



The

INDIAN



PANORAMA

18th YEAR

WWW.THEINDIANPANORAMA.NEWS

EVER TRUTHFUL

1 INDIAN AMERICAN WEEKLY : SINCE 2006

VOL 18 ISSUE 02 • NEW YORK / DALLAS • JAN 12 - 18, 2024

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

The INDIAN PANORAMA

Will bring out a profusely illustrated special edition to mark the 75th Republic Day of India.

Articles and advertisements may please be emailed by January 20, 2024 to salujaindra@gmail.com

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UNITED STATES OBJECTS TO PROVIDING DEFENSE MATERIAL TO NIKHIL GUPTA IN PANNUN CASE TILL APPEARANCE IN NEW YORK COURT



Nikhil Gupta's attorney filed a 'Motion to Compel Production of Discovery' on January 4 in the US District Court

JANUARY 11, 2024

NEW YORK (TIP): The US government has objected to providing defense materials to Indian national Nikhil Gupta, detained in a Czech prison on murder-for-hire charges in a foiled assassination attempt on a Khalistani extremist, saying it will provide the information only upon his appearance in a New York court and arraignment in the case.

Gupta, 52, was charged by federal prosecutors here in an indictment unsealed in November last year with working with an Indian government employee in the foiled plot to kill Khalistani separatist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, who holds dual US and Canadian citizenships, on American soil.

Gupta was arrested in Prague, the Czech Republic, on June 30, 2023 and is being held there currently. The US government is seeking his extradition to America.

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South Africa accuses Israel of Gaza genocide at the World Court

SAYS 22,100 PEOPLE KILLED BETWEEN MID-OCTOBER AND JANUARY 3



South Africa's Minister of Justice Ronald Lamola and South African Ambassador to the Netherlands Vusumuzi Madonsela sit in The Hague, Netherlands. -Credit / Reuters

JANUARY 12, 2024

THE HAGUE (TIP): South Africa accused Israel on Thursday of subjecting Palestinians to "one of the most brutal aerial bombings in the history of human warfare" and called on the International Court of Justice to order an emergency suspension of its military operations to stop "the destruction of the population" of Gaza.

South Africa has filed a complaint against Israel for "genocide" in Gaza with the ICJ, which is also popularly called the "world court". The legal battle may last several years, but Israel's immediate focus will be to prevent an interim order that could force a ceasefire in Gaza.

The provisional measures requested by South Africa to cease hostilities, if taken by the ICJ, will be legally binding. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken is

CONTD ON PAGE 44

Donald Trump defies judge on the final day of New York civil fraud trial



Former President Donald Trump speaks after his defense team finished presenting closing arguments at New York Supreme Court, on January 11, 2024, in New York. Credit / AP

JANUARY 11, 2024

NEW YORK (TIP): Barred from giving a formal closing argument, Donald Trump still seized an opportunity to speak in court at the conclusion of his New York civil fraud trial Thursday, January 11, unleashing a barrage of attacks in a six-minute speech before being cut off by the judge.

Trump spoke as the judge was trying to find out if the former president would follow rules requiring him to keep his remarks focused on matters related to the trial. Asked whether he would comply with the guidelines, Trump defied the judge and launched into his speech. "We have a situation where I am an innocent man," Trump protested.

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Purity of electoral rolls remains a priority, says Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar



Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar, center, addressing the media in Vijayawada on Wednesday, January 10, 2024

JANUARY 11, 2024

VIJAYAWADA (TIP): Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) of India Rajiv Kumar has said that firm directions have been given to all "formations of bureaucracy" to ensure free and fair elections in Andhra Pradesh.

Briefing the media here on January 10, after the two-day review meetings organized on the preparations for the general elections, Mr. Rajiv Kumar called upon the people in cities and towns to give up the "urban apathy" so that the overall voting percentage, which was quite good in the State, goes up further.

CONTD ON PAGE 44

Amid China tension, US to send unofficial delegation to Taiwan



JANUARY 11, 2024

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): The Biden administration will send an unofficial delegation comprised of former senior officials to Taiwan shortly after the self-governed island holds an election for a

CONTD ON PAGE 44

Democratic Progressive Party's presidential candidate Lai Ching-te with Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen at a rally in Taipei. Credit / Reuters



Andy Singh

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GUEST COMMENT

The Speaker's court: On the Maharashtra Assembly Speaker's ruling

MAHARASHTRA EXAMPLE SHOWS WHY POWER TO DISQUALIFY SHOULD BE IN INDEPENDENT HANDS

The Maharashtra Assembly Speaker Rahul Narwekar's ruling on the disqualification petitions filed by rival factions of the Shiv Sena demonstrates why the adjudicatory function under the anti-defection law should not be in the hands of Presiding Officers in the legislature. In a matter that many thought would decide the survival of the Eknath Shinde regime, the Speaker has ruled that there was no case to disqualify members of the Eknath Shinde faction, or 14 members in the Uddhav B. Thackeray (UBT) group. The ruling is based mainly on the finding that loyalists of Eknath Shinde, the Chief Minister now, constituted the 'real political party' when rival Shiv Sena factions emerged on June 21, 2022. Mr. Narwekar's verdict conveniently draws upon some aspects of the Supreme Court's final verdict of May 11, 2023, in which a Constitution Bench ruled that the

Governor was wrong in asking the then Chief Minister, Uddhav Thackeray, to undergo a floor test and that the Speaker was wrong in recognizing the Shinde faction's appointee as the party's whip. In contrast to the Court ruling, the Speaker has declared that Sunil Prabhu, an appointee of the UBT faction, 'ceased to be the duly authorized whip' from June 21, 2022, and that Bharat Gogawale of the Shinde group was "validly appointed" as the whip. As a result, Mr. Narwekar found no reason to sustain the charge that the Shinde loyalists violated any whip. He also ruled that there was no proof that the UBT group violated the other side's whip as no such whip was served on them.

The Uddhav Thackeray group may approach the Supreme Court again, possibly on the ground that the Speaker's ruling contradicts key conclusions of the Bench. While acknowledging the split in

the Shiv Sena Legislature Party, the Court had said: "... no faction or group can argue that they constitute the original political party as a defence against disqualification on the ground of defection". The Speaker has also referred to the Shinde faction's "overwhelming majority" (37 out of 55 MLAs of the original party). On the other hand, the Court had observed that the percentage of members in each faction is irrelevant to the determination whether a defence to disqualification is made out. However, the Court had conceded that the Speaker may have to decide on which faction is the real party when adjudicating a question of defection. It favored reliance on a version of the party constitution and leadership structure submitted to the Election Commission before rival groups emerged. It is these observations that the Speaker has utilized to determine which group is the real party. As long as defection disputes are in the hands of Speakers, and not any independent authority, political considerations will undoubtedly cast a shadow on such rulings. (The Hindu)

Bilkis Bano case : Supreme Court rightly cancels remission of convicts

Righting a horrible wrong, the Supreme Court has quashed the Gujarat government's decision to grant remission to 11 convicts in the Bilkis Bano case. A pregnant Bilkis was gangraped and seven of her family members were murdered during the 2002 riots in the state. Sentenced to life imprisonment for committing these heinous crimes, the convicts had been released, ironically, on Independence Day in 2022. The state government had gone by the 1992 remission policy, which was in force when the conviction took place in 2008, and not the 2014 policy, which forbids

the release of rape-murder convicts.

According to the court, the rule of law was breached as the state government usurped power not vested in it. Calling this an instance of abuse of power, the SC said it was the government of Maharashtra, where the trial and sentencing took place, that was competent to take a decision on the remission plea of the convicts. The ruling is a major embarrassment not only for the Gujarat government but also the Centre. In October 2022, the state government had told the apex court that it had decided to release the convicts primarily due to three reasons: they had completed 14 years or more in

prison; their conduct was found to be good; and the Centre had conveyed its 'concurrence/approval' regarding their premature release. They had been freed despite the CBI's contention that the offences committed were 'heinous, grave and serious' and hence 'no leniency may be given' to them.

Adding insult to injury, the convicts had been greeted with garlands after they walked out of the Godhra sub-jail. The court verdict is a stern reminder to the state and Central governments that they can't make a mockery of law and justice and get away with it. (Tribune, India)

Rift within INDIA

TMC-CONGRESS TUSSELE BODES ILL FOR THE BLOC

Two major constituents of the Opposition's INDIA bloc, the Congress and the Trinamool Congress (TMC), are at loggerheads over seat-sharing in West Bengal for the Lok Sabha elections. Reacting to reports that the TMC would spare only two seats for the Congress, state Congress president Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury has said that the grand old party would not 'beg for seats'. His statement has elicited a sharp response from the Mamata Banerjee-led TMC, which has asserted that 'badmouthing alliance partners and seat-sharing can't go

hand in hand'.

In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, the TMC bagged 22 seats and was followed closely by the BJP (18). The Congress, which had won two seats, now wants a bigger piece of the pie. The party needs to adjust its aspirations to the ground reality. The Congress had drawn a blank in the 2021 West Bengal Assembly elections, which saw the Trinamool retaining power with a thumping majority. In March last year, the Congress had won the Sagardighi bypoll; Left-supported candidate Bayron Biswas had stormed the ruling party's bastion. The

victory had prompted Chowdhury to comment that the Trinamool and Banerjee were not invincible in the state. However, Biswas had later switched over to the TMC. The INDIA bloc was formed a few months after the bypoll, but the Congress and the TMC continue to work at cross-purposes.

The Congress' apparent reluctance to take its allies along was cited as a major reason by the TMC for the former's poll debacle in the Hindi heartland states last month. The Congress might be the biggest party within INDIA in terms of Lok Sabha seats, but its shrinking national footprint in recent years has considerably weakened its standing. The party should engage pragmatically with its partners to finalize seat-sharing at the earliest. Prolonged bickering and one-upmanship will only play into the hands of the BJP. (Tribune, India)

Suozzi Holds Press Conference Highlighting Environmental Priorities

WAS JOINED AND ENDORSED BY REPRESENTATIVES FROM PROMINENT CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

JANUARY 11, 2024

GLEN COVE, NY (TIP): Former Congressman Tom Suozzi, on January 11, held a press conference highlighting his lifelong commitment to preserving and protecting our environment and laying out his plan to continue to do so when he returns to Congress after the February 13th special election.

At the press conference, held at a very cold and windy Sea Cliff Municipal Beach, Suozzi received enthusiastic and wholehearted endorsements from the New York League of Conservation Voters, the NRDC (National Resources Defense Council) Action Fund, and the Sierra Club Long Island Group.

"I am grateful to the New York League of Conservation Voters Federal Fund, the League of Conservation Voters Action Fund, the NRDC Action Fund, and the Sierra Club Long Island Group for recognizing my three-decades-long commitment to preserve, protect, and clean our air, land, and water," Suozzi said. "Just a few days ago, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Endangered Species Act, and on that day, I saw an eagle fly across the sky in my hometown of Glen Cove. The hard work of a lot of dedicated people can produce results!"

Joining Suozzi and speaking at the press conference were Julie Tighe, President of the New York League of Conservation Voters; Al Fredericks, Chair of the Political



Joining Suozzi and speaking at the press conference were Julie Tighe, President of the New York League of Conservation Voters; Al Fredericks, Chair of the Political Committee of the Sierra Club's Long Island Group; Kevin Curtis, Executive Director of the NRDC Action Fund; Danielle Fugazy Scagliola, member Glen Cove City Council; and Delia DeRiggi-Whitton, Nassau County Legislator.

Committee of the Sierra Club's Long Island Group; Kevin Curtis, Executive Director of the NRDC Action Fund; Danielle Fugazy Scagliola, member Glen Cove City Council; and Delia DeRiggi-Whitton, Nassau County Legislator.

When asked about the environment as a campaign

issue, Suozzi emphasized his 30-year public service record of cleaning up pollution, dramatically reducing nitrogen, modernizing sewage treatment plants, remediating groundwater, and restoring shell fishing in our local waters.

"I've been a champion of the environment for my entire career. My opponent, on the other hand, parrots the talking points of the Conservative Party, which rejects the Paris Climate Change Agreement, denying that climate change is even real," said Suozzi. "Well, I know the people that live in this district very well, and they care about the environment. They want to make sure that we clean up pollution and that we protect our air, protect our land, and protect our water."

"Our environment is a big part of my 10-point plan," said Suozzi, referring to his 10-point plan released in mid-December. "My opponent just put out a 10-point plan, which looks very similar to my 10-point plan, and there is nothing on it about the environment whatsoever."

Suoizzi concluded the press conference by reiterating that his opponent is hiding and refusing to debate. "The voters need to know where she stands on the environment and every other issue. She refuses to tell us anything in detail, and she refuses to debate," furthered Suozzi. "I give detailed policy descriptions and have a record of getting things done."

new jersey performing arts center
njpac



cinderella

The State Ballet Theatre of Ukraine
Sun, Jan 21 @ 3PM

The State Ballet Theatre of Ukraine returns to NJPAC with *Cinderella*, a fairy tale ballet for all ages.



Freedom Now Suite: Celebrating Max Roach's Centennial

Fri, Jan 26 @ 8PM

Max Roach's *Freedom Now Suite* with Cassandra Wilson, Ravi Coltrane, Sonia Sanchez, Saul Williams, Nasheet Waits and more.



celebrating peggy lee and frank sinatra

Feb 8 @ 7:30PM

Featuring Aloe Blacc, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Paula Cole, Bettye LaVette, Christian McBride, Rachael Price, Brian Stokes Mitchell and The Christian McBride Big Band.



nai-ni chen dance company

Year of the Green Wood Dragon

Sat, Feb 10 @ 2PM
Sun, Feb 11 @ 2PM

Bring the whole family to welcome the *Year of the Green Wood Dragon* with the spectacular **Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company**.



valentine's all-star comedy show

Sat, Feb 10 @ 7 & 9:45PM

A night of laughs and love! Bring a date (or a group of friends) to see **Bill Bellamy, Luenell, Radio Big Mack, Capone and Bruce Bruce**.



blippi

The Wonderful World Tour

Sat, Mar 16 @ 3PM

Blippi returns to NJPAC for *The Wonderful World Tour!* Kids will have a blast dancing and singing along.

Horizon music & comedy

M&T Bank dance series MARS WRIGLEY

TD jazz series

The American Song series at NJPAC is presented, in part, through the generous support of the Blanche and Irving Laurie Foundation, the David S. Steiner and Sylvia Steiner Charitable Trust, the Joan and Allen Bildner Family Fund, and the Smart Family Foundation/David S. Stone, Esq., Stone & Magnanini

INDIAN AMERICAN IMPACT FUND ENDORSES SUHAS SUBRAMANYAM CONGRESSIONAL CAMPAIGN



Suhas Subramanyam has been endorsed by the Indian American Impact Fund

JANUARY 8, 2024

VIRGINIA (TIP): The Indian American Impact Fund dedicated to ensuring Indian American communities' representation in the country's political leadership and enfranchising the growing Indian American electorate, has endorsed Suhas Subramanyam's campaign for Congress in Virginia's 10th District.

"I am excited to have the support of the Indian American Impact Fund," Subramanyam stated in a media release. "As the son of Indian immigrants whose parents instilled a lifelong value of service to others, I have been proud to represent a growing South Asian population and to be a champion for communities across Northern Virginia. I look forward to partnering with Impact to win this battleground House race."

Subramanyam's campaign also announced that it raised over \$270,000 in the fourth fundraising quarter, after only six full weeks in the race. The campaign will report over \$240,000 in cash on hand headed into the new year.

"I am honored by the immense grassroots support my campaign has received since our campaign launched in November," said Subramanyam. "I am excited that my record of taking on the toughest fights to get real results for our community is resonating with Northern Virginian families, and I look forward to building on this momentum in the months ahead."

Subramanyam, who announced his candidacy on November 16, has vowed to break through the gridlock and dysfunction in Washington to take on prescription drug costs, gun violence, and price-gouging.

In December, Subramanyam stood up to MAGA extremists, "defending reproductive rights despite Loudoun County Republican party's calls to ban him from houses of worship in Northern Virginia over his pro-choice record."

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

Indian American Saratoga Springs Finance Commissioner Minita Sanghvi to run for New York state senate

JANUARY 8, 2024

NEW YORK (TIP): Saratoga Springs Finance Commissioner Minita Sanghvi, an Indian American Democrat, has declared her candidacy for the 44th State Senate District in New York's Capital Region. The district, encompassing Saratoga County, Niskayuna, and the City of Schenectady, is currently represented by Republican incumbent Jim Tedisco, who transitioned to this district after redistricting.

Sanghvi is tapping into the district's shifting political landscape. While Republicans have historically represented the district, the tide is turning, with registered Democrats now outnumbering Republicans by nearly 6,000. President Biden secured a 12-point victory over Donald Trump in the 2020 election within the district.

"I'm running for State Senate because we deserve better," Sanghvi said in a press release on Monday. "We need a leader who will prioritize the needs of our community over partisan politics in Albany. I'm not a career politician; I'm a parent, a business educator, and a dedicated public servant committed to fiscal responsibility. My track record



Minita Sanghvi has declared her candidacy for the 44th State Senate District in New York's Capital Region

reflects my ability to listen to the people and collaborate with others to deliver tangible results."

Sanghvi, who was born in India, immigrated to the United States in 2001 after earning a degree in accounting and an MBA. She taught business at Skidmore College for nearly a decade. In 2021, she won the election to serve as the Saratoga Springs Finance Commissioner.

"As the Commissioner of Finance in Saratoga Springs, I've delivered fiscally responsible results that have prioritized public safety and enhanced our quality of life for all residents," Sanghvi said in the release. "Our achievements include funding a crucial third EMS and fire station, establishing a 24/7 low-barrier homeless shelter, and expanding essential infrastructure such as sidewalks, parks, and playgrounds. We've maintained our city's AA+ credit rating while making critical investments."

If elected, Sanghvi would make history as the first openly gay woman and the first woman of color to represent New York's 44th State Senate District, as well as the first openly gay woman in the New York Senate.

She emphasized her commitment to safeguarding the rights and freedoms of all residents, regardless of their political affiliation, and advocated for women's healthcare access, LGBTQ rights, and equal opportunities.

Her opponent, incumbent Tedisco, has held political office in Albany for four decades. Sanghvi cited the need for new ideas and a fresh vision in a district that is evolving and diversifying.

Indian American community wants cops to step up action after robberies in store



Rakesh Patel has called for increased police action with robbers frequently targeting his shop despite a robust security system put up by him.

JANUARY 10, 2024

COLUMBUS, OHIO (TIP): An Indian-origin convenience store owner in the US state of Ohio has called for increased police action with robbers frequently targeting his shop despite a robust security system put up by him.

Rakesh "Rocky" Patel has been selling beer, wine, and groceries at City Foods on East 12th Street and Chester Avenue in Cleveland since 2018, the media reported.

Patel, who claims to have spent thousands of dollars to protect his store - from cameras to door locks, said one more security option could put him out of business.

In one of the surveillance videos from December, seen by the news channel, a man is seen grabbing alcohol from a top shelf. An employee is thrown to the floor while trying to keep him from getting away with the bottles.

"Before they used to cover their face and come, and now they don't even have fear... It happened like three weeks in a row - one week continuously, like every day," Patel said.

"I'm working hard, paying taxes, and I feel sorry that I'm working hard. I work double so I can help college and everything for my son," he told the media.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

Indian origin doctor suspended by Singapore tribunal for improperly prescribing long-term sedatives



Dr Maninder Singh Shahi practiced at 81 Family Clinic located in Marine Parade Central

Photo for representation / istock

JANUARY 11, 2024

SINGAPORE (TIP): A 61-year-old Indian-origin doctor has been suspended from medical practice for three years by a Singaporean tribunal after he improperly prescribed long-term sedatives to his patients, according to a media report on Thursday.

"An Indian-origin doctor named Dr Maninder Singh Shahi has been suspended from medical practice for three years by a Singapore disciplinary tribunal for improperly prescribed long-term sedative medication to seven patients from his clinic for more than a decade," said the report.

The family doctor with 35 years of experience also failed to document his reasons for repeatedly prescribing such medication to one patient.

In its grounds of decision released on Tuesday, January 9, the three-member tribunal accepted the Singapore Medical Council (SMC)'s submissions for the suspension but rejected Dr Singh's argument for a reduction in sentence due to a delay in prosecution.

Dr Singh practiced at 81 Family Clinic located in Marine Parade Central at the time. It has since been renamed Legacy Clinic, the report said.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

Indian American Neena Singh becomes first Sikh & Indian American Mayor in New Jersey

JANUARY 9, 2024

MONTGOMERY TOWNSHIP, NJ (TIP): Blazing a trail, Neena Singh has become the first Sikh and Indian American woman mayor in New Jersey with her election as Mayor of Montgomery Township.

"Today is a historic moment for our community and our entire state," Singh said at the Township Committee's reorganization meeting last week, according to MyCentralJersey.com.

"I am grateful to my fellow committee members for their support. I am also incredibly proud of our township for, once again, breaking barriers and showing our state what inclusive, transparent and forward-thinking governance looks like."

Singh was unanimously selected to serve as mayor by her fellow Township Committee members. Vincent Barragan was selected as deputy mayor, becoming Montgomery's first Latinx deputy mayor.

Singh and Barragan were both sworn into office by Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman. Sending videotape congratulations to Singh were Sen. Cory Booker and Indian American state Sen. Vin Gopal.

"For every young South Asian girl



Neena Singh has become the first Sikh and Indian American woman mayor in New Jersey with her election as Mayor of Montgomery Township.

growing up not just in Montgomery but across New Jersey, they're going to have a true role model to look up to," Gopal said.

State Sen. Andrew Zwicker sent videotaped congratulations, but also appeared in person to offer his congratulations, along with Rep. Andy Kim, Assemblyman Roy Freiman and members of the Somerset County Board of Commissioners.

"I thank God my family and I ended up

settling in beautiful Montgomery Township, a town that is representative of the American Dream," Singh was quoted as saying.

"If America is a melting pot, then Montgomery is a good example of its diversity," she continued.

"This country and this town have given me immeasurable opportunities and I'm immensely grateful," Singh said.

Among Singh's priorities for 2024 are

public safety and health.

As Montgomery has grown, Singh said, the township has undertaken public safety initiatives, including measures to improve pedestrian safety.

She also said she will sign the Mayor's Wellness Campaign pledge.

"There will be opportunities for our Health Department, recreation, schools, libraries, businesses and local community groups to collaborate on this important quality of life endeavor," Singh said.

"Our goal for 2024 is to ensure that our residents have the best possible resources, whether it's community health, transportation, public spaces, municipal services or recreational activities," she said.

"We are also working on strategies to make our tax dollars go further," the mayor said.

Singh, who has lived in Montgomery for 24 years, has previously served as Deputy Mayor and Township Committeewoman. As an executive officer at STAND Central NJ, a grassroots non-profit, she worked not only on engaging and educating voters but also on empowering them to participate in the democratic process.

Indian American Praveen Madan named CEO and publisher of Berrett-Koehler

JANUARY 10, 2024

OAKLAND (TIP): Indian American strategy and transformation consultant Praveen Madan has been named as the new CEO and publisher of Berrett-Koehler Publishers (BK), described as a mission-driven publishing company, in place of David Marshall, who has retired.



Praveen Madan has been named as the new CEO and publisher of Berrett-Koehler Publishers (BK)

he has led a successful turnaround and reinvention of this legendary cultural institution.

Madan's innovative strategies, such as embracing the nonprofit model, implementing community financing and governance, developing new revenue streams, and raising wages to build a strong team, are being replicated by many

bookstores around the US, according to the release.

He says his learnings from the BK community have been critical to his success in the book industry.

BK founder and senior editor Steve Piersanti stated, "Berrett-Koehler is wonderfully fortunate to welcome Praveen as our new CEO and publisher. Praveen brings the best of both outsider and insider experience through his business consulting career, followed by his dynamic independent bookselling leadership, combined with serving from 2009 to 2020 on the BK board of directors, including two years as board chair. Praveen brings intimate knowledge of BK's business and culture along with fresh, innovative outsider perspectives." (Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

Indian American president of the Rockefeller Foundation Rajiv Shah appointed to New York Fed Board of Directors

JANUARY 9, 2024

NEW YORK (TIP): Dr. Rajiv Shah, the Indian American president of the Rockefeller Foundation, has been named to the Board of Directors of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York for a three-year term ending December 31, 2026.

Shah, who has led The Rockefeller Foundation, a philanthropy whose mission is to promote the well-being of people around the world, since 2017, has been appointed a Class C director to represent the interests of the public, according to a media release.

Prior to joining the foundation, Dr Shah was the founder and managing partner of Latitude Capital, a private equity firm focused on infrastructure and energy projects in Africa and Asia.

From 2009 to 2015, Dr Shah served as head of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). In that role, he served on the National Security Council, led the US responses to the 2010 earthquake in Haiti and the 2014 West African Ebola pandemic, and secured bipartisan support for the passage of the Global Food Security Act and the Electrify Africa Act.

Before joining USAID, Dr. Shah served as chief scientist and undersecretary for research, education, and economics at the United States Department of Agriculture,



Dr. Rajiv Shah has been named to the Board of Directors of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York where he created the National Institute for Food and Agriculture.

Earlier in his career, Dr Shah was a director at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, where he created the International Financing Facility for Immunization.

Dr Shah is a graduate of the University of Michigan, the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, and the Wharton School of Business. He served as a distinguished fellow in residence at Georgetown University and has received the Secretary of State's Distinguished Service Award and the US Global Leadership Award.

The Federal Reserve Act of 1913 requires each of the Reserve Banks to operate under the supervision of a board of directors.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

Suffolk County Hindu American Advisory Committee Sworn in



Mr. Veer Mukhi, Mr. Gobind Bathija, Mr. Arvind Vora, Mrs. Beena Kothari, Mrs. Gayathri Murali, and Mr. Nayan Rawal were sworn in as members of the Suffolk County Hindu American Advisory Committee.



Members of the Suffolk County Hindu American Advisory Committee with proclamations

January 11, 2024

HAUPPAUGE, NY (TIP): Mr. Veer Mukhi, Mr. Gobind Bathija, Mr. Arvind Vora, Mrs. Beena Kothari, Mrs. Gayathri Murali, and Mr. Nayan Rawal were sworn

in as members of the Suffolk County Hindu American Advisory Committee. The committee met on December 15, 2023 to hold discussions on its agenda for the next 3 years, and to formulate bylaws.

Mr. Gobind Bathija, Director, IACLI / Hindu Advisory Group, in a statement to The Indian Panorama, thanked Mohinder Singh Taneja, Suffolk county executive and Miss Olga El Sehamy,

deputy county executive for facilitating the formation of the group. He also thanked them for the proclamations recognizing their contribution to the community.

At candidate forum, Suozzi goes solo while Pilip continues to hide

JANUARY 11, 2024

GLEN COVE, NY (TIP): Earlier tonight, former Congressman Tom Suozzi participated in the Lakeville Estates Civic Association's Meet n' Greet in New Hyde Park. Suozzi was the singular participant in what was originally planned as a candidate forum featuring the two candidates for the NY03 special election on February 13.

According to the organizer of the forum, Mazi Pilip originally agreed to participate but then abruptly canceled, citing "other appointments." Suozzi accepted the invitation as soon as it was received and appeared at this evening's event, fielding and answering questions submitted by the public (read: voters).

The Lakeville Estates Civic Association represents 18,000 homeowners (read: voters) in communities such as New Hyde Park, Manhasset Hills, Herricks, and Garden City Park.

"Mazi Pilip did a huge disservice to the voters who came out tonight to listen to the candidates," said Suozzi. "Nobody knows who Mazi Pilip is or what she stands for, but instead of meeting with voters and taking their questions, she has stayed hidden.

"She blew it." During the hour-long forum, Suozzi answered several questions



During the hour-long forum, Suozzi answered several questions ranging from SALT to Social Security concerns to antisemitism and gun violence prevention

ranging from SALT to Social Security concerns to antisemitism and gun violence prevention. He touted his record of working across the aisle to deliver for Long Island and Queens, as well as talked about his 10-Point Plan that includes proposals for many of the questions posed to him during the event.

"We have many challenging issues that we face in this country and here in Nassau and Queens," stated Suozzi. "The only way we will solve the problems is if

both Republicans and Democrats work together, find common ground, and start fixing things!"

Suozzi's campaign noted that as of today, there have been 14 news outlets or civic organizations that have sent invitations to both candidates to debate or participate in candidate forums. While Suozzi has accepted five debate invites and will likely accept more, Pilip has only accepted a single debate on News 12, exactly five days before the February 13th special election and exactly five days after early voting has begun, and not accessible to the Queens' part of the Third Congressional District.

This evening voters in NY03 witnessed firsthand what Suozzi has been saying all along, "Why is Mazi Pilip hiding?"

Middlesex County Board of County Commissioners host 2024 Reorganization Meeting

A look back at 2023 achievements and highlights of the new year

JANUARY 8, 2024

MIDDLESEX COUNTY, NJ (TIP): The Middlesex County Board of County Commissioners held their annual Reorganization Meeting on Thursday, January 4, 2024, at the Middlesex College Performing Arts Center, with notable guests, including Governor Phil Murphy, Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin, Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman, and Congressman Frank Pallone. The event also marked the swearing-in of newly reelected County Commissioners Leslie Koppel and Charles E. Tomaro. Additionally, Commissioner Director Ronald G. Rios and Commissioner Deputy Director Shanti Narra were selected by their colleagues to serve in their roles once again. For event highlights including photos and video, please visit middlesexcountynj.gov/Reorg.

Reflecting on the past year's achievements, Middlesex County Commissioner Deputy Director Shanti Narra highlighted how the County is taking intentional and strategic steps to drive economic growth to ensure Middlesex County continues to be the best place to live, work, and play - year after year. Focusing on key areas such as education, transportation, and organizational strengths, the Board continues to build upon a strong and thriving community, by design.

Emphasizing Middlesex County's



commitment to education and workforce development as a cornerstone to economic growth, County Commissioner Deputy Director Narra underscored the investments made inclusive of the Community, Innovation, and Opportunity (CIO) Strategic Investment Plan announced in November 2022, which has made significant headway.

"Our accomplishments over the past year are deliberate and intentional through collaboration and strategic planning - and it's all, by design," said County Commissioner Deputy Director Shanti Narra. "Together in the new year we look forward to continuing to make meaningful investments and ensure progress, to serve Middlesex County's diverse community."

County Commissioner Deputy Director Narra also highlighted progress in the area of transportation, including the renovation and construction of the New Brunswick Train Station and the North Brunswick Train Station. Once completed, both stations will help relieve congestion on our roadways and offer convenient commuting options for residents. The County will also launch a micro transit pilot program offering low-cost rides to locations within New Brunswick.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

Akshay Mathur appointed Senior Director of Asia Society Policy Institute, Delhi

JANUARY 11, 2024

NEW YORK (TIP): Akshay Mathur has been appointed Senior Director of the Asia Society Policy Institute's Delhi office, a branch of Asia Society India established in 2006 and headquartered in Mumbai.

Mathur will be responsible for the Institute's policy mandate in India, leading a team that covers security, economics, and climate, leveraging Asia Society's global network to connect India's policies to the policy communities in the United States, Europe, and Asia. His expertise is geoeconomics, specifically international financial architecture, the global trading system, global economic governance and global digital governance.

Welcoming him to the role, Inakshi Sobti, CEO of Asia Society India, stated: "We look forward to having Akshay as part of Asia Society India, continuing to build on our work at the intersection of business, arts, and policy to foster broader engagement of India and South Asia with the world."

C. Raja Mohan, who was the first to lead the Policy Institute's work in Delhi, will continue with Asia Society as a Non-Resident Distinguished Fellow.

"We are delighted to have Akshay lead the Asia Society Policy Institute's work in India," says Rorry Daniels, Managing Director of Asia Society Policy Institute. "His substantial expertise in geoeconomics complements our existing work on India's security outlook and carbon market development. His



Akshay Mathur is concurrently a Non-Resident Senior Fellow with the Digital Economy Programme at the Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI) based in Canada

experience steering research and programming for other leading institutions in India will be critical to expanding the impact and reach of the Asia Society Policy Institute Delhi office."

Akshay Mathur is concurrently a Non-Resident Senior Fellow with the Digital Economy Programme at the Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI) based in Canada

Previously, he led Mumbai-based, business-supported, independent foreign policy think tanks Gateway House and Observer Research Foundation Mumbai.

He has written columns for Indian and foreign news publications, led Indian government-supported Track Two dialogues with other countries, published research for various Indian and global think tanks, and convened and spoken at several Indian and global forums on international, domestic and local policymaking.

He represented India at the inaugural cohort of the Asia Global Fellows program for mid-career leaders in the field of global policymaking hosted by the Asia Global Institute in Hong Kong in 2017 and the Georgetown University's Young Leaders Forum in Qatar in 2012

He has advanced degrees in policy, business and technology, specifically an MPA from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University as the Edward Mason Fellow, an MBA from Boston University's Questrom School of Business with concentration in Finance and Business Analysis, and a BS in Computer Science from the Manning College of Information and Computer Sciences at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

NEW YORK STATE ANNOUNCES TRAINING CENTER FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROVIDERS SERVING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Unique Center Offers Free-of-Charge Training for Behavioral Health Care Providers to Implement Evidence-Based Practices; Improve Services for Children and Families



JANUARY 11, 2024

NEW YORK (TIP): The New York State Office of Mental Health, on January 11, announced a new training center dedicated helping behavioral healthcare providers implement evidence-based practices free of charge so they can offer improved services to children and their families. Supported with a \$4.3 million investment of state funding, the Center for Workforce Excellence will bring evidence-based behavioral health training and technical assistance to eligible community-based organizations serving youth and families, which will help reduce disparities for people served by smaller providers, such as in rural areas.

"Given the cost of training and certification, implementing the best evidenced-based strategies for behavioral health care can be a costly endeavor for community-based

organizations and can be difficult for them to achieve financially," Commissioner Dr. Ann Sullivan said. "The Center for Workforce Excellence will support this training for eligible service providers, allowing these organizations to stay certified and up to date on the best evidence-based practices available to engage families and youth."

Operated by New York University's McSilver Institute for Poverty Policy and Research, the Center will help raise the overall level of expertise for clinicians serving youth and families across a range of practices. The center will provide support and training activities for providers -including evidence-based practice certification, data management and evaluation -and improving the ability of clinicians to effectively diagnose children at an earlier age so they can receive appropriate services.

"It is critical that behavioral health practitioners are given every available tool available to provide the best possible care for children and families," said Dr. Michael A. Lindsey, dean of NYU's Silver School of Social Work.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

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An expanding Gaza war, with no endgame in sight



BY TALMIZ AHMAD

AS THE GAZA CONFLICT REVERBERATES ACROSS THE REGION, WEST ASIA COULD SLEEPWALK INTO ARMAGEDDON

"TARGETED KILLINGS SERVE NO USEFUL PURPOSE: WHILE THE DECEASED LEADERS ARE QUICKLY REPLACED, THE ASSASSINATIONS INCREASE MUTUAL HOSTILITY AND ESCALATE TENSIONS. THE WORRYING POSSIBILITY IS THAT MR. NETANYAHU MIGHT NOT BE AVERSE TO A REGIONAL CONFLAGRATION: FOLLOWING THE POLITICAL AND MILITARY FAILURES THAT FACILITATED HAMAS'S OCTOBER 7 ATTACKS AND WITH NO MILITARY SUCCESS TO SPEAK OF SO FAR, NOW, WITH THE SUPREME COURT REJECTING HIS JUDICIAL REFORMS PROPOSALS, THE PRIME MINISTER FACES THE IMMINENT PROSPECT OF RESIGNATION, ARREST AND IMPRISONMENT. COULD A DESPERATE NETANYAHU NOT WISH TO SEIZE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO OBLITERATE ALL PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE, ELIMINATE HEZBOLLAH AS A FIGHTING FORCE, AND DEBILITATE IRAN AS A THREAT?"

With the Gaza war having reached its three-month mark, it has spread dangerously to Lebanon, Iraq, Yemen and even Iran. On January 2, an Israeli drone strike on a Hamas office in Beirut, killed Saleh al-Aroui, the deputy head of the Hamas leadership located abroad. The next day, two explosions in Kerman, at the mausoleum of General Qassem Soleimani, former head of the Al Quds Force, killed 95 people who had gathered at the shrine to mourn on the fourth anniversary of his assassination. Though the Islamic State has claimed responsibility, many Iranians suspect it to be Israeli's hand.

And, on January 4, the United States announced the targeted killing of the head of an Iran-affiliated militia in Baghdad that has been attacking American targets since the beginning of the Gaza war. These attacks have occurred amidst the ongoing skirmishes in the Red Sea's waters over the last several weeks, with the Houthis targeting commercial shipping with drones and missiles and inviting strong U.S. retaliation. The Houthis have demanded that humanitarian assistance be provided urgently to the beleaguered Palestinians in Gaza.

These attacks have escalated tensions in the already volatile region that is reeling from the death and destruction wreaked by Israel in Gaza since early October. Over the last three months, over 22,000 Palestinians have been killed, most of them women and children, while nearly two million have been displaced, the largest displacement of Palestinians in history. An extraordinary humanitarian catastrophe faces the two-million strong Palestinian community in Gaza.

NETANYAHU COULD PURSUE ESCALATION

Israeli troops have also expanded their military operations to the West Bank: nearly 300 Palestinians have been killed, several thousand taken into detention, and numerous homes destroyed. Israeli cabinet Ministers have complemented the violence of their soldiers by calling for the cleansing of Gaza of Palestinians and the resettlement of the enclave with Jewish settlers.

The major concern at present is that a desperate Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu might pursue the escalation trajectory as, despite the mass killings in Gaza, Israel has very little to show for its efforts: though committed to the destruction of the Hamas war machine and of the movement itself, no prominent Hamas leader has been apprehended in Gaza, while Hamas continues to inflict damage on Israeli soldiers in the ground fighting. A few



This is the time when West Asian rulers and their people should be on the same side to serve the region's interests' File photo

thousand women and children have been detained by Israeli security to reveal the location of Hamas leaders, with no apparent success so far.

There are concerns that al-Aroui's killing was carried out to proclaim some success in the war on Hamas. Saleh al-Aroui, by all accounts, was a soft target. Though he has been a prominent presence in the Hamas leadership, in recent years he had been located in Beirut and was principally liaising with Hezbollah and Iran. Most reports suggest that he had no involvement with the planning or execution of the October 7, 2023 attacks.

PEACE IS DISTANT

Targeted killings serve no useful purpose: while the deceased leaders are quickly replaced, the assassinations increase mutual hostility and escalate tensions. The worrying possibility is that Mr. Netanyahu might not be averse to a regional conflagration: following the political and military failures that facilitated Hamas's October 7 attacks and with no military success to speak of so far, now, with the Supreme Court rejecting his judicial reforms proposals, the Prime Minister faces the imminent prospect of resignation, arrest and imprisonment. Could a desperate Netanyahu not wish to seize this opportunity to obliterate all Palestinian resistance, eliminate Hezbollah as a fighting force, and debilitate Iran as a threat?

The reason why this prospect is even being raised is because, through the three-month war in Gaza, no major player has exhibited a vision or a strategy regarding the endgame and the "day after" the cessation of hostilities. Beyond bellicose claims relating to the extermination of Hamas and ethnic cleansing of the occupied territories, Israel has shown no clarity about its war

aims or the management of Gaza after the war. Certainly, there is no mention of a longer-term peace process. Thus, mass killings in Gaza and provocative targeted assassinations in the neighborhood have become ends in themselves.

A ROLE FOR SAUDI ARABIA

The U.S. has been in search of a policy from day one. Beyond its total political and military support for Israel, the Biden administration has shed crocodile tears over humanitarian concerns, but achieved nothing on the ground. The region's already discredited hegemon appears incapable of insisting on a peace process - obviously, the clout of Israel's right-wing supporters in Washington have paralyzed the government and lulled it into somnolence.

The Arab states have exhibited neither voice nor leadership so far: beyond pointless conferences and resolutions, there is no sign of a consensual and forceful approach to the broader Palestine issue or even concerns about regional security.

The principal responsibility for ushering in peace now rests on Saudi Arabia. It alone has the regional and global standing to insist that its views be deferred to. Having shrugged off its subordination to U.S. diktat, it has been confidently pursuing an independent foreign policy that resonates positively with the world's leading powers. Palestinian interests and regional peace require robust and pro-active Saudi initiatives, which have been missing so far.

This is the time when West Asian rulers and their people should be on the same side to serve the region's interests. Failing that, they will be swept away in the tidal wave of regional conflict they have done nothing to prevent.

(The author is a former Indian diplomat)

Simultaneous elections are a rarity around the world



BY MANJEEV SINGH PURI

"Fixed dates for elections to assemblies and federal parliaments are a more common feature than simultaneous elections at different levels of the political structure in a country. Canada, a federal polity with a parliamentary form of government, has enacted legislation at both the federal level as well as in its provinces, providing for a fixed date for holding of elections, with the date now varying from province to province and following a different timetable for federal elections. In Australia, the terms of the federal Parliament and the state legislatures (most of them) are three and four years, respectively, thus ruling out simultaneous elections."

The high-level committee on 'One nation, one election' (ONOE) has sought public suggestions regarding constitutional amendments and other arrangements for giving effect to ONOE. The main rationale for suggesting ONOE are time and cost savings. Since these factors are applicable globally, it bears noting that almost nowhere among federal parliamentary democracies are simultaneous elections held at the federal and provincial (state) levels. Indeed, the 79th report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice, which looked into the matter of simultaneous elections, could cite only two cases from across the globe - South Africa and Sweden.

The South African elections, offering universal adult suffrage, began only in 1994 and the African National Congress,



It is believed that a separation of parliamentary and state elections ensures that voters are not cross-influenced by leaders or issues specific to each poll.

Credit / ANI

which led the freedom struggle, has continued to win throughout the country at both the federal and provincial levels (barring Western Cape). This is a situation not dissimilar to that of India during the first 25 years after Independence, when the Congress largely won across the country. The more competitive political scenario in India thereafter started showing up hung assemblies (and even Parliament), floor-crossing, etc., resulting in dissolution and elections and at different times for Parliament and states as a gap of more than six months without a legislature in place, both at the Centre and in the states, is considered unacceptable for a democracy and not allowed in the Indian Constitution.

Sweden has a unitary form of government with municipalities and regions, but the latter are not like provinces in a federal polity and don't have a hierarchical relationship. Essentially, both are forms of local government undertaking different types of tasks. And the Swedish Constitution allows for early elections, but these are for the balance of the dissolved term.

The Indian parliamentary panel's report also refers to the UK's decision in 2011 to have a fixed term for its Parliament. The report was submitted in 2015. Two years later, the UK Parliament, barely in its second cycle under the fixed-term enactment, overrode the Fixed Term Parliaments Act, which was repealed in 2022. The devolved assemblies in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, in any case, follow their own timetable.

Fixed dates for elections to assemblies

and federal parliaments are a more common feature than simultaneous elections at different levels of the political structure in a country. Canada, a federal polity with a parliamentary form of government, has enacted legislation at both the federal level as well as in its provinces, providing for a fixed date for holding of elections, with the date now varying from province to province and following a different timetable for federal elections. In Australia, the terms of the federal Parliament and the state legislatures (most of them) are three and four years, respectively, thus ruling out simultaneous elections.

The model for a 'fixed date and tenure' election that readily comes to mind is of the US, where presidential and gubernatorial elections are only held every four years and a system is in place for successors to take over if a President or Governor becomes non-functional. Lasting the full course through a succession process is possible, though it sometimes results in anomalies such as Gerald Ford becoming President in 1974 without having contested the election 'at the level of the people'. It, moreover, bears noting that elections to the House of Representatives in the US Congress and state assemblies are held every two years. Given the US tradition of primaries, the country is practically in the election mode every other year.

Interestingly, despite major efforts to build a consensus on simultaneous polls to the Lok Sabha and assemblies, the parliamentary committee's best case was polls in two phases - for some states around the time of the middle of the Lok

Sabha's term and for others with the Lok Sabha elections.

It is believed that a separation of federal and provincial elections ensures that voters are not cross-influenced by leaders or issues of the national election with the one in their state or province or vice-versa. Studies indicate that this is likely to happen when the regional party (or parties) in the fray doesn't have a distinct identity and a cause that the voters can easily identify with and so differentiate between parliamentary and Assembly elections.

Nevertheless, the idea that time and costs should not be unnecessarily incurred on repeated elections is a laudatory one. From experiences in Germany and, more recently, in Nepal, constitutional provisions that provide for greater political stability may be possible segues. For example, the German Basic Law and the 2015 Nepali Constitution only permit positive votes of no-confidence - such a motion must be accompanied by the naming of the next leader. Then there is the issue of setting the right precedent.

In the UK, as also in Canada, attempts to fix the terms of Parliament were thwarted by the Commonwealth tradition of the Prime Minister having the right to dissolve the House and seek a fresh mandate. In Nepal, while the same tradition was sought to be invoked, its Supreme Court disallowed it on two occasions during 2021 and asked the House to elect a new leader. This ensured that the House elected in 2017 sat through its full five-year term with no additional expenditure on mid-term polls.

(The author is a former Ambassador)

MORE TO MARMALADE THAN MEETS THE EYE



BY VIVEK KATJU

THE CONGRESS NEEDS A RECIPE TO CONNECT WITH THE MASSES AND REVIVE ITS FORTUNES

"RAHUL'S BHARAT JODO YATRA HAS CONTRIBUTED TO DOING AWAY WITH HIS 'PAPPU' IMAGE. BY ANY STANDARDS, IT WAS AN ENORMOUS FEAT OF PHYSICAL STAMINA AND HE STUCK TO HIS IDEOLOGICAL MESSAGE RIGHT THROUGH. IT IS DIFFICULT FOR HIS POLITICAL RIVALS TO CALL A PERSON WHO HAS WALKED SUCH A LONG DISTANCE AS 'PAPPU.' ONE CAN ALMOST HEAR VILLAGE ELDERS AND OTHERS WHO MAY BE GREAT ADMIRERS OF PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI ADMIT, "CHHORA CHALA TOH HAI." THE FACT THAT THE CONGRESS LOST THE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS IN THE HINDI HEARTLAND STATES HAS MORE TO DO WITH THE GREAT STRUCTURAL WEAKNESSES IN THE PARTY RATHER THAN RAHUL'S IMAGE. IMAGE MATTERS IN POLITICS AND, THEREFORE, IT IS ESSENTIAL FOR RAHUL NOT TO CONVEY THAT ULTIMATELY HE IS A 'SOUTH DELHI' BOY - AS THE MARMALADE VIDEO DOES."

I begin with an admission. I like orange marmalade a lot ever since I got used to its bittersweet flavor. The New Year's Eve video of Sonia and Rahul Gandhi making marmalade in their kitchen, obviously from Chinese oranges from their garden, brought back memories of the marmalade made by my late mother-in-law from kinnows and oranges. Well-known foreign brands of Seville orange marmalade could never compare with those made by her. Since there is no possibility that I will ever have the opportunity to spread on a toast the marmalade whose recipe was given by Priyanka Gandhi, I will continue to consider my mother-in-law's marmalade as the best. Just one more word on marmalade: Rahul calls it a jam. That is a sacrilege of sorts as marmalades are essentially jellies.

Despite all the efforts being made by Opposition parties through the INDIA bloc, it is apparent that the BJP under Modi is ahead in the electoral race.

But the Sonia-Rahul video was much more than mother and son bonding over making marmalade. Anything that they post on social media has a political purpose. Their political adversaries will use the video to emphasize the elitist nature of the family. This is because most Indians would never have heard about marmalade, leave alone tasting it. It is, therefore, intriguing that Sonia and Rahul did not take this into account before posting the video. The fact that Sonia



It would have been a better communication strategy to speak about marmalade in Hindi.

Credit / PTI

said she could not wait to have 'arhar ki daal and chawal' on returning from abroad will not detract from the elitism evident in the video.

It would have been a better communication strategy for the Gandhis to speak about marmalade in Hindi. Perhaps they could have said: "Yeh ek kism ka murabba hai jo ki narangi ya kinnow se banaya ja sakta hai." And that farmers who grow oranges, kinnows and other suitable citrus fruit can try it out. That would have made the video less baffling to the ordinary Indian. However, there is a more fundamental issue.

Just when it appears that Rahul is making efforts to 'jodo' (connect) himself and his ideology with the vast majority of the Indian people, he does something which, howsoever small and inconsequential it may be in the larger scheme of things, degrades his initiative. Thus, in this case, why couldn't Sonia and Rahul think of making gajar ka halwa, which north Indians, at least, can readily relate to? The carrots may not have been from their garden; nevertheless, that would have sent out a mother-son bonding message. And, if they wanted to do something a little exotic with carrots, they could have made carrot murabba. Surely, Indira Gandhi would have initiated Sonia into the goodness of gajar ka murabba. And they could have also dwelt on the nutritional value of amle ka murabba, which is made in early summer. It would have been best if they had made besan ke laddoo.

Rahul's Bharat Jodo Yatra has contributed to doing away with his 'Pappu' image. By any standards, it was an enormous feat of physical stamina and he stuck to his ideological message right through. It is difficult for his political rivals to call a person who has walked such a long distance as 'Pappu.' One can almost hear village elders and others who may be great admirers of Prime Minister Narendra Modi admit, "Chhora chala toh hai." The fact that the Congress lost the Assembly elections in the Hindi heartland states has more to do with the great structural weaknesses in the party rather than Rahul's image. Image matters in politics and, therefore, it is essential for Rahul not to convey that ultimately he

is a 'south Delhi' boy - as the marmalade video does.

As of now, despite all the efforts being made by the Opposition parties through the INDIA bloc, it is apparent that the BJP under Modi is ahead in the electoral race. Modi towers over the entire Opposition's leaders. Besides, in the Hindi-speaking states and western India, unless some entirely unforeseen development occurs, it is a near certainty that the BJP will be victorious in the Lok Sabha election. The question is whether it will do as well as it did in 2019. It is too early to make that assessment.

The fact is that the fortunes of the Congress cannot be revived unless it is able to make headway in Uttar Pradesh. It lost influence in UP more than three decades ago when its traditional voter base of high-caste Hindus, Scheduled Castes and Muslims abandoned it. Over the years, the Congress organization has become ineffective in the state. The problem is that the Gandhis, in the past two decades, have not focused sufficiently on UP. These two decades have also seen changes in the thinking of the Hindus in the Hindi heartland, including UP. It has moved towards reviving past glory and doing away with what they consider historical injustices. The Congress simply does not know how to respond to these changes with sustained clarity.

Meanwhile, it is clear that the international community anticipates a Modi victory in the General Election. Had that not been so, a major country like France would not have accepted the invite to its President to be the chief guest at the Republic Day event, especially as it was publicly known that India's first choice was US President Joe Biden. Biden's presence in India four days after the Ayodhya ceremony would have been a great communication coup for Modi. The BJP would have used it to project Modi's international profile, in addition to his position as India's tallest leader. While French President Macron is a significant global leader, he is obviously not in the same league as Biden.

(The author is a former Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, India)

Please Join

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Dr. Ajey Jain Dr. Raj Modi Hon. Jennifer Rajkumar Eric Kumar
George Abraham Dr. Purna Atluri Gobind Bathija
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Air Force Two carrying US Vice President Kamala Harris diverted to DC-area airport after encountering 'wind shear'

JANUARY 10, 2024

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): US Vice President Kamala Harris' aircraft was forced to divert to a Washington-area airport after encountering stormy weather Tuesday night as she returned from a trip to Georgia.

Press secretary Kirsten Allen said in

a statement, "Tonight, en route from Atlanta, GA, Air Force 2 was diverted from Joint Base Andrews to Dulles International Airport due to inclement weather."

A person familiar with the matter, speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss it, said the

aircraft encountered wind shear as a powerful storm brought high winds and rain to the nation's capital. The same person said no one was injured.

Wind shear is a sudden shift in wind direction or speed that can be hazardous during take-off and landing.



US Vice President Kamala Harris
Official portrait

Creating path to Palestinian state can isolate Iran: Antony Blinken



Antony Blinken, US Secretary of state

JANUARY 11, 2024

CAIRO (TIP): Israel working with the region and creating a path to a Palestinian state is the best way to isolate Iran, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Thursday, January 11, as he ended a frenetic

regional tour over the Gaza war in Cairo. Shuttling between Israel and Arab states, Blinken has been pushing for a way forward from the bloodshed in Gaza, even as the conflict threatens to spread further to Lebanon, Iraq and Red Sea shipping lanes, according to a Reuters report.

Speaking to reporters after meeting Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, Blinken said the region faced two paths, the first of which would see "Israel integrated, with security assurances and commitments from regional countries and as well from the United States, and a Palestinian state - at least a pathway to get to that state".

"The other path is to continue to see the terrorism, the nihilism, the destruction by Hamas, by the Houthis, by Hezbollah, all backed by Iran," he said. "The first path is the best way to isolate, to marginalize Iran and the proxies making trouble," he added.

Virginia Giuffre claims she got \$15,000 from Epstein for having sex with Prince Andrew when she was 17 years old

Giuffre's first experience with the royal took place at Ghislaine Maxwell's residence in London

JANUARY 12, 2024

NEW YORK (TIP): In a recent development in the ongoing legal battle surrounding the allegations against Prince Andrew, court documents have been released shedding light on Virginia Giuffre's claim that she was paid thousands of dollars by convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein for a sexual encounter with the royal when she was 17 years old.

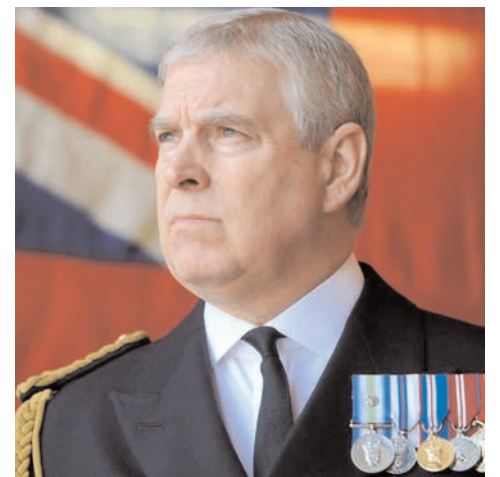
The documents, part of Giuffre's civil defamation case against Epstein's ex-girlfriend and associate Ghislaine Maxwell, revealed a series of questions posed to Giuffre regarding her interactions with Prince Andrew in 2001. According to reports by Sky News, she was specifically asked if she had received \$10 to \$15,000 from Epstein for having sex with Prince Andrew, to which Giuffre responded, "Yes, I did receive \$15,000."

She also admitted to not paying taxes on the money.

Prince Andrew, who has consistently denied any wrongdoing, faced accusations from Giuffre that her first experience with him took place at the Maxwell's residence in London.

Maxwell, currently serving a 20-year sentence for her role in sex trafficking alongside Epstein, has denied the allegations.

Giuffre's deposition further added her claims of being forced to have sex with Prince Andrew three times between 1999



Prince Andrew

File photo

and 2002 in locations including London, New York, and a private Caribbean island owned by Epstein. She also spoke about an undated visit to a club with Prince Andrew, where he allegedly ordered "clear drinks" containing alcohol.

Prince Andrew withdrew from frontline royal duties in 2019 amid public outrage over his association with Epstein. He settled a US civil case brought by Giuffre in February 2022, wherein she claimed he sexually assaulted her when she was 17. Following the settlement, the late Queen Elizabeth II stripped Prince Andrew of his honorary military titles and patronages, effectively removing him from royal life.

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Indian passport 80th strongest, allows visa-free travel to 62 nations

The Indian passport remains the 80th strongest in the world, the same as last year, according to the 2024 Henley Passport Index. However, the Indian passport now gives its holders visa-free access to 62 countries as against 57 in the 2023 Henley Passport Index. Two years ago, India was at the 87th spot.

However, India has a lot of catching up to do as the average number of destinations travellers are able to access visa-free in the latest Index is 111. In 2023, the average number of destinations travellers were able to access visa-free was 109.

The Henley Passport Index ranks all of world's 199 passports to 227 travel destinations. Where a visa is required, a score of zero is given, and a score of one is given if the destination is a visa on arrival. Besides European countries, whose passports are much more powerful, several third world countries too have passports that allow visa-free entry to more countries than India. They include Malaysia (12th spot with visa free access to 182 countries) and South Africa (53rd place with visa-free access to 108 countries). Sanctions-hit Russia is in the 51st spot with visa-free access to 119 countries.

Passport holders of Pakistan have access to only 34 countries and its passport is ranked 101. Six countries start 2024 with the world's most powerful passport. The countries are France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Singapore and Spain, whose passport allows visa-free entry to 194 global destinations. *Source: TNS*

Indore, Surat named cleanest cities, Maharashtra cleanest state

NEW DELHI (TIP)

Indore and Surat were on Thursday, January 11, named the joint winners of the cleanest city award, while Maharashtra bagged the top spot among states in the Union government's annual cleanliness rankings for urban areas.

This was the seventh year in a row that Indore was named the cleanest city in the Swachh Survekshan Awards. Surat, which has been in second place behind Indore for the past three years, won the top award for the first time.

Both cities had 100% door-to-door collection of waste, 98% segregation at source and 100% remediation of dumpsites, according to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs' Swachh Survekshan 2023 dashboard. Both cities were tied at the top place among cities with a population over 1 lakh.

The rankings take into account door-to-door collection of waste, segregation at source, cleanliness of public areas, clean water bodies and citizens' feedback regarding the cleanliness of their cities.

Of the eight rounds of annual awards since 2016, this was the first time that two cities shared the top prize. Navi Mumbai was named the third cleanest city.

With 89.24% door-to-door collection and 67.76% source segregation, Maharashtra was awarded the cleanest state. In second place, Madhya Pradesh has 90.59% door-to-door segregation and 54.1% source segregation.

Chandigarh won the award for the city having the best safety standards for sanitation workers – Safaimitra Surakshit Shehar. Varanasi was named the cleanest 'Ganga town'. Sasvad in Maharashtra was named the cleanest city among those with population below 1 lakh. Mhow Cantonment was named the cleanest cantonment in the country.

On the other hand, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Rajasthan, Nagaland and Tripura were ranked the bottom five states.

Starting with 73 cities in 2016, the number of cities covered in the annual ranking has increased over the years. The 2023 round covered 4,416 urban local bodies, 61 cantonments and 88 Ganga towns. According to the ministry, 1.58 crore online citizen feedback and 19.82 lakh face-to-face views were received as a part of the ranking.

Distributing the awards at a ceremony here, President



President Droupadi Murmu presents the 'All India Clean City - Rank 1' award to Surat, Gujarat as Union Minister for Housing & Urban Affairs Hardeep Singh Puri applauds during the Swachh Survekshan Awards 2023, in New Delhi, Thursday, Jan. 11, 2024. (PTI Photo)

Droupadi Murmu highlighted the importance of creating wealth from waste. She said a large amount of urban land was buried under mountains of garbage, which had a harmful impact on health. She noted that the Swachh Bharat Mission was working to eliminate such legacy dumpsites.

Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said scientific processing of waste had increased from 15-16% in 2014 to almost 76% now. Housing and Urban Affairs Secretary Manoj Joshi said cities were working to achieve 100% processing of waste. He said there were still some instances of sanitation workers cleaning sewers manually, leading to accidents and deaths – something which must be "completely eliminated".

Top 10 big cities (over 10 lakh population)

2023

- Indore (same rank in 2022)
- Surat (same rank in 2022)
- Navi Mumbai (same rank in 2022)
- Visakhapatnam (same rank in 2022)
- Bhopal (rank 6 in 2022)
- Vijayawada (rank 5 in 2022)
- Greater Hyderabad (rank 10 in 2022)
- Pune (rank 9 in 2022)
- Raipur (rank 11 in 2022)
- Pimpri Chinchwad (rank 19 in 2022)

Modi begins special religious exercise for 11 days for Ram Temple ceremony

NEW DELHI (TIP)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday, January 12, began a special 11-day religious exercise ahead of the consecration ceremony at the Ram temple in Ayodhya on January 22. In a message, he said it is his good fortune that he will be a witness to this auspicious occasion.

He said God has chosen him as an instrument to represent all Indians during the 'Pran Pratishtha' exercise and that he is undertaking the special religious exercise keeping this in mind. "I seek blessing from people," he said on X.

The prime minister posted an audio message, noting that it is difficult to articulate one's sentiments at this time but he is making an attempt. "I am emotional. First time in life, I am experiencing such feelings," he said.



Officials said Modi will be following the arduous guidelines detailed in scriptures related to the 'Pran Pratishtha' ceremony.

While counting himself as blessed to be representing all Indians when he

enters the sanctum sanctorum of Ram temple on January 22, the PM said though he would witness the divine moment in person, all 140 crore Indians would be with him.

"All Ram worshippers will be with me.

That moment will be a moment of our collective realisation. I will carry with me the inspiration of innumerable people who sacrificed their lives for the Mandir, the inspiration of endless tales of nameless people and their valour and of the resilience shown over a long wait of 500 years," Modi said, adding that he would enter the sanctum sanctorum of the temple with the energy of everyone and would feel their presence.

The 11-day social and moral code of conduct the PM entered into on Friday is prescribed in Hindu scriptures as a mandatory exercise ahead of a task like consecration of an idol.

The code of conduct involves a range of tasks, including fasting, and observance of a set of values.

Called Yam Niyams, these codes are strict and require tremendous self-discipline.



The founder and CEO of a startup in Bengaluru Suchana Seth was arrested by the Aimangala police on a request from the Goa police, for killing her four-year-old son in a service apartment in Candolin, North Goa.

Bengaluru CEO's crumpled note written with eyeliner shows custody battle frustration: Cops

A hand-written note found in Suchana Seth's bag may serve as a major clue to the spine-chilling murder of the four-year-old son of the Bengaluru-based CEO. The Goa Police on Thursday said the note was written on tissue paper in English probably using eyeliner or a kajal pencil and then it was shredded and crumpled. The investigators pieced together the torn pieces of the note and said it offered an insight into Suchana Seth's mental state that she was frustrated with the custody battle.

Suchana Seth has been involved in a custody battle for their son with her husband P Venkat Ram.

The recent court order allowed the father to meet the son on designated days which did not go down well with Suchana, reports said. The CEO also disclosed to close friends and family members that the son's face reminded her of her husband's face.

The police have not disclosed the exact content of the note but said the note consists of five sentences written in English.

Situation in Rajouri-Poonch matter of concern; Army enhancing deployment: Gen Pande

KOLKATA (TIP)

The situation in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri-Poonch region is a matter of "concern" and enhancing deployment of troops, boosting intelligence apparatus and reaching out to local people are part of measures being initiated to contain terrorist activities in the area, Chief of Army Staff Gen Manoj Pande said on Thursday.

At a press conference, he also said he has conveyed an unambiguous message to the soldiers and commanders that there will be "zero tolerance" to human rights violations and they must operate in a professional manner.

Three civilians were killed in Poonch last month allegedly during questioning by the Army in connection with an ambush of Army personnel by militants. Four Army soldiers were killed in the ambush.

"The situation in Poonch-Rajouri has been an issue of concern to us," Gen Pande said.

It is learnt that the terrorists operating in the Rajouri-Poonch area are very well-trained in carrying out terror attacks and ambushes.

The Army Chief said his force is focusing on strengthening the human intelligence which includes synergising the Army's efforts with other agencies, adding having support of the locals is also "extremely crucial" in anti-terror operations.

"We have already taken follow up action," he said.

The Chief of Army Staff said the Army is also looking at strengthening the ability to use technology to gather intelligence.

"We have enhanced our deployment



Chief of Army Staff General Manoj Pande gestures while addressing the annual press conference ahead of the Army Day in New Delhi.

and also reoriented some of the units," he said.

At the same time he said the troops have been told to operate professionally. "My guidance to soldiers and commanders is unambiguous — in terms of respect for human rights, there will be zero tolerance for any actions on that account," he said.

"We have clearly laid out guidelines spelling out what you (Army personnel) must do and what you must not do in those areas and for the soldiers to be able to (operate) in a professional manner," Gen Pande said.

He said there has been an increase in terrorist activities in Rajouri-Poonch region in the last five-six months.

"In the last five to six months, in Rajouri and Poonch, there has been an increase in terrorism. Terrorism in that area was eradicated in 2003 and peace was there till 2017-18," he said.

"Because of the situation in the valley getting normal, this is one area, our adversaries have been active in, in terms of abetting terrorism, encouraging proxy tanzems in operating in this area," he said.

The Army Chief said 45 terrorists were killed in Jammu and Kashmir in the last three years.

'LAC in Eastern Ladakh Is Stable But Sensitive'

Pande said the situation along the Line of Actual Control in eastern Ladakh is "stable" but "sensitive", and asserted that Indian troops are maintaining a "high state" of preparedness to deal with any challenge. Our operational preparedness continues to be at a high level, he said, noting that the Indian Army is maintaining adequate reserves to confront any security challenge in the region.

Indian and Chinese troops are locked in an over three-year confrontation in certain friction points in eastern Ladakh even as the two sides completed disengagement from several areas following extensive diplomatic and military talks.

On the situation in Jammu and Kashmir, Gen Pande said the ceasefire understanding with Pakistan is holding along the Line of Control (LoC) though there have been infiltration attempts.

We are foiling infiltration attempts along the LoC, he said.

Asked about talks between Bhutan and China to resolve their boundary dispute, Gen Pande suggested the developments having bearing on India's security are being monitored.

The Army Chief described the situation along the Indo-Myanmar border as a matter of concern. We are closely watching developments there, he said. He also said that integration of Agniveers into the Army is moving forward well.

The Army Chief also said that 2024 will be the year of technology adoption for the Indian Army as part of the overall modernisation of the force.

Conservative Islamic elements backed by China triggered Maldives crisis: Ex-Indian envoy

NEW DELHI (TIP)

The rapid decline in ties between India and the Maldives is the result of an Islamic conservative faction coming to power in the Indian Ocean Island, says a former top Indian diplomat.

"Democracy in Maldives is relatively young, in their teens, and it is a question of lack of understanding of the situation as well as the realities of bilateral relations between the two countries, which has triggered this crisis, said Dnyaneshwar Manohar Mulay, a former Indian High Commissioner to Maldives.

Just a month after Prime Minister Narendra Modi met with the newly elected Maldivian President Mohamed Muizzu, relations between the two former allies have gone into a tailspin. The immediate provocation came from tweets by three Maldivian ministers, attacking the Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, for promoting the Lakshadweep islands during his recent sojourn there at the perceived cost to the Maldives and for India's close ties with Israel.

The ministers also made derogatory remarks about



Chinese President Xi Jinping with Maldives' President Mohamed Muizzu, in Beijing. (PTI)

Indians. The tweets have been deleted, the Ministers suspended, and the Maldivian government has distanced itself from them, but the damage has been done.

According to former High Commissioner Mulay, "whenever such developments happen, it is the result of some people, who have been polluting the minds of the

island population there and China has played a significant role in doing this. It has been providing all the assistance to the conservative elements in the Maldives and the current regime in Maldives is pro-development but also very conservative."

He added: "There is an Islamic tilt to their policies and that is why the first visit of President Muizzu was to Turkey and it is unfortunate that the second visit was to China. It is an indication of what the new regime prefers." Mulay pointed out that President Muizzu is a follower of former Maldives President, Abdullah Yameen, a known anti-India hardliner, who was President between 2013 – 2018. Yameen was sentenced to five years in jail and fined USD 5 million in 2019 for embezzling USD 1 million in state funds.

As President of the Maldives, Yameen had laid the foundation for the Chinese debt trap in 2015 and led the 'India Out' campaign, currently being pursued by President Muizzu, who wants India's 70 soldiers in the island nations out. These personnel operate India-sponsored radars and surveillance aircraft. *Source: HT*

'Durga' Indira Gandhi

Indira Gandhi represented strength. She epitomized sacrifice. She personified service. She was the Iron Lady of India whom Atal Behari Vajpayee called "Durga" (the Indian Goddess of Power). The first woman Prime Minister of India, she was a true Bharat Ratna. Her birthday falls on November 19

Indira Priyadarshini Gandhi, born on 19 November 1917, was an Indian politician and stateswoman who served as the third Prime Minister of India from 1966 to 1977 and again from 1980 until her assassination in 1984. She was India's first and, to date, only female prime minister, and a central figure in Indian politics as the leader of the Indian National Congress.

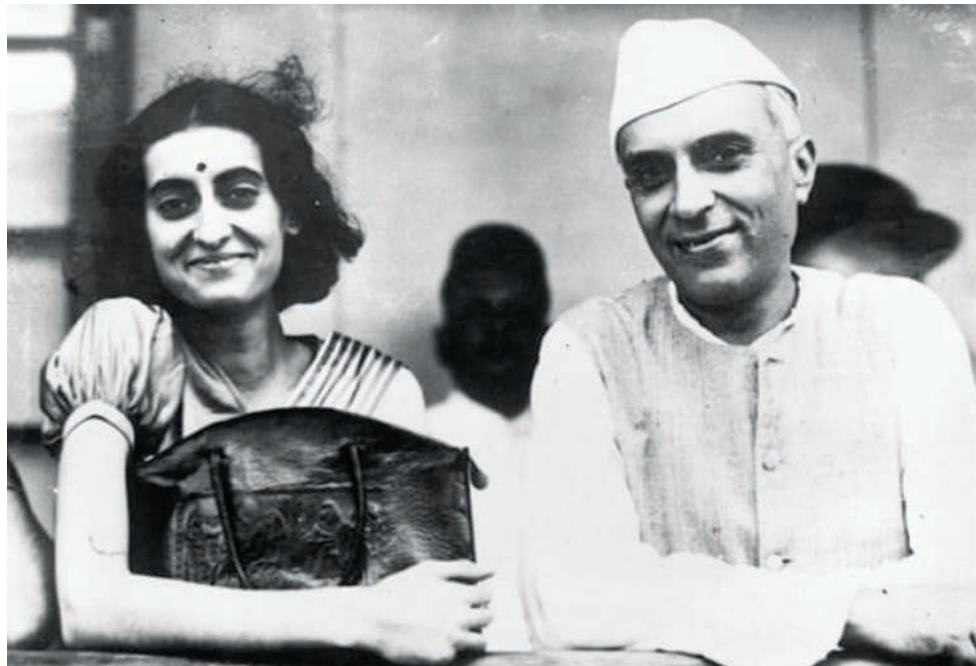
Gandhi was the daughter of Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of India, and the mother of Rajiv Gandhi, who succeeded her in office as the country's sixth prime minister.

Furthermore, Gandhi's cumulative tenure of 15 years and 350 days makes her the second-longest-serving Indian prime minister after her father. Henry Kissinger described her as an "Iron Lady", a nickname that became associated with her tough personality since her lifetime.

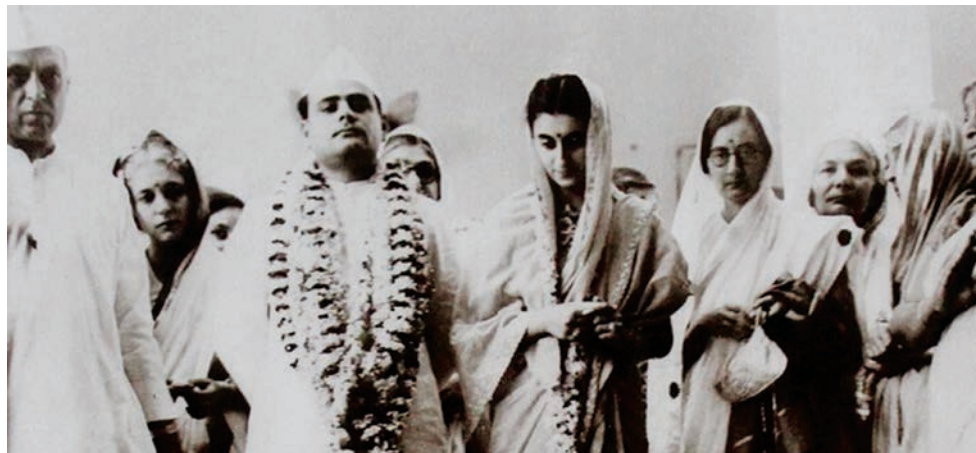
During Nehru's premiership from 1947 to 1964, Gandhi served as his hostess and accompanied him on his numerous foreign trips. In 1959, she played a part in the dissolution of the communist-led Kerala state government as then-president of the Indian National Congress, otherwise a ceremonial position to which she was elected earlier that year. Lal Bahadur Shastri, who had succeeded Nehru as prime minister upon his death in 1964, appointed her minister of information and broadcasting in his government; the same year she was elected to the Rajya Sabha, the upper house of the Indian Parliament. On Shastri's sudden death in January 1966, Gandhi defeated her rival, Morarji Desai, in the Congress Party's parliamentary leadership election to become leader and also succeeded Shastri as prime minister. She led the Congress to victory in two subsequent elections, starting with the 1967 general election, in which she was first elected to the lower house of the Indian parliament, the Lok Sabha. In 1971, the Congress Party headed by Gandhi managed to secure its first landslide victory since her father's sweep in 1962, focusing on issues such as poverty. But following the nationwide Emergency implemented by her, she faced massive anti-incumbency and lost the 1977 general election, the first time for the Congress party to do so. Gandhi was ousted from office and even lost her seat in parliament in the election. Nevertheless, her faction of the Congress Party won the next general election by a landslide, due to Gandhi's leadership and weak governance of the Janata Party rule, the first non-Congress government in independent modern India's history.

Birth And Early Life

On November 19, 1917, Indira was born



Indira Gandhi with her father Jawaharlal Nehru.



Indira married Feroze Gandhi in the year 1941.



Indira Gandhi addressing a gathering.

into the family of Motilal Nehru, who was heavily involved in the time of independence. Indira's father, Jawaharlal Nehru, was a well-known and well-educated lawyer who remained engaged for most of the time with Mahatma Gandhi in the Indian independence struggle. Indira Gandhi has had a patriotic attitude since her youth, and India's nationalist movement at that time

included a protest of British foreign goods as part of its strategy. She was highly influenced by this movement. As a result, when Indira once encountered a foreign-built thing on the occasion of Holi, that led this 5-year-old Indira to burn her favorite doll.

Education

Indira completed her matriculation at

Pune University and continued her studies in Shantiniketan in West Bengal before moving for further education to Switzerland at Oxford University's Somerville College.

Indira had spent several months in Switzerland with her unwell mother during her studies when her mother, Kamala Nehru, got Tuberculosis in 1936, and Jawaharlal Nehru was in an Indian prison when Kamala died.

Marriage & Family Life

After Indira Gandhi entered the Congress Party, she met Feroze Gandhi. At that time, Feroze Gandhi was a reporter and a significant member of the Youth Congress. Later, Indira Gandhi married Feroze Gandhi in the year 1941, against her father's denial. Rajiv Gandhi was born first, followed by Sanjay Gandhi.

Although Indira Gandhi was married to Feroze Gandhi, Feroze and Gandhi's family were not related as per community. Although Feroze fought alongside Mahatma Gandhi in the fight for independence by the community, he's been a Parsi. In contrast, Indira Gandhi was a Hindu, and untraditional marriage wasn't usual at the time, and it was the reason why the pair wasn't admired in public. Thus Mahatma Gandhi backed them in the tough time and issued a public declaration, including a message to the media, that he would like to invite all the people who are not happy to come and accept this marriage and bless the bride and groom, it is also said that Mahatma Gandhi was the person who advised Feroze and Indira to use the title "Gandhi" to keep their public influence clean in the political career ahead.

Political Career

Indira's entrance into politics was neither extremely challenging nor shocking because the Nehru family was already there in India's central government as a first contender. No one was then near them. Since Indira was a child, she watched Mahatma Gandhi come and go from his Allahabad home on several occasions for different reasons. Thus, she was attracted by the country and its democracy.

Indira Gandhi held several electoral rallies for her husband Feroze and headed the campaign in his support during the Lok Sabha elections of 1951 and 1952. Feroze was competing for Rae Bareilly at that time. Feroze quickly rose to prominence as a frontrunner in the fight against systemic corruption. He revealed many corruption cases and cronyism, including the identity of an investment company in the name of the finance minister of that time, T.T. Krishnamachari. At that time, Jawaharlal Nehru was generally viewed

as a close friend of the finance minister.

Feroze found his place in national politics, in this fashion, with a huge struggle at the initial phase, even though he maintained his campaign against people involved in the corruption from central government with a small group of followers. Unfortunately, he died due to a heart attack on September 8, 1960.

Cong President and Political Involvement

Indira Gandhi was appointed as a President of the INC, i.e., Indian National Congress, back there in 1959. Jawaharlal Nehru also chose her as a main advisory of the committee. Indira Gandhi preferred to be the contender in the very next election after the demise of Nehru on May 27, 1964, and she also won. And thus, she was handed the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting department in Lal Bahadur Shastri's cabinet.

Prime Minister of India

Following Lal Bahadur Shastri's death in Tashkent on January 11, 1966, she gained a majority of the vote in an interim election and became Prime Minister. The acceptance of the 1969 nationalization plans of India's 14 major banks of that time, along with four major oil corporations, was among the most noteworthy achievements for her as Prime Minister. Apart from these achievements, India, under her tenure, made the first underground explosions in 1974 that led the country into the nuclear age. She also made productive moves to remove food scarcity from the country.

Indo-Pak War

In 1971, the fact was that Indira Gandhi had to deal with a major issue this year. And thus, it started with the conflict when West Pakistani soldiers entered Bengali East Pakistan to suppress their independence campaign. On 31st March 31, she spoke out against the terrible conflict, but opposition persevered, and thousands of migrants began pouring into India. And as a result, India started facing a severe shortage of resources for the caring of these migrants, which caused concern inside the country. Although India backed the freedom warriors who were fighting for their country's independence, the issue became even more problematic when US President Nixon urged the US to take Pakistan's side, while China had already been equipping Pakistan. And as a result, West Pakistan's military continued to torture the civilians in East Pakistan, and mostly Hindus got targeted. Around 10 million East Pakistanis abandoned the nation and sought residence in India. Indira Gandhi got compelled by the massive number of refugees to encourage the Azami League's fight for independence from West Pakistan.

India gave military support as well as provided weapons to counter West Pakistan. Indira Gandhi acknowledged the necessity of Bangladesh's independence after Pakistan bombarded India's camp on December 3. She promised that she would grant safety to Bangladesh's revolutionary warriors and back the country's formation. US



Pakistani President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Indira Gandhi signing the Simla Agreement in 1972.



Indira Gandhi with Jacqueline Kennedy, First Lady of the US in New Delhi, 1962.



Indira Gandhi with U.S. President Richard Nixon, 1971.

President Nixon ordered US warships to be dispatched to India on December 9, but Pakistan surrendered on December 16. The surrendered paperwork was signed by the West Pakistani Armed Forces in front of India, leading to the foundation of Bangladesh, a new country. And as a result, on December 16, 1971, the war between West Pakistan and East Pakistan in Dhaka ended.

Imposition of Emergency

Opposition leaders and social activists held a major protest against the central government led by Indira Gandhi in 1975 due to the growing prices, the horrible status of the economy of that time, and widespread corruption. Also, people's resentment towards her continued to grow. In the following year, the Allahabad High Court declared that Indira had cheated during the previous election, which also helped trigger the present

political chaos of that period. Indira was asked to quit her seat immediately. Instead of quitting on June 26, 1975, Indira Gandhi announced a state of emergency, claiming the country's unstable political circumstances.

J.P. Narayan, a Gandhian socialist, and his followers hoped to restructure Indian culture by uniting youths, villagers, and labor groups in a "whole non-violent revolution." But as a result, Narayan was soon apprehended and jailed. As the result of the emergency, the people's constitutional rights were abolished, and thus she jailed all of her political rivals and put the media under severe control.

Post Removal of Emergency

During the Emergency, Indira's youngest child Sanjay Gandhi tried to control the country with complete authority, ordering the dismantling of slum areas and a hugely controversial sterilization campaign, which turned Indira against the government. Indira Gandhi requested an election in 1977. As a result, the growing Janata Dal alliance, led by Morarji Desai and J.P. Narayan, beat her even though she was confident that she would defeat the opponents.

Return of Indira as a Prime Minister

Indira Gandhi took full advantage of a rift among the Janata Party's members. During their tenure, the ruling party's government ordered to arrest Indira Gandhi by claiming some cause. Unfortunately, their method backfired for those individuals and helped Indira Gandhi gain some sympathy. Afterward, in the 1980 elections, the Congress won with a huge margin, and Indira Gandhi was re-elected Prime Minister of India. Also, the truth cannot be escaped that the Janata Party was not stable somewhere, which allowed Congressmen and Indira to gain benefits from it.

Operation "Bluestar"

In September 1981, a gang of Sikh terrorists demanded "Khalistan", and as a result, the group managed to enter into the Golden Temple complex, Amritsar. To respond to the incident, Indira Gandhi ordered troops (Army) to proceed towards this religious place to implement Operations Blue Star even though she was aware of the information that thousands of innocent people were there in the temple premise. Although the government later claimed that they used tanks and other heavy weapons to reduce the terrorist threat, it resulted in the deaths of several innocent people. And thus, this Blue Star mission was regarded as a type of disaster in Independent India. The impact of the incident worsened the nation's regional tensions. A few Sikhs resigned from military and civil executive roles, and some have even decided to return governmental honors. Indira Gandhi's political identity somehow also got affected during all these incidents.

In response to the carnage at the Savarna temple during Operation Blue Star, Gandhi's bodyguards Bint Singh and Satwant Singh shot Indira Gandhi with 31 bullets on October 31, 1984. This event took place on New Delhi's Safdarganj Road.

Lohri: The bonfire, harvest festival

Lohri is a famous festival of North India, especially the folk festival of the Indian state of Punjab. There are many significance and legends about Lohri festival. It is believed that this festival marks the passing of winter solstice. Lohri festival is considered to mark the end of winter. It is a traditional welcome by people in the northern region of the Indian subcontinent for longer days and the sun's journey to the northern hemisphere. The festival of Lohri is celebrated a day before the Hindu festival of Makar Sankranti. Lohri is a celebration of the arrival of longer days after the winter solstice. Usually the festival of Lohri is celebrated on 12, 13 or 14 January every year.

Significance of Lohri

For the people of Punjab, the festival of Lohri holds great significance as it marks the beginning of the harvest season of Rabi crops in the state and the end of winter. It is celebrated by making a huge bonfire that symbolises the Sun bringing in warmth. The significance of the festival is both as a winter crop season celebration and a remembrance of the Sun deity.

Other legends explain the celebration as a folk reverence for fire or the goddess of Lohri.

Lohri puja

On the day of Lohri, place the picture of Mahadev on a piece of black cloth. An earthen lamp must be lit in front of the deity and people make several offerings and puja to the deity. People usually turn to the West during this puja. After doing puja to Sri Mahadev, people go around the bonfire made of wood and cow dung cakes — singing, dancing and throwing in food items like sugarcane, jaggery and other eatables they have got as part of the puja offering.

Lohri history and beliefs

As per the Punjabi folk tradition, Lohri's original can be traced back to the time when a legendary Punjabi hero, Dulla Bhatti rescued innocent girls from the clutches of lecherous men. It is enshrined in folk poetry that is sung during the winter festival of Lohri. The chieftain is believed to have rescued two Brahmin girls, Sundri and Mundri, from Akbar, who wanted them in his harem. Dulla Bhatti became their godfather and is believed to have married them off on Lohri with much pomp and festivity, directly challenging the authority of the emperor.

The tale of Sundri and Mundri was turned into a song that is sung during Lohri celebrations every year.

Lohri celebrations

Just like many other Indian festivals, Lohri is celebrated in its own unique way. The festival is celebrated by lighting up a bonfire. People dance and sing around it. They eat and also throw popcorn, gur, rewaries, sugar-candies



and sesame seeds into the fire. In traditional Punjabi families, dinner is served with gajak, sarson da saag and makki di roti on the day of Lohri festival.

Lohri holds special significance for the newly-married couple or the new-born child in the family and is celebrated with great enthusiasm on these occasions as it symbolises fertility.

Punjabi farmers observe the day after Lohri (Maghi) as the beginning of the financial New Year.

Happy Lohri is the conventional greeting on Lohri. Rather than go to each other's homes to exchange sweets or mithai, like during Diwali, Lohri calls for everyone to meet at a common place. The community comes together and wishes each other a 'Happy Lohri' signifying the beginning of a new season. The word Lohri is derived from two words til (sesame) and rorhi

(jaggery), which are traditionally eaten during the festival. The terms til and rorhi together used to sound like 'tilohri' earlier in history, gradually morphing into the term 'Lohri'. One the fire dies out, dinner includes crowd favorites like makki di roti te sarson da saag (cornflour pancakes and mustard spinach) and lassi (buttermilk).

Lohri celebrations mark the beginning of the harvest season. It is celebrated to offer thanks for making a bounteous harvest possible. Lohri night traditionally falls on the longest night of the year known as the winter solstice. Lohri festival indicates that the biting cold of the winter is ending and happy sunny days are arriving.

What do we do on Lohri?

Bonfire is the top highlight of Lohri. Traditionally, families used to gather

around bonfires and sing folk songs like Sundariye Mundariye Ho. Nowadays, most people plug in a speaker to play songs off of YouTube or other music apps. Dishes made of rewri, gajak, peanuts and other seasonal products are snacks — as well as bonfire fodder.

What do you put on a Lohri fire?

People sing and dance around the Lohri fire and throw foods like gajak, popcorn, puffed rice and others into the fire as 'tributes' to the gods in exchange for blessings. Lohri is also considered especially auspicious for newlywed couples and parents with newborn babies.

Why do we burn fire on Lohri?

Folklore of Punjab believes that the flames of the bonfire lit on the day of Lohri carry the messages and prayers of the people to the sun god to bring warmth to the planet to help crops grow. In exchange, the sun god blesses the land and ends the days of gloom and cold. The next day is celebrated as Makar Sankranti. For some, the bonfire symbolically indicates that the bright days are ahead of the people's lives and acts as the carrier of people's prayers to the sun god — it's just a really good excuse to party.

Importance of first Lohri of baby, bride

A new bride is made to never forget her first Lohri in her new family. She needs to wear new and vibrantly colored attire, dress up in her best for the occasion wearing lots of bangles, and decorate her palms with Mehndi. You can say that she needs to get ready as a bride again. The husband also wears a new outfit and wears an elaborate turban. The new bride is gifted with beautiful clothes and jewelry for the occasion by her in-laws and other friends and relatives. As an old custom- she is made to savor special delicacies and she enjoys to the full while knowing other significant traditions.

Traditionally, the Lohri holy Bash is commemorated to welcome the bride in a warm and friendly way among all the family members and to introduce the new bride to one and all.

Lohri is also very important for a newly born baby. The mother is dressed up in new and gorgeous clothes and heavy jewelry, and Mehndi is applied on her hands in an elaborate pattern. She is asked to sit with the newborn baby in her arms and family, relatives, and friends gift her with fruits, sweets, clothes, jewelry, and money. On this noteworthy occasion, a group of people also perform Bhangra on the traditional songs around the fire in the ground. They also offer roasted peanuts, sesame laddoo, and other food items in the fire for the jollifications. The revelry goes on for the whole night along with dinner and soft drinks. These days Lohri has gained immense popularity and people not only in Punjab, but the whole of India, even in south India get together to celebrate the festival.

Makar Sankranti

Makar Sankranti is an important Hindu festival celebrated in different forms in India and Nepal. The festival is celebrated when the sun enters into Makar rashi in Pausha month. It is celebrated every year either on 13, 14 or 15 January because on these dates the sun leaves Dhanu rashi and enters into maker rashi. The festival is also known as Uttarayni because on this day the sun starts to move towards north.

The festival is celebrated in different states of India in different ways. In south India, It is known as Pongal festival in Tamil Nadu while it is celebrated as Sankranti in Karnataka, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh. In north India, it is celebrated as Lohri in Punjab and Haryana. In Uttar Pradesh, it is a day of giving and donation.

The harvest festival is both a religious as well as seasonal observance, and is dedicated to Lord Surya, the Sun God and marks the sun's transit into Makara (Capricorn) raashi (zodiac sign). The festival is majorly celebrated in the Indian Subcontinent and also by Indians and Hindus around the world.

The festivities related to Makar Sankranti have many names depending on the region it is being celebrated in. For example, by north Indian Hindus and Sikhs, it is called Maghi and is preceded by Lohri. It is called Makara Sankranti and also Poush songkranti in Maharashtra, Goa, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Karnataka and Telangana, Sukarat in central India, Magh Bihu by Assamese, and Thai Pongal or Pongal by Tamils.

While festivities may not be at par as previous years on account of the coronavirus pandemic, usually on this day devotees take a dip in rivers like Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Krishna and Cauvery that are considered to be holy. For believers, taking a dip washes away their sins, it is also considered a time of peace and prosperity and many spiritual practices are conducted on this day. Sesame and jaggery ladoos or chikkis are distributed on this day. Popularly referred to as til-gud. The sweet signifies that people must stay together in peace and harmony despite their differences. In Gujarat, kite flying is organised as part of Makar Sankranti festivities. It is also believed that those who die on Makar Sankranti are not According to Hindu belief, if one dies on Makar Sankranti they are not reborn, but go straight to paradise.

The auspicious day of Makar Sankranti will fall Monday, 15 January 2024.

Believe goes that Makar Sankranti is the most auspicious day of the year and has a very sacred mythological story associated. It marks the end of an inauspicious phase that begins around mid-December. Further, it is also believed that any sacred Makar Sankranti ritual can be performed from this day onwards. The auspicious day of Makar Sankranti also marks the beginning of warmer and longer days as compared to nights. Now let's know what mythology says about this lucky day.

Mata Mahishasurmardini – a powerful form of Goddess Durga, had descended



with the purpose of destroying Mahishasur. The Goddess had first set foot on earth, in the Kataraj ashram of Rishi Kardam and Devahuti.

It is also believed that on this day Lord Sun visits God Shani who is the owner of the constellation Makar. Since Shani is the foster child of Sun, they do not share a good relation. However, it is Shani's responsibility to take care of his father. Hence, this day signifies the priority of responsibilities.

Even in the epic of Mahabharata, an episode mentions how people in that era also considered the day as auspicious. Bhishma Pitamah even after being wounded in the Mahabharata war lingered on till Uttarayan set in so that he can attain heavenly abode inauspicious times. It is said that death on this day brings Moksha or salvation to the deceased.

History of Makar Sankranti

The great savior of his ancestors, Maharaj Bhagirath, did great Tapasya to bring Gangaji down on the earth for the redemption of 60,000 sons of Maharaj Sagar, who were burnt to ashes at the Kapil Muni Ashram, near the present-day Ganga Sagar. It was on this day that Bhagirath finally did tarpan with the Ganges water

for his unfortunate ancestors and thereby liberated them from the curse. Thus Makar Sankranti marks the start of good luck and fortune for all endeavors.

Another legend says that any boy or girl who takes a bath at any of the holy places will be blessed with a charming and beautiful partner. Another belief associated with the holy dip is that Lord Vishnu himself comes down to take a dip in the Triveni Sangam and therefore anyone who bathes there is blessed with his grace.

Culture and Festivity

Makar Sankranti is celebrated differently at different places and has a variety of rituals associated.

Maharashtra

Maharashtra takes the limelight when it comes to the celebration of Makar Sankranti. People here come together to exchange sweets especially laddus made of Til (Sesame seeds) and Jaggery. Women who are married get together to exchange utensils and put Haldi Kumkum on their forehead. Hindus wear ornaments made of 'Halwa' on this day.

Orissa

In Orissa, families get together to prepare some authentic delicacies on the eve of Makar Sankranti. They prepare a special dish called 'Ghantaa' which is a curry made of different cereals and vegetables. They also prepare some sweet dishes. Many of Orissa celebrate the day of Sankranti by lighting bonfires, dancing and eating their particular dishes sitting together. The Bhaya tribals of Orissa have their Magh yatra in which small home-made articles are put for sale.

Uttar Pradesh

In Uttar Pradesh, Sankranti is called 'Khichiri'. Taking a dip in the holy rivers on this day is regarded as most auspicious. A big one-month long 'Magha-Mela' fair begins at Prayag in Allahabad on this occasion. Apart from Triveni, ritual bathing also takes place at many places like Haridwar and Garh Mukteshwar in Uttar Pradesh, and Patna in Bihar.

Bengal

The famous Ganga Sagar river witnesses a huge Mela every year during Makar Sankranti. This is the place where river Ganga is believed to have divided into the nether region and vivified the ashes of the sixty thousand ancestors of King Bhagirath. This meal is attended by a large number of pilgrims from all over the country.

Tamil Nadu

Pongal is the festival which is very similar to Makar Sankranti and is one of the major festivities of South India. Rice and pulses cooked together in ghee and milk are offered to the family deity after the ritual worship. In this, they worship the Sun God.

Andhra Pradesh

The people of Andhra celebrate it for three long days and call it 'Pedda Panduga' meaning big festival. The whole event lasts for four days, the first day Bhogi, the second day Sankranti, the third day Kanuma and the fourth day, Mukkanuma.

Gujarat

For the Gujarati's, the festival is more about socializing and show your love for your relatives. They exchange gifts, arrange dinners and perform Puja together. The Gujarati Pundits on this auspicious day grant scholarships to students for higher studies in astrology and philosophy. This festival thus helps the maintenance of social relationships within the family, caste, and community.

Punjab

Punjab celebrated this occasion as Lohri. This period being the coldest of the year they lit huge bonfires and participate in entertaining activities. Sweets, sugarcane, and rice are thrown in the bonfires, around which friends and relatives gather together. The following day, which is Sankrant, is celebrated as MAGHI. The Punjabi dance their famous Bhangra dance and eat sumptuous dinner together.

Maghi Mela at Muktsar

Maghi da Mela is held at the holy city of Sri Muktsar Sahib each year in January or the month of Magh according to Nanakshahi calendar and it is one of the most important melas or fairs of India and the most important of all religiously significant gatherings of the Sikhs.

The tenth Sikh master Guru Gobind Singh Ji chose Maghi as one of the three festivals to be celebrated by Sikhs (the others are Baisakhi and Bandhi Chhor Divas. After the battle of Sri Muktsar Sahib which took place on 8 May 1705, Maghi came to be associated with the forty Sikhs and the battle of Sri Muktsar Sahib.

Maghi is the occasion when Sikhs commemorate the sacrifice of forty Sikhs, who fought for Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Sikh master.

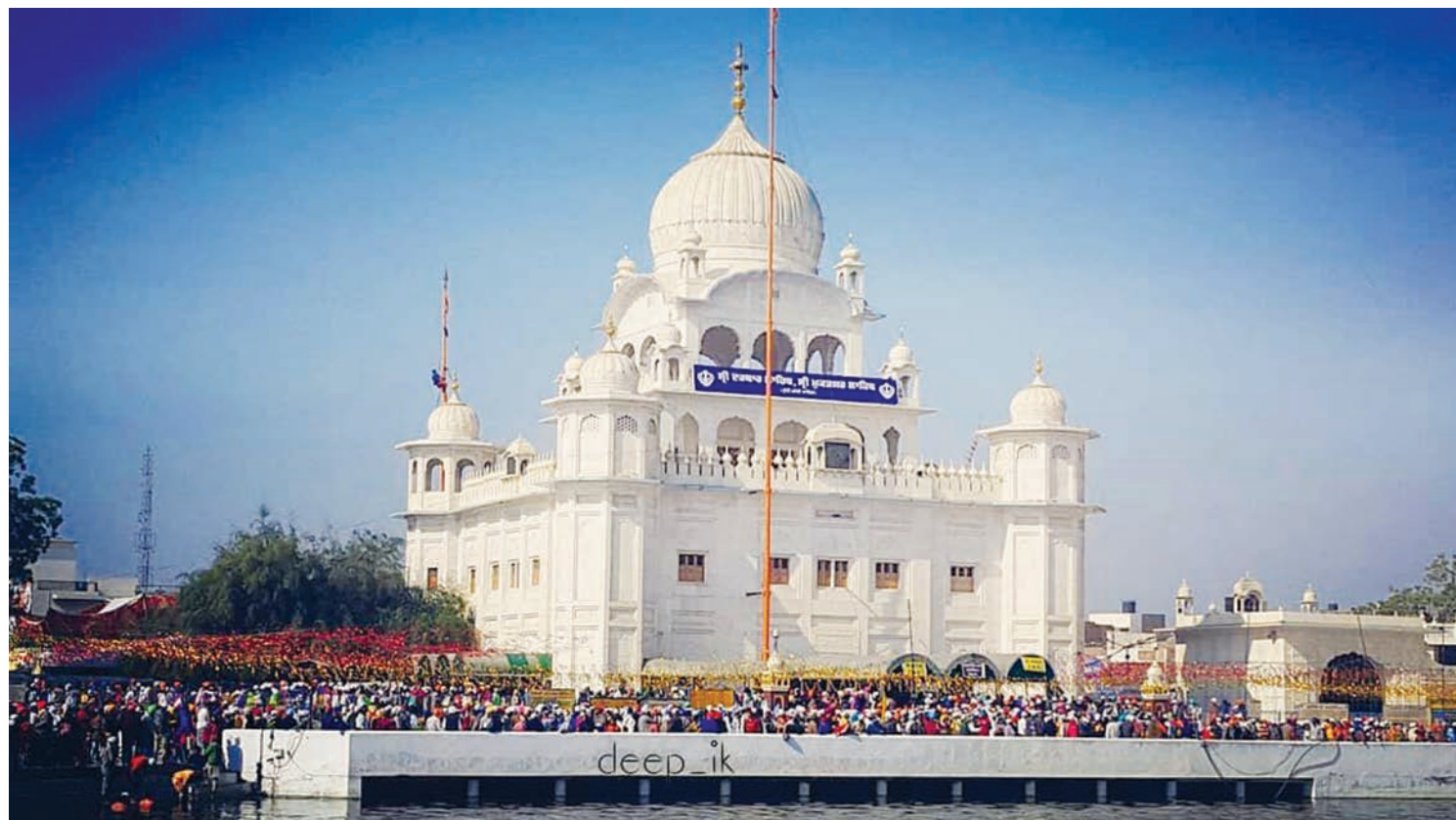
Maghi, Makara Sankranti, the first day of the month of Magh. The eve of Maghi is the common Indian festival of Lohri when bonfires are lit in Hindu homes to greet the birth of sons in the families and alms are distributed. In the morning, people go out for an early-hour dip in nearby tanks.

For Sikhs, Maghi means primarily the festival at Muktsar, a district town of the Punjab, in commemoration of the heroic fight of the Chali Mukte, literally, the Forty Liberated Ones, who laid down their lives warding off an attack by an imperial army marching in pursuit of Guru Gobind Singh.

Etymologically, mukta from Sanskrit mukt means 'liberated, delivered, emancipated,' especially from the cycle of birth and death. Mukti (liberation, emancipation) in Sikhism is the highest spiritual goal of human existence, and mukt or mukta is the one who has achieved this state of final beatitude. Mukta, also means a pearl, and the word would thus signify a title or epithet of distinction. It was probably in this sense that the five Sikhs, who on 30 March 1699 received the vows of the Khalsa immediately after the first five Panj Piare, were blessed with the title mukta, plural mukte.

The term Chali Mukte is also used sometimes for the martyrs whom were attacked by a huge army, which had been in pursuit of the 40 Sikhs, their Guru and the two older Sahibzadas since the evacuation of Anandpur by Guru Gobind Singh during the night 5-6 December. Encircled and hopelessly outnumbered at Chamkaur on 7 December, they engaged the enemy in small sorties throughout the day. Two of those sorties were led by their Guru's two oldest sons the Sahibzadas.

The Guru had previously created the Khalsa making his men his equal. Now Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji told the survivors of his plan to challenge his attackers the next morning joining his sons, the Sahibzadas, in Sach Khand. The five remaining Singhs were Bhai Dharam Singh, (the two remaining Panj Pyare), Bhai Man Singh, Bhai Sangat Singh and finally Bhai Sant Singh. They begged Guru Ji to escape, they said, "At Kesgarh Sahib we watched you beseeching the five beloved ones to initiate you with Amrit. You had said then, I am of the Khalsa, and the Khalsa



is mine. Today we ask in the capacity of the Khalsa beseeching you to leave Chamkaur and escape to a safer place."

Guru Saheb had no choice now but to accept their demands. It was decided that Guru Ji, Man Singh and the two Panj Pyare would leave the fort and that they would dress Sant Singh to look like Guru Ji because he had an uncanny resemblance to Guru Saheb. Guru Ji killed the few soldiers that were on watch. Then they left in the pitch dark the Guru clapped his hands three times saying "PeerŪ Hind Rahaavat" ("The 'Peer' of India is Leaving").

They all shouted Sat Sri Akal and scattered in different directions. The mughals who couldn't see where anyone was, ended up killing several of their own while Guru Ji and the three Sikhs escaped.

Wazir Khan, the faujdar of Sirhind, denied the next day of the prize he had so eagerly and treacherously hounded, must have been furious. He would soon release that fury on the Guru's remaining sons and their grandmother who, betrayed by their old family cook Gangu, soon fell into his hands back at Sirhind.

While there is no unanimity over the names of the martyrs of Sri Muktsar Sahib and Chamkaur Sahib, the five Muktas who comprised the first batch of Sikhs to receive amrit at the hands of the Panj Piare are given in Rahitnama by Bhai Daya Singh as Ram Singh, Fateh Singh, Deva Singh, Tahil Singh and Isar Singh. No other details of these five are available except that an old manuscript of Bhai Prahlad Singh's Rahitnama is said to contain a note associating Ram Singh and Deva Singh with the village of Bughiana, Tahil Singh and Isar Singh with Dall-Van and Fateh Singh with Kurdpur Mangat.

According to Bhai Chaupa Singh, his Rahitnama or code of conduct was



drafted by muktas. The text is said to have received Guru Gobind Singh's approval on 7 Jeth 1757 Bk / 5 May 1700. It appears that the title of mukta was bestowed subsequently also on persons other than the original five. The number of muktas is recorded variously in old Sikh texts. For instance, Kesar Singh Chhibbar, Bansavallnama Dasan Patshahlan Ka, mentions 14, and Kuir Singh, gurbilas Patshahi X, 25.

But the muktas universally celebrated in the Sikh tradition are the forty martyrs of Sri Muktsar Sahib who earned this title by sacrificing their lives for the Guru and who redeemed their past apostasy of having disowned their Guru and deserted him, when driven to desperation by the prolonged siege of Anandpur by the Rajput hill chiefs and Mughal forces by having their disclaimer torn by the Guru.

Sikhs celebrate the Maghi with an end to end recital of the holy Guru Granth Sahib and religious rituals in all the Sikh Gurudwaras. On the eve of Maghi falls the common Indian festival called the Lohri when bonfires are lighted in Hindu homes and alms are also distributed. . however The largest assembly, however,

takes place at Muktsar (Punjab) where big fairs are organized and pilgrims take a holy dip in the sacred waters of sarovar and also visit several shrines. A mahala or big march of pilgrims from the main shrine to gurdwara Tibbi Sahib, sacred to Guru Gobind Singh, concludes the three-day celebration.





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WARM UP THIS WINTER WITH GRAMMY® AWARD WINNING VIOLINIST & MORE

BY MABEL PAIS

"What the New Jersey Symphony has established, bringing music to the Garden State in schools and in six different cities, is a sincere accomplishment. And it's never been better." - nj.com



Augustin Hadelich

Credit / njsymphony.org

The New Jersey Symphony (NJS) presents one of the foremost concert violinists in the world, Augustin Hadelich, in three performances with Music Director Xian Zhang conducting.

The GRAMMY® Award-winning violinist will play Beethoven's monumental violin concerto of which Hadelich recently told 'The Strad' magazine, "Beethoven composed much of it in a high register that makes the sound shine with an incredible purity and transparency ... [Its] length creates one of its greatest challenges: to sustain the long arc of the musical story, so it does not sound like an endless collection of 'nice moments.'" Learn more about Hadelich at augustinhadelich.com.



(left) Xian Zhang and Daniel Bernard Roumain.

Credit / njsymphony.org

Also featured on the program is a piece originally commissioned by the New Jersey Symphony for the virtual 2020-21 season, *i am a white person who _____ Black people*, by Resident Artistic Catalyst Daniel Bernard Roumain. Roumain, who goes by his monogram DBR, was limited in the original version to just strings and percussion, but has expanded the piece for this performance to include wind and brass instruments. This will be the first performance of the piece in front of a live audience.

When speaking of the piece in 2020, DBR said, "With *i am a white person who _____ Black people*, I am extending what has traditionally been my choice given to any white person: how do you see me and other BIPOC people, and what choice of word or phrase best reflects your opinion of Black people? Your choice, in part, reflects who you are." Learn more about Daniel Bernard Roumain at danielroumain.com.

The performance closes with audience-favorite 'Pictures at an Exhibition,' written first as a solo piano piece by Modest Mussorgsky and later orchestrated by Maurice Ravel.

PROGRAM

Beethoven's Violin Concerto with Augustin Hadelich

New Jersey Symphony Classical

Xian Zhang conductor

Augustin Hadelich violin

New Jersey Symphony

Princeton -> Friday, January 12, 2024, 8 pm

Richardson Auditorium in Princeton

Red Bank -> Saturday, January 13, 2024, 8 pm

Count Basie Center for the Arts in Red Bank

Newark -> Sunday, January 14, 2024, 3 pm

New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark

Daniel Bernard Roumain *i am a white person who _____ Black people*

Beethoven Violin Concerto

Mussorgsky/Ravel Pictures at an Exhibition

EXPERIENCE MANY FACETS OF THE AMERICAN DREAM THROUGH MUSIC



Rob Kapilow.

Credit / njsymphony.org

BY MABEL PAIS

The New Jersey Symphony (NJS) presents a concert program called 'The American Dream,' focused on the many facets that make up the long-held idea of the American Dream, the stories of those who have immigrated to America, and the differences found in the American experience through different cultures.

PROGRAM

The American Dream
Featuring Music from Leonard Bernstein's 'West Side Story' and the 'On the Town'

Includes World Premiere by Rob Kapilow (Jan 20 & 21 only)

Xian Zhang conductor

Rob Kapilow conductor (Jan 20 & 21 only)

JCC Young People's Chorus @ Thurnauer | Emma Brondolo, artistic director (Jan 20 & 21 only)

Young People's Chorus of New York

City® | Francisco J. Núñez, artistic director and founder (Jan 20 & 21 only)

Ember Choral Arts | Deborah Simpkin King, artistic director (Jan 20 & 21 only)

New Jersey Symphony

Daniel Bernard Roumain *i am a white person who _____ Black people* (Jan 18 only)

STILL DARKER AMERICA

Rob Kapilow *We Came to America* (World Premiere, Commissioned by the Thurnauer School of Music at the Kaplen JCC on the Palisades) (Jan 20 & 21 only)

Bernstein Three Dance Episodes from *On the Town*

Bernstein Symphonic Dances from *West Side Story*

TICKETS

Tickets for any of the concerts can be purchased by phone 1.800.ALLEGRO (255.3476) or

njsymphony.org.

More information on concerts and tickets, visit njsymphony.org/events.

THE THURNAUER SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Learn more about the School and artist-in-residence Rob Kapilow at jccotp.org/arts/thurnauer-school

THE YOUNG PEOPLE'S CHORUS OF NEW YORK CITY

Learn more about the Chorus and Artistic Director Francisco J. Núñez at ypc.org.

Ember Choral Arts (formerly Schola Cantorum on Hudson)

Learn more at emberarts.org.

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

CELEBRATE THE JOY OF MUSIC WITH FIVE CHOIRS

BY MABEL PAIS

Nearly two hundred choristers in the New Jersey Youth Chorus (NJYC) present a Winter Concert on Sunday, January 21 at 4:00 p.m. at Ridge Performing Arts Center located at 268 South Finlay Avenue in Basking Ridge.

Childs, 'Glory to God' by Giovanni Battista Pergolesi, and 'Eneza Upendo (Spread Love)' by Jim Papoulis.

NJYC's Sola Voce ensemble led by Joanna Scarangelo will perform 'JAM! (Jom - Ayuh - Mari!)' by Tracy Wong. The Malaysian translation means, "Come, let's go make some music together and sing while passing time! Leave your worries for a while." They will also perform 'I Started Out Singing' by Jocelyn Hagen.

NJYC's most advanced ensembles, Camerata led by Dan Malloy and Coriste led by Trish Joyce, will perform 'Hold Out Your Light,' a traditional spiritual arranged by Stacey V. Gibbs; 'Nada Te Turbe' with text by St. Teresa de Ávila (1515-1582) and music by Andrew Steffen; 'T?ReKita' by Reena Esmail, a piece based on the sounds of the Indian tabla and hand gestures, called mudras, used in Indian classical dance; and 'And Sure

auditioned choral ensemble program for students in grades 3-12, encourage a love and appreciation of choral music while nurturing personal growth and creative development.

The 15 ensembles of the New Jersey Youth Symphony, which serve over 500 students in grades 3-12 by audition, inspire young people to achieve musical excellence through high-level ensemble training and performance opportunities.

The Paterson Music Project, based in Paterson, is an El Sistema-inspired program of Wharton Arts that uses music education as a vehicle for social action by empowering and inspiring young people to achieve their full potential through the community experience of ensemble learning and playing.

From Pathways classes for young children to Lifelong



5 choirs of the NJYC

Credit / whartonarts.org

"All five of our choirs look forward to lifting their voices to celebrate the joy of music and song at this annual winter event. We hope you will join us and enjoy a wide variety of repertoire performed with beauty and artistry," said NJYC Founder and Director Trish Joyce.

PROGRAM

Joyful selections performed by NJYC's youngest choristers, Primo Coro led by Trish Joyce and Coro Vivo led by Dan Malloy, include 'Three Fiddle Tunes' arranged by Robert Hugh, 'Who Has Seen the Wind' with text by Christina Rossetti and music by Edwin

Stars Shining' by Z. Randall Stroepe.

TICKETS

Tickets are priced for Adults, Students & Seniors and are available at NJYC.org.

WHARTON ARTS

Wharton Arts' mission is to offer accessible, high quality performing arts education that sparks personal growth and builds inclusive communities.

Wharton Arts' vision is for a transformative performing arts education in an inclusive community to be accessible for everyone.

Wharton Arts is New Jersey's largest independent non-profit community performing arts education center serving nearly 2,000 students through a range of classes and ensembles.

The 5 ensembles of the New Jersey Youth Chorus, an

Learning programs for adults, the Wharton Performing Arts School has a robust musical theater and drama program and offers both private and group classes for instruments and voice for all ages and all abilities. With the belief in the positive and unifying influence of music and that performing arts education should be accessible to all people regardless of their ability to pay, Wharton Arts offers need-based scholarships.

Wharton Arts is located in Berkeley Heights, New Providence, and Paterson, NJ and reaches students from 12 counties. All of Wharton Arts' extraordinary teaching artists, faculty members, and conductors hold degrees in their teaching specialty and have been vetted and trained to enable our students to achieve their personal best.

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

BEAT THE WINTER BLUES THIS JANUARY AT MPAC

BY MABEL PAIS

The Morristown Performing Arts Center's (MPAC, mayoarts.org) features a fun mix of January events, especially for families, to beat the Winter blues and get out for a fun outing.

Here's the list.....

Face 2 Face: A Tribute to Elton John & Billy Joel

Thursday, January 11, 2024 at 8 pm

Friday, January 12, 2024 at 8 pm

Come celebrate the two greatest "Piano Men" of our generation in this tribute concert starring David Clark as Billy Joel and Jeff Scott as Elton John, performing hits like "Crocodile Rock," "I'm Still Standing," "You May Be Right," "Piano Man" and much more!

LIMITED TICKETS

Dancing with the Stars: Live! - 2024 Tour

Sunday, January 14 at 3 pm and 7 pm

See the ballroom brought to life in this brand-new production featuring your favorite 'Dancing with the Stars' pros, PLUS special guest stars joining the pros this year! With dazzling routines in every style, jaw-dropping talent, and non-stop entertainment, it's sure to be an unforgettable night full of all the magic of the TV show and more!

DRUMLINE Live



Drumline.

Credit / mayoarts.org

Thursday January 18, 2024 at 7 pm

DRUMLINE Live, the show stopping attraction created by the musical team behind the hit movies 'Drumline and Drumline: A New Beat,' embodies the soulful, high-stepping style of the Historically Black College and University (HBCU) marching band experience. With its riveting rhythms,

bold beats, and ear grabbing energy, DRUMLINE Live is a high octane musical roller coaster ride that is guaranteed to touch every emotion in your body. You will be on your feet by Halftime!!

Tomatoes Tried to Kill Me But Banjos Save My Life

An Award-winning, Inspirational True Story

Wednesday, January 24, 2024 at 7:30 pm

When life took an unexpected turn, Keith Alessi finds that the healing power of music becomes the key to saving his life. This authentic true story is one sure to leave you feeling empowered, inspired, and ready to dust off your own long forgotten dreams. Presented in the round with the audience seated on stage.

Hairspray

Friday, January 26, 2024 at 8 pm

Saturday, January 27, 2024 at 3 pm and 8 pm

You Can't Stop the Beat! HAIRSPRAY, Broadway's Tony Award-winning musical comedy phenomenon is back on tour! Join 16-year-old Tracy Turnblad in 1960s Baltimore as she sets out to dance her way onto TV's most popular show. Can a girl with big dreams (and even bigger hair) change the world? Featuring the beloved score of hit songs including "Welcome to the '60s," "Good Morning Baltimore" and "You Can't Stop the Beat," HAIRSPRAY is "fresh, winning, and deliriously tuneful!" (The New York Times). This all-new touring production reunites Broadway's award-winning creative team led by Director Jack O'Brien and Choreographer Jerry Mitchell to bring HAIRSPRAY to a new generation of theater audiences.

All Programs are Subject to Change.

OFFERING SPRING PERFORMING ARTS CLASSES FROM THREE TO ADULT

BY MABEL PAIS

Registration for MPAC's spring Performing Arts Classes is ongoing.

Classes begin the week of January 22 and run for 14 weeks. Classes will be offered for children as young as three through adult. Classes include musical theatre, acting, improv, audition technique, private voice lessons, and The Miracle Project, MPAC's program for children on the autism spectrum and with specific needs.

Registration will be processed on a first come, first served basis. All classes must be paid for in full at the time of registration unless other arrangements have been made. Limited scholarships available based on need. For a scholarship application, visit mayoarts.org. For a list of classes, visit mayoarts.org/education/pas.

NEW: Winter Enrichment Series!

Beat the winter blues with one of our new and exciting programs! MPAC's new Winter Enrichment Series features Broadway master classes, magic and mayhem and open Mics. These limited classes run 3-4 sessions:

Classes featured:

THURSDAY OPEN MIC CABARET! Do



MPAC Performing Arts Company.

Credit / mayoarts.org

you love to sing and perform? Do you play an instrument and you'd love to jam with fellow musicians? Are you looking for a fun way to release stress and socialize? Join MPAC for this new casual open mic Cabaret! Experience a true sense of communal artistry in a low stress environment! Come and share your talents or feel free to observe and sing along! Hosted by seasoned performers & established accompanists Ages 21 & UP! Begins Feb 1 (3 sessions)

MAGIC & MAYHEM A fun and interactive 6 week Magic Trick Workshop!! At each session, you will

learn the secrets to, and get to keep, a number of fun and exciting magic tricks! Develop the skills and confidence necessary to begin performing magic whenever you want and wherever you are! Ages 11-18

BROADWAY MASTER CLASS SERIES

With Mandy Gonzalez, Danielle Ferland, Bob Marks & Forrest McClendon!

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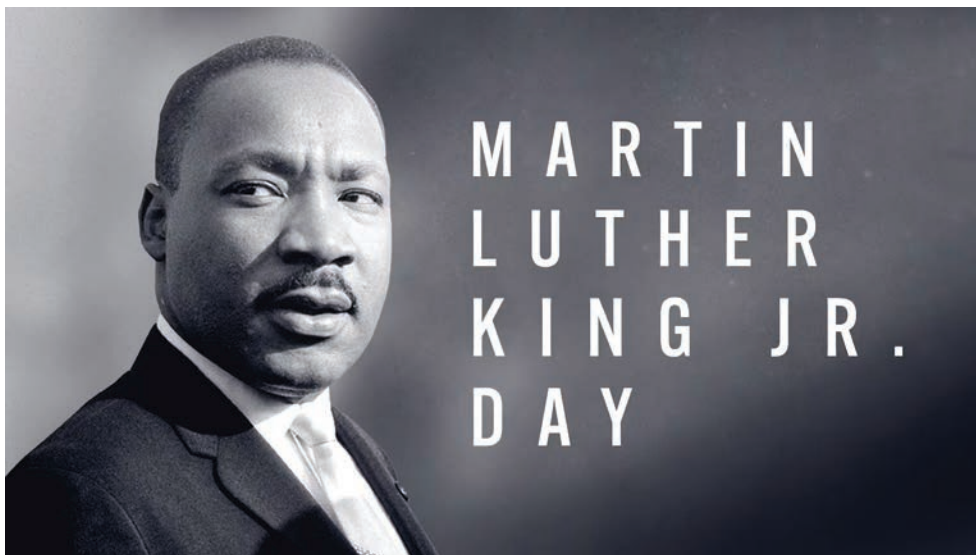
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(Mabel Pais writes on The Arts and Entertainment, Social Issues, Spirituality, Education, Cuisine, Health & Wellness, and Business)

Martin Luther King, Jr. the chief spokesperson in Civil Rights Movement in America

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY IS A FEDERAL HOLIDAY IN THE UNITED STATES MARKING THE BIRTHDAY OF MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. IT IS OBSERVED ON THE THIRD MONDAY OF JANUARY EACH YEAR. BORN IN 1929, KING'S ACTUAL BIRTHDAY IS JANUARY 15.



Martin Luther King, Jr. the chief spokesperson for nonviolent activism in the Civil Rights Movement, which protested racial discrimination in federal and state law

Martin Luther King, Jr., made history, but he was also transformed by his deep family roots in the African-American Baptist church, his formative experiences in his hometown of Atlanta, his theological studies, his varied models of religious and political leadership, and his extensive network of contacts in the peace and social justice movements of his time. Although King was only 39 at the time of his death, his life was remarkable for the ways it reflected and inspired so many of the twentieth century's major intellectual, cultural, and political developments.

The son, grandson, and great-grandson of Baptist ministers, Martin Luther King, Jr., named Michael King at birth, was born in Atlanta and spent his first 12 years in the Auburn Avenue home that his parents, the Reverend Michael King and Alberta Williams King, shared with his maternal grandparents, the Reverend Adam Daniel (A. D.) Williams and Jeannie Celeste Williams. After Reverend Williams' death in 1931, his son-in-law became Ebenezer Baptist Church's new pastor and gradually established himself as a major figure in state and national Baptist groups. The elder King began referring to himself (and later to his son) as Martin Luther King.

King's formative experiences not only immersed him in the affairs of Ebenezer but also introduced him to the African-American social gospel tradition exemplified by his father and grandfather, both of whom were leaders of the Atlanta branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Depression-era breadlines heightened King's awareness of

economic inequities, and his father's leadership of campaigns against racial discrimination in voting and teachers' salaries provided a model for the younger King's own politically engaged ministry. He resisted religious emotionalism and as a teenager questioned some facets of Baptist doctrine, such as the bodily resurrection of Jesus.

During his undergraduate years at Atlanta's Morehouse College from 1944 to 1948, King gradually overcame his initial reluctance to accept his inherited calling. Morehouse president Benjamin E. Mays influenced King's spiritual development, encouraging him to view Christianity as a potential force for progressive social change. Religion professor George Kelsey exposed him to biblical criticism and, according to King's autobiographical sketch, taught him "that behind the legends and myths of the Book were many profound truths which one could not escape" (Papers 1:43). King admired both educators as deeply religious yet also learned men and, by the end of his junior year, such academic role models and the example of his father led King to enter the ministry. He described his decision as a response to an "inner urge" calling him to "serve humanity" (Papers 1:363). He was ordained during his final semester at Morehouse, and by this time King had also taken his first steps toward political activism. He had responded to the postwar wave of anti-black violence by proclaiming in a letter to the editor of the Atlanta Constitution that African Americans were "entitled to the basic rights and opportunities of American citizens" (Papers 1:121). During his senior year King joined the Intercollegiate Council, an interracial student

discussion group that met monthly at Atlanta's Emory University.

After leaving Morehouse, King increased his understanding of liberal Christian thought while attending Crozer Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania from 1948 to 1951. Initially uncritical of liberal theology, he gradually moved toward Reinhold Niebuhr's neo-orthodoxy, which emphasized the intractability of social evil. Mentored by local minister and King family friend J. Pius Barbour, he reacted skeptically to a presentation on pacifism by Fellowship of Reconciliation leader A. J. Muste. Moreover, by the end of his seminary studies King had become increasingly dissatisfied with the abstract conceptions of God held by some modern theologians and identified himself instead with the theologians who affirmed personalism, or a belief in the personality of God. Even as he continued to question and modify his own religious beliefs, he compiled an outstanding academic record and graduated at the top of his class.

In 1951, King began doctoral studies in systematic theology at Boston University's School of Theology, which was dominated by personalist theologians such as Edgar Brightman and L. Harold DeWolf. The papers (including his dissertation) that King wrote during his years at Boston University displayed little originality, and some contained extensive plagiarism; but his readings enabled him to formulate an eclectic yet coherent theological perspective. By the time he completed his doctoral studies in 1955, King had refined his exceptional ability to draw upon a wide range of theological and philosophical texts to express his views with force and precision. His capacity to infuse his oratory with borrowed theological insights became evident in his expanding preaching activities in Boston-area churches and at Ebenezer, where he assisted his father during school vacations.

During his stay in Boston, King also met and courted Coretta Scott, an Alabama-born Antioch College graduate who was then a student at the New England Conservatory of Music. On 18 June 1953, the two students were married in Marion, Alabama, where Scott's family lived.

Although he considered pursuing an academic career, King decided in 1954 to accept an offer to become the pastor of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama. In December 1955, when Montgomery black leaders

such as Jo Ann Robinson, E. D. Nixon, and Ralph Abernathy formed the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA) to protest the arrest of NAACP official Rosa Parks for refusing to give up her bus seat to a white man, they selected King to head the new group. In his role as the primary spokesman of the year-long Montgomery bus boycott, King utilized the leadership abilities he had gained from his religious background and academic training to forge a distinctive protest strategy that involved the mobilization of black churches and skillful appeals for white support. With the encouragement of Bayard Rustin, Glenn Smiley, William Stuart Nelson, and other veteran pacifists, King also became a firm advocate of Mohandas Gandhi's precepts of nonviolence, which he combined with Christian social gospel ideas.

After the U.S. Supreme Court outlawed Alabama bus segregation laws in *Browder v. Gayle* in late 1956, King sought to expand the nonviolent civil rights movement throughout the South. In 1957, he joined with C. K. Steele, Fred Shuttlesworth, and T. J. Jemison in founding the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) with King as president to coordinate civil rights activities throughout the region. Publication of King's memoir of the boycott, *Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story* (1958), further contributed to his rapid emergence as a national civil rights leader. Even as he expanded his influence, however, King acted cautiously. Rather than immediately seeking to stimulate mass desegregation protests in the South, King stressed the goal of achieving black voting rights when he addressed an audience at the 1957 Prayer Pilgrimage for Freedom.

King's rise to fame was not without personal consequences. In 1958, King was the victim of his first assassination attempt. Although his house had been bombed several times during the Montgomery bus boycott, it was while signing copies of *Stride Toward Freedom* that Izola Ware Curry stabbed him with a letter opener. Surgery to remove it was successful, but King had to recuperate for several months, giving up all protest activity.

One of the key aspects of King's leadership was his ability to establish support from many types of organizations, including labor unions, peace organizations, southern reform

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organizations, and religious groups. As early as 1956, labor unions, such as the United Packinghouse Workers of America and the United Auto Workers, contributed to MIA, and peace activists such as Homer Jack alerted their associates to MIA activities. Activists from southern organizations, such as Myles Horton's Highlander Folk School and Anne Braden's Southern Conference Educational Fund, were in frequent contact with King. In addition, his extensive ties to the National Baptist Convention provided support from churches all over the nation; and his advisor, Stanley Levison, ensured broad support from Jewish groups.

King's recognition of the link between segregation and colonialism resulted in alliances with groups fighting oppression outside the United States, especially in Africa. In March 1957, King traveled to Ghana at the invitation of Kwame Nkrumah to attend the nation's independence ceremony. Shortly after returning from Ghana, King joined the American Committee on Africa, agreeing to serve as vice chairman of an International Sponsoring Committee for a day of protest against South Africa's apartheid government. Later, at an SCLC-sponsored event honoring Kenyan labor leader Tom Mboya, King further articulated the connections between the African American freedom struggle and those abroad: "We are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality" (Papers 5:204).

During 1959, he increased his understanding of Gandhian ideas during a month-long visit to India sponsored by the American Friends Service Committee. With Coretta and MIA historian Lawrence D. Reddick in tow, King met with many Indian leaders, including Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. Writing after his return, King stated: "I left India more convinced than ever before that non-violent resistance is the most potent weapon available to oppressed people in their struggle for freedom" (Papers 5:233).

Early the following year, he moved his family, which now included two children-Yolanda King and Martin Luther King, III-to Atlanta in order to be nearer to SCLC headquarters in that city and to become co-pastor, with his father, of Ebenezer Baptist Church. (The Kings' third child, Dexter King, was born in 1961; their fourth, Bernice King, was born in 1963.) Soon after King's arrival in Atlanta, the southern civil rights movement gained new impetus from the student-led lunch counter sit-in movement that spread throughout the region during 1960. The sit-ins brought into existence a new protest group, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), which would often push King toward greater militancy. King came in contact with students, especially those from Nashville such as John Lewis, James Bevel, and Diane Nash, who had been trained in nonviolent tactics by

James Lawson. In October 1960, King's arrest during a student-initiated protest in Atlanta became an issue in the national presidential campaign when Democratic candidate John F. Kennedy called Coretta King to express his concern. The successful efforts of Kennedy supporters to secure King's release contributed to the Democratic candidate's narrow victory over Republican candidate Richard Nixon.

King's decision to move to Atlanta was partly caused by SCLC's lack of success during the late 1950s. Associate director Ella Baker had complained that SCLC's Crusade for Citizenship suffered from lack of attention from King. SCLC leaders hoped that with King now in Atlanta, strategy would be improved. The hiring of Wyatt Tee Walker as executive director in 1960 was also seen as a step toward bringing efficiency to the organization, while the addition of Dorothy Cotton and Andrew Young to the staff infused new leadership after SCLC took over the administration of the Citizenship Education Program pioneered by Septima Clark. Attorney Clarence Jones also began to assist King and SCLC with legal matters and to act as King's advisor.

As the southern protest movement expanded during the early 1960s, King was often torn between the increasingly militant student activists, such as those who participated in the Freedom Rides, and more cautious national civil rights leaders. During 1961 and 1962, his tactical differences with SNCC activists surfaced during a sustained protest movement in Albany, Georgia. King was arrested twice during demonstrations organized by the Albany Movement, but when he left jail and ultimately left Albany without achieving a victory, some movement activists began to question his militancy and his dominant role within the southern protest movement.

As King encountered increasingly fierce white opposition, he continued his movement away from theological abstractions toward more reassuring conceptions, rooted in African-American religious culture, of God as a constant source of support. He later wrote in his book of sermons, *Strength to Love* (1963), that the travails of movement leadership caused him to abandon the notion of God as "theologically and philosophically satisfying" and caused him to view God as "a living reality that has been validated in the experiences of everyday life" (Papers 5:424).

During 1963, however, King reasserted his preeminence within the African-American freedom struggle through his leadership of the Birmingham Campaign. Initiated by SCLC and its affiliate, the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights, the Birmingham demonstrations were the most massive civil rights protests that had yet occurred. With the assistance of Fred Shuttlesworth and other local black leaders, and with little competition from SNCC and other civil rights

groups, SCLC officials were able to orchestrate the Birmingham protests to achieve maximum national impact. King's decision to intentionally allow himself to be arrested for leading a demonstration on 12 April prodded the

Freedom, attended by more than 200,000 people, was the culmination of a wave of civil rights protest activity that extended even to northern cities. In his prepared remarks, King announced that African Americans



Martin Luther King Jr. in the march on Washington

Kennedy administration to intervene in the escalating protests. The widely quoted "Letter from Birmingham Jail" displayed his distinctive ability to influence public opinion by appropriating ideas from the Bible, the Constitution, and other canonical texts. During May, televised pictures of police using dogs and fire hoses against young demonstrators generated a national outcry against white segregationist officials in Birmingham. The brutality of Birmingham officials and the refusal of Alabama's governor George C. Wallace to allow the admission of black students at the University of Alabama prompted President Kennedy to introduce major civil rights legislation.

King's speech at the 28 August 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and

wished to cash the "promissory note" signified in the egalitarian rhetoric of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence. Closing his address with extemporaneous remarks, he insisted that he had not lost hope: "I say to you today, my friends, so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream ... that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.'" He appropriated the familiar words of "My Country 'Tis of Thee," before concluding, "When we allow freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white



"I have a Dream" - Martin Luther King's speech which inspired millions and filled them with hope and faith

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men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual: 'Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!' (King, "I Have a Dream").

Although there was much elation after the March on Washington, less than a month later, the movement was shocked by another act of senseless violence. On 15 September 1963, a dynamite blast at Birmingham's Sixteenth Street Baptist Church killed four young school girls. King delivered the eulogy for three of the four girls, reflecting: "They say to us that we must be concerned not merely about who murdered them, but about the system, the way of life, the philosophy which produced the murderers" (King, Eulogy for the Martyred Children).

St. Augustine, Florida became the site of the next major confrontation of the civil rights movement. Beginning in 1963, Robert B. Hayling, of the local NAACP, had led sit-ins against segregated businesses. SCLC was called in to help in May 1964, suffering the arrest of King and Abernathy. After a few court victories, SCLC left when a biracial committee was formed; however, local residents continued to suffer violence.

King's ability to focus national attention on orchestrated confrontations with racist authorities, combined with his oration at the 1963 March on Washington, made him the most influential African-American spokesperson of the first half of the 1960s. He was named Time magazine's "Man of the Year" at the end of 1963, and was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in December 1964. The acclaim King received strengthened his stature among civil rights leaders but also prompted Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) director J. Edgar Hoover to step up his effort to damage King's reputation. Hoover, with the approval of President Kennedy and Attorney General Robert Kennedy, established phone taps and bugs. Hoover and many other observers of the southern struggle saw King as controlling events, but he was actually a moderating force within an increasingly diverse black militancy of the mid-1960s. Although he was not personally involved in Freedom Summer (1964), he was called upon to attempt to persuade the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party delegates to accept a compromise at the Democratic Party National Convention.

As the African-American struggle expanded from desegregation protests to mass movements seeking economic and political gains in the North as well as the South, King's active involvement was limited to a few highly publicized civil rights campaigns, such as Birmingham and St. Augustine, which secured popular support for the passage of national civil rights legislation, particularly the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

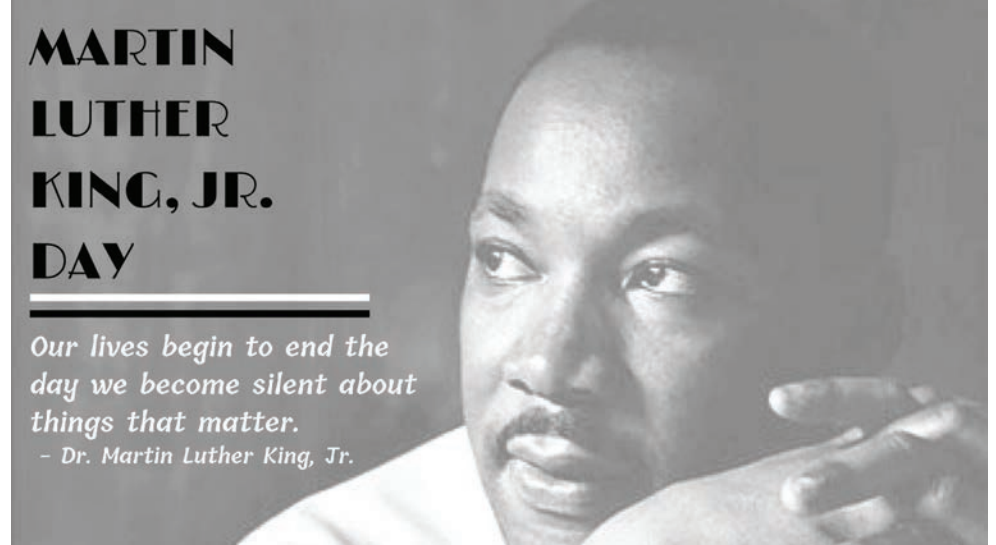
The Alabama protests reached a turning point on 7 March 1965, when

state police attacked a group of demonstrators at the start of a march from Selma to the state capitol in Montgomery. Carrying out Governor Wallace's orders, the police used tear gas and clubs to turn back the marchers after they crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge on the outskirts of Selma. Unprepared for the violent confrontation, King alienated some activists when he decided to postpone the continuation of the Selma to Montgomery March until he had received court approval, but the march, which finally secured federal court approval, attracted several thousand civil rights sympathizers, black and white, from all regions of the nation. On 25 March, King addressed the arriving marchers from the steps of the capitol in Montgomery. The march and the subsequent killing of a white participant, Viola Liuzzo, as well as the earlier murder of James Reeb dramatized the denial of black voting rights and spurred passage during the following summer of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

After the march in Alabama, King was unable to garner similar support for his effort to confront the problems of northern urban blacks. Early in 1966 he, together with local activist Al Raby, launched a major campaign against poverty and other urban problems, and King moved his family into an apartment in Chicago's black ghetto. As King shifted the focus of his activities to the North, however, he discovered that the tactics used in the South were not as effective elsewhere. He encountered formidable opposition from Mayor Richard Daley and was unable to mobilize Chicago's economically and ideologically diverse black community. King was stoned by angry whites in the Chicago suburb of Cicero when he led a march against racial discrimination in housing. Despite numerous mass protests, the Chicago Campaign resulted in no significant gains and undermined King's reputation as an effective civil rights leader.

King's influence was damaged further by the increasingly caustic tone of black militancy in the period after 1965. Black radicals increasingly turned away from the Gandhian precepts of King toward the black nationalism of Malcolm X, whose posthumously published autobiography and speeches reached large audiences after his assassination in February 1965. Unable to influence the black insurgencies that occurred in many urban areas, King refused to abandon his firmly rooted beliefs about racial integration and nonviolence. He was nevertheless unpersuaded by black nationalist calls for racial uplift and institutional development in black communities.

In June 1966, James Meredith was shot while attempting a "March against Fear" in Mississippi. King, Floyd McKissick of the Congress of Racial Equality, and Stokely Carmichael of SNCC decided to continue his march. During the march, the activists from SNCC decided to test



MLK believed in speaking up rather than keeping quiet about things that matter

a new slogan that they had been using, Black Power. King objected to the use of the term, but the media took the opportunity to expose the disagreements among protesters and publicized the term.

In his last book, *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?* (1967), King dismissed the claim of Black Power advocates "to be the most revolutionary wing of the social revolution taking place in the United States," but he acknowledged that they responded to a psychological need among African Americans he had not previously addressed (King, *Where Do We Go*, 45-46). "Psychological freedom, a firm sense of self-esteem, is the most powerful weapon against the long night of physical slavery," King wrote. "The Negro will only be free when he reaches down to the inner depths of his own being and signs with the pen and ink of assertive manhood his own emancipation proclamation" (King, "Where Do We Go From Here?").

Indeed, even as his popularity declined, King spoke out strongly against American involvement in the Vietnam War, making his position public in an address, "Beyond Vietnam," on 4 April 1967, at New York's Riverside Church. King's involvement in the anti-war movement reduced his ability to influence national racial policies and made him a target of further FBI investigations. Nevertheless, he became ever more insistent that his version of Gandhian nonviolence and social gospel Christianity was the most appropriate response to the problems of black Americans.

In December 1967, King announced the formation of the Poor People's Campaign, designed to prod the federal government to strengthen its antipoverty efforts. King and other SCLC workers began to recruit poor people and antipoverty activists to come to Washington, D.C., to lobby on behalf of improved antipoverty programs. This effort was in its early stages when King became involved in the Memphis sanitation workers' strike in Tennessee. On 28 March 1968, as King led thousands of sanitation workers and sympathizers on a march through downtown Memphis, black

youngsters began throwing rocks and looting stores. This outbreak of violence led to extensive press criticisms of King's entire antipoverty strategy. King returned to Memphis for the last time in early April. Addressing an audience at Bishop Charles J. Mason Temple on 3 April, King affirmed his optimism despite the "difficult days" that lay ahead. "But it really doesn't matter with me now," he declared, "because I've been to the mountaintop... and I've seen the Promised Land." He continued, "I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the Promised Land," (King, "I've Been to the Mountaintop"). The following evening, the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., took place as he stood on a balcony of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis. A white segregationist, James Earl Ray, was later convicted of the crime. The Poor People's Campaign continued for a few months after King's death, under the direction of Ralph Abernathy, the new SCLC president, but it did not achieve its objectives.

(Photo M 4 here)

Until his death, King remained steadfast in his commitment to the transformation of American society through nonviolent activism. In his posthumously published essay, "A Testament of Hope" (1969), he urged African Americans to refrain from violence but also warned: "White America must recognize that justice for black people cannot be achieved without radical changes in the structure of our society." The "black revolution" was more than a civil rights movement, he insisted. "It is forcing America to face all its interrelated flaws-racism, poverty, militarism, and materialism" (King, "Testament," 194).

After her husband's death, Coretta Scott King established the Atlanta-based Martin Luther King, Jr., Center for Nonviolent Social Change (also known as the King Center) to promote Gandhian-Kingian concepts of nonviolent struggle. She also led the successful effort to honor her husband with a federally mandated King national holiday, which was first celebrated in 1986.

(Source: The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute, Stanford)

'We lost hope': ravaged Gaza nears 100 days of war

KHAN YOUNIS (TIP): Bombed-out neighbourhoods, mass graves dug in the sand, spreading hunger and disease -- as the bloodiest ever Gaza war nears 100 days, besieged Palestinians have endured ever new horrors.

More than three months of relentless Israeli bombardment since the October 7 Hamas attack have taken a gruelling toll on Gaza's 2.4 million people, most of whom have had to flee their homes.

"It has felt like 100 years," said Abdul Aziz Saadat, who is among the flood of displaced Palestinians whose number the UN puts at 1.9 million, and who now lives in the densely crowded southern Gaza city of Rafah.

"Some are living in schools, some on the streets, on the floors, others are sleeping on benches," Saadat said in the city where many families now shelter in makeshift tents against the winter cold.

"The war has not spared anyone."

Israel has vowed to destroy Hamas, the Islamist group that rules Gaza, after its militants broke through a high-tech security barrier and launched the worst-ever attack on Israel.

The bloody onslaught of October 7 left about 1,140 dead in Israel, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally based on official figures, and saw 250 hostages dragged back into Gaza.

Israel's relentless military response has caused massive destruction in the Gaza Strip, even by the grim standards of its four previous wars, fuelling anger across the Middle East and beyond.

At least 23,357 people have been killed in the fighting, the majority of them women and children, according to the



Hamas health ministry -- or almost one per cent of the population.

The war will reach the 100-day mark on Sunday, with no end in sight.

Many thousands of strikes have rained down on the long-blockaded and densely populated Mediterranean coastal strip, cratering crowded urban areas and pancaking multi-storey residential buildings.

Much of northern Gaza has been reduced to a dusty wasteland and largely depopulated as Israeli troops and tanks have churned through it in a ground invasion from October 27 in which 186 soldiers have been killed.

Gaza hospitals, schools, universities and places of worship have been hit, as Israel has argued Hamas fighters are hiding among civilians and in a vast tunnel network below civilian infrastructure.

Entire neighbourhoods that once bustled with people, cars and donkey-

drawn carts have been devastated in large-scale bombing starkly revealed in aerial photography.

"It's just so widespread," said Jamon Van Den Hoek, an associate professor at Oregon State University who has been mapping the impact through satellite radar.

"It's really unprecedented in the speed of the damage."

Between 45 and 56 percent of Gaza's buildings had been damaged or destroyed by January 5, according to research he has conducted with Corey Scher at the City University of New York.

"The extent of damage that we've recovered or detected in Gaza only compares to the most severely hit areas in Ukraine," said Scher.

The researchers said their figures may be higher than data from satellite imagery, as radar can pick up not just a bird's eye view but also damage to the sides of buildings.

A United Nations Satellite Center assessment, which covered just the first 50 days of the war, found around 18 per cent of Gaza structures had already been destroyed or damaged.

The war has also taken a toll on Gaza's ancient heritage, including centuries-old buildings in its historic centre, a web of narrow lanes which thrived with market traders and gold merchants before the war.

UNESCO said it was "gravely concerned" and stressed that "cultural property is civilian infrastructure, and as such must neither be targeted nor used for military purposes".

'Blood, chaos and mayhem'

now, the main battle for Gazans is just to survive.

AFP journalists have seen mass graves dug in orchards, hospital yards and even a football field.

Corpses retrieved from collapsed buildings have been transported by bulldozers and piled up in hospital morgues.

Gazans have spoken of being unable to retrieve decomposing bodies from the streets for fear of being killed themselves.

Hospitals are places of "blood on the floor, chaos and mayhem", said Rik Peeperkorn, the World Health Organization's representative for the Palestinian territories.

Surgeons have operated without anaesthetic and by the light of smartphones.

Of Gaza's 36 hospitals, only 15 are still partially functioning, the latest UN figures show. Some have been raided by Israeli forces. (AFP)

SHELLING KILLS 10 CIVILIANS IN SUDAN CAPITAL: ACTIVISTS

AL-JAZIRA (TIP): Ten civilians were killed on January 11 by artillery fire in a residential area of Khartoum, the capital of war-torn Sudan, pro-democracy activists said.

Sudan has been gripped by nearly nine months of war pitting army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan against his former deputy, paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) commander Mohamed Hamdan Daglo.

The conflict has claimed 12,000 lives, according to a conservative estimate by the ACLED analysis group, while the United Nations says more than seven million people have been displaced.

In the latest bloodshed, the resistance committee of southern Khartoum said "10 civilians were killed by artillery fire in residential areas and the local market".

This committee is one of many groups that used to organise pro-democracy protests and now provide assistance during the war.

Diplomatic efforts to end the conflict have so far failed.

(AFP)

Israel strikes Gaza ambulance, killing medics; Israeli military denies bombing

KHAN YOUNIS (TIP): A heavy strike on January 10 brought down a two-story building in the central city of Deir al-Balah, close to its main Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital, killing at least 20 people, according to hospital officials. A strike killed six people in an ambulance near Deir al-Balah, including four crew, a medical aid group said.

The Palestinian Red Crescent Society said an Israeli strike on an ambulance in the central Gaza Strip on Wednesday killed four medics and two other people inside the vehicle.

The organisation said in a statement there were "six martyrs" as a result of "the IDF (Israeli army) targeting of a PRCS ambulance in Deir al-Balah," adding that four were emergency team members.

The Red Crescent had initially said four people had died but revised the figure, saying "two individuals who were in the ambulance at the time of the targeting sustained injuries and were later martyred".

The Israeli military did not immediately comment on the incident when contacted by AFP.

Jagan Chapagain, the head of the International Federation for Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, called the attack "unacceptable" in a social media post and said, "I strongly condemn their killing."

He added: "Protection of patients and health care workers is not negotiable. They must never be targeted."

The Red Crescent said the ambulance had been on Salah al-Din Road, a highway running north-south through the Gaza Strip that has in the past been used by thousands of Palestinians fleeing the Israeli military advance.

Earlier on Wednesday afternoon, the health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said multiple people were killed in an Israeli strike near a hospital in Deir al-Balah.

Israel denies bombing Gaza ambulance, killing medics

The Israeli military on Thursday denied it was behind the bombing of an ambulance in the central Gaza Strip a day earlier which killed four medics and two other people.

"A review was conducted based on the details provided to the IDF (Israeli

military) which shows that no strike was carried out in the described area," the army said in a statement to AFP.

The Palestinian Red Crescent Society had said six people were killed Wednesday in an Israeli strike on their ambulance at the entrance to the Deir al-Balah area of central Gaza.

The roof of the ambulance was completely destroyed and part of the vehicle was crushed, AFP photos show.

Jagan Chapagain, the head of the International Federation for Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, called the attack "unacceptable" in a social media post and said "I strongly condemn their killing."

Crowds of mourners gathered Thursday for the funerals of the medics, a shredded and bloodied Palestinian Red Crescent uniform placed atop one of the white shrouds. The Red Crescent said the ambulance had been on Salah al-Din Road, a highway running north-south through the Gaza Strip that has in the past been used by thousands of Palestinians fleeing the Israeli military advance.

(AFP)

Gabriel Attal is France's youngest-ever and first openly gay prime minister

PARIS (TIP): Gabriel Attal was named January 9 as France's youngest-ever prime minister, as President Emmanuel Macron seeks a fresh start for the rest of his term amid growing political pressure from the far right. Attal, 34, rose to prominence as the government spokesman and education minister and had polled as the most popular minister in the outgoing government.

He is France's first openly gay prime minister.

His predecessor Elisabeth Borne resigned Monday following recent political turmoil over an immigration law that strengthens the government's ability to deport foreigners.

Macron's office announced the appointment in a statement. He will work with Attal to name a new government in the coming days, though some key ministers are expected to continue in their posts.

"I know I can count on your energy and your commitment," Macron posted on X in a message to Attal. The president made a reference to Attal reviving the



"spirit of 2017," when Macron shook up French politics and shot to a surprise victory as France's youngest-ever president on a pro-business centrist platform aimed at reviving one of the world's biggest economies.

The 46-year-old president has shifted rightward on security and migration issues since then, notably as far-right rival Marine Le Pen and her anti-immigration, anti-Islam National Rally

have gained political influence. Macron's second term lasts until 2027, and he is constitutionally barred from a third consecutive term.

Political observers also suggested that Macron, a staunch supporter of European integration, wants his new government to get ready for June's European Union elections, where far-right, anti-EU populists are expected to increase their influence. (AP)

HEZBOLLAH TARGETS ISRAELI BASE TO AVENGE KILLINGS IN LEBANON

BEIRUT (TIP): Lebanon's Iran-backed militant group Hezbollah said it targeted an Israeli command base January 9 in retaliation for the killings of one of its commanders and the Hamas deputy leader.

Hezbollah and its arch-foe Israel have been exchanging near-daily fire across the border since the Israel-Hamas war broke out on October 7.

The Shiite Muslim movement, a Hamas ally, said it had targeted the "enemy's northern command centre" in the city of Safed with "several suicide drones." It said the attack was part of its response to the killings of Hamas deputy leader Saleh al-Aruri on January 2 and of Hezbollah field commander Wissam Tawil on Monday.

The Israeli army confirmed that a "hostile aircraft" had come down at one of its bases in the north and said that "no injuries or damage were reported."

On Saturday, Hezbollah said it had fired more than 60 rockets at an Israeli military base, also in response to Aruri's killing in Beirut which was widely blamed on Israel. (AFP)

A non-traditional candidate resonates with Taiwan's youth ahead of Saturday's presidential election

TAIPEI (TIP): With Taiwan's high-stakes presidential election just days away, a nonconformist candidate has been resonating with the island's youth, seemingly more concerned with the dearth of good jobs and affordable housing than the looming threat from China.

First-time voters are overwhelmingly drawn to Ko Wen-je, an outspoken surgeon-turned-politician who previously served as the mayor of Taipei, the island's capital.

The 64-year-old has emerged as the third most popular candidate ahead of January 8 vote, behind those from Taiwan's traditional opposing parties — the governing Democratic Progressive Party and the main opposition Nationalists, known as the Kuomintang or KMT.

The DPP and the KMT have dominated Taiwan's politics for decades and have largely taken turns governing since the 1990s, after decades of martial law following Taiwan's 1949 civil war split from China.

Beijing still claims Taiwan as its territory and threatens to take control over it by force, if necessary. In the face of that pressure, DPP has positioned itself as more independence-leaning while KMT has traditionally favored closer ties with Beijing.

Ko, meanwhile, has promoted himself as the alternative, seeking a middle ground and advocating patience with China. He founded the Taiwan People's Party, or TPP, in 2019 and talks about more economy and pragmatic issues, including the cost and quality of education.



In a survey of its undergraduate students published last month, Soochow University in Taipei found that 33.9% of the respondents said they intended to vote for Ko, while 22.1% preferred William Lai, the DPP candidate and Taiwan's vice president who is seen as the overall front-runner in the vote. About 5% favored KMT candidate Hou Yu-ih. The university said 12,119 students were polled from Oct. 30 to Nov. 3, though it did not say how the survey was conducted. No margin of error was given.

GENERATIONAL FAULT LINES

Part of Ko's attraction to young voters is their perspective, analysts say.

There is a generational gap between first-time voters and older residents in the way they see the island's political landscape, according to Liu Wen, a researcher at Academia Sinica, a Taipei-

based research institute.

Older voters may remember the DPP as an up-and-coming party that challenged the once-entrenched KMT, Liu said. But those in their early 20s have come of age while the DPP was in power and see it as part of the political establishment.

Ko has emerged as an alternative to the "blue-green" divide, Liu said, referring to KMT's and DPP's official colours.

And having that third option "can be exciting for young people who want a more anti-establishment platform," she said.

Ko himself attributes his popularity among Taiwan's youth to the generational divide. Older voters, he told The Associated Press in an interview last week, have supported the KMT or DPP for 30 years.

"It is difficult for them to change," Ko said. "But young voters are different."

"It is not because I appeared (on the political scene) that Taiwan has a third

party," Ko also said. "It is because young people in Taiwan were already sick of these two parties that I have had the opportunity to form a third."

Henry Su, a 19-year-old economics student at National Taiwan University in Taipei, said many of his friends are very pro-Ko and "they think he's pretty good," though he personally leans toward supporting Lai.

However, Su said he is "disappointed" by the DPP's emphasis on upholding Taiwan's sovereignty in the face of China's threats — as opposed to addressing young people's more immediate concerns, such as housing and education.

Fang Kai-hao, a 22-year-old studying biomechanical engineering at the same university, said he favours Ko for being more straightforward than the other candidates. Ko graduated from the medical school at the same university, "so the student community trusts him more," Fang said.

THE CHINA THREAT

Beijing has described the election in Taiwan as a choice between war and peace and has blasted front-runner Lai as a separatist and a "destroyer of peace." Chinese warships and military aircraft approach the island almost daily, despite Taiwan's protests. Taipei accuses China of seeking to influence the vote through an array of pressures, from military harassment to politically motivated trade curbs. (AP)

6.1 MAGNITUDE EARTHQUAKE JOLTS AFGHANISTAN, TREMORS IN NORTH INDIA

KABUL / NEW DELHI (TIP): An earthquake of magnitude 6.1 struck Afghanistan on January 11 with tremors rippling through parts of north India, the National Centre for Seismology said.

The epicentre for the quake, which struck at 2.50 pm IST, was 241 kilometres north-northeast of Kabul, it said. It further noted that its depth was registered at 220 kilometres.

The NCS shared a post on X, stating, "Earthquake of Magnitude:6.1, Occurred on 11-01-2024, 14:50:24 IST, Lat: 36.48 & Long: 70.45, Depth: 220 Km, Location: Afghanistan."

The quake triggered panic among people, with many in Delhi and the National Capital Region reporting shaking of furniture. (PTI)

BHUTAN'S TSHERING TOBGAY TO BECOME PM FOR SECOND TIME

THIMPHU (TIP): Bhutanese voters have elected Tshering Tobgay to become prime minister for a second time after his party won nearly two-thirds of seats, the election commission said in results released on January 10.

Tobgay, head of the liberal People's Democratic Party (PDP), who served as prime minister of the Himalayan kingdom from 2013 to 2018, won 30 of 47 seats in Tuesday's election, official figures showed.

The election was dominated by serious economic challenges that have called into question the Himalayan kingdom's long-standing policy of prioritising "Gross National Happiness" over growth.

Bhutan lies sandwiched between the globe's two most populous countries, China and India, who watched the vote with keen interest as they eye strategic contested border zones.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India, Bhutan's key trading partner, offered his "heartiest congratulations to my friend" Tobgay for winning the polls, according to a post on X, formerly Twitter. Tobgay responded by thanking Modi.

"I too look forward to working closely again with you to nurture and strengthen the unique bonds of friendship and cooperation that our nations enjoy," Tobgay wrote in a message on X on Wednesday.

The 58-year-old, a former civil servant, is a passionate conservation advocate who holds a degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Pittsburgh and a Master's in public administration from Harvard.

Tobgay was also leader of the opposition in Bhutan's first parliament when it was established in 2008, soon after the start of the reign of the present king. (AFP)

A spiritual leader in Nepal known as 'Buddha Boy' arrested on charges of rape and kidnapping

KATHMANDU (TIP): Nepal police said January 10 they had arrested a spiritual leader whose followers believe him to be a reincarnation of Buddha over allegations of disappearances and rape at his ashrams.

Ram Bahadur Bomjan, known as "Buddha Boy" among devotees, became famous as a teenager after followers said he could meditate motionless for months without water, food or sleep.

The 33-year-old guru has a devout following but has long been accused of physically and sexually assaulting his followers, and has been hiding from authorities for several years.

"He was arrested after absconding for several years," police spokesman Kuber Kadayat told AFP.

Police apprehended Bomjan in Kathmandu on a warrant issued for his alleged rape of a minor at an ashram in Sarlahi, a district south of the capital.

They said he was caught with bundles of cash amounting to 30 million Nepali rupees (\$225,000) and another \$22,500 in foreign currency.

Accusations of abuse and misconduct against Bomjan stretch back more than a decade.

Dozens of assault complaints were



filed against Bomjan in 2010. He said he beat the victims because they disturbed his meditation.

An 18-year-old nun accused the guru of raping her at a monastery in 2018.

Police opened another investigation against him the following year after family members reported the disappearance of four of his devotees from one of his ashrams.

The whereabouts of the four are still unknown, Dinesh Acharya of the Central Investigation Bureau told reporters on Wednesday.

"Unless we know what situation the

missing are in we are not in a position to call it murder," he said.

Before he went on the run, Bomjan still commanded a legion of followers as the allegations against him mounted. At one point tens of thousands of people had gathered to witness his reputed miracles of meditation deep in the jungle.

While aged 16, Bomjan disappeared for nine months to wander the wilderness of eastern Nepal, prompting a round-the-clock vigil by Buddhist monks who prayed for his safe return. (AFP)

Afghan women detained over improper hijab: Taliban official

KABUL (TIP): A Taliban official has said several girls and women were detained recently in Kabul for not covering themselves properly, after reports circulated of a crackdown in the Afghan capital.

In a video posted on social media January 10, security official Ehsanullah Saqib told a gathering of religious scholars in Kabul's western Dasht-e-Barchi neighbourhood that in the past week "we have detained several women and girls who were without hijab, with the help of women police".

Since returning to power in August 2021, Taliban authorities have imposed a strict interpretation of Islam, with women bearing the brunt of laws the United Nations has labelled "gender apartheid".

Women have been squeezed from public life, barred from travelling without a male relative and ordered to cover everything but their hands and eyes when outside the home, though many women still go out in Kabul without covering their mouths.

Ehsanullah, addressing the gathering on Tuesday according to the video posted on X by Khaama Press and Amu TV, said the women and girls were detained because they were "totally without hijab",

wearing trousers or leggings and dresses, instead of a garment that loosely covers the whole body.

"They were arrested to inform their families that their sister, daughter or wife roams without hijab and they should prevent this," he said.

Abdul Ghafar Sabawoon, spokesman for the Ministry for the Prevention of Vice and Promotion of Virtue, told AFP the women had "only been advised by female police to have greater respect and dignity (in observing hijab)".

"No woman has been disrespected or humiliated, nor do we have anyone in the custody in connection to this."

In a recent post on X, the ministry denied some images circulating were of police rounding up women over not wearing hijab, saying they were pictures of authorities removing beggars from the streets.

A human rights activist in Afghanistan who asked not to be identified said the detentions were meant to "put pressure on families to force women and girls to wear hijab and instil fear in women and girls through their families".

"This is the first time the Taliban has arrested women and girls from the streets openly" over hijab, she told AFP. (AFP)

FOUR PEOPLE KILLED IN TERRORIST ATTACK IN PAKISTAN: POLICE

PESHAWAR (TIP): At least four people, including three policemen, were killed after terrorists attacked a toll plaza in Pakistan's northwestern region on January 10, police said.

The incident happened when unidentified terrorists attacked Laachi toll plaza in Kohat district of Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province on Wednesday morning.

"Terrorists attacked the Laachi toll plaza in KPK provinces' Kohat district. Four people including three policemen were killed," said the police.

Heavy contingent of police rushed to the site to control the situation.

After the incident, the police have sealed the entire area and started massive combing operation to arrest the culprits involved in the assault.

KPK's caretaker Chief Minister Justice (Retired) Arshad Hussain condemned the attack.

He Praised the services and sacrifices of the KPK police in war against terrorism.

"The entire nation stands behind the police in their matchless struggle against terrorism," he said. (PTI)



Consulate General of India New York

*Cordially Invites Members of Indian
Community & Friends of India to Celebrate*

75th Republic Day of India

at 9am on January 26, 2024



*at
3 East 64 Street
New York, NY 10065*

RSVP : madad.newyork@mea.gov.in

India in history this Week

JANUARY 12 TO JANUARY 18

12 JANUARY



1863 Swami Vivekananda, who brought Gyan Prakash to India, was born.

1948 Mahatma Gandhi gave his last speech and decided to go on a hunger strike against communal violence. He was deeply saddened by the partition of India in 1947.

13 JANUARY

1709 Mughal ruler Bahadur Shah I defeated his brother Kambakhsh in Hyderabad in a power struggle.

1849 The famous Battle of Chillianwala started during the Second Anglo Sikh War.

1910 Radio was broadcast for the first time. The broadcast could also be heard on a ship 20 km away in the sea.

1923 Famous film producer and director Shakti Samanta was born.

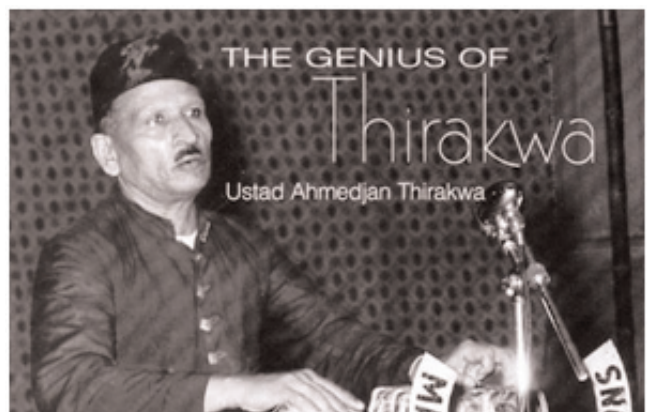


1938 Renowned santoor player Pandit Shivkumar was born.

1948 Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi started a fast unto death in Kolkata to maintain Hindu-Muslim unity.

1949 India's first astronaut Rakesh Sharma is born.

1976 Death of the famous tabla player of India Ahmed Jan Thirkwa.



14 JANUARY

1741 Third war of Panipat started between Marathas and Afghans.

1742 Edmund Haley, who introduced the world to

Haley Comet, breathed his last on this day. Edmund Haley is one of England's best known astronomers.

1964 Test bowler Rameshchandra Gangaram Nadkarni set a record for throwing 21 maiden overs.

1977 Narayan Karthikeyan, the first Indian to fill the Formula One race, was born on this day.



1994 For the first time in 300 years, a member of Britain's royal family adopted Catholicism. The Duchess of Kent became a member of the Catholic Church in a private service.

2002 The British government announced that the foot and mouth disease that has been spreading in the country for nearly 11 months will be considered to end at midnight.

2016 Social activist and famous litterateur Mahashweta Devi was born.

15 JANUARY

1784 Establishment of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.

1934 An earthquake measuring 8.7 struck India and Nepal. About 11,000 lives were lost in this earthquake.

1975 Portugal signs agreement for independence of Angola.

1988 Former India bowler Narendra Hirwani, taking historic feat, took 16 wickets in his debut Test match against West Indies.

2012 India's first female photo journalist Homi Vairala died.

16 JANUARY

2009 On this day, Kalpana Chawla filled the space shuttle Columbia, spent 372 hours in space



1761 Pondicherry was annexed by the British from the French.

1769 Pondicherry was annexed by the British from the French.

1681 The grand coronation of Sambhaji, son of Kshatrapati Shivaji, took place at Raigad Fort in Maharashtra.

1938 Death of noted Bengali litterateur Sharat Chandra Chattopadhyay.

17 JANUARY

2008 The Central Government approved a scheme of Rs 1800 crore for providing jobs to the disabled.

2009 Randhir Singh, the general secretary of the Indian Olympic Association, resigned from his post.

2010 The Supreme Court of India has given a proactive definition of the right to self-defense in the event of unlawful assault, saying that people who follow the law do not have to be cowardly. Its two-member bench set a 10-point directive on the right to self-defense, stating that a person cannot be criminalized under these circumstances, even if he had caused the attacker's death.

18 JANUARY

1996 Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister NT Rama Rao



died on 18 January 1996.

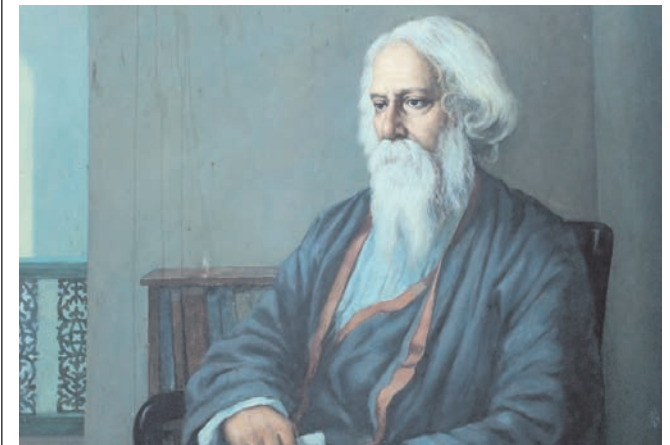
1955 On this day in 1955, the famous Urdu writer and poet Sadat Hasan Manto said goodbye to this world.

1991 After 62 years of business, in 1991, today the Eastern airline was closed for economic reasons.

2003 Famous Hindi writer and poet Harivansh Rai Bachchan died in 2003.

1896 The first demonstration of the 'X-ray machine' was done in 1896.

1930 In 1930 Rabindranath Tagore visited the



Sabarmati Ashram.



1997 In 1997, Nafisa Joseph became Miss India.

1995 In 1995, the domain of Yahoo.com was created on this day.



MUNISH BYALA

ABOUT ME

@MBYALA

I am a journalist by profession, PR specialist, and Licensed real estate salesperson. I am very proud to support various Not for profit organizations, and for that, I have been awarded by Town, County, and State for my community services.

Four years ago, I officially became a lifetime member of IALI and served under ad hoc committee's chairs. I brought many sports activities to IALI, e.g., Cricket, Volleyball, and Golf. For participating in this election, my goal is to bring unity among the IALI family and involve our young family members.

I am confident that I have the experience and knowledge that we need, as well as the intangible qualities like enthusiasm, strong work ethic, dedication, and dependability to get the job done right as Executive Council member of the IALI team.

VOTE AND SUPPORT

MY GOALS

- OPEN COMMUNICATION CHANNELS:
- ENSURE THAT COMMUNICATION CHANNELS ARE OPEN AND ACCESSIBLE TO ALL MEMBERS.
- IMPLEMENT REGULAR NEWSLETTERS, FORUMS, OR MEETINGS TO KEEP EVERYONE INFORMED ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION'S ACTIVITIES.
- INCLUSIVITY AND RECONNECTION:
- DEVELOP STRATEGIES TO RECONNECT WITH FORGOTTEN OR INACTIVE MEMBERS, MAKING THEM FEEL VALUED AND WELCOME.
- CREATE EVENTS OR PROGRAMS THAT CATER TO DIVERSE INTERESTS TO ENCOURAGE BROADER PARTICIPATION.
- REPRESENTATION IN EXECUTIVE COUNCIL:
- ADVOCATE FOR THE INCLUSION OF DIVERSE VOICES IN THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL TO REFLECT THE VARIED PERSPECTIVES WITHIN THE IALI FAMILY.
- COST-FREE ELECTIONS:
- PROPOSE PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS TO MINIMIZE OR ELIMINATE ELECTION-RELATED EXPENSES,
- ADVOCACY FOR MEMBERS:
- PLEDGE TO REPRESENT THE CONCERNS AND INTERESTS OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS IN THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, ACTING AS THEIR ADVOCATE IN DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES.
- REVITALIZING SPORTS AND ACTIVITIES:
- REINSTATE SPORTS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE PHYSICAL WELL-BEING AND SOCIAL INTERACTION AMONG IALI MEMBERS.
- ENCOURAGE THE FORMATION OF INTEREST GROUPS TO CATER TO DIFFERENT HOBBIES AND PASSIONS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY.
- WALL OF FAME:
- ESTABLISH A VISUAL REPRESENTATION OF THE ORGANIZATION'S HISTORY, RECOGNIZING PAST LEADERS AND THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS.
- ENSURE THAT THE WALL OF FAME IS REGULARLY UPDATED TO INCLUDE ALL RELEVANT INDIVIDUALS AND ACHIEVEMENTS.
- CONTINUOUS FEEDBACK LOOP:
- ESTABLISH A FEEDBACK MECHANISM TO RECEIVE INPUT FROM MEMBERS AND INCORPORATE THEIR SUGGESTIONS AND CONCERNS INTO DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES.

CONTACT ME!

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Managing your weight gain during pregnancy

A vast majority of women are not achieving a healthy weight during pregnancy. Most women should gain somewhere between 25 and 35 pounds (11.5 to 16 kilograms) during pregnancy. Most will gain 2 to 4 pounds (1 to 2 kilograms) during the first trimester, and then 1 pound (0.5 kilogram) a week for the rest of the pregnancy. The amount of weight gain depends on your situation.

Overweight women need to gain less (10 to 25 pounds or 4 to 11 kilograms or less, depending on their pre-pregnancy weight).

Underweight women will need to gain more (28 to 40 pounds or 13 to 18 kilograms).

You should gain more weight if you are having more than 1 baby. Women having twins need to gain 37 to 54 pounds (16.5 to 24.5 kilograms).

A balanced, nutrient-rich diet, along with exercise, is the basis for a healthy pregnancy. For most pregnant women, the right amount of calories is:

- 1,800 calories per day in the 1st trimester
- 2,200 calories per day in the 2nd trimester
- 2,400 calories per day in the 3rd trimester

What's Causing the Weight Gain?

Much of the weight that you gain during pregnancy is not fat, but is related to the baby. Here is a breakdown of how 35 pounds (16 kilograms) adds up:

- Baby: 8 pounds (3.5 kilograms)
- Placenta: 2 to 3 pounds (1 to 1.5 kilograms)
- Amniotic fluid: 2 to 3 pounds (1 to 1.5 kilograms)
- Breast tissue: 2 to 3 pounds (1 to 1.5 kilograms)
- Blood supply: 4 pounds (2 kilograms)
- Fat stores: 5 to 9 pounds (2.5 to 4 kilograms)
- Uterus growth: 2 to 5 pounds (1 to 2.5 kilograms)

Managing Weight During Pregnancy

Some women are already overweight when they get pregnant. Other women gain weight too quickly during their pregnancy. Either way, a pregnant woman should not go on a diet or try to lose weight during pregnancy.

It is better to focus on eating the right foods and staying active. If you do not gain enough weight during pregnancy, you and your baby may have problems. Still, you can make changes in your diet to get the nutrients you need without gaining too much weight. Talk to your health care provider to get help with planning a healthy diet.



Healthy choices

Fresh fruits and vegetables make good snacks. They are full of vitamins and low in calories and fat.

Eat breads, crackers, and cereals made with whole grains.

Choose reduced-fat dairy products. You need at least 4 servings of milk products every day. However, using skim, 1%, or 2% milk will greatly reduce the amount of calories and fat you eat. Also choose low-fat or fat-free cheese or yogurt.

Foods to avoid

Naturally sweetened is better than foods and drinks with added sugar or artificial sweeteners.

Food and drinks that list sugar or corn syrup as one of the first ingredients are not good choices.

Many sweetened drinks are high in calories. Read the label and watch out for drinks that are high in sugar. Substitute water for sodas and fruit drinks.

Avoid junk-food snacks, such as chips, candy, cake, cookies, and ice cream. The best way to keep from eating junk food or other unhealthy snacks is to not have these foods in your house.

Go light on fats. Fats include cooking oils, margarine, butter, gravy, sauces, mayonnaise, regular salad dressings, lard, sour cream, and cream cheese. Try the lower-fat versions of these foods.



Beauty and skincare tips on 5 minutes makeup routine

A quick 5-minute makeup routine is perfect for those busy mornings when you want to look put-together without spending too much time. So, we sorted your beauty woes by whipping up a 5-minute makeup routine which is a simple and efficient way to enhance your natural beauty and look polished without spending too much time in front of the mirror. Here's a simple and efficient routine but feel free to adjust it to your preferences and needs.

Step 1: Moisturizer - Start by applying a lightweight moisturiser to hydrate your skin. This creates a smooth canvas for makeup and keeps your skin looking fresh.

Step 2: Concealer - Use a concealer to cover any blemishes, dark circles or imperfections. Dab a small amount onto the problem areas and blend it in with your finger or a makeup sponge.

Step 3: Foundation or BB Cream - Apply a light layer of foundation or BB cream to even out your skin tone. You can use your fingers, a makeup sponge, or a brush for this step.

Step 4: Eyebrows - Quickly define your eyebrows using a brow pencil, powder, or gel. Fill in any sparse areas and brush them into shape.

Step 5: Mascara - Apply a coat of mascara to your lashes. Wiggle the wand from the base to the tips to add volume and length.

Step 6: Blush - Add a touch of blush to your cheeks for a healthy flush of colour. Smile to locate the apples of your cheeks and apply the blush in a circular motion.

Step 7: Lip Color - Finish off your look with a lip product of your choice. A tinted lip balm, lipstick or lip gloss can quickly enhance your pout.

Spicy Chicken Curry

Ingredients

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

To Marinate

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

Method



- Cut the chicken and cut it into medium size pieces. Marinate it with salt, lemon juice and turmeric powder for at least half an hour.
- Dry roast the ingredients under To Roast and Powder on low flame till everything turns golden

brown in colour. After it cools make a powder of it and keep aside. Be careful not to burn it.

- Make a paste of the ingredients under To Crush. Keep this aside.
- Heat the oil in a heavy bottomed pan and add the cumin seeds and bay leaf.
- Add the chopped onions and fry till it becomes brown in colour.
- Add the ground paste of shallots, ginger, garlic and green chillies and fry till the raw smell is gone.
- Add the marinated chicken and fry for few minutes. The chicken releases lot of water.
- Now add the tomato puree and the freshly powdered spices, required salt and water.
- Cover and cook for 15-20 minutes. By now the chicken pieces will be completely cooked.
- This is the right time to check for salt and other spices. Adjust anything if needed.
- Cook uncovered till the oil floats on top of the gravy.
- Add the finely chopped cilantro and fresh curry leaves and switch off. Keep the gravy covered till you are ready to serve.

Bottled water contains thousands of previously unknown nanoplastics: Study

Bottled water contains tens of thousands of identifiable fragments as well as previously unknown nanoplastics in each container, posing significant health risk, finds a study.

In recent years, there has been rising concern that tiny particles known as microplastics are showing up basically everywhere on Earth -- from polar ice to soil, drinking water and food.

However, in the study, published in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, the researchers focussed on nanoplastics -- the spawn of microplastics that have broken down even further.

For the first time, the team from the Columbia University in the US could count and identify these minute particles in bottled water using newly-refined technology.

They found that on average, a litre contained some 240,000 detectable plastic fragments -- 10 to 100 times greater than previous estimates, which were based mainly on larger sizes.

Nanoplastics are so tiny that, unlike microplastics, they can pass through intestines and lungs directly into the bloodstream and travel from there to organs including the heart and brain.

They can invade individual cells, and cross through the placenta to the bodies of unborn babies.



"Previously this was just a dark area, uncharted. Toxicity studies were just guessing what's in there," said Beizhan Yan, environmental chemist at Columbia University's Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory.

"This opens a window where we can look into a world that was not exposed to us before."

Using a technique called stimulated Raman scattering microscopy, which involves probing samples with two simultaneous lasers that are tuned to make specific molecules resonate, the researchers tested three popular brands of bottled water sold in the US (they declined to name which

ones), analysing plastic particles down to just 100 nanometers in size.

They spotted 110,000 to 370,000 particles in each litre, 90 per cent of which were nanoplastics; the rest were microplastics.

They also determined the specific plastics -- polyethylene terephthalate or PET, polyamide -- a type of nylon, polystyrene, polyvinyl chloride and polymethyl methacrylate -- all used in various industrial processes.

While the plastic types the researchers searched for accounted for only about 10 per cent of all the nanoparticles they found in samples; they have no idea what the rest are. *Source: IANS*



Mediterranean diet named best diet of 2024: Know all about it

The culinary traditions of the Mediterranean region, including Greece, Italy, Croatia, Turkey, Spain, and Morocco, are renowned for their delectable and nutritious portions.

Probably, that's why one of the most popular diets known as the Mediterranean diet has been named the healthiest diet of 2024 for the seventh time by a panel of experts, according to the US News & World Report.

While most people living in the Mediterranean region consume a variety of foods, their predominant diet revolves around plant-based elements such as whole grains, beans, nuts, and unsaturated fats from extra-virgin olive oil. Limited lean poultry and abundant seafood also find a place in their meals.

Central to the Mediterranean diet is an emphasis on overall dietary quality rather than a singular nutrient or food group.

Numerous studies affirm its efficacy in reducing the risk of chronic conditions like heart disease and type 2 diabetes, ensuring longevity, and enhancing the overall quality of life.

The Mediterranean diet's nutritional benefits and health advantages were initially revealed in the Seven Countries Study, a comprehensive investigation spanning from 1958 to 1999 that explored the correlation between diet and heart diseases among approximately 13,000 men.

This study demonstrated that the type of fats -- saturated, monounsaturated, or polyunsaturated -- plays a more crucial role in cardiovascular health than the total fat intake.

While conventional nutritional advice suggests limiting total calorie intake from fat to 30%, the Mediterranean diet allows up to 40%, provided most fats are unsaturated.

According to the US & World Report, the Mediterranean diet focusses on nutrient-dense foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds, and healthy fats, limiting the intake of saturated fats, added sugars, and sodium. *Source: India Today*

Are dairy products fattening and unhealthy?

In recent times, there has been a growing narrative suggesting that dairy products are fattening and unhealthy. However, it is crucial to dispel these misconceptions as they do not align with scientific evidence. In fact, we need to acknowledge the numerous benefits that dairy brings to our overall health unless one is intolerant or allergic to it. It continues to be a key pillar of a balanced diet.

The Nutritional Value of Dairy Products: Dairy products are rich sources of high-quality proteins crucial for muscle development and the proper functioning of vital organs. A cup of milk provides eight grams of protein. Additionally, dairy products are an excellent source of calcium, playing a pivotal role in strengthening bones and preventing osteoporosis. A glass of milk is rich in potassium and takes care of 50 per cent of your daily vitamin B12 requirement.

Caloric Content: Fat-Free vs Whole Milk Products

Contrary to popular belief, dairy products made from fat-free or low-fat milk are not only nutritious but also have fewer calories compared to their whole milk counterparts. This makes them a suitable option for individuals looking to manage their calorie intake without compromising on essential nutrients. It is important to note that moderate consumption of dairy, especially when opting for low-fat alternatives, can be



part of a balanced diet. Studies have shown that dairy in conjunction with a low calorie diet has led to a greater percentage of weight loss while keeping lean muscle intact. A glass of skimmed milk contains just four per cent of the recommended daily calorie allowance, that of whole milk is eight per cent, according to Dairy UK. A 2013 study showed that dairy helped people feel fuller and reduced how much fat they ate overall. Besides, dairy helps prevent the onset of Type 2 diabetes, which again is a trigger for obesity. *Source: The Indian Express*

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NASA delays mission to take humans back to Moon until 2025

The US space agency has pushed back its manned Artemis mission to the Moon to 2025 that will send the first woman and first person of colour on the lunar surface.

NASA will now target September 2025 for Artemis II, the first crewed Artemis mission around the Moon, and September 2026 for Artemis III, which is planned to land the first astronauts near the lunar South Pole.

Artemis IV, the first mission to the Gateway lunar space station, remains on track for 2028.

The first mission, Artemis II, was supposed to take place later this year.

NASA Administrator Bill Nelson said in a statement that they have learned a lot since Artemis I, and the success of these early missions relies on "our commercial and international partnerships to further our reach and understanding of humanity's place in our solar system".

"Artemis represents what we can accomplish as a nation - and as a global coalition. When we set our sights on what is hard, together, we can achieve what is great," he added.

The space agency said that ensuring crew safety is the primary driver for the Artemis II schedule changes.

"As the first Artemis flight test with crew aboard the Orion spacecraft, the mission will test critical environmental control and life support systems required to support astronauts," said NASA.

NASA's investigation into unexpected loss of char layer pieces from the spacecraft's heat shield during Artemis I is expected to conclude this spring.

The new timeline for Artemis III, said NASA, aligns with the updated schedule for Artemis II, which ensures the agency can incorporate lessons learned from Artemis II into the next mission, and acknowledges development challenges experienced by NASA's industry partners. *Source: IANS*

Vondy, the all-in-one AI platform: Things it does better than ChatGPT

There is a chatbot or an AI tool for just about everything now. Ever since ChatGPT was introduced, numerous AI tools have been developed that can perform an assortment of tasks. Among the sea of AI chatbots and tools, a recently introduced AI tool is making waves. Unlike ChatGPT, Bard or Claude 2, this tool offers more than just conversations.

Introducing Vondy AI, an all-in-one AI platform that can create content as well as enhance productivity. The application has been developed by New York-based software engineer Rohit Das and New Jersey-based software engineer David Laub. Those who have used this application claim it to be more powerful than OpenAI's ChatGPT.

Here's a deep dive into why Vondy AI could be the best AI tool:

It's free

ChatGPT runs on the most powerful AI model GPT-4. However, to access this, users are required to subscribe to ChatGPT Plus which costs around \$20. Meanwhile, Vondy is free and there are no message limits. It comes with a ready-made GPT store similar to the App store. It is to be noted that the tool offers over 100 AI assistants.

Create your own GPT assistant

OpenAI at its first-ever developer conference announced Custom GPTs, which allowed users to create their own AI chatbots. However, this too was limited to premium subscribers. Vondy AI lets you create the GPT of your choice. Users need to go to 'Create Assistant+', click on 'Create your own app', Upload a photo, name



the agent and describe its purpose. Once the agent is ready users can further build it by asking questions, just the way it is done on ChatGPT Plus.

Save more time

Now that you have your own AI assistant, you will be able to save hours worth of work. Be it content creation, data analysis, building market strategy, education, or even graphic designing, an AI assistant created using Vondy AI will come to your rescue.

Premade AI Assistants/GPTs

While one is free to create their custom AI assistants, Vondy AI offers hundreds of pre-built AI assistants. The existing AI assistants on the platform are claimed to enhance productivity by 10 times.

Create viral content

Vondy AI also has an AI assistant that's a social media influencer. The AI chatbot lets you create content for Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube. This is essentially an AI-powered social media manager who can take care of your social media. *Source: The Indian Express*

WhatsApp's new feature to let users share music audio during video call

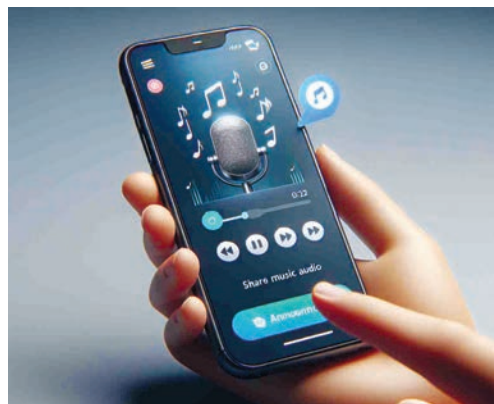
Meta-owned WhatsApp is rolling out a new feature that will let users share music audio during a video call on Android.

According to WABetaInfo, the ability to listen to video and music audio together is now available to some beta testers.

"Specifically, when someone in the call shares their screen, audio they play on their device will also be shared with other people in the call. It's important to note that this feature also works in individual calls, allowing users to enjoy a synchronised audio experience even in one-on-one video conversations," the report noted.

According to the report, the new feature not only promotes a sense of togetherness in group interactions but also brings an added layer of intimacy to one-on-one conversations.

Moreover, users in a call can also watch videos together, experimenting with shared audio during their video calls, allowing participants to synchronise their video playback experiences, creating a



virtual movie-watching or content-sharing session.

The feature will be rolling out to even more people over the coming weeks, the report mentioned.

Meanwhile, WhatsApp is reportedly developing a feature that will allow users to search for others through their username. Users will now be able to search for others by entering their username into the search bar, in a future update of the web client.

Webb telescope may have discovered auroras on a distant 'failed star'

Astronomers used the James Webb Space Telescope to find a brown dwarf with infrared emission from methane. This is unexpected because the brown dwarf, larger than Jupiter and smaller than a star, is cold and does not have a host star. The researchers propose that the methane may be there due to processes generating auroras.

To solve the enigma of methane on the planet W1935, scientists turned to our solar system. Methane emissions are fairly common from gas giants like Saturn and Jupiter. The upper-atmosphere heating that causes the emissions is linked to aurorae.

The beautiful aurorae of our planet that you have seen pictures of are created when energetic particles from the Sun crash into the gas molecules in our atmosphere. Both Jupiter and Saturn have similar auroras that are caused by solar wind but particles also come from nearby active moons like Jupiter's Io and Saturn's Enceladus.

But W1935 does not even have a host star, let alone stellar wind to generate aurora and explain the extra energy in the atmosphere required for methane emissions. The team proposes that either unaccounted internal processes like atmospheric phenomena or external interactions with either interstellar plasma or a nearby active moon may account for the emissions.





Microsoft dethrones Apple to become world's most valuable company

Microsoft claimed the top spot as the world's most valuable company, edging past Apple, whose shares faced a sluggish start in 2024 due to mounting worries about demand.

Microsoft's shares, fuelled by its early lead in generative artificial intelligence, rose by 1.6 per cent, resulting in a market valuation of \$2.875 trillion. Meanwhile, Apple experienced a 0.9 per cent decline, bringing its market capitalisation to \$2.871 trillion—the first instance since 2021 that Apple's valuation dipped below that of Microsoft.

Apple's stock has seen a 3.3 per cent slide in January, in contrast to Microsoft's 1.8 per cent increase.

The decline in Apple's stock value stems from a series of downgrades, raising concerns about sustained weakness in iPhone sales, particularly in key markets like China.

Furthermore, regulatory scrutiny of the arrangement that designates Google as the default search engine on iOS poses a threat to Apple's services business, which has been a positive aspect in recent quarters.

Apple, with a market capitalisation reaching its peak at \$3.081 trillion on December 14, concluded the previous year with a 48 per cent gain, lagging behind Microsoft's 57 per cent surge.

Microsoft, having aggressively introduced genAI-powered tools in 2023 through its collaboration with OpenAI, briefly outpaced Apple as the most valuable company several times since 2018, notably in 2021 during concerns about iPhone maker's stock due to COVID-driven supply chain shortages.

"It was inevitable that Microsoft would overtake Apple since Microsoft is growing faster and has more to benefit from the generative AI revolution," said D.A. Davidson analyst Gil Luria.

In related news, Microsoft's \$13 billion investment in OpenAI faces a potential investigation by European Union watchdogs, triggered by upheavals at OpenAI revealing deep connections between the two companies. The European Commission is evaluating whether Microsoft's involvement warrants scrutiny under the bloc's merger rules, potentially leading to a formal investigation and unwinding if it's found to impede fair competition.

US inflation exceeds forecasts as housing costs and energy prices rise

NEW YORK (TIP)

Higher energy and housing prices boosted overall U.S. inflation in December, a sign that the Federal Reserve's drive to slow inflation to its 2% target will likely remain a bumpy one.

January 11th report from the Labor Department showed that overall prices rose 0.3% from November and 3.4% from 12 months earlier. Those gains exceeded the previous 0.1% monthly rise and the 3.1% annual inflation in November. The December figures were slightly above economists' forecasts.

More than half the increase in prices from November to December reflected higher housing costs. Energy costs, along with food prices, also contributed to inflation.

Excluding volatile food and energy costs, though, so-called core prices rose just 0.3% month over month, unchanged from November's increase. Core prices were up 3.9% from a year earlier — the mildest such pace since May 2021. Economists pay particular attention to core prices because, by excluding costs that typically jump around from month to month, they're seen as a better guide to the likely path of inflation.

Inflation has cooled more or less steadily since hitting 9.1% in mid-2022. Still, despite the slowdown in price increases, along with steady economic



Source: Getty Images

growth, low unemployment and healthy hiring, polls show many Americans are dissatisfied with the economy

That disconnect, a likely issue in the 2024 elections, has puzzled economists and political analysts. A major factor is the lingering financial and psychological effects of the worst bout of inflation in four decades. Much of the public remains exasperated by higher prices. Prices are still 17% higher than they were before the inflation surge began and are still rising.

Pollsters and economists say there's never been as wide a gap between the underlying health of the economy and public perception. Wage gains have outpaced inflation in recent months, meaning that Americans' average after-inflation take-home pay is up. Yet a poll conducted in November by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, about three-quarters of respondents described the economy as poor. Two-thirds said their expenses had risen. *Source: AP*

'Can't afford a crypto mania': RBI governor Shaktikanta Das on cryptocurrencies

MUMBAI (TIP)

The US may have green-lighted exchange-traded funds (ETFs) in bitcoin, but for India's apex banking regulator, cryptocurrencies remain a strict no-no.

"The way we look at crypto remains unchanged, irrespective of who does what," Reserve Bank of India (RBI) governor Shaktikanta Das stated at the 16th Mint Annual BFSI Summit and Awards in Mumbai on Thursday, January 11. "Just because somebody is doing something, we are not here to emulate them."

The US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) on Wednesday approved the first US-listed ETFs to track bitcoin, marking a milestone for the world's largest cryptocurrency and the broader crypto industry. The SEC approved 11 applications, including from BlackRock, Fidelity and Invesco. At the same time, the SEC said it does not endorse or approve bitcoin.

"RBI's position on cryptocurrency



Reserve Bank of India governor Shaktikanta Das

remains unchanged. Travelling down that path will create huge risks. I don't think the world or emerging markets (EMs) can take a crypto mania like the tulip mania," Das said, referring to the 17th century boom and bust in Dutch tulip prices, regarded as one of the most infamous asset bubbles in history.

Delivering the keynote address at the event, Das pointed out that the US regulator itself has flagged the risks of cryptocurrency products. However, he noted that the blockchain technology, on which cryptocurrencies are built, has the

potential to lend itself to many applications.

The governor has voiced his concerns on cryptocurrencies several times earlier as well, citing macroeconomic and financial stability risks. In June 2022, Das termed them a "clear danger", and said anything that derives value based on make-believe, "without any underlying", is just speculation under a sophisticated name.

The central bank has been focusing on strengthening governance and assurance in regulated entities, Das said. "The key is to identify risks early, monitor them closely and manage them effectively. In this context, instilling an appropriate risk culture in the organisation is important." This needs to be driven by the board and senior management with effective accountability at all levels, Das said, adding RBI expects top officials and board members to play a more proactive role. *Source: HT*



BEJAN DARUWALLA AND CHIRAG DARUWALLA

ARIES



You'll have a very busy week so make sure you have your priorities straight this week. This week you will need to work very carefully on your fitness and money as you will have a lot of workload and will also have to face some health-related problems. You need to remain calm because this week you will have to face many unhappy people. This week something important will happen in your business which will keep you busy throughout this week.

TAURUS



This week you will be more efficient and more disciplined than in the last few days. This is a difficult week for you in a very positive way as learning and growth happen at the strangest of times. You will achieve a lot. You will have a pleasant time with your family in shopping and entertainment and the arrival of guests in the house will create an atmosphere of excitement. Your loved ones staying safe and healthy is the most important thing you will be concerned about this week.

GEMINI



This week you will be successful in making a big investment. Chances are you will rush the process and skip the analysis and formulation part, which could ruin all the profit you have made from the new prospect. You have to listen to your money advisor and take your time. This week your love relationships will be better than before. If you have been trying to attract the attention of a specific person for some time now, luck will be on your side this week. Live in the present and try not to let things destroy you. Take care of your love life partner's health.

CANCER



Your fitness is getting much better than in the last few days. This week you will feel like a new person because this week you will be full of strength and passion. Your health

WEEKLY HOROSCOPE - JAN 15 TO JAN 21, 2024

By Chirag Daruwalla - Son of Astrologer Bejan Daruwalla

and fitness have finally recovered from the consequences of all your bad habits over the past few years. This week a lot of achievements will happen in your professional and personal life. This will take you far in life and also in your career.

LEO



You will feel a vague restlessness that will inspire you to consider new career options this week. You won't be tempted to eliminate it completely, but you may want to take some kind of step in a completely different direction. Your business will be very good for you this week. Your loved ones will shower you with acknowledgment and gratitude for everything you have done to reach this point.

VIRGO



This week you may attract partners who are more concerned with originality than pairing, or who seem too extravagant. A plan for some family religious events will also be made. There will be momentum in import-export-related business. Your creative mind will be at its best this week. The new ideas, opportunities, and determination you develop will be appreciated at your workplace this week.

LIBRA



This week you'll see the world from a strange new perspective. If you focus on the small, good things that happen throughout this week, then you will not be bothered by all the negativity that comes this week. This week your business will give you happiness. This week you have time to improve yourself and work on things you wanted to do to develop your skills. Trust timing and practice patience. Don't waste this week worrying about the lack of new moments.

SCORPIO



Expect some arguments with coworkers who are jealous of you because of the fame you've gained this week. As you have been communicating in the past, you need to focus more on your work and not on those who want to drag you down in life. You also need to share information about your work publicly. There is a need to be extra careful about information. Field because it can be used against you to pull you down from the position you currently hold. You have to overcome these people by making reactive efforts to not let them ruin your week.

SAGITTARIUS



Sagittarius

You will be dissatisfied with the lack of attention and support you are getting from your partner. At the beginning of this week, you will feel a lot of trouble in your love relationship. But as the days pass by, by the end of the week you and your spouse are likely to develop a much better relationship and understand each other. This week you will be a powerful person in terms of work. Your navigation skills will help you overcome any obstacle without much effort. This will be a good week to reflect and reflect on your achievements.

CAPRICORN



Capricorn

Your partner's attitude towards you may be good which will solve the problems this week. When it comes to your love life you will try your best and show your patient approach to maintain a calm life this week. Things will become easier for you this week as your destiny will give you strength and create an area of favorable facilities for you. This feature will take your life a lot further and you will realize it this week.

AQUARIUS



Aquarius

This week, you will give expected results in your thoughtful actions in your business. You just have to make sure that you are ready to move forward without making any impulsive decisions as this can seriously harm you this week. This week you will be provided with ample opportunities to prove yourself at the workplace, which can also lead to progress in your field. If you are single, you may have some deep realizations this week, which will make you more confident and sociable. Sort yourself out this week and try to find things you are passionate about and people who make you happy this week. If you are looking for a life partner, Venus is strong in your zodiac sign this week and will help you in all matters related to love and relationships.

PISCES



Pisces

This week you will experience a lot of brightness in your life. Whatever you are trying to achieve, you may get it this week. A sense of peace guides you throughout the week. Your fitness is going great. This week is the week you should decide to make it even better. In your regular activity, do plenty of dancing and physical activity, drink plenty of water, and increase your intake of fruits and vegetables. Also, exercise regularly and go for long walks every week because this week you need physical activity to improve your physical and mental health. Professionally, this week you have a lot of work that you have to complete and hence you need to be physically, mentally, and emotionally prepared and capable for it.

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BIRTHDAY HOROSCOPE : JANUARY 15 TO JANUARY 21 BY VEDIC ASTROLOGER NASTUR BEJAN DARUWALLA

JANUARY 15

Ganesha says today, you might find yourself buzzing with a unique blend of energy and creativity. This is an excellent day to tackle complex projects, especially those requiring out-of-the-box thinking. At work, your innovative ideas could lead to significant breakthroughs, setting the stage for future success. In personal relationships, your ability to communicate openly and honestly will deepen connections. Embrace leadership roles as your confidence is at a high. However, remember to balance your professional ambitions with personal relaxation to maintain overall well-being. Unexpected opportunities may arise, so be ready to seize them. This day is about embracing change and stepping into uncharted territories with confidence.

JANUARY 16

Ganesha says collaboration is key today. Working closely with colleagues or friends will bring about fruitful outcomes and strengthen bonds. A chance encounter, possibly in a social or professional setting, might open doors to exciting new ventures or meaningful connections. Embrace different viewpoints and ideas, as they will enrich your experiences and broaden your horizons. It's a day to value teamwork and shared efforts, both in

your career and personal life. Your ability to cooperate and harmonize with others will lead to success and fulfillment.

JANUARY 17

Ganesha says your intuition is your guiding star today. Trusting your gut feelings, especially in financial or career decisions, will lead you towards positive outcomes. It's crucial to balance your professional life with personal interests and relationships. Overemphasis on work can lead to neglecting important personal connections. Listen to your inner voice; it's steering you towards choices that truly resonate with your core values and long-term goals. This day is about aligning your actions with your inner wisdom.

JANUARY 18

Ganesha says a wave of creativity washes over you today, making it an ideal time for artistic pursuits or innovative problem-solving. Your imagination is a powerful tool, capable of producing unique and effective solutions. In relationships, showing your affectionate and playful side will bring joy and laughter. It's a day to express yourself creatively, whether through art, writing, or simply in the way you approach daily tasks. Embrace your creative spirit and let it guide your

actions.

JANUARY 19

Ganesha says today calls for introspection and reflection. Take time to consider your life goals, aspirations, and the path you're currently on. It's a good day to plan for the future, setting realistic and achievable targets. Communication with loved ones will be deep and meaningful, providing an opportunity to share your innermost thoughts and feelings. This introspective journey will lead to a deeper understanding of yourself and strengthen your relationships.

JANUARY 20

Ganesha says you're filled with a robust and dynamic energy today. It's the perfect day to tackle challenging tasks and take on responsibilities that you've been hesitant about. Your ability to handle complex issues is enhanced, and you'll find yourself efficiently navigating through tough situations. Socially, you're likely to be the life of the party, bringing energy and enthusiasm to any gathering. Enjoy this vibrant day, making the most of your interactions and spreading positivity.

JANUARY 21

Ganesha says a sense of calm and harmony envelops you today. It's an excellent time for reconciliation and



VEDIC ASTROLOGER NASTUR BEJAN DARUWALLA

mending any recent conflicts or misunderstandings. Professionally, the hard work and dedication you've shown are starting to yield visible results. Take a moment to celebrate your achievements and share your success with those who have supported you along the way. Today is about appreciating the balance and stability in your life, recognizing the efforts you've made, and enjoying the fruits of your labor.

Nastur Bejan Daruwalla is available for astrological consultations.

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II SHREE GANESHAY NAMAII



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Brahma Gauri Punam Fast

Brahma Gauri Punam fast is done on Tritiya of Shukla Paksha of Pausha month. On this day Jagjanani Gauri should do Shodashopachar Puja. This fast is observed by women. Therefore this fast is important for women. With the effect of Gauri worship, husband and son become Chiranjeevi and attain heaven.

Brahma Gauri Vrat Katha

A poor husband and wife lived in the village. Woman who believed in God and recited worship. Her husband did not do any work and consumes alcohol. Women used to work in people's homes and this used to run their household expenses. The husband used to snatch the money that the woman earned from her, if the woman did not give the money, her husband used to beat her. The man used to rob the entire rupee in liquor.

Once that woman was sitting at home with a sad heart. The woman had nothing, no money and no food. Then a monk came and asked for alms from that woman. The woman said with a very sad heart, Baba ji, I have nothing, what can I give you.

The monk said to the woman that daughter, you are looking very sad, I may talk to you, maybe I can relieve some of your sorrow. The woman told her whole story to the monk. The woman told the monk that she has been married for 10 years but she has neither got husband happiness nor child happiness.

The monk asked the woman to observe Brahmagauri fast. By observing this fast, you will also get child happiness and husband will also get happiness. The woman told the monk that when and how to do this fast, please kindly tell the law of this fast.

This fast is done on Tritiya of Shukla Paksha of Paush month. In this fast one fasts for the whole day and meal is taken at one time.

The woman performed Brahmagauri Vrat according to the fast and law prescribed by the monk, due to which her husband started working and also stopped drinking alcohol. The woman also got the happiness of children. Now the life of the woman started living happily and peacefully.

About Goddess Gauri

Gauri is a female deity who is an incarnation of Goddess Parvati, the consort of Lord Shiva. Renowned for being gentle and nurturing, she is extremely fair and charming. Her radiance is in direct contrast to her alter ego Goddess Kali, who is dark and of fierce disposition. It is said that Lord Shiva, in a lighter vein, once rebuked Parvati for being too dark. This upset the Goddess and she resolved to do penance in a bid to acquire a fair complexion. To the chagrin of Shiva, she retired to the forest and performed severe austerities for hundreds of years. Shiva's counterpart, Lord Brahma was immensely pleased with Parvati's penance and granted her boon. Soon Parvati was blessed with a lustrous golden complexion and she came to be known as Gauri. This resplendent color of the Goddess came to be associated with fertility and plenty, while also representing a bountiful harvest. Devotees who come to worship her offer her pots of rice as a token of their gratitude.

Depiction of Goddess Gauri

Goddess Gauri is depicted with four arms, with two arms wielding a pellet drum and a trident in each. Her other two arms are in the Abhaya Mudra and Varada Mudra, which symbolize the boon giving gesture and the fear dispelling gesture respectively. She is also portrayed seated on a cow which serves as her mount. Milk and mirrors are the symbols associated with her and she is shown attired in green garments with ornaments draping her body. She is also portrayed with a huge head dress on her head and her charming face is always glowing with the radiance of youth.



Important information

Brahma Gauri Vrat 2024

Sunday, 14 January 2024

Shukla Paksha Tritiya Start : 13 January 2024 at 11:11 pm

Shukla Paksha Tritiya End : 14 January 2024 at 08:00 am

Lions serve as her attendants, while her golden complexion is suggestive of her connection with the Sun. The Goddess epitomizes the virtue of austerity, while signifying the importance of hard work and efforts in achieving our dreams and ambitions. She is the very embodiment of purity, indicative of her penance to win the approval of Lord Shiva. Her dedication and devotion to Shiva is unparalleled, and she is often depicted as a young unmarried maiden, willing to undertake severe austerities in a bid to win over her beloved Lord as her husband. She is thus the object of worship for many unmarried girls who wish to acquire a suitable groom. Many revere the Goddess as a symbol of growth and at the same time casting off the old, while also representing the life giving facet of

“Everyone thinks how to become a better son or daughter, mother or father, brother or sister, husband or wife, and man or woman. But no one puts actual thoughts on that they are all HUMAN and how to become a better HUMAN. What can we do to learn how to be a better human? ”

-- Arish K Sahani

nature.

Worship and Importance of Goddess Gauri

Gauri is deeply revered by everyone but particularly more so by women, who adore the Goddess for her feminine characteristics. Her importance is underlined by the fact that a festival is also celebrated in her honor known as Gauri Habba. This festival is celebrated for reaping a rich harvest and also for protecting her female devotees. The Goddess is also venerated during the hugely popular nine day Navratri festival. This benevolent form of the Goddess is kind and blesses her devotees with boons, while at the same time punishing evil doers.

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

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

“Indians alone can save India, and India and Hinduism are one.”

Sikh History This Week

JANUARY 12 TO JANUARY 18

12th January

1758 Baba Aalla Singh attacked Abdul Samand Khan of Sirhind and reached a mutual agreement.

1797 Shah Zaman lost 20,000 soldiers against Sikhs in a battle in Amritsar during his 3rd invasion. In a reckless hand-to-hand fighting at Amritsar, Shah Zaman lost 20,000 of his choicest soldiers against 15,000 Sikhs. During his 3rd invasion, Shah Zaman reached Peshawar in Nov. 1796 and entered Lahore in Jan. 1797. Sikh Sardars vacated Lahore and assembled at Amritsar to face Shah Zaman. Shah Zaman was defeated at Amritsar and returned to Lahore. The Sikhs pursued the retreating Afghans up to the outskirts of Lahore. Ranjit Singh with his 9000 troops was made responsible for security of the holy city. This marked the beginning of the rise of Ranjit Singh. Sikhs cut off his supply lines and forced Shah Zaman to return back.



1922 British government announced its decision to finally withdraw from the management of the Darbar Sahib at Amritsar. The British government announced its decision to finally withdraw from the management of Sri Darbar Sahib at Amritsar and leave the administration in the hands of the Sikh community. The government had mistakenly believed that the Sikh community wanted to use the Gurudwara resources for political purposes. Despite its intense efforts, it found no Sikh willing to accept the office of Sarbrah at its hands. Finally, the government was left with no option but to negotiate with the SGPC, conceding the demands of Baba Kharak Singh, the uncrowned King of the Sikhs.

1922 The Akalis under Mula Singh Bahawal took control of Anandpur Sahib.

1922 The militant Akalis under Kishan Singh Garhgaj helped capture the Gurudwara of Kiratpur Sahib. Akalis forcibly captured the Kirtapur Gurudwara, despite the SGPC's disapproval of such measures. The Akalis were helped by the Chakravarti Jatha under the leadership of Kishan Singh Garhgaj.

1923 Letters of the soldiers published in Babbar Akalis Doaba newspaper. These letters expressed the gist of their talks with District Commissioner of Jalandhar.

1982 Harsimran Singh, Chief organizer of Dal Khalsa, arrested. Harsimran Singh, Mukh Panch (chief Organizer) of the Dal Khalsa was arrested from Mohali near Chandigarh. The Dal Khalsa leaders believed that that was possible because of a conspiracy by some member of the Organisation. Harsimran Singh was tortured by the police and forced to read out a written statement if he wanted to save his life. The police told him that they had the permission of the Government to kill him in a fake encounter near the Indo-Pakistan border. Such atrocities were perpetrated on various Sikhs arrested during that period.

13th January

1588: Foundation stone of Sri Darbar Sahib, Amritsar, laid by Sain Mia Mir.

Foundation stone of Sri Harmandir Sahib, Amritsar, was laid down by the renowned Sufi Saint of Qadiri order, Mir Mohamed Khan, popularly known as Hazarat Mian Mir of Lahore. Sri Harmandir Sahib, unlike any other place of worship, was built at a lower level than the surrounding area. It has doors on all four sides, signifying both humanity and universalism and that it was open to people of all the denominations.

1761: Janam Din Akali Phula Singh Ji.

PHULA SINGH AKALI was son of Siha village (Bangar) resident Eshwar Singh. After being introduced to amrit through Nihangh Singh (of Naena Singh Shaheedhi misl), he assumed the name Phula Singh. He was one of the precious flowers of Kalgidhar's Akali garden. He led the Akali movement in restoration of our Gurudwaras and general improvement of the whole Panth. He traveled extensively in pursuit of Gurudwara reforms. However, he maintained his residence in Amritsar. Even today there is a "burgh" and an establishment, named after him, in Amritsar. Akali Phula Singh helped Maharaja Ranjit Singh fight and successfully win numerous wars. He was so true to his faith and strong in his principles that he did not hesitate in pointing Maharaja Ranjit Singh's lapses in public forums. Further he actively sought appropriate punishment (Tankha) for such lapses.

1764: Conquest of Sirhind by the Khalsa Dal.

Sirhind was attacked and successfully conquered by the Khalsa Dal. The city was plundered and the walls of the fort were pulled down. Sirhind is the place where the younger sahibzadas, Baba Zorawar Singh Ji and Fateh Singh Ji, were bricked alive at this place. Ahmed Shah Abdali's proclamation to blow up Sri Harminder Sahib was answered by the total demolition of Sirhind.

1849: Battle of Chellianwala fought between Khalsa Army and East India Company resulting in tremendous loss of lives on both sides.



1913: Walls of the Gurudwara RakabGanj forcibly demolished by the British Government.

1974: Harbhajan Singh Yogi was honored with the title of "Bhai Sahib" at Sri Akal Takhat, Amritsar. He had been honored for his contributions for the American Sikh movement that accounted for 500,000 of American decent.

14th January

1553: Guru Amar Das visits Kurukshetra.

The solar eclipse of "Abijit Nakshatra (recurring after about 25 years) brought Guru Amar Das and his Sikhs to Kurukshetra for preaching Guru Nanak's mission to the vast multitude. It led to discussions with yogis, naked ascetics, sanyasis and the followers of all the six schools of Hindu philosophy. The earlier solar eclipse had taken Guru Nanak to Kurukshetra, known as a big centre for pilgrimage on such an occasion.

1705: Mela Maaghi (Muktsar) in remembrance of 40 Muktas.

Mela is observed every year at Muktsar. Guru Gobind Singh cast off the blue dress that he used for his escape at Dhilmi. He then moved on to Talwandi and was at Rohi when a group of 40 Sikhs from Majha, accompanied by Mata Bhag Kaur, visited him. They were visiting to convey their condolences at the death of his four sons and his mother, and also to offer their services to mediate a compromise between the Guru and the Mughal authorities. However, the Guru put them on the defensive by narrating the series of Mughal atrocities from Guru Arjan's martyrdom through Guru Hargobind's incarceration for several years at Gawalior, Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom to the laying of the siege of Anandpur.

1761: Abdali destroyed Panipat but the Sikhs faced him in Goindwal and rescued their honor.

15th January

1350: Bhagat Namdev Ji passed away. Annual mela observations are held in village Ghumaan, district Gurdaspur.

16th January

1766: Sirdar Chadat Singh Sukarchakia killed Hameed Khan and captured Gujrawala.

1841: Chand Kaur defended Lahore against Sher Singh's attack with the help of Gulab Singh. Fort was well defended by Gulab Singh and Gardner. Dhian Singh returned to Lahore. Sher Singh lost about 5000 men. And Gulab Singh left fort and Lahore and carried away great wealth.



1923: First abortive attempt is made to kill Arjan Singh Patwari of Haripur. He was alleged to be responsible for Master Mota Singh's arrest.

17th January

1766: Jahan Khan, the Commander of Ahmed Shah Abdali's forces, attacked Amritsar. The united forces of the Sikh Misls, faced Jahan Khan and successfully defeated the enemy forces at Putlighar, on the outskirts of Amritsar. 1846 The Khalsa Army of Ranjit Singh ransacked a garrison of East India Company at Ludhiana.

1872: Baba Ram Singh, Naamdhari Leader, was arrested by the British government. He was subsequently exiled from India.

1872: 42 Naamdhari GurSikhs, accused of secessionist acts, were bown-up at Malaerkotla, after being tied with the cannons while one boy was cut to pieces. These executions were carried out under orders of Mr. L. Cowan, Deputy Commissioner Ludhiana, Malaerkotla.

1922: All Akalis arrested in connection with the Keys agitation are released.

1925: A jatha of 500 Akali Sikhs, led by Lakha Singh JahanShah (Gujran Wala), ready to lay down their lives was stooped from proceeding to Gangsar, Jaito – the place of Sikh agitation, and arrested.

Chennai: Gateway to South India

Chennai, formerly known as Madras, is the capital city of the state of Tamil Nadu, in the southern part of India located on the Coromandel Coast of the Bay of Bengal. Known as the "Gateway to South India," Chennai is a major administrative and cultural centre.

This 'capital of the south', is one among the four metropolitan siblings of India, having a rich cultural history which it perfectly balances with its metropolis lifestyle. Chennai is worth visiting for its temples steeped in south-Indian culture, British-era museums and monuments, culinary delights and Marina Beach (Second largest urban beach in the world). Chennai's skyline is famous for its towering skyscrapers, but the heart of Chennai has an old-world charm to it that refuses to be overshadowed.

Marina Beach

Situated in the city of Chennai in Tamil Nadu, Marina Beach is a natural urban beach along the Bay of Bengal. The beach is stretched out to a distance of 13 kilometres making it the longest natural urban beach in the country, second largest in the world and also the most crowded beach in India with almost 30,000 visitors a day. With a white sandy shore that looks as though extending to infinity, the landscape of Marina Beach is a mesmerising and serene sight to behold. The beach has a primarily sandy terrain and is dotted with plenty of merry-go-rounds and shops selling souvenirs. You could take a walk along the Marina beach with your near and dear ones or even all alone and enjoy the cool evening sea breeze along with a hot plate of crispy sundal and murukku. Watching the sun crawl upwards into the sky or even disappear into the ocean from the beach, is an awe-striking and enchanting experience.

Government Museum

Government Museum was established in 1851 and is the second oldest museum in the country after the Indian Museum in Kolkata. Situated in Egmore suburb of Chennai, it is built in the Indo-Sarcenic style and houses a rich collection of the works of Raja Ravi Varma.

MGR Film City

Having been established in the year



1994, a considerably new structure, the MGR Film city is managed by the Government of Tamil Nadu in loving memory of MG Ramachandran who was not only a crowd-pleasing tamil actor but also a longtime CM of Tamil Nadu.

Covering a massive 70 acres at Taramani in Chennai, the MGR Film City is a popular tourist hotspot and the place-to-be for several South Indian films directors. Besides being the best place to catch a glimpse of a popular Tamil actor and the film city also has a film school, indoor and outdoor shooting locations, replicas of village and urban areas, temple, church, mosque, post office, police station, prison, courtroom, and landscaped gardens in Italian, Japanese and Mughal styles. They recently opened the MGR Knowledge Park which has been adding to the attraction.

Breezy Beach

Breezy Beach lays in the remote and serene neighbourhood of Valmiki Nagar in Chennai. Being smaller and less

polluted, its a perfect getaway for anyone looking for a peaceful evening.

This beach is not as popular and known as the Elliots beach, and is hence more quiet and peaceful. Evenings are very pleasant and breezy here, and in the recent years, lots of tourists have been attracted towards this beach for its beauty. Those looking for an amiable, refreshing and breezy place to chill out and have fun, the Breezy beach of Chennai is the place to be.

Marundeeswarar Temple

The magnificent Marundeeswarar Temple, in Tiruvanmiyur, near Chennai has the temple deity Shiva in the form of Marundeeswar or Aushadeeswarar, the God of Medicines. A fine specimen of Dravidian architecture, this temple is a must visit for anyone visiting Chennai or nearby cities.

Glorified in the 7th-8th century by Nayanars (Saivite Saints), Tirugnana Sambandar, and Appar, the temple was expanded by the Chola Kingdom in the 11th century. Moreover, given the name,

Marundeeswarar Temple has been a place of worship especially for people with diseases and those facing various problems with their health. The prasadam here is a mixture of sacred ash, water, and milk which is believed to cure any ailments. One must visit the temple to encounter the miraculous power it is said to have.

Arignar Anna Zoological Park

One of the most popular picnic spots in Vandalur, the Arignar Zoological Park is an amazing place to discover the flora and fauna of the region. A favourite weekend spot with both children and adults alike, the Arignar Zoo is situated at a distance of 32 kilometres from Chennai city.

It is the largest zoo of its kind in South East Asia and is sprawled over an area of 1260 acres. In addition to having an extensive collection of endemic and exotic animals, visitors can experience the wild first hand with a trip to safari parks where lions and deer can be easily spotted.



contd from page 1**South Africa accuses Israel of Gaza...**

currently touring Israel's neighboring countries in an attempt to take Israel off the ICJ's hook.

On the first day of hearing, South Africa's advocate Tembeka Ngcukaitobi said the intent behind Israel's aerial and ground offensive to destroy Gaza was nurtured at the highest level of state which included its Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

"The evidence of genocidal intent is not only chilling, it is also overwhelming and incontrovertible," he said while requesting for indication of provisional measures to stop Israel from deliberately imposing living conditions intended to bring about the physical destruction of Gazans as a group, and to allow access to humanitarian aid.

Faced with a toll of more than 22,100 people killed between mid-October and January 3, South Africa invoked "its rights and obligations" to prevent genocide and "protect the Palestinians of Gaza from destruction".

Israel has rejected the accusations of genocide as "false and baseless" and accused South Africa of playing "advocate of the devil" in a reference to Hamas. An Israeli government spokesperson said the case "lacks both a factual and legal basis, and constitutes a despicable and contemptuous exploitation of the court".

Another case at the ICJ against Israel is already in progress and has been brought by the UN General Assembly. (With inputs from The Tribune)

United States objects to providing...

Gupta's attorney filed a 'Motion to Compel Production of Discovery' on January 4 in the US District Court, Southern District of New York, requesting the court to direct federal prosecutors to provide "the defense materials relevant to its ability to defend the instant charges".

US District Judge Victor Marrero had on January 8 given the government three days to respond to the motion filed by Gupta's attorney. The government, in its reply filed with the district court on Wednesday, said Gupta's motion asking for discovery material should be denied.

"The government respectfully submits this letter in opposition to defendant Nikhil Gupta's motion to compel discovery during the pendency of his extradition proceedings in the Czech Republic," federal prosecutors said.

They said that consistent with federal rules of criminal procedure, "the government is prepared to produce discovery promptly upon the defendant's appearance in this district and arraignment on this case. Before then, however, the defendant is not entitled to discovery, and he identifies no good reason for the court to order it".

In the government's response, US Attorney Damian Williams said that Gupta had identified no legal entitlement or justification for discovery at this time.

"The government stands ready to provide discovery to him, like any other criminal defendant, promptly upon his appearance and arraignment in this district. His motion to compel discovery should be denied," Williams said.

Gupta's counsel in New York Jeff Chabrowe has said in his motion that the attorney representing Gupta in Prague in his extradition proceedings states that "no evidence or documentation of any sort has been given to him other than the US indictment itself".

He said Gupta had been interviewed in Prague "by groups of senior US agents on several occasions and continues to be interviewed".

"An order compelling discovery is particularly appropriate here" as Gupta "is being subject to repeated interrogations by US officials without the presence of the counsel representing him in his criminal case," the motion by Chabrowe said.

"The defense counsel present in Prague has no evidence or other case materials, other than the bare

indictment. Most critically, the defendant continues (to be) interrogated by US officials, after the indictment, where his uninformed counsel has no ability to secure his rights. Accordingly, this court should order the government to comply with the defense discovery request here," the motion said.

Gupta's motion said a municipal court in Prague had initially recommended extradition, "but several layers of judicial review remain before any final extradition order is issued".

It added that in the interim, Chabrowe asked the US Attorney's office to begin providing discovery but the US Attorney for the Southern District of New York "refuses to do so".

The government, in its motion, rejected Gupta's assertion that he has been subjected to repeated interrogations by US officials without the presence of the counsel representing him in his criminal case.

"In fact, he has met only twice with US law enforcement authorities, the second time in the presence of counsel, and on both occasions, he was advised of his rights. In the first meeting, immediately after his arrest, the defendant waived his rights verbally and spoke with law enforcement agents."

The government said that the second meeting occurred in the presence of Gupta's counsel in the Czech Republic, and when he declined to be interviewed, the meeting concluded.

India has already constituted a probe committee to investigate the allegations. (Source: PTI)

Donald Trump defies judge on the...

"I'm being persecuted by someone running for office and I think you have to go outside the bounds."

Judge Arthur Engoron - who had denied Trump permission earlier to give a closing statement at the trial - let him continue almost entirely uninterrupted for what amounted to a brief personal summation, then cut him off and recessed for lunch.

Trump, the leading contender for the Republican presidential nomination, has repeatedly disparaged Engoron, accusing him in a social media post Wednesday night of working closely with the New York attorney general "to screw me."

On Wednesday, Engoron had nixed an unusual plan by Trump to deliver his own closing remarks in the courtroom, in addition to summations from his legal team, after lawyers for the former president would not agree to the judge's demand that he stick to "relevant" matters.

After two of Trump's lawyers had delivered traditional closing arguments Thursday, one of them, Christopher Kise, asked the judge again whether Mr. Trump could speak. Engoron asked Trump whether he would abide by the guidelines he had laid out earlier, which included not trying to introduce new evidence or making a campaign speech.

Trump then launched into his remarks.

"This is a fraud on me. What's happened here, sir, is a fraud on me," Trump said. He later accused the judge of not listening to him. "I know this is boring to you."

"Control your client," Engoron warned Mr. Kise.

Engoron then told Trump he had a minute left, let him speak a little more, and then adjourned.

Lawyers representing New York state were scheduled to give their closing remarks in the afternoon.

The exchange took place hours after authorities responded to a bomb threat at the judge's house. Police checked out the threat at Engoron's Long Island home, which came a day after he denied the former president's extraordinary request to deliver his own courtroom close, officials said. The proceedings were not delayed.

At 5:30 a.m. on Thursday, hours before the trial's final day was to begin, Nassau County police said they responded to a "swatting incident" at Engoron's Great Neck home. Nothing amiss was found at the location, officials said.

(Read full story at
www.theindianpanorama.news)

Purity of electoral rolls remains a...

The Election Commission of India (ECI) had directed the enforcement agencies and the public administration at the district level to make a collaborative effort, rather than work in silos, to curb the flow of money and other forms of inducements, he said, and insisted that purity of electoral rolls remained a priority for the ECI.

DELETION OF VOTERS : As far as the complaints of large-scale deletion of voters were concerned, Mr. Rajiv Kumar said all deletions made since January 6, 2022, till August 30, 2023, were re-verified by the District Election Officers. Out of the 21 lakh deletions made, only 13,061 deletions (0.61%) turned out to be incorrect, he said, and added that they were since rectified.

Mr. Kumar said the ECI was striving to provide best electoral experience to the voters and see that the political parties had a level-playing field. He did not mince words in saying that there had been a whopping 835% increase in seizures (cash and value of material allurements) in elections to the Legislative Assemblies of 11 States (not including Andhra Pradesh) from 2018-17 to 2022-23, from ₹366 crore to ₹3,427 crore, suggesting that influencing the voters continued to be a scourge being dealt by the ECI.

As far as the cases of door numbers with more than 10 voters were concerned, a house-to-house verification was done for 1.57 lakh house numbers having 20 lakh-plus electors, and the number of such houses decreased to 65,964 with 9.49 lakh voters at the time of draft publication of the electoral rolls on October 27, 2023. Of them, 4.52 lakh voters migrated to other places and 26,679 were non-traceable, and others were staying in those house numbers. (Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

Amid China tension, US to send...

new president this weekend, a move that could upset Beijing in an already-fragile bilateral relationship. A senior administration official confirmed the plan on Wednesday, January 10, without offering more details but said such a face-to-face meeting was the "most effective way" to engage the new Taiwanese government and convey US policy in the region, according to an AP report.

China and Taiwan's opposition party Kuomintang (KMT) have warned of the danger ruling party presidential candidate Lai Ching-te can pose to peace if he wins election this weekend.

The KMT favors closer ties with China but denies being pro-Beijing. The poll is being closely watched internationally. Reuters

The official, briefing reporters on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive plans, said the administration believed the move would contribute to peace and stability in the region. Beijing claims Taiwan to be part of Chinese territory and vows to unify with it eventually. In August 2022, Beijing reacted angrily by firing missiles and blockading the island after then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi visited Taiwan. Chinese President Xi Jinping, at his most recent meeting with President Joe Biden in November, called Taiwan the "most sensitive issue" in US-Chinese relations.

Washington has a security pact with Taiwan to provide it with sufficient hardware and technology to deter any armed attack from the mainland. The US has stepped up support for Taiwan and its democratically elected government in recent years as Beijing ratchets up military and diplomatic pressure on the island.

The US government takes no side on the island's statehood but insists the differences must be resolved peacefully. Biden told Xi in November that the US government opposes any unilateral change to the status quo in the Taiwan Strait.

The US has endorsed no political party or candidate in Taiwan. Beijing has made it clear that it does not want a victory by Lai Ching-te, also known as William Lai, the candidate from the ruling Democratic Progressive Party known for its pro-independence leaning.



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Kangana's 'ridiculous' Tejas stunt mocked on Twitter

Kangana Ranaut was seen as an Indian Air Force pilot in *Tejas*. One of the biggest box office failures of last year, the action film collected only ₹6.2 crore nett in India. Recently, Kangana, while reacting to an X user who had called *Tejas* an 'excellent movie' that failed in theatres, had slammed Animal's success. Now, it looks like Kangana's statement has backfired. Many are taking to X to roast her by sharing a clip of her aerial stunts in *Tejas*.

Some criticised the VFX and screenplay of a scene in the film, a sped-up video of which is being shared by X users. As *Tejas* Gill, an Air Force pilot, Kangana Ranaut was on a rescue mission in the daring scene, which saw her carry an injured soldier in her arms and fly away in a waiting chopper amid threat from a bunch of tribals on a beach. She also survived their bows and arrows mid-air.

Sharing the over one minute sped-up video, an X user said, "Why should I alone suffer (laughing emojis). Guys why didn't you support this masterpiece in theatres? Poor Konakona ji." Another said, "How did this movie miss the Oscar?"

Karmma Calling: Raveena can't escape her karma in this glamorous revenge drama



After the success of her debut web show *Aranyak*, Raveena Tandon is back with yet another thriller series, *Karmma Calling*. The actor plays a glamorous queen of the 90s, Indrani Kothari, who is now married to a billionaire. Her reign on Alibaug comes under fire as she comes face to face with a girl named Karma Talwar.

Played by Namrata Sheth, Karma Talwar seems to be a girl looking for revenge and in mood for no mercy. She wants eye for an eye, blood for blood and deceit to avenge deceit. The show trailer shows Raveena's Indrani going to all lengths to beat Karma but will seemingly pay for her sins in the past.

Wrap up the year gone by & gear up for 2024 with HT! Click here [Karmma Calling](#) also stars Varun Sood, Vikramjeet Virk, Waluscha De Sousa, Gaurav Sharma, Viraf Patel, Amy Aela and others. It will be streaming on Disney+ Hotstar January 26 onwards. Disney+ Hotstar shared the *Karma Calling* trailer on X with the caption: "Na power, na paisa, na rules - Indrani ka saamna koi nahi kar paya. Kya hoga jab uska saamna hoga uske Karmma se (Neither power nor money or rules could deal with Indrani. What will happen when she will come face to face with her karma)? #HotstarSpecials #KarmmaCalling - all episodes streaming from Jan 26th.

Karmma Calling is based on the popular American series, *Revenge*. The show is set in the world of glitz and glamour, filled with deceit and betrayal. It revolves around the ultra rich and affluent Kothari family and all that conspires around them in their world. Reportedly, the series has massive grandeur, scale and a glamorous outlook. It has been adapted and directed by Ruchi Narain of *Guilty* fame.

As soon as the trailer appeared online, many recognised the show was indeed a remake of the TV show, *Revenge*. Praising the show, an Instagram user wrote, "This looks sooo good." Another reacted, "Godamn! This is fire." A viewer also commented, "It will be interesting to see as I have seen all episodes of *Revenge*!...very interesting indeed!!" *Source: HT*

SRK 'begs' Mani Ratnam for a movie

Shah Rukh Khan and Mani Ratnam had worked together in the 1998 film *Dil Se*. At the CNN-News18 Indian Of The Year 2023 event on Wednesday, January 10, the two spoke about collaborating on a project again. Trying to convince Mani Ratnam to cast him in a film, Shah Rukh said he was ready to do *Chaiyya Chaiyya* on top of a plane if the filmmaker asked him.

Shah Rukh Khan told Mani Ratnam, "I'm requesting you, I'm begging you and I'm telling you every time to do a film with me. I swear, this time, I'll dance on top of the plane for *Chaiyya Chaiyya* if you tell me... And, good evening Suhasini (Mani Ratnam's wife). I told you that time to tell him 'Shah Rukh, Shah Rukh' before he sleeps." When asked if he'll make another film with the actor, the director said he would do so 'when he (Shah Rukh) buys a plane..."

Boasting about the box office success of all his films in 2023, including the blockbusters *Pathaan* and *Jawan*, Shah Rukh Khan told Mani Ratnam in his cheeky way, "Mani, let me just tell you, the way my films are doing... this plane is not faraway." In response, the filmmaker joked, "I'll bring it down to earth, don't worry."

Sharing a clip of their interaction at the event a fan tweeted, "Shah Rukh Khan's pitch to Mani Ratnam for another film after *Dil Se* is so wholesome. SRK said he will dance to *Chaiyya Chaiyya* on top of a plane this time."



Directed by Mani Ratnam, *Dil Se* was a love story set against the backdrop of insurgency in northeast. Shah Rukh Khan-starrer *Dil Se* featured several songs, of which *Chhaiya Chhaiya* was one of the most iconic. It was composed by AR Rahman and penned by Gulzar. *Chaiyya Chaiyya* was sung by Sukhwinder Singh and Sapna Awasthi, and choreographed by Farah Khan. She had won the Filmfare Award for best choreography for the song that year.

Shahid, Kriti's 'Teri Baaton Mein Aisa Uljha Jiya' to release in Feb

Actors Shahid Kapoor and Kriti Sanon's upcoming romance drama movie has been titled "Teri Baaton Mein Aisa Uljha Jiya", the makers announced on Wednesday, January 10.

Billed as "an impossible love story", the movie will be released in theatres on February 9.

"This Valentine's week, experience an impossible love story! #TeriBaatonMeinAisaUljhaJiya in cinemas February 9, 2024," Dinesh Vijan's Maddock Films posted on its social media pages. The romance drama, written and directed by Amit Joshi and Aradhana Sah, was previously scheduled to hit the screens in December 2023. "Teri Baaton Mein Aisa Uljha Jiya" will also feature veteran actors Dharmendra and Dimple Kapadia in pivotal roles.

The movie is produced by Vijan, Jyoti Deshpande and Laxman Utekar.





Tom Cruise strikes strategic movie partnership with Warner Bros

Hollywood superstar Tom Cruise and studio Warner Bros Discovery have announced a new partnership that will see them develop and produce theatrical films. Cruise, known for delivering blockbusters like Mission: Impossible franchise, Top Gun series and many more, will also star in the feature film projects. As part of the deal, Cruise and his production company will have offices on the Warner Bros Discovery lot in Burbank, California.

The pact with Warner Bros will mark a sort of homecoming for Cruise, who started his acting journey with the studio's Risky Business and then worked on films such as Edge of Tomorrow, Rock of Ages, The Last Samurai, Eyes Wide Shut, Interview with the Vampire and Magnolia. Michael De Luca and Pam Abdy, co-chairs and CEOs of Warner Bros Motion Picture Group, hailed Cruise as an 'absolute legend' of the film industry.

Natalie Portman says method acting is a 'luxury' women cannot afford



Natalie Portman is setting the record straight on the concept of method acting for films. In an interview with The Wall Street Journal, the Academy Award-winning actor shared that she likes to keep her personal life and professional life separate, and that method acting is not something 'women can afford.'

Speaking to The Wall Street Journal, Natalie said, "I've gotten very into roles, but I think it's honestly a luxury that women can't afford. I don't think that children or partners would be very understanding of, you know, me making everyone call me 'Jackie Kennedy' all the time." The actor was referring to her 2017 biographical film Jackie, where she portrayed the character of former US first lady Jackie Kennedy. She received an Academy Award nomination for her performance in the film.

The actor had talked at length about her preparation for Black Swan, the film directed by Darren Aronofsky, for which she won the Academy Award. In Black Swan, Natalie played Nina Sayers, a ballerina whose hallucinations and obsession begin to unfold as she prepares for a major production of Swan Lake. The actor had earlier revealed that she took a year-long rigorous training regimen for the film and that the experience did not leave her even when she returned home.

Natalie is garnering critical acclaim for her most recent role in Todd Haynes' May December, in which she plays an actor named Elizabeth, who follows and studies a real life person named Gracie, played by Julianne Moore. The preparation is key for her to bring more perspective in a movie based on her life. The film, which first premiered at the Cannes Film Festival in May, is now streaming on Netflix. Natalie recently attended the Golden Globes award ceremony where she was nominated in the Best Actress in a Motion Picture (Musical or Comedy) section but lost to Emma Stone in Poor Things.

Lindsay Lohan makes surprise appearance at Mean Girls premiere

Actress Lindsay Lohan made a surprise appearance at the Mean Girls premiere in New York City.

The original Mean Girls star celebrated the premiere of the musical movie with writer-producer Tina Fey, who reprises her role as Ms Norbury from the 2004 comedy classic, and Angourie Rice, who takes on Lohan's role as Cady Heron.

Lohan and Fey were joined by original cast members Daniel Franzese, who starred as Damian Hubbard, and Rajiv Surrendra, who played rapping mathlete Kevin Gnapoor.

Will any of them make a cameo in the film? "I couldn't possibly say, but we do have some fun cameos," Fey said.

"Ashley Park is in the movie, Tim (Meadows) is in the movie - we have some fun influencer friends.

But you'll just have to come see it this Friday."

Additional Mean Girls stars and creative team members in attendance included Renee Rapp, Christopher Briney, Aulii Cravalho, Jaquel Spivey, Avantika, Bebe Wood, Busy Philipps, Jon Hamm, Megan Thee Stallion, director of photography Bill Kirstein, choreographer Kyle Hanagami and co-directors Arturo Perez Jr and Samantha Payne.

Payne recalled the initial conversations she and Perez Jr had with Rapp, who played Regina George in the Broadway musical, about translating the iconic queen bee from stage to screen.

"We talked about how this is really a personalisation of the role. On Broadway, it's so different from the camera being right here," Payne said while waving her hand in front of her face.

The original "Mean Girls" is one of the most quotable films ever made, with fans still referencing one-liners like "You go, Glen Coco!" and "On Wednesdays, we wear pink" 20 years later.

Wood, who plays Gretchen Wieners, said "You can't sit with us!" was the most intimidating line she had to deliver in the musical film.

"I thought it would be 'That's so fetch,' but strangely, I think it turned into 'You can't sit with us!'" Wood recalled. "I didn't even recognize how big that moment was until I was reading the script, and then we were performing it and I was like, wow, I really have to cause a scene right now in front of all these people... But it was so fun. I don't know what it was, but I definitely needed to let that out that day. I needed to yell."



History This Week

JANUARY 12 TO JANUARY 18

JANUARY 12



January 12, 1932 - Hattie W. Caraway, a Democrat from Arkansas, was appointed to the U.S. Senate to fill the term of her deceased husband. Later in the year, she became the first woman elected to the Senate.

January 12, 1990 - Romania outlawed the Communist Party following the overthrow of Dictator Nicolae Ceausescu who had ruled for 24 years.

January 12, 1991 - Congress authorized President George Bush to use military force against Iraq following its invasion of Kuwait.

January 12, 1996 - The first joint American-Russian military operation since World War II occurred as Russian troops arrived to aid in peacekeeping efforts in Bosnia.

January 12, 1999 - President Bill Clinton sent a check for \$850,000 to Paula Jones officially ending the sensational sexual harassment legal case that ultimately endangered his presidency. The president withdrew \$375,000 from his and Hillary Rodham Clinton's personal funds and got the remaining \$475,000 from an insurance policy. The lawsuit had exposed the president's affair with Monica Lewinsky and resulted in investigations by Independent Counsel Ken Starr that led to Clinton's impeachment by the House of Representatives and subsequent trial in the Senate.

Birthday - American statesman and patriot John Hancock (1737-1793) was born in Braintree, Massachusetts. He was elected president of the Second Continental Congress in 1775, was the first signer of the Declaration of Independence, and went on to become the first elected governor of Massachusetts.

JANUARY 13

January 13, 1935 - The population of the Saar region bordering France and Germany voted for incorporation into Hitler's Reich. The 737 square-mile area with its valuable coal deposits had been under French control following Germany's defeat in World War I.



January 13, 1990 - Douglas Wilder of

Virginia became the first African American governor in the U.S. as he took the oath of office in Richmond.

January 13, 2021 - President Donald Trump was impeached by the House of Representatives on a charge of "Incitement of Insurrection" following a violent attack on the U.S. Capitol by his supporters seven days earlier. The charge alleged Trump encouraged the January 6th insurrection to interfere with Congressional certification of the 2020 presidential election, after losing to Democrat Joe Biden. Trump was acquitted on February 13, 2021 when the U.S. Senate failed to reach the two-thirds majority needed for conviction.

Birthday - Author Horatio Alger (1834-1899) was born in Revere, Massachusetts. He wrote over 100 books for boys, many featuring "rags to riches" themes of poor boys triumphing over life's obstacles.

JANUARY 14



January 14-23, 1943 - President Franklin Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill met at Casablanca in Morocco to work on strategy during World War II. At the conclusion of the conference, Roosevelt and Churchill held a joint news conference at which Roosevelt surprisingly announced that peace would come "by the total elimination of German and Japanese war power. That means the unconditional surrender of Germany, Italy and Japan."

Birthday - Benedict Arnold (1741-1801) was born in Norwich, Connecticut. He was the American Revolutionary War hero who turned traitor, sending information to the British in exchange for money. After obtaining command of West Point in 1780, he conspired to turn over the garrison to the British. However, his plans were discovered and he fled to British headquarters in New York. After the war, he lived in England.

Birthday - Philosopher-physician Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965) was born in Upper Alsace, Germany. He served as a medical missionary in Africa and received the 1952 Nobel Peace Prize for his work on behalf of the brotherhood of all nations.

Birthday - American film pioneer Hal Roach (1892-1992) was born in Elmira, New York. His output included nearly 1,000 movies of all lengths, including the classic Laurel and Hardy comedies.

JANUARY 15

January 15, 1973 - Golda Meir became the first Israeli Prime Minister to visit the Pope.

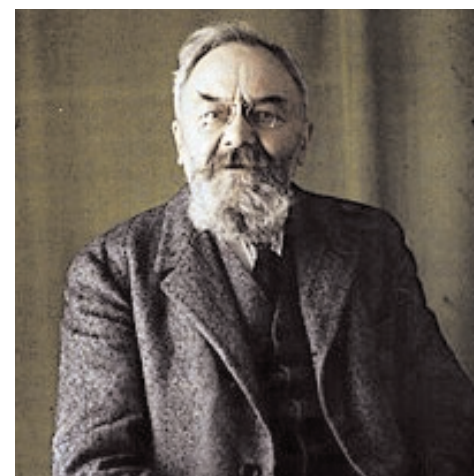
Birthday - Martin Luther King (1929-1968) was born in Atlanta, Georgia. As an African American civil rights leader he spoke eloquently and stressed nonviolent methods to achieve equality. He received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964. He was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee, on April 4, 1968. In 1983, the third Monday in January was designated a legal holiday in the U.S. to celebrate his birthday.

JANUARY 16

January 16, 1979 - The Shah of Iran departed his country amid mass demonstrations and the revolt of Islamic fundamentalists led by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. The Shah had ruled Iran since 1941 and had unsuccessfully attempted to westernize its culture.

January 16, 1991 - The war against Iraq began as Allied aircraft conducted a major raid against Iraqi air defenses. The air raid on Baghdad was broadcast live to a global audience by CNN correspondents as operation Desert Shield became Desert Storm.

January 16, 1992 - The twelve-year civil war in El Salvador ended with the signing of a peace treaty in Mexico City. The conflict had claimed over 75,000 lives.



Birthday - French industrialist Andre Michelin (1853-1931) was born in Paris. He started the Michelin Tire Company in 1888, pioneering the use of pneumatic tires on autos.

JANUARY 17

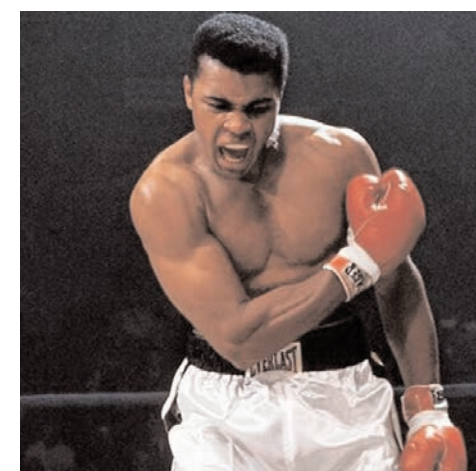
January 17, 1945 - During World War II, Warsaw, Poland, was liberated by Soviet Russian troops.

January 17, 1966 - A Hydrogen bomb accident occurred over Palomares, Spain, as an American B-52 jet collided with its refueling plane. Eight crewmen were killed and the bomber then released its H-bomb into the Atlantic.



Birthday - Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790) was born in Boston, Massachusetts. Considered the Elder Statesman of the American Revolution, he displayed

multiple talents as a printer, author, publisher, philosopher, scientist, diplomat and philanthropist. He signed both the Declaration of Independence and the new U.S. Constitution.

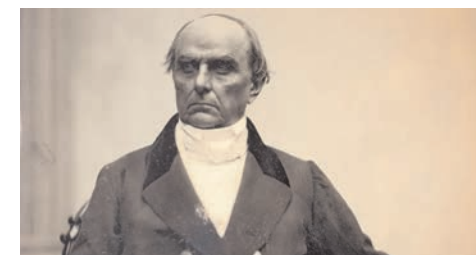


Birthday - Muhammad Ali was born in Louisville, Kentucky, January 17, 1942 (as Cassius Clay). At age 22 in 1964, he knocked out Sonny Liston to win the world heavyweight boxing championship, shouting out "I shook up the world!" After converting to the Muslim religion, the boxing superstar became an outspoken conscientious objector (on religious grounds) to America's escalating involvement in the Vietnam War and refused military duty upon being drafted. As a result, he was stripped of his boxing title, banned from boxing, and subsequently jailed. After a long legal battle, his conviction was reversed and he regained the championship in 1974 by defeating George Foreman. In the early 1980s, after retiring from boxing, Ali revealed his new struggle with Parkinson's disease. However, he has remained active, devoting himself to various philanthropic and humanitarian causes.

JANUARY 18



January 18, 1966 - Robert Clifton Weaver was sworn in as the first African American cabinet member in U.S. history, becoming President Lyndon B. Johnson's Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.



Birthday - American orator and politician Daniel Webster (1782-1852) was born in Salisbury, New Hampshire. "Liberty and Union, now and forever, one and inseparable!" he stated in the U.S. Senate in 1830 in response to Southern Senators who contended that individual states had the right to refuse to obey Congress.

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Dr. YOGENDRA SAXENA

(M.D.)

VOTE AND SUPPORT

Cardiologists transform heart's 'Mitral Valve' care through 'Ring Replacement' procedure in India

BY DR YASH GOYAL

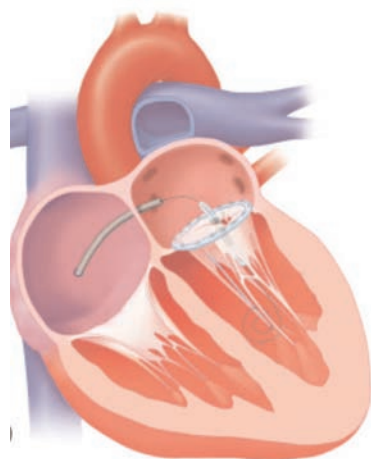
JAIPUR (TIP): For the first time, the specialized cardiologists at Eternal Heart Care Centre (EHCC) and Research transformed heart's "Mitral Valve" care and treatment in young and old age patients through a novel 'Ring Replacement' procedure in India.

They described the procedure as "Transcatheter Mitral Valve Replacement (TMVR) in Ring".

Surgery is no longer the sole solution for mitral valve replacement, thanks to techniques like TMVR. Cardiologist experts are pioneering this shift, providing alternatives for patients who couldn't undergo conventional surgery.

"It is a revolutionizing milestone in heart care with the successful execution of the first ever TMVR procedure in heart care", Dr Prashant Dwivedi, In charge TAVR and Structural Heart Disease Program at Eternal Heart Care Centre (EHCC) and Research told The Indian Panorama.

"Traditionally, open-heart surgery was the standard approach for mitral valve issues. However, the Transcatheter Mitral Valve Replacement (TMVR) procedure is a minimally invasive alternative, reducing trauma, risk and recovery time. This innovative technique deploys a new valve through a leg-inserted catheter,



eliminating the need for large incisions," Dr Dwivedi who expertised it with the group leader Dr Samin K Sharma said.

It eliminates chest incisions and cardiopulmonary bypass, leading to less pain and quicker recovery, Dr Dwivedi claimed.

If a young patient suffers from Mitral Valve complications he can go for open heart surgery where a devised ring is implanted for the cure. After 20-30 years, if the same patients develop any further complication in MV then the expert TAVR cure, replace or repair MV through the special ring implanted years ago. The open heart surgery of such patients with



Dr. Prashant Dwivedi



Dr. Sameen K Sharma

Photos / courtesy Corporate PR Nitesh Tiwari

the MV seriousness is difficult, and if the Ring is there then the cure and treatment is easy and non-invasive, according to Dr Dwivedi.

Dr Dwivedi who performed this procedure in two patients, one at EHCC and another at a private hospital in Udaipur said the cost depends on the condition of the patient. However, the cost of treatment varies between Rs.14 to 15 lakh, and in the country it is dawning on the heart care.

Dr. Prashant Dwivedi rightly states, "With each stride made in cardiology, we

come closer to ensuring a better quality of life for individuals grappling with cardiovascular conditions. India's entry into TMVR resonates on the international stage, benefitting people worldwide.

According to medical science, "Transcatheter aortic valve replacement is commonly called TAVR. It's done to replace a narrowed aortic valve, a condition called aortic valve stenosis. A doctor inserts a flexible tube called a catheter into a blood vessel and guides it into the heart".

25 from Haryana paid Rs 85 lakh each for 'donkey route' trip

WERE ABOARD FLIGHT GROUNDED IN FRANCE LAST MONTH; 'UNPOPULARITY' OF NICARAGUA GAVE PLOT AWAY

JANUARY 10, 2024

CHANDIGARH (TIP): Over 25 men from Haryana were aboard the "dubious" Dubai-Nicaragua Legend Airways Airbus A340, grounded in France last month. Hailing from Ladwa, Pehowa, Yamunanagar and Kaithal, the men were aware that they were embarking on a "donkey route" to the US, but were assured that it was "legally" safe, and even if they failed, they would not go to jail.

Having paid around Rs 85 lakh, they were going on valid tourist visas to Nicaragua in Central America, and would then enter the US on boats through Mexico.

A senior official from the Crime Investigation Department (CID), Mumbai, said they were trained for any exigency, and were assured of legal assistance if things went wrong. However, the "unpopularity" of Nicaragua gave the plot away.

"This was a near-perfect plan, which ensured all travelers were legally safe. They had valid visa and just the last leg was risky. They even had legal aid ready. Nicaragua is not popular among international and Indian tourists. A chartered plane going to such a destination raised doubts in France. The travelers, however, were trained well and



stuck to the tourist story and were sent back," he said.

"It was foolproof and we had seen several videos showing the successful landing of Gujaratis in the US, and that is what inspired us. I sold my shop and got money. They told us nobody could touch us till Mexico, and from there they said we would take an illegal route through boats to reach the US. Two lawyers had already been paid to take up our case in the eventuality that we are caught at the border. We were asked to travel light, but

carry enough money for support survival. The officials at France didn't believe that we were going to Nicaragua as tourists, and many of us developed cold feet when questioned. I think that gave us away. The Indian authorities also questioned us, but everything was legal," said a traveler from Haryana.

Though no official investigations are on against them, the revelations have blown the lid off various private firms and touts who help people reach the US and Canada via stops in Europe and

South American countries. To make the multi-hop journey, now known as the "donkey route", the agents help create fake documents and paper trails.

Sanjay Kharat, SP, (CID), Gujarat, said at a press conference that the police had identified four kingpins in the case. "It is not easy for one person to arrange for over 300 tickets and to make such arrangements. There are many more in the racket, and transactions were made through the hawala route. The passengers, however, have recorded statements that they have not paid a penny, and the investment was made by agents. This is a highly specialized operation," he said.

So far, 17 FIRs have been registered in the case in Gujarat. No communication has been received by the Haryana or Punjab police regarding the travelers.

HAD VALID TOURIST VISA

With valid tourist visa for Nicaragua, they were to enter the US on boats through Mexico

Hailing from Ladwa, Pehowa, Yamunanagar and Kaithal, they were aware that they were embarking on a "donkey route"

They were assured that it was "legally" safe, and even if they failed, they would not go to jail

Hockey India announces 26-member men's team for South Africa Tour

Hockey India has announced the 26-man squad for a Four Nation Tour in Cape Town, South Africa, starting January 22.

The tournament will feature France, Netherlands, India and hosts South Africa.

The Indian team will be led by Harmanpreet Singh and FIH Player of the Year winner Hardik Singh will shoulder the responsibilities of vice captain. Youngsters Arajjeet Singh Hundal and Bobby Singh Dhami have been included in the squad following an impressive outing with the junior side. Goalkeepers PR Sreejesh, Krishan Pathak and Pawan have been included in the squad along with defenders Jarmanpreet Singh, Jugraj Singh, Amit Rohidas, Harmanpreet Singh, Varun Kumar, Sumit, Sanjay and Rabichandra Singh Moirangthem.

Midfielders selected in the team are Vivek Sagar Prasad, Nilakanta Sharma, Rajkumar Pal, Shamsher Singh, Vishnukant Singh, Hardik Singh and Manpreet Singh. The forward line features Mandeep Singh, Abhishek, Sukhjeet Singh, Gurjant Singh, Lalit Kumar Upadhyay, Akashdeep Singh, Arajjeet Singh Hundal, Bobby Singh Dhami. Speaking about the South Africa Tour, Chief Coach Craig Fulton said: "We are quite excited to get on with the season in the Olympic year with the South Africa Tour where we will play quality teams. We have chosen a big squad in order to give players exposure and it will also give me an opportunity to see some of the players in competition mode ahead of the FIH Hockey Pro League."

Squad: Goalkeepers: PR Sreejesh, Krishan Pathak, Pawan

Defenders: Jarmanpreet Singh, Jugraj Singh, Amit Rohidas, Harmanpreet Singh, Varun Kumar, Sumit, Sanjay and Rabichandra Singh Moirangthem

Midfielders: Vivek Sagar Prasad, Nilakanta Sharma, Rajkumar Pal, Shamsher Singh, Vishnukant Singh, Hardik Singh and Manpreet Singh

Forwards: Mandeep Singh, Abhishek, Sukhjeet Singh, Gurjant Singh, Lalit Kumar Upadhyay, Akashdeep Singh, Arajjeet Singh Hundal, Bobby Singh Dhami.

India beat Afghanistan by six wickets in first T20

MOHALI (TIP)

In a game where Virat Kohli was unavailable, captain Rohit Sharma got run out off the second ball of the innings and local favourite Shubman Gill went back to the dressing room inside four overs, Shivam Dube (40-ball 60*) and Jitesh Sharma (31 off 20) came to the fore to help India chase down a target of 159 in 17.3 overs in the first T20I at the PCA Stadium in Mohali on Thursday, January 11. India's six-wicket win in biting cold conditions helps them take a 1-0 lead in the three-match series.

Known for their quality spin bowlers, Afghanistan toiled hard to defend the total but couldn't stop the Indian batters from achieving the target with relative ease. India's chase got off to a disappointing start due to a mix-up between Sharma and Gill in the very first over of the run chase. Off Fazalhaq Farooqi's bowling, Rohit hit the ball to mid-off and ran to the non-striker's end, only to find Gill ball-watching and not responding to the skipper's call. A livid Rohit let his disappointment known before trudging back to the dressing room.

Gill went on to hit five fours but couldn't stay long enough to make amends for his mistake. In the fourth over, he was stumped by Rahmanullah Gurbaz off Mujeeb Ur Rahman. At this stage, Afghanistan seemed to have a firm grip on the proceedings, but Dube and Tilak Varma did not allow the opposition bowlers to dominate



Playing his first T20I after the Asian Games, Shivam Dube (second from left) starred with an unbeaten 60 not out and also got a wicket. Photo: Ravi Kumar/TNS

during their brisk 44-run partnership for the third wicket.

Dube's first big shot came in the seventh over against off-spinner Mohammad Nabi, slog-sweeping a ball that was in his arc powerfully over the deep midwicket boundary. In the same over, Tilak charged down the track for an inside-out drive to the right of long off for four. With 14 runs coming off the next over by Naveen-ul-Haq, the momentum was clearly in India's favour.

It took a stunning catch by Gulbadin Naib to send Tilak back and reduce India to 72/3. In came Jitesh Sharma, who looked in complete control alongside Dube to take India to the cusp of victory. With Sanju Samson on the bench and uncertainty surrounding Ishan Kishan's position in the team, this was an ideal

opportunity for Jitesh to make an impression.

He made it count, smashing a 20-ball 31 that took the pressure off Dube during their partnership of 45 runs for the fourth wicket. With star spinner Rashid Khan ruled out of this series, it was Mujeeb who was the pick of the Afghanistan bowlers. Having dismissed Gill early on, Mujeeb came back to get the better of Jitesh too. In his four overs, he picked two wickets while conceding just 21 runs and squeezing in a maiden.

Dube, however, ensured that he stayed through to the end, notching up his second half-century in T20Is to seal a comfortable victory for India. His innings included five fours and two sixes. Rinku Singh also chipped in with a useful cameo at the end, remaining unbeaten on 16 off nine deliveries.

India to field its biggest shooting contingent at Paris Olympics

NEW DELHI (TIP)

India will be fielding their biggest-ever shooting contingent at the Paris Olympics. Pistol shooter Rhythm Sangwan on Thursday, January 11, sealed India's 16th Olympic quota with a bronze medal in 25m sports pistol at the Asian Olympic qualifying event in Jakarta.

At the Tokyo Olympics India had 15 shooters. With the qualifying events yet to be completed, India are expected to go well beyond the Tokyo mark. A maximum of 24 Olympic quota places can be secured. That said, the challenge will be to win a medal at the Olympics. Indian shooters have returned empty handed from the previous two Olympics. The dry run at the Tokyo Olympics was more disappointing, considering the impressive performances of the shooters in the run-up to the Games.

The focus will now shift on the preparation for the Paris Games, but before that, shooters will have to confirm their places in the squad during a domestic trial in May. After Tokyo, a new lot of youngsters have come through the ranks and national coaches will have to ensure that the Olympics first-timers

are able to soak in the pressure that comes with it.

"There is a lot more emphasis on mental preparation in this Olympics cycle. A sports psychologist is part of the team now," says Ronak Pandit, chief coach pistol (25m).

"Besides, the high-performance coaching team has been relying on data such as breathing pattern of shooters, skin conductance response and heart rate to determine when they are entering the zone. A lot of background work has happened after Tokyo that is showing results," says Pandit, the former international who was also part of the support staff in Tokyo. "Before every major event, the shooters are being told by the coaches on the likely challenges they are going to face that might affect their performance."

Sure, these steps are being taken following the lessons from the Tokyo debacle. In the last three years several new faces have been performing well for India at the world stage. The big success has come in rifle, where India had all eight quotas secured even before the ongoing qualifying event. In pistol, India have now grabbed six of the eight spots. Only two have come in shotgun so far.



Asian Games gold medalist Esha Singh, Rhythm Sangwan and Manu Bhaker (L to R). PTI Photo



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 beautifully 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



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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.