

The INDIAN PANORAMA

We will bring out a special Republic Day Supplement on the occasion of the Republic Day of India, January 26. Please send in articles and advertisements by January 23, 2018. For any question, please call 646-247-9458 or email to editor@theindianpanorama.com

40% of foreign-born techies in Seattle Indians

SEATTLE (TIP): More than 40 per cent of the foreign-born tech workers in Seattle - which is home to Microsoft, Amazon, and Boeing - are from India, according to a media report. Silicon Valley is overly dependent (70 per cent) on foreign tech workers in IT occupation, it said.

(Source: PTI)

SC lifts ban imposed by some States on 'Padmaavat', citing freedom of speech

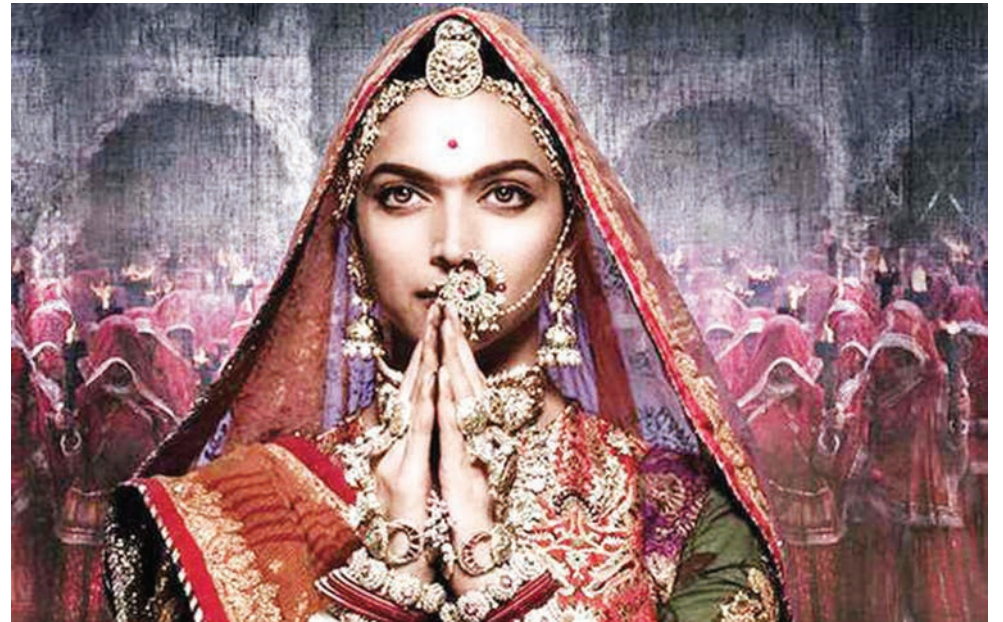
NEW DELHI (TIP): The Supreme Court, on January 18, paved the way for the nationwide release of 'Padmaavat' on January 25, as it stayed orders issued by the Haryana, Rajasthan and Gujarat governments banning the screening of Deepika Padukone-starrer film.

Noting that maintenance of law and order was the duty of state governments, a Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra asked states to provide the security needed for the film's peaceful screening.

The Supreme Court also restrained other states from similar ban notifications. It sought to emphasize that theatre and cinema were a part of right to freedom of speech and expression. "Let it be released... a movie

contd on Page 32

The official poster of the controversial movie Padmaavat in which Deepika Padukone plays Rani Padmavati



British Prime Minister Theresa May speaks in Parliament

LANDMARK BREXIT BILL PASSED

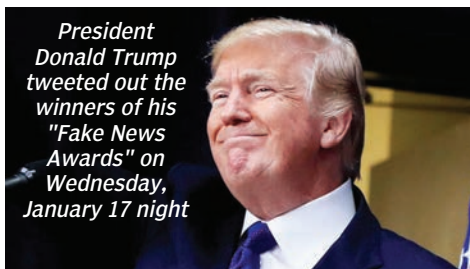
LONDON (TIP): British MPs gave the green light, on January 18, to a landmark Brexit Bill, after weeks of debate and a damaging government defeat, but the legislation now faces a battle in the House of Lords.

The House of Commons voted by a majority of 29 to approve the EU (Withdrawal) Bill, which repeals the 1972 law that made Britain a member of the European Union. "This bill is essential for preparing the country for the historic

contd on Page 32

President Trump Tweets out 'Fake News Awards'

CNN, ABC News, New York Times, Washington Post, Time among the awardees



President Donald Trump tweeted out the winners of his "Fake News Awards" on Wednesday, January 17 night

WASHINGTON (TIP): Announcing the much-awaited Fake News Awards, US President Donald Trump declared 'The New York Times' as the winner of the 'Fake News

contd on Page 32

Canada Lawmaker behind 1984 Genocide Motion is Ontario's First Sikh Woman Minister

The 38-year-old daughter of Canada's first turbaned MP Gurbax Singh Malhi was sworn in as Minister of the Status of Women on Thursday, January 18.

TORONTO (TIP): Harinder Malhi, the Indo-Canadian member of the Ontario provincial parliament and the mover of the 1984 genocide motion in the House last April, has been given a cabinet berth in the Ontario cabinet,

contd on Page 32



Harinder Malhi represents the Punjabi-dominated 'riding' of Brampton-Springdale

Damocles sword hangs on government running despite House Passing Short-Term Spending Bill

GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN BATTLE MOVES TO SENATE

WASHINGTON (TIP): The House, on Thursday, January 18 night, approved, 230 to 197, a stopgap spending bill to keep the government open past Friday, but "Senate Democrats - angered by President Trump's vulgar aspersions and a lack of progress on a broader budget and immigration deal - appeared ready to block the measure", said a New York Times report.

In the Senate, at least about a dozen Democratic votes would be needed to approve the measure, and there was little chance that those would materialize.

Democrats are intent on securing concessions that would, among other things, protect from deportation young immigrants brought to the country illegally as children, increase domestic spending, aid Puerto Rico and bolster the government's response to the opioid crisis.

The Senate held only a procedural vote on the stopgap bill late Thursday night, leaving for Friday a more consequential vote when Democrats are expected to block the measure.

(Developing story)



Gurvinder S. Sahni
Attorney At Law

GURVINDER S. SAHNI

ATTORNEY AT LAW

Tel. 718.846.3400
Fax. 718-846-2299
Email. gs@sahnilaw.com

117-07 101st Avenue, 2nd Fl. Richmond Hill, NY 11419



Andy Singh

516-441-7000
16 E. Old Country Road
Hicksville, NY 11801



Herman Singh

718-441-7000
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2018 Guru Nanak Prize Awarded to Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding

HEMPSTEAD, NY(TIP): A non-profit organization that promotes religious understanding in schools, workplaces, health care settings and regions of armed conflict across the globe has been awarded Hofstra University's 2018 Guru Nanak Interfaith Prize, Hofstra University President Stuart Rabinowitz announced, January 18.

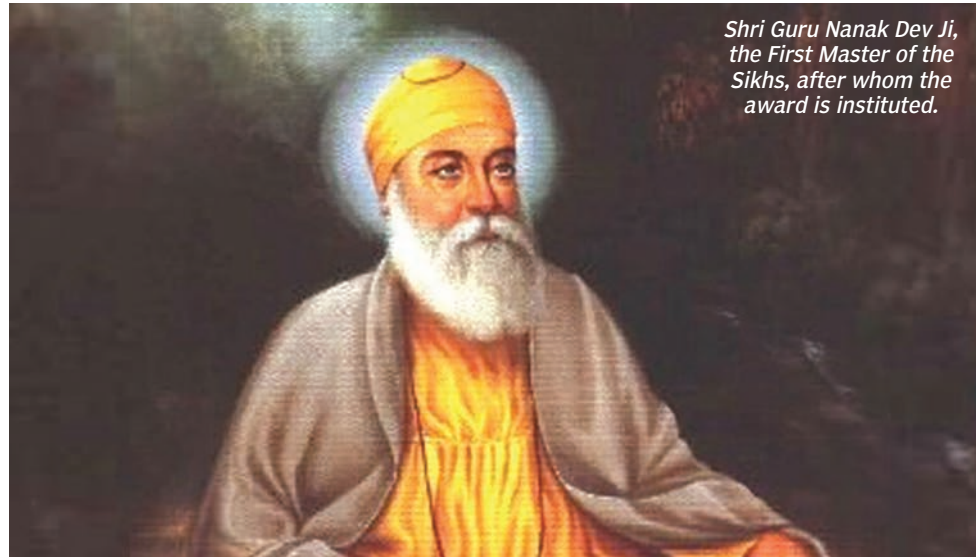
The Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding, founded 25 years ago and based in Lower Manhattan, offers programs and resources providing educators, physicians and corporate leaders with practical tools for addressing religious differences and creating cultures that respect religious diversity. It was founded in 1992 by Dr. Georgette F. Bennett, in memory of her late husband, Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, a humanitarian interfaith leader.

Through its Peacemakers in Action Network, Tanenbaum also facilitates and supports collaborations by a network of individuals from varied religious traditions who promote grassroots and interfaith peacebuilding efforts in armed conflicts around the world. The Network currently consists of 28 individuals from 23 regions.

"Tanenbaum is an extraordinary organization that embodies the principles of Guru Nanak," said President Rabinowitz. "Tanenbaum empowers people with concrete strategies that lead to greater religious understanding and inclusion in societal institutions."

Tanenbaum is also an inaugural member of the now 330+ participant CEO Action Diversity and Inclusion movement, and is in the third year of its public education campaign Combating Extremism, which aims to dispel stereotypes, inspire interreligious respect, and provide trustworthy information about current religion-related issues.

Said Dean Benjamin Rifkin of Hofstra College of Liberal Arts and Sciences: "Tanenbaum's accomplishments and mission are a perfect manifestation of the vision for this award, which is based on the conviction



that we have much to learn from the traditions of others."

The \$50,000 Guru Nanak Interfaith Prize is bestowed every two years to recognize significant work to increase interfaith understanding. The award will be formally presented to the Tanenbaum Center at a banquet in April 2018.

The first Guru Nanak Interfaith Prize was awarded in 2008 to His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso. Since then, eight individuals and organizations have been recognized with the Guru Nanak prize.

"Receiving the Guru Nanak Interfaith Prize is an honor of the highest order," said Tanenbaum CEO Joyce S. Dubensky. "To be recognized as an advocate for the same values embodied by Guru Nanak—justice, equality, respect and compassion—is an affirmation of everything Tanenbaum seeks to achieve."

The Guru Nanak Interfaith Prize was established in 2006 by Ishar Bindra and family and named for the founder of the Sikh religion. It is meant to encourage understanding of various religions and encourage cooperation between faith communities. Guru Nanak believed that all humans are equal, regardless of color, ethnicity, nationality or gender.

In September 2000, the Bindra family endowed the Sardarni Kuljit Kaur Bindra Chair in Sikh Studies at Hofstra University in honor of the family's matriarch.

Tejinder Bindra, speaking on behalf of the Bindra Family, noted when the award was inaugurated that Guru Nanak espoused a message of universal brotherhood at a time of increasing religious intolerance during 15th and 16th century India.

"It is in this spirit that the Guru Nanak

Prize was initiated," Bindra said. "If one can experience that universality then there is absolutely no room left for differences in race, color, caste, creed, religion or gender; and then as the Sikh scripture tells us 'I see no stranger'."

"The awardees may or may not be Sikh and may represent any of the multitudes of faiths or, for that matter, even no particular faith at all," he said. "It is their dedication that brings humankind to their shared destiny, common purpose and roots that they honor."

Indian American Businessmen Chintu and Chirag Patel feted as Persons of the Year 2017

NEW YORK (TIP): Chintu Patel and Chirag Patel, Co-Chairmen of Amneal Pharmaceuticals, were honored as Persons of the Year 2017 for their monumental corporate success and philanthropy by The South Asian Times on Jan 13, 2018 at a gala reception in Syosset, NY.

Joining in presenting the plaques to the duo were Consul General Sandeep Chakravorty, Congressman Steve Israel, and Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone.

Chintu and Chirag Patel have taken Amneal in 15 years from a family business to 5th largest generics drug company in the USA with \$2 billion revenue expected in 2018. They have also set up family foundations called Niswarth and Irada with large humanitarian projects in India.

They were featured as cover story in The South Times New Year Special issue of January 6-19, 2018. At the event last weekend at the North Shore Synagogue's grand ballroom, the two Patel brothers were introduced by Kamlesh Mehta, Publisher and Chairman of The South Asian Times.

Assembled at the reception to cheer the honorees as well as celebrate the remarkable success and contributions of the Indian



From L to R: Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone, The South Asian Times Publisher and Chairman Kamlesh Mehta, Consul General Sandeep Chakravorty, Priti and Chirag Patel, Chintu and Falguni Patel with Congressman Steve Israel right behind, former Hempstead Town Clerk Nasrin Ahmad, Mekkatti graphics President Subin Varghese and The Asian Era Chairman Jack Poola at the event.

American community were numerous community leaders, entrepreneurs, publishers and officials. Notable was the presence of two Padma Shri honorees Dr Dattatreya Nori and Dr Sudhir Parikh.

Congressmen Israel and Suffolk County Executive Bellone, while congratulating Chintu and Chirag, who they have known personally, praised the Indian American community's role in bringing the two great

democracies of India and US closer. Amb. Sandeep Chakravorty echoed their thoughts. Steve Israel said "Chintu and Chirag have not forgotten the past while keeping an eye on the future," reflecting on how they have retained the best of Indian culture and family values while having a long time vision to serve humanity.

Chirag Patel in his acceptance speech talked about the infinite human potential, adding "One side is business success, but the same thing applies to greater purpose in life." Tremendous growth of Amneal notwithstanding, he said, "We are not stopping, we have multiple projects in biotechnology."

Chintu Patel said so far they had kept a low profile but a persistent Kamlesh Mehta convinced them to agree to be Persons of the Year 2017 arguing that their story will be inspirational for the community and it also conveys the importance of family values. Chintu said their father, Kanu Patel, is their inspiration who is still active at 75. He also thanked his team at Amneal, which employs more than 5,000 people.

(Source: Based on a Press Release /Parveen Chopra)

Indian American Gurbir S. Grewal is the First Sikh Attorney-General of New Jersey



Grewal, became nation's first Sikh state attorney general after the Senate approved his nomination with a vote of 29-0. He was later sworn into office at a private ceremony

TRENTON, NJ (TIP): Gurbir S. Grewal, a prominent Indian-American lawyer has become the first Sikh attorney general of the US State of New Jersey after the State Senate approved his nomination unanimously.

"I never imagined that my life's journey could bring me here today," Grewal, 44, said during his confirmation hearing in front of the Senate Judiciary Committee on Tuesday, January 16. "I'm extremely humbled, and I'm looking forward to getting started," he said. "My first order of business is to introduce myself and get up to speed."

Grewal, became the nation's first Sikh state attorney general after the Senate approved his nomination with a vote of 29-0. He was later sworn into office at a private ceremony, NJ.com reported. Grewal, a registered Democrat, was made Bergen County's top law enforcement official by Governor Chris Christie in 2016.

Before that, he worked as chief of the economic crimes unit at the US Attorney's Office under former federal prosecutor Paul Fishman, the report said. Grewal told lawmakers he would continue the Attorney General's Office's efforts to stem the opioid crisis and improve relationships between police and the communities they serve. He said he would direct the Division of Criminal Justice, the office's prosecuting arm, to work with prosecutors in the state's 21 counties to coordinate response to the heroin epidemic.

He has run the 265-employee Prosecutor's Office since January 2016, working to combat opioid abuse with strategies such as pairing recently hospitalized or arrested suspects with addiction counselors. He also focused on improving relationships between police and the community. Grewal was nominated in December to serve as the next attorney general of the US state of New Jersey. He was named by New Jersey Governor-elect Phil Murphy. *Source: Business-Standard*

INDIAN ORIGIN IS BRITAIN'S FIRST WOMAN SIKH LAWMAKER TO BE APPOINTED AS SHADOW MINISTER

The Shadow Cabinet is the team of senior parliamentarians chosen by the Leader of the Opposition to mirror the Cabinet in Government

LONDON (TIP): Preet Kaur Gill, Britain's first woman Sikh Member of Parliament (MP) has been promoted to the Shadow Cabinet by the Opposition Labour party leader Jeremy Corbyn.

The Shadow Cabinet is the team of senior parliamentarians chosen by the Leader of the Opposition to mirror the Cabinet in Government.

Each member is appointed to lead on a specific policy area for their party and to question and challenge their counterpart in the Cabinet. In this way, the Opposition seeks to present itself as an alternative government-in-waiting.

Ms. Gill, 44, won her Birmingham Edgbaston seat for the Labour party in the June 8 snap polls last year.

In July, she was elected to the Home Affairs Select Committee in the British Parliament.

She was promoted to the post of shadow minister for international development in Mr Corbyn's New Year reshuffle of what he brands as a "government-in-waiting".

"We had no Sikh MPs prior to this election. So, Sikhs had no representation and we had no female Sikh representation. Parliament must reflect the people it serves," Ms. Gill had said at the time of her election.



The Opposition Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn has promoted Preet Kaur Gill, Britain's first woman Sikh Member of Parliament (MP) to the Shadow Cabinet

Since then, she has a busy tenure, being elected to the influential Home Affairs Select Committee - the cross-party parliamentary panel that examines the workings of the UK Home Office. Ms. Gill is also the chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for British Sikhs.

Her appointment was announced alongside

that of Clive Lewis as shadow treasury minister. Mr. Lewis had resigned as the shadow business minister in February last year over wanting a vote against the European Union (Notification of Withdrawal) Bill and was one of 52 rebel MPs to defy Labour party orders to back the bill in a Parliament vote.

He was also accused in a sexual harassment scandal but cleared of wrongdoing by the party late last year.

Others who moved up to the frontbenches of the Opposition include Jack Dromey as the shadow minister for pensions and Karen Lee as shadow minister for fire.

"Pleased to make appointments to strengthen Labour's frontbench which is a government-in-waiting. I look forward to working with them holding the Tories to account, developing our policies to transform our country and preparing to form a government for the many, not the few," Mr Corbyn said in a statement.

British Prime Minister Theresa May had announced a reshuffle of her top team earlier this year, leading to the appointment of three new Indian-origin MPs -- Rishi Sunak, Suella Fernandes and Shailesh Vara -- to junior ministerial posts.

Indian Origin British Sculptor Anish Kapoor Awards \$1 Million 'Jewish Nobel' Prize to Refugees

Anish Kapoor dubbed the Jewish Nobel - last year, for his commitment to Jewish values

LONDON (TIP): British-Indian sculptor Anish Kapoor donated \$1 million to five charities working with refugees worldwide on Jan 17, in a bid to alleviate a record-breaking global displacement crisis.

Kapoor, who was born to an Indian father and Iraqi Jewish mother, won the Genesis Prize - dubbed the Jewish Nobel - last year, for his commitment to Jewish values.

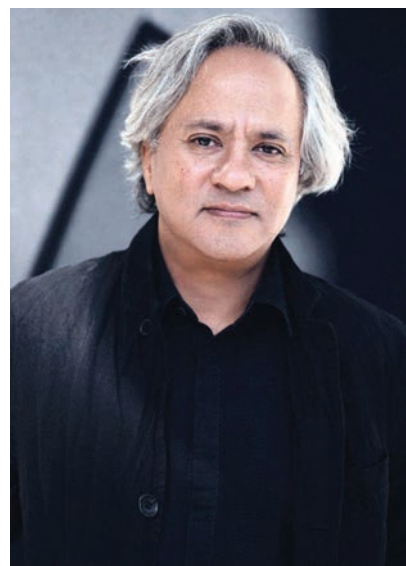
"Like many Jews, I do not have to go far back in my family history to find people who were refugees," he said in a statement.

"Directing Genesis Prize funds to this cause is a way of helping people who, like my forebears not too long before them, are fleeing persecution."

The United Nations (U.N.) says the world is witnessing the highest levels of displacement on record, with more than 65 million people forced to flee their homes, surpassing numbers after the Second World War more than 70 years ago.

U.N. efforts to agree a voluntary pact on safe, orderly and regular migration suffered a setback in December when the United States quit the negotiations.

"In recent months, awareness of the plight faced



"Directing Genesis Prize funds to this cause is a way of helping people who, like my forebears not too long before them, are fleeing persecution", says Anish

by tens of millions of refugees and displaced persons worldwide has fallen significantly while the refugee crisis continues unabated," said Kapoor, a longtime social activist.

Kapoor, who lived in Israel briefly before settling in Britain in the 1970s, won the Turner Prize in 1991 and created a Holocaust memorial for London's Liberal Jewish Synagogue.

Winners of the Genesis Prize, which is granted by the Israeli government, award \$1 million to charities of their choice, with the aim of inspiring the next generation of Jews.

One of Kapoor's grantees is the International Rescue Committee, which is working with refugees in Uganda - home to more than 1 million people who have fled war in South Sudan - and with stateless Rohingya in Myanmar.

He is also providing food for refugees in Greece and France and medical care for Syrian refugees.

Previous winners include former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg and the actor Michael Douglas. The 2018 winner, the Oscar-winning actress Natalie Portman, plans to focus her award funds on promoting women's equality.

(Source: NDTV)

Indian Americans Launch Impact Project to Help Run, Win and Lead in the United States

WASHINGTON, DC (TIP): Following historic wins at the ballot box in November 2017, a group of Indian American philanthropists, community leaders, and political operatives have come together to formally launch the Indian American Impact Project ("Impact Project") and Indian American Impact Fund ("Impact Fund"), collectively known as "Impact."

Co-founded by Raj Goyle, CEO of

Bodhala and former member of the Kansas State House, and Deepak Raj, Chairman of Pratham USA and founder of the Raj Center on Indian Economic Policies at Columbia University, these bold new initiatives will help talented and patriotic Indian Americans run for office, win, and lead. Raj Goyle will chair the Impact Project, a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization focused on leadership development and training,

while Deepak Raj will chair the Impact Fund, a political action committee that will endorse and support viable candidates who reflect the Indian American community's values.

"Despite rapid growth and professional success, for too long Indian Americans have been underrepresented in elected office from state capitols to the U.S. Congress," said Goyle. *(Read full story on www.theindianpanorama.news)*

Co-founder Raj Goyle, CEO of Bodhala and former member of the Kansas State House says: "At a time when our community and our values are under attack by xenophobic rhetoric and regressive policies, it is more critical than ever that Indian Americans build and wield political power to fight back."





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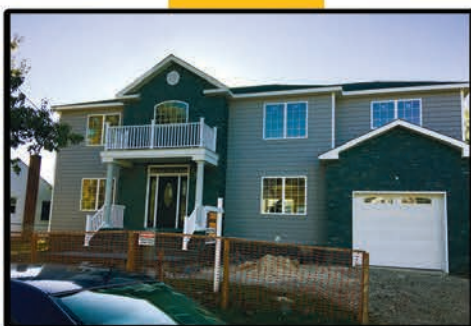
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New Executive of IALI Takes Oath of Office

LONG ISLAND, NY (TIP): The newly elected Executive Council of India Association of Long Island held its Oath Ceremony on 9th January 2018 at Merrick Golf Course, Merrick, Long Island. Congratulations to the newly elected President Mrs. Gunjan Rastogi and her Executive Team of extremely talented individuals, who are experts in their own fields.

At 7:00pm, team members welcomed the guests with piping hot Masala Chai with cookies. The program officially began at 8:00pm by singing of American and Indian national anthems, followed by swearing-in of the new President and her Executive Team by Honorable Dr. Neeta Jain, District Leader, District 25. The ceremony was witnessed by big turnout which included, past Presidents, dignitaries, community leaders, IALI members and invited guests. The event was well covered by media - TV Asia, Jus Punjabi, PTC, Indian Express to name a few.

Past President, Mr. Satnam S. Parhar gave a fabulous introduction to the newly elected President, followed by the President's speech, where she expressed her vision for IALI 2018, by continuing current popular programs and launching Child Enrichment Program, which will help children with science projects and their homework and enhancing Sports Forum with indoor activities. Furthermore, she intends to use diverse means of technology (e.g. Social media, Email etc.) to get in contact with each and every potential member for building a stronger, larger IALI network and disseminate information to the members in timely manner. She also wants to partner with other non-profit organizations to build a bond with the community.

Last but not the least, Gunjan Rastogi's speech directly



Gunjan Rastogi takes oath as President for 2018



The Executive

touched the hearts and minds of the audience when she used a quote from President JF Kennedy's inaugural address:

"My dear Team, do not ask what IALI can do for you but rather what can you do for IALI.

And our dearest Members, tell us, what we (IALI) can do for you?"

Program came to an end at 8:45 p.m. and delicious Indian Dinner was served to all attendees, which everybody relished.

Oath Ceremony program was hosted by IALI Executive council 2018 and team members. New Team: President-Gunjan Rastogi, Vice President-Lalit Aery, Secretary-Shashi Malik, Treasurer-Hargovind Gupta, Members at Large: Kuljeet Ahluwalia, Rajeev Chaudhary, Ekta Singh Dass, Sushil Khanna, Surin Manaktala, Balaji Nagaraj, Sujata Seth, Mohinder Singh, Event Advisor-Jyoti Gupta, Finance Chair-Vimal Goyal, Cultural Chair-Amita Karwal, Co-chair-Dr. Ujwala Shah, Membership Chair-Pradeep Tandon, Women's Forum Chair-Veena Lamba, Co-chair-Lalita Mansukhani, Shalini Pawa, Committee Members: Ravi Kanta Verma, Rachna Shahdarpuri, Rizwana, Sangeet Forum Chair-Anjana Kashyap, Co-chair-Saroj Aery, Senior Forum Nassau County-Vijay Goswamy, Co-Chair Surinder Kade, Senior Forum Suffolk County-Kanta Dutta, Co-Chair-Neena Sawe, Meditation Chair-Narinder Kapoor, Co-chair-Sujata Seth, Outreach Program: Mukesh Modi, Co-Chair-Dr. Jag

Kalra, Child Enrichment Chair - Neeru Bhambri, Committee Member -Hargovind Gupta, Public Relations-Ratna Bhalla, Communication Chair-Rajeev Chaudhary, Kids Forum Chair-Ekta Singh Dass, Hospitality Chair-Sushil Khanna, Sports Chair-Surin Manaktala, Media Chair-Indu Shyam Gajwani.

(Press Release)



A view of the gathering

INDIAN AMERICAN SURAJ PATEL ANNOUNCES CANDIDACY FOR US CONGRESS

New York entrepreneur and lawyer aims to represent the wishes of New Yorkers in Congress

NEW YORK, NY (TIP): Indian American Suraj Patel has announced his candidacy for US Congress in New York's 12th Congressional district.

"I didn't plan to enter the political arena myself until after this last Presidential Election when many of us realized we can't sit on the sidelines anymore," said Patel.

"My family moved here from India searching for opportunity, and they seized it when they got here. They worked their way up from security guards and store clerks to building a business and raising four unruly boys to adulthood. Their story and our stories need to be told so that we all remember how wonderful this country already is and what truly makes it great. So much about this country is inspiring except for its politics right now, and we have an obligation to change that."

Patel hopes to make voices from all over New York heard. "We need to fight to make our people's lives better, to push for what's possible, to elevate voices that have been ignored, and to finally give people a choice for who represents them."

Patel and the Committee to Elect Suraj Patel hope to encourage fellow New Yorkers to



Suraj Patel (left) with Barack Obama

take initiative and vote for one of their own. It has been 8 years since the last serious Democratic challenger ran for Congress in NY-12, and Patel aims to break this streak while aiming to raise the number of total

voters. With strict voting laws, turnout in New York City is among the lowest in the nation, with only 8% of voters participating in the 2016 congressional primary.

With new voices, ideas, and energy, Patel

aims to reach New Yorkers who want to make a difference and build a new electorate.

Through his website, visitors can make their voices heard by completing a brief survey to tell Patel's team what matters to them. The website also offers a link where New York residents can register as Democrats.

Details can be found at <https://www.surajpatel.nyc/>.

Patel is a New York entrepreneur, lawyer, activist, and ethics lecturer at NYU Stern. He is also a founding team member of The Arena and the founder of Creative Caucus, working to find and support great new candidates in their run for office. Patel is a board member at Atlas:DIY and served on the Obama White House Advance Team.

CONTACT SURAJ PATEL

Email: hello@surajpatel.nyc

Website: <https://www.surajpatel.nyc/>

Facebook: <http://facebook.com/surajforny>

Instagram: <http://instagram.com/surajforny>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/surajstar>

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Consul General Chakravorty extends support to Kean University Masters Program in Hindi Pedagogy

BY ASHOK OJHA

NEW YORK, NY (TIP): As hundreds of Hindi enthusiasts gathered on a chilled Saturday morning to celebrate the International Hindi Day at the Consulate General of India in New York, there were a few important guests the Consul General allowed special hearing. It was a matter of promoting higher education in learning that required special attention of the Indian Diplomat, himself a great listener.

Professor Janis Jensen, director of STARTALK projects at Kean University was anxious about the quality of teachers, especially for teaching a critical language, Hindi. "There is a great need to build capacity for the teaching of Hindi in the USA where most Hindi teachers lack formal teacher's training to teach Hindi to 21st century digital learners", said Jensen, who appealed the consul General and the Indian community to support the sustainability of the Masters' Program in Hindi pedagogy at Kean University, the only teacher preparation program aimed at preparing Hindi teachers for teaching in schools or preparing for doctoral programs.

Consul General Sandeep Chakravorty told Jensen that he would extend all possible support to keep her program running. He repeated this resolve before the gathering of community folks, who were attending the Hindi Day event that it was time to supplement our talk to support Hindi to really act by supporting meaningful teaching and learning programs outside of India. Chakravorty patiently listened to the other speaker Dr. Jennifer Eddy, who made a presentation about NYS Teacher Certification for Hindi 7-12 grades. She emphasized that the Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) in Critical Languages Education is a program of initial and professional certification combined into a 39-credit master's program that was designed for teacher candidates who will be responsible for designing their new language program. Professor Eddy said that the program was offered at Queens College located amidst the residential hub of people of Indian origin and was ideal for those interested in teaching Hindi. Chakravorty promised the support of Government of India for promoting Hindi outside of India.

The event proved to be very special for parents who left home as early as 6 am in order to reach the Consulate premises in time. "It was a rare occasion for students to showcase their skills in Hindi speaking at the Consulate", said Anil Dadheech, whose daughter Ria, a millennium kid who is very savvy using online tools while learning Hindi and practicing Indian culture. Ria performed a 'Ghumar' dance and recited the popular 'Jhansi ki Rani' poem.



Lighting the Lamp. From left: Ashok Ojha, Consul General Sandeep Chakravorty, Purnima Desai, Janis Jensen, I.S. Saluja and Jennifer Eddy



Ambassador Sandeep Chakravorty, Consul General of India, addressing Hindi professionals, students, parents and community folks to celebrate Hindi Diwas on January 13. Hindi Sangam Foundation and the Consulate joined hands to organize the event



Ria Dadheech, a student of Sangam-Franklin STARTALK students performing at the Hindi Diwas Celebration on January 13 at the Consulate General of India, New York, NY.

Photos by Jay Mandal- on assignment



Hindi Sangam Trustee Purnima Desai received a Certificate from the Consul General of India Ambassador Sandeep Chakravorty while Ashok Ojha, President, HSF looks on!



Professor Jennifer Eddy, Queens College, CUNY, guest speaker at Hindi Day event, January 13 at Indian Consulate, NYC



Millennium kids from Hindi Schools in New Jersey participated in a colorful Hindi Day event on Jan 13. Consul General Sandeep Chakravorty, HOC Jaideep, HSF president and event coordinator Ashok Ojha joined in.

Other students representing Educators Society for the Heritage of India, Hindi USA and Hindi Sangam Foundation STARTALK program expressed a great sense of pride and self-confidence as they presented their song and dance items. Nehal, a two-time Sangam Franklin STARTALK student reflected her classroom learning in real life as she summarized with reasons her favorite destinations to visit in India. "I learned at STARTALK program what are the important places I must see and why? It inspired me to think and express my own list of favorite places", Nehal articulated. "Our goal at STARTALK programs is to prepare our students innovate and use their classroom learning into expressing their viewpoints in real life situations. That is why presentations at events like this become so important. It offers our students real life experience to interact with native speakers of Hindi", said Mamta Tripathi, who serves as the lead instructor at Hindi programs in Franklin, Marlboro and Montgomery Townships.

Consul General Ambassador Sandeep Chakravorty distributed certificate to all participating students who came from various places in the New York Metro area. The participating students and accompanying teachers represented many schools including those run by Hindi Sangam Foundation, Educators Society of India, Yuva Hindi Sansthan and Hindi USA. Ashok Ojha, coordinator of the event elaborated upon his efforts to work together with language experts, officials and the Consulate for strengthening the forum of Hindi in USA. He thanked the Consul General for his support in promoting Hindi and helping to organize the Fifth International Hindi Conference in September 2018. Teachers and students led by Mamta Mamta Kandpal Tripathi, Akila Sekhar, Mainu Maino Murmu and Hema Ojha presented spectacular performance. HSF Trustee and Vice-Chairperson Purnima Desai Desai delivered a vote of thanks.


**GUEST
COMMENT**

**On Privatization of Air India:
Ready for sale**
The decision to allow 49% foreign stake in Air India sets the stage for its privatization

The Union Cabinet has approved a series of changes in foreign direct investment norms as the government prepares to enter the last lap of its economic policy-setting phase ahead of the 2019 election. Key among these was the decision to allow up to 49% overseas ownership, including by a foreign airline, in Air India. This comes just a little more than six months after the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs gave its nod for a strategic disinvestment of the airline. The relaxation in ownership norms clears the decks for possible bidders such as the Singapore Airlines-Tata combine and Jet Airways - with its overseas equity and route partners - to make a more detailed commercial assessment of the investment opportunity the state-owned flag carrier presents. For the fiscally constrained government, the decision couldn't have come sooner. With the Union Budget due soon and the government woefully short of its budgeted strategic disinvestment goal for the current financial year - as of end-November, only 28% of the targeted ₹15,000 crore had been realized - the hope must be for an accelerated timetable for the stake sale. Still, the fulfilment of a necessary condition for a strategic sale doesn't automatically become sufficient grounds for a successful privatization. Given the carrier's accumulated debt of about ₹50,000 crore and the fact that the interest of potential investors is likely to be focused on Air India's lucrative long-haul international routes and its fleet of more than 40 wide-bodied aircraft, disinvestment will be neither easy nor guaranteed. At the very least, the government needs to set a clear, unambiguous road map for the sale process.

The other reform cleared by the Cabinet was the crucial decision to put 100% FDI in Single Brand Retail Trading under the 'automatic' route, accompanied by the long-sought relaxation of mandatory local sourcing norms. This had been a major issue with potential investors including Apple, which had repeatedly urged the government to take a more benign view given the level of technological advancement incorporated in its products and the difficulty in finding local sources of supply at the requisite scale. The five-year holiday on the 30% local-sourcing requirement is expected to give companies setting up shop here adequate time to identify, train and even technologically assist in the creation of local supply chains. If this decision was going to be made, it is surprising it was not done in November 2015, when the Centre changed tack and opened up single brand retail to 100% FDI. An early decision would have helped, given the sector's potential for job-creation and technology upgradation. Still, better late than never.

(The Hindu)

By Mike Ghose

President Trump does not care about anyone but himself; he is reckless and insensitive with his words which cause unwanted social hostility between people and nations. He will be gone when his term ends, but we the people will have to live with the consequences of his words and actions.

I stumbled across an article in Times of Israel with the actual title, "When Jews came from 'shithole' countries." What caught my attention was the following sentence, "Sarna and Diner both said that similar fears animated the nativism of the 1920's and today. In both cases, they said, these derogatory comments were based on a few of the other from a foreign culture, who will disrupt white American society."

Teresa May, the Prime Minister of United Kingdom expressed the same fear in her speech in Philadelphia to Republicans upon her visit a year ago. She said, "I believe it is in our national interest to do so. Because the world is increasingly marked by instability and threats that threaten to undermine our way of life and the very things that we hold dear."

Times of Israel wrote, "While congressmen in the 1920s may not have used Trump's language, they were also opposed to letting in people from so-called undesirable countries - like Italians, Slavs and Jews from Eastern Europe. Chinese immigrants were banned altogether. Senator David Reed, for whom the 1924 law was named, also wanted to let in more immigrants from "Nordic" countries."

"This prejudice had been around for decades before the 1924 law. A report from 1891 prepared by Senator Henry Cabot Lodge lumped Jews, Italians, Poles, and others into "races most alien to the body of the American people." Times of Israel.

Recognizing this inherent phobia of a group of people from among the majority of the population, any population for that matter, we wrote at the Center for Pluralism, "The Center is committed to reassuring each other, including the disconnected ones among the White Americans, that together as Americans, we are committed to safeguarding the American way of life. No American needs to worry about losing his or her way of life. As Americans, we uphold, protect, defend and celebrate the values enshrined in our Constitution.

Although no minorities have made any attempt to change the way of life of the majorities, they need to make extra efforts to reassure the concerned group within the majority that they live their lives, and have not, and will not make any attempt to change the Majoritarian lives. Together let's preserve

AS I SEE IT

Pluralism is the Panacea to Trump's Profanity

“As a society, it is our responsibility to keep law and order and faithfully guard the safety of every citizen. Hate is one of the many sources of disrupting the peace in a society and it is our duty to track down the source of such hate and work on mitigating it. Pluralism is a development of an attitude of respecting the otherness of others and accepting the God-given uniqueness of each one of us. You are who you are, and I am who I am; let's figure it out how to make life easy for both of us”, says the author.

America's greatness that we all cherish.

The following speech was written for Hillary Clinton hoping she would deliver it; the full speech is at Huffington Post dated November 6, 2016, two days before the elections.

My priority is to reach out to my fellow Americans who had it good until the disaster from wars brought misery to them; the white Americans. We are going to find ways and means for them to recover from the difficult times they have endured while other Americans have prospered.

You have two stark choices in front of you; one makes the decisions from the seat of his pants. He does not listen to anyone, does not have the support of a single former President nor does he have the advisement of the sane voices. He can bankrupt the nation and walk away with no consequences, but you may be the one who gets stiffed. Your job and your life is an experiment to him, and the safety of our nation will be subjected to his whims.

Believe me, the Black Americans, Jewish Americans, Muslim Americans, immigrant Americans, and all other Americans want each one of us to prosper, particularly the disaffected White Americans. Our prosperity hinges on the prosperity of people around us and prosperity of nations around us. None of us will succeed if some of us are left behind.

I am committed to restoring justice to my fellow Americans who lost their jobs in manufacturing, Americans who live on farms, Americans who do not have an education or technical skills, men and women who are plumbers, electricians, repairmen, drivers, janitors and small business owners, and taking care of them is a priority of my administration. We will restore our glory days, and in the end, no American will be left out.

Pluralism is the panacea

As a society, it is our responsibility to keep

law and order and faithfully guard the safety of every citizen. Hate is one of the many sources of disrupting the peace in a society and it is our duty to track down the source of such hate and work on mitigating it. Pluralism is a development of an attitude of respecting the otherness of others and accepting the God-given uniqueness of each one of us. You are who you are, and I am who I am; let's figure it out how to make life easy for both of us.

The Center for Pluralism will become the energy to give a solid cohesive social structure to our nation. By the year 2025, there will not be an office, school, playground, college, restaurant, theater, train, bus or a workplace where people of different faiths, races, ethnicities, and national origins do not work, interact, play, live and marry together. This is bound to create conflicts in airports, public spaces, boardrooms, and in bedrooms as well as places of worship, workplaces, politics, eateries, and schools.

We have a responsibility to shape the future of our society, and we will continue to focus our energies on ensuring a safe America, where no one including your kids, grandkids or yourselves has to worry about his/her faith, ethnicity, race, gender or other God-given uniqueness and live his or her life without apprehensions.

The Center for Pluralism will be an antidote to Anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, Racism, Homophobia, Hindu phobia, Xenophobia, Misogyny and other phobias. Through research and activism, we are establishing a respectful space for the ideals of pluralism with the policymakers, interfaith groups, Republicans and Democrats and of course the media and you!

(The Washington based author is an Indian American, committed to building cohesive work places, societies and communities and offers pluralistic solutions. He is the founder and president of the Center for Pluralism. He can be reached at mikeghouse@gmail.com)

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PRESIDENT/PUBLISHER: Prof. Indrajit S. Saluja
VICE PRESIDENT: Chitagam Saluja
CHIEF EDITOR: Prof Indrajit S. Saluja
ASSISTANT EDITOR: Bidisha Roy
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CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS:
Baldev Singh / BJ Videos
Gunjesh Desai / Masala Junction
Jay Mandal,
Mohammad Jaffer/ SnapIndia

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The Indian Panorama
P.O. Box No. 190067, South Richmond Hill, NY 11419,
Tel: 646-247-9458
Email: editor@theindianpanorama.com
DALLAS EDITION
P.O. BOX 121695, ARLINGTON, TX 76012
Lovlien Kaurr, VP & Bureau Chief

E-mail tipdallas01@gmail.com; Phone: 646-247-9458
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INDIAN JUDICIARY IN TURMOIL

'No Your Honour!': An earnest plea to save India's faltering democracy



BY GEORGE ABRAHAM



Many of these actions by CJI have created dissension in the ranks that may point to not only selective justice for the powerful and well-connected, but are instances when the very lives of justices are placed on line. Although some may question the rationale for an open news conference, these four judges are known for their impeccable integrity and impartial judgments. It is also apparent that the Supreme Court is currently lacking any mechanism to evaluate the inner workings of the court or streamline the process to resolve deficiencies resulting from wrong decision making", says the author.



Many newspapers in India on Saturday, January 13th carried the story of disarray in the Supreme court of India with a beaming headline 'No, Your honour!'. India has indeed witnessed an extraordinary news conference by four members of the Collegium revealing the skew in the allocation of work and lack of transparency by Dipak Misra, the Chief Justice of India (CJI).

It has been reported that this is the first time in history that four senior judges - Jasti Chelameswar, Ranjan Gogoi, Kurian Joseph and Madan B. Lokur brought the inner workings of this revered institution to the forefront of the public debate. The most notable aspect of this development is that these four judges have asserted that they have done this to preserve democracy for India.

According to Justice Chelameswar, the second senior most judge, "we tried to persuade the CJI to take steps but failed. Unless the Institution of Supreme Court is preserved, democracy won't survive in this country". He also added that they were left with no choice and did not want people to accuse those 20 years later that they did not take care of the Institution.

To the keen observers of the recent political dynamics in the country, this development may not come as a huge surprise. The traditions and protocols that preserved the independence of the Supreme Court have been under siege lately like many other Institutions in the country. For those who are concerned about the very concept of equal justice under law, the Supreme Court in India is found to be their last refuge. If that Institution is also interfered with or politicized, India would join the ranks of banana republics and would effectively cease to be a constitutional democracy.

The recent turn of events was triggered by the actions of the Chief Justice who started allocating cases of far-reaching consequences without transparency, indicating selective assignment of cases to preferred judges. One of those cases involved the murder of CBI judge B H Loya who was hearing the Sohrabuddin Sheikh Murder trial in which BJP President Amit Shah was accused. He appeared to have mysteriously died in 2014. CJI on Friday allotted a petition seeking independent inquiry into the death to Justice Arun Mishra who is 10th in seniority.

Then there was the medical admission scam involving sitting and retired High Court judges. They permitted private medical colleges to admit students to MBBS despite Supreme Court bar. Justice Chelameswar set up a bench to hear it, but CJI sent that to another bench saying he alone has the right to draw up the roster. There was also a procedural fight over the norms to appoint HC and SC judges, and CJI sidelined the five-member constitutional bench from such a critical decision making by selecting a small three-judge bench headed by himself.

Many of these actions by CJI have created dissension in the ranks that may point to not only selective justice for the powerful and well-connected, but are instances when the very lives of justices are placed on line. Although some may question the rationale for an open news conference, these four judges are known for their impeccable integrity and impartial judgments. It is also apparent that the Supreme Court is currently lacking any mechanism to evaluate the inner workings of the court or streamline the process to resolve deficiencies resulting from wrong decision making.

Although the Modi Government at first declared that the crisis in the Judiciary is an internal problem for their own to resolve, on the following day, the media got the glimpse of Prime Minister's Principal Secretary Nripendra Misra at the residence of the Chief Justice Misra. However, the report also stated that the gates were not opened. At this point, one can only speculate the role the Government has played muddying the water that could pose a higher risk to the integrity and the independence of the Judiciary.

It has been quite evident from the recent pronouncements by



various BJP/RSS leaders that they are quite unhappy with the current constitution that identifies itself as secular. The Union Minister Ananthkumar Hegde speaking at the meeting of Yuva Parishad said: "I will be happy if someone identifies as Muslim, Christian, Brahmin, Lingayat or Hindu, but trouble will arise if they say they are secular". Although he later offered a reluctant apology for strategic reasons, he may have been speaking from the mindset of those who are in power today. They are very well aware of the reality that not only they would require 2/3 majority to change the constitution but also a friendly Supreme Court in case of a judicial review.

There are growing indications that the Modi government which came to power under the guise of a development agenda is busy laying the foundation for a transformed India based on Hindutva ideology.

To accomplish their long-cherished goal of total transformation, they either have to change the Institutions that stand in their way or entirely wreck it.

Supreme Court is not the only the Institution that is under siege in today's India. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ill-advised demonetization program shed light on the stress and strain that the Reserve Bank of India was placed under along with its Governor Urjit Patel. At one point, tensions have boiled over between India's central bank and the government over the monetary policy as the country was facing its weakest growth after its much-heralded demonetization policy. Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has often pointed out about the danger to the Banking System due to its constant modification of policies and procedures.

Another Institution that has come under considerable scrutiny is the Election Commission of India. The so-called delay to hold the election in Gujarat on time appeared to have given a lot of flexibility to BJP to suit its political ends. The ongoing complaints about the EVM machines, though not substantiated, have cast a pall over the integrity of the voting system and the legitimacy of the election itself.

There are those who fear that the freedom of expression itself is in danger as many in the top leadership of the BJP seem to de-emphasize its importance. Arun Jaitley, the Union minister, is on record saying that freedom of expression should be subordinate to upholding the sovereignty of the nation. There is little doubt that threats to freedom of speech have intensified as right-wing student unions associated with BJP started attacking student assemblies on campuses and supporting the government's effort to criminalize normal political activity as seditious. The independent media has taken a share of hits as well as in the case of NDTV which was raided in an investigation over bank fraud charges by CBI.

If democracy has to survive the public has to gain a better understanding of the importance of an independent judiciary, impartial prosecutors and unbiased law enforcement system that can ensure the rule of law and effective protection of fundamental rights and freedoms for every citizen regardless of color, caste, creed or religious affiliations.

Undoubtedly, Jawaharlal Nehru with the help of other eminent leaders of the independence movement built many of these institutions that stood the test of time. The emerging nations during that period such as Yugoslavia, Egypt, and Ghana failed in this regard, and results are quite evident for all of us to see. Nehru's vision and leadership were critical in shaping India as we know it today. For BJP, many of these independent institutions remain as stumbling blocks in pushing their agenda through. Only time will tell the fate of many of those revered institutions which form the edifice upon which India stands. In the meantime, I pay homage to those four Jurists whose courage and commitment to preserve our venerable institutions may have given us a ray of hope and probably, few reasons to cheer!

(The author is the vice-chairman of the Indian Overseas Congress, USA. He can be reached at gta777@gmail.com)

US will carry on with Pak military training

ISLAMABAD (TIP): The US has conveyed to Pakistan that the military training component of the aid will continue despite suspension of the security assistance package, media reports said on Thursday, January 18.

Foreign Secretary Tehmina Janjua informed the Senate's foreign affairs committee on Wednesday that the US will continue funding the aid components that support their national interest, including the International Military Education and Training (IMET) part, Dawn reported.

The IMET program, which focuses on military education, is meant to establish a rapport between the US military and the recipient country's military for building alliances for the future.

Under this program, Pakistan Army officers have been trained in the US at a cost of \$52 million over the past 15 years and an allocation of another \$4 million has been made for the current year.

While the IMET would continue, the US has frozen the aid provided under the programs that are more important to Pakistan, particularly the Foreign Military Financing (FMF).

The recipients of FMF can use the funds under this program for procurement of defense hardware produced by the US.

Foreign Minister Khawaja Asif, while briefing the lawmakers on the current state of Pak-US relations, said the relationship was not going "very smooth" and problems were persisting. "We have to stand up to those who accuse us of harboring terrorists," Asif remarked.

Early this month, Trump accused Pakistan of giving nothing to the US but "lies and deceit" in return for USD 33 billion aid and said Islamabad has provided "safe haven" to terrorists.

Lies and deceit

Pakistan army officers have been trained in the US at a cost of \$52 million over the past 15 years

An allocation of another \$4 million has been made to train Pakistan military officers for the current year

The US will continue funding the aid components that support their national interest, including the International Military Education and Training (IMET) part.

(With inputs from IANS)

Sri Lanka lifts 38-year ban on women buying, selling alcohol

COLOMBO (TIP): Sri Lanka has revoked a 38-year ban on selling alcohol to women and employing them in places where the drinks are produced and sold.

Finance minister Mangala Samaraweera signed the notification revoking the ban to restore gender equality and promote tourism, a government statement said.

The ban had been in force since 1979, the early years of Sri Lanka embracing an open market economy. But many businesses had employed women to sell and serve alcohol and sold alcohol to them in spite of the ban.

The government also decided to allow liquor outlets to stay open an hour later, until 10pm.

The decision could become politically sensitive with clergy in the predominantly Buddhist nation opposing liberalizing alcohol consumption. However, many Sri Lankans consume alcohol. (AP)

Pakistan summons Indian envoy over 'ceasefire violations'

ISLAMABAD (TIP): Pakistan on January 18 summoned India's Deputy High Commissioner JP Singh over the alleged "unprovoked ceasefire violations" by Indian troops across the Line of Control which resulted in the death of two women.

Director General (South Asia and SAARC) Mohammad Faisal summoned Singh and "condemned the unprovoked ceasefire violations" by Indian forces, the Foreign Office said.

Faisal alleged that the Indian forces fired across the Working Boundary on January 18 in Sialkot sector, killing two women - 45-year-old Perveen Bibi and 20-year-old Ayesha - and injuring five civilians.

"The Indian forces along the Working Boundary started indiscriminate and unprovoked firing with heavy mortars and automatic weapons since Wednesday night on the civilian populated villages in Sialkot," Faisal said.

"Despite calls for restraint, India continues to indulge in ceasefire violations," he claimed.

He said in 2018, the Indian forces have carried out more than 110 ceasefire violations along the Line of Control and the Working Boundary in just 18 days, resulting in the



killing of three civilians, while injuring 10 others. "This unprecedented escalation in ceasefire violations by India is continuing since 2017 when the Indian forces committed more than 1,900 ceasefire violations," he said.

He also urged the Indian side to allow the UN Military Observer Group in India and

Pakistan (UNMOGIP) to play its mandated role as per the UN Security Council resolutions.

India maintains that UNMOGIP has outlived its utility and is irrelevant after the Simla Agreement and the consequent establishment of the Line of Control. (PTI)

Bangladesh says it's hosting over a million Rohingya



COX'S BAZAR (TIP): Bangladesh has counted more than a million Rohingya refugees living in camps near the border with Myanmar, higher than previous estimates, the head of its registration project said today as preparations for their return got under way.

The Bangladesh army began biometric registering of the refugees last year after the latest mass influx of Rohingya from Myanmar, where the Muslim minority have faced decades of persecution.

The registration is aimed partly at aiding repatriation of the refugees - a controversial issue as most say they do not want to return.

Bangladesh says it wants to start sending them home next week and has reached an initial agreement with Myanmar to complete the process within two years. "So far we've registered 1,004,742 Rohingya. They are given biometric registration cards," said Saidur Rahman, a brigadier general with the Bangladesh army who heads the Rohingya registration project. Several thousand more have yet to be registered, he said.

The figures are higher than those provided by the UN, which estimates there are 962,000 Rohingya living in southeast Bangladesh, near the Myanmar border.

That includes the 655,000 the UN estimates have entered the country since August 25, when the Myanmar military launched a violent crackdown in Rakhine state following attacks by Rohingya militants.

Doctors Without Borders has said at least 6,700 Rohingya Muslims were killed in the first month of the crackdown.

Refugees in Bangladesh have alleged mass rape and widespread arson at the hands of soldiers and the Buddhist majority in Rakhine. Some of the refugees have been living in Bangladesh for many years, but the repatriation agreement only covers those who have arrived since October 2016.

The two sides said on Tuesday they have agreed to complete the repatriation within a two-year period, the first concrete timeline given for the refugees' return.

Rights groups have expressed concerns about the pace of the process, particularly as Rohingya are still fleeing Rakhine

"With memories of rape, killing and torture still fresh in the minds of Rohingya refugees, plans for their return to Myanmar are alarmingly premature," James Gomez, Amnesty International's regional director for Southeast Asia and the Pacific, said yesterday. (PTI)

Gunmen kill mother, daughter during anti-polio campaign in Pakistan

QUETTA, PAKISTAN (TIP): Gunmen have shot and killed a mother and her daughter who were taking part in an anti-polio campaign in the southwestern city of Quetta, said Pakistani officials.

Local police official Naseeb Ullah said Thursday's attack took place when hundreds of polio teams were vaccinating children to save them from the crippling disease. The attack took place days after Pakistan launched a campaign against polio across the country.

Rescue officials said the slain workers were a mother and her daughter.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility.

Pakistan, Afghanistan and Nigeria are the only three countries in the world where polio hasn't been eliminated.

Pakistan regularly launches anti-polio drives despite threats from the Taliban, who perceive the campaign as part of a Western conspiracy and claim it will sterilize Pakistani children. (AP)

6 Pakistan security personnel killed in attacks in Balochistan

KARACHI (TIP): At least six security personnel have been killed in terror attacks in Pakistan's troubled Balochistan province.

A police constable was gunned down in Quetta on Tuesday following an attack yesterday in Turbat when militants shot dead five Frontier Corps (FC) personnel.

The policeman identified as Naseer Ahmed was on his way to work when two unidentified gunmen on a motorcycle fired at him and fled. A convoy of paramilitary FC, yesterday evening, came under attack in the mountainous region of Shapok in Kech district, 50 kilometres from Turbat town. (PTI)

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Indian American educator Deep Saran announces to run for US House of Representatives



WASHINGTON (TIP): An Indian American educator has announced to run for the US House of Representatives. Deep Saran, 45, is one of almost a dozen Democrats in the fray for the primary to earn the right to challenge the two-term GOP congresswoman Barbara Comstock from the 10th Congressional District of Virginia.

"I'm a teacher, school founder, technology entrepreneur, lawyer, and child of immigrants from India," Saran says on his campaign website. Saran said he would champion a national commitment for improved quality of public education both in terms of accessibility and affordability.

"As the child of immigrants, I would push back against intolerance and hatred," Saran said. Saran's parents emigrated from India over 50 years ago. His father was a refugee during India's partition. He founded and runs a school, 'Loudoun School for the Gifted'

Saran holds a degree in political science from the University of Maryland and attended law school at Georgetown University. He was previously a corporate attorney for large firms in Baltimore and Chicago but left private legal practice to study how children learn and to work on a Ph.D. in Human Development at the University of Maryland. *(Source PTI)*

At least 10 deaths from snow, ice and record cold in US South

ATLANTA (TIP): Snow, ice and a record-breaking blast of cold closed runways, highways, schools and government offices across the South and sent cars sliding off roads Wednesday in a corner of the country ill-equipped to deal with wintry weather. At least 10 people died, including a baby in a car that plunged off a slippery overpass into a Louisiana canal.

Icicles hung from a statue of jazz musicians in normally balmy New Orleans, and drivers unaccustomed to ice spun their wheels across Atlanta, which was brought to a near-standstill by little more than an inch (2.5 centimeters) of snow. The beach in Biloxi, Mississippi, got a light coating. And the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill canceled classes as the storm unloaded at least 8 inches (20 centimeters) of snow in Durham and Greensboro.

Even the best drivers had trouble: Retired NASCAR champion Dale Earnhardt Jr tweeted that he had just used his winch to help pull a car out of a ditch when he drove off the road and into a tree in North Carolina. "NC stay off the roads today/tonight. 5 minutes after helping these folks I center punched a pine tree," he reported. A spokesman said Earnhardt was not hurt and his pickup had only minor damage. Though skies were sunny and bright in many places, temperatures remained below freezing throughout the day in much of the South. (AP)

Is Texas the prime spot for Amazon's second headquarters? Dallas Mayor says yes, offers incentives

DALLAS, TX (TIP): Dallas Mayor Rawlings is keen to have Amazon set up its HQ 2 in Dallas. He thinks I will be a game changer for Dallas.

"We're going to be as aggressive as the next guy in the city of Dallas," Rawlings said. However, in a conversation with Texas Tribune CEO Evan Smith during The Texas Tribune Festival, he declined to put a dollar figure on the proposal. Rawlings also expects the state will pitch in with a check of its own, but also lamented that he believes the state Legislature has become less business-friendly and incentive-averse in recent years.

"Fundamentally, you've got to decide, are you going to grow, or not?" he said. "If a company says, 'I'm going to bring 50,000 employees, what are you going to do for me,' that's a fair transaction."

Amazon's request for proposals states that state and local incentives to help offset capital costs are "significant factors" in their decision. It's unclear where that money will come from, but the city could use Chapter 380 grants and has millions in bond money for economic development on the November ballot. But he would need City Council support.



"We're going to be as aggressive as the next guy in the city of Dallas," Rawlings said. "This is a game-changer": Rawlings.

Photo/ courtesy Mayor's office

The mayor said Dallas is "a legitimate contender" for Amazon. He touted the region's tech workforce, its airports and its diverse and growing economy as ideal for the online retail giant.

Rawlings threw out as potential landing sites the midtown project on the former Valley View mall site and an area southwest of downtown along Riverfront Boulevard that is

earmarked for development.

But first, he said, the city will join up with other North Texas areas. He said he spoke on Friday with more than a dozen other mayors in the area to team up on a pitch.

"Options are going to be very important to them, and if you look at DFW, I think we're going to have more options than anybody," he said.

After they draw Amazon to North Texas, the cities will then fight it out to win the corporate campus, he said.

It's a strategy that Rawlings has used frequently in recent years during international trips with Fort Worth Mayor Betsy Price. But often, the businesses the tandem hooks land in other North Texas cities.

But Amazon, which is based in downtown Seattle, lists as important factors direct transit access and other factors that some suburbs, such as Frisco, currently lack. Rawlings said he will fight hard for Dallas when the time comes.

"We're going to be as aggressive as the next guy in the city of Dallas," Rawlings said. "This is a game-changer."

INDIAN AMERICAN NEERAJ BHATIA HONORED WITH HIND RATTAN AWARD 2018

SAN FRANCISCO (TIP): A certified public accountant and a leading Indian American tax consultant, Neeraj Bhatia has been honored with the prestigious Hind Rattan Award 2018, which is one of the highest Indian diaspora awards granted annually to non-resident persons of Indian-origin by the NRI Welfare Society of India.

Bhatia is a sought-after tax professional who has offered extensive commentary on US and India tax issues over the years.

An accomplished accounting professional with over 30 years of practice in international and domestic tax planning and compliance for start-ups and multinational entities, Bhatia runs a successful tax and accountancy firm in the heart of Silicon Valley with offices in New Delhi as well.

"With India-US trade, corporate and economic relations booming, companies on both sides of the world are always looking for professionals who have expertise in tax and corporate laws of America and India," Bhatia said.

"My firm has the advantage of having accounting professionals who have decades of experience navigating tax laws in the two countries," he said.

He has helped around 1,000 startups get off the ground during the past two decades of practice in Silicon Valley. It was his insights into the IT sector that led him to be associated closely with Software Technology Parks of India (STPI) - an Indian government undertaking - in the San Francisco Bay Area. Bhatia has also kept his focus on helping several Indian-American organizations representing half a dozen Indian states engaged in charitable causes. He assists them in maintaining their charitable status through strict regulatory compliance.

Bhatia has a degree in chartered accountancy



Neeraj Bhatia has helped around 1,000 startups get off the ground during the past two decades of practice in Silicon Valley

from India and holds an LLM in international taxation from the US. He is vice president and director of Indo American Chamber of Commerce and is also on the Board of the University of Silicon Andhra, a newly-formed university imparting post-graduate degree programs in Indian languages, literature and arts.

He was awarded a gold medal and monthly scholarship for three years by India's Central Board of Secondary Education for securing the first rank in India in the Board exam. He was also awarded a gold

medal by Institute of Cost & Works (Management) Accountants of India for securing the first rank in north India. He is vice president and director of Indo American Chamber of Commerce and is also on the Board of the University of Silicon Andhra, a newly-formed university imparting post-graduate degree programs in Indian languages, literature and arts.

The Hind Rattan, which means 'Jewel of India' in English, is one of the highest Indian diaspora awards. The award is granted at the Society's annual Congress on the eve of India's Republic Day, in conjunction with national Pravasi Bharatiya Divas celebrations.

The award ceremony is attended by senior members of the Government of India and of the Supreme Court of India. The number of awardees varies each year, but is generally about 25 to 30. Criteria for award selection are not published by the Society; award selections are made among the Society leadership and awardees are invited to attend the conference in New Delhi to accept their awards.

The NRI Welfare Society has been operating over the past 37 years, connecting people of Indian origin with their motherland.

(Source: Connected to India)

13 siblings found chained in California home; parents charged

PERRY, California: A California couple has been charged with torture after police rescued their 13 malnourished children from a home where some of them had been chained to beds, and neighbors on Monday described the family as shut-ins who shunned social contact.

Police made the discovery after a 17-year-old girl escaped the house in Perris, about 70 miles (113 km) east of Los Angeles, and used a cellular phone she had found in the house to call them, the Riverside County Sheriff's Office said on Monday.

"Deputies located what they believed to be 12 children inside the house, but were shocked to discover that seven of them were actually adults," police said in a statement. "The victims appeared to be malnourished and very dirty."

The children ranged in age from 2 to 29, police said.

The girl, who officers had initially thought was about 10 years old, contacted police on Sunday after escaping the one-story house.

The parents, David Allen Turpin, 57, and Louise Anna Turpin, 49, were arrested and each charged with nine counts of torture and 10 counts of child endangerment. They were ordered held on \$9 million bail each.

Neighbors said the Turpins and their children rarely emerged from their unkempt home in the new built development of closely spaced single-family houses.

Wendy Martinez, a 41-year-old housewife, said her only contact with the Turpins came as she passed the house at night in October. Four children were installing sod in the yard while the mother watched from the door, and none responded when Martinez said hello.

"They were very, like, afraid," she said of the children. "Like they had never seen people before."

Police said six of the couple's children were minors, while the other seven were over 18. (Reuters)

Indian American Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal to boycott Donald Trump's State of the Union address

"I would not be attending the State of the Union this year. I join other distinguished members, including Rep John Lewis, in refusing to dignify a president who has used the platform of the Oval Office to fan the flames of racism, sexism and hatred-most recently with his vulgar condemnation of Haiti and other African countries," Jayapal said in a statement.



WASHINGTON (TIP): Indian American Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal has announced that she would skip President Donald Trump's State of the Union address, in protest against his policies and rhetoric against immigrants. Jayapal, 52, joins more than half a dozen Democratic lawmakers, including the legendary Congressman John Lewis, who will give a miss to the January 30 event.

Other lawmakers who have announced to boycott the event include Frederica Wilson, Maxine Waters, and Earl Blumenauer.

"I would not be attending the State of the Union this year. I join other distinguished members, including Rep John Lewis, in refusing to dignify a president who has used the platform of the Oval Office to fan the flames of racism, sexism and hatred-most recently with his vulgar condemnation of Haiti and other African countries," Jayapal said in a statement.

Jayapal said she disagrees with Trump's approach which is "narrow and self-serving".

"This president has consistently indicated that he has no interest in leading a unified

country. He has gone out of his way to play to a small and shrinking base of voters by using language that diminishes and demeans vast swaths of people in our own country and around the world," Jayapal said.

"His path is dangerous. His path is destructive. His path cannot be normalized. I will not normalize it. This is our own form of non-violent resistance," she said.

According to Jayapal, her constituents and people across the country are "heartbroken, terrified and demoralized".

"He does and says things that none of us, as parents, would condone for our children. He consistently uses language that is outright racist. He actively uses the highest office of the land to promote hatred as a political tool for his own benefit," said Jayapal.

"As a brown immigrant female member of Congress, I feel the impact of these words personally, as well as collectively," she said.

Jayapal is the only Indian American lawmaker to have announced boycotting Trump's State of the Union Address, which is a customary annual address of the US President to a joint session of the Congress.

Other Indian American Congressmen are Dr. Ami Bera, Ro Khanna and Raja Krishnamoorthi. Senator Kamala Harris from California is of mixed African and American heritage. **(Source PTI)**

The Indian American Former State Lawmaker Decides Against Running for Congress



Jay Goyal a former Ohio State Rep. has decided not to run for Congress because of, he said, "certain commitments that I've made to my family business and I need to make sure I'm fulfilling those commitments".

MANSFIELD (TIP): Former Ohio State Rep. Jay Goyal of Mansfield, has decided he will not run for the U.S. Congress. He announced his decision after some leading Democrats pressed him to consider doing so. The Columbus Dispatch reported Jan. 17, that Goyal had ruled out the run.

"Public service is something that has always been important to me. However, I have certain commitments that I've made to my family business and I need to make sure I'm fulfilling those commitments," Goyal is quoted saying in the Dispatch.

According to the Dispatch, U.S. Rep. Joyce Beatty, Ohio, from Jefferson Township, and Franklin County Commissioner John O'Grady had approached Goyal and urged him to run in a bid to send a Democrat to Congress. They hoped that Goyal, 37, could help their party turn a red seat into blue as the district comprises of areas where Goyal had name-recognition from the time he served in the State House. Republicans have held the seat on Capitol Hill since 1982.

Goyal was just 26 when he was first elected in 2006 and served three terms from 2007-2013, in the State House, including some of those years as Majority Leader.

He left the political arena in 2012 to help run the family business, Goyal Industries, a manufacturing concern that produces metal fabrications. He has been leading the company for several years now. Goyal graduated with a degree in industrial engineering from Northwestern University, he also has an MBA from Harvard Business School and a Master's in Public Policy from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government.

Trump: No US embassy move to Jerusalem this year

WASHINGTON (TIP): President Donald Trump denied on Wednesday that the planned relocation of the US embassy in Israel to Jerusalem would take place within a year, after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he expected the controversial move to happen by then. Reversing decades of US policy, Trump in early December recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital and set in motion the process of moving the embassy from Tel Aviv, imperiling Middle East peace efforts and upsetting the Arab world and Western allies alike. US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said last month the embassy move was "probably no earlier than three years out, and that's pretty ambitious," a timeframe that administration officials have attributed to the logistics of finding and securing a site as well as arranging housing for diplomats. (Reuters)

TAGC celebrated Makara Sankranti and India Republic Day with Telugu culture and traditions

CHICAGO, IL (TIP): Telugu Association of Greater Chicago (TAGC)- First Telugu association in North America- celebrated Makara Sankranti and India Republic Day with Chicago land area Telugu families at the HTGC Rama Temple Auditorium, Lemont IL. The event was a grand success with overwhelming response from the Telugu community with over 1000 guests in attendance. The event was conducted on 13th January 2018 from 3:00PM to 10PM. TAGC Board has decided to do this event with all local talent promoting the Telugu culture, traditions and encouraged youth to preserve traditions. As per Membership committee chair Praveen Vemulapalli more than 1000 guests were attending the event even during the Cold weather in Chicago.

The cultural programs included more than 30 events with 330 local talents, and Chicago's famous singers Praveen Jaligama garu, Sailaja garu and Madhavi Merugu garu who entertained audiences with movie songs.

TAGC President-elect Ramu Billakanti garu welcomed and wished good health, prosperity and wealth to all the guests on behalf of President Jyothi Chintalapani garu. President garu thanked all Sponsors, Volunteers and encouraged to take membership by all attendees.

The program started with Lord Ganesha prayer along with the cultural team and Board of Directors. In the Sankranti and India Republic cultural event 330 participants performed a variety of programs and shows keeping the audience entertained and involved. The program highlight was Men's skit "Pandu gadi Kotu Gola" and Women's skit "Mahillallu - Maharanulu"

TAGC President elect thanked and congratulated Cultural Committee Chair Ranga Reddy Lenkala Co- chair Swetha Janamanchi and Uma Avadhuta team members and volunteers who worked for more than 8 weeks to make the event grand success. Audience was enthusiastic to see all decorations throughout the Auditorium. Bommalla Koluvu, Kite decoration, Harvest Crop themes was a special attraction according to Decorations Committee Chair Mrs. Vani Yetrintala. There were also competitions on Sankranti theme and Muggulu potti. Gifts were distributed for the Competition winners by Sponsors along with on-spot gift cards for kids who answered correctly about Sankranti and Telugu culture.

TAGC Sankranti cultural Celebration also included a delicious dinner served by volunteers.



Participants of Peacock dance



TAGC Members and Participants at Sankranti Celebrations 2018

(Photographs and Press release by: Asian Media USA)

TWO CIVILIANS KILLED AS PAKISTAN TARGETS CIVILIAN AREAS, BOPs IN J&K

JAMMU (TIP): Two civilians were killed and three others injured as Pakistan Rangers heavily shelled civilian areas and Border Out Posts for the second consecutive day today along the IB in Jammu and Samba districts.

BSF troops effectively retaliated.

"Pakistan Rangers resorted to heavy firing and shelling along the IB in several areas in R S Pura, Arnia and Ramgarh sectors since 0640 hours", a BSF officer said.

They targeted around 40 Border Out Posts (BoPs) in three sectors using 82 mm and 52 mortar bombs, automatic and small weapons, he said.

"The exchange of fire is going on when the reports last came in", he said adding they have targeted BoPs and villages in over 35 kms of IB.

A police officer said Pakistani troops have targeted over 40 civilian villages in Arnia, R S Pura and Ramgarh sectors along the IB till now.

Two civilians, including a woman, were killed and three civilians were injured in the shelling, they said.

While the woman died in Sai Khurda, the man died in Korotona in R S Pura-Arnia belt. A civilian was injured in Sai Khurd village while two others were injured in Ramgarh.

In view of the heavy shelling, over 1000 border dwellers have migrated from the area and schools along the borderline have been closed. *Source: PTI*

INDIA SUCCESSFULLY TEST-FIRES NUCLEAR CAPABLE AGNI-5 MISSILE



NEW DELHI (TIP): India Thursday successfully test fired its indigenously built, nuclear-capable missile, Agni-V. It was conducted off a test range from Odisha's Abdul Kalam island. The intercontinental surface-to-surface ballistic missile has a range of 5,000 km. Confirming the development, Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said: "We have successfully launched nuclear-capable ballistic missile Agni-V today."

With the aim to strengthen its nuclear arsenal, the Indian army is modifying the Agni missile to make it capable of carrying nuclear warheads. New technologies are being incorporated into every test in addition to its navigation and guidance system, warhead and engine power.

VHP CHIEF PRAVIN TOGADIA SEES PLOT AGAINST HIM

AHMEDABAD (TIP): VHP leader Pravin Togadia, wanted in a 15-year-old case of flouting prohibitory orders, on Wednesday said phone calls made in the last 15 days by the joint commissioner of Ahmedabad police's crime branch should be made public to see "how many times he had spoken to the Prime Minister".

He said the crime branch was conspiring against him "under instructions from political bosses in Delhi". Togadia was reported missing on Monday morning when a Rajasthan police team reached Ahmedabad to arrest him in the 15-year-old case that charged him with flouting prohibitory orders. On Monday, Togadia was found unconscious in an Ahmedabad park and taken to a hospital.

On Tuesday morning, Togadia claimed that an informant had told him he would be killed in a police encounter so he had left the VHP office and reached his close aide Ghanshyam Charandas's home. He claimed that at 3 pm, he left for Ahmedabad airport to catch a flight to Jaipur, thinking he would surrender in court, but on the way he fainted and then found himself in the hospital.

Form panel to assign important cases, four SC judges tell CJI Dipak Misra

NEW DELHI (TIP): The four senior judges of Supreme Court who criticised Chief Justice (CJI) Dipak Misra for his administration of the court, including allocation of cases to judges, have recommended the creation of a committee of senior judges that will assign sensitive and important cases, according to people familiar with the matter.

The proposal is being discussed not just by them and the CJI but also, in terms of seniority, judges who stand a chance to be a future CJI, the people familiar with the matter added.

However, the talks remained inconclusive, they said, because the CJI was reluctant to concede to the demands as it would lead to the dilution of the chief's power as the master of the roster.

The four judges, the senior most in the Supreme Court after the CJI – justices J Chelameswar, Ranjan Gogoi, MB Lokur and Kurien Joseph – met the CJI for the second time this week and put forth their proposal for a just and transparent system to allocate cases.

Three judges, who, in order of seniority, stand a chance of becoming the CJI were asked by Justice Misra to be present during the talks because the issue raised by the four judges relates to the administrative function of the office of the CJI, the people explained.

Currently, cases are marked as per the roster notified by the Supreme Court registry. This is done once the CJI



(L-R) Justices Kurien Joseph, Jasti Chelameswar, Ranjan Gogoi and Madan Lokur address the media at a news conference in New Delhi

approves it. Though the marking is computer-generated, the CJI has a say when the registry informs him about a sensitive matter in advance. As the administrative head the CJI can either retain the matter, let it be heard by the bench as per the roster or send it to another bench.

It is this discretionary power which the four judges have attacked; their claim is that senior judges were being overlooked when it came to hearing sensitive cases.

Thursday's meeting between the judges lasted for around 20 minutes, from 10 to 10:20 am after which the judges dispersed to their respective courts.

The people familiar with the matter

said the CJI expressed his inability to accept the proposal because it would compromise the Chief Justice's power, a matter on which a five-judge constitution bench recently ruled. Justice Misra headed the bench that gave the verdict on November 10, 2017.

Justice Misra is also understood to have cited another SC judgement that in 1997 declared chief justice as the master of the roster. The impasse is likely to continue as Justice Chelameswar left the city on a private visit and is expected back on Sunday night.

If the talks between the senior judges fail then the CJI may have to convene a full court meeting to end the stalemate, one of the people familiar with the matter said. *Source: HT*

PM Modi's UAE, Palestine visit in February to focus on counterterrorism, cyber security

NEW DELHI (TIP): More cooperation in cyber security and counterterrorism initiatives and facilitating more investment in India's infrastructure sector will top Prime Minister Narendra Modi's agenda when he visits the UAE next month, said an official familiar with the plans on condition of anonymity.

Modi is likely to visit the Gulf nation on February 10 and 11. He will also visit Palestine en route to the UAE, home to 2.8 million Indian passport holders. Modi's visit to Palestine will come shortly after the visit of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to India. Modi was the first Indian PM to visit Israel last year, de-hyphenating its relationship with the two countries.

India and the UAE have put together an ambitious agenda to mark the second visit of Modi to the UAE, with which India has a comprehensive strategic partnership aimed at further strengthening their security and business ties.

Cyber security is one area both countries have identified for stepping up cooperation, said the official. New Delhi would like to collaborate with the UAE in setting up a cyber security centre in India. The UAE has had a cyber security centre since 2014 that acts as a nodal agency for protecting data, telecom networks, and which works with similar bodies around the world, the official



PM Narendra Modi with Palestine President Mahmoud Abbas in New York. File photo

pointed out.

"Cyber security has emerged as a key area of our bilateral cooperation with other countries. The UAE has some best practices and a centre in this field and the cooperation could be mutually beneficial," said another official.

The two sides are also looking at stepping up efforts to disrupt terrorist

networks, their financing and movements. In this context, India would like the UAE to help track the properties of people in its wanted list. Facilitating more UAE investment to India remains another focus. The two countries plan to step up the proposed \$ 75 billion target for UAE investments in India's infrastructure development. *Source: HT*

Hafiz Saeed should be prosecuted to fullest extent of law: US

WASHINGTON (TIP): The United States has called for Hafiz Saeed's prosecution "to the fullest extent of the law," following Pakistan's Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi's remark that no action could be taken against the United Nations-designated terrorist.

Abbasi, during an interview to Geo TV on Tuesday, referred to Saeed as 'sahib' or 'sir' "There is no case against Hafiz Saeed sahib in Pakistan. Only when there is a case, can there be action," he said when asked why there was no action against Saeed.

US fumes at non-action

Reacting strongly to the comments, State Department spokesperson Heather Nauert said the US believed that Saeed should be prosecuted and they have told Pakistan as much.

"We believe that he should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. He is listed by the UNSC 1267, the Al-Qaeda Sanctions Committee for targeted sanctions due to his affiliation with Lashkar-e-Taiba, which is a designated foreign terror organisation," Ms. Nauert told reporters at her daily news conference on Thursday.

"We have made our points and concerns to the Pakistani government very clear. We believe that this individual should be prosecuted," she said.



Highlights

- US has called for prosecution of JuDc chief Hafiz Saeed
- Pakistan PM Abbasi had told Geo TV that there is no case against Saeed
- Hafiz Saeed is a UN-designated global terrorist

Responding to a question, Nauert said the US has "certainly seen" the reports about Abbasi's comment on Saeed.

"We regard him as a terrorist, a part of a foreign terrorist organisation. He was the mastermind, we believe, of the 2008 Mumbai attacks which killed many people, including Americans as well," she said. Saeed, the chief of the Jamaat-

ud-Dawah (JuD), was released from house arrest in Pakistan in November.

The US has labelled JuD the "terrorist front" for the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), a group Saeed founded in 1987. LeT was responsible for carrying the 2008 Mumbai attack that killed 166 people.

Pak need to do more

Acknowledging that the US has had some challenging times with the government of Pakistan recently, Ms. Nauert has said the Trump Administration expects Pakistan to do a lot more to address terrorism issues.

"That's something that we've been very clear about all along. You know the news that we had that came out a couple weeks ago about our decision to withhold some of the security funding for Pakistan," she said.

Nauert said the entire administration was on the same page on the issue of US-Pakistan relationship.

Early this month, the US suspended about \$2 billion worth of security assistance to Pakistan accusing it of not doing enough in the fight against terrorism.

In retaliation, Pakistan suspended military and intelligence co-operation with the US.

The State Department on Thursday said it has not received any formal information in this regard from Pakistan. *Source: PTI*

GST RATES ON 29 GOODS, 53 SERVICES CUT

NEW DELHI (TIP): The Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council has reduced the rates on 29 goods and 53 categories of services, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said following the Council's meeting on Jan 18.

Against the backdrop of declining GST collections and waning compliance, the Council also discussed in detail various approaches to ease the return filing compliance burden, and the need for the implementation of anti-evasion measures.

Some of the services for which the rates have been cut include tailoring (18% to 5%), admission to theme parks (28% to 18%), and petroleum and natural gas mining and exploration (18% to 12%). The goods on which the rates have been reduced include biodiesel buses used for public transport (28% to 18%), sugar boiled confectionery, biodiesel, drinking water packed in 20 litre containers (all from 18% to 12%), and LPG supplied to domestic consumers by private distributors (18% to 5%). The new rates would come into effect on January 25.

"Rates have again been rationalised on few items, which is a step in the right direction," Pratik Jain, Leader, Indirect Tax at PwC India, wrote in a note.

More cuts to come

"One would expect that over the next few months, this process would continue, particularly with respect to 28% category, which should only be for select luxury and demerit products," he wrote.

Jaitley said that while the latest round of rate reductions would have an affect on the Centre's revenues, the impact would be small.

Status quo not altered at Doklam face-off site, says India

New Delhi (TIP): India said on Thursday that the status quo has not been altered at Doklam, where Indian and Chinese troops were locked in a stand-off for over two months last year, and rejected any suggestion to the contrary as "inaccurate and mischievous".

"Our attention has been drawn to some reports that question the accuracy of the position stated by the government in respect to the situation in Doklam," Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said.

He said that in response to repeated questions about any change in the status quo at the face-off site, the government has stated that there was no basis for such imputations.

"Government would once again reiterate that the status quo at the face-off site has not been altered. Any suggestion to the contrary is inaccurate and mischievous," he said.

Kumar's remarks come in the wake of media reports about China carrying out some infrastructure development in the disputed region.

Indian and Chinese troops had been locked in a stand-off for over two months last year in the Doklam area near Sikkim before "disengaging" on August 28. *Source: PTI*

Punjab CM accepts power minister Rana Gurjit's resignation

CHANDIGARH (TIP): Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh has accepted the resignation of power and irrigation minister Rana Gurjit Singh on Jan 18 following a meeting with AICC president Rahul Gandhi.

Rana Gurjit had submitted his resignation to Amarinder a few days ago. But the CM had not accepted it. He had left it to Rahul to take a call. The decision to accept the resignation was taken after a thorough discussion on the issue during a meeting of CM and Rahul Gandhi in Delhi today morning.

While sources said Amarinder was still backing his loyalist, Rahul and other leaders in the meeting are learnt to have prevailed upon the CM. PPCC President Sunil Jakhar, General Secretary Incharge Asha Kumari and AICC Secretary Harish Choudhary were also a part of the meeting.

Rana Gurjit was caught up in a controversy related to sand mine auction in May. His two ex employees had bagged sand mines in the first ever auction done by the Congress-led government. Then CM had then ordered a probe Justice JS Narang (ret'd) into the case. The commission had however given Rana a clean chit.



HIV cases in India drop more than 50% but challenges remain

NEW DELHI (TIP): In 2002, US National Intelligence Council made a projection: About 20-25 million people will be living with HIV in India by 2010. They got it wrong. "The future of the global epidemic is really at stake in India," said the then director, UNAIDS, Dr Peter Piot, who discovered the Ebola virus in Zaire in 1976. He was right, both about Ebola and HIV in India, where all the right things were done to stop the epidemic from spiralling out of control.

India being home to the world's third largest HIV population — after South Africa (7.1 million) and Nigeria (3.2 million) — has more to do with its 1.32 billion population than high infection rates.

Adult HIV prevalence in India is 0.28%, compared to South Africa's 18.9%, shows UNAIDS data for 2017.

The number of people living with HIV in India has more than halved from 5.1 million in 2003 to 2.1 million in 2016 — partly because the World Health Organisation's revised and enhanced methodology halved HIV estimates for India to 2.5 million in 2007.

India's revised estimates, combined with the five sub-Saharan African countries of Angola, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe, led to a 70% reduction in the global HIV prevalence over the previous year, with global estimates falling to 33.2 million



from 39.5 million in 2006. The epidemic, however, had started levelling off in the early 2000s as a result of a two-pronged strategy: intensive HIV prevention campaigns among the most affected; and free testing and treatment under the National AIDS Control Programme (NACP) since 2004.

Lowering risk

Lowering infections among high-risk groups such as transgenders and female sex workers (FSW) — so called as they are considered likely to engage in high-risk behaviours that spread HIV, such as unprotected sex and sharing needles and

syringes — is among the big successes of NACP, the first phase of which started in 1992.

By 2004, India had expanded targeted interventions for FSWs, injecting drug users, men who have sex with men, transgender people, single male migrants, long-distance truckers etc in the six high prevalence states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Nagaland and Manipur.

In 2003, around one in 10 FSWs in India had HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. The number fell to one in 64 in 2017.

Source: HT

AMERICA, INSPIRING

NJSO Celebrates Immigrant Composers at Winter Festival 2018

“This season, it (NJSO) celebrates the inspiration that is America, showcasing musical works by immigrants and foreign visitors...” Gabriel Van Aalst, President & CEO, NJSO

“These composers speak to me because their story is my own. While I had a wonderful musical education at the Conservatory in Beijing, I needed to come to the United States to follow my dream of becoming a conductor”.

Xian Zhang, NJSO Music Conductor

“(Xian Zhang's) conducting gestures reveal a passion, a precise knowledge of the score and a constant attention to detail. Her relationship with the musicians is producing great music and the orchestra members respond beautifully” The Asbury Park Press

(www.ken-ahlering.com) paints in response to a performance by the NJSO Chamber Players.

Full concert information is available at www.njsymphony.org/events/detail/america-inspiring-ravel-rachmaninoff.

America, Inspiring: Special Chamber Music Concert



Violinist Eric Wyrick,
Concertmaster of NJSO
Photo credit Tristan Cook

Tue, Jan 23, at 3 pm | St. George's-by-the-River Episcopal Church in Rumson

Thu, Jan 25, at 7:30 pm | Calvary Episcopal Church in Summit

NJSO CHAMBER PLAYERS

Eric Wyrick, violin
Brennan Sweet, violin
David Blinn, viola
Na-Young Baek, cello
TAN DUN Eight Colors for String Quartet
BARTÓK String Quartet No. 2

DVORÁK String Quartet No. 12 in F Major, Op. 96, "American"

A free pre-concert reception begins at 2 pm on Jan 23.

Full concert information is available at www.njsymphony.org/events/detail/america-inspiring-special-chamber-music-concert.



Violinist Chloe Hanslip,
international artist of
distinction

WEEK III: America, Inspiring: Dvořák's "New World" Symphony

Fri, Jan 26, at 8 pm - NJPAC in Newark
Sat, Jan 27, at 8 pm - Count Basie Theatre in Red Bank
Sun, Jan 28, at 3 pm - Mayo PAC in Morristown

Xian Zhang, conductor
Chloë Hanslip, violin
New Jersey Symphony Orchestra
BRITTEN Simple Symphony
KORNGOLD Violin Concerto
DVOŘÁK Symphony No. 9, "From the New World"

NJSO ACCENTS:
Prelude Performance-Fri, Jan 26, before the concert
Come early and hear the Anne Lieberon Ensemble from the NJSO's Youth Orchestras perform a selection inspired by the Winter Festival.

Poetry Reading-Sun, Jan 28, after the concert
Poets Maria Gillan and Patrick Rosal reflect on their own immigrant experiences in the closing event of the Winter Festival.
Full concert information is available at www.njsymphony.org/events/detail/america-inspiring-dvoraks-new-world-symphony.
(Mabel Pais is a freelance writer. She writes on The Arts and Entertainment, Social Issues, Health and Wellness, and Spirituality)

BY MABEL PAIS

At the NJSO, January is always a busy month with the Winter Festival. "This season, it (NJSO) celebrates the inspiration that is America, showcasing musical works by immigrants and foreign visitors who drew their stimulation from America's wide-ranging impacts" said Gabriel Van Aalst, President and CEO of the NJSO, who opened the Winter Festival on January 11.

The 2018 Winter Festival highlights the myriad ways America has inspired not only those who call it home but also those who have visited its welcoming shores. Leveraging the power of art to transcend differences, a series of NJSO Accents and special events further explore the immigrant experience and how foreign artists have illustrated American inspiration in their work.

Spanning three weekends, January 11-28, the Winter Festival includes orchestral performances at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark, State Theatre New Jersey in New Brunswick, Count Basie Theatre in Red Bank, Richardson Auditorium in Princeton, Mayo Performing Arts Center in Morristown and BergenPAC in Englewood.

The NJSO Chamber Players perform a special chamber music concert at St. George's-by-the-River Episcopal Church in Rumson and Calvary Episcopal Church in Summit.

Week I: America, Inspiring: Respighi & Prokofiev

Music Director Xian Zhang conducted NJSO premiere of



Xian Zhang_Music-Conductor Photo credit Benjamin Ealovega



Xian Zhang-conducts-the-NJSO Photo credit Fred Stucker

Che Yi's Ge Xu and Respighi's Fountains of Rome. George Li performed Prokofiev's Third Piano Concerto. Zhang, the orchestra's 14th music director, is the first woman to hold the position.

In a nod to Zhang's own journey to America and New Jersey, she led Respighi's Pines of Rome-a work she conducted in her first-ever performances with the NJSO in 2010. Chinese pianist George Li, the 22-year-old silver medalist of the XV International Tchaikovsky Competition, performed Prokofiev's Third Piano Concerto.



Xian Zhang-at-NJPAC

Photo credit Fred Stucker



Xian Zhang at NJPAC

Photo credit Fred Stucker

Performances took place on Thursday, January 11 at Bergen PAC in Englewood; Saturday, January 13 at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark; and Sunday, January 14, at State Theatre New Jersey in New Brunswick.

WEEK II: America, Inspiring: Ravel & Rachmaninoff

Andrew Constantine, conductor

Terrence Wilson, piano
MARTIN? Thunderbolt P-47 (NJSO Premiere)

RAVEL Piano Concerto in G Major

RACHMANINOFF Symphonic Dances

Fri, Jan 19, at 8 pm | Richardson Auditorium in Princeton

Sat, Jan 20, at 8 pm | State Theatre New Jersey in New Brunswick

Sun, Jan 21, at 3 pm | NJPAC in Newark

NJSO ACCENTS:

Panel Discussion-Fri, Jan 19, at 6:45 pm and Sun, Jan 21, at 1:45 pm

Host Naomi Lewin and a panel of experts discuss the political climate in Europe that drove so many of the Winter Festival's composers to come to America.

Wine Tasting-Sat, Jan 20, before the concert

Join wine and music expert Ron Merlino in an exclusive tasting of wines made of old-world grapes in new-world soil. For reservation and tickets, visit www.njsymphony.org/grapes

Performance & Painting-Sun, Jan 21, after the concert
Watch creative inspiration in action as artist Ken Ahlering



George Li, Pianist

Photo credit Simon Fowler



Terrence Wilson, Pianist

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DEEPIKA PADUKONE IN NEW BADASS COP LOOK

Deepika Padukone was spotted shooting for an advertisement in Mumbai, in which she was dressed as a cop - a welcome departure from her ethnic outfits and heavy jewellery during outings and promotions. We loved that too but a change is always good. And look at how superb Deepika looks in fitted khaki trousers and crisp white shirt with her hair tied in an elegant back bun.

Also just saying, her rumoured boyfriend Ranveer Singh's cop look in upcoming film Simmba has got nothing on Deepika's swag. What say? Fan clubs posted pictures of Deepika Padukone dressed as cop relaxing on the bonnet of a jeep.

Deepika Padukone is currently awaiting the release of Padmaavat, which is directed by Sanjay Leela Bhansali. The film's original release date was December 1 last year, but due to the Central Board Of Film Certification's delay, the film will now release on January 25. Padmaavat, which was originally titled Padmavati, was cleared for release with a U/A certificate and five alterations including the title.

Padmaavat faced massive opposition (and continues to face) from Rajput Karni Sena and other fringe outfits which opposed the film's release over alleged factual inaccuracies. Several states have also banned the film's release.

ANUSHKA'S 'PARI' TO RELEASE ON HOLI

Anushka Sharma's first film, post her marriage to Indian cricketer Virat Kohli, "Pari" will release on Holi, March 2.

The film, which is Anushka's third production under her banner Clean Slate Films, is directed by debutante Prosit Roy.

It also features Parambrata Chatterjee, Rajat Kapoor and Ritabhari Chakraborty.

The makers also released a motion poster of the film while not revealing much about the plot.

Anushka has previously produced "NH 10" and "Phillauri". Both the films featured her in the lead role.

"Pari" also has KriArj Entertainment as one of the producers.

In the first look released on June 13 last year, the actor, who played a friendly ghost in "Phillauri", gave some serious haunting vibes.

Pari is Anushka's third film as producer (Clean Slate Films) after 2015's critically acclaimed NH10 and this year's Phillauri, which wasn't as successful as NH10. Of the sort of films she wants to produce, Anushka told news agency IANS: "At Clean Slate, our endeavour is to tell stories that are not only meaningful and different, but also push the boundaries."

Anushka Sharma's next film, Jab Harry Met Sejal, releases on August 4. The film also stars Shah Rukh Khan and is directed by Imtiaz Ali. In fact, Anushka joined Jab Harry Met Sejal's promotional exercise a little late as she was busy working on Pari. Anushka has also signed up for Anand L Rai's next, which again features Shah Rukh and actress Katrina Kaif. In the film, SRK plays the role of a dwarf.

Apart from this, Anushka also has a small role in Rajkumar Hirani's Sanjay Dutt biopic, starring Ranbir Kapoor - her Ae Dil Hai Mushkil and Bombay Velvet co-star.



MOVIE REVIEW

KAALAKAANDI

Cast: Saif Ali Khan, Vijay Raaz, Deepak Dobriyal, Shobhita Dhulipala, Shenaz Treasurywala, Amyra Dastur

Director: Akshat Verma

Kaalakaandi is set in Mumbai and focused primarily on more mature characters. So its tone, texture and treatment are markedly different. The film is primarily in English, with only two underworld underlings conversing in street-level Hindi peppered liberally with expletives. It is clear that Verma is fascinated by mavericks and misfits. But armed with the quality of his writing, he turns the freaky, freewheeling, fizzy Kaalakaandi into a human drama that explores life's surprises, love, mortality, greed and betrayal.

The directorial debut of Delhi Belly writer Akshat Verma, Kaalakaandi has three parallel tracks that show us the different worlds that reside in Mumbai. The movie opens with Saif, an unnamed executive, who finds out he is suffering from cancer and has mere three months to live. His doctor has a special way of delivering the news: "You do not have ulcers, therefore you also do not have perforated ulcers and you can stop your medication. You have cancer, stomach cancer."

Saif goes on a predictable rant ala Jimmy Sheirgill in

Munnabhai MBBS as he cribs how he has never had alcohol, smoked or done drugs. Saif then heads home to a houseful of guests as his cousin is getting married and tries his hand at everything - alcohol, dancing with abandon and narcotics. He goes on a wild binge across the city and faces his inner demons as he goes on a spin across the city.

The second story is that of a couple - Kunal Roy Kapur and Shobhita Dhulipala - where she is moving to America for higher studies and he is sulking. The couple decides to attend a friend's birthday party and things go topsy-turvy from there.

Vijay Raaz and Deepak Dobriyal are the lead characters of the third story. They work as lowly courier boys for a goon but aspire to be a 'big shot' in the crime world. How their ambition leads to a sudden change of track in their story forms the crux of the film.

At least two of the three stories could have made for a gripping watch, Saif's and the one involving gangsters. However, what we see onscreen is a sad apology of a narrative. The characters in all the three stories appear bland and one-dimensional, with almost no growth in the course of their narrative. Kunal's presence in the film is a remarkable letdown - he has often proved his credentials in comic roles, especially quirky ones, and this role is an injustice to the talent.

Kaalakaandi, nonetheless, has its moments and Saif Ali Khan's uninhibited performance tops the list.





NATALIE PORTMAN MAY PLAY ASTRONAUT IN 'PALE BLUE DOT'

Actress Natalie Portman is reportedly in negotiations to replace Reese Witherspoon as the lead in 'Pale Blue Dot', about a successful female astronaut.

Reportedly, the makers will now look to find Portman's male co-star.

Witherspoon had left the role in last November due to scheduling conflicts with season 2 of 'Big Little Lies'. However, she will continue to produce the project with Bruna Papandrea.

It will be directed by ' Fargo ' and ' Legion ' creator Noah Hawley.

'Pale Blue Dot' follows a successful female astronaut who, after coming back home from a mission in space, starts to unravel when confronted by her seemingly perfect American dream life. The film explores the theory that astronauts who spend long periods of time in space begin to lose their sense of reality when they return home.

Source: IANS

FELT A RESPONSIBILITY PLAYING DONATELLA VERSACE: PENELOPE CRUZ

Hollywood star Penelope Cruz says she felt a "responsibility" playing Italian fashion designer Donatella Versace in the series 'The Assassination of Gianni Versace'.

The Academy Awards winner's comment comes just days after the designer expressed her distaste for the new Ryan Murphy series in an interview with Italian press last week, reports dailymail.co.uk.

During an appearance on a TV show, Cruz said: "You feel much more responsibility (playing a real person). When Ryan called me... I said 'I need to make (a) phone call and talk to Donatella about this before taking the job'."

Cruz, 43, only felt comfortable with the role after speaking to Donatella herself.

"She told me if somebody was going to do it, she was really happy that it was me, because she I think she knows what I feel for her and Gianni.

"They're the most kind people. It's important to me that when she sees what I've done she can feel the love and respect that I have put there (and) how I feel for her."

Cruz explained how Donatella returned the love by sending her a bouquet of flowers ahead of the Golden Globe Awards ceremony.

Source: IANS



MOVIE REVIEW

WISH UPON

Cast: Alexander Nunez, Daniela Barbosa, Elisabeth Röhm, Joey King, Josephine Langford, Ki Hong Lee, Mitchell Slaggert, Ryan Phillippe, Shannon Purser, Sydney Park

Director: John R. Leonetti

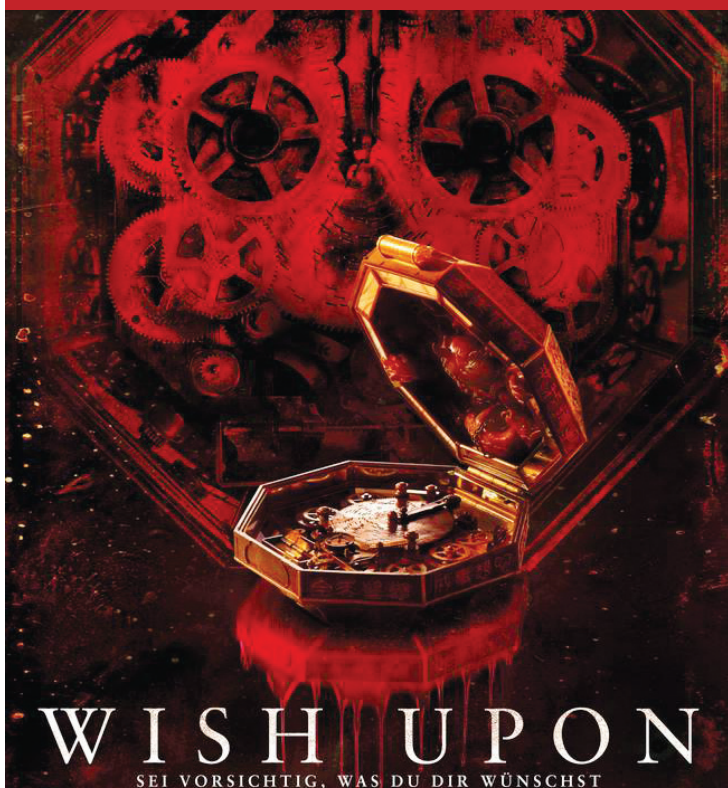
After a set-up establishing that high schooler Claire (Joey King) has had a blighted life since the suicide of her mother (Elisabeth Rohm), she clutches a magic object (a nicely-designed Chinese puzzle/music box) and wishes the mean girl at school would 'just rot'. The next day, teen princess of Instagram Darcie (Josephine Langford) wakes up with her face and toes falling off due to necrotising fasciitis. Then Claire's beloved dog is found in the crawlspace, disembowelled and eaten by rats.

Nevertheless, it takes several more wishes – a devoted boyfriend! a mansion! popularity! – and freak accidents involving sympathetic secondary characters and kitchen/bathroom/loft appliances before Claire works out how this particular double-edged curse works. It's as if all those valiant souls who make non-theatrical sequels to Hellraiser, Witchboard and Wishmaster have striven in vain. Among those who have issued warnings

about monkeying with monkeys' paws or messing with multiverses is director John R. Leonetti, who has track records in the be-careful-what-you-wish-for and cursed-object fields, with The Butterfly Effect 2 and Conjuring spinoff Annabelle.

Scripted by Barbara Marshall – who wrote Viral and Top Dog – Wish Upon has the feel of something tooled to be a new franchise. It ties itself in knots with several backstories for its curse, as if it were the follow-up to a movie starring barely-glimpsed Jerry O'Connell and Rebecca Romijn as previous doomed owners of the wishing box, as well as the template for sequels and spin-offs of its own. Wish Upon is one among a recent wave of spooky pictures aimed at teenage girls, including Ouija, Unfriended and Friend Request. This adds a shopping montage, an idiot bloke as ogled object of desire (Mitchell Slaggert) and the high school pecking order to a mix which includes familiar, always-effective horror schtick as characters blithely wander into mortal peril. In one set-piece, Sherilyn Fenn finds as many ways of imperilling herself while cooking dinner as in any vintage safety-in-the-home educational film.

Though a jumble – the story is at once predictable and awkwardly structured – Wish Upon works fairly well, and is certainly a step up from Leonetti's last non-sequel (the Manson murders movie Wolves at the Door).



WISH UPON
SEI VORSICHTIG, WAS DU DIR WÜNSCHST

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS LAY BARE THEIR VISION OF 2018

Community organizations are powerful engines of action. From culture to politics, they are the ones to bring the community together in a meaningful relationship, promoting amity and cordiality among the community members, projecting Indian values - social, cultural, religious and moral. They also play an effective role in bringing the mainstream

American communities closer to their groups. And, on top of it, they are the bridges between their country of origin and the country of their adoption. These organizations, in fact, empower the community.

The Indian Panorama approached some of the organizations to know from them about their

vision of 2018. We are glad that most responded. And response, indeed, has been, overwhelming. We wish to carry all responses, but find it difficult to carry them all in one go. We are, therefore, serializing. We request our friends who do not find their response published to wait for the next issue of The Indian Panorama on January 26.

ANU JAIN

Wishing a Very Happy and Prosperous New Year to all the readers of one of the most prestigious newspapers--



Actively involved in various organizations, including Rajasthan Association of North America, Jain Center of America, VegetarianVision, Indian Association of Long Island



Anu and associates with Laura Curran, Nassau County Executive



Anu with IALI group

The Indian Panorama. My name is Anu Jain and I am an accountant/finance controller and based in Long Island. I am also involved in community work and holding different positions with some of the prestigious non-profit organizations like Rajasthan Association of North America, Jain Center of America, Vegetarian Vision, along with my involvement with the Indian Association of Long Island, two years back.

I am involved in the social organizations, Rajasthan Association of North America, Vegetarian Vision and Indian Association of Long Island with the purpose serving the

respective communities. Similarly, being involved in Jain Center of America, a religious organization, I have the goal of promoting Jainism which is represented by the "Live and Let Live" principle, along with non-violence, peace, and love.

Through my efforts along with the organizations' support, I am able to achieve many of my goals such as providing scholarship and advisory support to students for them to excel in their education and career, supporting and serving the underprivileged. In addition to, promoting our rich Indian traditions and spreading

awareness of Indian culture and its values between American Indians and the members of the other ethnicities. We also celebrate our Indian festivals with everyone in the community to enhance the feeling of "Home Away From Home". Inspiring the new generation/youth to get involved with their new ideas to help people in need, whether locally or back in the villages of India and other countries. Forming strong connections with our roots and our traditions to learn and keep the values of our rich culture alive, along with educating others about health benefits of being vegetarian.

Indian American Forum Inc. (IAF)



A picture of one of the events the IAF organized to honor women for their excellent achievements

Indian American Forum Inc. (IAF) is a non-for-profit organization of Asian Indians in America to promote the cultural, secular heritage and values of India as well as the furtherance of friendship and understanding with people of other cultural backgrounds.

Since 1997, IAF is striving to provide a forum for fostering a mutual and better understanding through its socio-cultural activities and enjoys a very cordial relationship amongst local associations and communities.

IAF various activities that include India Republic Day, Indian American Night; Celebrating India Independence Day,

Outstanding Women's Achievement Gala, International Children Day, Senior Programs, Yoga and Health awareness camps and others are organized as self-funded activities. These have been possible through our motivated and dedicated volunteers who work tirelessly to make each of the activity as a success.

IAF aims to have Asian Indian community's participation to promote local socio-cultural interactions through charitable and educational activities and to help them become a part of the mainstream American life. IAF truly believes that each person of Indian American descent is a true ambassador to promote cultural, secular heritage and values of India.

STRAY THOUGHTS

Our company headed by our flagship company SB International, Inc. has been in business for the past almost 37 years and has had its upticks and downticks in the cycles of its business. We have concentrated on Energy, Metals and International Trade from the start of our company to develop a sound growth oriented business.

While succeeding in business, I have never lost focus on propagating the message for creating the awareness and richness of our heritage and culture. At any given opportunity, I have put forth my views on the various lessons one can learn from them, be it from Swami Vivekananda or from Mahatma Gandhi, as some leading examples.

These thoughts continually fire me up to make continuous efforts to contribute to numerous community related projects which can going forward make a difference individually to human lives and the country in the bigger context. One can notice that organizations are facing a lot of pressures to broaden their identity and mission to ensure social and environmental aspects are focused on along with their usual economic value creation. This is something I have always focused on right from the beginning.

To ensure I continue to meet the above, my business goal is to create a much more sustainable and meaningful organizations in our group which can carry my message forward for creating a balanced social & environmentally correct process with a sound economic value, to reach our business and community service targets. On a long-term



Satish Gupta, President & CEO SB International, Inc., Dallas, Texas- Community leader and Philanthropist

basis, I feel Corporate Social Responsibility should be an important aspect for any organization which is purpose driven to give a meaningful purpose both for its owners and their employees.

Some of the characteristics one needs to develop to support the above thought processes that I follow are: care about doing the right thing with appropriate transparency, have strong and visible morals and values, demonstrate through actions my beliefs, identify the passions in the team and see how it can be made to work towards the goals and build meaningful relationships. Last but not the least I try to make each member of the team to contribute in such a way to be perceived as making a difference both to the business and doing good for the society.

INDIA ASSOCIATION OF LONG ISLAND: A Historical Perspective

BY RAJESHWAR PRASAD

It was mid-seventies in the last century when a group of enthusiastic and concerned Indian professionals at the Central Islip State Hospital joined hands and started deliberations for developing an association. This informal group was celebrating Indian festivals and other special events while planning for an organization. In late seventies and early eighties their well-conceived dream came true and the India Association of Long Island (IALI) was formed and incorporated as a nonprofit entity. IALI is the only broad-based grassroots organization in Long Island, aimed at fostering unity among Indians from all regions of India, sustaining our cultural and social values, and above all to have one effective voice.

In the last almost four decades, IALI has made its dent not only in Long Island but in the entire NY/NJ metropolitan region. There have been ups and downs, but the strong foundation laid by dedicated and committed community leaders has withstood turmoil and continued moving ahead. Today the IALI, started just with 30 members, has close to 1700 subscribing members. Over the years IALI has undertaken activities such as Valentine Dinner Dance, Holi Festival, Tennis Tournaments, Family Picnics, Youth Activities including Disco Dancing, Celebration of India's Independence through India Day Parade, Food Drive through Interfaith Nutrition Network, IndiaFest - a showcase of Indian Arts and Crafts, Diwali Festival, Senior Citizen Forum and Women Forum (including monthly get-togethers). The annual Fund-Raising Dinner initiated in 1979 has honored over 130 individuals of Indian

origin for their accomplishments in fields such as science, medicine, social and community work, business and entrepreneurship. The association toyed with some other programs such as Info-India Project, Essay Competition among children on "India as I Know It." It has participated in Breast Cancer Walk-a-thon; Multicultural activities and Kite Flying competition at Indian American Night at the Eisenhower Park with the help of Indian American Forum. It has also participated recently in the Vegetarian Vision event, founded by Mrs. Malti and Harshad K. Shah, who were honored also by IALI last year. The event is held in Manhattan where thousands of people show up. IALI continue to collaborate with scores of other Indian and American associations.

Over the years, IALI developed working relationship with teaching institutions such as Dowling College, Old Westbury College, State University of New York at Stony Brook, Farmingdale University, and Hofstra University in various activities. It also established liaison with and representation on Institutions such as Police Departments, Offices of District Attorneys, American Jewish Congress (Center for Prejudice Reduction), Human Rights Commissions, Interfaith Nutrition Network (INN) and many more. Nassau County and Suffolk County Executives cherish IALI and participate in celebrations of Indian festivals such as Diwali and National holidays such as India's Independence Day. It also has maintained close working relationship with many Indian community organizations such as Federation of Indian American Associations (FIA), Association of Indians in America (AIA),

American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPIO), and the National Indo-American Association for Senior Citizens (NIAASC). It had also interacted with the Town of Huntington in 2005 in celebrating diversity where about three dozen countries participated. It has played an active role in celebration Asian American Festival sponsored by the Town of North Hempstead. For the last four years it has played a leading role and joined many other organizations in displaying its accomplishments through India Day Parade in Long Island.

IALI has come forth to support humane causes in USA, in India and other places. It has collaborated with other entities to support victims of earthquake in India. It also joined many other organizations to condemn acts of violence as projected by an attack on September 11, 2001 and prayed for the victims and their families. IALI initiated fundraising for Tsunami victims and earmarked entire raffle collection from Valentine Dinner/Dance for this purpose in 2005. It arranged an interfaith prayer gathering for the Mumbai tragedy in November 2008 where leaders of different faiths spoke and prayed for peace.

During the last two years IALI has been consolidating its activities in its HOME, bought just recently in Hicksville. The association has come a long way, but it is still challenging to visualize the future path in light of changing demographics and environment. IALI has a daunting task to develop resources and facilities for seniors so that they stay in Long Island, and other generations can utilize their rich and valuable experiences in moving forward.

All these IALI accomplishments have been



Gunjan Rastogi, President, IALI

possible due to the commitment of its members and that of the Indian community at large. It is expected that Indian Americans living in both the Counties will enhance its professional impact and make in-roads in the broader and diversified community structure of the region by playing more active role in its economic, social and political spheres.

(Rajeshwar Prasad is past president of IALI, co-founder and president of NIAASC, former Human Rights Commissioner of Suffolk County. He has now moved with his wife, Prem, to ShantiNiketan in Tavares, Florida).

VISION OF WORLD PEACE

BY ASHOK PARULEKAR

Goa is a beautiful place. Sri Chinmoy's statue in the capital city Panaji enhances the beauty and adds to the divinity. His aphorism at the statue reads: There shall come a time when the world of ours will be flooded with Peace. Who will bring that radical change? It will be you, you and your sisters and brothers who are an extension of your reality existence.

This aphorism expresses Sri Chinmoy's vision for world peace and encourages everybody to participate in it. Even if a single person becomes peaceful, it will be a significant contribution for the World Peace as we all are connected, and we are a part of the Universal Consciousness. Meditation makes one peaceful. Soulful music is another thing next to meditation.

Sri Chinmoy dedicated his life for the world peace and for the fulfilment of unlimited potential of human spirit. He established meditation centers in more than 60 countries and one at The United Nations. He wrote 1600 books and composed 22,000 soulful songs. He encouraged sports and athletics. Sri Chinmoy created a vast outpouring for art. His paintings are exhibited at the galleries worldwide. Through all his activities he was conveying the message of oneness of humanity. He travelled extensively and took India's ancient message, "The world is one family" to the far corners of the world. In 1987 Sri Chinmoy founded the Sri Chinmoy Oneness-Home Peace Run. The longest relay runs for peace inspiring millions in more than 140 countries.

Inspired by Sri Chinmoy's work his students around the world are offering free meditation classes and musical concerts. Sri Chinmoy Marathon team is world's leading organization for the ultra-run events. The vision is - World Peace and Self-transcendence leading to spiritual progress.

For more information see www.srichinmoy.org



Indian American Intellectuals' Forum

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One billion Hindus have a great history and culture.

But Hindus have not yet realized their future is dark if they have no Hindu Nation.

No culture can expand or stay alive without support of anation.

Today inlast 1400 years many nations are have lost their own roots own culture.

Many poor and uneducated locals in different land have adopted the culture of the enemy who invaded them.

These local converts have now become enemy of their own root cultures.

Today all convert nations are on war path. Every convert has forgot their roots and busy killing each other.

Converts in each nation are busy destroying own land, roots culture and history.

Its shame our media and intellectuals are not helping these converts to look back into the history ever to find their lost culture and why and how they should shed the adopted culture to live a better life.

They all need to come back and live a better life.

If media and our historian don't speak the truth to educate the masses.

We will soon be in another world war and see major destruction.

Some cultures are not peaceful.

Some cultures teach hate and freedom and right to destroy other cultures.

Some cultures are so peaceful they have not united them self to save from these evil cultures.

But I am hopeful 21 century eras of information, freedom of press and liberty will



Arish Sahani, President

soon expose these evil forces and Good will unite and destroy evil cultures.

Our organization Indian American Intellectuals forum bring yearly seminar to expose these evil forces.

Its time more people should joined expose these evil cultures and find a way to expose and help the followers to leave and go back to their own root culture of ancestors,

Everyone should look for his own roots.

Our roots depend on where we come from and based on our DNA.

Find Your DNA in 2018 and look for you roots and reeducate yourself to live in peace and prosperity.



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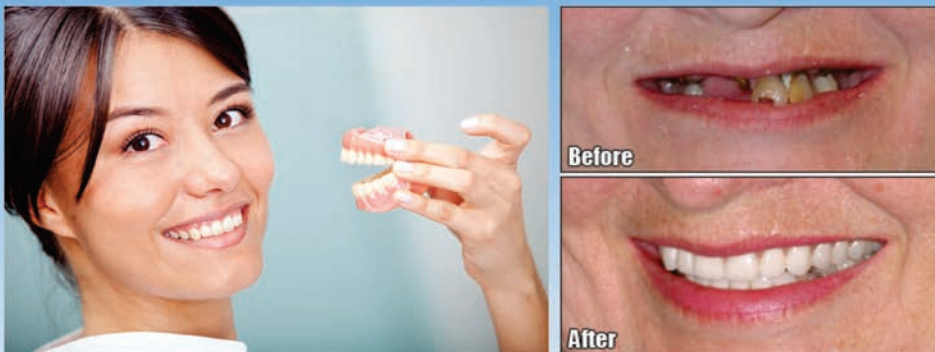
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Vladimir Putin seeks to be 'emperor for life': Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny

MOSCOW (TIP): The Kremlin's top critic Alexei Navalny has slammed Russia's March presidential election, in which he is barred from running, as a sham meant to "re-appoint" Vladimir Putin on his way to becoming "emperor for life". With two months to go before Russians vote in polls that are all but guaranteed to hand Putin a historic fourth term, the 41-year-old opposition leader and anti-corruption campaigner spoke to AFP Tuesday in his campaign headquarters.

"This is not an election and my role will consist of explaining to people that this procedure, which they call an election, in fact is only held to re-appoint Putin," he said.

"We will prove this and convince people that it's impossible to recognise either these polls or this regime."

Navalny last year mounted a national campaign, meeting thousands of people in cities across Russia, but in December the Central Election Commission said he could not take part due to a controversial embezzlement conviction which the opposition leader says is fabricated.

He is now ready to channel the force of his



Photo Courtesy of facebook.com/StandWithCJ

campaign team into persuading Russians to boycott the polls, calling his first major protest of this year on January 28.

"Putin wants to be emperor for life. His

entourage, people who became billionaires and the world's richest individuals, they want the same thing," he said, vouching to continue his "political fight." (AFP)

'Trump cancelled visit as UK didn't show him enough love'

LONDON (TIP): Donald Trump had cancelled his next month's visit to the UK after the British government did not show him "enough love", according to a media report quoting a source close to the US President.

Trump had claimed that his abrupt decision to cancel the working visit on February 26 and 27 for the launch of a new US embassy building was in protest against the "bad deal" over the sale of the older embassy in posh Mayfair area of central London.

However, the source quoted by The Sunday Times has revealed that in fact he had been put off by strong anti-Trump sentiments expressed by London mayor Sadiq Khan, who has repeatedly said that Trump was not welcome in the city.

However, the source said that his proclaimed distaste for the new embassy was "just an excuse".

"He (Trump) felt he had not been shown enough love by the British government," the source told the newspaper on condition of anonymity.

"He (Trump) started to believe that the British government thought the same way about him as Sadiq Khan and Jeremy Corbyn (the Labour party leader), who have made clear their disdain for him and said he is not welcome in the UK," the source said.

Khan, in a statement released on Twitter after Trump's own tweet announcing that he would not be visiting the UK in February, said: "President Trump got the message from the many Londoners who love and admire America and Americans but find his policies and action the polar opposite of our city's values". Trump protesters turned out to disrupt Khan's speech on gender equality to the Fabian Society in London. (PTI)

Chinese airlines permit mobile phones in flight mode

BEIJING: Several Chinese airlines have begun allowing passengers to use mobile phones in flight mode from Thursday, lifting a ban on their use during flights.

Other portable electronic devices could be used in flight mode, while on planes with Wi-Fi, passengers could access the internet using tablets and laptops but not phones.

China Eastern Airlines and Hainan Airlines took the lead in lifting the ban from Thursday after China's civil aviation authority in September said it would leave it up to carriers to make the call on whether to allow phones to be used on flights, Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported. The change also applies to Hainan subsidiary Lucky Air.

Spring Airlines, the country's largest budget carrier, followed suit Thursday, announcing that it will allow mobile phones to be used in flight mode from next month.

China's restrictions on the use of portable electronic devices on flights came with tough penalties - any violation of cabin rules is deemed to be damaging the public order and can result in up to 10 days' detention.

Last year, Beijing police detained three passengers in a month for using their mobile phones during flights, according to the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC).

One of them was detained for five days for listening to music on his phone during take-off and landing, the Post said. The lifting of the ban was welcomed, with passengers sharing selfies taken on their phones during flights with the two airlines. (PTI)

Denmark will increase defense spending to counter Russia: PM



RIGA (TIP): The Danish government expects to win backing for a substantial increase in defense spending next month, to counter Russia's intensified military activity in eastern and northern Europe, the NATO-member's prime minister said Monday.

"It will be like a disaster and no one can predict what the reaction will be," al-Qouqa said.

Denmark last week deployed 200 troops to a UK-led NATO mission in Estonia aimed at deterring Russia from attacking the Baltic NATO members.

Russia annexed Ukraine's Crimea peninsula in 2014 and backs separatist rebels in eastern Ukraine in a war that has killed more than 10,000 people.

"Russia's behavior has created an unpredictable and unstable security environment in the Baltic Sea region," Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen said at a joint news conference with Latvian Prime Minister Maris Kucinskis on Monday in Riga.

"When I received (Vladimir) Putin in Copenhagen during my first term as prime minister back in 2010, everybody thought that it would be the beginning of a new and much better and much more friendly cooperation between Europe and Russia. And that we could decrease our military spending," he said.

"But given the Russian aggression and what happened in Crimea, I think we simply have to be realistic about things and invest more in our security."

In 2016, Russia moved nuclear-capable Iskander-M missiles to its enclave of Kaliningrad on the Baltic Sea and deployed its S-400 air missile defense system there.

In April last year, Denmark said Russia had hacked its defense computer network and gained access to employees' emails in 2015 and 2016.

Russia has accused the West of "whipping up hysteria" over its recent military exercises.

Denmark's center-right minority government needs to persuade parliament to back a proposed 20-percent hike of the defense budget over a five-year period. Rasmussen said he expected a "very big majority" to do so.

"We want to look at ourselves as a core NATO member. And in order to behave like such a member, we need to increase our expenditures," he said, adding that the Danish military needed a "substantial increase".

"Five years ago we thought that the defense line, so to speak, would not be in Europe, but would be international operations. Now we realize that we need to have the capability to do both," he said. (Reuters)

Muslim county in China bans children from religious events over break

BEIJING (TIP): A mostly Muslim county in western China has banned children from attending religious events over a winter break, an education bureau said in a notice posted online, as authorities step up control of religious education.

School students in Linxia county in Gansu province, home to many members of the Muslim Hui ethnic minority, are prohibited from entering religious buildings over their break, a district education bureau said, according to the notification.

Students must also not read scriptures in classes or in religious buildings, the bureau said, adding that all students and teachers should heed the notice and work to strengthen political ideology and propaganda.

Reuters was unable to independently verify the authenticity of the notice.

A man who answered the telephone at the Linxia education bureau hung up when Reuters asked about the notice. A woman at the district education bureau declined to comment on the document's authenticity.

Xi Wuyi, a Marxist scholar at the state-backed Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and an outspoken critic of rising Islamic influence in China, shared the picture and welcomed the apparent move by the authorities.

With the notice, the county was taking concrete action to keep religion and education separate and sticking strictly to education law, she said on the Weibo social media platform.

New regulations on religious affairs released in October last year, and due to take effect in February, aim to increase oversight of religious education, and provide for greater regulation of religious activities.

Last summer, a Sunday School ban was introduced in the southeastern city of Wenzhou, sometimes known as "China's Jerusalem" due to its large Christian population, but Christian parents found ways to teach their children about their religion regardless. (Reuters)

SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN NEIGHBOURHOOD CAN HARM YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

Sexual violence in the neighbourhood can harm the physical and mental health of women, a study says. According to researchers, feelings about the frequency of rape or other forms of sexual assault in a neighbourhood are significantly tied to women's perceptions of its safety.

"Feeling unsafe, especially in and around your home, can erode physical and mental health," said Dana M Prince, co-author of the study and assistant professor at the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences at Case Western Reserve University.

"Our results could mean men are less aware of sexual violence, or perhaps they do not feel comfortable reporting that it makes them feel less safe — perhaps both — while women tend to be socialised early on to be aware of the possibility of sexual attack," Prince added.

The researchers noted that neighbourhoods play a key role in the behaviour and development of people, previous studies show and some conditions — such as crime, segregation, poverty and disorder — can have harmful effects on health.

For the study, published in the Journal of Community Psychology, researchers conducted interviews with nearly 350 adults in nine neighbourhoods in a major American city with high rates of poverty, unemployment and crime. Participants were asked how often particular crimes occurred in their neighbourhood in the past six months.



"Our results indicate that men can become more aware of how women feel about what contributes to and threatens their safety," the researcher said.

"Sexual and gendered violence affects all people and everyone can be partners in ending sexual violence," she added.

Source: IANS

Bring some fun into your outfit with floral prints

Flowers have always been a symbol of beauty and grace, usually loved by women across the world. Moreover, designers all over are reviving floral prints in outfits because of which this is slowly turning out to be the hottest trend in clothing.



Lacy/Pencil Skirt

A lacy floral skirt offers a subtler yet stylish look. Try a slim pencil skirt in floral pattern for a chic look. Add a crisp shirt in a solid colour and slip on a metallic ballerina flat to finish the look. The harmony of colours is quite important.

Maxi Dress

Pair a flowing floral Maxi dress with comfortable height uplifting stacked heels or sandals. Keep your accessories delicate to balance the floral look. Take your look up a notch with a leather hat. You could also add a chunky cardigan against protection in cold weather.

The Beachy Dress

A beachy dress in floral goes well for a beach party or a brunch. Look for burgundy, forest green or mustard yellow dress. Merely changing the colours of the print can make a huge difference.

Floral Jeans

For some experiment with your regular denims, try floral patterned jeans. Pair your jeans with a white full sleeve shirt for an elegant appeal. You can also opt to roll up the pant cuffs and wear a pair of metallic flip-flops to beautify the look.

Other style tricks to dress in floral:

- It is essential that you feel confident with what you are wearing.
- The floral print should be the main part of your outfit. So style your look with minimal accessories.
- Don't shy away from brighter colours. Always pair them with a complimenting colour.
- Floral prints aren't just for summer. Darker prints work well in the winter.

Source: ANI

FOOD CORNER

SPICY CHICKEN CURRY

Ingredients

Onion - 2 (finely chopped), Tomato - 2 (diced or pureed), Oil - 3 tbsp, Bay Leaf - 1, Curry Leaves - 1 sprig, Cumin seeds - ¼ tsp, Coriander leaves (Cilantro) - handful (finely chopped), Salt - to taste

To Marinate

Chicken - 1 kg (2 lbs), Turmeric powder - 1/4, tsp, Lemon juice - 2 tsp, Salt - 1 tsp, To cursh, Ginger - 1" piece, Garlic - 8 cloves, Shallots - 7, Green Chillies - 3, To roast and powder, Grated Coconut - 1/4 cup, Dry red chillies - 10, Coriander Seeds - 2 tbsp, Black Peppercorns - 2 tsp, Fennel Seeds - 2 tsp, Poppy Seeds - 1 tsp, Curry Leaves - 2 sprigs, Cardamom - 10, Cinnamon - 1" piece, Cloves - 5, Mace - 1 piece, Star anise - 1 piece, Black Stone Flower (Kalpasi) - 1, Kapok Buds (Marathi Moggu) - 1

Method

- Cut the chicken and cut it into medium size pieces. Marinate it with salt, lemon

juice and turmeric powder for at least half an hour.

- Dry roast the ingredients under To Roast and Powder on low flame till everything turns golden brown in colour. After it cools make a powder of it and keep aside. Be careful not to burn it.
- Make a paste of the ingredients under To Crush. Keep this aside.
- Heat the oil in a heavy bottomed pan and add the cumin seeds and bay leaf.
- Add the chopped onions and fry till it becomes brown in colour.
- Add the ground paste of shallots, ginger, garlic and green chillies and fry till the raw smell is gone.
- Add the marinated chicken and fry for few minutes. The chicken releases lot of water.
- Now add the tomato puree and the freshly powdered spices, required salt and water.



- Cover and cook for 15-20 minutes. By now the chicken pieces will be completely cooked.
- This is the right time to check for salt and other spices. Adjust anything if needed.
- Cook uncovered till the oil floats on top of the gravy.
- Add the finely chopped cilantro and fresh curry leaves and switch off. Keep the gravy covered till you are ready to serve.

REGULAR YOGA CAN SLOW DOWN AGEING OF BRAIN

NEW DELHI (TIP): Practising yoga regularly can slow down ageing of the brain and helps it stay young, claims a study.

The study by the researchers of the Defence Institute of Physiology and Allied Sciences (DIPAS), said that yoga might help in prevention of age-related degeneration by changing cardiometabolic risk factors and brain-derived neurotrophic factors among men.

DIPAS is a laboratory of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

The research study, which was published in the American Ageing Association, focused not only on the brain but comparative studies were conducted on hypertension, blood pressure, heart rate, and stress.

According to the researchers, a brain develops till the age of 20-30. After that, development of the brain halts and after 40 years, its slow degeneration starts.

As part of the study, done by Rameswar Pal, Som Nath Singh, Abhirup Chatterjee and Mantu Saha, 124 healthy and physically active men aged between 20 and 50 years were randomly selected and divided into three age groups — 20-29, 30-39, and 40-50 years.

Inclusion criterion were normal healthy and physically active males, absence of disease which could have contributed to obesity, hypertension, and



neurological disorders, not in medication and no prior knowledge of yoga. Smokers, alcoholics, and tobacco eaters were excluded from the study.

The respondents were made to practice yoga for one hour everyday for three months. The blood pressure which was recorded at 122/69 in the age group of 20-29 before yoga reduced to 119/68 (systolic pressure is 119 and the diastolic pressure is 68) after doing yoga.

Similarly, the blood pressure which was 134/84 among the respondents (40-50) came down to 124/79 after yoga.

Cortisol, which is a stress hormone released by the adrenal glands and helps body deal with stressful situations was 68.5 per cent in the age group of 20-29 which declined to 47.4 after the exercise.

The cortisol level which was 95 before yoga reduced to 72.7 after three months of yoga in the group 40-50 years.

Further, dopamine and serotonin levels which effectively improve motivation, focus, mood and instill positivity were found to have improved in all the groups after yoga.

Source: PTI

HOLDING NOSE WHILE SNEEZING MAY BURST YOUR EAR DRUM

WASHINGTON DC (TIP): If you are about to sneeze, don't try to stop it by pinching your nose and closing your mouth, as according to doctors, it can rupture throat, burst an ear drum and even pop a blood vessel in brain.

According to researchers, it may lead to numerous complications, such as pseudomediastinum — air trapped in the chest between both lungs, perforation of the tympanic membrane — perforated eardrum and even rupture of a cerebral aneurysm — ballooning blood vessel in the brain.

The team recently revealed that a 34-year-old young man managed to rupture the back of his throat during this manoeuvre, leaving him in excruciating pain, barely able to speak or swallow and in considerable pain.

Spontaneous rupture of the back of the throat is rare and usually caused by trauma, or sometimes by vomiting, retching or heavy coughing, so the young man's symptoms initially surprised the emergency care doctors.

He explained that he had had developed a popping sensation in his neck which immediately swelled up after he tried to contain a forceful sneeze by pinching his nose and keeping his mouth clamped shut at the same time.

A little later he found it extremely



painful to swallow and all but lost his voice.

When the doctors examined him, they heard that popping and crackling sounds (crepitus), which extended from his neck all the way down to his ribcage — a sure sign that air bubbles had found their way into the deep tissue and muscles of the chest, which was subsequently confirmed by a computed

tomography scan.

Because of serious complications, the man was admitted to hospital, where he was fed by tube and given intravenous antibiotics until the swelling and pain had subsided.

After seven days he was well and was discharged with the advice not to block both nostrils when sneezing in future.

Source: ANI



NON-INVASIVE THERAPY COULD REMOTELY KILL CANCER CELLS

LOS ANGELES (TIP): Scientists have developed a system that can non-invasively and remotely control immune cells so that they recognise and kill cancer cells.

There is a critical need to non-invasively and remotely manipulate cells at a distance, particularly for translational applications in animals and humans, researchers said.

They developed an innovative approach to use mechanogenetics—a field of science that focuses on how physical forces and changes in the mechanical properties of cells and tissues influence gene expression—for the remote control of gene and cell activations.

The team from University of California, San Diego in the US used ultrasound to mechanically perturb T cells, and then converted the mechanical signals into genetic control of cells. They show how their remote-controlled mechanogenetics system can be used to engineer chimeric antigen receptor (CAR)-expressing T cells that can target and kill cancer cells.

The engineered CAR-T cells have mechano-sensors and genetic transducing modules that can be remotely activated by ultrasound via microbubble amplification.

"CAR-T cell therapy is becoming a paradigm-shifting therapeutic approach for cancer treatment," said Peter Yingxiao Wang, professor at the UC San Diego.

"However, major challenges remain before CAR-based immunotherapy can become widely adopted. For instance, the non-specific targeting of CAR-T cells against nonmalignant tissues can be life-threatening," said Wang.

"This work could ultimately lead to an unprecedented precision and efficiency in CAR-T cell immunotherapy against solid tumors, while minimizing off-tumor toxicities," said Wang. Researchers found that microbubbles conjugated to streptavidin can be coupled to the surface of a cell, where mechanosensitive Piezo1 ion channels are expressed.

Upon exposure to ultrasound waves, microbubbles vibrate and mechanically stimulate Piezo1 ion channels to let calcium ions inside the cell. This triggers downstream pathways, including calcineurin activation, NFAT dephosphorylation and translocation into the nucleus.

Source: PTI

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DR. SATISH AND GITANJLI ANAND



DR. SATISH ANAND
Former Chairman, Board of Trustees, AAPI National
E-Mail: sanandmd@gmail.com

GITANJLI ANAND
Former President, India Association of Long Island (IALI)
E-mail: gitanjlianand@gmail.com

NEW PORTABLE DEVICE CAN IDENTIFY FAKE LIQUOR



WASHINGTON (TIP): Scientists have developed a portable device with advanced sensors that can accurately identify fake or watered-down alcohol, offering a strategy for liquor quality assurance.

Watered-down or fake liquors can reap financial rewards for nefarious individuals, but the adulteration of liquor cheats consumers and can even lead to health hazards from added contaminants.

In the past few years, deaths from contaminated alcohol have been reported in Indonesia, Mexico, China, Poland and Russia, among other places.

Unscrupulous individuals hoping to make a profit may homebrew liquor and bottle it in official-looking packaging or dilute liquor with anything from water to antifreeze.

Kenneth S Suslick and Zheng Li from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in the US wanted to address this growing health concern by engineering a device that can easily identify tainted products.

The researchers developed a disposable sensor with 36 dyes that change colour upon exposure to particular components in liquor.

Partial oxidation of the liquor vapours improved the sensor's response.

Using a handheld image analyser to detect these colour changes, the scientists correctly identified the alcoholic content and brand of 14 different liquors, including various scotch whiskeys, bourbon, rye, brandy and vodka with greater than 99 per cent accuracy.

In an experiment to demonstrate a real-world application, the researchers also sniffed out booze that had been watered down, even by as little as one per cent. *Source: PTI*

FACEBOOK TO TWEAK NEWS FEED TO BRING FAMILY, FRIENDS CLOSER

SAN FRANCISCO (TIP): Facebook is making changes to its News Feed feature that will allow users to see more updates from family and friends than posts from businesses, brands and media, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg has announced.

"One of our big focus areas for 2018 is making sure the time we all spend on Facebook is time well spent. We built Facebook to help people stay connected and bring us closer together with the people that matter to us," Zuckerberg posted on Facebook late on Thursday.

The CEO said that Facebook has got a feedback from the community that public content — posts from businesses, brands and media — is crowding out the personal moments that lead us to connect more with each other.

"We're making a major change to how we build Facebook. I'm changing the goal I give our product teams from focusing on helping you find relevant content to helping you have more meaningful social interactions," he said.

"As we roll this out, you will see less public content like posts from businesses, brands, and media. And the public content you see more will be held to the same standard — it should encourage meaningful interactions between people," Zuckerberg added.

The CEO said Facebook started making changes in this direction last year and it will take months for this new focus to make its way through all the products.

News Feed will be the first feature that



will see the first changes, "where you can expect to see more from your friends, family and groups." The update will also prioritise posts that spark conversations and meaningful interactions between people. Facebook will predict which posts its users might want to interact with their friends about, and show these posts higher in feed. These are posts that inspire back-and-forth discussion in the comments and posts that users might want to share and react to — whether that is a post from a friend seeking advice, a friend

asking for recommendations for a trip, or a news article or video prompting lots of discussion.

The social media giant said since the space in News Feed is limited, showing more posts from friends and family and updates that spark conversation will be seen more and public content, including videos and other posts from publishers or businesses, will be shown less.

The impact will vary from Page to Page, driven by factors including the type of content they produce and how people interact with it. *Source: IANS*

Farthest known galaxy in the universe discovered: NASA

WASHINGTON (TIP): NASA scientists have spotted the farthest known galaxy in the universe, a primitive cluster of stars just 500 million years old.

An intensive survey deep into the universe by NASA's Hubble and Spitzer space telescopes has yielded the image of the galaxy named SPT0615-JD, stretched and amplified by a phenomenon called gravitational lensing.

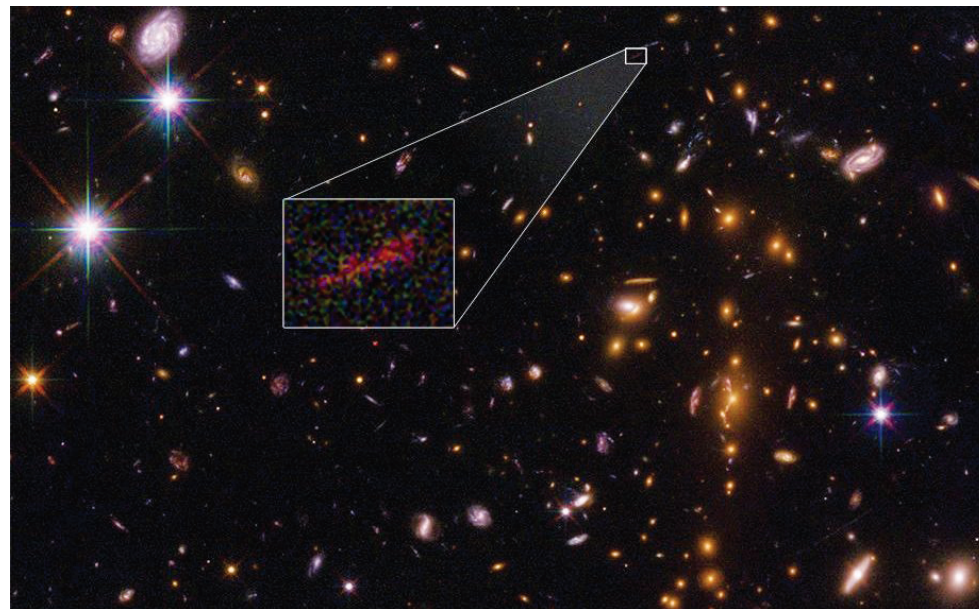
Though a few other primitive galaxies have been seen at this early epoch, they have essentially all looked like red dots given their small size and tremendous distances.

However, in this case, the gravitational field of a massive foreground galaxy cluster not only amplified the light from the background galaxy but also smeared the image of it into an arc.

"No other candidate galaxy has been found at such a great distance that also gives you the spatial information that this arc image does," said Brett Salmon of the Space Telescope Science Institute in the US.

"By analysing the effects of gravitational lensing on the image of this galaxy, we can determine its actual size and shape," said Salmon.

First predicted by Albert Einstein a century ago, the warping of space by the gravity of a massive foreground object can brighten and distort the images of far more



distant background objects.

Astronomers use this "zoom lens" effect to go hunting for amplified images of distant galaxies that otherwise would not be visible with today's telescopes.

SPT0615-JD was identified in Hubble's Reionization Lensing Cluster Survey (RELICS) and companion S-RELICS Spitzer programme.

"RELICS was designed to discover distant galaxies like these that are magnified

brightly enough for detailed study," said Dan Coe, Principal Investigator of RELICS.

By combining the Hubble and Spitzer data, Salmon calculated the lookback time to the galaxy of 13.3 billion years.

Preliminary analysis suggests the diminutive galaxy weighs in at no more than 3 billion solar masses. It is less than 2,500 light-years across

The object is considered prototypical of young galaxies that emerged during the

epoch shortly after the Big Bang.

The galaxy is right at the limits of Hubble's detection capabilities, but just the beginning for the upcoming NASA James Webb Space Telescope's powerful capabilities, said Salmon.

"This galaxy is an exciting target for science with the Webb telescope as it offers the unique opportunity for resolving stellar populations in the very early universe," he said.

Future prospects

One of the most pursued and active areas of cosmological research is the identity and dynamics of dark matter and dark energy. Undetectable by usual astronomical methods and entirely non-interactive with light, dark energy accounts for about seventy-five percent, whereas, dark matter occupies around twenty-one percent, of the known universe. Dark matter interacts only gravitationally and is responsible for gravitationally bending images of most galaxies and quasars.

Discoveries such as the current one can help astronomers decode the structure and composition dark matter, as most of the lensing is usually attributed to dark matter. The reason behind this is the quantity of dark matter in intervening galaxy clusters to outweigh the other by a factor of six or so. *Source: PTI*

Israel to invest \$68.6 million to boost cooperation with India

JERUSALEM: Israel will invest \$68.6 million to boost cooperation with India in areas like tourism, technology, agriculture and innovation over a period of four years, a senior official here has said ahead of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's high-profile India visit next week.

The commitment is in addition to the India-Israel Industrial R&D and Technological Innovation Fund of \$40 million over five years with equal contribution from both sides that has already been agreed between the two sides, deputy Director General of Israel's Foreign Ministry, Gilad Cohen, told PTI.

Netanyahu will be leading a high-profile delegation comprising 130 businessmen from 102 Israeli companies drawn from areas like agriculture, water, cyber security, health care and security on his four day trip to India starting January 14.

It will be the second visit by an Israeli Prime Minister to India after a gap of 15 years since Ariel Sharon visited New Delhi in 2003. The visit comes merely six months after Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited the Jewish state, becoming the first Indian premier to do so.

Several MoUs, including in the field of oil and gas, renewable energy, amended protocol for airports, cyber security, co-production of films and documentaries will be signed between the two sides.

Israel's Saare Tzedek hospital would be signing an agreement with India's Ministry of Health and Family Welfare



as well.

Informed sources here said that this relates to sharing of knowledge in the field of homoeopathy and ayurveda that have been gaining popularity in Israel over the last few years.

Technion-Israel Institute of Technology would also be signing an agreement with Ministry of Science and Technology, sources here said.

Reciprocating the warm reception extended to him by Netanyahu, Modi is likely to spend a lot of time with his Israeli counterpart during the trip.

Netanyahu accompanied Modi almost throughout his three day trip in July of last year, an honour generally reserved for Presidents of Israel's close ally the United States.

The Indian Prime Minister will be hosting a private dinner for Netanyahu

on January 14 after his arrival in New Delhi. The Israeli leader would be meeting External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj also the same day.

The Israeli Prime Minister would be formally welcomed the next day at the Rashtrapati Bhawan following which he would lay wreath at Rajghat.

He would be then participating in a dialogue at Hyderabad house which will also include a one-on-one discussion with Modi. Meetings with President Ram Nath Kovind and Vice President Venkaiah Naidu are also scheduled for Monday.

Netanyahu, accompanied by his wife Sara, would be travelling to Agra to see the Taj Mahal on Tuesday and return to Delhi to participate in the Raisina Dialogue.

Source: PTI

GOLD TOPS 31K-MARK ON JEWELLERS' BUYING, ASIAN CUES



NEW DELHI (TIP): Gold soared by Rs 100 to trade at Rs 31,050 per ten gram at the bullion market on continued buying by jewellers to meet wedding season demand.

Silver too advanced by Rs 100 to Rs 40,300 per kg due to increased offtake by industrial units and coin makers.

Marketmen attributed the rise in gold prices to steady buying by local jewellers, driven by ongoing wedding season amid higher Asian cues.

Globally, gold rose 0.08 per cent to US\$ 1,340.70 an ounce and silver by 0.03 per cent to US\$ 17.34 an ounce in Singapore.

Besides, a depreciated rupee against the dollar made imports of the metal costlier, thus fuelling the uptrend, they said.

In the national capital, gold of 99.9 and 99.5 per cent purity added Rs 100 each to Rs 31,050 and Rs 30,900 per ten gram respectively. The precious metal had gained Rs 475 in the previous four sessions.

Sovereign also edged up by Rs 50 to Rs 24,800 per piece of eight gram.

In line with gold, silver ready rose further by Rs 100 to Rs 40,300 per kg and weekly-based delivery by Rs 85 to Rs 39,665 per kg.

Silver coins too spurted by Rs 1,000 to Rs 75,000 for buying and Rs 76,000 for selling of 100 pieces.

Source: PTI

'NEW' RCOM TO BUILD \$600-M UNDERSEA CABLE

MUMBAI (TIP): Having decided to limit itself to business-to-business (B2B) segment, the crisis-ridden Reliance Communications (RCom) said shuttering its flagship wireless business and building the enterprise business is a "challenge".

The 'new RCom' today announced a \$600-million investment to build a 68,000-km undersea cable network that will carry data to Europe and Hong Kong from its headquarters here, and expects \$1 billion in annual revenue.

"One of the challenges is that we are going through setting up an enterprise company while we are actually taking down a wireless company. These aren't easy," RCom chief executive Bill Barney told reporters here.

Source: PTI

Patanjali ties up with e-tailers to push products online



NEW DELHI (TIP): Ramdev-led Patanjali Ayurved on Tuesday announced its partnership with eight online platforms in a move to push sales of its range of products.

"Online mechanism aims to provide convenient and efficient option along with extension of traditional retail market," Ramdev said while announcing the partnerships.

Patanjali has partnered with e-commerce firms Amazon, Grofers, Shopclues, Flipkart, BigBasket, 1mg, Paytm Mall and Netmeds on which the whole range of Patanjali products will be available. Patanjali medicine requiring prescription will be sold only through Netmeds and 1mg.

Shopclues Senior President Operations Vishal Sharma said the company would directly source and sell products to consumers.

Source: PTI

Airbus overtakes Boeing, says could halt A380 programme

PARIS (TIP): European aerospace giant Airbus overtook arch-rival Boeing in terms of aircraft orders last year, but warned that it could cease making its A380 jet if it does not receive any more orders for the supersize plane.

Airbus said it booked a total 1,109 aircraft orders and a record 718 deliveries in 2017.

By comparison, US rival Boeing booked 912 orders and 763 deliveries.

Chief operating officer Fabrice Bregier said that overall deliveries could rise to 800 this year, given the increased



pace of production of its A320neo aircraft.

The medium-haul A320neo and A321neo jets feature new generation engines that use 15 percent less fuel compared to their peers.

"We are going to double the number of

A320neos" delivered this year, Bregier told a news conference. "If we do that, we will be close to 800 deliveries in 2018." He acknowledged that deliveries of the A320neo had been slowed last year by problems with the engines made by US firm Pratt & Withney and by CFM, the joint venture of General Electric and Safran.

Nevertheless, the problems were gradually being resolved and around 30 aircraft were waiting for their engines, down from 60 at the beginning of the year, he said.

Source: AFP

BITCOIN SLIDES TO BELOW \$10,000



LONDON (TIP): Bitcoin, the dominant digital currency, extended a slump today following a recent surge to trade below \$10,000 for the first time since the start of December.

Around 1410 GMT, bitcoin stood at \$9,807.56 to record its lowest value since December 1 and a plunge of almost 50

percent since reaching a record high on December 18, according to data compiled by Bloomberg.

"There was clearly a significant speculative component to the rally late last year and the drop will be very discouraging to those that previously thought there was easy money to be made," Craig Erlam, senior market analyst at Oanda trading group, said of bitcoin's drop below \$10,000.

Bitcoin is down from record highs approaching \$20,000 in the week before Christmas, having rocketed 25-fold last year, before being hit by concerns about a bubble and worries about crackdowns on trading it.

"The panic-selling seen across all the major cryptocurrencies could be attributed to a possible regulatory clampdown in South Korea with authorities threatening to place an outright ban on cryptocurrency trading," noted David Cheetham, chief market analyst at XTB.

"Having said that, this narrative has been around for many weeks now and isn't really new but it has once more raised the spectre of tighter regulation on this market." Source: AFP



Shree Ganeshaya Namah

Bejan Daruwalla is world's most famous astrologer today. He appears regularly on world wide TV shows. Bejan who has been a professor in English, has authored a number of books on astrology. India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on March 29, 2012, lunched one of Bejan's books, '2012- End of the World? Bejan contributes to a number of journals and newspapers in many parts of the world which include Berkley Communications (London) Times of India (Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai) and The Indian Panorama (New York and Texas). Bejan's predictions have mostly been correct and people the world over rely on his predictions.



Bejan Daruwalla is available for astrological consultations. He can be reached at info@bejandaruwalla.com and on phone 011-91-8141234275 www.bejandaruwalla.com

Weekly Horoscope: January 22 - 28, 2018

Ganesha says in digital terms speed + space + spirituality + showmanship = Sagittarius.

Add to it the great divide between illusion / reality, evolution / revolution, freedom / captivity, knowledge / wisdom. The archer pierces the eye of the Sun and hits infinity.

Finally, Sagittarius is all about freedom. Sagittarius is both fast and furious.

Aries:

Ganesha says the scope of your activities, especially professional ones, will narrow. This phase is all about money and money matters. Income, assets and all sorts of monetary gains are your major pursuits. The desire to have a larger income overshadows all your other considerations and activities. Your working life will hover around business issues, acquisitions, capital, funds, and so on. Yes, this is a good time to launch a project, finish pending work, take on new assignments.

Taurus:

Life has taught you, in recent times to assign realistic goals and priorities. Once again, the focus is on the material plane. You are looking at providing comfort, security and protection for both yourself and your loved ones. Many issues need to be resolved. Real estate property, renovation and family matters are uppermost in your mind. You also need to get your way without hurting others and that is a tightrope walk.

Gemini:

This interesting and reasonably profitable phase is all about money and honey. The highlight is personal and shared finances. Love, passion and romance, partnerships and trade also flourish. Ganesha says that you have a very hectic time ahead and your plate will be full of professional and emotional demands. But, you are determined to enjoy it all and give your very best to the situation. I assure you that in the long haul this will pay dividends.

Cancer:

You change tack. Pretty dramatically this period you will also have more time to pursue hobbies and interests that are close to your heart. Here, love needs to be mentioned in particular. This is where you register your greatest and most pleasing gains. Loved ones, your spouse / partner, in particular, will get special attention. There may be more than one person who falls in the ambit of your love interests.

Leo:

The highlight of the period is a true and genuine reaching out to people. This period sets the trend for a sudden and pleasing shift of interests. Communications - whether phone calls, the media, or just dealing with correspondence, building up fresh contacts - will be the highlight of this period. You are satisfied with concrete gains and there will be pleasing fellowship with those you meet. You may even reach out in friendship to complete strangers!

Virgo:

This will be a great period. With your money worries and issues resolved, you turn to the arts, theatres, music, fun and enjoyment at parties, find occasions for happy times with children and also for pursuing your own interests and hobbies. Leisure is at the forefront; you are not slogging away. You are also more resolute in all your domestic affairs and make some important decisions now. You have the resources and style to make a success of anything you enter into, even if it is falling in love.

Libra:

This is not the phase for flights of fancy; it is certainly not the phase for light romance and fantasies. You focus more on the physical. You plunge headlong into love, passion, the pleasures of sex, and are yet firmly entrenched in the more pragmatic pursuits of funds and loans, legacies and money matters. This is very interesting period. You will also be captivated by meditation, and religious and spiritual practices.

Scorpio:

There is a natural and logical progression from last period. But there is a change here - you will seek spiritual solace, metaphysical truths and deeper insights into life. After the frantic pursuits of the previous period, the mood is somber, even meditative. Work issues will have to be resolved during this period of introspection. You are interested in genuine and strong bonding but the pressures of work will create an equally strong contrary pull.

Sagittarius:

You have somewhat lost track of your priorities, or perhaps focus, with all the thinking and introspection of recent times and it is now necessary to get back to what you love best - people and your interactions with them. You will be bonding with family like never before. They will be your strength, solace, comfort and above all, your inspiration to get ahead in life. Loved ones and the family take centre stage, and you are more rooted in domestic matters.

Capricorn:

Your family will be the centre of attention in every way. But it may not all be hunky dory; there will be negative trends too. You will continue working hard but are drawn into family and property matters, house and home and renovations of all kinds. Ganesha says that family and work are the twin themes that will require probably twice as much involvement and effort.

Aquarius:

You carry on and make the most of all your powers and skills. It is an action-packed time. The focus is on research, discoveries, inventions and new fields of study. There will also be meetings and conferences, interviews and committees. You will be on the move, reaching out in every conceivable way. A journey may also prove rewarding. Travel for both business and pleasure is almost definitely foretold and it will be productive, lucrative and rewarding - both financially and intellectually.

Pisces:

You need to curb your ego and get more tactful and diplomatic if you want to relate better with people, which is actually the need of the hour. This is a welcome realisation. Your sense of your self-image intensifies and diversifies to include not only how you see yourself but also how others see you. While reviewing both your public and personal image and person it is also time to weigh, evaluate and assess what you have achieved.

BASANT PANCHAMI

DEDICATED TO GODDESS SARASWATI, THE FESTIVAL ALSO MARKS THE ARRIVAL OF SPRING AND HARVEST AFTER THE WINTERS

The auspicious day of Vasant Panchami witnesses celebration of different Hindu festivals in different states of India. While Vasant means 'spring', Panchami means 'the fifth day'.

This festival follows the Hindu calendar and falls on the fifth day that is on Panchami of the bright half of the month of Magha that corresponds to sometime in the months of January or February. The day marks the onset of spring and is considered to be the birth date of Goddess Saraswati, the deity of knowledge and arts.

The festivals observed on this day include Saraswati Puja (Shree Panchami), Basant Festival of Kites in Punjab, Sufi Basant and the birthday of Deo-Sun God in Bihar.

Origin

There are many legendary stories associated with Vasant Panchami celebration. According to Indian literature, Vasant Panchami is linked to Shringara Rasam, one of the nine rasas or flavours, which generally relates to love, attraction and beauty.

Till present Kamadeva or Kama, the Hindu God of love and desire is honoured along with his wife Rati and Vasant, the personified representation of spring during celebration of the festival.

Legend says during ancient times female dancers along with dholkis would perform in the informal durbar in the palace of the royal Bakshi singing different ragas based on the theme of love and would shower red gulal with flowers at the end of the celebration accepting money from the royal women. This day also marks the beginning of spring and the forty days period when Kamadeva's wife Rati performed penance for her husband's misdeeds against Lord Shiva.

The forty days period ends with the celebration of Holi and within these forty days people make preparations for burning the Holika by gradually forming a pyre with logs, twigs and other inflammable items to be lit on Holi.

Another legend says that Goddess Saraswati was born on this day and people worship this deity of education and learning on this auspicious day to achieve insight, awareness and wisdom through knowledge. It is said that Goddess Saraswati was granted a boon by Lord Krishna that people will worship her on this day. According to Hindu mythology, Kalidasa tried to take his life for being forbidden by his newly wedded wife for his foolishness.

At that point Goddess Saraswati came out from the waters and instructed him to take a dip following which he attained knowledge and wisdom and eventually became a renowned poet. Thus people revere this day by worshipping Goddess Saraswati to attain knowledge.

Yet another legendary story elucidates initiation and celebration of this festival from the Aryan era. It is believed that the Aryans travelled through Khyber Pass and crossed the Saraswati River to reach India. They settled in India and gradually the Saraswati River became an important resource for development of their civilization following which the celebration might have become a routine.

Goddess Saraswati & Vasant Panchami

It is believed that Vasant Panchami day is the birth date of Goddess Saraswati who the Hindus worship as the Goddess of knowledge, arts, culture and enlightenment. The usual form of worshipping Goddess Saraswati at Vasant Panchami is to take a bath in the morning and then set up a kalash (a pot). Then Goddess Saraswati is worshipped after offering prayers to Lord Ganesha, Lord Shiva, Lord Vishnu and the Sun God following which coloured powder is sprinkled in the air. Goddess Saraswati is worshipped in different states of India as also in Nepal with great grandeur and dedication and the festival is



colour of mustard flowers that bloom during this time. A yellow theme prevails during this time with people wearing yellow clothes, savouring Basanti pulao that is sweet saffron rice and also preparing and consuming yellow sweets.

This day is also believed most auspicious to initiate children to the world of learning and education, a ritual referred as Vidya-Arambham/Praasana or Akshar-Abhyasam, considered to be one of the most significant parts of the festival. In Bengal the ritual is called 'Hathe Khor'i' when the child is assisted in writing the first words by the priest. Students refrain from studies on that day and keep their books, notebooks, pens, pencils and other educational stuff at the feet of the Goddess to seek her blessings. Cultural functions and gatherings also take place. A tiny clay pot filled with a mix of milk and water from Holy Ganges with a small twig carved in the shape of a pen or pencil inserted in it is kept by the side of deity during the festival.

On the next day students write the name of the Goddess on a leaf with the help of the small twig soaked with the liquid in the pot and offer it at the feet of Goddess Saraswati seeking blessings for education and wisdom. The idol of the deity is finally immersed in river praying her to come again next year. In South India Saraswati Puja is observed in the Ashwin month of Hindu calendar on the ninth day during Navratri. Celebrations & Traditions Vasant Panchami is observed in different parts of India in different ways. In Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh and Maharashtra people offer prayers to Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati with mango flowers and ears made of wheat, a tradition that is followed for ages. In Bihar's Aurangabad district people celebrate the birthday of Sun-Deo God, whose shrine was set up by King Aila of Allahabad on the day of Vasant Panchami.

At Amritsar's Harmandir Sahib the Sikhs initiate singing of the Basant Raga on this day that continues till the first day of Vaisakh. Again in the district of Bilaspur, Himachal Pradesh, the Sikhs organise a fair at the renowned Sikh shrine of Guru-ka-Lahore to celebrate and commemorate the marriage of Guru Gobind Singh Ji that took place on this auspicious day. It is also observed as a harvest festival in many states like Bihar and Bengal. People in Uttarakhand offer prayers to Mother Earth and the crops along with Goddess Saraswati apart from following other rituals related to agriculture and harvesting.

In Punjab, the Basant Festival of Kites is celebrated with great enthusiasm by people of all faiths marking it as a colourful occasion.

referred as Saraswati Puja or Sri Panchami. Vasant Panchami is dedicated to Saraswati puja in eastern regions of India and in Nepal. It is also observed in Uttar Pradesh where people celebrate the festival by singing religious verses.

Celebrations are observed in schools, colleges and other educational institutes, in temples as also in households. The idol of the goddess is draped in either white or yellow sari, people perform pujas in the morning using Marigold, Palash and Guldaudi flowers and Bael leaves and Sandal paste.

The offerings to the Goddess referred as Naivedhya consists of sweets and fruits like jujube fruit (popularly known as Ber or kul), dates, apples and bananas, which are served among the devotees after the puja.

The yellow colour holds significance during Vasant Panchami as it is associated with the

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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? Indian alone can save India, and India and Hinduism are one.'

Bollywood Legend 'Pritam' Live North American Tour Dedicated to Opioid Epidemic Awareness

NEW YORK CITY, NY (TIP): On Sunday Jan 14th, Press conference was hosted at the Indian Consulate in New York announcing the Launch of the much awaited and the historic North American Tour of Bollywood Music Legend Pritam Chakraborty dedicated to the cause of Opioid Epidemic awareness in America. With more than 600 songs in 120 movies to the Music Maestro #Pritam Credit, this tour will be the grandest Bollywood musical journey America has ever seen with eight singers and extraordinary performers in seven cities across North America.

"We are extremely pleased that Legendary Pritam Chakraborty is dedicating this historic tour to the awareness of opioid Epidemic Awareness, which as we all know is America #1 Crisis and a national emergency as declared by our President. With more than 500,000 American deaths, the message need to reach all youth to abstain from drugs. Indian kids are especially susceptible given the high pressure to succeed and we are glad that Pritam Da is so involved in this cause.

Said Dr Sanjay Gupta, President American Pain Association who along with Dr. Kavita Gupta, President AAPI East Coast, Karl Karla with Live2u and Anand and Sona Dawda from Cinema on stage organized this press conference.

Dr Sanjay Gupta thanked Ambassador Chakravorty to be part of this initiative from the very beginning last year when Dr Gupta presented the initiative to the now New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy and Ambassador Chakravorty at Dr. Gupta home along with Dr. Kavita Gupta.

Ambassador Chakravorty speaking at this occasion stated that drugs are killing more people than traffic accidents and guns in America and is a major concern. He felt that unfortunately this issue is not discussed and kept under a rug and has become a silent epidemic. We need more and more awareness and this tour will be a great platform to reach Indian Diaspora. He thanked Dr. Sanjay and Kavita Gupta in taking this initiative and felt that involvement of Bollywood is one of the best way to penetrate young minds and hearts.

Dr Kavita Gupta stated that we have more than 100,000 Indian Physicians in America and together we can help eradicate this deadly epidemic which is affecting our kids and



Ambassador Sandeep Chakravorty addressing the gathering

youth. We all need to take it seriously and put whatever effort we can, as safety and future of our next generation is at stake. We have one 9/11 happening every 3 weeks and it is time to stop this before more youth is killed.

Music Legend Pritam Da stated "I am extremely happy to be associated with this extremely important cause and will help in whatever way I can with this tour and even otherwise in fighting this epidemic. He felt that wrong messages are being given to young minds about drugs and using drugs is becoming a part of popular and Hip culture. A large part of this epidemic is due to ignorance of harmful effects of drugs."



Dr. Kavita Gupta addresses



With Pritam Da at the dais

Pritam talk about the 8 singers who will be singing many of his compositions which are the top Bollywoodhits. The singers include Harshdeep Kaur, Nakash Aziz, Shilpa Rao, Sreerama Chandra, Antara Mitra, Shalmali Kholgade, Amit Mishra and Amanat Ali.

Some of the movies to Pitam Crdeit credit include Dhoom, Dhoom 2, Goal Mal 3 Bajrangi Bhaijaan Phantom and Dilwale Ae Dil Hai Mushkil, Jagga Jasoos, Badtameez Dil, Tigers, Raabta, Tubelight Jab Harry Met Sejal, Dangal, and the list goes on.

Dr. Sanjay Gupta thanked Cinema on Stage founders Anand and Sona Dawda for

conceptualizing and producing this amazing and historic show and Karl Karla and the entire National team for bringing the tour across North America. The national team includes Jaweria Khan, Raj Uppal, Gaurang Patel, Jagmohan Nanda Bobby Bajaj Ajay Mittal Padma Mishra Dr. Bharat Patel Manish K Sood Bikram Jeet Singh Ray Sharma and Gaurav Sharma.

PRITAM National Tour in North America will take place in April 2018 as follows- April 6th Chicago, 7th New Jersey, 8th Toronto, 13th Dallas, 14th Los Angeles, 20th Washington D.C., 21st San Jose.

Mr Karl Karla thanked the entire national team for worked hard in making the dream to reality and bringing one of a kind mega show to American public.

Mr Anand and Sona Dowda mentioned that production of the legendary Pritam show was a longtime dream and it is an amazing feeling finally see it as a mega show.

The press conference was compered by Mamta Narula from Ultimate media and Dr. Kavita Gupta. The Press Conference was also attended by Physicians and community leaders along with media representatives.

Dr. Sanjay Gupta in his closing remarks felt that wrong messages from Hollywood and Bollywood are part responsible for creating this epidemic and now they can play a major role in reversing it. India is a country with a large young population and this epidemic is growing fast in India, but nobody wants to talk about it. It is sad to see the country of strong characters like swami Vivekananda and Narendra Modi falling prey to wrong messages. We are happy to see the support of Hollywood, Bollywood Artists and Sports Athletes in this initiative and hopefully together we will be able to turn this deadly tide.

(Press Release)



The organizers and admirers of Pritam Da with Ambassador Sandeep Chakravorty

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Israel puts tunnel dug under Gaza border on display

JERUSALEM (TIP): The Israeli military brought journalists on Thursday to film a 2 km (1.25 mile) tunnel dug by militants from the Gaza Strip to Israel, saying it was putting the construction on display to show the continuing threat it faces from the territory.

The Islamic Jihad militant group has claimed responsibility for building the tunnel, saying its aim was to use it to attack Israel in the next armed confrontation.

Twelve Gaza militants, most of them from Islamic Jihad, were killed in the destruction of the tunnel and in rescue efforts when Israel destroyed the underground passage on October 30. The tunnel, around the height and width of an upright person, was lined with concrete slabs. It was discovered about 120 meters inside Israel near Kissufim, about six meters below ground, as tunnelers burrowed towards the surface looking to build an exit, the Israeli military said.

"The tunnel that we see here is one of three tunnels that have been destroyed over the last two months," Israeli military spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Jonathan Conricus, said. "The threat has not passed and the terror from Hamas has not passed."

Palestinian tunnel diggers have long operated in border areas of the Gaza Strip, using the underground passageways to bypass tight border restrictions imposed by Israel and Egypt on the movement of goods and people, and to smuggle weapons.

Israel captured Gaza in a 1967 war. It is home to two million Palestinians, who complain that the blockade has left the enclave isolated and impoverished. Israel cites security concerns for the restrictions, tightened after the Islamist militant group Hamas took power in Gaza more than a decade ago.

Pope shocks Chile by accusing sex abuse victims of slander

SANTIAGO (TIP): Pope Francis accused victims of Chile's most notorious pedophile of slander on Jan 19, an astonishing end to a visit meant to help heal the wounds of a sex abuse scandal that has cost the Catholic Church its credibility in the country.

Francis said that until he sees proof that Bishop Juan Barros was complicit in covering up the sex crimes of the Rev. Fernando Karadimas, such accusations against Barros are "all calumny."

The pope's remarks drew shock from Chileans and immediate rebuke from victims and their advocates. They noted the accusers were deemed credible enough by the Vatican that it sentenced Karadima to a lifetime of "penance and prayer" for his crimes in 2011.

A Chilean judge also found the victims to be credible, saying that while she had to drop criminal charges against Karadima because too much time had passed, proof of his crimes wasn't lacking.

"As if I could have taken a selfie or a photo while Karadima abused me and



others and Juan Barros stood by watching it all," tweeted Barros' most vocal accuser, Juan Carlos Cruz.

"These people are truly crazy, and the pontiff talks about atonement to the victims. Nothing has changed, and his plea for forgiveness is empty."

The Karadima scandal dominated Francis' visit to Chile and the overall issue of sex abuse and church cover-up was likely to factor into his three-day

trip to Peru that began yesterday.

Karadima's victims reported to church authorities as early as 2002 that he would kiss and fondle them in the swank Santiago parish he ran, but officials refused to believe them.

Only when the victims went public with their accusations in 2010 did the Vatican launch an investigation that led to Karadima being removed from ministry.

The emeritus archbishop of Santiago subsequently apologized for having refused to believe the victims from the start.

Francis reopened the wounds of the scandal in 2015 when he named Barros, a protege of Karadima, as bishop of the southern diocese of Osorno. Karadima's victims say Barros knew of the abuse, having seen it, but did nothing. Barros has denied the allegations.

His appointment outraged Chileans, badly divided the Osorno diocese and further undermined the church's already shaky credibility in the country. (AP)

contd from Page 1

SC lifts ban imposed by some...

might not be so successful at the box office and people might not go to watch it, but its exhibition cannot be prohibited like this," it said.

Based on the saga of the historic battle of 13th century between Maharaja Ratan Singh and his army of Mewar and Sultan Alauddin Khilji of Delhi, the film has been opposed by Rajputs for alleged character assassination of Padmavati.

On behalf of producers Viacom 18, Harish Salve and Mukul Rohatgi contended that once the Central Board of Film Certification had cleared a movie, states could not interfere with it. CBFC was "extra cautious" and it issued a certificate after a few cuts suggested by an expert committee were carried out, they said. They cited the top court's 2011 ruling in the case of Prakash Jha's film 'Aarakshan', which was banned by some states for a certain period.

"Once the parliamentary legislation confers the responsibility and power on a statutory board and the board grants certificate, non-exhibition of it by states will be contrary to statutory provisions," the court said.

On behalf of the BJP-ruled states, Additional Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said there were intelligence reports regarding law and order problem. "If you go by this, 60 per cent of literature, even classical literature of India, cannot be read," the CJI said.

The Bench fixed March 26 for further hearing.

Meanwhile, while there is excitement among moviegoers for watching the much-awaited movie, there is also tension in the air with regard to some taking to streets and try blocking the movie's screening. The BJP ruled states of Rajasthan, Haryana and Gujarat may have to deal with law and order problem which they seem to have invited themselves. Politicians opposed to BJP are hinting at State sponsored demonstrations and disturbances in these states to block the screening of the movie. Only January 25 will tell what happens.

Landmark Brexit Bill passed

milestone of withdrawing from the European Union," Brexit Secretary David Davis said.

"We'll have a statue book that works, delivering a smooth and orderly exit desired by people, businesses across the UK and being delivered by this government."

The Bill is only one of several that Prime Minister Theresa May's minority government must pass to prepare Britain for its withdrawal from the EU in March 2019

MPs had tabled more than 500 amendments and spent more than 80 hours in debate, and Brexit Secretary David Davis said the Bill was heading to the Lords in an 'improved' state

The unelected House of Lords may insist on further changes when peers begin their scrutiny on January 30, while

ministers still face opposition from Scottish and Welsh administrations

President Trump Tweets out...

Award'. Others in Trump's unique award were 'ABC News', 'CNN', 'Time' and 'The Washington Post'. Trump announced the award in a tweet January 17 night.

The website GOP.Com where the winners were listed crashed soon after Trump announced the awards.

was a year of unrelenting bias, unfair news coverage, and even downright fake news. Studies have shown that over 90 per cent of the media's coverage of President Trump is negative," it said.

Topping the list was The New York Times' Paul Krugman story which claimed on the day of Trump's historic, landslide victory that the economy would never recover.

ABC News' Brian Ross was positioned second. It "CHOKES and sends markets in a downward spiral with false report," the website said.

'CNN' received the third prize for reporting that candidate Donald Trump and his son Donald J Trump Jr had access to hacked documents from WikiLeaks.

Time was placed fourth for reporting that Trump removed a bust of Martin Luther King Jr. from the Oval Office.

The Washington Post was laced last for reporting Trump's massive sold-out rally in Pensacola, Florida was empty.

Below is the full list of winners of the 2017 Fake News Awards.

- 1) The New York Times' Paul Krugman claiming markets would 'never' recover from a Trump presidency
- 2) ABC News' Brian Ross' bungled report on former National Security Adviser Michael Flynn
- 3) CNN falsely reporting the Trump campaign had early access to hacked documents from WikiLeaks
- 4) TIME report that Trump removed a bust of Martin Luther King, Jr. from the Oval Office
- 5) The Washington Post's Dave Weigel tweeting that Trump's December rally in Pensacola, Fla., wasn't packed with supporters
- 6) CNN's video suggesting Trump overfed fish during a visit with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe
- 7) CNN's retracted report claiming Anthony Scaramucci-Russia ties
- 8) Newsweek report that Polish First Lady Agata Kornhauser-Duda did not shake Trump's hand
- 9) CNN report that former FBI Director James Comey would dispute President Trump's claim he was told he was not under investigation
- 10) The New York Times report that the Trump administration had hidden a climate-change study
- 11) In Trump's words, "RUSSIA COLLUSION!" Russian collusion is perhaps the greatest hoax perpetrated on the

American people. THERE IS NO COLLUSION.

(Source: GOP Website/ PTI)

Canada Lawmaker behind 1984...

making her the first-ever Sikh cabinet minister in the Canadian province.

The 38-year-old daughter of Canada's first turbaned MP Gurbax Singh Malhi was sworn in as Minister of the Status of Women on Thursday, January 18.

The decision by Premier Kathleen Wynne to elevate Malhi seems to have been taken with an eye to Sikh votes as Ontario goes to the polls in June.

Ms Malhi represents the Punjabi-dominated 'riding' (or constituency) of Brampton-Springdale in the Ontario assembly, whose members are called MPPs or members of provincial parliament.

She joins another Indo-Canadian woman minister Dipika Damerla in the Ontario cabinet.

Interestingly, her elevation to the cabinet comes when two senior Sikh MPPs Amrit Mangat and Vic Dhillon have been ignored.

It is being speculated that because of her 1984 genocide motion, Ms Malhi can help her Liberal Party retain Sikhs votes which may drift to the New Democratic Party (NDP) which has just elected Jagmeet Singh as its national leader. After her genocide resolution, many in the Sikh community view her as the champion of the cause in the community.

Her party may also benefit from her father and former MP's huge hold over Sikh voters.

Interestingly, as a member of the Ontario assembly, Jagmeet Singh too had introduced a similar motion on the anti-Sikh riots, but his motion failed. He was also denied a visa to India in 2013.

Brampton, on the outskirts of Toronto, has the second largest concentration of the Sikh community in Canada after Surrey in British Columbia.

Ms Malhi's genocide motion in the Ontario assembly in April 2017 read: "That, in the opinion of this House... should reaffirm our commitment to the values we cherish -- justice, human rights and fairness -- and condemn all forms of communal violence, hatred, hostility, prejudice, racism and intolerance in India and anywhere else in the world, including the 1984 genocide perpetrated against the Sikhs throughout India, and call on all sides to embrace truth, justice and reconciliation."

The motion was passed 34-5 votes in a House of 107 members.

Reacting strongly to it, India rejected it calling it a "misguided motion which is based on a limited understanding of India, its constitution, society, ethos, rule of law and the judicial process". (Source: IANS)

HONEYMOON DESTINATIONS IN INDIA THIS WINTER

If you haven't yet zeroed in on a destination for your winter honeymoon yet, we have you covered with our HappyTrips special on the best honeymoon places in India in winters. We know that after weeks of planning and effort, your wedding day will arrive and go faster than you imagine.

And there is no other way for the newlyweds to relax after all the madness and begin their married life right than with a wonderful honeymoon? There's just one problem...where to go? To make it easier, we bring you the best winter honeymoon destinations in India.

Gulmarg

After a tiring wedding week, a quiet mountain honeymoon in winters might just do the right trick to unwind and rekindle the flame of love for the newly-weds. Thankfully, Gulmarg is not as crowded as Manali and Shimla usually are. An ideal honeymoon in Gulmarg should be a combo of skiing, trekking and exploring the beautiful sights in town.

If you have your heart set on a regal getaway, the beautiful city of Jaisalmer is going to give you the best head-start. This golden-hued getaway is chock-full of allure and romance with its historic architecture, amazing hotels, and perfect culture scene. Oh, and the food is amazing.

Darjeeling

Abundant natural beauty, rich culture and awesome weather make Darjeeling an almost other-worldly getaway for the newlyweds looking to relax after the D-day. Known for its tea gardens, toy train and the beautiful Himalayas, Darjeeling is the place that will spark up the romance in your life.

Ooty

Ooty is a small piece of heaven for the young couples seeking each others' company amidst verdant hills and quietude of nature. Honeymooners can take delight in long treks and sightseeing followed by nights cuddled up by the fire in hotel room—can there be anything more romantic?

Andaman and Nicobar Islands

These islands are a bit detached from the Indian peninsula, but if you can make it there, there is nothing like it. Port Blair and Havelock Island are the top touristy places in the Andamans. While Port Blair is known for its wealth of history, the other is a treasure trove of natural beauty. Andaman and Nicobar Islands are marked by fabulous weather and awesome accommodations as well.

Munnar

Consider the charming Munnar if you and your significant other are outdoorsy types. It has the atmosphere apt for lovebirds to coo-coo. You can easily find a hotel best suited for your honeymoon even if you are on a budget, and the city is easy to reach irrespective of whether you're coming from the east coast or the west side. Honeymooners can enjoy trekking, boating, rock climbing, spice/tea trailing etc. and even visit the nearby hill stations to enhance the experience.

Goa

Goa is undisputedly one of the best honeymoon places to visit during December. For the honeymooners that love the sun, sand and sea, the party capital of India become even more inviting in December, thanks to the cosy wintery sun. With temperatures ranging from 15 to 25 degrees Celsius, honeymooners can soak up the beach sun with ease and enjoy the nights breathing in the cool breeze. Plus, you get the advantage of availing great travel deals offered during that time of the year.

Source: HappyTrips



NGIDI TAKES SIX AS PROTEAS BEAT INDIA IN SECOND TEST

CENTURION (TIP): Debutant Lungi Ngidi took six wickets as South Africa defeated India by 135 runs to claim victory in the second Test, also winning the series with an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match contest here today. Seamer Ngidi, 21, recorded figures of 6/39, his best in first class cricket, as South Africa bowled out India for 151 just before lunch.

In the ICC rankings, India are the top-ranked side, while South Africa are ranked second.

The Proteas, though, will not be able to displace India from the perch even if they win the series 3-0. The third Test starts at the Wanderers in Johannesburg on January 24.

India resumed the final day on 35/3, chasing a victory target of 287, having been dealt a huge blow the evening before when Ngidi bagged the wicket of captain Virat Kohli (5). Their slender hopes were dealt a further setback when Cheteshwar Pujara (19) became the first Indian player ever to be run out twice in a Test.

Ngidi had a hand in that too as he chased the ball down to the boundary and stopped a four, with his cut-back to AB de Villiers allowing for a bullet throw to wicketkeeper Quinton de Kock that saw Pujara short. Pujara had also been run out first ball in the first innings and has now been involved in six of India's last eight run-outs in Tests.

It would start a procession of wickets as Parthiv Patel (19) picked out Morne Morkel on the fine leg boundary off Kagiso Rabada (3/47), with the big fast bowler pulling off a magnificent catch on the run.

India are the top-ranked side in Test cricket according to the ICC rankings with South Africa second, though the Proteas will not be able to overhaul the sub-continent side even with a 3-0 series win.



South Africa's Lungi Ngidi celebrates taking the wicket of India's Virat Kohli. Pic courtesy: REUTERS

Hardik Pandya (6) was caught by de Kock off Ngidi, before the seamer also induced an edge from Ravichandran Ashwin (3) to the wicketkeeper to leave India reeling at 87/7. Rohit Sharma (47) took the attack to

the bowlers before he was magnificently caught at fine leg by de Villiers off Rabada attempting a hook.

The innings wrapped up quickly after that as Mohammed Shami (28) was caught

by Morkel off Ngidi and Jasprit Bumrah spooned a catch to Vernon Philander at mid-off to hand the youngster his sixth wicket.

Source: Reuters

Kohli named ICC Cricketer of the Year

DUBAI (TIP): India captain Virat Kohli had something to cheer on Thursday when he was named ICC World Cricketer of the Year, a day after suffering his first Test series defeat as skipper in South Africa. The 29-year-old was rewarded for his prolific run in the qualification period from September 2016 to the end of 2017, in which he amassed 2,203 runs in Tests, 1,818 in ODIs and 299 in T20Is.

Kohli, who also led India to the top of the world's Test rankings during the period, received the Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy, which teammate Ravichandran Ashwin had won last year. The top order batsman was also adjudged the ODI Player of the year.

"It means a lot to win the Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy for becoming the ICC Cricketer of the Year and also the ICC ODI Player of the Year," Kohli, who was named captain of both the ICC Test and ODI teams for the year, said in an ICC statement.

ICC Awards

- ICC Men's Cricketer of the Year — Virat Kohli
- Men's Test Cricketer of the Year — Steve Smith
- Men's ODI Cricketer of the Year — Virat Kohli
- Men's Emerging Cricketer of the Year — Hasan Ali (Pakistan)
- Men's Associate Cricketer of the Year - Rashid Khan (Afghanistan)
- Men's T20I Performance of the Year - Yuzvendra Chahal (6/25 vs England)
- Test team of the year: Dean Elgar, David Warner, Virat Kohli (captain), Steve Smith, Cheteshwar Pujara, Ben Stokes, Quinton de



Kock (wicketkeeper), Ravichandran Ashwin, Mitchell Starc, Kagiso Rabada, James Anderson

- ODI team of the year: David Warner, Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli (captain), Babar Azam, AB de Villiers, Quinton de Kock (wicketkeeper), Ben Stokes, Trent Boult, Hasan Ali, Rashid Khan, Jasprit Bumra.

Source: PTI

INDIA LOSE TO BELGIUM IN FOUR NATIONS HOCKEY

TAURANGA (TIP): The Indian men's hockey team failed to convert any of the four penalty corners and ended up losing 0-2 to Belgium at the Four Nations Invitational tournament at the Blake Park here on Jan 18.

Goals by Sébastien Dockier (8th minute) and Victor Wegnez (34th) ensured Belgium stayed on top of the game.

Both teams played out an exciting first quarter, though it was Belgium who constantly tested the Indian defence, moving the ball swiftly while creating plenty of opportunities in the striking circle.

Their first big attempt came in the fourth minute when Belgian forward swiftly smashed a reverse hit to the post but goalkeeper PR Sreejesh, who is making a comeback from a long injury haul, made an impressive save.

Four minutes later, a circle penetration by Belgium saw Dockier demonstrate a classic reverse hit to put the ball into the post, leaving little chance for Sreejesh to save.

The 1-0 lead in the eighth minute put India on the backfoot. In the 12th minute, however, India found a golden opportunity to equalise when forward Ramandeep Singh won the team the first PC of the match, but the chance went begging, as the ball could not be stopped at the top of the D.

A compact Belgian defence slowed down India's attack in the second quarter. But relentless Indian forwards worked in packs as they kept up their hunt to find a successful penetration.

Seven minutes into the second quarter, India's moment to score was created by colts Armaan, Vivek Prasad and Mandeep who worked in tandem in front of the post forcing Belgian defenders to make an error.

The attempt resulted in the second PC of the match for India. However, Harmanpreet Singh's drag flick was defended by Belgium's first runner.

Minutes later, forward Ramandeep Singh made another foray into the Belgium circle, brimming hope of a conversion, but his nudge was high up, though Mandeep got a stick on it, the ball bounced off the cross bar. Belgium continued to lead 1-0 as the teams went into the half-time.

A strong circle penetration in the opening minute of the third quarter saw India win their third PC of the match, but Varun Kumar's drag flick was deflected by Belgian defender, denying India an equaliser.

Only minutes later, an error by the Indian defence was capitalised by Belgian Victor Wegnez who found the gap to put the ball into India's post to take his team's lead to a comfortable 2-0 in the 34th minute.

Source: PTI

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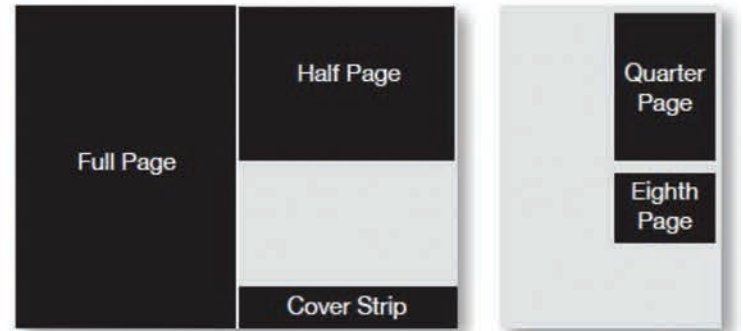


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