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INDIAN



PANORAMA

17<sup>th</sup> year

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EVER TRUTHFUL

# 1 Indian American Weekly : Since 2006

VOL 17 ISSUE 11 • NEW YORK / DALLAS • MAR 17 - 23, 2023

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# India's Parliamentary Democracy on Test: Parliament log jammed with neither side relenting

**BOTH HOUSES PUT TOGETHER FUNCTIONED FOR JUST FIVE MINUTES AND 45 SECONDS ON THURSDAY, MARCH 16, AS PANDEMONIUM BREAKS OUT OVER RAHUL SPEECH, ADANI ROW**

**NEW DELHI / NEW YORK (TIP):** India's both Houses of Parliament put together functioned for 345 seconds on March 16, 2023, with the ruling BJP unrelenting in its demand for an apology from Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and the Opposition refusing to back down on the call for a joint parliamentary probe into the Adani Group controversy.

While Mr. Gandhi's remarks abroad that democracy is under attack has drawn the BJP's ire, the Opposition parties are insistent that the government breaks its silence on the Adani issue. To further press their point, several MPs from the Opposition organized a human chain in the Parliament premises.



Opposition MPs hold a human chain protest at Parliament House complex on March 16, 2023. Photo Credit / PTI

CONTD ON PAGE 38

## INDIA WELCOMES CONFIRMATION OF ERIC GARCETTI AS U.S. AMBASSADOR



Newly appointed U.S. Ambassador to India Eric Garcetti. Photo / Twitter-@ericgarcetti

**MARCH 16, 2023**  
**NEW DELHI (TIP):** India has welcomed the confirmation of U.S. Ambassador-designate Eric Garcetti by the Senate saying that New Delhi looks forward to work with him to advance bilateral relations. The statement from the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) came as past comments from Mr. Garcetti on the human rights record of India became viral over the past week which drew criticism from multiple stakeholders, including the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP).

CONTD ON PAGE 38

## Major US banks inject \$30 billion to rescue First Republic Bank



First Republic Bank branch on 10th Avenue and 34th Street in New York City

Photo / First Republic Bank

**MARCH 16, 2023**  
**NEW YORK (TIP):** Large U.S. banks injected \$30 billion in deposits into First Republic Bank (FRC.N) on Thursday, swooping in to rescue the lender caught up in a widening crisis triggered by the collapse of two other mid-size U.S. lenders over the past week, a Reuters report said.

Banking stocks globally have been battered since Silicon Valley Bank collapsed last week due to bond-related losses that piled up when interest rates surged last year, raising questions about what else might be lurking in the wider banking system.

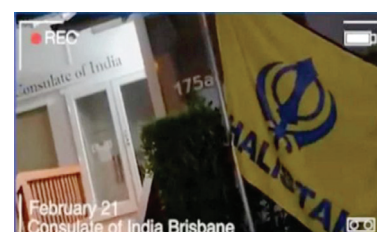
Within days, the market turmoil had ensnared Swiss lender Credit Suisse (CSGN.S), forcing it to borrow up to \$54 billion from Switzerland's central bank to shore up liquidity.

By Thursday afternoon, the spotlight whipsawed back to the United States as big banks led an effort to prop up support for First Republic, a regional lender whose shares had tumbled 70% in the last nine trading sessions.

CONTD ON PAGE 38

## Aussie radicals block entry to Indian consulate in Brisbane

**MARCH 16, 2023**  
**NEW DELHI / NEW YORK (TIP):** India's honorary consulate in Brisbane was forced to close briefly on Wednesday, March 15 after pro-Khalistan supporters blocked its entrance. Earlier on February 21, pro-Khalistan supporters, said to be from the outlawed Sikhs for Justice (SFJ), had fixed a flag outside the same building, which was later confiscated by the police. The incident comes after several temples, especially in Melbourne, were daubed in recent weeks with offensive graffiti by pro-Khalistan supporters.



Khalistan flag was raised at the Honorary Consulate of India in Australia's Brisbane. Photo Credit/ Twitter file photo

There is a heavy police presence in the area. Following the incident, the police and community leaders had a meeting with Indian-Australian leaders to assure them that the authorities were committed to upholding law and order. Some reports alleged that a Brisbane Sikh shrine bus was used to transport the protesters. The blocking of the honorary consulate comes days after Australian PM Anthony Albanese had assured PM Narendra Modi in Delhi that Australia will curb anti-India elements and also not tolerate any extreme actions or attacks on religious buildings.

CONTD ON PAGE 38

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**GUEST COMMENT****Dangerous maneuvering: On the Black Sea encounter and the risks posed by the Ukraine war****THE UNITED STATES SHOULD FIND STABILITY IN TIES WITH RUSSIA TO HELP END UKRAINE WAR**

The high-altitude maneuvering between two Russian fighter jets and an American drone over the Black Sea, which resulted in the splashing down of the U.S. MQ-9 Reaper drone on Tuesday, March 16 morning, has underscored the dangerous risks of the Ukraine war. In conflicting narratives about the incident, the Pentagon says the Russian Su-27s intercepted the surveillance drone in international airspace, dumping fuel on the drone, colliding with it and forcing it down. But the Russian Defense Ministry said its jets were scrambled after a U.S. drone violated its "temporary airspace" off the Crimean peninsula (declared for its war in Ukraine) and that the American aerial vehicle "lost altitude" in "sharp maneuvering". The MQ-9 recorded the incident. The video has been declassified and would help establish the truth. But whatever the reason, the fact that the U.S. lost a drone in the Black Sea, where it does not even

have a naval presence, is a grave reminder of how close the nuclear powers have come to a conflict. While both sides have responded with maturity, the underlying situation that triggered this crisis remains unchanged.

The U.S. has provided over \$30 billion in military assistance, including advanced defensive and offensive weapons, to Ukraine since the Russian invasion began, and imposed tough sanctions on Moscow. Washington says it is not directly involved in the war but is helping Ukraine defend its territories, while Russia alleges that the "collective West" is seeking to destroy it. As the war drags on, with Russia's failure to take a quick victory, the relationship between Washington and Moscow has broken down. Last month, Russia suspended its participation in the New START nuclear arms control treaty, the last of the Cold War-era weapons control mechanisms between the two countries. Steadily deepening mutual distrust amid an

ongoing conflict is a perfect recipe for disaster in great power rivalries. Even if the Biden administration has clearly ruled out a direct conflict with Russia, irresponsible and high-risk maneuvering or even accidents could lead to, as the Pentagon said, "miscalculation and unintended escalation". The U.S. and Russia already have a deconfliction hotline to avoid mid-air collisions in different theatres where they operate. They should use that mechanism around Ukraine as well to avoid a repeat of incidents such as the Black Sea one. But a bigger challenge is to arrest the deterioration of their bilateral ties, which is now reminiscent of the bilateral hostility of the first two decades of the Cold War. If the U.S. and Russia address this problem and find some stability between themselves, it would help them bring the war in Ukraine to an end.

(The Hindu)

**Chip pact with US: Boost to larger role for India in global supply chain**

From being a battle of corporate giants, the incredibly costly, complex and high-stakes business of making semiconductor chips has assumed the form of a geopolitical weapon. As governments respond to national security concerns brought out starkly by pandemic-era shortages and shifts in the global supply chain, India, too, has been paying more attention to ratchet up its nascent semiconductor industry with production-linked incentives. Last year, Foxconn, the Taiwanese firm that assembles Apple's iPhones, and mining company Vedanta teamed up to build a chip-making facility in Gujarat. The memorandum of understanding with the US on information-sharing on the semiconductor policy, commercial avenues and innovation is a boost for India's goal to have a larger role in the electronics supply chain. Leveraging complementary strengths would work to the advantage of both countries.

Biden administration has been proactive in pursuing a policy shift to end the heavy reliance on China and Taiwan for critical technological components. Expanding cooperation in advanced weaponry, supercomputing, semiconductors and other high-tech fields with India could be a part of its plan of 'friendshoring' or shifting the manufacturing of certain critical components to friendly countries. It's an opportunity not to be missed. New Delhi's central focus has to be on powering growth through collaborative energy and strategic alliances. Going forward, that would mean asking the US to ease restrictions on transferring defense-related and cutting-edge technology.

India would be circumspect of the voices sounding a note of caution to avoid falling into a trap of entering restrictive economic trade blocs. These apprehensions could be a false alarm since many of the Indo-US technology partnerships would hinge on new connections in the private sector, and nothing more. The India-US Commercial Dialogue's common goals include increasing supply chain resilience, enhancing energy security and reducing overall greenhouse gas emissions. Investment in emerging technology should be welcomed.

(Tribune, India)

**US banking crisis: Lapses in regulatory oversight led to the collapse**

The US authorities are scrambling to protect depositors' money after the back-to-back collapse of Silicon Valley Bank (SVB), Silvergate Capital Corporation and Signature Bank, which were major lenders to the crypto sector and tech startups. In a desperate bid to affirm the stability and credibility of the American banking system, the Joe Biden administration has granted SVB customers access to their money. Depositors of Signature Bank, which was closed on Sunday by the New York state financial regulator, have been promised compensation 'at no loss to the taxpayer'. Silvergate has said that it would be winding down operations and liquidating its bank.

SVB was among the top 20 American commercial banks till last year. It is the largest bank to be shut in the US since the 2008 financial meltdown, whose prime casualties included Washington Mutual and the Lehman Brothers' global investment bank. A link between them has surfaced: SVB's Chief Administrative Officer Joseph Gentile had worked with Lehman Brothers as Chief Financial Officer until he quit in 2007, a year before the 158-year-old giant went bankrupt, nearly bringing down the global financial system.

President Biden has stated that he is 'firmly committed to holding those responsible for this mess fully accountable and to continuing our efforts to strengthen oversight of larger banks so that we are not in this position again.' It is evident that lapses in regulation - coupled with an aggressive, risk-prone monetary policy aimed at taming inflation - brought things to such a pass. The writing was on the wall, but it was ignored. Short-seller William C Martin, former manager of a now-closed hedge fund, had already warned in January that SVB would blow up sooner rather than later. The fiasco holds a bitter lesson for US regulators and stakeholders: set your own house in order before losing sleep over smaller yet fast-growing economies. The key takeaway for India, which was rocked by the Punjab National Bank scam in 2018, is that no one can afford to ignore the warning signs. The regulatory system needs to be proactive rather than reactive to prevent a financial bloodbath and ensure the safety of people's deposits.

(Tribune, India)

# If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

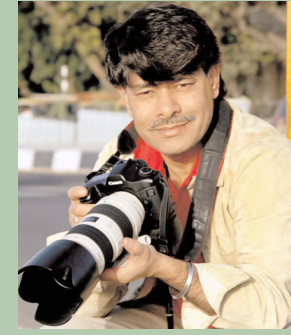
I.S. SALUJA

Spring arrives officially on March 20. However, New York this year may have to wait for the lovely Spring leaves, buds and blossoms.

A celebrated photojournalist Jay Mandal sent The Indian Panorama a few photographs of the beginning of the Spring season at various locations in the US from yesteryears. We are glad to

share the lovely pictures with the readers of The Indian Panorama.

Please do not despair if Spring season is slightly delayed. Have faith in what a British poet Percy Bysshe Shelley wrote:



Jay Mandal/ on assignment

"If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?"

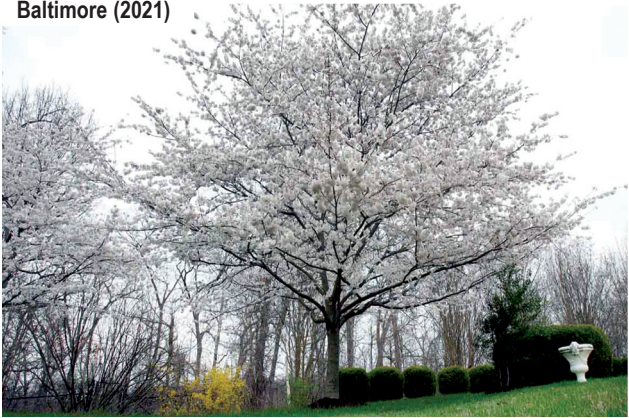
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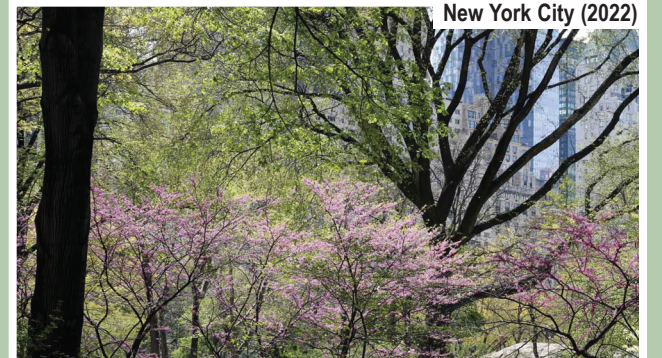
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# Indian American Vimal Kapur is the new CEO of Honeywell

MARCH 16, 2023

**CHARLOTTE, NC (TIP)** Yet another American corporate giant is set to be led by an Indian American executive with Honeywell International Inc Tuesday, March 15, announcing that Vimal Kapur, will take over as CEO of the multinational conglomerate on June 1.

The 57-year-old Kapur will take over the top role at Charlotte, North Carolina headquartered company, roughly 10 months after he was appointed Honeywell's president and chief operating officer.

A 34-year veteran of the company Kapur has held several other leadership positions including Managing Director for Honeywell Automation India Limited.

He graduated from the Thapar Institute of Engineering in Patiala, India as an electronics engineer with a specialization in instrumentation.

Kapur, who will succeed Darius Adamczyk was also appointed to the company's board of directors effective March 13, 2023. "These moves ensure a seamless leadership transition and position Honeywell for continued outperformance versus peers," according to the announcement.

"Vimal is absolutely the right person to lead our company to the next level of growth and stellar performance," said Adamczyk, who will continue to serve as Executive Chairman of Honeywell.

"Vimal is also uniquely capable to drive Honeywell's sustainable innovation and

solidify our position to lead in the energy transition," he said. "Now more than ever, our customers need our solutions to help their businesses be more efficient and more sustainable, and under Vimal's leadership, Honeywell's sustainability technologies will help our customers achieve their goals, today and into the future."

"Vimal has demonstrated that he can nimbly evolve business strategies to fit any circumstances - and we have seen that most dramatically in the challenges of the last few years. He is technically and analytically strong with a bias for results and gets the most out of people and processes," Adamczyk added.

"It is truly an honor to have the opportunity to serve as CEO of Honeywell under Darius' leadership and the leadership of our world class board of directors," Kapur said.

"I have had the privilege to work in a variety of businesses and functions over my three decades with Honeywell. Our high-performance culture and exceptional talent set Honeywell apart from other companies, and our innovation inspires me every day by bringing technologies to market that impact the world in a positive way." "Honeywell is playing a major role in making the world a better place, and I am both proud and humbled to take on the CEO role of this great company," he said. "I am looking forward to continuing to work with Darius and our board to continue to create value for our shareowners and our

customers."

Kapur was named President and Chief Operating Officer in July of 2022, and has been leading the creation of new solutions to help customers drive their sustainability transformations and accelerate their digital transformation journeys, according to the announcement.

As COO, Kapur has also overseen the continued integration of Honeywell Accelerator across the organization and furthering its adoption as an operational system for everything that Honeywell does.

Prior to his role as COO, Kapur served as President and CEO of PMT, an \$11 billion global leader in the development of high-performance products and solutions including low global warming refrigerants; specialty films for healthcare and photovoltaic applications; leading technologies for the global refining and petrochemicals industry; and process solutions.

Under Kapur's leadership as President and CEO of PMT, the business drove rapid growth in its sustainability portfolio including in circularity, energy evolution, environmental transformation, resiliency and accountability, the release said.

This included launching innovative technologies and partnerships with partners in plastics recycling, introducing large scale renewable energy storage for wind and solar usage and helping our customers lower their carbon footprint and improve energy efficiency with our broad



Vimal Kapur, will take over as CEO of Honeywell on June 1

line of low global warming refrigerants.

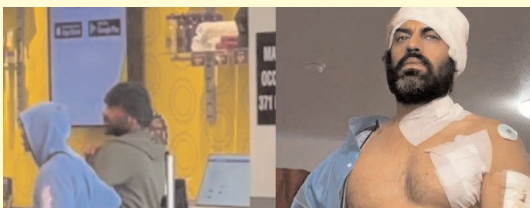
Prior to leading PMT, Kapur served as President and CEO of HBT, a \$6 billion global leader in building technology offerings, which improve energy performance, air quality and the safety and security of commercial buildings in more than ten million buildings worldwide.

Under Kapur's leadership, the HBT business successfully launched the Healthy Building portfolio and expanded margins by ~200 basis points over three years.

Before leading HBT, Kapur also held the role of President of Honeywell Process Solutions, where he successfully led the business through the oil and gas downturn.

Over a three-year period, Kapur was able to increase sales by 6%, expand margins by over 400 basis points and grow cash margins by 860 basis points to over 17%. Prior to that, Kapur was Vice President and General Manager of the Advanced Solutions line of business, where he built the foundation of an outcome-driven software business, successfully integrating the Matrikon acquisition into Honeywell. Honeywell primarily operates in four areas of business: aerospace, building technologies, performance materials and technologies, and safety and productivity solutions.

## Punjabi actor Aman Dhaliwal stabbed at gym in US



The incident took place when Punjabi actor Aman Dhaliwal was exercising in the gym. Photo / social media

MARCH 16, 2023

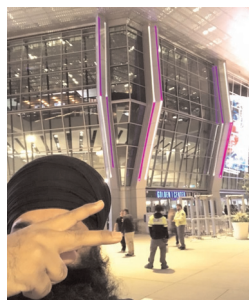
**NEW YORK (TIP):** Punjabi actor Aman Dhaliwal, who has worked in the Bollywood film 'Jodhaa Akbar' starring Hrithik Roshan and Aishwarya Rai, has been attacked in a gym in the US.

A video doing the rounds on social media, shows the accused asking for water from people around while Aman is at knife point. Moments later, the actor finds the right moment, turns around and pins the accused to the ground. Others come running and do not let him escape.

According to media reports, the incident took place when Aman was exercising in the gym. The accused held a knife and threatened others. Dhaliwal, who is currently hospitalized, has sustained injuries and scars on his torso, according to a report.

According to reports, after the incident, the police were called and the accused was handed over to them. The incident took place in the morning at Planet Fitness gym located at 3685 Grand Oaks in the US. (Source: IANS)

## Sikh man alleges religious discrimination at NBA game; says was denied entry as he was carrying kirpan



Mandeep Singh said he spoke to multiple people regarding the issue but to no avail.

Photo Credit: Twitter/@LightOfMind

MARCH 16, 2023

**PARMINDER AUJLA**

**SACRAMENTO (TIP):** A Sikh man has claimed that he was denied entry to a basketball match in the US because he was carrying a 'kirpan' -- a small dagger, which practicing Sikhs are required to carry at all times along with other articles of faith.

Mandeep Singh had gone to watch a basketball match involving the NBA team Sacramento Kings in California.

Sharing his photos from outside the venue from his Twitter handle, Singh said he spoke to multiple people regarding the issue, which he called "religious discrimination", but to no avail.

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

## Indian American threatens US students and Professors



Arvin Raj Mathur, 32, of Grass Lake in Jackson County, was arrested on Friday at Detroit Metropolitan Airport for threatening students and staff at his alma mater

Photo for representation only

MARCH 14, 2023

**WISCONSIN (TIP):** A former University of Wisconsin-Madison graduate student of Indian American was arrested after threatening students and staff at his alma mater with an email saying he planned to hide the flesh of their children in hamburger meat, according to media reports.

Arvin Raj Mathur, 32, of Grass Lake in Jackson County, was arrested on Friday at Detroit Metropolitan Airport and he is being temporarily held without bond, media reported.

Mathur is being held temporarily without bond in St. Clair County Jail and awaiting a detention hearing on Tuesday in a federal court in Detroit.

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

## Torture claims of Jagtar Johal, a British-Sikh detained in Delhi's Tihar jail, 'not admitted' in UK court

Johal faces nine charges in India, including conspiracy to murder, which carries a death sentence

MARCH 15, 2023

**LONDON (TIP):**

The UK government has told the High Court in London that a British Sikh man's allegation that he was tortured by Indian police while in custody on murder charges "are not admitted" as part of a legal challenge, which is set to be heard in secret in Britain.

Jagtar Singh Johal, a 36-year-old British citizen from Dumbarton in Scotland, was arrested while in Punjab for his wedding in 2017 and is currently being held at New Delhi's Tihar Jail. Johal has alleged that he was subjected to torture and mistreatment, allegations which the Indian authorities have denied and maintained that he was arrested on "serious charges" to face justice before the courts. (Read full story at [www.theindianpanorama.news](http://www.theindianpanorama.news))



Jagtar Singh Johal File photo

## Five eminent Indian-origin women honored at the Indian Consulate on International Women's Day



Consul General of India in New York, Randhir Jaiswal (extreme left) and Dr. Abha Jaiswal (extreme right) honored Meera Joshi, Radha Subramanyam, Hina Patel and Padmini Murthy. The fifth honoree Grammy Award winning singer and songwriter Falu Shah was honored in absentia

MARCH 16, 2023

**NEW YORK CITY(TIP):** Five eminent Indian-origin women were honored at the Indian Consulate on the occasion of the International Women's Day.

The Federation of Indian Associations, in association with the Consulate General of India in New York held its fifth annual International Women's Day celebrations on March 8 and honored five women for their outstanding achievements.

Among the awardees was Deputy Mayor of New York City, Meera Joshi, an

attorney by profession, who in her current role has accomplished several significant achievements, including transport innovations and equity cabinet. She also played a key role in implementing New York City's Vision Zero program - a comprehensive strategy aimed at reducing traffic fatalities and injuries, the statement said.

The other awardee was Radha Subramanyam, president and chief research and analytics officer at CBS - TV Net Corp. An award-winning media executive, Subramanyam has also been recognized as one of the '100 Leading

Women in the North American Auto Industry' by Automotive News.

Hina Patel is a TEDx speaker and executive leader leading a 200-employee engineering firm in three states. FIA said Patel is an advocate of women's rights in workplaces and has worked towards gender equity.

Padmini Murthy is a physician and global health leader at the American Medical Women's Association (AMWA) and has worked tirelessly to improve access to healthcare services, particularly for underserved women, the FIA said.

She has initiated several global health programs that focus on women's health such as the women's eye health taskforce and the Global Health council's Maternal, Newborn and Child Health initiative.

Grammy Award winning singer and songwriter Falu Shah was also honored at the event that was also addressed by Dr Abha Jaiswal. Shah was, however, unable to attend the function as she was in India where she performed at the inauguration of the cricket test match between India and Australia at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad, which was attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Australian counterpart Anthony Albanese.

Consul General of India in New York, Randhir Jaiswal, congratulated the 2023 recipients and encouraged the community to engage in more meaningful and community-impacting events.

## INDIAN-AMERICAN FLIGHT TEST ENGINEER RAVI CHAUDHARY IS CONFIRMED BY THE US SENATE AS ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF AIR FORCE



Newly appointed Assistant Secretary of Defense for US Air Force Indian-American Ravi Chaudhary. Photo credit / PTI

MARCH 16, 2023

**WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP):** The US Senate has confirmed Indian-American flight test engineer Ravi Chaudhary as the Assistant Secretary of Defense for the US Air Force, one of the top civilian leadership positions in the Pentagon.

The Senate on Wednesday, March 15, voted 65-29 to confirm the former Air Force officer's nomination with more than a dozen votes being cast by the opposition Republican Party.

Chaudhary previously served as a Senior Executive at the US Department of Transportation where he was Director of Advanced Programs and Innovation, Office of Commercial Space at the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

He was responsible for the execution of advanced development and research programs in support of the FAA's commercial space transportation mission. While at the transportation department, he also served as the executive director of the regions and center operations, where he looked over the integration and support of aviation operations in nine regions.

During his service in the US Air Force from 1993 to 2015, Chaudhary completed a variety of operational, engineering, and senior staff assignments.

As a C-17 pilot, he conducted global flight operations, including numerous combat missions in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as ground deployment as the director of the personnel recovery center at multi-national corps in Iraq.

As a flight test engineer, he was responsible for flight certification of military avionics and hardware for the force's modernization programs supporting flight safety.

Earlier in his career, he supported space launch operations for the global positioning system (GPS) and led third-stage and flight safety activities to ensure the full operational capability of the first GPS constellation.

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

## Indian American musician SANJ releases new fusion album named Nightingale



Sanjana Nayak

Photo credit / LinkedIn

MARCH 16, 2023

**NEW YORK (TIP):** For New York City based musician Sanjana Nayak, who goes by the name SANJ, the release of her debut album Nightingale just a few days ago is a culmination of a passion project.

SANJ's music can be best defined as a fusion of silky Indian vocals that tap into her two decades of classical music training. She says that her music reflects sultry

R&B flows inspired by songs that she grew up listening to. As an artist in America with South Asian roots, she believes her music pushes the boundaries of traditional fusion music. She says about her debut album, "My music also highlights my creative ethos in a way I haven't tapped into before."

She describes herself as an Indian-American innovative. Bred in Chicago and based in NYC, SANJ has been a lifelong singer, songwriter, and musician, and folds her passion for music into many facets of her life.

Her new wave of songwriting showcases her vision for sultry Desi-R&B, whilst still maintaining her stark colors and classic nostalgic sound that have won the hearts of many. By day, SANJ works in advertising strategy at Google, and performs often in venues across NYC by night. Already a social media star, SANJ has a following of over 150,000+ listeners across several platforms, and her Spotify saw 999% growth in 2022.

## Indian-origin teen Neel Moudgal wins \$250K US science prize

MARCH 16, 2023

**NEW YORK (TIP):** An Indian-origin teen has won a prestigious high schoolers' science prize of \$250,000 for developing a computer model to predict the structure of RNA molecules that can aid in quickly diagnosing diseases.

Neel Moudgal, 17, was announced the winner of the Regeneron Science Talent competition on Tuesday, March 14.

Ambika Grover, 17, was ranked sixth for an \$80,000 award and Siddhu Pachipala, 18, placed ninth for a \$50,000 prize.

About 2,000 high school students competed in the Science Talent Search with 40 selected for the final round.

According to the Society for Science that ran the competition sponsored by Regeneron Pharmaceuticals, Moudgal's computational biology and bioinformatics project "can rapidly and reliably predict the structure of various RNA molecules to facilitate the development of novel diagnostics and therapeutic drugs for diseases such as cancer, autoimmune diseases and viral infections".

Grover developed an injectable micro-bubble to break up blood clots and treat stroke victims by restoring the blood flow to the brain.

Pachipala used machine learning to assess a patient's suicide risk.



Sanjana Nayak

Photo credit / LinkedIn

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

# Thousands participate in Holi Celebrations in Guatemala and El Salvador



Ambassador Manoj Kumar Mohapatra (left), and El Salvador Vice Culture Minister Mr. Eric Doradea and Vice Foreign Minister Ms Adriana Mira enjoying the colorful Holi

MARCH 16, 2023  
I.S. SALUJA

**GUATEMALA CITY (TIP):** Continuing with its efforts to popularize Indian culture in the Central American countries of Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras, the Embassy of India in Guatemala City organized Holi celebrations in El Salvador on 4 March and in Guatemala City on 12 March. On 18 March, Holi will be celebrated in Honduras and on 19 March in the eastern Guatemalan port city of Puerto Barrios with more than 300 people of Indian origin who migrated to Guatemala in the late nineteenth century from India.

The iconic Cuscatlán Park in the centre of San Salvador, the capital of El Salvador, saw never-before celebrations of Holi with the participation of around 5000 Salvadorians. The celebrations were jointly organized by the Embassy of India Guatemala accredited to El Salvador and the Culture Ministry of El Salvador. Ambassador Manoj Kumar Mohapatra, Vice Culture Minister Mr. Eric Doradea and Vice Foreign Minister Ms Adriana Mira inaugurated the celebrations. The celebrations saw Salvadorans smearing and drenching each other with colors, dancing to the tunes of Indian Music and tasting Indian

food. The celebrations were witnessed by people from all walks of life, including members of the diplomatic corps, government officials, media representatives and artists.

"It's a colorful dust party. It is produced from the petals abandoned in temples," explained the Deputy Minister of Culture. "Every color has a meaning. Red reflects love; blue the color Krishna (...)", he added. "India comes to us to share in the joy of new beginnings," he added.

The festival promotes inclusion, solidarity, respect, tolerance and equality between individuals and was made possible thanks to the good relations between the two countries; which, in addition, have allowed to concrete a number of cultural exchange activities, such as Bollywood film projections as well as presentations of music and dance of India, which have taken place at various venues managed by the Ministry of Culture.

"We want to see color this day," said the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. "I feel happy. International relations go through culture," he admitted.

The activity featured the intervention of the Indian classical dance show (kathak) by teacher Soledad Ortiz and participants are estimated at as many as 5,000.

The same enthusiasm was seen on 12 March when Embassy organized Holi Celebrations in Guatemala City. Around 400 members of the



Ambassador Manoj Kumar Mohapatra, in his speech, introduced the audience to the history of Holi and encouraged participants to enjoy these unique celebrations



Holi revelers

"The relationship has grown stronger. Under this idea we have been able to bring this festival," the Indian ambassador said. "Through the festival we want to strengthen the ties between India and El Salvador," he completed.



Holi revelers

Indian community and local Guatemalans witnessed the colorful Holi celebrations at the Embassy premises. Around 50 young students from the North-Eastern City of Chiquimula especially travelled to Guatemala City to see these colorful celebrations. Ambassador Manoj Kumar Mohapatra, in his speech, introduced the audience to the history of Holi and encouraged participants to enjoy these unique celebrations. All 400 people enjoyed the Indian food and danced with daubing each other with colors.

(With inputs from Embassy of India in Guatemala)

# World Renowned Naturopaths & Reiki Grandmasters visiting New York

MARCH 16, 2023

I.S. SALUJA

**NEW YORK (TIP):** Dr. Nand Kishore Sharma & Dr. Savita Sharma Founder Directors, Reiki Healing Foundation, New Delhi (India) will be visiting New York from May 18 to May 21, 2023.

Dr. N. K. Sharma & Dr. Savita Sharma are world renowned Naturopaths & Reiki Grandmasters, whose life transforming workshops all over India & abroad have revolutionized the way people eat, think and live. Dr. Sharma couples are not just the "World Reiki Guru" but also protagonists in the field of raw food nutrition.

Their scientific, myth breaking & unparalleled course run worldwide have given the society a new direction and destroyed old theories and promoted new ideologies and concepts. Dr. Sharma are a revolutionary couple who entered the field of Occult Science around 30 years back with the sole objective of destroying blind beliefs, fears and ignorance and freeing people from the web of - diseases, suffering, tantric, superstitions, planetary fears & fake gurus.

With persistent efforts, utmost dedication and undying perseverance, they have succeeded in unveiling the mystic secrets and making people not just aware of the myths about black magic, planetary effects etc. but also empowering them against such negative energies. Their amazing Reiki courses have made each person a master of his own by making each person realize & unleash the powers hidden within instead of becoming a follower of a master.

Being staunch believers in natural law & its supremacy, they took up the cause of challenging



Dr. Nand Kishore Sharma & Dr. Savita Sharma Founder Directors, Reiki Healing Foundation, New Delhi

degenerative diseases & cancer cases. The couple after getting their doctorate started their practice in Bombay and established a 30 bedded Hospital by name "Natural Health Institute" at Chowpatty sea face.

They are the first Naturopaths in India who have extensively researched, studied & treated more than 18,000 Cancer Cases in his 40 yrs. of practice. For which they have been conferred several international & national awards.

Besides the workshops on Reiki and other related mystic areas, Dr. Sharma couple are the first to give in India the concept of "fireless kitchen" by promoting health through raw and natural food. They are the first to declare that 'Cereals & Milk' are degenerative (not original human food).

Dr. N. K. Sharma has authored several books on nutrition and spirituality among which "Milk-A Silent Killer" has been translated into several foreign languages. He has also authored an eye-opening book

"Mahatma Rogi Kyon" (Why Saints fall sick?)

With a versatile personality, Dr. N. K. Sharma is a poet, writer, singer, editor, teacher & as well a spiritual master.

Dr. Savita Sharma is also recipient of 10 best women of India award known as "Bharat Nirman Award" in the year 1990 by the president of India. Recently they have been honored from New York (USA) "Doctor of Divinity" award & also "Eminent Holistic Scientist" a national award from Union Minister of India. They have also been honored with "Bharat Nirman Award" and "Rajdhani Ratan Award".

They have been consultant to many prominent personalities of India like Film Stars, Saints, Industrialist, Politicians including Presidents and Prime Ministers.

They practice what they believe- they have brought up their two children without any vaccination, animal milk, childhood diseases, medication & suffering. Their children have never even experienced cold, cough or diarrhea. They are now in their young age of 40 yrs. still having their original childhood teeth.

Presently they are the founder director of the Reiki Healing Foundation, New Delhi that is the only organization so far in India that has trained more than 7.5 lacs students worldwide & 6000 Reiki Masters. It has now become the world's largest organization in the field of Reiki healing & mystic sciences.

Those desiring to set up a meeting with Dr. Nand Kishore Sharma & Dr. Savita Sharma may contact Mrs. Purnima Desai, Founder & President of Sriniketan Foundation and Shikshayatan at 1-646-472-9255 or via email at gurupurnima24@aol.com



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# Banks Are Failing: Is My Money Safe?



BY JOHN WAGGONER

**MOST INVESTMENTS - BUT NOT ALL - ARE PROTECTED BY A WEB OF INSURANCE**

Recessions don't always follow bank collapses, but the recent failures of Silicon Valley Bank and Signature Bank have pushed recession fears up a few notches. For retirees, this means added worry about the safety of their money. With that in mind, let's take some time and review the financial safety nets you have - and those you may not.

Before the creation of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) in 1933, depositors often got back only pennies on the dollar - if that - when a bank failed. Today the FDIC insures most bank deposits up to \$250,000. If you have more than \$250,000, you can get the additional funds covered by opening an account at a different bank, or by opening a different type of account, such as an individual retirement account (IRA), at the same bank. You can find out how much of your deposits are insured through the FDIC's Electronic Deposit Insurance Estimator.

The banking industry funds the FDIC via insurance premiums, which go into the Deposit Insurance Fund (DIF), whose assets are equal to about 1.3 percent of insured deposits. The FDIC also has a \$100 billion line of credit with the U.S. Treasury in case losses exceed the DIF's assets.

Of course, banks aren't the only financial institutions in the world. Here are some answers to common questions about the protections you have - or don't - in case of financial disasters.

How shaky is the banking sector? It's always a bit hard to tell: Banks can carry bad loans on their books for months before selling them off, and it takes a while for good loans to go bad in the first place. A spate of bad loans may not show up in a bank's earnings until well after they have gone bad.

Rising interest rates can be harmful to bank earnings. Silicon Valley Bank had a large portfolio of mortgage-backed securities with very low yields. As the Federal Reserve pushed interest rates up, those securities lost value. And as depositors demanded their money back, the bank had to sell those securities at a loss.

Wall Street has slashed the stock prices of many regional banks. In the past 30 days, financial stocks have fallen about 12 percent and regional bank stocks have tumbled 31 percent through March 14, according to Morningstar, the Chicago investment trackers.

At least so far, the banks' problems seem fairly limited. The Federal Reserve Bank of New York noted in November that the banking system is well capitalized, meaning that most banks have enough reserves to weather a downturn. S&P Global Ratings noted that it has "not seen evidence that unmanageable deposit outflows experienced at a few banks have widely

**RIISING INTEREST RATES CAN BE HARMFUL TO BANK EARNINGS. SILICON VALLEY BANK HAD A LARGE PORTFOLIO OF MORTGAGE-BACKED SECURITIES WITH VERY LOW YIELDS. AS THE FEDERAL RESERVE PUSHED INTEREST RATES UP, THOSE SECURITIES LOST VALUE. AND AS DEPOSITORS DEMANDED THEIR MONEY BACK, THE BANK HAD TO SELL THOSE SECURITIES AT A LOSS.**



After two recent bank failures, a pedestrian passes a Silicon Valley Bank branch in San Francisco, Monday, March 13, 2023.

Photo / courtesy Jeff Chiu -AP Newsroom

spread across rated banks."

Some questions answered.

Are there uninsured banks? Yes. You can check to see if your bank is covered by the FDIC by calling the agency's toll-free number (877-275-3342) or using its online tool. In the rare instance that your bank is uninsured, you should consider moving your money to an insured institution.

Are savings and loan associations insured by the FDIC? Yes. Savings and loan associations (S&Ls) went through a near-death experience in the 1980s and were insured by the Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corporation. S&Ls are now fully covered by the FDIC, with the same insurance levels as

Are credit unions insured by the FDIC? No. They are insured by the National Credit Union Share Insurance Fund at the same level (up to \$250,000 in deposits) as FDIC coverage.

Is my safe deposit box federally insured? No. The contents of your safe deposit boxes are not insured by the FDIC for theft or damage, and they are typically not insured by banks. You can, however, buy private insurance for safe deposit boxes.

Are people who invest directly in a bank insured? No. If you buy a bank's stock, you're not protected in a failure. Bonds are loans, however, and if you

own a failed bank's bonds, you may recover some of your investment in court.

Is my brokerage account federally insured? No. Most brokerages are insured by the Securities Investor Protection Corporation (SIPC) for up to \$500,000 if their brokerage fails. SIPC insurance includes up to \$250,000 in protection for cash in your account.

SIPC does not protect you against market losses, nor does it protect you against shysters who sell worthless securities. If a brokerage fails and you discover that some of your holdings are missing, SIPC works to replace those holdings at the current market price, which is not necessarily the same as their price when the brokerage failed.

SIPC doesn't handle quarrels between you and your broker. That's the domain of the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA), the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission or your state securities regulator.

Is my retirement account federally insured? It depends on how the money in your account is invested.

If an individual retirement account (IRA) or a 401(k) plan includes deposit accounts such as CDs and money markets held at an FDIC-covered bank, that money is insured up to \$250,000

per bank.

However, most retirement accounts are made up of investment assets such as stocks, bonds and mutual funds, which the FDIC does not cover. As with standard brokerage accounts, those investments may have SIPC protection, with the limits noted above.

Is my life insurance federally insured? No. Life insurance is insured by state guaranty funds, which cover life insurance policies and annuities if the insurer goes out of business. Laws vary by state, but most offer at least \$300,000 in life insurance death benefits and long-term care policies. Annuities are covered up to \$250,000.

State guaranty pools are funded by the companies that sell policies in that state. You can find your state guaranty association through the National Organization of Life and Health Insurance Guaranty Associations.

Is my cryptocurrency federally insured? No. If your crypto gets stolen, there's no FDIC, credit card issuer or bank to make you whole. Your money is gone.

(John Waggoner covers all things financial for AARP, from budgeting and taxes to retirement planning and Social Security. Previously he was a reporter for Kiplinger's Personal Finance and? USA Today.)

(Source: AARP)



# China's growing influence



BY G  
PARTHASARATHY

CHINA IS PLAYING A NOTABLE ROLE IN DEVELOPMENTS ACROSS THE INDO-PACIFIC AND THE GULF

“ CHINA IS NOW PLAYING A NOTABLE ROLE IN DEVELOPMENTS ACROSS THE INDO-PACIFIC. IT HAS UNDERMINED US INFLUENCE IN THE GULF REGION BY GETTING SAUDI ARABIA AND IRAN TO RE-ESTABLISH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. MOREOVER, WITH RUSSIA FLEXING ITS MUSCLES AND EXPANDING ITS INFLUENCE BY USING ITS VAST ENERGY RESOURCES, WASHINGTON HAS BEEN FORCED TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE REALITY THAT EVEN FRIENDLY DEMOCRACIES LIKE INDIA WILL NOT JOIN ITS BOYCOTT OF RUSSIA, ESPECIALLY WHEN ITS ENERGY INTERESTS ARE AT STAKE. BOTH THE US AND INDIA, HOWEVER, HAVE A SHARED INTEREST IN DEALING WITH THE GROWING CHINESE MARITIME AND ECONOMIC POWER ACROSS THE INDO-PACIFIC REGION. ”

As an assertive and re-elected Xi Jinping flexes his muscles to challenge the predominance of US power across Asia, and globally, India will have to strengthen its defenses along its borders with China. The recent Chinese intrusion in Arunachal Pradesh and its earlier intrusions in Ladakh now require strong attention across and beyond our land and maritime frontiers. There is a need for particular focus on Chinese moves in the Indian Ocean. It also needs to be borne in mind that the Biden administration has made a mess of US policies in the oil-rich Persian Gulf. Washington has ineptly and insensitively dealt with its vital relations with Saudi Arabia, amidst its continuing hostile relations with Iran. Beijing has, meanwhile, fostered a rapprochement between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

Building on its ties with Sri Lanka,



Domination: Beijing now has a free run at Sri Lanka's Hambantota Port for berthing its warships and submarines across the Indian Ocean. Photo credit /AP

India must take steps to promote rupee payments in trade, travel and investment.

China is now playing a notable role in developments across the Indo-Pacific. It has undermined US influence in the Gulf Region by getting Saudi Arabia and Iran to re-establish diplomatic relations. Moreover, with Russia flexing its muscles and expanding its influence by using its vast energy resources, Washington has been forced to acknowledge the reality that even friendly democracies like India will not join its boycott of Russia, especially when its energy interests are at stake. Both the US and India, however, have a shared interest in dealing with the growing Chinese maritime and economic power across the Indo-Pacific Region. In these complex circumstances, India has maneuvered skillfully in dealing with two important South Asian neighbors, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, whose close ties with China have obvious implications for India's security.

The Sino-Pakistan relationship is primarily directed against India. It is a relationship which includes arms transfers, both conventional and nuclear. Pakistan's nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles that can target Indian territory from New Delhi to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands are of Chinese design.

Sri Lanka's suspicions of India were accentuated during the Sinhala-Tamil ethnic conflict in the 1980s, when there were strong apprehensions of India's links with the LTTE. Indians sometimes tend to forget that the ethnic conflict was confined to northern Sri Lanka, where Tamils lived for centuries. It did not involve the 'plantation Tamils' living in the country's South. Southern Tamils in Colombo are full of praise for PM Modi after they met him during his visit to Sri

Lanka.

Sri Lanka is going through an acute economic crisis, akin to what Pakistan is facing. The virtually bankrupt Colombo government was overwhelmed when Modi announced that India would contribute \$4 billion to enable Sri Lanka to tide over its foreign exchange problems in imports of crucial items like fuel, oil and medicines. China stepped in rather late in the day, with a meagre pledge of \$1 billion. The Export-Import Bank of China has offered Sri Lanka a two-year moratorium on debt repayments and said it would support the country's efforts to secure a \$2.9 billion loan from the IMF. But in real terms, China has done little to reduce the debt burden it has foisted on Sri Lanka.

What is important is that China has led Sri Lanka, like many other nations, into a debt trap. This situation arose primarily because of Sri Lankan borrowings for China's construction of a number of projects in Sri Lanka, led by the Hambantota Port on its southern shores. There was a reckless disregard of the port's financial viability. The port is located in the constituency of former President Mahinda Rajapaksa. Beijing now has a free run at the port for berthing its warships and submarines moving across the Indian Ocean. New Delhi has responded strongly to the Chinese presence at the port, through which large amounts of goods, including sensitive equipment for India, transit. The Adani Group has, meanwhile, secured separate port facilities designated as West Container Terminal for transit of all imports and exports by India, with a reported investment of around \$700 million.

Amidst growing public anger against former President Gotabaya Rajapaksa

and the entire Rajapaksa family, Sri Lanka's Parliament endorsed the appointment of veteran politician Ranil Wickremesinghe as the new President last year. He has moved carefully and effectively in dealing with the virtual collapse of the Sri Lankan economy. There has also been fulsome praise for India's External Affairs Minister and Finance Minister for swiftly delivering assistance.

Talking to Sri Lankan friends during a recent visit to Colombo, I was struck by the goodwill that India has earned in Sri Lanka in recent days. This must be complemented by moving ahead on a number of issues. As devout Buddhists, the Sinhala population seeks better facilities for pilgrimages to Bodh Gaya. It is imperative to improve train services for the pilgrims, while jointly examining measures for improvement of facilities for their stay in India. A number of measures are needed to promote rupee payments in trade, travel and investment. The Talaimannar-Rameshwaram ferry needs to be revived for facilitating travel.

Most importantly, new economic opportunities are set to arise as the Trincomalee Port becomes functional in the coming months. New Delhi and Colombo need to move imaginatively in encouraging and promoting private sector investment from India in this region of the Bay of Bengal. There are also large opportunities for private investment and cooperation in areas like airports, hospitality and higher education, even as India's High Commissioner Gopal Baglay prepares to complete a difficult, eventful and successful tenure in Colombo.

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

# Oscars won, Indian cinema poised for greater glory



BY NONIKA SINGH

India shines at the Oscars - the words seem surreal. In a dream-come-true moment as India has picked up not one but two Oscars (Best Original Song and Best Documentary Short) out of three nominations, it's not just the makers of RRR and The Elephant Whisperers who stand proud. The electrifying feeling of joy in sync with the infectious beats of Naatu Naatu, composed by MM Keeravani, has spread across the country and the whisper is loud and clear - India can do it.

RRR roars once again and Guneet Monga, producer of the Kartiki Gonsalves-directed The Elephant Whisperers, beams, "We as two women from India stood on that global stage making this historical win! 1.4 billion Indians, this is for you. We've all manifested this together."

Indeed, magical! How and why? Before we answer that, the more important question is why India, one of the largest film producers in the world, couldn't crack the code earlier.

Year after year, we have lamented over why India can't win an Oscar and reams have been written about our dismal (near blank) record at the prestigious Academy Awards, often considered the hallmark of excellence and gold standard of recognition. Experts have time and again rued that if countries like Iran and South Korea can take home Oscars, what stops India, where there is no dearth of quality cinema. If India-centric films such as Life of Pi, the survival saga of an Indian boy, could win its director Ang Lee the coveted Best Director statuette, why can't our storytellers get it right?

Often, the blame has been laid at the door of our official selections. This year, too, much hue and cry was made when Pan Nalin's acclaimed film Last Film Show was chosen as India's official entry to the Oscars. Objections were raised by certain sections to the film, which, after making it to the shortlist, fell out of the race. In fact, similar has been the fate of our entries each year, leaving us to draw comfort in the few that have come our way.

Costume designer Bhanu Athaiya, composer AR Rahman, lyricist Gulzar, sound engineer Resul Pookutty and legendary filmmaker Satyajit Ray, who received an honorary award, are part of the select Oscar club.

But what makes this year's win truly delicious is that, for once, Oscars are for Indian films by Indian production houses. So far, our Oscar victories have been limited to India-centric films by foreign producers and directors. If back in time, it was Richard Attenborough's Gandhi that fetched costume designer Bhanu Athaiya an Oscar, making her the first Indian to get it, Danny Boyle's Slumdog Millionaire gave us the chance to chorus Jai Ho. But Naatu Naatu gives us a greater reason to rejoice and break

**NAYSAYERS ARE LIKELY TO ATTRIBUTE REASONS OTHER THAN QUALITY TO INDIA'S ASCENT ON THE OSCARS STAGE. THAT WE ARE NOT ONLY A HUGE MOVIE-PRODUCING COUNTRY BUT ALSO A VORACIOUS ENTERTAINMENT-CONSUMING ONE IS OFTEN ATTRIBUTED AS THE TRIGGER BEHIND OUR GROWING EMINENCE. THAT THIS IS WHY HOLLYWOOD ROPES IN OUR BIG STARS IN ITS FILMS AND, NOW, SERIES TOO, IS NOT A STATEMENT BUT ALMOST AN ASPERSION. IN NETFLIX LOOKING FOR NEW MARKETS, TOO, WE CAN SENSE A PLAN BEHIND THE INDIA PUSH.**



NAATU NAATU: The world is dancing to the tunes of the ebullient Telugu song. Photo credit / Reuters

into a hook step that has the world hooked in pure frenzy. In fact, the world has been dancing to the tunes of the ebullient Telugu song for quite some time now.

Prior to its Oscar win, SS Rajamouli's blockbuster RRR picked up the Golden Globe award for Best Original Song, too. The resounding success of the song is not hard to decode. From lilting lyrics to its catchy beats and dance steps and the way it has been picturized, all elements tick the right boxes. What is even sweeter is that it puts to rest all skepticism about India's naach-gaana brand of cinema and proves that music and dance are our USP, not Achilles' heel.

But, does the twin Oscar victory mean India has arrived on the world map of cinema? Judging by the standing ovation that the Naatu Naatu performance by its singers Rahul Sipligunj and Kaala Bhairava got at the 95th Academy Awards, one is tempted to say yes. The Elephant Whisperers'

maiden victory for India in the Documentary Short Subject category, too, makes us nod emphatically.

Of course, naysayers are likely to attribute reasons other than quality to India's ascent on the Oscars stage. The fact that we are not only a huge movie-producing country but also a voracious entertainment-consuming one is often attributed as the trigger behind our growing eminence. That this is why Hollywood ropes in our big stars in its films and, now, series too, is not a statement but almost an aspersion. In Netflix, a major OTT player, looking for new markets, too, we can sense a plan and method behind the India push.

Add to it the fact that diversity and inclusivity have been pushed to the forefront in Hollywood for quite some time now. More than one Oscar ceremony has created history. In 2020, South Korean film Parasite became the first foreign language film to win the Best Picture Award at the Oscars, thus breaking the "one-inch-tall barrier of

subtitles." Take this year's Best Film Award-winning Everything Everywhere All At Once. The Best Actress trophy for its lead actress Michelle Yeoh makes her the first woman of Asian descent to win the award. Clearly, India could not have been ignored for too long.

RRR makers have been making the right kind of noises ever since the film figured in the Oscar nomination list. Let's admit it - winning an Oscar is as much a marketing strategy, perhaps popular appeal too, as it is a litmus test of excellence.

Of course, the tumultuous response that RRR has generated overseas can't be orchestrated through a media blitzkrieg alone. India might still be far from winning the best film in even the International Feature category, let alone the overall one. The closest we have come are Lagaan, Salaam Bombay and Mother India making it to the prestigious final-five list of nominees.

Thus, there is no discounting the history we have created this year. It is more than heartening that Naatu Naatu beat top contenders like Rihanna's Lift Me Up from Black Panther: Wakanda Forever and Lady Gaga's Hold My Hand from Top Gun: Maverick among other nominees and The Elephant Whisperers defeated acclaimed competitors like Jay Rosenblatt's How Do You Measure A Year? To borrow from the words of Michelle Yeoh, the new tidings at the Academy Awards "is indeed a beacon of hope and possibilities" and, as our very own star of RRR, Jr NTR, said, "It's only a beginning." On the red (sorry, champagne) carpet, his co-star Ram Charan remarked, "We are not just coming as ourselves but we are coming as India today."

So, watch out, world, here we come! With our diversity, cultural specificity and inclusivity intact.

(The author is an Assistant Editor of The Tribune, Chandigarh)

# Shaheed Diwas

**Shaheed Diwas, also known as Martyrs' Day falls on March 23. The day honors the valor and commitment of those who sacrificed their lives for the country. On this day, freedom fighters Bhagat Singh, Shivaram Rajguru and Sukhdev Thapar were hanged to death by the British rulers.**

**The Indian Panorama salutes the trio of India's freedom fighters.**

2<sup>3</sup>rd March will remain forever etched in our memory since, on this day in 1931, three brave leaders, Bhagat Singh, Shivaram Rajguru, and Sukhdev Thapar, were hanged by the Britishers. The day March is celebrated as Shaheed Diwas to commemorate the contributions of Bhagat Singh, Shivaram Rajguru, and Sukhdev Thapar to India's independence.

The three brave leaders were hanged till death in Lahore for assassinating John Saunders in 1928 when they mistook him for James Scott, a British Police Superintendent. They took this step as an act of revenge against James Scott for ordering a lathi charge that caused Lala Lajpat Rai's death. Indians will observe the 91st death anniversary of the three brave freedom fighters on 23rd March 2022.

## Bhagat Singh

Born: 27th Sept. 1907, Punjab.  
Hanged on 23rd March 1931.

As a freedom fighter, he was considered to be one of the most famous revolutionaries of Indian Independence movement. For this reason, he is often referred to as Martyr Bhagat Singh. At such a young age, if anyone was smiling just before being hanged to death, it was Martyr Bhagat Singh. His uncle, Sardar Ajit Singh as well as his father, were both great freedom fighters, so Bhagat Singh grew up in a patriotic atmosphere.

At an early age, Bhagat Singh started dreaming of uprooting the British Empire. Never afraid of fighting during his childhood, he thought of 'growing guns in the fields', so that he could fight the British. The Ghadar Movement left a deep imprint on his mind. Kartar Singh Sarabha, hanged at the age of 19, became his hero. The massacre at Jallianwala Bagh on 13th April, 1919 drove him to Amritsar, where he kissed the earth sanctified by the martyrs' blood and brought back home a little of the soaked soil. At the age of 16, he used to wonder why so many Indians could not drive away a fistful of invaders.

In search of revolutionary groups and ideas, he met Sukhdev and Rajguru. Bhagat Singh, along with the help of Chandrashekhar Azad, formed the Hindustan Socialist Republican Army (HSRA). The aim of this Indian revolutionary movement was now defined as not only to make Bharat independent, but also to create a socialist Bharat.

A brutal attack by the police on veteran freedom fighter Lala Lajpat Rai at an anti-British procession caused his death on 17th November 1928, in Lahore. Bhagat Singh was determined to avenge Lajpat Rai's death by shooting the British official responsible for the killing, Deputy Inspector General Scott. However he shot down Assistant Superintendent Saunders instead, mistaking him for Scott. Then he made a dramatic escape from Lahore to Calcutta and from there to Agra, where he established a bomb



Legendary freedom fighters Sukhdev, Bhagat Singh and Rajguru were hanged to death on March 23, 1931, in the Lahore Conspiracy case. While Bhagat Singh was just 23, his comrades Rajguru and Sukhdev too were in their early twenties, 22 and 23 respectively. Their bodies were secretly cremated in the banks of the Sutlej river.

factory.

The British Government responded to the act by imposing severe measures like the Trades Disputes Bill. It was to protest against the passing of the Bill that he threw bombs in the Central Assembly Hall (now our Lok Sabha) while the Assembly was in session. The bombs did not hurt anyone, but the noise they made was loud enough to wake up an enslaved Nation from a long sleep.

After throwing the bombs, Bhagat Singh and his friend deliberately courted arrest by refusing to run away from the scene. During his trial, Bhagat Singh refused to employ any defense counsel.

Despite great popular pressure and numerous appeals by political leaders of Bharat, Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru were accorded the death sentence and hanged in the early hours of 23rd March 1931. Their bodies were cremated on the bank of the Sutlej in Ferozepur. Bhagat Singh was just 23 years old at that time. Old timers say that in many places, not a single hearth fire burned that day.

The last paragraph of the leaflet that he distributed (and wrote) in the Assembly Hall said: "We are sorry that we who attach such great sanctity to human life, we who dream of a very glorious future when man will be enjoying perfect peace and full liberty, have been forced to shed human blood. But sacrifice of individuals at the altar of the Revolution will bring freedom to all, rendering exploitation of man by man impossible. Inquilab Zindabad (Long live the Revolution)."

## Sukhdev Thapar

Born: 15th May 1907, Punjab



Statues of martyrs Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev at Saheed Park at Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg in New Delhi.

He was an active member of the HSRA, being one of its senior most leaders. He is known to have started study circles at the National College (Lahore), in order to delve into Bharat's past as well as to scrutinize the finer aspects of the world's revolutionary literature. Along with Bhagat Singh and others he started the 'Naujawan Bharat Sabha' at Lahore. The main aims of this organization were to activate the youth for the freedom struggle, inculcate a rational scientific attitude, fight communalism and end the practice of untouchability.

His letter to Mahatma Gandhi written

just prior to his hanging, protesting against the latter's disapproval of revolutionary tactics, throws light on the disparities between the two major schools of thought among Indian freedom fighters at that time.

## Shivram Rajguru

Born: 1908, Pune

He was born in an average middle-class Hindu Brahmin family at Khed in Pune District in 1908. He came to Varanasi at a very early age where he learnt Sanskrit and read the Hindu religious scriptures. He had a great admiration for Shivaji and his guerrilla tactics.

At Varanasi, he came in contact with revolutionaries. He joined the movement and became an active member of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Army (HSRA). Rajguru had a fearless spirit and indomitable courage. The only object of his adoration and worship was his motherland, for whose liberation, he considered no sacrifice too great. He was a close associate of Chandrashekhar Azad and Bhagat Singh and his field of activity was UP and Punjab, with Kanpur, Agra and Lahore as his headquarters.

Rajguru was a good shot and was regarded as the gunman of the party. He took part in various activities of the revolutionary movement, the most important being Saunderson's murder. Chandrashekhar Azad, Shivram Rajguru, Bhagat Singh and Jai Gopal were deputed for the job. On 17th December 1928, while Saunders came out of his office and started his motor-cycle, he was shot dead in front of the police headquarters at Lahore by Rajguru.

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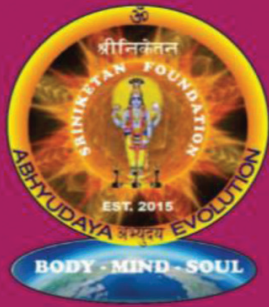


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WORKSHOP	DATE & TIME	VENUE	CONTRIBUTION
Personal Consultation, Pastlife & Healing Sessions	18 May (Thurs) 19 May (Fri) 22 May (Mon) 23 May (Tue)	The Community Center, Lakshmi Hall, 143-09, Holly Ave, Flushing, New York 11355 (9 am - 1 pm & 4 pm - 9 pm)	CONTRIBUTION
The Awakening (Basic)	20 May (Sat) 11 am - 4 pm	The Community Center, Lakshmi Hall, 143-09, Holly Ave, Flushing, New York 11355	FREE ENTRY
The Awakening (Advance)	21 May ( Sun) 4 pm - 9 pm	The Community Center, Lakshmi Hall, 143-09, Holly Ave, Flushing, New York 11355	CONTRIBUTION
Group PASTLIFE SESSION for all	21 May (Sun) 9 am - 12 noon	Saraswati Hall, 45-52 Bowne Street, Flushing, New York 11355	CONTRIBUTION

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## Khalistan referendum is work of ISI: Sikh separatist leader

Former pro-Khalistan leader and founder of Dal Khalsa Jaswant Singh Thakedar said the Khalistan referendum campaign being organised in few western countries is a doing of 'Pakistan's ISI' and it has nothing to do with Sikhs in India. He added that 'some Sikhs are working as tools' for the Pakistan government. He also said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi worked on 'major demands' by the Sikh community.

The UK-based Sikh separatist leader was being interviewed by news agency ANI and he was referring to a referendum campaign kickstarted by the US-based secessionist group called Sikhs for Justice (SFJ), headed by Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, in 2020 seeking consensus among Sikhs in a bid to secede Punjab from India.

Thakedar said those in Punjab don't demand the referendum and added that people in Canada, US or Britain don't have the right to vote for the secession.

"It is 'pakhand' (sham) to mislead people. People are understanding it a source of income for them," he was quoted as saying by ANI.

Pointing out the incident of defacing the Indian Consulate in San Francisco last year allegedly by some pro-Khalistani miscreants, Thakedar said 'there is no hand of Sikhs in this'.

# CBI books Sisodia in snooping case, Kejriwal says PM plans to keep him behind bars

NEW DELHI (TIP)

The Central Bureau of Investigation has registered a first information report against jailed Aam Aadmi Party leader Manish Sisodia in connection with an alleged case of snooping on political opponents, reported The Indian Express.

The former Delhi deputy chief minister was arrested by the central agency on February 26 in a case related to alleged irregularities in the national capital's now-scraped liquor policy.

A fresh case was filed weeks after the home ministry, acting on a recommendation of the Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena, gave sanction to prosecute Sisodia. The Central Bureau of Investigation has alleged that the Aam Aadmi Party gathered "political intelligence" through its feedback unit that was set up in 2015.

It said that the feedback unit was set up to strengthen the Delhi government's Vigilance Department. However, a substantial number of reports submitted by the feedback unit pertained not to actionable information on corruption in the Delhi government, but to "political activities of persons, political entities and political issues touching political interest of Aam Aadmi Party, BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party]", the central agency alleged.

Besides Sisodia, the FIR has named



Suresh Kumar Jain, a 1992-batch Indian Revenue Service officer who was then secretary of vigilance, Rakesh Kumar Sinha who was working as special advisor to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and joint director of the feedback unit, former joint deputy director of Intelligence Bureau Pradeep Kumar Punj, who was working as deputy director of the Feedback Unit, Satish Khetrpal, working as feedback officer and Gopal Mohan, anti-corruption advisor to Kejriwal.

All of them have been booked under the Prevention of Corruption Act as

well as Indian Penal Code Sections 120-B (criminal conspiracy), 403 (dishonest misappropriation of property), 409 (criminal breach of trust by public servant), 468 (forgery), 471 (using as genuine a forged document or electronic record) and 477A (falsification of accounts).

"The inquiry also revealed that Sisodia gave approval for the special allowance for FBU [Feedback Unit] on a proposal moved by PK Punj vide a note dated April 22, 2016," the complaint said, reported The Indian Express. "As described above the unlawful manner of creation and working of the FBU has caused wrongful loss to the government exchequer to the tune of approximately Rs 36 lakh."

According to the Central Bureau of Investigation, 60% of the reports generated by the feedback unit pertained to matters related to the vigilance department, while 40% were about political intelligence.

On Thursday, March 16, Kejriwal said that another case against Sisodia is part of the BJP's plan to keep the politician in jail for a long time.

Sisodia is currently in the custody of the Enforcement Directorate, which is investigating a money laundering angle in the Delhi excise policy case based on the first information report filed by the Central Bureau of Investigation.

## Bar council finally allows entry of foreign lawyers and firms in India

NEW DELHI (TIP)

The Bar Council of India (BCI) — the country's apex disciplinary and regulatory body for legal education and profession — has finally allowed foreign law firms and lawyers to practise in India, but in a restricted manner and on reciprocity basis.

The BCI had opposed the entry of foreign law firms and lawyers for years.

On 10 March, the BCI released the Bar Council of India Rules For Registration and Regulation of Foreign Lawyers and Foreign Law Firms in India, 2022, to facilitate the registration and practice of international lawyers in India.

This comes 5 years after the Supreme Court permitted the entry of foreign lawyers and firms on a temporary basis, but left it to the BCI to frame appropriate rules.

From restricting foreign lawyers and firms to playing only advisory roles to their clients in India to making renewal of registration mandatory every 5 years, the BCI has framed the rules in such a way that it does not jeopardise the prospects of Indian lawyers.



"Time has come to take a call on the issue. BCI is of the view that opening up of law practice in India to foreign lawyers in the field of practice of foreign law; diverse international legal issues in non litigious matters and in international arbitration cases would go a long way in helping legal profession/domain grow in India to the benefit of lawyers in India too," said the BCI notification on the rules.

It added, "Taking an all-inclusive view, the BCI resolves to implement these rules enabling foreign lawyers

and foreign law firms to practice foreign law and diverse international law and international arbitration matters in India on the principle of reciprocity in a well-defined, regulated and controlled manner."

BCI officials, who were part of the committee that drafted the rules, told ThePrint that, subject to their registration, the lawyers and legal firms from abroad shall be allowed to take up only non-litigious work, that too in an advisory role. However, exceptions are given with regard to international arbitration cases.

The rules restrict such advocates and firms from appearing before a judicial forum including tribunals and other statutory or regulatory authorities. They would be permitted only to render advice about the law of the country of their primary qualification, and allowed to practise on transactional work/corporate work such as joint ventures, mergers and acquisitions, intellectual property matters, drafting of contracts and other related matters on reciprocal basis.

Source: The Print

## MoD okays new artillery gun, long-range weapon for Sukhoi

NEW DELHI (TIP)

The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), the apex decision-making body of the Ministry of Defence, has approved the "need to procure" a new artillery gun, long-range weapons for Sukhoi 30 MKI jets and marine diesel engines.

The "need to procure" is termed Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) for the defence equipment. It is the first step in the acquisition process of the MoD and is like a green light to the armed forces to frame tenders for procurement.

The DAC accorded approval to the procurement proposals at a meeting chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh here on Thursday, the ministry said.

The DAC accorded AoN for capital acquisition amounting to more than Rs 70,500 crore and these will be under the "indigenously designed, developed and manufactured" category of procurement. Of the total proposals, Navy's proposals constitute more than Rs 56,000 crore, which largely includes indigenous BrahMos missiles, Shakti Electronic Warfare systems and maritime utility helicopters. The additional procurement of BrahMos missile system will enhance the maritime strike capabilities and anti-surface warfare operations.

For the Coast Guard, the DAC approved Advanced Light Helicopter MK-III from Hindustan Aeronautics Limited. The helicopter will carry a suite of surveillance sensors.

Source: TNS

## No woman chief justice at any high courts in country: Govt to Parliament

The ministry of law and justice informed Parliament on Thursday, March 16, that there is no woman chief justice at any high courts of the country.

Women judges make up 9.5% of the total strength of high courts, the ministry said, referring to data provided by the Bar Council of India (BCI).

As of now, there are 775 working judges, out of which, 106 are women.

The government said out of 15 lakh advocates from the country, nearly 2 lakh were women, accounting for almost 15.31% of the total advocates enrolled.

Answering questions raised by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP Rakesh Sinha, the minister of law and justice Kiren Rijiju told Parliament that so far, 11 women judges have been appointed in the Supreme Court, and only 30% of subordinate judges are female.

"The representation of women in the judiciary has increased in the last 70 years, but much distance needs to be traversed to address the needs of providing diversity in the higher courts," Rijiju had said while attending a valedictory function at Supreme Court last year.

"Over the past seven decades of India's journey as an independent nation, the representation of women as judges has increased," he added.

After President Droupadi Murmu's approval last month, the strength of judges in the top court rose to 32.

Source: HT

## Seven men, including Delhi cops, thrash meat vendors, urinate on them

Two meat vendors were allegedly beaten up and robbed by seven men, including three Delhi Police personnel, in east Delhi's Shahdara, a senior officer said.

The incident took place in Anand Vihar area on March 7 when the two meat vendors were travelling in their car and hit a scooter.

The accused, alleged to be 'gau rakshaks', urinated on the victims' faces and threatened to kill them, the police said on Thursday, March 16.

Reportedly, a case was registered four days later, even though the victims had approached the police immediately.

All the seven men involved in the incident were booked and the three policemen, one of them an assistant sub-inspector, were suspended, the police said. nNawab, who supplies meat to the Ghazipur slaughterhouse and a resident of Mustafabad, was headed home in his car with his cousin Shoab when he hit a scooter near Anand Vihar. They were carrying meat in the car, according to the FIR.

# India is ready, Japan to take a call on expanding defence cooperation

NEW DELHI (TIP)

Japan Prime Minister Fumio Kishida will have a full plate in the Capital next Monday with Indo-Pacific, QUAD summit and G7-G20 on the agenda when he meets Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The Japanese view on the Indo-Pacific and on expanding ties with India will be revealed when PM Kishida delivers a lecture on bilateral relations at the Sushma Swaraj Institute on March 20. Japan will host the G-7 summit in Kishida's constituency Hiroshima on May 19-21, which will be attended by PM Modi with the QUAD summit in Sydney taking place the same month.

New Delhi will be hosting the SCO Summit on July 4 with G-20 Summit scheduled for September this year.

While the Chinese belligerents in the Indo-Pacific with Beijing having military friction with Tokyo over Senkaku Islands and in East Ladakh with India on top of the agenda, PM Modi and PM Kishida will have a discussion on the G-7, QUAD and G-20 summits later this year. Key to these discussions will be how the two leaders are able to harmonize their positions over the Ukraine war as the impact of G-7 and QUAD summit communique will be felt on the G-20 summit being hosted by India in September this year. Japan is with the Anglo-Saxon powers over Ukraine and wants to punish Russia, India on its part wants the war to end without taking an anti-Russia stand.

Although India and Japan have a successful economic relationship, New Delhi is looking towards Tokyo to see whether PM Kishida wants to expand the bilateral ties to security and



PM Narendra Modi with Japanese PM Fumio Kishida. File photo

defence sectors. Even though Japan has doubled its capital defence spending in wake of China-Russia aggression in East China Sea and Sea of Japan, the country has still to shed off its pacifist doctrine and is diffident in deepening security ties with India. The situation gets even more complicated as PM Kishida represents Hiroshima, which was nuked and destroyed by the US in World War II, in the House of Representatives.

Even though Japan is a leader in specific defence technologies and cyber-security, PM Kishida is still mulling over whether to expand the bilateral relationship in these sectors and its impact on adversary China. From the statement emanating from

Beijing on Taiwan, it is quite evident that Japan will have to be prepared for a military emergency in Taipei as some Japanese Islands in the Okinawa Prefecture are in close proximity to Taiwan.

With Chinese President Xi Jinping expected to hold a summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin next week in Moscow, the Japanese situation will get more critical as the two "no limits allies" are already holding military exercises near Japan. While India has made up its mind over its strategic choices in a rapidly changing political world, the bilateral relations with Japan will only grow if Tokyo is clear on where it stands vis-à-vis China and Russia.

Source: HT

## Man reaches agreement with two wives, will spend 3 days a week with each, free to choose on Sunday

NEW DELHI (TIP)

A 28-year-old software engineer from Madhya Pradesh's Gwalior arrived at an agreement with his two wives and divided his time between the two women. He agreed to spend three days of the week with one of his wives and the next three with the other. He is free to spend Sunday with either of the women.

The man also had to provide separate flats to each woman. He has fathered children with both women.

Advocate Harish Dewan, the counsellor appointed by the Gwalior Family Court in January 2023 to resolve the issue, said that a 26-year-old woman married the man in May 2018. The man worked at a company in Gurugram and the couple lived in the city for two years. They also had a son together.

In 2020, the couple came to Gwalior after the pandemic began and the man started working from home. However,



he went back to Gurugram after spending a few days in Gwalior. He did not come back for his wife and child even when the situation improved.

The wife told him that she would come to Gurugram from Gwalior and her family found out that in 2021, the man had married his co-worker from

the same company. The second wife also gave birth to a girl.

The woman filed a case in a family court in Gwalior for alimony. The court asked advocate and counsellor Harish Dewan to attempt to reach a compromise before the hearing which was scheduled to take place on Tuesday.

Dewan talked to the man and told him that getting married to another woman without divorcing the first wife is punishable under the Hindu marriage act. The lawyer also told the man that he could also lose his job if the first wife filed an FIR.

The three parties then agreed to reach an agreement outside court. Under the agreement, the man has to spend three days of the week with one of his wives and the next three with the other. He is free to spend Sunday with whoever he chooses.

According to Dewan, the first wife can move court if the contract is violated.

Source: India Today

# India in history this Week

MARCH 17, 2023, TO MARCH 23, 2023

## 17 MARCH

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

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



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

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

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



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

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

## 18 MARCH



1910 On 18 March 1910, Gopal Krishna Gokhale proposed before the British Legislative Council for the provision of free and compulsory primary education.

1944 On 18 March 1944, Azad Hind Fauj of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose crossed the border of Burma.

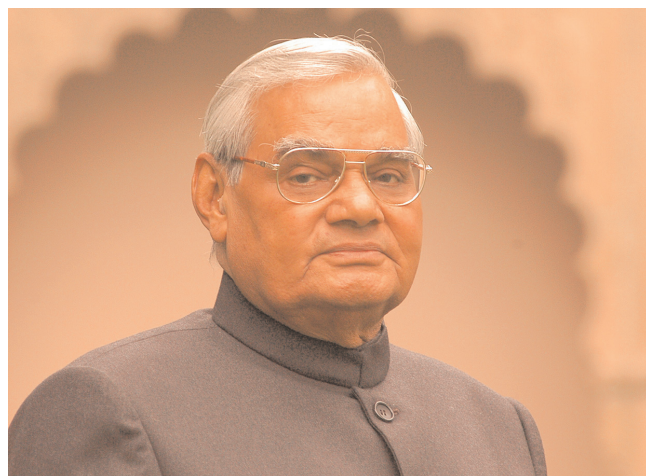
1922 The British court sentenced Mahatma Gandhi to six years in the sedition case in 1922 after the Civil Disobedience Movement.

2009 The Union Cabinet recommended imposition of President's rule in Meghalaya in 2009.

## 19 MARCH

1944 The Azad Hind Fauj hoisted the national flag in 1944 in Northeast India.

1972 Friendship Agreement signed between India and Bangladesh in 1972.



1998 Atal Bihari Vajpayee became Prime Minister for the second time in 1998.

1848 On this day in 1848, Shatapatra Kaulam was started in a newspaper called Prabhakar.

1954 On this day in 1954, the first helicopter was operated in the country.

## 20 MARCH



2014 Khushwant Singh, a journalist, writer and historian who was recognized for his impeccable comment, died.

1351 Muhammad Tughlaq Shah Do died in 1351.

1921 Doctor Alexander was born in 1921.

1970 The Satyashodhak Samaj was formed in 1970.

1992 The great creator Satyajit Rai received the Bharat Ratna.

1987 The Food and Drug Administration approved the anti-AIDS drug AZT. It was the first drug approved by the US government to treat AIDS.

## 21 MARCH



1836 First public library started in Kolkata, now its name is National Library.

1858 Rebel soldiers of Lucknow surrender.  
1887 Establishment of Prathana Samaj in Bombay.



1916 Shehnaist Ustad Bismillah Khan was born.

1791 British army was captured in 1791 by defeating Tipu Sultan of the then Bangalore.

1975 The then President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed declared Emergency under Section 352 at the request of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1975.

## 22 MARCH

1890 Ramachandra Chatterjee became the first person to get off parachute in 1890.

1972 Mrs. Indira Gandhi resigned as Prime Minister in 1977.

1964 First rally of old cars held in Kolkata.

1957 A national calendar based on suspicion was adopted.



1969 Inauguration of Indian Petrochemicals Corporation Limited.

## 23 MARCH

1910 1910 Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia was born in



Faizabad district of Uttar Pradesh.

1931 During the 1931 Indian independence movement, revolutionary Bhagat Singh and his associates Rajguru and Sukhdev were hanged on this day.

1986 1986 First company of women was trained in Central Reserve Police Force.

1940 The All India Muslim League demanded a separate country for Muslims in 1940.





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तदुपरांत : प्रीतिभोज

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# NJS SPOTLIGHTS SYMPHONY STARS

BY MABEL PAIS

"[The Symphony's centennial] will be important not just for marking how far they've come, but for what lies ahead." - NJ.COM



Ha Young Jung



Chris Komer



Eric Wyrick



Garth Greenup

The New Jersey Symphony presents New Jersey Symphony Stars featuring five of the orchestra's resident musicians - Eric Wyrick, Ha Young Jung, Chris Komer, Garth Greenup and Nayoung Baek led by Music Director Xian Zhang.

Darryl Kubain, a conductor and violinist with the Symphony, has commissioned a triple concerto that showcases the talents

of Principal Horn Chris Komer; Principal Trumpet Garth Greenup and Assistant Principal Cello Nayoung Baek. Both the work's title and movements are drawn from Norse mythology. "The Well of Urd is one of the three wells that lie beneath the roots of Yggdrasil, which is the World Tree," Kubian explains. "It is where the three Norns weave the fate, the wyrd, of mankind." The soloists come from different instrumental families to highlight their roles as the Past (cello), Present (horn), and Future (trumpet), respectively.

Gran Duo Concertante, written by Giovanni Bottesini (1821-1889) in 1880, originated as a piece for two double basses in the 1840s when Bottesini was a student. Years later, when he toured with violinist Camillo Sivori, the two of them adapted the work for violin and double bass. Principal Bass Ha Young Jung joins Concertmaster Eric Wyrick for this thrilling showpiece that highlights the bass and violin during one extended and virtuosic movement.

## PROGRAM

New Jersey Symphony Stars  
Thursday, March 16, 1:30 pm | New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark  
Friday, March 17, 8 pm | Richardson Auditorium in Princeton  
Saturday, March 18, 8 pm | Count Basie Center for the Arts in Red Bank

Sunday, March 19, 3 pm | Mayo Performing Arts Center in Morristown  
Xian Zhang conductor  
Eric Wyrick violin  
Ha Young Jung bass  
Chris Komer horn  
Garth Greenup trumpet  
Nayoung Baek cello  
New Jersey Symphony  
Rossini Overture to The Barber of Seville

Darryl Kubian The Well of Urd - A Tone Poem for Three Soloists and Orchestra (World Premiere, New Jersey Symphony Commission)

Bottesini Gran Duo Concertante  
Bizet Selections from L'Arlésienne Suites Nos. 1 & 2

More information is available at [njsymphony.org/stars](http://njsymphony.org/stars)

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Email: [information@njsymphony.org](mailto:information@njsymphony.org)  
@NJSymphony on Facebook,  
Instagram, Twitter and TikTok  
@NewJerseySymphony on YouTube

## TICKETS

Tickets can be purchased by phone at 1.800.ALLEGRO (255.3476) or at [njsymphony.org](http://njsymphony.org).

# MAESTRO MUSIC DIRECTOR RETURNS TO CONDUCT TCHAIKOVSKY SYMPHONY NO. 4

BY MABEL PAIS



Neeme Järvi

Neeme Järvi, former Music Director, returns to conduct the New Jersey Symphony March 25-26. One of the most celebrated conductors of our time, Järvi, who served as Music Director from 2005-2009, will lead the orchestra through one of Tchaikovsky's most popular works, his Symphony No. 4. William Grant Still's "Afro-American" Symphony and Arvo Pärt's Cantus in Memoriam Benjamin Britten opens the concert.

William Grant Still's Symphony No. 1, "Afro-American," composed in 1930, was the first symphony composed by an African American man to be performed by a major American orchestra. The piece established Still's career as a major figure in American classical music. Inspired by African American spirituals, folk songs and traditional hymns, "Afro-American"

is considered to be one of the greatest integrations of Black culture into classical forms.

The Estonian-born composer Arvo Pärt (born 1935) is largely known for a compositional style in contemporary classical music that he calls tintinnabuli developed in the 1970s, which was influenced by his experiences with chant music. Pärt was a great admirer of English composer Benjamin Britten and was severely affected by his death in 1976. Cantus in Memory of Benjamin Britten is his tribute, and an expression of regret that they never met in person. Estonian-born Neeme Järvi first performed this piece with the New Jersey Symphony in 2005.

## PROGRAM

Neeme Järvi Conducts Tchaikovsky  
Saturday, March 25, 8 pm | New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark  
Sunday, March 26, 3 pm | New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark

Neeme Järvi conductor  
New Jersey Symphony

Arvo Pärt Cantus in Memoriam Benjamin Britten  
Still Symphony No. 1, "Afro-American"

Tchaikovsky Symphony No. 4

## TICKETS

For more information and Tickets, visit [njsymphony.org/neeme](http://njsymphony.org/neeme) or call 1.800.ALLEGRO (255.3476).

Neeme Järvi

Principal Conductor and Artistic Director (for lifetime): Estonian National Symphony Orchestra

Director Emeritus: Detroit Symphony Orchestra

Conductor Laureate: Royal Scottish National Orchestra

Chief Conductor Emeritus: Gothenburg Symphony

Guest Chief Conductor: Japan Philharmonic Orchestra

The head of a musical dynasty, Neeme Järvi is one of today's most highly respected maestros. He conducts the world's most prominent orchestras and works alongside soloists of the highest caliber. As a prolific recording artist, he has amassed a discography of over 500 recordings. In September 2018, Neeme Järvi received the Gramophone Lifetime Achievement Award.

He is one of the most recorded artists in his field. His records include critically acclaimed complete symphony cycles of Prokofiev, Shostakovich, Richard Strauss, Mahler, Dvořák, Glazunov, Grieg, Sibelius, Nielsen and Brahms. Recent releases on Chandos include Tchaikovsky's complete ballets and symphonies.

Neeme Järvi has been honored with many international awards and accolades such as the Gramophone Lifetime Achievement Award (2018), the Echo Classical Award (Neeme Järvi with

Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, 2017), and the International Record Prize Toblach in 1993 (Mahler Symphony No. 3, London Symphony Orchestra) and in 2011 (Mahler Symphony No. 7, Residentie Orkest The Hague). From his native country, he received an honorary doctorate from the Music and Theatre Academy and the Order of the National Coat of Arms from the President of the Republic of Estonia. Learn more at [facebook.com/NeemeJarviConductor](http://facebook.com/NeemeJarviConductor)

## The New Jersey Symphony (NJS)

The Emmy and Grammy Award-winning New Jersey Symphony, celebrating its Centennial Season in October 2022, is redefining what it means to be a nationally leading, relevant orchestra in the 21st century. We are renewing our deeply rooted commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion by championing new, and often local, artists; engaging audiences for whom the inspiring depth and breadth of classical music will be new; and incorporating the broadest possible representation in all aspects of our organization—all to better reflect and serve our vibrant communities. Learn more at [njsymphony.org](http://njsymphony.org) or email [information@njsymphony.org](mailto:information@njsymphony.org).

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

# INDIA WINS TWICE ON OSCARS NIGHT

BY MABEL PAIS

While audiences around the world watched the 95th Oscars on Sunday, March 12, 2023, India made history at the event by winning in the MUSIC category for 'NAATU NAATU' from the film 'RRR' (short for 'Rise, Roar, Revolt') and the BEST DOCUMENTARY SHORT, 'THE ELEPHANT WHISPERERS.'



Keeravaani and Chandrabose with Oscar.  
Credit /AMPAS.

## MUSIC (ORIGINAL SONG)

WINNER  
NAATU NAATU

from RRR; Music by M.M. Keeravaani; Lyric by Chandrabose

Oscar-winning Best Original Song from 'RRR,' 'Naatu Naatu' - made this year's ceremony and much more special was the infectious song-and-dance number from RRR was recreated onstage during Hollywood's biggest night.

Deepika Pudukone, the Mumbai Film Industry's (also called "Bollywood") own, introduced the performance, highlighting the historic nature of "Naatu Naatu" being "the first song ever from an Indian production to be nominated for an Oscar," and also "a total banger." Singers Rahul Sipligunj and Kaala Bhairava performed the song - which you can watch below - and in doing so, brought the Telugu Film Industry (also called "Tollywood") to Hollywood for the night.

"Naatu Naatu" made history again when the Telugu-language track won BEST ORIGINAL SONG, becoming the first song from an Indian film to win in the category. (Indian composer A.R. Rahman previously won in 2009 for "Jai Ho," though Slumdog Millionaire was a U.K. production.)

"I grew up listening to the Carpenters, and now here I am with the Oscars," composer M.M. Keeravaani said onstage, before breaking into his own rendition of the band's song, "Top of the World": "There was only one wish on my mind, so was Rajamouli's and my family's. 'RRR' has to win, pride of every Indian, and must put me on the top of the world."

'RRR' has also received an 'Naatu Naatu,' two Golden Globe nominations and one win (nominated for Best Non-

English Language Film and winning Best Original Song for "Naatu Naatu"), five Critics Choice Awards nominations and two wins (nominated for Best Picture, Best Director, Best Visual Effects, and winning Best Original Song and Best Foreign Language Film), been named Best Music/Score and runner-up for Best Director by the Los Angeles Film Critics Association, been named a top 10 film by the National Board of Review, and won over 23 regional/online critics association awards out of dozens of nominations.

Watch the 'Naatu Naatu' performance on Oscar Night.  
[youtu.be/dx9\\_85YED6k](https://youtu.be/dx9_85YED6k)

## DOCUMENTARY SHORT FILM

WINNER  
THE ELEPHANT WHISPERERS  
Kartiki Gonsalves and Guneet Monga



The Elephant Whisperers.  
Credit / sikhyaentertainment.com

An indigenous couple in South India, Bomman and Bellie, fall in love with Raghu, an orphaned elephant given into their care, and tirelessly work to ensure his recovery and survival. 'The Elephant Whisperers' portrays the dignity of both the magnificent elephants and the

indigenous people who have lived with them and cared for them for centuries.

Filmmaker Kartiki Gonsalves points out that she wanted to get the audience to stop seeing animals as "the other" and start to see them as one of us. "In this time, there are so many stories of animals being killed and species dying out - and this is a positive story that highlights the beauty of man and animal working together. I believe coexistence is the way we need to move forward into the future, only with mutual respect and cooperation can we save the planet," in an interview with the AMPAS publication.

"In my eyes, I feel that human empathy transcends diversity and connects us all in our environmental cause. I also seek to give a platform to women and indigenous tribes, especially those working to conserve the planet and bringing new perspectives and a deeper public understanding to the environmental and humanitarian issues. I believe that strong imagery has the unique power of changing minds. Storytelling is bringing stories that inspire, raise awareness and ultimately effect change," she continued.

Producer Monga adds that the film introduced her to an indigenous community that is fiercely protective of their work and derives great purpose, dignity, and community from what they do. They have made her reflect on one of the deep questions the film asks which is, "How much is enough?" There's a beautiful line in the film where they say, "We take only what we need from the jungle and it is enough for all of us." That really resonated with her.

# INDIA'S ONLY ALL-FEMALE NEWS NETWORK ENCOURAGES CHANGE

BY MABEL PAIS

In a male-dominated media landscape, the women journalists of India's all-women-run Khabar Lahariya ("News Wave") newspaper risk it all, including their own safety, to cover the country's political, social, and local news from a women-powered perspective. Founded in 2002, Khabar Lahariya is an entirely digital organization doing on-the-ground reporting in India's small towns and villages. They believe in the power of technology to tell stories that matter. From underground network to independent media empire - now with 10 million views on their YouTube site-they defy the odds to redefine power. Watch the video - [youtu.be/1iSz\\_rXJcoU](https://youtu.be/1iSz_rXJcoU)

In celebration of Women's History Month, Women@NJPAC focuses on India's only all-female news network. The documentary film, 'Writing With Fire,' captures the bravery, tenacity and charm of a small group of rural Dalit women, considered members of a low caste, maybe outcaste. In spite

of their social status and limited means, they fearlessly uncover their country's inequities and wrongdoings.

While in the United States, a changing media landscape has shuttered many print newspapers and reduced the budgets for local reporting. While local journalists strive to keep their communities informed, they must also contend with the challenges of monetizing an online media presence.

Women@NJPAC is curating the virtual panel conversation on the importance of a free press and the power of journalists to transform their communities. The panelists will also share ideas on how to effect change and chip away at systems of oppression that have shaped lives for millennia.

## HOW TO PARTICIPATE:

Register at [njpac.tfaforms.net/145?id=a2F8X0000085Kc1UAE](https://njpac.tfaforms.net/145?id=a2F8X0000085Kc1UAE)

You'll receive a link to watch 'Writing With Fire' at home.

Join NJPAC for a virtual panel discussion at 7PM on March 20.

## PROGRAM

### PANELISTS

#### ANURIMA BHARGAVA

executive producer, writing with fire; founder/president, anthem of us

#### STEFANIE MURRAY

director, center for cooperative media, montclair state university

#### ALEJANDRA SORTO

campaign strategist, american civil liberties union of new jersey

## MODERATOR

#### SHUMITA BASU

broadcast journalist; host, apple news today and in conversation

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



'Writing with Fire,' poster

Credit / pbs.org.

# WHARTON'S ANNUAL GALA HONORS TWO AWARDEES

BY MABEL PAIS

Wharton Arts at its Annual Gala on Thursday, March 9, 2023, honored former New Jersey Youth Symphony (NJYS) Artistic Director and Conductor Barbara Barstow posthumously with the Education Award. The award was presented by Artistic Director and Principal Conductor Helen H. Cha-Pyo and accepted by Barstow's husband, Bill Barstow. The event featured a tribute performance of Karl Jenkin's 'Palladio' by a string ensemble of current NJYS students and alumni in addition to a live auction during a three-course dinner.

Barbara Barstow was the second Artistic Director of New Jersey Youth Symphony (2000-2009) and longtime conductor (1981-2009) who spearheaded the start of the youth orchestra program's Preparatory Orchestra, Junior Strings, and Orchestral Strings Training Ensemble (OSTE), as well as the annual NJYS summer camp and Playathon. Her dedication and visionary leadership for nearly three decades helped shape the organization into the thriving musical community that it is today.

Said Cha-Pyo, "We cannot express enough our gratitude for Barbara's unwavering commitment to NJYS, which has been instrumental in transforming it into the dynamic and flourishing musical community of 15 ensembles that it is today. By honoring Barbara with this year's Education Award,



Barbara Barstow (left), husband Bill Barstow.

we also celebrate the countless musicians and music lovers whose lives she has deeply touched over the years. As we approach NJYS' 45th anniversary season, we look forward to continuing this celebration with our NJYS alumni and carrying on Barbara's legacy of excellence in music education."

The 2023 Wharton Arts Lifetime Achievement Awardee Angel Blue, Grammy award-winning opera soprano was also honored. Angel Blue has taken the opera world by storm with historic performances as Violetta in Verdi's 'La Traviata' and, despite being told it would never happen, Ms. Blue was the first black woman to ever sing the fully staged role in Italy at Teatro alla Scala. She currently

sings the role of Violetta Valéry in the new Metropolitan Opera production of 'La Traviata.'

Peter H. Gistelink, Executive Director of Wharton Arts, shared his enthusiasm for the honoree and said, "Angel Blue is not only an amazing internationally-recognized and celebrated opera singer with huge credentials, but also represents the tenacity and courage necessary to persist in the professional world of classical music. Her career and life path are testimonies to this, and she definitely is an example to all of us."



Angel Blue

"I am so honored to be recognized with the 2023 Lifetime Achievement Award of Wharton Arts, an organization I admire for their work and creative mission of offering accessible, high quality performing arts education that sparks personal growth and builds stronger communities," said Angel Blue.

The Gala was held at the Westmount Country Club in Woodland Park, NJ. To find out more about the event and tribute to Barbara Barstow, visit WhartonArtsGala.org.

# WHARTON WITH YMCA INSTILLS SIGNIFICANCE OF COMMUNITY FOR SENIORS

BY MABEL PAIS

Wharton Arts, New Jersey's largest non-profit performing arts education center partners with the Summit Area YMCA to offer programs for adults aged 55 and over beginning March 20, 2023.



Seniors CAFÉ Choir.

Credit / Wharton Arts.

The Wharton CAFÉ (Creative Aging for Everyone) Choir is a free eight-week choir program that will culminate with a public performance in New Providence on May 9. The program is a continuation of a pre-pandemic rendering made possible through funding from the National Guild for Community Arts Education.

In the fall of 2017, Wharton Arts was one of 20 organizations selected for the National Guild for Community Arts Education's Catalyzing Creative Aging Program, a multi-phase initiative that supports the establishment of new creative aging programs at nonprofit arts education organizations nationwide. With the support of the Guild, Wharton Arts piloted its first CAFÉ (Creative Aging for Everyone) Choir in 2019 with 30

participants from Brighton Gardens of Mountainside and Sunrise of Madison. The free 12-week program culminated in a final concert at the Chatham United Methodist Church, where the choir performed popular standards from Rodgers and Hammerstein to Henry Mancini and Johnny Mercer.

When asked to complete a program evaluation, more than 70% of the choir respondents indicated that CAFÉ Choir increased their appreciation of the arts and their interest in learning more about singing and the performing arts. The majority of respondents also indicated that the program increased their confidence, mental engagement, and confidence in creating art, and half of the respondents indicated that this program encouraged them to take part in other community activities.

"In response to the growing community's need for more and better opportunities to improve quality of life and outlets to stay fulfilled and connected throughout one's lifetime, Wharton Arts cultivated several avenues of creative expression for adults of all ability levels," said Cha-Pyo.

This season's CAFÉ Choir differs from the initial rendition in that it is a shorter, 8-week course open to the public, but the program is still completely free to participants. Classes take place at two area YMCA locations: the Summit Area Y and the Berkeley Heights YMCA.

Said Summit Area YMCA Program Coordinator Mary Grace McCann, "As a member of the Diversity, Inclusion and Global Innovation Network, the Summit Area YMCA is committed to bridge building and encouraging a welcoming atmosphere within the community. The Y is made up of people from all walks of life who are joined together by a shared commitment to ensure that everyone

has the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive."

Both Wharton Arts and the Summit Area YMCA hope that promoting this free opportunity among their over-10,000 combined members in an area spanning the communities of Berkeley Heights, New Providence, Millburn, Springfield, Short Hills, Summit, Gillette, Stirling, and beyond will offer meaningful social engagement with peers, family, and communities, further contributing to an improved quality of life for participants to feel valued and empowered as they make connections between art and their own life experiences.

As the older adult population in NJ increases exponentially in the coming years, the development of accessible, high-quality programs and resources that improve quality of life are essential. Research shows the positive impacts of arts participation for older adult audiences who often experience extreme social isolation. For example, Dr. Gene Cohen, a leader in the field of geriatric psychiatry, demonstrated that older adults who participate in community-based cultural programs report better physical health, fewer doctor visits, less medication use, and higher morale than study participants who did not engage in such programs. The sense of empowerment that comes with skill development is also linked to improvements in physical and mental health in older adults.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the need for engagement and connection among these audiences, and Wharton Arts hopes to meet this incredible need by engaging adults 55+ through a variety of Lifelong Learning programs. For more information about the Wharton CAFÉ Choir, visit WhartonArts.org.

Wharton Arts

Learn more about Wharton Arts at WhartonArts.org.

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



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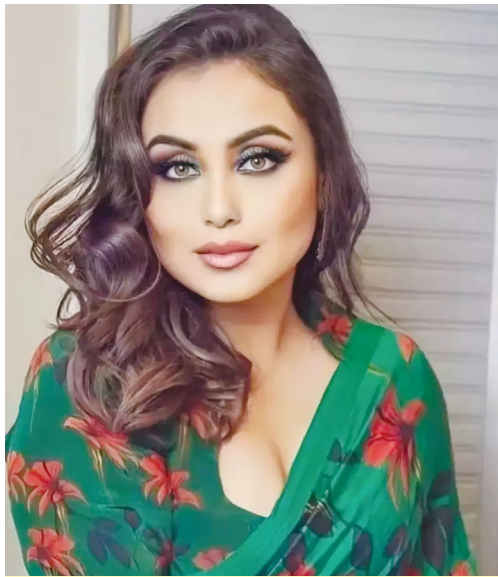
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*I enjoy doing romantic films with Shah Rukh Khan, says Rani Mukerji*

Sony Entertainment Television's singing reality show Indian Idol 13 celebrated Rani Mukerji in the 'dream finale' episode in the presence of the actress herself. Making an appearance for the first time on the show, Rani not only promoted her upcoming film, Mrs. Chatterjee V/s Norway, but also enjoyed the performances by the top seven contestants.

Bidipta Singh from Kolkata impressed everyone by singing Tumhi Dekho Na and Chup Chup Ke from the movies Kabhi Alvida Na Kehna and Bunty Aur Babli, respectively. Rani said, "I've done a variety of films but my favourite genre is romance. I enjoy doing romantic films with my hero; the one and only Shah Rukh Khan. The first song you sang, Tumhi Dekho Na, is one of my career's best. We had filmed Kabhi Alvida Na Kehna in New York, and I remember that it was extremely cold in September."

## Google searches for 'Naatu Naatu' skyrocket 1,105 percent after Oscar feat

Online searches for 'Naatu Naatu' on Google skyrocketed by a whopping 1,105 per cent worldwide after the super-hit song from the Telugu blockbuster 'RRR' won the Best Original Song at the 95th Academy Awards.

The finding by Japanese online casino guide 6Takarakuji, after sifting through Google Search trend data, revealed that online interest for 'Naatu Naatu' multiplied over 10 times the average volume, just hours after the Telugu-language film swept the Oscar award.

"The Indian song has become a popular sensation on TikTok, with 52.6 million views since its release in March last year," the findings showed.

The song presents a high-tempo rhythm and a dance battle between the legendary revolutionaries and their colonial masters.

"History was made during this year's Oscars ceremony, as aNaatu Naatu' became the first song from an Indian film to win in the Best Song category," said a spokesperson for 6Takarakuji.

The song won over the likes of music legends such as Lady Gaga and Rihanna, which is a testament to the song's huge popularity, as highlighted by the huge spike in this data.

"During the Oscars ceremony, the electrifying live performance of the song by singers Rahul Sipligunj and Kaala Bhairava received a standing ovation from the crowd, and this historic win will give 'RRR' and 'Naatu Naatu' some well-deserved exposure," the spokesperson added.

Bhairava and Rahul were on cloud nine after meeting Rihanna on the sidelines of the 95th Academy Awards.

Bhairava shared a picture taken with the nine-time Grammy Award winner.



Sipligunj and choreographer Prem Rakshith were also seen with the superstar singer.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi also

congratulated music director M.M. Keeravani and lyricist Chandra Bose after their song won the prestigious Oscar award.

Source: IANS

## Sara's next Gaslight was shot in just 36 days, says director Pavan Kirpalani

The trailer for the upcoming film Gaslight featuring Sara Ali Khan, Chitrangada Singh and Vikrant Massey in lead roles was unveiled earlier this week and the director has now revealed that the thriller was shot in just 36 days. The film was shot in at Wankaner Palace in Gujarat and is slated for a digital release on March 31.

Director Pavan Kirpalani said in a press statement, "I have shot Gaslight in 36 days and it's safe to say I can shoot a film within controlled budgets and tight schedules. With limited locations and detailed prepping, it is easier to shoot."

Talking about her experience of working on the thriller, Sara had said on the trailer launch that the role was mentally and physically challenging. "She's a very layered and nuanced character. I hope this film is going to be a thrilling ride for the audience as each scene will keep them at the edge of their seat." She also



labeled Gaslight as "a classic whodunit- set in an eerie yet beautiful palatial estate".

Actor Chitrangada Singh also said that her character of Rukmini in the film enabled her to explore her own self as an actor.

## Vicky Kaushal concludes shooting for 'Sam Bahadur'

Actor Vicky Kaushal on Tuesday announced that he has wrapped the shooting of his next feature project "Sam Bahadur", directed by Meghna Gulzar. "Sam Bahadur" is based on the life and times of Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw, one of India's greatest war heroes. The movie, set to be released in theatres on December 1, 2023, is produced by RSVP Movies. Kaushal shared the news of the film wrap on Instagram, posting a photo with Gulzar, who earlier directed the actor in her 2018 directorial "Raazi". The 34-year-old actor said he is grateful to have played a "true legend" on the big screen.

"Gratitude, gratitude and



only gratitude... to be a part of this process to depict the life of a true legend, to be a part of this team which truly gave it their all. So much I got to live, so much I got to learn... so much there is to bring to you all," Kaushal wrote.



## When Margot Robbie Said, 'I Am Officially Off The Market'

**M**argot Robbie is one of the most talented actors in the showbiz industry that has proved their mantle with her impeccable acting skills. Being a well-renowned actress in Hollywood, Margot has a strict policy on not dating actors from the acting industry. The actress wanted to avoid scrutiny from a high-profile romantic relationship. However, as she married British film producer Tom Ackerley in 2016, read on to find out when she talked about her dating life! When Margot started her career, she made a clear rule about her personal life. As she did not want to be romantically involved with any leading star from Hollywood, she married a British film producer as faith had other plans!

While talking to Marie Claire in an old interview, Margot Robbie said, "I am officially off the market," while commenting upon her linkups in Hollywood. The actress later adds, "I made a conscious decision, not to date actors, but not because I hate actors. That's a nasty generalisation to make, and that's not the case."

# Lindsay Lohan announces pregnancy with cute Instagram post



**A**ctress Lindsay Lohan has some exciting news to share! She is expecting her first child with husband Bader Shammass. Lohan's representative confirmed the news to Page Six, stating that the actress is "feeling great and she is thrilled."

Lohan took to Instagram on Tuesday to announce the news, sharing a photo of a white baby bodysuit with the words "coming soon" printed on it. She also posted the same image on her Instagram Stories, tagging Shammass.

In the caption, Lohan wrote, "We are blessed and excited!"

This news comes after Page Six reported in July 2022 that Lohan and Shammass had secretly tied the knot. Fans had been speculating for a while about the couple's relationship status, and the photos Lohan shared on her Instagram only fueled the rumors.

In the caption of one of her posts, Lohan gushed, "He found me and knew that I wanted to find happiness and grace, all at the same time. I am stunned that this is my husband. My life and my everything. Every woman should feel like this every day."

The newlyweds went on a lavish post-wedding vacation in Turkey, which Lohan documented on her Instagram. Last November they made their red carpet debut as a couple at a screening of Lohan's latest Netflix movie, "Falling For Christmas" in New York City. Lohan's baby news is not only exciting for her and Shammass but also for her inner circle, as her longtime celebrity friend Paris Hilton recently became a mom as well.

Hilton announced in January that she welcomed her first child, a baby boy named Phoenix, via surrogate with husband Carter Reum. Hilton wrote on Lohan's IG: "Congratulations love! So happy for you! Welcome to the Mommy Club!"

## Brooke Shields says she was sexually assaulted by Hollywood executive

**B**rooke Shields' documentary "Pretty Baby" made waves at the Sundance Film Festival, and it's not just because of the film's content. Shields' newest film takes viewers on a journey through her life in the entertainment industry, starting with her rise as a child model and leading up to her roles in films like "Pretty Baby" and "The Blue Lagoon".

But what has really captured audiences' attention is the revelation that Shields was sexually assaulted by a powerful Hollywood executive in her 20s. In a recent interview with People magazine, Shields opened up about her experience, revealing that she had never gone public with the assault until now because she thought no one would believe her.

She also shared how the assault had affected her, saying: "It's taken me a long time to process it. I'm more angry now than I was able to be then." Shields added that she blamed herself for the assault afterward, saying "I kept saying, 'I shouldn't have done that. Why did I go up with him? I shouldn't have had that drink at dinner.'"

The assault took place at a business dinner when Shields was a recent graduate of Princeton University. The unnamed Hollywood executive had invited her to his hotel room, where he proceeded to assault

her. Shields said that she froze during the assault and blamed herself afterward. "It was really easy to disassociate because by then it was old hat," she recalled. "And because it was a fight-or-flight type of choice. Fight was not an option, so you just leave your body. 'You're not there. It didn't happen.'"

Shields hopes that by sharing her story, she can help others who may have experienced similar situations. She wants to encourage people to come forward and seek help, saying "If you're afraid, you're rightfully so. They are scary situations. They don't have to be violent to be scary."

The two-part documentary, directed by Lana Wilson, has been called "fascinating" and "accomplished" by Variety. In the film, Shields shares her earliest experiences in Hollywood, including her rise as a child advertising model and her sexualization in movies starting at age 12 in "Pretty Baby." "Brooke Shields: Pretty Baby" is set to debut on Hulu on April 3.

As Shields continues to share her story, she hopes to raise awareness and encourage others to speak out against sexual assault. "I thought I would never work again," Shields said. "But I'm still here. I'm still working. And I want people to know that they can be, too."



## SOUTH KOREA HITS RECORD-LOW WEDDINGS AS BIRTH RATE PLUNGES



**SEOUL (TIP):** The number of South Koreans who tied the knot last year hit a record low, figures showed on March 16, compounding looming demographic woes in a country with the world's lowest birth rate.

Some 192,000 couples got married last year, according to the data released by Statistics Korea Thursday, down by more than 40 per cent from a decade earlier in 2012, when 327,000 couples had wed.

This is the lowest number of marriages in a year since records began in 1970.

The average age for men getting married for the first time was 33.7 years old, a record high, the data showed, while the age for brides also hit a record high of 31.3 years old for marriage.

They represent an increase of 1.6 years for men and 1.9 for women for first-time marriage from a decade earlier.

Nearly 80 per cent of couples who got married last year were doing so for the first time.

The new data comes as South Korea is grappling with a chronic decline in its birth rate, with the lowest-ever number of babies -- 249,000 -- born last year, breaking a previous record low in 2021.

South Korea had long ago passed the so-called replacement rate after which the population begins to shrink with a record-low 0.78 births per woman last year.

The government has spent around 280 trillion won (\$213 billion) since 2006 in an effort to boost birth rates but the population is projected to fall from about 52 million to 39 million by 2067 when the median population age will be 62.

Experts say there are multiple causes for the twin phenomenon of low marriage and birth rates, from high child-rearing costs and property prices to a notoriously competitive society that makes well-paid jobs difficult to secure.

The double burden for working mothers of carrying out the brunt of household chores and childcare while also maintaining their careers is another key factor, experts say. (AFP)

# Under fire over legal reforms, Israeli PM Netanyahu to face critics in Berlin

**BERLIN (TIP):** Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, under heavy fire at home over planned legal reforms, was due to arrive March 15 in Berlin where Germany's leaders will also urge him to reconsider the overhauls.

The German government is under pressure for hosting Netanyahu at a time of the disputed reforms, with critics urging Berlin to scrap the visit.

Netanyahu, speaking before boarding his plane to Germany, said Iran would be the "main issue" of his discussions, along with "other topics important to Israel".

"The security issues don't pause, even for a moment," he added.

German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, speaking in Tallinn on Wednesday, said he planned to raise the reforms with Netanyahu when they meet on Thursday.

Israel is the "only democracy in the whole region, a country with a strong constitutional state", he said.

"What I would like to see is that what we have admired about Israel... is preserved."

Netanyahu's government, which includes ultra-Orthodox and extreme-right parties, introduced its judicial reform package in January.

The changes would allow lawmakers to override Supreme Court decisions that strike down legislation with a parliamentary majority, and then deny the court the right to review such a move.

It would also make it harder for the Supreme Court to strike down legislation it deems to contravene Basic Laws, Israel's quasi constitution.

### Corruption charges



Netanyahu's government has argued the reforms are needed to limit judicial overreach, but protesters have decried them as threatening Israel's liberal democracy by weakening key checks and balances.

Ten consecutive weeks of nationwide demonstrations have followed, with critics also charging that the proposed changes aim to protect Netanyahu as he fights corruption charges in an ongoing court battle.

Ahead of Netanyahu's departure, critics took their protests to Ben Gurion airport.

"Dictator on the run" and "Don't come back", read placards held up by demonstrators near the airport, where a convoy of cars bearing Israeli flags circulated between the terminals, making them difficult to access, an AFP correspondent reported.

Netanyahu's flight was delayed by five hours as he held talks with his coalition partners.

President Isaac Herzog, who holds a largely ceremonial role, has for weeks

been toiling over a proposal to soften the government's legal overhaul.

### 'Worst possible time'

The controversy in Israel puts Germany in an uncomfortable position.

Germany and Israel forged strong diplomatic ties in the decades after World War II, with Berlin committed to the preservation of the Israeli state in penance for the Holocaust.

Successive German governments have described Israel's national security as a crucial foreign policy priority.

On the eve of Netanyahu's departure for Germany and ahead of a planned trip to Britain, 1,000 writers, artists and academics wrote to the two nations' ambassadors urging their governments to scrap the visits, denouncing what they called his "dangerous and destructive leadership".

In Frankfurt, Meron Mendel, who heads the Anne Frank educational centre named for the teenage Holocaust victim, also said Berlin should have declined the visit. (AFP)

## Moscow claims 'increased' US spying on Russia led to drone incident

**MOSCOW (TIP):** The Russian defence minister told the Pentagon chief on March 15 that Washington's "increased" intelligence gathering against Russia had led to a drone incident, Moscow said.

The United States on Tuesday accused Russia of forcing down one of its Reaper surveillance drones over the Black Sea through a collision with a Russian Su-27 warplane.

Russia denies that it deliberately brought the drone down.

It was the first such incident between Moscow and Washington since President Vladimir Putin sent troops to Ukraine in February 2022.

On Wednesday, Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu told US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin that "increased intelligence activities against the interests of the Russian Federation" and "non-compliance with the restricted flight zone" declared by Moscow due to its



campaign in Ukraine had led to the incident, the defence ministry said in a statement.

The ministry in Moscow also warned that it would react "proportionately" to any future US "provocations".

"Flights of American strategic unmanned aerial vehicles off the coast of Crimea are provocative in nature, which creates pre-conditions for an escalation of the situation in the Black Sea zone," the ministry said.

"Russia is not interested in such a development of events, but it will continue to respond proportionately to all provocations."

Separately, the Russian military's chief of the General Staff Valery Gerasimov spoke to Mark Milley, the chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, the defence ministry said in a separate statement. No details were immediately provided. (AFP)



# 'Prolific shoplifter' convicted of multiple frauds in UK

**LONDON (TIP):** An Indian-origin woman, who prosecutors said shoplifted on an industrial scale and deceived shops into refunding her for items that she had never actually purchased, has been convicted by a UK court of multiple counts of fraud and related offences.

Narinder Kaur aka Nina Tiara was convicted of 26 counts on a UK Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) indictment, which included fraud, possessing and transferring criminal property and perverting the course of justice, at the end of a trial last week that lasted four months at Gloucester Crown Court.

The 53-year-old was dubbed a "prolific serial shoplifter" by the CPS, which told the court that Kaur made it her full-time career to travel all over the country, steal items from high street stores, and dishonestly claim refunds on those items, sometimes on multiple occasions, that she was not entitled to.

During two police searches of her home, around 150,000 pounds in cash was found hidden away, as well as stolen goods.

The CPS was able to prove that Kaur defrauded the various retailers over a thousand times between July 2015 and

February 2019 and she remains in custody until her sentencing.

"Narinder Kaur undertook fraud in a long-standing and wide-ranging manner," said Giovanni D'Alessandro, a Senior Crown Prosecutor at CPS West Midlands.

"It was a very lucrative full-time job which demonstrably made her over half a million pounds over this period of offending. She went to extraordinary lengths to carry out her deceptions, seeking to find a way of defrauding a retailer and then travelling all over the country to replicate the fraud," he said.

She also changed her name legally and opened new bank accounts and credit cards with a second identity to avoid detection, he said.

"She now rightly faces a significant sentence for her crimes and the prosecution will look to recoup as many of her ill-gotten gains as the law allows," he added.

A close examination of Kaur's bank and credit card accounts, of which she had several, showed that she had visited and defrauded several high street retailers by claiming thousands of pounds in refunds -- way beyond the

amounts she had originally spent in those stores.

She also attempted to defraud Wiltshire Council -- the local authority for the Cleverton area where she is based in south-west England -- of 7,400 pounds by overpaying using stolen credit cards and then contacting the council for a refund, claiming she had accidentally made a payment with too many zeros.

According to the CPS, she worked with a male accomplice to use stolen bank card details to make payments to her own heating oil supplier.

She also instructed several solicitor's firms to sue her brother and arranged for an accomplice to make payments in the thousands of pounds using stolen card details, which she then asked the solicitors to pay to her.

She also lied to the court and produced false documentations to avoid being convicted of speeding offences and to relax her bail conditions, the court was told.

Working with the police, the CPS said it was able to prove the case using financial data, retail records, witness evidence and CCTV which proved Kaur's pattern of offending.



She was seen on CCTV entering stores, taking items from the shelves and taking them to the tills as if they had been previously purchased.

A close examination of her accounts confirmed the pattern of purchases and refunds and that the same process seen on the CCTV was being repeated on hundreds of occasions.

The final part of her crime was to lie in the face of court proceedings, in order to mislead the court and try to affect the outcome.

Each lie she made to the courts was uncovered piece by piece and disproven so her perversion of justice could be uncovered, the CPS said.

Some of the UK high street retailers and department stores hit by the wide-ranging fraud included Boots, Debenhams, House of Fraser, TK Maxx, Monsoon and John Lewis. (PTI)

# Kyiv condemns 'kidnapping, forced adoptions' as Russians foster Ukrainian kids

**KYIV (TIP):** At their home in the middle of Siberia, Russian pastor Roman Vinogradov and his wife Yekaterina are the new foster parents of five children from Moscow-occupied eastern Ukraine.

The Vinogradovs are experienced fosterers now raising 16 children, including four of their own, and say they just want to help those who are "very much in need". But Ukraine and human rights groups have condemned the forced transfer of thousands of children into Russia or Moscow-controlled territory since the invasion last year.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky last week referred to "kidnapping, forced adoption and re-education of Ukrainian children committed by Russia", calling this "a war crime and a crime against humanity".

Russia says it is simply taking in "refugee" children from Ukraine.

"I didn't steal anyone. And they (the children) don't think they were stolen," Vinogradov, a 41-year-old Protestant minister, told AFP. The Vinogradovs, who live in the Siberian city of Novosibirsk, more than 3,000 kilometres (1,800 miles) east of Moscow, said local authorities asked them to take in Ukrainian children after they requested another child.

"They phoned from children's services, saying: 'Will you take children from



Ukraine?" said Yekaterina Vinogradova, 38. "We said: 'Yes, we'll take them.'" "What difference does it make? Children are children everywhere. It doesn't matter what nation."

## Four girls and a boy

The couple are now fostering five Ukrainian half-siblings -- four girls and a boy aged three to 12, who arrived from Moscow six months ago. They already had seven foster children.

AFP saw the children cheerfully sledging together, clearing snow around the couple's large house and helping prepare a meal.

The Vinogradovs say the Ukrainian children came from children's homes in the city of Lugansk, which has been controlled by Russian-backed separatists

since 2014. They showed foster papers issued by officials from Lugansk's pro-Moscow administration.

The children do not remember their mother, who was stripped of her parental rights, Vinogradov said.

"The time will come of course when they ask questions. We'll have a look (for her). Maybe we'll organise a meeting," said his wife. Vinogradov said the children were learning to live in a family and still needed reassurance that "this is their home".

When the youngest went to nursery school "they were worried about whether we would collect them", Vinogradov said. "They asked: 'When will you come? Will you really come or not?'"

According to international law, no party to a conflict should evacuate

children to a foreign country except temporarily for a compelling health or safety reason.

## 'Russians hide our children'

In a report released on Monday, Human Rights Watch (HRW) called for a "concerted international effort" to return forcibly deported children and urged Russia to publish information on their whereabouts.

"Returning children who were illegally taken by Russian forces should be an international priority," said Bill Van Esveld, HRW associate director for children's rights. Ukraine's presidential commissioner for children's rights, Daria Gerasymchuk, said Russia was refusing to recognise that these children were "deportees".

"Russians hide our children," she told journalists last week.

Kyiv has so far brought back 308 children, Gerasymchuk said, with a "big team of government officials working to this end".

Ukraine has "many pieces of evidence coming from different cities" and has identified 43 children's camps in Russia. But children "are being moved around all the time", she said.

"We have evidence of how much effort was taken by Russia to make it impossible to reunify families." (AFP)



## SRI LANKA'S ECONOMY SHRANK BY RECORD 7.8 PER CENT LAST YEAR

**COLOMBO (TIP):** Sri Lanka's crisis-hit economy shrank a record 7.8 percent last year as long blackouts and critical fuel shortages put a chokehold on local commerce, official data showed March 16.

An unprecedented economic crisis sparked huge protests in the island nation, culminating last July when a mob stormed the home of then president Gotabaya Rajapaksa, forcing him to flee the country and resign.

Since then a new government has worked to repair Sri Lanka's battered public finances and secure a sorely needed International Monetary Fund (IMF) bailout.

Last year's contraction -- the biggest in the country's 75 years of independence -- compared with 3.5 percent growth in 2021 and a 4.6 percent contraction in 2020 as the coronavirus pandemic hit.

It was "caused by the deepening of the economic crisis... frequent power disruptions, shortages in fuel, raw materials, (and) foreign currency", Sri Lanka's census and statistics department said in a statement.

The data showed some improvement in Sri Lanka's fiscal position with inflation moderating to about 50 percent in February, down from a record high of 69.8 percent in September.

President Ranil Wickremesinghe has raised taxes and ended generous subsidies on fuel and electricity to boost government revenue after his predecessor defaulted on Sri Lanka's \$46 billion foreign debt last year.

The reforms are a precondition of a \$2.9 billion rescue package from the IMF, which Sri Lanka expects to finalise next week.

But the tax and price hikes have been roundly unpopular, triggering protests and industrial stoppages around the country.

About 40 trade unions warned Thursday that they planned a general strike next week if their demands for concessions on the austerity programme were not met.

Wickremesinghe has said Sri Lanka can expect to remain bankrupt until at least 2026 and insisted his government has no option but to implement the reforms demanded by the IMF. (AFP)

# Lahore HC prohibits Imran Khan's party from holding rally at Minar-e-Pakistan

**LAHORE (TIP):** Observing that the recent pitched battles between the security personnel and defiant supporters of former prime minister Imran Khan in Lahore have "tarnished the image of Pakistan across the world", a top court on March 16 prohibited the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party from holding a rally at the historic Minar-e-Pakistan here.

On Tuesday, Khan, the chief of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party, announced that he would stage a public gathering at the Minar-e-Pakistan -- considered the national emblem of the country and an expression of post-colonial identity-- on March 19 as part of his party's ongoing election campaign in Punjab province.

Justice Tariq Saleem Sheikh of the Lahore High Court (LHC) presided over the hearing and said the current situation in the provincial capital "tarnished the image of Pakistan across the world."

Justice Sheikh ordered that authorities should be informed about a rally at least 15 days in advance so that necessary security arrangements can be made, The Express Tribune newspaper reported.

Justice Sheikh also directed the PTI leadership to hold a meeting with Inspector General Police Punjab and the additional chief secretary to reach a consensus on their concerns that include "implementation of Imran Khan's non-



bailable arrest warrant, security plan and imposition of Section 144", it added.

Lahore's upscale Zaman Park area, where Khan, 70, resides, turned into a battleground after his defiant supporters engaged in pitched battles with policemen on Tuesday to stop them from arresting their leader in the Toshakhana case, resulting in injuries to more than 60 people.

Following the LHC order, police and other law enforcers withdrew from Khan's residence on Wednesday, putting a halt to clashes.

Khan, the former Pakistan Prime Minister has been in the crosshairs for buying gifts, including an expensive Graff wristwatch he had received as the premier at a discounted price from the state depository called Toshakhana and selling them for profit.

Meanwhile, a district court judge in Pakistan said on Thursday that he would halt attempts by the Islamabad police to arrest Khan in a corruption case if the ousted premier surrendered before the court.

Khan, a cricketer-turned-politician, was ousted from power in April last year after losing a no-confidence vote, which he alleged was part of a US-led conspiracy targeting him because of his independent foreign policy decisions on Russia, China and Afghanistan.

Since his ouster, Khan has been asking for early elections to oust what he termed an "imported government" led by prime minister Shehbaz Sharif.

Sharif has maintained that elections will be held later this year once the parliament completes its five-year tenure. (PTI)

## Banned from school, Afghanistan girls turn to madrassas under Taliban rule

**KABUL (TIP):** In a madrassa in the Afghan capital, rows of teenage girls rock back and forth reciting verses of the Koran under the watchful eye of a religious scholar.

The number of Islamic schools has grown across Afghanistan since the Taliban returned to power in August 2021, with teenage girls increasingly attending classes after they were banned from secondary schools.

"We were depressed because we were denied an education," said 16-year-old Farah, a veil covering her face and hair.

"It's then that my family decided I should at least come here. The only open place for us now is a madrassa."

Instead of maths and literature, the girls focus on rote-learning the Koran in Arabic -- a language most of them don't understand.

Those who want to learn the meaning of the verses study separately, where a teacher translates and explains the text in their local language.

AFP visited three madrassas in Kabul and in the southern city of Kandahar, where scholars said the numbers of girl students have doubled since last year.

For Farah, her ambition of becoming a lawyer was dashed when Taliban authorities blocked girls from secondary school -- and months later banned women from attending university.

"Everyone's dreams are lost," she said.

Still, Farah -- whose real name has been changed to protect her identity like other students AFP interviewed for this story -- counts herself lucky in that her parents allowed her to attend classes at all.

The Taliban government adheres to an austere interpretation of Islam. (AFP)

## Pakistan yet to confirm India's invitation to SCO meet

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** With the ongoing Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) presidency, India has been hosting various meetings and also inviting all members, including Pakistan. However, Pakistan has skipped these meetings, barring once which it attended virtually last week (the Chief Justice meeting) but only after Pakistan downgraded its participation.

India has sent an invite to Pakistan for the Foreign Ministers meet that would be held on May 4 in Goa but hasn't got a response yet. Invites have also been sent to them to attend the Home Ministers' meet and National Security Adviser (NSA) meetings on March 29 and Defence Ministers' meeting on March 27.

Pakistan's foreign ministry spokesperson, regarding their participation in the foreign ministers meet, had earlier said that the country would revert to the invitation in time before the event.

Earlier in January, Pakistan was the only country among the eight Shanghai Cooperation Organisation members that had not sent any entry for the SCO film festival that took place in Mumbai. Other members had sent 57 entries. The eight-member SCO includes India, Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Pakistan. While Afghanistan, Belarus, Iran and Mongolia are SCO observers and Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cambodia and Nepal are SCO dialogue partners.

From the outset, the SCO presented itself as a bulwark against "terrorism, separatism and extremism", a language that sought to capitalise on the global counter-terrorist consensus of the 9/11 era, as well as reflecting real concerns in Beijing about threats to Chinese Communist Party power.

However, India is part of the four-nation security Quad that includes the US, Australia, Japan and India. (ENS)

# Sikh History This Week

MARCH 17, 2023, TO MARCH 23, 2023

## 17th March



1823 Maharaja Ranjit Singh victoriously entered Peshawar for the first time, after winning numerous wars with Pathans.

1923 Second attempt to kill Labh Singh Dhillon also fails.



1972 Gurcharan Singh Tohra asked Fateh Singh to retire from active politics. 1973 The Federal Government of the United States of America officially recognizes the Sikh Dharma Brotherhood.

## 18th March

Maharaja Ranjit Singh assumed the governing control of Peshawar.

## 19th March

1922 A diwan at Sangowal is held by Kishan Singh Gargaj.

1923 Labh Singh of Garhshankar is murdered.

1981 Dal Khasal members, took out a procession at Anadpur Sahib during Hola Mohalla festival, in support of Khalistan. They carried a map of the proposed Sikh state on placards.



1984 All India Sikh Student Federation (AISSF) was banned by Indian government. As a result thousands of innocent Sikhs were Punjab formed the Senior Sikh Sophisticates Forum to strengthen arrested from their home.

## 20th March

1761 GurSikhs greatly harassed Ahmad Shah's returning forces from his 5th invasion, successfully engaged them near Goindwal and rescued Hindu women captured by him.



1914 Baba Gurdit Singh of Sarhali village charter a ship, Kamagata Maru, to satisfy the condition of the Canadian Privy Council Order No. 920. There were 376 passengers in it including 346 Sikhs. It started its journey for Canada reaching there on the 23rd May 1914, but the ship was not allowed to entry and was compelled to leave Canadian waters on 23rd July 1914.

1922 A conference at Apra takes place.

1931 Sikhs presented 17 demands charter for the Round Table Conference.

1956 Hukam Singh was elected Deputy Speaker of Indian Lower House.

## 21st March



1664 Ninth Patshah, Guru Tegh Bahadur visited Delhi.

1758 Sikhs captured Sirhind.

1921 Karam Singh Daulatpur organizes a conference at Mahalpur.

1986 One group of the Akalis called for a protest procession at Chandigarh. This procession was fired upon by the BSF and CRPF indiscriminately, killing several Sikhs.

## 22nd March

1923 First declaration of the Babbar's owning the murders and open letter by the Babbar Akalis to Lt. Governor, Punjab, was issued in "Babbar Akali Doaba" newspaper.

1924 3rd Shahidi Jatha of 500 valiant Akali Satyagrahies, led by Sardar Santa Singh of Chuck No. 133, Sargodha, marched from Amritsar to Gangsar, Jaito.

1946 Akali Dal passed resolution for an independent Sikh State.

## 23rd March

Third attempt to kill Labh Singh Dhillon also aborts



1931 Bhagat Singh Shaheed was hanged to death in the Lahore central jail along with Shivram Rajguru and Sukhdeo. Shaheed BHAGAT SINGH: was one of the leader Sikh revolutionaries of the early 20th century who earned the fame of causing explosion in the Legislative Assembly in Delhi and of committing daring acts of killing British Police Officers. He and his associates were hanged on March 23rd of 1931. Their bodies were secretly cremated on the bank of the Satluj river near Ferozpur. The associated secrecy was to avoid public outcry and any subsequent outburst of violence.

1985 Sikh Women's Seminar was held in Toronto. The seminar's primary objective was to bring the Sikh women together, whereby they could discuss various issues facing the community. There was a need for such a forum where Sikh women could assemble, deliberate, and contribute toward the development of programs for the Sikh youth. The following papers were presented at the seminar: A Potrait of South Asian Canadian Women; Role of Women in Sikh Society; What is Leadership; Role of Sikh Women in Canadian Society; Role of Women in Sikh Leadership; and Participation of Sikh Women in Community Life.



# Ramadan: A month of fasting and prayer

**Ramadan 2023** which begins on March 22 is expected to last 30 days. Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, observed by Muslims worldwide as a month of fasting, prayer, reflection and community. The Indian Panorama congratulates followers of Islam on the auspicious occasion.

Every year, Muslims around the world anticipate the sighting of the new crescent moon that signifies the official first day of Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic calendar and the most sacred month in Islamic culture.

The start of Ramadan fluctuates each year because the lunar Islamic calendar follows the phases of the moon. The beginning and end of Ramadan are determined by a moon sighting committee in Saudi Arabia. It begins the day after the committee spots the new crescent moon, which can be tricky since it's quite faint and can be seen for only about 20 minutes. If the moon isn't visible to the naked eye because of haze or clouds, lunar calculations are used to predict whether it's in the sky. This year Ramadan is predicted to begin on March 23, and to end April 21 with Eid al-Fitr celebrations.

## Origin of Ramadan

Ramadan, one of the months in the Islamic calendar, was also part of ancient Arabs' calendars. The naming of Ramadan stems from the Arabic root "ar-ramad," which means scorching heat. Muslims believe that in A.D. 610, the angel Gabriel appeared to Prophet Muhammad and revealed to him the Quran, the Islamic holy book. That revelation, Laylat Al Qadar—or the "Night of Power"—is believed to have occurred during Ramadan. Muslims fast during that month as a way to commemorate the revelation of the Quran.

The Quran consists of 114 chapters and is taken to be the direct words of God, or Allah. The hadith, or accounts by the companions of Prophet Muhammad's thoughts and deeds, supplement the Quran. Together they form the religious texts of Islam.

## How Ramadan is observed

During Ramadan, Muslims aim to grow spiritually and build stronger relationships with Allah. They do this by praying and reciting the Quran, making their actions intentional and selfless, and abstaining from gossiping, lying, and fighting.

Throughout the month, fasting between sunrise and sunset is obligatory for all Muslims, except for the ill, pregnant, traveling, elderly, or menstruating. Days missed fasting can be made up throughout the rest of the year, either all at once or one day here and there.

Meals are opportunities for Muslims to gather with others in the community and



A drone photo shows thousands of people gather for iftar (fast-breaking) dinner during the Holy fasting month of Ramadan at Sultanahmet Square in Istanbul, Turkey.

Muhammed Enes Yildirim/Anadolu Agency/Getty Images

break their fast together. Pre-dawn breakfast, or suhoor, usually occurs at 4:00 a.m. before the first prayer of the day, fajr. The evening meal, iftar, can begin once the sunset prayer, Maghreb, is finished—normally around 7:30. Since the Prophet Mohammad broke his fast with dates and a glass of water, Muslims eat dates at both suhoor and iftar. A staple of the Middle East, dates are rich in nutrients, easy to digest, and provide the body with sugar after a long day of fasting.

After the last day of Ramadan, Muslims celebrate its ending with Eid al-Fitr—the "festival of breaking the fast"—which begins with communal prayers at daybreak. During these three days of festivities, participants gather to pray, eat, exchange gifts, and pay their respects to deceased relatives. Some cities host carnivals and large prayer gatherings, too.

But no matter what observers have planned for their traditional suhoor and iftar gatherings this year, the spirit of this centuries-old tradition will remain the same as a time for piety and self-reflection.

## The Teachings of Ramadan



A Muslim woman prays after breaking fast at sunset at the Islamic Center of Greater Miami.

Lynne Sladky/AP

As mentioned, Ramadan is observed to honour the fourth pillar of Islam, known as Sawm. As per the history of Ramadan fasting, there are several reasons why Muslims are required to observe Sawm, including:

- To demonstrate self-control and restraint
- To cleanse their bodies
- To be reminded that some people do not have access to food and go hungry every day
- To be more compassionate and grateful for what they do have
- To strengthen their bond with Allah

### Religious practices

The common practice is to fast from dawn to sunset. The pre-dawn meal before the fast is called the suhur, while the meal at sunset that breaks the fast is called iftar.

Muslims devote more time to prayer and acts of charity, striving to improve their self-discipline, motivated by hadith: "When Ramadan arrives, the gates of Paradise are opened and the gates of hell are locked up and devils are put in chains."

### Fasting

Ramadan is a time of spiritual reflection, self-improvement, and heightened devotion and worship. Muslims are expected to put more effort into following the teachings of Islam. The fast (sawm) begins at dawn and ends at sunset. In addition to abstaining from eating and drinking during this time, Muslims abstain from sexual relations and sinful speech and behaviour during Ramadan fasting or month. The act of fasting is said to redirect the heart away from worldly activities, its purpose being to cleanse the soul by freeing it from harmful impurities. Muslims believe that Ramadan teaches them to practice self-discipline, self-control, sacrifice, and empathy for those who are less fortunate, thus encouraging actions of generosity and compulsory charity (zakat). Muslims also believe fasting helps instill compassion for the food-insecure poor.

Exemptions to fasting include travel, menstruation, severe illness, pregnancy, and breastfeeding. However, many Muslims with medical conditions insist on fasting to satisfy their spiritual needs, although it is not recommended by hadith. Those unable to fast are obligated to make up the missed days later.

### Suhoor

Each day, before dawn, Muslims observe a pre-fast meal called the suhoor. After stopping a short time before dawn, Muslims begin the first prayer of the day, Fajr.

### Iftar

At sunset, families break the fast with the iftar, traditionally opening the meal by eating dates to commemorate Muhammad's practice of breaking the fast with three dates. They then adjourn for Maghrib, the fourth of the five required daily prayers, after which the main meal is served.

Social gatherings, many times in buffet style, are frequent at iftar. Traditional dishes are often highlighted, including traditional desserts, particularly those made only during Ramadan. Water is usually the beverage of choice, but juice and milk are also often available, as are soft drinks and caffeinated beverages.



A Yemeni man reads the Quran at the Great Mosque in the old city of the capital Sanaa on May 9.  
Mohammed Huwais/AFP/Getty Images

In the Middle East, iftar consists of water, juices, dates, salads and appetizers; one or more main dishes; and rich desserts, with dessert considered the most important aspect of the meal. Typical main dishes include lamb stewed with wheat berries, lamb kebabs with grilled vegetables, and roasted chicken served with chickpea-studded rice pilaf. Desserts may include luqaimat, baklava or kunafeh.

Over time, the practice of iftar has evolved into banquets that may accommodate hundreds or even thousands of diners. The Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque in Abu Dhabi, the largest mosque in the UAE, feeds up to thirty thousand people every night. Some twelve thousand people attend iftar at the Imam Reza shrine in Mashhad.

### Charity

Zakat, often translated as "the poor-rate", is the fixed percentage of income a believer is required to give to the poor; the practice is obligatory as one of the pillars of Islam. Muslims believe that good deeds are rewarded more handsomely during Ramadan than at any other time of the year; consequently, many Muslims donate a larger portion - or even all - of their yearly zakat during this month.

### Nightly prayers

Tarawih are extra nightly prayers performed during the month of Ramadan. Contrary to popular belief, they are not compulsory.

### Recitation of the Quran

Muslims are encouraged to read the entire Quran, which comprises thirty juz' (sections), over the thirty days of Ramadan. Some Muslims incorporate a recitation of one juz' into each of the thirty tarawih sessions observed during the month.

### Ramadan celebrations around the world

#### Indonesia

The Padusan is an act of purification for Indonesian Muslims. Before Ramadan begins, they bathe and cleanse themselves in the natural pools they believe to be holy as part of this purification ritual for cleansing the soul and preparing the body for fasting and

prayer during the month of Ramadan.

#### Egypt

One of the most colorful and beautiful Ramadan traditions around the world is the Fanous or lanterns of Ramadan.

Brightly colored lamps light up the neighbourhoods of Egypt creating a magical sight. Intricately made from metal and glass with unique designs and expert craftsmanship, the Fanous are now universally symbolic of world Ramadan celebrations.

Legend has it that in the year 969, Egyptians welcomed the arrival of Caliph Moezz Eddin Allah to Cairo by lighting his path with hundreds of lanterns.

Another Egyptian tradition is that of the Mesaharaty or night caller. The Mesaharaty walks around the neighbourhood streets, accompanied by the soft beating of the drum, calling for people to wake up.

#### Turkey

Waking up to the beating of a drum is also common in Turkey. Here, they carry their Davul, or double-sided drum, while dressed in traditional Turkish garb, and beat and call people to wake as they roam the streets.

As a reward for their efforts, many share their suhoor, the meal before dawn and the long day of fasting begins.

Other families offer a modest tip or bahis in return for the delight of being woken to this traditional singing and drumming.

#### Morocco

The responsibility of waking believers up for suhoor in Morocco falls upon the Nafars. Dressed in the traditional gandora, a hat, and a pair of slippers, the Nafar sings wake-up prayers through the streets and laneways of their town before the sun has risen in the sky.

#### Kuwait

During the second week of the holy month of Ramadan, Kuwait celebrates the beginning of Gerga'aan. The three-day festival features Kuwaiti children dress in traditional costumes and go to door showing off their garments and singing songs for sweets and chocolates after the evening prayer.

Neighbourhoods come alive with

young people and songs of blessings. This tradition is said to have originated when Fatima, the first daughter of Prophet Mohammed, distributed sweets to people two weeks into one of the very first observances of Ramadan.

#### Iraq

As the sun sets in Iraq during Ramadan, people of all ages enjoy Iftar feasts of lentil soup, lamb stews with thareed, broken pieces of flatbread dipped. This is followed by post-iftar sweets, shopping and an evening stroll among streets full of colour and lights.

Meanwhile, the men of the local neighbourhood gather together to play the game of Mheibes. Two large groups of between 20 to 250 people take turns to pass a ring among their teammates. One team sits on the ground with tight fists in their lap while the group leader secretly passes the ring to one of his team members. The other team then has to guess who has the ring. Passed down through generations, this game of skill is even played in national championships.

#### Lebanon

One of the oldest living Ramadan traditions around the world is Midfa al Iftar - the firing of cannons to symbolise the end of the daily fast.

This Ramadan tradition is said to have originated in Egypt almost 200 years ago when ruler Khosh Qadam accidentally fired a cannon at sunset. Across the streets of Cairo, the booming sound reverberated through the city and its people mistook the echoes for a sign to end their daily fasting.

This mistake proved so popular, it came to be a tradition around the gulf countries as a commemoration for breaking fast.

In Lebanon, families often mark Iftar with an abundance of stuffed grape leaves, hummus, fattoush and tabbouleh. Many charities and organisations and businesses host Iftar functions to raise money for the needy while mosques and churches alike host clothing drives and distribute Ramadan provisions.

#### India, Bangladesh and Pakistan

The last evening of Ramadan is known as Chaand Raat, or night of the moon. Much like the night before Christmas, this eve before Eid al Fitr is a time for last-minute shopping and errands in anticipation of the celebrations ahead.

Streets in South Asia are vibrant with festivity, girls and women flock to jewellery stores and pop-up henna stalls for rows of matching bangles and elaborate henna designs for their hands.

Using dye prepared from the Lawsonia inermis, known as the henna tree, artisans craft temporary body art in the same method people have used since the Bronze Age.

#### Australia

In Australia, the Chand Raat Eid Festival is one of the biggest multicultural celebrations. Beginning in Sydney in 1998, it has grown to become one of the largest events of its kind in the country. Three major events take place in Sydney, Perth, and Melbourne, which cater to a combined total of more than 50,000 people. Promoting friendship, understanding, interfaith harmony, and multiculturalism for people of all backgrounds, these non-alcoholic events are enjoyable for the whole family.

# Make your skin look younger with bottle gourd

**B**ottle gourd might not sound as a delight for your taste buds but knowing about the benefits it has on your skin, you will surely fall in love with this pale veggie. Bottle gourd (commonly known as lauki/ghiya) not only gives you the right nutrition to your body, but it also ups your beauty quotient. Wrinkle-free skin With powerhouse nutrients such as vitamin C and zinc, bottle gourd helps in tackling premature ageing. The juice helps slow down cell ageing and prevents wrinkles from appearing on the face. You can have the lauki cooked or in the juice form for consumption. You can also apply the juice externally on your face and neck area for beautiful skin.

## For that natural glow

Loaded with minerals, antioxidants and vitamins, bottle gourd juice can do wonders to your skin, lending it a healthy glow. Use it as your morning mantra as it aids proper functioning of your digestive system and makes your skin radiant. Have a glass full of bottle gourd juice every morning on a regular basis for better results.

## Haircare

You will be shocked to learn that the staple from your kitchen can also tackle and control premature greying of hair. It contains vitamin B that has a cooling effect on your scalp and thus, helps reduce discoloration and frizziness of your natural hair. Regular intake of bottle gourd can also control hair fall. Grate a few pieces of bottle gourd and mix it with yoghurt or apple cider vinegar and use as a hair pack. You will be relieved of your hair problems after regular usage.

## Reduces pimples and acne

Bottle gourd juice effectively



cleanses the system and keeps dirt, pollution and oil under control. Hence it balances the secretion of oil from the pores which in turn reduces pimples and breakouts. You can consume it cooked or as a juice to combat your skin related problems.

## Smooth and clear skin

As bottle gourd purifies the blood, it helps in making the skin smooth and supple. It cleanses the body internally which eventually leads to healthy, glowing and clear skin. Make a smoothening face pack using cucumber and bottle gourd in equal proportions. You can also add besan and curd if you

wish. Apply it on your face for around twenty minutes and wash off with warm water. It will nourish your skin to the core and give it a butter-smooth feel at the same time.

## Puffy eyes

You can get rid of your eyes bags naturally using bottle gourd. It is the cooling effect and water content of the vegetable that does the trick. The remedy also works to relax and relieve your eyes. Press bottle gourd round slices onto your eyes and lie down relaxed. Wait for 20 minutes and then remove the slices. You will love the soothing impact it will have on your eyes.

## FOOD

# Moong Dal Pakodi

## Ingredients

Moong Dal - 1 cup  
Onion - 1/4 cup, finely chopped  
Green Chillies - 4, finely chopped  
Baking Powder - a pinch  
Salt as per taste  
Cumin Seeds - 1/2 tsp  
Coriander Leaves - few  
Oil as required for frying

## Method

- Soak the dal for 2 hours.
- Drain well.
- Add salt and grind to a coarse paste.
- Add green chillies, onion, coriander leaves, baking powder and cumin seeds.
- Heat oil in a deep frying pan.
- Make small balls of the dough and fry them in hot oil until golden brown.
- Remove and drain excess oil.
- Serve hot with sauce or mint chutney.

## To make Moong Dal Pakodi Chaat:

### Ingredients

Curd - 1 cup, whisked  
Sev - 1 cup  
Green Chutney for Chaat (recipe here)  
Sweet Chutney  
Coriander Leaves - few, chopped

### Method

- Transfer the prepared pakodis to a plate.
- Add 2 to 3 tbsps of the whisked curd on top.
- Sprinkle sev.
- Garnish with green chutney, sweet chutney and coriander leaves.
- Serve at once.



## Know who can contribute to greater intimacy

In most couples, one partner values romance more than the other. The person who contributes to greater sexual intimacy has more influence to make changes to promote closeness and playfulness because they are more likely to detect when the romance is waning. Although they are not primarily in charge of keeping an eye on things, their awareness makes them more equipped to have an impact on how deep the connection is.

## Unveiling the past

Each partner will need to decide to consciously move forward when a relationship loses its love or when trust has been broken. Try to forgive them and let go of any disappointments, grudges, and resentments. The only thing that is true is this moment, and the only way to genuinely enter the present is to forgive your partner who has hurt you in the past. As you let go of the past, you can love your partner for who they truly are and learn how to maintain a relationship through the highs and the lows.

## Sexual intimacy

This is likely among the most common causes of

# Bring back spark in your relationship



losing the spark in a relationship. When it comes to sexual intimacy, each of us has various fantasies, preferences, and limitations. Make sexual fulfilment your top priority, and learn to talk with your partner

openly and honestly about what you two want to do in bed without worrying about being judged. This will clear the way for a fulfilling sexual interaction between the couples and support the maintenance of your love for one another.

## Give your love surprises

When you give gifts or mini surprises to your partner without any special occasion they feel very special. By surprising your partner with a gift, you can maintain your love. It might be something small, like a book, chocolates, or flowers, might plan a surprise outing, a movie date, or going out to dinner, or it can be something that is meaningful to both of you or your love.

## Respect and gratitude

Gratitude and respect in a relationship are very important. Without respect, no relationship will work. Respecting someone means that you value them. So, to keeping your relationship healthy, you should respect your partner, their feelings, emotions and decisions.

# New treatment can enhance cardiac pump function in patients with heart failure

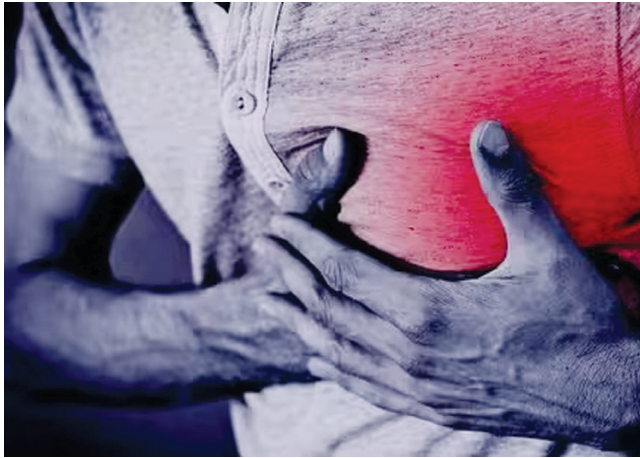
Researchers at Karolinska Institutet and Karolinska University Hospital in Sweden discovered that the hunger hormone ghrelin can boost the heart's pump capacity in patients with heart failure in a clinical investigation. The findings were published in the European Heart Journal.

Millions of people worldwide live with heart failure, a condition in which the pump function of the heart is reduced, such as after a myocardial infarction or angina. In heart failure, the heart muscle is weakened, leaving the heart unable to pump the amount of blood needed to provide the body with sufficient oxygen and nutrients. Treatments are available that slow the progression of the disease, but there are no methods that directly increase the heart's pump function.

Ghrelin is an endogenous hormone that has many receptors distributed in cardiac muscle tissues. It increases the appetite and stimulates the release of growth hormones. The researchers believe that its receptors are a promising target for enhancing the heart's pump function.

"Heart failure is the most common cause of hospitalisation in older generations and is associated with a poor quality of life and high mortality," says principal investigator Lars Lund, professor at the Department of Medicine, Solna, Karolinska Institutet, and senior consultant at Karolinska University Hospital. "If we can find ways to increase the heart's pump function, we can potentially improve life quality and prognosis for these patients."

In this double-blind study, 30 patients with heart failure at Karolinska University Hospital's cardiology



unit were randomly assigned to two groups, receiving either active treatment with ghrelin or a placebo given intravenously for two hours. The participants were followed up after two to five days.

After two hours' treatment, the cardiac output (i.e. the volume of blood pumped by the heart in one minute) had increased by an average of 28 percent in the ghrelin group, which can be compared with a small reduction in the placebo group. The reason for the increase was that more blood was pumped from the heart per beat, as the heart rate remained unchanged or was even slightly slower. At the two- to five-day follow-up, the pump capacity was 10 percent higher in the ghrelin group compared to in the placebo group.

Source: ANI

# Dimming lights 3 hours before sleep could reduce risk of gestational diabetes

Scientists are advising pregnant people to turn off or dim the lights in their homes a few hours before bedtime to reduce the risk of developing gestational diabetes mellitus.

The lights in question also include those coming from computer monitor and smartphone screens, according to the research from Northwestern Medicine, Northwestern University, US.

Women who developed gestational diabetes mellitus in the multi-site study had greater light exposure in the three hours before sleep onset, the study said.

They did not differ in their light exposure during daytime or sleep or in their activity levels compared to those who did not develop it.

"Our study suggests that light exposure before bedtime may be an under-recognized yet easily modifiable risk factor of gestational diabetes," said lead study author Minjee Kim, assistant professor at Northwestern University.

Growing evidence suggests exposure to light at night before bedtime may be linked to impaired glucose regulation in non-pregnant adults.

Bright light exposure prior to sleep can come from bright lights in your home and from devices like TVs, computers and smartphones.

However, little is known about the effect of evening light exposure during pregnancy on the risk of developing gestational diabetes, a common pregnancy complication with significant health implications for both the mother and the offspring.

The study, believed to be one of the first multi-site studies to examine light exposure before sleep on the risk of developing gestational diabetes, is published in the American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology Maternal Fetal Medicine. "It's alarming," Kim said.

"Gestational diabetes is known to increase obstetric complications, and the mother's risk of diabetes, heart



disease and dementia. The offspring also are more likely to have obesity and hypertension as they grow up," Kim said.

Data show that women who have gestational diabetes are nearly 10 times more likely to develop type 2 diabetes mellitus compared to those who do not have glucose issues during pregnancy, Kim said.

"We don't think about the potential harm of keeping the environment bright from the moment we wake up until we go to bed," Kim said.

"But it should be pretty dim for several hours before we go to bed. We probably don't need that much light for whatever we do routinely in the evening," Kim said.

Which source of bright light causes the problem is not known yet, but it might all add up, Kim said.

"Try to reduce whatever light is in your environment in those three hours before you go to bed," Kim said.

Source: PTI



## H3N2 virus: Health experts call for masks, better hygiene and flu shot

Even as India is seeing a spurt in Influenza cases, caused by H3N2 virus, health experts on Monday suggested people to take precautionary measures such as use of masks, better hand hygiene, as well as an annual flu shot.

A total of 3,038 lab-confirmed cases of various subtypes of influenza including H3N2 have been reported till March 9 by the states, as per the latest data available on IDSP-IHIP (Integrated Health Information Platform).

This includes 1,245 cases in January, 1,307 in February, and 486 cases till March 9.

"In my opinion, for the time being the government can again make masks mandatory at least in highly vulnerable zones like public transports, hospitals, airports, railway stations and other public conveyances. People should avoid visiting crowded places, or wear a mask whenever in public," Dr Sunil Sekri, Associate Consultant - Internal Medicine, Max hospital, Gurugram, told IANS.

The respiratory virus "spreads through droplets, so which means that the secretions can spread from person to person, and most people touch their nose and mouth at some point, or that secretions can remain on the fingers and when they shake hands with other people", it can likely spread, said Dr Rajeev Jayadevan, co-chairman of the Indian Medical Association's National Covid-19 Task Force, making a case for the need of masks particularly in crowded indoor gatherings.

According to data from the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), there has been a combination of respiratory viruses ranging from Covid-19 virus, swine flu (H1N1), H3N2, and the seasonal Victoria and Yamagata lineages of influenza B viruses in circulation.

H3N2 and H3N1 are both types of influenza A viruses, commonly known as the flu.

Some of the most common symptoms include prolonged fever, cough, runny nose, and body pain. But in severe cases people may also experience breathlessness and/or wheezing.

"For the last three years we have learned how respiratory infections can be prevented. Because the infections go out and come in from the nose and mouth, you need to cover this area and that is masking. Proper masks are needed, particularly when you are in crowded places," said Dr. Iswar Gilada, an infectious disease expert.

Source: IANS

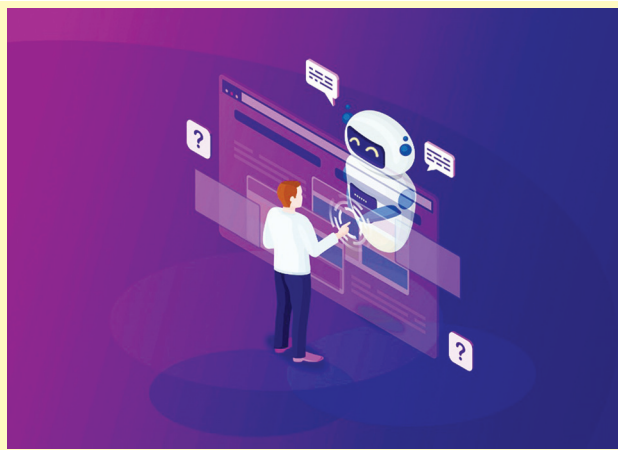
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## Avoid AI chatbots that don't appear on company's website or app, warn researchers

Researchers have warned to avoid chatbots that don't appear on a company's website or app and be cautious of providing any personal information to someone users are chatting with online, a new report said.

According to the Norton Consumer Cyber Safety Pulse report, cybercriminals can now quickly and easily craft email or social media phishing lures that are even more convincing by using AI chatbots like ChatGPT, making it more difficult to tell what's legitimate and what's a threat.

"We know cybercriminals adapt quickly to the latest technology, and we're seeing that ChatGPT can be used to quickly and easily create convincing threats," said Kevin Roundy, Senior Technical Director of Norton.

Moreover, the report said that bad actors can also use AI technology to create deepfake chatbots.

These chatbots can impersonate humans or legitimate sources, like a bank or government entity, to manipulate victims into turning over their personal information to gain access to sensitive information, steal money or commit fraud.

To stay safe from these new threats, experts advise users to think before clicking on links in response to unsolicited phone calls, emails or messages.

Further, they also recommend users to keep the security solution updated and ensure that it has a full set of security layers that go beyond known malware detection, such as behavioural detection and blocking.

## Facebook-parent Meta planning to launch Twitter rival

Elon Musk's Twitter could soon face new competition from Facebook-owned Meta. "We're exploring a standalone, decentralized social network for sharing text updates," a Meta spokesperson said in a statement to Variety.

"We believe there's an opportunity for a separate space where creators and public figures can share timely updates about their interests."

The rep said the company had no additional info on the prospective social network to share. News site Moneycontrol first reported on the potential Meta service, which is code-named "P92."

The new Meta app would be based on — and interoperable with — the framework that powers Mastodon, a Twitter-like service that launched in 2016 and has seen a surge in popularity since Musk's takeover of Twitter last October.

Meanwhile, Meta recently took another page from Musk's Twitter playbook. Last month, the tech giant began rolling out Meta Verified, a subscription service for Facebook and Instagram users that includes a verified blue check-mark badge — just like Twitter Blue — as well as other perks.

Source: ANI

# WhatsApp's new 'text detection' feature on iOS lets users extract text from images

Meta-owned messaging platform WhatsApp is widely rolling out the 'text detection' feature on iOS which allows users to extract text right out of an image.

The company is rolling out this feature to everyone after installing the latest WhatsApp for iOS 23.5.77 update, reports WABetaInfo.

When users open an image which contains text, they will see a new button that allows them to copy text from the image.

For privacy reasons, this feature is not compatible with the view once images.

Last month, it was reported that the messaging platform was rolling out a sticker maker tool on iOS, which allows users to convert images into stickers.

Earlier this week, WhatsApp was widely rolling out the 'voice status updates' feature on iOS, with which users can record a voice note and share it through Status.

The maximum recording time for a voice note is 30 seconds, and users can also forward voice notes from their chats to status.

### WhatsApp to replace phone number with username in groups chat list

WhatsApp is rolling out a new update for group participants which replaces phone numbers with username names within the



chat list. After the new update, users will see push names instead of phone numbers if they receive a message from any unknown contact in the WhatsApp group.

In December last year WhatsApp started introducing a new feature which swapped phone numbers with push names within the message bubble of group chats. The feature made it easier for users to recognize the messages from unknown contacts in the group chat window. Now according to WAbetaInfo, WhatsApp is bringing this feature to its chat list too so that users get to know from whom they received messages in the group chat. The new update is not that big but will make it easier

for recipients to know who the unknown contact is without saving the number in their contact list. The feature might also replace phone number with username even in different sections of the app like the group participants list.

This update will make it easier for users to understand who the sender is in the group especially in the large groups, where it is not possible to save contacts of each and every group member.

Notably, the update will show the username of only the group participants in the preview of messages within the chatlist and not for any personal chats from unsaved contacts.

## YouTube TV launches 'multiview' feature for watching multiple streams at once

YouTube TV has launched a new "Multiview" feature that will allow subscribers to watch up to four different programs at the same time.

The streaming giant said that early access to multiview will roll out to all YouTube TV members over the next few months.

Initially, only select users in the US will gain access to multiview on TV devices.

"During early access, some members will begin to see an option to watch up to four pre-selected, different streams at once in their 'Top Picks for You' section. After selecting multiview, viewers will be able to switch audio and captions between streams, and jump in and out of a fullscreen view of a game," YouTube said in a blogpost.

The company said that those who are part of early access will receive an email and see an alert about this feature in their YouTube TV experience.

As multi-viewing requires a high-



powered device, it will be limited to users who have specific equipment, according to the company.

YouTube intends to monitor feedback from multiview users as more people gain access in the coming months and the NFL (National Football League) season

approaches.

The goal is for all subscribers to have access to multiview by the start of the regular season.

YouTube has confirmed the access date for NFL Sunday Ticket, which will start from September 10.

Source: IANS





## Apple delays bonuses, limits hiring in latest cost-cutting move

Apple Inc. is delaying bonuses for some corporate divisions and expanding a cost-cutting effort, joining Silicon Valley peers in trying to streamline operations during uncertain times, according to people with knowledge of the situation.

The shift will reduce the frequency of bonuses for a portion of Apple's corporate workforce, said the people, who asked not to be identified because the plan hasn't been announced publicly. Separately, the company is freezing hiring for more jobs and leaving additional positions open when employees depart.

In the past, Apple typically doled out bonuses and promotions once or twice per year depending on the division. The twice-a-year teams usually saw that happen in April and October. Under the new plan, that group won't see bonuses or promotions next month, and all divisions will move to an annual schedule — with the payments occurring only in October.

The majority of Apple's divisions had already moved to a once-a-year schedule for bonuses and promotions, including software engineering and services, but staff in operations, corporate retail and other groups had still been on the outgoing biannual plan.

## India's exports dip 8.8 percent in February

India's exports dipped in February for the third consecutive month by 8.8 per cent to USD 33.88 billion against USD 37.15 billion in the same month last year, according to the data released by the commerce ministry on Wednesday, March 15.

Imports also declined by 8.21 per cent to USD 51.31 billion as against USD 55.9 billion recorded in the corresponding month last year.

The country's trade deficit in February stood at USD 17.43 billion.

During April-February this fiscal, however, the country's overall merchandise exports rose by 7.5 per cent to USD 405.94 billion.

Imports during the period increased by 18.82 per cent to USD 653.47 billion.

# Asian markets take breather from banking turmoil, capping tumultuous week

SYDNEY (TIP)

Asian markets extended a risk rally on Wall Street on Friday to end a tumultuous week that saw a brewing banking crisis send bond yields plunging while market participants sharply lowered expectations of future interest rate hikes in Western economies.

Overnight, the European Central Bank (ECB) delivered an inflation-fighting 50 basis point rate hike in line with oft-repeated guidance, with sentiment buttressed by the Swiss National Bank's massive support for Credit Suisse Group AG, which sent the troubled lender's shares 20% higher.

Further helping sentiment, as many as 11 U.S. banks including JPMorgan Chase & Co will deposit as much as \$30 billion into First Republic Bank. Investors welcomed the move by sending the stricken lender's stock 10% higher.

MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan rose 0.9% on Friday, erasing earlier losses this week. Japan's Nikkei climbed 0.5%.

China's bluechips increased 0.8% and Hong Kong's Hang Seng Index surged 1.2%.

S&P 500 futures eased 0.1% and Nasdaq futures were flat after major U.S. stock indices rallied hard on easing fear of a global banking crisis.

Meanwhile, global central bankers on Thursday introduced what market watchers interpreted as an emerging effort to firewall the rate increases needed to fight inflation from separate efforts to calm concern about financial stability.

"The ECB is trying to draw clear lines between its inflation fight and its job of maintaining financial stability. This is a theme other central banks are likely to echo," said James Rossiter, head of global macro strategy at TD Securities.

"It is rare that financial turmoil emerges in such a high-inflation environment, and while tighter financial conditions come at a convenient time for inflation-fighting central banks, they are unlikely to believe that tighter financial conditions alone will be enough to return inflation



to target." After hiking as indicated, the ECB refrained from providing a forward guidance on future rate hikes. Euribor futures have fully priced in a quarter-point hike to 3.25% at the ECB's next policy meeting and the possibility of another.

Markets are also back to overwhelmingly pricing in another 25 basis point hike from the U.S. Federal Reserve at its meeting next week, though there is a 20% chance of the Fed pausing instead.

Two-year Treasury yields continued to climb on Friday, rising 8 basis points to 4.2137% and pulling away from a six-month low of 3.7200% touched earlier this week. Yields were, however, headed for the steepest weekly decline since February 2020 when markets were thrown into chaos by COVID-19 fear.

Ten-year yields were steady at 3.5789% on Friday and were set for a weekly decline of 11 basis points.

The U.S. dollar and Japanese yen reversed some of their safe-harbour flows. The dollar index hovered at 104.38, after easing 0.3% overnight, while the yen pulled back from a one-month high to 133.47 per dollar.

The euro steadied at \$1.0615, after having received a boost from the ECB's half-point hike overnight. *Source: Reuters*

## US tells China's ByteDance to sell TikTok or get ready for a ban

NEW YORK (TIP)

The fight between the U.S. and China over TikTok reached an inflection point on Wednesday when the Biden administration demanded that ByteDance, the social media app's Chinese owners, sell off its stakes in the app or get ready for a possible ban.

The Committee on Foreign Investment in the U.S., or CFIUS, told TikTok that ByteDance must divest its ownership of the company, the Wall Street Journal reported. U.S. officials have been concerned about Americans' data on TikTok for years, particularly in relation to China's national security laws, which forces companies to turn over data if the government requests it. It's the first time the Biden administration has threatened to ban TikTok, echoing the position of former President Donald Trump.

TikTok, meanwhile, told the Wall Street Journal that forcing Chinese owners to sell their stakes in the company wouldn't eliminate national security concerns and maintained that its \$1.5 billion plan to safeguard U.S. data via an agreement with Oracle was the best solution. Under TikTok's plan, called "Project Texas," all data on American users would be stored in the U.S. TikTok's traffic is currently routed through Oracle's servers, the social media app states, and in the future, Oracle engineers will be able to inspect TikTok's source code.

The company said it was disappointed in CFIUS' decision.



"If protecting national security is the objective, divestment doesn't solve the problem: a change in ownership would not impose any new restrictions on data flows or access," TikTok spokeswoman Brooke Oberwetter told the Journal in a statement. "The best way to address concerns about national security is with the transparent, U.S.-based protection of U.S. user data and systems, with robust third-party monitoring, vetting, and verification, which we are already implementing."

The Journal states that 60% of ByteDance is owned by global investors, 20% by employees, and 20% by its founders.

*Source: Gizmodo*

## Shree Ganeshaya Namah

VEDIC ASTROLOGER NASTUR  
BEJAN DARUWALLA

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**The Indian Panorama brings you Weekly and Birthday Horoscope by Nastur Bejan Daruwalla**

## WEEKLY HOROSCOPE - MARCH 20 TO MARCH 26, 2023



Aries

**ARIES** : Ganesha says, You should consider making brief trades this week. Your economic fortune is favorable, so this week you can participate in commodities and initial public offerings. Don't allow other people use your relationships with them as pressure. It's a terrific week to spice up your connection if it's getting stale. You might swap tasks with your companion and make an effort to comprehend one another's responsibilities. You need to be extremely cautious regarding your health this week. This week, you'll pay for your recklessness. even if you only have a little uneasiness, see a physician.

**TAURUS** : Ganesha says, Overconfidence will knock you square in the head. Others are only attempting to pull you off the surface so that you slip up, therefore do not allow them publicize your achievement. This week, try not to allow your wants take precedence over your needs. This week is a wonderful time to consider growing your household business. Use this week to close the communication distance between you and your companion. You will forfeit everything important to you by traveling thus far. Happy couples will have their own corporate facades delighted in. This week, a medical problem will arise because of your erratic bedtime cycle. You'll have uneasiness and agitation. Ensure that you are in a safe place.

**GEMINI** : Ganesha says, you will be given the chance for which you had prayed for a prolonged time. It is advisable to resolve your judicial difficulties. Be careful not to discuss your intentions prior to being carried out. You need to discuss placing boundaries in your private situation this week. Your companion has a highly forgiving personality, so they will undoubtedly respect you. It is required to consider just particular characteristics. The climate is certain to have an impact on you this week. Be careful you just consume hot water all week.

**CANCER** : Ganesha says, this week is a modest bit unsettling for you, so don't believe your instincts. Be careful to believe the graphs, statistics, and figures. Relying on viewpoints will not be a sensible choice. Be careful to persuade your companion of this whenever speaking with them. If you are solitary, you anticipate a boisterous somebody in your quiet existence. This business will alter a bunch for you, primarily for the improved. The appropriate soul will be drawn to you by your amorous aura. Consider a strenuous exercise this week. You're likely to get hurt this week, so ensure you only perform it with professional guidance.



Leo

**LEO** : Ganesha says, Saturn's good influence on your zodiac sign will undoubtedly wear off, so you should be quiet this week. Conduct no important conferences or issue any disclosures. Instead, spend this week to think through your ideas and how you will utilize your capacity to carry them out. This week, allow your bravery to lead the way and tell your loved one how you truly believe. Jupiter is in a favorable situation in your zodiac, so you may expect a favorable answer. Due to your cognitive fatigue, you'll probably have a migraine. In the evening, take a hot bath and practice meditation. Limit your salt intake.

**VIRGO** : Ganesha says, Your colleagues will attempt to overwork you in an effort to see if you have all it needs, but because Lord Moon has favored you this week, you will triumph. Communicate regarding your accomplishments, but it's too early to have a party. Maintain an extra eye out for all things and all of it this week at the workplace. This week, your lover may inflict minor harm on you. You might envision oneself in a recovery area right about now since this connection is quickly turning deadly. Don't let your lover continually make you feel bad. Those who are happy with their ideal partner should hold onto it since it is unrivaled.

**LIBRA** : Ganesha says, this week, you'll experience a surge of successes that will allow you to provide the greatest for your loved ones, who will be grateful for your excellent parenting. A well-known person will serve as your ladder to the top. Don't let them feel taken advantage of. Regardless despite how knowledgeable a person is, mistakes can still be committed, so think twice before acting. Your romantic life is not progressing as well as you had hoped, but you just need to be patient. Wait for the proper moment; the right person is anxiously anticipating meeting you and will soon enter your life. This week, your wellness will be OK.

**SCORPIO** : Ganesha says, this week, you'll need to pay attention to the patterns if you want to identify a big opportunity. Your actions this week will portray a favorable picture of your destiny. This week, you could feel a bit cut off from your spouse since you'll have a hard time connecting with them. Be patient and eventually love will return to your life. This week, you'll experience unease and insecurity and have a hard time putting your faith in others. Give it some time. You will feel energized and refreshed this week, so your wellness will only need a little care. Use this strength in a wise way.



Sagittarius

**SAGITTARIUS** : Ganesha says, You could believe that your efforts would go in vain as a result of the Moon's phase. Eliminate any bad ideas from your mind. Your perspective will be obvious for today thanks to what you do this week. This week, your prior purchases will begin to pay dividends. You should participate in the stock marketplace this week. This week, your love life will require a little amount of effort, so ensure you take good care of your companion. Don't allow transient pleasures destroy your active way of life. Being cautious today will benefit you later.

**CAPRICORN** : Ganesha says, this week, an increase in impulsivity will have unfavorable effects. Keep to the course you already mapped out and avoid deviating from it. You won't be defeated this week, but you could lose your solid character in the process. This week don't attempt to convince your lover to accept less. This week, avoid bringing up any contentious issues and use caution. Mercury is not working in your favor. Avoid anything that might hurt your spine or joints. This week, avoid using large loads and exercise caution.

**AQUARIUS** : Ganesha says this week is likely to bring you an unanticipated fortune. Also, you will be prepared to make some firm judgments in favor of a greater good. Don't dwell too much on the folks you have let down. This week, engage in some lighthearted conversation. Take no significant obligations this week. Investing quality time with each other will bring back pleasant recollections of your former week, which will help you grin. Never attempt to put oneself in another person's shoes. Ensure you accept and appreciate who you are. God sees specialness in everybody, including you.

**PISCES** : Ganesha says, you can count on your team members' collaboration in spades. Ensure you finish all of your duties around the evening. since Venus will shift at that time and deliver you the desired outcomes. You'll start to notice indications of how prolonged your connection will survive this week. Assure you recognize the appropriate indications. You've invested a lot in this connection, and this week your cultivated connection will advance. Recently, you've begun to give your bodily fitness more attention. Consider your psychological state starting this week. Maintaining excellent wellness is important.



Pisces

## BIRTHDAY HOROSCOPE : MARCH 20 TO MARCH 26, 2023 BY ASTRO FRIEND CHIRAG - SON OF ASTROLOGER BEJAN DARUWALLA

**MARCH 20** : Ganesha says you would take charge of your team and successfully accomplish a variety of difficult projects. You are about to enter a noteworthy phase that will benefit your career greatly. You would spend more on frills and comforts, but you would be completely lost when it came to investing. At social events, you would be the centre of attention. You would meet new people and develop crucial connections. Even when your health appears to be in good shape, taking preventive medicine is advised.

**MARCH 21** : Ganesha says although you will likely see a financial gain on a number of fronts, the uncertainty surrounding your romantic relationship is probably going to leave one blemish on your record of accomplishment. Never place more faith in others than is necessary. It will be crucial to manage your time and plan ahead. There will be plenty of enjoyable and frequent socializing, parties, and outings. Those who are eligible will get married, and those who

need romance will find it. Family members may become disappointed and resentful due to your excessive work commitment.

**MARCH 22** : Ganesha says through the new contacts you'll make this day great; you'll have the chance to raise your level of living. Your professional advancement needs to be your main focus because it will produce the required results and will help you in the future. If you go out and join clubs and social activities, you'll be quite successful socially. Some of you have long-distance pilgrimages planned. The health of your parents will be a concern, but your spouse and kids will be supportive so be calm and focus on everything that you need to manage.

**MARCH 23** : Ganesha says in terms of time and money, you shouldn't be overly giving. To increase your income and standard of living, take advantage of the possibilities that present themselves. During this time, you'll probably earn favors because your confidence and spirits will be high.

Profits from investments and a new cooperation will be realized. Your standing inside the social group will get stronger. You might be shocked to learn that many influential people will support any new ideas you put out. Becoming a part of cultural events will be entertaining and educational.

**MARCH 24** : Ganesha says there will be a solution to any ongoing issues. You'll receive awards and acclaim as you move into this new stage of your life. In addition to feeling more safe and content with your actions, your financial situation will also improve. You should avoid standing as a guarantee for others as it will embarrass you and lead to numerous legal issues. Legal issues will become more complicated. Few couples enter into matrimonial relationships. Religious practices and travel will make you more at peace.

**MARCH 25** : Ganesha says if you surround yourself with creative and knowledgeable people, financial success is assured. Spending more on

luxuries and other living comforts is something you'll do if your finances are better. All legal or property conflicts will be resolved. Through social interactions and leisure pursuits, new romances may blossom for certain people. Stress and worry are brought on by a baby's health. Later on, you'll experience religious emotions that will prompt you to pray for divine blessings.

**MARCH 26** : Ganesha says gains in the workplace are almost guaranteed, but rising costs will worry you. There will be instances when your accomplishments surpass your expectations, but for the most part, you'll have to work really hard to get the bare minimum of outcomes. Individuals who have supported you up till now will remain by your side. Your relationship with your spouse will be really pleasant and on an even keel, but you must control yourself to avoid being overly stubborn, which will lead to uncomfortable situations at home. Romantic alliances will grow and get stronger.

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**C**haitra Navratri, also known as Vasant Navratri, is a Hindu festival celebrated in the month of Chaitra (March–April) every year. It is a nine-day festival that honors the nine forms of Goddess Durga or Shakti. It marks the beginning of the Hindu New Year. During this festival, devotees fast, pray and perform traditional rituals. The nine days of the festival are dedicated to nine different forms of the Goddess and each day is devoted to worshipping a different form. On the ninth day, the Goddess is worshipped in her full form. Chaitra Navratri is celebrated with much enthusiasm across India and is a joyous occasion for Hindus.

#### Origin of Vasant Navaratri

In days long gone by, King Dhruvasindu was killed by a lion when he went out hunting. Preparations were made to crown the prince Sudarsana.

But, King Yudhajit of Ujjain, the father of Queen Lilavati, and King Virasena of Kalinga, the father of Queen Manorama, were each desirous of securing the Kosala throne for their respective grandsons. They fought with each other. King Virasena was killed in the battle. Manorama fled to the forest with Prince Sudarsana and a eunuch. They took refuge in the hermitage of Rishi Bharadwaja.

The victor, King Yudhajit, thereupon crowned his grandson, Satrujit, at Ayodhya, the capital of Kosala. He then went out in search of Manorama and her son. The Rishi said that he would not give up those who had sought protection under him. Yudhajit became furious. He wanted to attack the Rishi. But, his minister told him about the truth of the Rishi's statement.

Yudhajit returned to his capital

Fortune smiled on Prince Sudarsana. A hermit's son came one day and called the eunuch by his Sanskrit name Kleeba. The prince caught the first syllable Kli and began to pronounce it as Kleem. This syllable happened to be a powerful, sacred Mantra. It is the Bija Akshara (root syllable) of the Divine Mother.

The Prince obtained peace of mind and the Grace of the Divine Mother by the repeated utterance of this syllable. Devi appeared to him, blessed him and granted him divine weapons and an inexhaustible quiver.

The emissaries of the king of Benares or Varanasi passed through the Ashram of the Rishi and, when they saw the noble prince Sudarsana, they recommended him to Princess Sashikala, the daughter of the king of Benares.

The ceremony at which the princess was to choose her spouse was arranged. Sashikala at once chose Sudarsana. They were duly wedded. King Yudhajit, who had been present at the function, began to fight with the king of Benares. Devi helped Sudarsana and his father-in-law. Yudhajit mocked Her, upon which Devi promptly reduced Yudhajit and his army to ashes.

Thus Sudarsana, with his wife and his father-in-law, praised Devi. She was highly pleased and ordered them to perform Her worship with havan and other means during the Vasanta Navaratri. Then She disappeared.

Prince Sudarsana and Sashikala returned to the Ashram of Rishi Bharadwaja. The great Rishi blessed them and crowned Sudarsana as the king of Kosala. Sudarsana and Sashikala and the king of Benares implicitly carried out the commands of the Divine Mother and performed worship in a splendid manner during the Vasanta Navaratri.

Sudarsana's descendants, namely, Sri Rama and Lakshmana, also performed worship of Devi during the Vasanta Navaratri and were blessed with Her assistance in the recovery of Sita.

#### Why Celebrate Vasanta Navaratri

It is the duty of the devout Hindus to worship the Devi (Mother Goddess) for both material and spiritual welfare during the Vasanta Navaratri and follow the noble example set by Sudarsana and Sri Rama. He cannot achieve anything without the Divine Mother's blessings. So, sing Her praise and repeat Her Mantra and Name. Meditate on Her form. Pray and obtain Her eternal Grace and blessings. May the Divine Mother bless you with all divine wealth!"

# Chaitra Navratri



#### Important information

**Navratri Day 1: Maa Shailputri Puja Wednesday, 22**

**Navratri Day 2: Maa Brahmacharini Puja Thursday, 23**

**Navratri Day 3: Maa Chandraghanta Puja Friday, 24**

**Navratri Day 4: Maa Kushmanda Puja Saturday, 25**

**Navratri Day 5: Maa Skandamata Puja Sunday, 26**

**Navratri Day 6: Maa Katyayani Puja Monday, 27**

**Navratri Day 7: Maa Kalaratri Puja Tuesday, 28**

**Navratri Day 8: Maa Maha Gauri Puja Wednesday, 29**

**Navratri Day 9: Maa Siddhidatri Puja Thursday, 30**

**Navratri Day 10: Navratri Parana Friday, 31**

#### Significance

During Navaratri, we invoke the energy aspect of God in the form of the universal mother, commonly referred to as "Durga," which literally means the remover of miseries of life. She is also referred to as "Devi" (goddess) or "Shakti" (energy or power).

It is this energy, which helps God to proceed with the work of creation, preservation and destruction. In other words, you can say that God is motionless, absolutely changeless, and the Divine Mother Durga, does everything. Truly speaking, our worship of Shakti re-confirms the scientific theory that energy is imperishable. It cannot be created or destroyed. It is always there.

#### Why Worship the Mother Goddess

We think this energy is only a form of the Divine Mother, who is the mother of all, and all of us are her children. "Why mother; why not father?", you may ask. Let me just say that we believe that God's glory, his cosmic energy, his greatness and supremacy can best be depicted as the motherhood aspect of God. Just as a child finds all these qualities in his or her mother, similarly, all of us look upon God as mother. In fact, Hinduism is the only religion in the world, which gives so much

importance to the mother aspect of God because we believe that mother is the creative aspect of the absolute.

#### Nine Nights & Days

Navaratri is divided into sets of three days to adore different aspects of the supreme goddess. On the first three days, the Mother is invoked as powerful force called Durga in order to destroy all our impurities, vices and defects. The next three days, the Mother is adored as a giver of spiritual wealth, Lakshmi, who is considered to have the power of bestowing on her devotees the inexhaustible wealth. The final set of three days is spent in worshipping the mother as the goddess of wisdom, Saraswati. In order have all-round success in life, we need the blessings of all three aspects of the divine mother; hence, the worship for nine nights.

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"If Hindus don't maintain Hinduism, who shall save it?"

"If India's own children don't cling to their faith, who shall guard it?"

"Indians alone can save India, and India and Hinduism are one."

contd from page 1

## India's Parliamentary Democracy on Test: Parliament log jammed with neither side relenting

The Lok Sabha worked for two minutes and 20 seconds in the pre-lunch sitting and 50 seconds in the post lunch sitting. The Rajya Sabha functioned for one minute and 55 seconds in the morning and 40 seconds in the afternoon.

Pandemonium broke out in the Lok Sabha right from the moment the House convened for the day. MPs on both sides tried to outshout the other. Trinamool Congress MPs were already in the well with black cloth tied around their mouths, accusing the Treasury benches of stalling Parliament for four days in a row.

Asking the protesting MPs to return to their seats, Speaker Om Birla said: "I want to run the House, I want to give you enough opportunities and time to speak. You have to go to your seats. You come to the well and then go outside and say that you don't get a chance to speak. This is not right."

The House was adjourned till 2 p.m. without even the procedural functions such as laying of the papers and standing committee reports. The post-lunch sitting was even shorter.

In the Rajya Sabha, Trinamool MPs sported black gags in the well and other Opposition members stood on their seats shouting slogans.

Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar's pleas to maintain order went in vain. In the afternoon, Deputy Chairman Harivansh faced a similar challenge. Even before the Upper House met at 2 p.m., the Trinamool

MPs made a circle around the table of the House. Watch and Ward personnel were assigned near the Chair. Mr. Harivansh adjourned the House for the day without taking up any business.

Meanwhile, in the Parliament complex at 12:30 p.m., Opposition leaders formed a human chain questioning the government's studied silence on the alleged stock manipulation by the Adani Group. Barring the Trinamool Congress, which did not participate in the protest, all major Opposition parties were represented, including the Congress, the DMK, the Samajwadi Party, the Aam Aadmi Party, the Rashtriya Janata Dal, the Shiv Sena (Uddhav Thackeray faction), the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, the Communist Party of India, the Communist Party of India (Marxist), the Revolutionary Socialist Party, the Indian Union Muslim League and the Bharat Rashtra Samiti.

The decision to form a human chain demanding a JPC probe was taken at a joint meeting of Opposition leaders convened by Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Thursday morning. Speaking to reporters during the protest, Mr. Kharge said, "Our demand from day one is that there should be a probe by a joint parliamentary committee but the government is shying away from it. What we do not understand is, when they have the majority, why are they afraid of constituting a JPC?"

Among the major Opposition parties, the Trinamool Congress is alone in not supporting the demand for a JPC probe. The party, while demanding a debate specifically on the risk that SBI and LIC funds face because of investments in the Adani group, believes that a Supreme Court monitored probe - which is already under way - will be more effective.

At a press conference later in the day, the Trinamool's Rajya Sabha leader Derek O'Brien said the Congress party needed to make up its mind. "In Tripura, you will be friends with the Left, that's your choice, in Bengal you will fight us tooth and nail... then in Meghalaya, before the election, you will write a litany on how bad Trinamool is. In Kerala, your friends in Meghalaya and West Bengal will become your enemy." The Trinamool also accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah of turning Parliament into a "deep dark chamber". "They don't want Parliament to run because they don't want to be accountable to the people," Mr. O'Brien added. (With inputs from The Hindu)

## India welcomes confirmation of Eric Garcetti as U.S. Ambassador

"Let me emphasize, we welcome the confirmation of Mr. Eric Garcetti as the Ambassador to India. We look forward to working with him to take forward our multifaceted bilateral relation," said MEA spokesperson Arindam Bagchi in response to a question from The Hindu.

Mr. Garcetti's confirmation had been stuck at the legislative level in the U.S. where he faced multiple hurdles, including allegations of sexual harassment by his chief of staff Rick Jacobs.

Mr. Garcetti's confirmation was expected since July 2021 when President Joe Biden nominated him to be the U.S. Ambassador to India. Further revelations on Mr. Garcetti came in a right-wing news portal Daily Caller that alleged he had close links with Chinese officials. At the same time, a 2021 video showing him speak on India's Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) also went viral. In the video Mr. Garcetti is shown arguing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that he will take up human rights issues in India during his tenure and said, "These will not just be afterthoughts for me...I have fought for human rights on four different continents and will be a core part of what I will pursue with my Indian counterpart." Responding to the video, VHP's national spokesperson Vinod Bansal told The Hindu that Mr. Garcetti's remarks on the CAA and the human rights scenario in India showed "his lack of understanding" of the Indian scenario.

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"We welcome his confirmation but his comments on the largest democracy in the world shows that he is not fully informed about the Indian scenario. It will be better if he forms a better understanding of the issues relevant to India before taking up the post of the U.S. Ambassador here," said Mr. Bansal alleging that there had been a spike in "anti-India "propaganda" in the U.S.

Mr. Bagchi, however, clarified that Mr. Garcetti's comments on CAA did not originate recently and said, "Our position on many of these issues are well known." (Source: The Hindu)

## Major US banks inject \$30 billion to rescue First Republic Bank

Some of the biggest U.S. banking names including JPMorgan Chase & Co (JPM.N), Citigroup Inc (C.N), Bank of America Corp (BAC.N), Wells Fargo & Co (WFC.N), Goldman Sachs (GS.N) and Morgan Stanley (MS.N) were involved in the rescue, according to a statement from the banks.

The deal was put together by power brokers including U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell and JPMorgan Chase CEO Jamie Dimon, who discussed the package on Tuesday, according to a source familiar with the situation.

U.S. regulators said the show of support was most welcome and showed the resilience of the banking system.

A round of financing on Sunday raised through JPMorgan had given First Republic access to \$70 billion in funds. But that failed to calm investors as worries of a contagion deepened with the demise of Signature Bank to follow that of SVB and depositors began moving cash to larger lenders.

First Republic Bank's stock closed up 10% on news of the rescue but its shares fell 18% in after-market trading, after the bank said it would suspend its dividend.

The bank's stock price is down more than 70% since March 6.

News of the rescue also helped boost Wall Street indexes, with JP Morgan, Morgan Stanley and Bank of America all up more than 1%, while the benchmark S&P 500 Banks Index (.SPXBK) recovered 2.2%.

(Source: Reuters / Pete Schroeder, Chris Prentice and Nupur Anand)

## Aussie radicals block entry to Indian consulate in Brisbane

"It is a matter of regret that reports of attacks on temples have come regularly from Australia over the past few weeks," PM Modi had said shortly after talks with Albanese last Friday.

Foreign Secretary Vinay Mohan Kwatra last Friday said, "PM Albanese assured PM Modi that his government had a deep understanding and appreciation of India's concern and would take all necessary measures to ensure that peace prevailed in their society."

The Australia Today quoted Sarah Gates of Hindu Human Rights as stating that "slogans were raised against Hindus calling them supremacists along with slogans of Khalistan Zindabad". The Indian diaspora is now the second-largest immigrant community in Australia.

(Source: TNS)



Located in the state of Tamil Nadu, Kodaikanal is one of the most famous honeymoon destinations in India. A Lakeside resort town of Tamil Nadu, Kodaikanal has a beautiful climate, mist-covered manicured cliffs and waterfall that come together to create the ideal setting for a perfect getaway. Kodaikanal means 'the gift of the forests'.

Nestled amidst the rolling slopes of the Palani Hills, Kodaikanal stands at an altitude of 7200 feet above sea level, and once you visit this hill station, you will find that every bit of what you have imagined it to be is real. Kodaikanal is a place you can go to take a break from the rigours of daily city life, and this hill station lets you sit back and connect with nature as you head out on biking or trekking trails or take a stroll through the vast forests surrounding the town.

#### Green Valley View

Formerly known as Suicide point, the Green Valley View offers a breathtaking view of the plains, deep valleys and hills. The mesmerizing view of the Vaigai Dam is an unforgettable experience. It used to be known as suicide point because of the dangerous valley which is dense and deep; below the point of more than 5000 feet drop.

Located at a distance of 5.5 km from the Kodaikanal Lake, the Green Valley View not just offers a gorgeous view, but is also surrounded by a lot of monkeys. On the way to the point, there are several shops which offer homemade chocolates, ornaments and a wide range of flowers.

#### Kodai Lake

Kodaikanal Lake is a manmade lake in the Kodaikanal city which is also known as Kodai Lake. Vera Levinge was the man responsible for the creativity and resources of this lake amidst Kodaikanal town. The star-shaped lake is centrally located in Kodaikanal and is surrounded by the rich green Palani Hills Range the main watershed for the lake. The lake is situated at an elevation of 2285m above sea level and has an average depth of 3.0m. The lake is at a distance of 3 km from the Kodai Bus stand.

#### Bear Shola Falls

Located at a mere distance of 2 kilometres from the Kodaikanal Lake, the Bear Shola Falls is a popular picnic spot in the region. This cascade is a seasonal attraction that comes to life in its fullest during the monsoons. An interesting legend behind the unique name of this place is that it was a favourite haunt of a bear who used to frequent this water body to drink water, hence imparting it the name Bear Shola Falls. Wrapped with dense forests coupled with the chirping of birds, Bear Shola Falls is a little heaven. Also, the forest area of the Western Ghats situated near the falls is a biodiversity hotspot where you can have a rendezvous with animals like monkeys and deer in the wild. The terrain around the Bear Shola Falls is slanting and uninterrupted by commercialisation, which makes it the perfect destination to go on a trekking adventure. As you approach the falls, you will encounter the hill path where you can reach by means of a motored vehicle. From there on, a concrete path leads the way to a short trek of around a kilometre which runs deep in the woods.

#### Dolphin's Nose

The Dolphin's Nose viewpoint in

# Kodaikanal: The princess of hill stations



Kodaikanal is based on a flat, protruding piece of rock that is shaped like a dolphin's nose. This forms a visible cliff at the height of 6,600 feet, where you can experience Kodaikanal at its best - plunging valleys, rugged terrain, clear skies, and the splendor of green.

Reaching this spot requires a moderate level 3 km long trek through the pines and rocks of the Palani Hill Range. It is possible to explore a nearby waterfall and a local village along the way.

#### Pillar Rocks

Situated in the 'Princess of Hill stations', Kodaikanal, the Pillar Rocks have become a lovely picnic spot. Constituting a beautiful mini garden; the place is named so as it has three vertically positioned boulders reaching up to a height of 400 feet. The aura here is full of affection and is evidence of a great love story. The 'white cross' which once existed on these rocks represented David Gell's excellent tribute to love. The view of rocks is not something to be missed. They stand as an untouched miracle for the tourists visiting Kodaikanal. The pillars are famous for providing bird's view of nearby



surroundings. The chambers between these two massive rocks are called the Devil's Kitchen. Fewer times you might find rocks covered with mist and clouds, but when the ways become clear nothing beautiful than this could be ever seen. Jutting straight away from the hills that surround them, the pillar rocks are majestic. You can come here, sit and relax as you soothe your eyes over the high hill ranges and clear skies. Moreover, do not forget taste the potato and onion bhaji which is served outside the mini garden.

#### Thalaiyar Falls

Also known as Rat Tail Falls, Thalaiyar Falls is located in the lush green slopes of Palani Hill ranges in the Dindigul District, in Kodaikanal. With a height of 297m, it is the highest waterfall

in Tamil Nadu, the sixth highest waterfall in India. There is a view tower in the park at the Dum Dum Rock, from where you can get a beautiful view of the falls and the Manjalar Dam. There is a hiking route near the waterfall.

The river water coming to the falls is from Perumal Malai village, through a 9 km downstream and is said to be clear. On the contrary, it may be polluted, and hence, visitors to the area are advised to avoid drinking it.

On a bright day, the falls is visible from the Dum Dum Rock viewpoint on the Batalugundu-Kodaikanal Ghat Road; where it appears like a white long and narrow strip of water on a background of the black rock cliff face. According to legends, Lord Muruga used to visit this rock on his way to the Palani Hills.

Source: Holidify



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## Seattle Seahawks secure backup plan, re-sign Drew Lock for 1 year in \$4 million deal

The Seattle Seahawks have made another move to solidify their quarterback roster, agreeing to re-sign Drew Lock to a one-year deal. This news was reported by NFL Media, which stated that Lock's new contract would be worth \$4 million in 2022, with incentives that could raise it to \$7.5 million for next season.

General manager John Schneider later confirmed the news on his Seattle radio show, stating that the team is excited to have Lock back as their backup quarterback. "We have a lot of confidence in Drew's abilities, and we believe he has a bright future ahead of him," Schneider said.

Lock was acquired from the Denver Broncos in a blockbuster trade involving Seahawks all-time passing leader, Russell Wilson. Last summer, he battled veteran Geno Smith for Seattle's top QB spot, but Smith won the job and took every snap at the position. Lock's only action with the Seahawks on the field was during the preseason, where he went 24 of 39 for 273 yards with three touchdowns and three interceptions.

A second-round pick in 2019 out of Missouri, Lock showed promise by going 4-1 in five rookie starts for Denver, throwing seven touchdown passes while getting intercepted just three times. However, he lost 12 of his 16 starts over the following two seasons as his play was marked by inconsistency. He threw 15 passes in 2020, tied with Carson Wentz for most in the league.

Despite Lock's struggles, the Seahawks believe that he has the potential to become a top quarterback in the league. With veteran Geno Smith returning on a three-year, \$75 million deal after his surprising Pro Bowl campaign in 2022, Lock will continue to develop his skills as Seattle's backup QB.

## Barcelona can virtually clinch Liga title in decisive Clasico

Xavi Hernandez and his Barcelona side can take a decisive step towards winning La Liga on Sunday -- where a Clasico victory over Real Madrid would send them 12 points clear of the champions.

The Catalans have not won the Spanish title since Ernesto Valverde was at the helm in 2019 and expanding the gap on their bitter rivals in second would virtually clinch it.

Madrid won the first La Liga Clasico 3-1 in October but Xavi's side have vastly improved since then.

The coach is desperate to win the league title to validate the team's growth, while for the club it would represent a swift return on their outlay last summer.

Despite their financial crisis, Barcelona signed Robert Lewandowski, Jules Kounde, Raphinha and other players by selling off future television rights in a move some blasted for gambling with the club's future.

Champions League group-stage elimination, followed by a Europa League knock-out by Manchester United, confirmed Barcelona still have a long way to go, but they have made significant progress.

Beating Real Madrid 3-1 in the Spanish Super Cup final in January in Saudi Arabia earned Xavi his first trophy as coach, and the performance was dominant. By contrast, when the teams met earlier March in the Copa del Rey semi-final first leg, Madrid had the better of the game, but Barcelona still scraped a 1-0 win.

# WPL: All-round show by Ashleigh Gardner in Gujarat Giants win

MUMBAI (TIP)

Ashleigh Gardner justified her top billing among the overseas recruits with a superb all-round performance that ensured a hard-fought 11-run victory over Delhi Capitals in a Women's Premier League match, here on Thursday, March 16.

After setting a below-par target of 148 for Delhi Capitals to win, Gujarat fought back well with an inspired show with the ball and in the field to bowl the second-placed team out for 136 in 18.4 overs here on a breezy night at the Brabourne Stadium.

Gardner first scored 51 off 33 balls with the bat and then took 2/19 in 3.4 overs under pressure to ease the road to victory for Giants, who have now leapfrogged RCB once again to stay fourth in five-team table. While DC's points tally remains 8 from 6 games, GG now have 4 points from six games.

The victory also ensured that Giants remained in contention for a place in the play-offs.

Arundhati Reddy (25) and Shikha Pandey (8 not out) kept Delhi's hopes alive till late in the game with their 35-run ninth-wicket stand, but Gujarat managed to pull off a favourable result with Kim Garth (4-0-18-2) and Gardner producing impressive spells.

Reddy and Pandey got together when Delhi were exactly 48 runs away from win with more than five overs left and batted sensibly without any element of risk but Garth eventually ended their association.



Gujarat Giants players celebrate the wicket of Delhi Capitals player Marizanne Kapp during 2023 WPL match between Gujarat Giants and Delhi Capitals in Mumbai, on Thursday, March 16, 2023. PTI

Reddy, who struck four fours in her 17-ball 25, played one shot too many as she was caught at cover when Delhi needed another 13 to win and Gardner took the final wicket of Yadav to seal the game.

Delhi made a shaky start losing dashing batter Shafali Verma (8) and Meg Lanning (18) inside the Powerplay, and also Alice Capsey, who was run out after a promising 11-ball 22 with two fours and as many sixes.

While Shafali was cleaned up by left-arm spinner Tanuja Kanwar, Lanning was guilty of playing across the line and was pinned

leg-before the wickets off Gujarat Giants captain Sneha Rana.

Capsey was the victim of a poor call for a single with Jemimah Rodrigues when there was none, as she was run out even before she could put her bat down on the ground to drag it in.

Earlier in the first half of the contest, half-centuries from Beth Mooney's replacement Laura Wolvaardt (57) and Gardner (51 not out) took Gujarat Giants to a total of 147/4 in their 20 overs, after they had crawled to an ordinary 53/2 halfway through.

Source: PTI

## Indian men's hockey team climb to No. 4 in world rankings

NEW DELHI (TIP)

The Indian men's hockey team jumped two places to fourth in the latest FIH rankings on the back of its rare back-back-wins against world champions Germany and Australia in the Pro League matches in Rourkela.

Significantly, India moved ahead of hockey powerhouse Australia, who dropped one place to fifth.

Germany, who were on top spot after winning World Cup title in Odisha in January, also slipped two places to third spot after losing back-to-back matches to India.

India won all their four matches—two each against Germany and Australia—in their FIH Pro League matches played at the Birsa Munda Stadium, the world's largest all-seater venue.

This is less than two months after



India made a shocking last 16 exit in the World Cup held here and in Bhubaneswar in January.

India won both the double-legged matches against Germany 3-2 and 6-3 while they beat Australia 5-4 and 4-3 in penalty shootout (after 2-2 in regulation time) in the first and second games.

Not only the all-win performance took India to the top of the FIH Pro League points table, the side led by

Harmanpreet Singh jumped two places from earlier sixth to fourth in the latest FIH rankings.

The Netherlands, who won bronze in the World Cup, are at the top spot while runners-up Belgium occupy the second place in the latest rankings.

"These things (world ranking) don't matter to us so much. We don't keep this in mind when we play. Our only priority was to convert our chances and keep the pressure on the opponent," India captain Harmanpreet Singh said.

"Some of the youngsters who got an opportunity to show their talent also stood up to the occasion and did very well for themselves as well as the team," said Harmanpreet, who is currently the leading goal-scorer in the ongoing FIH Pro League with 11 goals, ahead of Belgium's Alexander Hendrickx (six goals). Source: PTI

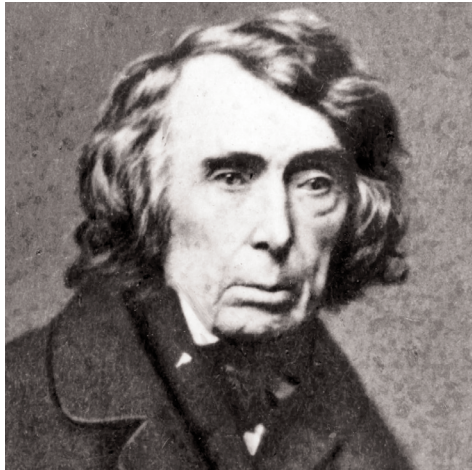
# History This Week

MARCH 17-23, 2023

## March 17

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

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



Roger B. Taney

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

## March 18

March 18, 1974 - The five-month-old Arab oil embargo against the U.S. was lifted. The embargo was in retaliation for American support of Israel during the Yom Kippur War of 1973 in which Egypt and Syria suffered a crushing defeat. In the U.S., the resulting embargo had caused long lines at gas stations as prices soared 300 percent amid shortages and a government ban on Sunday gas sales.



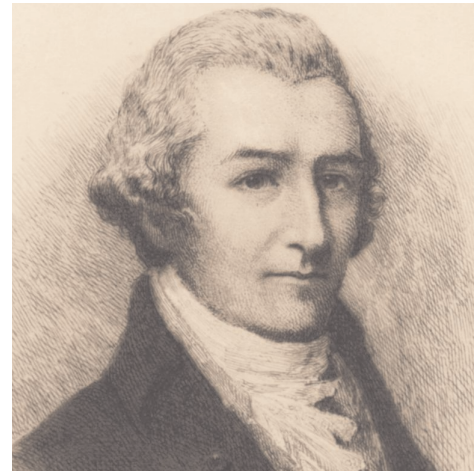
Grover Cleveland

Birthdays - Grover Cleveland (1837-1908) the 22nd and 24th U.S. president was born in Caldwell, New Jersey. He was the only president to serve two nonconsecutive terms and was also the only president to be married in the White House.

## March 19

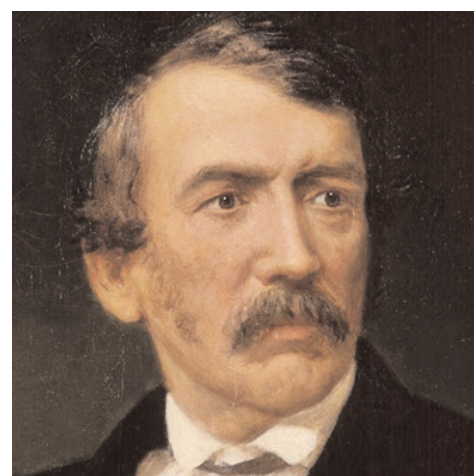
March 19, 2003 - The United States launched an attack against Iraq to topple dictator Saddam Hussein from power. The attack commenced with aerial strikes against military sites, followed the next day by an invasion of southern

Iraq by U.S. and British ground troops. The troops made rapid progress northward and conquered the country's capital, Baghdad, just 21 days later, ending the rule of Saddam.



William Bradford

Birthdays - William Bradford (1589-1657) was born in Yorkshire, England. He sailed aboard the Mayflower during its 66-day voyage from Plymouth, England to Massachusetts in 1620. The small ship carried over 100 passengers and a crew of 30. It was originally bound for Virginia but landed far north on Cape Cod. The Mayflower Compact was then drawn up as a form of government. Bradford became the first governor of the new Plymouth Colony, serving a total of 30 years, and was largely responsible for its success.



David Livingstone

Birthdays - Explorer and medical missionary David Livingstone (1813-1873) was born in Blantyre, Scotland. He arrived at Cape Town, Africa, in 1841 and began extensive missionary explorations, often traveling into areas that had never seen a white man. In his later years, he sought the source of the Nile River. He also became the subject of the famous search by news correspondent Henry Stanley who located him in 1871 near Lake Tanganyika in Africa after a difficult search and simply asked, "Dr. Livingstone, I presume?"

Birthdays - Wyatt Earp (1848-1929) was born in Monmouth, Illinois. He became a legendary figure in the Wild West as a lawman and gunfighter, best known for the shootout at the O.K. Corral in 1881, in which the Earp brothers (Wyatt, Virgil and Morgan) fought and defeated the Ike Clanton gang.



William Jennings Bryan

Birthdays - American politician William Jennings Bryan (1860-1925) was born in Salem, Illinois. He was defeated three times as a candidate for the presidency. He advocated a "free silver" monetary standard through unlimited coinage of silver rather than the gold standard. During a speech at the 1896 Democratic convention he electrified the delegates, stating, "You shall not press down upon the brow of labor this crown of thorns. You shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold!" In 1925, he was the successful prosecutor in the Scopes 'monkey' trial in which a teacher was convicted of violating Tennessee's Anti-Evolution Bill forbidding the teaching of the theory of evolution. However, he died just 5 days after the verdict.

## March 20

March 20, 1995 - A nerve gas attack occurred on the Tokyo subway system during rush hour resulting in 12 persons killed and 5,000 injured. Japanese authorities later arrest the leader and members of a Japanese religious cult suspected in the attack.



B.F. Skinner

Birthdays - American psychologist B.F. Skinner (1904-1990) was born in Susquehanna, Pennsylvania. He pioneered theories of behaviorism and developed the Skinner box, a controlled environment for studying behavior.

## March 21

March 21, 1918 - During World War I, the Second Battle of the Somme began as German General Erich von Ludendorff launched an all-out drive to win the war. The battle began with a five-hour artillery barrage followed by a rush of

German troops. The offensive lasted until April 6th and resulted in the Germans gaining about 35 miles of territory. Allied and German casualty figures for both battles approached 500,000.

March 21, 1943 - A suicide/assassination plot by German Army officers against Hitler failed as the conspirators were unable to locate a short fuse for the bomb which was to be carried in the coat pocket of General von Gersdorff to ceremonies Hitler was attending.



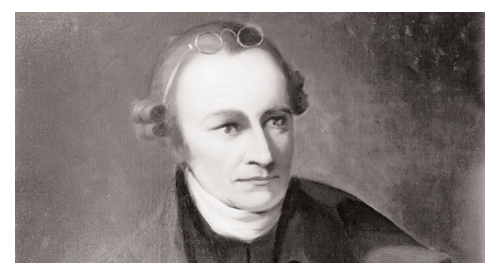
Johann Sebastian Bach

Birthdays - Organist and composer Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) was born in Eisenach, Germany. His output included thousands of compositions, many used in churches. Among his best known works; The Brandenburg Concertos for orchestra, The Well-Tempered Clavier for keyboard, the St. John and St. Matthew passions, and the Mass in B Minor.

## March 22

March 22, 1972 - The Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was passed by the U.S. Senate and then sent to the states for ratification. The ERA, as it became known, prohibited discrimination on the basis of gender, stating, "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex," and that "the Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article." Although 22 of the required 38 states quickly ratified the Amendment, opposition arose over concerns that women would be subject to the draft and combat duty, along with other legal concerns. The ERA eventually failed (by 3 states) to achieve ratification despite an extension of the deadline to June 1982.

## March 23



March 23, 1775 - Patrick Henry ignited the American Revolution with a speech before the Virginia convention in Richmond, stating, "I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty, or give me death!"

# GOPIO International Team Sworn-in with Community Leader Lal Motwani as the New President

MARCH 16, 2023

**STAMFORD, CT (TIP):** Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO) conducted its election last month and the new team was sworn-in on March 4th at a virtual Zoom ceremony with veteran community leader from New York Mr. Lal Motwani as its president. Motwani has been a Founder Life member from GOPIO inception in 1989 and was serving as the International Coordinator-at-Large and later as Executive Trustee of GOPIO Foundation in his last term. Others sworn in at the ceremony are media and community leader Mr. Umesh Chandra from Brisbane, Australia as Executive Vice President; Los Angeles area community leader Kewal Kanda as Vice President, New Jersey businessman Prakash Shah as Global Ambassador and former IBM official and community activist Ms. Jasbir 'Nami' Kaur as International Coordinator-at-Large.

Five more Regional International Coordinators were sworn-in as follows: Businessman Roger Latchman from Johannesburg, South Africa as Africa Coordinator; Engineering Entrepreneur Deo Gosine (Trinidad and New York) as Caribbean Coordinator; Real Estate Investor Ashok Madan of Southern California as North America Coordinator; former engineer Harmohan Singh Walia of Sydney,



GOPIO Officials who were sworn-in early this month.

TOP ROW: Lal Motwani, Umesh Chandra, Kewal Kanda, Prakash Shah and Nami Kaur.

BOTTOM ROW: Roger Latchman, Deo Gosine, Ashok Madan, Harmohan Singh Walia and Dhiraj Ahuja

Australia as Oceania Coordinator and New Delhi businessman Dhiraj Ahuja as South Asia Coordinator.

The election was conducted according to the GOPIO bylaws by a team of the Interim Committee which was appointed by the GOPIO General Body Meeting held on January 14th consisting of Mr. Ram Gadhavi (Wayne, New Jersey, USA), Mr. Mahavir Arya (Sydney, Australia) and Mr. Mridul Pathak (New York). In a spirit of unity, nominees with multiple nominations withdrew from their multiple

nominations except one, making it a unanimous choice for all positions.

The ceremony started with a universal prayer song by Ms. Devika Gadhavi, who is a young professional working for the New York Times. Dr. Thomas Abraham, Chairman of GOPIO welcomed the participants from all continents and provided a brief introduction to the birth of GOPIO and many of its achievements in the last 34 years. Dr. Abraham also highlighted the great services provided by GOPIO Chapters during the pandemic such as

providing food to the frontline workers at the beginning of the lockdown, getting N95 masks to the hospitals, replenishing food pantries and sending oxygen concentrators to India when the pandemic was at its highest level.

"GOPIO chapters around the world have been doing a lot of organizational ground work in many countries to promote leadership in public service and the thrust have been to promote and involve the Indian Diaspora in the larger society and local communities wherever they live," said Dr. Abraham.

In his acceptance speech, President Motwani said, "We will soon activate those regions which are not active now and we will get all the councils to become active again. We need many volunteers to get involved in the Councils such as Human Rights, Cultural, Academic, Women, Science and Technology, Youth and Young Professionals, Media, Health and Wellness and on Seniors. We will officially launch GOPIO Chamber of Commerce (GICC) in different parts of the world."

Congratulating the new team, former GOPIO President Niraj Baxi said that the ceremony on March 4th signifies marching forward for GOPIO.

The program ended with a melodious Bollywood celebration song by GOPIO-Edison President Pallavi Belwarior.

# Chuck Schumer Promises Reversal of Medicare cuts and clear the Green Card backlog

MARCH 16, 2023

**NEW YORK (TIP):** Indian American community leaders virtually met Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer on March 13, 2023.

The meeting was organized by Dr Raj Bhayani, Mohinder Taneja, Sunil Modi, Dr Sunil Mehra and Govind Bathija.

Assemblywoman Jenifer Rajkumar, Consul General Randhir Jaiswal, Dr Sudhir Parikh, Dr Raj Narayan, Dr Raj Jinna, Bobby Kalotee and Dr Mihir Meghani along with 200 Indian leaders joined the meeting with the senator.

Dr Raj Bhayani, Sunil Modi and Mohinder Taneja moderated the meeting and welcomed the Senate Majority Leader.

Mr. Schumer updated about his India visit two weeks back. He was happy about his meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He applauded various programs initiated by Modi government such as gas connections and easy remote internet access empowering rural India.

He led one of the most powerful United States Delegation to India along with eight senators and several other leaders as part of the US delegation to India. Several initiatives were launched and stronger U.S. India ties were emphasized in view of



Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer with his colleagues on a recent visit to India  
Photo / Courtesy office of Chuck Schumer

the rising Chinese threat. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) said ties between the U.S. and

India are a "crucial counterweight to outcompete China" Among the countries' shared strategic

interests, Schumer listed "outcompeting China, combating climate change, increasing trade and deepening bonds between our two countries" as well as "close cooperation between the U.S. and India in areas such as AI, green hydrogen and advanced tech manufacturing."

The delegation visited several sites such as Raj Ghat in Delhi and Jaipur Foot in Jaipur and had dinner hosted by Anand Mahindra, apart from various joint meetings with Indian government.

"I strongly believe the continued and strengthened U.S.-India relationship will be the great story that will define the 21st century," Schumer said.

In reply to Dr. Bhayani's questions, the Majority Leader promised to reverse the Medicare cuts this year. And he assured that green card backlog will be cleared soon. He believes high skilled workers such as physicians should be given direct green cards instead of H1 or J1 visa and he will work on making it happen.

At the conclusion of meeting the Majority Leader promised that we will have such meetings every quarter to strengthen Indo US relationship and to address concerns of Indian Americans in USA.

# CHHAYA CDC HOSTS CONGRESSMAN MEEKS

MARCH 16, 2023

**NEW YORK (TIP):** This morning, Congressman Gregory Meeks of New York's 5th Congressional District met with local small business owners, community leaders, and Chhaya staff at Chhaya CDC's Richmond Hill office. The Congressman's remarks focused on the indispensable role local, independently owned businesses play in our communities and reaffirmed his support for initiatives that bolster their success and stability.

Chhaya's Small Business program has provided essential assistance and services to a diverse population of small business owners in Queens, including financial counseling, marketing and social media support, legal assistance, and more. Chhaya's team also provides technical assistance with grant and loan applications, as well as resources to help businesses navigate the changing regulatory environment.

Congressman Meeks secured \$150,000 in Community Project Funding to support this program, which will allow Chhaya to expand its services to more small businesses, help them stay open, and grow in the face of current economic challenges.



Congressman Meeks has a word with Annetta Seecharran, Chhaya CDC Executive Director and others at the Richmond Hill office of Chhaya CDC

"The \$150,000 in federal funding awarded to Chhaya CDC provides recipients of the small business assistance program with the financial support they need to operate when experiencing economic hardships," said Congressman Gregory W. Meeks. "I am excited about the many possibilities

that this funding provides for small business owners looking to expand and maintain their companies."

"Small businesses are the backbone of our communities, providing jobs and critical resources. As the city continues to change and transform at a rapid pace, these businesses are not safe from

displacement or gentrification. We are excited about this incredible opportunity from Congressman Meeks and this support is so meaningful as we lean in and focus on ensuring the stability of this community." - Annetta Seecharran, Chhaya CDC Executive Director

# LIRR amends service changes at Kew Gardens, Forest Hills stations to accommodate commuters

MARCH 15, 2023

**NEW YORK (TIP):** After reviewing newly-implemented service changes across Queens, The Long Island Railroad (LIRR) has once again amended service changes at the Kew Gardens and Forest Hills stations to accommodate commuters.

This comes in response to four Queens lawmakers - Assemblyman Andrew Hevesi, Councilwoman Lynn Schulman, Rep. Grace Meng, and Senator Leroy Comrie - who sent a letter to MTA/LIRR Interim President Catherine Rinaldi to facilitate a resolution.

Announced in February, the initial proposed changes from LIRR had re-routed service between Queens and Penn Station, to the newly opened Grand Central Station terminal on Manhattan's east side.

In a letter sent to the agency on Feb. 24, the legislators expressed appreciation of the agency's efforts to expand service to Grand Central, however, they did not believe the expansion "should come at the cost of service cuts...to long standing customers of LIRR."

Specifically, the cuts included elimination of early-morning train service from Kew Gardens to Penn Station; elimination of late-afternoon service from Penn Station to Forest Hills; elimination of late-night service from Penn Station to Forest Hills and Kew Gardens; and elimination of all service between Kew Gardens and Forest Hills.

"Our offices were initially made aware of these changes after our constituents were notified of LIRR alterations that would eliminate all service between Kew and Penn for westbound trains departing between 4:46 a.m. and 6:49 a.m., and arriving at 5:01 a.m. and 7:03 a.m., respectively," the lawmakers said in the letter. "These changes create a massive gap in coverage for early morning commuters and place unacceptable



The Forest Hills LIRR station, one of the oldest in the city.

Photo credit / QNS

burdens on families and seniors who have come to rely on regular schedules between these stations."

The lawmakers noted that their constituents would be forced to use the MTA's E/F lines at Union Turnpike on Queens Boulevard as an alternative, which adds at least 25 to 40 additional minutes to their daily commute.

"Alternatively, our constituents, many of whom are seniors and individuals with disabilities, would have to walk uphill from Forest Hills to Kew Gardens in all types of weather or take an earlier morning bus and then transfer to this station," the lawmakers said.

The lawmakers said that each alternative "creates additional burdens that are absolutely unnecessary" for commuters while there is a fully accessible and centrally located LIRR station in the heart of the neighborhood that can take commuters to their destination comfortably within 15 minutes.

As they continue communicating with LIRR, the lawmakers confirmed that westbound early-morning service from Kew Gardens to Penn Station, and eastbound late-afternoon service from Penn Station to Forest Hills had been restored.

As of March 14, the agency had been reviewing additional requests from legislators, including to restore service between Kew Gardens and Forest Hills, as well as late night service from Penn Station to Queens.

"We have maintained continuous contact with LIRR to keep concerns on their radar, and to LIRR's credit, agency leadership and staff have been incredibly helpful and responsive. These restorations in service will relieve huge burdens on commuters, and we're hopeful that additional restorations will follow," Hevesi said.

Meng thanked the LIRR for hearing their concerns and responding to the issues raised about the change in schedules that negatively impacted her constituents.

"LIRR customers deserve convenient service, especially when commuting to and from work, and we're hopeful that even more restorations will be made soon," Meng said.

Comrie thanked the MTA/LIRR for being "flexible and seeing local community input as a priority with the recent schedule changes," and working together to improve service for Queens residents.

Schulman said that mobility is a fundamental part of making the city function for everyone.

"I am glad the LIRR listened to our communities and made necessary changes to ease travel for the commuters of Forest Hills and Kew Gardens. We will continue to monitor the situation and keep the LIRR accountable to our constituents," Schulman said.

(Source: QNS)

# Residential parking permits to help the M.T.A.



March 16, 2023

Ashook Ramsaran

**NEW YORK (TIP):** New York Governor Hochul had proposed a multipronged plan to help fill the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's budget gap of nearly \$3 billion by 2025 through a mix of new revenue streams, including \$500 million a year from New York City.

But lawmakers shot down the pillars of her plan.

**BOTH THE SENATE AND ASSEMBLY OPPOSED HER PROPOSAL TO RAISE PAYROLL TAXES ON BUSINESSES THAT BENEFIT FROM THE TRANSIT NETWORK, AS WELL AS THE \$500 MILLION YEARLY CONTRIBUTION FROM THE CITY. THE SENATE ALSO REJECTED HER MOVE TO DIVERT REVENUES FROM THREE PLANNED CASINOS IN THE NEW YORK CITY REGION TO HELP THE AUTHORITY.**

Instead, the Senate proposed giving the New York City Council the authority to create a parking permit system in the city's residential neighborhoods, an idea that has been floated by some transit advocates for years but has failed to gain traction.

The city would be allowed to charge up to \$30 a month for a permit, and the revenues would be dedicated to the M.T.A. The proposal would give the Council the power to require permits in certain areas, with the aim of easing the difficulty that many residents have in finding street parking.



We request all to come and enjoy this color full evening of laughter and delicious food.

# RANA Holi Hasya Kavi Sammellan 2023



Dr Kirti Kale

Abhinav Shukla

Padma Shri Dr Sunil Jogi

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with the traditional rajasthani food including nice Preparation of **MILLET DISH** also.

07:00 pm - 11:00 Pm :- Kavi Sammellan

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Urban Development and Housing Minister  
Govt. Of Rajasthan, India

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1.30 PM Lunch

**(AMPLE FREE PARKING)**

**DRESS CODE: CASUAL**

Please RSVP by Wednesday, March 15, 2023 to  
Prof. Indrajit S Saluja at [salujaindra@gmail.com](mailto:salujaindra@gmail.com)

**Cell: 646-247-9458**

**ADMITTANCE STRICTLY BY INVITATION AND UPON RSVP**





**2023 CHEVROLET  
EQUINOX LS AWD**

LEASE WITH \$3,117 DOWN

**\$139** per mo.  
for 27 mos.

Stk# CH230308. MSRP: \$28,675. \$3117 down pymt + 1st mo pymt + bank fee + DMV fee + taxes.



**2023 CHEVROLET  
TRAILBLAZER FWD**

LEASE WITH \$3,117 DOWN

**\$149** per mo.  
for 24 mos.

Stk# CH230504. MSRP: \$25,595. \$3117 down pymt + 1st mo pymt + bank fee + DMV fee + taxes.



**2023 CHEVROLET  
TRAVERSE 1LT AWD**

LEASE WITH \$3,117 DOWN

**\$249** per mo.  
for 24 mos.

Stk# CH230520. MSRP: \$42,945. \$3117 down pymt + 1st mo pymt + bank fee + DMV fee + taxes.



**2023 CHEVROLET  
SILVERADO LT CREW CAB**

LEASE WITH \$3,117 DOWN

**\$279** per mo.  
for 24 mos.

Stk# CH230510. MSRP: \$55,345. \$3117 down pymt + 1st mo pymt + bank fee + DMV fee + taxes.



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Prices include all costs to be paid by a consumer except, tax, title & MV fees. Lease incl 10K mi with \$.25 cents per add'l mi. Must have current Non-GM ease in household to qualify. Lessee responsible for excess wear, tear and maintenance. See dealer for details. Offer expires 4/3/23.



## A World without Childhood Blindness



Only by doing good can one benefit  
-Rig Veda

An Eye Institute in Rajahmundry, Andhra Pradesh to prevent avoidable childhood blindness  
Vision of Dr. V.K. Raju, the Eye Foundation of America and Goutami Eye Institute

- \* 3.5 million + served
- \* 350 thousand + surgeries
- \* 30 thousand + on children



**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**



"On behalf of all my colleagues of the Wilmer Eye Institute in Baltimore, MO, I send my best wishes and congratulations to our friends in Goutami on this extremely important occasion. This beautiful facility will match the wonderful world class work of your doctors, nurses and staff in preserving and restoring the vision of so many patients. We in the United States are inspired by your dedication and admire your tireless efforts to serve so many who need your skills and compassion. Best wishes, Peter"



**POST SURGERY**



**PRE SURGERY**

Triples Prasanth, Susanth and Nisanth, who were treated by Goutami Eye Institute three years ago and gifted vision for life, as ROP babies under GEMROP (Goutami Eye tele Medicine Retinopathy Of Prematurity).

- Treating disease and vision problems
- Performing free cataract surgeries
- Screening infants and children
- Distributing glasses and visual aids
- Conducting Research
- Providing Education

Be a part of the movement. Donate now at [www.eyefoundationofamerica.org](http://www.eyefoundationofamerica.org)  
Tax Exempt # 55-0621735

The work by the Eye Foundation of America team started in 1977 and has spread from India to 21 different countries. Additionally, EFA Focuses on teaching and training of health professionals who receive the Foundation's support at every level.  
<https://youtube/B23VvUaloN4> <https://youtube/KiCzqLQe2VE>

"There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children". - Nelson Mandela

To know more about the work of Eye Foundation of America or to donate, visit [www.eyefoundationofamerica.org](http://www.eyefoundationofamerica.org)

ॐ सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah,  
सर्वे सन्तु नरिमयाः । Sarve Santu Niramayah  
May all be prosperous and happy!  
May all be healthy!

The Eye Foundation of America  
695, West View Avenue, Morgantown, WV 26505  
Phone: 304-599-0705  
[www.eyefoundationofamerica.org](http://www.eyefoundationofamerica.org)