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The INDIAN PANORAMA

Will bring out a profusely illustrated New Year special edition to ring out the year 2022 and to ring in the year 2023.

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'We need peace': Zelenskyy says in his address to the joint session of US Congress

SAYS HE PROPOSED 10-POINT PEACE FORMULA TO BIDEN



Zelenskyy addressing the joint session of the US Congress. US Vice President Kamala Harris (left) and Speaker Nancy Pelosi hold the Ukrainian flag

DECEMBER 22, 2022 WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy told the US Congress that he proposed a 10-point "peace formula" during his meeting with President Joe Biden, which he hoped would result in joint security guarantees for decades ahead.

Zelenskyy, 44, met President Biden in the Oval Office and jointly addressed a press conference at the White House on Wednesday, December 21.

He was given the rare distinction of addressing a joint session of the US Congress on a day packed with back-to-back meetings.

"We need peace. Ukraine has already offered proposals, which I just discussed with President Biden, our peace formula, ten points which should and must be implemented for our joint

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Covid threat sounds alarm bells; Random testing of foreign arrivals; PM calls for hospital readiness



Prime Minister Narendra Modi (front left), Leader of House in Rajya Sabha Piyush Goyal (front right) and other MPs with masks on Thursday, December 22

DECEMBER 22, 2022

NEW DELHI (TIP): Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday, December 22, said Covid was not yet over and directed heightened surveillance, especially at international airports, for the timely detection of transmissible virus variants, if any. Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla advised all MPs to wear masks and follow the Covid protocol completely in view of the increasing

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UK Prime Minister Sunak insists Britain is not a racist country



British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak

DECEMBER 20, 2022

LONDON (TIP): Britain's first Indian-origin Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has defended the UK's record on race amid a brewing row over controversial remarks by a columnist attacking Prince Harry's wife Meghan Markle, who is of African-American heritage.

Sunak was addressing questions posed by reporters during a visit to the Latvian capital of Riga on Monday, December 19, when he spoke out against racism and highlighted his own heritage as carrying some weight on the subject.

"I absolutely don't believe that Britain is a racist country. And I'd hope that as our nation's first British Asian Prime Minister when I say that it carries some weight," he told reporters. "You know, I'm really proud of our country, its culture, its resilience, its beauty.

CONTD ON PAGE 32

150-year wait to get a green card: Indian H1B visa holders hold protest in Silicon Valley

A group of Silicon Valley tech workers from India marched in San Jose, California, on Dec. 17 to demand better means to secure a green card. Photo / Yahoo! News



DECEMBER 22, 2022

SAN JOSE (TIP): Traditionally, tech startups have used H1B visas to legally hire skilled foreign workers who may eventually qualify for a permanent green card in about a year or two. However, the cap on skills-based green cards issued per country has resulted in many workers from India being unable to get one.

The green card backlog was further exacerbated by former President Donald Trump in 2020 after he decided to stop all visa applications amid the COVID-19 pandemic. When President Joe Biden revoked the ban the following year, the H-1B visa to green card

CONTD ON PAGE 32

Punjab Governor de-notifies Chief Minister Elahi and his Cabinet



Parvez Elahi

DECEMBER 23, 2022

LAHORE (TIP): Pakistan's Punjab province plunged into a constitutional crisis as Governor Baligur Rehman on Friday, December 23, 2022, de-notified Chaudhry Parvez Elahi as Chief Minister with "immediate effect" for not complying with his order to obtain a vote of confidence.

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**GUEST COMMENT**

**Beyond weapons: On Ukraine President Zelenskyy's visit to Washington**

**THE UNITED STATES SHOULD PUSH UKRAINE TO FIND A SOLUTION TO THE CONFLICT WITH RUSSIA**

Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's visit to Washington, his first overseas travel since Russia's invasion on February 24, and the Biden administration's decision to send a new \$1.8 billion military aid package, including Patriot missile defense systems and precision-guided missiles, are a testament to the deep relationship Ukraine and the U.S. share in the time of war. Ukraine has already received American financial and military funding from approved assistance worth around \$54 billion. The U.S. supply of long-range missiles (HIMARS) has played a major role in Ukraine's recent battlefield advances in Kharkiv and Kherson, after its heavy losses in Donbas. The Patriot missile system is expected to strengthen Ukraine's air defenses at a time when Russia is bombarding the energy grid and water supplies. In Washington, President Joe Biden discussed a 10-point

peace formula with Mr. Zelenskyy (the details are unknown) and also promised continued support "for as long as it takes". Both leaders tried to send out a message of unity amid concerns of cracks in the western alliance as the war is continuing indefinitely with its massive economic costs.

The U.S. has gradually stepped up its supply of weapons to Ukraine, but is still wary of sending offensive weapons out of fears of escalating the conflict. Ukraine has relentlessly campaigned for more advanced weapons, including U.S. aircraft, tanks and long-range tactical missiles. While Mr. Biden said his administration would continue to back Ukraine, he also warned of the risks of sending offensive weapons to Ukraine, which could "break up NATO, the EU and the rest of world". Currently, Ukraine has a battlefield advantage, recapturing swathes of territories in the northeast

and south. But Russia has air superiority. The Patriot missiles could offer some protection to Ukraine but could also prompt Russia to carry out heavier attacks. This leaves Mr. Biden in a dilemma. He is ready to bolster Ukraine's defense but does not want to provoke a wider war between Russia and NATO. His Ukraine policy should not be an open-ended weapons supply package. The U.S. could help its ally but it should also push for a sustainable solution to the conflict. It should use its continued support to Ukraine to mount pressure on Russia - as its weapons play a critical role in Kyiv's counterattacks - and persuade Ukraine to resume direct negotiations. At this point, no military solution seems likely. Unless there is a credible push for talks, the war is likely to continue for the foreseeable future.

(The Hindu)

**Countering narco terror**

**STATE-OF-THE-ART ANTI-DRONE TECHNOLOGY IS A MUST**

Reiterating the Centre's zero-tolerance policy on the drug menace, Home Minister Amit Shah has announced that big criminals involved in narcotic trafficking would be put behind bars in the next two years. He has admitted that profits from the drug trade are being used to finance terrorism, while expressing concern that the 'dirty money' thus generated is hurting the country's economy. According to the minister, the mapping of drug routes has been done in 472 districts, even as narcotic contraband is entering the country from across the border through drones, tunnels, ports and airports. Shah's statement in the Lok

Sabha came hours after the Border Security Force (BSF) recovered around 26-kg heroin from a field in Fazilka, a border district of Punjab. Suspected Pakistani smugglers had abandoned the drug packets and escaped after the troops opened fire. On the intervening night of December 20-21, the BSF had shot down a drone near Amritsar and seized over 4 kg of narcotics.

Attempts by smugglers to push narcotics and weapons into India through drones and other means have increased during the ongoing winter season, when dense fog envelopes the region. The BSF says it has stepped up vigil near the India-Pakistan border in Punjab, but the frequent seizures don't seem to be deterring drug traffickers. Most of the drugs smuggled into India originate from the 'Golden Crescent' (comprising Afghanistan and parts of

Pakistan) and the 'Golden Triangle' (including areas of Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam and Thailand). There are reports that the illicit drug trade continues to flourish in Afghanistan under the Taliban regime, which had promised a crackdown on narcotics after it grabbed power in August last year. India has proactively used multilateral platforms this year to push for a joint fight against terror funding.

There is a need to up the ante and call out nations aiding or abetting narco terror. On the ground, the security forces should be equipped with state-of-the-art counter-drone technology to block the aerial route of drug supply. Synergy among agencies and governments holds the key to breaking the back of drug cartels.

(Tribune, India)

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# NAMC 53rd Annual Conference & Affirmation Gala Appreciation held in New York



The full house gala



Wendell R. Stemley, CMAA, NAMC National President



NAMC Hall of Famers Nayan Parikh with New York Governor Kathy Hochul

**DECEMBER 22, 2022**

**NEW YORK (TIP):** NAMC 53rd Annual Conference & Affirmation Gala held on November 2 and 3, 2022 at the Sheraton New York Times Square Hotel was a huge success, according to Wendell R. Stemley, CMAA, NAMC National President.

The Gala, hosted by the NAMC New York Tri-State Chapter, was attended by nearly 700 guests, including New York Governor Kathy Hochul, New York City Mayor Eric Adams, NAMC Hall of Famers Nayan Parikh, Cheryl McKissack, Don Peebles, Vic Verma, Dan Moncrief, and James Posey, and many others.

Mr. Stemley, in his address said: "Over the past several years, NAMC has been deeply involved in efforts to reform small business programs. We believe our efforts are making a difference and that real progress has been made. The bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act strives to provide 10 percent

participation for small business concerns owned and controlled by minority socially and economically disadvantaged individuals doing work with all federal agencies. This is one important example of progress. In addition, there has been an increase in the size standard for DBE firms as well as an increase in personal net worth for owners. NAMC has been working towards these changes through the previous three administrations, and the fruition of that labor is being seen."

"We ask that you continue the good work. Our industry could not have realized these changes alone and there is a real need to continue to recognize the strength of this organization- people like yourself and companies like yours--while NAMC strives to work towards a better future for its members by growing its support base."

Mr. Stemley thanked U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Secretary Pete Buttigieg and the USDOT team for an engaging and robust conversation

with the Secretary about where we are and what we can achieve in business with USDOT. He also thanked U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and the NAMC media partner, American DBE Magazine, led by Shelton Russell, who helped NAMC achieve a combined online and in person audience of over 500 people during the day panel sessions.

National President's award recipients included Vic Verma, Alpha Insulation & Waterproofing, and Yvette Stevens, Gilbane Building Company. They were honored for outstanding service on behalf of the organization and the minority construction contractor community.

Mr. Stemley recognized NAMC educational partners (Purdue University, Florida A&M University, University of Maryland, Virginia Tech, SUNY Delhi, Procure, and Excelsior University) as well as the two NAMC Student Chapter scholarship winners, Amy Fisher, University of Kansas, and Preston



New York Mayor Eric Adams is flanked by Nayan Parikh and Mrs. Parikh

Jackson, Florida A&M University, for presenting.

NAMC's 54th Annual Conference will be held in the Fall of 2023 in Dallas, Texas.

## AIA-National Organizes Tax Planning and Financial Seminar



AIA-National President Gobind Munjal addresses the gathering

**GARDEN CITY, LONG ISLAND (TIP):** The Association of Indians in America (AIA-National) held a Free Seminar on Tax Planning and Financial Seminar at Mint Restaurant in Long Island on Monday Dec 19, 2022 at 7 PM, which was quite a success. This Tax Seminar was attended by respected and eminent individuals, past National Presidents and Chapter Presidents of AIA, executive committee members, community



Chief Guest Manish Kulhari, Consul (Trade) appreciated the AIA National for organizing the informational and educational seminar for the benefit of the community.

leaders and dignitaries including members of the Media. Consul (Trade) Manish Kulhari from the Indian Consulate graced the occasion as Guest of Honor.

AIA National wanted to bring to the



the experts who spoke on the occasion

Indian Community such type of informational, educational and awareness seminars of public interest. Earlier in the year AIA National had arranged 2 very successful conferences on Awareness and Empathy. And now it arranged a seminar on Tax planning including Estate & Gift Tax

and Business Insurance at Mint Restaurant in Garden City, Long Island on Monday Dec 19th 2022 said Mr. Gobind Munjal, National President of AIA. We brought renowned and eminent speakers CECIL NAZARETH ACA, CPA, MBA, who is expert on National and International Taxation and Accounting and have done many seminars all over the world. He has also authored the book titled International Tax & Compliance Handbook (with special emphasis on India-U.S. taxes). Whereas renowned Attorney MICHAEL MARKHOFF Esq. from White Plains addressed the audience on Estate and Gift taxes, Mr. Patrick Scanlon and Patrick Ryder of Enforce Coverage Group in New York spoke on Business Insurance and workmen's comp, and Business Development officer at Jovia Financial Credit Union Kapila Datt spoke on Health and the various products that they offer at their bank.

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



**INDIAN-ORIGIN, FORMER IRISH PM, LEO VARADKAR ELECTED AS NEW PM OF IRELAND**



Indian-origin Leo Varadkar, former Irish deputy prime minister and leader of the Fine Gael party, has been elected as the new Prime Minister of Ireland

**DECEMBER 18, 2022**

**DUBLIN (TIP):** Indian-origin Leo Varadkar, former Irish deputy prime minister and leader of the Fine Gael party, has been elected as the new Prime Minister of Ireland following a vote in the lower House of the Irish Parliament.

On Saturday, a total of 87 members of the House voted in favor of his nomination as the new prime minister while 62 members voted against it, a news agency reported.

Following his appointment as new prime minister by Irish President Michael D Higgins, Varadkar announced a reshuffle of the Cabinet.

According to a list of the Cabinet members, former Irish prime minister and leader of Fianna Fail Michael Martin will become the new Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Defense while former minister for foreign affairs and defense Simon Coveney will become Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment.

Former finance minister Paschal Donohoe will be the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform while former minister for public expenditure and reform Michael McGrath will take Donohoe's position as the new Finance Minister.

There are altogether 15 members in the Cabinet. All the positions held by other Cabinet members have remained the same.

After the nomination was approved by the lower House of the Irish Parliament, the new Cabinet held its first meeting on Saturday night.

This is the second time that Varadkar has been elected as Irish PM. According to an agreement reached by the three parties in setting up a coalition government, Fianna Fail party leader Michael Martin will first serve as the Irish Prime Minister until December 2022 and Fine Gael party leader Varadkar will replace Martin to be the new PM until the five-year term of the current government comes to an end.

**Indo-Canadian Sikh dancer grooved to dhol beats at -40°C in snow ridden wilds**

**DECEMBER 21, 2022**

**YUKON (TIP):** When it comes to flawlessly executing bhangra moves over dhol beats, no one could outlast the enthusiasm of a Punjabi. Social media has no dearth of videos where Punjabis were seen grooving at the top of their energy without much paraphernalia of musical instruments and other stuff required to create aura of a bash. The testimony to this is a fresh video that has surfaced on internet, where a Sikh man could be seen performing bhangra in a snow-clad area at -40-degree Celsius temperature.

The video has been shared on Twitter by Gurdeep Pandher. He is a Sikh Canadian author, teacher and performer, who usually make Punjabi dance videos.

The video shows him grooving to dhol beats in the wilds of Yukon in Canada.

"Today, it's -40°C/-40°F in the Yukon wilderness around my cabin. Nature is



calm, frigid, cold and utterly stunning. The air is freezing but still very refreshing for the lungs. In this natural environment, I danced to create warmth. I'm dispatching the good vibe to the

world," Gurdeep captioned the post.

Since being shared, the post has amassed over 1.6 lakh views. Netizens are unanimously hailing the video as heart-warming and full of positivity.

**Young Indian Americans face race bias as early as preschool**

**DECEMBER 20, 2022**

**DALLAS (TIP):** Young Indian Americans, who are among more than 3.5 million South Asians living in the US, regularly face racial and ethnic discrimination as early as preschool, which influences the development of their identities, says a new study.

The second-generation Indian American adolescents are "especially vulnerable to discrimination as they explore and form their identities", according to the study by Texas A&M University School of Public Health.

The study surveyed nine Indian Americans between the ages of 12-17 years who talked about their experiences with peers at school, who made discriminatory comments about Indian culture, language or religion.

"This one kid found a rock and said, 'look it's your God'," and "in math class we had like little dots, and we would have to... put them into groups... And a white kid was saying 'is this your God?' and put it on his forehead", an Indian American student said.

"Then sometimes they would say stuff about the food, or they would mock an Indian accent like, 'I don't like Indian food' some people have said things like 'it's gross' or 'it's weird' or 'it smells really bad,'" he added.

Apart from reporting hate crimes, the adolescents also discussed the difficulties they faced balancing their Indian identity with their desire to be seen as American.

A few of them reported feeling angry that they did not have white skin like their friends, and their desire to be more "American" instead as early as preschool.

This balancing act often relies on code switching, where the interviewees spoke and acted differently when with family and at school, the study, published in the



Young Indian Americans regularly face racial and ethnic discrimination as early as preschool, which influences the development of their identities, says a new study.

Image for representation only

journal *Frontiers in Public Health*, said.

"The word Indian-American, it means you live between two worlds, my experience. I come home, I'm Indian. I live Indian lives; I eat Indian food. I step over my threshold, I become American. Go to school, I'm an American... Your parents don't kind of understand the western world and the western world doesn't really understand the Indian world. You live between two worlds, and you've got to be knowledgeable to know how to balance them," another student said.

In some cases, these adolescents felt they were seen as fitting into neither group.

The study showed that Indian American youth begin facing discrimination as early as preschool or elementary school.

These adolescents were all classified as second-generation, that is, they were born in the US and had parents who emigrated from India after the age of 18.

The research team was led by Jamilia Blake, PhD, School of Public Health professor; Indian American doctoral graduate Asha K. Unni, and colleagues from Texas A&M University and Davidson College.

Asian Indians were the first South Asians to immigrate to the US in the late 1800s and are currently the largest ethnic group in America.

**BRITISH-INDIAN 'SEXUAL PREDATOR' DOCTOR KRISHNA SINGH LOSES SENTENCE APPEAL BID**



Krishna Singh, 73, from North Lanarkshire, Scotland, was convicted earlier this year of 54 offences, involving 47 women, including a rape victim, teenagers and pregnant women.

Image for representation only

**DECEMBER 22, 2022**

**LONDON (TIP):** A former Indian-origin family doctor in the UK has lost a bid to challenge his 12-year jail sentence for committing sexual offences against women patients between 1983 and 2018.

Krishna Singh, 73, from North Lanarkshire, Scotland, was convicted earlier this year of 54 offences, involving 47 women, including a rape victim, teenagers and pregnant women.

Singh's lawyers had sought to challenge the sentence but permission for an appeal to proceed was not granted by a judge.

"The court is not satisfied there are exceptional circumstances justifying the extension sought," a judge at the Court of Appeal in Edinburgh said on Wednesday.

The appeal judge said that Singh was convicted of a prolonged course of sexual offences against patients which had "a devastating impact on many of the victims", the *Glasgow Times* reported.

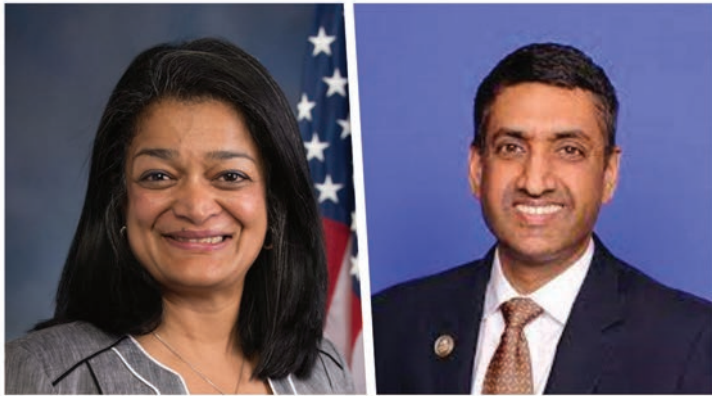
He added that the proposed note of appeal against the sentence imposed on Singh did not disclose grounds that were arguable.

Singh, who was awarded an MBE in 2013, had denied the charges that he was a "sexual predator hiding in plain sight".

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



# Two Indian American lawmakers call for immigration reform to reduce green card backlog



Pramila Jayapal and Ro Khanna have called for immigration reform to reduce green card backlog

DECEMBER 21, 2022

**WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP):** Two Indian American lawmakers have urged their colleagues to make one more attempt to deliver long due immigration reform after the US House failed to pass the EAGLE Act eliminating 7% per country green card caps.

"Our immigration system is broken and antithetical to our moral values as a country," tweeted Pramila Jayapal, House member from Washington. "There's still time left in this session to deliver long-overdue reform. We have to get this done."

"Per-country green card caps create lengthy backlogs to secure permanent status. For immigrants from India, this wait spans 150+ years," she wrote in another tweet. "As someone who's been on an H-1B visa, I'm proud to support the EAGLE Act to create a first-come, first-served system."

Ro Khanna, who represents Silicon Valley too was

"disappointed to see that Congress has still not passed the EAGLE Act."

"I urge House leadership to bring it up for a vote before we adjourn this Congress to end arbitrary per-country green card caps and bring down our decades-long backlog for immigrants," he tweeted.

Rep Eric Swalwell was also "disappointed that the EAGLE Act, a bill to make our employment-based visa system fairer, hasn't come for a vote in the House. Too many visa holders & their families are stuck in a green card backlog that arbitrarily discriminates against immigrants from certain countries."

Their comments were retweeted by Saurabh, a backlogged immigrant who tweeted his letter to Indian Foreign Minister, S Jaishankar and the Ministry of External Affairs "requesting them to issue a travel advisory for F1 & H1-B" - visa used extensively by Indian students and skilled workers.

"The environment in the US is not suitable for Indians and it is our moral duty to educate students and high-skilled workers against traveling & engaging with US institutions," he tweeted

Coreena Enet Soares noted "700,000 Indian expats await Green Cards. Waiting time to receive a PR for an Indian applying today, is 90 years and around 80,000 children are expected to age out before their parents receive permanent residence."

David J. Bier, associate director of immigration studies at the Cato Institute, a Washington think tank also urged the Biden administration "to act aggressively to prevent the depopulation of the United States by skilled Indian immigrants."

"Now that EAGLE Act is dead, and Congress is dead for at least 2 years. The admin needs to act aggressively to prevent the depopulation of the United States by skilled Indian immigrants," he tweeted.

## FORMER INDIAN AMERICAN OFFICIAL DALEEP SINGH AMONG 'BLOOMBERG 50' WHO DEFINED GLOBAL BUSINESS IN 2022



Former Deputy National Security Advisor Daleep Singh figures among this year's 'Bloomberg 50,' "the people who defined global business in 2022."

DECEMBER 19, 2022

**WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP):** As the architect of the sanction's regime against Russian President Vladimir Putin, former Deputy National Security Advisor Daleep Singh figures among this year's 'Bloomberg 50,' "the people who defined global business in 2022."

In February, as a top national security adviser to the White House, Singh was central to US and European efforts to cut off Russia from the global financial system after Putin invaded Ukraine, freezing more than half of his \$640 billion war chest, Bloomberg noted.

Besides the Indian American official, Bloomberg's sixth annual list of "those in business, politics, science and technology, finance and entertainment whose accomplishments deserve recognition," includes Indian tycoon Gautam Adani, Chairman, Adani Group.

"The Indian tycoon's wealth has surged more than anyone else's this year, making him the world's third-richest person behind Bernard Arnault and Elon Musk," Bloomberg noted.

Also listed among "Ones to Watch" who could be on next year's Bloomberg 50, is Rohan Murty, founder and chief technology officer, Soroco India Pvt Ltd., Boston and Bengaluru, India

"Murty is trying to streamline office work via artificial intelligence. Soroco collects and analyzes data on how workers use software across teams and then suggests changes to boost productivity and reduce costs," Bloomberg said.

Currently, Chief Global Economist, PGIM Fixed Income, Singh quickly became the public face of the administration's sanctions against Moscow. He was seen at the White House press briefings and his meetings and discussions with the president have been widely reported in the media. He is the great grandnephew of Daleep Singh Saund, the first Asian-American elected to the US Congress. *(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)*

## INDIAN-ORIGIN ATTORNEY VIVEK MALEK APPOINTED FIRST NON-WHITE TREASURER OF US STATE OF MISSOURI



Vivek Malek, a 45-year-old Indian-origin attorney, has been appointed as the first non-white treasurer of the US state of Missouri

DECEMBER 21, 2022

**JEFFERSON CITY (TIP):** Vivek Malek, a 45-year-old Indian-origin attorney, has been appointed as the first non-white treasurer of the US state of Missouri, according to an announcement made by Governor Mike Parson on Wednesday, December 21.

Malek, who moved from Rohtak in Haryana to what's called Missouri's Bootheel in 2002 to get his master's degree in business administration from Southeast Missouri State University, would replace fellow Republican Treasurer Scott Fitzpatrick, who is leaving the position to become state auditor in January.

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

## Indian American Rajeev Badyal named to National Space Council advisory group

DECEMBER 19, 2022

**WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP):** Indian American technocrat Rajeev Badyal, VP of Technology, Amazon Project Kuiper, is among 30 people selected to serve on the National Space Council's revamped Users Advisory Group (UAG).

As Chair of the National Space Council, Vice President Kamala Harris announced the new membership on Dec 16 with changes reflecting a new emphasis on climate change and workforce issues.

Pending official appointment by the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the selected members of the UAG will serve to enable the Biden-Harris Administration's effort to maintain a robust and responsible US space enterprise and preserve space for current and future generations, according to a White House announcement.

The candidates, the announcement said "represent a cross-section of companies and organizations that support the United States' large and highly skilled space workforce; users of space services, including climate scientists and agriculture providers; individuals focused on developing the next generation of space professionals; and leading experts in space."



Rajeev Badyal, VP of Technology, Amazon Project Kuiper, is among 30 people selected to serve on the National Space Council's revamped Users Advisory Group (UAG).

The UAG will provide the National Space Council advice and recommendations on matters related to space policy and strategy, including but not limited to, government policies, laws, regulations, treaties, international instruments, programs, and practices across the civil, commercial, international, and national security space sectors.

The board will be chaired by Lester Lyles, a retired US Air Force general who also serves as chair of the NASA Advisory Council. Harris announced the selection of Lyles at the most recent National Space Council meeting Sep 8 in Houston. Lyles, who previously served on the UAG, succeeded James Ellis, a retired admiral who is no longer on the UAG.

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



# The Spearheading of US India Healthcare Summit 2023 in US



Mr. H S Panaser President GITCC and Dr. Rahul Gupta, US White House Director of National Drug Policy met with Chief Minister of Karnataka Shri Basavaraj Bommai and discussed issues of mutual interest.

**EDISON, NJ (TIP):** The Global Indian Trade and Cultural Council USA (GITCC) is shaping into a Global Platform for Asian Indians to global market, will implement in September 2023, the first US-India Business and Healthcare Summit to bring global healthcare recognition to the region. It will help define India as a hub of innovation for training and research infrastructure in bringing to the region healthcare excellence through knowledge and technology transfers between the U.S. and India. US-India Healthcare Summit will increase commercial ties to implement enterprises tapping U.S.-India expertise to Indian pharmaceutical market expected to grow to US\$ 100 billion by 2025

Mr. H S Panaser President GITCC started meeting the leaders in the healthcare segment in India. He initiated his visit with Dr. Rahul Gupta the US White House Director of National Drug

Policy. They Met the Chief Minister of Karnataka Sh. Basavaraj Bommai and Dr C N Ashwath Narayan, Minister for IT & BT, Science & Technology, Higher Education, Skill Development, Entrepreneurship & Livelihood, Government of Karnataka to deliberate on new avenues in anti-narcotics and manufacturing of medication to treat drug dependence for US and other markets in the backdrop of firms globally pursuing the China-Plus-One strategy.

Collaborative engagements in the areas of enforcement, regulatory frameworks, transparency through effective IT Systems, building of robust frameworks for the growth of the pharmaceutical industry were discussed. As per the New Education Policy (NEP), the government unveiled its ambitious 'Twinning Programme' in 2021. A first-of-its-kind in India, it aims to internationalize higher education. Cooperation in student exchange programs, educational

twinning programs, curriculum building, upskilling and job growth in leading edge programs in Healthcare, Biotech, Tele-health, IT and Data Security were also discussed in detail.

A 2021 World Drug Report released by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) indicated that over 36 million people have suffered from substance use disorders (SUD). According to Global Data's Clinical Trial Database, nearly 80% of clinical trials are being sponsored by academic institutions, the pharmaceutical industry is lagging behind in the clinical arena of addiction treatments.

Post the discussion, Dr CN Ashwath Narayan said, "India and the USA are already working on bolstering the India-US counter-narcotics agreement as India assumes G20 presidency from December this year. The Government of Karnataka is exploring partnerships with the USA to continue to strengthen this dialogue. Further, we will share best practices for

President KDPMA and Mr. Suresh Khanna of IPA, welcomed the attendees and the GITCCs team consisting of the chief Guest Dr Rahul Gupta and Mr. H S Panaser A wide range of topics were addressed including API, Generic, Anti-Narcotics Medical Devices, AI and ML in Healthcare and Pharmacovigilance and Cyber Security. We talked about working as "We" not "I" on a global platform, The first such initiative of all coming to one platform as top manufacturers, MSMEs and SMEs will participate in the First US India Healthcare Summit 2023 in NY to be organized by Global Indian Trade and Cultural Council USA

Dr. Rahul spoke at the event, emphasizing the severity of Drug menace and advocated a campaign of Corporate Social Responsibility initiative as in being initiated by GITCC and other organizations in the US. Mr. Panaser emphasizing on deepening US India business relations and on the Drug menace. Dr Gupta appreciated the CSR



GITCC team with Karnataka officials



Mr. H S Panaser, Dr. Rahul Gupta and members of GITCC team met with Dr C N Ashwath Narayan, Minister for IT & BT, Science & Technology, Higher Education, Skill Development, Entrepreneurship & Livelihood, Government of Karnataka

monitoring the use of unregulated chemicals in drug manufacturing. We look forward to interacting with the White House and delegates from the US soon."

With its robust ecosystem of IT, pharma R&D centers, manufacturing, academic institutions, and leading technology companies, Karnataka is the only state in India that maintains a country-to-state relationship akin to country-to-country bilateral relations

We were humbled to be invited by KDPMA, the Apex body of the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers in Karnataka with members from Small, Medium, and Large-Scale Units, Government Enterprises and Multinationals, to an event "Meet and Greet," Dr. Rahul Gupta on 14th November 2022. Mr Harish Jain,

initiative as in being initiated by GITCC It was humbling to have Dr. H. G. Koshia, Commissioner FDAC, Gujarat as an honorable speaker presenting the overview and economic snapshot, the regulatory framework along with other drivers for growth in Pharmaceuticals and Educational infrastructure of India and Gujarat and the US India initiations.

The event was attended by Food and Drug administration officials, 'business leaders' bureaucrats and pharmaceutical manufacturers from Karnataka, Telangana, and Gujarat. Our special thanks to KDPMA, its President Mr. H Jain and Mr. S. Khanna for organizing this event. Our special thanks to Mr. A Surana of Micro Labs and Mr. U K Singh of Kumar Organics for sponsoring this event.



# Middlesex County Center for empowerment & Sneh Arts supported by Manavi hosted a community outreach event for sexual violence awareness



Abhik Mujherjee Sitar & Shivalik Ghoshal Tabla

**NEW BRUNSWICK (TIP):** The Middlesex County Center for Empowerment, Sneh Arts & Manavi collaborated to host a very special community outreach event to increase awareness surrounding sexual violence. The Middlesex County Center for Empowerment (the Center) is the state designated sexual violence program for Middlesex County. They strive to support and empower survivors and significant others affected by sexual violence, and to help eliminate all forms of sexual violence through community awareness and education. Sneh Arts is a cultural organization promoting and presenting

classical arts around the tri-state area that can have a positive impact in society. Manavi is a non-profit organization based out of New Jersey. Founded in 1985, Manavi was the first organization in the United States to specifically address the unmet needs of South Asian women affected by violence.

The perpetration of sexual violence is preventable. However, it starts with awareness building and that was the purpose of this event - to bring this issue into community consciousness and raise awareness about the services offered by the Center and Manavi to support survivors in the South Asian community. Sunny Thakkar of Sneh Arts continues to be dedicated to working with organizations such as Manavi and the Center in organizing and curating outreach events like this to help bring the community together in support of survivors and prevention of the violence.

Representatives from Manavi, Shanti Shah & Amritha Sridhar, helped MC the event and spoke about Manavi's services. Jennifer Kurdyla with the Middlesex County Center for Empowerment spoke about the Center's services, before speaking more about the issue of sexual violence with Nahrin Khan. During this presentation, Nahrin Khan shared a survivor's story to highlight how the experiences of violence and abuse can impact an individual at various points in their lives, from childhood to relationships to parenting. The presentation illustrated the impact survivorship has on individuals, relationships, communities, and society, and therefore the importance of preventing people from perpetrating on an individual, relational, communal, and societal level. Sexual violence prevention involves changing the existing harmful socio-cultural and gender norms that support power imbalance and allow perpetrators to exercise control over survivors. Sexual violence prevention is also about understanding and respecting consent and boundaries, and these concepts are easier to instill at an early age through education. Jennifer and Nahrin urged everyone in the audience to support survivors, to be advocates for change, and to break the silence around sexual violence through conversations



Team with artists

and education.

Nahrin Khan, outreach consultant for the Center, said, "When it comes to the South Asian culture, it is important to recognize that there is deep rooted patriarchy that is functioning within the collectivist tradition. For instance, the traditional patriarchal attitude towards women not only contributes to but also

maintains that power imbalance. In many instances, women are subjugated, subordinated and subservient, within our communities, and our world view encourages conformity to those traditional fixed gender-based roles creating unhealthy expectations that often lead to violence." *(Read full story at [www.theindianpanorama.news](http://www.theindianpanorama.news))*



J. Maheshwari performs Bharatnatyam



Noah Damer performs Kathak

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# THE PANGS IN BIRTHING NEW POLITICAL LEADERS



BY RADHIKA RAMASESHAN

**"THE YEAR 2018 COULD HAVE MARKED A DECISIVE SHIFT FOR THE CONGRESS, IF ONLY THE LEADERSHIP HAD CAPTURED THE ZEITGEIST IT WAS LEADING TO. THE PARTY HAD WON ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS IN THREE STATES WHICH WERE IN THE BJP'S THRALLDOM. MADHYA PRADESH, RAJASTHAN AND CHHATTISGARH WERE NOT EASY STATES TO WREST FROM THE BJP. THIS WAS THE JUNCTURE AT WHICH THE CONGRESS COULD HAVE ADDRESSED THE LEADERSHIP QUESTION ON A CLEAN SLATE, WITHOUT GETTING DAUNTED BY THE ENTRENCHED PROVINCIAL OLD GUARD. THIS WAS THE JUNCTURE TO SPOT AND NURTURE YOUNGER LEADERS FROM THE GRASSROOTS TO HELM THE STATES INSTEAD OF ALLOWING A SCLEROTIC HIERARCHY TO WORK THE SYSTEM ON RICKETY LIMBS."**

The year 2018 could have marked a decisive shift for the Congress, if only the leadership had captured the zeitgeist it was leading to. The party had won Assembly elections in three states which were in the BJP's thralldom. Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh were not easy states to wrest from the BJP. This was the juncture at which the Congress could have addressed the leadership question on a clean slate, without getting daunted by the entrenched provincial Old Guard. This was the juncture to spot and nurture younger leaders from the grassroots to helm the states instead of allowing a sclerotic hierarchy to work the system on rickety limbs.

The Congress displayed the spunk to shake up the system only in Chhattisgarh. It chose Bhupesh Baghel, then 57, as the chief minister in place of veteran TS Singh Deo, a running favorite,



Photo caption: The Congress missed shaking up the system in Rajasthan and MP

Photo / PTI

with a reported assurance to Singh Deo that the position was a rotational arrangement between him and Baghel. With just a year for Chhattisgarh to vote, the assurance, if real, never materialized. Baghel, a backward-caste Kurmi, not only survived internal challenges but also became a lynchpin of the national Congress organization. His ascendancy was a recognition and an acknowledgment on the Congress's part that to survive and retain the base it is left with, strong state leaders were invaluable.

The Congress missed the bus in MP and Rajasthan. In MP, Kamal Nath, 72 in 2018 and remarkably agile, positioned himself as the frontrunner through deft footwork, leaving younger leaders, notably Jyotiraditya Scindia, to search for options.

In Rajasthan, evidently intimidated by the perception that Ashok Gehlot, then 67, had a formidable organizational network of his own (which inevitably failed after he completed his five-year term as the Congress's rout in 2003 and 2008 testified), the party played safe and rooted for Gehlot to helm a third term. Like Scindia, a much younger Sachin Pilot, projected as Gehlot's closest rival, was left hanging. The Congress's fear was that Gehlot could inflict considerable damage to the party if driven up the wall.

The grit displayed in Chhattisgarh - that was perhaps because Singh Deo was seen as less troublesome than Nath and Gehlot - evaporated in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan.

It need not have played out that way because out of this trio of states, Chhattisgarh is regarded as a sure-fire winner a second time. If re-elected, it will prove that the limited experimentation paid off for the Congress.

In Himachal Pradesh, the Congress top

brass overlooked the time-honored metric of lineage and 'stature' when it went for Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu as the CM. Lok Sabha MP Pratibha Singh held on to her claim to the last, insisting that the victory symbolized a homage to her departed husband and former CM Virbhadr Singh. Hers was a contention whose emotional quotient might have worked in the old days but in an era in which ordinariness commands a higher premium over bloodline in politics, Sukhu, the son of a bus driver, pipped her to the post.

The Congress awaits its next big leadership test in poll-bound Karnataka, where it is caught in a welter of rivalry between the old warhorses, Siddaramaiah and DK Shivakumar, who refuse to forfeit their assumed prerogative to lead the party even on peril of losing an election. Will the high command have the mettle to call their bluff or let the party go adrift amid their strife? By now, the Congress should have developed a second line of leadership, but it passed up the opportunity.

Leadership transition in politics, as in every winner-takes-all venture, is painful. While change ushers in the arrival of the next generation, it also brings the possibility of a different functioning mode from what the elite and the rank and file are used to.

Unlike industry, the fear in politics is partially unfounded because the original structure in which parties exist is rusted and will not countenance, let alone implement, the radical changes its timeworn frames are called on to do. Politics is essentially conservative and change-averse.

The BJP under Prime Minister Narendra Modi is often described as unrecognizably different from the party that existed under Atal Bihari Vajpayee

and LK Advani. That is not true. The BJP and Modi command a majority of their own and are, therefore, supremely well placed to execute the RSS's agenda in almost every sphere of governance. A centralized political entity, allowing marginal latitude to the states, has been at the heart of the Sangh's political philosophy. So, it is not surprising that the BJP's command structures have been refashioned to enforce the might of the center in which the losers take nothing, not even the leftovers.

The compulsions in the preceding dispensations were different. Vajpayee ran an unwieldy coalition because the BJP never gained the numbers to stand on its own. It had to contend with pesky allies as well as the Sangh's incessant demands and could keep neither very happy.

Does this mean that the seemingly invincible central BJP always overrides the states? Himachal partially busted the myth because the BJP's rebels refused to heed Delhi's entreaties to back off and help the official candidates. The BJP is struggling to get its Chhattisgarh, Bihar and Rajasthan organizations in place because these states are bereft of credible leaders to replace the veterans in Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan, while Bihar never had a helmsman. The BJP leaned so heavily on the Janata Dal (United) that the state party was eviscerated.

The BJP's lacunae do not solve the Congress's problems. A stated objective of Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra was to re-energize the party organizations in the states. The aftermath? Days after the walkathon traversed Telangana, there was a virtual revolt against the state Congress president, A Revanth Reddy, for allegedly patronizing the TDP defectors over the original leaders. There are no short cuts.

(The author is a Senior Journalist)



# Reshaping the world's responses to the terror matrix



BY  
M.K. NARAYANAN

**SCRUTINIZING DECLARATIONS OF A DECLINE IN LEVELS OF TERRORISM AND REACTIVATING THE PROPOSAL FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM ARE SOME OF THE STEPS NEEDED**

The world has been witnessing a flurry of meetings and conferences on the issue of countering terrorism worldwide. The list resembles an alphabetic soup, viz., meetings of the United Nations Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee, the No Money for Terror Conference, and an Interpol Conference in which terrorism figured prominently. The recurring theme has been the need to wage a coordinated fight against terrorism. Nothing much, however, seems to have changed. India and Pakistan, for instance, among the most affected by terrorism, have continued to hurl invectives at each other instead of finding ways to cooperate to deal with the terrorism menace. Much of the world is continuing on their paths. None of this augurs well for the fight against terrorism.

## THE RELEVANCE OF PAST INSTANCES

An oft-repeated comment is, hence, worth recalling, viz., history is most relevant when it comes to ensuring a proper understanding of threats such as terrorism, which have a long-term impact. While there appears to be a lull as far as major terror incidents are concerned, it must not be lost sight of that it was as recently as at the beginning of this century that the world witnessed several landmark terror attacks. Two that stood out were the September 11, 2001 terror attack in New York, and the November 26, 2008 attacks on multiple targets in Mumbai. Both in their own way reflected the kind of paradigmatic changes that were taking place in the practice of violence. Both had profound strategic implications. The 9/11 attack heralded what came to be regarded as 'new age terrorism', while Mumbai underscored the dangers of state-sponsored terrorism. With these attacks the cognitive map of terrorism had changed.

This was confirmed by the series of major terror attacks that took place in 2015-16. The attacks on the Charlie Hebdo offices in Paris (January 2015) and on the Bardo Museum in Tunis (March 2015), were followed by the one in Istanbul (in which several were killed, in 2016) There was also the attack in Paris again, in November 2015 (in which at least 130 were killed, signaled not only the emergence of 'new age' terrorism but also the rise of new terrorist entities such as the Islamic State (IS) and the al Qaeda - each with their own caliphs.

During 2016, the IS launched several more spectacular attacks (some with its allies) across Asia, Europe and North Africa. The intensity has since declined to an extent, but this is offset by indications of new complicated patterns of relationships among various terrorist conglomerates. It has provided a fillip to many fringe extremist organizations that nurse a terror mindset. Hence, it would be wise for those in authority to heed the warning that terrorism could well prove to be the defining threat of not merely the present, but to future generations as well.

Terrorism remains the omnipresent threat that it has always been. The locales may shift but the threat remains. While Europe and Asia remain in the cross hairs of different terrorist groups, Africa and northwest Asia appear to have become the main hunting ground of the al-Qaeda and IS terrorists. Linkages among terrorist groups, have if anything, become strengthened, and evidence of this was forthcoming very recently when al-Qaeda leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri (successor to Osama bin Laden) was identified as living in Kabul in a 'safe house' maintained

The Taj Hotel in  
November 2008

Photo / PTI



by the Haqqani Network (which has ties with Pakistan's intelligence). Zawahiri was eliminated in July 2022 in a U.S. directed 'Hell Fire' missile attack while he was still in Kabul. All this confirms, if confirmation was required, that al-Qaeda has both an advocacy and an advisory role, vis-à-vis, the Taliban in Afghanistan.

What is also becoming evident is that al-Qaeda's activities in particular are becoming more decentralized. It is finding fertile grounds in the Sahel region of Africa and in Eastern Africa, apart from its salience in Afghanistan. Among the al-Qaeda's firmest allies today is, undoubtedly, the Taliban. The Haqqani Network within the new Taliban government provides many an opportunity for al-Qaeda to find greater traction across the region.

## A NEW MIX

The belief that the growing ambit of terrorist activities was the primary reason for the recent spate of meetings on terrorism would, however, be misleading. Very little seems to have been discussed at these meetings on how to deal with the spate of newer terror groups, i.e., groups apart from al-Qaeda and the IS, whose ambit of activities had widened and become more widespread. There is again no indication that the meetings took stock of the fact that ideology intertwined with religious extremism had become an even more potent threat than previously. Instead, it would seem that the terrorist 'handle' had become a useful ploy for many governments to drum up support for their various initiatives, without much substance to their declarations.

Many of the past problems still remain. The declining level of serious terrorist incidents do not, however, translate into a decline in terrorism. No doubt, today's scaled-down attacks of little-known targets do not attract public attention. But as in most other fields of human endeavor, it is the small incidents that portray what could happen in the near and the not-too-distant future. It would be unfortunate if counter-terrorism experts across India were not to read proper meanings into many recent terror attacks, such as the one in Coimbatore (Tamil Nadu) and Mangaluru (Karnataka) attacks. The incidents may appear relatively

insignificant but are symptomatic of growing radicalization and suggestive of the fact that a sizeable base is being built in the southern region, which could lead to the creation of organizations on the model of the Indian Mujahideen (of the early 2000s). Constant and careful vigil by counter-terrorism experts is needed to keep track of not only these activities but also the kind of links that are being established (under the radar) by global terrorist outfits whose presence is not as widely advertised as that of al-Qaeda and the IS.

## MEASURES NEEDED

Hence, what is most needed by world leaders, at one level, is not to accept all declarations of a decline in levels of terrorism at face value and, at another level, not to treat some terrorists as good and others as bad, based on each nation's predilections. The next step is to reactivate the proposal for the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT) that has been languishing in the offices of the UN (since India first proposed this in the 1990s) and finalize the list of items needed to check terrorism globally. Acceptance of the CCIT would send signals far more potent than empty platitudes by world leaders at global conferences on the need to defeat terrorism. Once the CCIT is accepted by the UN, the war on terror would gain a new salience.

Additionally, counter-terrorism agencies the world over need to hone their skills and capabilities on how best to counter 'new age terrorism'. There is also a clear need for counter-terrorism agencies across the world to function in a more coordinated manner, exchanging both intelligence and tactics. They need to take stock of the newer patterns of terror such as 'enabled terrorism' and 'remote control terrorism', viz., violence conceived and guided by controllers thousands of miles away, positing the dangers of Internet-enabled terrorism. Counter-terrorism experts will again need to enlarge their expertise to accommodate multi-domain operations, and undertake terror 'gaming', all of which have become essential in today's day and age.

(The author is a former Director, Intelligence Bureau, a former National Security Adviser and a former Governor of West Bengal)



# AAP needs to restore democratic credentials



BY  
NEERA CHANDHOKE

**"EXPERIENCED IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS, KEJRIWAL SHOULD KNOW THAT AS LONG AS THE PARTY CONCENTRATES ONLY ON HIM IT WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO SPREAD ITS WINGS TO THE REST OF THE COUNTRY. DEMOCRACY IMPOSES RESPONSIBILITIES ON POLITICAL PARTIES IN MANY WAYS, BUT, ABOVE ALL, A PARTY CANNOT BE DEMOCRATIC UNLESS IT PRACTICES INNER-PARTY DEMOCRACY. THE RESULTS IN HIMACHAL PRADESH AND GUJARAT SHOW UP THE LIMITS OF A ONE-MAN PARTY. A PARTY NEEDS CADRES. IT ALSO NEEDS IDEOLOGY SO THAT ITS MEMBERS KNOW WHAT THEY STAND FOR AND WHAT THEY STAND AGAINST. BEFORE WE VOTE FOR A POLITICAL PARTY, WE MUST KNOW WHAT ITS WORLDVIEW IS. A DEMOCRATIC PARTY HAS TO BE COMMITTED TO HUMAN EMANCIPATION FROM DOMINATION AND OPPRESSION."**

**APART FROM SERVICE DELIVERY, THE AAP'S INITIATIVES SUCH AS REPORT CARDS AND POLLS ON WHO THE CM SHOULD BE, CARRY APPEAL. UNTRAMMELED BY ANY KIND OF IDEOLOGY, THE LEADERSHIP ADJUSTS ITS RHETORIC ACCORDING TO THE MOOD OF THE COUNTRY - FROM PUBLICLY RECITING HANUMAN CHALISA TO DEMONSTRATING PATRIOTISM THROUGH FLAGS. THE PARTY SHOULD TELL US UNEQUIVOCALLY WHAT IT STANDS FOR OR AGAINST.**



Photo caption: The AAP is a party many of us have invested in, but it must not stop at limiting its notions of a good life to schools and clinics. Photo / Courtesy Tribune

In the 1970s and 1980s, the reinvention of civil society in eastern Europe re-catalyzed a powerful debate on what was called the 'crisis of representation'. Citizens turned their back on Stalinist states and began to connect with each other in civil society through organizations ranging from discussion groups to soup kitchens. The future belonged to citizen groups and social movements linked through coalitional politics and ideologies.

In India, the crisis of representation took hold of the political imagination after the Emergency and escalated in the years that followed. Indians looked for an alternative to a moribund party system. Over time, political disenchantment led to the consolidation of two sorts of political formations. In the 1980s, the Hindutva movement extended the ideological commitment of its parent organization - the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh - into every arena of collective life.

In 2012, a new party was created out of the 2011 'India Against Corruption' movement which took the country by storm. Interestingly, the campaign against corruption had a place for everyone - from the religious right to the left. Ideology was done away with.

After spectacularly winning the Delhi elections in 2015 and 2020, Arvind Kejriwal set his sights on transforming the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) into a national party. In the recent elections in Gujarat, the AAP secured 12 per cent of the votes - after having got the required vote share in the Assembly elections in Delhi, Punjab and Goa. It has become a national party in 10 years. This is

remarkable considering that experienced regional leaders from Lalu Prasad Yadav to Chandrashekar Rao have not been able to secure this status for their parties.

Apart from service delivery, the AAP's initiatives such as report cards and polls on who the CM should be, carry appeal. Untrammelled by any kind of ideology, the leadership adjusts its rhetoric according to the mood of the country - from publicly reciting Hanuman Chalisa to demonstrating patriotism through flags.

We are caught between a highly ideological party and a party that disdains ideology. The cadres of the BJP intend to rework every institution/practice in the country, from marriage to schools, to universities, to renaming and restructuring of spaces, to rewriting of history, and to refashioning of the nationalist imagination. The AAP prefers to concentrate on pragmatic solutions to issues such as education and healthcare, reduction of power bills and promotion of mohalla clinics.

Has the AAP failed to transcend its original avatar as a civil society organization? Perhaps. Consider the implications of concentrating on issues that are civic, rather than wholly political, such as democracy. Citizens have the right to well-being for which quality education, healthcare, employment, housing and income are essential components. More significantly, citizens have the right to civil liberties, the right to not be imprisoned without due cause, the right to freedom of thought and expression, the right to protest, and the right to not

be harmed.

Whether it was the anti-CAA agitation in December 2019-January 2020, the assault on Jamia Millia Islamia and JNU faculty members and students in January 2020, communal violence in north-east Delhi in February 2020, protests at Shaheen Bagh or the indiscriminate arrests of journalists, academics, civil society activists and students, the AAP has preferred to sit on the fence. Presumably, the AAP does not support violation of rights, but acts of omission are as complicit with infringements of basic rights as acts of commission. As long as the AAP shies away from taking a stand on basic democratic rights, the party will remain a service provider which also fights elections.

Experienced in public affairs, Kejriwal should know that as long as the party concentrates only on him it will never be able to spread its wings to the rest of the country. Democracy imposes responsibilities on political parties in many ways, but, above all, a party cannot be democratic unless it practices inner-party democracy. The results in Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat show up the limits of a one-man party. A party needs cadres. It also needs ideology so that its members know what they stand for and what they stand against. Before we vote for a political party, we must know what its worldview is. A democratic party has to be committed to human emancipation from domination and oppression.

To argue that a political platform of a party intends to fix political predicaments through improving schools and hospitals - noble as these objectives might be - is to decontextualize the whole issue of what citizens want. We need healthcare and education, but we also need rights. Rights come in packages; they are indivisible. We also need freedom of thought, action and expression.

The AAP is a party many of us have invested in, but it must not stop at limiting its notions of a good life to schools and clinics. These are components of a good life, but ultimately it is rights that defend the dignity of human beings.

It is rights that mark out the agenda of a party from cynical power-grabbing platforms. The AAP should tell us unequivocally what it stands for or against. It should not be reduced to a service provider. The party should restore its democratic credentials to avoid this fate.

(The author is a political scientist)



# Taliban fighters enforce university ban in Kabul; Afghan women inconsolable

DECEMBER 21

**KABUL (TIP):** Taliban security forces in the Afghan capital on December 21 enforced a higher education ban for women by blocking their access to universities, with video obtained by The Associated Press showing women weeping and consoling each other outside one campus in Kabul.

The country's Taliban rulers a day earlier ordered women nationwide to stop attending private and public universities effective immediately and until further notice. The Taliban-led administration has not given a reason for the ban or reacted to the fierce and swift global condemnation of it.

Journalists saw Taliban forces outside four Kabul universities Wednesday. The forces stopped some women from entering, while allowing others to go in and finish their work. They also tried to prevent any photography, filming and protests from taking place.

Rahimullah Nadeem, a spokesman for Kabul University, confirmed that classes for female students had stopped. He said some women were allowed to enter the campus for paperwork and administrative reasons, and that four graduation ceremonies were held Wednesday.

Members of an activist group called the Unity and Solidarity of Afghanistan Women gathered outside the private Edrak University in Kabul on Wednesday morning, chanting slogans in Dari.

"Do not make education political!" they said. "Once again university is banned for women, we do not want to be eliminated!"



Despite initially promising a more moderate rule respecting rights for women and minorities, the Taliban have widely implemented their interpretation of Islamic law, or Sharia, since they seized power in August 2021.

They have banned girls from middle school and high school, barred women from most fields of employment and ordered them to wear head-to-toe clothing in public. Women are also banned from parks and gyms.

A letter shared by the spokesman for the Ministry of Higher Education, Ziaullah Hashmi, on Tuesday told private and public universities to implement the ban as soon as possible and to inform the ministry once the ban is in place.

The move is certain to hurt efforts by

the Taliban to win international recognition for their government and aid from potential donors at a time when Afghanistan is mired in a worsening humanitarian crisis. The international community has urged Taliban leaders to reopen schools and give women their right to public space.

Qatar and Pakistan, both Muslim countries, have expressed their disappointment at the university ban and urged authorities to reconsider their decision.

Qatar played a key role in facilitating the negotiations that led to the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Afghanistan last year. It called on the "Afghan caretaker government" to review the ban in line with the teachings of Islam on women's education. (AP)

## IMRAN SUPPORTERS 'BESIEGE' GOVERNOR'S HOUSE IN LAHORE

DECEMBER 22

**LAHORE (TIP):** A large number of supporters of Pakistan's ousted Prime Minister Imran Khan "besieged" the governor's house here on December 22 and warned the governor of denotifying the chief executive of Punjab province on the pretext of a trust vote.

Khan, addressing the participants via video link from his residence in Lahore, criticised the federal government for creating hurdles in the dissolution of the Punjab Assembly.

The constitutional crisis in Punjab has deepened following Chief Minister Chaudhry Parvez Elahi's refusal to obtain a vote of confidence on the order of Punjab Governor Baligur Rehman of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N).

Seventy-year-old Khan had announced the dissolution of Punjab and Kyber Pakhtunkhwa assemblies on December 23 to push the federal coalition government to call for snap elections.

The elections are due between October and November 2023 after the completion of the tenure of the incumbent government. (PTI)

## PAKISTAN CALLS FOR GLOBAL AID FOR 20 MILLION FLOOD VICTIMS

**ISLAMABAD (TIP):** Pakistan's prime minister on December 21 urged the international community to give his country desperately needed aid to help 20 million flood victims survive the harsh winter, as the country struggles to cope with the humanitarian aftermath of vast floods earlier in the year. AP

## SHER BAHADUR DEUBA NEPALI CONGRESS'S PM CANDIDATE

DECEMBER 21

**KATHMANDU (TIP):** Nepal Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba will be the ruling Nepali Congress party's candidate for the post of Prime Minister in the new government after he was elected the parliamentary party leader on Wednesday. The 76-year-old Nepali Congress President, who has served as the prime minister for a record fifth term, defeated his challenger party General Secretary Gagan Kumar Thapa by 39 votes, officials said. Deuba secured 64 votes, while Thapa could muster only 25 votes, they said. All 89 lawmakers of the party participated in the voting. The win means that Deuba will possibly lead the next government after the Nepali Congress emerged as the single-largest party in the general elections held on November 20 in Nepal. Deuba thanked party lawmakers and said that he will work to create a party free from obstacles. "Everyone helped me win. (PTI)

# Over 100 Rohingya stranded in boat for two weeks, many dead, says activists

DECEMBER 21

**MYANMAR (TIP):** Up to 20 people have died of hunger or thirst on a boat carrying ethnic Rohingya that has been stranded at sea for two weeks off India's coast, two Myanmar Rohingya activist groups said.

The boat with at least 100 people is currently in Malaysian waters as members of the Muslim minority continue to escape violence in Myanmar and hardship in Bangladesh refugee camps.

"We estimate that probably as many as 20 have died... some from hunger and thirst, and others jumped overboard in desperation. This is absolutely awful and outrageous," said Chris Lewa, director of the Arakan Project, which works to support Myanmar's Rohingyas.

It is not clear if the boat drifted or was towed to Malaysian waters or if India attempted to provide aid.

Indian Navy and Coast Guard did not



immediately respond to requests for comment.

Each year many Rohingya risk their lives boarding rickety vessels to reach Malaysia.

Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network's Rohingya Working Group said the group

had been adrift for more than two weeks.

"These people have been adrift on a damaged boat for more than two weeks without food and water. We have heard that up to 16 people may have already died," said Lilianne Fan, chair of Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network's Rohingya Working Group.

The Sri Lankan navy rescued more than 100 Rohingya on another boat over the weekend.

In 2018, more than 730,000 Rohingya Muslims fled to neighbouring Bangladesh following a military crackdown in Myanmar that witnesses said included mass killings and rape.

Rights groups and media have documented killings of civilians and burning of villages.

"These people must be urgently disembarked to safety. It's inhuman to keep them at sea after such an ordeal," said Dil Mohammed, a Rohingya refugee leader in Bangladesh camps. (reuters)



# US to send US\$ 1.8 billion in aid, Patriot battery, to Ukraine

DECEMBER 22, 2022

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): An Associated Press report says the US will send US\$ 1.8 billion in military aid to Ukraine in a massive package that will for the first time include a Patriot missile battery and precision guided bombs for their fighter jets, US officials said on Tuesday, as the Biden administration prepares to welcome Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to Washington.

US officials described details of the aid on condition of anonymity because it has not yet been announced.

The aid signals an expansion by the US in the kinds of advanced weaponry it will send to Ukraine to bolster the country's air defenses against what has been an increasing barrage of Russian missile strikes.

The package, which was expected to be announced on Wednesday, will include about US\$ 1 billion in weapons from Pentagon stocks and another US\$ 800 million in funding through the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative, which funds weapons, ammunition, training and other assistance, officials said.

Zelenskyy and other Ukraine officials have pressed Western leaders to provide more advanced weapons, including the Patriots, to help their country in its war with Russia.

The Patriot would be the most advanced surface-to-air missile system the West has provided to Ukraine to help repel Russian aerial attacks.

The timing of the military aid announcement - as Zelenskyy makes his first trip out of Ukraine since the war began - sends a strong message of continued US support for Ukraine as the war drags on.

The aid comes as Congress is poised to approve another US\$ 44.9 billion in assistance for Ukraine as part of a massive spending bill.

That would ensure that US support will continue next year and beyond as Republicans take control of the House in January. Some GOP lawmakers have expressed wariness about the assistance.

During the quick trip, Zelenskyy is expected to meet with Biden at the White House, take questions from the press, and deliver an address before Congress.

White House officials said the visit, which will come 10 months after the Russian invasion, is meant to help underscore Biden's message that the US will be there for



Ukraine for as long as it takes to repel Russian forces.

Biden and Zelenskyy spoke about the possibility of the visit during their December 11 call and the White House formally extended the invitation three days later.

The decision to send the Patriot battery comes despite threats from Russia's Foreign Ministry that the delivery of the advanced surface-to-air missile system would be considered a provocative step and that the Patriot and any crews accompanying it would be a legitimate target for Moscow's military.

But the White House is pushing back against the notion that delivery of the Patriot amounts to an escalation of US involvement on behalf of Ukraine.

A senior administration official, who briefed reporters on the condition of anonymity, said that Biden has been clear that his administration would "lean forward" in supporting Ukraine but it is "not seeking to engage in direct war with Russia." It's not clear exactly when the Patriot would arrive on the front lines in Ukraine, since US troops will have to train Ukrainian forces on how to use the high-tech system.

The training could take several weeks, and is expected to be done at the Grafenwoehr training area in Germany.

To date, all training of Ukraine forces by the US and the West has taken place in European countries.

Also included in the package will be an undisclosed number of Joint Direct Attack Munitions kits, or JDAMs, officials said. The kits will be used to modify massive bombs by adding tail fins and precision navigation systems so that rather than being simply dropped from a fighter jet onto a target, they can be released and guided to a target.

US fighter and bomber aircraft use the JDAMs, and the Pentagon has been working to modify them so they can be used by Ukraine.

The US so far has been reluctant to provide Ukraine with American fighter jets.

Russia has warned the advanced aircraft would be considered provocative, and the US to date has said other weaponry would be a better fit, citing the significant maintenance and training needs for those warplanes.

So instead of providing Ukraine those US aircraft, the Pentagon is helping Kyiv find innovative ways to upgrade its fleet with the same capabilities it would get with a US fighter jet.

The aid package will also include an undisclosed number of rockets for the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, thousands of artillery and mortar rounds, trucks, and HARM air-to-surface anti-radiation missiles.

According to officials, the urgent pleadings of Ukrainian leaders and the devastating destruction of the country's civilian infrastructure, including loss of electricity and heat during winter, ultimately overcame US reservations about supplying the Patriots.

White House and Pentagon leaders have said consistently that providing Ukraine with additional air defenses is a priority, and Patriot missiles have been under consideration for some time.

Officials said that as the winter closed in and the Russian bombardment of civilian infrastructure escalated, that consideration took on increased priority.

US officials had balked at providing the Patriots to Ukraine because they could be considered an escalation that would trigger a response from Moscow.

In addition, there were concerns about the significant training that would be required and questions about whether US troops would have been required to operate it. Biden has flatly rejected sending any US combat troops to Ukraine.

One Patriot battery routinely includes up to eight launchers, each of which can hold four missiles. It would be coming from Pentagon training stocks in the US.

The entire system, which includes a phased array radar, a control station, computers and generators, typically requires about 90 soldiers to operate and maintain. However, only three soldiers are needed to actually fire it, according to the Army.

## At below -40°C, Arctic 'bomb cyclone' to hit US; people warned of 'life-threatening cold'; Threatens holiday travel for millions of Americans



For Representation only

DECEMBER 23, 2022

DETROIT (TIP): A Reuters report says that a dangerously frigid arctic air mass gripped a vast expanse of the United States on Thursday, December 22, as a looming winter storm of historic proportions threatened to upend travel plans for millions of Americans. Leading into the holiday weekend, the impending storm was expected to bring blizzard conditions to the

Great Lakes region, heavy rains followed by a flash freeze on the East Coast, wind gusts of 60 miles per hour (100 kph) and bitter cold as far south as the Mexican border.

As the storm took shape over the Great Lakes on Thursday, a weather phenomenon known as a bomb cyclone was likely to develop from a "rapidly deepening low-pressure" system, the National Weather Service (NWS) said. The cyclone could spawn snowfalls of a half inch (1.25 cm) per hour and howling winds from the Upper Midwest to the interior Northeast, producing near-zero visibility, the weather service said. Combined with the arctic cold, wind-chill factors as low as 40 degrees below zero Fahrenheit (minus 40 Celsius) were forecast in the High Plains, the northern Rockies and Great Basin, the NWS said.

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

## Indian journalist Rana Ayyub receives support from US Senator

DECEMBER 23, 2022

WASHINGTON, D.C.

(TIP): A prominent US Senator has expressed support for Indian journalist Rana Ayyub, noting that her work is driven by a sense of purpose and a love for her country and the ideals for which it stands.

In a statement on Thursday, Democratic Senator Patrick Leahy said, "Rana Ayyub is an award-winning Indian journalist who has courageously reported on religious violence, extrajudicial killings, and other matters of public interest in India." "Her important work is driven by a sense of purpose and a love for her country and the ideals for which it stands. Yet she faces online harassment and trolling,



Indian journalist Rana Ayyub

Photo / Courtesy @RanaAyyub/Twitter

death threats, and baseless government retaliation for her reporting," Leahy said.

"Despite the immense pressure to silence her by government officials who should be protecting her, she continues to expose the abuses of those in power," the Senator from Vermont added.

Citing the Committee to Protect Journalists, Leahy said that in 2022 alone at least 38 journalists were killed, 294 were imprisoned, and 64 are missing or simply doing their job. He added that countless others faced intimidation, harassment, legal persecution, and threats.

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



# Defense chiefs of US and India discuss issue of global security amidst increased tension on India-China border

DECEMBER 22, 2022

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): Seeking to deepen US-India military ties, the defense chiefs of the two countries have shared their assessments of the regional and global security environment and discussed ways to deepen bilateral cooperation and interoperability.

The call between US Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen Mark A Miley and his Indian counterpart Chief of the Indian Defense Force Gen Anil Chauhan took place amidst increased tension between India and China on the border.

"The two military leaders shared assessments of the regional and global security environment and discussed ways to deepen bilateral military ties and interoperability," Joint Staff Deputy Spokesperson Joseph R. Holstead said on Wednesday in a readout of the call.

"The US and India share a strong military-to-military relationship under the US-India Major Defense Partnership," Holstead said, adding that



The call between US Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen Mark A Miley and his Indian counterpart Chief of the Indian Defense Force Gen Anil Chauhan took place amidst increased tension between India and China on the border.



India plays a "key role" in maintaining a free Indo-Pacific.

"India is a key regional leader and an important partner in maintaining a free and open Indo-Pacific," he said.

The US, India and several other world

powers have been talking about the need to ensure a free, open and thriving Indo-Pacific in the backdrop of China's rising military maneuvering in the resource-rich and strategically important region.

China claims nearly all of the

disputed South China Sea, though Taiwan, the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia and Vietnam all claim parts of it.

Beijing has built artificial islands and military installations in the South China Sea. China also has territorial disputes with Japan in the East China Sea.

In 2017, the US, Australia, India and Japan gave shape to the long-pending proposal of setting up the Quad to develop a new strategy to keep the critical sea routes in the Indo-Pacific region free of any influence.

The Chinese and Indian troops were engaged in a fresh clash in the Yangtse area of Arunachal Pradesh's Tawang sector on December 9, which is the first such major flare-up after the deadly hand-to-hand combat in the Galwan Valley in June 2020 that marked the most serious military conflict between the two sides in decades.

(Source: PTI)

## Dr RASHMI PATEL ELECTED FIA CHICAGO PRESIDENT



Dr Rashmi Patel, President FIA Chicago

Rajesh Singapori Vice President; Shrujal Patel Vice President; Jayantilal Patel Joint Secretary; Dr Hemant Patel Treasurer; and Hina Pandya Joint Treasurer.

In his acceptance speech, President Dr Rashmi Patel, outlined the goals that he would executive and achieve during his presidency. On behalf of his newly elected Executive Team, he thanked all the trustees and outgoing committee for their efforts and input in the FIA Chicago. He assured the community of all-inclusive initiatives under his tenure.

Dr. Rashmi Patel and his panel are eager to take the FIA to a new height and instead of few routine yearly programs, announced to conduct and do more programs to make the FIA strong by reaching out to all the Indian organizations, association members, and all the NRIs in the Chicagoland area. They want to have a routine health



Dr Rashmi Patel addresses FIA members

clinic, an open FIA office for routine communication, immigration help and Medicare and Public aid insurance advisors available routinely. There are many more programs being planned soon.

Dr. Rashmi Patel has been a practicing physician for the last 35+ years and has

been a part of many different associations including FIA. He served as a President for the Care and Share organization for 2 years and helped lots of needy and destitute in the communities. He helped the Lions club in opening new blood banks in the state of Gujarat. Dr. Patel routinely conducts the Reiki treatment seminar and yearly holds the Reiki educational seminars. He is involved in philanthropic work. Should you have any questions, suggestions, ideas or concern please contact him or any board member by email at [Fiachicago2023@gmail.com](mailto:Fiachicago2023@gmail.com)

The FIA Chicago's elections attracted an impressive response with almost all of the member organizations turning up for the elections. The election hall was packed to seams as the election committee smoothly conducted the elections. The statement of the FIA account and finance was also presented before the member organizations.

DECEMBER 19, 2022

CHICAGO (TIP): Chicago's eminent physician and renowned hospitality entrepreneur Dr Rashmi Patel has been elected the President of the Federation of Indian Associations (1980) Chicago.

He and his Executive Team was elected at the organization's elections held on 18 Dec 2022. FIA Election Committee comprising three of the FIA Trustees Kanti Patel, Rajesh Patel, and Bhailal Patel presided over, and conducted the election process. Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Satish (Sunny) Gabhawala oversaw through videoconferencing. A Large number of Trustees, Past Chairs, and Past Executives were in attendance.

The elected Executive includes Dr Rashmi Patel, President; Mukesh Shah, Secretary; Nitin Patel, Exe Vice President; Cecil Joseph Vice President;



FIA Chicago Executive team



**SC constitution bench  
verdict on demonetisation  
on January 2**

A five-judge constitution bench of the Supreme Court will pronounce on January 2 its verdict on nearly three dozen petitions on the government's 2016 notification to ban currency notes of Rs500 and Rs1000.

The bench reserved its verdict on December 7 after hearing elaborate arguments from the government and the petitioners who have contended that the demonetisation decision was arbitrary, unconstitutional and contrary to the powers and procedure prescribed under the Reserve Bank of India Act. The top court, which is currently closed for the winter recess, will reopen on January 2.

A note in the Supreme Court's list of cases for the said the judgment will be rendered by Justice BR Gavai for the bench, which indicates that the verdict may be unanimous. The bench also comprises justices S Abdul Nazeer, AS Bopanna, V Ramasubramanian and BV Nagarathna.

As the bench concluded hearing the arguments on whether the government followed due procedure provided under the RBI Act before undertaking a massive exercise to withdraw over 86% of the currency from circulation on November 8, 2016, the court also directed the ministry of finance and the Reserve Bank of India to produce the relevant files leading to the decision. The government undertook demonetisation under Section 26 (2) of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Act, 1934. The provision empowers the government to declare that "any series of bank notes of any denomination shall cease to be legal tender" after a recommendation from the central board of RBI.

# No breakthrough in 17th round of India-China high-level military talks

NEW DELHI (TIP)

Against the backdrop of fresh tensions over the clash between their troops in the Tawang sector, India and China on Tuesday, December 20, held the 17th round of high-level military talks on the eastern Ladakh border standoff but there was no indication of any forward movement in resolution of the remaining issues. A joint statement released on Thursday said both sides exchanged views in an "open and constructive" manner to resolve the "relevant issues" and that it was agreed to maintain "security and stability" on the ground in the region.

The senior military officers of the two sides held the dialogue at the Chushul-Moldo border meeting point on the Chinese side of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh and it lasted for around 10 hours, people familiar with the matter said. The talks took place 11 days after the clash at Yangtse area along the LAC in the Tawang sector of Arunachal Pradesh.

The statement said the two sides agreed to stay in "close contact", maintain dialogue through military and diplomatic channels and work out a mutually acceptable resolution of the remaining issues at the earliest.

It is learnt that the Indian side insisted on resolving the issues at the remaining friction points of Demchok and Depsang in eastern Ladakh as soon as possible.

"Building on the progress made after the last meeting (16th round) on July 17, the two sides exchanged views on the resolution of the relevant issues along the LAC in the Western Sector in an open and



constructive manner," the statement said. "They had a frank and in-depth discussion, keeping in line with the guidance provided by the state leaders to work for the resolution of the remaining issues at the earliest which would help in restoration of peace and tranquility along the LAC in the Western Sector and enable progress in bilateral relations," it said.

In line with a decision taken at the 16th round of military talks, the two sides carried out disengagement from Patrolling Point 15 in the Gogra-Hotsprings area in September.

"In the interim, the two sides agreed to maintain the security and stability on the ground in the Western Sector," the joint statement said.

"The two sides agreed to stay in close contact and maintain dialogue through military and diplomatic channels and work out a mutually acceptable resolution of the remaining issues at the earliest," it noted.

The fresh round of Corps Commander-

level talks on the eastern Ladakh row came over a month after Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping shook hands and exchanged pleasantries at the G20 summit in Bali.

On the clash in the Tawang sector, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said in Parliament on December 13 that the Chinese troops tried to "unilaterally" change the status quo in the Yangtse area but the Indian Army compelled them to retreat by its firm and resolute response.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Monday said the Indian Army will not let China change the status quo along the LAC "unilaterally" and its current deployment along the frontier was not seen before.

When asked about the Tawang incident, Bagchi said he would not like to comment and referred to the statement made by Defence Minister Singh on the matter.

To another question on whether similar incidents happened in the past in the region, he said there were incidents when Indian troops stood firm and "you are aware of that.. we have been emphasising that our soldiers will stand firm to guard our frontiers".

Replying to a separate query on whether the Tawang incident was flagged by the Indian side at the military talks, Bagchi said he would not like to speculate as he does not have a confirmation on it. India has been maintaining that its ties with China cannot be normal unless there is peace in the border areas.

The eastern Ladakh border standoff erupted on May 5, 2020, following a violent clash in the Pangong lake area. *Source:PTI*

# BJP's idea to stop Bharat Jodo Yatra: Rahul responds to health minister's Covid alert letter

NEW DELHI (TIP)

Days after Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya wrote to Rahul Gandhi asking him to ensure Covid protocol is followed in his ongoing Bharat Jodo Yatra, the former Congress president has responded. Speaking at a public rally Nuh, Haryana on Thursday, (December 22) Rahul Gandhi described the health minister's letter as an attempt to stop his march.

"It's their (BJP) new idea, they wrote a letter to me saying COVID is coming and stop the (Bharat Jodo) Yatra. All these are excuses to stop this Yatra, they are scared of India's truth," Rahul Gandhi said.

Senior Congress leader Salman Khurshid said the party will follow all Covid guidelines, but Yatra won't be suspended or stopped.

Mandaviya, in his letter to Rahul Gandhi, had urged him to ensure that Covid guidelines are followed otherwise he should suspend the Yatra in 'national

interest'.

"I request (Rahul Gandhi) that Covid protocol, including use of masks and sanitisers, be strictly followed during the march and only those who are vaccinated be allowed to participate. "If this Covid protocol cannot be followed, then, in view of the public health emergency, and to save the country from the Covid pandemic, I request you to suspend the 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' in the national interest," the letter dated December 20 stated.

The Congress had reacted sharply over the Health Minister's letter citing PM Modi's election rallies in Gujarat. "The BJP is taking out yatras in Karnataka and Rajasthan. Has the Health Minister sent a letter to them?" Congress spokesperson Pawan Khera told the media.

"Was Modi ji wearing a mask when he went door to door to seek votes in Gujarat?" another Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury remarked.





**Defence ministry approves capital procurement proposals worth Rs 84,328 cr**

The defence ministry on Thursday, December 22, approved the procurement of a number of military platforms and weapons including light tanks, anti-ship missiles and long range guided bombs at a cost of Rs 84,328 crore to boost combat capabilities of the armed forces.

The procurement proposals were cleared by the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) headed by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

The Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) for the procurement came amid a spike in tensions between India and China after troops from the two sides were engaged in a clash along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) at Yangtse in the Tawang sector of Arunachal Pradesh.

Sources said the light tanks and mounted gun system are set to be deployed in high-altitude forward areas including along the LAC.

The defence ministry said the DAC accorded approval for 24 capital acquisition proposals which include six for Indian Army, six for Indian Air Force, 10 for Indian Navy and two for Indian Coast Guard, adding the total value of the procurement would be Rs 84,328 crore.

It said the proposals include procurement of futuristic infantry combat vehicles, light tanks, naval anti-ship missiles, multi-purpose vessels, new range of missile systems, long range guided bombs and next generation offshore patrol vessels.

The ministry said 21 proposals worth Rs 82,127 crore will be procured from indigenous sources.

"It is pertinent to mention that 21 proposals, worth Rs 82,127 crore (97.4 per cent), are approved for procurement from indigenous sources. This unprecedented initiative of DAC will not only modernise the armed forces but also provide substantial boost to the defence industry to achieve the goal of 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat'," the ministry said. It said the procurement for the Army included futuristic infantry combat vehicles, light tanks and mounted gun system, adding they will provide a quantum jump to the force's operational preparedness.

"Proposals approved also include procurement of ballistic helmets, with enhanced protection level, for our soldiers," the ministry said in a statement.

"Approvals for procurement of naval anti-ship missiles, multi-purpose vessels and high endurance autonomous vehicles will further enhance maritime strength giving a boost to the Indian Navy's capabilities," it said.

The ministry said the Indian Air Force will be further strengthened with enhanced lethal capabilities by induction of new range of missile systems, long range guided bombs, range augmentation kit for conventional bombs and advanced surveillance systems.

# Covid threat: Random Covid testing for international passengers from December 24

**NEW DELHI (TIP)**

The Union health ministry on Thursday, December 22, asked the civil aviation ministry to ensure random Covid testing of two per cent of passengers arriving in international flights from December 24 to minimize the risk of ingress of the new variant of coronavirus in the country.

Following random testing, if anybody is found Covid-positive, the sample should be sent for genomic testing at the designated INSACOG laboratory network, Union health secretary Rajesh Bhushan wrote in a letter to his civil aviation ministry counterpart Rajiv Bansal.

After submitting samples for random testing, travellers will be allowed to leave the airport.

A copy of the positive report shall be shared with Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme at [shoc.idsp@ncdc.gov.in](mailto:shoc.idsp@ncdc.gov.in) by the concerned testing laboratory (besides sharing with the APHOS) to be in turn shared with concerned state or Union Territory for further follow-up action, Bhushan said.

Bhushan in the letter stated that as a result of its sustained efforts and focus on the five-fold strategy of test-track-treat-vaccination and adherence to Covid-appropriate behaviour, India has been able to effectively restrict the spread of COVID-19 transmission in the country so far.

However, globally the number of new cases of COVID-19 continue to remain alarmingly high, with around 5.9 lakh daily new cases reported on average during the week ending on December 19, 2022.

This spike in the trajectory of COVID-19 is particularly concerning with respect to Japan, United States of America, South Korea, Brazil, France and China where cases are increasing in a sustained manner, he stated.

"...it has been decided that ministry of civil aviation in coordination with airport operators and Air Port Health Offices (APHOS) shall ensure" two per cent of the total passengers in the flight shall undergo random post-arrival testing at the airport, Bhushan said in the letter.

Such travellers in each flight shall be identified by the concerned airlines (preferably from different countries), the letter said, adding that after submitting the sample passengers shall be allowed to leave the airport.

"This arrangement shall come into practice with effect from 10:00 AM on Saturday, December 24, 2022," the letter said.

Bhushan requested the ministry of civil aviation that testing may be done at a subsidised and uniform rate across all international airports.



**Nasal vax gets nod, early roll-out likely**

India's technical expert committee on immunisation has recommended the use of Bharat Biotech's nasal vaccine against Covid-19 as a booster for adults, Union health minister Mansukh Mandaviya said in Parliament on Thursday, with people aware of the matter separately saying that the roll-out could happen as soon as next week.

The vaccine, branded iNCOVACC, was approved by the country's drugs regulator and will add to India's arsenal of tools to fight the pandemic. Experts are particularly hopeful over of its utility since it is easy to administer and creates immunity in the nose (the site where the coronavirus first takes hold) – factors that could help overcome hesitancy around booster doses.

Around 719 million of 940 million adults are yet to take boosters, according to data analysed by HT.

If there is a sudden rush for these pending doses, people aware of the matter said, there are adequate doses to distribute among states, even though the companies have stopped production.

Source: PTI and HT

## Many states bring back mask mandate, push for Covid booster vaccines

**NEW DELHI (TIP)**

Chief ministers and health ministers of several states on Thursday, December 22, reviewed preparations and protocols for Covid-19, with many deciding to make it mandatory for people to wear masks in crowded places, step up genome sequencing and nudge people who are yet to take their third doses to come forward.

Meetings were held in Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh. Officials and ministers in many of these states advised alert, but added that there was no reason to panic.

In UP, the CM Yogi Adityanath asked officials to step up testing and genome sequencing and to ensure that people wear masks at crowded places. "Officials of medical education and medical health department has been asked to increase surveillance at airports and identify passengers with symptoms such as cold and flu. They have been asked to take samples of suspected patients and ask the patients to remain in home isolation," said deputy chief minister and health minister Brajesh Pathak.

In Agra, the district health officer was quoted by news agency ANI as saying that people will not be allowed at the Taj Mahal without testing.

In Karnataka, health minister K Sudhakar said an advisory will be issued making masks mandatory "in indoor areas, closed spaces and in areas with air-conditioning." Random testing and screening passengers arriving at international airports will also be done," the minister said, following a meeting with the CM.

Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee directed the state administration on Wednesday to step up surveillance, especially ahead of the Ganga Sagar mela in January, 2023, while in Kerala, health minister Veena George said a stock-taking was done and there was no need for panic.

Tamil Nadu's chief minister MK Stalin led a consultative meeting on Thursday and directed officials to carry out genome sequencing of all positive samples. The state also asked the Union government to issue guidelines for mandatory testing of international passengers arriving from China and Hong Kong.

Source: HT



# India in history this Week

DECEMBER 23, 2022, TO DECEMBER 29, 2022

## 23 DECEMBER

1902 The birth of Chaudhary Charan Singh, the fifth Prime Minister of the country popular as the leader of the farmers. This day is celebrated as 'Farmer's Day' in the country.

1921 Visva-Bharati University was inaugurated.

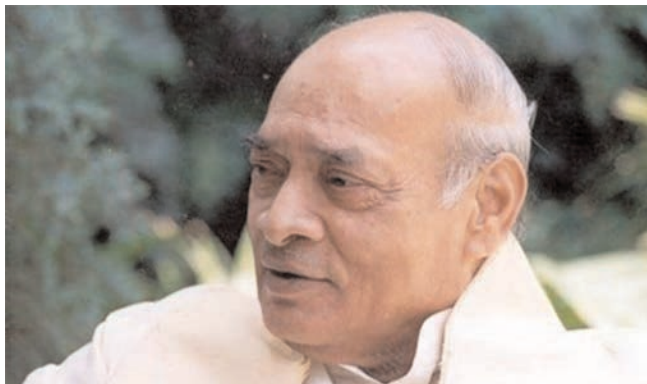
1926 Murder of Swami Shraddhanand, a freedom fighter, social reformer, pro-Dalit benefactor, supporter of women's education and Arya Samaj campaigner.

1968 Successful launch of country's first rocket 'Maneka'.

1995 360 people died due to fire in a school program in Mandi Dabwali area of Haryana.

2000 Calcutta, the capital of West Bengal, was officially renamed Kolkata.

2008 The software company Satyam was banned by the World Bank.



2004 9th Prime Minister of India Narasimha Rao died.

## 24 DECEMBER

1894 First medical conference organized in Calcutta.

1989 The first amusement park in India was opened in Essel World Mumbai.



2000 Vishwanathan Anand became world chess champion.

2002 The Delhi Metro was launched by Shahdra Tis Hazari Line.

2008 55% votes were cast in the last phase of Jammu and Kashmir assembly elections.

2014 It was announced that Bharat Ratna was awarded to Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Madan Mohan Malaviya.

1973 EV Ramaswamy Naikar died in Vellore, Tamil Nadu.

## 25 DECEMBER

2008 One of 11 payloaders of Chandrayaan-1 sent by India to space sent a new picture of the moon.

1861 Madan Mohan Malaviya, an educationist of India and honored with Bharat Ratna, was born.

1924 Former Prime Minister of the country and honored with Bharat Ratna, Atal Bihari Vajpayee was born.

1665 The French East India Company was formed in India to compete with Britain in political, economic and imperialist matters during the reign of Louis XIV.

1763 Maharaja Surajmal of Bharatpur was killed.

1771 The Mughal ruler Shah Alam II sat on the throne of Delhi under the patronage of the Marathas.

1800 Christmas Day was first made a public holiday on an international scale.

1861 Madan Mohan Malviya, a social worker and the leader of the Kashi Hindu University, was born in Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh.

1972 Chakravarti Rajagopalachari, the last Governor General of India, died in Madras (now Chennai), the capital of Tamil Nadu.



1994 The 7th President of India, Giani Zail Singh, died in Chandigarh.

## 26 DECEMBER



2004 Two and a half million people died due to tsunami in the Indian Ocean. A 9.15 magnitude earthquake in the ocean caused a tsunami wave. People from many countries including India, Sri Lanka and Indonesia were killed.

1904 Inauguration of country's first cross country motorcar rally between Delhi and Mumbai.

1925 Establishment of Communist Party of India.

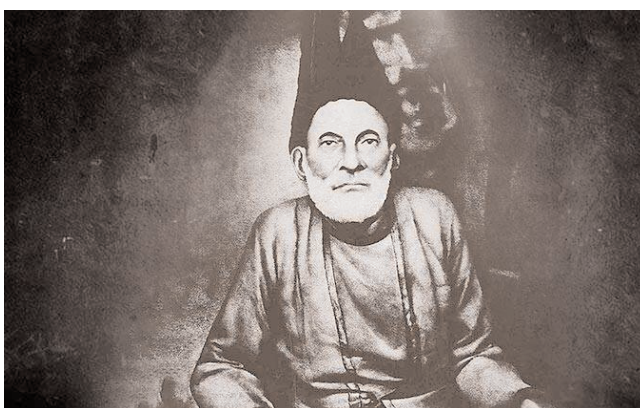
1978 Former Prime Minister of India Indira Gandhi was released from prison. Morarji Desai's government arrested Indira Gandhi on 19 December.

1977 Naveen Patnaik, son of Odisha's prominent leader Biju Patnaik, founded the Biju Janata Dal (BJD).

1666 Sikhism Guru Govind Singh was born.

## 27 DECEMBER

1797 Famous Urdu poet Mirza Ghalib was born in Agra, Uttar Pradesh.



1861 The first public bid for tea was concluded in Calcutta (now Kolkata).

1911 'Jana Gana Mana' was sung for the first time at the Calcutta session of the Indian National Congress.

1975 372 people died in the Chasnala coal mine accident in Dhanbad.

2008 'Taare Zameen Par' won the Best Film Award at the V. Shantaram Awards ceremony.

## 28 DECEMBER

1668 Sambhaji, son of Maratha ruler Shivaji, died due to imprisonment and torture by Mughal ruler Aurangzeb.

1855 The first session of the Indian National Congress took place in Bombay, in which 72 delegates attended.

1896 Bande Mataram was sung for the first time at the Kolkata session of the Indian National Congress.

1928 The speaking film Melody of Love was screened for the first time in Kolkata.

1984 The Congress won the Lok Sabha elections under the leadership of Shri Rajiv Gandhi.

2000 An illustrated postage stamp of Rs 3 in a set of five postage stamps was released by the Indian Postal Department in honor of the gallantry award winners.

2013 The Aam Aadmi Party formed the government in Delhi with the support of the Congress.



1932 India's famous industrialist Dhirubhai Ambani was born.

## 29 DECEMBER

1530 Humayun, son of Mughal emperor Babur succeeded him.

1983 Indian cricketer Sunil Gavaskar scored a maximum of 236 runs in Test cricket against the West Indies.

1984 The Congress won the parliamentary election with the largest majority in the history of independent India. Telugu emerged as the largest opposition party in the country by winning 28 seats in this election.

1985 Sri Lanka granted citizenship to 43,000 Indians.



1917 Ramanand Sagar, the famous Indian film director and producer of the famous serial 'Ramayana', was born.

1977 The world's largest open air theater 'Drive' opened in Bombay (now Mumbai).



# AAPI-QLI Convention 2022 held: Four accomplished Physicians honored



Dr. Vinni Jayam addresses



Dr. Patrick O' Shaughnessy Award (From L- R):Dr. Chuck Lucore-CEO of St. Francis Hospital, Dr. Abhay Malhotra-Immediate Past President, Mrs. Mamta Malhotra, Mrs. O'Shaughnessy, Dr. Patrick O'Shaughnessy- chief Guest, Hon. Bruce Blakeman-Nassau County Executive, Dr. Vinni Jayam-President AAPIQLI, Dr. Jagdish K. Gupta-Chairman Board of Trustees, Dr. Jagat Rawal - Convention Chair and Dr. Raj Jinna-President-Elect.



Dr. Jagdish Gupta addresses



VIP's and Elected Officials



Entertainment by Atma Dance Company

## DECEMBER 18, 2022

**LONG ISLAND, NY (TIP):** AAPIQLI (American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin Queens Long Island) celebrated their 26th Annual Convention at the Crest Hollow Country Club on Dec 17, 2022, at the behest of the President Dr. Vinni Jayam, Convention Chair, Dr. Jagat Rawal and Chairman Board of Trustees, Dr. Jagdish Gupta,

The ceremony was presided by the Chief Guest, Dr. Patrick O'Shaughnessy, CEO of Catholic Health Services. Studded with guests of Honor, Dr. Chuck Lucore, CEO of St. Francis Hospital and Hon. Bruce Blakeman, Nassau County Executive.

The Chair, Dr. Jagat Rawal welcomed the audience of over 550 attendees including Physicians, Entrepreneurs, Community Leaders, Industry Leaders. It was a day when AAPIQLI showcased their activities and accomplishments in the year. The President Dr. Vinni Jayam elaborated them as 'Three Pillars' - Educational, Service and Charitable endeavors. The chairman, Dr. Gupta, highlighted the success of AAPIQLI, being the largest chapter of National AAPI and congratulated all the patron members for its success. The Chief Guest Dr. Patrick O'Shaughnessy and the Guests of Honor Dr. Chuck Lucore, Hon. Bruce Blakeman delivered their appreciative remarks.

### The day was about honoring some of brightest and most accomplished Physicians in the Greater NY area.

#### The Honorees this year were

1. Dr. Richard Shlofmitz, Chairman of Cardiology at St. Francis Hospital and Service Line Director of Cardiology for the Catholic Health.
2. Dr. Meena Bansal, Professor of Medicine at Icahn School of Medicine and Director of Transplant Hepatology Fellowship and Translational Research in the Division of Liver Diseases at Mount Sinai Health center.
3. Dr. Rohan Ramakrishna, Chief of Neurosurgery at New York-

Presbyterian/Brooklyn Methodist Hospital & Weill Cornell Medical College.

4. Dr. Bhavani Srinivasan, the Lifetime Service Awardee

The celebration included a scintillating dance performance by the AATMA Group and music by Dr. Biba Singh. The program was masterfully MCed by Dr. Sunil Mehra.

We would like to appreciate the efforts of the team including - Dr. Jagdish Gupta, Chair BOT, Dr. Abhay Malhotra, Immediate Past President, Dr. Devendra Shrivastava, Co-Chair, Dr. Venu Palla, Co-Chair, Dr. Raj Bhayani, Media Chair etc.

## STATE SENATOR JOHN LIU HAS A MESSAGE FOR NEW YORKERS



Senator John Liu

As 2022 draws to a close, I wanted to take a moment to wish you and your family a happy and healthy New Year and joyous holiday season!

This past year saw New Yorkers finally begin to get back on track after two years of pandemic difficulties. Our children are now back in school and more and more workers are heading back to work.

In 2022, boundaries of congressional and state senate districts changed significantly. Beginning 2023, I will represent Senate District 16 where my house of 30 years is now located. I am happy and excited to return to the district I grew up and lived in almost my entire life, and represented in the City Council, which includes Flushing, Bayside, Fresh Meadows, Auburndale, and Oakland Gardens.

As we enter 2023, we look forward to a year of continued recovery, and we look to chart a path forward so that we emerge a stronger community and a better New York for all. We will continue to remain vigilant and mindful of our responsibilities as New Yorkers and citizens of the world. As your New York State legislator, and the Chair of the Committee on NYC Education, I will continue to push for public policies that improve the quality of our public education system, and commit to supporting programs and services that uplift our diverse communities in the New Year and beyond.

*Wishing you and your loved ones all the best in 2023!!*



# US SENATOR CORY BOOKER ATTENDS 'HIP HOP NUTCRACKER' AT NJPAC

BY MABEL PAIS



(back row, center) US Senator Cory Booker and HH Nutcracker creative team Photo / Courtesy NJPAC

## Tchaikovsky's Score, Hip Hop Dance, NYC Style

'The Hip Hop Nutcracker,' Tchaikovsky's 130-year-old ballet reimaged as a holiday dance spectacle,

brought the show back home to New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) Newark on Saturday, December 17 while celebrating the show's 10th season. The creative team, cast and crew along with hip hop pioneer and MC, Kurtis Blow,

met United States senator from New Jersey Cory Booker.

Grab your family and friends and let the dynamic performers of 'The Hip Hop Nutcracker' take you on a journey that celebrates love, community and the magic of the holiday season!

## The Hip Hop Nutcracker

A holiday mash-up for the whole family, 'The Hip Hop Nutcracker' is celebrating its 10th anniversary this season as it continues another spectacular tour. Directed and choreographed by Jennifer Weber, this contemporary dance spectacle is a re-mixed and re-imagined version of the classic, smashing hip hop dance and Tchaikovsky's timeless music together into a heart-stirring and inspirational holiday event. 'The Hip Hop Nutcracker' is brought to life by a powerhouse cast of a dozen all-star dancers, a DJ, a violinist, and MC Kurtis Blow, one of hip hop's founding fathers, who opens the show

with a short set.

And to add to the excitement - inspired by the live stage show - the Original Special 'The Hip Hop Nutcracker' from Disney Branded Television will stream this holiday season, only on Disney+.

Just like the original, in 'The Hip Hop Nutcracker,' Maria-Clara and the Nutcracker Prince go on a dream adventure battling a gang of mice, visiting the land of sweets and learning the lessons of the holiday season. Innovative digital graffiti and visuals transform the landscape of E.T.A. Hoffmann's beloved story from traditional 19th Century Germany to the vibrant, diverse sights and sounds of contemporary New York City.

For a sneak peek into the spectacular performance, visit [youtu.be/FLiqBhlfmCA](https://youtu.be/FLiqBhlfmCA)

For the remaining HIP HOP NUTCRACKER 2022 TOUR SIZZLE dates, visit [hiphopnutcracker.com](https://hiphopnutcracker.com)

# GRAMMY WINNER PIANIST DANIIL TRIFONOV BRINGS HIS TALENT TO NJS



Daniil Trifonov Photo / NJS

BY MABEL PAIS

Grammy Award-winning pianist Daniil Trifonov brings his technique, style, poetry and power to Brahms' Piano Concerto No. 2 in January 6-8 concerts with the New Jersey Symphony, led by Music Director Xian Zhang.

The program features two works by Richard Strauss scored for large orchestra: the swashbuckling tone poem 'Don Juan,' written when Strauss was just 25, and the Suite from the composer's 1911 opera 'Der Rosenkavalier,' a sly take on the classic love triangle that ranges from poignant to raucously funny. 'Don Juan' is based on Friedrich Lenau's poetic drama depicting the hero as noble and dashing, not the villainous title character of da Ponte and Mozart's 'Don Giovanni.' The Suite to 'Der Rosenkavalier' is memorable for the unforgettable waltzes, stitched together with other music from the opera.

## PROGRAM

### DANIIL TRIFONOV PERFORMS BRAHMS

Friday, January 6, 8 pm at Richardson Auditorium, Princeton

Saturday, January 7, 8 pm at New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC),

Newark

Sunday, January 8, 3 pm at Mayo Performing Arts Center (MPAC), Morristown

Xian Zhang conductor  
Daniil Trifonov piano  
New Jersey Symphony

## BRAHMS PIANO CONCERTO NO. 2 IN B-FLAT MAJOR

Strauss 'Don Juan,' Op. 20  
Strauss Suite from 'Der Rosenkavalier,' Op. 59

Classical Conversation  
Friday, January 6, 7 pm and Saturday, January 7 at 7 pm

Before the performance, learn more about the music from New Jersey Symphony musicians, guest artists and other engaging insiders.

More information is available at [njsymphony.org/trifonov](https://njsymphony.org/trifonov) or via email at [information@njsymphony.org](mailto:information@njsymphony.org).

## HEALTH SAFETY PROTOCOLS

All New Jersey Symphony performances follow safety measures in partnership with the venues and based on the guidance provided by the CDC and the State of New Jersey.

## TICKETS

For more Information on NJS and Tickets, visit [njsymphony.org](https://njsymphony.org) or call 1.800.ALLEGRO (255.3476).

## DANIIL TRIFONOV

Daniil Trifonov has been described as "the most astounding pianist of our age" - The Times of London.

He was Musical America's 2019 Artist of

the Year, won a Grammy Award in 2018 for his 'Transcendental' recording featuring Liszt's complete concert Études, and received Opus Klassik's 2021 Instrumentalist of the Year/Piano award for 'Silver Age,' a 2020 album of music by Scriabin, Prokofiev and Stravinsky. Last year he released 'Bach: The Art of Life,' featuring 'The Art of Fugue' with his own completion of the final contrapunctus, and toured a 2021-22 recital program centered on 'The Art of Fugue in Europe,' and a second program in the U.S. of Prokofiev, Szymanowski, Debussy and Brahms. Trifonov received a 2021 Grammy nomination for his 2019 recording 'Destination Rachmaninov: Arrival.'

Trifonov was 2021-22 artist in residence at the New Jersey Symphony in the 2021-22 season, when his performances with the orchestra included Beethoven's Second Piano Concerto and a brand-new concerto written for him by Mason Bates. To learn more about Daniil Trifonov, visit [daniiltrifonov.com](https://daniiltrifonov.com).

## THE NEW JERSEY SYMPHONY

NJS, the Emmy and Grammy Award-winning New Jersey Symphony, celebrating its Centennial Season in 2022-23, is redefining what it means to be a nationally leading, relevant orchestra in the 21st century. NJS is renewing its deeply rooted commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion by championing new, and often local, artists; engaging audiences for whom the inspiring depth and breadth of classical music will be new; and incorporating the broadest possible representation in all aspects of

the organization - all to better reflect and serve its vibrant communities.

Since 2021, Music Director Xian Zhang has worked together with composer, violinist, educator and social-justice advocate Daniel Bernard Roumain, the orchestra's resident artistic catalyst, to offer programming that connects with diverse communities in Newark and throughout New Jersey.

Internationally renowned Chinese-American conductor Xian Zhang began her tenure as the New Jersey Symphony's current Music Director in 2016. Since her arrival at the New Jersey Symphony, Zhang has revitalized programming with an industry-leading commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion in mainstage concerts.

The centennial season opened in October with concerts featuring Rachmaninoff's Third Piano Concerto with soloist Yefim Bronfman; Jessie Montgomery's 'Banner,' Nimbus Dance performing original choreography to Copland's 'Appalachian Spring' Suite; Strauss' 'Burleske' for Piano and Orchestra with soloist Michelle Cann; Brahms' Fourth Symphony; and Dorothy Chang's 'Northern Star.' The centennial season will conclude in June 2023 with Zhang leading the orchestra and violinist Joshua Bell in Bruch's Violin Concerto No. 1, Stravinsky's 'Rite of Spring' and a commissioned world premiere by Daniel Bernard Roumain.

Connect with the New Jersey Symphony

Website: [njsymphony.org](https://njsymphony.org)  
@NJSymphony on Facebook,  
Instagram, Twitter and TikTok

@NewJerseySymphony on YouTube  
Email: [information@njsymphony.org](mailto:information@njsymphony.org)

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



# ANIMATION SHOW OF SHOWS RETURNS TO THE QUAD

After a two-year hiatus, the ANIMATION SHOW OF SHOWS returns to the Quad Cinema in New York City, December 30. This 22nd edition comprises 10 films-nine recent, along with one restored classic-which deal with both the anxieties and hopes of a world faced with a seemingly endless series of existential crises. All are inventive, their tone ranges from the whimsical to the profound; their techniques, from stop-motion to hand-drawn to computer-aided. The nine new films come from Europe, Asia, and North America. The program culminates with a striking restored 4K digital remaster by the Academy Film Archive of Frederic Back's classic 1987 Oscar-winner, "The Man Who Planted Trees."

## BEYOND NOH

3m 55s, 1.78, color, Stop Motion Animation, No dialogue, US & Japan, 2020

Set to a driving percussive score, "Beyond Noh" rhythmically shows us 3475 masks in under four minutes, creating a constantly mutating, almost dancing image -- moving from Japanese Noh masks to a variety of tribal ritual masks and on to every possible Halloween mask, from Guy Fawkes to Marvel Comics to the Simpsons.

**World Premiere: Tribeca Film Festival, New York City 2020**

## EMPTY PLACES

8m49s, 1.78, color, 3D computer animation, No dialogue, France, 2020

Geoffroy de Crécy presents a portrait of a literally dehumanized world. A record player repeatedly plays Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata. Elevator doors open and close. A luggage carousel goes round and round, a machine spits out tennis balls, a train mindlessly continues its route. But there is no one to pick up the bags, to hit the balls, to ride the train. It is as though everyone in the world has suddenly vanished without explanation, leaving our objects to futilely serve a non-existent populace. Director Geoffroy de Crécy describes his film as "an ode to the melancholy of machines," and the melancholy is palpable.

**First Public Performance: Annecy International Animation Festival, 2020**

## BESEDER (GOOD AND BETTER)

4m23s, Aspect Ratio, 1.77, color, 2D hand drawn animation, Hebrew (subtitled English)

"So hard to think it's gonna be good and better. It's too complicated. So easy to think it's gonna be bad and worse." So goes Tova Gertner's graceful, melancholy waltz. Director Gil Alkabetz presents us with a series of surreal vignettes, invoking famous works by (among others) Picasso, Dali, Magritte, Duchamp, and Saul Steinberg. Many involve distortions of the human form, in the manner of Bill Plympton, the result is unsettling (even when funny), bemoaning the human tendency toward pessimism.

**First Public Performance: Animix Festival, Israel 2021**

## ZOIZOGLYPHE

7m44s, minimal color, 2D hand drawn animation, France, 2021

This wildly inventive short is the work of Jeanne Apergis, who was born in 2000. A bunch of little bird-like figures pop up on screen. They organize themselves into phalanxes; one outlier joins them, setting off a chain reaction that drives them across the screen. Their movements generate the soundtrack. As they cascade, there is the illusion of watching an optical

representation of the sound.

**First Public Performance: Annecy International Animation Festival 2021**

## RAIN (DESZCZ)

5m13s, 1.78, color, 2D Hand Drawn Animation, no dialogue, Poland, 2020

A man stands on the roof of an impossibly tall skyscraper, having a smoke. Someone playfully sneaks up behind him, so startling him that he falls off the roof. This humans-as-lemmings scenario can be read any number of ways, all of them damning views of human nature.

**First public performance: Annecy International Animation Festival 2019**



Animation Show of Shows

Photo / Fusion Entertainment

## AVERAGE HAPPINESS

7m03s, 1.78, color, 2D Hand Drawn Animation, No dialogue, Switzerland, 2019

A statistics professor is delivering a very dry lecture on "Introductory Econometrics for Finance 1 & 7," using "average happiness" as an example. It's so dry that the graphs he's explaining seem to get bored. Working from found footage, director Maja Gehrig alternately connects and disconnects the images from the real-world aspects they are meant to convey. "I took them out of their context to give a new context in my film." Joy Frempong's music and Peter Bräker's sound-design make the diagram-world real and buoyantly express the mood of the diagrams.

**First Public Presentation: DOK Leipzig, Germany 2019**

## AURORA

5m15s, 1.77, color, 2D hand drawn animation, US, 2020.

Director Jo Meuris's "Aurora" has the simplest of stories: Jojo is a pig-tailed little girl who falls in love with a horse named Aurora. When Aurora moves

away, Jojo's heart is broken. But, after a while, another horse comes into her life, and, while he's definitely not Aurora, the girl comes to love him, and her heart begins to heal. The result is a charming, bittersweet expression of love lost, regained, and replicated -- with a nod to the ways in which our lost loves live on in our memories and dreams.

**First Public Screening: University Video and Film Association Conference July 2020**

## YES-PEOPLE (JÁ FÓLKID)

8m35s, 1.77, color, 3D computer graphics animation, Iceland, 2019

In this Oscar-nominated short, Gisli Darri Halldórsson presents a day in the life of the residents of an apartment building, as they wordlessly go about their business... or almost wordlessly: the one word we hear repeatedly is "Ja" (yes).

As is often the case in real life, these neighbors barely interact with anyone other than their own families. But the thin walls create a sort of vague community through sound. Music, TV, and lovemaking are all loud enough to breach the solitude of apartment living.

**First public screening: Minimalen Short Film Festival Norway, 2020**

## TIES

7m36s, 1.85, color, Stop Motion replacement animation, Germany / Russia 2019

As a young woman leaves for college, a thread from her skirt gets caught on her old swing. When she walks to the waiting cab, her skirt doesn't unravel, but the swing does. All the lines that compose the swing pull away until it collapses. Only the actions of her mom are able to break the thread and stop this wholesale destruction. Mom is even able to reconstruct her husband out of the jumble of thread. Russian animator Dina Velikovskaya's film converts the age-old notion of "family ties" into a graphic reality. The girl's departure is a metaphor for "empty nest" syndrome. It unravels the family unit, which then has to find the strength to reformulate their lives in her absence.

**First public performance: DOK Leipzig, Germany, September 2019**

## THE MAN WHO PLANTED TREES

30m8s, 1.33, color, 2D Hand drawn, Canada, 1987

This year's ANIMATION SHOW OF SHOWS ends with Frederic Back's 1987 classic, "The Man Who Planted Trees," presented in a striking restored 4K digital remaster by the Academy Film Archive and color corrected for ANIMATION SHOW OF SHOWS at Picture Shop Post by Sr. Colorist Kris Santa Cruz. The Oscar-winning film, narrated by Christopher Plummer, tells the story of a young man's encounter with an isolated shepherd, Elzéard Bouffier, who is determined to renew his barren landscape by planting thousands of trees. Based on a possibly autobiographical 1953 fable by Jean Giono, it's a beautifully hand-drawn epic -- an environmental plea ahead of its time. As the shepherd's efforts bear fruit, the film's palette gradually moves from dusty browns to a range of colors, evoking memories of the great impressionist painters.

**First public performance: Landmark Theater, Los Angeles, U.S.A. 1988**

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





## Tabu reveals her character in Kuttey was initially written for a male actor

The trailer of Vishal Bharadwaj's son, Aasmaan's debut directorial, Kuttey, is out. Starring Naseeruddin Shah, Tabu, Arjun Kapoor, Konkona Sen Sharma, Kumud Mishra, Radhika Madan and Shardul Bhardwaj, the film will be hitting theatres on January 13, 2023. Now, during the trailer launch event, Tabu revealed that her character in the film was initially written for a male actor. She also opened up about the nuances of her character. During the trailer release event of Kuttey, Tabu was asked about how different it was working with Aasmaan, since she has already collaborated with Vishal Bharadwaj several times. She revealed, "Aasmaan is a different kind of filmmaker and there is no comparison with Vishal Bharadwaj's films. Of course, thought and aesthetics are similar, but his cinema is different. Actually, this character was written for a male actor, but it was changed for me."

# SRK only Indian to feature on British magazine's list of 50 greatest actors of all time

Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan has become the only Indian to be named in an international list of 50 greatest actors of all time by a prominent British magazine.

The 57-year-old actor is included in Empire magazine's list which also recognises Hollywood giants like Denzel Washington, Tom Hanks, Anthony Marlon Brando, Meryl Streep, Jack Nicholson and many others.

In the accompanying short profile, the magazine said Khan has a career that has now spanned four decades of "near unbroken hits, and a fanbase of pretty much billions".

"You don't do that without outrageous amounts of charisma and absolute mastery of your craft. Comfortable in almost every genre going, there's pretty much nothing he can't do," it added.

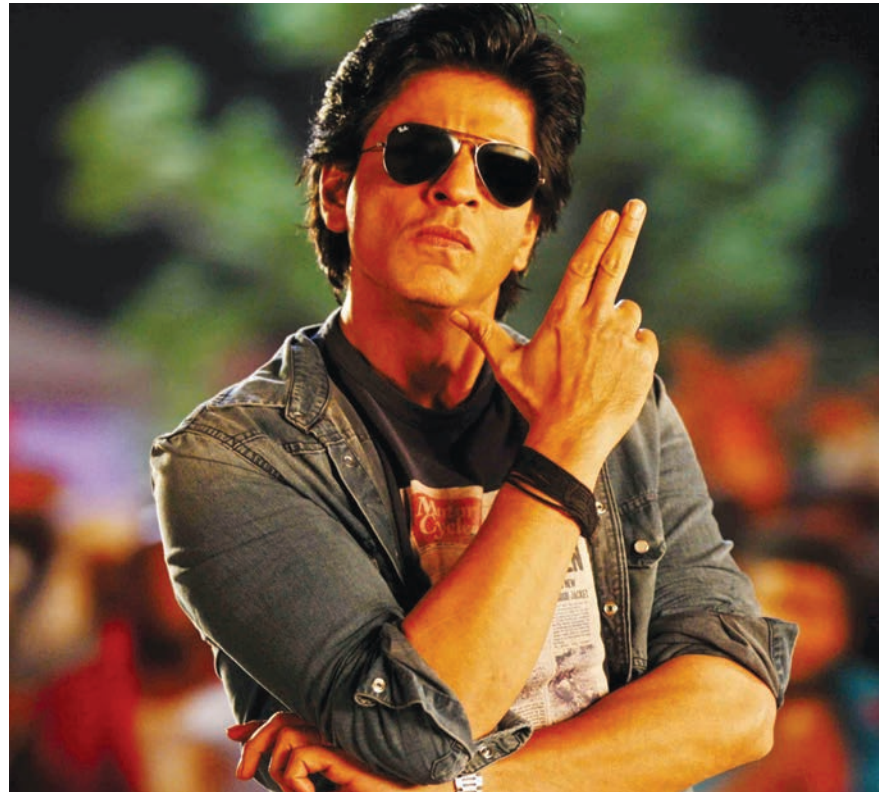
From his extensive filmography, the publication highlighted Khan's notable characters from four movies -- Sanjay Leela Bhansali-directed "Devdas", Karan Johar's "My Name Is Khan" and "Kuch Kuch Hota Hai", and "Swades", directed by Ashutosh Gowariker.

His dialogue from the 2012 movie "Jab Tak Hai Jaan" -- "Zindagi toh har roz jaan leti hai... Bomb toh sirf ek baar lega" (Every day life kills us a little. A bomb will kill you only once) -- has been recognised as the "iconic line" of his career.

"Jab Tak Hai Jaan" was filmmaker Yash Chopra's swansong and featured Khan as an Indian Army Major named Samar Anand. The film also starred Katrina Kaif and Anushka Sharma.

The actor will be next seen in the actioner "Pathaan", set to be released worldwide on January 25, 2023. Directed by Siddharth Anand, the movie also stars John Abraham and Deepika Padukone.

Khan will also star in two more movies -- action-entertainer "Jawan" with filmmaker Atlee and the Rajkumar Hirani-directed "Dunki".



## Gauahar Khan stuns in green as she walks the red carpet a day after announcing pregnancy

Day after announcing her pregnancy, actor Gauahar Khan made a stunning appearance at the Filmfare OTT Awards in Mumbai on Wednesday, December 21. She arrived for the event in a blazer-skirt gown. Her film Sorry Bhaisaab won the award in the Short Film (Fiction) category.

A paparazzo video on Instagram shows her taking some help in climbing the stairs in the elaborate gown. She had her hair tied in a ponytail and completed the look with matching emerald jewellery. Sharing a picture with the directors of Sorry Bhaisaab, Gauahar wrote on Instagram, "The host, and the Winners!!!! yayyyy we won for best short film, fiction at the #filmfareottawards2022! #sorrybhaisaab ko Thank you! Congratulations to our amazing directors @sumit.ghildiyal @sumadhikary and my guptaji @mrfilmistaani @arreindia @amazonminitv thank you @filmfare and the jury. #grateful #happy #winners."

Sorry Bhaisaab stars Gauahar and Sharib Hashmi as a married couple with a daughter. It is written and directed by Suman Adhikary Sumit Ghildiyal.

Gauahar and husband Zaid Darbar announced the pregnancy with an animated reel on social media. It was captioned, "One became two when Z met G. And now the adventure continues as we soon become three. In Sha Allah seeking all your prayers and blessings in this beautiful journey."

Gauahar and Zaid tied the knot in a lavish wedding ceremony in December 2020. Zaid is the son of veteran music composer Ismail Darbar. The latter recently told ETimes, "I am extremely happy that Gauahar and Zaid are going to become parents and I will be a grandfather for the first time. Main dada banne wala hoon (I'm going to be a grandfather) and this will be the most joyous occasion in our lives. I pray for a healthy baby... aur uska naseeb bulund ho (and his fate be strong)."



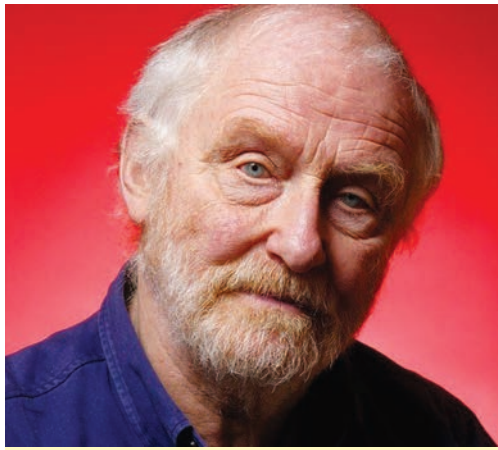
## Ranveer Singh's Cirkus releasing this Christmas

Ranveer Singh, Pooja Hegde, and Jacqueline Fernandez starrer comedy drama Cirkus, which is all set to hit theatres on December 23rd. The movie is directed by Rohit Shetty. In the comedy-drama, the Bajirao Mastani actor will appear in a completely distinct avatar.

According to previous reports, the film was supposed to release in the first week of December. Later, the makers changed their decision. Other than Ranveer, Pooja, and Jackie, the film stars Siddhartha Jadhav, Johnny Lever, Sanjay Mishra, Vrajesh Hirjee, Vijay Patkar, Sulbha Arya, Mukesh Tiwari, Anil Charanjeett, Ashwini Kalsekar, and Murli Sharma in important roles. Deepika Padukone is playing a cameo role in the film, and her song, Current Laga Re with hubby Ranveer, already went viral.

According to reports, the movie is based on the 1982 classic Angoor, starring Sanjeev Kumar and Deven Verma. This will be the first time Ranveer has played double roles. After Simmba and Sooryavanshi, the movie is Ranveer and Rohit's third collaboration.





## Flash Gordon director Mike Hodges passes away at 90

British director Mike Hodges, known for films like "Flash Gordon" and "Croupier", has died. He was 90. His death was confirmed to NBC News by producer and "I'll Sleep When I'm Dead" collaborator Mike Kaplan, reports 'People' magazine.

According to Kaplan, Mike Hodges died at his home in Dorset, England, due to heart failure. Hodges' long standing career dates back to the 1950s. Before getting a start in films, he spent two years in mandatory national service on a royal navy minesweeper, which he credits as the inspiration for his first film, "Get Carter".

In a letter published by The Guardian in May, quoted by 'People', he said: "For two years, my middle-class eyes were forced to witness horrendous poverty and deprivation that I was previously unaware of. I went into the navy as a newly qualified chartered accountant and complacent young Tory, and came out an angry, radical young man."

# Kate Winslet details 'abuse' she got from 'Titanic' fans who called her 'too fat'

Actress Kate Winslet detailed horrifying body shaming from "borderline abusive" fans following the release of the iconic Hollywood-hit "Titanic".

The actress, 47, slammed the "bullying" she received from some viewers who said she was "too fat" while she battled feeling "deeply insecure", reports mirror.co.uk.

Winslet starred alongside Leonardo DiCaprio in James Cameron's 1997 movie based on and named after RMS Titanic, the cruise ship which tragically sunk after hitting an iceberg in 1912.

In one of the final scenes, she and Leo's character Jack are seen in the water as her character Rose climbs onto floating debris after the boat sank.

Speaking of the comments made from movie buffs about that pivotal scene in a recent episode of the Happy Sad Confused podcast, she said: "Apparently I was too fat."

"Why were they so mean to me? They were so mean. I wasn't even f\*\*\*\*\*g fat," she explained.

She explained how she wishes she had replied to the horrible comments at the time, adding: "I would have responded. I would have said, 'Don't you dare treat me like this. I'm a young woman, my body is changing, I'm figuring it out, I'm deeply insecure, I'm terrified, don't make this any harder than it already is'."

"That's bullying, you know, and actually borderline abusive, I would say."

Winslet has openly discussed body shaming in the past as she revealed she was cruelly told to settle for "fat girl" roles during her time at acting school.

She said: "It can be extremely negative. People are subject to scrutiny that is more than a young, vulnerable person can cope with. But, in the film industry, it is really changing. When I was younger my agent would get calls saying, 'How's her weight?' I kid you not. So it's heartwarming that this has started to change."

Her comments come after it was emerged that her co-star Leonardo narrowly avoided losing his iconic role in Titanic after a row on-set with the film's director James Cameron.

Cameron detailed threatening to send the then 20-



something actor packing after he refused to take part in a vital part of production.

He had instructed DiCaprio to take part in a chemistry screen test alongside Winslet.

"He didn't know he was going to test," Cameron said.

"He came in, he thought it was another meeting to meet Kate." Source: IANS

## Jenna Ortega reveals why her character cry once in 'Wednesday'

Actress Jenna Ortega has shared as to why her character Wednesday Addams only cried once in the highly streamed Netflix series 'Wednesday'.

It only happened once in all of season one, after Ortega's Wednesday rushed Thing to be saved by Uncle Fester after the disembodied hand was found stabbed to Wednesday's Nevermore Academy dorm room wall, reports eonline.com.

"It's also a really important moment for Wednesday," Ortega said on 'Still Watching Netflix' December 20. "I think it's the only time we really see her cry."

Wednesday is seen wiping away tears after Fester manages to magically save Thing's life. As she explained, seeing Wednesday get emotional elevated the scene to another, very impactful level.

"I'm glad it was over him, though," Ortega said about her tears.

"I don't think it would have made sense over anything else."

Joy Sunday, who plays fellow Nevermore Academy student Bianca Barclay, echoed a similar sentiment about the scene, saying, "This is the first time you get to see Wednesday really being frantic, so you could tell she really cares about Thing, which is sweet."



## Demi Moore celebrates entering 'kooky, unhinged grandma era'

Hollywood actress Demi Moore will soon be a grandmother. The 'Charlie's Angels' actress' daughter, Rumer Willis, is expecting her first baby with boyfriend Derek Richard Thomas, the couple revealed in a joint Instagram post.

Already playing the role of proud grandmother, Moore shared their announcement post on her own Instagram, reports 'People' magazine. "Entering my hot kooky unhinged grandma era," Moore (60), wrote alongside the couple's photos.

"So happy for you my love!" she later added in the comments. Emma Heming Willis, who is married to Rumer's father Bruce Willis, also shared her excitement for the mom-to-be. "Baby news is happy news!!! Congratulations @rumerwillis and @derekrichardthomas We are elated over here," Demi Moore wrote on Instagram. According to 'People', Rumer and Thomas made the special announcement with a carousel of bump photos. In the first snap, the father-to-be wrapped his hand around her growing belly and gave it a sweet kiss while Rumer smiled.



She also showed off her pregnant silhouette as she stood near a window in another image. A photo that featured a very excited Thomas rounded out the set of pictures.

The 'What Lies Ahead' actress and her musician/producer beau have been romantically linked since earlier this year. The baby will be the first grandchild for Rumer's parents- Bruce (67) and Demi Moore.



## BANK OF ENGLAND UNVEILS DESIGN OF BANKNOTES FEATURING KING CHARLES

DECEMBER 20

**LONDON (TIP):** The Bank of England on December 20 unveiled the design of banknotes featuring King Charles III.

In a statement, the central bank said the portrait of the King will appear on existing designs of all four polymer banknotes (5, 10, 20 and 50 pounds), with no other changes to the existing designs. The King's image will appear on the front of the banknotes, as well as in cameo in the see-through security window.

The new notes are expected to enter circulation by mid-2024.

All polymer banknotes carrying a portrait of the late Queen Elizabeth II remain legal tender, and the public can continue to use these as normal, the statement said. "In line with guidance from the Royal Household, to minimise the environmental and financial impact of this change, new notes will only be printed to replace worn banknotes and to meet any overall increase in demand for banknotes.

"Notes featuring Queen Elizabeth II and King Charles III will therefore co-circulate," it added. Speaking ahead of the release, Bank of England Governor Andrew Bailey said: "I am very proud that the Bank is releasing the design of our new banknotes which will carry a portrait of King Charles III. This is a significant moment, as the King is only the second monarch to feature on our banknotes. People will be able to use these new notes as they start to enter circulation in 2024." (IANS)

## Russian President Putin wants to end war in Ukraine, says 'sooner, the better'

DECEMBER 23

**MOSCOW (TIP):** Russian President Vladimir Putin on December 22 said Russia was aiming for a speedy end to the conflict in Ukraine and that fighting should end as soon as possible, reported The Sydney Morning Herald (SMH).

"Our goal is... to end this conflict. We are striving for this and will continue to strive... so we will seek to make sure that it all ends, and the sooner, the better," Putin told reporters.

Putin's comments were met with scepticism by Ukraine and its allies.

White House spokesman John Kirby said Putin had "shown absolutely zero indication that he's willing to negotiate", an end to the war that began with Russia's invasion of Ukraine on February 24, reported SMH.

"Quite the contrary," Kirby told reporters during an online briefing, adding, "Everything he (Putin) is doing on the ground and in the air bespeaks a man who wants to continue to visit violence upon the Ukrainian people (and) escalate the war." Meanwhile, the Russian President said a speedy end to the conflict in Ukraine would inevitably involve a diplomatic solution.

Russia has persistently said it is open to negotiations. Still, Ukraine and its allies suspect it as Moscow's ploy to buy time after a series of Russian defeats and retreats, reported SMH.

"I have said many times: the intensification of hostilities leads to unjustified losses," Putin told reporters.

"All armed conflicts end one way or another with some negotiations on the



diplomatic track," he said, adding, "Sooner or later, any parties in a state of conflict sit down and make an agreement. The sooner this realisation comes to those who oppose us, the better. We have never given up on this." Meanwhile, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy returned to Ukraine buoyed by the support shown by President Joe Biden on his trip to Washington, his first foreign journey since Russia invaded its neighbour.

Notably, US Congress moved closer on Thursday to approve an additional USD 44.9 billion in the emergency military and economic assistance, part of a wider US government spending bill. That is on top of some USD 50 billion already sent to

Ukraine this year, reported SMH.

The Biden administration announced another USD 1.85 billion in military aid for Ukraine, including the Patriot system.

Zelenskyy told the Congress that US aid to his country was an investment in democracy and Patriot system was an important step in creating an air shield.

However, Putin played down the significance of the Patriot air defence system. He said it was 'quite old' and did not work like Russia's S-300 system. "An antidote will always be found," he said, boasting Russia would 'crack' the Patriots. "So those who do it are doing it in vain. It's just prolonging the conflict, that's all," he said. (ANI)

## China hospital data absent from WHO's latest covid reports, raising concern

DECEMBER 23

**GENEVA/BEIJING (TIP):** The World Health Organization has received no data from China on new Covid hospitalisations since Beijing lifted its zero-Covid policy, prompting some health experts to question whether it might be hiding information on the extent of its outbreak.

However, the WHO has said gaps in data might be due to Chinese authorities simply struggling to tally cases.

WHO weekly reports showed rising hospitalisations for Covid-19 in China running up to Beijing's December 7 decision to ease restrictions on movement that were meant to stamp out any transmission of the virus but which prompted extraordinary public protests and hobbled the world's second largest economy.

They peaked at 28,859 through to December 4, according to a WHO graph, the highest reported figure in China since the Covid-19 first emerged three



years ago, but figures have been absent in the last two reports.

WHO spokesperson Margaret Harris said to direct questions about data reporting to the country concerned. China's diplomatic mission in Geneva did not respond to Reuters questions.

China has been routinely accused of downplaying its Covid outbreak and some experts say its narrow criteria for identifying deaths will underestimate the true toll. Some estimates predict large numbers of deaths ahead and China has been racing to bolster its

health system. Lawrence Gostin, a law professor at Georgetown University who follows the WHO closely, called the missing data "highly suspicious".

"What it tells me is that China is hiding data that are vital for understanding the full impact of its decision to end its zero-Covid strategy," he told Reuters.

Adam Kamradt-Scott, professor of Global Public Health at the European University Institute, said countries frequently tried to hide the extent of disease outbreaks.

"It's hard to criticise China when there's other countries that haven't reported Covid cases (at all)," he said.

WHO emergencies chief Mike Ryan has pointed to possible capacity issues. "I wouldn't like to say that China is actively not telling us what's going on. I think they're behind the curve," he said.

Global rules on disease outbreaks require countries to communicate information on ongoing outbreaks but they cannot be enforced. Reuters



# RUSSIA AND CHINA HOLD JOINT NAVAL DRILLS

DECEMBER 22

**MOSCOW (TIP):** Russian and Chinese warships on December 22 practised joint action in the East China Sea, continuing a series of drills that reflect a growing defence cooperation between the two countries.

The Russian Defence Ministry said the Varyag missile cruiser, the Marshal Shaposhnikov destroyer and two corvettes of Russia's Pacific Fleet were taking part in the drills that began on Wednesday.

China has deployed two destroyers, a diesel submarine and several others ships for the exercise.

Russian and Chinese aircraft were also taking part in the week-long maneuvers that will involve firing exercises and anti-submarine drills, according to the ministry.

"The main goal of the drills is to strengthen naval cooperation between the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China and to maintain peace and stability in the Asia Pacific region," the ministry said.

Military ties between Moscow and Beijing has grown stronger since Russian President Vladimir Putin sent his troops into Ukraine on February 24.



China, which has declared a "no limits" friendship with Russia, has pointedly refused to criticise Moscow's actions, blaming the US and NATO for provoking the Kremlin, and has blasted the punishing sanctions imposed on Russia.

Russia, in turn, has strongly backed China amid the tensions with the US over Taiwan.

In November, Tu-95 bombers of the Russian air force and Chinese H-6K

bombers flew joint patrols over the Sea of Japan and the East China Sea.

As part of the drills, the Russian bombers landed in China for the first time, and the Chinese bombers flew to an air base in Russia.

In September, China sent more than 2,000 troops along with more than 300 military vehicles, 21 combat aircraft and three warships to take part in a sweeping joint exercise with Russia. AP

## 8 teen girls charged with murder after man fatally stabbed in Toronto

DECEMBER 21

**TORONTO (TIP):** Eight teenage girls, who apparently met on social media, have been charged with second-degree murder in the stabbing death of a 59-year-old man in Toronto, police said December 21.

Investigators allege that the girls assaulted and stabbed the man in the city's downtown core early Sunday morning. Toronto Police said medics took the man to a hospital, where he died.

According to police, the eight girls were arrested near where the attack happened. Three of the girls are 13 years old, three are 14 and two are 16.

Detective Sgt. Terry Browne of the Toronto Police Service Homicide Squad said investigators think the girls were trying to take a bottle of alcohol from the man.

"I've been in policing for almost 35 years and you think you've seen it all," Browne said in an interview with The Associated Press. "Anyone who isn't shocked with hearing something like this has clearly just thrown in the towel and just said that anything is possible in this world. Eight young girls and most under the age of 16. If this isn't alarming and shocking to everyone, then we're all in trouble quite frankly." Browne said the same girls got into an altercation earlier in the night in the area. He declined to release more details about



that.

"They met each other through social media. They come from varying parts of the city," Browne said. "We don't know how or why they met on that evening and why the destination was downtown Toronto. We don't know how long they were acquainted with each other. I wouldn't describe them as a gang at this point." Browne said they took part in a "swarming." He declined to say if they videotaped it. He said they will look to see if there are similar attacks online.

"Maybe these were eight young women that wanted to make a name for themselves and see if they could become socially famous," he said.

Police believe they all acted in concert. "They are all equally culpable," he said. "There is no doubt in our minds that they were all working as a singular entity in a swarming mob mentality when they chose to attack this man." He said a number of weapons were seized,

but he declined to say what kind. He also said three of the girls had prior encounters with the police.

"It's bizarre that they would all have hooked up together and found their way to downtown Toronto. Their primary residences are all over the place," he said.

Browne said police spoke to the parents of the teens.

"I can tell you it was a shock to find out that their children were involved in an event like this," he said.

Canadian authorities can't release the girls' names by law because they're underage.

They have made their first court appearance and remain in custody. The next court appearance is December 29.

Browne said the victim started living in Toronto's shelter system in September. He said they haven't been able to reach certain family members and until they do they won't release his name.

"He does have a very supportive family in the area so I wouldn't necessarily call him homeless. Maybe just recently on some hard luck," he said.

Browne said they are asking anyone who saw the group of teens that night to contact police.

He said 20 or 30 years ago in Toronto young teen boys would swarm others and try to steal Dr. Martens boots or Air Jordan shoes for a time but said that faded away. (AP)

## CHINA SENDS 39 WARPLANES, 3 SHIPS TOWARDS TAIWAN

DECEMBER 22

**TAIPEI (TIP):** China's military sent 39 planes and three ships toward Taiwan in a 24-hour display of force directed at the island, Taiwan's defence ministry said on December 22. China's military harassment of self-ruled Taiwan, which it claims is its own territory, has intensified in recent years, and the Communist Party's People's Liberation Army has sent planes or ships toward the island on a near-daily basis.

Between 6 am on Wednesday and 6 am on Thursday, 30 of the Chinese planes crossed the median of the Taiwan Strait, an unofficial boundary once tacitly accepted by both sides, according to Taiwan's Ministry of National Defence.

Taiwan scrambled combat jets to warn away 39 Chinese aircraft that entered its southeastern air defence zone, the island's defence ministry said on Thursday. Taiwan has complained of repeated missions by the Chinese air force over the last two years, often in southern areas of its air defence identification zone, or ADIZ.

Thursday's incursion included 21 fighters and four H-6 bombers, as well as early warning, antisubmarine and aerial refuelling aircraft, Taiwan's defence ministry said in a report detailing Chinese activities in its ADIZ over the last 24 hours. Among the planes were 21 J-16 fighter jets, 4 H-6 bombers and two early-warning aircraft.

Taiwan said it monitored the Chinese moves through its land-based missile systems, as well as on its own navy vessels. China's military held large military exercises in August in response to US House speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan.

Beijing views visits from foreign governments to the island as de facto recognition of the island as independent and a challenge to China's claim of sovereignty. — AP

## NETANYAHU GOVT ALL SET FOR SWEARING-IN BY JAN 2

DECEMBER 22

**JERUSALEM (TIP):** Prime Minister-designate Benjamin Netanyahu has announced that he has been able to form the next government that would "work for the good of all Israeli citizens", minutes before the midnight deadline.

Netanyahu, 73, informed President Isaac Herzog late on December 21 paving the way for the swearing-in no later than January 2, or even earlier. In November, President Herzog officially invited Netanyahu to form the new government. He has won the backing of 64 Members of the Knesset (Israeli Parliament), Netanyahu. (PTI)



# Sikh History This Week

DECEMBER 23, 2022, TO DECEMBER 29, 2022

## 22nd December



1666 Parkash Utsav, Patshahi Tenth, Guru Gobind Singh Ji. Guru Gobind Singh, born as Gobind Das or Gobind Rai, was the tenth Sikh Guru, a spiritual master, warrior, poet and philosopher. When his father, Guru Tegh Bahadur was executed by Aurangzeb, Guru Gobind Singh was formally installed as the leader of the Sikhs at the age of nine, becoming the tenth and final human Sikh Guru. Among his notable contributions to Sikhism are founding the Sikh warrior community called Khalsa in 1699 and introducing the Five Ks, the five articles of faith that Khalsa Sikhs wear at all times. Guru Gobind Singh is credited with the Dasam Granth whose hymns are a sacred part of Sikh prayers and Khalsa rituals.

1704 SHAHEEDHI, Wadhae Sahibjadhae, Sakka Chamkaur.

1899 Birth of freedom fighter Sardar Udam Singh.

## 23rd December



1667 Birth of Mata Sudari Ji.

1704 Martyrdom of Bhai Jaita.

## 24th December

1805 Fateh Singh Ahluwalia sought understanding between General Lake and Jaswant Rai Hulkar.

1921 Kishan Singh Garhgaj attended diwans at Chamjkaur Sahib and Sirhind during Dec. 24-28 and delivered fierce speeches.

## 25th December

1850 Lord Dalhousie visits Fatehgarh to meet Maharaja Dalip Singh.

1922 First meeting of Babbars is held at Jassowal to decide the reformation of the Jholichuks.

1922 Special issue of "Babbar Akali Doaba" newspaper on Kalghidhar.

## 26th December



1802 Maharaja Ranjit Singh captured Amritsar.  
1832 Sada Kaur died at a ripe old age of 70 years.  
1832 Indus Navigation Treaty signed.

## 27th December

1953 The Sikhs refused Jawahar Lal Nehru permission to speak from a religious shrine.

## 28th December

1711 Bhai Mani Singh's grandchildren accept shahadat in the war of Bilaspur, Himachal.

1844 A regency of ten Sardars was formed under Jawahar Singh as Wajir and Lal Singh as Commander-in-Chief of Sikh forces.

1849 Bhai Maharaj Singh was arrested from sugarcane fields of Pandori Nijjar and Jalbhe. This area is located between Adampur Doaba and Sham Chaurasi in Jalandhar district.

1929 All Parties Convention held at Calcutta where the Hindus refused to accept the rights of the Sikhs.

## 29th December



1705 Battle of Muktsar. The Battle of Khidrane Dee Dhab took place in 1705, following the siege of Anandpur. In 1704, Anandpur was under an extended siege by the allied forces of the Mughals and the hill chiefs. The forty deserters from Anandpur lived in the Majha region in Punjab. A woman, Bhag Kaur (also known as Mai Bhago) who also lived in the village, convinced the deserters to fight with her at Khidrane Dee Dhab, where they fought and died under the leadership of Guru Gobind Singh, who blessed them for their service and the place, later, was renamed as Muktsar, literally meaning The Pool of Liberation.

1923 Sadha Singh of Pandoori Nijjaran dies during the trail.



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# Makeup tricks that slim your face instantly

Creating a slimmer, more defined appearance to the face with makeup might seem like a tall task, but these time-tested expert tips make it easy, effective and essential foolproof.

## Cheat the Light

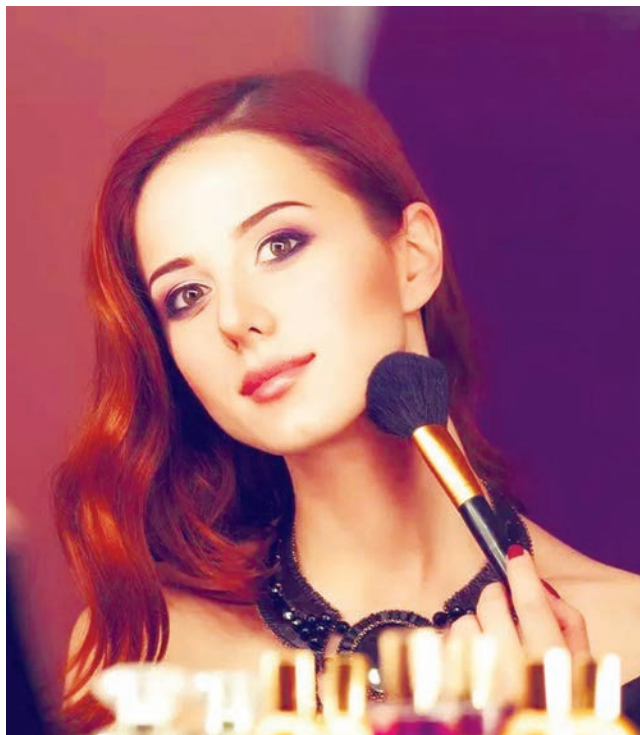
While she isn't a fan of "slimming" and prefers to use the word define, Sofia Tilbury, celebrity makeup artist and brand ambassador for Charlotte Tilbury Beauty, says the easiest way to sculpt and define your face is with cream contour and bronzers, such as Charlotte's Beautiful Skin Sun-Kissed Glow Bronzer. "Define and lift the look of your features by gliding your contour high along on the cheekbones then tap into the temples, jawline and either side of the nose, before blending out with a brush. To keep that lifted effect, I also like to apply a lighter shade of Magic Away Concealer in the inner corners of the eyes, upwards along the outer corner and down the centre of the nose, forehead and chin. This helps to cheat the light, bouncing away shadow and illuminating the highest points of the face. Finish with blush and highlight high on the cheekbones and blend up and out towards the top of the ear for a glowing, sculpted and lifted-looking finish."

## Perfect the Pinch

Pro tip: Backstage and behind the scenes, Charlotte swears by ice for a fresh, tightened, lifted look, and her Cryo-Recovery Face Mask and Eye Serum are perfect for getting that cooling, depuffing effect in just 10 minutes. "I also always take the time to massage the face in circular motions using Magic Serum, Magic Cream and Collagen Superfusion Facial Oil," Sofia shares. "Create hooks with your index fingers and smooth outwards and upwards beneath the cheekbones, then gently pinch along the jawline in one sweeping motion to reduce the look of fluid retention and really carve out those facial features before makeup!"

## Edit the Apple Application

You've most likely heard this blush-tip 101: "Applying blush directly to the apples of your cheeks will make your cheeks appear fuller and more youthful," says Lori Leib, Bodyography creative director and professional



makeup artist. But to create the look of a slimmer face, Leib says apply blush to the upper apples of your cheeks and slightly around your temples.

Celeb makeup artist Renée Loiz also takes the "edited apple" route. "Sweeping blush along the upper part of your cheeks [she likes using Kosas Contrachroma Blush] and not directly on the apples of cheeks is another technique to make your face look thinner. When you apply on the apples, you're drawing attention to the roundest part of your face. But when you apply blush to the upper part of your cheeks, this draws the face upwards."

"A good blush fixes everything!" reiterates celebrity makeup artist Jenna Nicole. "Give an elongated and lifted look to your face by only hitting the tops of your cheekbones—never the apples of the cheeks."

Source: Newbeauty

## FOOD

# Pav Bhaji

## INGREDIENTS

1 tbsp butter, 3 tomato (finely chopped), ¼ cup peas, ½ capsicum (finely chopped), 2 potato (boiled & mashed), 1 tsp salt, ¼ tsp kashmiri red chilli powder, ¼ tsp turmeric / haldi, 1 tsp + ½ tsp pav bhaji masala, 1 tsp kasuri methi / dry fenugreek leaves, 1 tbsp coriander leaves (finely chopped), 1 tsp ginger garlic paste, 1 onion (finely chopped), ½ lemon juice, 3 drops red food colour (optional), water to adjust consistency  
8 pav / bread roll, 4 tsp butter, ½ tsp kashmiri red chilli powder, ½ tsp pav bhaji masala, 4 tsp coriander leaves (finely chopped).

## INSTRUCTIONS

- In a large kadai heat 1 tbsp butter and add vegetables. cook and mash well.
- Now add 1 tsp chilli powder, ¼ tsp turmeric, 1 tsp pav bhaji masala, 1 tsp kasuri methi and 2 tsp coriander leaves.
- Heat a tbsp of butter and add ¼ tsp chilli powder, ½ tsp pav bhaji masala, 1 tsp kasuri methi.
- Also add 1 tbsp coriander leaves, 1 tsp ginger garlic paste, 1 onion and ½ lemon juice. saute well.
- Now add 3 drops of red food colour and mix well.
- Boil and mash for 5 minutes adjusting consistency.
- Finally, serve pav and bhaji as pav bhaji.



# Lose weight without counting calories

Waxed by the idea of counting your calories after every time you eat anything just to lose weight? You no longer need to be counting to lose those extra kilos. You can now lose weight just by keeping in mind these simple points. They might sound futile at first, but their implementation can give your wondrous results. So, why wait?

## Make vanilla your friend

When you hear vanilla, you are reminded of vanilla cakes or vanilla ice creams, things which won't help but worsen your diet routine. You'll be shocked to know that while as an ingredient it is no good for weight loss but its aroma can help you cut those not-so-required cravings for unhealthy food. And no craving means cutting down on unhealthy food consumption. You can also sniff on peppermint for similar results.

## Have mirror in dining room

Ever saw yourself eating? If not, hang a mirror in the dining room and look yourself while you eat. According to a study, people who look at themselves while eating end up eating less, helping them in cutting on junk food. Also, if going out for a dinner at a friend's place, make sure the hostess can see you while eating, this will make you reconsider your choice of eating unhealthy.



Strange, but it works.

## Contrast food with dishes

Okay, this might sound simply inefficacious but it actually works. So every time you eat something unhealthy, consider contrasting your dishes with your food. For instance, if you are eating red sauce pasta, don't opt for a red plate to go with it. Instead go for a

white one. This way, it will help you keep a track of the amount of food you are eating and you won't end up eating in excess.

## Go for comedies while eating

Not that we are encouraging you to watch television while eating, but honestly speaking, we all do that instead of it being repeatedly discouraged. So why not do it smartly? Binge on to all those chips while watching comedies, eating them while watching any action or sad movie will escalate your consumption.

## Say good-bye to stress

Stress! Although this six letter word is related to us mentally, but no second thought to the fact that it affects our body physically as well. It induces the release of stress hormone called cortisol, which leads to increased belly fat. So why not bid adieu to it?

## Go for dim lights

Ever wondered as to why most of the exotic hotels and restaurants have dim lights? It is because soft lights help stress fade away and make conversations interesting. This makes you enjoy your meal and take longer for you to finish it, making you consume fewer calories.



# Amid China Covid surge, health experts warn of new variants

Chinese health experts have warned that a new wave of coronavirus infections that have hit China may result in new variants, prompting authorities to set up a nationwide network of hospitals to monitor mutations of the deadly virus.

Wang Guangfa, a respiratory expert from Peking University First Hospital, warned that Beijing may experience a spike in severe Covid-19 cases over the next fortnight.

Engulfed by the latest wave, medical resources in the capital city are facing additional stress. The city is set to soon face peak caseload, Wang told state-run Global Times. Wang said ensuring there is no breakdown in medical resources is a key factor in raising success rates in treating critical Covid-19 cases.

"We must act quickly and prepare fever clinics, emergency and severe treatment resources," he said, adding that the primary action for hospitals is to expand ICU beds.

According to health officials, Chinese cities are currently hit by highly transmissible Omicron strains, mainly BA.5.2 and BF.7, which are spreading like wildfire. Beijing is hit by the BF.7 variant of the Omicron virus, stated to be the fastest spreading coronavirus, causing havoc in the capital whose hospitals are overcrowded.

Reports also highlight the increasing rush at crematoriums in Beijing and other cities. Beijing has acknowledged seven deaths in the last few days.

Many Chinese pharmaceutical companies are operating at full capacity to meet rocketing demand for cold and fever medicines, and thanks to various measures taken by the government and firms, the shortages are easing, according to official media reports.

Also, public health experts, including top respiratory disease expert Zhong Nanshan, have warned that waves of Covid-19 infections in China over a short period of



time might give rise to new variants of the virus.

After relaxing the zero-Covid policy restrictions following protests, China has stopped testing people. Till early this month people needed to test almost every day to visit public places with negative test results.

With no testing now, concerns have been raised about whether it is possible to track any changes as the country battles a surge in cases at the same time as testing requirements have been scaled back.

To keep track of the emergence of new variants, the Chinese Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (China CDC) has established a data-gathering network made up of one hospital in each city, and three cities in each province.

Xu Wenbo, director of the China CDC's National Institute for Viral Disease Control and Prevention, said each hospital is expected to collect samples from 15 patients in the outpatients and emergency room, 10 from patients with severe illnesses, and all fatalities.

Source: PTI



## Smoking raises risk of midlife memory loss, confusion

According to a new study, middle-aged smokers are considerably more likely than nonsmokers to experience memory loss and confusion, and the chance of cognitive decline is lower for those who have quit smoking recently.

The research by The Ohio State University is the first to examine the relationship between smoking and cognitive decline using a one-question self-assessment asking people if they've experienced worsening or more frequent memory loss and/or confusion.

The findings build on previous research that established relationships between smoking and Alzheimer's Disease and other forms of dementia, and could point to an opportunity to identify signs of trouble earlier in life, said Jenna Rajczyk, lead author of the study, which appears in the Journal of Alzheimer's Disease.

It's also one more piece of evidence that quitting smoking is good not just for respiratory and cardiovascular reasons - but to preserve neurological health, said Rajczyk, a PhD student in Ohio State's College of Public Health, and senior author Jeffrey Wing, assistant professor of epidemiology.

"The association we saw was most significant in the 45-59 age group, suggesting that quitting at that stage of life may have a benefit for cognitive health," Wing said. A similar difference wasn't found in the oldest group in the study, which could mean that quitting earlier affords people greater benefits, he said.

Data for the study came from the national 2019 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System

Survey and allowed the research team to compare subjective cognitive decline (SCD) measures for current smokers, recent former smokers, and those who had quit years earlier. The analysis included 136,018 people 45 and older, and about 11% reported SCD.

The prevalence of SCD among smokers in the study was almost 1.9 times that of nonsmokers. The prevalence among those who had quit less than 10 years ago was 1.5 times that of nonsmokers. Those who quit more than a decade before the survey had an SCD prevalence just slightly above the nonsmoking group.

Source: ANI

## Loss of smell most prevalent symptom of long Covid: Study

Smell loss is one of the most prevalent symptoms of long Covid, according to a new study. According to the research, it reveals that almost a third of long Covid patients suffer persistent smell loss, with almost a fifth experiencing loss of taste.

The team from the University of East Anglia (UEA), UK, investigated the prevalence of long Covid, and particularly ear, nose and throat related symptoms such as smell loss and parosmia, where people experience strange and often unpleasant smell distortions.

The findings have been published in the journal International Forum of Allergy and Rhinology.

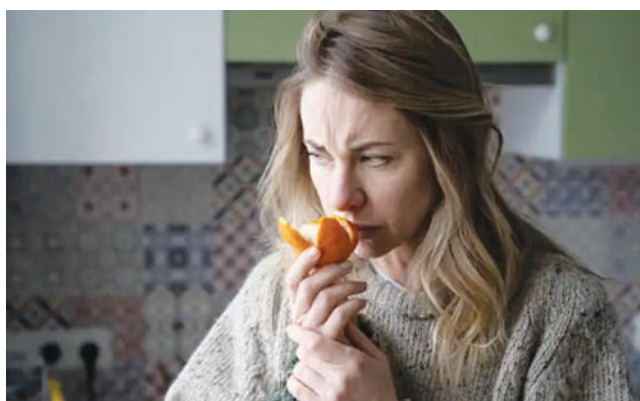
"Long Covid is a complex condition that develops during or after having covid, and it is classified as such when symptoms continue for more than 12 weeks," said lead researcher Carl Philpott, UEA.

"Symptoms include headache, myalgia, fatigue and loss of taste and smell. Parosmia can persist for months after initial infection, alongside brain fog and memory loss.

"We wanted to find out more about the prevalence of long Covid, and particularly ear, nose and throat related symptoms such as smell loss and parosmia," said Philpott.

The team looked at results from the UK Coronavirus Infection Survey and analysed information from over 3,60,000 people in March 2022.

A total of 10,431 participants identified as suffering from long Covid, and were asked about the presence of



23 individual symptoms and the impact of the condition on their day-to-day activities, the study said.

Self-reported long Covid was defined as symptoms persisting for more than four weeks after the first suspected coronavirus infection but not explained by another condition.

"We found that almost three percent of the participants self-identified as having long Covid, and if we scale this up to reflect the UK population, it would equate to around 1.8 million people," said Philpott.

"We found that fatigue was the most common symptom, whilst ENT-related symptoms included a loss of smell and taste, vertigo, shortness of breath, wheezing and a sore throat.

Source: PTI

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### DR. SATISH AND GITANJLI ANAND



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## Microbes can assist humans build colonies on Moon & Mars, new study reveals

Researchers at the University of California, Irvine have been motivated to consider new ways that reveals microbes can assist humans in colonising the Moon and Mars by studying the biochemical process by which cyanobacteria absorb nutrients from rocks in Chile's Atacama Desert.

Researchers in UCI's Department of Materials Science and Engineering and Johns Hopkins University's Department of Biology used high-resolution electron microscopy and advanced spectroscopic imaging techniques to gain a precise understanding of how microorganisms modify both naturally occurring minerals and synthetically made nanoceramics.

A key factor, according to the scientists, is that cyanobacteria produce biofilms that dissolve magnetic iron oxide particles within gypsum rocks, subsequently transforming the magnetite into oxidized hematite.

The team's findings, which are the subject of a paper published recently in the journal *Materials Today Bio*, could provide a pathway for new biomimetic mining methods. The authors also said they see the results as a step toward using microorganisms in large-scale 3D printing or additive manufacturing at a scale that's useful in civil engineering in harsh environments, like those on the moon and Mars.

"Through a biological process that has evolved over millions of years, these tiny miners excavate rocks, extracting the minerals that are essential to the physiological functions, such as photosynthesis, that enable their survival," said corresponding author David Kisailus, UCI professor of materials science and engineering. "Could humans use a similar biochemical approach to obtain and manipulate the minerals that we find valuable? This project has led us down that pathway."

The Atacama Desert is one of the driest and most inhospitable places on Earth, but *Chroococcidiopsis*, a cyanobacterium found in gypsum samples collected there by the Johns Hopkins team, has developed "the most amazing adaptations to survive its rocky habitat," said co-author Jocelyne DiRuggiero, associate professor of biology at the Baltimore university.

Some of those traits include producing chlorophyll that absorbs far-red photons and the ability to extract water and iron from surrounding minerals," she added. Using advanced electron microscopes and spectroscopic instruments, the researchers found evidence of the microbes in the gypsum by observing how the very minerals contained within were transformed.

Source: ANI

## Google working on making text, voice internet search available in over 100 Indian languages

Google, the world's most popular search engine, is working on making text and voice internet search available in over 100 Indian languages, its India-born CEO Sundar Pichai said.

Pichai, who is visiting India, said the pace of technological change in the country has been extraordinary and Google is supporting small businesses and startups, investing in cybersecurity, providing education and skills training, and applying AI (Artificial Intelligence) in sectors like agriculture and healthcare.

"I'm here to see progress being made from our USD 10 billion, 10-year India Digitization Fund (IDF), and share new ways. We're helping to advance India's digital future at our Google for India event.

"That includes our efforts to build a single, unified AI model that will be capable of handling over 100 Indian languages across speech and text - part of our global effort to bring the world's 1,000 most-spoken languages online, and to help people access knowledge and information in their preferred language," he wrote in a blog.

In July 2020, Google had announced plans to invest USD 10 billion in India over next five to seven years as the search giant looks to help accelerate adoption of digital services in the key overseas market.

"We're also supporting a new, multidisciplinary centre for responsible AI with IIT Madras," Pichai said.

This as part of Google working to seize the opportunity in AI globally, balancing the need to be bold with innovation and responsible in its approach.

"I'm excited to see the ways India will contribute to breakthroughs in



Union Minister for Electronics & Information Technology Ashwini Vaishnaw with Google CEO Sundar Pichai during the Google for India Summit 2022, at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi, on Monday, December 19, 2022. PTI

AI that could benefit over a billion people in India, and more around the world," he said.

Pichai said he was amazed at the ways people are already using technology to make their communities better.

"One of the local tech founders I met today has broken new ground by offering a radiation-free and non-invasive breast cancer screening tool; another developed a chatbot that helps people manage stress. I was glad to hear their stories and to share thoughts on how technology can expand opportunity during a conversation at Women Will," he said.

Pichai met telecommunications and IT minister Ashwini Vaishnaw and was later scheduled to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"Prime Minister Modi's Digital India vision has helped to accelerate the progress we're seeing across India, and I'm excited for India to share its experience with the world as it takes over the G20 presidency in 2023," he said.

"The pace of technological change in India has been extraordinary, and there's so much opportunity still ahead. Glad to be able to see it up close, and I'm already looking forward to my next visit."

Sanjay Gupta, Google's Country Head and Vice President, India, said Google is making search results pages bilingual in India by tapping into its advanced ML (Machine Learning)-based translation models and a cross-language search technology. Source: PTI

## WhatsApp banned over 37 lakh Indian accounts in November 2022

The instant messaging platform WhatsApp banned lakhs of accounts in the month of November. These WhatsApp accounts have been banned under Rule 4(1)(d) of the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021. The latest report from the messaging platform shows that WhatsApp banned over 37 lakh accounts between November 1 and November 30, which is a couple of lakhs more than the accounts banned in October.

The report clearly stated that among the 37+ lakh accounts, 990,000 of these accounts were proactively banned, before any reports from



users.

Commenting on banning lakhs of accounts in India, a WhatsApp Spokesperson said, "WhatsApp is an industry leader in preventing abuse, among end-to-end encrypted messaging services. Over the years, we have consistently invested in Artificial Intelligence and other state of the art technology, data scientists

and experts, and in processes, in order to keep our users safe on our platform." The company said that it deploys tools and resources to prevent harmful behavior on the platform. "We are particularly focused on prevention because we believe it is much better to stop harmful activity from happening in the first place than to detect it after harm has occurred," the messaging platform said.

WhatsApp's abuse detection operates at three stages of an account's lifecycle: at registration, during messaging, and in response to negative feedback, which is received in the form of user reports and blocks.



## Reliance Retail buys Metro's India business for Rs 2,850 cr

Reliance Industries has agreed to buy German firm Metro AG's wholesale operations in India for Rs 2,850 crore as the conglomerate run by billionaire Mukesh Ambani seeks to strengthen its dominant position in India's mammoth retail sector.

Reliance Retail Ventures Ltd (RRVL), a subsidiary of the oil-to-telecom conglomerate, signed definitive agreements to acquire a 100% equity stake in Metro Cash & Carry India Pvt Ltd for a total cash consideration of Rs 2,850 crore, subject to closing adjustments, the two firms said in a joint statement.

Reliance is India's biggest brick-and-mortar retailer with over 16,600 stores, and a strong wholesale unit would further deepen its operations in India.

Metro started operations in India in 2003 as the first company to introduce a cash-and-carry business format in the country and currently operates 31 large format stores across 21 cities with about 3,500 employees.

These stores sell products such as fruits and vegetables, general grocery, electronics, household goods and apparel to business customers like hotels, and restaurants as well as offices and companies, small retailers and kirana stores. Half of the stores are in southern India. *Source: PTI*

# Asian markets track Wall St down as recession worries return

HONG KONG (TIP)

Asian markets fell again Friday, December 23, after forecast-beating US data fuelled expectations that the Federal Reserve will lift interest rates well into next year.

A glum warning from top chipmaker Micron and worries about China's surging Covid cases added to the less-than-Christmassy mood on trading floors.

Investors have been on a rollercoaster ride this month with slowing inflation and an easing of monetary policy hikes offset by central bank warnings that borrowing costs will likely have to go higher than expected.

Those worries were increased by the Bank of Japan's shock decision this week to move away from its ultra-loose monetary policy, increasing bets on an even more restrictive investment environment in 2023.

Wall Street's three main indexes ended well in the red Thursday after revised figures showed the world's biggest economy grew a lot more in July-September than first thought, while jobless claims rose less than expected last week.

The readings suggested that despite almost a year of rate hikes and soaring inflation, activity remained strong and the Fed had much more work to do.



That came as Micron Technology said the industry's worst supply glut for more than 10 years meant it would struggle to return to profit next year.

It also saw a big drop in sales and a heavier loss than forecast this quarter.

"The Grinch selloff is firmly in place after Micron delivered a gloomy outlook and as better-than-expected US economic data supported the Fed's case for more ongoing rate increases," said OANDA's Edward Moya.

"Global coordinated central bank tightening has yet to fully impact most of the economic readings for the major economies and that should have investors nervous over earnings downgrades and credit risks."

The losses in New York extended into Asia, where Tokyo shed more than one percent, with Hong Kong, Shanghai, Sydney, Seoul, Singapore, Wellington, Taipei, Manila and Jakarta also well down.

"The consumer has a lot more strength than I think what the market was pricing in," Priya Misra, of TD Securities, told Bloomberg Television.

"When the accumulated savings they've had since Covid, when that runs out, which we think happens by the middle of next year, that's when consumer spending slows down."

Hopes that China's growth will surge as it rolls back its zero-Covid strategy have been overshadowed by a surge in cases across the country that has kept people at home, and battered travel and economic activity.

"The spike in Covid-19 infection rates following the easing of mobility restrictions will still constrain economic activity in the December-January time frame," said Guan Yi Low, at M&G Investments.

Still, expectations that demand for crude will pick up in the new year, as well as a drop in US stockpiles, is providing healthy support to the commodity, with both main contracts rising about five percent this week. *Source: AFP*

## US economy grew 3.2% in Q3, an upgrade from earlier estimate

WASHINGTON (TIP)

Shrugging off rampant inflation and rising interest rates, the U.S. economy grew at an unexpectedly strong 3.2% annual pace from July through September, the government reported Thursday in a healthy upgrade from its earlier estimate of third-quarter growth.

The rise in gross domestic product — the economy's output in goods and services — marked a return to growth after consecutive drops in the January-March and April-June periods.

Still, many economists expect the economy to slow and probably slip into recession next year under the pressure of higher interest rates being engineered by the Federal Reserve to combat inflation that earlier this year reached heights not seen since the early 1980s. Driving the third-quarter growth were strong exports and healthy consumer spending.

Investment in housing plunged at an annual rate of 27.1%, hammered by higher mortgage rates arising from the Fed's decision to raise its own benchmark rate seven times this year.

Thursday's GDP report was the Commerce Department's third and final look at the July-September quarter. The first look at the fourth quarter comes out Jan. 26. Forecasters surveyed by the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia expect the economy to grow again the last three months of the year — but at a slower, 1% annual rate. In its previous estimate of third-quarter growth, issued Nov. 30, the Commerce Department had pegged July-September growth at an annual rate of 2.9%. Behind the upgrade to Thursday's 3.2% was stronger growth in consumer spending, revised up to a 2.3% annual rate from 1.7% in the November estimate. *Source: AP*

## Private cryptos can cause next financial crisis, warns RBI

MUMBAI (TIP)

Pressing for the prohibition of instruments like bitcoin, Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das on Wednesday, December 21, warned that the next financial crisis can be triggered by private cryptocurrencies, if such speculative instruments are allowed to grow.

Das has been staunchly opposed to such instruments and the RBI has gone till the Supreme Court with its contention.

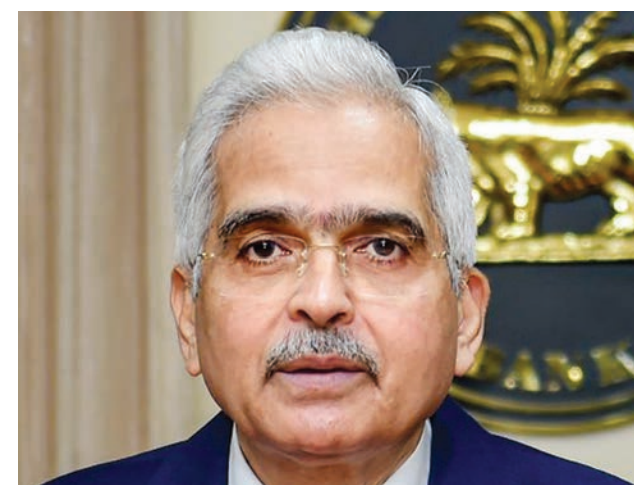
"Cryptocurrencies... have huge inherent risks from macroeconomic and financial stability (perspective) and we have been pointing it out," he said, speaking at an event organised by a newspaper here.

The RBI governor added that the developments over the last one year, which include the latest crash of cryptocurrency exchange FTX, which is termed as one of the biggest financial frauds in the history of the US, illustrate the threat posed by such instruments.

"After all these, I don't think we need to say anything more about our stand," Das said, adding that private cryptocurrencies' valuation has shrunk from \$190 billion to \$140 billion and there is no underlying value for the market-determined price.

"It's a 100% speculative activity, and I would still hold the view that it should be prohibited... if you try to regulate it and allow it to grow, please mark my words, the next financial crisis will come from private cryptocurrencies," he said.

He acknowledged that different jurisdictions are taking different stances on it, but the RBI would like to stick to its stance of prohibiting them completely.



**"It's a 100% speculative activity, and I would still hold the view that it should be prohibited... if you try to regulate it and allow it to grow, please mark my words, the next financial crisis will come from private cryptocurrencies" — Shaktikanta Das, RBI Governor**

Das said the origin of private cryptocurrencies lie in their intent to "break" the system, in not believing in fiat currencies introduced by the central banks and not believing in a regulated financial system.

"They want to bypass and beat the system," Das said, adding that he is yet to come across any credible argument which can demonstrate the public good served by such private cryptocurrencies. *Source: PTI*



## Shree Ganeshaya Namah



VEDIC ASTROLOGER NASTUR BEJAN DARUWALLA

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

## WEEKLY HOROSCOPE - DECEMBER 26, 2022 TO JANUARY 1, 2023



### Aries

Ganesha says, this week, you'll employ a bunch of your special professional skills. You will discontinue your judicial efforts, which is for the benefit. This week, you need to take greater precautions with your wellness if you operate in the fields. Your partner and you will need to assign a few of your duties to one another this week so that you may enjoy time alone together. You ought to invest some effort learning to understand your spouse before you are married. There will be a lot of casualties this week. You should not approach big autos this week. Get first aid materials on hand at all times.



### Taurus

Ganesha says, this week, you'll be extremely confident and agile in professional situations. You will be capable of deciphering the credentials to the barriers in your way this week thanks to your product characteristics. This week, we'll deal with your financial issues as usual. Your buddy and you will enjoy some much-needed downtime this week. Your romantic life will be relaxed, and you won't doubt your relationship. You need to be very careful this week with regard to your hypertension issues. If you experience any pulmonary issues, you need to use extra caution this week.



### Gemini

Ganesha says, this week, your eighth sector will see some unrest, which will damage your commercial relationships. You'll need to keep an eye on a shifting chart of your corporation's earnings this week to determine your profitability, and the similar is valid for the financial markets. This week won't bring you any particularly exciting encounters, but there's a good chance that your acquaintance will turn into a romantic relationship. Your brain and intellect will be energized this week. This week, your anxieties will go and you'll sense peace.



### Cancer

Ganesha says, this week, you'll be going with hard graft plans for an unfinished task. You will be enabled to profit from an excellent opportunity. The free time frames this week will be a lifesaver for you. This week, you'll be extremely emotional. Avoiding reaching any judgments about your love life this week since your head will be filled with competing feelings. Individuals are probably just passingly interested in their really close friends. This week, you must refrain from doing anything by yourself. You're more liable to get a major accident this week, so exercise caution.



### Leo

Ganesha says, you'll be affected by the financial slump this week if you work for an import-export firm, which will hurt your earnings. Individuals that are employed this week will be okay and pick up new abilities. You will be the object of your partner's interest this week. Somebody surprising will pursue couples this week. Husbands and wives will have a busy week this week. You will engage with bodily intoxication this week, which will be quite advantageous for you. Never undertake something without seeking specialist advice.



### Virgo

Ganesha says, this week, your monetary strategies will be accorded more consideration. This week if you have an appointment, you need to be aware of your physical communication. If you own a corporation, you may also think about buying property land. You and your buddy will have some light conversation this week. Meeting a kind, funny person may make a single person's week better. Without a sure, love will astound you in this symbol. This week, your wellness is going to be excellent. You won't have to stress sticking to your fitness objectives.



### Libra

Ganesha says, this week, you will take a stand for a teammate since doing so will contribute to your employment satisfaction. You'll have a very successful week in regards of your profession. Donate a small amount this week. This week, your mate has to be particularly cautious about their wellness. You need to monitor their condition this week. If you're wedded, this week will be filled with a wonderful time spent with your partner. This week, you'll be in excellent form. You will easily be able to advance your job and lessen your anxiety this week.



### Scorpio

Ganesha says, this week, you will hear back from the organizations where you submitted applications for assessments. You'll be capable of boosting your major stream of revenue with revenue from other streams. The firm will offer apprentices full-time employment. This week, your partner will make you seem confined by trying to squeeze you into the mound they've created for the perfect partner. You and your companion will quarrel about a subject this week. This week, you should consume more vegetables and drinks because your body will require a sufficient amount of stimulation.



### Sagittarius

Ganesha says, you'll anticipate encountering people this week that you haven't thought about collaborating with in the past. In this week's marketplace, having a well-known brand associate will give you the upper hand. The best time to sell your shares is not this week. This week, you'll be able to develop a solid bond with your partner. Additionally, you'll be able to address problems that have been bothering you for a while. You're excited to begin a primary care routine this week, which will take up a large portion of your afternoons this week.



### Capricorn

Ganesha says, this week, somebody's viewpoints and yours will diverge on a business-related issue. You'll require more effort if you want to establish an authority in your field. At the conclusion of the week, if you provide wholesale goods, you will get a sizable purchase. This week, your friend will remind you that you are currently giving it your all and this will fill you with delight and satisfaction. This week, you must not travel with your spouse if you just got wedded. These days, if you don't want your diastolic pulse to vary, you need to stay away from excessive glucose and sodium consumption.



### Aquarius

Ganesha says you'll have the opportunity to acquire some profitable large objects this week. Since values are anticipated to increase once more this week, buying silver is a wise move. You'll outwit your commercial rivals this week. This week, your partner will decide to hang out with friends during spare period. You will be introduced to this company, but it will be challenging for you to fit in. This week, you'll need to be more careful with your cardiovascular problem. If you utilize dangerous substances, you can run into issues.



### Pisces

Ganesha says, this week, you will be able to ensure that your professional skills are at peak. You will be able to make sure that you are getting good profits from the work you do. You will be able to take charge of your domestic issues and the situation will improve this week. You will step in new year with confidence. You will be able to make your partner feel loved and cared for this week. You will get time for yourself which will help your individual growth also. Your health will be alright this week. Do not worry and enjoy the flow!



**BIRTHDAY HOROSCOPE : DECEMBER 26, 2022 TO JANUARY 1, 2023  
BY ASTRO FRIEND CHIRAG - SON OF ASTROLOGER BEJAN DARUWALLA**

**DECEMBER 26 :** Ganesha says you enjoy reading to expand your knowledge, but you need to learn to control your urge to act when you are bashful, arrogant, or moody. Children would provide great joy and success in their chosen careers. Travelling far or going on a pilgrimage will be high on your agenda. Property sales, rent accrual, dividends, and interest payments all result in financial profits for the seller. Long-term investments and speculative ventures are also advantageous at this time.

**DECEMBER 27 :** Ganesha says today you should work on controlling your occasionally careless and stubborn behavior. Entrepreneurs would diversify their businesses and pursue new, lucrative opportunities. If you deal in real estate, you will do incredibly well, but you might anticipate some partner rivalry. Later today, you'll be delighted to hear some exciting news from your kids. Make the most of your new romance, which may be new to you. For both spiritual and physical benefits, meditation and yoga should be practiced.

**DECEMBER 28 :** Ganesha says starting new businesses is encouraged throughout the upcoming time. Previously sluggish projects

would pick up steam. If there are any disagreements, they will be resolved, which will make you feel relieved. Due to your competitive nature, you would always try to outperform others and be well-liked by your fellow students. Friends will be supportive but obnoxious. The possibility of developing romantic relationships with coworkers exists, but they would be very fleeting.

**DECEMBER 29 :** Ganesha says you would have abundant energy right now, and if you used it well, you would achieve outstanding accomplishments. Later in the year, a long trip looks likely, probably to attend some momentous event. It is not advisable to rely on friends and family because they won't be accommodating. Financially speaking, it appears to be an excellent time to buy equities and real estate, but all purchases should be made with the long term in mind.

**DECEMBER 30 :** Ganesha says many people's financial situations will improve today, and some will inherit family property. Your confidence will increase as the business prospers and you make money. Both academically and athletically, students will do incredibly well. Those with high

blood pressure or piles should exercise caution with their health. The legal issues weighing on your mind will be resolved to your satisfaction. For some, promotions and pay raises are likely.

**DECEMBER 31 :** Ganesha says to be aware of your impulsive and hasty tendencies. To improve your productivity, take the initiative to alter the workplace environment to suit your needs. You'll target meetings with delegates who are well-known around the world. You'll be able to start saving for the future now. You'll appreciate having your partner around. You have a deep faith in God, and you may soon visit numerous holy sites. Your attention will be drawn to interior design and construction.

**JANUARY 1 :** Ganesha says people will regard you with respect and deference. You possess the fortitude to handle any circumstance. You will become a well-known person because of your originality and planned work, attracting everyone's attention. Your snarky and cynical nature can keep you from social gatherings. Potent nature may cause you to lose credibility. You will soon take the marital oath. Be patient, since resolving your legal challenges will take some more time.

|| SHREE GANESHAY NAMAH ||



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contd from page 1

## 'We need peace': Zelenskyy says in...

security guarantees for decades ahead. And the summit, which can be held," Zelenskyy said in his historic address to the joint session of the Congress.

He said that any such discussions would also depend on Russia's willingness to negotiate and the participation of the international legal order, even as he slammed Russian President Vladimir Putin for invading Ukraine.

"It would be naive to wait for steps towards peace from Russia which enjoys being a terrorist state. Russians are still poisoned by the Kremlin. The restriction of international legal order is our joint task," Zelenskyy noted.

Zelensky -- wearing his trademark combat-green sweatshirt and boots -- expressed hope that Congress would pass the extra USD 45 billion in aid to Ukraine to "help us to defend our values, values and independence".

Earlier on Wednesday, Biden welcomed Zelenskyy to the Oval Office, saying the US and Ukraine would continue to project a "united defense" as Russia wages a "brutal assault on Ukraine's right to exist as a nation." Zelenskyy, on his first known trip outside his country since Russia invaded in February, said he wanted to visit earlier and his visit now showed the "situation is under control, because of your support." He said the people of Ukraine will also go through their war of independence and freedom with dignity and success.

"We'll celebrate Christmas. And even if there is no electricity, the light of our faith in ourselves will not be put out," he said.

"If Russian missiles attack us, we'll do our best to protect ourselves. If they attack us with Iranian drones and our people will have to go to bomb shelters on Christmas Eve, Ukrainians will still sit down at the equality table and cheer up each other. And we don't have to know everyone's wish as we know that all of us, millions of Ukrainians, wish the same victory," he explained.

Zelenskyy said the battle is not only for the life, freedom and security of Ukrainians, or any other nation which Russia attempts to conquer. "This struggle will define in what world our children and grandchildren will live, and then their children and grandchildren. It will define whether it will be a democracy of Ukrainians and for Americans, for all," he added. Zelenskyy came to the US after making a daring trip on Tuesday to the front line of the ongoing conflict, to the city of Bakhmut in Ukraine's contested Donetsk province. (Source: PTI)

## Covid threat sounds alarm bells...

number of cases of Covid-19 in several countries, especially in China. Chairing a high-level meeting following a Covid surge in China and some other countries, the PM gave five messages to attending ministers, states and the public - increase genome sequencing and Covid testing levels; ensure hospital readiness; follow Covid protocols; mask up in crowds; and administer booster doses with priority to the elderly and the vulnerable.

The meeting decided to go in for random testing of 2 per cent of all foreign arrivals from Saturday to detect any fresh variants rather than ban flights to and from the affected countries. However, kids under 12 have been exempted, if asymptomatic.

Sources said the Covid situation would be monitored and a call taken later whether the Air Suvidha tool should be revived in respect of nations witnessing a surge. Air Suvidha forms mandated inbound international travelers to give details of RT-PCR tests conducted 72 hours prior to travel and their vaccination proof.

At today's meet, attended by Home Minister Amit Shah, Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia and top officials, the PM monitored preparedness of health infrastructure, status of Covid vaccination and

emergence of new Covid-19 variants and their public health implications. "The PM cautioned against complacency and advised strict vigil. He said Covid was not over yet and directed officials to strengthen the ongoing surveillance measures, especially at the international airports," a PMO statement said.

NITI Aayog Member (Health) VK Paul briefed the meeting on India's steady Covid decline over a year with average daily cases falling to 153 and weekly positivity down to 0.14% in the week ending December 22. However, 5.9 lakh daily average cases had been reported globally for the last six weeks, the PM was told.

The PM stressed the need for readiness of Covid infrastructure at all levels and advised states to audit Covid-specific facilities to ensure operational readiness of hospital infrastructure, including oxygen cylinders, PSA plants, ventilators and human resources. He also directed officials to ramp up testing and genomic sequencing efforts with states already advised to send all positive samples to the genome testing labs.

This is expected to support timely detection of variants, if any, and speed up response.

For citizens, the PM urged Covid-appropriate behavior at all times in the wake of the festive season ahead and called for masking up in crowded public places. India has so far detected four cases of BF.7, a subvariant of Omicron, currently driving the Chinese surge and known for high transmissibility. Earlier today, Mandaviya briefed Parliament about the surges in China, US, Japan, France, Greece, Italy and South Korea. (Source: Tribune)

## UK Prime Minister Sunak insists...

And actually, it's an enormous privilege to champion Britain and indeed, its institutions like the monarchy when I'm out and about on the world stage as I am here today," said the UK-born politician, who has his family roots in Punjab.

Sunak was reacting to an ongoing row over former television presenter and columnist Jeremy Clarkson writing in 'The Sun' about loathing Meghan Markle, the Duchess of Sussex, "on a cellular level", in the wake of the controversial 'Harry and Meghan' documentary being aired on Netflix recently.

Clarkson's column received over 6,000 complaints to the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO), resulting in an apology from the writer and the newspaper removing the column from its website.

"For everyone in public life, language matters," said Sunak, when asked about the furor.

Meanwhile, more than 60 cross-party British MPs have written to the editor of 'The Sun', Victoria Newton, to demand action be taken against Clarkson.

In a letter, they said Meghan Markle had received credible threats to her life and that columns such as Clarkson's contributed to an "unacceptable climate of hatred and violence". The letter, coordinated by the Conservative Party Chair of the Women and Equalities Select Committee in the House of Commons, Caroline Nokes, was signed by fellow Tory MPs as well as Opposition MPs from Labour, Lib Dem, Green and SNP. "We cannot allow this type of behavior to go unchecked any longer. We welcome the Sun's retraction of the article and we now demand action is taken against Mr. Clarkson and an unreserved apology to Ms Markle immediately," they write. (Source: PTI)

## 150-year wait to get a green card...

backlog had already hit an all-time high of 1.4 million people. Based on an estimate from the Cato Institute, Indians with advanced degrees seeking permanent residence in the U.S. should expect a wait time of 151 years.

According to the dozens of workers who joined the march, they have been waiting for their green cards for decades. "We all have applied for a green card and it has been approved. Only thing is, we need to wait 150 years to get a green card," Akhilesh Malavalli told KPIX CBS SF Bay Area. "A hundred fifty years! I'll be dead. I'll be dead by the time we see a green card."

The protesters held a demonstration in front of

Representative Zoe Lofgren (D, CA-19), chair of the House subcommittee on immigration, to urge her to bring her proposed bill to the House floor for a vote in the coming week.

HR 3648, a bill that would remove national origin as a consideration for the green card, was introduced by Lofgren last year alongside Rep. John Curtis (R, UT-03). "What we are fighting for is basic equality," Malavalli said. "Treat us based on what skills we bring to this nation and not necessarily based on where we were born." Under current laws, H1B workers who lose their jobs for whatever reason are granted only two months to find a new job to stay in the U.S. before they become illegal immigrants.

Immediate family members of H1B visa holders can receive an H-4 visa, which is linked to the time limit of the H1B. Children of H1B workers lack the protection that a green card offers in case their parents lose their jobs or die. The law states that they must leave the country when they turn 21, regardless of whether they've lived in the U.S. since they were born.

(Source: Yahoo News)

## Punjab Governor de-notifies Chief...

The Governor, who belongs to PML (N) took extreme action to stop Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) Imran Khan from dissolving the Punjab Assembly.

Former prime minister Khan had announced to dissolve the Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provincial assemblies where his party is in power to push the federal coalition led by the Pakistan Muslim League (N) (PMLN) to call for snap polls.

In the early hours of Friday, December 23, the Governor issued an order denotifying chief minister Elahi and his Cabinet.

"Since chief minister, Chaudhry Parvez Elahi has refrained from taking a vote of confidence at the appointed day and time (last Wednesday) therefore he ceases to hold office with immediate effect. He however can continue working as chief minister of Punjab till his successor is appointed," the Governor said.

Mr. Elahi who belongs to the PTI junior coalition partner Pakistan Muslim League Quaid (PMLQ) said he will move the court against the Governor's 'illegal order'. PTI senior leader and former information minister Fawad Chaudhry has said the Governor will have to pay for his "misconduct". "The Governor's order denotifying the chief minister and his Cabinet has no legal value. Chief Minister Parvez Elahi and his cabinet will continue to function and a reference against him is being sent to the president for his removal from office " Mr. Chaudhry tweeted.

The PML-N and its allied parties had vowed to use all options to stop Khan from dissolving the two assemblies. They say the country can't afford early polls because of its poor economy.

Legal experts say the ongoing constitutional battle between the federal and Punjab governments will eventually be settled by courts as questions of law have arisen after Governor Balighur Rehman asked Chief Minister Elahi to seek a "vote of confidence" in a special assembly session within 48 hours and subsequently denotified him for his failure to comply with his order.

Punjab has not seen political stability since the ouster of prime minister Imran Khan through a "vote of no confidence" in April and several petitions are still pending before the courts relating to the chief minister's election.

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

The former cricketer-turned-politician, who came to power in 2018, is the only Pakistani Prime Minister to be ousted in a no-confidence vote in Parliament.

He alleged that the no-confidence vote was part of a US-led conspiracy targeting him because of his independent foreign policy decisions on Russia, China, and Afghanistan.

However, the U.S. has denied the allegations.



# Nara and Narayana – Twin-brother Avatar of Lord Vishnu

**N**ara and Narayana are twin sages who are the incarnated avatars of Lord Vishnu. Nara means human, and Narayana refers to the supreme Lord. Their purpose of the incarnation was to maintain Dharma on earth. Ancient texts mentioned them as the twin sages who came to earth to eradicate evils and establish virtue and righteousness.

They were widely known as Krishna and Arjuna in Mahabharata, who fought against evils to protect Dharma on earth. Bhagavata Purana mentions Nara-Narayana as the fourth incarnation of Lord Vishnu on earth.

Various Hindu texts state the sages were the sons of the Dharma (one of the mind-born sons of Lord Brahma) and Murti (daughter of Daksha).

Since their childhood, these twins have been inseparable. Nara and Narayana went to Badrinath, where they spent their lifetime performing deep austerities for the welfare of humankind. To test them, even Lord Shiva threw his most destructive divine weapon, Pashupatastra, at them. However, the weapon lost its power as it reached near them because of their intense penance and devotion. Lord Shiva realized that they were at the highest level of Samadhi.

There are stories about Nara and Narayana in Bhagavata Purana and Mahabharata, here are a few such stories about these beautiful twin sages.

## Celestial nymph Urvashi's birth

Urvashi is a heavenly nymph well-known as the most beautiful apsara (nymph) with excellent dancing skills. The Bhagavat Purana describes her birth story.

Once Lord Nara and Narayana were doing austerity in the Badrinath. Their energy was so intense that it scared the Lord of heaven, Indra. So, to interrupt the twin sages from their penance, Lord Indra sent Kamadeva (the god of love and lust) and celestial nymphs (Apsaras).

Apsaras tried their best efforts to disturb Nara and Narayana but failed. Instead, Lord Narayana placed a flower on his thigh from which a beautiful apsara emerged. Her beauty and charm were so overpowering, making even the heavenly apsaras and Kamadeva return to heaven in shame. Since the apsara originated from the thigh (Uru) of Narayana sage, she was named Urvashi.

Knowing the intention of Kamadeva, Basanta (spring), and apsaras, Nara-Narayana was not angry with them. Instead, they requested to take Urvashi with them to heaven.

## Badrinath

According to Bhagavata Purana, the Badrinath region or Badrikashram is the sacred place where the twin avatar of Lord Vishnu, Nara-Narayana, are still meditating since ancient times for the well-being of living beings. Nearby the Badrinath temple, there are statues dedicated to the great Nara-Narayana.

## In Mahabharata

The epic Mahabharata mentioned Lord Krishna as the supreme Lord and Arjuna as Nara, the companion of Narayana. Chandra Deva (the moon god) said to all Devas that in Dwapar Yuga, sage Nara would be born as Indra's son, and his son would be Arjuna's mighty son Abhimanyu. Even the sage Veda Vyasa validated in Bhagavata Purana that Arjuna and Krishna as the incarnation of Nara Narayana in Dwapar Yuga.

In Vana Parva (the book of the forest), Lord Krishna also talks about this to Arjuna.

Even Lord Shiva told Arjuna about his previous life, which he failed to remember. Therefore, In Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna himself told Arjuna, "Oh dear Arjuna! we both took numerous births which you have no memories of, but I remember everything."

## Nara-Narayana and Karna

In Treta Yuga, King Dambhodabhava turned evil to become the supreme being in the universe. So, he



## Important information

### Kamda Saptami Vrat

Thursday, 29 December 2022

Saptami Starts: 28 December 2022 at 8:44 pm

Saptami Ends: 29 December 2022 at 7:17 pm

**Did you know : Kamda Saptami Vrat is done to each Shukla Saptami and every four months should be passed in every four months.**

performed severe penance for thousands of years to please the Surya Deva. Pleased with the king, the Sun-god offered him a thousand pieces of armor attached to his body. To kill him, one has to do penance for a thousand years, and each time one armor got destroyed, that person died.

With such immense power, he started creating destruction all over the world. So, to eradicate him, Nara-Narayana challenged him to a fight. Nara fought with Sahasrakavacha while Narayana meditated for a thousand years. Both of them alternatively took turns to fight against Sahasrakavacha and meditate.

Finally, leaving Sahasrakavacha with the last armor. To avoid his death, Sahasrakavacha asked the sun god for assistance. The sun god promised Sahasrakavacha for protection.

At the same time, there was Yuga change which provided Sahasrakavacha with an opportunity to escape death. The very moment Narayana declared both he and Nara would reincarnate as Krishna and Arjuna to eliminate Karna (Sahasrakavacha) in the Dwapar Yuga.

During the Mahabharata war, Lord Indra took the form of a brahmin and asked for his armor which Karna donated easily. Without protection from the last armor, Arjuna was able to kill Karna.

## Nara-Narayana and Prahlad

The son of Asura King Hiranyakashipu, Prahlad was one of the greatest devotees of Lord Vishnu. Once, he asked the Chyavan rishi, "which is the most sacred place on earth for pilgrimage?". The sage replied that Naimisharanya was the one. So Prahlad went with his followers, and there they saw the twin sages meditating under a tree pierced by arrows. Prahlad asked the sages about the weapons, and in their response, the sages replied those who work as per their abilities earn respect. Such responses angered Prahlad, and they all started fighting for thousands of years.

At last, Prahlad got defeated and went to Vaikuntha (resident of Lord Vishnu) and asked Lord Vishnu about his defeat. The Lord said one of the sages, Narayana, was himself. Knowing the facts, Prahlad went to Nara and Narayana and apologized for his mistake.

Source:Vedicfeed

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# Hampi: The abode of bygone ruins and fascinating landscape

**H**ampi, the city of ruins, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Situated in the shadowed depth of hills and valleys in the state of Karnataka, this place is a historical delight for travellers. Surrounded by 500 ancient monuments, beautiful temples, bustling street markets, bastions, treasury building and captivating remains of Vijayanagar Empire, Hampi is a backpacker's delight. Hampi is an open museum with 100+ locations to explore and a favourite way to see the city from the perspective of its history.

Hampi was the capital of the Vijayanagar empire around 1500 AD, and by some accounts, the second largest city in the world at that time. Over the next centuries it fell out of importance, and now you can explore the ruins of a lot of temples and other structures spread out over a vast area. The terrain around Hampi is as mysterious as the ruins itself - the city is surrounded by boulders of different sizes, and you can climb to the top of them with a little effort to get a stunning view of the entire city and the geography. It is located on the banks of the Tungabhadra River. Famous for its massive, beautifully carved temples, especially the Virupaksha Temple, dedicated to the patron deity of the empire. You can also find remains of the old aqueducts, canals and military barracks and stables here. Hampi was declared a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1986 and many efforts have been taken to restore the lost glory of the place - very limited (if any) modern establishments are allowed in the main area, which gives an authentic feel to the ruins.

## Virupaksha Temple

The Virupaksha temple (or Prasanna Virupaksha temple) is located on the banks of the Tungabhadra river at Hampi. Built during the 7th century, the beautiful architecture and history of the temple have made it a UNESCO World Heritage site. The temple is abode to one of the forms of Lord Shiva called Lord Virupaksha. While it is located at present-day Hampi, it was once a smaller shrine in the middle of the ancient and majestic Vijayanagara empire. You will find beautiful stone inscriptions dating back to the 7th century on the walls of the temple as proof of its rich heritage. Architecture-lovers and history-buffs, do visit the temple when you are in Hampi!

The temple has tall towers or gopurams acting as gateways to the inner sanctums, as is usually seen in temples of south Indian style architecture. The gopurams lead to many inner corridors and halls, all decorated with ornate stone-work. The sculptures depict mythological stories of numerous Gods and Goddesses. The main deity of the temple is Lord Virupaksha, but it is also abode to few other Hindu deities too. While many devotees visit the temple during festival seasons like the Car Festival, it is otherwise less crowded.

## Vithala Temple

The most impressive structure in



Hampi, the Vithala Temple dates back to the 16th century and is a truly splendid example of rich architecture. The famous stone chariot, which has become an iconic symbol of the architecture of Hampi, is located inside the premises of this temple.

The temple complex is spread over a huge area. The main gate has an impressive arch with carvings, and opens in a large courtyard which has the famous stone chariot in the center. The main temple is located just behind the chariot and has beautiful carvings. There are also several other smaller temples inside the courtyard, all of which are definitely worth a visit. The carvings on the walls/pillars of these structures depict various gods in different forms.

## Lotus Palace

The Lotus Palace in Hampi is one of the most iconic landmarks in the town. Named so for the way the structure looks like a lotus in bloom, this palace was the designated area for the royal women of

the Vijayanagara Empire and is found within the Zenana Enclosure. Known widely as one of the few edifices in Hampi that was not lost either to the Mughal raids of the town or to the ravages of time, the Lotus Mahal stands tall in its courtyard.

## Yantrodharaka Hanuman Temple

On top of the Anjaneya Hill, at a distance of 2 kilometres from the Virupaksha Temple, the beautiful Yantrodharaka Hanuman Temple also known as the Monkey Temple is present inside a cave. The temple being 500 years old is dedicated to Lord Hanuman. Sri Vyasaraaja, who was the Rajaguru of the Vijayanagara Kingdom and a Dwaita philosopher, was the one to install the idol of Lord Hanuman in the temple. Being one of the most famous attractions of the Anjeyanadri Hill, the Monkey Temple is considered as a sacred spot for Hindus.

One has to climb 570 steps to reach the temple since it is located on top of the hill. Though the climb is steep, the

beautiful views and the pleasant air make up for the climbing. One is also likely to come across aged people climbing up with energy and devotion. There is a small temple just 5 minutes away from the Yantrodharaka Temple which is dedicated to an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, i.e. Lord Srinivasa. His idol has been carved out by Sri Vyasaraaja. Below a fig tree in front of the Hanuman Temple lie some snakestones, and they are worshipped as well. It is one of the must-visit spots for all the nature as well as religious lovers.

## Hampi Bazaar

Also known as the Virupaksha Bazaar, the Hampi Bazaar is the place to go to pick up knick-knacks, souvenirs, cheap clothes and trinkets to remember your trip to Hampi by. Situated right in front of Virupaksha temple, hence its alternate name, this bazaar which stretches for over a kilometre long is one of the main landmarks of Hampi. From embroidered shawls, fibre handicrafts, to stone carvings, this is the place to pick up anything Hampi-related. The Hampi Utsav which happens every November is also a big tourist draw and should be noted.

## Hippie Island

While most tourists stay to the south of Tungabhadra where most of the ruins are located, some prefer the north banks which have a vibrant hippie culture. Virapapur Gadde or Hippie Island is a small island situated across the Tungabhadra river. It takes 5 minutes to travel to the island via coracle or boat. The last boat for the island leaves at 5.30 pm. The backpacker's delight, Hippie Island (Virupapur Gadde) is an epitome of scenic beauty and is known for laidback ambient and lodges.

It has shacks and cafes which operate from October end to mid-March. They serve awesome food along with chilled beer, and most of these have a great view of either the river or the beautiful rice fields. A lot of these cafes also serve as guest houses and you can get simple rooms here at cheap rates. Away from the luxurious life, living in small huts, savouring the taste both Indian and Western cuisine and lying on the banks of the river you will definitely develop affection for the place. The shacks and cafes are a joint venture by Indians and Foreigners. Virupapur Gadde is full of backpackers who are on their way of exploring the remains of ancient times in the modern age. Therefore, you would find many for your company.

During the peak, season backpackers storm this area. It has small tourist huts which are offered at quite reasonable prices. The island has small cafes which are a joint venture of Indians and foreigners who stayed back to the place after it mesmerized them. A coracle ferry is needed to reach this side of the river. During the monsoon season, it is advisable to take a taxi to another end which is 40 km away.

Source: Holidify



# History This Week

DECEMBER 23 TO DECEMBER 29

## December 23

December 23, 1913 - The U.S. Congress passed the Federal Reserve Act establishing the Federal Reserve System to serve as the nation's central bank. Chief responsibilities include: execution of monetary policy; influencing the lending and investing activities of commercial banks; and overseeing the cost and availability of money and credit.

December 23, 1947 - The transistor was invented at Bell Laboratories by John Bardeen, Walter Brattain and William Shockley, who shared the Nobel Prize for their invention which sparked a worldwide revolution in electronics.



Hideki Tojo

December 23, 1948 - Hideki Tojo was hanged for war crimes. He had been Japanese prime minister from 1941-44. Following Japan's defeat in World War II, he was arrested as a war criminal, tried by a military tribunal and sentenced to death. He was hanged along with six other Japanese wartime military leaders at Sugamo Prison in Tokyo, with the sentence carried out by the U.S. 8th Army.

December 23, 1987 - Dick Rutan and Jeana Yeager set a new world record of 216 hours of continuous flight around the world without refueling. Their aircraft Voyager traveled 24,986 miles at a speed of about 115 miles per hour.

Birthdays - Japanese Emperor Hirohito (1901-1989) was born in Tokyo. He was Japan's wartime Emperor and was allowed to remain in his position after the war.

## December 24

December 24, 1814 - The Treaty of Ghent between America and Britain was signed, officially ending the War of 1812.

December 24, 1914 - The first-ever German air raid against Britain took place when a German monoplane dropped a

single bomb on Dover, England, during World War I.



V-1 Flying Bomb

December 24, 1942 - The first surface-to-surface guided missile, later known as the V-1 Flying Bomb, was launched by German rocket engineer Wernher von Braun. Called "Buzz Bombs" for the loud buzzing sound of their motor, they were used by Nazi Germany against Britain beginning in September 1944.

December 24, 1943 - General Dwight D. Eisenhower was appointed Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force preparing for D-Day.

December 24, 1990 - On Christmas Eve, the bells of St. Basil's Cathedral in Moscow rang for the first time since the death of Lenin.

December 24, 1992 - Caspar Weinberger and five other Reagan aides involved in the Iran-Contra scandal were pardoned by President George Bush.

Birthdays - Ignatius Loyola (1491-1556) was born in northern Spain (as Inigo de Onaz y Loyola). He founded the Catholic Jesuits (Society of Jesus).

## December 25

December 25th - Christmas Day, commemorating the birth of Jesus of Nazareth. Although the exact date of his birth is not known, it has been celebrated on December 25th by the Western (Roman Catholic) Church since 336 A.D.



William the Conqueror

December 25, 1066 - William the Conqueror was crowned King of England after he had

invaded England from France, defeated and killed King Harold at the Battle of Hastings, then marched on London.

December 25, 1926 - Hirohito became Emperor of Japan.

December 25, 1989 - In Romania, a television broadcast of a Christmas symphony was interrupted with the announcement that Nicolae Ceausescu and his wife had been executed following a popular uprising. A pro-democracy coalition then took control. Ceausescu, a hard-line Communist, had been ousted from power after ordering his black-shirted state police to suppress a disturbance in the town of Timisorara, resulting in the deaths of an estimated 4,500 persons.

Birthdays - Isaac Newton (1642-1727) was born in Woolsthorpe, Lincolnshire, England. He was a mathematician, scientist and author, best known for his work Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica on the theory of gravitation. He died in London and was the first scientist to be honored with burial in Westminster Abbey.

Birthdays - American nurse and philanthropist Clara Barton (1821-1912) was born in Oxford, Massachusetts. She served as a nurse during the Civil War and in 1881 founded the American Red Cross.

Birthdays - The founder of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Mohammed Ali Jinnah (1876-1948) was born in Karachi.

## December 26

December 26, 2004 - An estimated 230,000 persons were killed and 1.5 million left homeless when a magnitude 9.3 earthquake on the seafloor of the Indian Ocean set off a series of giant tsunami waves that smashed into the shorelines of a dozen countries including Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, India and Somalia.



Mao Tse-Tung

Birthdays - Mao Tse-Tung (1893-1976) was born in Hunan Province, China. He was a Chinese librarian, teacher, communist revolutionist,

considered the "founding father" of the People's Republic of China.

## December 27



Josef Stalin

December 27, 1927 - Josef Stalin consolidated his power in Soviet Russia by expelling rival Leon Trotsky from the Soviet Communist Party.

December 27, 1945 - The International Monetary Fund was established in Washington, D.C.

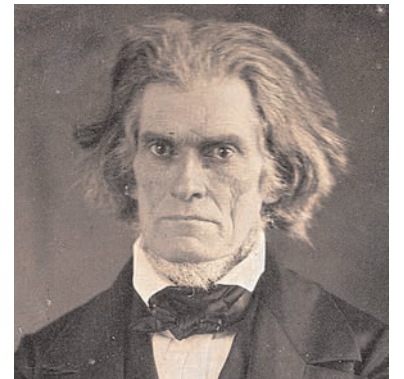
December 27, 1949 - The Dutch transferred sovereignty of Indonesia to the new United States of Indonesia. The new nation retained a formal association with the Netherlands until 1954, when an independent Republic of Indonesia was formed. Indonesia is the largest country in Southeast Asia. It consists of 13,677 islands along the equator between the Indian and Pacific oceans, and a population of over 150 million.

December 27, 1996 - A genocide trial began concerning the killing of an estimated 800,000 Tutsis in Rwanda. In 1994, a bloody civil war had broken out between the two main ethnic groups, the Hutu and the Tutsi. After the Hutu army seized power it had waged a campaign of "ethnic cleansing" against the Tutsi population.

Birthdays - French chemist-bacteriologist Louis Pasteur (1822-1895) was born in Dole, France. He developed the pasteurization process to kill harmful bacteria with heat and found ways of preventing silkworm disease, anthrax, chicken cholera, and rabies.

Birthdays - Actress Marlene Dietrich (1901-1992) was born in Berlin, Germany. She starred in The Blue Angel, the first 'talkie' made in Germany. She then moved to Hollywood and starred in films including; Destry Rides Again, Touch of Evil, Judgment at Nuremberg and Witness for the Prosecution. In the 1950's she toured the world as a cabaret singer in a stage revue.

## December 28



John C. Calhoun

December 28, 1832 - John C. Calhoun became the first American ever to resign the office of vice president. He served under Presidents John Quincy Adams and Andrew Jackson and resigned after a series of political disagreements with President Jackson. He went on to become a U.S. Senator from South Carolina.

December 28, 1947 - Victor Emmanuel III, the last King of Italy, died while in exile in Alexandria, Egypt. He had become king upon the assassination of his father in 1900. Following World War I, he named Benito Mussolini to form a cabinet and then failed to prevent Mussolini's Fascists from seizing power. In 1946, he abdicated and went into exile.

## December 29



Thomas Becket

December 29, 1170 - Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, was murdered by four knights acting on orders from England's King Henry II.

December 29, 1890 - Members of the U.S. 7th Cavalry massacred more than 200 Native American (Sioux) men, women and children at Wounded Knee Creek, South Dakota.

December 29-30, 1916 - In the waning days of the Romanov dynasty, Russian 'monk' Rasputin (Grigory Yefimovich Novykh) was assassinated. A group of conspirators had lured him to a private home then poisoned and shot him, although he did not die.



## Ramiz Raja removed as Pakistan Cricket Board chairman

Former cricketer Ramiz Raja has been removed as chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) by the country's government, which has appointed a 14-member committee, headed by Najam Sethi, to run the affairs of the game for the next four months.



The Pakistan government, through a notification late on Wednesday, removed Raja following the team's 3-0 whitewash by England in the Test series.

The notification, issued by Pakistan Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif, has to be approved by the federal cabinet, which is just a formality.

The developments on Wednesday, December 21, confirmed speculation that Sharif, who is the patron-in-chief of the PCB, had decided to appoint Sethi as the new chairman of the country's cricket body.

Raja served as PCB chairman for 15 months after he was appointed by former premier Imran Khan to head the board in September 2021.

Raja had taken over as the 36th chairman of the PCB after his predecessor Ehsan Mani had stepped down from the post. He was the fourth former cricketer to be appointed to the post after Ijaz Butt (2008-11), Javed Burki (1994-95) and Abdul Hafeez Kardar (1972-77).

Sethi was the chairman and CEO of the PCB from 2013-2018 and resigned soon after Imran and his party won the 2018 general election.

There was, however, no official word from the PCB or Raja on the latest developments days before the Test series against New Zealand, beginning in Karachi on December 26.

The notification states that the PM has "reviewed" the 2014 constitution of the PCB and abolished the existing constitution made in 2019.

As per the notification, Sethi will head the management committee that includes former Pakistan players Shahid Afridi, Haroon Rasheed, Shafqat Rana, and former women's team captain Sana Mir.

Source: PTI

# Old guards open door to victory

MIRPUR (TIP)

India seamer Umesh Yadav and off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin claimed four wickets apiece as the tourists bowled out Bangladesh for a below-par 227 on the opening day of the second and final Test here on December 22.

India, pressing for a 2-0 series sweep, finished the day on 19 for no loss with stand-in skipper KL Rahul (3) and Shubman Gill (14) seeing off the final eight overs.

Rahul had been given lbw to Shakib Al Hasan but the batsman reviewed the decision which was overturned after replays confirmed the ball would have missed the stumps.

Bangladesh's modest total was built around former captain Mominul Haque's gritty 84 in his first match of the series.

On a day when several batsmen squandered starts, Haque was the glorious exception who dug his heels in and kept the scoreboard ticking. Bangladesh lost both of their openers in the morning session after Shakib won the toss and elected to bat at the Shere Bangla National Stadium.

India sprang a surprise by dropping spinner Kuldeep Yadav, whose match-haul of eight wickets in their comprehensive victory in Chittagong earned him the Player of the Match award.

Jaydev Unadkat was picked instead and the left-arm seamer,



India's Umesh Yadav (centre) celebrates dismissing Bangladesh's captain Shakib Al Hasan with his teammates. photos: AP/PTI

playing in his second Test 12 years after his first, drew first blood by removing Zakir Hasan for 15.

Zakir, who smashed a century in his Test debut in Chittagong, could have been dismissed for a golden duck but Mohammed Siraj dropped him in the deep in the second over of the day.

Najmul Hossain (24) was trapped lbw by Ashwin (4/71) after offering no shot to a ball which rapped him below the knee roll.

Shakib (16) survived a stumping opportunity before lunch but could not capitalise on it and fell to the first ball after the break.

Mushfiqur Rahim (26) fell to

Unadkat and Litton Das made a run-a-ball 25 before chipping an Ashwin delivery to Rahul at midwicket.

Yadav (4/25) dented the Bangladesh lower-order and Ashwin removed Haque and Khaled Ahmed in the space of three balls as Bangladesh wilted in 74 overs. Haque, who relinquished the captaincy in May after overseeing a string of defeats, hit 12 fours and a six before his bizarre dismissal. The No. 3 batsman lunged forward but then decided to leave the ball from Ashwin which brushed his glove on the way to Rishabh Pant behind the wicket.

Source: Reuters

# Argentina's FIFA World Cup winners arrive home to hero's welcome

BUENOS AIRES (TIP)

Thousands of ecstatic fans gave Argentina's football squad a hero's welcome in Buenos Aires in the early hours before dawn on Tuesday, December 20, after the plane carrying Lionel Messi and his World Cup-winning team mates touched down at Ezeiza airport.

The Argentine capital has been in party mode since their dramatic victory over France in Sunday's final in Qatar, which gave the country its first World Cup win since Diego Maradona hoisted the trophy 36 years ago.

The players, wearing their gold winners' medals around their necks and taking turns to hold the World Cup trophy aloft, waved at fans from an open-top bus as the lights from thousands of mobile phones sparkled and flags fluttered in the crowd.

Joyous fans sang to the beat of a drum and fireworks lit up the sky as the bus slowly wound its way through the crowd.

The players are expected to spend a few hours at the Argentine Football Association (AFA) facilities near the airport before heading at noon to the huge Obelisco monument in the center of town.

"Good morning!" Messi said on Tuesday in an Instagram post in which he could be seen sleeping in his room at the AFA complex next to the golden trophy.

Local media estimated that there were already more than 100,000 people waiting for the players at the Obelisco by mid-morning, with more crowds joining from streets on all sides.

Thousands had tracked the plane, the state airline Aerolineas Argentinas AR1915, all the way from Doha and a stop-off in Rome.

Argentina beat France 4-2 on penalties after a scintillating 3-3 draw, with Messi scoring twice and France's Kylian Mbappe netting three times. Messi, 35, said the final would be his last match in the World Cup, though he intends to play a few more games for the national side. Source: Reuters



Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni and Lionel Messi with the FIFA World Cup trophy during the teams arrival at Ezeiza International Airport. Reuters





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