



The INDIAN PANORAMA

WWW.THEINDIANPANORAMA.NEWS



EVER TRUTHFUL

PANORAMA

1 INDIAN AMERICAN WEEKLY : SINCE 2006

17th year

VOL 17 ISSUE 49 • NEW YORK / DALLAS • DEC 15 - 21, 2023

ENQUIRIES: 646-247-9458 • info@theindianpanorama.com

The INDIAN PANORAMA
EVER TRUTHFUL

Will bring out a SPECIAL profusely illustrated NEW YEAR EDITION on Friday, December 29, 2023.

Advertisements and articles may please be emailed by December 20, 2023 to editor@theindianpanorama.news

For any queries, please email to salujaindra@gmail.com or call at 646-247-9458.

Visit www.theindianpanorama.news

Former Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, three veteran diplomats honored with 2023 Diwali 'Power of One' Awards at UN

"THE IDEALS OF DIWALI ARE THE IDEALS OF UN CHARTER" : CHAIR OF DIWALI FOUNDATION USA RANJU BATRA

DECEMBER 12, 2023

UNITED NATIONS (TIP): Former UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and three veteran diplomats were honored with the annual 'Diwali Power of One Awards', hailed as the 'Oscars of diplomacy', for their selfless efforts to "help form a more perfect, peaceful, and secure world for all".

The former UN chief was honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2023 Diwali Stamp - The Power of One Award ceremony organized by the Diwali Foundation USA.

The other awardees for the year 2023 are former permanent representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the UN Ambassador Mirsada Colakovic, former permanent representative of South



Former Secretary General Ban Ki-moon receiving the "Power of One" award from Chair of Diwali Foundation USA Ranju Batra. Also seen is Ravi Batra (extreme right)

Photo : Mohammed Jaffer / SnapsIndia

CONTD ON PAGE 6

GIULIANI ORDERED TO PAY \$148 MILLION IN DAMAGES TO TWO GEORGIA ELECTION WORKERS



Rudy Giuliani gets another blow with the Jury awarding \$148 million in damages to Georgia election workers over his 2020 vote lies. CNN Screenshot

DECEMBER 15, 2023

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): A jury awarded \$148 million in damages on Friday, December 15, to two former Georgia election workers who sued Rudy Giuliani for defamation over lies he spread about them in 2020 that upended their lives with racist threats and harassment, according to media reports.

The damages verdict follows emotional testimony from Wandrea "Shaye" Moss and her mother, Ruby Freeman, who tearfully described becoming the target of a false conspiracy theory pushed by Giuliani and other Republicans as they tried to keep then-President Donald Trump in power after he lost the 2020 election.

There was an audible gasp in the courtroom when the jury foreperson read aloud the \$75 million award in punitive damages for the women.

CONTD ON PAGE 36

India must address US concerns on murder plot against Gurpatwant Pannun, say 5 Indian-American US Lawmakers

White House gives classified briefing on alleged murder plot



Indian American US Representatives Ro Khanna, Pramila Jayapal, Shri Thanedar, Ami Bera and Raja Krishnamoorthi have warned of significant damage to the US-India partnership if the Pannun murder plot issue is not "appropriately addressed". -File photo

I.S. SALUJA

DECEMBER 15, 2023

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): Indian-American U.S. lawmakers have expressed deep concern over an Indian being charged with an alleged plot to kill Khalistani Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, an American-Canadian citizen.

CONTD ON PAGE 36

Parliament security breach: Intruder Sagar Sharma talked about 'dying for nation' in his diary; mastermind Lalit Jha sent to 7-day police custody

DECEMBER 15, 2023

LUCKNOW (TIP):

Sagar Sharma, one of the two men who had jumped into the Lok Sabha chamber and set off smoke canisters, maintained for some years a diary in which he often wrote "Inquilab Zindabad" on top of the page and at one stage talked about "dying for the nation".



Parliament security breach mastermind Lalit Jha (left) and another accused Sagar Sharma. -Photo / courtesy Tribune

"I have given my life to the nation. I have taken a step towards freedom. Now the turn will come to die for the nation. I have already rested a lot," he wrote in Hindi on June 13, 2015.

Sharma (28), a resident of Ramnagar in Lucknow, maintained the diary from 2015 to 2021, keeping it along with his books that included crime novels and a Hindi translation of Adolf Hitler's Mein Kampf, police officials said.

CONTD ON PAGE 36

Expedia Cruises
Air, Land & Sea Vacations

AMAZING DUBAI
07 Days / 06 Night
From June 24, 2023 to June 30, 2023

Inclusions
06 Night accommodation
5* Hotel on double sharing basis
Half Board 6 Breakfast and 6 Dinners
Round Trip Dubai Airport Transfers
Dubai city tour, Dubai Mall, Fountain Show
Dubai Aquarium and under water zoo.
Visit to Burj Khalifa (124th Floor)
Desert Safari with dinner and Belly Dance
5 Star Marina cruise with dinner
Museum of the Future,
Abu Dhabi city tour with Lunch
Fujairah Day Trip
Dubai Frame
Miracle Garden

DOUBLE OCCUPANCY
\$ 749/- per person

SINGLE OCCUPANCY
\$ 999/- per person

Exclusion
Air Fare (but can be added)
Tips for guides, drivers and porters.
Personal Expenses
Anything that is not specified.
Travel Insurance not included but highly recommended.

BEST PRICE

More info 516-690-1257 / 516-988-7593 msingh@expediacruz.com / msmigliani22@gmail.com Mohinder Singh Miglani 22w Marele St. Hicksville, NY 11801

OMNI MORTGAGE CORP.
Residential | Commercial | SBA Loans

Andy Singh 516-441-7000
16 E. Old Country Road
Hicksville, NY 11801
E-mail: herman@omnimortgage.com

Herman Singh 718-441-7000
118-18 101 Avenue
Richmond Hill, NY 11419
Registered Mortgage Broker- NYS Dept of Financial Services
Loans arranged thru 3rd party providers

The INDIAN PANORAMA
EVER TRUTHFUL**PRESIDENT/PUBLISHER:**

Prof. Indrajit S. Saluja

VICE PRESIDENT:

Chitagam Saluja

CHIEF EDITOR:

Prof Indrajit S. Saluja

CONSULTING EDITOR :

Deepak Dwivedi Chairman,

Editor-In-Chief

Blitz India Media Group

ASSISTANT EDITOR:

Bidisha Roy

SPL. REPORTER UNO:

H.S. Panaser

GRAPHICS DIRECTOR:

Om Parkash Malik

DIRECTOR**ADMINISTRATION:**

Gauri Beri

CONTRIBUTING**PHOTOGRAPHERS:**

Baldev Singh / BJ Videos

Gunjesh Desai / Masala Junction

Jay Mandal,

Mohammad Jaffer,

SnapsIndia

Mohammad Shahzad,

Zia Khan,

Nisha Rani

Vaaho Photographers,

Vijay Shah - Photo Journalist.

CORRESPONDENTS :**SACRAMENTO:**

Parminder S. Aujla

NEW YORK :

Chitagam

FRESNO:

Tarlochan Singh

DALLAS:

Harjit Dhesi, Amarjit Dhillon

OVERSEAS CORRESPONDENTS**LONDON**

Nirpal Singh Shergill

SPL CORRESPONDENT**DELHI BUREAU CHIEF:**

Chandan Singh

CHANDIGARH:

Manjit Sidhu

LUDHIANA:

A.S. Arora,

R.P.Sharma

JAIPUR :

Dr. Yashpaul Goyal

DALLAS BUREAU CHIEF & VP

Lovliien Kaurr

972-330-3139

editor@theindianpanorama.news

The Indian Panorama

P.O. Box No. 190067, South

Richmond Hill, NY 11419,

Tel: 646-247-9458

Email:

editor@theindianpanorama.news

DISCLAIMER

THE INDIAN PANORAMA ASSUMES NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CLAIMS MADE IN ADVERTISEMENTS. WE ONLY SELL SPACE. VIEWS PUBLISHED IN THE NEWSPAPER ARE THOSE OF THE AUTHORS AND DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THE VIEWS OF THE NEWSPAPER. ALL RIGHTS ARE RESERVED. REPRODUCTION IN WHOLE OR IN PART WITHOUT PERMISSION IN WRITING FROM THE INDIAN PANORAMA IS PROHIBITED.

GUEST COMMENT

Principled shift: On India's stand on Gaza

India must take a more vocal position on Gaza with Israel

Two months after Israel's bombardment of Gaza residents in retaliation for the October 7 terror attacks by Hamas began, India joined its voice to the global call to stop the bombing, voting in favor of a resolution at the UN General Assembly (UNGA) along with 152 other nations. The resolution demanded an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, an observance of international humanitarian law, the unconditional release of all hostages, as well as "ensuring humanitarian access". India's vote was a shift from its previous vote at the last such UNGA resolution on October 27, when despite the death of 8,000 Gazans, India had decided to abstain from voting for a resolution that called for a ceasefire. The government and the MEA explained this to be a matter of principle, as part of India's "zero-tolerance" approach towards terrorism, as the earlier resolution did not contain an "explicit condemnation" of the October 7 attacks. However, while

the UNGA resolution passed on December 12 bears no direct mention of the terror attacks, India has voted in favor. Although the government has yet to detail the rationale, there could be several reasons: casualty figures have risen relentlessly, with 18,000 dead and the highest such toll of nearly 90 journalists. More than 80% of the entire population is homeless. Even the U.S., Israel's biggest ally, estimates that nearly half of the 29,000 air-to-ground munitions deployed by Israel thus far are "unguided" or indiscriminate missiles. Second, Israeli Defense Forces have gone far beyond their original mandate of eliminating Hamas capacity and freeing the hostages to a large-scale flattening of Gaza and forced occupation of more territory. More than 100 Israeli hostages remain in Hamas custody. Third, global opinion, including Indian public opinion, has moved decidedly from sympathy with Israel, to horror at the unfolding aftermath, and New Delhi

could not have been immune to entreaties by Palestine and the Gulf States to take a relook at its vote, even as India stood isolated in South Asia and the Global South for its previous abstention.

It may be too early to see India's UNGA vote as a reversal of its earlier position and a reversion to its original position in the conflict, where it has traditionally called for peace. Much will depend on the role India chooses for itself in ensuring the ceasefire is effected and holds, given that Israel has already rejected the UNGA resolution. Having proven its credentials as a friend to Israel following the terror attacks, as well as the odium of enabling the civilian deaths, the Modi government must be more vocal in helping the Netanyahu government out of the strategic cul de sac it has bombarded its way into, one which could cause regional instability and insecurity for decades.

(The Hindu)

FUND CRUNCH : CENTRE MUST LIBERALLY AID PUNJAB IN ITS DRUG FIGHT

At the first National Conference of Heads of Anti-Narcotics Task Force of States and Union Territories held in April, Union Home Minister Amit Shah outlined the broad set of strategies to achieve the goal of making India drug-free by 2047. Among the impressive plans, the need for all states to fight the battle in a coordinated manner, rising above politics, stood out. Towards this end, he advised the states to optimally use not only the central funds available for narcotics control but also those from the police modernization kitty to carry out narco-related upgradation of forensic science laboratories.

However, the ground reality points to disparity in the grant of funds in the past five years. Punjab, Delhi and Chhattisgarh - all non-BJP-ruled states - were deprived of grants for narcotics control during this period, as per data shared in Parliament. Haryana and Himachal Pradesh got substantial amounts to tackle the drug menace, even though Punjab, being a border state, is more vulnerable to narco-terror. This is amply clear from the grim statistics of 2022 - after Kerala, Punjab saw the second highest number of arrests under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act.

Punjab should step up efforts to secure its due share of the central funds, while the Centre must loosen its purse strings for this endeavor. It will give a much-needed boost to the multi-pronged fight against the menace. The combat encompasses a slew of activities, ranging from catching the drug lords to rehabilitating the unfortunate youth addicted to substance abuse and scientifically disposing of the huge amounts of drugs seized by various agencies. Funds are the key to the success of any anti-drug campaign.

(Tribune, India)

SECURITY BREACH: TAKE EXEMPLARY ACTION AGAINST MP, HOUSE STAFF

Less than three months after hosting its first House session, the new Parliament complex witnessed a major security breach when two intruders jumped into the Lok Sabha hall from the visitors' gallery and opened smoke canisters. Even more shocking was their audacity to cause chaos in the House on the 22nd anniversary of the 2001 Parliament terror attack, which had claimed the lives of nine securitymen and staff. The Lok Sabha Secretariat has suspended eight security personnel for lapses, even as a probe has been initiated on the orders of the Ministry of Home Affairs. The intruders and their accomplices have been arrested and booked under the anti-terror law UAPA (Unlawful Activities Prevention Act).

The incident has glaringly exposed the vulnerability of the parliamentary security system, which needs to be dismantled and replaced with a professional force. The intruders had gained access to the gallery through visitor passes arranged by BJP MP Pratap Simha. Parliamentarians invariably entertain requests for such passes from members of their constituencies. As per the Parliament rulebook, the MP has to certify that 'the visitor is my relation/personal friend/known to me personally and I take full responsibility for her/him'. It is apparent that due diligence was not exercised by the MP and his personal staff while processing applications.

That the duo managed to sneak in

smoke canisters shows criminal laxity. The security gaps, if not plugged at the earliest, can be exploited by terror groups and other anti-India elements - to the detriment of national security. The entry of visitors needs to be tightly regulated, even as all MPs and their staff must closely scrutinize every application they receive. There should be zero tolerance to any lawmaker's irresponsible conduct that imperils Parliament's physical or digital security. Trinamool Congress MP Mahua Moitra was recently expelled from the Lok Sabha for sharing her parliamentary login with an unauthorized person. Exemplary action should be taken against Simha as well.

(Tribune, India)

Mazi Melesa Pilip is Republican Nominee for NY Congressional District 3 Special Election



Nassau County Legislator Mazi Melesa Pilip is the Republican nominee for the Feb. 13 election to replace George Santos

DECEMBER 14, 2023

GREAT NECK, NY (TIP) : Nassau County Republicans have chosen Legislator Mazi Melesa Pilip as their nominee in the Feb. 13 special election to replace George Santos.

Pilip will be facing former Rep. Tom Suozzi (D-Glen Cove), who held the seat from 2017 to 2023.

Pilip is Jewish, and originally from Ethiopia. She emigrated to Israel and served in the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) before coming to the United States.

Pilip won election to the Nassau County Legislature in 2021 and won re-election for the seat in November.

"Mazi Pilip is a formidable candidate with a unique biography: a former IDF paratrooper and mother of seven," National Republican Congressional Committee Chairman Richard Hudson said in a statement. Mazi's incredible life of service stands in stark contrast to career politician Tom Suozzi, who uses his office to make life better for himself instead of his community. With Mazi in Congress, Long Islanders will have a representative who stands up to the extreme Hochul-Suozzi agenda making New York less safe and more expensive."

Although she holds office as a Republican, Politico reported that she has been a registered Democrat since 2012.

Kim Devlin, an advisor for Suozzi's campaign, did not mention Pilip in response to Republicans choosing her.

"People are sick and tired of the circus in Congress," Devlin said. "Tom Suozzi has a proven record that he will work every day to try and bring common sense back to Washington by working across party lines, like he's always done. His focus is on helping families get ahead, improving veteran health care, cleaning our air and water, and protecting our suburban quality of life."

Legislators-Elect Davis and Koslow Ring in Holiday Season At Nassau Coliseum Toys for Tots Drive



Photos by Peter M. Budraitis

DECEMBER 10, 2023

UNIONDALE, N.Y. (TIP): Nassau County Legislators-Elect Scott Davis (D-Rockville Centre) and Seth Koslow (D-Merrick) rang in the holiday season at one of the nation's largest one-day Toys for Tots collection drives, which was held outside Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum on Sunday, Dec. 3.

Undeterred by steady, cold rainfall throughout the morning, a steady stream of donors contributed more than 150,000 individual donations during the event, which was launched 13 years ago by Glen Cove's Joe LaPadula and Jon Holzer of Martino Auto Concepts with support from Nassau County Legislature

Minority Leader-Elect Delia DeRiggi-Whitton (D - Glen Cove). The rain-soaked 13th annual edition of this event was presented by Glen Cove-based not-for-profit First City Project and supported an array of corporate and community sponsors, many of whom are from the automotive world.

With the culmination of the holiday season fast approaching, Legislators-Elect Davis and Koslow are working with community leaders in their forthcoming districts to identify families and agencies that would benefit from Toys for Tots contributions.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

new jersey performing arts center
njpac



the nutcracker

The State Ballet Theatre of Ukraine
Sun, Dec 17 @ 3PM

A magical classic for all ages! The State Ballet Theatre of Ukraine transports you to a dazzling winter wonderland.



the hip hop nutcracker

with MC Kurtis Blow
Sat, Dec 23 @ 2 & 7:30PM

NJPAC's original holiday extravaganza remixes and reimagines Tchaikovsky's ballet with supercharged hip hop choreography.



cirque dreams holidayze

Dec 26 @ 7PM
Cirque Dreams Holidayze lights up the 2023 holiday season with its popular and electrifying stage spectacular!



paw patrol live!

The Great Pirate Adventure
Fri, Dec 29 @ 10AM, 2PM & 6PM
Sat, Dec 30 @ 10AM & 2PM
Bring the kids to see their favorite characters from Nickelodeon's PAW Patrol live onstage in The Great Pirate Adventure.



Stephanie Mills & The Whispers
Jan 13

tickets make great gifts!

Give them an experience you know they will love!

Here's a sample of the exciting events coming up in the new year:

- JAN 13 Stephanie Mills & The Whispers
- JAN 21 Cinderella The State Ballet Theatre of Ukraine
- MAR 9 Kristin Chenoweth
- MAR 10 John Mellencamp
- MAR 15 Nickel Creek
- MAR 16 Blippi The Wonderful World Tour

All dates, times and artists are subject to change.

Horizon music & comedy

M&T Bank dance series

Generous support for The Hip Hop Nutcracker is provided by the Smart Family Foundation/David S. Stone, Esq., Stone & Magnanini.

Indian American Hari Choudhari wins UK's prestigious 2024 Marshall Scholarship



Hari Choudhari, a student of International Politics with minors in History and German at Georgetown University is among the 51 winners of the prestigious 2024 Marshall Scholarship

DECEMBER 13, 2023

LONDON (TIP): An Indian-origin student is among the 51 winners of the prestigious 2024 Marshall Scholarship, which selects American scholars to pursue their graduate education at any university in the UK.

Bengaluru-born Hari Choudhari, a student of International Politics with minors in History and German at Georgetown University, will begin his graduate studies in September 2004 under the program that saw 1006 applications from across the US this year.

As a Marshall Scholar, he will study Conflict Transformation and Social Justice at Queen's University Belfast, followed by an MSc in Global Leadership and Peacebuilding at King's College London.

"I am so proud that this year's set of Marshall Scholars represent the diversity and richness of our region," said Emma Wade Smith, Trade Commissioner for North America and British Consul General in New York, announcing the scholarships on Monday.

"From science and mathematics to linguistics, artificial intelligence, energy and sustainability, migration studies, these young leaders have already impressed with their robust academic training; and they have demonstrated real promise in terms of their career trajectories," Smith added.

Currently, Hari has been involved in multiple internships over the course of his college career, including the Center for Cross-Border Studies in Northern Ireland and the Meridian International Center.

He is currently a Virtual Student Federal Service (VSFS) intern with the Political Section at the US Consulate-General in Munich, Germany and will be interning in Congress with the House Committee on Foreign Affairs next semester.

His research on German security policy was published by the American-German Institute.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

India Association of Los Angeles (IALA) elects new executive members for 2023-2024

December 13, 2023

LOS ANGELES (TIP): The India Association of Los Angeles (IALA) has elected its executive committee for the year 2023-2024 with Sunil Agrawal as the new president and Pramesh Shah as the executive VP.

A noted IT consultant, Agrawal brings more than two decades of community service experience to the role. He previously served as President in 2018-19 and Chairman in 2019-2020.

Agrawal has made significant contributions to the community, including hosting premieres of movies such as "The Kashmir Files," "The Vaccine War," and "The Elevator" in Los Angeles, according to a press release.

Additionally, he organized the widely acclaimed "Koun Banega Ramayan Expert" events in 2006 and 2008, engaging thousands of children across the USA. As a founding trustee of the Dharma Civilization Foundation since 2012, the press release said, he continues to play a pivotal role in shaping cultural initiatives.

Other members of the 17-member Executive Committee are:

Secretary, Kiran Kamboj; Joint Secretary, Dhara Patel; Treasurer, Rajni Thakkar; VP Finance, Robin Paik, VP Publicity, Navdeep Singh; VP Cultural Affairs, Hezal Shah; VP Public Relations: Shamsheer Sidhu; VP Youth Affairs,



IALA Executive

Ramesh Bramharouthu; and VP Health, Bama Sridhar.

Rajesh Khandelwal, Manisha Makwana, Mohinder Kaur, Promilla Sahni and Vasu Pawar were elected Executive Members

Since 1999, IALA has been organizing the India Independence Day Mela, drawing over 10,000 attendees, predominantly from the Indian community. This celebration provides a platform for community talent to

showcase their skills.

As part of India's Republic Day celebrations, IALA is organizing a cultural extravaganza and premier event on Feb 3, 2024 with fashion show, music melody and spectacular dance performances by professional artists.

Dr K Srikar Reddy, Consul General of India, San Francisco, would be the chief guest for the event at Arbat Banquet Hall, 711 S San Fernando Blvd, Burbank, CA 91502.

Indian-origin motel owner shot dead by homeless trespasser in North Carolina



Satyen Naik was shot dead by a homeless trespasser

his own life, police said.

Satyen Naik was discovered with a gunshot wound outside the motel when police arrived on the scene on Wednesday.

"Just after 10, the 911 center received a call about an individual trespassing at the Hostess House," said Newport Police Chief Keith Lewis.

"A disturbance was heard in the background, and just following that a second call was received that an individual had been shot. Within moments officers arrived on scene," The media quoted Lewis as saying.

Once Naik was safely away from the building, emergency personnel took him to Carteret Health Care to receive medical attention. He was later pronounced dead.

"It's a family-owned business and he operated this business daily with his family," Lewis said.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

DECEMBER 8, 2023

NEWPORT CITY, NC

(TIP): A 46-year-old Indian-origin motel owner in Newport city in the US state of North Carolina was shot dead by a homeless trespasser, who barricaded himself inside a room at the property before taking

Sikh truck driver flees to India after he gets 15 years' jail for smuggling 80kg cocaine in Canada

A Canada-wide arrest warrant has been issued against Raj Kumar Mehmi from Surrey after he was sentenced in November



Raj Kumar Mehmi from Surrey fled to India after he gets 15 years in jail for smuggling 80kg cocaine
Photo: @IANS/X

DECEMBER 14, 2023

SURREY, B.C. (TIP): A Canada-wide arrest warrant has been issued against a 60-year-old Sikh truck driver in British Columbia province who fled to India after he was sentenced to 15 years in prison for drug trafficking.

Raj Kumar Mehmi from Surrey was sentenced in November for smuggling 80 kg of cocaine into British Columbia, through the Canada-US Pacific Highway border crossing.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

Indian American author Maya Ajmera inducted into American Academy of Arts and Sciences

DECEMBER 12, 2023

NEW YORK (TIP): Maya Ajmera, Indian American President and CEO of Society for Science and Executive Publisher of Science News has been inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Ajmera was elected in 2022, with 269 other accomplished individuals, drawn from academia, the arts, industry, policy, research and science, and include more than 40 International Honorary Members from 23 countries, according to a media release.

"I am so honored to be inducted into American Academy of Arts and Sciences with such luminary individuals," said Ajmera on her induction on Sep 30. "I look forward to working with the Academy members to address some of the most pressing issues facing our world."

In 1780, the Academy's founders envisioned an organization that would recognize accomplished individuals and engage them in addressing the greatest challenges facing the young nation.

The first members included Benjamin Franklin and George Washington. The members elected in 2022 also include historian Heather Cox Richardson, novelist Salman Rushdie and New York Times critic Wesley Morris.

Prior to joining Society for Science,



Maya Ajmera has been inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Ajmera founded the Global Fund for Children (GFC), a nonprofit a nonprofit organization that invests in innovative, community-based organizations working with some of the world's most vulnerable children and youth, according to her official profile.

Under Ajmera's 18 years of leadership, GFC grew from a vision into one of the largest networks of grassroots organizations working on behalf of vulnerable children.

Ajmera served as the inaugural Social Entrepreneur in Residence for Duke University and Visiting Professor for the Practice of Public Policy at The Sanford School of Public Policy at Duke.

She was a Visiting Scholar and Professorial Lecturer at The Paul H.

Nitze School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) at Johns Hopkins University and continues to serve as an adjunct on the faculty of the International Development Program.

She is also an award-winning children's book author of more than 20 titles, including Back to School, Every Breath We Take, Children from Australia to Zimbabwe and To Be a Kid, with more than 5 million readers worldwide.

Ajmera is the recipient of the 2020 National Science Board Public Service Award, recognized for her tremendous contribution to increasing the public's understanding of science and engineering.

She is also a recipient of the Henry Crown Fellowship at the Aspen Institute, the Echoing Green Fellowship, the William C. Friday Fellowship for Human Relations and the Rotary International Graduate Fellowship.

Ajmera is a board member for Echoing Green, Kids in Need of Defense, Sibley Memorial Hospital/Johns Hopkins Medicine and the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics Foundation.

She holds an AB from Bryn Mawr College and an M.P.P. from The Sanford School of Public Policy at Duke University.

Indian American entrepreneur Manoj Bhargava named interim CEO of Sports Illustrated



Manoj Bhargava has been named interim CEO of Arena group, publisher of Sports Illustrated

DECEMBER 13, 2023

NEW YORK (TIP): Indian American entrepreneur Manoj Bhargava has been named interim CEO of Arena group, publisher of Sports Illustrated just weeks after the magazine was accused of publishing articles generated by artificial intelligence.

He replaces Ross Levinsohn, who was terminated "to improve the operational efficiency and revenue" of the company, Arena Group announced Dec 11.

Bhargava's appointment comes amid a wider purge of a number of senior executives including operations president and COO Andrew Kraft at the company since the scandal broke.

Bhargava is founder and CEO of Innovations Ventures, the company known for producing the 5-hour Energy drink. He bought a majority stake in Arena Group, publisher of more than 265 brands, including Sports Illustrated, TheStreet, Parade Media, Men's Journal, and HubPages, in August.

Bhargava has "experience in media and a track record for strong branding, and has made his fortune selling the popular caffeine brand," Forbes then noted.

The Lucknow-born Bhargava moved with his family to the US as a teenager, settling in a poor Philadelphia neighborhood, The Wall Street Journal said in a November 2015 profile.

He attended the prestigious Hill School, prior to enrolling at Princeton. But he never earned a college degree. He dropped out and, after holding a string of odd jobs, returned to India to become a monk.

This is where his "real education began," he told The Journal. After more than a decade at the monastery, he moved back permanently to the US. He worked a number of odd jobs ranging from a taxi driver to a printing press operator.

It was in 1990 that he would start his first company, a plastics company, that he built and sold to a private equity firm.

In 2004, Bhargava was at a trade show and came across an energy drink. He dreamed of an energy drink without sugar, unknown stimulants, and with less fluid ounces.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

Indian American medical student Rijul Maini crowned Miss India USA 2023



Rijul Maini has been crowned Miss India USA 2023

DECEMBER 12, 2023

EDISON, NJ (TIP): Rijul Maini, an Indian American medical student from Michigan, has been crowned Miss India USA 2023 at the annual pageant held in New Jersey. Greeshma Bhat of Virginia was declared first runner-up and Ishita Pai Raikar of

North Carolina was the second runner-up. During the event, Sneha Nambiar from Massachusetts was declared as Mrs. India USA and Saloni Rammohan from Pennsylvania won the title of Miss Teen India USA. Maini, 24, a medical student and model, aspires to be a surgeon and hopes to serve as a role model to women everywhere, a press release said.

"I am a third year medical student in MSUCOM's class of 2025. This summer, after taking boards, I was able to participate in the Miss India Michigan 2023 pageant. I thought it would be something fun to do before starting hospital rotations," Maini wrote on X, formerly Twitter.

"It is so exciting to have won the title! I have always been a fan of fashion, art, and beauty, so to be able to celebrate those interests along with medical school has been a blessing," she wrote. "Congratulations to MSUCOM student Rijul Maini for winning the title of Miss India Michigan 2023!" MSU College of Osteopathic Medicine@MSU_Osteopathic posted.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

Indian-origin hotel owners arrested for hiding two fugitives 'hide out room'

Dakshaben Patel and Harshil Patel charged with making false reports to police officers, a felony

DECEMBER 15, 2023

DALLAS (TIP): Two Indian-origin hotel owners in the US state of Tennessee have been arrested in the US for allegedly lying to the police about the whereabouts of two fugitives who were hiding inside their building, according to media reports.

Dakshaben Patel and Harshil Patel, who own the Super 8 and Mountain Inn in Monteagle, were arrested on Tuesday, Fox News reported.

They allegedly lied to police about the whereabouts of wanted individuals during an investigation on July 18, the Monteagle Police Department said.

Two officers had been conducting surveillance on the rear of the hotel due to "high drug transition" in the area and spotted two individuals on a balcony, police said. The officers identified the individuals as having felony warrants out of Franklin County.

Investigators later found that the hotel had a "hide-out room on the corner of the building" and determined that was where the fugitives had been living, police said.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)



Dakshaben Patel and Harshil Patel arrested in Monteagle, Tennessee for hiding two fugitives

Photo for representation / iStock

Former Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, three veteran diplomats honored with 2023 Diwali 'Power of One' Awards at UN



Former Secretary General Ban Ki-moon addressing the gathering after receiving the award. Seen, among others, are India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj (extreme left) , Ranju Batra (4th from left), and Ravi Batra (behind Mr. Ban Ki-moon)

Photo : Mohammed Jaffer / SnapsIndia



Awardees and organizers of Power of One Awards

Photo : Mohammed Jaffer / SnapsIndia

CONTD FROM PAGE 1

Korea to the UN Ambassador Kim Sook and 72nd UN General Assembly president and EU Special Representative for the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue Miroslav Lajcak.

They were honored at a special ceremony held in the UN Headquarters on Monday, December 11.

Ban commended the work and "forward-thinking vision" of the Diwali Foundation USA "for advancing vital light in a world of increasing darkness".

Ban said the world of today "seems fractured like never before" as he cited the COVID-19 pandemic, climate crisis and regional conflicts, particularly "regional crisis as we see today in the Middle East and Ukraine".

"But it is exactly at times such as these that the work of the United Nations is indispensable. The United Nations and its pursuit of peace, human rights and sustainable development exemplifies the values and principles that we should all espouse to replicate," he said.

Ban was the eighth Secretary-General of the United Nations, serving two terms as the world's top diplomat from January 2007 to December 2016.

He said that as the world moves into 2024 and beyond, "we share a common destiny illuminated by peace, sustainability and prosperity. Let us work together and expand our unified efforts to realize this shared destiny for all. This is your political responsibility and for me, my moral responsibility as a former Secretary General" and as an awardee of the Power of One honor.

India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj, in her address to the event attended by UN diplomats, envoys, civil society members and policy experts, said that Diwali is a celebration that holds a very special place in the hearts of over a billion Indians across the globe.

Diwali "is more than just a festival. It

is a sentiment that embodies the triumph of light over darkness, knowledge over ignorance and hope over despair", she said.

Kamboj said, "as we light the lamps of Diwali, let us remember that every



The traditional lamp lighting . Mr. & Mrs. Ban Ki-moon with organizers of Power of One Award lighting the lamp
Photo : Mohammed Jaffer / SnapsIndia

small light, no matter how small, can make a significant difference in dispelling the shadows". Sri Lanka's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Mohan Pieris said "Deepawali has become truly a secular festival in the world, since its message is not exclusively restricted to any religious creed.

"This festival has united the global community with the central message that we need more than ever the humanistic ideals to engage the inglorious wars, which are bleeding the innocence of humanity," he said.

Pieris underscored that for the world to have peace, it is important that the whole world must be united to save the higher ideals of humanity, which have evolved since the millennium in various religious traditions.

Chair of Diwali Foundation USA Ranju Batra, who had spearheaded efforts for over seven years to get a

commemorative 'Forever Diwali' stamp issued by the US Postal Service in 2016, said: "Diwali is a message of peace." She said her journey for the Diwali stamp is seen as a "metaphor of peace and harnessing its power to promote



excellence in diplomacy. The ideals of Diwali are the ideals of UN Charter".

She noted that the 2023 Power of One awardees have clearly demonstrated that "one person can make a difference".

The Diwali stamp celebration is not of a religion or nation but of the spirit of harmonious inclusiveness and cross-cultural understanding that all religions deserve, she said.

Eminent Indian-American attorney and Chair of National Advisory Council South Asian Affairs and moderator of the award ceremony Ravi Batra said the UN transcends borders and boundaries.

"The need to acknowledge excellence is critical, generally, but in diplomacy, which is on life support in today's world, it is essential and that's how these awards are - the Power of One," he said, adding that they honor "world class diplomats who have changed the world by what they did".

Hailed as the 'Oscars of Diplomacy', the awards are presented to former Permanent Representatives or former high-level members of the UN Secretariat or member state, or soon to be "former", who have "toiled selflessly to help form a more perfect, peaceful and secure world for all".

The 2023 Award ceremony was co-organized by the Diwali Foundation USA and Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, and the Permanent Missions of Chile, Eritrea, Georgia, India, Kazakhstan, Kiribati, Morocco, Oman and Sri Lanka to the United Nations.

The co-sponsors included the Permanent Mission to the United Nations of Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bhutan, Cyprus, France, Germany, Ghana, Hungary, Iraq, Israel, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Mexico, Nepal, Philippines, South Korea, South Africa, Spain, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkiye, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States, Uzbekistan, Vietnam and Palestine, and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA-NY) among others.

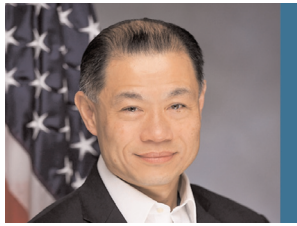
Diwali Foundation USA was established in 2017 to promote a peaceful and consensus-based process to achieve societal "good, as befits the high hopes and ideals of humanity enshrined in the United Nations Charter".

The Foundation established 'The Power of One' awards to celebrate and highlight the important work done in a peaceful manner, especially at the United Nations.

Previous honorees include former UN assistant secretary general and deputy executive director of UN Women, Lakshmi Puri, former UK Ambassador to the UN, Matthew Rycroft, former permanent representative of Georgia to the UN, Kaha Imnadze, and former permanent representative of Grenada to the UN Keisha McGuire.

(Source: PTI)

SENATOR LIU TO HOST JOLLYFEST HOLIDAY PARADE IN FLUSHING



New York State Senator John Liu

DECEMBER 12, 2023

FLUSHING, NY (TIP): In celebration of the holiday season, Senator John Liu will kick off his inaugural Jollyfest Holiday Parade in downtown Flushing. The event will take place on Sunday, December 17, 2023. Children and families are invited to attend and march in the parade where kids will receive a free holiday hat and register for a toy giveaway while supplies last. The parade will feature antique cars, marching bands, community organizations, and several opening ceremony performances.

Senator John Liu stated, "The holidays are here and we're kicking off the season with our first Jollyfest Parade in downtown Flushing to give children in our community a chance to celebrate with friends, family, and lots of community spirit. We hope all will come out to take part in this community parade, and enjoy this celebration of the holidays together."

The event is being organized in conjunction with Better Chinatown Society, Tangram, Flushing Business Improvement District, and NYPD. The parade will begin at Main Street and Franklin Avenue in Flushing where children are asked to register to march in the parade as well as for a toy giveaway at the parade's conclusion at Tangram mall, located at 133-33 39th Ave., Flushing.

GANDHIAN SOCIETY AND NYC DISCUSS LANDMARK MUSEUM COLLABORATION

DECEMBER 15, 2023

NEW YORK, NY (TIP): In a historic meeting today, Gandhian Society board members Sravan Natakala and founder Bhadra Butala met with New York City officials to discuss exciting collaboration opportunities towards peace, nonviolence, and social justice. The meeting included Deputy Commissioner for International Affairs Dilip Chauhan and Commissioner Edward Mermelstein, who expressed the City's full support for a groundbreaking initiative: a permanent museum dedicated to the life and legacies of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr.

"This potential partnership represents a monumental step forward in promoting the values of peace and equality that both Gandhi and King championed," said Sravan Natakala, Gandhian Society board member. "By showcasing their shared message of nonviolent resistance and social justice, this museum would serve as a beacon of inspiration for generations to come."

The proposed museum would be a first-of-its-kind institution, offering a unique platform for education, dialogue, and action. It would delve into the remarkable lives of Gandhi and King, highlighting their unwavering commitment to justice and their transformative impact on the world stage.

"We are honored by the City's enthusiastic support for this important initiative," said Bhadra Butala, founder of the Gandhian Society. "A permanent museum in New York City would not only celebrate the legacies of Gandhi and King, but also inspire future generations to embrace their principles and strive for a more just and peaceful world." Both the Gandhian Society and New York City officials are committed to moving forward with this ambitious project. A follow-up meeting is scheduled to finalize the details of collaboration and set the stage for the museum's development.

About the Gandhian Society: The Gandhian Society is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting the principles of Mahatma Gandhi in the United States. Through education, dialogue, and community service, the Society fosters understanding and appreciation for Gandhi's message of nonviolence, truth, and social justice.

Srinu Maddula, Eye Foundation of America board member offers a matching donation of \$250,000

DECEMBER 15, 2023

NEW YORK (TIP): Since EFA is not hosting an in-person event this year, Mr. Maddula graciously offered a matching donation of \$250,000. This act of generosity will significantly enhance our ability to continue providing vital eye care services, a press release from the Eye Foundation of America said.



Srinu Maddula is a regular donor to the Eye Foundation of America

TO CONTRIBUTE TO THIS MEANINGFUL CAUSE, WE INVITE YOU TO MAKE A TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATION:

1. By check, save on fees!
2. Directly online by visiting <https://eyefoundationofamerica.org>

CHECKS MAY BE SENT TO THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS:

Eye Foundation of America
695 Westview Avenue
Morgantown, WV 26505

Your friendship and commitment have been instrumental in advancing our shared vision of creating a World Without Childhood Blindness.

Thank you once again for your generosity and continued partnership.

COMPLETING ONE YEAR,
ALOTUSINTHEMUD.COM IS SET TO GROW
AND CURATE MORE USEFUL CONTENT FOR YOU.

THANK YOU, READERS, DONORS AND SUPPORTERS.

ALOTUSINTHEMUD.COM IS A NOT-FOR-PROFIT ONLINE MAGAZINE FOR WELLNESS, AS WELL AS PERSONAL AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH. TO GIVE A TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATION, CLICK ON THE DONATE BUTTON IN THE FOOTER OF THE WEBSITE, OR CONTACT PARVEEN CHOPRA - PH: +1 516 710 0508, EMAIL: LOTUS4USA@GMAIL.COM.

ATLAS ROLL OFF CORP.

DISPOSAL SITE

OPEN Monday - Friday 6.30 AM to 4.00 PM
Saturday 6.30 AM to 1.30 PM

For construction Debris, Demolition & Cleanouts

Located at 895 Essex Street, Brooklyn, NY 11208
Just 5 minutes from JFK

Roll Off Container Service

10, 15, 20, 30 & 40 Yards

Serving all the five boroughs of New York Since 1983
NYC BIC LIC #711

Reasonable low rates ** All major credit cards accepted

Call @ 718-345-6451

Seal of approval on Art 370 abrogation

Various stakeholders should make efforts to rebuild J&K as a full-fledged state



BY RAKESH DWIVEDI

"THE VERDICT IS HISTORIC AS IT AIMS TO RECTIFY PAST BLUNDERS, SUCH AS APPOINTING LORD MOUNTBATTEN CHAIRMAN OF THE DEFENSE COMMITTEE AT THE START OF THE 1947-48 KASHMIR WAR, WHEN THE ARMY GENERALS ON BOTH SIDES (INDIA AND PAKISTAN) WERE BRITISH; REFERRING THE MATTER TO THE UNITED NATIONS; ACCEPTING A CEASEFIRE WHEN THE INDIAN ARMY WAS IN A WINNING POSITION; AND FINALLY, ACCEPTING A PLEBISCITE PROPOSAL ON MOUNTBATTEN'S ADVICE. ARTICLE 370 WAS IN CONTINUATION OF THESE BLUNDERS. EVEN THOUGH THE ARTICLE WAS INSERTED AS A TEMPORARY PROVISION TO ENABLE FULL FEDERALIZATION ON A PAR WITH OTHER STATES, THE PROVISION WAS KEPT ALIVE, LEADING TO CALLS FOR A SETTLEMENT WITH PAKISTAN AND THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE HURRIYAT CONFERENCE. AND IN THIS BACKDROP, TERRORISM TOOK ROOT. IT WAS ON AUGUST 5, 2019, THAT THE MODI GOVERNMENT SCRAPPED ARTICLE 370; THIS LED TO LITIGATION CHALLENGING THE CONSTITUTIONAL VALIDITY OF THE DECISION."



The Supreme Court has rightly upheld the Centre's decision to scrap J&K's special status.

Photo / ANI

In a landmark verdict, the Supreme Court upheld the Centre's decision to abrogate Article 370 of the Constitution. The judgment put the judicial seal of approval on the proclamations issued by the President over four years ago that not only de-operationalized Article 370 but also applied provisions of the Constitution to Jammu and Kashmir as are applicable to other states. It also affirmed the proclamation under Article 356 and the creation of the UT of Ladakh. The court allowed the UT of Jammu and Kashmir to continue as such for some time in view of the Solicitor General's statement that withdrawal of statehood was a temporary measure.

Justice Kaul has recommended the constitution of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission for giving a hearing to the people of J&K.

The lead judgment was authored by Chief Justice of India (CJI) DY Chandrachud on behalf of himself, Justice Surya Kant and Justice BR Gavai. Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul and Justice Sanjiv Khanna concurred with the judgment.

The verdict is historic as it aims to rectify past blunders, such as appointing Lord Mountbatten Chairman of the Defense Committee at the start of the 1947-48 Kashmir war, when the Army Generals on both sides (India and Pakistan) were British; referring the matter to the United Nations; accepting a ceasefire when the Indian Army was in a winning position; and finally, accepting a plebiscite proposal on Mountbatten's advice. Article 370 was in continuation of these blunders. Even though the Article was inserted as a temporary

provision to enable full federalization on a par with other states, the provision was kept alive, leading to calls for a settlement with Pakistan and the involvement of the Hurriyat Conference. And in this backdrop, terrorism took root. It was on August 5, 2019, that the Modi government scrapped Article 370; this led to litigation challenging the constitutional validity of the decision.

A major issue was whether Article 370 was permanent and could not be abrogated. One contention was that it was the result of a formal compact. The court negated the contention and held that in view of its locus in the Constitution and the marginal note, Article 370 was a temporary provision. Its objective was to gradually bring J&K on a par with other states. The court referred to a series of previous orders issued by the President to apply more and more provisions of the Constitution to J&K and said that those orders also supported the inference that Article 370 was temporary.

Another major contention was that Maharaja Hari Singh, while acceding on three subjects, had reserved residuary sovereignty, and the J&K Constitution was a product of a sovereign J&K Constituent Assembly; hence, the President's order could not abrogate Article 370 so as to annul the J&K Constitution. This, too, did not find favor with the court. The CJI stated that after the execution of the Instrument of Accession and the issuance of the proclamation of November 1949, the state of J&K became fully integrated with India and was part of its territory; thus, no sovereignty was left with Yuvraj Karan Singh. The J&K Constitution

was held to be subservient to the Constitution of India and would, therefore, automatically get erased upon abrogation of Article 370. Justice Kaul accepted that there was some internal sovereignty left with J&K, but agreed that this would stand terminated upon the issuance of the proclamation by the President under Article 370(3). This provision does not require any consultation with the J&K government, and the proviso about the recommendation of the J&K Constituent Assembly ceased after its dissolution. But the cessation of the Constituent Assembly did not have the effect of taking away the power of the President in the main part. So, the President validly issued the impugned constitutional orders (272 and 273). He could order the application of all provisions of the Constitution to J&K.

The court also upheld the proclamation under Article 356, while accepting that it was subject to judicial review on the grounds mentioned in the SR Bommai case. The court noted that none of the proclamations could be said to be issued mala fide. The court, however, struck down paragraph 2 of constitutional order 272, which sought to amend the proviso to Article 370 by substituting the Legislative Assembly of J&K for the Constituent Assembly, saying that such an amendment was not permissible. This would have no impact on the abrogation proclamation as that was sustainable under Article 370(3) itself.

Citing Article 3 of the Constitution, the court upheld the creation of the UT of Ladakh, but it left open the question of law about the conversion of a state in view of the basic features of federalism and representative democracy, even as the Solicitor General stated that the deprivation was temporary and statehood of J&K would be restored soon. The court directed holding of elections by September 2024 and restoration of statehood at the earliest.

Justice Kaul, who hails from J&K, wrote an interesting epilogue recommending the constitution of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission on the pattern of South Africa or some such mechanism, wherein people of J&K could be given a hearing in order to resolve their grievances. This was a recommendatory observation, which was not echoed by other judges.

It is hoped that various stakeholders would accept the new situation and move on to rebuild J&K as a full-fledged state like the others, with citizens enjoying constitutional rights.

(The author is a Senior Advocate, Supreme Court of India)

Challenge for India to align policies with COP28 outcomes

THE KEY EXISTENTIAL NEED IS TO MOVE AWAY FROM COAL TO RENEWABLES. TO BE ABLE TO DO SO, DEVELOPING NATIONS WILL NEED FINANCE THAT MUST NOT ADD TO THEIR DEBT BURDEN



BY SUBIR ROY

"The final outcome, thrashed out during the conference which went into overtime, does, however, represent a small step forward that needs to be noted. The unanimous decision at the conference was to begin reducing the global consumption of fossil fuels and achieve net-zero by 2050, the first such binding decision ever taken. This signals the eventual demise of the age of fossil fuels - coal, oil and gas. It, thereby, sends a key signal to policymakers, including those in India, who have been somewhat brazenly continuing with policies to support investment in coal, to change tack. It also sends signals to coal investors to get out as quickly as they can and make no further commitments, irrespective of any contrary signals from policymakers."

How useful has COP28, the Conference of the Parties held in Dubai, been in taking forward the initiative which began with the 2015 Paris Agreement to address climate change, its mitigation and adaptation and securing the finance needed for the whole process? Typically, a lot of the right kind of noises have been made, as also promises to deliver, while seeking to leave commitments as open-ended as possible so that short-term national imperatives can be addressed even while working on and swearing allegiance to

the overall goals.

The final outcome, thrashed out during the conference which went into overtime, does, however, represent a small step forward that needs to be noted. The unanimous decision at the conference was to begin reducing the global consumption of fossil fuels and achieve net-zero by 2050, the first such binding decision ever taken. This signals the eventual demise of the age of fossil fuels - coal, oil and gas. It, thereby, sends a key signal to policymakers, including those in India, who have been somewhat brazenly continuing with policies to support investment in coal, to change tack. It also sends signals to coal investors to get out as quickly as they can and make no further commitments, irrespective of any contrary signals from policymakers.

The member countries also reached a historic agreement to triple renewable energy capacity globally by 2030, again a decision which has run counter to the Indian position. The timeline, barely seven years away, is important as India and China, the two large economies with rapidly rising emission levels, had decided early during the conference to stay out of such an agreement to mitigate present climate trends by tripling the world's renewable energy output and doubling energy efficiency by that date. This is despite 118 countries agreeing to join the pact.

The International Energy Agency says the tripling is needed to keep in sight the goal of driving down the demand for fossil fuels and keeping global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels by the end of the century. The focus of action will be on phasing out coal-fired power plants and curbing the use of oil and gas.

Should Indian policymakers see these outcomes as somewhat excessively binding, they have reason to be happy about one key decision which emerged early during the two weeks over which the conference lasted. A 'loss and damage' fund to help vulnerable countries cope with the impact of climate change will be created. This is the right thing to do, but the giveaway is the size, albeit initial, of the fund - a mere \$475 million, with the US commitment being just \$17.5 million. This needs to be set against the \$525 billion combined loss that the 55 most vulnerable countries have suffered from climate change in the last 20 years. The loss will reach \$580 billion by 2030.

Of course, further contributions will come as the work of the fund, to be initially overseen by the World Bank, progresses. It will help poor countries cope with the cascading effects of climate change, such as rising sea levels, floods, droughts and cyclones. The moral



The advisory panel for COP28 has recommended a two-pronged strategy - tax polluting activities and cut fossil fuel subsidies

justification for asking for such a fund is that the rich countries, whose industrial growth since 1850 resulted in greenhouse gas accumulation, global warming and the climate crisis, should now help the poor countries, who are the most vulnerable victims, combat it.

India's approach so far has been that without making any fresh commitment, it wishes to abide by the nationally determined targets it has already announced. In journeying towards that, a sea change will come in sectors like steelmaking, vehicles design and manufacturing, building design and construction processes, not to speak of cookstoves used by households. The drive towards using more clean energy will affect businesses of all sizes, ranging from micro, small and medium enterprises to large corporates.

What is critical is that the investment to enable this energy transition needs to be forthcoming. At present, investment in the fossil fuel sector continues to outstrip that directed towards promoting a clean economy. An advisory panel for COP28 has recommended that a two-pronged strategy be adopted - tax polluting activities and cut fossil fuel subsidies. One area where carbon taxes can be introduced relatively smoothly is transportation - maritime and aviation. But overall, cutting subsidies where they are deeply entrenched will be politically challenging. Farmers will not like fertilizer subsidy to be cut and it will need a brave state government to go back on supplying free a minimum load of electricity to every household.

A particular culprit, a term the panel did not explicitly use, is large oil and gas companies which have made windfall profits from the quick rise in energy prices as a result of the Ukraine war. But

it will be difficult to put a punitive tax on them as many of them are either state-owned (like Coal India, NTPC and West Asian giants) or have political clout, like those in the US.

Overall, the key global existential need is to move away from coal to renewables. Rich countries that have moved away from coal to natural gas are balking at helping the rest of the world do so. Hence, coal is the whipping boy, but it is also the fuel used by countries which have not moved to gas, which is somewhat cleaner. To be able to do so, developing countries will need finance that must not add to their debt burden.

What are the corrective measures that Indian policymakers will have to take in view of the conference's outcomes? They will have to speed up the creation of greater capacity of renewable energy like solar and wind power. There is much talk about producing hydrogen of various hues, but it is worth remembering that the only hydrogen which passes muster is green hydrogen that is made from renewable energy itself. Besides, huge battery banks will have to be set up and transmission lines strengthened so that wind and solar power can be transmitted from areas where they can be produced to those which are deficient in the necessary climatic and geographical requirements.

COP28 has forged a global consensus on the path the planet must take to save itself. This has posed a double challenge for a country like India, which has to both grow rapidly to overcome poverty as also do away with an abundant natural source of energy like coal. If India's politicians do not rise to this challenge, they risk pulling both themselves and the country down.

(The author is a Senior economic analyst)

More grave than the attack 22 years ago

THIS TIME, THE DELINQUENTS MANAGED TO REACH THE VIRTUAL HEART OF PARLIAMENT WHILE THE PROCEEDINGS WERE GOING ON IN THE LOK SABHA



BY VAPPALA
BALACHANDRAN

"OFFICIALLY, THE NEW BUILDING'S FIVE-TIER SECURITY IS FOOLPROOF: VISITORS' ENTRY IS THROUGH THE 'RECEPTION' NEAR THE RAIL BHAVAN. ALSO, VERIFICATION OF CREDENTIALS IS DONE AT THE SECURITY POST ON RAISINA ROAD BEFORE THEY REACH THE 'RECEPTION'. THERE IS A STIPULATION THAT BEFORE ENTERING, ALL ELECTRONIC GADGETS, BAGS AND WALLETS MUST BE DEPOSITED IN A DESIGNATED CLOAK ROOM. THE VISITORS ARE SCREENED AT THE RECEPTION, THEIR PASSES ARE VERIFIED AGAIN, AND THEY ARE CHECKED AGAIN NEAR THE ENTRY GATE OF THE NEW BUILDING. THE VISITORS ARE THEN GROUPED INTO THOSE GOING TO THE LOK SABHA OR THE RAJYA SABHA AND CHECKED AGAIN AT TWO GATES. BEFORE ENTERING THE RESPECTIVE VISITORS' GALLERIES, THEY ARE CHECKED ONCE MORE."



The new Parliament building's five-tier security is supposed to be foolproof.

Photo / X (formerly Twitter)

There is an important difference between the Pakistan-sponsored terror attack on Parliament on December 13, 2001, and the intrusion into the new Parliament building by miscreants on December 13, 2023. This time, the delinquents managed to reach the virtual heart of Parliament while the proceedings were going on in the Lok Sabha. That makes the incident much more serious than the one in 2001, when terrorists could not enter the building.

In 2001, the terrorists were fortuitously intercepted by an alert security officer in charge of the escort vehicle of the Vice-President, whereas on Wednesday the security staff was blissfully unaware of the intruders' presence, putting the onus of resistance on the MPs. Remarkably, the security personnel were not spotted when the miscreants started spraying gas from canisters hidden in their shoes.

Also, the intruders seemed to have taken advantage of the layout of the complex, jumping into the Lok Sabha hall quite easily from the visitors' gallery. The distance between the gallery and the hall seems to have been reduced in the new building, going by what some MPs said immediately after the incident. Another important point revealed by them was that the new system of entry into the building through a single access point as against three or four entry points in the old building seemed to have burdened the security apparatus.

That perhaps might have been the reason why the miscreants could hide the canisters in their shoes despite the much-touted five-tier security system in the new building. We can only imagine the horror that could have happened had they carried grenades instead of gas

canisters. This incident was somewhat like what happened at Raj Ghat on October 2, 1986. Several VIPs, including the President, the Prime Minister and MPs had been saved, not by their security staff, but only because Karamjit Singh - an assailant who had hidden himself in tree branches despite a prior intelligence alert - possessed only a primitive muzzle-loading gun. Like in 1986, we cannot depend on providence for our VIP security.

In 2001, according to the Supreme Court's records, a white Ambassador car with a red beacon on top entered the Parliament complex around 11:30 am and arrived at the point where the convoy of the Vice-President was waiting near Gate No. 11. Inside the car were persons dressed in some sort of uniform. Since the escort vehicle was blocking its way, the suspect car turned away. This made the ASI in charge of the Vice-President's escort vehicle suspicious and he told the car driver to stop.

Instead, the driver reversed the vehicle and tried to move away. In the process, it hit the Vice-President's car. The ASI and the Vice-President's driver ran towards the suspect car and caught hold of the driver by the collar. Five Pakistani terrorists then got out of the car and started laying wires and detonators.

Seeing this, the ASI fired a shot, hitting the leg of one of the terrorists. The terrorist fired back, injuring the ASI in his right thigh. This exchange of fire alerted the police and special forces in the Parliament complex and a gunbattle started. The terrorists went from gate to gate within the complex, firing at the security men, and the latter returned fire.

Then BJP MP Ram Naik had told the media that there were three gates: Gate No. 12, through which the Vice-President - who is also the Rajya Sabha chairman - entered; Gate No. 1, from where the MPs usually came in; and Gate No. 5, from where the Prime Minister entered. He said the terrorists fired at all these three gates but could not enter the building as CRPF constable Kamlesh Kumari Yadav had closed the main entrance. According to reports, she died after being hit by 11 bullets.

None of this happened on Wednesday. The entry of the offenders was smooth. After the incident, several complaints were made by Opposition members: the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Security has not been constituted during the 17th Lok Sabha; there is 'political bias' in issuing visitor passes; there is increased presence of private security guards, who have allegedly replaced official parliamentary security guards and Central police forces in the new building.

Officially, the new building's five-tier security is foolproof: Visitors' entry is through the 'reception' near the Rail Bhavan. Also, verification of credentials is done at the security post on Raisina Road before they reach the 'reception'. There is a stipulation that before entering, all electronic gadgets, bags and wallets must be deposited in a designated cloak room. The visitors are screened at the reception, their passes are verified again, and they are checked again near the entry gate of the new building. The visitors are then grouped into those going to the Lok Sabha or the Rajya Sabha and checked again at two gates. Before entering the respective visitors' galleries, they are checked once more.

None of this prevented the entry of these determined intruders. This audacious security breach, which comes weeks after Sikhs for Justice founder Gurpatwant Singh Pannun's threat to Air India, speaks very poorly of the overall security of our sensitive institutions. Did our security managers assume that only Air India needed to be protected after that threat?

Any student of terrorism history would know that terrorists often change tactics to cause confusion. After the 26/11 attacks in 2008, we were getting ready to face fidayeen strikes while the terrorists reverted to improvised explosive devices and killed 21 people at three places in Mumbai in July 2011.

(The author is a former Special Secretary, Cabinet Secretariat, government of India)

Mahatma Gandhi's Bust unveiled in Livingstone, Guatemala: A Symbol of Peace and Inspiration



Ambassador Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra and Mayor Daniel Esaú Pinto Peña unveiling Mahatma Gandhi Bust in Livingstone, Guatemala

DECEMBER 11, 2023

GUATEMALA CITY (TIP): In a poignant ceremony on December 6, 2023, Ambassador Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra, in collaboration with Mayor Daniel Esaú Pinto Peña of Livingstone, unveiled the bust of Mahatma Gandhi in Livingstone. The ceremony was attended by members of the Indian diaspora, local dignitaries, and residents of Livingstone, creating an atmosphere of unity and shared heritage. As the bust stands as a beacon of inspiration, it is expected to become a focal point for fostering dialogue and understanding between the diverse communities residing in Livingstone.

Mahatma Gandhi, the towering figure of India's independence movement, is revered globally for his philosophy of non-violence and his role in inspiring movements for civil rights and freedom across the world. The decision to install the busts in different



Ambassador Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra spoke about the profound impact of Gandhi's teachings on the global stage.

cities of Guatemala reflects the universal appeal of Gandhi's principles and their relevance beyond geographical boundaries.

Livingstone, home to approximately 150 families of Indian origin, holds a unique cultural connection with India. The presence of a bust of Mahatma Gandhi in this city not only symbolizes the shared values of peace and non-violence but also pays tribute to the Indian

diaspora's contributions to the local community.

The unveiling ceremony was marked by a spirit of friendship and cultural exchange, with Ambassador Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra expressing the profound impact of Gandhi's teachings on the global stage. Mayor Daniel Esaú Pinto Peña echoed these sentiments, recognizing the significance of Gandhi's legacy in promoting harmony and unity.



Members of Indian community, local Guatemalans and friends of India attended the event in large numbers

This unveiling follows the installation of the first Mahatma Gandhi bust earlier in the year at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs office in Guatemala City which was unveiled by Hon'ble Minister of State H.E. Ms. Meenakshi Lekhi and Hon'ble Foreign Minister of Guatemala H.E. Mr. Mario Búcaro. The unveiling of these two busts in Guatemala is a celebration of the enduring values of peace, harmony, and justice. It is a testament to the strong cultural ties between India and Guatemala, encapsulating the spirit of friendship and mutual respect that characterizes the diplomatic relations between the two nations.

Republic of El Salvador and Lakshmi Capital sign Letter of Intent for Metro line project in El Salvador



The ceremony was graced by Ambassador Dr Manoj Kumar Mohapatra, Vice Minister of Transport Nelson Reyes and other dignitaries

DECEMBER 11, 2023

GUATEMALA CITY (TIP): In a significant stride toward strengthening infrastructure and economic development in El Salvador, Lakshmi Capital, a Finance Company, and the Ministry of Public Works and Transportation of the Republic of El Salvador signed a Letter of Intent in San Salvador on 4th December 2023. The signing ceremony, graced by the presence of Ambassador of India in Guatemala, Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra, underscores the commitment to initiate a transformative project - the development of a metro line in San Salvador. The metro line project aims to invigorate the economy and modernize transportation infrastructure in the country. Following a comprehensive pre-feasibility study, the decision was made to embark on the creation



Minister Romeo Rodríguez of Ministry of Public Works, El Salvador and Mr. Russell Alexander Luther Rodas of Laxmi Capital with the signed copies of Letter of Intent

of a subway system in San Salvador, leveraging international investment for optimal outcomes.

The Ministry of Public Works and Transportation will play a pivotal role by providing pre-feasibility analyses, designs, legal frameworks, and mechanisms essential for the successful implementation of the project. Lakshmi Capital, in turn, will contribute technical expertise and investment mechanisms to facilitate the development, construction, implementation, operation, management, and maintenance of the Massive Transport System of Passengers in the Metropolitan Area of San Salvador.

Laxmi Capital is the first non-bank financial company with capital of Indian origin to facilitate the development of energy, digital transformation, transportation, infrastructure and industrial projects. It is at the forefront of transforming the landscape of cross-border investments between India and Central America by ensuring the smooth availability of



Seen in the picture are Ambassador Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra, Vice-Minister of Transport Nelson Reyes and other dignitaries

working capital for the region. Lakshmi Capital is committed to delivering cutting-edge technology from India to facilitate the successful implementation of projects across various industries in the region.

The Letter of Intent was signed between Minister Romeo Rodríguez of Ministry of Public Works, Government of Republic of El Salvador and Transportation and Mr. Russell Alexander Luther Rodas of Laxmi Capital in the presence of Vice Minister of Transport Mr. Nelson Reyes. The event formalizes the shared commitment of both entities to work collaboratively within the regulatory framework of El Salvador. The project aims to enhance the public transport system in the metropolitan area, fostering economic growth and improving road safety.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

Tom Suozzi is poised to win the New York District 3 special election in February

BY PROF. INDRAJIT SALUJA AND PARVEEN CHOPRA

The early bird gets the worm, goes the saying. Indeed, even as Republicans took time to announce their candidate for the seat in New York that fell vacant by the expulsion from Congress of the disgraced George Santos, Democrat Tom Suozzi hit the ground running. So, the former Nassau County Executive and three-term Congressman (2017-2022) who represented the same District 3, has placed himself in a position of advantage.

Announced by New York Governor Kathy Hochul, the special election is scheduled for February 13. District 3 encompasses large parts of Nassau County, and a part of Queens, with a fair proportion of the well-to-do Indian community residing there.

Tom Suozzi gave an exclusive interview last weekend to *The Indian Panorama*. It was his first engagement after the Democratic party nominated him as the ideal candidate to flip the seat. I was particularly impressed with his reply to my question why he chose to seek election to Congress. Here is what he said: *"America is an idea that all men and women are created equal. And if you embrace that, you're just as American as anybody else. And that idea is under threat. One of the reasons I'm getting back into public service is to try and address that threat."*



Mr. Tom Suozzi is not a new face for the voters in NY Congressional District 3, which he represented for three terms from 2017 to 2022.

fought in World War Two as a navigator. Graduating from Harvard Law School, he couldn't get a job at a law firm because nobody liked the Italians after Mussolini teamed up with Hitler. Not disheartened, he went on to get elected as city court judge at age 28.

So, when I think of the Indian American experience, I see the same story and I see the same striving to succeed in their adopted country. You still love your native land, and celebrate the culture, food, and history. But you've adopted the idea of America and made it your own.

America is an idea that all men and women are created equal. And if you embrace that, you're just as American as anybody else. And that idea is under threat. One of the reasons I'm getting back into public service is to try and address that threat. But I've always found that like Italian Americans, and Irish Americans from my mother's side, Indian Americans have that same love of America, that same sense of hard work and opportunity, the same love for their fellow human beings, and the love of family.

I've enjoyed learning about the Indian American community, and its diversity. I've got tremendous friends in the community.

TIP: THE INDIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY HAS DONE VERY WELL FOR THEMSELVES, BUT NOW THEY ARE GETTING WORRIED ABOUT SAFETY AND SECURITY. SOME BELIEVE THAT IT IS THE GOP WHICH IS HARDER ON CRIME. HOW DO YOU ADDRESS THEIR CONCERNS?

TOM SUOZZI: Yes, your community has done spectacularly well. They are hardworking, well-educated, and very entrepreneurial. I'm conscious of their concern. But I want both the Democrats and the Republicans to vote for me as I'm very committed to public safety. The priority of the government is to make sure that the citizenry is safe.

As mayor of the city of Glen Cove, I oversaw the Police Department and we were one of the safest communities in the country. Later, as executive of Nassau County, I ran the 12th largest police department in the country and we were the safest place for over 500,000 people. We saw record crime decreases every year when I was in office.

Later, when I was in Congress, protests against the police erupted in the wake of the horrific murder of George Floyd. Bad behavior by police officers must be called out. But during that same period, I honored police officers from my district for their service. That was not easy to do amid the protests, but I wanted the police to always know that I supported them. We can't let a few bad actors ruin the reputation of the overwhelmingly good police, which is so important to our safety and our quality of life.

TIP: YOU VISITED INDIA AS PART OF A CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION. WHAT WERE YOUR IMPRESSIONS OF THE COUNTRY?



Tom Suozzi with Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi in New Delhi



The interviewer Prof. Indrajit Saluja and the interviewee Mr. Tom Suozzi pose for a photograph .

Photo : Courtesy Parveen Chopra

Then there is the climate crisis and wars in Israel and Ukraine. People look to Washington DC to our leaders, and they say, "What are you doing to address the things I'm concerned about? What are you doing to address the problems that affect my life? All I see you doing is pointing fingers at each other and attacking each other." You know, they (the Republicans) kicked the Speaker out. They can't fund the government, endangering a government shutdown. 'Do nothing Congress' they have turned it into. And people are getting more and more frustrated. Then you had the disgraced George Santos in that seat.

Remember that I have a record of getting things done. I brought money back to the district. I cleaned up the pollution. I helped people with their constituent issues related to the federal government: immigration, Social Security, and healthcare. During COVID-19, I fought for the state and brought more money and aid to New York and our hospitals.

I also have a record of working across party lines. I was on the problem solvers caucus. This race is not going to be just about Democrat versus Republican. If it was, that probably wouldn't be good for me because, as you said, Republicans have been winning on Long Island and I'm a Democrat. But to serve the people I'll work with anybody - Republican, Democrat, or Progressive. I'll try and find common ground. We passed the bipartisan multibillion-dollar infrastructure bill for roads and bridges and trains and airports and the ports.

TIP: THAT IS WHY, MR. SUOZZI, YOU ALWAYS GET THE SUPPORT OF A LARGE MAJORITY OF VOTERS WHO SEE WHAT A CANDIDATE CAN DO FOR THEM RATHER THAN GO BY PARTY AFFILIATION.

TOM SUOZZI: Yes. I think the time is right for that message right now. And it's always been my message and people are hungering for that because every problem we face in the country is complicated. But you cannot solve complicated problems in an environment of fear and anger, where everybody is yelling at each other. You need people of goodwill to sit down across the table to try and find common ground.

TIP: YOU ARE WELL REGARDED BY THE INDIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY IN NASSAU COUNTY.

TOM SUOZZI: I've got a very warm feeling for the Indian Americans starting from my days as Glen Cove Mayor way back in the 1990s. My story is that my father came to the US as a young boy from Italy and became a success story. He went to Fordham University and

HERE ARE EXCERPTS FROM THE INTERVIEW.

TIP: WELCOME, MR. SUOZZI. WE WANT A CONGRESSMAN WHO HAS BEEN AN ACHIEVER, WHO HAS ALREADY DONE A LOT OF WORK FOR HIS CONSTITUENTS. AND WE WANT YOU IN WASHINGTON AGAIN. WE ARE SURE THAT NOTWITHSTANDING THE REPUBLICAN CHALLENGE AND THE FACT THAT LONG ISLAND HAS LARGELY TURNED RED, YOU WILL MAKE SURE THAT A DEMOCRAT REPRESENTS US IN THE US HOUSE. SO, FIRST, TELL OUR READERS WHY YOU THINK YOU ARE THE BEST CANDIDATE FOR THEM.

TOM SUOZZI: For our Indian American constituents, let me first say Namaste, and for the Sikh friends, Sat Sri Akal.

I think that I'm the best person for this job because we've got a lot of distrust that exists in politics these days. And people want someone they feel comfortable with, somebody that they respect, and that they won't be surprised by their behavior.

That's not to say that everybody likes me or likes everything I've done, but at least they know me. And I've got a record of getting things done to help make people's lives better.

People have a sense of dread about what's going on in the world these days. They're concerned about the cost of living. They're concerned about the immigration crisis in America. They're concerned about crime and public safety. A lot of violence has been directed towards turban-wearing American Sikhs, other South Asians, and Asians.

CONTD FROM PAGE 12

TOM SUOZZI: I had a wonderful time during that brief official trip in 2018. We met Prime Minister Narendra Modi. In Delhi, we visited the BAPS temple (Akshardham). Of course, we went to see the Taj Mahal, which I never knew was a Muslim burial site.

I got the impression that India is moving forward very rapidly. I see more and more success there because India has embraced democracy as well as capitalism, the two best systems that can be.

This is what I talk about in America also. Capitalism is taking more people out of poverty and has resulted in more innovation than any system in the world. But its competitive underpinning results in some people doing very well and some others doing very poorly. So, we say, okay, we got another system. It's called democracy, where we set up protections so that nobody is to be relegated to a life of hunger and homelessness. The challenge is, how do you find a balance between these two systems?

Somehow, in recent years and decades in America, the middle class has been hollowed out with more people making tremendous amounts of wealth, and a lot more people not even able to make ends meet. So, we have to do a better job of rebuilding the middle class in America.

I helped pass the bipartisan Chips Act to try and bring semiconductors back to America. We must restart manufacturing items ourselves, and you'll see more supply chains and so on.

TIP: WHAT DO YOU PROMISE TO YOUR CONSTITUENTS IN NY DISTRICT 3? WHY SHOULD THEY VOTE FOR YOU?

TOM SUOZZI: I promise my constituents that I will work as hard as I can. Every single day. I have to try and make their lives better, and to help them solve the problems they face in their lives to the extent that I can. I promise my constituents that I will never embarrass them or make them ashamed that I'm their representative. And I promise them that I will be open and accessible and will treat everyone in my



Tom on the campaign trail. "I promise you that I will be open and accessible and will treat everyone in my constituency as though I was the best friend they ever had".

constituency as though I was the best friend they ever had.

TIP: HOW ARE YOU GETTING THE WORD OUT ABOUT THIS SPECIAL ELECTION, WHICH IS LIKELY TO SEE A LOW TURNOUT, AND GETTING THE VOTE OUT FOR YOU?

TOM SUOZZI: The election is on February 13. So, it's a very short period from now. My campaign has divided the Congressional District of 790,000 people into 16 regions as different regions have different characteristics and different groups of people. For example, in Hicksville, there are a lot of longtime residents as well as a lot of newcomers from India and Pakistan. So, we are going to have outreach to all those different communities.

I have a great advantage, I think, in this race, because I've been around here a long time and because of the good things that I've tried to do, and I have high name recognition. My opponents will spend millions of

dollars trying to make me look bad but because people know me and because of the work we're going to do during this campaign, we'll be able to get people to come out and vote for me.

I take the ground campaign seriously, that's person-to-person, getting people to talk to their friends, relatives, and coworkers to spread the word. And that's going to be a highly organized effort, with some very professional people helping me to pull that together. My team is already in place.

I am confident of winning the race and will restore sanity to Washington.

(Prof Indrajit Saluja is the Editor-in-Chief of The Indian Panorama, and Parveen Chopra, the former editor of The South Asian Times, is the founder-editor of ALotusInTheMud.com)



The Indian Panorama Endorses Tom Suozzi, the Ideal Advocate for NY's 3rd Congressional District



Tom Suozzi is a seasoned politician. What sets him apart is his comprehensive understanding of both local and federal governance, and his supreme desire to serve his constituents as their best friend

X photo

Representing constituents in any congressional district requires a unique blend of experience, dedication, and an unwavering commitment to bettering the lives of those you serve. In the case of New York's 3rd Congressional District, Tom Suozzi emerges as the epitome of a public servant dedicated to the welfare of his constituents.

Suozzi's illustrious career in public service speaks volumes about his suitability for this role. With a rich administrative background as the Mayor of the Town of Glen Cove and Chief Executive of Nassau County, Suozzi brings invaluable hands-on experience in local governance, understanding the pulse of communities, and addressing their needs at the grassroots level.

What sets Suozzi apart is his comprehensive understanding of both local and federal governance. Serving three terms as a Congressman, Suozzi has seamlessly transitioned from local leadership to the national stage. His tenure has been defined by a no-nonsense, result-oriented approach. He has consistently delivered for his constituents, irrespective of partisan divides, emphasizing pragmatic solutions over political posturing.

One of Suozzi's distinctive traits is his commitment to transcending partisan lines.

In an era marked by political polarization, Suozzi's dedication to collaboration and bipartisanship stands as a beacon of hope. He understands that progress often requires a willingness to work across the aisle, forging alliances to achieve tangible results that benefit the lives of those he represents.

Despite the 3rd Congressional District leaning more Republican, Suozzi has earned the trust and admiration of constituents due to his track record. His proven ability to deliver results, coupled with a sincere and tireless approach to addressing community concerns, has garnered widespread support. This support transcends party affiliations, as constituents recognize Suozzi's genuine commitment to their well-being.

The constituents' inclination to re-elect Suozzi is rooted in their belief that he is the embodiment of effective representation. Suozzi's tenure has been characterized by his unwavering dedication to tackling issues that matter most to the people - healthcare accessibility, economic growth, infrastructure development, and education, among others. His ability to translate promises into actionable policies has earned him the faith of those he serves.

Tom Suozzi's re-election to Congress is not merely about rewarding past

accomplishments; it's a testament to the trust and confidence constituents have in his ability to continue championing their causes. His presence in Congress is seen as a crucial asset for the district, a guarantee that their voices will be heard and their concerns will be addressed with diligence and empathy.

In essence, Tom Suozzi's candidacy for the representative of NY's 3rd Congressional District is not just about his impressive resume. It's about recognizing a leader who embodies the essence of public service - a leader who has consistently put the interests of his constituents above partisan politics, delivering tangible results and fostering a sense of unity and progress within the community.

As constituents head to the polls, they carry with them the hope of having a steadfast advocate in Congress, a leader who will tirelessly fight for their interests. Tom Suozzi has proven time and again that he is that leader. His dedication, experience, and bipartisan approach make him the most suitable candidate to continue representing the people of the 3rd Congressional District in Congress.

Therefore, The Indian Panorama is pleased to endorse Tom Suozzi for Congress.

**ROBOCALLS WAKE UP
GOVERNMENT FINALLY**

Around 33 million robocalls are made each day to Americans, according to the National Consumer Law Center (NCLC)-more than 50 billion a year, says a Times report.

Photo for representation

DECEMBER 15, 2023

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP):

Anyone with a mobile phone knows the unpleasant sensation of answering a call from an unfamiliar number only to hear a pre-recorded marketing or scam pitch from a company you have no interest in patronizing. Around 33 million robocalls are made each day to Americans, according to the National Consumer Law Center (NCLC)-more than 50 billion a year, says a Times report.

This is more than just an annoyance; in 2022, around 68 million Americans lost over \$29 billion to scam callers, according to NCLC. These calls also make people less likely to answer their phone or trust valid phone calls they do receive, making the nation's significant telecommunications infrastructure less valuable.

One of the most frustrating things about these calls, says Margot Saunders, senior counsel at NCLC, is that they are largely illegal. Government regulations say that a telemarketing call is only legal to a cell phone or residential line if the recipient of the call has provided "prior express written consent" to that call. (This is similar to rules of the National Do Not Call Registry, though consumers must opt in to that registry through the website of the Federal Trade Commission.) But often, the sellers and the telemarketers calling for them don't have this consent.

The reason they're getting away with continuing to make these calls is that the sellers, often big well-known companies, hire telemarketing firms to make the calls on their behalf. Often, these telemarketing firms buy consumer information-and, they argue, consent-from other companies, in a billion-dollar business called lead generation. Lead generators typically take one agreement from a consumer providing consent and sell that agreement to many different callers and sellers, who themselves resell it to many others. A consumer might have signed up to receive a call from one seller-say a car insurance quote-and then unwittingly clicked a box agreeing to be contacted by hundreds or thousands of companies loosely affiliated with the car insurance company.

(Read full story at
www.theindianpanorama.news)

Inspiring Afternoon with Samosa Caucus Congressmen in Lexington, Massachusetts

DECEMBER 10, 2023

LEXINGTON, MA (TIP): On a rainy yet inspiring afternoon in Lexington, Massachusetts, two esteemed members of the Samosa Caucus, Congressman Shri Thanedar (U.S. Representative from Michigan's 13th Congressional District) and Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi (U.S. Representative for Illinois's 8th Congressional District), captivated a diverse audience with their compelling stories and insights.

Arranged under the guidance of Mr. Ramesh Kapur, President of the US India Security Council, the gathering was hosted and Co-Chaired by Amar and Deepika Sawhney. Additional Co-chairs were Abhishek Singh, Ashok Patel, Vickram Rajadhyaksha, Nar Koppula, Priya Samant, Sanjay Gokhale, and Vivek Sharma, the event provided a warm and welcoming atmosphere for all attendees.

Congressman Thanedar shared his American journey as a young student, bringing with him the aspirations of a bright future. His narrative, a poignant tale of tragedy and triumph, stirred emotions in the audience, showcasing the resilience and determination that propelled him forward. In contrast,



Congressman Shri Thanedar and Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi captivated a diverse audience with their compelling stories and insights.

Congressman Krishnamoorthi stated that his connection with the U.S. dates back to his toddler years, symbolizing the early roots embedded in the American experience. Despite arriving as a three-year-old, his story resonates with a unique blend of cultural heritage and American identity. Adding a touch of humor to the event, Krishnamoorthi shared the entertaining tidbit of coining the term "Samosa Caucus," sparking an uproar

of laughter that echoed through the room.

Both Congressmen transitioned from successful careers in the private sector to roles in public service, united by a shared commitment to serve their communities and contribute to the greater good. Their narratives served as powerful testaments to the opportunities and challenges inherent in the American experience, ultimately reflecting the strength and diversity that define the nation's fabric.

The audience, spanning generations, engaged in a lively Q&A session, covering topics from reconciling the Democratic party on common grounds among members with diverse viewpoints and addressing the mounting U.S. debt to border control, immigration, and funding for arts programs. Even the youngest attendees posed questions about public speaking in a televised setting. Despite time constraints, both Congressmen addressed every query posed by the eager crowd, emphasizing the importance of the upcoming elections and fostering unity. The event left an indelible mark, showcasing the power of community engagement and the shared commitment to shaping a better future.

US reaches H-1B cap for fiscal year 2024

DECEMBER 15, 2023

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): The US has received a sufficient number of petitions needed to reach a cap for the much-sought-after H-1B foreign work visas for the fiscal year 2024, a federal agency has announced.

The H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in speciality occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise. Technology companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from countries like India and China.

US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) in a statement on Thursday, December 14, said it has

received a sufficient number of petitions needed to reach the congressionally mandated 65,000 H-1B visa regular cap and the 20,000 H-1B visa US advanced degree exemption, known as the master's cap, for fiscal year 2024.

The US federal government's fiscal year runs from October 1 to September 30.

"We will send non-selection notices to registrants through their online accounts over the next few days," USCIS said.

USCIS said it will continue to accept and process petitions that are otherwise exempt from the cap.

Petitions filed for current H-1B workers who have been counted previously against the cap and who still retain their cap number are exempt from the FY 2024 H-1B cap.

The federal agency will continue to accept and process petitions filed to extend the amount of time a current H-1B worker may remain in the United States; change the terms of employment for current H-1B workers; allow current H-1B workers to change employers; and allow current H-1B workers to work concurrently in additional H-1B positions.



The US has received a sufficient number of petitions needed to reach a cap for the much-sought-after H-1B foreign work visas for the fiscal year 2024

Photo for representation

IRS reminds taxpayers, Jan. 16 due date for final 2023 quarterly estimated tax payments

DECEMBER 15, 2023

WASHINGTON, D.C.

(TIP): The Internal Revenue Service reminded taxpayers who didn't pay enough tax in 2023 to make

a fourth quarter tax payment on or before Jan. 16 to avoid a possible penalty or tax bill when filing in 2024.

Taxes are normally paid throughout the year by withholding tax from paychecks, by making quarterly estimated tax payments to the IRS or by a combination of both. This is done because taxpayers need to pay most of their tax during the year as income is earned or received.

Who needs to make a payment?

Taxpayers who earn income not subject to tax withholding such as self-employed people or independent contractors should pay their taxes quarterly to the IRS.

In addition, people who owed tax when they filed their current year tax return often find themselves in the same situation again when they file the next year. Taxpayers in this situation normally include:

Those who itemized in the past but are now taking the standard deduction,

Two wage-earner households,
Employees with non-wage sources of income such as dividends,

Those with complex tax situations and/or
Those who failed to increase their tax withholding.

What income is taxable?

The IRS reminds taxpayers that most income is taxable, whether it's unemployment income, refund interest or income from the gig economy and digital assets.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)



Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service

WORLDSTAR ENTERTAINMENT
IN ASSOCIATION WITH **EVENT MASTER**
PRESENTS

Event Master

DJ KUCHA

HOST SHALIN BHANOT

NYE 2024

WITH **AMEESHA PATEL**

M METROPOLITAN

RS

APPETIZERS • DINNER • DESSERT • OPEN BAR • MIDNIGHT CHAMPAGNE TOAST • PARTY GIVEAWAYS

SUN • DECEMBER 31ST, 2023
DOOR OPEN : 7:30PM | PARTY START : 8PM

HILTON GRAND BALLROOM
598 BROAD HOLLOW ROAD MELVILLE, NY 11747-5002

TICKETS @ **Sulekha.com**

SINGLE \$200 VIP (WITH MET'S CREDIT)

SINGLE \$150 REGULAR

\$75 KID'S (8 AND ABOVE)

SCAN TO BUY TICKETS




SHAHEEN

VOSA



हम हिंदुस्तानी

GLOBAL PUNJAB

ਪ੍ਰੀਤਨਾਮਾ

ATIQUE SHEIKH
848-391-2610

ONKAR SINGH
212-300-6511

SHILPA
631-356-3655

NEERU UPPAL
646-239-8980



BJP MLA in UP gets 25 years in jail for raping minor, faces disqualification from Assembly

A court on December 15 sentenced BJP MLA Ramdular Gond to 25 years of rigorous imprisonment for the rape of a girl nine years ago, setting the stage for his disqualification from the Uttar Pradesh Assembly.

According to the Representation of the People Act, a lawmaker sentenced to imprisonment of two years or more shall be disqualified "from the date of such conviction" and remain disqualified for another six years after serving time.

Ahsan Ullah Khan, the additional district and session judge of the MP-MLA court in Sonbhadra, also imposed a fine of Rs 10 lakh on Gond which would be used for the rape survivor's rehabilitation.

Special Public Prosecutor Satyaprakash Tripathi said the court held the MLA from Duddhi assembly constituency guilty on December 12. Before the pronouncement of the verdict, Gond's lawyer urged the court for minimum punishment. He also assured the court that Gond would take complete care of the family of the rape survivor.

Giving detail of the case, Tripathi said the incident took place on November 4, 2014, and a case was registered against Gond under sections 376 (rape), 506 (punishment for criminal intimidation) and 5L/6 of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

KRISHNA JANMABHOOMI CASE

SC declines to stay survey of Shahi Idgah mosque complex

NEW DELHI (TIP)

The Supreme Court on Friday, December 15, refused to stay the survey of the Shahi Eidgah mosque abutting the Krishna Janmabhoomi temple in Mathura, observing that neither is a petition challenging the order of survey before it nor does it consider it necessary to pass a restraining order at this stage.

"At this stage, we won't stay anything. If there is any adverse order, you can come back...Should we be staying a matter without the impugned order being in front of us," a bench of justices Sanjiv Khanna and SVN Bhatti asked senior counsel Huzefa Ahmadi, who appeared for the Uttar Pradesh Sunni Waqf Board and the Eidgah management committee.

Responding, Ahmadi emphasised that the high court must be asked to stay its hands since a related matter has already been listed by the Supreme Court on January 9. "Why should the high court go ahead when the very issue of whether they can proceed with the matter is pending before this court?" asked Ahmadi.

By an order on November 10, the Supreme Court fixed January 9 for considering the objections of the Eidgah committee and UP Sunni Waqf Board to the high court order deciding to hear nearly 18 suits relating to Krishna Janmasthan-Shahi Eidgah land dispute by transferring them to itself from various civil courts in Mathura.

However, the high court on Thursday went ahead and directed the appointment of an advocate-commissioner to oversee the survey of the mosque, which Hindu petitioners say holds signs proving that it was a once a Hindu temple, opening a new chapter in the decades-old dispute that is part of a raft of cases where Hindu petitioners are pushing for legal change to gain rights over Islamic holy sites.

To be sure, there has been no stay order by the apex court against the proceedings before the high court.

Ahmadi, challenging the Thursday high court order, urged the Supreme bench to issue a restraining order to stop the high court from going ahead with the procedural directions regarding the survey on December 18 when the matter will be heard next.

But the top court was not in favour of this. The bench only recorded in its order that the hearing in the Supreme Court is fixed on January 9 and that in case the petitioners have any grievance against a particular order, it was open for them to file an appropriate petition.



"We are not staying anything. What we have recorded is good enough. You bring this order to the notice of the high court. That's it. We won't record anything more," the bench told Ahmadi.

When Ahmadi replied that the high court has not been paying heed to the committee's request to defer the proceeding since their petition was pending at the top court, the bench said that the committee will have to file a separate petition if they were to challenge the order of survey.

"At present, the issue here is only of the jurisdiction. The merits of the matter are not before us...You file your appeal and we will see," it added.

During the proceedings, Ahmadi repeatedly pointed out that the committee will find it extremely difficult to secure an urgent hearing from the top court if it is aggrieved by the December 18 order of the high court since the Supreme Court break for winter vacation is from December 18 to December 31. "Mr Ahmadi, if any urgent order is required, you know the procedure," the bench retorted.

The Supreme Court is seized of the challenge to a May 26 order of the Allahabad high court, transferring to itself all suits filed by Hindu parties claiming right over the mosque land. The mosque committee has argued that it did not have the financial wherewithal to defend the suits in the Allahabad high court which is 600km away and would prefer having it in Delhi which is only 150 km away.

The May 26 order by the high court had come on a plea by Bhagwan Shrikrishna Virajman at Katra Keshav Dev Khewat Mathura (deity) through the next friend, Ranjana Agnihotri, who is also an advocate, and seven others.

Govt, Oppn clash over security breach, 14 MPs suspended

NEW DELHI (TIP)

As many as 14 opposition MPs were suspended from Parliament for the remainder of the winter session for disrupting proceedings, as the Lok Sabha security breach incident snowballed into a major row on Thursday, December 14, with the government asking the opposition not to "politicise" the "grave national issue" and the Congress, Trinamool Congress and others demanding a statement from Home Minister Amit Shah.

While TMC's Derek O'Brien was suspended in the Rajya Sabha, as many as 13 opposition MPs, including nine from the Congress and the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam's Kanimozhi, were suspended from the Lok Sabha for disrupting the proceedings.

Amid opposition protests, demanding a statement from Home Minister Shah and Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the security breach incident, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi moved two resolutions separately for the suspension



Suspended TMC MP Derek O'Brien and others outside the Parliament House | PTI

of the MPs for disrupting the Lok Sabha proceedings. The MPs had moved into the well of the Lok Sabha raising slogans, questioning the security breach, and demanding a statement from the government. While T N Prathapan, Hibi Eden, Jothimani, Ramya Haridas and

Dean Kuriakose, all from the Congress, were suspended when the first resolution was adopted, four Congress MPs -- VK Sreekandan, Benny Behanan, Mohammed Jawaid and Manickam Tagore -- along with PR Natarajan (CPI-M), Kanimozhi (DMK), K Subbarayan (CPI), SR Parthiban

(DMK) and S Venkatesan (CPI-M) were suspended through the second resolution.

Later, after several opposition MPs pointed out that Parthiban was named among the suspended MPs even though he was not present in Delhi but was in Chennai, his suspension was revoked.

Soon after the Rajya Sabha House met at noon after an adjournment, chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar warned O'Brien against his unruly behaviour and for disrupting the proceedings. He asked O'Brien to leave the House, but the opposition MP did not relent and protested instead. The chairman then allowed Leader of the House Piyush Goyal to move a motion to suspend O'Brien under Rule 256. The motion to suspend O'Brien for the remainder of the session was adopted with a voice vote.

O'Brien did not leave the Rajya Sabha chambers even after suspension and the matter of his conduct was referred to the privileges committee of the house. The committee has been asked to submit a report on O'Brien's conduct in three months.

Cabinet okays pact with US to enhance innovation ecosystem

The Union Cabinet on Friday cleared a slew of pacts signed between India and nations such as the US, Saudi Arabia, Italy and Tanzania related to several key sectors like trade, electronic manufacturing and commerce.

The Cabinet approved the draft MoU between India and the US to enhance innovation ecosystems through an innovation handshake.

It would contribute significantly strengthening commercial opportunities in high tech sector, official sources said.

During the 5th India-US Commercial Dialogue which was held in March during the visit of US secretary of commerce Gina Raimondo, the Commercial Dialogue was re-launched with strategic focus on supply chain resiliency, climate and clean technology cooperation, advancing inclusive digital economy, and facilitating post-pandemic economic recovery especially for SMEs and start-ups.

It included launch of a new working group on talent, innovation and inclusive growth (TIIG) under the Commercial Dialogue.

India flight tests indigenous high-speed flying-wing UAV

The Defence Ministry on Friday said a successful flight trial of an indigenous high-speed flying-wing Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) was carried out in Karnataka's Chitradurga that propelled India into an elite club of nations to have the technology to produce such a platform.

The autonomous flying wing technology demonstrator has been developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

"The DRDO has successfully carried out a flight trial of autonomous flying wing technology demonstrator, an indigenous high-speed flying-wing UAV from the aeronautical test range in Chitradurga," the ministry said.

The successful flying demonstration of this autonomous stealth UAV is a testimony to maturity in the technology readiness levels in the country, it said.

Rajasthan: Bhajan Lal Sharma sworn in as CM

BY DR YASH GOYAL

JAIPUR (TIP)

Bhajan Lal Sharma, BJP-Legislative Party Leader, was on Friday, December 15, sworn-in as the new Chief Minister of Rajasthan by the Governor of Rajasthan Kalraj Mishra at a gala event outside Albert Hall Museum in the Ram Niwas Bagh here.

The Governor also administered the oath of office and secrecy to two Deputy Chief Minister Diya Kumari, ex-royal of Jaipur and Vidhyadhar Nagar MLA, and Prem Chandra Bairwa, a Dudu MLA, in presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Defense Minister Rajnath Singh, Nitin Gadkari, BJP President JP Nadda, and Chief Ministers of BJP ruled states including Madhya Pradesh and Chattisgarh, Union Ministers, party MPs, and other top party functionaries.

Former Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot also shared dias and he shook hands with a number of senior BJP leaders and a few union ministers. Vasundhara Raje was sitting on chair close to Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, union minister.

Sharma, who is celebrating his 56 birthday coinciding with the swearing in ceremony, is the 15th Chief Minister of Rajasthan and beginning a new era of youngest CMs in the state.

It is worth mentioning that Rajasthan gets Sharma of Brahmin caste after 33 years of Late Hari Deo Joshi (Congress) who ruled the state 1973-77, 1985-1988 and 1989-90. This also ended the 20 years of CM ships in the state ruled by Bhairon Singh Shekhawat (former Vice President), Vasundhara Raje, and Ashok Gehlot till yesterday.

Hailing from Bharatpur district, fifty-six year old Bhajan is post-graduate in Political Science. In his early age of young life he was an active



(Clockwise from above): Bhajan Lal Sharma, new CM, Diya Kumari, deputy CM and Prem Chandra Bairwa, deputy CM.

Pic courtesy: CM media cell



member and functionary of Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad in Nadbai and Bharatpur. He took active participation in the Kashmir March in 1990 and he spent some time in Jail during Sriram Janam Bhoomi Andolan in 1992. He who is the BJP and its frontal organisations BJYM and BJP Zila Mantri in Bharatpur was also twice Sarpanch at the age of 27. In 2023 assembly poll he won from Jaipur's

Sanganer constituency.

In view of the upcoming LS elections-2024, with today's ministry formation coined by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, BJP aims to target Brahmin votes through Bhajan Lal, BJP State President C P Joshi (Brahmin), Rajput votes through Diya Kumari, SC/ST votes via deputy CM Bairwa, and Sindhi mandates from Speaker Vasudev Devnani.

Kin of Nikhil Gupta, accused of Pannun murder 'plot' files plea; apex court says 'sensitive matter'

NEW DELHI (TIP)

An unidentified family member of Indian national Nikhil Gupta, who is accused in a US court of plotting an assassination attempt in New York, approached the Supreme Court on Friday alleging human rights violations but the apex court described the matter as an "extremely sensitive" for the Centre and refused to issue directions to the government.

The petition, filed by a member of Gupta's family identified as "Mr X", alleged that he was not shown any arrest warrant, subjected to forced consumption of beef and pork during his detention in Czech custody in violation of his religious beliefs as a Hindu vegetarian, denied

consular access, the right to contact his family in India, and the freedom to seek legal representation. The plea sought the Centre's intervention in the extradition proceedings pending before the Extradition Court in Prague, Czech Republic. The court refused to step in but agreed to examine a petition seeking consular access and legal assistance on January 4.

"This is an extremely sensitive matter for the ministry to come in," a bench of justices Sanjiv Khanna and SVN Bhatti told senior advocate CA Sundaram, who represented Mr X. "We won't direct the government [of India]. You are capable of taking care of yourself. You have already been supplied with the necessary documents and papers," the bench added.

Sundaram argued that the case had turned into a "diplomatic and political quagmire" between India and the US. "He (Gupta) is a hapless victim caught in the crossfire," he said, adding that Gupta's family was not aware of his whereabouts, there was no lawyer or translator to help him get a fair trial and that he had exhausted his financial resources fighting proceedings against him in courts under US and Czech jurisdictions.

To be sure, it remains unclear whether Gupta, who was arrested on June 30, is still in the Czech Republic or has already been extradited to the US.

The top court also expressed doubts about looking into the plea. "The person detained has not given his own affidavit. He cannot have given it. As a next friend,

you have filed this petition. If there is any violation of law, you have to go to the concerned court there. We are not going to have an adjudication here. Go there and appear."

To this, Sundaram said, "I fully understand that he has to approach the concerned court but let the ministry of external affairs see if it can assist him."

US prosecutors have alleged that Nikhil Gupta, alias Nick, worked on the directions of an Indian government employee, who described himself as a "senior field officer" responsible for intelligence, to arrange the assassination of US-Canadian citizen Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, a senior leader of the outlawed Sikhs for Justice (SFJ) who has been declared a terrorist by India.

Chhattisgarh: From village head to CM, the incredible journey of Vishnu Deo Sai

BJP'S VISHNU DEO SAI TOOK OATH AS THE NEW CM OF CHHATTISGARH IN RAIPUR ON DECEMBER 13. ARUN SAO AND VIJAY SHARMA WERE SWORN-IN AS DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTERS AT AN EVENT ATTENDED BY PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI AND UTTAR PRADESH CM YOGI ADITYANATH.

Hailing from the tribal (Janjati/Vanvasi) dominated Jashpur region of Chhattisgarh, Vishnu Deo Sai has taken oath as the first Vanvasi Chief Minister of the Chhattisgarh state, where the Vanvasi community constitutes a significant majority. The swearing-in ceremony held in Raipur's science college ground on Wednesday afternoon was attended by a number of senior leaders of the Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) including the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, Party's President, JP Nadda, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, and other BJP CMs.

Sai commenced his political journey after getting elected as a Panch (ward) from Bagia Gramme Panchayat, a remote region located in Jashpur, in the year 1989 and never looked back. Next year, Sai participated in the Panchayat elections again and emerged victorious as Sarpanch of the Bagia Panchayat.

In 1990, Sai contested from the then state assembly seat of Tapkara and had been elected as a member of the legislative assembly of undivided Madhya Pradesh for a term of three years. He was re-elected for the state assembly in the election held in the year 1993.

In the year 1999, Sai contested its first Lok Sabha election from the Vanvasi-dominated Raigarh Lok Sabha seat and was elected as a Member of Parliament of the 13th Loksabha. The popularity of Sai can be better understood by the fact that after being elected as an MP in 1999 Sai was re-elected from the same seat in the 2004, 2009 and 2014 Lok Sabha



Vishnu Deo Sai takes oath as the Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh, in Raipur on December 13, 2023. | Photo Credit: X/@BJP4India

elections. In between his years as an MP, Sai has been nominated in many committees formed by the respective governments of Bharat.

As BJP's president in Chhattisgarh

During his years as an MP, Sai has

also been bestowed with the responsibility of leading the BJP in the state thrice. He was first named as the president of the party in Chhattisgarh in October 2006. Sai first tenure as a party's president lasted for around three and a half years, during which

the party registered a resounding victory in the 2008 state assembly election, securing a total of 50 seats in the 90-seat state assembly election.

Sai was re-appointed as the party's president for a short term of around six months in the year 2014, though he left the post after he was made the union minister for state for steel, labour, and employment in the NDA government in the subsequent year. He was again appointed as the party's president in the year 2020 for a period of two years, during which the party managed to perform well in Chhattisgarh in the 2019 Lok Sabha election. In December last year, Sai was also nominated as a special invitee in the BJP's national working committee.

Sai was asked to contest the recently held state assembly election from the much-hyped Kunkuri assembly seat, where he emerged victorious after defeating the Indian National Congress UD Minj by a margin of 25000 votes. Later on, Sai was chosen as the leader of the BJP's legislative group in a meeting held in state assembly in Raipur on December 10, paving the way for Sai to become the first Vanvasi Chief Minister of the Vanvasi heartland.

It is to be noted that the saffron party's move to choose Sai as the CM of the state is expected to further solidify the trust of the Vanvasi community in the Narendra Modi-led party, which earlier threw its weight behind Draupdi Murmu, another BJP leader of the Vanvasi community, for the presidential post.

Chhattisgarh: Land of rich culture and heritage

Chhattisgarh is a landlocked state in Central India. It is the ninth largest state by area, and with a population of roughly 30 million, the seventeenth most populous. It borders seven states - Uttar Pradesh to the north, Madhya Pradesh to the northwest, Maharashtra to the southwest, Jharkhand to the northeast, Odisha to the east, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana to the south. Formerly a part of Madhya Pradesh, it was granted statehood on 1 November, 2000, with Raipur as the designated state capital.

Chhattisgarh is one of the fastest-developing states in India. Its Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) is Rs 5.09 lakh crore (US\$64 billion) (2023-24 est.), with a per capita GSDP of Rs152,348 (US\$1,900) (2023-24 est.). A resource-rich state, it has the third largest coal reserves in the country and provides electricity, coal, and steel to the rest of the nation. It also has the third largest forest cover in the country after Madhya Pradesh and Arunachal Pradesh with over 40% of the state covered by forests.

Chhattisgarh boasts a unique position that has facilitated cultural exchanges throughout history. This region's heritage resonates with echoes of ancient civilizations and dynasties, each leaving an indelible

mark on its identity. The vibrant tapestry of Chhattisgarh's culture is woven with threads of traditional festivals, intricate art forms, and resplendent architecture.

Economy

Chhattisgarh's nominal gross state domestic product (GSDP) is estimated at Rs 5.09 lakh crore (US\$64 billion) in 2023-24, the 17th largest state economy in India. The economy of Chhattisgarh recorded a growth rate of 11.2% in 2023-24. Chhattisgarh's success factors in achieving high growth rate are growth in agriculture and industrial production.

Agriculture

Agriculture is counted as the chief economic occupation of the state. According to a government estimate, net sown area of the state is 4.828 million hectares and the gross sown area is 5.788 million hectares. Horticulture and animal husbandry also engage a major share of the total population of the state. About 80% of the population of the state is rural and the main livelihood of the villagers is agriculture and agriculture-based small industry.



Laxman Temple in Sirpur, Chhattisgarh.

The majority of the farmers are still practicing the traditional methods of cultivation, resulting in low growth rates and productivity. The farmers have to be made aware of modern technologies suitable to their holdings. Providing adequate knowledge to the farmers is essential for a better implementation of the agricultural development plans and to improve productivity.

Madhya Pradesh: Shivraj Singh Chouhan out, Mohan Yadav is new CM

MOHAN YADAV TOOK OATH AS THE CHIEF MINISTER OF MADHYA PRADESH ON DECEMBER 13. RAJENDRA SHUKLA AND JAGDISH DEVDA TOOK THE OATH AS DEPUTY CMS, WHILE FORMER UNION MINISTER NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR WILL BE THE ASSEMBLY SPEAKER.

The Narendra Modi-Amit Shah duo on Monday, December 11, struck out veteran Shivraj Singh Chouhan, the last remaining BJP leader from the Atal-Advani era, and foisted a low-profile Mohan Yadav as chief minister-designate of Madhya Pradesh, tightening their grip over the party.

The sidelining of Chouhan was also seen as a signal to Vasundhara Raje Scindia, another pre-Modi era chief minister, in Rajasthan to get ready to bow out.

In what could rub salt in his wound, Chouhan was made to propose the name of Yadav, the Ujjain South MLA, as his replacement at the meeting of the newly elected MLAs in Bhopal and later hail his choice.

Not only has the four-term chief minister been shown the door but along with him a bunch of politically dominant leaders, some of whom had been made to quit as ministers in the Modi government and sent to the state, have also been left looking as dispensable faces.

The bunch included Narendra Singh Tomar, who till recently was a senior minister in the Modi government. Tomar, whose supporters had projected him as the next chief minister when he was dispatched to contest the state polls, has been offered the Assembly Speaker's job, considered a retirement post. Along with him, former junior minister Prahlad Singh Patel and party general secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya have been left hoping that they get a decent portfolio in the new



Former MP chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan greeting new CM Mohan Yadav.

government. The foisting of Yadav, one of the 165 BJP MLAs, as chief minister is being seen in BJP circles as the first experiment of its kind by the Modi-Shah duo outside their home turf of Gujarat. What Modi-Shah did in Gujarat nearly a year ahead of the polls by installing the low-profile Bhupendra Patel as chief minister has been applied to Madhya Pradesh after the polls. BJP leaders said the nature of the party's runaway victory in three heartland states, projected as a victory of "Modi's guarantee", could be used to ram through more decisions like this.

The choice of Yadav, a three-term MLA from Ujjain South, a prominent Hindu pilgrimage town, is being projected as not only a generational change. Yadav is being projected as an OBC face to counter the BJP's rivals — the Samajwadi Party and the RJD — in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar that are trying to infuse a fresh dose of Mandal politics by pressing for a caste census.

"Mohan Yadav will be the first prominent Yadav face to be made a chief minister by the BJP. It will go out as a signal to the Yadavs in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar that the BJP is not

against the community as is projected by Akhilesh and Tejashwi," a BJP leader said.

In Babulal Gaur, however, the BJP had a Yadav as chief minister as a stop-gap in 2004-05.

The surprise choice was also used to project that in Modi-Shah's BJP, even low-profile "grass-root" leaders can aspire to get the top post. Party managers said that by choosing a relatively low-profile leader, the top leadership is also looking to demolish the "caucus" of powerful leaders in the state and gain direct control over state politics.

Yadav, who served as a minister in the Chouhan government, is said to have deep links with the RSS, which has a strong network in the state. He owes his political foray to the student wing of the RSS, the ABVP, and is a known Hindutva face in Ujjain.

As in Chhattisgarh, the BJP leadership has also appointed two deputy chief ministers in Madhya Pradesh — Rajendra Shukla (upper caste) and Jagdish Deora (Scheduled Caste). They are equally low-profile like Yadav, though they have served as ministers in the Chouhan government and been elected more than once as MLAs.

Asked what the future holds for Chouhan, who is 64 and still a long way from the unofficial retirement age of 75 in the BJP, party insiders indicated that he could be asked to serve as a senior Union minister and possibly given the agriculture portfolio that Tomar held.

Madhya Pradesh meaning 'central province' is a state in central India. Its capital is Bhopal, and the largest city is Indore, with Gwalior, Jabalpur, Ujjain, Dewas, Sagar, Satna, and Rewa being the other major cities. Madhya Pradesh is the second largest Indian state by area and the fifth largest state by population with over 72 million residents. It borders the states of Uttar Pradesh to the northeast, Chhattisgarh to the east, Maharashtra to the south, Gujarat to the west, and Rajasthan to the northwest.

The area covered by the present-day Madhya Pradesh includes the area of the ancient Avanti Mahajanapada, whose capital Ujjain (also known as Avantika) arose as a major city during the second wave of Indian urbanisation in the sixth century BCE. Subsequently, the region was ruled by the major dynasties of India. The Maratha Empire dominated the majority of the 18th century. After the Anglo-Maratha Wars in the 19th century, the region was divided into several princely states under the British and incorporated into Central Provinces and Berar and the Central India Agency. Some years after India's independence, the Central Provinces and Berar was renamed as Madhya Pradesh with Nagpur as its capital: this state included the southern parts of the present-day Madhya Pradesh and northeastern portion of today's Maharashtra. In 1956, this state was

Madhya Pradesh: The Heart of India

reorganized and its parts were combined with the states of Madhya Bharat, Vindhya Pradesh and Bhopal to form the new Madhya Pradesh state, the Marathi-speaking Vidarbha region was removed and merged with the Bombay State. This state was the largest in India by area until 2000, when its southeastern Chhattisgarh region was designated a separate state.

The economy of Madhya Pradesh is the 10th-largest in India, with a gross state domestic product (GSDP) of Rs 9.17 trillion (US\$110 billion) and has the country's 26th highest per-capita income of Rs 109372.

Madhya Pradesh ranks 23rd among Indian states in human development index. Rich in mineral resources, Madhya Pradesh has the largest reserves of diamond and copper in India. 25.14% of its area is under forest cover. Its tourism industry has seen considerable growth, with the state topping the National Tourism Awards in 2010-11. In recent years, the state's GDP growth has been above the national average. In 2019-20, state's GSDP was recorded at 9.07.

Madhya Pradesh is also famous for honey production in district Morena.



The "Great Stupa" at Sanchi.

The state has an agrarian economy. The major crops of Madhya Pradesh are wheat, soybean, gram, sugarcane, rice, maize, cotton, rapeseed, mustard and arhar. Minor Forest Produce (MFP), such as tendu leaves used to roll beedi, sal seed, teak seed, and lak also contribute to state's rural economy.

Milk vendor, sarpanch, rebel: Bhajan Lal Sharma takes the helm as Rajasthan CM

LIKE MADHYA PRADESH AND CHHATTISGARH, THE BJP PICKED A 'NEW FACE' IN SHARMA, SKIPPING VETERAN LEADER VASUNDHARA RAJE

A viral video on social media shows Vasundhara Raje, former BJP chief minister of Rajasthan, at a party legislature meeting in Jaipur. Sitting next to union minister Rajnath Singh, the party observer for Rajasthan, she opens a slip of paper that he hands to her.

Raje looks taken aback by its contents — the script of which was written in Delhi. That piece of paper allegedly had the name of Rajasthan's new CM, Bhajan Lal Sharma, announced by the party on December 12. Raje proposed his name at this meeting, and then accompanied Sharma and other senior leaders to meet governor Kalraj Mishra and stake claim to form the government.

Sharma, 56, is a first-time MLA who won from Sanganer constituency in Jaipur by 48,081 votes. He's the second Brahmin CM in Rajasthan in 33 years after Congress's Haridev Joshi. He will have two deputies — Diya Kumar, a Rajput, and Prerchand Bairwa, a Dalit — while Vasudev Devnani will be speaker.

Before his candidature from Sanganer, Sharma was a familiar face at press conferences, often introducing speakers or checking arrangements. Chosen as the state BJP's general secretary for the fourth time before the assembly polls, he would hold meetings across the state, and also oversaw arrangements of public meetings for Home Minister Amit Shah and Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Before his candidature from Sanganer, Sharma was a familiar face at press conferences, often introducing speakers or checking arrangements. Chosen as the state BJP's general secretary for the fourth time before the assembly polls, he would hold meetings across the state, and also oversaw arrangements of public meetings for Home Minister Amit Shah and Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Milkman to sarpanch

Born in Atari village in Bharatpur district, Sharma is described as a



Defense minister and BJP central observer for Rajasthan's Rajnath Singh, Rajasthan BJP president CP Joshi, former Rajasthan CM Vasundhara Raje and newly elected Rajasthan chief minister Bhajan Lal Sharma being garlanded during BJP Legislature Party meeting.(PTI)

“simple and righteous” man by friends and party colleagues. He's the only son and his father, Kishan Swaroop Sharma, is a farmer who owns 25 bighas of land in Atari.

A day before counting of votes, Sharma visited Atari and sought blessings from elders, said Om Prakash Jatav, a farmer in the village.

Sharma's schooling took place in Atari and Gangwana villages and Nanbai tehsil, all in Bharatpur. A note shared by the BJP with journalists said, “After completing his primary education in Atari, he came to Nadbai for secondary education and got in touch with the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad.” The ABVP is the student wing of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh.

Schooling done, Sharma enrolled in MSJ College in Bharatpur and graduated in 1989. He was already a BJP member at

this point — according to Rakesh Sharma, president of Nanbai BJP (rural), he and Bhajan Lal had joined the party in 1984.

The family depended on agriculture and milk for their livelihood. After Bhajan Lal finished college, he helped out.

“He would collect milk from his village and sell it to a dairy in Bharatpur,” said his uncle Maniram Sharma, a retired teacher in Atari. “This continued for seven or eight years until he was given bigger responsibilities by the BJP.”

In 1990, Bhajan Lal took part in a “Kashmir march”. He went to Udhampur in Jammu and Kashmir and courted arrest with 100 BJP workers. He was also jailed for participating in the Ram Janmabhoomi agitation in 1992.

In the early 1990s, he served with the

Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha in Bharatpur in various capacities. He got on well with Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, who was then the state president of the BJYM. Bhajan Lal, as district president of the BJYM in Bharatpur, would campaign with Birla during elections and take on organisational work for the party.

At this time, Sharma would also often travel to Kota, where Birla lived.

“At the time, I was posted at a school in Kota,” said his uncle Maniram. “He would come to the city and stay with me. In the morning, he would leave for Om Birla's house. Bhajan Lal and Om Birla would campaign together during the assembly elections.”

First tryst with elections

In 2000, Sharma contested his first election — a panchayat poll. He won, and became sarpanch of Atari gram sabha. Three years later, the BJP denied him a ticket from Nadbai during the assembly polls. So, Sharma quit and fought on the lock-and-key symbol of a new party, the Rajasthan Samajik Nyay Manch, which had been floated by Devi Singh Bhati and Lokendra Singh Kalvi.

“He did not tell us that he was denied a ticket by the BJP,” Bhati, a seven-time MLA from Bikaner's Kolayat, told Newsland. “But he did say this to me: ‘Since reservation is the goal of the party, I will fight this battle.’” The RSNM's main poll plank then was reservation for economically weaker sections.

The Nadbai seat was eventually won by an independent candidate named Krishnendra Kaur. The BJP candidate came fourth with 13,949 votes and Sharma came fifth with 5,969 votes. The RSNM won only one seat in the polls. Bhati, considered a Raje loyalist, rejoined the BJP this September. This election, his grandson Anshuman Singh Bhati won from Kolayat in Bikaner on a BJP ticket.

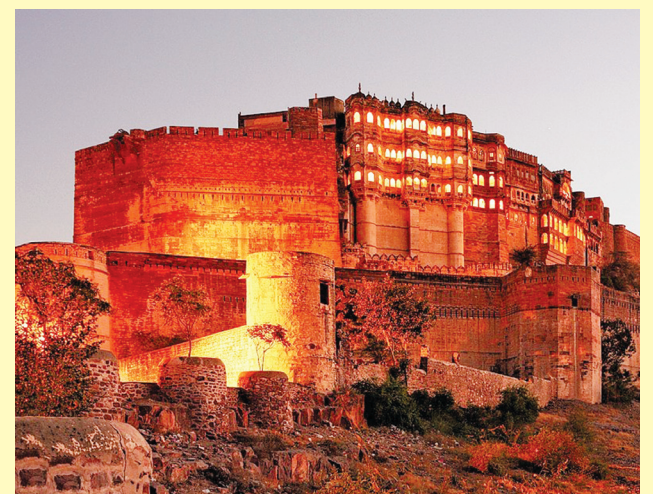
Rajasthan 'Land of Kings' is a state in northern India. It covers 342,239 square kilometers (132,139 sq mi) or 10.4 percent of India's total geographical area. It is the largest Indian state by area and the seventh largest by population. It is on India's northwestern side, where it comprises most of the wide and inhospitable Thar Desert (also known as the Great Indian Desert) and shares a border with the Pakistani provinces of Punjab to the northwest and Sindh to the west, along the Sutlej-Indus River valley. It is bordered by five other Indian states: Punjab to the north; Haryana and Uttar Pradesh to the northeast; Madhya Pradesh to the southeast; and Gujarat to the southwest. Its geographical location is 23°.3' to 30°.12' North latitude and 69°.30' to 78°.17' East longitude, with the Tropic of Cancer passing through its southernmost tip.

Its major features include the ruins of the Indus Valley civilisation at Kalibangan and Balathal, the Dilwara Temples, a Jain pilgrimage site at Rajasthan's only hill station, Mount Abu, in the

Rajasthan: The 'Land of Kings'

ancient Aravalli mountain range and eastern Rajasthan, the Keoladeo National Park of Bharatpur, a World Heritage Site[16] known for its bird life. Rajasthan is also home to three national tiger reserves, the Ranthambore National Park in Sawai Madhopur, Sariska Tiger Reserve in Alwar and the Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserve in Kota.

The State of Rajasthan was formed on 30 March 1949 when the states of the Rajputana Agency of the erstwhile British Empire in India were merged into the new Indian Union. Its capital and largest city is Jaipur. Other important cities are Jodhpur, Kota, Bikaner, Ajmer, Bharatpur and Udaipur. The economy of Rajasthan is the seventh-largest state economy in India with Rs 10.20 lakh crore (US\$130 billion) in gross domestic product and a per capita GDP of Rs118,000 (US\$1,500). Rajasthan ranks 22nd among Indian states in human development index.



Mehrangarh Fort.

Revanth Reddy takes charge as CM of Telangana along with 11 ministers

ALL INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE LEADERS LED BY SONIA GANDHI ATTENDED THE SWEARING IN CEREMONY

Soon after Anumula Revanth Reddy was sworn in as the first Congress Chief Minister of Telangana on December 7 in front of a crowd of thousands at the Lal Bahadur Stadium in the State's capital, he vowed to revive a tradition of inviting the public into the halls of power to present their grievances directly to him. He immediately signed his first file, to implement the six welfare 'guarantees' that headlined the Congress' poll manifesto.

Telangana Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan administered the oath of office to Reddy, who steered his party to victory in India's youngest State, in the presence of Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and other senior leaders, including Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Vadra, as well as the Congress CMs of Karnataka and Himachal Pradesh.

On December 9, Reddy assigned portfolios to 11 ministers in his newly formed cabinet. According to a gazette notification issued by the state government, Revanth Reddy has retained the Municipal Administration and Urban Development portfolio along with the General Administration and Law and Order. He will also hold all other unallocated portfolios.

Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu was allocated the Finance and Planning and Energy portfolios. The allocation of the portfolios to the ministers was approved by Telangana Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan.

Nalamada Uttam Kumar Reddy was given the Irrigation and Food & Civil Supplies portfolios, while Damodar



Revanth Reddy

Rajanarsimha was allocated the Health and Family Welfare as well as the Science and Technology portfolios.

Komatireddy Venkat Reddy will oversee Roads and Buildings and Cinematography, while Duddilla Sridhar Babu will take charge of Information Technology, Electronics and Communications Industries and Commerce and Legislative Affairs departments. Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy has been allocated the Revenue & Housing as well as Information & Public Relations departments.

The Transport and BC Welfare departments were assigned to Ponnamparthi Prabhakar, while Konda Surekha would oversee the Environment and Forests, and Endowment departments.

Danasari Anasuya (Seethakka) will

take charge of Panchayat Raj & Rural Development and Women & Child Welfare departments, while Tummala Nageswara Rao was assigned the portfolios of Agriculture, Marketing, Co-operation, as well as Handlooms and Textiles. Jupally Krishna Rao will be the Minister for Prohibition and Excise, and Tourism and Culture departments.

First Cong CM of the youngest Indian state

In the 2023 Telangana Assembly elections, Congress emerged victorious in 64 of the total 119 seats, while the ruling Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) was restricted to 39 seats.

The BJP and All India Majlis-E-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) received eight and seven seats, respectively. On the other hand, the Communist Party of

India secured only one seat.

Earlier, as speculations rife over PCC chief Revanth Reddy becoming the next CM, a few reports claimed that there is opposition with the party on this name. Among those who reportedly opposed the decision include former Telangana Congress chief N Uttam Kumar Reddy, Bhatti Vikramarka, Komatireddy Venkat Reddy, and Damodar Rajanarasimha.

Who is Anumula Revanth Reddy?

Born in Mahboobnagar district, Anumula Revanth Reddy started his career in politics with the ABVP while he was a student. He was also associated with the Telangana Rashtra Samithi (now changed to Bharat Rashtra Samithi). He was elected as a Member of the Legislative Council (MLC) as an independent candidate and soon after he joined the N Chandrababu Naidu-led Telugu Desam Party (TDP).

Reddy has been an MLA thrice, twice from the TDP and once from the Congress, which he joined in 2017.

During the 2018 Telangana Assembly polls, he represented Congress from the Kodangal seat but lost to the BRS candidate. However, Revanth Reddy won from Malkajgiri Lok Sabha seat in the 2019 general elections by a margin of 10,919 votes. In 2021, he was appointed as Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee president, replacing N Uttam Kumar Reddy. In the 2023 Telangana elections, Reddy was a Congress candidate from Kodangal and Kamareddy Assembly constituencies.

While Reddy won the Kodangal seat by a margin of 32,532, he was defeated by BJP's K Venkata Ramana Reddy in Kamareddy.

Telangana: India's youngest state

Telangana is a state in southern India. In the capital of Hyderabad, the Charminar is a 16th-century mosque with 4 arches supporting 4 towering minarets. The monument overlooks the city's long-running Laad Bazaar. Once the seat of the Qutb Shahi dynasty, the sprawling Golconda Fort is a former diamond-trading center. In the city of Warangal, the centuries-old Warangal Fort features carved stone towers and gateways. Telangana was earlier part of the Hyderabad state from the end of 1948 to 1956. The youngest state in India is Telangana. It was formed as the '29th state of India'.

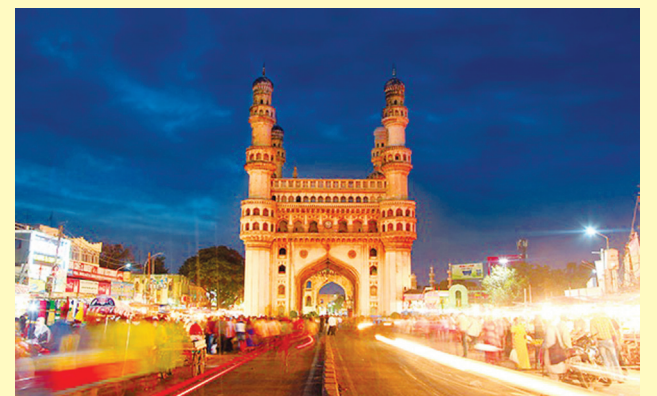
The state has an area of 1,14,840 Sq Km and has a population of 3,52,86,757.

Telangana is situated on the Deccan Plateau, in the central stretch of the eastern seaboard of the Indian Peninsula. It covers 112,077 square kilometers (43,273 sq m). The region is drained by two major rivers, with about 79% of the Godavari River catchment area and about 69% of the Krishna River catchment area, but most of the land is arid. Telangana is also drained by several minor rivers such as the Bhima, the Maner, the Manjira, the Musi, and the Tungabhadra.

The annual rainfall is between 900 and 1500mm in northern Telangana and 700 to 900mm in southern Telangana, from the southwest monsoons. Telangana contains various soil types, some of which are red sandy

loams (Chalaka), Red loamy sands (Dubba), lateritic soils, salt-affected soils, alluvial soils, shallow to medium black soils and very deep black cotton soils. These soil types allow the planting of a variety of fruits and vegetable crops such as mangoes, oranges, coconut, sugarcane, paddy, banana and flower crops.

Telugu one of the classical languages of India is the official language of Telangana and Urdu is the second official language of the state. About 75% of the population of Telangana speak Telugu and 12% speak Urdu. Before 1948, Urdu was the official language of Hyderabad State, and due to a lack of Telugu-language educational institutions, Urdu was the language of the educated elite of Telangana. After 1948, once Hyderabad State joined the new Republic of India, Telugu became the language of government, and as Telugu was introduced as the medium of instruction in schools and colleges, the use of Urdu among non-Hyderabad Muslims decreased. Both Telugu and Urdu are used in services across the state, such as the Telangana Legislature website, with Telugu and Urdu versions of the website available, as well as the Hyderabad metro, wherein both languages are used on station names and signs along with English and Hindi. The Urdu spoken in Telangana is called Hyderabad Urdu, which in itself is a dialect of the larger Dakhini Urdu dialects of South India.



Telangana is one of the fastest-growing states in India posing average annual growth rate of 13.90% over the last five years. Telangana's nominal gross state domestic product for the year 2020-21 stands at Rs 13.59 lakh crore.

Agriculture also form a backbone of Telangana's Economy. Two important rivers of India, the Godavari and Krishna, flow through the state, providing irrigation. Farmers in Telangana mainly depend on rain-fed water sources for irrigation. Rice is the major food crop. Other important local crops are cotton, sugar cane, mango and tobacco. Recently, crops used for vegetable oil production, such as sunflower and peanuts, have gained favor. There are many multi-state irrigation projects in development, including Godavari River Basin Irrigation Projects.

India in history this Week

DECEMBER 15 TO DECEMBER 21

15 DECEMBER

1950 The iron man Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel died.
1749 Chhatrapati Shivaji's grandson Shahu died.
1953 India's S. Vijayalakshmi Pandit was elected the first woman president of the eighth session of the United Nations General Assembly.



1991 Filmmaker Satyajit Ray was awarded a Special Oscar for his achievements in the cinema world.

16 DECEMBER

1985 The country's first fast breeder nuclear reactor started functioning in Kalpakkam.
1971 Bangladesh separated from Pakistan and became an independent nation after agreeing to a ceasefire between India and Pakistan.
1993 'Education for all' conference starts in New Delhi.
2004 Doordarshan's free to air DTH service 'DD Direct +; Was launched by the Prime Minister.
1903 The Taj Mahal Palace Hotel in Mumbai was opened for guests.



2012 In New Delhi, a woman was gang-raped in a bus, leading to public protests against the Government of India and the Government of Delhi.

1937 Hawa Singh, one of the best boxers in India, was born.

17 DECEMBER

1645 Nur Jahan Begum, wife of the Mughal emperor Jahangir, died.



2002 Turkey supported India on Kashmir issue.
1715 Banda Bahadur Bairagi, the chief of the Sikhs, surrendered to the Mughals at Gurdaspur.
1929 The great revolutionaries Bhagat Singh and Rajguru shot English police officer John Saunders.
1933 India's legendary cricketer Lala Amarnath played an excellent innings of 118 runs in his debut Test match.



1940 Mahatma Gandhi postponed the individual Satyagraha movement.
1971 The third war between India and Pakistan ended after Bangladesh came into existence as a result of the partition of Pakistan.
1996 National Football League was launched.

18 DECEMBER

1897 Bhojpuri artist, musician and social worker Bhikhari Thakur was born.
1271 The Mongol emperor Kublai Khan named his empire as Yuan. With this began the Yuan dynasty.
1960 The National Museum was inaugurated in the capital Delhi.
1398 Timur captured Delhi by defeating Sultan Nusrat Shah.
1989 Sachin played his first ODI against Pakistan.



1995 Unidentified aircraft dropped weapons in Purulia, West Bengal.
1997 The Washington Treaty concluded for cooperation in space research between India and the United States.

2008 The BrahMos supersonic cruise missile was successfully tested.
2017 India won 29 gold out of 30 at Commonwealth Wrestling Championships.

2017 The heaviest rocket GSLV Mark-3 was successfully launched.

19 DECEMBER

1927 The great freedom fighters Ram Prasad Bismil, Ashfaq Ulla Khan and Roshan Singh were hanged by the British.

1961 Goa got independence from Portugal's slavery. Indian troops entered the border of Goa under Operation Vijay.

1945 The institute in Mumbai was relocated to the Kenilworth bungalow on Pedder Marg. It was inaugurated by the then Governor of Mumbai, Sir John Colville.



1998 Amartya Sen was awarded honorary citizenship by Bangladesh, Sheel Kumar (India) as the best player in world disabled skiing held in Denver (USA).

1860 Lord Dalhousie, who was the Governor General of India from 1848 to 1856, died in Britain.

1937 India's 12th President Pratibha Patil was born in Jalgaon, Maharashtra.

1927 India's famous freedom fighter Ashfaq Ulla Khan died.

20 DECEMBER

1875 The ICRM renamed the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

1876 The great poet Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay composed the national song 'Vande Mataram'.

1955 Indian Golf Association was formed.
1985 In the Tirupati Balaji temple, Lord Venkateswara was offered a diamond studded crown valued at Rs 5.2 crore.

1990 India and Pakistan agreed not to attack each other nuclear.

1988 The United Nations Convention against Non-Government Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, which controls international crime against the trade of illegal drugs, was signed in Vienna.

1993 A cooperation agreement was signed between India and the European Union in Brussels.

21 DECEMBER

2011 The country's famous nuclear physicist PK Iyengar died.

1911 The first indigenous bank, Central Bank of India, was founded by Sorabji Pochkhanwala.



2008 Congress President Sonia Gandhi and Bollywood star Shah Rukh Khan were included in the list of 50 powerful people of the world by US magazine News Bik.

2009 The first meeting of the Finance Committee and Executive Board (BoG) of Indian Institute of Technology, Mandi was held.

1974 INS Satavahana, the country's first vessel to offer submarine training, was inducted into the ship fleet at Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh.



IMMIGRATION PROBLEMS?

S **SOPHIA SHARMA**
— & ASSOCIATES, P.C. —
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

IMMIGRATION | WILLS & ESTATES | FAMILY LAW
LANDLORD-TENANT | PERSONAL INJURY | BANKRUPTCY

(212) 247-2222

WWW.SSAPC.LAW



SOPHIA SHARMA, ESQ.

@SSAPCLAW



1. OPEN YOUR CAMERA APP
2. POINT IT AT THE CODE 
3. TAP THE MESSAGE
4. GET OUR CONTACT FREE BUSINESS CARD ON YOUR PHONE



ASYLUM & DEPORTATION

BONDS · AFFIRMATIVE ASYLUM
DEPORTATION / REMOVAL
PROCEEDINGS · CANCELLATION
& WITHOLDING OF REMOVAL

FAMILY BASED IMMIGRATION

I130 · I751 · I485 · VAWA
K1/K3 FIANCE VISAS
NATURALIZATION
CONSULAR PROCESSING

BUSINESS IMMIGRATION

H1B · I140 GREENCARD · PERM
LCA · O-VISAS · EB1/EB2 · EB5
L1/L2 · P VISA · R VISA
TN VISAS AND MORE...

WAIVERS

I601 - HARDSHIP WAIVER
I601A - PROVISIONAL WAIVER
I212 - FRAUD WAIVER

WE SPEAK

ENGLISH · ESPAÑOL · हिन्दी
اردو · ਪੰਜਾਬੀ · বাংলা



Alia Bhatt's the perfect bridesmaid at best friend's wedding

Alia Bhatt was a stunning bridesmaid as she attended her friend's pre-wedding ceremony. Alia took to Instagram to share a series of photos as she had a good time with her friends. Alia was glowing as she wore a bright pink ensemble and posed with her friends.

Alia attended her friend Disha Khatwani's mehendi ceremony on Wednesday, December 13, along with her gang Akansha Ranjan Kapoor, stylist Usaamah Siddique, Tanya Saha Gupta, and Kripa Mehta.

More photos from the evening were shared online by Alia's friend. She reposted them on Instagram story with a heart hands emoji. The post has Ranbir Kapoor-starrer *Animal*'s trending song 'Jamal Kudu' playing in the background. This is Bobby Deol's *Animal* entry song in the film and is getting a lot of love.

On the work front, Alia Bhatt will next be seen in Vasan Bala's *Jigra*. The film is jointly produced by Alia Bhatt and Dharma Productions and Alia has been busy shooting for it.

Mast Mein Rehne Ka: Jackie and Neena Gupta film is feel-good and effortless

Leave aside good messaging or bad, strong filmmaking or not — we're witnessing a spanking-new mini-renaissance in Hindi cinema. After the staid and occasionally engaging *Sam Bahadur* and baffling monstrosity that was *Animal*, two films from two starkly contrasting worlds and *raisons d'être* — *Joram* and *The Archies* — vie for the audience's attention (and I'm not even considering the perfect streaming vehicle *Kadak Singh* on grounds of relative recentness). And this is just 10 days of December.

In the middle of all this splendid plenty, Vijay Maurya's *Mast Mein Rehne Ka* breaks the mould somewhat. Minus any pre-release publicity, minus a hyped star cast, minus any expectation for the moviegoer, this sweet little diptych achieves what most of our recent big-screen and OTT releases (maybe with the exception of *12th Fail*, with its austerity and heart) have failed to.

At the outset a slice-of-life geriatric romance straight out of a *Modern Love: Mumbai* episode propelled by the Macguffin of neighbourhood robberies, *Mast Mein Rehne Ka* hits you like a bolt from the blue (of course without the intention to hurt). It is incredibly well-acted and beautifully shot, delivering not only a winsome portmanteau of two shorter films bumping into each other as if in a city park to say hello, but a stirring commentary on multifarious lonelines and an indulgent portrait of the city itself.

Jackie Shroff is Kamath, a taciturn and lonely 75-year-old widower who likes to spend his time gazing at the leaping waves or guzzling frothy beer and chicken lollipop every week. Early into the film, his house is broken into by



Nanhe, a down-on-his-luck tailor trying his best to stand on his two feet in the city of dreams. An anticlimactic scuffle ensues and the clumsy debutant bungles his first-ever burglary. Kamath survives the blow to his nose and — after a vaudeville encounter with law enforcement helped by the rappy title song — runs into Mrs Handa (Neena Gupta) a potty-mouth but effervescent sexagenarian who has just returned from Canada.

Yet, what heightens your adoration of this film in light of the above observations is the fact that it doesn't allow weighty trifles to encumber its storytelling. Director Maurya and cinematographer Nagaraj Rathinam are generous in allowing two out of every five frames to cliché and there are lines that feel especially stagey in a script that is otherwise free-flowing and inventive. But as I said, *Mast Mein Rehne Ka* is the

first acolyte of its title, and that isn't to celebrate the low-hanging fruit but to applaud the authenticity and purpose of telling the story and eschewing the frills.

Monica Panwar and Abhishek Chauhan play the other two protagonists in the quartet that are somehow reminiscent of the crackerjack lead pair of *Joyland*. He is Nanhe, the bumbling, soft-spoken migrant tailor intent on pursuing his practice no matter the circumstances. She is the loutish tramp with boot polish on her face, making a living on the streets and telling off anyone at the drop of a hat. While Chauhan feels both restrained and strained in his absorption of the character, Panwar has a raw ferocity about her, and I have to say her submission to a character that's so far away from her station in life as I understand it — is rocket fuel for the audience's investment in the story.

Kajol would never do scenes where she gets molested

Actor Kajol has shared why she would not do 'scenes that require (her) to be molested'. Speaking at the Netflix Film Actors' Roundtable 2023, Kajol accepted that she has been part of films where she has had to do such scenes. She added that such scenes are 'very very very uncomfortable and very disturbing'.

Kajol said, "It has always been my take as an actor that I'll not do scenes that require me to be either molested or in any which way show me in a place where I don't want to be because I think as actors when we do a shot, we're feeling it, we're really feeling it. So yes, we are actors up to a point but the camera I feel is one of those things it's like man-made magic and it tends to capture it if you're not being honest in front of it. At times like this, you need to be honest."

She also said, "That's been my personal thing on it that, 'No, I don't want to do this. I don't feel comfortable. I don't feel comfortable when I have to act out a scene where I am being physically

abused or molested'...I have done it, it's not that I haven't. But it's very very very uncomfortable and very disturbing. And I don't feel I need to do it to prove a point. I can prove my point to be a good actor in 100 different other ways, I don't need this particular experience."

Kajol has been part of several films where she had to shoot molestation scenes. The movies include--*Baazigar* (1993), *Ishq* (1997), and *Dushman* (1998). In *Lust Stories 2* (2023), Kajol played a character who was abused by her partner. Though the abuse scenes weren't shown, her character was shown to have bruises on her face.

Kajol was last seen in series *The Trial - Pyaar, Kaanoon, Dhokha*, which was helmed by Suparn Varma. The actor was also part of *Lust Stories 2*. She will be seen with Kriti Sanon in *Do Patti*. Helmed by Shashanka Chaturvedi, *Do Patti* is produced by Kathha Pictures and co-produced by Kriti Sanon, co-written by Kanika Dhillon and will stream exclusively on Netflix.





James Cameron confirms Kate Winslet will be back as Ronal in 'Avatar 3'

Filmmaker James Cameron confirmed that along with actress Kate Winslet he was working on Avatar 3. James said the project's post-production schedule was 'hectic', but the film was due for release on Christmas 2025.

James said in an interview that Kate would once again play Ronal. While Kate's involvement in Avatar: The Way of Water was relatively minimal, it sounded like she would have more to do in the third film.

The director said Kate was in touch with a real-life shaman to learn more about her role. "When you see her doing that purification ritual to try to revive Kitty in the film and some of the stuff that she's going to do in the third movie is based on actual practice," he said.

Source: IANS

Kevin Costner and Jewel set off romance rumors after getting cozy in the Caribbean

Kevin Costner and singer Jewel are sparking romance rumors after appearing together at a charity event in the Caribbean.

Photos obtained by TMZ show Jewel speaking into a microphone and appearing to sit on Costner's lap, with his arms around her waist.

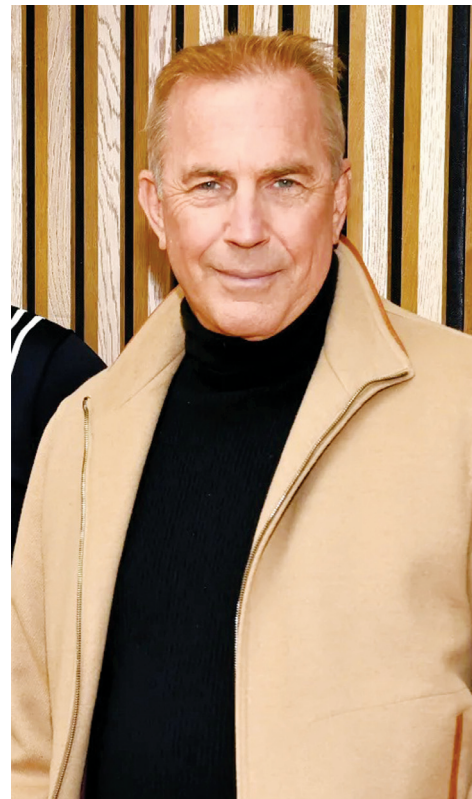
The two were on Richard Branson's Necker Island in the British Virgin Islands for a tennis fundraiser for the Inspiring Children Foundation, an organization started by Jewel.

Sources told TMZ the pair had flown to the Caribbean together, and hung out longer than the event, saying, "There was definitely something going on. They were flirty, and when they were together, it was like they both just lit up."

Jewel mentioned the "Yellowstone" star on social media while recapping the event for fans. She shared a reel of photos, including a group photo featuring her and Costner.

"Every year, my foundation @inspiringchildren and I go to Necker Island to help host a tennis event w @richardbranson to raise funds for our kids. Amazing players like @geniebouchard come and support us in playing doubles with the folks who come... it's an incredible time, and one I use to relax, rest and play w my son!" the 49-year-old wrote in the caption.

She also thanked Costner, writing, "@kevincostnermodernwest was kind



enough to mentor our kids this year, and Sir Richard was his usual inspiring self- who also plays a mean game of doubles!"

Representatives for both parties did not immediately respond to Fox News Digital's request for comment.

Earlier this year, Costner finalized his

divorce from his wife of 18 years, Christine Baumgartner, with whom he has three children.

Baumgartner filed for divorce on May 1 citing irreconcilable differences. In documents obtained by Fox News Digital, Christine cited April 11 as the date of separation.

'I thought I was gonna die' Sydney Sweeney recalls brush with death moment on set after a spider bite



Many people share a common fear of spiders, and Hollywood actress Sydney Sweeney is no exception. The actress, busy filming for her upcoming project Anyone But You, recently disclosed a frightening experience on set. During an interview on The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon, Sydney revealed the details of the terrifying event while filming a scene with a trained spider. She revealed the moment when she truly thought she might die.

While discussing her role in the upcoming film Anyone But You on NBC's show, the Euphoria actress shared the challenges of her character. Despite the animal being deemed safe to work with, Sydney Sweeney revealed that she was still bitten by a trained spider.

Sydney was supposed to record a dramatic shot of herself coming across a huntsman spider on her partner's underwear in one of the scenes. "They told me it was trained," she said. "I don't know how you train a freaking spider.

There's no way."

When asked what happened next the actress said "The thing just starts biting me," she continued by explaining that the team had assumed she might be acting as her scream became more intense, but they were unaware that it was genuinely severe. "But we're in the middle of the scene, and I'm supposed to be screaming. But then my screaming got a little serious."

"They thought I was making really serious dramatic choices in a rom-com. It was terrible. So no one cut. So I'm just standing there with this spider on my arm, biting me, and I'm screaming, and just everyone's watching." She added.

Luckily, Glen saw what was really going on and intervened to aid. Sydney's injuries were treated by the team medic, who made the hilarious remark that she had become Spider-Woman as a result of the bite. "That was, like, a soul scream. I thought I was gonna die. Well, I was like, 'It's poisonous. I'm gonna die.'"

Source: HT

TENS OF THOUSANDS RALLY IN GEORGIA TO CELEBRATE EUROPEAN UNION CANDIDATE STATUS

TBILISI (GEORGIA) (TIP): Tens of thousands took to the streets of the Georgian capital Tbilisi on December 15 to celebrate the European Union's decision to put the EU-aspirant country on a formal membership path.

At a summit in Brussels on Thursday, European Union leaders agreed to grant Georgia long-awaited official candidate status and to open accession talks with Ukraine and Moldova.

Waving Georgian and EU flags, cheering crowds flooded Tbilisi's central Freedom Square on Friday evening, an AFP journalist at the scene reported.

"I congratulate you on this historic event. Long live united, strong, European Georgia!" Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili told the crowd.

An orchestra performed Georgia's national anthem and the EU's Ode to Joy.

Highlighting the deep polarization that mars Georgia's political landscape, President Salome Zurbashvili, who is at loggerheads with the ruling Georgian Dream party, was not invited onto the podium. Instead, she stood in the crowd. "This is a great celebration," she told reporters. "We made a very important step towards (joining) the EU."

Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine applied to join the 27-nation bloc after the Kremlin unleashed its all-out war on Ukraine last year.

The EU granted candidate status to Kyiv and Chisinau at that time but urged Tbilisi to first reform its judicial and electoral systems, reduce political polarisation, improve press freedom, and curtail the power of oligarchs.

In November, the European Commission recommended that EU leaders grant Georgia official candidate status -- with the caveat that the Tbilisi government introduces reforms.

EU membership is enshrined in Georgia's constitution and supported -- according to opinion polls -- by around 80 percent of the population. (AFP)

Two attacks launched by Yemen's Houthi rebels strike container ships in vital Red Sea corridor

DUBAI (TIP): A ballistic missile fired by Yemen's Houthi rebels slammed into a cargo ship on December 15 in the Red Sea near the strategic Bab el-Mandeb Strait, following another attack only hours earlier that struck a separate vessel, authorities said.

The missile attack on the MSC Palatium III and the earlier assault on the Al Jasrah escalated a maritime campaign by the Iranian-backed Houthis. The attacks also endanger ships travelling through a vital corridor for cargo and energy shipments for both Europe and Asia from the Suez Canal out to the Indian Ocean.

The Houthis say their attacks aim to end the pounding Israeli air-and-ground offensive targeting the Gaza Strip amid that country's war on Hamas. However, the links to the ships targeted in the rebel assaults have grown more tenuous as the attacks continue.

"The Yemeni armed forces confirm they will continue to prevent all ships heading to Israeli ports from navigating in the (Red Sea) until they bring in the food and medicine that our steadfast brothers in the Gaza Strip need," the Houthi military spokesman, Brig. Gen. Yahya Saree said in a statement claiming responsibility for Friday's attacks.

In his statement, military spokesman Saree claimed the Houthis targeted the Palatium III and the Alanya, and not the Al Jasrah. It wasn't immediately clear why he erroneously identified the second ship.

The recent attacks led Maersk, the



world's biggest shipping company, to announce Friday that it's told all of its vessels planning to pass through the Bab el-Mandeb Strait to "pause their journey until further notice." German-based shipper Hapag-Lloyd which was operating the Al Jasrah also said it was pausing all its container ship traffic through the Red Sea until Monday.

A U.S. defence official and the private intelligence firm Ambrey said the MSC Palatium III, a Liberian-flagged container ship, caught fire after the strike. It wasn't immediately clear if anyone on board the vessel had been hurt.

The attacks Friday further escalated a campaign by the Houthi rebels, who have claimed responsibility for a series of missile assaults in recent days that just missed shipping in the Red Sea and its strategic Bab el-Mandeb Strait.

On Thursday, the Houthis fired a ballistic missile that missed a container ship travelling through the strait.

The day before that, two missiles fired from Houthi-held territory missed a commercial tanker loaded with Indian-manufactured jet fuel near the Bab el-Mandeb Strait. Also near the strait, a missile fired by Houthis on Monday night slammed into a Norwegian-flagged tanker in the Red Sea.

Global shipping has increasingly been targeted as the Israel-Hamas war threatens to become a wider regional conflict -- even during a brief pause in fighting during which Hamas exchanged hostages for Palestinian prisoners held by Israel. The collapse of the truce has raised the risk of more sea attacks.

In November, Houthis seized a vehicle transport ship linked to Israel in the Red Sea off Yemen. The rebels still hold the

Hungry, thirsty and humiliated: Israel's mass arrest campaign sows fear in northern Gaza

DEIR AL-BALAH (TIP): The Israeli military has rounded up hundreds of Palestinians across the northern Gaza Strip, separating families and forcing men to strip to their underwear before trucking some to a detention camp on the beach, where they spent hours, in some cases days, subjected to hunger and cold, according to human rights activists, distraught relatives and released detainees themselves.

Palestinians detained in the shattered town of Beit Lahiya, the urban refugee camp of Jabaliya and neighbourhoods of Gaza City said they were bound, blindfolded and bundled into the backs of trucks. Some said they were taken to the camp at an undisclosed location, nearly naked and with little water.

"We were treated like cattle, they even wrote numbers on our hands," said Ibrahim Lubbad, a 30-year-old computer engineer arrested in Beit Lahiya on Dec. 7 with a dozen other family members and

held overnight. "We could feel their hatred." The roundups have laid bare an emerging tactic in Israel's ground offensive in Gaza, experts say, as the military seeks to solidify control in evacuated areas in the north and collect intelligence about Hamas operations nearly 10 weeks after the group's deadly Oct. 7 attack on southern Israel. Militants killed about 1,200 people and abducted over 240 that day.

In response to questions about alleged mistreatment, the Israeli military said that detainees were "treated according to protocol" and were given enough food and water. The army spokesman, Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, said the men are questioned and then told to dress, and that in cases where this didn't happen, the military would ensure it doesn't occur again. Those believed to have ties to Hamas are taken away for further interrogation, and dozens of Hamas members have been arrested so far, he said.

Photos and video showing Palestinian

men kneeling in the streets, heads bowed and hands bound behind their backs sparked outrage after spreading on social media.

To Palestinians, it is a stinging indignity. Among those rounded up were boys as young as 12 and men as old as 70, and they included civilians who lived ordinary lives before the war, according to interviews with 15 families of detainees. "My only crime is not having enough money to flee to the south," said Abu Adnan al-Kahlout, an unemployed 45-year-old with diabetes and high blood pressure in Beit Lahiya. He was detained Dec. 8 and released after several hours when soldiers saw he was too faint and nauseated to be interrogated.

Palestinians cowered with their families for days as Israel poured heavy machine-gun fire into Beit Lahiya and Jabaliya, the firefights with Hamas militants stranding families in their homes without electricity, running water, fuel or communications and internet service. (AP)

UK court finds Mirror Group newspapers guilty of hacking Prince Harry's phone

LONDON (TIP): Prince Harry won his historic phone hacking lawsuit on December 15 against the publisher of the Daily Mirror and was awarded over 140,000 pounds (\$180,000) in the first of several lawsuits against British tabloids to go to trial in his battles with the press.

Justice Timothy Fancourt in the High Court found phone hacking was "widespread and habitual" at Mirror Group Newspapers over many years and private investigators "were an integral part of the system" to gather information unlawfully on Harry and his associates.

He said executives at the papers were aware of the practice and covered it up.

Fancourt found the newspapers had invaded the Duke of Sussex's privacy by using unlawful information gathering to produce 15 of the 33 newspaper articles examined at trial as a representative sampling from nearly 150 Harry cited.

Harry said the ruling was "vindicating and affirming" and should serve as a warning to other news media that used similar practices, an overt reference to two tabloid publishers that face upcoming trials in lawsuits that make nearly identical allegations.

"Today is a great day for truth, as well as accountability," Harry said in a statement read by his lawyer outside court.

"I've been told that slaying dragons will get you burned. But in light of today's victory and the importance of doing what is needed for a free and honest press, it is a worthwhile price to pay. The mission



continues," Harry's statement read.

Fancourt awarded the duke damages for the distress he suffered and a further sum for aggravated damages to "reflect the particular hurt and sense of outrage" over the fact that two directors at Trinity Mirror knew about the activity and didn't stop it.

"Instead of doing so, they turned a blind eye to what was going on and positively concealed it," Fancourt said. "Had the illegal conduct been stopped, the misuse of the duke's private information would have ended much sooner."

Harry, the estranged younger son of King Charles III, had sought 440,000 pounds (\$560,000) as part of a crusade against the British media that bucked his family's longstanding aversion to litigation and made him the first senior member of the royal family to testify in

court in over a century.

His appearance in the witness box over two days in June created a spectacle as he lobbed allegations that Mirror Group Newspapers had employed journalists who eavesdropped on voicemails and hired private investigators to use deception and unlawful means to learn about him and other family members.

"I believe that phone hacking was at an industrial scale across at least three of the papers at the time," Harry asserted in the High Court. "That is beyond any doubt."

Harry had a tendency in his testimony "to assume that everything published was the product of voicemail interception," which was not the case, the judge said. He said Mirror Group was "not responsible for all of the unlawful activity directed at the duke." (AP)

515 INJURED IN A BEIJING RAIL COLLISION AS HEAVY SNOW HITS THE CHINESE CAPITAL

BEIJING (TIP): Two subway trains collided in heavy snow in Beijing, sending 515 people to the hospital, including 102 with broken bones, authorities said on December 15.

The accident occurred Thursday evening in Beijing's mountainous west on an above-ground portion of the sprawling subway system's Changping line.

Slippery tracks prompted automatic braking on the leading train. A train following from behind was on a descending section and went into a skid and was unable to brake in time, the city transport authority said in a statement Friday on its social media account.

Emergency medical personnel, police and transport authorities responded, and all passengers were evacuated by about 11 p.m., it said. Twenty-five passengers were under observation and 67 remained hospitalized on Friday morning, the authority said.

Unusually heavy snow that began falling on Wednesday has prompted the suspension of some train operations and school closures.

Alerts remain in place for icy roads, extreme cold and further snowfall. Temperatures were due to fall to minus 11 C (12 F) overnight. No fatalities have been reported from the winter storms that have struck a wide swath of northern China. Beijing's winters tend to be bitterly cold, but heavy snowfall is rare. (AP)

Israel parliament passes new wartime budget

JERUSALEM (TIP): The Israeli parliament passed an amended 2023 budget on December 14 with new funds for the war against Hamas, following a bitter debate over money for settlements and ultra-Orthodox communities.

The additional fiscal measures, which total around 30 billion shekels (\$8 billion), passed with 59 votes in favour and 44 against in the 120-seat parliament.

Of the additional funds, 17 billion shekels are earmarked for supporting Israel's war effort.

The remaining 13.5 billion shekels will support civilians impacted by the conflict.

It comes three months into Israel's war against Hamas in the Gaza Strip, aimed



at destroying the militant group after its shock October 7 attacks which Israeli officials say killed around 1,200 people, mostly civilians.

The Hamas-run health ministry in the Palestinian territory says more than 18,700 people, mostly women and children, have been killed in the conflict.

Most of the civilian funding is earmarked for residents of southern

Israeli communities targeted by Hamas in its attacks.

However, some has been allocated to inhabitants of areas near the Lebanon border, who have been subjected to almost daily rocket attacks by Hezbollah, the Lebanese militant group allied to Hamas.

Around 250,000 people living in these "active combat zones" have been

evacuated.

That funding will cover both security and other needs, including shelters, hospitals and emergency services.

The overall 2023 budget, which totals around 600 billion shekels, had been the subject of tense discussions with far-right and religious coalition partners before elements of the centre-right opposition joined to form a national unity administration.

The budget was denounced by opposition leader Yair Lapid, who previously rejected an offer to join the emergency government.

At the heart of the controversy is a discretionary fund of 14 billion shekels shared between the parties of the pre-war government.

Hundreds of millions of shekels from that fund have been earmarked for ultra-Orthodox communities as well as Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank, which are considered illegal under international law.

(AFP)

SRI LANKA ARRESTS 21 INDIAN FISHERMEN FOR ALLEGED POACHING IN ITS WATERS

COLOMBO (TIP) : At least 21 Indian fishermen have been arrested for allegedly poaching in Sri Lanka's territorial waters, the island nation's Navy has said, taking the total number this year to 195.

The Indian fishermen were arrested and their four trawlers were seized on December 13 in the northeastern waters off Mannar and Kovilan.

The Navy said in 2023 they had arrested 195 Indian fishermen for poaching in Sri Lankan waters.

The fishermen issue is a contentious one in the ties between India and Sri Lanka, with Lankan Navy personnel even firing at Indian fishermen in the Palk Strait and seizing their boats in several alleged incidents of illegally entering Sri Lankan territorial waters.

The Palk Strait, which is a narrow strip of water separating Tamil Nadu from Sri Lanka, is a rich fishing ground for fishermen from both countries.

There have been periodic instances of Indian fishermen being arrested by Sri Lankan authorities for allegedly crossing the International Maritime Boundary Line and fishing in Sri Lankan waters. (PTI)

Police headquarters, checkpoint come under attack in Pakistan; 5 law enforcement officials killed

PESHAWAR (TIP): At least five law enforcement officials were killed in militant attacks on a regional police headquarters and a checkpoint in the restive northwest Pakistan on December 15 that also killed four rebels, in an uptick in violence against security forces in the country.

The attacks come three days after terrorists killed 23 soldiers in the same region in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

The first attack occurred at the Police Lines in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Tank district. Three policemen were killed and three others injured in the attack. Four militants were also killed, authorities said.

A terrorist blew himself up at the main entrance of the police office and residence block and the others stormed in. The attack was claimed by a new militant group, Ansarul Jihad.

In another attack, militants attacked the joint police and security forces check post in Nalla Bara tehsil in the Khyber tribal district in which two troops of the Frontier Constabulary were killed.

Six people were also injured in the attack.

The attack comes days after at least 23 soldiers were killed and more than 30



others injured after militants belonging to the Tehreek-i-Jihad Pakistan (TJP), a newly formed militant group that is an affiliate of the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), stormed a compound used by the military in Dera Ismail Khan.

The TJP terror outfit has been behind some major attacks in Pakistan.

On November 4, the TJP militants attacked the Pakistan Air Force's Mianwali Training Air Base, some 300 km from Lahore, damaging three grounded aircraft.

The terrorists have repeatedly

attacked the security and military installations in Pakistan.

In September 2015, Taliban gunmen killed 29 people, including 16 worshippers in a mosque, when they stormed Badaber Airbase, close to the northwestern city of Peshawar.

In May 2011, 15 terrorists belonging to TTP and Al Qaeda attacked PNS Mehran, the headquarters of the Pakistan Navy's Naval Air Arm, located in Sindh and killed 18 military personnel and wounded 16.

Two American-built surveillance aircraft were also destroyed. (PTI)

Pakistanis, Bangladeshi politicians are new targets of deepfake, 90 per cent of videos online are pornographic

BANGKOK (TIP) : There was the Bollywood star in skin-tight lycra, the Bangladeshi politician filmed in a bikini and the young Pakistani woman snapped with a man.

None was real, but all three images were credible enough to unleash lust, vitriol - and even allegedly a murder, underlining the sophistication of generative artificial intelligence, and the threats it poses to women.

The two videos and the photo were deepfake, and went viral in a vibrant social mediascape that is struggling to come to grips with the technology that has the power to create convincing copies that can upend real lives.

"We need to address this as a community and with urgency before more of us are affected by such identity theft," actor Rashmika Mandanna said in a post on X, that has garnered more than 6.2 million views.

She is not the only Bollywood star to be cloned and attacked on social media, with top actors including Katrina Kaif, Alia Bhatt and Deepika Padukone also targeted with deepfakes.

The lycra video, said Mandanna, was "extremely scary not only for me, but also for each one of us who today is vulnerable to so much harm because of how technology is being misused". While digitally manipulated images and videos of women were once easy to spot, usually lurking in the dark corners of the internet, the explosion in generative AI tools such as Midjourney, Stable Diffusion and DALL-E has made it easy and cheap to create and circulate convincing



deepfakes.

More than 90% of deepfake videos online are pornographic, according to tech experts, and most are of women.

While there are no separate data for South Asian countries, digital rights experts say the issue is particularly challenging in conservative societies, where women have long been harassed online and abuse has gone largely unpunished.

Social media firms are struggling to keep up.

Google's YouTube and Meta Platforms - which owns Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp - have updated their policies, requiring creators and advertisers to label all AI-generated content.

But the onus is largely on victims - usually girls and

women - to take action, said Rumman Chowdhury, an AI expert at Harvard University who previously worked at reducing harms on Twitter.

"Generative AI will regrettably supercharge online harassment and malicious content ... and women are the canaries in the coal mine. They are the ones impacted first, the ones on whom the technologies are tested," she said.

"It is an indication to the rest of the world to pay attention, because it's coming for everyone," Chowdhury told a recent United Nations briefing.

As deepfakes have proliferated worldwide, there are growing concerns - and rising instances - of their use in harassment, scams and sextortion.

Regulations have been slow to follow.

The US Executive Order on AI touches on dangers posed by deepfakes, while the European Union's proposed AI Act will require greater transparency and disclosure from providers.

Last month, 18 countries - including the United States and Britain - unveiled a non-binding agreement on keeping the wider public safe from AI misuse, including deepfakes.

Among Asian nations, China requires providers to use watermarks and report illegal deepfakes, while South Korea has made it illegal to distribute deepfakes that harm "public interest", with potential imprisonment or fines.

(Reuters)

Sikh History This Week

DECEMBER 15 TO DECEMBER 21

15th December



- 1887 Maharani Bamba, wife of Dalip Singh, passed away in London.
- 1923 Bhai Pheru Morcha.
- 1924 14th Shaheedhi Jatha of 500 Akalis marched from Amritsar to Jaito.
- 1941 Independent Hind Forces were established.
- 1983 Jarnail Singh Bhindrawalae moved his resident into the building neighboring Sri Akal Takhat.
- 1990 International Conference on Sikh Studies held in New York.

16th December

- 1634 Battle of Lahara Gaga between Moghals and Sikhs.
- 1665 Guru Tegh Bahadhr released from Aurangzeb's detention.



- 1705 Guru Gobind Singh reached Rai Kot.
- 1971 Pakistani solidiers surrendered to General Jagjit Singh Arora.
- 1987 Isreal Condemns Attrocities against Sikhs in the UNO.

17th December

1846 Treaty of Bhairawal signed between the British and Maharaja Dalip Singh.

18th December

1661 Guru Tegh Bahadhr Ji left for Delhi to saefguard the rights of Brahmins.

1845 Battle of Mudki between Sikhs and British Forces.



1960 Fateh Singh started fast unto death for Punjabi Suba.



19th December

- 1924 Babbar Sada Singh PinDori accepted shahadat in Jail.
- 1967 Punjabi Bill passed by the Punjab Assembly.



20th December

1520 Guru Nanak Dev Ji visited Baghdad, Iraq.



- 1704 Guru Gobind Singh Ji evacuated Anadpur Sahib.
- 1920 Gurudwara Panja Sahib management came under the Panthic controls.

21st December

1704 Sikhs blocked the advances of the joint Hindu-Moghul army near Sirsa (Ropar district) so that Guru Gobind Singh Ji could reach some safer zone.

1838 Ranjit Singh suffered a stroke and severe attack of paralysis. Remained critical for several days. Speech and sight virtually gone.

Methods to remove unwanted body hair

Most women prefer getting rid of excess body hair using different hair removal methods. While shaving and waxing are popular choices, there are many other ways to get rid of unwanted hair.

Shaving

Shaving works by cutting off the hair at the skin level. It's the most commonly used method of hair removal. You can choose between electric shavers and disposable razors, depending on your budget.

ADVANTAGES: Shaving is painless as long as you are careful to not cut yourself. Make sure you use shaving cream or soap and sharp blades. That way you can decrease the chance of having razor burn or post-shave irritation. It is also the least expensive and fastest way to remove unwanted hair.

DISADVANTAGES: Since the hair is only removed at the skin level, it tends to grow back soon.

Where does it work best: Shaving works on various body parts but many women avoid shaving their face for the fear of thick hair growth post the session. However, shaving your legs, arms, underarms and even pubic area is safe.

HOW TO USE IT: Shaving in the shower especially when you are using disposable razors is the best way to get a smooth, hair-free body. Wet the area you want to shave and then lather it up with shaving gel or cream. Then, wet the razor with water and shave in the opposite direction of the hair growth. Hold the skin taut if needed for a smoother glide. This step is essential when using an electric shaver as there is no cream used. Once done, pat dry the skin and apply moisturiser to prevent dryness.

HOW LONG WILL IT LAST: The hair tends to grow back faster with this hair removal method. Depending on your hair growth, you will notice tiny hair growing back anything between two-three days to a week's time post shaving.

Hair removal creams

Hair removal creams, also known as depilatories, have chemicals that break down the hair structure. In this method, you apply the cream on an area, wait for 5 to 10 minutes for it to break down the hair and then use a towel or a plastic scraper to remove the cream along with the hair.

ADVANTAGES: Hair removal creams provide results that will typically last longer than shaving but less than waxing.

DISADVANTAGES: The chemicals in hair removal creams are strong and can irritate your skin. So do a patch test first and if the skin is fine with no irritation or redness, continue to apply it on a



larger area.

WHERE DOES IT WORK BEST: Hair removal creams can be used on large areas like legs and arms and also on patches that are difficult to shave or wax like your upper lip or elbows.

HOW TO USE IT: Simply apply the cream in the direction of the hair growth and leave it on for the required time as mentioned in the instructions. Then wash it off and pat dry your hairless, smooth skin.

HOW LONG WILL IT LAST: These creams can keep your hair growth away for up to a week depending on the thickness.

Waxing

Waxing is a hair removal technique that uses wax to remove hair from the root. It is done by applying warm wax over an area and then using a strip of cloth or paper to remove the wax along with the unwanted hair.

ADVANTAGES: You have to suffer through only a few seconds of pain for at least two weeks of hairlessness. And it doesn't grow back as stubble. It'll have a tapered tip, making the hair growth less obvious than when you shave. Waxing also leaves your skin feeling silky, and over time re-growth of hair is likely to be finer and slower.

DISADVANTAGES: The drawback of waxing is that you have to let the hair grow enough for the wax to pull it out.

WHERE DOES IT WORK BEST: Waxing is a hair removal technique that can be done on every part of the body including the face and pubic area. It works best when the hair is fully grown so that it can be pulled out in one stroke.

HOW TO USE IT: It is best to go to a salon and get waxed but you also get home waxing kits that have strips coated with wax. You need to apply these strips in the direction of the hair growth and hold the skin taut. Then, in one quick motion, pull the strip in the opposite direction to get rid of the hair. In salons, wax is applied on the skin using a spatula and the same process is followed.

HOW LONG WILL IT LAST: Waxing keeps you hair-free for two-three weeks at least, and in many cases, it can be four weeks too.

Electrolysis

In this method of hair removal, a needle is used to deliver a short blast of electric current into the hair follicle. It's said to result in permanent hair removal after just a few sessions. Unlike lasers, electrolysis works for any type of hair and skin.

ADVANTAGES: The main advantage of electrolysis is that it provides permanent results. But this procedure has to be performed only by a professional. There's no way you can do it on your own. Electrolysis is also much less expensive than laser hair removal, and requires fewer follow-up visits.

DISADVANTAGES: During electrolysis, the hair is removed one at a time. This makes it a much slower process than laser hair removal. There is a stinging sensation for each follicle that could be painful, again depending on your threshold.

WHERE DOES IT WORK BEST: Since the process is long, it works best on smaller areas like the face, neck and underarms.

FOOD CORNER

Half Roast Chicken

Ingredients

Cooking oil, Whole chicken (skin on- rinsed and dressed), 2-3 Onions (quartered- skin on), 1 bulb Garlic (halved - skin on), 4-5 Carrots (roughly quartered), 1/2 Cup Celery, finely, chopped, 5 sprigs Thyme, 250 ML Dunkleweizen (pour into a glass and keep open at room temperature for an hour or two to make flat), 2 Cups Chicken stock, 3 Tbsp Butter, To taste Sea salt.

Method

- Preheat oven to 220 degree C.
- In a greased oven tray line the carrots, celery, onions, garlic and thyme.
- Place the chicken on the tray and grease with oil and sprinkle with sea salt.
- Roast the chicken for 1.5 hours or till the juices run clear. Remove from the tray and reserve/rest.
- While the chicken is resting, pour the dunkelweizen into the tray turn the oven to the highest heat setting and let it bubble for five minutes.
- Remove the tray from the oven and transfer all contents to a sauce pan before adding in the chicken stock and the butter.
- Reduce the mixture of the beer, and chicken stock till it coats a spoon, adjust the salt.
- Serve with buttery mashed potatoes.



Beauty benefits of banana

This humble fruit can do much more than you think! From treating acne to anti-ageing benefits, this genius fruit needs to be part of your beauty regime. And here's our scoop on top 5 benefits of banana.

Natural moisturiser

Banana is rich in potassium, which makes it a great moisturiser for your skin. All you need to do is mash half a banana and use it as mask to reveal soft and supple skin. For extreme dry skin, you can also add honey to make the mask more effective.

Acne control

Banana peels is as useful as banana; it's rich in antioxidant properties and does wonder to your skin too. For acne solution, you can rub the white part of the peel on acne affected areas till the peel turns brown. Like this the active nutrients on your skin will do its magic. You can do this twice a week to reduce acne and even the scars.

Reduce puffy eyes

For instant DIY solution; you can use banana mash to reduce puffy eyes. Use the mash bananas on the affected area for about 15-20 minutes and rinse with cold water. This will help to reduce the swelling.

Foot care

Just like your face, you can use banana mash on your feet too. Use banana mask on your feet as a foot mask for 15 minutes and wash them with lukewarm water to get smoother and softer feet.

What happens to teeth as you age? And how can you extend the life of your smile?

A healthy smile helps us live long, well and happy lives. But just like our bodies, our teeth succumb to age-related changes. So what happens to teeth as you age? And what can you do to ensure your smile lasts the distance?

First, what are teeth made of?

The tooth crown is covered by a hard enamel coat that surrounds softer, brown dentine, which protects a centrally located pulp.

Enamel is a complex weave of brittle, honeycomb-clustered strands that interact with light to make teeth appear opalescent (a pearly, milky iridescence).

Dentine under enamel forms most of the tooth crown and root, and is made of collagen, mineral, water and proteins. Collagen strands are woven to stretch and spring back, to prevent teeth from cracking and breaking when we grind and chew.

The pulp has blood vessels and nerves that communicate with the rest of your body.

Enmeshed in the dentine mineral and collagen are small, interconnected tubules formed by specialised cells called odontoblasts that settle around the pulp, once our teeth completely form.

Each tooth contains a finite number of odontoblasts, unlike the constantly replenished special bone cells that renew.

How do our teeth change as we age?

Unable to renew, our teeth become brittle, and prone to fracture as dentine loses its spring. This is more common in teeth with existing crack lines, large fillings or root canal treatments.

With time, the outer surface of enamel thins to reveal the relatively opaque dentine that darkens as we age.

The dentine darkens because the collagen weave stiffens and shrinks, and the fluid in the tubules fills with mineral.

The odontoblasts continue to form dentine inside the tooth to reduce the translucent pulp space. The increase in dentine makes our teeth appear opaque and insulates from hot and cold sensations. This is why X-rays are useful to detect cavities we may not feel.

Food and drink particles fill micro-gaps and age-related fine crack lines that run up and down enamel to discolour and stain. These stains are easily managed by tooth whitening.

How else can you extend the life of your teeth and brighten your smile? Here are seven tips to avoid dental decline:

Avoid unnecessary forces

Avoid using your teeth to hold things such as working tools or to



open packaging. Take measures to avoid forces such as grinding or clenching by wearing a night guard.

If you have large fillings or root canal-treated teeth, speak to your dentist about specific filling materials or crowns that can protect your teeth from cracking or breaking.

Share the load

If you are missing molars or premolars, distribute chewing forces evenly to prevent overloading your remaining teeth.

Replace missing teeth with bridges, implants or well-fitted dentures to support your bite. Get your dentures checked regularly to ensure they fit and support adequately, and replace them at least every ten years.

Preserve your enamel

Reduce further enamel and dentine loss by selecting soft-bristled tooth brushes and non-abrasive toothpastes.

Certain whitening toothpastes can be abrasive, which can roughen and wear the tooth surfaces. If you are unsure, stick with toothpastes that are labelled "sensitive".

Reduce your exposure to acid in food (think lemons or apple cider vinegar) or illness (reflux or vomiting) where possible to maintain enamel and prevent erosion.

Enhance your saliva

Saliva protects against acid attacks, flushes our teeth, and has antibacterial properties to reduce erosion and decay (holes forming).

Saliva is also important to help us chew, swallow and speak.

But our saliva quality and

quantity reduces because of age-related changes to our salivary glands as well as certain medications prescribed to manage chronic illnesses such as depression and high blood pressure.

Speak to your doctor about other medication options to improve your saliva or manage reflux disease to prevent erosion.

Treat gum disease

Aesthetically, treating gum disease (periodontitis) reduces gum shrinkage (recession) that typically exposes the relatively darker tooth roots that are more prone to developing holes.

Manage and prevent senescence

Cellular senescence is the process that changes DNA in our cells to reduce our ability to withstand physical, chemical or biological damage.

Cellular senescence enhances new cancer formation, the spread of existing cancers and the onset of chronic illnesses such as Alzheimer's disease, diabetes, osteoporosis and heart disease.

You can prevent cell damage by managing lifestyle factors such as smoking, uncontrolled diabetes and chronic infections such as gum disease.

Adapt and ask for help

Ageing can affect our cognition, hand dexterity and eyesight to prevent us from cleaning our teeth and gums as effectively as we once could. If this describes you, talk to your dental care team. They can help clean your teeth, and recommend products and tools to fit your situation and abilities.

Source: PTI



5 minutes of physical activity can be valuable in late-stage lung cancer: Study

Lung cancer affects more individuals each year than any other malignancy. Nonetheless, a new study led by Curtin University revealed that people with incurable forms of the condition may survive longer if they engage in less than five minutes of physical activity per day.

From the time of their diagnosis, 89 patients with incurable lung cancer had their daily activities monitored by a team from Curtin School of Allied Health, Curtin enAble Institute, and other research institutions.

They then compared the mortality rates after 12 months between those who engaged in more moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (such as walking) and those who were largely inactive—and saw significant results.

The people who completed more than 4.6 minutes per day of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity had a 60 per cent lower risk of mortality after 12 months compared to the group who were less active.

Study lead and former Cancer Council WA postdoctoral Fellow Associate Professor Vin Cavalheri said this could be important in treating people with inoperable lung cancer, particularly early.

"We previously demonstrated people with inoperable lung cancer were highly sedentary and spent minimal time in moderate-to-vigorous physical activity before the commencement of treatment," he said. "These new findings further indicate that healthcare providers should investigate a person's levels of physical activity in early management of inoperable lung cancer."

"We also need to evaluate what can be done to encourage people with inoperable lung cancer to exercise more, as 24 per cent of the study's participants engaged in less than one minute per day of moderate to vigorous physical activity." Associate Professor Cavalheri said it was important to tailor any physical activity or exercise regimes to each individual, rather than focus on a set of guidelines which some people may find unattainable.

Source: ANI

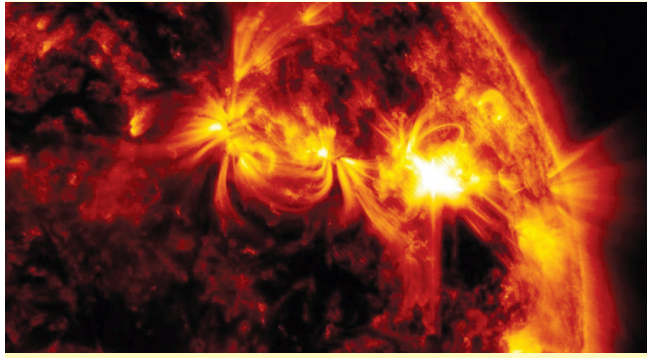
PAGE SPONSORED BY

DR. SATISH AND GITANJLI ANAND



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

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



Sun emits X-class solar flare; most powerful detected in years

The Sun emitted an incredibly strong solar flare that peaked at 10.30 PM IST on Thursday, December 14. The flare was classified as an X2.8 flare and was the most powerful one detected since 2017. Solar flares usually happen when powerful magnetic fields in and around the Sun “reconnect.” They are classified on the basis of their strength and put into the B, C, M and X classes, with the last being the strongest. Similar to the Richter scale, each step up on the ladder represents a ten-times increase in energy output. Also, each letter class has a finer scale from 1 to 9. For instance, even though X-class flares are the strongest, there are flares that are ten times as powerful as X1, which is why flares get a number rating along with their letter class. This means that the X2.8 was an especially powerful one. But it is not the most powerful one ever — that would be a flare record in 2003, during the last solar maximum. It was so powerful that it overloaded the sensors measuring it and was later estimated to be about X45. Radiation from the flare caused a shortwave radio blackout over the Americas, according to SpaceWeather.com. Soon after the blast, the United States Air Force reported a type 1 solar radio burst, which usually comes from the leading edge of a coronal mass ejection, (CME) or a large expulsion of plasma and magnetic field from the Sun’s corona.

New Apple iPhone app Journal to help you reflect on everyday moments

Apple has launched a new iPhone app called Journal that will help users reflect and practice gratitude through journaling, which has been shown to improve wellbeing.

With Journal, users can capture and write about everyday moments and special events in their lives, and include photos, videos, audio recordings, locations, and more to create rich memories.

With the new Journaling Suggestions API, third-party journaling apps can also suggest moments for users to write about. Journal and the Journaling Suggestions API are available with the release of iOS 17.2, Apple said in a statement. “Journal makes it easy to preserve rich and powerful memories, and practice gratitude by intelligently curating information that is personal to the user, right from their iPhone. We’re making it possible for other journaling apps to offer the same personalized suggestions while maintaining the highest level of privacy,” said Bob Borchers, Apple’s vice president of Worldwide Product Marketing. Users can browse past entries, bookmark them, or filter for details like photos, workouts, places, and more. Scheduled notifications can help make journaling a consistent practice.

“Suggestions based on user activity include writing prompts to empower meaningful insights, and daily reflection prompts help users focus on gratitude, kindness, purpose, and more. Users control the type of content that appears in Suggestions and can create a journal entry with the Suggestions they choose,” said Apple.

NASA’s cereal box-sized spacecraft shares new details on ‘hot Jupiters’

A spacecraft the size of a cereal box has collected precise measurements of the atmospheres of large and puffy exoplanets called “hot Jupiters”.

As their name suggests, hot Jupiters are gas giants like our own Jupiter. These planets, however, hug much closer to their home stars, completing an orbit roughly once every several Earth days.

In the process, stellar radiation cooks hot Jupiters to thousands of degrees Fahrenheit, and their atmospheres swell to enormous sizes, a bit like bread rising in an oven.

The spacecraft, Colorado Ultraviolet Transit Experiment (CUTE), measuring just 14 inches in length, has observed seven hot Jupiters so far.

Some of them seem to be losing their atmospheres, but others aren’t.

Researchers have long suspected that this constant pummeling from stellar radiation could strip away the atmospheres from around some exoplanets over millions-to-billions of years.

Data from CUTE suggest that the process might not be so simple.

“The planets seem to be coming in all of the flavours,” said Kevin France, principal investigator and Associate Professor in the



Laboratory for Atmospheric and Space Physics (LASP) and Department of Astrophysical and Planetary Sciences at the University of Colorado-Boulder.

He added that CUTE is helping scientists to build out their field guide to the many kinds of planets that exist in the Milky Way Galaxy including those that look nothing like Earth’s close neighbours.

“We want to understand how our solar system fits into the family of solar systems in the universe,” France said.

“That means understanding the big planets, the small planets, the ones that have life and the ones that

definitely don’t and all of the important physical processes that are operating on these planets.”

CUTE observes distant planets as they pass in front of their home stars, causing ultraviolet light from those stars to dim in the process. In some cases, the spacecraft is so precise that it can detect when starlight dims by just 1 per cent.

France will present the results at the ongoing 2023 meeting of the American Geophysical Union in San Francisco. Launched in September 2021, CUTE is currently orbiting about 525 km above Earth’s surface, and is expected to reenter the atmosphere by 2027. *Source: IANS*

Cybercriminals likely to execute AI-led cyberattacks, identity attacks in 2024: Report

Cybercriminals are expected to focus on developing and implementing more AI-powered cyberattacks, targeted ransomware campaigns, and identity attacks, among others, in 2024, a new report said on Friday, December 15.

According to cloud-enabled security solutions provider Barracuda Network, as organisations approach 2024, the main concerns appear to be the risk of AI-powered cyberattacks, attackers’ growing ability to bypass multifactor authentication (MFA) and vulnerabilities in supply chains and critical infrastructure.

“As we turn our gaze towards 2024, we see a future that combines the ongoing success of many current attack tactics, such as identity compromise, with an emerging landscape dominated by AI-powered cyberattacks,” said Parag Khurana, Country Manager, Barracuda Networks (India) Pvt Ltd.

“The well-documented global shortage of cybersecurity professionals means organizations need to look to integrated-end-to-end security solutions, third-party security operations centres and ongoing employee security awareness training, to fortify their defences,” he added.

Researchers mentioned that cybercriminals are expected to leverage the capabilities of machine learning and generative AI to enhance their attacks. This could include the automation of attack processes through



advanced AI algorithms, leading to more efficient, scalable, and intricate attacks.

Targeted ransomware campaigns are likely to focus on critical infrastructure and high-value targets, according to the researchers.

Moreover, the report noted that new threats are expected to emerge, driven by technological advancements, geopolitical events, and changes in attacker tactics. These include the potential rise of deepfake and synthetic media attacks.

A significant shift in focus toward small and mid-market businesses is also expected as threat actors capitalise on increased digitisation in these sectors and exploit the shortage of cybersecurity professionals.

Source: IANS

Wholesale price inflation hits an 8-month high of 0.26% in November

India's wholesale inflation stepped out of the deflationary zone for the first time since March 2023 as it rose to 0.26 percent in November, data released by the commerce ministry on December 14 showed. Wholesale Price Index (WPI) inflation was at -0.52 percent in October 2023 and 6.12 percent in November 2022.

At 0.26 percent, the latest wholesale inflation print is the highest in eight months.

The WPI data comes two days after the statistics ministry said the headline retail inflation rose to a three-month high of 5.55 percent in November, still down 189 basis points from the 15-month high of 7.44 percent in July. Wholesale inflation has zoomed 149 basis points over the same period.

One basis point is one-hundredth of a percentage point.

Like the Consumer Price Index, the WPI too rose by 0.5 percent month-on-month in November, driven by a 1.9 percent rise in the food index. Within food, the biggest push, as expected, came from vegetables, with a 16.5 percent month-on-month surge in price index, thanks to a 41.3 percent jump in the index of onions. Other food items to register a sequential increase in price included fruits (up 1.7 percent), wheat (1.6 percent), and pulses (1.4 percent), jacking up the wholesale food inflation to 4.69 percent in November from 1.07 percent in October.

At the same time, prices of manufactured products changed little, with their index rising a mere 0.1 percent MoM. Keeping manufactured products' inflation in check was price weakness in key raw materials, with the price index for semi-finished steel down 1.5 percent MoM and that of basic metals 0.9 percent lower compared to October.

Amid optimistic trend in global markets, Sensex, Nifty hit record highs

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty surged to all-time high levels in early trade on Friday, December 15, amid an optimistic trend in global markets after the US Federal Reserve kept its key interest rate unchanged and signalled rate cuts next year.

Continuous foreign fund inflows into the equity markets also fuelled the rally in stocks.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 339.36 points to 70,853.56, its all-time high level, in early trade. The Nifty climbed 115.45 points to reach its record peak of 21,298.15.

Among the Sensex firms, JSW Steel, Infosys, Tata Steel, HCL Technologies, Tata Consultancy Services, Sun Pharma, Tata Motors and Reliance Industries were the major gainers.

Nestle, Axis Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank and UltraTech Cement were among the laggards.

US Fed holds key interest rate steady, signals 3 cuts in 2024

WASHINGTON (TIP)

The Federal Reserve kept its key interest rate unchanged Wednesday for a third straight time, a sign that it is likely done raising rates after having imposed the fastest string of increases in four decades to fight painfully high inflation.

The Fed's policymakers also signaled that they expect to make three quarter-point cuts to their benchmark interest rate next year. Those envisioned rate cuts — which wouldn't likely begin until the second half of 2024 — suggest that the officials think high borrowing rates will still be needed for much of next year to further slow spending and inflation.

In a statement it issued after its 19-member policy committee met Wednesday, the Fed said "inflation has eased over the past year but remains elevated." It was the first time since inflation first spiked in 2021 that the Fed has formally acknowledged progress in its fight against accelerating prices. It also provided a hint that its rate-cut efforts may be over, saying it is considering whether "any additional" hikes are needed. The Fed kept its benchmark rate at about 5.4%, its highest level in 22 years, a rate that has led to much higher costs for mortgages, auto loans, business borrowing and many other forms of credit. Higher mortgage rates have sharply reduced home sales. Spending on appliances and other expensive goods that people often buy on credit has also declined.

So far, the Fed has achieved what few observers had thought possible a year ago: Inflation has tumbled without an accompanying surge in unemployment or a recession, which typically coincide with a central bank's efforts to cool the economy and curb inflation. Though inflation remains above the Fed's 2%



Federal Reserve chief Jerome Powell

target, it has declined faster than Fed officials had expected, allowing them to keep rates unchanged and wait to see if price increases continue to ease.

At the same time, the government's latest report on consumer prices showed that inflation in some areas, particularly health care, apartment rents, restaurant meals and other services, remains persistently high, one reason why Fed Chair Jerome Powell is reluctant to signal that policymakers are prepared to cut rates anytime soon.

On Wednesday, December 13 the Fed's quarterly economic projections showed that its officials envision a "soft landing" for the economy, in which inflation would continue its decline toward the central bank's 2% target without causing a steep downturn. The forecasts showed that the policymakers expect to cut their benchmark rate to 4.6% by the end of 2024 — three quarter-point reductions from its current level.

A sharp economic slowdown could prompt even faster rate reductions. So far, though, there is no sign that a downturn is imminent. In its quarterly projections, the Fed's policymakers now expect "core"

inflation, according to its preferred measure, to fall to just 2.4% by the end of 2024, down from a 2.6% forecast in September. Core inflation, which excludes volatile food and energy costs, is considered a better gauge to inflation's future path.

The policymakers foresee unemployment rising to 4.1% next year, from its current 3.7%, which would still be a low level historically. They project that the economy will expand at a modest 1.4% next year and 1.8% in 2025.

Interest rate cuts by the Fed, whenever they happen, would reduce borrowing costs across the economy. Stock prices could rise, too, though share prices have already rallied in expectation of rate cuts, potentially limiting any further increases.

Powell, though, has recently downplayed the idea that rate reductions are nearing. He hasn't yet even signaled that the Fed is conclusively done with its hikes. One reason the Fed might be able to cut rates next year, even if the economy plows ahead, would be if inflation kept falling, as expected. A steady slowdown in price increases would have the effect of raising inflation-adjusted interest rates, thereby making borrowing costs higher than the Fed intends. Reducing rates, in this scenario, would simply keep inflation-adjusted borrowing costs from rising.

Recent economic data have modestly cooled financial markets' expectations for early rate cuts. Last week's jobs report for November showed that the unemployment rate fell to 3.7%, near a half-century low, down from 3.9% as businesses engaged in solid hiring. Such a low unemployment rate could force companies to keep raising pay to find and retain workers, which would fuel inflationary pressures.

Source: AP

Apple's valuation may soon be more than Europe's largest stock market

Technology giant Apple is known to be one of the biggest and most profitable name in the industry. But on Wednesday, December 13, the firm made headlines for making an impact to be remembered on the largest stock market of Europe - France.

The French stock market is considered among the big leagues even for firms valued at billions of dollars, but the iPhone maker is eclipsing the largest stock market in Europe with its rising valuation, now crossing USD 3.1 trillion.

Apple Inc is now the world's most valuable publicly traded company, and its market value on Wednesday closed at a record high, at \$3.1 trillion. Meanwhile, combined market value of companies listed on the French stock market was about \$3.2 trillion as of Wednesday's close.

According to an index compiled by Bloomberg, Apple is not only on track to dominate the French stock market, but is also bigger than all but the six largest stock markets in the world, as per its most recent market value.

As surprising as it may seem, this is not the first time that the iPhone maker has overtaken Paris' stock exchange in terms of market value. The duo swapped positions a number of times during last year's second-half selloff as central banks raised interest rates to tackle inflation.

French stock market vs Apple

The French stock market is at a record high this week,



propelled by luxury-good companies including Louis Vuitton owner LVMH and Birkin bag manufacturer Hermes International SCA. The stocks pulled back starting in mid-summer, only to rev up again in recent weeks as evidence grew that inflation is cooling and thus interest rates may have peaked, with no sign of a recession in the US.

However, the United States has seen one of the biggest stock market surges in history when it comes to tech companies, with Apple benefiting heftily from the hike. Apple has soared more than 50% in 2023, adding about \$1 trillion in market value. Shares edged higher in pre-market trading.



BEJAN DARUWALLA AND CHIRAG DARUWALLA



ARIES : Ganesha says that the beginning of this week will be a bit busy for the people of Aries. At the beginning of the week, more hard work and effort will have to be made to solve the problems related to the workplace. During this time, due to not getting the expected support from seniors and juniors, the mind may remain a little sad. However, you will be able to solve all the problems with your understanding. In the middle of the week, there may be a meeting with an influential person, with whom there will be an opportunity to associate with profitable plans in the future. During this, desired success can be achieved in court-related matters. With the help of a special person, the wish to expand the business will be fulfilled. All efforts made in this direction will be successful. In the second half of the week, you have to avoid leaving your work in the hands of others, otherwise, you may have to face losses. This week will be normal in terms of a love relationship. Relationships with a love partner will be normal and there will be opportunities to spend happy moments with him. Married life will remain happy. This week you will need to take full care of your health along with work.



TAURUS : Ganesha says that people of the Taurus zodiac sign will feel sad at the beginning of the week due to a sudden big hurdle in some pending work. During this period, financial worries will arise due to the interruption of means of livelihood and spending money on unnecessary things. Employed people will have to wait a little longer for transfer, promotion, or change in the workplace. In the middle of the week, people associated with the business will get the desired profit. During this time, the journeys made in connection with business will be beneficial. The latter half of the week will prove auspicious for you. If you were thinking of buying and selling land and buildings, then you would have to wait a little longer to get the desired profit. You may get some good news related to your children at the end of the week. Love relationships will become stronger and harmony with the love partner will increase. You may also get a big surprise gift from your love partner. You will continue to get happiness and support from your spouse in married life.



GEMINI : Ganesha says Gemini sign people will get many opportunities this week to move forward in life. However, to take advantage of those opportunities, you will have to manage your time and energy. During this period, you may have to travel long or short distances in connection with work. Travels will prove to be tiring but beneficial. People preparing for exams and competitions will need more hard work to achieve their desired success. You will get an opportunity to join some beneficial scheme with the help of a special person.

WEEKLY HOROSCOPE - DEC 18 TO DEC 24, 2023

By Chirag Daruwalla - Son of Astrologer Bejan Daruwalla

Some family problems may cause you to worry in the middle of the week. Ignoring health-related matters may result in trips to the hospital. In the latter part of the week, there may suddenly be an additional workload in the workplace, for which you may have to spend extra time. From the financial point of view, during this period you may have to go through both financial gain and expenditure situations in your life. Think carefully before moving forward in a love relationship. At the end of the week, a program can be made to visit a tourist place with the family.



CANCER : Ganesha says that the people of the Cancer zodiac sign will get full support of good fortune this week. Both seniors and juniors will be seen supporting you fully in the workplace. You will be successful in completing all the incomplete tasks based on your hard work and effort. One can get happiness from land, buildings, and vehicles. If you had invested money in any scheme earlier, you will get benefits from it. In the middle of the week, you may have to face some difficulties related to business. During this time, you may have to face tough competition from your competitors. If you were thinking of expanding or changing your business, then proceed thoughtfully and take the opinion of your well-wishers before taking any big step. In the latter part of the week, with the help of your female friend, you will be able to reduce your difficulties. This week is going to be very auspicious for you from the point of view of a love relationship. Family members may give the green signal to your love relationship and approve of marriage. You will get opportunities to spend happy moments with your love partner. Married life will remain happy.

LEO : Ganesha says that this week will be very successful for Leo. The week will start with some good news that will enhance your prestige. You may be honored at work or in society for some special work this week. There is a possibility of employed people getting transferred to the desired place or getting important responsibilities. This week will prove to be very auspicious for those who are thinking of pursuing their studies or making a career by living abroad. All the difficulties coming in the way of your dream will go away. The middle of the week will prove to be very auspicious for businesspeople. The decisions taken by you during this period will prove to be successful and profitable. However, you should avoid investing money in speculation, lottery, or the stock market because whatever you get during this period will be achieved only through your hard work. Those people who were having a rift with their love partner will get resolved this week with the help of a female friend. To strengthen your love relationship, appreciate the feelings of your love partner. Married life will remain happy. Keep your diet and routine right.



VIRGO : Ganesha says that people of the Virgo zodiac sign should avoid doing any work hastily or under pressure this week. At the beginning of the week, the workload will remain a bit heavy, but your friends will prove to be very helpful. While making any decision related to land-building, do take the advice of a well-wisher. In the middle of the week, suddenly a big expenditure can come to the fore. You may have to spend more out-of-pocket money on things related to home repairs or amenities. During this time, you

will need to be more careful with those people in the workplace, who often try to obstruct your work. Before implementing your plans, do not forget to brag or praise them in front of others, otherwise, your opponents may put obstacles in it. If you are associated with any business, then be very careful while dealing with money. Your attraction towards the opposite sex may increase this week. Friendship with someone can turn into a love affair, but don't display it even by mistake, otherwise, you may have to face trouble. There will be love and harmony with your spouse.



LIBRA : Ganesha says that people of the Libra zodiac may have to travel long or short distances in connection with careers or business at the beginning of the week. The journey will prove pleasant and profitable. During this period, friendship with an influential person will be of great benefit to you in the future. In the middle of the week, you may have to spend more money out of your pocket on home repairs or luxuries-related things, due to which your budget may get a little disturbed. During this time, you will have to control your speech and behavior. Especially in your workplace, you will have to ignore the small things of people and focus on your goal. The second half of the week is going to be a bit difficult for businesspeople. During this period, the mind may remain a little disappointed due to not getting the desired profits in business. This week cannot be called favorable for you from the point of view of a love relationship. Any misunderstanding regarding any matter can create a rift in your relationship. To overcome this, you will have to resort to dialogue instead of dispute. Even in married life, to make your relationship sweet, you should avoid ignoring the feelings of your spouse.



SCORPIO : Ganesha says that the people of the Scorpio zodiac will get less good fortune this week than expected. In such a situation, you will have to put extra hard work and effort into completing any task. There may be a delay in getting the desired success. The mind will be a little disappointed due to not being able to complete the planned work on time or due to obstacles. However, in any difficult situation, your friends and family will stand by you completely. In the middle of the week, those who do business in partnership may face some difficulties from the side of their partner. In such a situation, do not make any decision in a rush or by getting carried away by emotions, otherwise, you may have to face financial loss. During this time, the minds of the students studying and writing can wander from studies. Working women may find it difficult to balance their work and home life. This week you need to be very careful in terms of love relationships. To improve your love relationship, you have to avoid ignoring the feelings and compulsions of your love partner. To make married life happy, try to resolve any differences with your spouse through dialogue instead of dispute.



SAGITTARIUS : Ganesha says that this week will bring new opportunities in life for Sagittarius people. Employed people can get important responsibilities in the workplace. Due to this your respect will increase. Everyone senior and junior in the

BIRTHDAY HOROSCOPE : DECEMBER 18 TO DECEMBER 24 BY VEDIC ASTROLOGER NASTUR BEJAN DARUWALLA



**VEDIC ASTROLOGER NASTUR
BEJAN DARUWALLA**

DECEMBER 18

Ganesha says today will be simple yet serene. No new exciting prospects or projects will arise, but you'll fall in love with your work and fall in even more love with your partner today. You will feel like an agile person today as you go through the day full of energy and enthusiasm. Your health has finally healed and it is very likely to stay better. You will have immense support from your business partner today. They will work throughout the day today and won't be in your way today.

DECEMBER 19

Ganesha says your day will go positively if you go through the day with a casual approach and avoid anything and everything that causes you anxiety and worry today. Make sure you're aware of your surroundings and whereabouts today. You have to stay focused and do not get involved in unproductive activities. Today luck is by your side in terms of work and finances hence to reap the full benefits of your good luck getting a lot of work done today.

DECEMBER 20

Ganesha says you will feel very refreshed today. Going out to meet your friend will be a very good idea for you today. You will feel like today will be the day that things start to get brighter for you. Expect positive surprises and a lot of appreciation from your partner. Just having an open conversation with your partner will make your day positive. You will meet some amazing people today. You will experience a great social life today, which will keep you occupied throughout the day.

DECEMBER 21

Ganesha says you will have the most amazing day ever today. You will be very lucky in achieving whatever you want today. You will be also generous and spend your money unreasonably but you should be careful in spending on the right things only. Little gestures made by your loved one will keep you happy and satisfied throughout the day. Your health is on its way to improving as well today. Try to relax as much as you can. Meditation and yoga will help you a lot today.

DECEMBER 22

Ganesha says luck is on your side if you follow your intuitions today, your business will require you to keep working continuously throughout today. Hence you need to have patience and have control over your work schedule. Even though you want to spend today with your partner you won't have much time today especially till the evening as an unexpected and huge amount of workload will be piled up on you due to the absence of a colleague.

DECEMBER 23

Ganesha says you will feel like a new person today as you go through the day full of love light and energy. Your health has finally healed from the consequences of all the bad habits you've had for the last few years. You will have a great time with your loved ones and your partner today. You will make great progress by learning in your business as well hence all in all a good day today for your health as well.

DECEMBER 24

Ganesha says with more time on

your hands you're going to spend a lot of quality time getting to know your partner better today. You're usually someone who always goes the extra mile and puts in a lot of hard work which won't be the case today because your partner will force you to take the day off. The possibility of taking the next step in your relationship is quite high today. You will have a day full of doing things you love and spending time with your favorite person in the lap of nature.

Nastur Bejan Daruwalla is available for astrological consultations.

**He can be reached at
info@bejandaruwala.com and
on phone +91-9638770377
www.bejandaruwala.com**

CONTD FROM PAGE 34

workplace will be seen appreciating your work. All your plans made during this period will seem to be successful. Special support from parents will be received while making any major decision related to the family. In the middle of the week, some people may be seen challenging or obstructing your work, but you will prove unsuccessful in all their efforts with your understanding. For those who have been thinking of expanding their business for a long time, their wish can be fulfilled by the end of this week with the help of a special person. Students engaged in the preparation of examination competitions can get to hear some good news. Love relations will be intense and better tuning will be seen with the love partner. Married life will remain happy. You will get support from your spouse at every step of life.



Capricorn

CAPRICORN : Ganesha says that the people of Capricorn sign will get less good fortune this week than expected. At the beginning of the week, some problems related to home and family will become a major cause of your problems. During this, there can be a dispute with a brother or sister about something. Due to the dispute related to land and buildings, one may have to visit the court. However, a friend or well-wisher will prove to be very helpful in finding a solution to a problem related to property or domestic matters. In the middle of the week, you may have to run unnecessarily for a career or business. Conflicting situations may have to be faced in business. Employed people may have to get scolded by the boss for something in the workplace. During this, the cooperation of colleagues will also be less than expected. However, the second half of the week can

bring some relief as compared to the first half. During this, the efforts made for employment will be successful. To improve the love relationship, do not do any such work this week which will hurt the feelings of your love partner. In difficult times, your life partner will remain with you like a shadow and will become your support. Avoid ignoring health-related problems this week.



Aquarius

AQUARIUS : Ganesha says that this week is going to be full of relief for the people of Aquarius as compared to the previous week. If the tasks planned at the beginning of the week are completed on time, you will feel amazing confidence within you. During this time, your pending work will be completed with the help of friends. Obstacles coming in the way of employment will be removed. You will get benefits with the help of someone associated with the ruling government. However, with the arrival of money from various sources, there will be excess expenditure. In the middle of the week, you will be worried about the health of any family member. However, you will need to take full care of your health because due to the emergence of seasonal or any chronic disease, you may face physical and mental pain. Even the slightest carelessness towards health can force you to visit the hospital. In the second half of the week, while making any major decision related to business, the advice of well-wishers must be taken. Avoid investing money in any risky scheme during this time. In terms of love relationships, this week you need to be very careful with those people who are jealous of your couple. Married life will remain happy. There will be better coordination with the spouse.



Pisces

PISCES : Ganesha says that this week has brought auspiciousness and good fortune for the people of Pisces. At the beginning of the week, if there is any major success related to career and business, there will be an atmosphere of happiness in the family. During this, whatever responsibility you will get in the field, you will be able to fulfill it in a better way. Seniors will appreciate your work. You will be successful in completing all your incomplete tasks on the strength of your hard work and effort. In the middle of the week, you will get full support from your parents while solving any major issue related to family. However, while doing this, you should avoid ignoring the feelings of your loved ones. If you had invested money in any scheme earlier, then by the end of this week you can get big financial benefits from it. You may get a big proposal from an influential person to take the business forward. If you were thinking of expressing your love to someone, your wish will be fulfilled. Married life will remain happy. Health will be normal.

ABOUT CHIRAG DARUWALLA

Celebrity Astrologer Chirag Daruwalla is the son of famous astrologer Bejan Daruwalla. He is known for his detailed astrological predictions on career, health, love, finance, and business. You can visit their website bejandaruwala.com for guidance on problems related to your life and solve your problem with the help of expert astrologer Chirag Daruwalla. For guidance on problems related to your life you can talk to Astrologer Chirag Daruwalla on Call/WhatsApp: +91 9825470377 or also mail on: info@bejandaruwala.com

contd from page 1**Giuliani ordered to pay \$148 million...**

Moss and Freeman were each awarded another roughly \$36 million in other damages.

"Money will never solve all my problems," Freeman told reporters outside Washington's federal courthouse after the verdict. "I can never move back into the house that I call home. I will always have to be careful about where I go and who I choose to share my name with. I miss my home. I miss my neighbors and I miss my name."

Giuliani didn't appear to show any emotion as the verdict was read after about 10 hours of deliberations. Moss and Freeman hugged their attorneys after the jury left the courtroom and didn't look at Giuliani as he left with his lawyer.

The former New York City mayor vowed to appeal, telling reporters that the "absurdity of the number merely underscores the absurdity of the entire proceeding."

"It will be reversed so quickly it will make your head spin, and the absurd number that just came in will help that actually," he said.

Giuliani had already been found liable in the case and previously conceded in court documents that he falsely accused the women of ballot fraud. Even so, the former mayor continued to repeat his baseless allegations about the women in comments to reporters outside the Washington, D.C., courthouse this week.

Giuliani's lawyer acknowledged that his client was wrong but insisted that Giuliani was not fully responsible for the vitriol the women faced. The defense sought to largely pin the blame on a right-wing website that published the surveillance video of the two women counting ballots.

Giuliani's defense rested Thursday, December 14 morning without calling a single witness after the former mayor reversed course and decided not to take the stand. Giuliani's lawyer had told jurors in his opening statement that they would hear from his client. But after Giuliani's comments outside court, the judge barred him from claiming in testimony that his conspiracy theories were right.

The judgment adds to growing financial and legal peril for Giuliani, who was among the loudest proponents of Trump's false claims of election fraud that are now a key part of the criminal cases against the former president.

Giuliani had already been showing signs of financial strain as he defends himself against costly lawsuits and investigations stemming from his representation of Trump. His lawyer suggested that the defamation case could financially ruin the former mayor, saying "it would be the end of Mr. Giuliani."

And Giuliani is still facing his biggest test yet: fighting criminal charges in the Georgia case accusing Trump and 18 others of working to subvert the results of the 2020 election, won by Democrat Joe Biden, in that state. Giuliani has pleaded not guilty and characterized the case as politically motivated.

Jurors in the defamation case heard recordings of Giuliani falsely accusing the election workers of sneaking in ballots in suitcases, counting ballots multiple times and tampering with voting machines. Trump also repeated the conspiracy theories through his social media accounts. Lawyers for Moss and Freeman, who are Black, also played for jurors audio recordings of the graphic and racist threats the women received.

The women's lawyers asked for at least \$24 million for each woman in defamation damages alone. They also sought compensation for their emotional harm and punitive damages.

On the witness stand, Moss and Freeman described fearing for their lives as hateful messages poured in. Moss told jurors she tried to change her appearance, seldom leaves her home and suffers from panic attacks. Her mother described strangers banging on her door and recounted fleeing her home after people came with bullhorns and the FBI told her she wasn't

safe.

"It's so scary, anytime I go somewhere, if I have to use my name," Freeman said, gasping through her tears to get her words out. "I miss my old neighborhood because I was me, I could introduce myself. Now I don't have a name, really."

Defense attorney Joseph Sibley told jurors they should compensate the women for what they are owed, but he urged them to "remember this is a great man."

An attorney for Moss and Freeman, in his closing argument, highlighted how Giuliani has not stopped repeating the false conspiracy theory asserting the workers interfered in the November 2020 presidential election. Attorney Michael Gottlieb played a video of Giuliani outside the courthouse on Monday, in which Giuliani falsely claimed the women were "engaged in changing votes."

"Mr. Giuliani has shown over and over again he will not take our client's names out of his mouth," Gottlieb said. "Facts will not stop him. He says he isn't sorry and he's telegraphing he will do this again. Believe him."

The judge overseeing the election workers' lawsuit had already ordered Giuliani and his business entities to pay tens of thousands of dollars in attorneys' fees. In holding Giuliani liable, the judge ruled that the former mayor gave "only lip service" to complying with his legal obligations while trying to portray himself as the victim in the case.

India must address US concerns on...

If the issue is not addressed appropriately, it could cause significant damage to the US-India partnership, they warned after a classified briefing by the Biden administration on Nikhil Gupta's indictment.

Gupta was detained at the Prague airport in June in an action that came at the request of the US, the Czech government spokesman said on Friday, December 15. The US had submitted an extradition request two months later, they said.

Friday's classified briefings were attended by US Representatives Ami Bera, Pramila Jayapal, Ro Khanna, Raja Krishnamoorthi, and Shri Thanedar.

"We believe the US-India partnership has made meaningful impact on the lives of both of our people, but we are concerned that the actions outlined in the indictment could, if not appropriately addressed, cause significant damage to this very consequential partnership," they said in a statement.

The US Congress members said the charges were deeply concerning and the safety of their constituents are their most important priority. They welcomed India's move to form an enquiry committee but said it should assure the US that such incidents will not happen again.

"We welcome the Government of India's announcement of a Committee of Enquiry to investigate the murder plot and it is critical that India fully investigate, hold those responsible, including Indian government officials, accountable, and provide assurances that this will not happen again," they said.

Gupta, 52, moved the Supreme Court on Friday, December 15, via a family member and claimed multiple violations of fundamental rights, including threats to himself and his family, and requested the Indian government to intervene in his extradition to the US. The hearing has been adjourned till January 4.

He claimed he was intercepted by "American agents" on his arrival in Prague, then bundled into a black SUV and interrogated for three hours while being driven around the foreign city. He claimed he was "forced" to eat only pork and beef during his first few days in the prison.

Nikhil Gupta has been charged by US federal prosecutors with working with an Indian government employee in the foiled plot to kill Pannun, a designated terrorist in India.

In September, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau had alleged the role of Indian agents in the June murder of another Khalistani terrorist, Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a Canadian citizen. India had rejected the

allegations as "motivated".

However, the murder plot of another Khalistani, Gurpatwant Singh Pannun in the US, and US administration's tough stand on the issue, has lent credence to the claims of Canadian Prime Minister that Indian agents were responsible for Nijjar's murder. More and more people as also governments across the world do not seem to buy India government's denials of involvement. (With inputs from agencies)

Parliament security breach: Intruder...

Family members of Sharma gave the diary to the local police who then handed it over to their Delhi counterparts investigating Wednesday's security breach in Parliament.

The diary entries are not regular. It included his thoughts on society, poems and couplets by revolutionaries and freedom fighters.

In one such entry, Sharma wrote "Sarfaroshi ki tamanna ab hamaare dil mein hai, dekhna hai zor kitna baazu-e-qaatil mein hai"- a couplet that was made famous by Ram Prasad Bismil as a war cry during the British rule.

On February 6, 2021, Sharma wrote, "Ghar se vida lene ka samay najdik aa gaya hai (It's almost time to bid adieu to home). On one hand, there is a fear and on the other the fiery determination to go through anything."

"I have waited every moment of five years for the time when I will move towards my duty. The strongest person in the world is not one who knows how to snatch but the one who can give up everything," he added.

In a diary entry on June 12, 2015, Sharma wrote, "The modesty of daughters is being looted in the open here. Then why are we sitting patiently with folded hands?"

The very next day, he wrote about giving his life for the nation.

Police sources, quoting the family members, said that Sharma studied till class 12 and tried to join the army but failed despite several attempts. He later moved to Bengaluru for a few years. After returning home a few months ago, Sagar began driving an e-rickshaw.

According to the family members, while leaving home on Monday, Sagar told them that he was going to Delhi to take part in a protest. His kin claimed that were unaware of his involvement in the Parliament security breach.

Satyam Singh, a friend of Sagar said that he wanted to study more after class 12 and talked about financial constraints.

"He wanted to do something for his family. He talked of earning an honest living without harming anyone. I find it hard to believe that he took such an extreme measure of causing a ruckus inside Parliament," he said.

According to the police, Sagar's father Roshan Lal is a carpenter while his mother Rani is a homemaker. The family hails from the Unnao district of Uttar Pradesh but has been living in a rented accommodation in Lucknow for over a decade.

A Delhi court on Friday, December 14 sent Lalit Jha, arrested in the Parliament security breach case, to 7-day custody of the Delhi Police that claimed he was the "mastermind" of the shocking incident.

In a major security breach on the anniversary of the 2001 Parliament terror attack on Wednesday, Sagar Sharma and Manoranjan D jumped into the Lok Sabha chamber from the public gallery during Zero Hour, released yellow smoke from canisters and shouted slogans before being overpowered by MPs.

Around the same time, two others, including a woman, raised slogans and released yellow smoke from canisters outside the Parliament premises, prompting police to round up the duo.

The four persons have been arrested and slapped with terror charges under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. (Source: PTI)

Vivah Panchami

The day of Vivah Panchami is considered a special day in Hinduism. This day is celebrated every year on the fifth day of Shukla Paksha of Magashish month according to Hindu date. Panchami is special in Hinduism because it is believed that Lord Rama and Mother Sita got married on this day. That's why 'Vivah Panchami' is also known as 'Ram Vivah'.

Vivah Panchami is celebrated like a festival in Hinduism. This festival is celebrated with great enthusiasm in the city of Ayodhya in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. The day of Vivah Panchami is celebrated as the marriage festival of Sita and Rama in temples and holy places associated with Sri Rama in the Mithila region of India and Nepal.

Significance of Vivah Panchami

The day of Vivah Panchami is considered as an auspicious and holy day according to the scriptures. Vivah Panchami festival is held in almost all Ram-Sita temple areas in India and Nepal. It is celebrated with great enthusiasm especially in Ayodhya. On this day the temples of Ram-Sita are decorated with lamps and flower garlands. The idols of all the deities in the temples are beautified with new clothes and ornaments. On this day in the temples of Ram-Sita marriage-like conversation takes place. This social program is popularly known as 'Ram Vivah Utsav'.

Not considered auspicious - for marriage

According to astrology, the day of Vivah Panchami is not considered auspicious for marriage. Lord Rama and Mother Sita were married on the day of Vivah Panchami, but then this day is not considered perfect for common people for marriage. Because the life after the marriage of Lord Rama and Sita was full of sorrows and hardships. That's why it is believed that getting married on this day can make a person's married life as painful as Ram and Sita's.

Vivah Panchami Story

King Dasharath was once approached by Maharishi Vishwamitra, requesting him to allow Ram to guard his Yagna. King Dasharath reluctantly agreed and allowed Prince Ram and Lakshman to go with sage Vishwamitra. Vishwamitra successfully completed his Yagna and returned to Mithila along with Ram and Laxman. During that time, Mithila's ruler Janak had organised a Swayamvar for Princess Sita.

The Swayamvar task for all participants was to lift and string a massive bow, Shiva Dhanusha, which was laid resting on the ground. However, it was such a heavy and enormous bow that participants failed to lift it. Sage Vishwamitra then asked Ram, who strung the bow, breaking it into two. King Janak was delighted and got Sita married to Lord Ram.

Vivah Panchami Rituals

- In the morning, devotees bathe and dress in clean, fresh clothes.
- The idols of Bhagwan Rama and Mata Sita are decorated.
- Bhagwan Ram is given yellow robes, while Mata Sita is given crimson clothes.
- 'Vivah Prasang,' the sacred Baal-Kand script, was read by either the priest or family members.
- Listening to the legend of Lord Rama and Maa Sita's wedding is believed to bring happiness and blessings.
- On this day, reciting the Ramcharitmana ensures a happy and wealthy family life.
- The devotion of Bhagwan Rama and Mata Sita would help you in resolving all family conflicts.
- Devotees chant devotional and religious songs as well as sacred mantras in praise of the deities (bhajans).
- In the 'Ramleela,' the Vivah Panchami takes place in various settings.
- The celebration is concluded with the offering of a final Aarti and Bhog Prasad after the priest



Important information

Vivah Panchami 2023 or Ram Vivah Utsav 2023

Sunday, 17 December 2022

Panchami tithi start : 16 December 2023 at 08:00 pm

Panchami tithi end : 17 December 2022 at 05:33 pm

completes the Vivah Panchami Puja.

Vivah Panchami Benefits

- If any difficulties develop in your marriage, performing puja on the day of Vivah Panchami can help you in overcoming them.
- Worship on this day may remove any difficulty that arises in a person's married life.
- Worshipping the combined form of Lord Shri Ram and Mata Sita aids in obtaining both of their blessings as well as the removal of all obstacles in a person's marriage.
- Furthermore, chanting Bala Kanda's Path is very important during the idols' wedding ceremony.
- Reciting the Ramcharitmanas also promotes pleasant family life.

Vivah Panchami is an excellent occasion indeed, and it procures so many windfalls for the devotees too. It is the best event for all Rama and Sita followers to portray their love for the great godheads. It is the best occasion to observe for those who want a fulfilling and happy married life. Vivah Panchami is also the perfect time to get married. The marriages

which take place on this day sustain with more vitality.

It is also an excellent day to execute community marriages in large numbers. People suffering from problems in their marriage are advised to keep a fast on this day. The fast and idolization of Lord Rama and Sita can bring positivity and peace to their wedding.

PAGE SPONSORED BY



ARISH K. SAHANI

Serving Since 1972

Please Call or Write for Your Insurance Needs

Arish K Sahani (Father)

Shiv Sahani (Son)

Priya Sahani Sood (Daughter)

718 - 271 - 1906

arish.sahani@gmail.com

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

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

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

History This Week

DEC 15 - DEC 21

DECEMBER 15

December 15, 1939 - *Gone with the Wind* had its world premiere in Atlanta, introduced by producer David O. Selznick and featuring appearances by Vivien Leigh and Clark Gable.

December 15, 1943 - The Battle of San Pietro took place during World War II as a German panzer battalion devastated American forces trying to take the 700-year-old Italian village. Hollywood director John Huston, serving as an army lieutenant, filmed the battle and left behind a graphic account.



December 15, 1961 - Nazi SS-Colonel Adolf Eichmann was sentenced to death in Jerusalem for his role in the Holocaust. Eichmann had organized the deportation of Jews from all over occupied Europe to Nazi death camps.

December 15, 1964 - Canada adopted a new national flag featuring a red maple leaf on a white background.

December 15, 1989 - The dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet ended in Chile. Pinochet had come to power in 1973 after a military overthrow of the democratically elected government.

December 15, 1993 - The GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) Treaty was approved by delegations from 117 countries. The treaty was designed to reduce international tariffs, eliminate trade quotas, and protect intellectual property.

December 15, 1995 - European Union leaders announced their new currency would be known as the Euro.

Birthdays - French engineer Alexandre Eiffel (1832-1923) was born in Dijon, France. He designed the Eiffel Tower for the Paris International Exposition of 1889. He also helped design the Statue of Liberty.

DECEMBER 16



December 16, 1944 - American big-band leader Glenn Miller disappeared in a small plane over the English Channel and was presumably killed. Best

remembered for *Moonlight Serenade* and *In the Mood*.

December 16, 1944 - During World War II in Europe, the Battle of the Bulge began as the Germans launched a big counter-offensive in the Ardennes Forest along a 75-mile front, taking American troops by surprise. Aided by foggy, snowy weather, the Germans penetrated 65 miles into Allied lines by the end of December. The German advance was eventually halted by Montgomery on the Meuse and Patton at Bastogne. As the weather cleared, Allied aircraft attacked German ground forces and supply lines and the counter-offensive failed. There were an estimated 77,000 Allied and 130,000 German casualties.

December 16, 1969 - The British House of Commons voted 343-185 to abolish the death penalty in England.

December 16, 1991 - The United Nations voted to revoke Resolution 3379, originally approved on November 10, 1975, which had equated Zionism (a movement supporting the Jewish national state of Israel) with racism.

Birthdays - Philosopher George Santayana (1863-1952) was born in Madrid, Spain. As a child he emigrated to the U.S. and eventually became a teacher at Harvard University. Best known for stating, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

Birthdays - Anthropologist Margaret Mead (1901-1978) was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She studied primitive peoples in the Southwest Pacific and was known for her outspoken manner regarding social issues such as women's rights, child rearing, population control and world hunger.

DECEMBER 17



December 17, 1971 - The war between India and Pakistan over East Pakistan (later Bangladesh) ended as 90,000 Pakistani troops surrendered.

December 17, 1903 - After three years of experimentation, Orville and Wilbur Wright achieved the first powered, controlled airplane flights. They made four flights near Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, the longest lasting about a minute.

Birthdays - Poet and abolitionist John Greenleaf Whittier (1807-1892) was born in Haverhill, Massachusetts. His books of poetry include *Legends of New England* and *Snowbound*.

DECEMBER 18

December 18, 1916 - During World War I, the Battle of Verdun concluded after

ten months of fighting in which 543,000 French and 434,000 German soldiers were killed.



December 18, 1940 - Adolf Hitler ordered the German General Staff to begin planning Operation Barbarossa, the invasion of Soviet Russia.

December 18, 1956 - Japan was admitted to the United Nations.

December 18, 2019 - Donald Trump, the 45th U.S. President, was impeached by the House of Representatives on charges of Abuse of Power and Obstruction of Congress. The charges alleged that Trump sought help from Ukraine to investigate Democratic rival Joe Biden and his son Hunter Biden, to interfere with the 2020 presidential election, and that Trump attempted to obstruct the House's impeachment inquiry by directing his aides to ignore subpoenas for documents and testimony. Trump was acquitted on February 5, 2020 when the U.S. Senate failed to reach the two-thirds majority needed for conviction.

Birthdays - West German Chancellor Willy Brandt (1913-1992) was born in Lubeck, Germany (as Herbert Ernst Karl Frahm). During Hitler's regime, he was an anti-Nazi exile. He returned to Germany after World War II, entered politics and was elected chancellor in 1969. He won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1971 for his efforts to improve East-West relations during the Cold War.

DECEMBER 19

December 19, 1946 - War broke out in French Indochina as Ho Chi Minh attacked the French seeking to oust them from Vietnam. This marked the beginning of a thirty-year conflict which eventually led to heavy U.S. involvement and ended with a Communist victory in April 1975 after U.S. withdrawal from South Vietnam.



December 19, 1998 - The House of Representatives impeached President Bill Clinton, approving two out of four Articles of Impeachment, charging Clinton with lying under oath to a

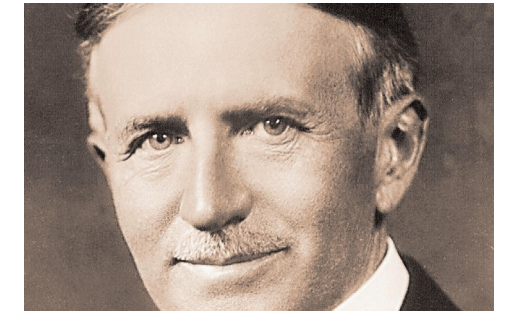
federal grand jury and obstructing justice.

Birthdays - Historian Carter Woodson (1875-1950) was born in New Canton, Virginia. He introduced black studies to American colleges and universities. His works included; *The Negro in Our History* and *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861*.

DECEMBER 20

December 20, 1956 - The Montgomery bus boycott ended after the U.S. Supreme Court ruling integrating the Montgomery bus system was implemented. The boycott by African Americans had begun on December 5, 1955, after Rosa Parks was arrested for refusing to give up her seat on a Montgomery bus to a white man.

December 20, 1989 - The U.S. invaded Panama attempting to capture Manuel Noriega on charges of narcotics trafficking. Operation Just Cause occurred seven months after Noriega had declared unfavorable election results in his country to be null and void. The invasion toppled the Noriega government and resulted in the installation of Guillermo Endara as president. Noriega temporarily eluded capture, but surrendered a few weeks later to U.S. troops. He was then tried, convicted, and imprisoned in the U.S.



Birthdays - American industrialist Harvey S. Firestone (1868-1938) was born in Columbiana County, Ohio. He founded Firestone Tire and Rubber Co. and was a close friend of Henry Ford and Thomas Edison.

DECEMBER 21

December 21, 1945 - World War II General George Patton died in Germany following a car accident. He had been injured on December 9th near Mannheim and was taken to a hospital in Heidelberg where he died. He was buried in Luxembourg. Nicknamed "Old Blood and Guts," he once stated during the war, "We shall attack and attack until we are exhausted, and then we shall attack again."



December 21, 1988 - Pan American Flight 103 exploded in midair as the result of a terrorist bomb and crashed into Lockerbie, Scotland. All 259 passengers and crew members along with 11 persons on the ground were killed.

Kolkata, India's second biggest city, is a perpetually ongoing festival of human existence, concurrently luxurious and squalid, refined and frantic, pointedly futuristic, while beautifully in decay. A vibrant 350-year-old metropolis located on India's Eastern Coast, the capital of West Bengal thrives on contradictions and imposing spectacles; nothing is commonplace in this city. Famously known as the City of Joy, Kolkata is, in every sense, the artistic, cultural and intellectual capital of the country. Kolkata's streets are vivid, hectic, chaotic, and yet, brimming with life and creativity. Driven by the indomitable spirit of the self-made middle class, the city has created a beautiful juxtaposition of the old colonial-era charm with the nascent upcoming hipster culture that thrives amongst the city's millennial residents.

Starting from admiring the flourishing art scene in the city to going on rewarding gastronomical explorations to wandering amidst the countless bazaars to sitting by the banks of the Hooghly and enjoying a peaceful sunset, Kolkata is soaked in layers and layers of heritage and culture, and peeling off each layer to look beneath the hood is a very rewarding, once-in-a-lifetime experience. As the famous quote goes, "If you want a city with a soul, come to Calcutta".

Formerly the capital of the British empire before the government was shifted to Delhi, Kolkata has a distinct tinge of its royal past lingering in every nook and cranny of the city. If you want to soak in some of the city's regal past, take a walk along the streets of North Kolkata, which houses some of the oldest mansions in the city, swathed with vines and a persistent sense of aristocratic pride. Kolkata is home to Rabindranath Tagore's ancestral house, which has now been converted into a museum and houses a staggering collection of family portraits and paintings. There are plenty of ghats all over the city where you can sit and enjoy a sunset while sipping on tea, one of the most noted of these being the Prinsep Ghat, which offers stunning views of the Vidyasagar Setu in the backdrop. Close by is Millennium Park, which is a beautified waterfront park from where you can avail boat rides and cruises.

Kolkata has a very lively nightlife, and the entire stretch along Park Street houses innumerable bars and pubs where you can party the night away. Kolkata's street food is famous all across the country, and the city is lined with eateries and food stalls at every corner, where you can savour local Bengali food, or try out local snacks such as Jhalmuri, or Ghugni

Kolkata: The city of Joy



Chaat.

Victoria Memorial

Spread over 57 acres of land, housing 21 lush green gardens, 28,394 artefacts, and 3,900 artistic paintings, Victoria memorial is one of the best places to visit in Kolkata. Built in the memory of Queen Victoria, this white marble beauty is a host to 20 lakhs annual visitors.

Fort William

Situated on the eastern banks of Hooghly river, Fort Williams is a huge building from the colonial era that has served multiple purposes till date. It is one of the few Kolkata points of interest which is a must visit place during your Kolkata sightseeing tour. Known as the 'black hole of Calcutta', this place was once a temporary jail where prisoners were hauled, but now it serves as the headquarters of the Eastern Command.

Marble Palace

This nineteenth century palatial mansion in North Kolkata, is one of the most visited tourist places in Kolkata. It is one of the best restored royal family palaces in India that boasts of artistic statues, elegant glassware, and noteworthy paintings of illustrious artists of the British Raj.

Howrah Bridge

A Kolkata sightseeing tour is truly

incomplete without visiting the 'Harbour Bridge of India', the Howrah Bridge. Titled as the 'oldest but the busiest' place in Kolkata, the Howrah Bridge was built over the Hooghly river to ensure connectivity between the two major cities of Kolkata and Howrah.

Tagore's House

Known as the 'Jorasanko Thakur Bari', Tagore's house is one of the most important historical places in Kolkata. The former residence of India's most renowned literaries, Rabindranath Tagore, is now converted into a museum which houses a photo gallery, fascinating paintings, and Tagore's literary works.

Sunderbans

The most famous Kolkata tourist spot, Sunderbans is one of the natural wonders of the world. Listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Sunderbans is a part of the world's largest delta formed by the Ganges, Brahmaputra, and Meghna. It is also the largest Tiger reserve, and national park in India.

Rabindra Sarovar

Previously known as Dhakuria lake, Rabindra Sarovar is an artificial lake in Kolkata. It is one of the best places to visit in Kolkata if you are looking for a quiet, and peaceful time. Every morning one would find numerous people jogging, or walking along the shores of the lake. It is

also a perfect spot for nature admirers who wish to get close to the beauty of nature.

Botanical Gardens

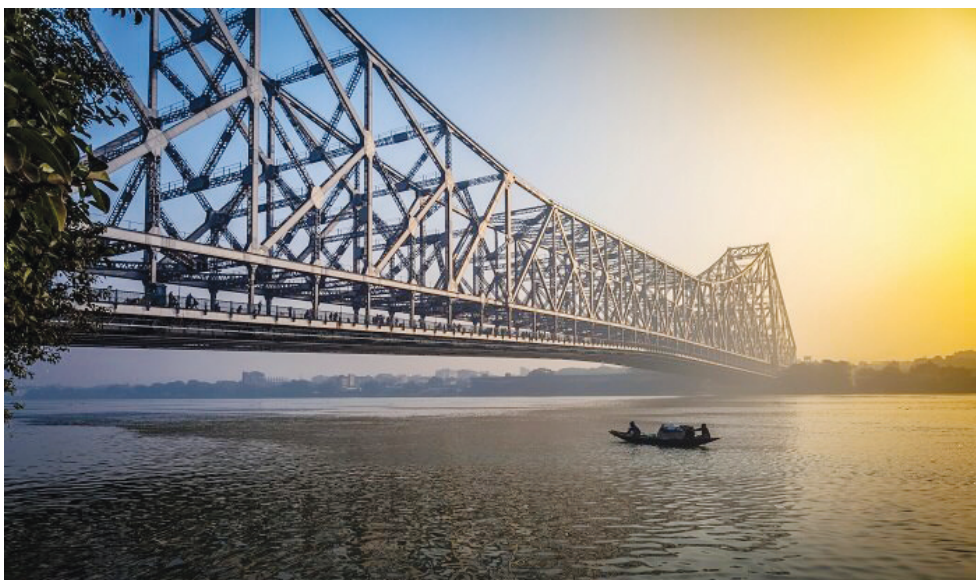
Located along the western banks of River Ganga, Botanical Garden is a 273 acre garden known for its extensive floral diversity. Housing more than 12,000 different species of plants, it is one of the most beautiful places to see in Kolkata for travelers who wish to witness the mesmerising beauty of nature.

Aquatica

Spread across a huge 75,000 square feet area. Aquatica is one of the largest water amusement parks in Eastern India. For people who seek light hearted adventure along with some fun filled activities, Aquatica is one of the best places to visit in Kolkata with friends where one can enjoy numerous thrilling rides and activities.

Nicco Park

One of the best places to visit in Kolkata, Nicco Park is an exhilarating amusement park developed for the sole purpose of recreational activities for families. It is one of the oldest amusement parks in Kolkata that houses various adventurous, and fun filled rides for children as well as adults where they can spend some rejuvenating time with their families.





Shiv Sahani

Call for All your Life Insurance Needs!
"Making Friends Through Service"

SAHANIS: Shiv, Arish & Priya

Office: (718) 271-0453

Cell: (646) 644-0174

Email: sksahani@ft.nyl.com
Agent, New York Life Insurance Company



Indian Visa Center

VISA / OCI PIO / PASSPORT
APPLICATION ASSISTANCE CENTER

349 S. Broadway, Hicksville, NY 11801

DEEPAK BANSAL

Email: deepakbansalny@gmail.com

Cell: 516.304.8808 Fax: 516.218.8009



Rohan Handa
Executive Partner
New York Life

Do you want to succeed in a very rewarding career?

NEW YORK LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY

IS HIRING

Do you want to capitalize on your ability to produce?

COME CHECK IT OUT!

CALL MR. ROHAN HANDA 718-286-1132 | 516-435-6120

Conveniently located at:
95-25 Queens Blvd., 4th Floor
Rego Park, N.Y. 11374



SACH Law Firm

> Immigration

> Accidents

> Divorce

> Real Estate

"Whole Truth and
Nothing But The Truth."

Call at (516)-499-9779

Our legal team at Sach Law Firm has a well-deserved reputation of excellence in providing smart, sensible, and cost-effective legal and business solutions for our clients.

We serve a wide range of clientele, and every client relationship is valued greatly and treated with dignity and respect. Each engagement benefits from the depth and breadth of expertise of Sach Law Firm.



Happy Diwali & prosperous New Year to all with
best healthy & wealthy best wishes!



INDO US EXPRESS, INC.

Worldwide Couriers / Freight Forwarders
Domestic Rush Delivery / Import / Export
Custom Clearance / Trading Consultant

Gurinder Singh
CEO

SALES OFFICE

224 West 30th St., #604, New York, NY 10001

Mail: P.O. Box 7304, Hicksville, NY 11802

Office: 212.447.5720 Fax: 516.932.3750

Delhi: 98.1849.0552

Mumbai: 92.2453.1807

New York: 347.538.7041

Visit US Online: www.indousexpress.com

Email: indousexpress@gmail.com

For advertising in www.theindianpanorama.news

Call 646-247-9458



In a tribute to MS Dhoni, no Indian will ever don number 7 jersey

MS Dhoni's iconic No. 7 jersey won't be seen on any other India cricketer. Three years after he hung his boots as an international cricketer, the Indian cricket board, in a tribute to his contribution to the sport, has decided to 'retire' the number sported by the World Cup-winning captain.

The only other cricketer bestowed a similar honour is Sachin Tendulkar — in 2017, his signature No. 10 jersey too was folded away for good.

It is learnt that the BCCI has informed players in the national team, especially the debutants, that they don't have the option of numbers associated with Tendulkar and Dhoni.

"The young players and current Indian team players have been told not to pick M S Dhoni's Number 7 jersey. The BCCI has decided to retire Dhoni's T-shirt for his contribution to the game. A new player can't get No. 7, and No. 10 was already off the list of available numbers," said a senior Board official.

The BCCI's decision somewhat limits the choices for Team India players. As a rule, the ICC allows players to pick any number between 1 and 100, but in India, the options are limited. "At present, 60-odd numbers are designated to the regulars in the Indian team and those in contention. So even if a player is out of the team for about a year or so, we don't give away his number to a new player. That means a recent debutant has just 30-odd numbers to choose from," said a BCCI official. Earlier this year, when 21-year-old opener Yashasvi Jaiswal was making his India debut, he was keen on No. 19, the number he has on his back when playing for Rajasthan Royals.

Ton-up Surya shines before Kuldeep's spell sinks S Africa

JOHANNESBURG (TIP)

Captain Suryakumar Yadav produced a hundred of rare brilliance and Kuldeep Yadav worked his magic with the ball as India registered a comprehensive 106-run series-levelling win over South Africa in the third and final T20I here on December 14.

Suryakumar's 100 off 56 balls that contained seven fours and eight sixes and Yashasvi Jaiswal's fluent 60 off 41 balls carried India to 201/7 after the visitors were asked to bat first.

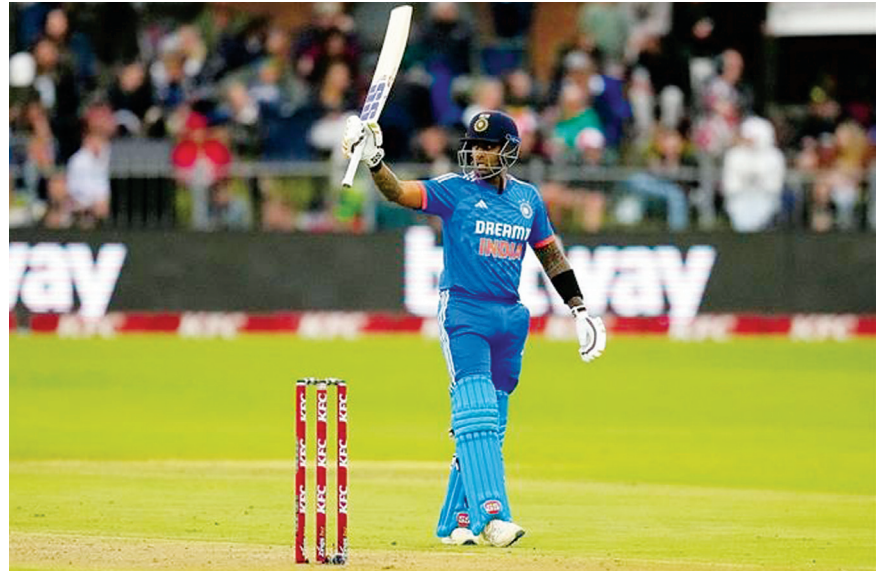
The Indian bowlers, especially left-arm wrist spinner Kuldeep (5/17), who turned 29 today, managed to hit better lengths to bundle out SA for 95 in 13.5 overs.

But for that, India need to thank Suryakumar. The 33-year-old exploited the opportunity to bat on a bone-dry surface, making his fourth T20I century, joining teammate Rohit Sharma and Australian Glenn Maxwell as batters with that many three-figure scores in the shortest format.

Suryakumar and Jaiswal made 112 runs for an entertaining fourth-wicket alliance and trusted the true nature of the Wanderers' pitch to unfurl shots of the highest quality.

Their partnership also allowed India to wriggle out of a bit of a tight space after losing Shubman Gill (8) and Tilak Varma (0) off successive balls in the third over to left-arm spinner Keshav Maharaj. India were 29/2 at that point.

Brief scores: India: 201/7 in 20 overs (Suryakumar 100, Jaiswal 60; Maharaj 2/26, Williams 2/46); South Africa: 95 all out in 13.5 overs (Miller 35; Kuldeep 5/17, Jadeja 2/25).

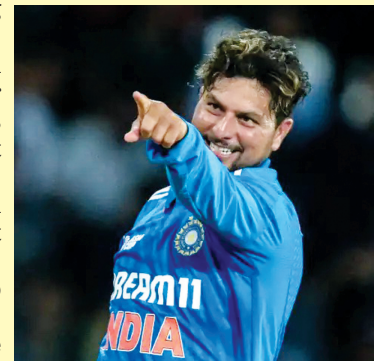


Suryakumar Yadav became the first batter to score T20I tons in 4 different countries.

South African pitches are suiting spinners in ongoing tour, says Kuldeep after picking fifer

Surprised by the spin on offer during the third T20I at The Wanderers here, Kuldeep Yadav said the South African wickets, generally known for their pace and bounce, are also suiting spinners in the ongoing tour. Kuldeep had a perfect 29th birthday on Thursday, December 14, as he became only the second Indian bowler to pick up multiple five-wicket hauls in T20Is after Bhuvneshwar Kumar. He became the first Indian spinner to reach the landmark.

Both Kuldeep and Bhuvneshwar have two fifiers in T20Is. "It turned out to be a special day. I have never thought about taking five wickets. I just wanted the team to win which is more important," Kuldeep said. "I was concerned about my bowling because I was playing after sometime, so wanted to get my rhythm. It was perfect today. The ball was coming out well from the hand and the conditions too suited the spinners a bit." Kuldeep returned with figures of 5/17 from 2.5 overs as India beat South Africa by 106 runs to level the finish the three-match T20 series tied at 1-1.



Hardik Pandya replaces Rohit Sharma as MI captain, franchise loses 400k followers in 1 hour

MUMBAI (TIP)

Mumbai Indians lost 400,000 followers on Twitter an hour within an hour of announcing Hardik Pandya as their new captain ahead of the Indian Premier League 2024 season. Pandya was announced as the new captain of the side on December 15. The former Gujarat Titans captain would be taking over from legendary Rohit Sharma, who has five IPL titles to his name.

Sharma had been at the helm of Mumbai Indians since 2013 and won a record number of titles - 5, which was equaled by Mahendra Singh Dhoni in IPL 2023. Sharma, who has not played T20Is for India since 2022 T20 World Cup semi-final loss against India will not be leading his franchise from IPL 2024. The India captain took a break from cricket after India's heartbreaking loss in the final of World Cup 2023 and is set to return in the 2-match Test series against South Africa, which starts on 26 December.

"It is part of legacy building and staying true

to the MI philosophy of being future-ready. Mumbai Indians have always been blessed with exceptional leadership right from Sachin to Harbhajan and Ricky to Rohit, who while contributing to the immediate success have always had an eye on strengthening the team for the future. It is in keeping with this philosophy that Hardik Pandya will assume captaincy of Mumbai Indians for the IPL 2024 season," Mahela Jayawardene, Global Head of Performance, Mumbai Indians said.

Hardik Pandya, who debuted in the IPL for Mumbai Indians returns to the franchise after 2 years of captaining Gujarat Titans. Pandya led Gujarat Titans to the IPL title in their debut season, where they beat Rajasthan Royals in the final of IPL 2022. Hardik Pandya was named the player of the match in the final, after he picked up 3 wickets and scored 34 runs. Pandya did well with the franchise in 2023 as well, leading them to the final, where they lost to MS Dhoni's Chennai Super Kings in a last-ball thriller.



Rohit Sharma will make way for Hardik Pandya, who was recently bought by Mumbai Indians from Gujarat Titans (GT) for Rs 15 crore in the transfer window. (ANI/File image)



An Eye Institute in Rajahmundry, Andhra Pradesh combatting avoidable blindness in children.

"On behalf of all my colleagues of the Wilmer Eye Institute in Baltimore, MD. I send my best wishes and congratulations to our friends in Goutami on this extremely important occasion. This beautiful facility will match the wonderful world class work of your doctors, nurses, and staff in preserving and restoring the vision of so many patients. We in the United States are inspired by your dedication and admire your tireless efforts to serve so many who need your skills and compassion. Best wishes, Peter"

Peter J McDonnell, MD Director Wilmer Eye Institute, Johns Hopkins



New Goutami Institute building to be constructed 2024

3.5 + million served
325,000 + vision restoring surgeries
30,000 + surgeries on children

Services Include:

- Treating disease and vision problems
- performing free cataract surgeries
- distributing glasses and visual aids
- conducting community research
- providing education to physicians and the public

Join our Vision.
Give the gift
of sight today.

Visit eyefoundationofamerica.org

695 WESTVIEW AVENUE, MORGANTOWN, WV 26505
TAX ID # 55-062-1735



In 2018 Prasanth, Sushanth and Nisanth were diagnosed and treated for Prematurity Retinopathy. An illness in premature babies which can cause blindness.

Luckily through GEMROP an initiative funded by EFA to screen premature babies throughout hospitals in India, the triplets were able to receive an expensive surgery free of charge. The boys are now the age of 4 with perfect vision.