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The INDIAN PANORAMA

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Bipartisan infrastructure deal moves past first Senate vote

THE CHAMBER VOTED TO MOVE FORWARD WEDNESDAY NIGHT AFTER NEGOTIATORS CAME TO AN AGREEMENT ON KEY ISSUES.



WASHINGTON (TIP): After weeks of negotiations, the Senate's bipartisan infrastructure deal finally moved forward on Wednesday, July 28 night, handing a group of centrists and President Joe Biden a major win.

Though the legislation is still unfinished and failed just a week ago, more than a dozen Republicans took the plunge and voted to break an initial filibuster on the bill. Among them was Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), who has previously said "100 percent" of his focus was on standing up to Biden's agenda. *contd on page 34*

« Senator Mitt Romney, Senator Susan Collins (extreme right) and other Republicans who negotiated the deal urged their colleagues to support a measure they said would provide badly needed funding for infrastructure projects. Photo / Courtesy T.J. Kirkpatrick - The New York Times

PEGASUS SNOOPING ROW: UNITED OPPOSITION TO CONFRONT GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT



United opposition to target govt in Parliament on Pegasus snooping row

Photo for representation only

NEW DELHI (TIP): A united opposition on Thursday, July 29, will target the government in Parliament on the issue of the Pegasus snooping row.

The opposition MPs have moved notices for adjournment motions in both the Houses. In the Lok Sabha, Congress MP's Manickam Tagore and *contd on page 34*

'Both of our democracies are works in progress': US Secretary of State Antony Blinken

"SHARED VALUES - FREEDOM AND EQUALITY - ARE KEY AND NONE OF US HAVE DONE ENOUGH," BLINKEN SAID

NEW DELHI (TIP): Two of the world's biggest democracies should do more to strengthen democratic institutions, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said today during his India visit.

"Shared values - freedom and equality - are key and none of us have done enough. We need to strengthen our democratic institutions. This is at the core of our relationship, beyond strategic and economic ties," Mr Blinken said.

"One of the elements Americans admire most is fundamental freedom and human rights. That's how we define India. India's democracy is powered by free-thinking citizens," Mr Blinken said.

Mr Blinken told civil society groups -



US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar in New Delhi

his first appointment before meeting External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Prime Minister Narendra Modi - that the US and India are "connected by shared values" such as rule of law and freedom of religion. "Both of our democracies are works in progress... As I said before, sometimes that process is painful. Sometimes it's ugly. *contd on page 34*

BASAVARAJ BOMMAI SWORN IN AS CHIEF MINISTER OF KARNATAKA PM Narendra Modi congratulates new CM, applauds contribution of B.S. Yediyurappa



Three-time MLA and former Minister Basavaraj Bommai took oath as the 30th Chief Minister of Karnataka on July 28, 2021. He was sworn in by Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot. - Photo Courtesy/ K. Murali Kumar

BENGALURU (TIP): Basavaraj Bommai was, on July 28, sworn in by Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot as the 30th chief minister of Karnataka, in the presence of senior Bharatiya Janata Party leaders, including former chief minister B.S. Yediyurappa, *contd on page 34*



Women wings conducting the ongoing 'Kisan Sansad' (farmers parliament), under the banner of Samyukt Kisan Morcha at Mantar in New Delhi on July 26, 2021.

Photo Courtesy/ Shiv Kumar Pushpakar

KISAN MORCHA TO HOLD 'BIG PANCHAYAT' IN MUZAFFARNAGAR ON SEPT 5

NEW DELHI (TIP): The Samyukt Kisan Morcha, a body of farmer unions leading protests around the national capital for the last eight months, on Monday, July 26 announced it would hold a "big panchayat" in Muzaffarnagar on September 5. *contd on page 34*



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-: GUEST COMMENT :-

Change in Karnataka

Yediyurappa makes way for new leader

The replacement of BS Yediyurappa as the chief minister of Karnataka could well set the template for the BJP to tackle dissidence in the party. The demand for generational change was evident with the four-time CM facing resistance from the younger leaders in the state BJP and yet again failing to last his full term. Yediyurappa had steered the BJP's course in the state and was instrumental in bringing it to power, managing the affairs in trying times of the pandemic, but had to step aside to boost the party's prospects ahead of the Assembly elections in 2023.

The change in Karnataka comes after Pushkar Singh Dhama replaced Tirath Singh Rawat in Uttarakhand and Sarbananda Sonowal made way for

Himanta Biswa Sarma, who had crossed over from the Congress, in Assam. In Uttar Pradesh, a former bureaucrat, an aide of PM Modi, was made the vice-president of the state BJP ahead of the state polls next year, after initial efforts to install him as the Deputy CM met with resistance. The BJP has experimented even earlier with fresh chief ministerial faces in Himachal Pradesh and Haryana. Whether replacing Yediyurappa, known to be his own man, yields dividends, will depend on how disparate sections within the party are managed, for the BJP lost the Delhi elections even after replacing Sahib Singh Verma with Sushma Swaraj as the CM on poll eve. The change in Karnataka also comes soon after the reshuffle in the Union Cabinet which may give a hint about the way the BJP

Central leadership is working, with sitting ministers being replaced with fresh faces. Generational change is evident even in other parties with younger leaders like Sachin Pilot in Rajasthan and Navjot Singh Sidhu in Punjab asking the Congress leadership for more say in party affairs.

While effecting changes within the party and by trying to put its regional satraps on a tight leash, the BJP should guard against over-reach and alienating its own cadre. Allowing its own governments in states to function properly may also serve as a good augury for intra-party democracy as well as the federal spirit.

(Tribune, India)

Raids on media houses

Govt ought to leash agencies, reassure journalist fraternity

Every action has a message, particularly when the actor is the Government of India. About 100 sleuths from the Income Tax Department swooped on the offices of India's biggest Hindi newspaper, Dainik Bhaskar, in Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh in a series of searches starting at 4 am on Thursday, July 22. The residence of Bhaskar's promoter Sudhir Agarwal, too, was raided. Similarly, IT officials landed up at the offices and residences of Bharat Samachar TV channel's owner-editor and UP state head in Lucknow the same day. Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur said the 'agencies were doing their own work and there is no interference.'

However, Dainik Bhaskar and Bharat

Samachar believe that this is no routine IT investigation. They strongly contend that this has to do with their coverage of UP's Covid second surge. Bhaskar had run a number of stories on the floating corpses on the Ganga and the makeshift graves on its banks, exposing the UP government's gross ineptitude and under-reporting of deaths. Its Editor also wrote an opinion piece in New York Times, titled 'The Ganges is returning the dead, it does not lie'. Bharat Samachar insists that the TV channel is being punished for its coverage of bodies on the Ganga, the oxygen crisis and the Hathras rape.

This was one controversy the government could have done without while it was battling accusations of phone tapping in the Pegasus expose.

The timing of these IT searches across the country has led the Opposition to claim that the government is intimidating the media. Synchronized raids at two media houses that have been critical of the government would obviously only lead to such conclusions, particularly in an atmosphere of distrust created by the expose of snooping on the country's Opposition leaders, activists and media professionals. Mainstream Indian media has always exercised its freedom with utmost responsibility to the extent of being termed tame by the Opposition. If it is still being targeted, if the claims of victimisation are true, the government ought to leash its agencies immediately and reassure the media fraternity.

(The Hindu)



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Indian American Physician Manisha Juthani Nominated to Lead Connecticut's Dept. of Public Health

WASHINGTON (TIP): The office of Governor Lamont announced on 26 July the nomination of Manisha Juthani as Connecticut's Public Health Commissioner.

Dr. Juthani, an Indian American, is an associate professor at the Yale University School of Medicine. She will succeed Dr. Deidre Gifford to lead the Public Health Department, as he is being promoted to the duty of Senior Advisor to the Governor for Health and Human Services.

Juthani praised the Governor and Dr. Gifford's leadership in helping Connecticut fight the coronavirus pandemic and said that she will continue with those efforts.

Under Dr Gifford's leadership, I look forward to continuing their efforts related to COVID-19, mental health, health equity, health disparities, and access to



Manisha Juthani has been named as Connecticut's Public Health Commissioner

healthcare going forward.

Dr Juthani in the press release.

She studied at the Weill Medical College of Cornell University after completing a BA degree in Biological Basis of Behavior from the University of Pennsylvania. Having been trained at the New York-Presbyterian Hospital, she worked as chief resident at Memorial-Sloan Kettering Cancer Centre. She joined Yale in 2002 as part of a fellowship training and thereafter started working there as a faculty member.

In the press release, Governor Ned Lamont praised Juthani to have been recommended by "top experts" and that her experience with infectious diseases will benefit Connecticut's response to the pandemic. He also stated that Connecticut has been doing good with the vaccinations, however there is a need for sound policies to keep the rate of transmission low.

Celebrating India's 75th Independence Day, AAPI Plans Blood Donation and Bone Marrow Drive Camps in 75 Cities In US

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IN HONOR OF COVID - 19 FALLEN HEROES
 In collaboration with **BitCare.co**



Dr. Anupama Gotimukula, President of AAPI announced on July 25 the AAPI plan of blood donation and bone marrow drive

Medavram, Chair of AAPI's Blood Donation Initiative said. The launch event will be held in Chicago on August 7th, Dr. Medavaram announced.

Dr. Kusum Punjabi the Chair of Board of Trustees of AAPI, who is the youngest to date to be holding this position in AAPI's 40 years long history and serving patients in the Emergency Department, said "As the pandemic has exhausted all the resources, especially the lifesaving and much needed Blood across the nation and the world, AAPI is in the forefront, once again, spreading the message for the need to donate blood and save lives."

Dr. Ravi Kolli, President-Elect of AAPI, a Board-Certified Psychiatrist with additional qualifications in Addiction, Geriatric and Forensic Psychiatry, and serving as the Psychiatric Medical Director of Southwestern Pennsylvania Human Services, urged "potential blood donors to donate blood to help ensure lifesaving blood products are available for patients. Your donation is needed now to prevent delays in patient care. Help overcome the severe blood shortage!"

Dr. Anjana Samadder, Vice President of AAPI, said, who herself has experienced the ordeal with Covid -19, and has come out stronger, resilient and tenacious, quoting Red Cross said, "Every two seconds someone in the U.S. needs blood. It is essential for surgeries, cancer treatment, chronic illnesses, and traumatic injuries. Whether a patient receives whole blood, red cells, platelets or plasma, this lifesaving care starts with one person making a generous donation."

"With the ongoing pandemic, the United States and the world need the help of blood and platelet donors and blood drive hosts to meet the needs of patient care," said Dr. Satheesh Kathula, Secretary of AAPI, a board-certified hematologist and oncologist from Dayton, Ohio, practicing Medicine for nearly two decades. Dr. Kathula also said, "It is very difficult to find a matched stem cell donor for Southeast Asians should they need a bone marrow or stem cell transplant, and this drive will help increase the number of potential donors."

Dr. Krishan Kumar, a pediatric emergency medicine physician in East Meadow, New York and is affiliated with multiple hospitals in the area, quoting studies done on the need and usefulness of Blood said, "Blood donation helps save lives. In fact, every two seconds of every day, someone needs blood. Since blood cannot be manufactured outside the body and has a limited shelf life, the supply must constantly be replenished by generous blood donors."

The growing influence of physicians of Indian heritage is evident, as increasingly physicians of Indian origin hold critical positions in the healthcare, academic, research and administrative positions across the nation. We the physicians of Indian origin are proud of our great achievements and contributions to our motherland, India, our adopted land, the US and in a very significant way to the transformation of the Indo-US relations.

Serving 1 in every 7 patients in the US, AAPI members care for millions of patients every day, while several of them have risen to hold high flying jobs, shaping the policies and programs and inventions that shape the landscape of healthcare in the US and around the world.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

QUEENS MAN FACES HATE CRIMES CHARGES FOR RANDOM ATTACKS ON MUSLIMS IN QUEENS

Defendant Allegedly Followed and Punched Victims in Three Separate Incidents



District Attorney Katz said, "As alleged, the defendant attacked and intimidated individuals because of their beliefs. That type of hate will not be tolerated in Queens County, where our diversity is our greatest strength." File photo

QUEENS, NY (TIP): Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced July 28 that Naved Durrni, 30, has been charged with assault as a hate crime, criminal possession of a weapon and other charges for three separate attacks on people hebelieved to be Muslim. The defendant allegedly pursued, struck

and yelled anti-Muslim sentiments at the victimshe encountered on the street over the last few weeks.

District Attorney Katz said, "As alleged, the defendant attacked and intimidated individuals because oftheir beliefs. That type of hate will not be tolerated in Queens County, where our diversity is our greatest strength."

Durrni, of 106th Avenue in the Jamaica, Queens, was arraigned on July 28 before Queens Criminal Court Judge Edwin Novillo on a complaint charging him with criminal possession of a weapon in the third degree, assault inthe third degree as a hate crime, menacing in the second degree as a hate crime and aggravated harassment in thesecond degree. Judge Novillo set the defendant's return date for August 17, 2021. If convicted, Durrni faces upeight years in prison. (Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)



**INDIANS IN AMERICA
HOPEFUL US MAY LIFT
INDIA TRAVEL BAN SOON**

OHIO (TIP): Ohio-based IT analyst Sumit Kumar made an urgent phone call this week to his hometown in Haryana, India, to ask his parents to postpone booking their tickets to the US via Cancun.

Kumar says he took the decision after the US State Department in its new travel advisory changed the travel health notice for India from Level 4 to Level 3.

"I am hopeful that within the next 1-3 months the travel restriction from India to the US will be lifted and elderly like my parents will be able to travel directly and not via the cumbersome way of visiting a third country and spending a fortnight in a new place."

Dropping India to Level 3 means that now the State Department only asks the US citizens to reconsider before traveling to India unlike earlier Level 4 that urges citizens not to travel to that country.

Within minutes of this new advisory travel portals and immigration groups began discussing the possibilities of a likely normalized travel.

Speculations are rife that the travel restrictions may come down within the next three months. However, Carmel, Indiana based Sneha S. is still going ahead and considering a possible third country travel for her parents.

"The situation is so rapidly changing, who knows what may happen in a few days," she says. "India, we are hearing, is getting ready to cope up with a third wave. I can't take any chances and want my parents to be with me."

Indian Americans are praying that the third Covid-19 wave does not hit India because that may likely upset any travel possibilities further.

For the past year and a half most Indians living and working in the US have faced some kind of family separation owing to pandemic related travel restrictions.

After the second wave hit India earlier this year, US put travel restrictions for certain visa holders traveling directly from India with a presidential proclamation. The restriction has prevented many work visa holders on a visit to India to come back to the US and has made the travel of relatives or family on B1/B2 visa nearly impossible. While families have been devising ways such as seeking National Interest Exception or flying their parents through a third country, the last two updates on travel from India to US have raised hopes.

**(Read full story at
www.theindianpanorama.news)**

**US-Based Non-Profit IIT Bombay
Alumni Organization Donates
\$50 Million to its Alma Mater**

WASHINGTON (TIP): A US-based alumni group of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Bombay has donated a whopping \$50 million to its alma mater.

The IIT Bombay Heritage Foundation (IITBHF), a US based non-profit charity organization established to support students, alumni, faculty, and research at IIT Bombay, said this during a virtual event attended by hundreds of leading alumni and past and current IIT-B directors, a media release said.

IITBHF celebrated 25 years of its alma mater on July 19.

According to the organizers, the amount of \$50 million was collected from over 3,300 donors. The foundation has also helped establish the most recognizable IIT and IIT Bombay brands in the US and elsewhere.



The IIT Bombay Heritage Foundation (IITBHF), a US based non-profit charity organization has donated \$50 million to IIT Mumbai

It has supported 575 named scholarships benefiting nearly 5,000 students and funded the construction and establishment of 25 major centers, schools and laboratories.

"This is an occasion to remember our founding, rejoice in our achievements and renew us for the future," said D C Agrawal, president IITB Heritage Foundation in his welcome address.

IIT Bombay Director Subhasis Chaudhuri lauded the Heritage Foundation's efforts for its far-reaching contributions over the last 25 years.

"Our success as the top ranked Indian Institute would not have been possible without the heartfelt and far-reaching support of IIT Bombay Heritage Foundation and the alumni donors," he said.

"What IITBHF has achieved over the last 25 years would not have been possible without the generous support of over 3300 alumni donors," said its current chair Raj Mashruwala.

**Indian-origin British author Sunjeev Sahota among 13
contenders for fiction's Booker Prize**



Sunjeev Sahota is among the 13 authors long listed for the prestigious 2021 Booker Prize for fiction for his novel 'China Room'

LONDON (TIP): Indian-origin British author Sunjeev Sahota is among the 13 authors long listed for the prestigious 2021 Booker Prize for fiction for his novel 'China Room', alongside Nobel laureate Kazuo Ishiguro and Pulitzer Prize winner Richard Powers.

The 2021 long list or "The Booker Dozen" of 13 novels was unveiled on Tuesday after judges evaluated 158 novels published in the UK or Ireland between October 1, 2020, and September 30, 2021.

Sahota, 40, who was the 2015 Booker Prize nominee for The Year of the Runaways, is on the long list for the 50,000-pound (USD 69,000) prize for his novel "China Room", inspired in part by the author's own family history.

Britain's Ishiguro, who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2017, is among this year's "Booker dozen" for "Klara and the Sun," a novel about love and humanity narrated by a solar-powered android.

It is the fourth Booker nomination for Ishiguro, who won the prize in 1989 for "The Remains of the Day." American author Powers is nominated for "Bewilderment," about an astrobiologist and his neurodivergent son. Powers won the Pulitzer for fiction in 2019 for the eco-epic "The Overstory," which was also a Booker Prize finalist.

Other Booker contenders on this year's list include A Passage North, Anuk Arudpragasam; Second Place, Rachel Cusk, The Promise, Damon Galgut; The Sweetness of Water, Nathan Harris, An Island, Karen Jennings; A Town Called Solace, Mary Lawson; No One is Talking About This, Patricia Lockwood; The Fortune Men, Nadifa Mohamed; Great Circle, Maggie Shipstead and Light Perpetual, Francis Spufford. The 13 books on this year's longlist were chosen by the judging panel: historian Maya Jasanoff (chair); writer and editor Horatia Harrod; actor Natascha McElhone; twice Booker-shortlisted novelist and professor Chigozie Obioma; and writer and former Archbishop Rowan Williams.

Historian Jasanoff, who is chairing this year's judging panel, said, "One thing that unites these books is their power to absorb the reader in an unusual story, and to do so in an artful, distinctive voice. Many of them consider how people grapple with the past - whether personal experiences of grief or dislocation or the historical" legacies of enslavement, apartheid, and civil war.

"Many examine intimate relationships placed under stress, and through them meditate on ideas of freedom and obligation, or on what makes us human. It's particularly resonant during the pandemic to note that all of these books have important things to say about the nature of community, from the tiny and secluded to the immeasurable expanse of cyberspace" Jasanoff said in a statement.

A six-book shortlist will be announced on September 14, and the winner will be crowned on November 3 during a ceremony in London.

**INDIAN AMERICAN NIKHIL KUMAR
KNOCKED OUT OF OLYMPIC TT
MEN'S SINGLES GAME**



Nikhil Kumaran eighteen-year-old from San Jose, California lost to Swedish pro Anton Kaellberg

TOKYO (TIP): Indian American Nikhil Kumar, participating in his first Olympics, won two rounds to advance to the final 48 in the Men's Singles table tennis event before Swedish pro Anton Kaellberg knocked him out. Kumar, an eighteen-year-old from San Jose, California, did not have an answer for Kaellberg, who won the Second Round best-of-seven match in four straight games (11-7, 11-5, 11-6, 11-5) on Sunday evening at the Tokyo Metropolitan Gymnasium.

Kumar fell behind early in Game One and never seemed to get fully on track, although he did rack up four points in a row in that game to get to 7-8 before Kaellberg pulled away, according to teamusa.org.

By the third game, it was clear that Kaellberg was in command of his game and control of the match, running off the game's first six points before Kumar broke through. In the final game, Kumar grabbed his first lead of the match by taking the first three points (3-0), but Kaellberg never seemed in trouble, as he took six of the final seven points of Game Four to close out the young American.

Although Kumar is now eliminated from the Men's Singles competition, he will get another shot at Kaellberg and his Swedish teammates when the United States takes on Sweden in the Round of Sixteen for the Team Event in table tennis, which is scheduled for August 1. **(Read full story at
www.theindianpanorama.news)**

Indian American Arpita Bhattacharyya Joins key post at Department of Energy

WASHINGTON (TIP): Indian American Arpita Bhattacharyya has joined the Biden-Harris Administration as Chief of Staff to Deputy Secretary at the Department of Energy (DOE).

She is among a new group of appointees "to help advance President Biden's ambitious Build Back Better agenda to combat climate change, create good-paying jobs, and win the clean energy future for all Americans," (DOE) announced.

"DOE is thrilled to welcome these extraordinary individuals who are committed to championing climate solutions and delivering on President Biden's promise of a more prosperous, equitable clean energy future," Chief of Staff Tarak Shah said in a press release.

"Their talent and innovative spirit are invaluable to our success and making our clean energy future a reality."

Bhattacharyya most recently led strategic projects at Impossible Foods, working to bring low-emission food technology to market.

She previously worked at SunPower,



Arpita Bhattacharyya has joined the Biden-Harris Administration as Chief of Staff to Deputy Secretary at the Department of Energy (DOE).

developing commercial solar projects for Fortune 500 companies and later leading the Channel Project Development and Finance team.

Bhattacharyya has also worked closely with the US and international governments on collaborative climate partnerships at the Center for American Progress. Bhattacharyya holds an MBA from the Yale School of Management and

a BA from Carleton College.

A resident of San Francisco Bay area, Bhattacharyya has had published work on environment and climate change. She has also worked as Policy Analyst for the Energy and Environment team at the Center for American Progress.

Bhattacharyya started out as a Special Assistant to Distinguished fellow Carol Browner and was promoted three times in her time at the Center.

She is the fifth Indian American to be appointed to a senior leadership position at the DOE. In January Tarak Shah, who was the Personnel lead for the Climate and Science team at the Biden-Harris Transition, became the first person of color, first Indian American, and first openly LGBTQ person to serve as Chief of Staff at DOE.

Besides him three other Indian Americans working at DOE are: Tanya Das as Chief of Staff, Office of Science, Narayan Subramanian as Legal Advisor, Office of General Counsel and Shuchi Talati as Chief of Staff, Office of Fossil Energy.

INDIAN AMERICAN ENGINEER AND ENTREPRENEUR ENTERS CONGRESSIONAL RACE



Shrini Kurani will be running for the US House of Representatives from a Congressional District in California.

WASHINGTON (TIP): An Indian American engineer and entrepreneur has announced that she will be running for the US House of Representatives from a Congressional District in California.

Shrini Kurani, born to Indian immigrant parents in Riverside, will be challenging 15-term Republican incumbent Ken Calvert for the mid-term elections in November 2022.

"I'm running for Congress in CA-42! It's time for fact-based solutions and bold action," Ms. Kurani said on Thursday, July 22.

"As a first-generation American, my family worked together to build a successful pool supply business right here in Riverside. My parents didn't take a single day off for 10 years, but even that level of hustle is often not enough these days. Opportunities are out of reach for far too many people while career Washington politicians like Ken Calvert are focused on helping themselves, their political parties, and their corporate donors," she said.

Ms. Kurani described herself as "an engineer, entrepreneur, and a fact-based problem solver and not a politician".

"I've spent my career building businesses that reduce waste and create quality jobs. I'm running for Congress to make things work better in Washington and build an Inland Empire where people feel safe, healthy, and have opportunities to succeed in fulfilling jobs," she said.

"Ken Calvert has been in Washington for nearly 30 years and he's voted against our interest time and time again. It's time for a new approach," she added.

Kurani graduated from La Sierra High School at the age of 16 and earned her degree in mechanical engineering from UC Riverside.

She has worked to start companies aimed at reducing waste and creating sustainable solutions for food and water and served as an advisor to start-up businesses developing ways to make healthcare and education more affordable, accessible, equitable, and effective, a media release said.

At present, there are four Indian Americans in the House of Representatives -- Dr Ami Bera, Ro Khanna, Raja Krishnamoorthi and Pramila Jayapal.

INDIAN AMERICAN VEENA REDDY SWORN IN AS THE USAID'S MISSION DIRECTOR



Veena Reddy was sworn in as the new Mission Director of USAID-India - Image Tweeted by USAID_India

WASHINGTON (TIP): US Agency for International Development (USAID) on Monday, July 26, named the first Indian American Veena Reddy as its Mission Director. "Today, Veena Reddy was sworn-in as our new Mission Director. She will be the first Indian American to lead USAID-India, representing the best of both countries, and aims to bolster US-India's development partnership leveraging her unique experiences and leadership," tweeted USAID.

"Best wishes, Veena USAID-India. India-USAID partnership has the potential to make a difference to the lives of people not only in India and US, but across the world!" tweeted India's Ambassador to the United States Taranjit Singh Sandhu.

Veena Reddy, a Foreign Service Officer with the US Agency for International Development, is USAID/Cambodia's Mission Director. She arrived in Cambodia in August 2017 and currently oversees a staff of 75 as well as USAID programs in the food security, environment, health, education, child protection, and democracy and governance sectors.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

Indian American Nisha Ramachandran is the First south Asian American to be named as Executive Director of CAPAC

WASHINGTON (TIP): The Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC) has named Indian Nisha Ramachandran as its new executive director.

The former aide to Rep. Ami Bera (D-CA), a veteran of Asian American advocacy, is the first South Asian American to serve in the role.

CAPAC, founded in 1994, is a congressional caucus of members of Congress of Asian and Pacific Islander heritage. "I'm very excited to welcome Nisha Ramachandran as the new Executive Director of CAPAC," said Rep. Judy Chu (CA-27), the caucus chair, in a statement on Thursday. "Nisha comes to CAPAC after nearly a decade of experience working with the AAPI community on a national scale. Her breadth of knowledge on the issues important to the community - from civil rights to healthcare - make Nisha the perfect leader to help guide CAPAC in this critical moment as we address the continuing problem of anti-Asian violence and work to rebuild after the coronavirus pandemic in a way that ensures AAPIs are included. I am looking forward to working with Nisha to advance AAPI priorities and am eager to see her succeed."

CAPAC's First Vice Chair Rep. Grace Meng (NY-06) and Bera also welcomed Ramachandran.

"I am thrilled to congratulate and welcome Nisha Ramachandran as the new Executive Director of CAPAC," said Meng. "She has worked within the national Asian American and Pacific Islander community and brings a wealth of knowledge, expertise and experience to our caucus. I look forward to working with her on addressing the many critical issues impacting AAPIs."

"Nisha has nearly a decade of experience working within the AAPI community, including serving as an APAICS fellow with my office," Bera said. "I'm confident Nisha will be a great Executive Director and will play a valuable role in uplifting the AAPI community during this critical moment in our nation's history. As a proud CAPAC Member, I look forward to working with Nisha to advance the important work of our organization."

Most recently, Ramachandran ran a consulting firm that focused on the AAPI community. Previously, she worked at the National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA) for nearly three years, as policy director and policy and operations manager. Based in Washington, DC, NCAPA is a coalition of dozens of Asian Pacific American organizations.

Ramachandran is a cofounder and member of the board of directors of Desis for Progress, a South Asian American group that supports progressive policies and values.

Ramachandran is an alumnus of the George Washington University, from where she earned a master's in public policy in 2012. She also completed her bachelor's degree from the university in anthropology and religion.



Nisha Ramachandran has been named by the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus as its new executive director



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AS I SEE IT

The end of a dream

IN 'NEW INDIA', EVERY DISSENTING VOICE IS SEEN AS A CONSPIRACY AGAINST THE NATION



BY AVIJIT PATHAK

"LET US REFLECT ON THE TYRANNY OF POWER, AND THE TRIVIALIZATION OF FUNDAMENTAL DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES. DIALOGUE IS REPLACED BY THE MONOLOGUE OF THE SUPREME LEADER; MAJORITARIANISM IS EQUATED WITH THE ULTIMATE VIRTUE; EVERY DISSENTING VOICE IS SEEN AS A CONSPIRACY AGAINST THE NATION; AND THE WIDESPREAD NETWORK OF THE PROPAGANDA MACHINERY WITH ITS TECHNOLOGICAL GLITZ AND PATRIOTIC NOISE SEEKS TO TRANSFORM EVERYTHING INTO ITS OPPOSITE-SAY, A RIGHTS ACTIVIST INTO A TERRORIST, A PROFESSOR WITH CONSCIENCE INTO A CONSPIRATOR, OR A YOUNG/IDEALIST STUDENT INTO AN ENEMY OF THE NATION. IS IT THAT YOU AND I TOO ARE BECOMING INCREASINGLY USED TO THIS CULTURE? ARE WE ESCAPING FROM FREEDOM, AND ACCEPTING THE CULT OF NARCISSISM? OR IS IT THAT WITH THE TYRANNY OF POWER AND THE EMERGENT AUTHORITARIAN PERSONALITIES, THE STATE SEEKS TO GENERATE THE PSYCHOLOGY OF FEAR AMONGST PEOPLE?"



Snooping: In the dystopian age, technology does not liberate us; it is a chain of surveillance

Photo for representation only

Think of living in a society where surveillance is normal, and sedition charges are routinely filed against politico-cultural dissenters. And think of the ruling regime that wants us to believe that the allegations of surveillance using Pegasus spyware are wrong, and everything is perfect except the noise made by a set of 'disruptive'/ 'anti-national' conspirators. Is it the end of a dream that many of our freedom fighters strove for—the dream of a new India evolving through the spirit of decolonization, and cherishing the values of equity, justice, moral, intellectual, political freedom and symmetrical cultural pluralism? Is it the time to throw all these principles into the dustbin of history, and get ready to enter the dystopian age?

Yes, it is frightening. Yet, we have to acknowledge it. And possibly, we too have to look at ourselves to comprehend why this dystopia is becoming so obvious. Let us reflect on the tyranny of power, and the trivialization of fundamental democratic principles. Dialogue is replaced by the monologue of the supreme leader; majoritarianism is equated with the ultimate virtue; every dissenting voice is seen as a conspiracy against the nation; and the widespread network of the propaganda machinery with its technological glitz and patriotic noise seeks to transform everything into its opposite-say, a rights activist into a terrorist, a professor with conscience into a conspirator, or a young/idealist student into an enemy of the nation. Is it that you and I too are becoming increasingly used to this culture? Are we escaping from freedom, and accepting the cult of narcissism? Or is it that with the tyranny of power and the emergent authoritarian personalities, the state seeks to generate the psychology of fear amongst people?

We live amid fear—the fear of being targeted, and branded as a 'conspirator'; the fear of being observed and monitored through the newly formed sophisticated technologies of surveillance; the fear of

being sent to a dark cell of a non-hygienic/over-crowded prison, and not granted the bail. Well, the likes of Gandhi, Ambedkar and Bhagat Singh might have cherished the principle of freedom, and modern/enlightenment philosophers might have generated this aspiration. But then, in this dystopian age, freedom, it seems, is a myth. Is it that we are abandoning the idea of freedom except the superficial freedom to buy and consume, or surf multiple television channels, and watch cricket, soap operas and spicy Bollywood stories? As the findings of the Pegasus project have revealed, there is no notion of privacy; and the telephone number of anybody, be it the Supreme Court staffer who accused a former Chief Justice of India of sexual harassment or Rahul Gandhi, can be potentially targeted. And it is obvious that these technologies of surveillance would further promote an authoritarian political culture.

And at the same time, this phenomenon of the ever-growing chains of surveillance leads to yet another important question relating to our everyday life. Is it that it is not just the State, but you and I too have begun to celebrate and internalize the idea of surveillance? Yes, the CCTV camera has entered the very soul of our existence. The school principal is observing, monitoring, hierarchizing and disciplining her colleagues and students; the gated community is observing every visitor; and some 'alert' parents observe their children through the eyes of the CCTV camera. From railway stations to airports, from market complexes to cinema halls—we are under surveillance. And in the name of 'safety' and 'security', we seem to have accepted it; in fact, it would not be wrong to say that we are demanding more and more surveillance. This is the irony of our times. In a way, we too have prepared the ground for the arrival of a state that seeks to enter even our bedrooms.

Likewise, we should also ask ourselves

WE LIVE AMID FEAR—THE FEAR OF BEING TARGETED, AND BRANDED AS A 'CONSPIRATOR'; THE FEAR OF BEING OBSERVED AND MONITORED THROUGH THE NEWLY FORMED SOPHISTICATED TECHNOLOGIES OF SURVEILLANCE; THE FEAR OF BEING SENT TO A DARK CELL OF A NON-HYGIENIC/OVER-CROWDED PRISON, AND NOT GRANTED THE BAIL.

a question: Do we really like to value and preserve our privacy? See the way with our obsessive indulgence with the ever-growing communication technologies, everything private about our lives is becoming a commodity for public consumption: be it a honeymoon picture or the new car bought at the time of Diwali. For many, it is not very easy to retain the distinction between the 'private' and the 'public' amid the Facebook/WhatsApp-induced temptations of 'sharing', 'following' and 'subscribing.' As technology seduces us, we fall more and more into the chains of surveillance. In the dystopian age, technology does not liberate us; it is a chain of surveillance.

What is the message that this dystopian message is conveying? Abandon the idea of freedom. Instead, be a loyal conformist. Deny your creative agency, and wait for the miracle to be delivered by the supreme leader. Follow the prescribed ideology of nationalism—its symbols, its uniform and its military dream. And be 'productive'; never question the 'good intentions' of the corporate empire to enhance economic growth and build smart cities; those who think of Gandhi and Marx, love Tagore and Sartre, read George Orwell and Michel Foucault, and speak of freedom, satyagraha and creative rebelliousness are 'useless', 'non-productive' and 'dangerous'. And accept the logic of surveillance. It is for your benefit. It assures 'safety' and 'security', and it eliminates the possibility of all sorts of danger that might emanate from 'terrorists', 'Maoists', 'environmental fundamentalists', 'disobedient journalists' and 'unruly' university students!

It is for us to decide whether we are ready to enter this dystopian age, or acquire the courage to say that to live gracefully is to fly in the open sky.

(The author is a Sociologist)

This agitation is not just about farmers now



BY YOGENDRA
YADAV

"THE FARMERS ARE A FORCE THAT CAN SHAPE AN ALTERNATIVE PATH TO INDIA'S DEVELOPMENT. AGAIN, IT IS NOT THAT FARMERS BELIEVE IN ALTERNATIVES MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE. IT IS JUST THAT THEIR LIVELIHOOD CONCERNS AND COLLECTIVE INTEREST PUSH THEM TOWARDS EQUITY AND ECOLOGICAL SUSTAINABILITY. THE PRESENT MOVEMENT UNDERLINES THE FARMERS' QUEST FOR EQUITY, THEIR DEMAND FOR A DIGNIFIED MINIMUM PRICE FOR THEIR PRODUCE, AND THEIR DETERMINATION TO COMBAT CORPORATE TAKEOVER OF AGRICULTURE. SOONER THAN LATER, THE CHALLENGE OF CLIMATE CHANGE WOULD FORCE THE FARMERS TO BE THE TORCHBEARERS OF SUSTAINABILITY AS WELL. POOR ECOLOGICAL PRACTICES ARE NOW BEGINNING TO TURN INTO POOR ECONOMICS FOR THE FARMERS AND CAUSING THEIR RUIN. FARMERS ARE NOT SOME RELIC OF THE PAST. THEY CAN BE A POTENT FORCE TO SHAPE INDIA'S FUTURE."

JULY 26 was a special day to ask a big question: can the farmers' movement be the vanguard we need in rescuing our constitutional democracy and reclaiming the republic?

On July 26, the historic kisan morcha at the borders of Delhi completed eight months. The Samyukt Kisan Morcha



Farmers can shape an alternative path to India's development. - Photo / CourtesyTribune

(SKM) marked the day by organizing an all-women Kisan Sansad within earshot of Parliament. Just when the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was hoping to erase the farmers' movement from the country's mindscape, it sprang up to occupy the center stage once again. The successful and peaceful conduct of Kisan Sansad addressed some of the real as well as orchestrated anxieties associated with the Republic Day protest this year. The same day, the SKM leadership was in Lucknow to announce 'Mission UP and Uttarakhand'. The detailed calendar for these two states signaled a move to expand, deepen and intensify the movement.

It so happened that Rahul Gandhi chose the same day to drive a tractor to Parliament with a banner opposing the three farm laws, leading to a day-long detention of some Congress MPs. Within the House, all Opposition MPs followed the whip issued by the farmers' movement and continuously raised the issues flagged by the farmers. This rare coincidence of protests inside and outside Parliament may have meant little to the Narendra Modi government, but it did indicate the political clout of the farmers' movement and its role as the opposition in the country, currently.

The question now is not what the farmers can secure for themselves. The prime issue is not about if and when the farmers would succeed in their immediate objective of getting the anti-farmer laws repealed and securing legal guarantee of the Minimum Support Price (MSP). The real question is what the farmers can secure for the entire country - whether they can lead the larger battle for saving the very idea of India.

My answer is in the affirmative. Not because I draw upon 'insider information' as a participant, not because I believe in any special virtues of the peasantry. I believe the farmers can play a decisive role in reclaiming our rapidly shrinking republic because their class interest happens to coincide with

the project of saving the soul of India. If democracy, diversity and development are the three key pillars of the idea of India, farmers' movement cannot but provide anchors to all these ideas. In saving themselves, the farmers save the republic of India.

I am not suggesting that farmers are inherently more democratic than other classes of citizens. They are not. But one thing is clear: in today's India, farmers need democracy more than other classes. Businessmen can buy their way to achieve what they need. The middle class can access power through bureaucracy and occasionally through judiciary as well. The working class in the organized sector still has some, though fast-dwindling, procedural protections to safeguard their interests. Farmers as a group have no avenue open to them other than street politics, agitations and movements. They need democratic spaces to exercise this option. Their class interest coincides with the project of saving democracy. The ongoing farmers' movement is acutely aware of this. It is not a coincidence that exactly a month ago, the farmers had marked June 26, the Emergency Day, by organizing 'Save Agriculture, Save Democracy' protests outside Raj Bhawans across the country.

Similarly, the farmers' movement provides the strongest bulwark against the assault on the idea of a diverse India. Not just because farmers and farming are inherently diverse and protecting farming is about protecting diversity. And not merely because the movement happened to have originated among the Sikh peasantry. Above all, the project of uniting farmers requires the movement to take on the BJP's politics of divide and rule. In Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, the farmers' movement has already established itself as the most powerful organized force to take on the politics of communal division. As the movement spreads to other regions of the country, this is the true 'Bharat Jodo Andolan'.

Finally, the farmers are a force that can

THE QUESTION NOW IS NOT WHAT THE FARMERS CAN SECURE FOR THEMSELVES. THE PRIME ISSUE IS NOT ABOUT IF AND WHEN THE FARMERS WOULD SUCCEED IN THEIR IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVE OF GETTING THE ANTI-FARMER LAWS REPEALED AND SECURING LEGAL GUARANTEE OF MSP. THE REAL QUESTION IS WHAT THE FARMERS CAN SECURE FOR THE ENTIRE COUNTRY - WHETHER THEY CAN LEAD THE LARGER BATTLE FOR SAVING THE VERY IDEA OF INDIA.

shape an alternative path to India's development. Again, it is not that farmers believe in alternatives more than anyone else. It is just that their livelihood concerns and collective interest push them towards equity and ecological sustainability. The present movement underlines the farmers' quest for equity, their demand for a dignified minimum price for their produce, and their determination to combat corporate takeover of agriculture. Sooner than later, the challenge of climate change would force the farmers to be the torchbearers of sustainability as well. Poor ecological practices are now beginning to turn into poor economics for the farmers and causing their ruin. Farmers are not some relic of the past. They can be a potent force to shape India's future.

First, this is not an argument about the necessity and inevitability of farmers' role in history. Farmers need not always play the role of a revolutionary vanguard, the role assigned to the working class in the Marxist theory. But there is one commonality with the logic advanced in The Communist Manifesto: like the proletariat, the farmers in today's India are the only class whose interest happens to be aligned with the forward movement in history.

Second, this won't happen by itself. The alignment of interests ensures that the farmers are well placed to play a historic role. But it all depends on how consciously and carefully the farmers' movement takes up this task. It depends upon how the present movement combines the immediate economic issues of the farmers with the larger political issues involving their long-term interest. It depends on how well the movement succeeds in spreading itself beyond its current geographic epicenter and in uniting all sections of Indian farmers, from big landowners to the landless peasants. That is the historic responsibility of the farmers' leadership.

(The author is National President, Swaraj India. He can be reached at Yogendra.yadav@gmail.com)

US Flight from Afghanistan and the Opportunity for the PRIC

BY DR. A. ADITYANJEE

"Geopolitics abhors vacuum and that will be true of Afghanistan despite its hostile reputation and tough terrain. The US and the NATO countries have no direct interest in Afghanistan at this juncture having tasted defeat. However, others do. And that includes neighboring countries like Pakistan and China. Pakistan has always lusted for strategic depth by swallowing the Islamic neighbor Afghanistan from the time of the military dictator General Zia-ul-Haq. In Pakistan's congenital hostility towards India, the ISI and the GHQ have yearned for strategic depth to balance India after having lost their Eastern wing in 1971 war with India leading to emergence of the independent Bangladesh."

Afghanistan has been aptly called the graveyard of empires. It is the theatre where the British Empire and the Czarist Russia played the great game! Czarist Russia pined for a warm water port in the Indian ocean. Control of Afghanistan was the primary means of getting that access to a warm water port in the Indian ocean. After the British and the Soviets, it is the turn of the US to realize that aphorism by learning a practical lesson. After a 20 years' long occupation of Afghanistan in the name of eliminating terrorism, nation building and promoting democracy, the current US administration belatedly realized that US military engagement in Afghanistan was counterproductive. Having lost at least 2443 US soldiers, 21000 seriously war wounded, and an undeclared number (3800) of civilian-military-security contractors, having spent almost \$ 2.3 trillion of money in the black hole of Afghanistan, war has been costly to the US.

The allied NATO forces lost 1144 soldiers in this war. Afghanistan government may have lost 70,000 soldiers over the last two decades. By a conservative estimate by the Brown University, 48,000 Afghan civilians may have died due to the war. All this while, the Wiley neighbor and the fountain head of terrorism, Pakistan was milking the US as a cash cow. The US Congress sanctioned \$18 billion of US monies between 2001 and 2011 for Pakistan. The funds trickled down slowly afterwards as the Americans realized that they were being taken for a ride. The war forced 2.7 million Afghans to flee abroad; another 4 million were internally displaced people. We do not know the exact casualty figures for the Taliban. Having said that, the distinction between the Afghan civilians and Taliban fighters is very thin.

While the Woke of the World will blame the US for this carnage, equal responsibility lies on other states (Pakistan and Saudi Arabia) and non-state actors like Taliban and Al Qaeda. While the terror groups were sponsored and given safe haven sanctuaries by Pakistan; a major chunk of funding for these terror groups came from Saudi Arabia and UAE initially along with other petrodollar rich Gulf countries. Incidentally, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Turkmenistan were the only four countries that had recognized the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan headed by Mullah Omar in the late 1990s. Granted that the US was successful in crushing the Al Qaeda during the last two decades, Pakistan's duplicity and the US stupidity has resulted in the renewed resurgence of the Taliban. We are witnessing the prospect of the current Afghan government being routed in next few months as the Taliban consolidate their grip over the entire Afghanistan.

Geopolitics abhors vacuum and that will be true of



U.S. troops leaving Afghanistan

Afghanistan despite its hostile reputation and tough terrain. The US and the NATO countries have no direct interest in Afghanistan at this juncture having tasted defeat. However, others do. And that includes neighboring countries like Pakistan and China. Pakistan has always lusted for strategic depth by swallowing the Islamic neighbor Afghanistan from the time of the military dictator General Zia-ul-Haq. In Pakistan's congenital hostility towards India, the ISI and the GHQ have yearned for strategic depth to balance India after having lost their Eastern wing in 1971 war with India leading to emergence of the independent Bangladesh.

An expansionist China is gradually expanding its land borders after having swallowed Tibet and East Turkistan. In the recent years China has been lusting after the minerals and rare earths deposits of Afghanistan. It is true that China is wary of the Islamic terror threat from Afghanistan into its own Uighur population in Xinjiang region (former East Turkistan); however, there seems to be a lovefest going on between China and Taliban. Taliban leadership is assuring China that they will never be a party to spreading terrorism in any country especially China. The neighboring Islamic Republic of Iran is interested in its religious and cultural affinity with the mainly Shia population in Northern Afghanistan. Although Iran may have provided sanctuary to some of the Taliban leaders during the last two decades, its theocratic leadership is not in love with Saudi and Pak-sponsored Sunni fundamentalist terrorist group like Taliban. Iran's tolerance for the Taliban in the last two decades was secondary to the Iran's hostility towards the US rather than any genuine love for the Taliban.

That brings the issue of Russian interest in Afghanistan. One might think that Russia, once bitten by the Taliban and Al Qaeda, would be twice shy. Why is the current Russian government so favorably inclined towards the Taliban and the prospect of Taliban governed Afghanistan? The answer may be schadenfreude at the US plight and now its flight! However, the Russian leadership under Putin has become very pragmatic. They want to keep their enemies closer to their heart. Russia knows that an unrestrained Taliban pose a danger to Russian southern borders and would radicalize the Russian Islamic terrorist groups in Chechnya. In order to control the Taliban, Russia has no options but to engage the Taliban and try to moderate them in their outreach in Central Asia. Russia just signed a Karachi to Lahore pipeline deal with Pakistan. Despite India's displeasure, Russia has started selling arms to Pakistan. Russia is reaching out to Pakistan as a counter-reaction to India's burgeoning strategic relationship with the US. Russia should be wary of China's demographic invasion of Russia's north-east Siberian region. Ongoing Sinicization of Russian Siberia will eventually lead to

The allied NATO forces lost 1144 soldiers in this war. Afghanistan government may have lost 70,000 soldiers over the last two decades. By a conservative estimate by the Brown University, 48,000 Afghan civilians may have died due to the war. All this while, the Wiley neighbor and the fountain head of terrorism, Pakistan was milking the US as a cash cow.

China claiming sovereignty and annexing that region. Russia should understand its long-term strategic interests. Russia should refuse to sell S-500 ballistic missile defense system to China. Russia should not be satisfied with being a junior strategic partner to China.

It is, indeed, very likely that an Afghanistan over-run by the Taliban in the next few months may end up having four wives: mainly Pakistan, Russia, Iran and China. We have called this gang of four anti-Quad countries earlier by the acronym PRIC analogous to the acronym BRIC. It is an alternative quadrilateral group (anti-Quad quad) that is likely to be sponsored by China to counterbalance the real Quad! Although, the motivations of the individual countries are uniquely selfish to each of them in engaging with Afghanistan, they might collectively fill the geo-political vacuum in Afghanistan left by the US withdrawal. The balance of power issues in Afghanistan, which is the gateway of the Central Asia, will entice China to assume a leadership role in forging the unholy alliance of the PRIC. China does have the option of using the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) mechanism in Afghanistan but for hard realpolitik, China will refrain from using the SCO as the primary tool of influence in Afghanistan. China's strategic purpose in Afghanistan will be to keep India out, China in and Russia down. In order to achieve that geo-political goal, China will undercut its own SCO mechanism because it includes both Russia and India. Russia may favor involvement of the SCO in Afghanistan to counterbalance China. Keeping the SCO out of Afghanistan will definitely suit China's ironclad friend Pakistan also. Along with China, Pakistan does not countenance a role for India in the Talibanized again Afghanistan! Pakistan might tolerate Iran's involvement in a Talibanized Afghanistan as compared to India.

History teaches us that there cannot be geo-political vacuum. US and the NATO have lost any appetite for engagement in Afghanistan. China, aiming to be the sole superpower, will try to take the final step to humiliate America and contain India by fostering the cooperation and birthing of the PRIC group. Eight years ago, China had proposed a G-2 condominium to the US which US flatly rejected. Now, China is dreaming under Paramount Leader Xi Jinping to be the all-pervasive hegemon of the world relegating the US to number two position. Just like China worked from the theoretical economic construct of the BRIC, to launch the organization BRIC and later enlarge it into BRICS as means to exert geo-political influence, China will surely launch the PRIC quad in a major way.

The theater of a Talibanized Afghanistan gives the Communist China a readymade geopolitical opportunity to the launch the PRIC as a quadrilateral cooperation mechanism to balance the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue mechanism! It will depend upon the wisdom and sagacity of the Putin-led Russia and the foresight and astuteness of Indian diplomacy to prevent such an unholy alliance mechanism of the PRIC from taking birth! US can also contribute to the same goal by lifting sanctions on India for trading with Iran, even if the US is not on friendly terms with Iran. Let India engage Iran so as to prevent Iran from getting deeper into the Dragon's embrace. Iran is a civilizational nation analogous to India and China which the US is not. US State department mandarins do not understand the importance of the concept of civilizational nations and history. Let India take the leadership in aborting the birth of the PRIC while the US provides support to India from behind.

(The author is a columnist. He can be reached at adityanca@gmail.com)

Pakistan PM names 'common friend' who offered Rs 1K crore bribe to withdraw case against Nawaz Sharif

LAHORE (TIP): Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan has finally filed a reply in a defamation case and identified a "common friend" who allegedly offered him Rs 1,000 crore on behalf of Shahbaz Sharif to withdraw the Panama Papers case in the Supreme Court against then prime minister Nawaz Sharif.

Khan in 2017 had alleged that Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) president Shahbaz offered him Rs 1,000 crore through a "common friend" to withdraw the Panama Papers case in the Supreme Court against then prime minister Nawaz Sharif.

Khan at that time did not disclose the identity of the person who offered him the bribe on behalf of Shahbaz.

Shahbaz, 69, is the younger brother of 71-year-old Nawaz Sharif.

Following Khan's allegation, Shahbaz filed a defamation case against the cricketer-turned-politician.

In a written reply to Lahore session court on Tuesday in response to the defamation suit, Prime Minister Khan disclosed the name of the person who offered him Rs 1,000 crore to withdraw the Panama Papers case against Sharif as Omar Farooq.

"Omar Farooq—a common friend—made this offer to Imran Khan," the prime minister's counsel told the court.

The counsel said the incident was disclosed for the consumption of the public at large and in the interest of the public good which does not constitute



any defamation.

He said the plaintiff and the defendant are political rivals and have been facing each other in the political arena for more than two decades.

Shahbaz himself made numerous "defaming and malicious" statements against Khan and other leaders of the ruling Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) as well as other political parties in the past, the counsel said, requesting the court to dismiss the suit as the PML-N leader is not entitled to any damages.

Additional District and Sessions Judge Mudassir Farid adjourned the hearing

till August 4.

In the four years, Khan's legal team sought adjournments on at least 50 hearings.

In his petition, Shahbaz requested the court to issue a decree for recovery of Rs 1,000 crore as compensation for the "defamatory" comment, which caused great damage to his reputation in the public. In a statement on Wednesday, PML-N spokesperson Marriyum Auranzeb demanded an apology from Prime Minister Khan for levelling baseless allegations against the Opposition leader. (PTI)

INDONESIA'S SINABUNG VOLCANO SPEWS ASH, HOT CLOUDS

MEDAN (INDONESIA) (TIP): A rumbling volcano on Indonesia's Sumatra island on July 28 shot billowing columns of ash and hot clouds down its slopes.

The ash released by Mount Sinabung in North Sumatra province reached more than 4,500 metres (14,760 feet) into the atmosphere, and an avalanche of searing gas clouds blew 1 kilometre (0.62 mile) to the east and southeast, Indonesia's Volcanology and Geological Hazard Mitigation Centre said.

There were no casualties from the afternoon eruption, said Armen Putra, an official at the Sinabung monitoring post, and an alert has been maintained at the second-highest level.

The 2,600-metre (8,530-foot) mountain has been rumbling since last year and villagers were advised to stay 5 km (3.1 miles) from the crater's mouth. They've been warned about lava, while authorities were closely monitoring sensors that picked up increasing activity in recent weeks.

The last such eruption was in early May, when ash fell on nearby villages.

The volcano, one of two currently erupting in Indonesia, was dormant for four centuries before exploding in 2010, killing two people. Another eruption in 2014 killed 17 people, while seven died in a 2016 eruption. It has sporadically come to life since then.

About 30,000 people have been forced to leave their homes around Sinabung in the past few years.

Sinabung is among more than 120 active volcanoes in Indonesia, which is prone to seismic upheaval due to its location on the Pacific "Ring of Fire", an arc of volcanoes and fault lines encircling the Pacific Basin. — AP

Taliban attack on Afghan city foiled; 28 militants dead

KABUL (TIP): Afghan security forces have foiled a Taliban attack on the city of Taluqan city, the capital of Takhar province, and killed 28 militants, an official said on July 27. The Taliban militants, according to the official, were planning to storm Taluqan city from different directions but the ground troops backed by fighter planes targeted the militants, forcing them to retreat.

Besides the 28 victims, 17 Taliban militants were also injured. The Taliban reportedly control all 16 districts of Takhar province and have been fighting to capture Taluqan city, 245 km north of Kabul.

A number of Takhar residents have staged a sit-in in Kabul, calling on the central government to send more troops to the province. In another development, nine militants, including four foreigners, were confirmed dead after

'NATO WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT GHANI'

NATO SECRETARY-GENERAL JENS STOLTENBERG SAID HE HAD SPOKEN TO AFGHANISTAN PRESIDENT ASHRAF GHANI TO REASSURE HIM THAT NATO WOULD CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE COUNTRY, WHERE TALIBAN ADVANCES HAVE PILED PRESSURE ON THE US-BACKED GOVERNMENT IN KABUL. REUTERS

soldiers ambushed Taliban fighters in in Kuran-wo-Munjan district of the Badakhshan province. — IANS

Imran Khan's PTI wins most seats in PoK election marred by irregularities, violence

ISLAMABAD (TIP): Prime Minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party is set to form the next government in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) as it emerged as the largest political party in the legislative assembly election in the region which was marred by allegations of irregularities and violence, local media reported, citing unofficial results.

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party (PTI) has won 23 seats while Pakistan People's Party (PPP) was second with eight seats and the incumbent Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) secured just six seats, the state-run Radio Pakistan reported.

Muslim Conference (MC) and Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Party (JKPP) were successful on one seat each.

However, Geo TV reported that PTI won 25 seats, followed by PPP with nine and PML-N six. One seat each was won by Muslim Conference and Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Party.

Thus, PTI got a simple majority to form the government without support of any other party. It is for the first time that it will form a government in PoK.

Traditionally, the ruling party in the country wins the elections in PoK.

The assembly has a total of 53 members but only 45 are directly elected, while five seats are reserved for women and three are meant for technocrats.

The 45 members directly elected include 33 residents of PoK and 12 refugees who came over the years from Kashmir and settled in various cities of Pakistan. (PTI)

American Telugu Association's July 2022 DC Conference Grand Kickoff an Enormous Success

WASHINGTON (TIP): American Telugu Association, a burgeoning Telugu association catering to the needs of Telugu People across North America announced on Saturday, July 24th that it is ready to conduct its first ever national Conference in Washington DC Area. In an event held on July 24th Saturday at Crowne Plaza hotel in Herndon, VA with much fervor and pomp, ATA announced that it will conduct its flagship event ATA17th Conference and Youth Convention at Walter E Convention Centre in Washington, DC on July 1-3rd, 2022 and unveiled the Conference Theme song & Logo.

ATA Jt. Secretary Ramakrishna Ala welcomed the audiences and guests onto the stage. Sr. Counsellor (Economic) Embassy of India, Washington DC Mr. Anshul Sharma graced the occasion as chief guest and carried out the ceremonial lamp lighting ceremony to kick start the convention amidst nadaswaram music. Mr. Sharma applauded the efforts of ATA over the past 30 years and being a key integral part of Indian diaspora.

ATA President Boojala announced that this will be the major Telugu event in the post COVID world and was ecstatic to announce that Washington DC will



Pasham, Conference Director KK Reddy, Co-Convener Sai Sudini, Co-Coordinator Ravi Challa, Co-Director Ravi Bojja along with the support from CATS President Sudha Kondapu. Capital Area Telugu Sangam, CATS, is the co-host of the convention. A total of 70 Conference Committees



that all the safety protocols were followed to conduct the event and appraised audiences that ATA in spite of being torch bearer of Telugu culture also is involved in a lot of SEVA activities. Conference Director KK Reddy announced that 800 people attending the kickoff meet itself conveys the



host its first convention ever in capital area. Mr. Boojala quoted that all the Telugu people are a single family and invited one and all to this festival of Telugu's. ATA President Elect Madhu Bommineni encouraged all the women to come forward and play a pivotal role in making the conference a huge success. Conference Committees were announced, and the 17th ATA Conference & Youth Convention will be held under the leadership of Convener Sudheer Bandaru, Coordinator Kiran

were announced and several prominent Telugu community members from the area adorned various key roles.

17th ATA Conference Convener Sudheer Bandaru requested the support of DC area Telugu's to come forward in scores, volunteer and make this event a huge success. CATS President Sudha Kondapu promised full-fledged support of their entire team for the event from the bottom of their heart. Conference Coordinator Kiran Pasham announced



enthusiasm within the Telugu community about this convention. Advisory committee chair Jay Challa pledged his full support and advised the committee to be always positive in their path towards the convention to make it a huge success. TANA, NATA, TDF, NATS, TATA, GWTCs, Varadhi, TAM, Ujwala, and several other organizations pledged their wholehearted support for the event.

Festivities kick started with a plethora of ATA leaders from various parts of US descending upon DC metro area to participate in the event. Event Days Proceedings started with a strong contingent of 100 volunteers from ATA Executive board, Trustees, Adhoc, Standing Committees and local committees visiting Walter E Convention Center for a site visit and to plan the logistics. Fun filled evening programs included a medley of cultural and Bollywood dances. Young Talented singers enthralled the audiences with their mesmerizing renditions of the popular Telugu songs. Fundraising event was held and \$750K was raised towards the convention. Sumptuous food was provided. Saree clad Indian women and kids in ethnic attire adorned the halls of the meeting center and were witnessed having a great time. ATA Past Presidents Parmesh Bheemreddy, Karunakar Asireddy congratulated the local teams and media for their outstanding support to ATA.



U.S. maintains entry restrictions due to rising Delta cases

WASHINGTON(TIP): The United States said Monday, July 26 it would maintain restrictions on international travel into the country, sidestepping European pressure, pointing to a surge of cases of the COVID-19 Delta variant at home and abroad.

"We will maintain existing travel restrictions at this point," White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki told reporters.

"The more transmissible Delta variant is spreading both here and around the world."

In its latest advisories, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommended avoiding travel to Spain and Portugal, two popular destinations for American tourists, due to growing cases of COVID-19.

The United States issued the same guidance for Cyprus, a week after also recommending against travel to Britain,

the top international destination for US travelers after Mexico and Canada in 2019.

COVID cases have also been rising again in the United States, overwhelmingly due to the Delta variant among people who have not been vaccinated despite the wide availability of doses.

Ms. Psaki said the White House projected that COVID cases would keep rising "in the weeks ahead."

Asked how travel restrictions would help, Ms. Psaki said, "Yes, it is the dominant variant in the United States. That doesn't mean that having more people who have the Delta variant is the right step."

The United States has restricted travel from the European Union, Britain, China and Iran for more than a year due to the Covid-19 pandemic, later adding other countries including Brazil and India.

The European Union in June opened up to travelers from the United States, typically requiring proof of vaccination or negative tests, under pressure from tourism-dependent nations such as Greece, Spain and Italy that feared another bare season.

EU leaders have asked the United States to show reciprocity, and President Joe Biden on July 15 said he would have an answer on the issue "within the next several days" after appeals by German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

The United States makes widespread exceptions including for students, scholars, journalists and businesspeople, but European leaders have complained that the regulations inconvenience ordinary people and hinder transatlantic trade.

Top US government scientist Anthony Fauci warned Sunday that the United



:"The more transmissible Delta variant is spreading both here and around the world," says White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki.

File photo

States is "going in the wrong direction" and repeated appeals for hesitant people to get vaccinated.

"It certainly is in retreat among the vaccinated," Fauci told CNN.

IRS CONTINUES UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION ADJUSTMENTS, PREPARES ANOTHER 1.5 MILLION REFUNDS

WASHINGTON (TIP): The Internal Revenue Service reported July 28 that another 1.5 million taxpayers will receive refunds averaging more than \$1,600 as it continues to adjust unemployment compensation from previously filed income tax returns.



Most taxpayers need not take any action and there is no need to call the IRS. However, if, because of the excluded unemployment compensation, taxpayers are now eligible for deductions or credits not claimed on the original return, they should file a Form 1040-X, Amended U.S. Individual Income Tax Return.

Taxpayers should file an amended return if they:

- did not submit a Schedule 8812 with the original return to claim the Additional Child Tax Credit and are now eligible for the credit after the unemployment compensation exclusion;
- did not submit a Schedule EIC with the original return to claim the Earned Income Tax Credit (with qualifying dependents) and are now eligible for the credit after the unemployment compensation exclusion;
- are now eligible for any other credits and/or deductions not mentioned below. Make sure to include any required forms or schedules.

Taxpayers do not need to file an amended return if they:

- already filed a tax return and did not claim the unemployment exclusion; the IRS will determine the correct taxable amount of unemployment compensation and tax;
- have an adjustment, because of the exclusion, that will result in an increase in any non-refundable or refundable credits reported on the original return;
- did not claim the following credits on their tax return but are now eligible when the unemployment exclusion is applied: Recovery Rebate Credit, Earned Income Credit with no qualifying dependents or the Advance Premium Tax Credit. The IRS will calculate the credit and include it in any overpayment;
- filed a married filing joint return, live in a community property state, and entered a smaller exclusion amount than entitled on Schedule 1, line 8.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, which became law in March, excluded up to \$10,200 in 2020 unemployment compensation from taxable income calculations. The exclusion applied to individuals and married couples whose modified adjusted gross income was less than \$150,000.

Refunds by direct deposit will begin July 28 and refunds by paper check will begin July 30. This is the fourth round of refunds related to the unemployment compensation exclusion provision.

Since May, the IRS has issued over 8.7 million unemployment compensation refunds totaling over \$10 billion. The IRS will continue reviewing and adjusting tax returns in this category this summer.

The IRS effort focused on minimizing burden on taxpayers so that most people won't have to take any additional action to receive the refund. The IRS review means most taxpayers affected by this change will not have to file an amended return because IRS employees have reviewed and adjusted their tax returns for them. For taxpayers who overpaid, the IRS will either refund the overpayment or apply it to other outstanding taxes or other federal or state debts owed.

For this round, the IRS identified approximately 1.7 million taxpayers due an adjustment. Of that number, approximately 1.5 million taxpayers are expected to receive a refund. The refund average is \$1,686.

The IRS started with the simplest tax returns and is now reviewing more complex returns. The average refund amount is higher for this round because the IRS included an adjustment to the Advance Premium Tax Credit (APTC).

OFFICER AT CAPITOL RIOT RESPONDS TO QUESTIONS OF CREDIBILITY: 'I CAN'T PUT A BAND-AID ON MY EMOTIONS'

WASHINGTON (TIP): A US Capitol Police officer who was the target of racist slurs during the January 6 insurrection rebuked questions about his credibility from conservative critics Wednesday, July 28 evening, stating, "I can't put a Band-Aid on my emotions."



Harry Dunn testified Tuesday, July 27, before the House select committee investigating the riot

Harry Dunn -- one of the four officers who testified Tuesday, July 27, before the House select committee investigating the riot -- told CNN's Don Lemon on "Don Lemon Tonight," "You know what hurts more, or just as much as what happened on January 6? The attacks -- the attacks on our credibility and that we're lying and that we don't love our country and we're fake police officers and we're not real cops."

Last week, Fox News host Tucker Carlson sought to undermine Dunn's credibility in advance of his testimony, claiming without evidence that the officer "is an angry, left-wing political activist."

"Dunn will pretend to speak for the country's law enforcement community, but it turns out Dunn has very little in common with your average cop," Carlson said on his show.

The comments prompted an immediate response from Dunn's lawyers, and the officer told CNN on Wednesday evening that "it's more than frustrating." Though he wasn't physically assaulted during the attack, Dunn asked, "If I came here with my arm in a sling, or bandage around my head, would that give me more credibility?"

"Sorry, I can't put a Band-Aid on my emotions or my brain, my psychological -- my mindset. I cannot put a Band-Aid on it. All I got is my words."

Dunn has repeatedly spoken out about how he and his fellow Black officers are still grappling with their harrowing experience on January 6, when they endured racist attacks from the insurrectionists. Flags, signs and symbols of racist, White supremacist and extremist groups were displayed along with Trump 2020 banners and American flags at the riot. Black officers played a key role in defending lawmakers during the attack.

"More than six months later, January 6 still isn't over for me," Dunn told the House panel Tuesday. "I know so many other officers continue to hurt, both physically and emotionally,"

Dunn added that he has sought counseling "for the persistent emotional trauma of that day" and implored his colleagues to do the same if needed.

"I want to take this moment and speak to my fellow officers about the emotions they are continuing to experience from the events of January 6. There is absolutely nothing wrong with seeking professional counseling," he said. "What we all went through that day was traumatic, and if you are hurting, please take advantage of the counseling services that are available to us." (Source: CNN)

Another FIR registered against Raj Kundra in porn apps case

MUMBAI (TIP): Another FIR registered has been against businessman Raj Kundra at Malvani Police Station in connection with his role as an alleged "key conspirator" in a case of making pornographic films and publishing them through mobile applications. He was arrested on July 19.

The Mumbai crime branch has taken up the case for further investigation.

On Tuesday, July 27, the Bombay High Court sought a response from the Mumbai Police in a plea by Kundra, alleging that his arrest was illegal as he was not served legal notices as per law. The court said it cannot decide on granting interim relief and pass an order without hearing respondent authorities and adjourned the hearing in the plea.

Maharashtra floods: US NGO to deploy medical teams

An American non-profit organisation will deploy medical teams to treat survivors in Maharashtra after heavy monsoon rains pummelled the region, triggering devastating landslides and flooding that have killed over 200 people and displaced thousands of others.

Three medical teams departed for Sangli, Satara and Ratnagiri on Wednesday, the non-profit body Americares said in a statement.

The teams, organised by Americares India staff in Mumbai and operated in partnership with local healthcare groups, will provide urgently needed medical care and COVID-19 education to survivors for 10 days.

According to the statement, two additional teams will depart for Kolhapur and Raigad later this week to deliver essential health services for families affected by the recent floods.

"The flooding in Maharashtra has devastated communities and has put the health of thousands at risk," said Americares vice president of Emergency Response Kate Dischino.

SC says no immunity to protect legislators from criminal law

NEW DELHI (TIP): The Supreme Court of India on Wednesday, July 28, dismissed a petition filed by the Kerala Government seeking a direction to withdraw cases against prominent Communist Party of India (Marxist) leaders for alleged vandalism in the Kerala State Assembly in 2015 when the current ruling party in the state was in opposition at the time of the incident.

A two-judge bench of the apex court, headed by Justice Chandrachud and comprising Justice M R Shah in its judgement said that "there is no immunity/privilege that protects legislators from criminal law."

"There is no merit in the Kerala government's appeal, and the appeal stands dismissed," Justice Dr Dhananjaya Chandrachud, leading the bench of the Supreme Court, said.

The bench of the apex court had reserved the verdict on July 15.

While dismissing the appeal, Justice Dr Chandrachud observed, "The Acts of vandalism does not serve public function or come under freedom of speech".

The apex court said that the withdrawal of cases against the accused persons will be against public justice and policy.

"Vandalism and destruction inside the house is not essential for exercising legislative function," the apex court said.

It further said that the trial court was correct in rejecting the application to withdraw the FIR.

Justice Chandrachud in the judgement also said that the members possess the privilege that is essential for exercising public functions.



He added that the privileges of MLA bear a functional relationship to the discharge of functions of the legislators, but it is not a mark of difference that places the legislators on a pedestal.

The privileges and immunity are not a mark of status which makes them stand on an unequal footing, the Supreme Court said in its judgement.

Senior lawyer and former Solicitor General (SG) Ranjeet Kumar, appearing for the left party, had argued before the Supreme Court that the then government was presenting the budget. There were some protests and both party members protested and a woman member was hurt.

"Legislative Secretary filed an FIR against our (Left) party members," Kumar had said,

The members of the ruling party were equally at fault. It was a fight between two parties, Kumar had told the Supreme Court and sought a direction to withdraw cases against prominent CPI(M) leaders for alleged vandalism in the Kerala state

Assembly in 2015,

To this, Justice Chandrachud asked Kumar whether it is in the interest of justice to throw things and damage material at the sanctuary of a democratic set-up.

The apex court had in one of its hearings expressed concern over the MPs and MLAs not properly maintaining the decorum of houses and observed that a strong message needs to be sent out and such behaviour could not be tolerated.

"Strong message needs to be sent out and such behaviour could not be tolerated," the apex court had said, during the course of one of its hearings.

The petition was filed before the Supreme Court against a March 12, 2021 order of the Kerala High Court.

The Kerala High Court had rejected the State's petition challenging the dismissal by the Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court seeking permission to withdraw prosecution against the accused persons, including certain sitting ministers. *Source: ANI*

Harappan city of Dholavira in Kutch among UNESCO's world heritage sites

RAJKOT (TIP): Dholavira, the Harappan-era archaeological site located in Kutch district of Gujarat, was on Tuesday inscribed on the UNESCO list of world heritage sites, making it the first site of Indus Valley Civilisation in India to be included on the coveted list.

The decision taken at the 44th session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee on at Fuzhou, China, comes days after the Kakatiya Rudreshwara temple in Telangana, popularly called the Ramappa Temple, was inscribed on the list.

"Dholavira: A Harappan City, in India, just inscribed on the @UNESCO #WorldHeritage List. Congratulations!" UNESCO tweeted.

After Champaner, Rani ki Vav and the walled city area of Ahm-edabad, Dholavira is the fourth site from Gujarat to gain the tag.

An official release from UNESCO described Dholavira as an ancient city, which is one of the most remarkable and well-preserved urban settlements in South Asia dating from the third to mid-second millennium BCE (Before Common Era).

Discovered in 1968, UNESCO said in a release, the site is set apart by its unique characteristics, such as its water management system, multi-layered defensive



Dholavira, Harappan city in Kutch. (Source: Twitter/Vijay Rupani)

mechanisms, extensive use of stone in construction and special burial structures.

"Of note is also the art associated with the city – artefacts of various kinds such as copper, shell, stone, jewellery of semi-precious stones, terracotta, gold, ivory have been found at the site. In addition, the

interregional trade links associated with Dholavira, have also been acknowledged as contributing to the shared heritage of humanity," UNESCO said.

Located on Khadir island in the Great Rann of Kutch (GRK) in Bhachau taluka of Kutch district, Dholavira is around 210 kilometres east of district headquarters Bhuj. Spread over 22 hectares, the Harappan-era acropolis is the fifth largest archaeological site of the Indus Valley Civilisation, dating back to around 3000 BC and is believed to have been occupied till 1500 BC. It draws its name from present-day village Dholavira on the semi-arid island on the Indo-Pakistan border.

"Absolutely delighted by this news. Dholavira was an important urban centre and is one of our most important linkages with our past. It is a must visit, especially for those interested in history, culture and archaeology," Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted, adding he had first visited the site during his student days and was mesmerised by the place.

"As CM of Gujarat, I had the opportunity to work on aspects relating to heritage conservation and restoration in Dholavira. Our team also worked to create tourism-friendly infrastructure there," Modi added.

Pak agencies making fake calls to Indian security forces, alert issued

Following the drone attack at the Jammu air base, security agencies have picked up several fake calls to the forces made by Pakistani spy agency ISI.

Intelligence sources have said security agencies have issued an alert over an increasing number of fake calls being made to the Indian security forces from Pakistan.

Pakistan's ISI has been mulling over increasing the frequency of these fake calls to the Indian security force installations by impersonating senior officials of the armed forces, said the sources.

These calls originate from different numbers with very few traces.

Sources have also said that the increasing number of such calls after the drone threats in the western sector has raised an alarm among the security agencies.

Such activities were reported by the security agencies earlier as well and advisories to the agencies were issued by the headquarters, according to intel sources.

In view of the upcoming Independence Day celebrations, security agencies have been asked to remain vigilant of these fake calls and to take suitable measures to prevent the passage of any information.

Pegasus: IT panel meet put off after boycott by BJP MPs

A meeting of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Information Technology, set up to discuss the Pegasus snooping issue, was on Wednesday postponed due to lack of quorum. The panel has 32 MPs as its members and 14 of them, all of the BJP, refused to sign the attendance register.

Led by Jharkhand's Nishikant Dubey, the BJP MPs earlier gave a notice of breach of privilege against Congress leader Shashi Tharoor, who chairs the IT panel, expressing "no confidence in him".

In the notice to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, they demanded that Tharoor be removed from the committee for violating discipline and publicly speaking about its agenda.

"He has not only disrobed the democratic functioning of an august committee, but also exhibited high level of sycophancy towards his political masters," the notice read.

Tharoor recently said in the media that Pegasus row would be taken up by the IT committee on a priority.

BORDER ROW

Assam, Mizoram agree on deployment of neutral force

NEW DELHI (TIP): A neutral central force will be deployed along the disturbed Assam-Mizoram border where five policemen and a civilian were killed following a clash recently, officials said on July 28.

The decision was taken after a two-hour-long meeting chaired by Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla and attended by Assam Chief Secretary Jishnu Baruah and Director General of Police Bhaskar Jyoti Mahanta and their Mizoram counterparts Lalnunmawia Chuaungo and SBK Singh, respectively.

Both state governments have agreed for the deployment of a neutral Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) at the disturbed interstate border along the National Highway 306, a Home Ministry official said.

The neutral force will be commanded by a senior officer of the CAPF. Besides, to facilitate the functioning of the force, both state governments will work out arrangements in coordination with the Union Home Ministry within a reasonable timeframe.

The Home Secretary also conveyed to the delegations of Assam and Mizoram that the two governments should continue discussions mutually to resolve the border issue in an amicable manner.

The Chief Secretaries and the police heads of Assam and Mizoram were called by the Union Home Ministry to resolve the ongoing border conflict



Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma pays homage to the Assam Police personnel who died in July 26 clashes at Lailapur on the Assam-Mizoram border.

between the two states.

"The central government is concerned over the Assam-Mizoram border dispute which led to violence and deaths of six persons. The objective of the meeting is to lower the tension, bring peace and possibly find a solution," a senior MHA official said.

Later, the Mizoram Chief Secretary said the situation along the interstate border was currently peaceful and it was agreed in the meeting that everyone would try to maintain peace and there was no point in indulging in violence.

State forces were being withdrawn from the disputed area, he said. The

Assam Chief Secretary said the CAPF would take over the responsibility of the interstate border. The process of withdrawal of state police forces was being worked out, he said.

Director General of CRPF Kuldiep Singh was also present in the meeting as the personnel of the paramilitary force have been deployed in the Assam-Mizoram border areas where tension is high.

Assam's Barak Valley districts of Cachar, Karimganj and Hailakandi share a 164-km border with three Mizoram districts of Aizawl, Kolasib and Mamit.

Source: TNS

'Poore desh me khela hoga, it will be Modi vs country in 2024' — Mamata says in Delhi

NEW DELHI (TIP): It will be Modi vs the rest of India in 2024 and the opposition will create history, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said Wednesday, July 28, setting the tone for opposition unity in the Lok Sabha elections.

"Poore desh me khela hoga. When general elections happen, it will be Modi vs country. This is our hope for 2024," Banerjee said in a free-wheeling interaction with reporters in Delhi on the third day of her visit.

The West Bengal CM, however, remained non-committal about her role at the national level and said she has a "sweet home" in Bengal and would like to stay there.

"I don't want to be a leader but a cadre. Let me be that. But I want to bell the cat; I want to help all. I am not a VIP but an LIP (Less Important Person)," Banerjee said when asked about her national role.

She said the situation on the ground is different now. "Every regional party is very strong today. If all of them are together, they will be stronger than BJP," she said.

The West Bengal CM, on a strong footing after her party's resounding



Congress chief Sonia Gandhi with West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee.

victory in the assembly elections in May, reiterated that talks with various opposition leaders are going on but no final decision has been taken as yet on the opposition's strategy for 2024.

"The Parliament session is on, so political parties and their leaders are busy. Once the session is over, we will sit together and decide. In a democracy, talks have to go on," she said.

Asked who will become the leader of

the opposition alliance, Banerjee said she is not a "political astrologer".

"It depends on the situation. All of us can work together. Anybody can become a leader," she said. "I don't want to impose my opinion. After the Parliament session, opposition parties must meet."

Following her interaction with the media, Banerjee met Congress president Sonia Gandhi and later Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal.

After meeting Gandhi, Banerjee said the former had invited her for tea and they discussed a host of issues including the need for the opposition to come together. "Rahulji was also present. We discussed the political situation in the country, Pegasus as well as Covid," she said.

On the role the Congress will play in the coalition, Banerjee said Sonia also champions opposition unity. "Congress trusts the regional parties and regional parties trust Congress," she said.

Banerjee said that she is hopeful that a positive result will come out in the future from all these discussions. She later met Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

Source: The Print

India records 43,509 new Covid-19 cases, active cases cross 4 lakh-mark

NEW DELHI (TIP): India recorded 43,509 new cases of the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) in the last 24 hours, which pushed the nationwide tally to 31,528,114 while the death toll climbed to 4,22,662 with 640 daily fatalities, according to Union health ministry update on Thursday, July 28.

The active cases declined to 4,03,840 in the said time period, according to data released by the ministry at 8am on July 28. The national Covid-19 recovery rate improved to 1.27 per cent, it stated. The number of active cases increased by 4404.

As many as 17,28,795 Covid-19 tests were conducted on Tuesday, taking the total number of tests conducted so far to 46,26,29,773.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 3,07,01,612, while the case fatality rate stands at 1.34 per cent, it said.

The total number of vaccine doses administered so far has reached 44.19 crore under the nationwide vaccination drive.

More than 2.18 crore Covid-19 vaccine doses are still available with states, Union Territories and private hospitals



for inoculation, the Union health ministry said on Wednesday. "More than 2.18 Crore (2,18,10,422) balance and unutilized Covid Vaccine doses are still available with the States/UTs and

private hospitals to be administered," said the Ministry of health and family welfare.

The Covid-19 vaccination drive has been ramped up through availability of

more vaccines, advance visibility of vaccine availability to states and Union Territories for enabling better planning by them and streamlining the vaccine supply chain. The new phase of universalisation of vaccination commenced from June 21.

Meanwhile, Maharashtra's weekly positivity rate has dropped to 3.8% from last week's 4.36%, indicating a downward trend of the second Covid-19 wave.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the positivity rate should remain below 5% for an outbreak to be considered under control. Positivity rate is the percentage of tests of a particular infection returning positive.

The state currently has 10 districts with positivity rates above the state average of 3.8%. These are Satara (8.03%), Pune (7.23%), Kolhapur (7.18%), Sangli (6.91%), Sindhudurg (6.49%), Solapur (5.90%), Ahmednagar (4.95%), Beed (4.88%), Raigad (4.70%), and Ratnagiri (3.83%). This means currently just six out of the 10 districts have a positivity rate of more than 5%. Last week, nine of the 10 districts had a positivity rate of more than 5%.

Source: HT

US announces \$25 million for India's Covid-19 vaccination programme

NEW DELHI (TIP): With a pledge of \$25 million to support India's Covid-19 vaccination programme, the United States (US) on Wednesday committed to further strengthening of ties between the two countries.

In his first trip to India, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced that the US government will partner with India's Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, as well as state governments to support vaccine supply chain logistics, to address misinformation and vaccine hesitancy, and train healthcare workers to deliver vaccines safely and effectively across India.

"US has contributed more than 200 million dollars [USD] worth of Covid-19 assistance. I am pleased to announce that the United States government will send additional 25 million dollars [USD] to support vaccination efforts across India," Blinken announced during a joint press conference with India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar.

At the media briefing after talks with Blinken, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar thanked the US for its "truly exceptional" support to India during the second wave of the pandemic and for keeping the supply chain for raw material open for vaccine production in India.

The US Agency for International Development (USAID) will also collaborate with key stakeholders, including the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, UNICEF, the WHO, and GAVI to promote equitable vaccine delivery and strengthen pandemic preparedness.

The Covid-19 pandemic saw both India and the US working in tandem to service each others needs. "We remember with gratitude and will not forget the aid and assistance India provided to us early in the pandemic. I am proud we could return the gesture to India." Blinken said on Wednesday, July 28.

Source: India Today

Covid lockdown negatively impacted women's nutrition in India: Study

WASHINGTON (TIP): The nationwide lockdown in India in 2020 due to the Covid pandemic had a negative impact on women's nutrition in the country, according to a study conducted by a group of researchers in the US.

The study by Tata-Cornell Institute for Agriculture and Nutrition in four economically backward districts of Uttar Pradesh's Maharajganj, Bihar's Munger, and Odisha's Kandhamal and Kalahandi indicate a decline in household food expenditures and women's dietary diversity in May 2020 compared to May 2019, particularly for non-staples like meats, eggs, vegetables and fruits.

It occurred despite the special Public Distribution System (PDS), direct benefit transfer and ration from anganwadis reaching 80 per cent, 50 per cent and 30 per cent of the surveyed households, respectively, said the study published in the latest issue of *Economia Politica* journal.

"Our findings contribute to the growing body of evidence of women's disproportionate vulnerability to economic shocks, the impact of a staple grain focused safety net programme, and restricted markets on the access and availability of diverse nutritious foods," says the paper which makes a case for policy reforms towards PDS diversification to include



nutrition-rich foods and market reforms to remove supply-side bottlenecks and expansion of direct benefit transfers for healthy food access.

"Women's diets were lacking in diverse foods even before the pandemic, but Covid has further exacerbated the situation," said Soumya Gupta, a research economist at TCI who co-authored the study along with Prabhu Pingali, TCI director; Mathew Abraham, assistant director; and consultant Payal Seth.

"Any policies addressing the

impact of the pandemic on nutritional outcomes must do so through a gendered lens that reflects the specific, and often persistent, vulnerabilities faced by women," she said in a statement issued by the Cornell University.

Researchers said that policymakers should recognise the disproportionate impact of the pandemic and other disruptive events on women's nutrition by bolstering safety-net programmes to ensure that they meet the needs of women and other marginalised groups.

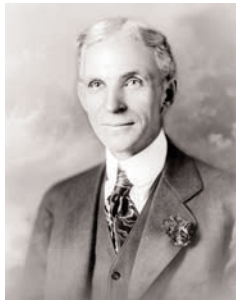
Source: PTI

History This Week July 30, 2021, to August 5, 2021

"HISTORY IS A CYCLIC POEM WRITTEN BY TIME UPON THE MEMORIES OF MAN." - PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

July 30

JULY 30, 1975 - Former Teamsters Union leader James Hoffa was last seen outside a restaurant near Detroit, Michigan. His 13-year federal prison sentence had been commuted by President Richard M. Nixon in 1971. On December 8, 1982, seven years after his disappearance, an Oakland County judge declared Hoffa officially dead.



Henry Ford

BIRTHDAY - Automotive pioneer Henry Ford (1863-1947) was born in Dearborn Township, Michigan. He developed an assembly-line production system and introduced a

\$5-a-day wage for automotive workers. "History is bunk," he once said.

July 31

JULY 31, 1776 - During the American Revolution, Francis Salvador became the first Jew to die in the conflict. He had also been the first Jew elected to office in Colonial America, voted a member of the South Carolina Provincial Congress in January 1775.

JULY 31, 1790 - The U.S. Patent Office first opened its doors. The first U.S. patent was issued to Samuel Hopkins of Vermont for a new method of making pearlsh and potash. The patent was signed by George Washington and Thomas Jefferson.

August 1

AUGUST 1, 1838 - Slavery was abolished in Jamaica. It had been introduced by Spanish settlers 300 years earlier in 1509.

AUGUST 1, 1944 - Anne Frank penned her last entry into her diary. "[I] keep on trying to find a way of becoming what I would like to be, and what I could be, if...there weren't any other people living in the world." Three days later, Anne and her family were arrested and sent to Nazi concentration camps. Anne died at Bergen-Belsen concentration camp on March 15, 1945, at age 15.

AUGUST 1, 1944 - The Warsaw Uprising began as the Polish Home Army, numbering about 40,000 Polish patriots, began shooting at German troops in the streets. The Nazis then sent eight divisions to battle the Poles, who had hoped for, but did not receive, assistance from the Allies. Two months later, the rebellion was quashed.

BIRTHDAY - Star-Spangled Banner author Francis Scott Key (1779-1843) was born in Frederick County, Maryland. After witnessing the British bombardment of Fort McHenry on the night of September 13-14,



Francis Scott Key

1814, he was enthralled to see the American flag still flying over the fort at daybreak. He then wrote the poem originally entitled Defense of Fort McHenry which became the U.S. National Anthem in 1931.



Herman Melville

BIRTHDAY - Moby Dick author Herman Melville (1819-1891) was born in New York.

August 2

AUGUST 2, 1776 - In Philadelphia, most of the 55 members of the Continental Congress signed the parchment copy of the Declaration of Independence.

AUGUST 2, 1923 - President Warren G. Harding died suddenly in a hotel in San Francisco while on a Western speaking tour. His administration had been tainted by the Teapot Dome political scandal and his sudden death prompted many unfounded rumors. He was succeeded the next day by Calvin Coolidge.

AUGUST 2, 1939 - Albert Einstein wrote a letter to President Franklin D. Roosevelt concerning the possibility of atomic weapons. "A single bomb of this type carried by boat and exploded in a port, might very well destroy the whole port together with some of the surrounding territory." Six years later, on August 6, 1945, the first Atomic Bomb, developed by the U.S., was dropped on the Japanese port of Hiroshima.

AUGUST 2, 1990 - The Iraqi army invaded Kuwait amid claims that Kuwait threatened Iraq's economic existence by overproducing oil and driving prices down on the world market. An Iraqi military government was then installed in Kuwait which was annexed by Iraq on the claim that Kuwait was historically part of Iraq. This resulted in Desert Shield, the massive Allied military buildup, and later the 100-hour war against Iraq, Desert Storm.

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August 3



Christopher Columbus

AUGUST 3, 1492 - Christopher Columbus set sail from Palos, Spain, with three ships, Nina, Pinta and Santa Maria. Seeking a westerly route to the Far East, he instead landed on October 12th in the Bahamas, thinking it was an outlying Japanese island.

BIRTHDAY - War correspondent Ernie Pyle (1900-1945) was born in Dana, Indiana. His syndicated column offered sympathetic insights into the experiences of common soldiers during World War II. He received a Pulitzer Prize for his reports of the bombing of London in 1940 and later war reports from Africa, Sicily, Italy and France. He

was killed by machine-gun fire near Okinawa in the South Pacific on April 18, 1945.

BIRTHDAY - Gray Panthers founder Maggie Kuhn (1905-1995) was born in Buffalo, New York. After she was forced into mandatory retirement at age 65, she founded the Gray Panthers organization to fight age discrimination and succeeded in the banning of mandatory retirement in most professions.

August 4

AUGUST 4, 1962 - Apartheid opponent Nelson Mandela was arrested by security police in South Africa. He was then tried and sentenced to five years in prison. In 1964, he was placed on trial for sabotage, high treason and conspiracy to overthrow the government and was sentenced to life in prison. A worldwide campaign to free him began in the 1980s and resulted in his release on February 11, 1990, at age 71 after 27 years in prison. In 1993, Mandela shared the Nobel Peace Prize with South Africa's President F.W. de Klerk for their peaceful efforts to bring a nonracial democracy to South Africa. In April 1994, black South Africans voted for the first time in an election that brought Mandela the presidency of South Africa.

AUGUST 4, 1964 - Three young civil rights workers, James Chaney, Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner, were found murdered and buried in an earthen dam outside Philadelphia, Mississippi. They had disappeared on June 21 after being detained by Neshoba County police on charges of speeding. They were participating in the Mississippi Summer Project organized by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) to increase black voter registration. When their car was found burned on June 23, President Lyndon Johnson ordered the FBI to search for the men.



Louis Armstrong

BIRTHDAY - Jazz trumpet player Louis Armstrong (1901-1971) was born in New Orleans, Louisiana. Known as "Satchmo," he appeared in many films and is best

known for his renditions of It's a Wonderful World and Hello, Dolly.

BIRTHDAY - Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg (1912-1947) was born in Stockholm. During the Holocaust, Wallenberg saved an estimated 33,000 Jews by issuing thousands of protective documents, by securing the release of Jews from deportation trains, death march convoys, labor service brigades, and by establishing the International Ghetto, a network of 31 protected houses. He was detained by Soviet agents on January 17, 1945 and is believed to have died in prison in 1947.

BIRTHDAY - Barack Obama the 44th U.S. President was born in Honolulu,



Barack Obama

Hawaii, on August 4, 1961. His father was from Kenya, Africa, while his mother was originally from Kansas. Upon completing his college education, young Obama moved to Chicago, becoming active in community affairs. He then attended Harvard Law School, becoming the first African-American president of the Harvard Law Review in 1990. He returned to Chicago, worked in a law firm, then entered politics. Elected to the Illinois State Senate in 1996, he went on to become a U.S. Senator in 2004. Four years later, he successfully challenged former First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton for the Democratic presidential nomination and went on to defeat Republican John McCain in the general election, November 4, 2008, thus becoming the first President of African-American origin.

August 5

AUGUST 5, 1583 - The first British colony in North America was founded by Sir Humphrey Gilbert, a British navigator and explorer. He sighted the Newfoundland coast and took possession of the area around St. John's harbor in the name of the Queen. He was later lost at sea in a storm off the Azores on his return trip to England.

AUGUST 5, 1861 - President Abraham Lincoln signed into law the first Federal income tax, a 3 percent tax on incomes over \$800, as an emergency wartime measure during the Civil War. However, the tax was never actually put into effect.



Marilyn Monroe

AUGUST 5, 1962 - Film star Marilyn Monroe died at age 36 from an overdose of sleeping pills. She made 29 films during her career and came to symbolize Hollywood glamour.

AUGUST 5, 2011 - Standard & Poor's credit rating agency downgraded the United States debt from its highest rating of AAA to a lesser AA+ rating, marking the first-ever decline of credit worthiness for the U.S. The agency cited America's \$14 trillion in outstanding debt and ineffective political leadership regarding debt reduction.

BIRTHDAY - John Eliot (1604-1690) was born in Hertfordshire, England. Known as the "Apostle to the Indians," his translation of the Bible into an Indian tongue was the first Bible to be printed in America.

BFF 2021 CELEBRATES

BY MABEL PAIS

**FESTIVAL CELEBRATES DIVERSE FILMMAKERS
71% WOMEN, 75% BIPOC/AAPI, 33% LGBTQIA+
NARRATIVE, DOCUMENTARY, SHORT AND
EPISODIC FILM COMPETITION
30TH ANNIVERSARY SCREENING OF
"THELMA & LOUISE" - AUGUST 3, 2021**

"We are proud to offer audiences an inspirational line up celebrating diversity and inclusion on screen and behind the camera, to demonstrate the power of intersectional equity in entertainment media. Through our unique inclusion qualifiers, we are giving voice to directors who are 71% Female, 75% BIPOC or AAPI and 33% LGBTQIA+." - Geena Davis: Bentonville Film Festival (BFF) Chair

"We are thrilled to come together in the heartland to share stories of inclusion at the 7th Annual BFF. The mission of the Festival has always been to create a platform that champions a multitude of new, diverse voices. The silver lining from last year's 2020 virtual Festival was the unique opportunity to expand our capacity and thereby, our audiences, with more than 30,000 virtual attendees," - Wendy Guerrero - President, Bentonville Film Festival & Foundation (BFF)

The Bentonville Film Foundation presents its 2021 Bentonville Film Festival (BFF) with narrative, documentary feature, short, and episodic film selections set for August 2-8, 2021 in Bentonville, AR. This is the 7th BFF annual film festival.

For this year's event BFF will combine virtual and safe in-person activations, including premieres, conversations, awards, and events to produce a hybrid experience for Festival attendees. Festival passes and single tickets are available for purchase.

This year Festival attendees will enjoy a 30th anniversary screening of "Thelma & Louise" at the 112 Drive-In (Fayetteville, AR) on Tuesday, August 3 followed by an exclusive conversation with the film's star and Festival Chair, Academy Award® winner Geena Davis and Academy Award®-winning screenwriter Callie Khouri. The film, which first premiered in 1991, is an empowering tribute to trailblazing women. Geena Davis' (Thelma) and Susan Sarandon's (Louise) iconic strong female lead performances cemented the revolutionary film as a feminist classic that still resonates today.

BFF is an annual Festival and globally recognized platform amplifying female, non-binary, LGBTQIA+, BIPOC, and people with disabilities' voices in entertainment. For updates, special events, panels and jury information, visit bentonvillefilm.org

In the BFF 2021 juried competition program, 71% are directed by women, 75% by people that are BIPOC or AAPI, and 33% by people of the LGBTQIA+ community. 70% of these films are written by women, 70% by people that are BIPOC or AAPI, 32% by people of the LGBTQIA+ community and 87% feature a female lead, 81% a BIPOC or AAPI lead, and 30% an LGBTQIA+ lead. 96% of these films have a cast and crew that was made up of more than half of people from these same communities.

TICKETS

Passes and tickets for the 2021 Bentonville Film Festival can be purchased at bentonvillefilm.org/tickets-passes

FILMS, PROJECTS LINEUP:

The following projects are confirmed for the 2021 BFF competition:

NARRATIVE FEATURES:

"7 DAYS" - DIR/WRIT: Roshan Sethi | USA

Ravi is set up on an arranged marriage date with Rita by their traditional Indian parents. When the circumstances of quarantine force them to shelter together, Ravi discovers that Rita is not quite the traditional girl of his dreams.

"AMERICANISH" - DIR/WRIT: Iman Zawahry | USA



"Americanish." - Photo / BFF 2021

In Jackson Heights, Queens, two sisters and their fresh off the boat cousin try all the conventional ways to earn the love and respect of the matriarch of their family only to learn that life works out in the most unconventional ways.

"BEANS" - DIR: Tracey Deer | 2020 | CAN

"BEANS" is a 2020 Canadian drama film that explores the 1990 Oka Crisis at Kanesatake, which Deer lived through as a child, through the eyes of Tekehentahkwa, a young Mohawk girl whose perspective on life is radically changed by these events.

"CATCH THE FAIR ONE" - DIR/WRIT: Josef Kubota Wladyka | USA

A former boxer embarks on the fight of her life when she goes in search of her missing sister.

"THE DAPHNE PROJECT" - DIRS/WRITS: Alec Tibaldi, Zora Iman Crews | USA

Daphne Wilco, actress and social justice warrior, wreaks havoc on a production of Euripides' "The Bacchae" in the name of progress -- her progress.

"THE DISAPPEARANCE OF MRS. WU" - DIR: Anna Chi | USA | World Premiere

Aware that her time is running short, irascible Wu family matriarch Lily (Lisa Lu) is eager to repair the strained relationship with her adult daughter Mary (Michelle Krusiec) and help her shy 18-year-old granddaughter Emma (Rochelle Ying) find her voice. Along the way, long-held secrets are revealed and Mary and Emma each come to understand the painful choices their mothers made in this funny and touching multi-generational story about family, forgiveness and being true to oneself.

"I'M FINE (THANKS FOR ASKING)" - DIRS: Kelley Kali, Angelique Molina | USA

In this exhilarating, poignant debut feature, Danny (Kelley Kali) a recently widowed woman barely makes ends meet by braiding hair and making deliveries on roller skates. When a client is unable to pay her, she realizes that if she can't raise \$200 by day's end, she will lose the apartment and have to admit to her daughter that they are actually "houseless".

"LUDI" - DIR: Edson Jean | USA

Ludi, a hardworking and exhausted nurse, battles

coworkers, clients and one impatient bus driver to learn her self-worth as she chases the American Dream in Miami's Little Haiti neighborhood.

"THE NOVICE" - DIR/WRIT: Lauren Hadaway | USA

A college freshman joins her university's cutthroat rowing team and undertakes an obsessive journey to make the top varsity boat, no matter the cost.

"SEE YOU THEN" - DIR: Mari Walker | USA

Kris, a transgender computer programmer, and Naomi, an Asian-American performance artist, used to date in college. "SEE YOU THEN" focuses on the universal truth that no matter how much you change, a part of you will always stay the same.

"WAIKIKI" - DIR/WRIT: Christopher Kahunahana | USA



Waikiki." - Photo / BFF 2021

Leaving behind the touristic image of paradise and island culture, "WAIKIKI?" tackles the often-unspoken generational trauma of postcolonial cultures through a mixing of genre conventions, experimental storytelling, and perspectives.

"WOMEN IS LOSERS" - DIR/WRIT: Lisette Feliciano | USA

Inspired by real women and the Janis Joplin song of the same title, "WOMEN IS LOSERS" is a dramedy that follows the life of a young single mother whose refusal to let herself and her newborn son sink into poverty puts her at odds with pre-Roe v. Wade America.

DOCUMENTARY FEATURES:

"ALL THESE SONS" - DIRS: Bing Liu, Joshua Altman | USA

Beginning in 2018, we follow Marshall Hatch Jr. from the West Side and Billy Moore from the South Side of Chicago, as they work directly with young men from the community to not only end this cycle of death from gun violence but also to end it by undoing generations of oppression leading all the way back to the American slave trade. As Marshall puts it, at stake is the very soul of the nation.

"AT THE READY" - DIR: Maisie Crow | USA

Ten miles from the Mexican border, the students at Horizon High School in El Paso (many of whom are Latinx) train to become police officers and Border Patrol agents. As they discover the realities of their dream jobs may be at odds with the truths and people they hold most dear, we learn the price they must pay as they grapple with their place within their communities at the intersection of identity, immigration, and personal politics.

"CRUTCH" - DIRS: Chandler Evans & Sachi Cunningham | USA

"CRUTCH" chronicles the life of Bill Shannon, an internationally renowned artist, breakdancer and skateboarder on crutches, as he finds his voice and uses his performance art to expose the secret world of

CONTD ON PAGE 19

CONTD FROM PAGE 18

assumptions that exists all around us.

"A FIRE WITHIN" - DIR: Christopher Chambers | USA

"A FIRE WITHIN" chronicles the incredible, true story of three Women who are immigrants from Ethiopia and torture survivors, who one day discover that their torturer is in the U.S... working at a hotel in Atlanta, Georgia. It is a thrilling story about three immigrants, three refugees, three survivors taking a stand to make their voices heard and their courageous fight to bring a notorious torturer from Africa to justice - right here in America.

"KILI BIG" - DIR: Ida Joglar | USA | World Premiere

A group of plus-sized women from around the world attempt to climb the tallest peak in Africa, Mount Kilimanjaro.

"MOM & M" - DIR: Jena Burchick | USA

"MOM & M" is an intimate portrait of modern American parenthood. Meet Nikki, a transgender writer; Elise, a social media influencer; and Sansa, their adopted daughter who battles leukemia. Together they navigate what happens when your partner comes out as transgender while caring for an ill child and that remission is not the end to life's challenges. The Richard family offers a deep-seated glimpse of love's power in surviving extraordinary circumstances.

"SUBJECTS OF DESIRE" - DIR: Jennifer Holness | USA

"SUBJECTS OF DESIRE" explores the cultural shift in North American beauty standards towards embracing Black female aesthetics and features while exposing the deliberate and often dangerous portrayals of Black women in the media. The film is a culturally significant, provocative film that deconstructs what we understand about race and the power behind beauty.

"TRY HARDER" - DIR: Debbie Lum | USA

With humor and heart, "TRY HARDER" takes us to the reality of the American college application process and the intersection of class, race, and educational opportunity as they navigate a quintessential rite of passage and make it their own.

"UPROOTED: THE HISTORY OF JAZZ DANCE" - DIR: Khadifa Wong | USA

The history, lineage and future progressions of jazz dance. The story of Jazz Dance is a complex one, it goes to the very heart of humanity. It is a story of triumph over adversity, oppression and privilege as well as a celebration, because ultimately, what all people have in common is rhythm and a basic human need to get down.

"WORKHORSE QUEEN" - DIR: Angela Washko | USA

"WORKHORSE QUEEN" explores the complexities of mainstream television's impact on queer performance culture. In addition to following Ed Popil's life and career before and after being cast onto RuPaul's Drag Race, the film focuses on the growing divide between members of a small town drag community - those who have been on television, and those who have not.

"YOUTH V GOV" - DIR: Christi Cooper | USA



"Youth V Gov." - Photo / BFF 2021

"YOUTH V GOV" is the story of America's youngest citizens taking on the world's most powerful government. Twenty-one courageous youth lead a

groundbreaking lawsuit against the U.S. government, asserting it has willfully acted over six decades to create our climate crisis, thus endangering their constitutional rights to life, liberty, and property. If these young people are successful, they'll not only make history, they'll change the future.

SHORT FILMS:

Twenty-Seven Shorts are featured:

#WHITINA, AMERICANIZED, BIG TOUCH, BJS MOBILE GIFT SHOP, BUG FARM, CONGRATULATIONS (MABROOK), CRACKED, DREAMER, EL TRISTE, FIRST DOWN, I AM NORMAL, I'M A VAMPIRE, I WAS A STRANGER, KOREATOWN GHOST STORY, MESSAGE READ, NAHJUM, NOOR AND LAYLA, PIZZA PARTY, SELAHY (MY WEAPON), SORRY FOR THE INCONVENIENCE, STAIRS, THE SUMMER OF SNAKES, SUPERSTAR, WALKING THROUGH PEANUT BUTTER, WHEN THE LEAVES FALL, WOMANHOOD, and YOU ARE ME & I AM YOU.

EPISODICS:

There are Five Episodics: BETA, FOLLOWING HANNAH STONE, GIRL NIGHTSTAND: CHAPTER TWO, THE HIGH LIFE, and NOW WITH FIONA.

For more information about the 2021 Bentonville Film Festival (BFF), visit the Website: bentonvillefilm.org, and social media

Facebook: facebook.com/BFFfestival

Twitter: twitter.com/BFFFestival

Instagram: instagram.com/BFFFestival

The Bentonville Film Foundation & BFF

BFFoundation is a non-profit organization focused on promoting underrepresented voices of diverse storytellers. The Foundation aims to amplify storytellers who identify as female, non-binary, LGBTQIA+, BIPOC, and people with disabilities in entertainment and media. For more information visit the website and social media channels.

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

TRIBECA FILMS OF NOTE

BY MABEL PAIS

MISSION: JOY - Finding Happiness in Troubled Times
DIRS: Louie Psihoyos & Peggy Callahan | USA | 2021
| Eng | Doc | 1h 30m | NR
OFFICIAL SELECTION: 2021 TRIBECA FILM FESTIVAL

"Humor is a prelude to faith, and laughter is the beginning of prayer." - Reinhold Niebuhr, American theologian

"MISSION: JOY - FINDING HAPPINESS IN TROUBLED TIMES" is an exploration of the remarkable friendship between Archbishop Desmond Tutu and His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Academy Award®-winning director Louie Psihoyos teams up with co-director Peggy Callahan on "MISSION: JOY - FINDING HAPPINESS IN TROUBLED TIMES," a documentary with unprecedented access to the unlikely friendship of two international icons who transcend religion: His



(L to R): The Dalai Lama with Bishop Desmond Tutu
Photo / spiritualityandpractice.com

Holiness the Dalai Lama & Archbishop Tutu. In their final joint mission, these self-described mischievous brothers give a master class in how to create joy in a world that was never easy for them. They offer neuroscience-backed wisdom to help each of us live with more joy, despite circumstances. MISSION: JOY is an antidote for the times.

Watch the film at utahfilmcenter.org

PRAY AWAY

DIR: Kristine Stolakis | 2020 | USA | 1h 41m
OFFICIAL SELECTION: 2020 TRIBECA FILM FESTIVAL

In "PRAY AWAY," by Kristine Stolakis, former leaders of the "pray the gay away" movement contend with the aftermath unleashed by their actions.

Focusing on the dramatic journeys of former conversion therapy leaders, current members, and a survivor, PRAY AWAY chronicles the "ex gay" movement's rise to power, persistent influence, and the profound harm it causes.

VIEW THE TRAILER:
[YOUTU.BE/TK_CQGVFXES](https://youtu.be/TK_CQGVFXES)

TO LEARN MORE, VISIT
PRAYAWAYFILM.COM;

FACEBOOK: PRAYAWAYFILM;

INSTAGRAM: PRAYAWAYFILM;

TWITTER: PRAYAWAYFILM.

"PRAY AWAY" opens in theaters on Friday July 30 in New York City at the IFC Center with Q/A following screenings on July 30 and 31. The new acclaimed Netflix Original Documentary PRAY AWAY debuts globally August 3rd on Netflix.

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



Richa to play investigating officer in Six Suspects

Actor Richa Chadha is thrilled to star in filmmaker Tigmanshu Dhulia's upcoming series Six Suspects and says the murder mystery features her in a complex character of an upright investigating officer trying to make her way in the male dominated system.

Co-starring Pratik Gandhi, Six Suspects will premiere on Disney+ Hotstar. The series is an adaptation of author Vikas Swarup's 2008 novel of the same name.

The show has been produced by Ajay Devgn Ffilms and Reel Life Entertainment.

Richa, known for her performances in films like Masaan and Fukrey, said the show presented her with the opportunity to work with Tigmanshu, her co-star from Gangs of Wasseypur.

Nora Fatehi recreates Madhuri's 'Dola Re' look

Putting on her Bollywood swag, Nora Fatehi dressed up as Madhuri Dixit Nene recreating her 'Dola Re Dola' look in order to celebrate 100 years of Bollywood on a dance reality show as a judge.

Earlier Nora has expressed her desire to star in the senior actress' biopic and her latest pictures prove she's ready for it!

In her YouTube vlog, Nora Fatehi had shared her overwhelming experience of meeting Madhuri Dixit Nene for the first time while co-judging a dance reality show along with the senior actress. Expressing her fondness for Madhuri, Nora has often regarded the former as her idol. Concluding the vlog, Nora Fatehi termed herself as a hopeless dreamer for wanting to star in Madhuri Dixit's biopic.

Requesting her fans to share their thoughts, Nora Fatehi said, "Guys, comment if you want me to do Madhuri ma'am's biopic in future. I'm just a hopeless dreamer, I swear!"

As the dance reality show celebrates 100 Years of Bollywood, Nora Fatehi decided to declare her admiration for Madhuri Dixit Nene yet again by dressing up in the latter's iconic 'Dola Re Dola' look from Devdas.

Earlier, Madhuri Dixit Nene has showered Nora Fatehi with praises, appreciating the young actress for her talent, dedication and passion for her art. Nora Fatehi has carved her path to success in Bollywood, terming Madhuri as her inspiration. Today, Nora Fatehi is one of the most loved and popular performers in not just India but across the world with a global print of record-breaking streak of success.

Currently gearing up for the release of her upcoming next 'Bhuj: The Pride of India', Nora Fatehi has generated a huge chatter across quarters to witness her never-seen-before avatar in the film.



Bhumi: Tried to use social media to spread awareness about climate conservation

Actress and environmentalist Bhumi Pednekar on World Nature Conservation Day on Wednesday, shared that she has tried to use social media as a tool to reach out to as many people as she can and find new ways to reach out to the youth to spread awareness about conservation.

Bhumi said: "With all the focus on Covid-19 and restarting the world, we have to realise that climate change is happening as we speak. Yes, the entire attention has gone to the coronavirus pandemic as it should have but I'm hoping that the pressing issue of climate change hasn't taken a backseat with governments."

Bhumi is deeply concerned about extreme weather conditions that are affecting people across the world.

The 32-year-old actress said: "The pandemic has given us time to recalibrate, reset ourselves and our outlook towards the environment. We must pay heed to what is happening around us at all times. Even though mother nature got some time to heal, the looming danger has not yet been averted. We are still seeing forest wildfires, flash floods, polar caps melting happening around us."

She stressed that climate change needs to be taken seriously.

"We have accelerated it to levels of heavy repercussions and there seems no stopping. Flash floods, drought, forest fires, disease outbreaks, mass



extinction - we have seen it all. Our basic behaviour needs to change towards this global crisis," she said.

The actress is single-mindedly trying to raise awareness in India about the severe impact of climate change.

Huma Qureshi: It has been a difficult two years

The film industry is taking baby steps towards resuming normalcy in the face of the pandemic, but actor Huma S Qureshi warms people against throwing caution to the wind. The actor, who herself has been out and about for her shooting commitments, says while staying at home for prolonged period is not an option, being careful is what we all should focus on while out of our houses.

"Of course we've to go out, work and make a living. But one has to do it responsibly and respectfully maintaining our safety and the safety of others at the optimum. I've been working throughout this pandemic, and I understand the importance of that," says the actor, urging people to step out only when absolutely necessary.

"I know it's very frustrating because we thrive on social interactions, but one has to do that responsibly," she asserts.





Judy Greer to headline indie film 'LA Bound'

Hollywood actress Judy Greer will play the female lead in an independent feature film, 'LA Bound', claim reports.

The film is based on a small-town high school football star and how he ruins his college scholarship to shift base to Los Angeles to become an actor, and pay tribute to his late sister's passion for creative arts.

As per reports, the film's written and directed by Chris McGowan.

Greer, who will play Carol Berry opposite Brec Bassinger in 'LA Bound', will soon be seen in the highly anticipated sequel to 2018 hit film 'Halloween'—titled 'Halloween Kills'. Just like the previous installment, the upcoming sequel's been co-written and directed by David Gordon Green.

Matt Damon endorses Ben Affleck, Jennifer Lopez reunion

Actor Matt Damon is happy for his friend, actor Ben Affleck's reunion with actor and singer Jennifer Lopez. Since April this year, it has been speculated that Ben and Jennifer have got back together.

Matt spoke to Extra, while promoting his new film Stillwater. When asked about Ben's reunion with former fiancée Jennifer, Matt said: "I'm just so happy for him. He's the best. He deserves every happiness in the world. I'm glad for both of them."

On Jennifer Lopez's 52nd birthday earlier this month, she made her relationship with Ben Instagram-official. The couple had jetted off to the South of France to ring in her birthday. On the occasion, she had shared a bunch of pictures in an orange bikini, on a yacht. While many of them were her solo pictures, the last picture showed Ben and her kissing.

Jennifer and Ben split in 2004 after getting engaged in 2002. They have worked together in films such as Jersey Girl and Gigli.

Rumours of Jennifer and Ben's relationship first emerged in late April when they were spotted outside her LA home following her split from New York Yankees baseball star Alex Rodriguez.



Since then, the couple has often been spotted together in Los Angeles and in Miami. In May this year, the duo was seen kissing. Later that month, the two reportedly went on a long vacation to Montana. In June

this year, Jennifer reportedly went looking for schools in Los Angeles for her children. Jennifer shares 13-year-old twins Max and Emme with her ex, Marc Anthony. The kids have been attending school in Miami for years.

Dwayne Johnson takes Emily Blunt on her first Jungle Cruise ride



Actor Dwayne Johnson took to Instagram to share a video of himself taking his Jungle Cruise co-star Emily Blunt on a Jungle Cruise ride before the premiere of their film.

The video begins with Dwayne taking Emily on her first Jungle Cruise ride. The two engage with their skipper and try to understand her 'jokes', giving Emily leverage to take a potshot at Dwayne's sense of humour as well. "Still better than your jokes," she says. When they disembark, they are greeted by screaming fans. Before they enter the theatre, Emily says nervously, "I am about to throw up." The rest of the video focuses on the duo engaging with their fans after the

film.

Dwayne Johnson captioned the post, "Peak backstage with Emily & I for our JUNGLE CRUISE premiere day. After 3 years in the making, it was with butterflies, with mana and with so much love and gratitude for every soul in the theater that came to celebrate this special moment with us - our official worldwide JUNGLE CRUISE premiere. It was an incredible experience to share safely alongside the fans, the press and best of all the REAL Disneyland Jungle Cruise skippers right there under the stars at Disneyland. And very cool to take Emily on her first ever ride of JUNGLE CRUISE."

The Last Duel, Spencer set for Venice Film Festival

The Venice International Film Festival unveiled a starry lineup of world premieres for September — including Pablo Larrain's "Spencer," starring Kristen Stewart as Princess Diana, and Ridley Scott's medieval drama "The Last Duel," featuring Matt Damon, Ben Affleck and Adam Driver.

The oldest film festival in the world is kicking off its 78th edition September 1 on the Lido with the premiere of Pedro Almodóvar's "Madres paralelas," starring Penelope Cruz. "Spencer" and "Madres paralelas" are among 21 features premiering as part of the official competition, which has often helped guide eventual Oscar best picture nominees and even winners.

Other films competing for the Golden Lion include Ana Lily Amirpour's fantasy "Mona Lisa and the Blood Moon," with Kate Hudson and Craig Robinson; Maggie Gyllenhaal's adaptation of Elena Ferrante's "The Lost Daughter," starring Olivia Colman and Dakota Johnson; Paul Schrader's crime drama "The Card Counter," with Oscar Isaac and Tiffany Haddish, and Paolo Sorrentino's "The Hand of God."

Edgar Wright's stylish psychological thriller "Last Night in Soho," with Thomasin McKenzie and Anya Taylor-Joy, will also have its premiere in Venice out of the competition before heading to the Toronto Film Festival.

Jane Campion's "The Power of the Dog," with Benedict Cumberbatch, Kirsten Dunst



and Jesse Plemons; Denis Villeneuve's adaptation of "Dune," starring Timothée Chalamet, and "Halloween Kills" were all previously announced as part of the slate. Campion's film, about brothers in 1920s Montana, is another competition title, and one of two Netflix films debuting at the festival.

Last year, Chloe Zhao's "Nomadland" premiered at the scaled-down but still in-person festival and was awarded the Golden Lion. This year, Zhao will help decide who gets that prize as a member of the main jury led by fellow Oscar winner Bong Joon-ho, who directed "Parasite."

IRAN BLAMES US FOR PAUSE IN NUCLEAR TALKS

DUBAI (TIP): Iran's supreme leader on July 28 declared Tehran would not accept Washington's "stubborn" demands in talks to revive a 2015 nuclear deal and said the United States had failed to guarantee that it would never abandon the pact again. "The Americans acted completely cowardly and maliciously," state TV quoted Ayatollah Ali Khamenei as saying.

"They once violated the nuclear deal at no cost by exiting it. Now, they explicitly say they cannot give guarantees that it would not happen again." Since April 9, Tehran and six world powers have been in talks to revive the nuclear pact ditched three years ago by then US President Donald Trump, who argued it favoured Iran. The sixth round of indirect talks between Tehran and Washington adjourned on June 20, two days Ebrahim Raisi was elected President of the Islamic Republic. — Reuters

SEARCH FOR MISSING PEOPLE CONTINUES AT GERMAN EXPLOSION SITE

BERLIN (TIP): Rescue teams in Germany continued searching for missing workers on July 28 at an industrial park for chemical companies where an explosion killed at least two people and injured 31 others, German news agency dpa reported.

The Tuesday explosion at the waste management facility of the Chempark site in western Germany produced a fire that took firefighters almost four hours to extinguish. It was not clear how many people were still missing.

Police said on Wednesday that investigations into the cause of the explosion would begin on Thursday, dpa reported. So far, it appeared that the blast was linked to storage tanks filled with solvents.

The industrial park is located in the city of Leverkusen, near Cologne. After the explosion sent a large black cloud into the air, residents were asked to stay indoors and several major highways were shut down for hours.

City officials also warned people not to let children play outside, use outside pools or eat fruit and vegetables from their backyards in the coming days.

Leverkusen is home to Bayer, one of Germany's biggest chemical companies and one of the biggest employers in the region. The city has about 1,63,000 residents, many of whom work for Bayer.

The industrial park, operated by Currenta, is located close to the banks of the Rhine River. AP

Won't let terrorists operate from Afghanistan, Taliban leader assures Chinese FM

BEIJING/TIANJIN (TIP): A Taliban delegation, led by Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, on July 28 made a surprise visit to China and held talks with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, during which the Taliban leader termed Beijing as a "trustworthy friend" and assured that the group would not permit "anyone to use" Afghanistan's territory. This is the first meeting between China and the Taliban amid the withdrawal of US and NATO forces from Afghanistan.

The ongoing offensive by the Taliban capturing a significant amount of territory from government forces has sparked concerns in China that the separatist Uygur militant group from its volatile Xinjiang province, the East Turkistan Islamic Movement, (ETIM) would infiltrate through its Afghan borders. The Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman, Zhao Lijian, has confirmed at a media briefing that the delegation led by Baradar met Wang at the port city Tianjin located close to Beijing. The



ministry also posted photos of Wang with Baradar and his delegation.

The Taliban delegation's visit followed days after Pakistan and China announced plans to launch 'joint actions' in Afghanistan to drive out terrorist forces during the talks between Wang and Pakistan Foreign Minister, Shah

Mahmood Qureshi at the Chinese city of Chengdu on July 25.

During talks, Wang expressed hope that the Taliban could draw a clear line between themselves and the ETIM. Wang said the ETIM was a listed terrorist organisation that threatened territorial integrity. — (PTI)

South, North Korea have restored hotlines as leaders seek to rebuild ties

SEOUL (TIP): South and North Korea have restored hotlines that Pyongyang severed a year ago when ties deteriorated sharply, with renewed efforts by the two countries' leaders to rebuild relations, the South's presidential Blue House said on July 27.

South Korean President Moon Jae-in and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un have exchanged multiple letters since April and agreed to reconnect the hotlines, said Moon's press secretary, Park Soo-hyun.

North Korea's state media outlet, KCNA, also said all inter-Korean communication channels resumed operation at 10 a.m. Tuesday (0100 GMT) is in line with an agreement between Moon and Kim.

"The two leaders have explored ways to recover relations by exchanging letters on several occasions, and agreed to restore severed hotlines as a first step for that process," Park said in a statement.

"They have also agreed to regain trust as soon as possible and foster progress on relations again."

KCNA touted the reopening of the hotlines as "a big stride in recovering the mutual trust and promoting reconciliation."

North Korea cut the hotlines in June 2020 as cross-border ties soured after a failed second summit in February 2019 between Kim and former U.S. President Donald Trump, which Moon had offered to mediate.

The move was followed by the



destruction of a joint liaison office inside the North that had been set up in 2018 to foster better ties, plunging relations between the rivals to a low point.

Seoul's defence ministry confirmed that a military hotline was tested on Tuesday and that twice-daily regular communication would resume.

The Unification Ministry, which handles inter-Korean affairs, also said telephone lines installed at the border truce village of Panmunjom had also been restored, welcoming it and expressing hopes for a restart of cooperation.

Moon has called for a revival of the hotline and talks, pinning high hopes on U.S. President Joe Biden to restart negotiations aimed at dismantling North Korea's nuclear and missile

programmes.

But it was unclear whether the hotline reopenings were a serious sign that Pyongyang would respond to overtures by Moon and the Biden administration, which called for a "reliable, predictable and constructive" way to kickstart denuclearisation talks.

"The United States has been continuing to reach out to North Korea ever since President Biden took office. I think this shows willingness on Pyongyang's part to respond," said James Kim of the Asan Institute for Policy Studies in Seoul.

"But it is premature to read too much into these gestures," Kim added. "We need to see some seriousness on Pyongyang's part to move towards denuclearisation for us to say that there is genuine progress."

Yang Moo-jin, a professor at the University of North Korean Studies in Seoul, said exchanging information on COVID-19 and natural disasters may be a way to rebuild ties.

North Korea has not formally confirmed any COVID-19 outbreaks, but it closed its borders and took strict anti-virus measures, seeing the pandemic as a matter of national survival.

The announcement came as the two Koreas marked the 68th anniversary of the armistice that ended the 1950-53 Korean War.

Kim paid tribute to fallen soldiers and sent gifts to surviving veterans, according to KCNA. Reuters

Russia protests Japan's 'hostility' over island visit, summons envoy

MOSCOW/TOKYO (TIP): Russia rejected what it said was a hostile Japanese diplomatic protest following a visit to a disputed island chain on July 26 by the Russian Prime Minister, saying he could go wherever on Russian territory he wanted.

A top Japanese government spokesman said earlier on Monday that Tokyo was lodging an official diplomatic protest over the visit by Mikhail Mishustin to one of four Russian-held islands to which Japan lays claim.

Japan, which Russian news agencies said had summoned the Russian ambassador over the matter, calls the islands the Northern Territories, while Russia calls them the Kuril Islands.

The territorial dispute over the islands dates to when the then-Soviet Union seized them at the end of World War-II, and has prevented the two countries from signing a formal peace treaty.

Mishustin was quoted by Russian news agencies as saying during the visit that Moscow planned to set up a special economic zone with no customs duties and a reduced set of taxes on the island chain.

Russia's foreign ministry summoned the Japanese ambassador in Moscow to protest over Tokyo's behaviour. "Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Igor Morgulov conveyed a strong protest to the Japanese side in connection with hostile steps taken by official Tokyo in recent days," the ministry said in a statement.



Disputed territory

Japan calls the disputed territory the Northern Territories. Russia, on the other hand, calls it Kuril Islands

The territorial dispute dates back to the era when the then USSR captured the area during the end of World War-II

The two countries haven't signed a formal peace treaty

Tokyo: must advance peace negotiations

The Japanese embassy said in a statement that ambassador Toyohisa

Kozuki, in his own expression of protest, described Russian PM Mikhail Mishustin's trip as "going against our country's consistent position on the Northern Territories". The Japanese side "strongly demands Russia to take constructive actions to advance peace treaty negotiations", the statement said.

Moscow blocks Navalny's website

Russian Internet watchdog Roskomnadzor has blocked jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny's website, navalny.com, his team said on Monday. Reuters

57 MIGRANTS DIE IN SHIPWRECK OFF LIBYAN COAST

GENEVA (TIP): At least 57 people drowned on July 26 after a boat capsized off the Libyan coast near Khums, the latest tragedy in the Mediterranean where more than 1,100 have perished this year, the UN's International Organisation for Migration (IOM) said.

Bodies have not been recovered from the shipwreck, but survivors included migrants from Nigeria, Ghana and Gambia, IOM spokeswoman Safa Msehli told Reuters.

"According to survivors brought to shore by fishermen and the coast guard, at least 20 women and two children were among those who drowned," she said earlier by tweet.

The migrants, the majority from West Africa, departed from Khums, presumably to reach Europe, Msehli said.

"Despite an increase in arrivals in Europe, there is no crisis of numbers and arrivals remain manageable through better solidarity and improved governance and management of migration," she added.

Migrant boat departures to Italy and other parts of Europe from Libya and Tunisia have increased in recent months with better weather. Hundreds of thousands have made the perilous crossing in the last years, many fleeing conflict and poverty in Africa and the Middle East. (Reuters)

MACRON DIALS ISRAELI PM OVER SNOOPING CHARGES

JERUSALEM (TIP): French President Emmanuel Macron has spoken to Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett on reports that Morocco's security forces may have used the Pegasus spyware to snoop on his cellphones, according to a media report.

A global media consortium last week reported that 50,000 cellphone numbers were being spied on using the Pegasus malware, which has been developed by Israeli cybersecurity company NSO Group. The mobile phones of French President Macron and 15 members of his government may have been among potential targets, according to a member of the media consortium. Macron telephoned Bennett and asked him to ensure that "the issue was being taken seriously", Israel's Channel 12 reported on Saturday evening. The Israeli PM said the allegations were from a period when he had not assumed office but assured that the required conclusions on the matter will be reached upon.

The Moroccan government has denied reports that the country's security forces used the spyware to eavesdrop on the French President. Similarly, the NSO Group has denied that the French President was targeted. A source close to Macron played down the risks, saying the French leader had several phones which were "regularly changed, updated and secured". — PTI

DEATH TOLL RISES TO 15 IN CHINA'S WAREHOUSE FIRE

BEIJING (TIP): The death toll from a fire at a warehouse in China's northeastern Jilin province has risen to 15, local authorities said on July 26.

The fire broke out on Saturday afternoon at a logistic warehouse in Jingyue high-tech industrial development zone in Jilin's province's capital Changchun.

The Changchun municipal government said the local fire brigade received reports of the accident at around 3:48 pm on Saturday and launched search and rescue efforts, which concluded on Sunday.

The death toll has risen to 15, they said, adding that 25 people are injured.

The injured people are receiving treatment in hospitals and have no life-threatening injuries, the government said.

Authorities have confirmed the identities of the deceased and continue to investigate the cause of the accident, state-run Xinhua news agency reported. PTI

Bus swerves off road in Croatia; 10 killed, 45 injured

ZAGREB (CROATIA) (TIP): A bus swerved off a highway and crashed in Croatia early July 26, killing 10 people and injuring at least 45 others, police said.

The crash happened around 6 am (0400 GMT; 12 am EDT) near the town of Slavonski Brod on the highway between the capital, Zagreb, and the Serbian border.

Photos from the scene showed the bus on the side in the grass near the edge of the road. Firefighters and rescuers could be seen around the bus while traffic on the highway was halted.

Police said the bus had Kosovo license plates and was on a regular route from Germany to Kosovo capital Pristina, which is located south of Serbia. The cause of the crash wasn't immediately known.

Local police chief Franjo Galic said the bus was full, with more than 60 people on board. He described the

crash as "one of the worst accidents I have ever seen." The 45 injured were transferred to the hospital in Slavonski Brod. Hospital chief Josip Samardzic said eight people had serious injuries.

It wasn't immediately clear whether there were any children on the bus.

Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic expressed "sadness and grief" and extended his condolences to the relatives of the people who died in the crash and the people of Kosovo.

"We hope the injured will recover," Plenkovic tweeted.

State-run HRT television reported that Croatia's government officials were on their way to the scene.

The highway where the crash happened is a key traffic artery through Croatia which is busy over the summer because of tourism and foreign workers travelling home from Western Europe. — AP

Portugal's 98% Covid-19 patients not fully vaccinated

People not immunised or having received only one dose of vaccine constitute 98 per cent of patients hospitalised with Covid-19 in Portugal, the Portuguese General Directorate of Health (DGS) reported.

The reduction in the risk of hospitalisation was obvious among patients who were fully vaccinated, and immunization "reduces by up to three times the risk of death" of the coronavirus, according to Andre Peralta Santos, an expert from the DGS, the Xinhua news agency reported.

Most of the patients hospitalised at this moment in Portugal are over 60 years old, but a significant number of hospitalised people are aged 20-39.

"Where the vaccine advances, the virus retreats," and vaccination "is the key in the lives of Portuguese people," Portuguese President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa said.

He celebrated the fact that the rate of people who do not want to be vaccinated in Portugal is low, and encouraged undecided people to look at the scientific data and change their position.

The Portuguese Council of Ministers will meet on Thursday to decide whether to ease the current restrictions in force in the country, after hearing experts' guidance at the meeting.

Global Covid-19 caseload tops 195.8 mn

WASHINGTON (TIP): The overall global Covid-19 caseload has topped 195.8 million, while the deaths have surged to more than 4.18 million and vaccinations soared to over 3.96 billion, according to the Johns Hopkins University.

In its latest update on Thursday, July 29, morning, the University's Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) revealed that the current global caseload, death toll stood and vaccination tally stood at 195,865,047, 4,185,754 and 3,960,681,747, respectively.

The US continues to be the worst-hit country with the world's highest number of cases and deaths at 34,668,545 and 611,779, respectively, according to the CSSE.

In terms of infections, India follows in the second place with 31,484,605 cases.

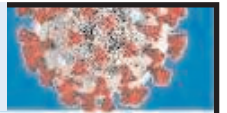
The other worst countries with over 3 million cases are Brazil (19,797,086), France (6,116,711), Russia (6,116,249), the UK (5,797,335), Turkey (5,660,469), Argentina (4,891,810), Colombia (4,757,139), Spain (4,395,602), Italy (4,330,739), Iran (3,792,014), Germany (3,769,552) and Indonesia (3,287,727), the CSSE figures showed.

In terms of deaths, Brazil comes second with 553,179 fatalities.

Nations with a death toll of over 100,000 are India (422,022), Mexico (239,079), Peru (196,138), Russia (153,620), the UK (129,718), Italy (128,010), Colombia (119,801), France (111,923) and Argentina (104,822).

Source: IANS

TRACKING THE VIRUS



GLOBAL

Cases | Deaths
195,865,047 | **4,185,754**

INDIA

Cases | Deaths
31,528,114 | **4,22,662**



England scraps quarantine for fully vaccinated visitors

LONDON (TIP): Fully vaccinated travelers from the United States and much of Europe can enter England without quarantining starting next week.

The British government says people who have received both doses of a vaccine approved by the FDA in the U.S. or the European Medicines Agency, can take pre-and post-arrival coronavirus tests instead of self-isolating. There is one exception: France, which Britain has dubbed a higher risk because of the presence of the beta variant of the coronavirus. Visitors from France will continue to face a British quarantine.

Currently, only people who have been vaccinated in Britain can skip 10 days of quarantine when arriving from most of Europe or North America. The move to boost Britain's ailing travel industry comes despite rising coronavirus cases.

The rule change takes effect Monday and only applies to England. Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland will decide whether to follow suit.

Britain's travel industry has criticized the government for being too slow to open up, saying it has

squandered its lead in the global vaccine rollout and given the EU a headstart in attracting tourists.

Now, from Aug. 2, travelers with the U.S. and EU-approved vaccines will not have to quarantine. Lifting the same requirement for fully vaccinated Britons returning from medium-risk countries in July helped to kickstart a travel recovery.

The new rule applies to England but is widely expected to be followed by the rest of Britain shortly. The government said international cruise sailings could also restart from England.

Airlines such as British Airways and Britain's biggest airport Heathrow, weighed down by cumulative pandemic losses of \$4 billion, welcomed the move but said more was needed to be done if the industry was to recover from the collapse in demand.

Top of the list is a reopening of the UK-U.S. travel corridor which is still affected by a ban on all non-U.S. citizens who have been in Britain.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson told LBC Radio earlier on Wednesday that he wanted U.S. citizens to come to England "freely" and was discussing making changes.

US CDC reimposes mask mandate for vaccinated people

WASHINGTON (TIP): Barely three months after suggesting that vaccinated people no longer needed to wear masks, indoors or out, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has now recommended people to resume wearing masks amid the surging delta variant, the media reported.

Speaking to reporters in a news briefing, Rochelle Walensky, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, expressed disappointment and dismay that the summer surge in cases, driven by the delta variant's startling transmissibility and low vaccination rates in many areas, had forced the agency to reimpose its guidance that was lifted in May, the Washington post reported.

"It is not a welcome piece of news that masking is going to be a part of people's lives who have already been vaccinated," Walensky said. "This new guidance weighs heavily on me."

The new guidance advised that people who live in high-transmission communities wear masks in indoor public spaces, even if they've been vaccinated. It also recommended that vaccinated people with vulnerable household members, including young



children and those who are immunocompromised, wear masks indoors in public spaces, the report said.

The agency also called for universal masking for teachers, staff members and students in schools, regardless of their vaccination status. The CDC continues to recommend that students return to in-person learning in the fall.

In addition, the agency also now says that fully vaccinated people should get tested if they have any covid-19 symptoms or if they were recently exposed to someone who had a suspected or confirmed infection. Fully vaccinated Americans also should isolate if they test positive for the coronavirus or are experiencing symptoms, it said.

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Wash your hair the right way

Ever wonder how to wash your hair the right way? You should. The real reason your hair looks (and feels!) so darn good after a trip to the salon is because the pros understand that the key to happy hair is a well-executed shampoo — that's why we consulted with the pros to find out exactly how to take our shampoo game to the next level. Here, the best tips for silk, shiny, beautiful hair.

Prepare your hair

Oil your hair two to three hours beforehand. An oil massage opens pores and enables better absorption of oil nutrients. Oil your hair from roots to tips and don't massage too hard. You can use coconut, mustard or olive oil and even a combination for your pre-shampooing routine.

Rinse gently

Start by rinsing your hair with lukewarm water. This will remove extra oil from hair and scalp and wash off dry skin on the scalp. It will further help open the cuticles and soften the hair. When rinsing, keep in mind to not start rubbing hair immediately but wait for your hair to be soaking wet.

Shampoo your hair

Choosing the right shampoo is important if you want your hair's natural shine and moisture to stay intact. For dry and damaged hair, it's best to opt for sulfate and paraben-free shampoo. Whereas for thin hair, go for a volumising shampoo. In any case, avoid shampoo with synthetic ingredients so that your hair doesn't get damaged. Don't rinse off the shampoo with warm water.

Apply conditioner

Hair conditioner is applied after you have rinsed out the shampoo completely. It helps in retaining moisture and binding hair cuticles. Apply it evenly along the



length of hair (but not the scalp). Leave it on for a minute or so and then rinse it off with cold water.

Other tips to keep in mind

- Wash your hair with lukewarm water as hot water can damage your hair.
- Apply a conditioning mask once a week -- a hair mask can offer deeper hydration and repair, leaving hair lush and shiny.
- Take a small amount of shampoo and work it up to lather. Start from the scalp and gently move on to the body straight down to the tip.
- Let your hair dry gradually. The best way is to take a towel and wrap it around your head and soak all the extra water.
- Understand your hair type. Go to a professional if need be and find out if you have a combination scalp, an oily one or the one that is prone to dryness.
- Accordingly, choose your hair products. Many people do not choose the correct shampoo and conditioner type for themselves.

FOOD CORNER

Lauki Kofta

Ingredients

2 Cups Lauki, grated, 1 tsp Salt, 1 tsp Red Chilli Powder, 1/2 Cup Besan, Tamarind, 1 1/2 Cups Onion, finely chopped, 1 tsp Salt, 1 tsp Turmeric Powder, 1 tsp Red Chilli Powder, 2 tsp Coriander Powder, Tbsp Lauki Water, 5 Nos Tomato, pureed, 2 Tbsp Coriander Leaves, 2 Cups Water



Method

- Grate Lauki and squeeze out the excess water and keep that water in a separate bowl to use in gravy. Now keep the grated Lauki in a deep bowl.
- Add salt, red chilli powder and besan to it. Mix the ingredients well. If it is watery then add little more besan for a thick consistency of the mixture.
- Apply oil on your palms and make flat ball to stuff 1 piece of tamarind in each ball.
- Cover the stuffing properly and make round shaped ball. Repeat this process with rest of the balls.
- Now deep fry the balls on medium heat till golden brown and crisp. Heat oil in a heavy bottomed pan and add the chopped onion to it. Stir fry until onion is well cooked.
- Now add salt and turmeric powder. Stir well and cover the saucepan with a lid for 4-5 minutes. Keep checking the mixture to avoid overcooking.
- Now add red chilli powder and coriander powder. Mix well adding the Lauki water. Again cover the saucepan and cook further for few minutes. Then pour the tomato puree along with coriander leaves and stir fry for 5 minutes.
- Add fresh water and bring it to boil on medium heat. Stir in between occasionally. Add the fried koftas to the gravy and cook for few more minutes.
- Turn off the flame and transfer the Lauki kofta curry in a serving dish. Garnish with coriander leaves.

These buttery-rich formulas have a smooth consistency that helps in healing all the woes brought in by skin dryness.

Body butter isn't watery making it more reliable to provide long-lasting hydration. Body butter is usually made from butters derived naturally from nuts and seeds.

For best results, use body butter every day post-shower and scoop out a minimum quantity. Body butter is a nutrient-dense cream comprised of natural oils and butters specially formulated to hydrate, protect, and nourish your skin.

If you've used lotion your whole life but you're not familiar with body butter, you're in for a treat. Our body butter is 100% natural and gives you a dewy glow and a non greasy finish.

At room temperature, it should be semi-solid. Compared to lotion, it is almost always thicker.

Shea body butter

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup shea butter
- 5 tbsp almond oil
- 2-3 drops of lavender essential oil

Procedure

- To melt the unrefined shea butter, use a double boiler.
- Remove it from the heat once it has



- melted and let it cool.
- Add the almond oil and stir to combine.
- When you see a solid texture, add

- the essential oil and whisk it all together with a blender.
- Do you see a buttery formula? Fill a container with this and slather it on

Get rid of dry skin with body butter

your skin daily.

Cocoa butter

Ingredients

- 1/4 cup cocoa butter
- 1/2 cup shea butter
- 3 tbsp coconut oil
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 2-3 drops of lavender essential oil

Procedure

- Melt shea butter and cocoa butter together in a double boiler.
- Once melted, remove from heat and set aside to cool.
- Add both oils until the texture changes to a more solid-state.
- Once you've added the essential oil, combine everything.
- Place the butter in a glass bowl and place it in the refrigerator.

Benefits

- Moisturizes and smoothes the skin.
- Reduces wrinkles.
- Soothes sunburn, eczema, and rashes.
- Forms a protective barrier over the skin.
- Nourishes your skin with vitamins and antioxidants.

Malnutrition may increase risk of Covid severity

NEW YORK (TIP): Adults and children with Covid-19 who have a history of malnutrition may have an increased likelihood of death and the need for mechanical ventilation, according to a study.

Malnutrition hampers the proper functioning of the immune system and is known to increase the risk of severe infections for other viruses, but the potential long-term effects of malnutrition on Covid-19 outcomes are less clear, said Louis Ehwerhemuepha from Children's Hospital of Orange County in California, US.

Children older than five and adults aged 18 to 78 years with previous diagnoses of malnutrition were found to have higher odds of severe Covid-19 than those with no history of malnutrition in the same age groups.

Children younger than five and adults aged 79 or above were found to have higher odds of severe Covid-19 if they were not malnourished compared to those of the same age who were malnourished. In children, this may be due to having less medical data for those under five, according to the researchers.

The risk of severe Covid-19 in adults with and without malnutrition continued to rise with age above 79 years. The findings are published in the journal *Scientific Reports*.

Malnutrition, as a global health problem for both the pediatric and



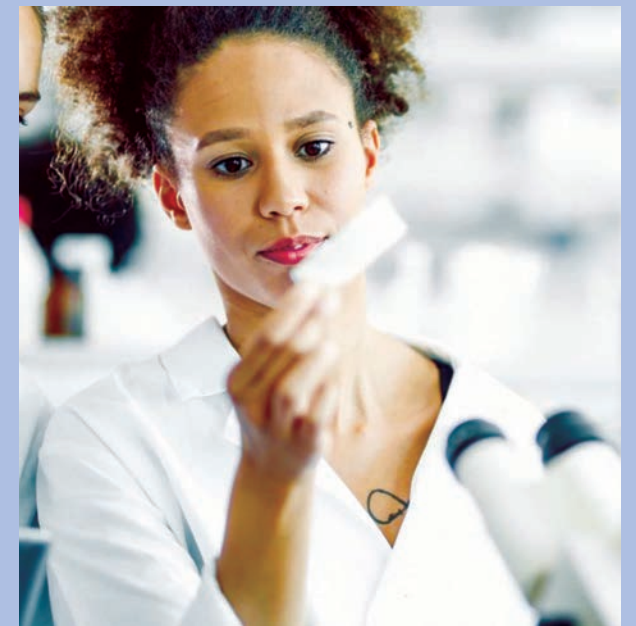
adult population, will continue to overlap with the Covid-19 pandemic that has already affected millions worldwide, Ehwerhemuepha said.

The researchers suggest that public health interventions for those at highest risk of malnutrition may help mitigate the higher likelihood of severe Covid-19 in this group.

For the study, the team investigated associations between malnutrition diagnoses and subsequent Covid-19 severity, using medical records for 8,604 children and 94,495 adults (older than 18 years) who were hospitalised with

Covid-19 in the US between March and June 2020. Patients with a diagnosis of malnutrition between 2015 and 2019 were compared to patients without.

Of 520 (6 per cent) children with severe Covid-19, 39 (7.5 per cent) had a previous diagnosis of malnutrition, compared to 125 (1.5 per cent) of 7,959 (98.45 per cent) children with mild Covid-19. Of 11,423 (11 per cent) adults with severe Covid-19, 453 (4 per cent) had a previous diagnosis of malnutrition, compared to 1,557 (1.8 per cent) of 81,515 (98.13 per cent) adults with mild Covid-19.



Novel therapy might be effective in many cancers

NEW YORK (TIP): A team of researchers has developed a novel therapy that could be effective for different types of cancers.

The study, published in the journal *Cancer Discovery*, indicates that the therapeutic agent shows high effectiveness in vitro at disrupting a biological pathway that helps cancer survive.

"Translating these findings into effective cancer therapies for patients is a high priority..." said researcher Jian Jin from Mount Sinai in the US.

According to the researchers, the therapy is an engineered molecule, MS21, that causes the degradation of AKT, an enzyme that is overly active in many cancers.

This study laid out evidence that pharmacological degradation of AKT is a viable treatment for cancers with mutations in certain genes, the researchers said.

AKT is a cancer gene that encodes an enzyme that is frequently abnormally activated in cancer cells to stimulate tumour growth. Degradation of AKT reverses these processes and inhibits tumour growth.

"Our study lays a solid foundation for the clinical development of an AKT degrader for the treatment of human cancers with certain gene mutations," said co-author Ramon Parsons from the varsity.

"Examination of 44,000 human cancers identified that 19 per cent of tumours have at least one of these mutations, suggesting that a large population of cancer patients could benefit from therapy with an AKT degrader such as MS21," Ramon added.

MS21 was tested in human cancer-derived cell lines, which are models used in laboratories to study the efficacy of cancer therapies.

The researchers are looking to develop MS21 with an industry partner to open clinical trials for patients.

Mixed AstraZeneca-Pfizer shot boosts Covid antibody level, says study

SEOUL (TIP): A mixed vaccination of first AstraZeneca and then a Pfizer COVID-19 shot boosted neutralising antibody levels by six times compared with two AstraZeneca doses, a study from South Korea showed.

The study involved 499 medical workers -- 100 receiving mixed doses, 200 taking two doses of the Pfizer/BioNTech shot and the remainder getting two AstraZeneca shots.

All showed neutralising antibodies, which prevent the virus from entering cells and replicating, and the result of the mixed schedule of vaccines showed similar amounts of neutralising antibodies found from the group that received two Pfizer shots.

A British study last month showed similar results -- an AstraZeneca shot followed by Pfizer produced the best T-cell responses, and a higher antibody response than Pfizer followed by AstraZeneca.

The data provides further



support for the decision of several countries to offer alternatives to AstraZeneca as a second shot after the vaccine was linked to rare blood clots.

The South Korean study also analysed neutralising activity against major variants of concern, the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency

(KDCA) said.

None of the groups demonstrated reduced neutralising activity against the Alpha variant, first identified in Britain, but the neutralisation titre decreased by 2.5 to 6 fold against Beta, Gamma and Delta, first detected in South Africa, Brazil and India, respectively.

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QR Codes are here to stay. So is the tracking they allow

When people enter Teeth, a bar in San Francisco's Mission neighborhood, the bouncer gives them options. They can order food and drinks at the bar, he says, or they can order via a QR code.

Each table at Teeth has a card emblazoned with the code, a pixelated black-and-white square. Customers simply scan it with their phone camera to open a website for the online menu. Then they can input their credit card information to pay, all without touching a paper menu or interacting with a server.

A scene like this was a rarity 18 months ago, but not anymore. "In 13 years of bar ownership in San Francisco, I've never seen a sea change like this that brought the majority of customers into a new behavior so quickly," said Ben Bleiman, Teeth's owner.

QR codes — essentially a kind of bar code that allows transactions to be touchless — have emerged as a permanent tech fixture from the coronavirus pandemic. Restaurants have adopted them en masse, retailers including CVS and Foot Locker have added them to checkout registers, and marketers have splashed them all over retail packaging, direct mail, billboards and TV advertisements.

But the spread of the codes has also let businesses integrate more tools for tracking, targeting and analytics, raising red flags for privacy experts. That's because QR codes can store digital information such as when, where and how often a scan occurs. They can also open an app or a website that then tracks people's personal information or requires them to input it.

Source: NYT

Hubble finds first evidence of water vapour on Jupiter's moon Ganymede

WASHINGTON (TIP): Astronomers have uncovered the first evidence of water vapour in the atmosphere of Jupiter's moon Ganymede by using new and archival datasets from NASA's Hubble Space Telescope.

According to the study published in the journal *Nature Astronomy* on Monday, the water vapour forms when ice from the moon's surface turns from solid to gas.

Previous studies have offered circumstantial evidence that Ganymede, the largest moon in the solar system, contains more water than all of Earth's oceans, NASA said.

However, temperatures there are so cold that water on the surface is frozen solid, according to the US space agency.

Ganymede's ocean would reside roughly 160 kilometres below the crust, therefore, the water vapour would not represent the evaporation of this ocean.

Astronomers re-examined Hubble observations from the last two decades to find this evidence of water vapour.

In 1998, Hubble's Space Telescope Imaging Spectrograph took the first ultraviolet (UV) images of Ganymede, which revealed colourful ribbons of electrified gas called auroral bands, and provided further evidence that Ganymede has a weak magnetic field.

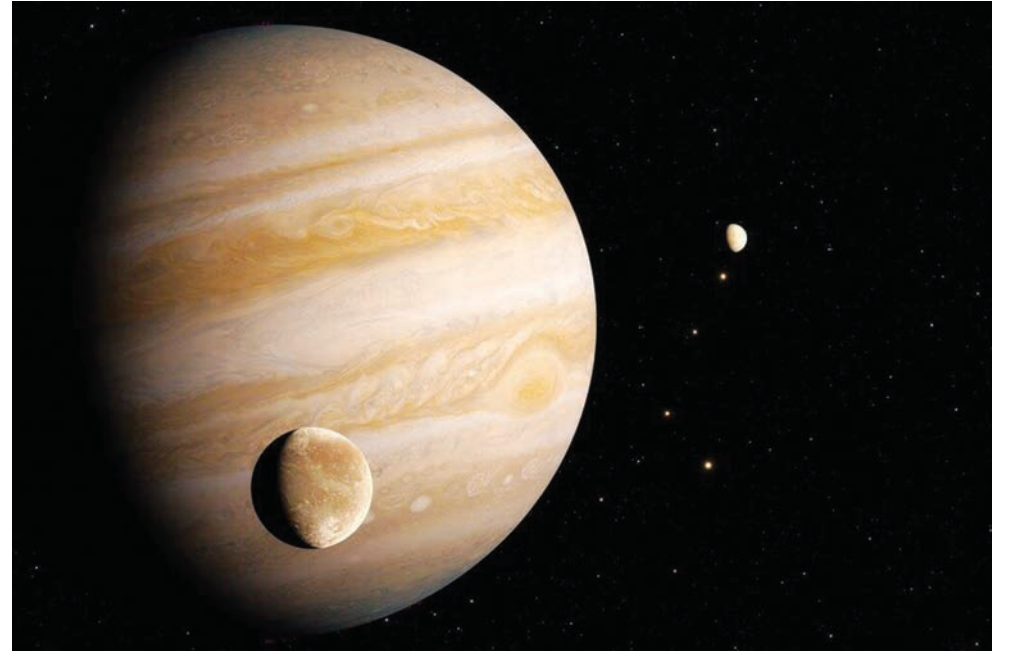
The similarities in these UV observations were explained by the presence of molecular oxygen (O₂).

However, some observed features did not match the expected emissions from a pure O₂ atmosphere.

At the same time, scientists concluded this discrepancy was likely related to higher concentrations of atomic oxygen (O).

Lorenz Roth of the KTH Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm, Sweden led the team to measure the amount of atomic oxygen with Hubble.

The team's analysis combined the data



from two instruments: Hubble's Cosmic Origins Spectrograph in 2018 and archival images from the Space Telescope Imaging Spectrograph (STIS) from 1998 to 2010.

Contrary to the original interpretations of the data from 1998, they discovered there was hardly any atomic oxygen in Ganymede's atmosphere.

Roth and his team then took a closer look at the relative distribution of the aurora in the UV images.

Ganymede's surface temperature varies strongly throughout the day, and around noon near the equator it may become sufficiently warm that the ice surface releases some small amounts of water molecules, the researchers said.

The perceived differences in the UV images are directly correlated with where water would be expected in the moon's atmosphere, they said.

"So far only the molecular oxygen had been observed," explained Roth.

"This is produced when charged particles erode the ice surface. The water vapour that we measured now originates from ice sublimation caused by the thermal escape of water vapour from warm icy regions," he said.

The finding adds anticipation to European Space Agency (ESA)'s upcoming mission JUpiter ICy moons Explorer (JUICE).

Planned for launch in 2022 and arrival at Jupiter in 2029, JUICE will spend at least three years making detailed observations of Jupiter and three of its largest moons, with particular emphasis on Ganymede as a planetary body and potential habitat.

"Our results can provide the JUICE instrument teams with valuable information that may be used to refine their observation plans to optimise the use of the spacecraft," Roth added.

Source: PTI

WhatsApp will now keep chats archived even after receiving new messages

WhatsApp will finally add a long-awaited feature to the app with a new update. The instant messaging app will now let users add unwanted chats to the 'Archived' folder and the chats will now stay in the folder when new messages come in, instead of coming back to the top, out of the Archived folder.

The new feature will let users have more control over their inbox, along with more ways to organise their Archived folder. The feature will also let users stay clear of non-priority messages from clouding up the top of their chat list.

"We have heard that users want their archived messages to stay tucked away in the Archived Chats folder, instead of moving back into your main chat list when a new message arrives," WhatsApp said in a statement, adding that "the new Archived Chats settings mean that any message



thread that is archived will now stay in the Archived Chats folder, even if a new message is sent to that thread."

"We know that not everything always needs to be front and centre for you. We want to make sure that WhatsApp remains a private and secure place where you can speak to the people who are most important to you and where you're in control of your messages," the company added.

Bezos offers NASA \$2 billion in exchange for moon mission contract

SEATTLE (TIP): Fresh off his trip to space, billionaire businessman Jeff Bezos on Monday offered to cover up to \$2 billion in NASA costs if the U.S. space agency awards his company Blue Origin a contract to make a spacecraft designed to land astronauts back on the moon.

NASA in April awarded rival billionaire entrepreneur Elon Musk's SpaceX a \$2.9 billion contract to build a spacecraft to bring astronauts to the lunar surface as early as 2024, rejecting bids from Blue Origin and defence contractor Dynetics. Blue Origin had partnered with Lockheed Martin Corp, Northrop Grumman Corp and Draper in the bid.

The space agency cited its own funding shortfalls, SpaceX's proven record of orbital missions and other factors in a contract decision that senior NASA official Kathy Lueders called "what's the best value to the government." In a letter to NASA Administrator Bill Nelson, Bezos said Blue Origin would waive



payments in the government's current fiscal year and the next ones after that up to \$2 billion, and pay for an orbital mission to vet its technology. In exchange, Blue Origin would accept a firm, fixed-priced contract, and cover any system development cost overruns, Bezos said.

"NASA veered from its original dual-source acquisition strategy due to perceived near-term budgetary issues, and this offer removes that obstacle," Bezos wrote.

Source: Reuters



US economic recovery on track despite Covid-19 surge: Federal Reserve

WASHINGTON (TIP): The US economic recovery remains on track despite a rise in coronavirus infections, the Federal Reserve said on Wednesday, July 28, in a new policy statement that remained upbeat and flagged ongoing talks around the eventual withdrawal of monetary policy support.

In a news conference following the release of the statement, Fed Chair Jerome Powell said the US job market still had "some ground to cover" before it would be time to pull back from the economic support the US central bank put in place in the spring of 2020 to battle the coronavirus pandemic's economic shocks.

"I would want to see some strong job numbers" in coming months before reducing the \$120 billion in monthly bond purchases the Fed continues to make, he told reporters.

But Powell also set aside, at least for now, the risk that the renewed spread of the coronavirus through its more infectious Delta variant would put the recovery at risk or throw the Fed off track as it plans an exit from crisis-era policies.

"It will have significant health consequences" in the areas of the country where outbreaks are intensifying, Powell said. But in the prior waves of coronavirus infections "there has tended to be less in the way of economic implications ... It is not an unreasonable expectation" that would remain the case this time, he added.

The Fed's policy statement, issued after the end of a two-day policy meeting, reflected that confidence.

"With progress on vaccinations and strong policy support, indicators of economic activity and employment have continued to strengthen," the central bank said in the statement.

Looking past the quadrupling of daily US coronavirus infections that has occurred since the Fed last met in June, the central bank indicated it still had faith that an ongoing vaccination drive would "reduce the effect of the public health crisis on the economy" and allow a robust reopening to proceed.

Fed policymakers, in a unanimous statement, also said they were moving ahead with discussions about when to reduce the central bank's bond-buying program, a precursor to eventually raising interest rates.

Depositors to get up to Rs 5 lakh within 90 days if bank under moratorium

NEW DELHI (TIP): The Union Cabinet has cleared the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC) Bill, 2021, which will allow depositors to withdraw up to Rs 5 lakh in 90 days.

The announcement will cover 98.3 per cent of all deposit accounts and 50.9 per cent of the deposit value, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Wednesday. This compares with the global deposit insurance coverage of 80 per cent of all accounts and 20-30 per cent of the deposit value.

"Even if there is a moratorium on a bank...this measure will set in," Sitharaman said. In the first 45 days, after the bank is placed under moratorium by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the lender will collect all depositor claims and submit it to DICGC. The corporation will process the claims in real time. Within 90 days, the process will be completed, even when the bank resolution is ongoing.

"This will be the biggest relief we can offer to small depositors, nearly covering 98.3 per cent depositors," Sitharaman said.

The DICGC Bill, 2021, will cover banks that have been already placed under moratorium, and will insure savings deposits, fixed deposits, current and recurring deposits.

Satish Marathe, director on the RBI board, said this would address the woes of depositors who were not able to get their funds due to problems of banks. Another likely fallout will be that the



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Minister of Sports, Youth Affairs and Minister of Information and Broadcasting Anurag Thakur.

revival of banks facing problems will become difficult as they will have to return money to the depositors.

DICGC has paid most of the claims to customers of cooperative banks. There may be some burden on the corporation in the form of higher outgo, but it would not adversely impact financial profile, analysts said.

"Although the change will cover 98.3 per cent accounts, there is certainly scope for raising the limit further since the middle-income depositors may still not get full benefit in the case of a failure of a bank, and one may need to rely upon a merger with another bank as a bailout to take care of customers' money," said Jyoti Prakash Gadia, managing director, Resurgent India.

As the government had increased the deposit insurance cover for bank customers from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 5 lakh last year, lenders have been paying a premium of 12 paise per Rs 100 deposit since April 2020, as compared to 10 paise earlier. The law has a provision that the premium will not be hiked beyond 15 paise per Rs 100 deposit. There will be enabling provision to increase this cap in future, which will be determined by the government in consultation with the RBI. At present, the amount in Deposit Insurance Fund (DIF), used for the settlement of claims of depositors of banks under liquidation, reconstruction and amalgamation, stood at Rs 1,10,380 crore as on March 31, 2020, as against Rs 93,750 crore as on March 31, 2019. The DIF is built out of the premium paid by insured banks and the coupon income received on investments in central government securities.

DICGC collects insurance premiums from the insured banks for administration of the deposit insurance system. The premiums to be paid by the insured banks are computed on the basis of their assessable deposits. The Insured banks pay advance insurance premiums to the corporation semi-annually within two months from the beginning of each financial half year, based on their deposits as at the end of previous half year.

The premiums paid by the insured banks to the Corporation are required to be borne by the banks themselves and are not passed on to the depositors.

IMF upgrades outlook for rich nations, slashes India forecast

WASHINGTON (TIP):

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has maintained its 6% global growth forecast for 2021, upgrading its outlook for the US and other wealthy economies but cutting estimates for a number of developing countries struggling with surging Covid infections.

The divergence is based largely on better access to Covid vaccines and continued fiscal support in advanced economies, while emerging markets face difficulties on both fronts, the IMF said in an update to its World Economic Outlook.

"Close to 40% of the population in advanced economies has been fully vaccinated, compared with 11% in emerging market economies, and a tiny fraction in low-income developing countries," IMF's chief economist Gita Gopinath said.

The IMF significantly raised its forecasts for the US, which it now expects to grow at 7% in 2021 and 4.9% in 2022 — up 0.6 and 1.4 percentage points, respectively, from the forecasts in April. The projections assume the US Congress will approve President Joe Biden's roughly \$4 trillion in proposed infrastructure, education and family support spending largely as envisioned by the White House.

Positive spillovers from the US spending plans, along with expected progress in Covid vaccination rates, are boosting the IMF's 2022 global growth forecast to 4.9%, up 0.5 percentage point from April.

The IMF cut its 2021 growth forecast for India, which has struggled with a massive wave of infections this year, by three percentage points to 9.5%. It also reduced its 2021 forecast for China by 0.3 percentage point, citing a scaling back of public investment and overall fiscal support.

Source: Reuters



Kirloskar family feud: Brothers' firms spar over 130-year-old legacy

NEW DELHI (TIP):

Kirloskar Brothers Ltd (KBL), led by Sanjay Kirloskar, accused four firms under his brothers Atul and Rahul of trying to "usurp" its legacy of 130 years and trying to mislead the public, which has been refuted by the other side.

As the family feud simmers, KBL in a letter to capital markets regulator Sebi claimed that recent press releases by Kirloskar Oil Engines Ltd (KOEL), Kirloskar Industries Ltd (KIL), Kirloskar Pneumatic Company Ltd (KPCL) and Kirloskar Ferrrous Industries Ltd (KFIL) "have sought to usurp the legacy" of KBL.

Also, they attempted to pass off the legacy and track record of KBL as that of their own, the letter said.

When contacted, a spokesperson of Kirloskar Industries Ltd (KIL) said the letter by KBL to Sebi "contains a large number of factual inaccuracies and mis-statements".

"Nothing contained in the entire Press Release even remotely makes any reference to KBL let alone attempting to pass off the legacy and track record of Kirloskar Brothers Limited as that of their own," the spokesperson added.

On July 16, five firms led by brothers Atul and Rahul Kirloskar had announced a 'refresh' exercise of their respective businesses, with an eye on evolving from engineering-led firms into customer-focussed solution providers.

Source: PTI



Shree Ganeshaya Namah



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Chirag Bejan Daruwalla with his father late Bejan Daruwalla

**TIP brings you Weekly and Birthday Horoscope by
Astro Friend Chirag - Blessed Son of Astrologer Bejan Daruwalla**

WEEKLY HOROSCOPE - 2nd August to 8th August 2021

Aries

Ganesha says you will get involved in activities you never thought you would participate in this week. The first three days will bring you opportunities you were waiting for but in the last two days you will feel uneasy and derailed from your schedule. Avoid gambling on Wednesday 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 dull moment due to transition of moon.

Taurus

Strong positive energies are aligned in your favor this week. You need to do the bare minimum to achieve great success in your professional life. If you chose to work hard this week, the financial profit you will make this week will be astronomical. Your love life will experience a downfall this week. It will be due to unexpected rude behavior from your partner, understand why they're behaving this way instead of being cold and rude.

Gemini

You will make much progress this week. Keep doing what you are doing; being persistent and consistent will pay you very well in the future. Do not rest this week. You need to work on your water intake while you're at it, try to remain more physically active. It will help you achieve the body that you keep saying you want. Your health will gradually progress where you want it to be. Make sure to get some vitamin d by soaking in the sunlight as much as you can.

Cancer

This is a tough week for your business as it will suddenly spiral downwards; you need to pick up the slack before it gets even worse. You will have to become the inspiration and motivate your employees, as they will be quite disappointed and low from the sudden blow to your business. You will have a lot of work to do, which is a good thing as you have been waiting for a new prospect for quite a while now. Take each step with caution as you move forward with this huge business opportunity.

Leo

Your love life will enter into a new phase this week. You will experience a positive shift in your emotions as everything new is exciting and intriguing. You will meet your partner's extended family and friends this week. You and your partner tend to have very different communication styles hence to be heard and make your relationship work both of you will have to put in the work and efforts to be heard and meet each other in the middle when it comes to things you both don't agree on.

Virgo

This is a great week for you to make real estate investments to expand your business and take it to the next level. Your business will be better than you expected week. You will be blooming with new opportunities but also a huge amount of workload. You will learn how to deal with different personalities and how to easily get any problem be it at work or in your personal life to a resolution.

Libra

You will do okay this week if you do not let your thoughts get to you as this week is a sensitive week for you. Avoid any kind of stress this week because your health is totally in your hands and you will need to make today count by making the correct choices. You will be doubtful about your partner's contributions and intentions towards you. You will have to be focused on doing your own thing irrespective of whether your partner contributes to your life or not. Make sure you are your own best friends this week.

Scorpio

Finances and prosperity are on your way this week. Due to the immense luck, you have this week. Make sure you make the most of the luck that you have this week because it won't last long. A lot of digestive issues will bother you a lot this week. Since it is new to you, you won't understand what you're doing wrong that is causing it. Make sure that you not only have a proper diet but that you eat at the right time as well as hydrate properly and consult a doctor if you feel very uneasy today.

Sagittarius

You will be very busy with work and family events this week. You won't be able to spend as much time as you can do what you love. If you are starting a new innovation in your existing business, you can expect help to come by in the form of sponsors. You will experience a positive shift in your professional life this week, which will keep you excited throughout the week. You will need to go the extra mile in terms of learning if you want your business to keep being more and more successful.

Capricorn

You will taste victory in most of the tasks you take. Those awaiting a promotion are likely to get the good news this week itself hence all in all this is a good week for you. Gains from speculative activities are indicated. Your reputation will grow and spread far and wide. Many of the problems that you have been facing from a long time will get solved.

Aquarius

New opportunities will arise this week. You need to be ready for a whole week of work as you have a lot piled on. Try to be as productive as you can be. Financial positions shall improve considerably this week as old payments will easily start to clear up. Past Investments and speculative deals will bring in unexpectedly great returns. A lot of unexpected obstacles will arise due to silly mistakes of your employees hence your temper will be tested as well. Being angry at your employees will ruin the work even more hence no matter how hard it is learning to be gentle.

Pisces

Luck is not by your side when it comes to your business this week. Expenses could be incurred this week. Find an outlet for your energy and impulsiveness, like jogging, yoga, meditation, or cycling. When you get angry, use your aggression as a fuel for a healthier lifestyle. Anything that satisfies your urge to release the anger in the form of physical energy and explore the unknown is good for your overall health.

BIRTHDAY HOROSCOPE 2ND AUGUST TO 8TH AUGUST 2021

By Astro Friend Chirag - Blessed Son of Astrologer Bejan Daruwalla : www.bejandaruwalla.com

CONTD FROM PAGE 30

August 2

Hanging out with your friends will be relatively easy today. Your social life will be the most positive part of your day. A very productive day is on its way for you today. You will have a lot of work to do, which you will thoroughly enjoy.

August 3

You will be amazing when it comes to being present and charming in front of a large amount of people today. You might experience a little disappointment from your partner today because they will want to spend the day with you alone but you would rather be with all the people that you love today which will create issues in your relationship today and have you second guessing about it.

August 4

You will be showered with a lot of love and

appreciation from your colleagues today. You feel appreciated for your efforts. You will have astounding confidence from today in your work and it will only keep getting better and better. Do not rush and get overwhelmed by today's events.

August 5

Positive energies are all for you today. Today you will realize the importance of your family as they will support you a lot in all of your decisions made recently. Make sure to express your gratitude to them a gift preferably an album with beautiful memories would be very much appreciated by your family.

August 6

You will meet some new friends today. You will experience a positive shift in your social life today, which will keep you excited throughout the day. Today you're doing great in your life. Consider that the stars are in your favor today. Great things are

coming your way.

August 7

You will be encouraged to formulate your plans and goals alone today. Your leadership skills will help you move past any hurdles without much effort. You will feel as if you're being tested in strength and character as well as patience by your partner as well as your employees as they leave all the work and responsibilities on you.

August 8

Your love life has been on a roller coaster for the past few days which you hate but today you will experience a lot of progress as well as stability compared to your past few days. Try to express what you have been thinking all along. Make it abundantly clear that you love and care for them. Expressing your feelings will help you better your love life and help mark clear boundaries each one of you should not cross.

|| SHREE GANESHAY NAMA ||



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Kartikeya: The God of war

Kartikeya, God of war and victory and he was Commander of gods. He is popular as Murugan and mounts on Peacock with Weapons such as Vel, Bow and Arrow. Kartikeya also known as Skanda, and Subramaniyan and the son of Shiva and Parvati.

Lord Kartikeya is a Hindu god, the son of Shiva and Parvati, and is a much revered deity especially in South India. He is known by various names like Murugan, Shanmukha (Shanmuga), Subhramanian, Shadanana, Guha, Senthil, Saravana, Kumaraswamy and Skanda.

Kartikeya is quintessentially brave, intelligent, and perfection personified because of which he is worshipped as the god of war and victory. He is also the brave leader of god's forces and was created to destroy demons, symbolizing negative tendencies of human beings. In North of India Kartikeya, also called Kartik, is believed to be the elder son of Shiva and Parvati but his devotees in South believe him to be the younger son with Ganesh being the elder offspring of Shiva and Parvati

Origins of Kartikeya

According to the Skanda Purana, Shiva's first wife Sati angrily immolated herself after she felt insulted by her father Daksha when he didn't invite Lord Shiva for a Yagna Ceremony and further insulted Him.

An irate Lord Shiva then destroyed the Yagna with the help of ganas. An ascetic Shiva was married with great difficulty the first time around and a second marriage was nearly impossible. Taking advantage of the fact the demons - Tarakasur and Surapadma thought the boon of being killed only by Lord Shiva's son would make him invincible.

Kama, the God of Love, awakens Lord Shiva from his penance to remarry Him to Goddess Parvati. Angered by the interruption in his meditation, Lord Shiva burns Kama to ashes with His third eye though He does fall in love with Goddess Parvati. Lord Shiva's hands His fiery seed fire to Agni who can handle it till the radiance becomes Shiva's offspring.

Unable to bear the heat, Agni gives the radiance to Ganga who deposits it in a lake in a forest Sara Vana where Kartikeya is born (giving him the name Saravana) with six faces - eesanam, sathpurusham, vamadevam, agoram, sathyojatham and adhomugam, and hence the name Shanmuga or Shadanana. Kartikeya was cared for by six women symbolizing Pleiades (Kritika in Sanskrit) and thus got the name Kartikeya.

Ideals that Kartikeya represents

Kartikeya's weapon is Vel (spear) in one hand, which is also called as Shakti since his mother Parvati has given all the power to the spear, and he blesses his devotees with the other. The god of war mounts a peacock symbolizing piety and subjugation of all sexual desires and destruction of bad habits and negative influences symbolized by the serpent that is clutched in the peacock's claws. Karthikeya represents power and strength and worshipping him can get rid of woes and give the worshipper strength.

Kartikeya destroyed the demon Tarakasur on the seventh day of his birth. He is known to be the most masculine and fierce among Hindu gods. Known for his valor and as the protector of dharma, Kartikeya has slain several demons like Krauncha, Banasura and Pralamba. He is also always youthful, which gives him the name Kumara.

As Shadanana, Kartikeya has six heads, each standing for the five senses and the mind. The six heads also help him keep an eye in all directions so that he can combat problems coming from any direction.

As war god with six faces, Kartikeya also teaches his devotees to battle through life fighting off bad people who could lead you to the wrong path of lobha(greed), kaama (sex), krodh (anger), moha (passion), mada (ego), and matsarya (jealousy).

Kartikeya as the supremely intelligent god Kartikeya was supposed to have begun his education under none other than Lord Brahma Himself. But on the first day of his education Kartikeya asked Lord Brahma the meaning of Om.

Lord Brahma described it on twelve thousand verses but Kartikeya was unsatisfied. When his father Lord Shiva explained the significance of Omkara in twelve lakh verses, he found that insufficient as well and said



that Omkara can be explained in twelve crore verses, making Shiva proud of his son's intelligence and knowledge.

Shiva then sent Kartikeya to live on earth for the welfare of mankind. Wives of Kartikeya In the North of India Kartikeya is believed to be a bachelor (Bramhachari) while in South He has two wives Devasena (Amruthavalli or Devayani) who is the daughter of Indra thus giving Kartikeya the name Devasenapati (also meaning the commander of the army of gods) and the daughter of a tribal hunter named Valli (Sundaravalli).

Symbolism of his Idol

If you look at the idol of Kartikeya, on one hand, He carries a spear. It is also called Vel. It is not a trident. It is symbolic of the Kundalini Shakti.

In his other hand, he carries a small flag on which there is a rooster. In another version, Tarakasur was defeated by Lord. So, Tarakasur (ego) became a chicken or rooster after being defeated by Kartikeya. After having defeated Taraka (ego) in battle, Kartikeya spared his life and asked him what boon he would desire. Taraka prayed to always be at the feet of the Lord, and so Lord Kartikeya made him the emblem on his flag. This also means that the ego should always be kept subdued. Ego is necessary for life but it should be kept subdued.

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"If Hindus don't maintain Hinduism, who shall save it?"

"If India's own children don't cling to their faith, who shall guard it?"

"Indians alone can save India, and India and Hinduism are one."

contd from page 1

Bipartisan infrastructure deal moves past first Senate vote

But even as the Senate agreed to begin considering the bipartisan framework, final passage remains uncertain. Republicans will demand amendment votes and input on the bill, and it will once again face a 60-vote hurdle to close debate. The Senate may even work through the weekend to make progress on the proposal and its \$550 billion in new spending as August recess approaches.

"I want to commend the group of senators who worked with President Biden," said Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) after the vote. "My goal remains to pass both the bipartisan infrastructure bill and a budget resolution this work period. Both. It might take some long nights, it might eat into our weekends, but we are going to get the job done. And we are on track."

Ahead of the vote, Schumer pleaded for full party support to advance the bill, which many progressives have reservations about, at a lunch for all 50 Democrats, according to Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin. Afterward, Schumer professed confidence that the Senate was finally ready to move forward.

Wednesday's breakthrough comes a month after negotiators originally said they had a deal on infrastructure. In the end, it took weeks to finalize the details between a bipartisan group of 10 senators and the White House, and even on the day of the vote the bill was still being written.

But Sen. Rob Portman of Ohio, the GOP point man on the deal, said Wednesday morning that the group and the administration had resolved key issues and that he and other negotiators were ready for the Senate to consider the agreement. Negotiators acknowledge that many steps remain before the legislation heads to Biden's desk, but they celebrated Wednesday's vote as a win for bipartisanship.

"At a time when Washington seems broken, this group of members ... came together, along with others, and decided we are going to do something great for our country," Portman said. "Despite the popularity of it, and the need for it, Washington hasn't been able to get it done. This time we're going to get it done."

Sen. Kyrsten Sinema (D-Ariz.), the lead Democratic negotiator, attributed Wednesday's successful vote to the negotiators who were "deeply committed to demonstrating to the country and to the world that our government can work." Sinema further thanked every senator who voted to move forward, saying they demonstrated "a commitment to show that bipartisan[ship] is alive and well and works in our country."

The White House on Wednesday also declared victory. In a statement released ahead of the vote, Biden said the deal showed "our democracy can function, deliver, and do big things."

According to a detailed summary of the bill obtained by POLITICO, the bill uses \$205 billion in unused coronavirus aid money as its main financing mechanism. Other major revenue sources include \$53 billion in unused unemployment benefits, \$49 billion for delaying a drug rebate rule and even \$56 billion in expected economic growth. A key question is whether Republicans will be able to swallow those as legitimate funding sources after demanding the bill be fully paid for.

Schumer in the end kept all 50 members of the Democratic caucus together, including progressives who had reservations about the deal.

"There's a discussion we need to have about infrastructure. So I think it's time," said Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.). "There are things I like and there are things I really don't like."

Many Senate Republicans are skeptical of the bipartisan framework and want to see legislative text and details about whether the bill is fully financed before moving forward. Committee chairs and ranking

members have also expressed frustration with the process.

And now that the effort is advancing, its supporters will need to fend off divisive amendments and navigate it to a place where at least 60 senators feel satisfied enough to cut off debate and send it to the House, where its fate is uncertain.

"This idea of getting on a bill that's still being written is still a bad idea," said Sen. John Cornyn of Texas, a close McConnell adviser. "We're going to insist upon amendments because this bill's been negotiated by 20 people but there are 80 other senators."

Speaker Nancy Pelosi hasn't been briefed on the bipartisan deal and wouldn't rule out amending it if it came over to the House, she told reporters at lunchtime Wednesday. Pelosi and other top House Democrats are under significant pressure from some within their caucus - like Transportation Chair Peter DeFazio - to ensure the Senate deal isn't completely void of House priorities.

"I can't commit to passing something that I don't know what it is yet," Pelosi told reporters Wednesday. "But I'm hoping for the best."

Privately, though, Democrats admit it's highly unlikely the House would try to make changes to the Senate deal, noting the White House's opposition to reopening the negotiations after the fact. Pelosi also reiterated her promise to not even consider the bipartisan bill until the Senate passes a Democratically backed reconciliation package, leaving the timing in flux for when a deal would even reach Biden's desk.

Schumer has long insisted that the Senate will pass the bipartisan infrastructure package and the budget blueprint for the \$3.5 trillion social spending before leaving for the August recess. (With inputs from Politico)

"Both of our democracies are works in progress": US Secretary of State Antony Blinken

But the strength of democracy is to embrace it," Mr Blinken said. The Modi government has faced criticism over growing use of anti-terrorism legislation and sedition laws to arrest campaigners, journalists and students. The Supreme Court on July 15 described the British-era sedition law as "colonial", and questioned whether the law was "still necessary after 75 years of Independence".

In the talks with Mr Blinken, Indian officials are expected to express alarm over Taliban gains in Afghanistan. India is worried that a possible takeover of Afghanistan by the Taliban, which it sees as backed by Pakistan, will turn the country into a base for terrorists to attack India.

The Taliban welcomed virulently anti-Indian terrorists when it ruled Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001. A hijacked Indian airliner was flown to the Taliban bastion of Kandahar in 1999.

India, a firm backer of the Afghan government with billions of dollars in development aid, recently evacuated some of its staff from its Kandahar consulate due to the worsening security situation. (With inputs from PTI)

Pegasus snooping row: United opposition to confront government in Parliament

Manish Tewari have already moved notice for adjournment motion.

Ahead of the House proceedings, the Congress MPs will meet in Parliament. In the Upper House, the opposition leaders will hold a meeting.

On Wednesday, only the Juvenile Justice Bill could be passed amid the din. The opposition forced repeated adjournments and in the Lok Sabha many opposition members tore off papers.

In the government Business in the Upper House, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is to move the Bill to amend the Factoring Regulation Act, 2011, as

passed by the Lok Sabha for consideration. (Source: IANS)

Basavaraj Bommai sworn in as Chief Minister of Karnataka

Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and BJP Karnataka in-charge Arun Singh.

Mr. Bommai took oath in the name of God amid cheers from well-wishers and his supporters, who were also raising slogans of Bharat Mata Ki Jai.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi finally broke his silence on the change of guard in Karnataka. Congratulating new Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai, he tweeted: "He brings with him rich legislative and administrative experience. I am confident he will build on the exceptional work done by our government in the state. Best wishes for a fruitful tenure."

Mr. Modi praised former chief minister Mr. Yediyurappa, who resigned on July 26. "No words will ever do justice to the monumental contribution of Shri B. S. Yediyurappa Ji towards our party and for Karnataka's growth. For decades, he toiled hard, travelled across all parts of Karnataka and struck a chord with people. He is admired for his commitment to social welfare," the PM tweeted.

Mr. Yediyurappa tweeted back; "Thanking him for the kind words."

Union Home Minister Amit Shah also congratulated Mr. Bommai. "I am sure, under the guidance of PM Narendra Modi Ji, he will further boost BJP's resolve to serve the poor and farmers of the state with his wisdom and experience," he tweeted.

He not only acknowledged the contribution of Mr. Yediyurappa in building the party in Karnataka, but also said he would continue to guide the party and the government. "Shri B. S. Yediyurappa Ji has served the party and people of Karnataka with utmost devotion. His contribution and hard work towards strengthening the BJP at the grassroots level in Karnataka is truly inspiring. I am sure he will continue to guide the party and government," he tweeted.

A good number of Bommai's supporters, many from his constituency Shiggaon in Haveri district, stood outside Raj Bhavan to cheer for him as he took the oath of office. Shiggaon comes under Dharwad Lok Sabha constituency and is about 365 km from Bengaluru.

Son of former chief minister and Janata parivar leader S.R. Bommai, he was chosen to replace B.S. Yediyurappa at the BJP legislative party meet held in Bengaluru on July 27.

Earlier, Mr. Bommai arrived at the venue along with his family members, including wife Channamma, children Bharat and Aditi.

Outgoing chief minister B.S. Yediyurappa looked cheerful and arrived at the venue early. His younger son B.Y. Vijayendra, whose role in his resignation from the post of chief minister, is a matter of speculation, was also present. Among those present in big numbers were ministers from the outgoing council, and legislators who are keen to make it to the new cabinet.

Kisan morcha to hold 'big panchayat' in Muzaffarnagar on Sept 5

Rakesh Tikait, spokesperson of the Bharatiya Kisan Union, made the announcement in Lucknow as part of the morcha" plans of intensifying the stir in States. The morcha termed it as the "mission U.P." and "mission Uttarakhand".

Mr. Tikait said the campaign would entail intensifying the stir and reaching out to farmers in Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Punjab which go to the polls early 2022.

"This movement will start from there," Mr. Tikait said. Issuing a threat to the U.P. government, Mr. Tikait said if it did not work in the interests of the farmers, the morcha would also blockade Lucknow.

"Lucknow ko bhi Dilli banaya jayega," he said, adding that roads from all four sides to Lucknow would be sealed.

Hampi: World Heritage site

Hampi is famous for its ruins belonging to the erstwhile medieval Hindu kingdom of Vijaynagar and it is declared a World Heritage site. The temples of Hampi, its monolithic sculptures and monuments, attract the traveler because of their excellent workmanship. The Hindu style of architecture found at Hampi reflects the splendor of the Vijaynagar Empire. The rugged landscape adds to the historic ambiance of this site.

Hampi is located in the central part of Karnataka in the southern part of India. It is 353 km from Bangalore, and 13 km from Hospet. It is located on top of the rugged terrain and is 467 m above sea level. Tungabhadra River flows through Hampi. It has a tropical climate with hot summers (April-June), and cool winters (October-February). It experiences the southwestern monsoon rains from June to August.

Places to visit in Hampi

Virupaksha Temple

The temple is so constructed that its main entrance faces east and homes to two courtyards. No sooner you enter the temple, there is a statue of Nandi with three heads. There is a pillared hall in the center which is reckoned as the Ranga Mandapa.

In case you are an international traveler, you have to register yourself at a police outpost with all your essential details. Mostly, this temple remains crowded in December; whereas it celebrates its annual festival in February and it is one of the best places to visit in Hampi.

Vijaya Vittala Temple

Vijaya Vittala Temple or Vijaya temple of Hampi amongst the ancient Places to Visit In Hampi worthy of visiting. There are fantastic stone structures all around, and the pillars here appear as if they are playing music.

This is true architectural excellence of Hampi as it exemplifies remarkable creativity and the beauty of architecture's imagination. The architecture of this temple dates back to the Dravidian era and reflects South Indian traits.

Three towering gateways are encircling the temple along with high compound walls. Maha Mantapa, Stone chariot, musical pillars are amongst the tourist attractions of this Vijaya Vittala Temple.

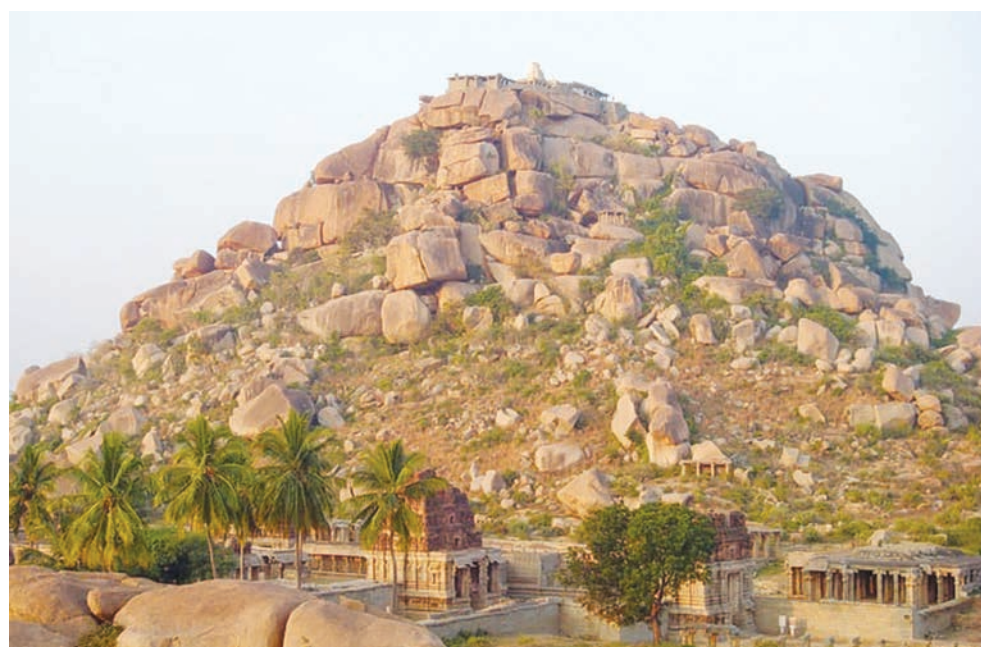
Lotus Mahal

Lotus Mahal or Kamal Mahal exhibits an explicit architectural design amongst all the other Hampi tourist places. It is so called as it more or less resembles the shape of a lotus flower.

Central dome of this Mahala resembles the bud of lotus and the balcony and passages as petals. The roof illustrates a multi-layered design reflecting and Indo architectural style. There are around 24 pillars to provide excellent support to the arched windows of this palace.

Yantroddharaka Hanuman Temple

Yantroddharaka Hanuman Temple is present at a distance of around 2km from



the famous Virupaksha temple. This temple is a part of a cave standing at the peak of a hill and is dedicated to the Hindu deity Lord Hanuman.

Also, the Tungabhadra river flows through the steps of this hill. Here, you can find Lord Hanuman indulged in a state of deep meditation. Within a distance of five minutes from here, you can find another temple dedicated to Lord Srinivasa. In case you feel hungry, you can approach small stalls nearby

selling either mangoes, biscuits or cucumbers.

Hippie Island

Another area which is amongst the most visited Places to Visit In Hampi is Hippie Island, named after its vibrant culture. Virapapur Gadde is a small island located across the Tungabhadra River. Known to be a backpacker's delight, this island is stunning and is popular amongst the locals as well as

tourists for its laid back ambience and cosy lodges.

Tourists can spend their time relaxing at one of the many cafes and shacks, like Green Garden Restaurant, Laughing Buddha Café, etc. while gorging on great food, and soaking in the view of beautiful rice paddies. This location is also known to be a centre for people to conduct sunset jam sessions with musical instruments for a fun party-like atmosphere.

Queen's Bath

Reckoned as a large bath of Hampi, Queen's Bath exemplifies the Vijayanagara's architectural excellence. It lies close to one of the most awful places to visit in Hampi- the Royal Enclosure.

Although built around 500 years ago, this magnificent structure still remains intact in its construction. Its simplest exterior perfectly blends with an ornate interior to embrace its overall appearance.

It is a rectangular building measuring around 30 square meters and has a large sunken bath at its center. It may interest you to find arched corridors all around this Royal bath.

Matanga Hill

Out of all the places to visit in Hampi, Matanga Hill is the one which is most talked about. It represents the highest point of Hampi, and it's a picturesque destination for the travel photographers to capture some aerial views of Hampi.

North portion of this hill terminates into Tungabhadra river where you have another religious place to visit-Kodanda Rama temple. Towards the south of this hill, you have a twisting valley with a zigzag Turthu canal. Low-lying Northern section exhibits a trekking trail that connects straightaway to Hampi bazaar.

Elephant Stables

Elephant Stables is amongst the significant tourist places to visit in Hampi to witness a little to absolutely no destruction. It is a long building homing to a series of dome-shaped chambers which once were used for the parking of royal elephants.

These chambers are around 11 in their total count; some of which are interconnected. The whole building gives a symmetrical appearance, and the central hall tower reflects the shape of most of the temples here. This central hall has five domes on either side of it which reflects an Islamic style of architecture.

Monolithic Bull

Situated at the east end of the Hampi Bazaar, the Monolith Bull or Nandi is a grand piece of ancient architecture that is housed in a two-story pavilion. This huge structure, which mythologically is the vehicle of Lord Shiva, is placed just opposite to the famous Virupaksha Temple. This Monolithic Bull, although partially mutilated, exhibits a coarse style of carving. The statue is so beautiful that it attracts a large number of visitors every day. It is also one of the frequently visited historical Tourist Places in Hampi. It is also surrounded by huge boulders and rock pillars.

Tokyo 2020: USA faces initial challenges from Japan, China in medals hunt



- Philippines wins its first ever Olympic gold
- Flora Duffy wins first ever Olympic gold for Bermuda
- Japanese tennis star Naomi Osaka knocked out
- Japan wins baseball gold as USA and Canada get silver and bronze
- Belgium and Australian men maintain clean record in men's hockey
- Mirabai Chanu wins first silver medal in weightlifting for India
- Indian shooters fail to make to the podium
- Japanese siblings create history by winning individual golds

The first four days of competitions of the 32nd Olympic Games - Tokyo 2020 - have been full of excitement, throwing up many new winners while surprising a few established stars as the US supremacy in medals tally has come for initial challenges from both China and the hosts Japan.



Weightlifter Mirabai Chanu

For India, though the games started on a bright silvery note with lifter Mirabai Chanu winning a silver medal, disappointments were galore in most of other sports and events, including archery, shooting and women's hockey.

After a sober or subdued start with a simple but colorful opening ceremony on July 23, there have been excitement galore. The concept of mixed team events in some sports, including shooting, has finally been

introduced.

Though it is for the first time that world's top athletes are competing for glory of sport, there are no spectators in the stands. Traditional medal ceremonies are no longer the order of the day. Medals are only presented or champions themselves exchange medals at ceremonies.

Because of trying conditions created by the Corona pandemic, cultural events that are normally held as a part of the games are being avoided.

The US is continuing to dominate pool events. It won gold medals in 4x100 freestyle relay for men as well as 400 individual medleys for men. Lyda Jacoby (100m breaststroke) and Kathleen Ledecky (1500 m freestyle for women) were other gold medal winners from the pool.



Besides, Carissa Moore was all cheers when she won the Surfing gold to become the first American to win the event.

The US shooters also deserve a word of praise for their fine showing so far. Besides winning skeet events, both for men (Vincent Hancock) and women (Amber English), the US also won the 10 m Air Rifle for men (William Shaner).

Interestingly, when the US beat Nigeria 81-72, it was its 50th win a row in basketball.

Other gold medal winners for the US so far include woman fencer Kieffer Lee and Taekwondo star Anastasija Zolotic.

The USA is expected to dominate the medals tally as more and more water sport events are held before the start of the track and field competitions.

Neighboring Canada has a good start with two gold medals and three silver medals so far. The gold medals for Canada have come in swimming (100 m butterfly - Margaret Michel) and weightlifting 64 kg (Maude Charron).

Two of three silvers have come from the pool - 100 breaststroke (Kylie Masse) and 4x100 m freestyle relay while the third came from synchronized springboard diving.

Indian hopes of a medal in hockey were revived after the third round of round robin league matches. India defeated Spain 3-0 for its second win in three games. Earlier, India had suffered a humiliating 1-7 defeat at the hands of Australia. In the women's section, India is yet to lodge its first point after losing all three pool matches. The last was today against the defending champions Great Britain that Indian women lost 1-4.

Canada was also winless in men's hockey after the first three rounds.

Belgium and Australia men are at the top of their respective pool tables with an all-win record so far.

Boxer Lovlina Borgohain joined her more fancied Olympic seniors - PV Sindhu and Mary Kom - in the hunt for more medals after Mirabai Chanu gave a silvery start. She boxed her way to the quarterfinals and is just a win away from an Olympic medal. She won her first bout with a split points decision over Nadine Apetz of



BY PRABHJOT SINGH

Germany on Tuesday.

Young Lovlina fought gamely against her more experienced German opponent and became the second Indian boxer after veteran Mary Kom to clear the preliminary round.

Old man of table tennis Sharat Kamal Achanta lost his third-round battle to Ma Long of China 1-4 to mark end of Indian challenge in the sport. Ma Long won 11-7, 8-11, 13-11, 11-4 and 11-4.

In badminton, Indian pair failed to make the last eight rounds even after winning its second group match. Rankireddy and Shetty Chirag beat Ben Lane and Sam Wendy of Great Britain 21-17, 21-19. They, however, could not advance to the last eight as they had a technical disadvantage of number of games won. India had a plus of one game against 3 and 2 differences of Indonesia and Taipei.

Though the start of mixed team events had raised hopes of an Indian medal in shooting, yet it was the same old story. None of three Indian pairs on view on the first day of mixed competitions - Manu Bhaker and Saurabh Chaudhary in 10 m Air Pistol, Anjum Moudgil and Deepak Kumar and Elvanil Valarivaa and Divyansh Singh Panwar in 10 m Air Rifle - could qualify for the finals. Earlier, even in individual events, all shooters failed to get to the podium.

Incidentally, these are women athletes who are continuing to win laurels from where they left in Rio. The last three Olympic medals have come through women athletes. Sakshi Malik (wrestling) and PV Sindhu (badminton) won India's bronze and silver medals, respectively, in Rio and this time lifter Mirabai Chanu has got a silver.

Besides boxer Lovlina, two other women athletes - PV Sindhu and veteran Mary Kom - are still very much in the race for a medal in Tokyo 2020. Then there is wrestler Vinesh Phogat also. Her bouts are yet to commence.

PV Sindhu cleared her last group match defeating NY Cheung of Hong Kong to move to the quarterfinals.



PV SINDHU ENTERS BADMINTON QUARTERFINALS AT TOKYO OLYMPICS



Reigning world champion P V Sindhu sailed into the women's singles quarterfinals with a straight-game triumph over Denmark's Mia Blichfeldt in the Olympics badminton competition here on July 29. The 26-year-old Indian, who won a silver in the 2016 Rio Olympics, notched up a 21-15 21-13 win over 13th seed Blichfeldt in a 41-minute match.

Review of Tokyo Olympic Games so far
Surprises galore; history made

Japanese siblings create Olympic history



Abe Hifumi and Uta

Abe Hifumi and Uta became the first Japanese siblings, who won simultaneously at the World Championships in Baku 2018, have done it again, this time in the 32nd Olympic games in Tokyo 2020. They may have wondered after their Baku feat whether they could repeat the feat at Tokyo 2020 or no. They did it. On the second day of Tokyo 2020 the impossible happened, with Hifumi and Uta becoming the first siblings in Olympic history to both strike gold on the same day in an individual sport.

UTA'S GOLD CAME FIRST AFTER SHE WON THE FINAL OF THE WOMEN'S - 52KG COMPETITION. MINUTES LATER, HER BROTHER HIFUMI DID THE SAME IN THE 60 KG.

"The road to get here, parts of it seemed long and others short," said Hifumi after his historic win. "I managed to get to where I am standing today because of the support of so many people. Gratitude - that is what I'm feeling", reacted Uta after her final.

Hifumi was also full of joy to have won Gold on the same day. "This has turned out to be the greatest day ever. I don't think we, as brother and sister, couldn't shine any brighter on this stage known as the Tokyo Olympics. So happy", he said.

Coach INOUE Kosei recognized the amazing family achievement after the brother-sister act pulled off their gold-medal performances in quick succession. "Together, he and she have written their own chapter in history," he said. "I think we're witnessing the birth of two new stars in judo right before our own eyes. I'm counting on them to lead the way for all of judo and I expect a lot from."

TOKYO 2020:
US Medalists till July 27, 2021
Gold Medalists:



Fencer Kieffer Lee

Lee Kiefer, fencing, women's foil individual
William Shaner, shooting, 10m air rifle men
Vincent Hancock, shooting, skeet men
Amber English, shooting, skeet women
Carissa Moore, surfing, women
United States, swimming, men's 4x100m freestyle relay
Chase Kalisz, swimming, men's 400m individual medley
Lydia Jacoby, swimming, women's 100m breaststroke
Anastasija Zolotic, taekwondo, women's -57kg



Taekwondo star Anastasija Zolotic

SILVER MEDALISTS:

United States, diving, women's synchronized 10m platform
Jay Litherland, swimming, men's 400m individual medley
Kathleen Ledecky, swimming, women's 400m freestyle
Emma Weyant, swimming, women's 400m individual medley
United States, artistic gymnastics, women's team
United States, softball
United States, equestrian, dressage team
United States, shooting, 10m air rifle mixed team
Bronze Medalists:
Jagger Eaton, skateboarding, men's street
Ryan Murphy, swimming, men's 100m backstroke
Kieran Smith, swimming, men's 400m freestyle
Regan Smith, swimming, women's 100m backstroke
Lilly King, swimming, women's 100m breaststroke
United States, swimming, women's 4x100, freestyle relay
Hali Flickinger, swimming, women's 400m individual medley
Katie Zaferes, triathlon, women's individual

CANADIAN MEDALISTS

GOLD MEDALISTS:

Margaret Michel, 110 m butterfly for women
Maude Charron, 64 kg weightlifting for women

SILVER MEDALISTS:

4X100 n freestyle relay
3 M synchronized springboard diving for women
Kylie Masse, 100 m breaststroke, women

INDIAN MEDALISTS

SILVER MEDALISTS:

Mirabai Chanu, weightlifting

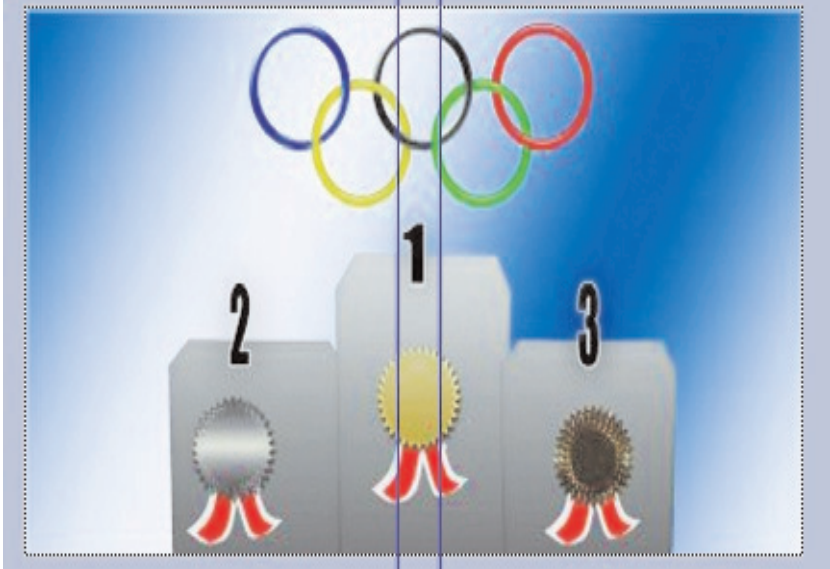
Before the Tokyo 2020 Olympic games started, 71 of 206 member nations of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) were still without their first gold medal.

Tokyo has helped two of these nations - Philippines and Bermuda - to erase this gold less identity. Philippines won gold in 55 kg weightlifting for women where Hidilyn Diaz earned the honors of becoming the first Filipino to wear a gold medal.

For Bermuda, it was turn of Triathlon star Flora Duffy to win the honors.

TOKYO OLYMPICS MEDAL TALLY

Country	Rank	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
United States	1	13	12	10	35
India	45	1	0	1	2
China	2	13	6	9	28
Japan	3	13	4	5	22
ROC	4	7	11	7	25
Australia	5	7	2	9	18
Great Britain	6	5	6	5	16



(The author is a senior sports journalist. He can be reached at prabhjot416@gmail.com)



Nandu Natekar, badminton's first superstar, dies at 88

Nandkumar Mahadev Natekar, who died today at age 88, was a superstar badminton player of the first two decades after Independence, much before Prakash Padukone and Syed Modi entered the scene.

Famous as Nandu Natekar, he was the first Indian to win an international badminton title, at the Selangor International in Kuala Lumpur in 1956, and was a six-time national champion.

Known for his grace and artistry on the court — and not power and speed during an era when players were not extremely athletic — Natekar led India in the Thomas Cup team championship from 1951 to 1963. When the Arjuna Award for excellence in sport was first given in 1961, he was among the sportspersons honoured.

Natekar's six national singles titles are exceeded only by Padukone (9) and Syed Modi (8).

His best show at the All England Championships was reaching the quarterfinals in 1954 — falling short of the achievement of the now-forgotten Prakash Nath, who had reached the final in 1947. Nath could well have become the first great of Indian badminton but after hearing of rioting near his home in Lahore just before the All England final, he lost the title match and gave up the sport.

Natekar was a very good tennis player, too, but after losing the junior national final to the great Ramanathan Krishnan in 1951-52, he decided to concentrate on badminton.

2nd T20I: Sri Lanka level series with 4-wicket win vs Covid-hit India

COLOMBO (TIP): A depleted Indian team, playing with only five batsmen, could not defend a modest target of 133 despite a valiant effort from its players as Sri Lanka kept the three-match series alive with a four-wicket victory in the second T20 International here on Wednesday, July 28.

With nine players unavailable after Krunal Pandya tested positive, India had no option but to play with six specialist bowlers, including one pacer Navdeep Saini, who wasn't even given a single over.

Dhananjaya de Silva (40 not out) anchored a tricky Lankan chase after India scored 132 for five. The hosts won with two balls to spare.

Vice-captain Bhuvneshwar Kumar (1/21 in 4 overs) was economical till Chamika Karunartne launched his full-toss for a six. The 12 runs from that over brought the equation down to 8 runs off final overs which was very difficult for debutant Chetan Sakariya to defend.

If one bowler despite figures of 2/30 will be annoyed is Kuldeep, who was brilliant but was let down by his fielders, who dropped a couple of catches. Some poor effort in the outfield also spoilt his figures.

Yadav outfoxed opposition skipper Dasun Shanaka by shortening the length of his stock delivery — the one that turns into the right-hander drawing him out and Sanju Samson effected a smart leg-side stumping.

Minod Bhanuka (36 off 31 balls) also tried to fetch a wideish tossed up delivery outside the off-stump and holed out at deep mid-wicket just after Bhuvneshwar had dropped one while running backwards when he skied one against the turn in the cover region.

Varun Chakravarthy (1/18 in 4 overs) also was impressive but the total became their undoing.

Earlier, India struggled for momentum against the Sri Lankan spinners on a sluggish track, managing 132 for five.

Debutant Devdutt Padikkal, though, in his brief innings gave a glimpse of a



Dhananjaya de Silva played the perfect innings to guide Sri Lanka home. Photo source: AFP

bright future.

The degree of difficulty could be gauged by the fact that only seven boundaries and a six was hit in 20 overs with as many as 42 dot balls consumed by the visiting team batsmen.

Skipper Shikhar Dhawan (40 off 22 balls) aware of a thin-on experience batting line-up had a cautious approach on a track where ball simply refused to come onto the bat and improvisation was the order of the day.

With heavy rain slowing the outfield, run-making became an ordeal but young Padikkal (29 off 23 balls) was elegant as usual before a moment's indiscretion did him in.

The other much-anticipated debut of Ruturaj Gaikwad (21 off 18 balls) also ended in a whimper when a Sri Lankan captain Dasun Shanaka's short ball climbed on him and he got himself in a tangle while playing a pull-shot that went straight-up after for Minod Bhanuka.

Knowing that only five batsmen are playing on the day, Dhawan had to cut down on risky shots even though a

cover drive, an on-drive and a slog-pull behind square were there among his five fours before off-spinner Dananjaya de Silva (2/13) got him to play the slog-sweep.

But the man who impressed the most was Padikkal, who slog swept Dhananjaya de Silva for a six, ran well between the wickets during his 32-run stand with skipper Dhawan and brief one with Sanju Samson.

He also reverse swept Wanindu Hasaranga (1/30) for a boundary before a non-existent slog-sweep brought about his downfall.

Some of his strokes didn't reach the boundary but the Bengaluru boy showed that he has the temperament required for the highest level.

But the player, who once again blew away an opportunity was Sanju Samson (7 off 13 balls). He was hoodwinked by a leg break from Akila Dananjaya (2/29) and was bowled.

Samson has now blown away nine chances in T20 Internationals and is unlikely to get too many more after Thursday's final game. Source: PTI

ICC T20 Rankings: Virat Kohli, KL Rahul maintain top-10 positions



DUBAI (TIP): India captain Virat Kohli and senior batsman KL Rahul stayed put at fifth and sixth position, respectively, in the latest ICC rankings for the T20 International batsmen issued on Wednesday, July 28.

However, both Rahul and Kohli are not part of the Indian team that is playing a T20 series in Sri Lanka, the dividends of which were reaped by pacer Bhuvneshwar Kumar, who moved up to 16th position in the bowlers' list after his 4/22 in the first game last Sunday.

Leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal, who

was economical in the first game, has gained 10 places to be 21st on that list where Sri Lankan Wanindu Hasaranga with a stellar performance is placed second.

In the T20I batsmen's list, Rohit Sharma has dropped to 14th without playing while Shikhar Dhawan after his 38-ball-46 is now 29th.

In the ODI list, Kohli and Rohit trail Pakistan's Babar Azam in the top-10 while Jasprit Bumrah is the lone Indian at seventh in the bowlers' table.

In the all-rounder's list, Ravindra Jadeja remained static at No. 9.

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