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The INDIAN PANORAMA

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President-Elect Joe Biden unveils ambitious 1.9 trillion 'American Rescue Plan'



- \$1 trillion to assist families needing direct financial support: \$1400.00 more to each American
- \$440 billion to emergency funds for small businesses and communities
- \$400 billion for COVID-19 response and increasing vaccine capabilities
- Outlines plan to revive manufacturing and a minimum wage of \$15

I.S. Saluja

WILMINGTON, DEL (TIP): Emphasizing on the strength of unity of Americans, President-elect Joe Biden in his speech, January 14 here said, "Unity is not some pie-in-the-sky dream. It's a practical step to get any of the things we have to get done as a country, get done together," Biden said .

"I'm convinced we are ready to get this done," he said. "The very health of our nation is at stake." *contd on page 2*

Lady Gaga to sing national anthem, Jennifer Lopez to perform at Joe Biden's inauguration



Lady Gaga, Jennifer Lopez to headline Biden-Harris inauguration - Twitter picture

WILMINGTON, DEL (TIP): Lady Gaga will sing the national anthem at Joe Biden's inauguration and Jennifer Lopez will give a musical performance on the West Front of the U.S. Capitol when he is sworn in as the nation's 46th president next Wednesday, January 20. *contd on page 12*

BREAKING NEWS

FARMERS' PROTEST: Supreme Court to hear case on January 18

PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP IS IMPEACHED

Becomes the first U.S. President in US history to be impeached twice



U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) shows the article of impeachment against U.S. President Donald Trump after signing it in an engrossment ceremony, at the U.S. Capitol in Washington on January 13, 2021.

WASHINGTON (TIP): President Donald Trump was impeached by the U.S. House for a historic second time on January 13, charged with "incitement of insurrection" over the deadly mob siege of the Capitol in a swift and stunning collapse of his final days in office.

With the Capitol secured by armed National Guard troops inside and out, the House voted 232-197 to impeach Mr. Trump. The proceedings moved at lightning speed, with lawmakers voting just one week after violent pro-Mr. Trump loyalists stormed the U.S. Capitol, urged on by the President's calls

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President-Elect Joe Biden unveils ambitious 1.9 trillion 'American Rescue Plan'

The package is titled the "American Rescue Plan." Biden described it as a package of emergency measures to meet the nation's immediate economic and health-care needs, to be followed in February by a broader relief plan he will unveil in his first appearance before a joint meeting of Congress.

January 14 proposal comes at a critical time for the nation. More than 4,200 people in the United States died of the coronavirus on Tuesday, a new daily-record high. The economic recovery appears to be backsliding, with jobless claims spiking to a new high since August, as nearly 1 million people filed for unemployment last week, says a Washington Post report. It also comes six days before Biden's inauguration, and a day after the House of Representatives impeached President Trump, highlighting the president-elect's challenge of trying to get his top agenda item passed as the Senate is likely to be enmeshed in an impeachment trial. Biden has expressed the hope that the Senate can simultaneously move forward on his agenda while weighing impeachment, although it's unclear how well that might work in practice.

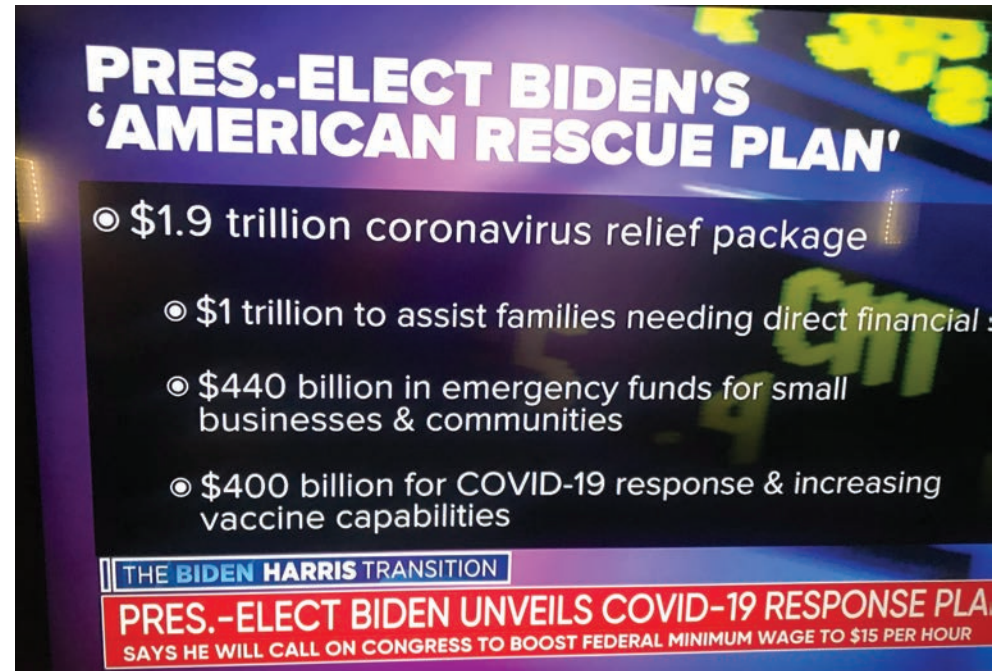
Biden alluded only in passing to the political challenges his proposal will confront, remarking of his proposal to raise the minimum wage: "People tell me that's going to be hard to do," but noting that it just happened in Florida.

The plan contains a raft of provisions that build on the approximately \$4 trillion Congress has already devoted to addressing the pandemic, which included a \$900 billion measure Trump signed last month. Biden has repeatedly described that last bill as unfinished business, saying Thursday, "We will finish the job."

Biden's proposal is divided into three major areas: \$400 billion for provisions to fight the coronavirus with more vaccines and testing, while reopening schools; more than \$1 trillion in direct relief to families, including through stimulus payments and increased unemployment insurance benefits; and \$440 billion for aid to communities and businesses, including \$350 billion in emergency funding to state, local and tribal governments.

The proposal will aim to make good on Biden's plan for a universal vaccination program, devoting \$20 billion to that goal, as well as \$50 billion for a "massive expansion" of testing and \$130 billion to help schools reopen safely. Among the many goals laid out in the proposal, Biden hopes to deliver 100 million vaccine shots in 100 days, and reopen a majority of K-12 public schools in that time frame.

Incoming Senate majority leader Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.) had urged Biden to consider a higher price tag than what he was initially eyeing for the proposal, according to a person familiar with the conversation who spoke on the condition of anonymity to recount the



private conversation freely. Still, the size and scope of the package exceeded the expectations of a number of outside advocates, while answering demands from economists for a major new investment to get the economy on a sounder footing.

"I know what I just described will not come cheaply," Biden said Thursday night. "But failure to do so will cost us dearly."

The legislation includes a number of priorities sought by top congressional Democrats, including some of the more liberal members, from increasing the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour to adding billions in funding for childcare.

Biden called for increasing federal unemployment benefits from \$300 per week to \$400 per week for millions of jobless Americans. The benefits would be extended through September, preventing millions of people from losing their jobless aid in March, as would occur under current law. Biden's plan states that he will also seek to link the level of unemployment benefits to general economic factors, so that benefits increase automatically when the unemployment rate spikes.

As expected, Biden's proposal would also increase from \$600 to \$2,000 per person the stimulus payments approved by Congress last month. Trump enthusiastically endorsed the \$2,000 stimulus payments, as did congressional Democratic leaders, but many Republicans opposed the idea. Biden's plan would also expand eligibility for the stimulus payments to families where one parent is an immigrant, as well as to adult children claimed as dependents on their parents' tax returns. Both categories were excluded in the last relief packages due to GOP opposition. About 13.5 million adult dependents were excluded from the checks as a result, including millions of disabled people.

A major expansion of tax credits is also included in Biden's proposal, for children and lower-income workers. Biden's plan would expand a tax credit for children to \$3,600 a year per child under 6, as well as \$3,000 a year for children under 17. It would also extend eligibility for the credit to millions of very poor families. It would dramatically boost the Earned Income Tax Credit, a

benefit for workers, from \$530 to \$1,500.

Biden's plan also contains new initiatives aimed at buoying the ailing U.S. economy, such as a combined 14 weeks of paid sick and family medical leave for millions of workers. It would provide grants to more than 1 million small businesses, and approve about \$35 billion toward making low-interest loans available, particularly for clean-energy investments. Biden's plan would put tens of billions of dollars into other needs facing the country, from food and water assistance, food stamps, and funding for U.S. territories such as Puerto Rico.

The size of the package and its embrace of multiple liberal priorities that are anathema to Republicans - including a large sum for state and local governments - raises questions about how much bipartisan support Biden will be able to get for the proposal. He is already facing pressure from liberals on Capitol Hill who want to use Democrats' newfound control of Congress to push through aggressive and costly legislation.

Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), who will chair the Budget Committee, has said he is working to put together a massive stimulus bill that could pass under special budget rules with a simple majority vote in the Senate, instead of the 60-vote margin normally required. Biden, however, wants to try for a bipartisan majority on his first bill - although his team appears to have conducted little outreach to congressional Republicans on the plan. Democratic aides say that if Republicans do not appear willing to cooperate, they can shift gears quickly and move to "budget reconciliation," the procedure that would allow them to pass legislation without GOP votes. That's how Republicans passed their big tax-cut bill after Trump took office, and how President Barack Obama passed the Affordable Care Act. The Senate will be divided 50-to-50 between Republicans and Democrats in the new Congress, giving Democrats control because Vice President-elect Kamala D. Harris will have the tie-breaking vote. Democrats' 222-to-211 majority in the House is the narrowest for either party in years.

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Indian Community Organization GOPIO raises \$5,000 for Building One Community for new immigrants



GOPIO-CT Chapter officials presenting a check to Stamford based Building One Community. (From L to R): GOPIO-CT Executive VP Prasad Chintalapudi, Trustee Joe Simon, B1C Executive Director Dr. Anka Badurina, Trustee and Comptroller Dr. Thomas Abraham and Board members Srinivas Akarapu and Rajneesh Misra - Photo / Courtesy GOPIO CT

Indian community organization aims to help local communities hit hard by Covid pandemic.

STAMFORD, CT (TIP): Global Organization of People of Indian Origin-Connecticut Chapter (GOPIO-CT) has given Stamford-based Building One community (B1C) \$5,000 for its mission to help in integration of new immigrants and their families.

A check for \$5,000 was presented to B1C's Executive Director Dr. Anka Badurina towards their service

activities to new immigrants by GOPIO-CT officials on Jan. 8, according to a GOPIO release.

The Stamford based community service organization officials also discussed other ways to help B1C from Indian American community volunteers as mentors and as computer/ IT technical experts.

"We, in GOPIO, promote all our chapters to contribute to the local communities and as a financially successful group in America, we owe to the society especially when the

pandemic has hard hit the lower income communities," said Dr. Thomas Abraham, GOPIO-CT Trustee and Chairman of GOPIO International.

GOPIO raises funds at its annual Holiday Party every year for a charity which provides services to the local community. This year's Holiday Party with a musical evening was held virtually due to Covid-19 pandemic.

Since 2016, GOPIO-CT had supported Women's Mentoring Network, Future 5, Teach for America and Children's Learning Center of Fairfield from its Holiday Party Fundraiser.

Over the last 14 years, GOPIO-CT has become an active and dynamic organization hosting interactive sessions with policy makers and academicians, community events, youth mentoring and networking workshops, and working with other area organizations to help create a better future, the release said.

GOPIO said it serves as a non-partisan, secular, civic and community service organization - promoting awareness of Indian culture, customs and contributions of PIOs through community programs, forums, events and youth activities as well as promoting involvement and supporting local charitable organizations.

It seeks to strengthen partnerships and create an ongoing dialogue with local communities, the community organization said.

(Based on a Press Release)

New York State attorney general sues NYPD



New York State Attorney General Letitia James announced filing of the suit January 14 - CBSN Screenshot

NEW YORK (TIP): New York State Attorney General Letitia James is suing the New York City Police Department and its leadership over its "excessive, brutal and unlawful" handling of George Floyd protests, James said in a news release. The suit, filed Thursday, January 14, in Manhattan federal court, comes after a monthslong investigation into the NYPD's actions during protests over the killing of Floyd that found that officers allegedly used "indiscriminate, unjustified, and repeated use of batons, pepper spray, bicycles and a crowd control tactic known as 'kettling' against peaceful protesters," the release said. James also wants to install an external monitor to oversee the department's policing tactics.

Indian American writer Ved Mehta passes away

NEW YORK (TIP): Celebrated Indian American writer Ved Mehta, who overcame blindness to provide Americans their first introduction to India through his prolific writing on a broad canvas has passed away. He was 86.

Mehta's death at his home in Manhattan Saturday morning was announced by The New Yorker magazine, where he had been a staff writer for 33 years.

Born in pre-partition Lahore to a well-off Punjabi family, Mehta lost his sight when he was three years old, to meningitis. Sometime after, he was sent to live and study at an institution for the blind in Bombay.

Besides his multivolume memoir, published in book form between 1972 and 2004, his more than two dozen books included volumes of reportage on India, among them "Walking the Indian Streets" (1960), "Portrait of India" (1970) and "Mahatma Gandhi and His Apostles" (1977).

His book "The Ledge Between the Streams" describes his life as a blind child in the India of the nineteen-forties,

as he learned to read Braille and to ride a bicycle and a horse.

"Throughout his youth and his maturity as a writer, Mehta was determined to apprehend the world around him with maximal accuracy and to describe it as best he could," the New Yorker wrote.

"I felt that blindness was a terrible impediment, and that if only I exerted myself, and did everything my big sisters and big brother did, I could somehow become exactly like them," he wrote.

Mehta came to the United States when he was fifteen, and attended the Arkansas School for the Blind, in Little Rock. After studying at Pomona College and Oxford University, he began to flourish in his working life as a writer.

Mehta walked the streets of the city without a cane or a seeing-eye dog, and he bristled when someone dared try to assist him, the New Yorker wrote.

Madhur Jaffrey, the Indian-born actress and cookbook author, once told Maureen Dowd, of the New York Times, that when she first met Mehta, "I tried to take his arm" to help. "He gave me a

shove, and we've been friends ever since," she was quoted as saying.

Mehta "explored the vast, turbulent history of modern India through the intimate lens of his own autobiography," the New York Times wrote in its obituary.

The recipient of a MacArthur Foundation "genius grant" in 1982, Mehta was long praised by critics for his forthright, luminous prose - with its "informal elegance, diamond clarity and hypnotic power," as The Sunday Herald of Glasgow put it in a 2005 profile cited by the Times.

"One of the most striking hallmarks of Mehta's prose was its profusion of visual description: of the rich and varied landscapes he encountered, of the people he interviewed, of the cities he visited," the Times said.

In the line of duty, he traversed India, Britain and the United States, including the teeming streets of New York, nearly always alone, with neither dog nor cane, it noted.

Mehta, according to the Times,



Author of more than two dozen books, Ved Mehta has died at 86

explained in interviews, "the act of writing in general - and his modus operandi in particular - was a way of retaining mastery over a visual universe that had been denied him nearly all his life, a continuing project of self-location in a world bristling with image."

What was more, he said, although he had long been part of the world of the blind, he did not wish to write as if that community were his exclusive province.

Many of his nonautobiographical books, including "Walking the Indian Streets," made no mention of his blindness and read as if their author had witnessed firsthand the sights he described - a stance rooted in what he called "my determination to write as if I could see."

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

Indian American Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal Tests Positive for COVID-19



One of the best known Indian American House Representatives Pramila Jayapal got infected with Coronavirus during Capitol lockdown on January 6

WASHINGTON (TIP): Indian American Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal said on Tuesday, January 12, that she has tested positive for

coronavirus after being locked down in a secured room at the US Capitol where several Republican lawmakers recklessly refused to wear masks in the moments after the January 6 attack.

"I just received a positive COVID-19 test result after being locked down in a secured room at the Capitol where several Republicans not only cruelly refused to wear a mask but recklessly mocked colleagues and staff who offered them one," 55-year-old Ms Jayapal tweeted.

In a statement, Ms Jayapal said she began quarantining immediately after the attack on the Capitol, fearing and foreseeing exactly what would occur given the number of maskless lawmakers sitting in the same room with her.

The duration in the room was multiple hours, she said.

"Too many Republicans have refused to take this pandemic and virus seriously,

and in doing so, they endanger everyone around them," she said.

"Only hours after President (Donald) Trump incited a deadly assault on our Capitol, our country, and our democracy, many Republicans still refused to take the bare minimum COVID-19 precaution and simply wear a damn mask in a crowded room during a pandemic - creating a superspreader event on top of a domestic terrorist attack," she added.

"While I am isolating per the Capitol Physician's instructions, I will continue to work to the best of my ability because the deep urgency of our many crises is paramount," she said.

Dr. Brian Monahan, the Attending Physician of the US Congress, advised representatives and Congressional staff on Sunday that those in the secured room could have, "been exposed to another occupant with coronavirus infection."

"I am also calling for serious fines to be immediately levied on every single

Member who refuses to wear a mask in the Capitol," Ms Jayapal said. "Additionally, any Member who refuses to wear a mask should be immediately removed from the floor by the Sergeant at Arms. This is not a joke. Our lives and our livelihoods are at risk, and anyone who refuses to wear a mask should be fully held accountable for endangering our lives because of their selfish idiocy."

In December, Ms Jayapal was elected as the chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus (CPC), making her one of the most powerful US lawmakers in the 117th Congress.

On Monday, January 11, Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman of New Jersey said that she had tested positive for COVID-19.

"Following the events of Wednesday, including sheltering with several colleagues who refused to wear masks, I decided to take a Covid test. I have tested positive," Mr Coleman tweeted on Monday.

Indian American | Sabrina Singh Named White House Deputy Press Secretary



Sabrina Singh has been named as the White House Deputy Press Secretary in the upcoming Joe Biden administration in the US.

WASHINGTON (TIP): Indian American Sabrina Singh has been named as the White House Deputy Press Secretary in the upcoming Joe Biden administration in the US.

Ms Singh was Press Secretary to Vice President-elect Kamala Harris on the Biden-Harris campaign.

US President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris announced additional members of the White House staff on Friday.

According to a statement by Biden-Harris transition team, the appointments demonstrate that the president and vice president-elect are building an administration that "looks like America and is ready to deliver results for the American people on day one."

Prior to her role on the campaign, Ms Singh served as Senior Spokesperson for Mike Bloomberg's presidential campaign and National Press Secretary for Cory Booker's presidential campaign.

She previously served as Deputy Communications Director for the Democratic National Committee, Spokesperson for American Bridge's Trump War Room and Regional Communications Director on Hillary Clinton's 2016 presidential campaign.

She has also worked at SKDKnickerbocker, served as Communications Director for Rep. Jan Schakowsky and worked at various Democratic committees.

Indian American Lawmaker Ro Khanna Sees Two challenges before America after Capitol riot

WASHINGTON (TIP): In the aftermath of the Capitol riot by supporters of outgoing President Donald Trump, Indian American lawmaker Ro Khanna believes America faces two challenges on the economic and cultural fronts to rebuild faith in democracy. "It's a big challenge for us," the third-term progressive Democrat in the House told Business Insider in a telephonic interview on Jan 8, two days after the riot when asked about the state of American democracy.

"I think there's two challenges for the country," Khanna said. "The challenge of economically-left behind places and people where you don't have economic wealth generation, without basic healthcare, without basic housing." "And then you have the deeper question, and that is the cultural challenge," he said noting "how we've become a multi-racial multi-ethnic democracy" thanks to the immigration post-'65 from non-European countries.

"I mean we're the most diverse we've ever been in our nation's history - it's easy to conceive of a nation on philosophical principles if there is also a cultural similarity," Khanna said. "To conceive of a nation on philosophical principles, of a commitment to our constitution, when you have such incredible racial diversity, such incredible religious diversity and the racial history we do, is a very, very difficult project," he said.

"And I think a large part of our challenges - how do we begin to improve the communication between Americans who come perhaps from very different perspectives," Khanna said. "I guess the point is we need a bold economic vision, but we need to couple that with leadership that looks for finding commonalities of Americans with great differences," he said.

"And it's a difficult project, but there's never been a multiracial, multiethnic democracy in the history of the world. And so what we're trying to do is very hard as well," Khanna said. "In the Congress, we need to begin a dialogue with each other in ways that lowers the volume of the screaming on cable news and looks for ways to respect Americans and understand their anxieties, understand their perspectives, and find some common fabric for this country," he said.

Khanna also stressed the "need to rethink the role that social media has had in encouraging diversion realities and



Indian American lawmaker Ro Khanna believes America faces two challenges on the economic and cultural fronts to rebuild faith in democracy.

how we try to structure and design social media so that there are common sources of information." "We have to look at education across the country in terms of giving people the ability to sort out facts from conspiracy theory," Khanna said.

"And then we have to look at the communities that have been left out and why and why some of the anger may be there and the anxiousness may be there with the changes the country is going through, and how to respect the dignity of these places that have been left behind," he said. "And if we can do that, you're not going to get to everyone, but maybe you'll get to some, and that builds a coalition of people going forward," Khanna said.

Khanna, who has made a name for himself as a strident opponent of the US government's interminable support for the "forever wars", hoped the US would end the war in Yemen and pull out the remaining US troops in Afghanistan. The Indian American lawmaker said he was also "working with Sen. Bernie Sanders on a war powers resolution to make sure that Congress has to be consulted before we get into any other wars."

Asked about his expectations from the Biden administration on the national security and foreign policy front, Khanna said, "I'm hoping we end the war in Yemen." Encouraged by preliminary conversations with people in Biden's team, he believed the new administration is "going to make it a priority to stop our support for the Saudis and stop the bombing in Yemen. That has to be a priority."

Favoring a pull out of the remaining US troops in Afghanistan, Khanna said, "There needs to be a peace negotiation, and then we ought to leave." "We should make it clear that if there's ever emerging threats or terrorist threats to our homeland from [Afghanistan], we reserve the right to conduct and we reserve the right to go in again," he said. "But there's no point in having a permanent presence there."

Asked if after the Capitol insurrection, Republicans will still support Trump, Khanna said, "It's the first time I've seen a break. Not just by lawmakers, but also by [Trump's] Republican friends." "I think the images of the Capitol being stormed, it really shifted people's mindsets," Khanna said. "There's something about the sacredness of the Capitol, about a belief in stability for American democracy."

4 Indian Americans and FIA honored with Pravasi Bharatiya Samman

WASHINGTON (TIP): The Federation of Indian Associations of New York, New Jersey & Connecticut (FIA-Tristate) and four individual Indian Americans have been conferred 2021 Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award (PBSA), the highest honor for overseas Indians.

The awards were conferred by Indian President Ram Nath Kovind as part of the 16th edition of the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) Convention held virtually on Jan 9.

The theme of the convention, aimed at encouraging Indian diaspora to be part of socio-economic development in India, was "Contributing to Aatmanirbhar Bharat."

The awardees represent the vibrant excellence achieved by our diaspora in various fields, a media release said. Several countries have been represented for the first time among the awardees.

Dr. Mukesh Aghi, one of the awardees and President & CEO of US-India Strategic Partnership Forum, delivered the acceptance speech on behalf of the awardees.

Four individual Indian American award winners were Arvind Phukan, for environment technology, Nilu Gupta for promoting Indian culture, Dr. Sudhakar Jonnalagadda for medicine and Dr. Aghi



FIA and four individuals- Mukesh Aghi, Arvind Phukan, Nilu Gupta, Dr. Sudhakar Jonnalagadda have been awarded Pravasi Bharatiya Samman at the PBD 2021

for business.

"We are very proud, humbled and thankful to be the recipient of the Pravasi Bhartiya Samman," said FIA-Tristate president Anil Bansal. "It is the recognition of hard and selfless work of so many people in the FIA family."

"This award is for the exceptional and meritorious contribution to India, the Indians for social and humanitarian causes. We at FIA have been totally dedicated to serving the interest of India and Indian diaspora in the USA."

"It is truly a moment of pride for FIA and for me to witness this prestigious recognition bestowed upon FIA," said chairman Ankur Vaidya. "I take this opportunity to thank the founders and patriarchs, some of them are on our board who dedicated a lifetime in

serving the community through the organization."

The Federation of Indian Associations (FIA) of the tri-state area of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut is one of the largest umbrella organizations in the Indian community, representing over one million strong and vibrant Asian-Indians. Established in the year 1970, the FIA has emerged as an effective mouthpiece and mobilizer for the community.

Jonnalagadda, President of the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI), said, "In recognizing me, the government has recognized all the medical professionals who have been in the forefront fighting Covid, including those who have laid their lives at the services of treating

patients infected with the deadly virus. "This award will strengthen the medical fraternity to recommit our efforts, skills and talents for the greater good of humanity. Congratulations to all of my co-awardees."

Jonnalagadda assumed office as the 37th AAPI President last July with a commitment to "make AAPI stronger, more vibrant, united, transparent, politically engaged, ensuring active participation of young physicians, increasing membership, and enabling that AAPI's voice is heard in the corridors of power".

AAPI is the largest ethnic medical organization in the US, representing the interests of the over 100,000 physicians and fellows of Indian origin.

Indian Americans Neha Gupta and Reema Shah Named by Joe Biden to Office of White House Counsel

WASHINGTON (TIP): US President-elect Joe Biden on Monday, January 11, named two Indian Americans - Neha Gupta and Reema Shah - to the Office of the White House Counsel.

Ms Shah, who had served on the debate preparation team for Joe Biden on the Biden-Harris Campaign, has been named as Deputy Associate Counsel while Ms Gupta, currently an attorney in the Office of the General Counsel for the Biden-Harris Transition, has been named as Associate Counsel in the Office of the White House Counsel.

Ms Shah was an associate at Latham & Watkins and a Bristow Fellow in the Office of the Solicitor General at the Department of Justice. She served as a law clerk to Justice Elena Kagan on the US Supreme Court and Judge Sri Srinivasan on the US Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit. Originally from New Jersey, Ms Shah is a graduate of Harvard College, Cambridge University and Yale Law School.

Ms Gupta served as a Deputy City Attorney in the San Francisco City Attorney's Office, where she was general counsel to several city agencies, litigated



Neha Gupta and Reema Shah have been named by Biden to office of White House Counsel

constitutional and statutory challenges to city laws and administrative decisions, and participated in the office's affirmative public protection advocacy.

Previously, Ms Gupta clerked for Judge Michael Daly Hawkins of the US Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit and Judge Richard Seeborg of the US District Court for the Northern District of California. A New York native born to Indian immigrants, Ms Gupta is a graduate of Harvard College and Stanford Law School.

Joe Biden also named Samiyyah Ali as Deputy Associate Counsel, Funmi Olorunnipa Badejo as Associate

Counsel, Tona Boyd as Special Counsel, Megan Ceronky as Associate Counsel, Martine Cicconi as Associate Counsel, Sean Crotty as Associate Counsel and Ashley Deeks as Associate Counsel and Deputy Legal Advisor to the National Security Council.

These officials will, under the direction of White House Counsel Dana Remus, help restore faith in the rule of law and the accountability of government institutions, the transition said.

"My administration has no greater task than restoring faith in American government. Our White House Counsel's Office will be built upon a foundation of integrity and honesty. This qualified and crisis-tested legal team will ensure that this administration is accountable and always operates in service of the American people," said Joe Biden.

Vice President-elect Kamala Harris said: "The American people deserve a government that is open, honest, and transparent. These dedicated public servants will help us meet the unprecedented challenges facing our nation while upholding the highest standards of ethics and integrity".

Indian-Origin Minister in UK Cabinet Appointed President of UN Climate Summit

NIRPAL SINGH SHERGILL

Indian origin Minister in British government has been appointed President of UN Climate Summit scheduled to be held Glasgow, Scotland, in November.



LONDON (TIP): Alok Sharma, one of the Indian-origin ministers in UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Cabinet, on Friday, January 8, relinquished his role as Business Secretary in a mini-reshuffle to take sole charge as President of COP26 - the United Nations climate summit scheduled for Glasgow, Scotland, in November. The Agra-born minister, who was until now in charge of dual roles, will focus entirely on what has been dubbed as the largest summit the UK has ever hosted, bringing together representatives from nearly 200 countries, including India.

Downing Street said PM Johnson had asked Mr Sharma to take on the new charge to drive forward coordinated global action to tackle climate change to meet the high ambitions for the summit.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

UN Secretary General Guterres' path to reelection might be a quick one, experts say

NEW YORK (TIP): After months of speculation, United Nations chief António Guterres officially announced his bid for reelection this week through his spokesperson's office.

The race might be a relatively straightforward and possibly short one; so far, no other candidates have stepped forward. And Guterres' good standing with all five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council might discourage potential competitors, according to U.N. expert Richard Gowan. The Security Council holds the final vote to select the U.N. leader, and candidates require their government's endorsement.

"It is fundamentally different from the last race in 2016, and I think the working assumption around the U.N. is that Guterres will win a second term without too much struggle," Gowan said. "He gets a lot of credit from diplomats here for navigating the [U.S. President Donald] Trump era pretty well, overall, and the general idea is that if he wants a second term, which he clearly does, then he should have a chance to stay on."

Guterres unofficially laid out a vision for a second term in July, when he called for a new social contract to better address "two seismic shifts" that will shape this century: the climate crisis and digital transformation. "Both could widen inequalities even further," Guterres said in the speech. The COVID-19 pandemic, meanwhile, has presented a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to "build back a more equal and sustainable world," he said.

From aviation to trade to industrial development, a number of top jobs at the United Nations are up for grabs this year.

A second five-year term for Guterres would give him the chance to build on these efforts, which, in some cases, have suffered political blows. The U.S., one of the world's largest greenhouse gas emitters, is likely to rejoin the Paris climate agreement under President-elect Joe Biden's administration, among other expected reversals from Trump administration policies.

"When I read that [2020 speech], I felt confident Guterres assumed that if Biden won, he would run again. In a sense, that speech was his stump speech, and he was already laying out what this campaign is all



António Guterres, United Nations secretary-general.

Photo / Courtesy United Nations

about and a level of ambition that is much greater than would have been feasible in the last four years," Gowan said.

The presidents of the General Assembly and Security Council are expected to soon release a letter that would formally initiate the selection process for the next secretary-general. Officially opening up the election process, as the General Assembly last did in 2015, to include more candidates will be an important step, even if they do not immediately appear, according to Enyseh Teimory, communications officer at the United Nations Association - UK. Setting a deadline for nominations, likely in the early spring, will also be part of this process.

"I don't know if there will be other candidates coming forward, and so far, Guterres hasn't done much to rock the boat."

- Mandeep Tiwana, chief programs officer, CIVICUS
"We have not had anything specific from anybody, but we hope that someone somewhere will step forward, kind of just in terms of having an open and transparent process," Teimory said.

"I think they [the president of the General Assembly and Guterres] have demonstrated in the language a commitment to opening up the process and to receiving potential multiple nominations," Teimory continued.

Russia or China proposing another candidate would potentially change the election forecast, but so far there

is no clear indication of this, according to Mandeep Tiwana, chief programs officer at civil society coalition CIVICUS.

"The incumbent usually has such an advantage. I don't know if there will be other candidates coming forward, and so far, Guterres hasn't done much to rock the boat," Tiwana said.

Civil society organizations such as UNA-UK and CIVICUS have voiced concerns about the election process remaining transparent. In 2016, Guterres initially ran against 12 other candidates, but the number of competitors was eventually whittled down to four finalists, including Helen Clark, then-head of the U.N. Development Programme and former prime minister of New Zealand.

That election marked the first time that the race for secretary-general included public debates and speeches, instead of centering solely on closed-door political appeals and negotiations. The 1 for 7 Billion civil society campaign - a group of NGOs that convened for a transparent secretary-general election process - pushed for a woman to be selected as U.N. chief for the first time.

While Guterres was selected for secretary-general in October 2016, predecessors were confirmed for a second term earlier in the year. For example, Ban Ki-moon was reelected for secretary-general in June 2011.

"I think if it becomes clear that there isn't an alternative candidate, then quite frankly the bulk of the Security Council members and the bulk of the General Assembly members would probably want it out of the way, and they might want it out of the way before the GA in September," Gowan said.

Going through the motions of a traditional campaign would still set an important precedent for future campaigns and would also lend credibility to Guterres' reelection bid.

"At the end of the day, the key for us is [that] the process is consolidated. It lends to legitimacy for whoever the SG is or continues to be. That legitimacy is fundamental at this time while they are leading and international organizations like the U.N. face such challenging times," Teimory said.

NYC Test & Trace Corps Expands Rapid Covid-19 Testing On Mobile Units To Reach Communities Most In Need

Expansion comes as City surpasses 100,000 tests per day for three days in a row

NEW YORK (TIP): As the City continues to fight the winter surge of COVID-19 cases, the NYC Test & Trace Corps announced on January 14, the expansion of its partnership with Rapid Reliable Testing (RRT), a subsidiary of Ambulnz, to bring rapid antigen testing to its entire mobile testing fleet in order to reach more communities in need of convenient and safe testing at no cost. This new testing capacity is being added as demand for testing grows, where the City reached a new milestone of more than 100,000 tests per day for three days in a row from January 4-6.

"The increase in COVID-19 cases makes it more important than ever that all New Yorkers continue to get tested often, and the record-breaking testing numbers of recent days show that communities are hearing our call," said



NYC Test & Trace Corps Executive Director Dr. Ted Long. "Our growing fleet of mobile rapid testing units expands our ability to provide flexible and convenient testing at no cost where the need is greatest."

Since the launch of mobile rapid testing in partnership with RRT last month, the number of units providing the service has grown from two to 20, with rapid testing expected to be available in 30 mobile units by the end of next month. Mobile rapid units provide

test results in approximately 15 minutes, and each mobile testing unit can perform up to 300 tests per day.

"With increased knowledge, comes increased safety," said Stan Vashovsky, CEO of Ambulnz. "Enabling our entire Mobile Testing Unit fleet for Rapid Antigen testing provides the people of New York with ~15 minute results, and provides the City with a better understanding of positivity rate trends. This creates transparency that helps keep us all safer, and limit the spread of the virus."

While adding more testing options, the City also marks a new milestone in testing. More than 100,000 New Yorkers were tested each day for three days in a row on January 4, 5, and 6. The City currently has capacity to administer 120,000 tests per days, offered at more than 300 sites. Mobile rapid testing enhances the current testing capacity of administering 120,000 tests per day, offered at more than 300 sites across the

city.

The new rapid mobile units will be deployed citywide on a week-to-week basis according to need, and no appointment is required. To view locations of Ambulnz mobile testing sites, visit www.rrttesting.com/nyc-testing. For a current schedule of all mobile deployments, visit nyc.gov/covidtest, where you can also find other testing sites near you at no cost. Or call the NYC Test & Trace Corps hotline at 212-COVID19.

"During this pandemic, we've seen such great demand for rapid testing and rightly so-it is one of the most important tools in our arsenal in the fight against COVID-19 and now we are bringing that capability to our mobile testing units to help reach the communities who need it most," said Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

NY City Mayor pressures Governor to expand vaccinations

- **New York reported 31,164 total statewide deaths of New Yorkers who tested positive for COVID-19, as of Jan. 6.**
- **There were 197 more fatalities in New York on Jan. 6.**



The disagreeing two- Mayor de Blasio and Governor Cuomo

NEW YORK (TIP): The long list of disagreements between Gov. Andrew Cuomo and New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio through the course of the coronavirus pandemic continues to grow, as the mayor - like other local officials across the state - asks the governor to expand administration of the COVID-19 vaccine to more eligible groups. So far, Cuomo has resisted allowing additional groups beyond "category 1A" recipients - health care workers and nursing home staff and residents - to start receiving the vaccine, saying that there are still many more of

those individuals who should receive the vaccine before moving on to other groups. "The prioritization of health care 1A is federal guidance, state

guidance, and it's virtually universal across the country," Cuomo said yesterday.

But New York City officials have said that thousands of vaccine doses risk going unused and wasted because of the limited number of people who can access them. On Friday, de Blasio continued to call for expanding vaccinations to groups including first responders and New Yorkers over 75 years old. "All around the state, people are asking for the freedom to vaccinate," de Blasio said at a press conference today. "We have to assume at some point the state is going to hear us."

The New York Times reported today that small numbers of vaccine doses have been thrown out in New York City after going unused. "It's stressful and frustrating to have (the) vaccine and to be unable to start giving it to our patients as quickly as we would like," one doctor told the Times.

The Indian American Action Group seeks to promote community

NEW YORK (TIP) New York based The Indian American Action Group (IAAG) is a bipartisan movement launched by a group of visionary Indian Americans. These individuals have achieved positions of leadership across a broad range of professions, have served their communities selflessly and have been champions of change. Based on U.S. Census statistics, the Indian American community has grown over 100 percent in the last decade, continuously outpacing every other ethnic group along socio-economic dimensions. Despite our financial strength and professional achievements, our social and political voice to support the four million Indian Americans requires strengthening.

The Indian American Action Group has three primary objectives it seeks to accomplish:

1. IAAG recognizes that great democracies depend on new and bold ideas and our future political leaders that need our support today. Our goal is to ensure that the Indian American community is represented in all levels of government. To further this, we aim to provide support to Indian American political candidates at the federal, state, and local levels by fund raising by attending voting campaigns and providing strategic and tactical assistance where needed. We seek to promote and support non-Indian American, visionary, progressive and inclusive leaders who have proven their commitment to the values and interest of the Indian American community.

2. We recognize that two of the world's greatest democracies share a lot in common. Our objective to strengthen the

relationship between India and USA begins with focusing on the people. This is highlighted in matters of homeland security and standing for India's solidarity and sovereignty at its borders. India has entered the 21st century with vigor, attaining new levels of innovation and enterprise. The innovation of technology centric companies which is fueled by the large talent pool of Indian professionals has reinforced the U.S. leadership position in technology and innovation globally. Sustaining this leadership requires championing judicious immigrations laws, respect for our faith and religious beliefs, and an inclusive immigration and civic experience for all.

3. India is one of the world's oldest civilizations and its rich culture and traditions are legendary. IAAG will work towards establishing a positive narrative and discourse, by undertaking education campaigns. We seek to engage the broader audience to highlight the richness of our birth nation, address misunderstandings and misinterpretations and showcase our contributions in all areas of civic engagement, business leadership and social causes.

Indians in the US have permeated the established power bastions that for immigrants can often be virtually impenetrable. We are at the dawn of a politic awakening and civic engagement within our community and IAAG will harness and leverage this strength to shape the national dialogue for Indian Americans and its future generations.

The founding members of the IAAG :-
Dr. Sankar Niranjan, MD FASN, is a physician and nephrologist based out of

West Hartford Connecticut. He has been very involved with the community locally and in India. He is the Connecticut Chapter coordinator for two different non-profit organizations - AIM for SEVA and Tamil Nadu Foundation that do amazing work with rural education in India.

Neha Kiran Chopra, Esq, received her Juris Doctorate and is a practicing Attorney in the State of New York with a specialization in Real Estate Law. She thrives in serving her community and desires to combat social and political problems affecting the Indian diaspora.

Vipul Kashyap, Ph.D. has a doctorate in Computer and is focused on outreach and education of Indian culture, traditions and philosophy to the broader American society at large. Vipul is the board member of the Connecticut Center for Interfaith Understanding (CCIU) and works with various Indian organizations such as AIM for Seva - for various fundraising activities - for both local charities in the Connecticut area and for education of rural kids in India.

Suraj Kurtakoti is passionate about fostering and strengthening the relationship between US and India. He has been involved in programs helping to build more engaged relationship between the Indian American community and wider community in general, through programs such as introducing Yoga to school kids/teachers and celebrating Indian cultural events with our local first responders.

Dr. Renee Mehrra, a doctorate in Public Health is a tenacious broadcaster with a burning passion for accurate and compelling storytelling. She has been



consistently appraised by the Asian Indian community as one of the most prominent broadcast journalists in the tri-state area.

Naresh Gehi, Esq has been a profoundly strong advocate for human rights, working to help individuals acquire citizenship and working in grassroots settings in order to help enact positive social change. His track record in this regard is unprecedented and has been given exposure & critical acclaim for his work in places like the New York Times, CNN, Politico, and ABC News, among others.

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(ADVERTORIAL)

AS I SEE IT

Supreme Court order has confirmed farmers' fears



BY YOGENDRA
YADAV

A committee is only as good as its members. It is no secret that the farmers' organisations were apprehensive about the composition of a committee appointed by the court. The process by which the court arrived at these four names left a lot to be desired, to put it mildly. The same court that chided the government for passing the farm laws without consulting the farmers adopted an even less transparent process to decide upon this committee.

In rejecting the Supreme Court-appointed expert committee to mediate between farmers and the Narendra Modi government, the farmers' organisations have not only wisely sidestepped a possible trap, but have also reaffirmed a basic principle of democratic accountability and responsible governance.

Let there be no confusion about it. The expert committee appointed by the SC is not meant to advise the court on technical matters of agricultural marketing or on the implications of the disputed agricultural laws. The order of the Supreme Court makes it clear that the committee is to facilitate negotiations between the government and farmers' organisations: "The negotiations between the farmers' bodies and the government have not yielded any result so far. Therefore, we are of the view that the constitution of a committee of experts in the field of agriculture to negotiate between the farmers' bodies and the government of India may create a congenial atmosphere and improve the trust and confidence of the farmers."

The court goes on to specify that the

committee has been "constituted for the purpose of listening to the grievances of the farmers relating to the farm laws and the views of the government and to make recommendations." Presumably, the committee will try to find a middle ground and advise the government on how the laws should be tweaked in a way so as to satisfy both the government and the protesting farmers.

That is precisely why the farmers' organisations had resisted, right from the beginning, the idea of any such committee. They have objected to being forced into binding mediation, questioned the instrument of a committee and suspected the composition of such a committee. On all three counts, their assessment has been proven right.

First of all, the farmers have been suspicious of being pushed into mediation that they never asked for or consented to. They have never said no to negotiations with the government. Sure, the talks with the government have been frustrating. The Modi government has been intransigent. Yet, that is the only site for negotiations in a democracy. In the last instance, elected representatives are there to speak to the people. They are accountable to the people and to the farmers. The courts are there to adjudicate between right and wrong, legal and illegal. The courts are not there to engage in give and take, which is part of any negotiation. That is why the courts are responsible to the Constitution and not accountable to the people. That is the logic of democratic governance. Any attempt to shift the site of negotiation from the government to the judiciary amounts to overturning this basic democratic logic.

The government's keenness to shift this 'headache' and the Supreme Court's alacrity to take over have strengthened the resistance of the farmers. It needs to be underlined that the protesting farmers

did not approach the court. Nor did the government, at least not on paper. The initial petitioners were third parties who wanted the court to evict the farmers from their protest site. The other set of petitioners questioned the constitutionality of the three laws and wanted these scrapped. None of the petitioners prayed for mediation from the court. Yet, from day one, that is what the court was interested in. The court dismissed, and rightly so, the pleas asking for eviction of the protesting farmers. It recognized, again rightly so, the democratic rights of the farmers to engage in a peaceful protest. As for the pleas, regarding the constitutional validity of the three laws, the court put this on the back burner, saying that it will consider these at an appropriate time.

The Supreme Court could have expedited this process by setting a time frame within which it will decide upon the constitutional validity of these three laws. That would have been most appropriate. But it chose not to do so. Instead, the court chose to focus on a third issue beyond what was asked for by any party and beyond its legal remit. Farmers' organisations were smart enough to resist this move from the beginning.

The second objection of the farmers' organisations was to the very mechanism of a technical committee of experts. This idea was proposed by the Modi government in the very first round of negotiations held on December 1, and the farmers rejected it there and then. Such a committee would be very useful to clarify a point of law or to work out policy or fiscal implications of the proposed laws. Such a committee could also help work out the details of a compromise formula, once the basic framework is agreed to. But a technical committee cannot possibly work out the basic framework itself. Mediation is not done by

technocrats. It is done by non-specialists who have some familiarity with the subject, but more importantly, who enjoy the trust and confidence of both parties. The Supreme Court-appointed committee of experts was never going to be that mechanism.

Dushyant Dave and the other three lawyers representing just eight out of 400-plus farmers' organizations involved in this protest were wise to keep away from the court's deliberations on this issue.

Finally, a committee is only as good as its members. It is no secret that the farmers' organisations were apprehensive about the composition of a committee appointed by the court. The court's order confirmed their worst fears. The process by which the court arrived at these four names left a lot to be desired, to put it mildly. The same court that chided the government for passing the farm laws without consulting the farmers adopted an even less transparent process to decide upon this committee. Names like P Sainath and ex-CJIs were thrown around and quietly dispensed with. No one knows who suggested the four names that the court came up with. Little surprise then that the four names have invited disappointment and ridicule. Not because the four members are not respectable, but because these are arguably the four best advocates for the government's position and the laws. That the court chose such a partisan committee to mediate between the farmers and the government has cast a shadow on itself.

Someone might ask: Forget the technicalities, but what's wrong in the top court stepping in to resolve a deadlock? Well, that is possible, provided the Supreme Court were to enjoy moral authority over and above its legal and constitutional powers. Such moral authority is commanded, not demanded.

(The author is President, Swaraj India)



COMMENT

PROF. INDRAJIT
SALUJA

President Donald Trump has the rare distinction of being impeached twice by the House of Representatives. Just as he created history in 2016 by getting elected after beating 16 Republicans in primaries, and finally defeating Democrat Hilary Clinton, he created history again on January 6, 2021 by being the first sitting President to incite insurrection.

Senators Must Stand Up For America

The article of impeachment stated that Trump "repeatedly issued false statements asserting that the presidential election results were fraudulent and should not be accepted".

It says he then repeated these claims and "willfully made statements to the crowd that encouraged and foreseeably resulted in lawless action at the Capitol", leading to the violence and loss of life.

"President Trump gravely endangered the security of the United States and its institutions of government, threatened

the integrity of the democratic system, interfered with the peaceful transition of power, and imperiled a coequal branch of government."

However, it remains to be seen if the Republican Senators will embrace moral values or continue to be the blind followers of Trump. It is going to be a tough choice for them, though. But they had better know it is now or never for them to get rid of a person who has dictatorial mindset, and who has usurped all power of the Republican

party, and has created an aura around himself, which is no good for any political outfit. There already are some who have declared their intention to support the House impeachment when it comes to the Senate. But then, many more Republican Senators will be needed to uphold the House impeachment and convict President Trump. Will they stand up to the hour? The next few days will decide on the future course of history of America.



BY PRABHU DAYAL

Will Trump again escape impeachment conviction?

In December 2019, when House Speaker Nancy Pelosi had announced a formal impeachment enquiry against President Trump, she recounted an anecdote to back her arguments. Pelosi said, "On the final day of the Constitutional Convention in 1787, when our Constitution was adopted, Americans gathered on the steps of Independence Hall to await the news of the government our founders had crafted. They asked Benjamin Franklin, 'What do we have, a republic or a monarchy?' Franklin replied, 'A republic, if you can keep it.'

Pelosi was again in the forefront of efforts to 'Keep the Republic' in the wake of fresh, unprecedented challenges. Wednesday 6th January 2021 will go down as perhaps the darkest and most embarrassing day in history for most Americans because on that day the country's President incited a mob of his supporters to attack and ransack the Capitol, the temple of America's democracy which houses the Senate and the House of Representatives.

More than two months had elapsed since the US Presidential elections were held on November 3, but President Trump refused to accept the verdict which had gone in favor of his rival, Joe Biden. He complained that the Presidential election results were "rigged" due to widespread fraud, while election officials repeatedly said that there was no evidence to back Trump's claims. The Trump campaign also filed dozens of lawsuits challenging the election results but was rebuffed in most state and federal courts.

Claiming that the election had been stolen from him, Trump incited a mob of his supporters to storm the U.S. Capitol when the US Congress met on January 6 to formally count the Electoral College votes. Violence broke out as the mob ransacked the Capitol, and members of Congress were forced to go into hiding for their safety. Five persons died in the mayhem, including a policeman. Reports indicate that eighty-two persons have

"It may be noted that in terms of the provisions relating to impeachment proceedings, the House of Representatives charges an official of the federal government by approving the articles of impeachment by majority vote, but the Constitution requires a two-thirds vote of the Senate to convict the person being impeached. The Democrat-controlled House had impeached Trump in December 2019 for pressurizing the president of Ukraine to investigate Biden, but the Republican-held Senate had acquitted him in February 2020."

been arrested and police are on the hunt for others who were involved in the attack.

Although Congress reconvened the following day and certified Biden's election victory, Trump was severely criticized for inciting the violence, including by some members of his own Party. Top Democratic Party leaders including Nancy Pelosi and Chuck Schumer (leader of the Democrats in the Senate) called on Vice President Mike Pence and Trump's Cabinet to invoke the U.S. Constitution's 25th Amendment, which allows them to strip the president of his powers if he is unfit to discharge the duties of his office. They also said that if Pence and Trump's Cabinet refuse to do so, they would call for Trump to be impeached. "The president's dangerous and seditious acts necessitate his immediate removal from office," they said in a statement accusing Trump of inciting an "insurrection." As expected, Pence refused to rule that Trump was no longer capable of discharging his duties, setting the stage for the impeachment.

President Donald Trump, who was charged with "incitement of insurrection" over the mob siege of the Capitol, becomes the first President in the history of the United States to be impeached by the House of Representatives for the second time. The House voted 232-197 to impeach Trump. Significantly, ten Republicans joined the Democrats saying that he should be held accountable and warned of a "danger" if Congress should leave him unchecked ahead of Joe Biden's inauguration.

What now lies on the road ahead?

This time also, while the Democrat-dominated House has impeached him, will the two-thirds majority of the Senate required for conviction be obtained? There is so far no indication that enough members of the president's party would agree to convict him. Thus, the impeachment proceedings started for a second time against Trump might end with the same outcome as before.

Thus, in other words, Trump could again escape conviction by the Senate even though he has been impeached by the House. However, nothing can be ruled out in politics. Trump has said that he will be running for President in 2024; he will be 78 years old at that time, but so is Biden right now! Therefore, his age may not work against him. Going by present indications, he has a strong support base which might again propel him ahead of other Republican candidates and help him get his party's nomination as it did in 2016".

Would his rivals relish that possibility? Or, would they rather have him elbowed out of the way? In other words, will Trump's rivals work with the Democrats in the impeachment process in order to put an end to his political career? The drift of public opinion is against Trump, and they might find it convenient to go along. Politics, like adversity makes strange bed-fellows, and nothing can be ruled out at this juncture.

Can the process continue even after Trump leaves office? Legal experts are divided on this matter. There are some who believe that Trump can only be



President Donald Trump, who was charged with "incitement of insurrection" over the mob siege of the Capitol, becomes the first President in the history of the United States to be impeached by the House of Representatives for the second time.

impeached while he is office, while there are others who believe that if the process has commenced in the House, it could continue in the Senate even after he has left office. In this regard, they have cited a legal precedent. In 1876, Secretary of War William Belknap was investigated by the House for corruption. Just minutes before the House was set to vote on his impeachment, he went to the White House and handed his resignation to President Ulysses Grant. However, the House went ahead and impeached him. The Senate also proceeded to have a trial though he was acquitted as two-thirds of the Senators did not vote in favor of the conviction.

The coming days, therefore, will be watched with great interest not just in America but all across the globe.

(The author is a retired diplomat)

FARM LAWS ON HOLD: Panel composition thwarts forward movement

By putting on hold the implementation of the three controversial farm laws until further orders, the Supreme Court has said it is trying to solve the problem in the best way. There is little room to disagree, considering the deadlock and unlikelihood of any forward movement in the talks between the Centre and the protesting farmers. The unions' immediate reaction not to back down from their demand of the repeal of laws is not surprising. A month-and-a-half of a peaceful, organized protest in extreme conditions, riding on popular sentiment and support, lends strength to the

conviction of purpose. But opting for a point of no return and a prolonged holdout - by the government and the protesters - cannot be seen as a prudent stand. As Chief Justice Bobde observed, "These are matters of life and death. We are concerned with laws. We are concerned with lives and property of people affected by the agitation."

The court's intervention lends an opportunity to come out with possible solutions which both sides can agree not to disagree on, but questions are bound to be raised over the composition of the committee if the perception is that all the four members support the new laws. Only

a suitable mix would make the discussions meaningful and lend weight to it being a forum for a frank and open discussion. If the opposition is to the manner and intent of the reform proposed and not the idea of reform itself, there is merit in bringing forth articulate, informed depositions on the pros and cons, the apprehensions, the distrust. Much of the onus lies on the government. It has to show its willingness to new proposals and assurances that the farmers cannot do without.

Keeping in view the proposed protest march in the Capital on Republic Day, a notice has been issued to the unions on a Delhi Police plea to stop their tractor rally



during the January 26 parade. The fervent hope is that the need for such a protest does not arise.

(The Tribune)

12 police officials dismissed for negligence in protecting Hindu temple from vandalism in Pakistan

PESHAWAR (TIP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provincial government in Pakistan has dismissed 12 police officials following an enquiry report that found them guilty of "negligence" in protecting a Hindu temple in the province, which was torched by a mob led by members of a radical Islamist party.

The government also forfeited one-year service of 33 police officials in connection with the incident.

The temple in Terri village in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Karak district was attacked on December 30 by the mob after members of the Hindu community received permission from local authorities to renovate its decades-old building. The mob demolished the newly constructed work alongside the old structure.

Deputy Inspector General of Police, Kohat Region, Tayyab Hafeez Cheema had appointed Superintendent of Police (Investigation Wing) Zahir Shah as enquiry officer to probe the incident and submit its report within a week's time.

Shah conducted the probe against 73 police officials and recommended to dismiss 12 of them from service on charges of negligence and irresponsibility in the discharge of their official duties.

"Keeping in view of the available record and facts on file, perusal of enquiry papers and the recommendations of the Enquiry Officers, they are found guilty of the charges. They show cowardice, negligence, and irresponsibility in the discharge of their official obligations. They failed to protect the Hindu Temple which caused disrepute for the Police department in the eyes of the general public," the report said.

The report recommended forfeiting one-year regular service of 33 police officials. The officer also recommended writing to the Superintendent of Police, Frontier Reserve Police, Kohat for minor punishment to the remaining 28 personnel.

The 12 police officials dismissed include the station house officer (SHO) and assistant sub inspector of Terri Police Station.

The report said that the mob, under the supervision of Maulana Shareef, assaulted the Hindu Temple in Terri, wherein the mob burnt the said temple and damaged it without any interruption as a result of which a complaint under various sections was filed in the Terri police station.

Maulana Shareef, who is in judicial custody, is said to have incited the crowd.

"This is highly quite adverse on their part and shows negligence, carelessness and irresponsibility on the part of delinquent hands," the report said. PTI

Fire destroys hundreds of homes in Rohingya refugee camp

DHAKA (TIP): A fire raced through a sprawling Rohingya refugee camp in southern Bangladesh on Thursday, destroying hundreds of homes, officials said. No casualties were reported.

The UNHCR said more than 550 homes sheltering about 3,500 people as well as 150 shops were either totally or partially destroyed in the fire.

The fire broke out early Thursday in Nayapara Camp in Cox's Bazar district, where more than 1 million Rohingya refugees from Myanmar are staying. Nayapara is an old camp that was started decades ago.

Mohammed Shamsud Douza, a senior refugee official, said firefighters took two hours to bring the blaze under control.

No serious injuries were reported, and the cause of the fire was not immediately known.

A video showed many refugees searching through charred corrugated iron sheets for valuables.

"This is another devastating blow for the Rohingya people who have endured unspeakable hardship for years," Save the Children's country director in



Bangladesh, Onno van Manen, said in a statement.

"Today's devastating fire will have robbed many families of what little shelter and dignity was left to them." About 700,000 Rohingya fled to the camps in Cox's Bazar after August 2017, when the military in Buddhist-

majority Myanmar began a harsh crackdown on the Muslim group following an attack by insurgents.

The crackdown included rapes, killings and the torching of thousands of homes, and was termed ethnic cleansing by global rights groups and the UN. — AP

Nepal Foreign Minister Gyawali embarks on three-day India visit



KATHMANDU (TIP): Nepal's Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali on Thursday embarked on a three-day visit to India during which he will attend the 6th meeting of Nepal-India Joint Commission and discuss the entire gamut of relations, including COVID-19 cooperation and border disputes, with his Indian counterpart S Jaishankar.

Gyawali is the senior-most political leader from Nepal to visit India after Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli triggered a border row last year by publishing a new political map that showed the three Indian territories — Limpiyadhura, Kalapani and Lipulekh — as part of Nepal. The Joint Commission is the highest mechanism between the two

countries to discuss the entire gamut of bilateral relations.

During the meeting, the two countries are scheduled to hold discussions on various issues including bilateral trade, energy, border disputes and COVID-19 assistance. The Joint Commission meeting "will discuss the whole gamut of Nepal-India bilateral relations, including trade, transit, energy, boundary, COVID-19 cooperation, infrastructure, connectivity, investment, agriculture, tourism, culture, among others," the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement earlier.

During his visit, Foreign Minister Gyawali will also meet with the high-level dignitaries of India, the Foreign Ministry said here.

Gyawali is being accompanied by Foreign Secretary Bharat Raj Poudyal and Secretary at the Ministry of Health and Population Laxmi Aryal, according to officials.

After Nepal released the map last year, India reacted sharply, calling it a "unilateral act" and cautioning Kathmandu that such "artificial enlargement" of territorial claims will not be acceptable to it.

India said that Nepal's action violated an understanding reached between the two countries to resolve the boundary issues through talks. PTI

Ajit Doval meets Afghan President Ashraf Ghani in Kabul, visit unannounced



KABUL (TIP): National Security Adviser Ajit Doval on Wednesday met Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and his counterpart Hamdullah Mohib during an unannounced two-day visit to Kabul.

"Both sides discussed expansion of cooperation in countering terrorism and strengthening regional consensus on the Afghan peace process," said Afghan President's spokesman Sediq Sediqqi. "The Afghan National and Defence Security Forces are the righteous pillars of Afghanistan's stability, the front lines against regional and global terrorism... in collaboration with NATO and the US could achieve more success in the fight against terrorism," the President said.

Doval arrived in Kabul days after US Afghan envoy Zalmay Khalilzad, followed by a top US military official, met Pakistan Army officials at Rawalpindi. "The two sides held extensive conversations on issues of strategic mutual interest, including on synchronising efforts to combat terrorism and build peace," said a statement from the Afghan NSA's office. Mohib also met Chinese Ambassador Wang Yu. TNS

BJP's new power order Tweaked hierarchy gives it full control, reducing RSS's interventions



BY RADHIKA RAMASESHAN

An organizational restructuring in the BJP is rarely newsworthy unless the change is effected at the top or a big-time functionary such as Ram Madhav is dropped from the central team of office-bearers and Vasundhara Raje is shafted to pave the way for a leadership makeover in Rajasthan. Recently, JP Nadda, the BJP president, quietly tweaked the organizational hierarchy to reinforce a significant political message: the BJP will exercise complete control over the party and its apparatuses and the patriarch RSS's interventions could become minimal, if not nominal. The Sangh-BJP equation that was in a permanent flux has settled into a constant in the Modi regime. PM Modi rules over a BJP-majority government that is not rocked by the coalition partners or an Opposition. Until he confronted his first challenge in the farmers' movement, his authority appeared incontestable. The RSS is hands-off towards the protests. Its farmers' front, the Bharatiya Kisan Sangh (BKS) issued innocuous statements. The paterfamilias is in no mood to rock the boat.

The BJP took advantage of its commanding position to minimize the presence of the RSS pracharaks in Nadda's team and overturned an arrangement ostensibly cast in stone. BL Santhosh remains the general secretary (organization), and there is no dilution in the power he wields as the second-most important person in the party. In the past, a general secretary, however influential, had two or more deputies 'assisting' him. This line-up of the general secretary and the joint general secretaries (organization) under him was generally made up of obscure figures who avoided the media, although Sunder Singh Bhandari and KN Govindacharya were exceptions and liberally shared information and political insights. Santhosh and Ramlal, his predecessor, had a trio under them, comprising V Satish, Saudan Singh and Shiv Prakash all of who were 'loaned' to the BJP for long-term work.

Last week, the loanees were relocated in the BJP with new designations, their mandate vastly diminished. It is unclear whether the joint general secretary's post will remain. Essentially the recast means the Sangh will have only Santhosh to deal with. He will be the sole conduit between the RSS and the BJP, and for all intent and purpose both will depend largely on the feedback he gives and the inputs he shares. A quintessential pracharak from Karnataka, he earned the moniker, poornavadi karyakarta (full-time



All set: The Sangh-BJP equation that was in a permanent flux has settled into a constant during the Modi government's rule.

Photo / courtesy PTI

The BJP took advantage of its commanding position to minimize the presence of the RSS pracharaks in Nadda's team and overturned an arrangement ostensibly cast in stone.

volunteer). Every pracharak is a full-time volunteer but the sobriquet denoted Santhosh's 'exceptional dedication'. During his stint in the Karnataka BJP, also as a general secretary, he allegedly played his share of intra-BJP politics and was rarely on the same page as CM Yediyurappa. But he is credited with 'discovering' and nurturing young 'talent'

such as Lok Sabha MPs Tejaswi Surya and Prathap Simha and the Karnataka BJP president, Nalin Kumar Kateel. The choice of protégés reveals Santhosh's unmistakable preference for those who are wedded to hard Hindutva.

In that sense, Santhosh, as also the BJP brass, sorted out the existential dilemma that dogged Vajpayee when he was the PM. Vajpayee had the RSS snapping at his heels. If the VHP got aggressive and amped up the Ram temple demand with violent consequences, on occasions, it was the Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM) and the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS) that scuttled Vajpayee's pet reforms. He was disinclined to give the Sangh fronts unbridled latitude, and suffered as a result.

Modi has no such issues, regardless of the problems he lived with in Gujarat from the VHP and BKS. He is adept in managing their occasional tantrums. In December 2019, when the VHP threatened to besiege the government if it would not intervene decisively to seek a 'resolution' of the Ayodhya 'dispute' and got the RSS sarsanghachalak's endorsement for the agenda, the Centre earned more than a breather when the apex court cleared the way. For Modi, it was an opportune moment to dispel the few misgivings the VHP cast over his 'commitment'. He presided over an elaborate ground-laying ceremony in Ayodhya to mark the start of the construction.

Of all RSS fronts, the VHP has the greatest potential to marshal agent provocateurs, whip up communal passions and immobilize an

administration. If the outfit is given a free pass to flout the law, a government can breathe easy. This is what has happened in MP. The VHP galvanized its storm-troopers to strike terror in the minority-dominated pockets in the guise of collecting funds for the temple. CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan has embraced hard-core Hindutva, and giving the VHP leeway suits him politically. In UP, the temple's epicenter, the VHP does little or nothing because CM Yogi Adityanath has everything laid out: a pliant state machinery, public opinion and the voluntary militia of his Hindu Vahini in case action was demanded.

In contrast, an issue stares the BKS in the face, but it refused to react. In the Centre-farmer face-off, all that the Sangh's peasant wing asked for was guaranteeing the MSP in the open market and a designated court to adjudicate disputes related to contract farming. At no point did it suggest that the farming laws should be relooked, let alone repealed. Like the BKS, the SJM opted for the straight and narrow.

Had the RSS, the BKS and the SJM confronted the Centre on the peasantry, it would have been forced to respond and perhaps withdraw the laws. In 2015, it was an ultimatum the SJM served that nudged the government to freeze the proposed amendments in the Land Acquisition Act. The RSS astutely figured that keeping the peace with the Modi dispensation is mutually advantageous and disputes must be buried.

(The author is a senior journalist)

President Donald Trump is Impeached

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for them to "fight like hell" against the election results. Ten Republicans deserted Mr. Trump, joining Democrats who said he needed to be held accountable and warned ominously of a "clear and present danger" if Congress should leave him unchecked before Democrat Joe Biden's inauguration Jan. 20.

The Capitol insurrection stunned and angered lawmakers, who were sent scrambling for safety as the mob descended, and it revealed the fragility of the nation's history of peaceful transfers of power. The riot also forced a reckoning among some Republicans, who have stood by Mr. Trump throughout his presidency and largely allowed him to spread false attacks against the integrity of the 2020 election.



Chaos and mayhem at the Capitol on January 6.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi invoked Abraham Lincoln and the Bible, imploring lawmakers to uphold their oath to defend the Constitution from all enemies, foreign "and domestic".

She said of Mr. Trump: "He must go, he is a clear and present danger to the nation that we all love."

Holed up at the White House, watching the proceedings on TV, Mr. Trump took no responsibility for the bloody riot seen around the world, but issued a statement urging "NO violence, NO lawbreaking and NO vandalism of any kind" to disrupt Mr. Biden's ascension to the White House.

In the face of the accusations against him and with the FBI warning of more violence, Mr. Trump said, "That is not what I stand for, and it is not what America stands for. I call on ALL Americans to help ease tensions and calm tempers."

Mr. Trump was first impeached by the House in 2019 over his dealings with Ukraine, but the Senate voted in 2020 to acquit him. He is the first President to be impeached twice. None have been convicted by the Senate, but Republicans said on Wednesday that could change in the rapidly shifting political environment as officeholders, donors, big business and others peel away from the defeated President.

The soonest Republican Senate leader Mitch McConnell would start an impeachment trial is next Tuesday, the day before Mr. Trump is already set to leave the White House, Mr. McConnell's office said. The legislation is also intended to prevent Mr. Trump from ever running again.

Mr. McConnell believes Mr. Trump committed

impeachable offences and considers the Democrats' impeachment drive an opportunity to reduce the divisive, chaotic President's hold on the GOP, a Republican strategist told The Associated Press on Wednesday.

Mr. McConnell told major donors over the weekend that he was through with Mr. Trump, said the strategist, who demanded anonymity to describe Mr. McConnell's conversations.

In a note to colleagues on Wednesday, Mr. McConnell said he had "not made a final decision on how I will vote."

Unlike his first time, Mr. Trump faces this impeachment as a weakened leader, having lost his own re-election as well as the Senate Republican majority.

Even Trump ally Kevin McCarthy, the House Republican leader, shifted his position and said Wednesday the President bears responsibility for the

horrifying day at the Capitol.

In making a case for the "high crimes and misdemeanors" demanded in the Constitution, the four-page impeachment resolution approved on Wednesday relies on Mr. Trump's own incendiary rhetoric and the falsehoods he spread about Mr. Biden's election victory, including at a rally near the White House on the day of the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol.

A Capitol Police officer died from injuries suffered in the riot, and police shot and killed a woman during the siege. Three other people died in what authorities said were medical emergencies. The riot delayed the tally of Electoral College votes that was the last step in finalizing Mr. Biden's victory.

Ten Republican lawmakers, including third-ranking House GOP leader Liz Cheney of Wyoming, voted to impeach Mr. Trump, cleaving the Republican leadership, and the party itself.

Ms. Cheney, whose father is the former Republican Vice-President, said of Mr. Trump's actions summoning the mob that "there has never been a greater betrayal by a President" of his office.

Mr. Trump was said to be livid with perceived disloyalty from Mr. McConnell and Ms. Cheney.

With the team around Mr. Trump hollowed out and his Twitter account silenced by the social media company, the President was deeply frustrated that he could not hit back, according to White House officials and Republicans close to the West Wing who weren't authorized to speak publicly about private conversations.

From the White House, Mr. Trump leaned on Sen.

Lindsey Graham of South Carolina to push Republican senators to resist, while chief of staff Mark Meadows called some of his former colleagues on Capitol Hill.

The President's sturdy popularity with the GOP lawmakers' constituents still had some sway, and most House Republicans voted not to impeach.

Security was exceptionally tight at the Capitol, with tall fences around the complex. Metal-detector screenings were required for lawmakers entering the House chamber, where a week earlier lawmakers huddled inside as police, guns drawn, barricade the door from rioters.

We are debating this historic measure at a crime scene," said Rep. Jim McGovern, D-Mass.

During the debate, some Republicans repeated the falsehoods spread by Mr. Trump about the election and argued that the President has been treated unfairly by Democrats from the day he took office.

Other Republicans argued the impeachment was a rushed sham and complained about a double standard applied to his supporters but not to the liberal left. Some simply appealed for the nation to move on.

Rep. Tom McClintock of California said, "Every movement has a lunatic fringe."

Yet Democratic Rep. Jason Crow, D-Colo. and others recounted the harrowing day as rioters pounded on the chamber door trying to break in. Some called it a "coup" attempt.

Rep. Maxine Waters, D-Calif., contended that Mr. Trump was "capable of starting a civil war".

Conviction and removal of Mr. Trump would require a two-thirds vote in the Senate, which will be evenly divided. Republican Sen. Pat Toomey of Pennsylvania joined Sen. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska over the weekend in calling for Mr. Trump to "go away as soon as possible".

Fending off concerns that an impeachment trial would bog down his first days in office, Mr. Biden is messaging Senators to divide their time between taking up his priorities of confirming his nominees and approving COVID-19 relief while also conducting the trial.

The impeachment bill draws from Mr. Trump's own false statements about his election defeat to Mr. Biden. Judges across the country, including some nominated by Mr. Trump, have repeatedly dismissed cases challenging the election results, and former Attorney General William Barr, a Trump ally, has said there was no sign of widespread fraud.

The House had first tried to persuade Vice-President Mike Pence and the Cabinet to invoke their authority under the 25th Amendment to remove Mr. Trump from office. Pence declined to do so, but the House passed the resolution anyway.

The impeachment bill also details Mr. Trump's pressure on state officials in Georgia to "find" him more votes. While some have questioned impeaching the President so close to the end of his term, there is precedent. In 1876, during the Ulysses Grant administration, War Secretary William Belknap was impeached by the House the day he resigned, and the Senate convened a trial months later. He was acquitted.

(Based on AP story)

Lady Gaga to sing national anthem, Jennifer Lopez to perform at Joe Biden's inauguration

The announcement of their participation comes one day after word that Tom Hanks will host a 90-minute prime time TV special celebrating Mr. Biden's inauguration. Other performers include Justin Timberlake, Jon Bon Jovi, Demi Lovato and Ant Clemons.

At the swearing-in ceremony, the Rev. Leo O'Donovan, a former Georgetown University president, will give the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance will be led by Andrea Hall, a firefighter from Georgia.

There will be a poetry reading from Amanda Gorman, the first national youth poet laureate, and the benediction will be given by Rev. Silvester Beaman of Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Wilmington, Delaware.

Expecting trouble, DC locks down a week before inauguration

WASHINGTON (TIP): There were no cars or scooters and seemingly no tourists on Wednesday, January 13, just the occasional jogger and multiple construction crews at work.

All through downtown Washington, the primary sound for several blocks was the beeping of forklifts unloading more fencing.

There were no cars or scooters and seemingly no tourists on Wednesday, just the occasional jogger and multiple construction crews at work. The US Capitol that proved such a soft target last week was visible only through lines of tall, black fence.

Two blocks from the White House, a group of uniformed National Guard troops emerged from a tour bus and headed into a hotel as a state of lockdown descended on Washington that will last through the January 20 inauguration.

"Clearly we are in uncharted waters," said Washington Mayor Muriel Bowser.

Last weeks "violent insurrection" at the Capitol by supporters of outgoing President Donald Trump has "impacted the way we are approaching working with our federal partners in planning for the 59th inauguration," Ms. Bowser said Wednesday.

The FBI has warned that armed protests by violent Trump supporters were being planned in all 50 state capitals as well as in Washington for the days leading up to the inauguration of President-elect Joe Biden.

Between the pandemic and the security threat, Ms. Bowser is flat-out asking people not to come to the District of Columbia for the inauguration. And at Ms. Bowers request, a National Special Security Event declaration was moved up to January 13, a distinction which she said "puts in place an entirely different command and control structure" for security.



About 300 demonstrators gather after painting a sign in the middle of Broadway on January 9, 2021 outside the historic Old Courthouse in downtown St. Louis.

The NSSE status is normal for a presidential inauguration and other major events like an international summit or the Super Bowl. But it's rare to start the lockdown so far in advance of the event.

Police vehicles sealed off a huge swath of downtown DC Wednesday, causing immediate traffic snarls. Starting Wednesday, Ms. Bowser said, "Anyone inside the inauguration perimeter might be stopped and questioned. Starting Friday, all parking garages in the downtown restricted zone will be sealed through the inauguration."

Ms. Bowser is also being pushed to deny lodging options to potentially violent protesters. The local Black Lives Matter affiliate and Shutdown DC issued a joint statement on Wednesday urging all downtown hotels to voluntarily close and pay their staffs. In addition to the threat of violence, the activist groups say

Trump supporters are a threat to the health of hotel staff for their general refusal to wear facemasks amid the pandemic. Several downtown hotels, including one which had become a favorite hangout of the militant Proud Boy faction, chose to avoid trouble by closing last week.

"Closing hotels completely for these six nights is the only way to guarantee the safety of hotel workers, neighbors, vulnerable and unhoused residents, incoming administration officials, members of Congress, and our democracy," the statement said. "If hotels do not willingly close, we ask Mayor Bowser to extend today's emergency order and close all hotels in the city." On Wednesday, Airbnb announced it was cancelling all reservations in the Washington metro area. Ms. Bowser said she had been in regular contact with Airbnb officials since last week, but did

not specifically request this step.

"We are aware of reports emerging yesterday afternoon regarding armed militias and known hate groups that are attempting to travel and disrupt the Inauguration," a company statement said. "We are continuing our work to ensure hate group members are not part of the Airbnb community." On the ground, much of the most visible security will come in the form of more than 15,000 National Guardsmen from multiple states, some of them armed.

According to officials, the number of Guardsmen who will actually be carrying guns will be limited. Some Guard members nearer the Capitol will have long guns, and others will have their sidearms.

It is likely that those closer to the crowds or on fence lines won't be armed, but those up closer to the building may be. National Guard members operate under strict rules of engagement on the use of force. But generally speaking, troops can use lethal force to protect the lives of others and themselves.

Officials also said that while 15,000 Guard members have been activated, more may be called. DC Police Chief Robert Contee estimated Wednesday that more than 20,000 National Guardsmen would be active in the District of Columbia on Inauguration Day.

Officials are continuing to review requests from law enforcement, and some believe several thousand more could be brought in. Defense and military officials have been calling governors and adjutants general to ask if they might have people they could send, if requested.

So far, officials said state leaders have said that protecting their own capitols will be their top priority, but they still have some guard members they will be able to send, if needed.

(Source: PTI)

contd from page 2

President-Elect Joe Biden unveils ambitious 1.9 trillion 'American Rescue Plan'

With those margins, even holding enough Democrats together to pass legislation along party lines could prove a challenge. The most conservative Senate Democrat, Sen. Joe Manchin III (W.Va.), has already expressed skepticism about the need for a new round of stimulus checks, while Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.) said Thursday that Biden isn't going far enough by proposing \$1,400 checks, even though Biden's approach means most



"I know what I just described will not come cheaply," Biden said Thursday night. "But failure to do so will cost us dearly."

CBSN Screenshot

people will end up with \$2,000 given the earlier batch of \$600 checks. "\$2,000 means \$2,000. \$2,000 does not mean \$1,400," Ocasio-Cortez said.

Foreshadowing the legislative fight to come, Biden's plan quickly attracted criticism from advocates on the right and the left. Stephen Moore, an outside economic adviser to Trump, slammed it as "fiscally irresponsible." Mark Wolfe, head of the National Energy Assistance Directors' Association, said he was disappointed the proposal didn't include more money for rental assistance or low-income energy assistance.

The \$130 billion in K-12 funding in the proposal is aimed at paying expenses associated with mitigating the spread of virus inside schools, such as improving ventilation systems. Although Biden has said he wants to open a majority of schools, there is no federal tally of how many are open to date, and some research suggests a majority of them may be offering in-person options already.

(WITH INPUTS FROM WASHINGTON POST AND AGENCIES)



India's youngest organ donor at 20 months saves five lives in her death

NEW DELHI (TIP): All of 20-months, Dhanishtha became the youngest cadaver donor of India, hailing from New Delhi's Rohini, the infant was left in a comatose state after she fell from a balcony at her home.

She was brought to Ganga Ram Hospital on January 8 in an unconscious state. After she was declared brain dead on January 11, her family decided to donate all her functional organs and have now saved the lives of five patients, the hospital informed in a press statement.

The child's heart, liver, and both kidneys and corneas were retrieved successfully at the hospital and used in five patients. All her other organs were in excellent condition.

In spite of the irreparable loss, her parents, Ashish Kumar and Babita, decided to donate Dhanishtha's organs to inspire others to come forward and save lives.

Ashish Kumar said: "During our stay at the hospital, we met many patients who were in dire need of organs. Though we lost our child, our daughter will continue to live, and in the process, improve the quality of life of the needy patients."

DS Rana, chairman, Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, said: "This noble act by the family is really praiseworthy and should motivate others. At 0.26 per million, India has the lowest rate of organ donation. On an average, five lakh Indians die every year due to lack of organs."

India's first 9 mm machine pistol co-developed by DRDO, Army

NEW DELHI (TIP): India developed its first indigenous 9 mm machine pistol, the Defence Ministry on Thursday informed that the machine gun was co-developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and the Indian Army.

The Army's infantry school in Mhow and the DRDO's Armament Research and Development Establishment (ARDE) in Pune have designed and developed the weapon, a press statement released by the DRDO said.

"The machine pistol fires the in-service 9mm ammunition and sports an upper receiver made from aircraft grade aluminium and lower receiver from carbon fibre. A 3 dimensional printing process has been used in designing and prototyping of various parts," it said in a statement.

"The machine pistol is likely to have production cost under Rs 50,000 each and has potential for exports," it said.

India approves Tejas fighter jets deal worth Rs 48,000 crore

NEW DELHI (TIP): The PM Narendra Modi-led Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) on Wednesday cleared indigenous defence deal worth Rs 48,000 crores to strengthen Indian Air Force's fleet of LCA-Tejas fighter jets, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said.

This will be the biggest deal ever in the indigenous military aviation sector.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh confirmed the development on Twitter, saying "the CCS chaired by the PM today approved the largest indigenous defence procurement deal worth about Rs 48,000 crore to strengthen IAF's fleet of homegrown fighter jet 'LCA-Tejas'. This deal will be a game-changer for self-reliance in Indian defence manufacturing."

The defence minister said Tejas is going to be the backbone of the fighter fleet of the Indian Air Force in years to come.

Around three years back, the IAF had issued an initial tender for procurement of 83 Tejas aircraft, a four-and-half generation combat jet.

"LCA-Tejas incorporates a large number of new technologies many of which were never attempted in India. The indigenous content of LCA-Tejas is 50 percent in Mk1A variant which will be enhanced to 60 percent," Singh said.

The defence minister said that aircraft maker Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) has already set up second-line manufacturing facilities at its Nasik and Bengaluru divisions.

"Equipped with the augmented infrastructure the HAL will steer LCA-Mk1A production for timely deliveries to the IAF," he said.

Singh said the Tejas programme would act as a catalyst for transforming the Indian aerospace manufacturing ecosystem into a vibrant, self-sustaining



one. "I thank the Prime Minister Shri @narendramodi for this historic decision taken by the CCS today," the defence minister said.

Tejas More Advanced than China-Pakistan's JF-17 Fighter Jets, Better Equipped: IAF chief

Air Chief Marshal RKS Bhaduria on Thursday, Jan 14, said the indigenously-developed Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas is far better and more advanced than China's JF-17 fighter aircraft manufactured by Pakistan's aeronautical company, adding that the newly added jets will be equipped for Balakot-type airstrikes.

Welcoming the government's approval to the Rs 48,000 crore deal to procure 83 LCAs from the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), the Chief of Air Staff in an interview to ANI said, "Indian aircraft Tejas is far better and more advanced than the Chinese and Pakistan joint venture JF-

17 fighter. It will have top of the line Beyond Visual Range (BVR) class of air-to-air missile Astra, and other sensors and weapons."

On being asked on the aircraft's capabilities in carrying out Balakot-type airstrikes, the Air Chief Marshal said, "In terms of strike capability, it will have the capability of a standoff weapon which will be even beyond the capability we used that time."

The Tejas Mk-1A will be equipped with active electronically scanned array radar, beyond visual range missile, electronic warfare suite and air-to-air refuelling and would be a potent platform to meet the operational requirements of the IAF, according to official statements.

The 83 aircraft will look after four squadrons, he said to question on the fighter aircraft's deployment in the IAF. "The current strength of the two squadron plan of LCA will now increase to six. Essentially the deployment will be on the frontline," he added.

Farm bills have potential to represent significant step forward for agriculture reforms in India: IMF

WASHINGTON (TIP): The IMF believes the farm bills passed by the Indian government have the potential to represent a significant step forward for agricultural reforms, but a social safety net is needed to protect those who might be adversely impacted during the transition to the new system, a spokesperson of the global lender said here.

Gerry Rice, Director of Communications at the International Monetary Fund (IMF), said the new measures would reduce the role of the middlemen and enhance efficiency.

"We believe the farm bills do have the potential to represent a significant step forward for agricultural reforms in India," Rice said at a news conference in Washington on Thursday, January 14.

"The measures will enable farmers to directly contract with sellers, allow farmers to retain a greater share of the surplus by reducing the role of



middlemen, enhance efficiency and support rural growth," he said.

"However, it is crucial that the social safety net adequately protects those who might be adversely impacted during the transition to this new system," the spokesperson said responding to a question on the ongoing protests by farmers against the laws in India.

This can be done by ensuring that the job market accommodates those that are impacted by the reforms, he said.

And of course, the growth benefits of these reforms will depend, critically, on

the effectiveness and the timing of their implementation, so need to pay attention to those issues as well with the reform," Rice said.

Thousands of farmers, mostly from Punjab and Haryana, have been camping at several Delhi border points, demanding a complete repeal of the three farm laws and legal guarantee of minimum support price for their crops.

Enacted in September last year, the three laws have been projected by the Centre as major reforms in the agriculture sector that will remove middlemen and allow farmers to sell their produce anywhere in the country.

However, the protesting farmers have expressed their apprehension that the new laws would pave the way for eliminating the safety cushion of the Minimum Support Price (MSP) and do away with the "mandi" (wholesale market) system, leaving them at the mercy of big corporates.

Indian Army signs USD 20 million contract with ideaForge to procure SWITCH drones

The Indian Army has signed a contract with ideaForge to procure “undisclosed quantities” of high-altitude variant of SWITCH unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) at a cost of approximately USD 20 million, according to a statement from the Mumbai-based company on Thursday, Jan 14.

This fixed-wing UAV, capable of vertical takeoff and landing, can be deployed at high altitude and harsh environments for day-and-night surveillance, said the statement.

“ideaForge has been awarded this contract after it emerged as the only vendor that qualified the operational requirements in an evaluation done in real-world conditions, for a fast-track procurement,” it mentioned.

The company said “undisclosed quantities of a high-altitude variant of ideaForge’s SWITCH UAV” will be delivered to the Indian Army over a period of one year.

The statement quoted ideaForge CEO Ankit Mehta saying that SWITCH UAV is the culmination of insights and knowledge the company has gained over years of experience in helping the Indian forces operationalise UAVs in their ranks.

“The trials saw about a dozen national and global players compete to meet the operational requirements. SWITCH UAV is the only product that cleared the Indian Army’s stringent product trials and surpassed expectations,” he noted.

Over 270 terrorists currently active in J&K

More than 270 terrorists are currently active in Jammu and Kashmir, which is less than the 2019 and 2020 figures, official sources have said.

The Union Territory has seen a decrease in terrorist incidents, infiltration and civilian killings in 2020, while security forces carried out more than 100 “successful” counter-terrorism operations killing 225 terrorists, they said.

There are over 270 terrorists active in Jammu and Kashmir currently, of whom 205 are in Kashmir Valley, they said. There were 421 active terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir in 2019 and over 300 in 2020. A total of 225 terrorists were killed in 2020. As many as 160 terrorists were killed in 2019 and 257 in 2018, they said. In 2020, terrorists activities were also witnessed in so-far peaceful areas south of the Pir Panjal range in Jammu region, including Kistwar-Doda and Poonch, they said.

Don’t decriminalise adultery in armed forces: Centre to SC

NEW DELHI (TIP): More than two years after the Supreme Court decriminalised adultery by declaring Section 497 of the IPC unconstitutional, the Centre has moved the Supreme Court with a plea that the historic verdict shouldn’t apply to the armed forces as it may cause instability among personnel who stay away from family.

A three-judge Bench, headed by Justice RF Nariman, issued a notice to the petitioner on whose plea Section 497 IPC was declared unconstitutional and referred the matter to a Constitution Bench.

Now, Chief Justice of India SA Bobde will constitute a five-judge Constitution Bench, which will hear the Centre and the original petitioner, and decide the issue.

In a historic verdict, the Supreme Court had on September 27, 2018, declared unconstitutional Section 497 of the Indian Penal Code, which punished only men for having sexual relationship with a married woman. In a unanimous verdict, a five-judge Constitution Bench, headed by then Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra, had said the 158-year-old Victorian era law was “manifestly arbitrary” and violated a woman’s right to equality and right to non-discrimination guaranteed under Article 14 and Article 15 of the Constitution as it treated them as chattels. The top court had, however, said adultery would be a ground for divorce in matrimonial proceedings and cautioned that the verdict should not be taken as a licence to indulge in such acts.

Striking down the adultery law, the top court had said, “This (Section 497 IPC) treats



More than two years after the Supreme Court decriminalised adultery by declaring Section 497 of the IPC unconstitutional, the Centre has moved the Supreme Court with a plea that the historic verdict shouldn’t apply to the armed forces as it may cause instability among personnel who stay away from family.

the woman as a chattel. It treats her as the property of man and totally subservient to the will of the master. It is a reflection of the social dominance that was prevalent when the penal provision was drafted.”

“The enforcement of forced female fidelity by curtailing sexual autonomy is an affront to the fundamental right to dignity and equality,” said the top court. It treated a married woman as a property of the husband,” the Bench had said. It had said, “In treating a woman as chattel for the purposes of this provision, it is clear that such provision discriminates against women on grounds of sex only, and must be struck down on this ground as well.”

Source: TNS

Parliament session from Jan 29, Union Budget on Feb 1



NEW DELHI (TIP): The Budget session of Parliament will commence from January 29, with Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman set to present the Union Budget on February 1.

The session will be held in two parts -- from January 29 to February 15 and March 8 to April 8. The 5th session of the 17th Lok Sabha will have 35 sittings -- 11 in the first part and 24 in the second part.

President Ram Nath Kovind will address both Houses of Parliament -- the Rajya Sabha and the Lok Sabha -- at 11 am on January 29.

Sitharaman will present the Union Budget at 11 am on February 1.

Parliament will adjourn on February 15 to enable various Standing Committees to consider the Demands for Grants of Ministries/Departments and prepare their reports, and reconvene on March 8.

India and China continue to maintain close communication

NEW DELHI (TIP): India and China continue to maintain close communication through diplomatic and military channels with the objective of ensuring complete disengagement at all friction points along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Thursday, January 14.

The MEA spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said the two sides have agreed to hold the next round of military talks and are in constant communication in this regard. “India and China continue to maintain close communication through diplomatic and military channels with the objective of ensuring complete disengagement in all friction points along the LAC in the western sector and for full restoration of peace and tranquillity,” he told a media briefing.

Srivastava was responding to a question on the status of talks between the two countries on the military face-off in eastern Ladakh.

The troops of the Indian Army and the Chinese People’s Liberation Army (PLA) are locked in a standoff for over eight months. Last month, India and China held another round of diplomatic talks under the framework of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination (WMCC) on India-China border affairs.

“As you are aware, the latest round of WMCC was held on December 18. The two



sides have agreed to hold a next round of senior commanders meeting, and are in constant communication through diplomatic and military channels in this regard,” Srivastava said.

The eighth and last round of military talks between the two sides took place on November 6 during which both sides broadly discussed disengagement of troops from specific friction points. Army chief Gen MM Naravane on Tuesday hoped for an amicable resolution of the standoff through talks based on “mutual and equal security”.

The Chief of Army Staff at the same time asserted that Indian troops are fully prepared to deal with any eventuality along the LAC and will hold their ground as long as it takes to achieve the “national goals and objectives.” India has all along been maintaining that the onus is on China to carry forward the process of disengagement and de-escalation at the friction points in the mountainous region.

No chief guest at R-Day, first time in 55 years



NEW DELHI (TIP): India will not have a chief guest at the Republic Day parade for the first time since 1966 because of the pandemic. But for the first time, a contingent from the Bangladesh Army will march down Rajpath on January 26, said MEA spokesperson Anurag Srivastava at the weekly media briefing here on Thursday, January 14.

Sources said it was decided not to have a chief guest after the proposal to draft Surinam President Chan Santokhi as a last minute replacement for UK PM Boris Johnson fell through. At the previous last minute pullout during the UPA regime, New Delhi had managed to persuade the King of Bhutan to do the honours. In the initial years, no chief guest was invited in 1952 and 1952, barely two years after the Nehru government had tried to make it a regular practice.

The Bangladesh Army’s participation will be the second time foreign soldiers will participate in the march past after a French Army contingent in 2016.

Source: TNS

CENTRE-FARMERS TALKS

Ahead of 9th round, Mann recuses himself from SC-appointed committee

Jan 26 plan will be revealed after meeting with ministers: Rajewal; will take out 'simultaneous parade', says Tikait

NEW DELHI (TIP): Ahead of the ninth round of Centre-farmer talks on Friday, January 15, there have been some major developments on the ongoing agitation. Amid growing criticism, including from his own union, BKU's Bhupinder Singh Mann (one of the four experts nominated by the Supreme Court for negotiations with farmers protesting against the three farm laws), on January 14, recused himself from the committee.

Meanwhile, amid the growing social media buzz on unions "tractor parade" on the Republic Day, farmers' leader Balbir Singh Rajewal said the January-26 plan will be revealed after the meeting with the Union ministers. He also urged everyone to maintain peace and harmony and not pay heed to "false and unfounded inflammatory propaganda and rumor mongering" on the tractor march to "malign and scuttle the movement".

Even as Rajewal said unions will finalize the contours of January 26 tractor march after their meeting with Central ministers on Friday, BKU leader from Uttar Pradesh Rakesh Tikait announced the program for the day saying that farmers will hold



A farmer rests inside a temporary shelter during their protest at Ghazipur border in New Delhi on January 14, 2021. Photo Credit: PTI

simultaneous parade from Red Fort to India Gate on the Republic Day.

"The Republic Day Parade has been cut short, it will now be from Rashtrapati Bhawan to India Gate, I am told. We will march from Red Fort to India Gate and meet it there. It will be a historic event," Tikait said in what is being seen as breaking ranks in the agitation.

Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar expressed hope of positive discussions on January 15.

Clearing the confusion over the fate of tomorrow's meeting (the only outcome of the January-8 talks) after the SC ruling on Tuesday and Mann recusing from the court-appointed panel today, Tomar said the talks will be held as scheduled. While they have already specified that they will not appear before the court-appointed panel, farmer unions said they were ready to attend the scheduled talks with the government.

In his statement, Mann said he was thankful to the Supreme Court for nominating him to the committee to start a dialogue with unions on the laws. However, as a farmer leader and union leader, "in view of the prevailing sentiments and apprehensions amongst the farm unions and public in general, I am ready to sacrifice any position offered or given to me so as to not compromise the interests of Punjab and farmers in the country, I am recusing myself from the committee and I will always stand with my farmers and Punjab," Mann said after the union he headed also distanced itself from him.

After being selected by the SC, he had urged everyone to put forward their views before the panel.

Union leaders claimed others on the panel will "also resign soon".

Rajewal said efforts were being made to malign the agitation through



Bhupinder Singh Mann, one of the four experts nominated by the Supreme Court for negotiations with farmers protesting against the three farm laws.

'dushprachar' (false propaganda). "The whole world is watching. This is not just a farmers' movement. It has become a mass movement across the country. A movement is successful only when it is completely peaceful, if there is violence it collapses.

"Misconceptions/false inflammatory propaganda are being spread about the 26 January movement. Some people are saying that the national flag should be hoisted at the Red Fort, some are saying the Parliament will be stormed," he said, accusing "anti-farmer forces and government agencies" of trying to malign and scuttle the peaceful agitation of farmers and common people. Urging everyone to maintain peace and calm, he told the farmers that the tractor march will be "from" Delhi borders. The exact outline of the programme for January 26 will be given after tomorrow's meeting.

(With inputs from TNS)

Farmers to attend ninth round of talks with government without 'much hope'

NEW DELHI (TIP): Protesting farmer leaders on January 14 said they will attend the ninth round of talks with the government amid indication that it may be the last such meeting with the Centre, but added that they don't have much hope as they will not settle for anything less than the repeal of the contentious farm laws.

Since a Supreme Court-appointed panel on farm laws is likely to hold its first meeting on January 19, the meeting on January 15 between with the government and the unions may be the last one.

Bhartiya Kisan Union (Ekta Ugrahan) Joginder Singh Ugrahan told PTI, "We are going to hold talks with the government tomorrow. We don't have much hope from the Friday meeting as the government will cite the SC-appointed panel. The government doesn't have good intention to resolve our issues." Mr. Ugrahan said that the unions do not

Government hopeful of positive discussions; Supreme Court-appointed committee member says panel ready to go to protest sites to talk to farmers.

want any committee, adding "we just want a complete repeal of three farm laws and legal guarantee on minimum support price for our crops". He said that farmers will not call off their protest until their demands are met.

Another farmer leader, Abhimanyu Kohar, said that government knows that the court cannot repeal the laws and added that the Centre should stop playing with the sentiments of farmers who have been camping at several Delhi borders since November 28.

He said that forming a committee is not a solution, adding that the new

farm laws have been enacted by Parliament and the court cannot do much. While the previous eight rounds of negotiations have failed to end the protests continuing for several weeks on various borders of the national capital, Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar said earlier in the day that the government is hopeful of positive discussions at the scheduled January 15 meeting.

In an interview to PTI, Anil Ghanwat, a member of the Supreme Court-appointed committee, said that the panel will have no "ego or prestige issue" if it has to go to farmers' protest sites to talk to them.

On the government holding parallel talks with protesting farmers scheduled for January 15, Ghanwat said, "I think this will be their last meeting with the government. They will say henceforth you (farmers) have to sit with the committee, which will give a report to the Supreme Court."

Agriculture Ministry denies RTI query on farm law consultations

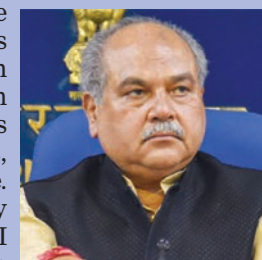
NEW DELHI (TIP): The Agriculture Ministry has denied a Right to Information (RTI) request for details on pre-legislative consultations on the farm reform laws, saying the matter is sub judice.

In its response, the Ministry cited the clause from the RTI Act that exempts information which has been expressly forbidden to be published by a court of law or whose disclosure would amount to contempt of court.

This comes after an earlier response claiming that the Ministry did not have any record of such consultations.

RTI activist Anjali Bhardwaj had filed her request on December 11, asking for specific details regarding the stakeholder consultations held before the Centre promulgated the three ordinances on agricultural reforms in June. Within the 30-day period given to respond, two Central Public Information Officers (CPIOs) in the agricultural marketing divisions of the Ministry disposed of her request, saying that they did not have any record of such consultations.

The Hindu had reported this on January 12, a day after the Ministry told the Supreme Court that farm unions were "peddling an erroneous notion" that no consultations were held.



Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar.

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Legacy of saint-soldier Guru Gobind Singh, founder of Khalsa Panth

Guru Gobind Singh was the last of the 10 Gurus, the one who transformed the Sikh faith. His birth anniversary falls on January 20

Guru Gobind Singh was the last of the ten Gurus, the one who transformed the Sikh faith. In 1699 he created the Khalsa (Pure), a community of the faithful who wore visible symbols of their faith and trained as warriors. Today the Khalsa comprises all practising Sikhs.

Contributions

Guru Gobind Singh succeeded his father Guru Teg Bahadur at the age of 9. His teachings were different from his predecessors' - he believed that no power could exploit the Sikhs.

He spent his childhood years studying Persian and Sanskrit, and was skilled in the art of war. His mission was to uphold right in every place and destroy sin and evil. In 1699 he chose the festival day of Vaisakhi as the occasion to transform the Sikhs into the Khalsa, a family of soldier saints.

Guru Gobind Singh introduced many of the customs that Sikhs practise today.

Sikhs who have been through the Amrit ceremony of initiation become Amritdhari, initiated Sikhs. They take new names and wear the 5 Ks - five physical symbols that Sikhs must wear.

He declared the the Sikh holy book as his successor instead of a human being. The Guru Granth Sahib would thus be the Sikhs' guide forever. Sikhs give it the same status and respect as a human Guru.

In 1699 the tenth guru, Guru Gobind Singh, chose Vaisakhi as the occasion to transform the Sikhs into a family of soldier saints, known as the Khalsa Panth.

Guru Gobind Singh founded the Khalsa in front of thousands at Anandpur Sahib.

During the Vaisakhi festival Guru Gobind Singh came out of a tent carrying a sword. He challenged any Sikh who was prepared to give his life to come into the tent. The Guru returned alone with his sword covered in blood. He then requested another volunteer and repeated the same action four times until five men disappeared into the tent. The crowd was very concerned until they saw five men return wearing turbans with the Guru.

These five men became known as the Panj Piare, or 'Beloved Five'.

The men were then baptised into the Khalsa by the Guru. He sprinkled them with Amrit ('immortalising nectar': the Sikh term for holy water) and said prayers. This is the basis of the Sikh baptism ceremony.

Vaisakhi is celebrated in much the same way as Gurburbs. Gudwaras are decorated and visited. Parades, dancing and singing happen throughout the day. Many Sikhs choose to be baptised into the Khalsa brotherhood on this day.

The festival is marked with nagar kirtan processions: processions through the streets (nagar means "town") which form an important part of Sikh culture and religious celebrations.

Kirtan is a term meaning the singing of hymns from the Guru Granth Sahib,



Vaisakhi marks the birth of Khalsa. On March 30 in 1699, Guru Gobind Singh gathered his followers in Anandpur. At this gathering, Khalsa was born.

the Sikh holy book. Celebrations always include music, singing and chanting scriptures and hymns.

The processions are led by traditionally dressed Panj Piaras.

The Guru Granth Sahib will be carried in the procession in a place of honour.

Amrit Ceremony

Sikhs who have been through the Amrit Ceremony of initiation, or Amrit Sanskar, become baptised Sikhs, take new names, and wear the 5 Ks.

The Amrit Ceremony is the initiation rite introduced by Guru Gobind Singh when he founded the Khalsa in 1699.

A Sikh can go through this initiation as soon as they are old enough to understand the full commitment that they are making.

The ceremony takes place in a Gurdwara, before the Guru Granth Sahib, and in the presence of 5 initiated Sikhs (who represent the Panj Piyaras, the first 5 Sikhs to be initiated).

During the ceremony, hymns are recited from the Sikh scripture, prayers are said, and the principles of Sikhism are affirmed.

Then amrit is prepared. Amrit is a mixture of sugar and water that has been stirred with a double-edged sword.

The candidates for initiation drink some of the amrit from the same bowl, and have it sprinkled on their eyes and hair.

Each then recites the Mool Mantra (the fundamentals of Sikhism). There are readings from the Guru Granth Sahib and an explanation of rules of Sikhism.

The ceremony ends with the eating of the ceremonial karah parshad. Parshad is a sweet tasting food which has been blessed. It is made from semolina, sugar and ghee.

Khalsa initiation

The 5 Ks date from the creation of the Khalsa Panth by Guru Gobind Singh in 1699.

The Guru introduced them for several reasons:

- Adopting these common symbols would identify members of the Khalsa
- Because all members of the Khalsa wear the 5 Ks the members of the community are more strongly bound together
- Each K has a particular significance

The meaning of the 5 Ks

The 5 Ks taken together symbolise that the Sikh who wears them has dedicated themselves to a life of devotion and submission to the Guru.

The 5 Ks are 5 physical symbols worn by Sikhs who have been initiated into the Khalsa.

The five Ks are:

- Kesh (uncut hair)
- Kara (a steel bracelet)
- Kanga (a wooden comb)
- Kaccha - also spelt, Kachh, Kachera (cotton underwear)
- Kirpan (steel sword)

Kesh - uncut hair

- Various reasons and symbolisms have been put forward for the Sikh practice of keeping hair uncut.
- Throughout history hair (kesh) has been regarded as a symbol both of holiness and strength.
- One's hair is part of God's creation. Keeping hair uncut indicates that one is willing to accept God's gift as God intended it.
- Uncut hair symbolizes adoption of a simple life, and denial of pride in one's appearance.
- Not cutting one's hair is a symbol of one's wish to move beyond concerns

of the body and attain spiritual maturity.

- A Sikh should only bow his head to the Guru, and not to a barber.
- It is a highly visible symbol of membership of the group.
- It follows the appearance of Guru Gobind Singh, founder of the Khalsa.
- Sikh women are just as forbidden to cut any body hair or even trim their eyebrows, as Sikh men are forbidden to trim their beards.

Kara - a steel bracelet

- A symbol of restraint and gentility.
- A symbol that a Sikh is linked to the Guru.
- It acts as a reminder that a Sikh should not do anything of which the Guru would not approve.
- A symbol of God having no beginning or end.
- A symbol of permanent bonding to the community-being a link in the chain of Khalsa Sikhs (the word for link is 'kari').
- The Kara is made of steel, rather than gold or silver, because it is not an ornament.

Kanga - a wooden comb

- This symbolises a clean mind and body; since it keeps the uncut hair neat and tidy.
- It symbolises the importance of looking after the body which God has created. This does not conflict with the Sikh's aim to move beyond bodily concerns; since the body is one's vehicle for enlightenment one should care for it appropriately.

Kachha - special underwear

- This is a pair of breeches that must not come below the knee. It was a particularly useful garment for Sikh warriors of the 18th and 19th centuries, being very suitable for warfare when riding a horse.
- It's a symbol of chastity.

Kirpan - a ceremonial sword

There is no fixed style of Kirpan and it can be anything from a few inches to three feet long. It is kept in a sheath and can be worn over or under clothing.

The Kirpan can symbolise:

- Spirituality
- The soldier part of the Soldier-Saints
- Defence of good
- Defence of the weak
- The struggle against injustice
- A metaphor for God

For a Sikh the fact that the Guru has instructed the Sikhs to wear the 5 Ks is an entirely sufficient reason, and no more need be said.

The symbols have become greatly more powerful with each passing year of Sikh history.

Every Sikh remembers that every Sikh warrior, saint, or martyr since 1699, and every living member of the Khalsa, is united with them in having adopted the same 5 Ks.

Guru Gobind Singh: The man and his philosophy

Guru Gobind Singh (January 5, 1667 - 21 October, 1708), born "Gobind Rai" at Patna Sahib, Bihar, India, was the tenth and last of the human form Gurus of Sikhism. He became Guru on November 24, 1675, at the age of nine, following the martyrdom of his father, the ninth Guru, Guru Teg Bahadur.

A divine messenger, a warrior, a poet, and a philosopher, Guru Gobind Singh molded the Sikh religion into its present shape, with the institution of the Khalsa fraternity, and the completion of the sacred scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib, in the final form that we find today. Before leaving his mortal body in 1708, Guru Gobind Singh decreed the Guru Granth Sahib as the next and perpetual Guru of the Sikhs.

It may not be out of context to consider that throughout the chronicles of human history, there has been no individual who lived a life more inspirational than Guru Gobind Singh. He is variously revered as Sarbans Dani (the merciful donor, who sacrificed his all), Mard Agamra (man without any parallels), Shah-e-Shahenshah (emperor of emperors), Bar do Alam Shah (ruler of both worlds), amongst others.

It is said that after the martyrdom of his father, Guru Teg Bahadur, the tenth Master declared that he would create such a Panth (community/society), which would challenge the tyrant rulers in every walk of life to restore justice, equality and peace for all of mankind. Via institution of the Khalsa in 1699, Guru Gobind Singh Ji infused the dual spirit of a saint and a soldier in the minds and hearts of his followers to fight oppression in order to restore righteousness (Dharma) and to uplift the down-trodden people in this world.

As a prophet, the Guru is unique. His teachings are very scientific and most suitable for all times. Unlike many other prophets he never called himself God or 'the only son of God.' Instead he called all people the sons of God sharing His Kingdom equally. For himself he used the word 'slave' or servant of God.

Birth of a Star

A splendid Divine Light shone in the darkness of the night. Pir Bhikan Shah a Muslim mystic performed his prayers in that Easterly direction (instead of towards the West, contrary to his daily practice), and guided by this Divine Light, he travelled with a group of his followers until he reached Patna Sahib in Bihar.

It was here that Gobind Rai was born to Mata Gujri. It is said that Pir Bhikan Shah approached the child and offered two bowls of milk and water, signifying both the great religions of Hinduism and Islam. The child smiled and placed his hands on both bowls. The Pir bowed in utter humility and reverence to the new Prophet of all humanity.

Gobind Rai was born with a holy mission of which he tells us in his autobiography "Bachitar Natak" (Wonderous Drama). In it Guru Ji tells us how and for what purpose he was sent into this world by God. He states that before he came into this world, as a free spirit he was engaged in meditation in



Nagar Kirtan or religious procession.

the seven peaked Hemkunt mountain.

Early Life

Gobind Rai's father, Guru Teg Bahadur, the Ninth Guru, was then travelling across Bengal and Assam. Returning to Patna in 1670, he directed his family to return to the Punjab. On the site of the house at Patna in which Gobind Rai was

born and where he spent his early childhood now stands a sacred shrine, Sri Patna Sahib Gurdwara, Bihar.

Gobind Rai was escorted to Anandpur (then known as Chakk Nanaki) on the foothills of the Sivaliks where he reached in March 1672 and where his early education included reading and writing of Punjabi, Braj, Sanskrit and Persian.

He was barely nine years of age when a sudden turn came in his life as well as in the life of the community he was destined to lead.

Kashmiri Brahmins come to Anandpur

Early in 1675, a group of Kashmiri brahmins under the leadership of Pandit Kirpa Ram, mad in desperation by the religious fanaticism of the Mughals General, Iftikar Khan, (he had threatened them with forced conversion to Islam) visited Anandpur to seek Guru Teg Bahadur's advice. Aurangzeb had ordered the forced conversion of all Hindus and thought that if the respected Kashmiri brahmins accepted Islam, others in the country would be easily converted. They had been given six months to decide or suffer the consequences. Time was running out!

As the Guru sat reflecting what to do, young Gobind Rai, arriving there in company with his playmates, asked why he looked so preoccupied. The father, as records Kuir Singh in his Gurbilas Patshahi 10, replied, "Grave are the burdens the earth bears. She will be redeemed only if a truly worthy person comes forward to lay down his head. Distress will then be expunged and happiness ushered in."

"None could be worthier than you to make such a sacrifice," remarked Gobind Rai in his innocent manner.

Guru Teg Bahadur advised the brahmins to return to their village and tell the authorities that they would accept Islam if Guru Teg Bahadur could first be persuaded to do so.

Soon afterwards the Guru with a few followers proceeded to the imperial capital, Delhi. After watching the tortured deaths of three of his followers he, as well, refused to convert and was beheaded on November 11, 1675. The 13 year old Gobind Rai, ordained as the next Guru before his father departed Anandpur, was formally installed as Guru Gobind Singh on the Baisakhi day of March 1676. In the midst of his engagement with the concerns of the community, he gave attention to the mastery of physical skills and literary accomplishment. He had grown into a comely youth spare, lithe of limb and energetic.

He had a natural genius for poetic composition and his early years were assiduously given to this pursuit. The Var Sri Bhagauti Ji Ki, popularly called Chandi di Var, written in 1684, was his first composition and his only major work in the Punjabi language. The poem depicted the legendary contest between the gods and the demons as described in the Markandeya Purana. The choice of a warlike theme for this and a number of his later compositions such as the two Chandi Charitras, mostly in Braj, was made to infuse martial spirit among his followers to prepare them to stand up against injustice and tyranny.

For the first 20 years or so of his life, Guru Gobind Singh lived peacefully at Anandpur practicing arms and exercises to complete his training as a soldier.

Continued on Page 20

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He also studied Persian and Sanskrit and engaged 52 poets to translate the Hindu epics. Stories of ancient heroes were translated into Punjabi in order to create the martial spirit among the Sikhs. The Guru also wrote several compositions including Jaap Sahib, Akal Ustat and Sawayas during this period. He also established a Gurdwara at Paonta Sahib on the banks of the river Jamna.

Stay at Paonta Sahib

Much of Guru Gobind Singh's creative literary work was done at Paonta he had founded on the banks of the River Yamuna and to which site he had temporarily shifted in April 1685. Poetry as such was, however, not his aim. For him it was a means of revealing the divine principle and concretizing a personal vision of the Supreme Being that had been vouchsafed to him. His Jap Sahib, Swayas and the composition known as Akal Ustat are in this tenor.

Through his poetry he preached love and equality and a strictly ethical and moral code of conduct. He preached the worship of the One Supreme Being, deprecating idolatry and superstitious beliefs and observances. The glorification of the sword itself which he eulogized as Bhagauti was to secure fulfillment of God's justice. The sword was never meant as a symbol of aggression, and it was never to be used for self-aggrandizement. It was the emblem of manliness and self-respect and was to be used only in self-defence, as a last resort.

Martial training

During his stay at Paonta, Guru Gobind Singh availed himself of his spare time to practice different forms of manly exercises, such as riding, swimming and archery. His increasing influence among the people and the martial exercises of his men excited the jealousy of the neighbouring Rajput hill rulers who led by Raja Fateh Chand of Garhwal collected a host to attack him.

But they were worsted in an action at Bhangam, about 10 km north-east of Paonta, in September 1688. Soon thereafter Guru Gobind Singh left Paonta Sahib and returned to Anandpur. The Guru and his Sikhs were involved in a battle with a Mughal commander, Alif Khan, at Nadaur on the left bank of the Beas, about 30 km south-east of Kangra, in March 1691.

Describing the battle in stirring verse in Bachitra Natak, he said that Alif Khan fled in utter disarray "without being able to give any attention to his camp." Among several other battles that occurred was the Husain battle (20 February 1696) fought against Husain Khan, an imperial general, which resulted in a decisive victory for the Sikhs.

Following the appointment in 1694 of the liberal Prince Muazzam (later Emperor Bahadur Shah) as viceroy of north-western region including Punjab, there was however a brief respite from pressure from the ruling authority. In Sambat 1756 (1699 A.D), Guru Gobind Singh issued directions to Sikh sangats or communities in different parts not to acknowledge masands, the local ministers, against whom he had heard complaints. He asked the Sikhs to send their offerings directly to Anandpur.

The Masands

The Guru received various complaints against the priests, masands who robbed the poor Sikhs and misappropriated the collections. Guru Sahib abolished this



order and severely punished the miscreants. Hereafter, the faithful were to bring their offerings directly to the Guru at the time of the annual Vaisakhi fair.

The Guru wanted to create a strong self-respecting community. He inspired the Sikhs with courage and heroism and

a life of simplicity and hard work. He started an arms factory at Anandpur in order to manufacture swords and lances needed for his soldiers. Once when the Brahmins insisted that he should offer worship to goddess Durga in order to seal victory, he agreed and kept up the farce

till nothing came out of it. At the crucial moment, the Guru unsheathed his sword exclaiming, "The sword is the Durga which will give us victory over our enemies.

Sikhs, he instructed, should come to Anandpur straight without any intermediaries. The Guru thus established direct relationship with his Sikhs. The institution of the Khalsa was given concrete form on 30 March 1699 when Sikhs had gathered at Anandpur in large numbers for the annual festival of Baisakhi.

Creation of the Khalsa

An open air diwan was held in Kesgarh Sahib at Anandpur. The Guru drew his sword and in a thundering voice said, "I want one head, is there any one who can offer me?"

This most unusual call caused some terror in the gathering and the people were stunned. There was dead silence. The Guru made a second call. Nobody came forward. There was still more silence. On the third call there raised Daya Ram, a khatri of Lahore who said, "O true king, my head is at your service."

The Guru took Daya Ram by the arm and led him inside a tent. A blow and thud were heard. Then the Guru, with his sword dripping with blood, came out and said, "I want another head, is there anyone who can offer?" Again on third call Dharam Das, a Jat from Delhi came forward and said, "O true king! My head is at thy disposal."

The Guru took Dharam Das inside the tent, again a blow and thud were heard, and he came out with his sword dripping with blood and repeated, "I want another head, is there any beloved Sikh who can offer it?"

Upon this some people in the assembly remarked that the Guru had lost all reason and went to his mother to complain.

Mohkam Chand, a calico priner/tailor of Dwarka (west coast of India) offered himself as a sacrifice. The Guru took him inside the tent and went through the same process. When he came out, he made a call for the fourth head. The Sikhs

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began to think that he was going to kill all of them.

Some of them ran away and the others hung their heads down in disbelief. Himmat Chand, a cook of Jagan Nath Puri, offered himself as a fourth sacrifice. Then the Guru made a fifth and the last call for a fifth head. Sahib Chand, a barber of Bidar (in central India), came forward and the Guru took him inside the tent. A blow and thud were heard.

The last time he stayed longer in the tent. People began to breathe with relief. They thought may be the Guru has realised "his mistake" and has now stopped.

The panj pyare

The Guru now clad his five volunteers in splendid garments. They had offered their heads to the Guru, and the Guru had now given them himself and his glory. When they were brought outside, they were in the most radiant form. There were exclamations of wonder and the sighs of regret on all sides. Now people were sorry for not offering their heads.

Since the time of Guru Nanak, Charan Pauhal had been the customary form of initiation. People were to drink the holy water which had been touched or washed by the Guru's toe or feet. The Guru proceeded to initiate them to his new order (Khande di Pauhal) by asking the five faithful Sikhs to stand up.

He put pure water into an iron vessel or Bowl (Batta of Sarbloh) and stirred it with a Khanda (two edged small sword). While stirring the water with Khanda, he recited Gurbani (Five Banis- Japji, Jaap Sahib, Anand Sahib, Swayas, and Chaupai). Sugar crystals called 'Patasas' which incidently the Guru's wife, Mata Sahib Kaur, had brought at that moment, were mixed in the water.

Amrit Sanchar

The Guru then stood up with the sacred Amrit (nectar) prepared in the iron bowl. Each of the five faithful, by turn, each kneeling upon his left knee, looked up to the Master to receive the divine amrit. He gave five palmfuls of Amrit to each of them to drink and sprinkled it five times in the eyes, asking them to repeat aloud with each sprinkle, "Waheguru Ji ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh." (This means: Khalsa belongs to God and all triumph be to His Name) Then he anointed with five sprinkles in the hair.

In this way Amrit was administered to the five faithful from the same bowl. After that he asked them to sip Amrit from the same bowl to signify their initiation into the casteless fraternity of the Khalsa. All the five faithful were baptized in this way by the Guru who then called them the 'PANJ PYARE' or Five Beloved Ones.

He gave them the appellation of Singhs (Lions) and they were named from Daya Ram to Daya Singh, Dharam Das to Dharam Singh, Mohkam Chand to Mohkam Singh, Himmat Chand to Himmat Singh, and Sahib Chand to Sahib Singh. The Guru then addressed them as the supreme, the liberated ones, pure ones and he called them The Khalsa.

Guru asks for Amrit

After the Guru had administered Amrit to his Five Beloved Ones, he stood up in supplication and with folded hands, begged them to baptize him in the same way as he had baptized them. He himself became their disciple (Wonderful is Guru Gobind Singh, himself the Master and himself the disciple).

The Five Beloved Ones were astonished



Five Sikh volunteers were named as Panj Pyaare or 'five beloved ones' by the Guru.



Gatka, the martial arts of Sikhs



Guru Gobind Singh's younger sons, Baba Zorawar Singh, aged 9 and Baba Fateh Singh, aged 6, were bricked alive.

at such a proposal, and represented their own unworthiness, and the greatness of the Guru, whom they deemed God's Vicar upon earth. They asked him why he made such a request and why he stood in a supplicant posture before them. He replied, "I am the son of the Immortal God. It is by His order I have been born and have established this form of

baptism. They who accept it shall henceforth be known as the Khalsa.

The Khalsa is the Guru and the Guru is the Khalsa. There is no difference between you and me. As Guru Nanak seated Guru Angad on the throne, so have I made you also a Guru. Wherefore administer the baptismal nectar to me without any hesitation." Accordingly the

Five Beloved Ones baptized the Guru with the same ceremonies and injunctions he himself had employed.

The rise of the Khalsa

The Guru was then named Gobind Singh instead of Gobind Rai. Guru Gobind Singh was the first one to take Amrit from the Khalsa, the Five Beloved Ones. About 80,000 men and women were baptized within a few days at Anandpur. "The creation of the Khalsa was the greatest work of the Guru. He created a type of superman, a universal man of God, casteless and country less. The Guru regarded himself as the servant of the Khalsa. He said, "To serve them pleases me the most; no other service is so dear to my soul." The Khalsa was the spearhead of resistance against tyranny." (Miss Pearl, S. Buck)

The creation of the Khalsa created a sense of unity among the Sikhs and their supporters. This unity and the resulting perceived strength in the Sikhs did not go well with the local rulers. The continuous gatherings at Anandpur sahib and the presence of many thousands of the congregation, some armed with fierce weapons caused anguish with the surrounding hill Rajas. These developments most alarmed the caste ridden Rajput chiefs of the Sivalik hills. They perceived the Sikhs as lower caste beings who had posed no danger to their authority. However, the creation of the Khalsa changed that. Firstly, it disturbed their system of discrimination and division; secondly, they could see that the forces of the Guru were becoming dangerous in number and in armaments.

Siege of Anandpur

They hence rallied under the leadership of the Raja of Bilaspur, in whose territory lay Anandpur; to forcibly evict Guru Gobind Singh from his hilly citadel. Their repeated expeditions during 1700-04 however proved abortive. The Khalsa forces were too strong to be dealt with by the hill Rajas. They at last petitioned Emperor Aurangzeb for help. In concert with contingents sent under imperial orders by the governor of Lahore and those of the faujdar of Sirhind, they marched upon Anandpur and laid a siege to the fort in May 1705.

Over the months, the Guru and his Sikhs firmly withstood their successive assaults despite insufficient amounts of food resulting from the prolonged blockade. While the besieged (Sikhs) were reduced to desperate straits, the besiegers (governor of Lahore) too were exhausted at the courage of the Sikhs. At this stage the besiegers offered, on Oath (promise) of the Qur'an, safe exit to the Sikhs if they quit Anandpur. At last, the town was evacuated during a night of December 1705. But as the Guru and his Sikhs came out, the hill monarchs and their Mughal allies set upon them in full fury.

Sikhs tricked by the Mughals

In the ensuing confusion many Sikhs were killed and all of the Guru's baggage, including most of the precious manuscripts, was lost. The Guru himself was able to make his way to Chamkaur, 40 km southwest of Anandpur, with barely 40 Sikhs and his two elder sons. There the imperial army, following closely on his heels, caught up with him. His two sons, Ajit Singh (born. 1687) and Jujhar Singh (born. 1691) and all but five of the Sikhs fell in the action that took place on 7 December 1705. The five surviving Sikhs commanded the Guru to save himself in order to reconsolidate the Khalsa.

Hong Kong police arrest 11 on suspicion of aiding activists' escape attempt, says media

HONG KONG (TIP): Hong Kong police have arrested 11 people over suspected crimes related to assisting a group of 12 pro-democracy activists accused of attempting to flee the city by boat for Taiwan last year, local media and activists reported on Thursday.

Those arrested, ages 18 to 72, according to local broadcaster RTHK, included eight men and three women.

Daniel Wong, a lawyer who tried to help the 12 people detained in mainland China last August, was among those arrested.

Wong wrote on Facebook that police arrived at his apartment at 6 am local time.

Police told Reuters they were still gathering information and could not make any immediate comment.

Local media said those arrested were suspected of assisting the 12 Hong Kong residents, who faced charges related to anti-government protests in the Chinese-ruled city in 2019, in their attempt to flee last year.

In late December, a Chinese court sentenced 10 of them to between seven months and three years in prison for illegally crossing the border, in a case that drew international attention and concern over the treatment of the activists.

Two, who were minors at the time of arrest, have been returned to Hong Kong.

The detainees' families said they had been denied access to independent lawyers and aired suspicion that Hong Kong authorities helped in China's arrests.

Self-ruled Taiwan has become a popular destination for Hong Kong pro-democracy activists since Beijing imposed a national security law in June 2020, a move that critics say is aimed at stamping out dissent and curbing freedoms.

More than 100 people have now been arrested under the national security law.

Hong Kong returned to Chinese rule in 1997 with the guarantee of freedoms not seen on the mainland, including freedom of speech and assembly. Democracy activists complain that Communist Party rulers in China are whittling away at those freedoms, a charge Beijing rejects.

The United States and European Union have called for the activists to be released and allowed to return to Hong Kong. Reuters

EU farmers could get cash to curb emissions from belching livestock

BRUSSELS (TIP): Farmers should get European Union funding to reduce methane emissions from livestock or increase organic farmland, the European Commission said on Thursday, under plans to make agriculture greener.

The EU is nearing the end of a two-year battle to overhaul its massive farming subsidies scheme, to attempt to align the agriculture sector - which contributes roughly 10% of EU greenhouse gas emissions - with the bloc's target to have net zero emissions by 2050.

The farming policy will suck up 387 billion euros from the EU's next budget, for 2021-2027, with agriculture spending split between direct payments to farmers and other support for rural development.

EU negotiators are wrangling over whether to spend 20% or 30% of payments for farmers on programmes to protect the environment. The Commission on Thursday outlined what those so-called "eco-schemes" could include.

Organic farming, use of feed additives to reduce the amount of methane - a potent greenhouse gas - belched out by animals, and "carbon farming" where farmers restore wetlands or peatlands to suck CO2 out of the atmosphere, are among its suggestions.

European farmers association Copa Cogeca welcomed the suggestions but said farmers should not be obliged to participate in them.



"The voluntary nature for farmers of these potential practices, as proposed by the Commission, should be maintained," a spokeswoman said.

Campaigners said some of the proposed measures could fuel the environmental degradation caused by current intensive farming practices.

The Commission's suggestion of paying farmers to improve "housing conditions" for animals amounted to "hidden subsidies to the highly-polluting intensive animal farming industry," said Celia Nyssens, agriculture policy officer

at the European Environmental Bureau.

Agriculture is facing increased scrutiny for its contribution to the twin crises of biodiversity loss and climate change. The EU is drafting legally-binding targets to restore nature - a move likely to impact agricultural sites, which make up 40% of EU land.

The sector is the most frequently reported pressure on Europe's habitats and species, from intensified farming practices including pesticide use and irrigation, according to the EU Environment Agency. Reuters

Piped water boosts women's health, happiness and income in rural Zambia

JOHANNESBURG (TIP): From growing vegetables to spending more time with their children, women's quality of life improved drastically after piped water was installed near their homes in rural Zambia, Stanford University researchers said on Thursday.

In a study involving 434 households in four Zambian villages, they found not having to walk to a communal water source saved each home about 200 hours per year on average - freeing up time for more productive activities.

"Women and girls benefit the most from alleviation of domestic chores and from food production for nutrition and income generation," said Barbara van Koppen, emeritus scientist at research organisation the International Water Management Institute.

"This study brings further unique proof that better water supplies enable more domestic and productive uses," van Koppen, who was not involved in the study, said in emailed comments.

Globally, about 844 million people live without easily accessible water used for



cleaning, cooking, drinking and farming, according to the study published in academic journal Social Science & Medicine.

With just 12% of the rural population in sub-Saharan Africa having water piped to their home, villagers - mainly women and girls - have to carry containers averaging 40 pounds (18 kg) from communal water sources, the study found.

The four villages included in the research lie in Zambia's southern province, two of which received piped water to their yard halfway through the study, meaning water was accessible 15

metres (49 feet) away.

The research showed women and girls with piped water supplies spent 80% less time fetching water, or four hours less each week, allowing them to garden, care for the children or sell goods instead.

Their households were four times more likely to grow vegetables either to sell or for their own consumption, and they also reported feeling happier, healthier and less anxious when they spent less time carrying heavy water containers.

"Addressing this problem provides the time and water for women and girls to invest in their household's health and economic development, in whatever way they see fit," said study author and Stanford researcher James Winter in a statement.

Despite the fact that previous studies have shown that piped water improves mental health and decreases the risk of infectious diseases, these installations have increased by only 2% in sub-Saharan Africa since 2007, the study found. — Reuters

Russia prison agency warns Navalny he faces immediate arrest

MOSCOW (TIP): Russia's prison service said on Thursday that top Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny faces immediate arrest once he returns from Germany.

Navalny, who has been convalescing in Germany from an August poisoning with a nerve agent that he has blamed on the Kremlin, said he will fly back home on Sunday.

He accused Russian President Vladimir Putin of now trying to deter him from coming home with the threat of arrest.

The Kremlin has repeatedly denied a role in the opposition leader's poisoning.

At the end of December, the Federal Penitentiary Service, or FSIN, warned Navalny that he faced time in prison if he fails to immediately report to its office in line with the terms of a suspended sentence and probation he received for a 2014 conviction on charges of embezzlement and money laundering that he rejected as politically motivated.

The European Court for Human Rights had ruled that his conviction was unlawful.

The FSIN said in a statement on Thursday that it issued an arrest warrant for Navalny in late December after his failure to report to its office.

The prison service, which has asked a Moscow court to turn Navalny's 3 ½-year suspended sentence into a real one, noted that it's "obliged to take all the necessary action to detain Navalny pending the court's ruling".

In a parallel move just before New



Year's, Russia's main investigative agency also opened a new criminal case against Navalny on charges of large-scale fraud related to his alleged mishandling of USD 5 million in private donations to his Anti-Corruption Foundation and other organisations.

Navalny has also dismissed those accusations as crudely fabricated.

Navalny, the most visible Putin critic who had received numerous brief jail terms over the past years, fell into a coma while aboard a domestic flight from Siberia to Moscow on August 20.

He was transferred from a hospital in Siberia to a Berlin hospital two days later.

Labs in Germany, France and Sweden, and tests by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons,

established that he was exposed to a Soviet-era Novichok nerve agent.

Russian authorities insisted that the doctors who treated Navalny in Siberia before he was airlifted to Germany found no traces of poison and have challenged German officials to provide proof of his poisoning.

They refused to open a full-fledged criminal inquiry, citing the lack of evidence that Navalny was poisoned.

Last month, Navalny released the recording of a phone call he said he made to a man he described as an alleged member of a group of officers of the Federal Security Service, or FSB, who purportedly poisoned him in August and then tried to cover it up.

The FSB dismissed the recording as fake. — AP

Managers detained as 22 trapped in China mine for 3rd day

BEIJING (TIP): Authorities have detained managers at a gold mine in eastern China where 22 workers have been trapped underground following an explosion on Sunday.

The condition of the workers trapped for more than three days remains unknown.

Managers waited more than a day to give notice of the explosion in violation of rules saying accidents must be reported within one hour, the official Xinhua News Agency said on Thursday, calling that an illegal act that will not go unpunished.

It wasn't clear if other accusations would be brought against them.

The mine in Qixia, a jurisdiction



under the city of Yantai in Shandong province, had been under construction at the time of the Sunday afternoon blast, the cause of which hasn't been announced.

More than 300 workers are seeking to clear obstructions while drilling a new shaft to reach the chamber and expel dangerous fumes.

Dominated by coal, China's mining industry used to be the world's deadliest, suffering more than 5,000 fatalities a year from explosions, gas leaks and floods. Safety improved dramatically after authorities overhauled the industry starting about 15 years ago, closing most smaller, more dangerous

operations and boosting supervision. Still, accidents happen relatively frequently, including two in the southwestern megacity of Chongqing last year that killed 39 miners. AP

Rare Tintin comic book art set to sell for millions in Paris

PARIS (TIP): Not even the coronavirus can get in the way of intrepid Belgian reporter and comic book legend Tintin.

Comic book lovers and tourists alike can catch a socially distanced glimpse of a Tintin drawing by Hergé in Paris before it goes under the hammer on Thursday, estimated to sell between 2 and 3 million euros and possibly break the record for the most expensive comic book art in history.

The 1936 work in Chinese ink, gouache and watercolor, was destined as a cover for *The Blue Lotus*, the fifth volume of the Belgian journalist's adventures. But it never sat on any book store shelves because it was rejected for being too expensive to reproduce on a wide scale - a victim of its own rare craftsmanship.

"They had to do a four colour process printing, so an additional colour and (the publisher) thought that the comic albums were already expensive and reproducing this cover would increase the production costs," said comics expert Eric Leroy at Art Curial auction house by the Champs-Elysees avenue.

As the name "Blue Lotus" suggests, the art work places Tintin in Asia. A huge red dragon appears on a black background by the Belgian reporter's petrified face. It is a prized addition to the universe of Tintin, the subject of recent shows in London and Barcelona, a 2011 Hollywood adaptation, a videogame and an app.

In "Blue Lotus", Tintin travels to China during the 1931 Japanese invasion to investigate and expose - along with his dog Snowy - Japanese spy networks, drug-smuggling rings and other crimes.

But the huge interest in this work has raised a host of questions among French media regarding the work's provenance - whether it was a gift to the son of Tintin's printer or a drawing simply never returned to the artist.

There is no question, however, of its authenticity. On Thursday, Hergé, whose real name was Georges Remi, could break the record for the most expensive piece of comic book art at 2.6 million euros that was previously set by himself.

"We set the previous record for the 'Pages de Garde' in 2014...it would be fair for this piece to break this record. Hergé had done only five comic covers using this technique of direct color so it's very rare," said Leroy. AP

Germany records highest daily death toll since start of Covid

Another 1,244 Covid-19 deaths have been reported in Germany in a 24-hour period, the highest daily figure since the start of the pandemic, official data showed.

To date, 43,881 people in Germany have succumbed to the disease, according to the Robert Koch Institute (RKI), the government's agency for disease control, Xinhua news agency reported.

Another 25,164 people have tested positive in the 24 hours, raising the total number of confirmed cases in Germany to about 1.98 million, RKI data showed.

At a press conference on Thursday, January 14, RKI President Lothar Wieler warned that a lag in testing over the New Year could mean that the latest numbers still don't show the full picture, German news agency dpa reported.

Germany "must massively reduce the case numbers" so as to bring normal life back to Germany, he said, urging more employers to switch to work-from-home models and appealing to the public to reduce contact with others to an absolute minimum.

"It is possible that the case numbers have stabilized," but much more still needed to be done, dpa quoted Wieler as saying.

Brazil's Covid vaccination drive to begin Jan-end

Brazil's vaccination campaign against the novel coronavirus will begin at the end of January in pandemic hotspot Manaus, capital of northern Amazonas state, Health Minister Eduardo Pazuello said.

"We are going to vaccinate in January," Xinhua news agency quoted the Minister as saying to reporters on Wednesday, January 13.

While Manaus will be the first city to immunise residents, the vaccine will be distributed simultaneously to every state across the country, he said.

Immunization does not mean "go out to party", Pazuello warned.

"It's not take the vaccine on the 20th and party in the streets on the 22nd."

Pazuello explained that "the vaccine induces the production of antibodies" but "this production of antibodies does not happen the next day. The literature speaks of 30 to 60 days".

This month, Manaus among Brazil's hardest-hit cities, registered a rise in deaths from the disease that forced authorities to set up a cold storage to prevent bodies from being buried in mass graves.

Global Covid-19 Caseload Tops 93 mn: Johns Hopkins

The overall global coronavirus caseload has topped 93 million, while the deaths have surged to more than 1.99 million, according to the Johns Hopkins University.

In its latest update on Friday morning, the University's Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) revealed that the current global caseload and death toll stood at 93,051,654 and 1,991,997, respectively.

The US is the worst-hit country with the world's highest number of cases and deaths at 23,308,712 and 388,529, respectively, according to the CSSE.

India comes in second place in terms of cases at 10,512,093, while the country's death toll soared to 151,727.

The other countries with more than a million confirmed cases are Brazil (8,324,294), Russia (3,459,237), the UK (3,269,757), France (2,909,879), Turkey (2,364,801), Italy (2,336,279), Spain (2,211,967), Germany (2,004,011), Colombia (1,849,101), Argentina (1,770,715), Mexico (1,571,901), Poland (1,414,362), Iran (1,311,810), South Africa (1,296,806), Ukraine (1,175,343) and Peru (1,040,231), the CSSE figures showed.

Brazil currently accounts for the second highest number of fatalities at 207,095.

The countries with a death toll above 20,000 are Mexico (136,917), the UK (86,163), Italy (80,848), France (69,452), Russia (63,016), Iran (56,538), Spain

TRACKING THE VIRUS

GLOBAL		INDIA	
Cases	Deaths	Cases	Deaths
93,051,654	1,991,997	10,512,093	151,727



(53,079), Colombia (47,491), Argentina (32,456), Indonesia (25,246), Turkey (45,125), Germany (44,672), Peru (23,495), Ukraine (21,300) and Belgium (20,250).

UK bans arrivals from South American countries, Portugal over new coronavirus variant

The British government on Thursday, January 14, announced its decision to ban arrivals from more than a dozen South American countries and Portugal from Friday following the detection of a new coronavirus variant.

British Transport Secretary Grant Shapps tweeted: "I've taken the urgent decision to BAN ARRIVALS from ARGENTINA, BRAZIL, BOLIVIA, CAPE VERDE, CHILE, COLOMBIA, ECUADOR, FRENCH GUIANA, GUYANA, PANAMA, PARAGUAY, PERU, SURINAME, URUGUAY AND VENEZUELA -- from TOMORROW, JAN. 15 at 4 a.m. following evidence of a new variant in Brazil."

"Travel from PORTUGAL to the UK will also be suspended given its strong travel links with Brazil, acting as another way to reduce the risk of importing infections. However, there is an exemption for hauliers travelling from Portugal (only), to allow transport of essential goods."

"This measure does not apply to British and Irish Nationals and third country nationals with residence rights - but passengers returning from these destinations must self-isolate for TEN DAYS along with their households," he added.

The new ban was announced after a meeting of senior British government



officials on Thursday, Jan 14, the BBC reported.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Wednesday told MPs in the House of Commons, lower house of parliament, that the government was "concerned" about the new virus variant detected in Brazil.

"We already have tough measures... to protect this country from new infections coming in from abroad," he said.

In December 2020, Britain has suspended flights from South Africa after a discovery of a new and concerning variant there.

Johnson said there were "lots of questions" over the latest variant, including whether it is resistant to COVID vaccines.

At present, experts are uncertain how

effective existing vaccines will be against the new variant, the Evening Standard newspaper reported.

Patrick Vallance, the British government's top scientist, told ITV that the new variant contains "a change of the genetic code, at position 484, and that changes a part of the protein, it changes a bit of a shape of the protein".

He said that there is no evidence new variants are more deadly.

The latest development came as another 1,564 have died within 28 days of a positive test, the highest daily death toll since the pandemic began in the country, according to official figures released Wednesday.

The total number of coronavirus-related deaths in Britain now stands at 84,767, the data showed.

Another 47,525 people in Britain have tested positive for COVID-19, bringing the total number of coronavirus cases in the country to 3,211,576, the figures showed.

England is currently under the third national lockdown since the outbreak of the pandemic in the country. Similar restriction measures are also in place in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

To bring life back to normal, countries such as Britain, China, Germany, Russia and the United States have been racing against time to develop coronavirus vaccines.

INOCULATION DRIVE

3 lakh healthcare workers to get Covid vaccine on January 16

NEW DELHI (TIP): Around 3 lakh healthcare workers will be inoculated at 2,934 sites across the country on the first day of the massive nationwide COVID-19 vaccination drive which is set to begin from January 16, official sources said.

Each vaccination session will cater to a maximum of 100 beneficiaries and the Union Health Ministry has advised states not to organise “unreasonable numbers of vaccination per site per day”.

“States have been advised to organise vaccination sessions taking into account 10 per cent reserve/wastage doses and an average of 100 vaccinations per session each day.

“Therefore, any undue haste on the part of states to organise unreasonable numbers of vaccination per site per day is not advised,” the ministry said on Wednesday.

It also said that states and UTs have also been advised to increase the number of vaccination session sites that would be operational every day in a progressive manner as the vaccination process stabilises and moves forward.

“Around 3 lakh frontline healthcare workers will be inoculated at 2,934 sites across the country on the first day of January 16,” a source said.

The government on Tuesday, Jan 12, hinted that vaccine recipients, for now, will not have the option to choose from the two vaccines—Oxford COVID-19 vaccine, Covishield, manufactured by Serum Institute of India (SII) and indigenously developed Covaxin of Bharat Biotech—that have been approved for restricted emergency use in India.

According to the Health Ministry



A healthcare worker administers COVID-19 vaccine during a mock immunisation process conducted as part of a dry run for immunization activity in Patna.

getting vaccinated for COVID-19 will be voluntary. Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan had said on Tuesday, “At many places in the world more than one vaccine is being administered. But, presently, in no country vaccine recipients have the option of choosing the shots.”

According to the government, the shots will be offered first to an estimated one crore healthcare workers, and around two crore frontline workers, and then to persons above 50 years of age, followed by persons younger than 50 years of age with associated comorbidities.

The cost of vaccination of healthcare and frontline workers will be borne by the central government, officials had said. All 1.65 crore doses of COVID-19 vaccines—

1.1 crore of Covishield and 55 lakh of Covaxin—procured by the Centre have been allocated to all states and UTs in proportion to their healthcare workers database, it said.

According to official sources, most of the 1.1 crore Covishield doses from Pune-based SII have been shipped to 60 consignee points across India from where they will be sent to smaller centres.

Of the 55 lakh doses of indigenously developed Covaxin of Bharat Biotech ordered by the Centre, the first tranche of 2.4 lakh doses has been dispatched to 12 states.

Covaxin has been sent to 12 sites—one each in Ganavaram, Guwahati, Patna, Delhi, Kurukshetra, Bengaluru, Pune,

Bhubaneswar, Jaipur, Chennai, Lucknow and Hyderabad, an official source said.

Covaxin has been developed by Bharat Biotech in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).

Health Ministry officials said that there will be a gap of 28 days between two doses of COVID-19 vaccines and its effectiveness can be seen only after 14 days, and urged people to keep following COVID appropriate behaviour.

The ministry, which has listed series of frequently asked questions (FAQs) on COVID-19 vaccine, also stated that it was advisable to receive a complete schedule of the anti-coronavirus vaccine irrespective of the past history of coronavirus infection as this will help in developing a strong immune response against the disease. On whether a person with an active COVID-19 infection is vaccinated, AIIMS Director Dr Randeep Guleria said a person with active and symptomatic COVID-19 infection may increase the risk of spreading the same to others at the vaccination site and thus infected individuals should defer vaccination for at least 14 days after the symptoms are resolved.

Elaborating on the possible side-effects of COVID-19 vaccine, Guleria said that as is true for other vaccines, some will have some degree of side effects in some individuals which could be in form of mild fever, pain at the site of injection, body ache, etc.

States have been asked to making arrangements to deal with any COVID-19 vaccine-related side effects as one of the measures towards safe vaccine delivery.

Source: PTI

India's coronavirus recovery rate rises to 96.53 percent

NEW DELHI (TIP): India's COVID-19 caseload rose to 1,05,27,683 with 15,590 people testing positive for the infection in a day while the recoveries have surged to 1,01,62,738, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Friday, January 15.

The country's death toll increased to 1,51,918 with 191 daily new fatalities, the data updated at 8 am showed.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 1,01,62,738, pushing the national COVID-19 recovery rate to 96.53 per cent, while the COVID-19 case fatality rate stands at 1.44 per cent.

The COVID-19 active caseload remained below 3 lakh.

There are 2,13,027 active cases of coronavirus infections in the country which comprises 2.02 per cent of the total caseload, the data stated.

India's COVID-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 30 lakh on August 23, 40 lakh on September 5 and 50 lakh on September 16. It went past 60 lakh on September 28, 70 lakh on October 11, crossed 80 lakh on October 29, 90 lakh on November 20 and surpassed the one-crore mark on December 19.

According to the ICMR, 18,49,62,401 samples have been tested up to January 14 with 7,30,096 samples being tested on Thursday. The 191 new fatalities include 70 from Maharashtra, 19 from Kerala, 17 from West Bengal, 14 from Uttar Pradesh, 10 each from Chhattisgarh and Punjab, eight from Madhya Pradesh, six from Haryana, and four each from Delhi, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

A total of 1,51,918 deaths have been reported so far in



the country, including 50,291 from Maharashtra followed by 12,246 from Tamil Nadu, 12,155 from Karnataka, 10,722 from Delhi, 10,010 from West Bengal, 8,543 from Uttar Pradesh, 7,138 from Andhra Pradesh and 5,473 from Punjab.

The Health Ministry stressed that more than 70 per cent of the deaths occurred due to comorbidities.

“Our figures are being reconciled with the Indian Council of Medical Research,” the Ministry said on its website and added that state-wise distribution of figures was subject to further verification and reconciliation.

India took 'very decisive' steps to deal with coronavirus: IMF chief

WASHINGTON (TIP): IMF chief Kristalina Georgieva has praised India for taking “very decisive” steps to deal with the coronavirus pandemic and its economic consequences and asked the country to do more this year to support an accelerated transformation of the economy.

The IMF Managing Director during a global media roundtable on Thursday predicted a less bad outlook for India in the upcoming World Economic Update due to the steps taken by it.

“When I called on everybody to stay tuned for January 26, that applies very much to India. You would see a picture in our update that is less bad. Why? Because the country actually has taken very decisive action, very decisive steps to deal with the pandemic and to deal with the economic consequences of it,” Ms Georgieva said.

The International Monetary Fund is scheduled to release its World Economic Update on January 26.

Talking about India, she said it was a very dramatic lockdown for a country of this size of the population with people clustered so closely together.

“Then India moved to more targeted restrictions and lockdowns. What we see is that that transition, combined with policy support, seems to have worked well. Why? Because if you look at mobility indicators, we are almost where we were before COVID in India, meaning that economic activities have been revitalised quite significantly,” she said.



Anushka-Virat requests paparazzi to not click photos of their daughter

Anushka Sharma and Virat Kohli became parents to a baby girl on January 11. Since then, fans of the couple have been waiting to catch the first glimpse of the newborn baby. But, Virushka, as their fans fondly address them, wants to protect the privacy of their child and hence have requested photographers in Mumbai not to click photos of their daughter.

In a statement, Virat and Anushka said, "Hi, Thank you for all the love that you have given us for all these years. We are happy to celebrate this momentous occasion with you. As parents, we have a simple request to make to you. We want to protect the privacy of our child and we need your help and support."

The couple promised the paparazzi all the 'content' featuring them but urged the photographers to not "take any content that has our child."

"While, we will always ensure that you get all the content you need featuring us, we would request you to kindly not take or carry any content that has our child. We know that you will understand where we are coming from and we thank you for the same," Virushka added.

Saif allows shooting inside Pataudi Palace exclusively for 'Tandav'

Saif Ali Khan will be next seen in the Amazon Prime Video's Tandav. The actor shot for the series at his own ancestral palace in Pataudi. While the actor allows film crews to shoot outside Pataudi Palace, he had never allowed shooting inside his property before Tandav. Saif said that he made an exception for Tandav.

Tandav is an upcoming political drama web series directed by Ali Abbas Zafar. In the show, Saif will be seen as an ambitious politician with his eyes at the Prime Minister's chair. Since he belongs to a family of

powerful leaders, a palace-like house was required for which Saif Ali Khan's ancestral palace in Pataudi, Haryana, was chosen.

While Saif Ali Khan has rented out the Pataudi Palace a couple of times, he says that it still makes him nervous. Speaking to Mid-day, Saif said, "I don't mind giving it for shoots sometimes because it remains unused 340 days of the year. These days, film crews have become responsible and look after the venues, but [the idea of a shoot] still makes me nervous. Usually, I am more comfortable if they are filming around the exterior of the palace. But for Tandav, I made an exception [by shooting inside]."

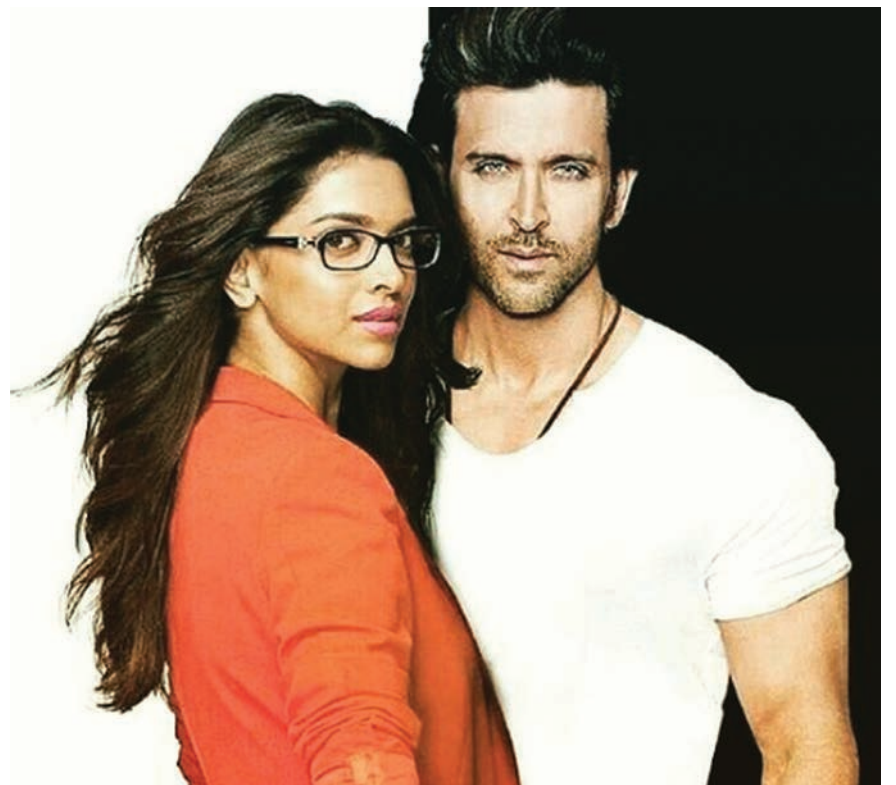


Hrithik Roshan and Deepika announce their first film together

Hrithik Roshan, Deepika Padukone and director Siddharth Anand put all rumours to rest as they announce their collaboration together today with the film Fighter, on the occasion of Hrithik's birthday.

The Greek God of Bollywood took to his social media handle to introduce Fighter with a motion poster and a sweet note introducing Siddharth's production house MARFLIX and Deepika. His caption read, "Presenting a glimpse of the MARFLIX vision as #Fighter! Looking forward to my first flight alongside the exceptional @deepikapadukone. All buckled up for this Sid Anand joyride. #SiddharthAnand."

Hrithik's emotional note for director Siddharth read, "It is an honour for me as an actor to introduce & be a part of Mamta & Sid Anand's FIRST PRODUCTION #Fighter for MARFLIX! This one is special as it deepens my association with a director and friend whose journey I have witnessed from being an AD on my sets, to directing me in Bang Bang & War. And now as he turns producer for FIGHTER, I cant seem to contain my excitement. This one is pure adrenaline for the heart and mind. So here goes ! BOOM Thank you Sid, for believing in me & making me your co-



passenger yet again. Here's to your journey towards the sky." It's a casting coup that Siddharth has pulled off by getting two of the most talented and good looking actors of the Indian film industry together for the very first time, Hrithik and Deepika, for this highly stylized

action film. Deepika seems to be on a film signing spree with another big film added to her kitty. The actress took to her social media sharing the asset and her caption read as, "Dreams really do come true... #Fighter #SiddharthAnand @HrithikRoshan #Marflix."

Priyanka is excited as The White Tiger makers send her name for awards season

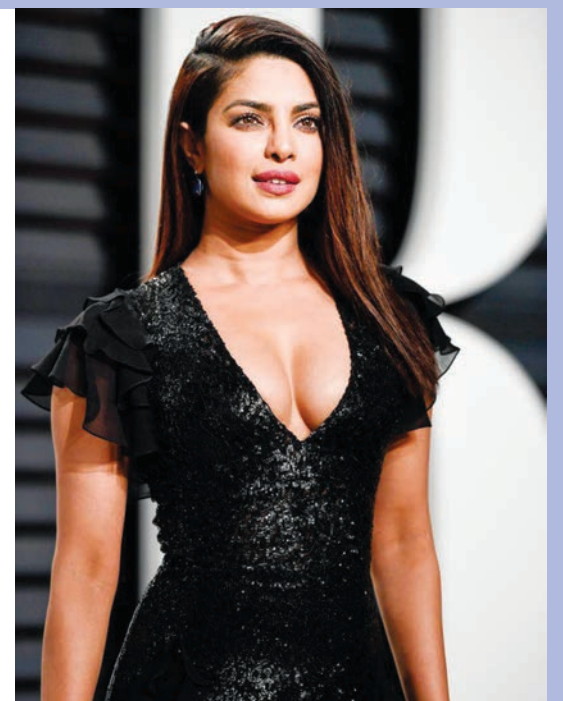
Actor Priyanka Chopra is excited about her upcoming Netflix movie, The White Tiger. On Wednesday, she took to Instagram to share pictures and videos of the screener package she had received for the movie.

Also attached with the screener was a 'For Your Consideration' leaflet, asking awards academies, associations and other organisations to consider the film and its team for the upcoming awards season. Priyanka's name was submitted in the Best Actress in a Supporting Role while her co-star Rajkummar Rao's name was submitted in Best Actor in a Supporting Role category.

The film's lead, Adarsh Gourav, was championed for the Best Actor in a Leading Role category while Divine and others were asked to be considered in the Best Original Song category for their song, Jungle Mantra. Director Ramin Bahrani and multiple others' names have also been submitted in different categories.

Sharing the leaflet on Instagram Stories, Priyanka added by fire effects and wrote, "And then I saw this!!" Adarsh, too, reposted her video on his Instagram page. Rajkummar, meanwhile, shared a picture of a large billboard, bearing the film's poster in New York City.

The White Tiger opened to largely positive



reviews last week. It released in select theatres in the US and will start streaming on Netflix on January 22. Based on the Man Booker Prize-winning novel by the same name, it is being called among the few frontrunners this awards season.



Chris Evans denies being in talks with Marvel to return as Captain America

Chris Evans has crushed a million hearts after he denied returning to Marvel for another Captain America film. He took to Twitter on Thursday, Jan 15, to put an end to the rumors. "News to me," he wrote in a tweet and added a 'shrug' emoji. In another tweet, he mentioned that he was amused with all the reactions by fans. "Some of the gif responses are priceless. good work, everyone," he wrote. Other celebrities such as Billy Eichner and Jamie Lee Curtis also reacted to his tweet. Jamie, who played his mother in Knives Out, said, "Can I play your mother? In every film you do?" Billy was ready to be Captain America in Chris' absence. "I'll do it," he wrote. As per a report in Deadline, Chris was sure to return as Steve Rogers in at least one more film while a second one was still being debated. Sources told the publication that he will not have his own solo movie but something like what Robert Downey Jr. did after Iron Man 3: Appearing in other films such as Captain America: Civil War, Avengers movies and Spider-Man: Homecoming.

Gwyneth Paltrow is 'uncomfortable' with fame

Gwyneth Paltrow isn't "comfortable" with being a "public person".

The 'Shakespeare in Love' star has been taking on fewer acting roles in recent years, with her most recent film role being in 2019's 'Avengers: Endgame', and has now admitted the reason she's begun to take a step back is because she's no longer sure she wants to pursue an acting career.

She said: "I think a lot of that also comes from the fact that I and this is something that I think I realised later in life like I actually haven't been that comfortable being a public person or being in front of the camera even though I've done it for so long. There's a part of me that really feels shy and doesn't feel like I'm naturally an extrovert ..."

"I started doing it so young ... I went for a long time before I asked myself like do I like this job? Am I comfortable doing this? Do I want to be an actor?"

And the Goop founder, 48, also said the only way she'd return to acting is if she was to work on something made by her writer and producer husband, Brad Falchuk.

She told Naomi Campbell on her '#NoFilterWithNaomi' YouTube series: "Someone said what is it going to take to get you acting again? And I said I have to be 'f*****' the writer! 'But that's sort of it if my husband writes something and he wants me to do it then I'll do it. I could never say never. I would like to go back on stage one day I really loved doing theatre."



Halle Berry: Having Black role models in Hollywood is 'so important'

Halle Berry says having Black role models in film and television was "very important" to her growing up.

The 'Catwoman' star has insisted it's "crucial" for Hollywood to create content with diverse casts, as being able to look up to actresses such as Lena Horne, Dorothy Dandridge, and Diahann Carroll when she was younger helped to "rearrange" her into the woman she is today.

Speaking in the upcoming PBS documentary 'American Masters: How It Feels to Be Free', she said: "I really struggled to find images of Black women or women that I could identify with. Early on, I remember seeing Lena Horne in 'Stormy Weather'. I remember seeing Dorothy Dandridge in 'Carmen Jones'. And then a little after that, I remember seeing Diahann Carroll in 'Julia' and that just rearranged me."

"Seeing Diahann Carroll being the star of a show and playing a mother who was a nurse, who was educated, who was beautiful, just rearranged me and it made me realise I had value and I could turn to every week, a woman that looked like who I would aspire to be when I grew up."

"I was a Black child being raised by a white woman, so I didn't have those images in my household. Finding them on television and through movies became very, very crucial to me."

'American Masters: How It Feels to Be Free' is set to premiere on January 18, and tells the story of how six women - Horne, Carroll, Abbey Lincoln, Nina



Simone, Cicely Tyson, and Pam Grier - broke through an entertainment industry hell-bent on keeping them out and looks at their activism as precursor to contemporary movements like #BlackLivesMatter.

Anne Hathaway reveals her preferred name

Anne Hathaway prefers to be called Annie. The 38-year-old actress has been known as Anne for her entire Hollywood career, but has said she regrets telling the Screen Actors Guild (SAG) she wanted to be known by her full name, because she prefers being called Annie.

She said: "Call me Annie, everybody, everybody, call me Annie, please. It's ... can we talk about my name for a second?"

"When I was 14 years old, I did a commercial, and I had to get my SAG card and they asked me, 'What do you want your name to be?' And I was like, 'Well, it should be my name. My name's Anne Hathaway.' So that seemed like the right choice, but it never occurred to me that for the rest of my life, people will call me Anne."



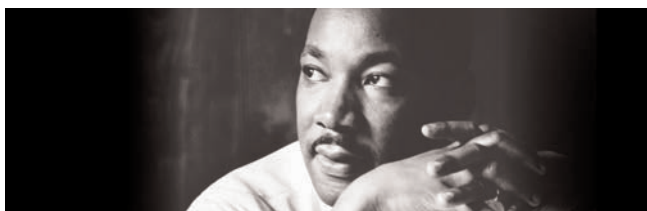
NJ IN SOLIDARITY

By Mabel Pais

NJPAC: STANDING IN SOLIDARITY

"Listening. Learning. Sharing. Taking action. Advancing ideas and solutions to accelerate social justice demands that all of us take these simple, powerful steps. Everyone at NJPAC stands in solidarity with those fighting against structural racism, societal inequity, and police brutality, and for civil rights, multiculturalism and authentic inclusion. Changing the world requires the efforts of everyone. Now, more than ever, each of us has an indispensable part to play." - John Schreiber, President & CEO, NJPAC

NJPAC AWARDS: SALUTING & ESPOUSING MLK IDEALS



Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. - Photo / Courtesy, NJPAC.

JANUARY 15, 2021, 6 PM

NJPAC and the Newark Branch of the NAACP salute the spirit of the nation's most beloved civil rights leader at the Arts Center's 24th annual Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Awards' on Friday, January 15, 2021 at 6PM. The event will be streamed live on NJPAC's Facebook page - facebook.com/NJPAC

Every year at this ceremony, two individuals from Newark who have made substantial contributions to the African American community are recognized for their service and their devotion to the ideals of social justice embraced by Dr. King.

This year, A'Dorian Murray-Thomas will receive the Visionary of the Dream Award for her service on the Newark Public School Board (to which she was elected 2019 when she was only 23 years old) and for her work in founding SHE Wins Inc., a leadership and social action organization for middle and high school girls in Newark.

Senator Ronald L. Rice will receive the Steward of the Dream Award, in recognition of his decades of service as a member of the New Jersey State Senate, where he represents Newark and surrounding towns.

In addition, Khalil Gibran Muhammad, professor of History, Race and Public Policy at Harvard Kennedy School, and the Suzanne Young Murray Professor at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Studies, will give the ceremony's keynote address. Professor Muhammad directs the Institutional Antiracism and Accountability Project and is the former Director of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, a division of the New York Public Library and the world's leading library and archive of global black history.

Rick Thigpen, Senior Vice President, Corporate Citizenship at PSEG and the chair of the PSEG Foundation, will provide opening remarks, and

students in NJPAC's 'Wells Fargo Jazz For Teens' and other arts education programs will perform during the celebration.

Get Social! Follow NJPAC Online:

Website: www.njpac.org/

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Hashtag: #NJPAC

Facebook: [facebook.com/NJPAC](https://www.facebook.com/NJPAC)

YouTube: NJPACtv

WIPA-PMP MLK Celebration Concert

VIRTUAL CONCERT, SATURDAY, JANUARY 16, 4-5 P.M.

In the face of deep national divisions and a pandemic that has illuminated the inequality in our country, it is more important now than ever to remember the teachings and legacy of Dr. King. PMP students have thoughtfully curated this one-hour presentation in honor of Dr. King through music, pictures, and poetry. Our students have demonstrated tremendous leadership and thoughtfulness in putting together this concert in a relevant, honest, and hopeful way. Our students' hard work and insight shows us that our future is bright and in good hands." - Elizabeth Moulthrop, PMP Director

The Paterson Music Project (PMP), a program of the Wharton Institute for the Performing Arts (WIPA), hosts a MLK Celebration Virtual Concert on Saturday, January 16 from 4:00-5:00 p.m. EST to commemorate the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

PMP students will lead the celebration as emcees, share poetry, and perform music. Performances include William Grant Still's arrangement of "Lift Every Voice" with guest performances from the wider Paterson and Wharton Arts community. Students will also premiere two original arrangements created during the fall 2020 semester based on the songs "This Little Light of Mine" and "We Shall Overcome." The MLK Celebration will be available streaming on WhartonArts.tv

For more information, visit

PatersonMusicProject.org

About PMP & WIPA

The Paterson Music Project (PMP) empowers children to achieve their full potential through the joyful pursuit of musical excellence. Inspired by the global El Sistema movement, PMP uses music education as a vehicle for social change in its home city of Paterson.

PMP provides tuition-free musical training to students throughout Paterson after school. Students study a primary instrument and participate in ensemble practice and instrumental sectionals. They receive an average of 6 hours of instruction per week and in addition, may participate in an optional private lesson program. Students perform frequently for the community and perform an average of 30 events annually.

Paterson Music Project (PMP) is a program of the Wharton Institute for the Performing Arts (WIPA). Wharton is New Jersey's largest non-profit performing arts education organization serving over 1,200 students of all ages and abilities through a range of classes and ensembles including the 15 ensembles of the New Jersey Youth Symphony which serve 500 students in grades 3 - 12. Beginning with early childhood music classes for toddlers, the Performing Arts School offers 500 private lessons and group classes each week, ensuring there is something for everyone of all ages and abilities.

NEWARK ARTS: HEALS & BRIDGES DIVISIONS

Jeremy Johnson, Exec.Dir. Newark Arts, speaks

These first eight days of 2021 started with excited anticipation and have concluded with disillusionment. The call for creatives and artists to express the fundamentals of freedom, equality, and equity have never been greater.

Like many of you, I watched in disbelief as insurrectionists flew the Flag of the Confederacy proudly in the nation's Capitol. As the descendant of enslaved African Americans, I recoiled at the sight. But I remain undaunted.

My brothers, uncles, and cousins served in the armed forces to defend this country's freedom for all of its people. And every day I have the privilege of working with the vibrant arts community of the great city of Newark. Our creatives have repeatedly demonstrated their resilience, ingenuity and perseverance. They have used art to build up neighborhoods, fight for social justice, educate our youth and beautify our communities.

Newark Arts will continue to work in partnership with the creative community and our public and private partners to 'power the arts to transform lives.' We will not be silent. We will lift our voices, wield our brushes, move our feet, play our instruments, and enact our dramas to express the ongoing struggle for justice.

Be encouraged. Be creative. Be involved."

**Sincerely,
Jeremy V. Johnson
Executive Director**



MLK Celebration, Student photo - Photo / Courtesy, WIPA.

NEWARK ARTS START

Zoom ArtStart 2021-22

Info Session

SATURDAY, JANUARY 16, 2021, 11 AM

Join Newark Arts for a Zoom Info Session on ArtStart 2021-22!

Attendance at this orientation is mandatory for first time applicants.

Artists, organizations and



Newark Arts Exec. Dir. Jeremy Johnson.

Photo / Courtesy Newark Arts.

CONTD ON PAGE 29

NJ IN SOLIDARITY

CONTD FROM PAGE 28

schools in the Newark area that are looking for funding to start or support an arts project or education program may be eligible to receive an ArtStart grant from Newark Arts. ArtStart provides funding to organizations and individuals to create music, dance, theatre, film, visual and literary art projects that benefit the residents and neighborhoods of Newark. Winning proposals will be awarded grants ranging up to \$3,000 each.

For those who cannot attend, the session will be recorded and posted on newarkarts.org/artstart.

Applications for the annual mini-grant program will open on Monday, January 25, 2021 at newarkarts.org/artstart. Award grantees will be announced in June 2021.

ArtStart was established in 2001, with the mission to nurture arts and cultural activities throughout the city of Newark, especially for youth and under-served populations.

About Newark Arts

Newark Arts' mission is to power the arts to transform lives. Established in 1981 as the Newark Arts Council, the organization's vision is to become a nationally recognized catalyst for the collaborative power of the arts in the City of Newark and urban America. Newark Arts is the producer of Newark Creates, a community-led citywide cultural plan.

To keep up to date on all the latest news from Newark Arts, sign up for our newsletter at newarkarts.org and follow @Newark_Arts on Twitter and @NewarkArts on Facebook and Instagram.

NJPAC - BOSS: THE BLACK EXPERIENCE IN BUSINESS

Film Screening via Viewing Link

Panel Discussion, January 18, 7 p.m. via Zoom

How does the business world fit into the fight for racial equality?

NJPAC looks at the long and inspiring history of Black business leadership and Black entrepreneurship, and how both have impacted the social justice movement.

Join NJPAC for a virtual panel discussion with the producer and director of the film, Stanley Nelson at 7 PM on Monday, January 18, which will focus on the issues faced by Black business leaders as they climb the corporate ladder, from microaggressions to major roadblocks.

Film screening: A viewing link will be provided earlier to the panel.

Panel discussion: 7PM on Monday, January 18, via Zoom video conference

**njpac-
org.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_2xZVdbHdQLq
UBfzAZPNVpw**

Before the panel discussion, NJPAC urges everyone to watch the PBS documentary 'Boss: The Black Experience in Business,' which explores the ways Black innovators and executives have climbed the corporate ladder - or built companies of their own - and then used their positions to help their communities.

BOSS: THE BLACK EXPERIENCE IN BUSINESS

Link: <https://vimeo.com/369405086>

PW: **bossnowm**

From Madam C.J. Walker - the world's first self-made female millionaire of any race - to contemporary business titans like Jay-Z and Merck's CEO Ken Frazier, Black business leaders have not only built their companies despite formidable obstacles, but they've viewed their work as an essential component of the struggle for justice.

Program : Keynote Address:

Khalil Gibran Muhammad, professor of History, Race and Public Policy at Harvard Kennedy School, and the Suzanne Young Murray Professor at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Studies, will give the ceremony's keynote address. Professor Muhammad directs the Institutional Antiracism and Accountability Project and is the former Director of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, a division of the New York Public Library and the world's leading library and archive of global black history.

Opening Remarks:

Rick Thigpen, Senior Vice President, Corporate Citizenship at PSEG and the chair of the PSEG Foundation, will provide opening remarks, and students in NJPAC's 'Wells Fargo Jazz For Teens' and other arts education programs will perform during the celebration.

Moderator:

Moderated by Chike Uzoka, Founder and Chief Innovation Officer of the Newark-based Valentine

Global, our panelists of business owners, executives and academics in the field will talk about the support networks available to Black-owned businesses, the secrets of maintaining resilience in the workplace, the value of mentorship, and the vital importance of Black entrepreneurs.

Panelists:

Kai Campbell: Born and raised in Newark, Kai describes himself as an "envisionary" working in a distressed urban development. Kai launched his first restaurant concept, Burger Walla, in 2014; it was quickly heralded as one of the best burger joints in the state. Following that, he has continued to run more successful businesses.

Stanley Nelson: Stanley, a MacArthur "Genius" Fellow, in 2013 received the National Medal in the Humanities from President Barack Obama in 2013. Nelson the filmmaker who created 'Boss: The Black Experience in Business', is an award-winning documentarian whose films about the African-American experience combine compelling narratives with rich historical detail.

Lyneir Richardson: Lyneir is the Executive Director of the Center for Urban Entrepreneurship and Economic Development (CUEED) at Rutgers University, where he leads capacity-building programs that have assisted more than 450 local entrepreneurs. Lyneir is CEO of The Chicago TREND Corporation, a social enterprise funded by prestigious impact investors to stimulate and invest in urban retail development.

Denise Woodard: Denise is the Founder and CEO of 'Partake', a line of allergy-friendly snacks inspired by her daughter's experience with food allergies. Launched in 2017, Partake's first product - delicious, nutritious, allergy-friendly cookies - can now be found in more than 2,500 retailers including Target, Sprouts, and Whole Foods Market.

Every year at this ceremony, two individuals from Newark who have made substantial contributions to the African American community are recognized for their service and their devotion to the ideals of social justice embraced by Dr. King.

'Vision of the Dream Award': A'Dorian Murray-Thomas will receive the 'Visionary of the Dream Award' for her service on the Newark Public School Board (to which she was elected 2019 when she was only 23 years old) and for her work in founding SHE Wins Inc., a leadership and social action organization for middle and high school girls in Newark.

'Steward of the Dream Award': Senator Ronald L. Rice will receive the 'Steward of the Dream Award,' in recognition of his decades of service as a member of the New Jersey State Senate, where he represents Newark and surrounding towns.

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



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Design ideas for your dream home

Consider the layout

Start the design process by taking note of the existing layout and making the best use of what you have. Find an architectural focal point, like a large window and arrange your seating around it. If you have old furniture, you could give it a new look by painting or adding new knobs to it.

You could develop a plan for each room and determine what you want to do and set things in order of priority. Depending on your budget, you could choose to paint, buy new furniture or do both.

Deciding on the look

Think about the kind of look and vibe you intend your home to have — rustic, or modern and minimalistic? Do you want your home to reflect a boho-chic vibe or are you a fan of an edgy, futuristic look? There are plenty of options to choose from. It comes down to personal choices and finding a middle ground that everyone happily agrees on.

The furniture

When choosing furniture for your home, comfort should be of prime importance. Buying a large piece of furniture that looks great but is not comfortable would be a waste of space. Mixing and matching furniture can add a fun element to the room and increase its aesthetic appeal. All you have to do is to make sure that all the pieces of furniture complement each other in style, colour, and texture.

It's always better to buy smaller pieces of furniture than a single large piece. This allows greater flexibility to move things around and change how a room looks without spending much time or effort.



Choosing the color palette

Painting is a quick and easy way to give your home a makeover. The colour palette plays a huge role in dictating the overall vibe of your home. Choosing neutral colours can make the room look open, spacious, classy, and timeless. Choose bold colours like red or black to add a dramatic effect.

You can introduce an element of style by adding a textured paint wall finish. Adding an accessory like a colourful rug that complements the wall can tie the colours of the room together.

Select a colour palette that includes a combination of colours that you love.

Choose the right multi-purpose pieces on a shoestring budget

When you're on a shoestring budget and want to buy some

furniture, the best place to look at is a flea market or garage sale. You can buy plain wooden chairs and tables and give them a fresh coat of paint to match the colours of your home. Even when shopping at a flea market or garage sale, the trick is to choose pieces that can serve more than one purpose.

Old trunks can be refurbished and can work as great storage options as well as coffee tables. Old baskets can be repainted and used to store items in the kitchen or to put plants.

Use fabric

Using fabrics to decorate a room can instantly change their look. You can choose brightly coloured curtains to make your living room or bedroom look bright and lively. Choose dark colours in red, purple, dark brown, and textures like linen or velvet in the bedroom for a rich look and cosy vibe.

Source: *The Indian Express*



By Tript Arora

CONNOISSEUR'S CHOICE



Roasted Chicken

Roasted Chicken is popular all over India, but it can be ubiquitously found on the menus of take-away joints of Punjab. Served with mint and coriander chutney, this hot, crispy chicken, tender from inside is a favorite snack of Punjabis. In the evenings in bustling market-places when you walk around on foot you can actually feel your senses tingle with the aroma of roasted chicken and fresh green chutney.

The recipe I am giving below will give the same taste and aroma as the popular chicken joint near you. It is also very easy to achieve. Another plus point is that this recipe requires no garlic & ginger, thus saving you a lot of time gone in peeling and chopping. The chicken is cooked with whole spices and marinated with cream melts in the mouth. Do give it a try. You will love the taste and recipe too.

We need

2 Chicken (1400 gm), 200 gm Dairy Cream, 2 Tbsp Lemon Juice, 2 Tbsp Kashmiri Red Chilli Powder, 2 Tsp Salt, 4 Green, Cardamom, 2" Piece of Cinnamon Stick, 1 Tbsp Whole Black Pepper, ¼ Tsp Nutmeg Powder, 2 Tbsp Chat Masala for sprinkling, 1 lemon for Garnish.

Here we go

- Cut the Chicken into big pieces. One chicken ideally cut into eight pieces. Wash the chicken. Keep aside to drain water. When the water is completely drained, wipe the chicken pieces with a kitchen towel. When the chicken is dried make an incision on every piece for the marination to be fully absorbed.
- Rub salt, Kashmiri red chilli powder and lemon on the chicken pieces and set aside to Marinate for 15 minutes.
- Meanwhile Grind whole black pepper, cinnamon stick, green cardamom and nutmeg powder. Add cream to this masala powder and set aside.
- After fifteen minutes, add masala mixed cream to the marinated Chicken. Mix everything together. Keep it in a refrigerator for 5 to 6 hours for Marination.
- After the Marination process, take out the chicken and let it come to room temperature. Meanwhile preheat OTG at 250 degree for 15 minutes with both rods on. When the oven is preheated, assemble chicken pieces on the middle grill inside it. Set the temperature at 180 degrees and cook for 30 minutes. You can cook it in an air fryer too. The process is the same. Preheat Air fryer at 200 degrees for 10 minutes. Keep marinated chicken pieces and roast for 25 minutes at 160 degrees.
- When the chicken is done take out and sprinkle some chat masala and lemon juice. Serve with Coriander Chutney and onion wedges.

Preparation Time : 30 min.

Marination Time : 5 to 6 hours

Cooking Time : 45 min.

Tips

- The longer the Marination Time, the better the taste.
- Do slit chicken pieces for better absorption of Marination.



You Can reach me at: www.triptasfoodtunnel.com
Email: triptasfoodtunnel@gmail.com
Instagram: [@triptasfoodtunnel](https://www.instagram.com/triptasfoodtunnel)

Beauty tips for healthy, glowing skin

Chilled tea bags for puffy eyes

Sipping green tea daily and throwing away the used tea bags? You may want to save it the next time. Other than flushing out toxins from your body, chilled black or green tea bags work wonders for your skin. Using this natural face beauty tip can instantly reduce puffiness around the eyes and make them look brighter and more awake. Put the bags on your eyelids and relax for 5 to 15 minutes as the tea bags work their magic.

Gram flour for tan

Gram flour or besan is used as a natural, mild exfoliator to get rid of dead skin cells, tan and sunburns. If you want clear, soft and naturally glowing skin here's the natural face beauty tip you need to know. Take equal amounts of gram flour and curd in a bowl and mix them well to form a paste. Apply this paste evenly on your face and neck, let it dry for half an hour before rinsing off with water. It will gently lift away dead skin cells and deep-set dirt, thereby lightening your skin tone and making it even.

Tomatoes to control excess oil

Excessive oil on the face doesn't only affect those with oily skin, in a country like India where the weather is



humid in most parts, excessive oil is quite common. Enriched with lycopene, tomatoes contain antioxidants along with great cooling and astringent properties. It helps balance the natural oils of the skin and gets rid of any excess oil that you may be struggling with. This natural face beauty tip is also used for reduces signs of aging such as wrinkles and fine lines. Scoop the pulp one tomato and apply evenly on your face. Allow it to dry for 15 minutes and wash off with warm water and reveal naturally glowing skin.

New tiny wireless device might help with weight loss

Scientists have developed a tiny wireless device that could help to fight obesity and to shed body weight by stimulating nerve endings. This device could be inserted via a simple implantation procedure.

A study led by researchers of Texas A&M University was published in Nature Communications, gastric bypass surgery is sometimes the last resort for those who struggle with obesity or have serious health-related issues due to their weight. Since this procedure involves making a small stomach pouch and rerouting the digestive tract, it is very invasive and prolongs the recovery period for patients.

Researchers said their centimetre-sized device provides the feeling of fullness by stimulating the endings of the vagus nerve with light. Unlike other devices that require a power cord, this wireless device can be controlled externally from a remote radio frequency source.

"We wanted to create a device that not only requires minimal surgery for implantation but also allows us to stimulate specific nerve endings in the stomach," said Dr Sung Il Park, assistant professor in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering.

"Our device has the potential to do both of these things in the harsh gastric conditions, which, in the future, can be hugely beneficial to people needing dramatic weight-loss surgeries," he added.

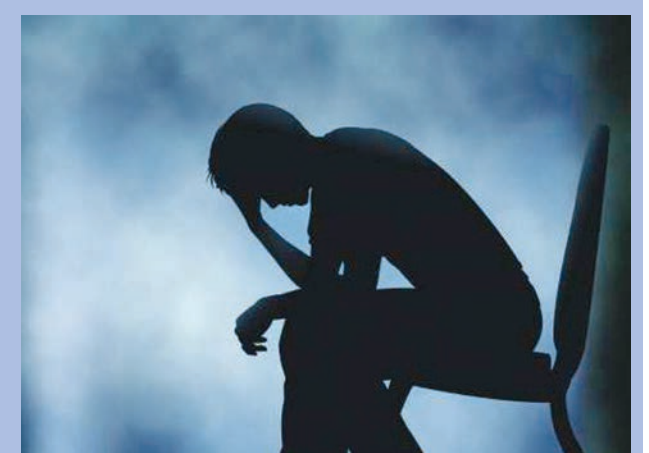


Obesity is associated with health problems and it has a significant economic impact on the US health care system, costing USD 147 billion a year. Additionally, it puts people at risk for chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease and even some cancers. For those with a body mass index greater than 35 or who have at least two obesity-related conditions, surgery offers a path for patients to not only lose the excess weight but maintain their weight over the long term.

In recent years, the vagus nerve has received much attention as a target for treating obesity since it provides

sensory information about fullness from the stomach lining to the brain. Although there are medical devices that can stimulate the vagus nerve endings and consequently help in curbing hunger, these devices are similar in design to a pacemaker; that is, wires connected to a current source provide electrical jolts to activate the tips of the nerve.

"Despite the clinical benefit of having a wireless system, no device, as of yet, has the capability to do chronic and durable cell-type specific manipulation of neuron activity inside of any other organ other than the brain," he said.



Metabolism may play role in recurrent major depression

Researchers have found that certain metabolites -- small molecules produced by the process of metabolism -- may be the predictive indicators for persons at risk of recurrent major depressive disorder (rMDD).

The findings, published in the journal Translational Psychiatry, indicated that the accuracy of this prediction was more than 90 per cent.

"This is evidence for a mitochondrial nexus at the heart of depression," said the researcher, Robert K. Naviaux, a professor at University of California in San Diego.

"It's a small study, but it is the first to show the potential of using metabolic markers as predictive clinical indicators of patients at greatest risk -- and lower risk -- for recurring bouts of major depressive symptoms," Naviaux added.

rMDD is a mood disorder characterised by multiple symptoms in combination -- feelings of sadness or hopelessness, anger or frustration, loss of interest, sleep disturbances, anxiety, slowed or difficulty thinking, suicidal thoughts and unexplained physical problems, such as back pain or headaches.

For the study, the team recruited 68 subjects (45 females, 23 males) with rMDD who were in antidepressant-free remission and 59 age- and gender-matched controls. After collecting blood from patients who were in remission, the patients were followed prospectively for two-and-a-half years.

Results showed that a metabolic signature found when patients were well could predict which patients were most likely to relapse up to two-and-a-half years in the future.

Analysis of the most predictive chemicals found they belong to certain kinds of lipids (fats that included eicosanoids and sphingolipids) and purines.

Purines are made from molecules, such as ATP and ADP -- the major chemicals used for energy storage in cells, but which also play a role in communications used by cells under stress, known as purinergic signaling.

The researchers found that in subjects with rMDD, changes in specific metabolites in six identified metabolic pathways resulted in fundamental alterations of important cellular activities.

First-degree relative with kidney disease increases risk by three-fold

In a large population-based family study, family history of kidney disease was strongly associated with increased risk of chronic kidney disease.

In this large population-based family study recently published in the American Journal of Kidney Diseases, researchers investigated the familial aggregation of CKD by comparing the risk of chronic kidney disease (CKD) in individuals with an affected first-degree relative to that in the general population.

Participants with an affected first-degree relative were observed to have a threefold higher risk of CKD compared to that in the general population, independent of BMI, hypertension, diabetes, hypercholesterolemia, history of cardiovascular disease (CVD), and smoking status.

The authors of this study observed a 1.56 fold higher risk in



those with an affected spouse, suggesting that shared environmental factors and/or assortative mating play a role. Heritability of eGFR was considerable (44 per cent), whereas heritability of UAE was moderate (20 per cent).

Heritability of kidney-related markers and serum electrolytes ranged between 20 and 50 per cent. These results indicate an important role for genetic factors in modulating susceptibility to kidney disease in the general population.

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IBM uses light for ultra-fast computing in AI systems

IBM researchers have developed a way to dramatically reduce latency in Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems by using light, instead of electricity, to create ultra-fast computing. The IBM team, along with scientists from the universities of Oxford, Muenster and Exeter, achieved this by using photonic integrated circuits that use light instead of electricity for computing.

The light-based tensor core could be used, among other applications, for autonomous vehicles.

In a Nature paper, they have detailed combination of photonic A—demonstrating a photonic tensor core that can perform computations with unprecedented, ultra-low latency and compute density.

"Our tensor core runs computations at a processing speed higher than ever before. It performs key computational primitives associated with AI models such as deep neural networks for computer vision in less than a microsecond, with remarkable areal and energy efficiency," IBM said in a blog post.

Telegram crosses 500 mn subscriber mark

Messaging service Telegram crossed 500-million subscriber mark globally and added 25 million new users in the last few days as it gained ground amid the controversy over WhatsApp's latest privacy policy update.

While Telegram did not specify India-specific user numbers, it said 38 per cent of the new users are from Asia, followed by Europe (27 per cent), Latin America (21 per cent) and MENA (Middle East and North Africa at 8 per cent). In a statement, Telegram said it surpassed 500 million monthly active users in the first week of January, and "has continued to grow with 25 million new users joining Telegram in the last 72 hours alone".

Reports citing Sensor Tower data indicated that Telegram had 1.5 million new downloads between January 6-10 in India.

India is the world's second-largest telecom market and the biggest consumer of data. As on October 30, 2020, the total telephone connections stood at 117 crore, of which 115 crore were mobile connections.

A report by Ericsson had stated that Indians used about 12 GB data per month on an average in 2019, the highest consumption globally, and this is expected to rise even further to about 25 GB (gigabytes) per month by 2025.

In a recent blogpost, Telegram CEO and founder Pavel Durov said global user addition has seen a "significant increase" compared to last year when 1.5 million new users signed up every day, and that with its current growth rate, Telegram is on track to reach billions of users in the near future.

'Galaxy-sized' observatory sees hints of gravitational waves

Scientists have used a "galaxy-sized" space observatory to find possible hints of a unique signal from gravitational waves, or the powerful ripples that course through the universe and warp the fabric of space and time itself.

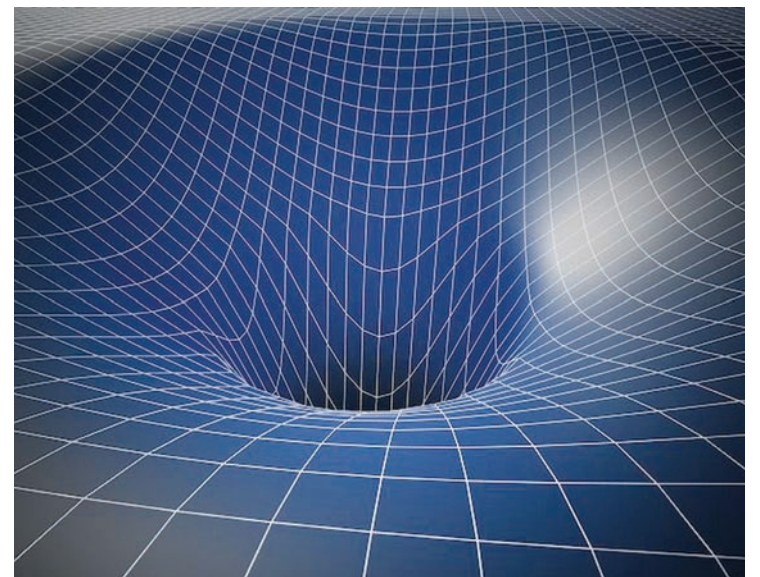
The new findings, which appeared recently in The Astrophysical Journal Letters, hail from a U.S. and Canadian project called the North American Nanohertz Observatory for Gravitational Waves (NANOGrav).

For over 13 years, NANOGrav researchers have pored over the light streaming from dozens of pulsars spread throughout the Milky Way Galaxy to try to detect a "gravitational wave background." That's what scientists call the steady flux of gravitational radiation that, according to theory, washes over Earth on a constant basis. The team hasn't yet pinpointed that target, but it's getting closer than ever before, said Joseph Simon, an astrophysicist at the University of Colorado Boulder and lead author of the new paper.

"We've found a strong signal in our dataset," said Simon, a postdoctoral researcher in the Department of Astrophysical and Planetary Sciences. "But we can't say yet that this is the gravitational wave background."

In 2017, scientists on an experiment called the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO) won the Nobel Prize in Physics for the first-ever direct detection of gravitational waves. Those waves were created when two black holes slammed into each other roughly 130 million lightyears from Earth, generating a cosmic shock that spread to our own solar system.

That event was the equivalent of a cymbal crash -- a violent



and short-lived blast. The gravitational waves that Simon and his colleagues are looking for, in contrast, are more like the steady hum of conversation at a crowded cocktail party.

Detecting that background noise would be a major scientific achievement, opening a new window to the workings of the universe, he added. These waves, for example, could give scientists new tools for studying how the supermassive black holes at the centers of many galaxies merge over time.

Chinese hackers luring Indian WhatsApp users into 'part-time' jobs



In fresh trouble for WhatsApp, which is facing backlash over its upcoming user data policy in India, New Delhi-based think-tank Cyberpeace Foundation said on Monday that China-based hackers are targeting WhatsApp users in the country with the promise of 'part-time' jobs.

Such proliferating messages on WhatsApp, which come with attached links, claim that one can earn Rs 200 to Rs 3,000 in a day in 10 to 30 minutes.

"There are multiple links that redirect to a common URL and each link uses different numbers to send a message," the foundation said in a statement.

"It can be observed that the same outgoing link is used for all the links with variation in the numbers. The parameter in the

links indicates that they can be redirected to WhatsApp in all regions and in languages other than English," said the report.

The CyberPeace Foundation along with experts from Autobot Infosec Private Ltd has launched an independent investigation into the matter.

"In all the links, the same redirection and outgoing sources were generated. However, in one link, a different URL was found and one new IP address that belongs to one of China's hosting company Alibaba Cloud," the report said.

When the URL is manipulated, an error code is displayed in Chinese language, the report said, adding that the domain names found during the investigation seem to have been registered in China.

Signal to ramp up hiring after WhatsApp controversy drives download surge

Messaging app Signal has seen "unprecedented" growth following a controversial change in rival WhatsApp's privacy terms and is looking to hire more staff as it seeks to bolster the service and supporting infrastructure, the head of its controlling foundation said.

Along with another encrypted app, Telegram, Signal has been the main beneficiary of online outrage around the changes announced last week, which require WhatsApp users to share their data with both Facebook and Instagram.

Telegram said on Wednesday it had surpassed 500 million active users globally.

Brian Acton, who co-founded WhatsApp before selling it to Facebook and then co-founding the Signal Foundation, declined to give equivalent data for Signal but said that the expansion in recent days had been "vertical". "We've seen unprecedented growth this past week," Acton said in an email to Reuters. "It's safe to say that because of this record growth, we're even more interested in finding talented people."

He also said Signal was working to improve its video and group chat functions, allowing it to compete better with WhatsApp, Microsoft Teams, and other conferencing apps that have become vital to day-to-day life over the past year.

Signal was downloaded by 17.8 million users over the past seven days, a 62-fold rise from the prior week, according to data from Sensor Tower. WhatsApp was downloaded by 10.6 million users during the same period, a 17% decline.



11 Indian companies in top-500 globally by value

MUMBAI (TIP): Total 11 private Indian firms have made it to the list of 500 most valuable companies across the world, and the country is ranked 10th on the chart, as per a report.

The total value of these 11 companies grew 14 per cent and has been pegged at USD 805 billion or nearly a third of the Indian GDP.

All these companies in the list of non-state enterprises have gained in value during 2020, which was hit by the pandemic, barring tobacco major ITC and second largest private sector lender ICICI Bank, as per the 'Hurun Global 500' report.

Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Industries leads among the local enterprises with a 20.5 per cent jump in valuation to USD 168.8 billion as of December 1 and is ranked 54th globally, as per the list.

Tata Consultancy Services' value grew by nearly 30 per cent during the year to take its value to USD 139 billion, ranking it 73rd globally and making it the second most valuable Indian firm.

The value of HDFC Bank grew 11.5 per cent to USD 107.5 billion Hindustan Lever (USD 68.2 billion, gains of 3.3 per cent), Infosys (USD 66 billion and gains of 56.6 per cent), HDFC Ltd (USD 56.4 billion, gains of 2.1 per cent) and Kotak



Mahindra Bank (USD 50.6 billion, 16.8 per cent in gains).

ICICI Bank's overall valuation decreased 0.5 per cent to USD 45.6 billion, taking it to the 316th spot in overall rankings, while ITC's value dived 22 per cent to USD 32.6 billion making it the 480th in the list of 500.

The report said 239 of the non-India headquartered companies have a presence in the country, with a maximum

number of them having regional offices in the financial capital.

Of the 11 most valuable companies, seven have their headquarters in the financial capital, followed by one each in Pune, Bengaluru, Kolkata and New Delhi, it said.

The report said the local stock market grew 12 per cent despite the pandemic, which can explain the rise in the valuations.

Tesla registers unit in India

American electric carmaker Tesla has registered its Indian arm amid indications that the company is set to enter the country's automobile market.

According to a regulatory filing, the firm has registered Tesla India Motors and Energy Pvt Ltd with RoC Bangalore.

The company has been registered as an unlisted private entity with a paid up capital of Rs 1 lakh.

Vaibhav Taneja, Venkatraman Sreeram and David Jon Feinstein have been appointed as directors of Tesla India, as per the Registrar of Companies (RoC) filing.

Last month, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari had said Tesla is set to start its operations in the country in 2021 and would also look at setting up a manufacturing unit based on demand.

Earlier on Tuesday, auto major Tata Motors denied tying up with the company for its India foray.

In November last year, replying to a Twitter user who asked about the progress of the company's India plans, Tesla CEO Elon Musk had said, "Yea..Next year for sure".

Mahindra cuts over half of North America workforce

Indian automaker Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd has cut more than half of the workforce at its North American unit, two sources familiar with the matter told Reuters, due to the Covid-19 pandemic and an ongoing legal tussle.

The sources did not give a figure for the number of jobs lost at the business, which had over 500 employees in early 2020, according to its website.

However, one of the sources said "hundreds of workers" had been laid off since mid-2020 as part of a restructuring, and that the cuts were as high as two-thirds of Mahindra Automotive North America's (MANA) total staffing.

Positions include engineers and manufacturing jobs at its plant in Detroit that produces the off-road vehicle Roxor, as well as sales executives. The cuts come as Mahindra reviews its businesses in a drive to conserve capital and retain only those that make money or have the potential to be profitable.

MANA said in a statement it had furloughed some staff and laid off others due to the pandemic and an International Trade Commission lawsuit which led to an August "cease and desist" order for the Roxor business.

Freezing temperatures push Asian gas prices to new records

Freezing temperatures across Asia and Europe are driving liquefied natural gas (LNG) prices to record highs and pushing up the cost of shipping the fuel globally as buyers grapple with tight inventories and a shortage of tankers.

Demand for super-cooled natural gas has surged in recent years as buyers, particularly China and India, move away from dirtier coal-polluting power plants. Prices had remained relatively low until late 2019, when unexpected cold weather and bottlenecked shipments caused prices to surge.

Spot Asian LNG prices are up more than 1,000% since touching a record low below \$2 per mmBtu in May during lockdowns to stem the spread of the coronavirus. US natural gas prices hit a six-week high on Tuesday, while the cost to ship LNG from the United States to Asia hit an all-time record, in part due to a logjam in the Panama Canal, where vessels transit from the US Gulf to the Pacific.

"This bottleneck for shipping has an immediate impact on the demand for gas. Storage supplies are low and therefore, demand is high," said Toby Dunipace, with shipbroker SSY in a report this week. He said Panama Canal congestion had led to waiting times of seven to 10 days or more for LNG vessels.

The effects are being felt in US markets as well, where US natural gas prices hit a six-week high on Tuesday.

Global LNG trade has set record highs each year since 2015. Global LNG demand jumped about 10% a year from 2017-2019 mostly due to strong growth in China and India.

Analysts at Goldman Sachs said there were 10 US cargo loading cancellations for February. Limited LNG tanker availability may keep spot LNG prices elevated in coming months, traders said.



Apple invests millions to back entrepreneurs of color

Apple Inc on Wednesday, January 13, said it was putting \$60 million into a fresh round of projects aimed at challenging systemic racism, including its first foray into venture capital funding to back entrepreneurs of color.

Apple said it would invest \$10 million in a fund with Harlem Capital, a New York-based early-stage venture firm, with the goal of helping fund 1,000 companies over 20 years. Apple will invest \$25 million in Siebert Williams Shank's Clear Vision Impact Fund, which provides financing to small- and mid-sized businesses, with an emphasis on minority-owned firms.

Apple will become a limited partner in funds at both. "There's a lack of diversity among venture capital and banking funders," Lisa Jackson, Apple's vice president of environment, policy and social initiatives, told Reuters. "We looked for where we thought there was opportunity for our resources to do good things."

The efforts are part of Apple's \$100 million racial equality and justice initiative announced last year after the killings of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd, two Black people killed by police.

Apple is contributing \$25 million to the Propel Center, a 50,000-square-foot facility in Atlanta where historically Black colleges and universities will collaborate on programs in entrepreneurship, app development and other topics.



Shree Ganeshaya Namah



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Chirag Bejan Daruwalla with his father late Bejan Daruwalla

**The Indian Panorama brings you Weekly and Birthday Horoscope from the World's most
trusted Vedic Astrologer Nastur Bejan Daruwalla.**

**Weekly Horoscope
Jan 18 - 24, 2021**

Aries

Venus is in the favor of your sign this week hence whatever you do regarding your love life will turn out to be beneficial for you. Take full advantage of Venus being in your favor this week. If you're single, socialize and try to meet new people as well as catch up with old friends. This week you can begin moving ahead in the pursuit of pleasure and fulfilling partnerships.

This week is a great period to earn appreciation for your generosity, so give freely and you will get back even more in return. Don't be afraid to express your feelings in ways that are more emotional than reasoned. Be vulnerable as it makes you more genuine and open towards your partner.

Taurus

You will gain a lot of profit in your business this week which will set a positive tone for the entire week. You won't need to do things that you hate in terms of work anymore. You will have the time, space and affordability to follow your passion. Financial abundance is in your cards this week, which will keep you satisfied and happy throughout the week. You need to be more analytical about making investments now as managing the funds that you receive this week and in the future as it will make a significant difference in your life.

This is the perfect week for you to make investments as your luck will favor you into making the correct and logical decisions. Seek advices from the elders that you trust as well as your partner. Do not delay in taking the decisions as your luck is in your favor this week. Make sure to take important decisions in this week itself.

Gemini

Exciting, adventurous and fun defines this week for you. When it comes to your business be open to your team's ideas and don't be afraid to take steps out of the box and be unique and creative. Your business will be thriving this week. Financial abundance is in favor of your sign, although it will demand a lot of your time and attention, you will enjoy each and every moment of it as creativity is your forte, it's what you do best and you love doing it the most. Only take the creative and not the conventional route when it comes to your business today.

Cancer

Let your intuitions guide you this week. You will make amazing returns on your speculations this week, which will bring yourself - confidence to the next level. You will receive a lot of appreciation from people who did not believe in you and underestimated your intelligence. Focus on building relationships that feel right and aren't made on selfish motives. Work on improving your communication skills today.

Your decision making and leadership skills will impress a new prospect this week and will yield you very positive results with very little of your time and attention needed. Your love life will flourish this week as you have a lot of time at your hands. You will have a very warm and cozy time with your partner cherishing how far you have come together in your personal as well as professional lives in this week itself.

Leo

You will feel extremely loved and appreciated this week, which will boost your confidence. Your partner will make you feel like you're worth a lot more than you have been given till date. Hence you will walk through every place as if it's the most beautiful thing you have ever seen. You need to care for your partner as much as they care for you.

Be careful of letting yourself come across as rude and snobby to your partner, and seek out new ways to delight your partner. Singles should seek out intellectual stimulation when searching for their special someone. When looking for a connection seek out people who hold a zest for life and a search for deeper meaning. As you notice that your well-being improves over this week, you will have a lot of energy to go on fun adventures with your partner.

Virgo

This week is all about new and positive beginnings for you. Career-wise, your journey will give the expected results. You just have to make sure that you are determined to tread ahead with discipline. You will be provided with ample opportunities to prove yourself at work as well, which, in turn, may also lead to your promotion in this week itself. Material security is on your way today. This could mean that at work you'll be more satisfied with your salary rather than with job satisfaction or creative fulfillment. Your business will be great and smooth throughout the week. Your business will grow a lot this week and you will acquire new clients. Be it a big or a small prospect, you will observe that your business has grown the most this week.

CONTD FROM PAGE 30

Weekly Horoscope

Jan 18 - 24, 2021

Libra

Your relationship will grow stronger today and you're very likely to take the next step in your relationship this week. You and your partner will grow very close this week. You will start to understand what makes them upset and what makes them happy. Hence you will realize that things will only get better as the days go by in this week itself. Your relationships in general will improve a lot be it with your partner, family or friends. Hence this week is all about socializing for you.

If you are looking for love, this is the week for you to socialize and start meeting new people as luck is on your side throughout the week. You're very likely to find a very strong new love interest this week. Relaxing by meditating and doing what you love will be very important for you during this entire week.

Scorpio

This week is all about hustling for you. You will be very ambitious and mostly achieve whatever you want in you want this week. You will be helpful, generous and spend money freely but make sure to be extremely careful in spending on right things only. Domestic life will be peaceful and serene throughout the week. You will also be able to defeat your rivals with flying colors this week. All in this is a good week for you to work hard and enjoy the results of your hard work.

This week is going to be fabulous for you. Positive news at the beginning of the week itself will boost your confidence to a whole another level. This week is going to be full of excitement and unique experiences for you. You will go through a positive shift when it comes to your mental and physical health. This positive shift will help you to participate and indulge more in

social events. You will have an overall very positive week. Your competitors will think twice before facing you! People will not dare to pick fights with you this week. You need to use this opportunity starting early this week itself to build better relationships.

Sagittarius

Your personality will shine through in front of a new prospect and all of your colleagues throughout this week. The stars are really making you be the best you can be this week be it as a partner or as an employee. If you're single, you're most likely to meet a love interest

You'll be smiling all week, thinking someone you have an instant connection with. You and your new love interest are extremely compatible and you will feel so as the week goes by both of you will be very excited about each other and are likely to agree upon the same choices in everything you do. Both of you will feel loved and appreciated, hence rest assured all your feelings about this person are mutual and will be reciprocated.

Capricorn

You will have a newfound confidence throughout this week. You will have a newfound burst of energy throughout the entire week. That is because the sun is in your favor this week and will make you fearless, confident and energetic this week. You can conquer each and every aspiration you have this week with minute efforts. Your health will assist you in achieving all that you want this week today as well. Your health is doing very well this week. You might experience some issues like acidity or increased heart rate which is nothing to worry about as it is due to the intense energies that are with you this week.

Aquarius

Working with your team will be relatively easy this week. Your work life will be the most positive part of your week. You will also receive a lot of love and appreciation from your colleagues which will set a very positive tone for the entire week as you keep getting praised which motivates you to work even better. New prospects in terms of sponsorship will help you move forward in your business as well hence this week speaks monetary gains for you. Your charismatic energy will attract a lot of people today towards you this week which means if you're single you might as well have a lot of people chasing after you. If you're in a relationship You're likely to take the next step in your relationship this week itself.

Pisces

Your week will be filled with excitement! You will get involved in activities you always wanted to do like dancing or any adventurous sport. The first three days will bring you opportunities you were waiting for but in the last two days you will get the time and funds to make a huge celebration of all the opportunities you have received. Avoid getting into any fights or arguments or even coming across people who you know trigger you in the wrong way this week.

This week you should be very selective avoid people you invest your emotions in as their possessive nature may harm you later. There will be surprising moments due to transition of moon. Your happiness will be contagious towards the people you love the most and you will have the time of your life with your favorite people. Last week's messy situations will come grounded this week and help from your partner will push you towards progress in career. Love will bloom unexpectedly, do not get overwhelmed just sit back and enjoy.

Birthday Horoscope

January 18-24, 2021

Jan 18

Ganesha says the Moon opens up lines of communication, allowing you to have meaningful dialogues that bring mutual understanding, helpful exchanges, commitments and deals.

Jan 19

The Moon in your sign makes you impatient, assertive, and impulsive, which helps you to seize opportunities, but also inclines you to be a touch overconfident. Be careful about

misreading another's intentions.

Jan 20

You and a partner may not be on the same wavelength. It's not a day to go on a joint shopping adventures. On purchases and other things, but especially values, you're not seeing eye-to-eye.

Jan 21

Overall trends are splendid for reaching an understanding with someone today, maybe even

meeting someone new, particularly where good mental rapport is one of the requirements.

Jan 22

Subtlety is not your strong suit, but you'll have no choice but to play it when others' behaviors seem to mask their motives. Their need to feel in charge and in control seems at stake.

Jan 23

Frustrating tasks, delays, or an

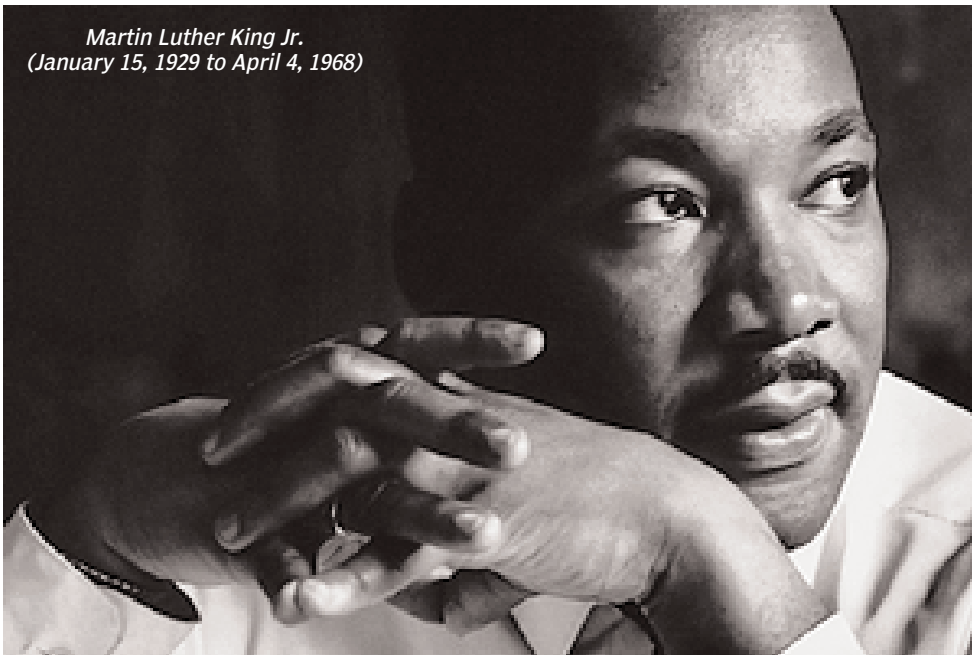
overload of work can cause you to feel pressured and under the gun. Or maybe, you're just feeling under the weather. It will help just to pace yourself.

Jan 24

If you feel that your personal freedom is something you're willing to protect at all costs, that could put you at odds with those who impose obligations, leaving you to manage rifts that result.

Remembering Martin Luther King Jr. on his 92nd birthday

Minister, civil rights activist, and public opinion leader who changed the face of America



Martin Luther King Jr.
(January 15, 1929 to April 4, 1968)

Born : January 15, 1929, Atlanta, Georgia

Died : April 4, 1968, Memphis, Tennessee

Spouse : Coretta Scott King

Accomplishments

Leader of African American Civil Rights Leader

Nobel Peace Prize (1964)

Presidential Medal of Freedom (1977)

Congressional Gold Medal (2004)

Famous letters and speeches

"I have a dream" Speech

Letter from Birmingham jail

Letter to Coretta

Our God is Marching On (How Long? Not Long)

Martin Luther King Jr. became the predominant leader in the civil rights movement to end racial segregation and discrimination in America during the 1950s and 1960s, and was a leading spokesperson for nonviolent methods of achieving social change. His eloquence as a speaker and his personal charisma combined with a deeply rooted determination to establish equality among all races despite personal risk won him a worldwide following. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964 and was selected by Time magazine as its Man of the Year. His "I Have a Dream" speech, which is now considered to be among the great speeches of American history, is frequently quoted. His success in galvanizing the drive for civil rights, however, made him the target of conservative segregationists who believed firmly in the superiority of the white race and feared social change. He was arrested over 20 times and had his home bombed. Ultimately, he was assassinated on April 4, 1968, on the balcony of a motel where he was staying in Memphis. A monument to Dr. King was unveiled in the national capital in 2012.

Early Life of Martin Luther King Jr.

Martin Luther King Jr. was born Michael Luther King Jr., in Atlanta, Georgia, on January 15, 1929. His father, in a 1957 interview, said that both he and his son were supposed to be named for the leader of the Protestant Reformation but misunderstandings led to Michael being the name on birth records. The boy became the third member of his family to serve as pastor of the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, following in the footsteps of his grandfather and father. His training and experience as a minister undoubtedly contributed to his renowned oratorical style and cadence.

He also followed the educational path taken by his father and grandfather: he got his education in Georgia's segregated public schools (from which he graduated at age 15). And he received a B.A. degree from Atlanta's Morehouse College, a traditionally black college. He then went on to study theology at Crozer Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania, an integrated school where he was elected president of his senior class although it was comprised primarily of white students. In 1955, he received an advanced degree from Boston College in Massachusetts; he had completed the residence for his doctorate two years

earlier. (In 1991, a Boston University investigatory committee determined he had plagiarized portions of his doctoral dissertation; plagiarism was also discovered in his word at Crozer. However, the committee did not recommend his degree be revoked. Evidence of plagiarism had been discovered by Boston University archivists in the 1980s.)

While in Boston, he met and married Coretta Scott, who would be his lifetime partner in both marriage and his campaign for civil rights. In 1954, the couple moved to Montgomery, Alabama, where King had been hired as the pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church.

He was already active in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, America's leading African-American organization. At the time of

his move to Montgomery, he was a member of its executive committee, and in December 1955, he led a 382-day boycott of Montgomery's segregated public bus system. Negroes, the term then used for those of African descent, were relegated to the back of the bus and forced to give up their seats if a white person wanted to sit. Since many blacks lived in poverty or near-poverty, few could afford automobiles, and public busses were essential to them for traveling to and from work and elsewhere. During the boycott, King became a target for segregationists. Personal abuse, arrest, and the bombing of his home made clear the risks he would be taking if he continued to work with the movement for civil rights.

In 1957, that movement spawned a new organization, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, to



Civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. during the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom on Aug. 28, 1963, in Washington.

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focus on achieving civil rights. King was elected president. By dropping reference to Negroes or colored people in its title and instead using the term "Christian Leadership" the organization was declaring its goals were not just those of one race but should be those of all Christian people. King strongly influenced the ideals of the organization.

During the next 11 years, he would speak over 2,500 times at public events, traveling over six million miles. He also wrote articles and five books to spread the message farther. In 1963, he was a leader in the massive civil rights protests at Birmingham, Alabama, that drew the attention of all America—indeed, of the entire world—to the discrimination African Americans faced and their demands for change. Arrested during the protests, he penned "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," which became a manifesto for the civil rights revolution and placed King among America's renowned essayists such as Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Influence of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi

His tactics for achieving social change were drawn from those of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (known as Mahatma, "great soul"), who had used nonviolent civil disobedience to bring about change in his native India (as he had done with some success previously to win concessions for Indian immigrants living in South Africa's apartheid system). Gandhi's methods included boycotts of British goods and institutions. (Like Martin Luther King, Jr., Gandhi was repeatedly arrested and ultimately was assassinated by a fanatic.)

Although King stressed nonviolence, even when confronted by violence, those who opposed change did not observe such niceties. Protestors were beaten, sprayed with high-pressure water hoses, tear-gassed, and attacked by police dogs; bombings at black churches, homes, and other locations took a number of lives; some—both black and white—who agitated for civil rights such as the right to vote were murdered, but the movement pressed on.

King was the most prominent leader in the drive to register black voters in Atlanta and the march on Washington, D.C., that drew a quarter-million participants. His message had moved beyond African Americans and was drawing supporters from all segments of society, many of them appalled by the violence they saw being conducted against peaceful protestors night after night on television news.

Martin Luther King's Nobel Peace Prize

His oratory and impassioned drive, not just for equality under the law, but for true understanding and acceptance of all races and creeds by all races and creeds, led Time magazine to select Martin Luther King, Jr., as its Man of the Year for 1963. The following year, the Nobel Prize Committee in Stockholm, Sweden, awarded him the Nobel Peace Prize. Then 35, he is the youngest man ever to have received it. The prize included an award of over \$54,000, which he promised to donate to the furtherance of the civil rights movement.

As the Vietnam War escalated, King spoke out against America's involvement in the conflict. His antiwar position was an outgrowth of his belief in nonviolence, but to those who opposed King it intensified their belief he was pro-Communist and anti-American.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Assassinated

In the spring of 1968, King traveled to Memphis, Tennessee, where the majority of the city's black sanitation workers had been striking since February 12 for increased job safety measures, better wages and benefits, and union recognition. The mayor, Henry Loeb, staunchly opposed all these measures. King was solicited to come to Memphis to lead a planned march and work stoppage on March 28.

That protest march turned violent when sign-carrying students at the end of the parade began



Funeral procession for Martin Luther King, Jr., April 9, 1968, Atlanta.

breaking windows of businesses, which led to looting. One looter was killed and about 60 people were injured. The city of Memphis lodged a formal complaint in the U.S. District Court against King and several other leaders of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. He and those leaders negotiated with the factions among the workers and their supporters who had initiated the march.

Assured that they would observe the creed of nonviolent civil disobedience, King agreed to return to Memphis for the rescheduled march on April 5. The district court had issued a restraining order, however; representatives of the SCLC met with the judge on April 4 and worked out a broad agreement that would permit the protest march to be held on April 8. Details were to be worked out on April 5.

On the evening of April 4, one of the SCLC representatives, Andrew Young (who would later serve as President Jimmy Carter's ambassador to the United Nations and would be elected mayor of Atlanta), came to King's room at the Lorraine Motel and informed him of what had been worked out with the judge. They prepared to go out to dinner, along with their colleagues. When King stepped onto the balcony in front of his room, he was shot and killed. He was just 39 years old.

In direct contrast to the nonviolence he had preached, riots broke out following Martin Luther King, Jr.'s death. In Chicago alone, nearly a dozen people died, 350 were arrested for looting, and 162 buildings were destroyed by arson.

Martin Luther King Jr's Legacy

By the time of Martin Luther King Jr.'s death, the civil rights movement was evolving; in some ways, it seemed to be leaving him behind. New black power activists did not accept his philosophy of nonviolence as a way to achieve their goals. The FBI was breaking the power of the Ku Klux Klan, which had stood squarely in the way of racial equality. After successfully campaigning for Carl Stokes, the first black mayor of Cleveland, King was not invited to the victory celebration. The next civil rights challenges, such as fighting poverty, were more abstract compared with the clarity of issues like discrimination in hiring and the use of public amenities. These new concerns would likely have proven more difficult for him to

achieve the same levels of success as he had in his previous campaigns for equality and justice. On the last Saturday of his life, he mused about quitting his full-time role in the movement, though he seemed to talk himself out of that, according to one of his fellow activists, Jesse Jackson.

Yet, the lasting legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. as a vibrant catalyst for social change cannot be denied. Among the prominent legacies of his ability to organize and energize the movement for equality are the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. His birthday has become a national holiday, when government offices and many private businesses close to honor his memory. A portion of the Lorraine Motel, including two persevered rooms and the balcony on which he was assassinated, are part of the National Civil Rights Museum. King's birthplace is now part of the National Park System.

His eloquent words live on, inspiring others who see injustices and seek to change them. He had a dream, and though it is still a long way from being fully realized, the America of his racially segregated youth and that of today's integrated society—in which a black man was elected president of the United States having served two full terms from 2008-2016—are as far apart and different from each other as the planet Mars is from Neptune. It is impossible to imagine such sweeping change would occur as quickly as it did without a leader like Martin Luther King Jr. driving it forward.

But 60 years after the March on Washington, there is no gainsaying that Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" has entered American public culture as "the oratorical equivalent of the Declaration of Independence," as Hansen puts it. If its fame threatens to swamp the balance of King's legacy, and if its stature directs historical memory only toward the brightest and not the bleakest days of the 1960s black freedom movement, it nonetheless remains the most notable oratorical achievement of the 20th century—a "sort of a Gettysburg Address" indeed.

(This article was written by David J. Garrow and originally published in August 2003 issue of American History Magazine. Courtesy / HistoryNet)

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Shillong: An abode of clouds, rolling hills

An abode of clouds, the rolling hills around the town and the hill station of one of the smallest states of India, Meghalaya. With the best places to visit in Shillong, it is geography synonymous to heaven, is the painting hung on your drawing-room wall, a collage of memories yet to be lived.

This prepossessing land is a beauty that floats on high over vales and hills, where the tall pine trees are seen fluttering and dancing in the breeze, and the clouds find a space along the margins of a hill unfolding the enchanting blue sky. The mystique land perched on an escarpment is more than enough to leave your imagination spell-bound.

The capital city of the state Meghalaya - a perfect blend of old charm and fresh essence, this bliss of solitude carries a number of things like falls, parks, peaks, landscapes and museums to keep a traveller's head tossing in sprightly dance.

With the best places to visit in Shillong, this surprising holiday destination will make you forget to stop the shutters of your cam. The god's honest harvest is ready to find a space among the favourites in your travel diary.

What to see

Living Root Bridge

In Meghalaya, bridges aren't built, they are grown. The Living Root Bridge is an example of that. About a two-hour drive from Shillong, near Mawlynnong, the bridge is made of sturdy roots and is often used by villagers. While this bridge is a popular tourist attraction because of its accessibility, the one situated in Cherrapunji is not for the weak-hearted; it involves trekking down over 3,000 steps.

Mawlynnong

You'll pass through this village on your way to the Living Root Bridge. We suggest making a pit stop here, on your way back. The village is very clean and the people from the village are friendly and welcoming. Walk through the tiny lanes and make it a point to check out the neatly-divided residential areas, small drainage canals built along the huts and the bamboo dustbins installed every few meters. Make it a point to grab a meal at the local shacks; these offer a peek into the cuisine from the state. A vegetarian meal here consists of plain dal, rice and a curry, and a non-vegetarian meal is usually chicken cooked with bamboo shoots and served with rice and spicy pickle.

Dawki, Umngot River

Crystal clear water is not just an expression, but a reality at Dawki. Passing through the India-Bangladesh border, the Umngot River makes for an ideal spot for camping and barbecues, or just to laze around. Take a boat ride (priced at ₹400 per hour) along the river and go nuts gawking at the large pebbles on the river bed. Yes, you can see through the water — even 15ft deep at some places.



Mawphlang Sacred Forest

The Khasi Hills have many forests that have been preserved by local religious sanctions, which means that these forests cannot be harmed or tampered with. "Don't even dare picking up a leaf as a souvenir," instructed our guide. About 25km from Shillong, this sacred forest is an ideal spot for nature lovers, and those who are looking for a moment of peace and quiet. Dense trees, orchids and butterflies are in abundance, and so are religious stones that stand tall in the forest.

Elephant Falls

Named after an Elephant like stone at its foot, the Elephant Falls are amongst the most popular falls in the North-East, situated next to Shillong. It is a tourists' paradise with three layers of the falls accessible to the layman from different vantage points. The Britishers named this fall so owing to the presence of an elephant-shaped rock on one side of the fall. However, the stone disintegrated and was washed away due to an earthquake in 1897. Elephant Waterfalls is a superb place for spending some time in the midst of nature while capturing the incredible moments for your keepsake.

The breathtaking Elephant falls were referred to as 'Ka Kshaid Lai Pateng Khohsiew' by the local Khasi people, which means 'The Three Step Waterfalls', as these falls consist of three mesmerising falls in succession. The first of the three waterfalls are tucked between the dense trees and are very broad. The second waterfall reduces to thin strands of water and is almost negligible in winters due to the receding water levels. The third and the most visible waterfall is the tallest with clear water flowing like a sheet of milk on the dark rocks in the backdrop. Out of the three, the third waterfall tends to strike the visitors as the most impressive. Elephant Falls is a great stopover destination before one head for further journeys into Meghalaya. Located 12 km away from the capital city of Shillong, it is one of the most visited falls in the beautiful state.

Umiyam Lake

Umiyam Lake, a mesmerizing man-made reservoir, is located at a distance of 15 kilometres north of Shillong which is the capital of the north-eastern Indian state of Meghalaya. The lake was formed after a dam was constructed to generate hydroelectric power. The scenic Umiyam Lake is encircled by lush green East Khasi hills that form one of the best panoramic sights for nature-lovers in the country. The sunrise at the lake is a treat to watch and shouldn't be missed. The Umiyam Lake has a park adjoining it which is a hotspot for picnics and frequented by locals for a getaway from their busy scheduled.

The serene lake or the reservoir is surrounded by thick coniferous forests and expands over an area of about 222 square kilometres.

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England in control after bowling out Sri Lanka for 135 runs

GALLE (TIP): England captain Joe Root struck his 50th Test fifty to put them in a strong position on the first day of the opening Test after Dom Bess took five wickets as the tourists bowled out Sri Lanka for a paltry 135.

An unbeaten 110-run partnership between Jonny Bairstow and Root saw England to 127-2 at stumps on Thursday, trailing by eight runs, with the opportunity to go on and build a significant lead after Sri Lanka posted the lowest first-innings score in a Test at the Galle International Stadium.

The pair steadied matters after spinner Lasith Embuldeniya, who opened the bowling, had removed England openers Dom Sibley (4) and Zak Crawley (9) cheaply.

Root, in his 98th Test, survived a leg before decision when on 20, which was overturned on review, before reaching his half century off 94 balls. He will resume on Friday on 66 with Bairstow playing a strong supporting role with 47 not out.

Bess took 5-30 off just 10.1 overs with strong back-up from Stuart Broad (3-20) as the home side failed to take advantage of winning the toss with some wayward batting.

Murray tests COVID +ve, Australian Open participation in doubt

LONDON (TIP): Britain's former world No. 1 Andy Murray tested positive for the novel coronavirus recently and his participation in next month's Australian Open is in doubt, local media reported on Thursday.

The 33-year-old Murray, who is self-isolating and in good health, was awarded a wildcard to play in the main draw of the year's first Grand Slam in Melbourne and still hopes to compete at the tournament, the reports added.

However, that could prove difficult with players and officials required to arrive in Australia during a 36-hour window from Thursday and needing to serve a mandatory isolation of 14 days.

The players, who will be allowed to spend five hours outside their rooms during quarantine for training purposes, will then play warm-up events at Melbourne Park from January 31 before the Australian Open starts on February 8.

Organisers, Tennis Australia, were not immediately available to comment. Murray is currently ranked 123rd in the world.

Australia score 215 for 5 after electing to bat in Brisbane Test

BRISBANE (TIP): Debutant Washington Sundar got the dangerous Steve Smith with a well-planned dismissal but Marnus Labuschagne upped the ante in the second session with an unbeaten 73 that took Australia to 215 for 5 on the opening day of the fourth Test on Friday, January 15.

Australia scored runs at a fair clip in the second session against an inexperienced Indian attack which also lost one of their pacers Navdeep Saini due to a groin strain.

During the session, 89 runs were scored with Labuschagne batting in company of Matthew Wade (27 batting, 57 balls) with an unbroken 67 runs to show for their efforts.

The session witnessed rookie off-spinner Washington Sundar laying a successful leg-trap for Smith (36), who flicked one to Rohit Sharma stationed at short mid-wicket for the catch.

Smith and Labuschagne had added 69 runs for the second wicket in which the former skipper was the aggressive partner.

However, after Smith's departure, Labuschagne stepped up and his 73 off 167 deliveries had seven boundaries. Wade also looked in good touch on a placid batting track having hit five boundaries. Shardul Thakur suffered the most among Indian pacers.

Labuschagne was lucky when Ajinkya Rahane dropped a sitter off Saini at gully and immediately after that the bowler complained of groin pain and was taken off the field.

Earlier, a new-look Indian bowling line-up kept it steady, removing openers David Warner and Marcus Harris in the first session.

With a cumulative experience of three Test matches and '10 balls' that Shardul Thakur bowled on his debut in 2018, India



Washington Sundar celebrates with team mates after getting the wicket of Steve Smith during day one of the fourth test match on Friday, January 15.

did well, although Steve Smith and Marnus Labuschagne were once again looking ominous on a bouncy and batting track. However, Mohammed Siraj and Shardul Thakur did well to get rid of the openers in the first hour of play where honours were shared.

That Australia forced a half-fit Warner (1) to play was evident when he had no apparent footwork while trying to drive an angular delivery from Siraj which was brilliantly snapped by an agile Rohit Sharma diving to his right.

It could be seen that Warner, after his groin injury, is still finding it difficult to stretch his front-foot and get to the pitch of the delivery.

Thakur, whose debut against West Indies

ended in a nightmare after bowling only 10 deliveries, achieved success, bowling the 11th one in Test arena.

It was a gentle outswing — an inswing for left-handed Harris (5), who instinctively clipped it straight to debutant Washington Sundar at square leg.

For India, Thangarasu Natarajan's fairytale story just got better as he became India's 300th Test cricketer and looked reasonably decent with the new ball without being exceptional as he is with the white ball. He did get some initial swing and kept the openers quiet during that first spell. But the most impactful bowler was Siraj with his pace and length even though a few loose deliveries were there for the taking.

Olympic champion Rollins-McNeal suspended in doping case

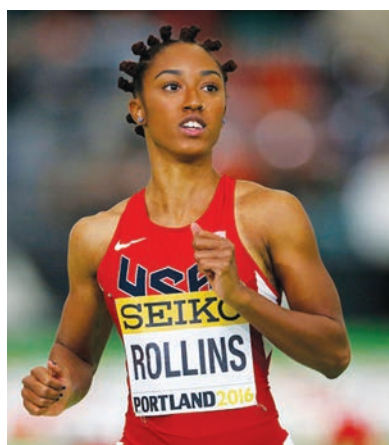
MONACO (TIP): Olympic hurdles champion Brianna Rollins-McNeal has been provisionally suspended for a doping rules violation, the Athletics Integrity Unit said on Thursday, January 14.

Rollins-McNeal won gold in the 100-meter hurdles at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics. The 29-year-old American was also world champion in 2013.

The AIU said it charged Rollins-McNeal with "tampering within the results management process", but did not specify details of the case.

The AIU cited a section in the World Anti-Doping Code that covers "conduct which subverts the doping control process".

The code gives one example as "altering identification numbers



on a doping control form during testing".

Rollins-McNeal is the fourth fastest woman in history in her event. She clocked 12.26 seconds at the US national championships.

THAILAND OPEN

Saina loses to Busanan in second round; injured Srikanth gives walkover

BANGKOK (TIP): Star India shuttler Saina Nehwal was knocked out of the Yonex Thailand Open Super 1000 after losing the women's singles second round to Busanan Ongbamrunphan here on Thursday, January 14.

In a battle of attrition, Saina managed to grab the opening game but ran out of steam in the end, losing 23-21 14-21 16-21 in a match that clocked 68 minutes.

It was Saina's fourth straight loss to the Thai, who ranks 12 in the world.

In the men's singles, former world No. 1 Kidambi Srikanth was forced to give a walkover to his 8th seeded Malaysian opponent Lee Zii Jia after pulling up his right calf muscle.

Earlier in the day, Indian men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty bowed out of the competition after suffering a 19-21 17-21 defeat against second seeded Indonesian combination of Mohammad Ahsan and Hendra Setiawan.

Saina and Busanan engaged in some long rallies but it was the Thai shuttler who had the last laugh as she dished out some delectable drops and also stood out with better placement of shots.

Lord Shiva, Mahadeva is perhaps the most complex of Hindu deity. He is the Auspicious one (Shiva), The terrific one (Rudra), Lord of the Dance (Nataraja), Lord of the universe (Vishwanatha), He is the Destroyer and the Transformer. He is limitless, transcendent, unchanging, formless and also the one without beginning or without end.

“SHIVA” means the auspicious one. It is humanly impossible to explain Shiva, just as it is impossible to explain the universe yet let’s make an attempt.

From simple human intellect, he is the one from whom the Brahman emerges, in whom it stays and within whom it goes back.

Here Brahman is not mere the Universe but is the one who is the base and cause of the universe. Brahman holds the universe. Lord Shiva is reasons of all causes. He must not be seen as a Human-God. That’s a wrong notion. Scriptures call him the Nirgun Brahman and the Sagun Brahman

Shiva exists in 3 states

Nirgun: In this state he is formless, and the whole universe and creation lie in the pervasiveness of Shiva.

Saguna: In the Saguna state Shiva is the entire universe and his “ansh” is present in the tree, the insect, the animal, male, female and the whole creation. In this state, though all forms arise out of him yet, no form can describe him.

Nirgun-Sagun: In the Nirgun-Sagun state Shiva is worshipped as the Shivalingam. The word Shivalingam has been derived from Sanskrit roots Shiva (Lord) + Lingam (Mark/Chinha/Symbol). Hence, Shivalingam is the mark of the lord within its creation. Everything in the world arises out of a dome/a ball/ a Pindi. Be it a tree which comes from a seed which is round, a child which comes from a cell which is round, all heavenly bodies are round, the minutes of cells are round and our very earth is round. Everything being round is a mark of the Lord/Shiva. Since Shiva can’t be comprehended, we worship his mark or we worship the whole Brahman in a Shivalingam.

Thus, it is important to understand that he is “Formless”. Though all forms belong to him and he is happy in whatever way you look at him yet there is no single form in the world that describes him.

Symbols of Lord Shiva

Symbolism has found its way since the start of the Vedic following. As one of the holy trinity, Shiva has many symbols that are associated with him. Whenever we find these elements, we immediately think of the Lord himself. Here are the symbols of Lord Shiva:

The Moon Crescent – Ardha-Chandrama

From a scientific and philosophical point of view, the moon on Shiva’s forehead depicts control on time in terms of nature. The waxing and waning of the moon was used to calculate the days and months in earlier times.

Thus, the Moon symbolizes time and Lord Shiva wearing the moon on his head denotes that Shiva has complete control over time and is beyond the measure of time and is eternal. Control on time and the moon is important to control nature. An example that I can quote here is the high tides and the low tides that arise due to the gravity of the moon. Hence, it is Chandrashekhara alone who can control time.

The meaning behind symbols of Lord Shiva



Body smeared with ashes

This symbol has a higher meaning than just the element itself. It represents how Shiva is in its transcendental aspect in nature and that his presence is higher than material presence. The ash is not a normal one, but instead the ash from a cemetery. It corresponds to the Hindu philosophy of life and death, that death is the ultimate reality of life. Everything, in the end, is converted into ashes, and since Shiva is the God of destruction, the ash represents that everything, in the end, can be reduced to destroyed and that the lord goes beyond the circle of life and death.

Matted Hair / Jata

The symbol of matted hair is that Shiva is the Lord of Wind or Vayu, that every moment, all living beings breathe him. It represents Shiva as the Pashupatinath, the Lord of All Living Beings.

The Ganga

In Hindu dharma, Ganga is River Goddess and the most sacred river. Legend has it that the river has the source in Shiva and that flows from the matted hair of Shiva. Symbolically, it is represented by the jet of water smothering out of the head of Shiva and falling on the ground. The legend also has it that Shiva himself allowed that water to flow to humans through an outlet in the river to traverse the earth. The water is thus considered to be pure and has purifying nature. This is also how Shiva has got his name Gangadhara, which means “Bearer of the river Ganga”. Sanatana Dharma refers to the river as having the capacity of bringing fertility, and that Lord Shiva is not just a

god of destruction, but also a conveyor of purity and peace.

The Third Eye

Lord Shiva is often depicted with a 3rd eye and called Triyambkam, Trinetra etc. The third eye is a symbol for Shiva devotees to develop the sight of knowledge. Our 2 eyes are not always sufficient to judge things and know realities.

Shiva’s third eye represents the rejection of desire. Even a normal man must have Samta(balance), Sadhuta (purity of character), and Doordrishti (broader vision). He must not fall prey to desires arising out of women (other than wife), money (other than that which is earned by sweat and purity), fame (other than that which arises out of sattvic actions).

From the Yogic point of view, it is said that when the pineal gland or ‘third eye’

is awakened, one is able to see beyond space-time into time-space. It raises the frequency on which one operates and moves one into a higher consciousness.. with more research it is being realized that it is essentially a spiritual antenna the mystical third eye of ‘lord Shiva’. For many eons, the third eye has been seen as a way to reach higher levels of consciousness while still being present in a physical body.

The Snake Around the Neck

The snake coils three rounds on the neck of Shiva, and that represents time in its most accurate form: the past, the present and the future, and the coiling signifies the cyclic nature of it. And him wearing the snake shows that Shiva is immune to the wrath of time and death. They also represent dormant energy known as Kundalini Shakti that resides within him.

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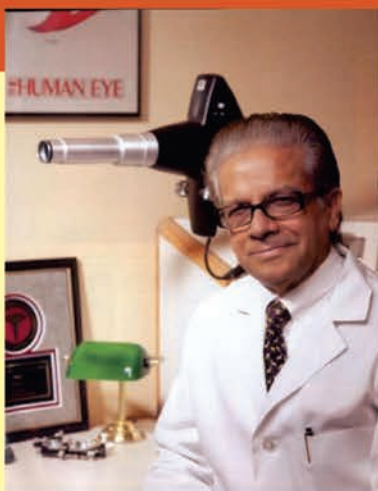
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