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EVER TRUTHFUL

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UN CONDEMNS ISRAEL AS GAZA DEATH TOLL CROSSES 25K MARK



United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has denounced Israel for the "heartbreaking" deaths of Palestinian civilians in Gaza and called it unacceptable to resist statehood for the Palestinian people

JANUARY 21, 2024

JERUSALEM (TIP): The Palestinian death toll has soared past 25,000, the health ministry in the Gaza Strip said while the Israeli government appeared far from achieving its goals of crushing the militant group and freeing more than 100 hostages. At the same time, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has denounced Israel for the "heartbreaking" deaths of Palestinian civilians in Gaza and called it unacceptable to resist statehood for the Palestinian people. Israel's military operations have spread mass destruction and killed civilians on a scale unprecedented during my time as secretary-general, Guterres said at the opening of a summit of the G77+China in Uganda's Kampala.

Israel's military said on Sunday that its soldiers had killed 15 Palestinian gunmen during fighting in the northern Gaza Strip.

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Prime Minister Modi unveils Ram Lalla idol at Ayodhya



Prime Minister Narendra Modi offers prayers before the idol of Ram Lalla during the 'Pran Pratishtha' ceremony at the Ram Mandir, in Ayodhya on Jan. 22, 2024. - Photo Credit / PTI

JANUARY 22, 2024

AYODHYA (TIP): The consecration of the Ram temple in Ayodhya was held today, January 22, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi attending the rituals. Following the consecration, the shrine will be opened to the public a day later.

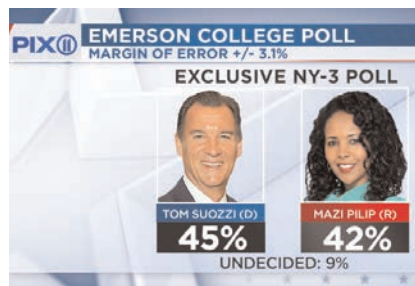
The "Pran Pratishtha" ceremony began at 12.20 p.m.

'Mangal Dhwani' from 50 instruments resonated in Ram temple during consecration event

Fifty traditional musical instruments from across the country were part of a devotional "Mangal Dhwani" that resonated during the consecration ceremony at the newly constructed Ram temple in Ayodhya.

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Suoizzi leads Pilip in tight race to replace Santos in NY-3: PIX11 poll



According to a new PIX11/Emerson College Polling survey released Thursday, January 18, former Democratic Congressman Tom Suozzi is ahead of his Republican contender Mazi Pilip

JANUARY 18, 2024

NEW YORK (TIP): In the race to replace disgraced Former Republican Congressman George Santos, former Democratic Congressman Tom Suozzi is ahead in his quest to return to Washington, according to a new PIX11/Emerson College Polling survey released Thursday, January 18.

Suozzi, who represented New York's 3rd Congressional District for three terms before an unsuccessful run for governor, got the support of 45% of those surveyed. Republican nominee Mazi Pilip, a Nassau County legislator and an Israeli-American who once served in Israel's Defense Forces, got support from 42% of those surveyed. About 9% of NY-3 voters are undecided.

NY-3 is comprised mostly of Nassau County with a little bit of eastern Queens. The special election is set for Feb. 13, with early voting beginning Feb. 3. Suozzi's advantage in the poll swells when you look at "very likely" voters who were surveyed. They comprise about 84% of the survey and are crucial in special elections, which often see a low turnout.

CONTD ON PAGE 48

Times Square in New York echoes with bhajans to celebrate Ram Lalla's Pran Pratishtha



The Indian community, which turned out in huge numbers for the celebrations, wears traditional Indian attire and is seen holding saffron flags

JANUARY 21, 2024

NEW YORK CITY (TIP): Ahead of the Ram Temple Pran Pratishtha ceremony in India on Monday, January 22, the Indian diaspora illuminated Times Square with the picture of Lord Ram in New York and chanted Shree Ram bhajans and songs to showcase the cultural heritage and vibrancy of their home country.

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Ambassador Binaya Srikanta Pradhan took over as the Consul General of India at New York on January 15, 2024

Ambassador Binaya Srikanta Pradhan takes over as India's Consul General at New York

NEW YORK CITY (TIP): Ambassador Binaya Srikanta Pradhan, a career diplomat of the 2002 batch of the Indian Foreign Service, took over as Consul General of India at New York on January 15. He has succeeded Ambassador Randhir Kumar Jaiswal who has since taken over as Spokesperson at the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in New Delhi.

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COMMENT

Guru Gobind Singh's teachings are relevant to modern times

REMEMBERING THE SAINT-SOLDIER AND CREATOR OF KHALSA ON HIS BIRTH ANNIVERSARY WHICH IS BEING CELEBRATED ON JANUARY 19

BY
INDRAJIT SALUJA

Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Sikh Guru, stands as a towering figure in Sikh history. Born on December 22, 1666, in Patna, India, he played a pivotal role in shaping Sikhism and reinforcing its principles. Guru Gobind Singh is renowned not only for his spiritual teachings but also for his unwavering commitment to justice and the defense of the oppressed. His legacy revolves around the creation of Khalsa, a community of saint-soldiers, embodying the harmonious balance between spirituality and martial prowess.

Guru Gobind Singh was the son of Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Sikh Guru, and Mata Gujri. Early in his life, he faced the harsh realities of religious persecution when his father sacrificed his life defending the rights of non-Muslims. This early exposure to adversity shaped Guru Gobind Singh's worldview and set the stage for his future role as a leader and warrior.

At the tender age of nine, Guru Gobind Singh assumed the mantle of Guruship after the martyrdom of his father. His leadership was marked by a determination to fortify the Sikh community against external threats and persecution. His teachings emphasized

the equality of all humans, irrespective of caste or creed, and the need for Sikhs to stand up against injustice.

One of Guru Gobind Singh's most significant contributions was the establishment of the Khalsa in 1699. Recognizing the need for a community of warriors dedicated to defending justice, he called upon his followers to gather at Anandpur Sahib during the Baisakhi festival. There, he performed the Amrit Sanchar, a sacred ceremony that initiated the Sikhs into the Khalsa Brotherhood.

During the ceremony, Guru Gobind Singh infused the Amrit (sacred nectar) with the Five Ks, which are the distinctive symbols of the Khalsa: Kesh (uncut hair), Kara (steel bracelet), Kanga (wooden comb), Kachera (cotton undergarments), and Kirpan (ceremonial sword). These symbols served as a constant reminder of the Khalsa's commitment to Sikh values and the readiness to defend righteousness.

Guru Gobind Singh's teachings embodied a unique blend of spirituality and martial valor. He propagated the idea of the "Sant-Sipahi," a saint-soldier who combines spiritual discipline with the readiness to take up arms when peaceful means fail. This philosophy emphasized the importance of selfless service, justice, and fearlessness in the face of oppression.

The Guru himself led by example, actively participating in battles against

tyranny. His military campaigns aimed not at conquest but at safeguarding the principles of righteousness and freedom. Guru Gobind Singh's commitment to the defense of the oppressed set a precedent for Sikhs, inspiring them to resist injustice with courage and determination.

Guru Gobind Singh's legacy extends far beyond his lifetime. His creation of the Khalsa not only provided Sikhs with a distinct identity but also fostered a sense of community and shared purpose. The Khalsa became a symbol of resilience and strength, standing against injustice and promoting the values of equality and justice.

The Guru's poetic compositions, collected in the Guru Granth Sahib, continue to inspire millions of Sikhs around the world. His writings, including the Zafarnama (Letter of Victory) written to Emperor Aurangzeb, reflect his unyielding spirit and commitment to justice.

Guru Gobind Singh, the saint-soldier and creator of Khalsa, left an indelible mark on Sikhism and the broader tapestry of Indian history. His life exemplified the harmonious coexistence of spirituality and martial prowess, and his teachings continue to guide Sikhs in navigating the challenges of the modern world. Guru Gobind Singh's legacy is a testament to the enduring power of courage, justice, and the unwavering commitment to defending the oppressed.

GUEST COMMENT

Iran-Pakistan faceoff : Both nations at fault for backing terrorists

Iranian missile strikes on terror bases in Balochistan have triggered a fierce retaliation from Pakistan, which targeted purported terrorist hideouts in Iran's Sistan-Baluchestan province on Thursday. The Inter-Services Public Relations, the Pakistan military's media wing, stated that hideouts used by two Baloch terrorist organizations were 'successfully struck in an intelligence-based operation'. It said Pakistan's armed forces were in a perpetual state of readiness to ensure the safety of its citizens against acts of terrorism. According to Pakistan's Foreign Office, Islamabad has been sharing its concerns with Tehran about the havens for Pakistan-origin terrorists in Iran, but to no avail.

The tit-for-tat attacks are a new low in the relations between Iran and Pakistan. Ironically, both nations - notorious for harboring or supporting terrorists as well as militia groups - are playing the victim card. They are desperately trying to make the international community buy their argument that they are more sinned against than sinning. Undoubtedly, Iran and Pakistan have been scorched by terrorism at times, but the onus is on them to first set their own house in order. Collaborative efforts are needed to fight the 'snakes in the backyard', which have started biting the very hand that fed them.

Terrorism is a global threat requiring a multilateral, multipronged strategy. Unilateral

actions by Tehran and Islamabad are adding fuel to the raging fire in West Asia. The wider the conflagration spreads, the worse it will get for peace and economic progress in the region. Commenting on the Iranian strikes, India has said that it understands actions that countries take in self-defense, while reasserting its 'uncompromising position of zero tolerance' to terrorism. New Delhi should make it a point to condemn terrorism unequivocally, no matter which country sponsors it. At the same time, it is vital to emphasize the importance of diplomatic parleys for defusing tensions.

(Tribune, India)

FIA welcomes Consul General Shri Binaya S. Pradhan

JANUARY 18, 2024

NEW YORK CITY (TIP): Federation of Indian Associations (NYNJCT&NE) warmly welcomed the new Consul General of India, New York, Shri Binoy S. Pradhan. The FIA delegation first extended a heartfelt welcome to the Honorable Consul General on behalf of Chairman Ankur Vaidya and the entire FIA team in New York. The delegation comprised President Dr. Avinash Gupta, Dr. Sudhir Parikh, Kenny Desai, Anil Bansal, Anand Patel, and Alok Kumar.

The FIA team has pledged its full support to the Consul General, assuring him that they will stand behind every initiative that benefits the community. Consul General Mr. Pradhan reciprocated, expressing his commitment to ensuring that the



(L to R): DCG Dr. Varun Jeph, Anand Patel, Dr. Sudhir Parikh, CG Shri Binaya S. Pradhan, Dr. Avinash Gupta (FIA- President), Kenny Desai, Anil Bansal and Alok Kumar.

consulate remains accessible to the community under all circumstances.

Deputy Consul General Dr. Varun Jeph informed the Honorable Consul General about the overwhelming support from the larger community towards the consulate. He also highlighted the significant contributions made by FIA to the community and their steadfast support.

Dr. Avinash Gupta extended an invitation to Hon. CG and DCG to participate in the "Dance Pe Chance" event on February 10th, one of the largest dance competitions organized by a community organization. The event aims to connect the younger generation with our culture and celebrate Republic Day.

Hon. Consul General Shri Binaya S. Pradhan expressed gratitude to all team members for braving the inclement weather to visit the consulate and extend such a warm welcome. Dr. Parikh assured the CG of FIA's unwavering support to the consulate.

Italian American Organizations Condemn Ethnic Slur From Pilip's Campaign



Mazi Pilip called "Tom Suozzi is the godfather of the border crisis", a statement which has been condemned by Italian American organizations as ethnic slur from Pilip's campaign

JANUARY 17, 2024

GLEN COVE, NY (TIP): The Order of Sons of Italy Commission on Social Justice, the National Italian American Foundation, the Conference of Presidents of Major Italian American Organizations, the Italian American Action Committee, the New York State Italian American PAC, the New York State Order of the Sons of Italy, and the former President of the New York State Sons of Italy have issued a joint statement. In today's New York Post, Mazi Pilip said, "Tom Suozzi is the godfather of the border crisis."

"As Italian Americans and Italian American organizations, we condemn this anti-Italian attack and demand that Legislator Pilip apologize and refrain from issuing any other anti-Italian stereotypes in the future."

Bob Ferrito, National President of the Order of Sons of Italy Commission on Social Justice, John Cavelli, National Italian American Foundation, Judge Basil Russo, Conference of Presidents of Major Italian American Organizations, Robert Fonti, Italian American Action Committee, Jim Lisa, New York State Italian American PAC, Anthony Naccarato, former President of New York State Sons of Italy, Bob Ferrito, National President of the Order of Sons of Italy Commission on Social Justice

The Indian Panorama Chief Editor interviews Ambassador Binaya S Pradhan



Ambassador Binaya S Pradhan, Consul General of India at New York in an interview with Prof. Indrajit S Saluja, chief editor of The Indian Panorama
Photo / Jay Mandal- on assignment

JANUARY 19, 2024

NEW YORK CITY (TIP): Ambassador Binaya S Pradhan, who took over as the Consul General of India at New York on January 15, 2024 gave an interview to The Indian Panorama on the 4th day at work, on January 19.

In the 45-minute interview, Ambassador Pradhan shared his thoughts on diverse issue, from consular services to strengthening bonds within the Indian Diaspora, to promoting ties between India and the US at different levels which included trade and commerce, culture, co-operation in various other fields.

Ambassador Pradhan showed a keen interest in paying special attention to the Indian youth and the Indian women here.

The Indian Panorama will carry the interview in the Republic Day special edition on January 26. The video of the interview will also be made available on The Indian Panorama website www.theindianpanorama.news

Emmy-nominated Indian-American filmmaker Tirlok Malik visits Ram Mandir in Ayodhya seeking divine blessings for his new film 'I Am Hanuman'



Tirlok Malik at Ram Mandir in Ayodhya

JANUARY 18, 2024

NEW YORK (TIP): Emmy-nominated Indian-American filmmaker Tirlok Malik visited Ram Mandir in Ayodhya to seek blessings of Lord Rama for his planned new film "I am Hanuman".

Mr. Malik plans to start work on his ambitious film, which he says is different from the dozen films he has made hitherto, from "Lonely in America" to "Khushiyan" to "On Golden Years".

A poster of his planned film was released after he offered his prayers at the Ram Mandir.



The poster of the film "I am Hanuman" in miniature form

INDIAN-ORIGIN SINGAPORE LAWYER KASTURIBAI MANICKAM SUSPENDED FOR FALSELY ATTESTING DOCUMENTS



Kasturibai Manickam—a lawyer with more than 25 years' experience—was handed a one-year suspension.

Photo for representation only

JANUARY 17, 2024

SINGAPORE (TIP): An Indian-origin lawyer who falsely attested that she had witnessed the signing of several property-related documents despite those not being signed in her presence was handed a one-year suspension.

The Law Society of Singapore argued for a 30 months' suspension for Kasturibai Manickam—a lawyer with more than 25 years' experience—acting for two siblings who were the registered owners of a condominium unit.

However, the Court of Three Judges, led by Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon, said this was an instance of a "grave error of judgement" rather than a character defect, according to a media report.

There was no dispute that the documents were signed by the intended signatories, Chief Justice Menon said.

Kasturibai's error was to decide to attest that she witnessed the signing because she knew the parties and thought no harm would ensue, he said.

Santha Devi V Puthenveetil Kesava Pillay and her brother Raman Puthenveetil Kesava Pillay had sold the property in September 2020 to two individuals.

Kasturibai's firm—East Asia Law Corporation—had acted for the siblings in several matters prior to the sale of the property. Raman's wife was also a long-time employee of the firm.

In the course of acting for the siblings, Kasturibai prepared six documents for the transaction, all of which were signed by Santha Devi.

Between September 7, 2020, and November 5, 2020, Kasturibai signed as a witness to Santha Devi's signature, even though the lawyer did not witness the signing.

Five of the documents, including a transfer instrument, were sent to the law firm acting for the purchasers.

(Read full story at
www.theindianpanorama.news)

Indian-origin man, his girlfriend sentenced for their "wicked conspiracy" in London

JANUARY 17, 2024

LONDON (TIP): An Indian-origin man and his partner have been sentenced for breaking into gym lockers and stealing bank cards to pay for their lavish lifestyles in southeast London.

Ashley Singh (39) and Sophie Bruyey (20) of Widmore Road in Bromley, would visit gyms and rifle through victims' lockers as they got busy in their workouts, the Metropolitan Police said on Monday.

The pair would then max out their victims' credit cards on expensive tech and designer gear, before selling them on and using the cash to buy bags, shoes, holidays and a pedigree puppy.

The duo was sentenced at Croydon Crown Court on January 10 to conspiracy to commit fraud by false representation between January 2022 and January 2023 with a total value of 250,000 pounds.

Singh was sentenced to three years' imprisonment while Bruyey received a 20-month sentence at a young offenders' institute, suspended for two years.

The court also asked her to undergo a rehabilitation program and complete 120 hours of unpaid work.

The pair's spree was noticed by a local



Ashley Singh was sentenced to three years' imprisonment while Sophie Bruyey received a 20-month sentence at a young offenders' institute, suspended for two years.

officer, who realized there was a pattern and flagged it to detectives who are experts in economic crime.

A Lewisham-based team traced the pair's phones, cars, and faces on CCTV and linked them all together.

Officers from the Metropolitan Police arrested them at Gatwick Airport on January 27, 2023, as they returned from Paris with 2,000 euros worth of designer goods.

At least 18 people were targeted in

what the sentencing judge branded a "wicked conspiracy".

The judge described the impact the pair's "wide-ranging spree" had had on people, including instances where people no longer felt safe around strangers, or had suffered professionally due to the stress.

DC Luis Da Silva, from the Met's economic crime team that investigated this case, said: "We know Londoners are worried about theft. It's a horrible crime, and it causes a lot of stress, pain, and financial loss. That's why we take this crime seriously and a whole team of us were committed to catching Singh and Bruyey."

"You couldn't fail to be moved by the devastating impact their callous behavior had on people, and we hope that by catching them this offers victims a little bit of solace."

He urged anyone who has had something stolen to get in touch and said that the proceeds of the duo's crimes will be used to help compensate the victims.

There were 18 fraud reports in total, with 14 in the Metropolitan area, one from Sussex, one from Hertfordshire and two reports from Cambridgeshire.

Indian-origin student in London dies after 'psycho' Tunisian boyfriend 'nearly beheads' her for 'rejecting him'



Maher Maaroufe, 24, stabbed his girlfriend Sabita Thanwani, an aspiring psychologist, in the neck at Arbour House student flats in Clerkenwell area of London on March 19, 2022.

JANUARY 16, 2024

LONDON (TIP): A Tunisian national has been locked up indefinitely in a psychiatric hospital for killing and nearly beheading a 19-year-old Indian-origin student at her university accommodation in London in 2022.

Maher Maaroufe, 24, stabbed his girlfriend Sabita Thanwani, an aspiring psychologist, in the neck at Arbour House student flats in Clerkenwell area of London on March 19, 2022.

Appearing before the Old Bailey last year, Maaroufe, of no fixed address, admitted manslaughter by means of diminished responsibility, saying he was suffering from schizoaffective disorder at that time. (Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

British-Indian dentist fined for dodging over 53K pounds in tax

A person or business is named publicly if they have deliberately defaulted on more than 25,000 pounds in tax

JANUARY 10, 2024

LONDON (TIP): An Indian-origin dentist in England's West Midlands region has been ordered to pay 22,654 pounds by His Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) for evading tax worth 53,528 pounds.

Jasbinder Singh, a resident of Coventry, was named publicly by the HMRC for deliberately defaulting on tax from April 6, 2012 to April 5, 2015 and April 6, 2015 to April 5, 2018, the Coventry Telegraph reported recently.

A person or business is named publicly if they have deliberately defaulted on more than 25,000 pounds in tax, according to HMRC. In the West Midlands, the biggest amount of tax avoided by a company was a whopping 243,647 pounds. It was said to have been owned by Daily Drinks 007 Ltd in Smethwick, Birmingham. Golden City Limited in Selly Oak, Matthew Electronics Limited in Birmingham and Solihull Financial Services Limited are some of the other companies in the West Midlands that have failed to pay tax.

Last year, an Indian-origin manufacturer was found guilty in what the HMRC described as one of the country's largest ever "carousel" tax frauds. (Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

Indian man gets 4 years jail, six strokes of cane for molesting British woman: Report

JANUARY 19, 2024

SINGAPORE (TIP): A 25-year-old Indian national has been sentenced to four years of jail and six strokes of the cane for molesting a British woman at a night club in Singapore in 2022, according to a media report on Friday.

The incident happened in August 2022 when Erugula Eswara Reddy, who is in Singapore on a student pass, met the victim at a Turf Club road restaurant while she was intoxicated and waiting for her friends, The Straits Times reported.

Taking advantage of the situation, Reddy forcibly lifted the victim from the chair and took her to a nearby field even though she constantly kept asking him to let her go.

He then molested the victim, laid her on the ground and undressed himself, the report said.

However, one of the male friends of the woman who was searching for her reached the spot after he heard screams of the victim calling for help.

The victim's friend on reaching the spot saw that Reddy was naked with the partially dressed victim lying face up and weeping.

The friend then alerted the police. Officers arrived at the scene to arrest the offender.

(Read full story at
www.theindianpanorama.news)

Indian American official Sanjay Virmani to lead FBI counterterrorism division in DC

JANUARY 18, 2024

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): Sanjay Virmani, a senior Indian American FBI official, has been named the special agent in charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) Counterterrorism Division of the Washington Field Office by Director Christopher Wray.

He most recently served as deputy assistant director in the Counterterrorism Division at FBI Headquarters in Washington, DC, according to an FBI press release.

Virmani joined the FBI as a special agent in 2003 and was assigned to the San Francisco Field Office where he worked on cyber and counterterrorism matters. In 2007, he was promoted to supervisory special agent in the Counterterrorism Division.

In 2010, he was selected as the supervisory special agent to lead the San Francisco Field Office's Joint Terrorism Task Force in the Oakland Resident Agency. In that role, he led a squad of agents, analysts, and task force officers working on international terrorism investigations.

In 2013, Virmani was selected to serve as Director of the INTERPOL Digital Crime Center at the INTERPOL Global



Sanjay Virmani has been named the special agent in charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) Counterterrorism Division of the Washington Field Office

Complex for Innovation in Singapore. In this role, he led the directorate in providing operational support to INTERPOL's 190 member countries to address cybercrime threats.

In 2016, Virmani returned to FBI Headquarters as a unit chief of the Cyberterrorism unit, which was focused on identifying, obtaining intelligence on, and disrupting cyberterrorists and their networks globally.

In 2018, he was promoted to assistant section chief of the Counterterrorism Division's Internet Operations Section, where he worked to foster partnerships within the US intelligence community and with international partners.

In 2018, he also returned to the San Francisco Field Office as the supervisory special agent of the Private Sector Engagement squad, then was promoted to assistant special agent in charge over the Cyber Branch.

In 2021, Virmani returned to the Counterterrorism Division as section chief of the Strategic Partner Engagement Section, where he oversaw the FBI's liaison efforts with the law enforcement community, US interagency, and private sector partners on counterterrorism-related matters.

In 2022, he served as the acting special agent in charge of the Tampa Field Office. The same year, he was promoted to deputy assistant director in the Counterterrorism Division.

He earned a bachelor's in industrial engineering from California State Polytechnic University in San Luis Obispo and received a master's in business administration from the Naval Post Graduate School in Monterey, California.

Sixteen Indian Americans elected fellows of National Academy of Inventors 2023 Class



As many as 16 Indian American inventors figure among 162 academic inventors in the National Academy of Inventors (NAI) 2023 Class of Fellows.

JANUARY 15, 2024

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): As many as 16 Indian American inventors figure among 162 academic inventors in the National Academy of Inventors (NAI) 2023 Class of Fellows. Election as an Academy Fellow is the highest professional distinction awarded solely to inventors.

The 2023 class of Fellows will be honored and presented their medals by a senior official of the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) at the NAI 13th Annual Meeting on June 18, 2024, in Raleigh, North Carolina.

The Indian American inventors in the list are: Arvind Agarwal, Florida International University; Sanjoy Banerjee, City University of New York; Ashok Gadgil, University of California, Berkeley; Balakrishna Haridas, Texas A&M University; M. N. V. Ravi Kumar, The University of Alabama; Prashant Kumta, University of Pittsburgh; Prashant Mali, University of California, San Diego; Dinesh Manocha, University of Maryland, College Park; Arumugam Manthiram, The University of Texas at Austin; Seemantini Nadkarni, Massachusetts General Hospital; Jagjit Nanda, Stanford University; Ravindra Pandey, University at Buffalo, The State University of New York; Niketa Patel, University of South Florida; Anil Sood, The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center; Srinivas Sridhar, Northeastern University; and Karthikeyan Sundaresan, Georgia Institute of Technology.

The 2023 class of Fellows represents NAI's foundational and continuing commitment to diversifying innovation on all levels, with underrepresented inventors comprising 33% of this year's class, according to a media release.

This year's class also showcases regional diversity with Fellows representing 35 US states and 10 countries, exemplifying the Academy's belief that great innovators can be found everywhere.

"This year's class of NAI Fellows showcases the caliber of researchers that are found within the innovation ecosystem.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

Indian American community leader Tara Sreekrishnan running for California State Assembly



Tara Sreekrishnan is running for California State Assembly from District 26.

JANUARY 17, 2024

SACRAMENTO (TIP): Indian American community leader Tara Sreekrishnan, currently serving on the Santa Clara County Board of Education, is running for California State Assembly from District 26.

"Silicon Valley fosters innovation and attracts the world's brightest," she stated

announcing her run. "I believe in Silicon Valley, yet it's crucial to acknowledge the challenges our residents face: housing affordability, climate change, traffic congestion, and an education system that needs strengthening."

"Addressing these challenges - and spending tax dollars efficiently and effectively - is why I'm running for State Assembly," Sreekrishnan added.

Sreekrishnan, 30, has served on the county board of education since 2021. She currently serves as state Sen Dave Cortese's deputy chief of staff and legislative director. She was previously Cortese's chief of staff when he was a county supervisor.

She is also the co-founder of Silicon Valley Youth Climate Action-a nonprofit that seeks to combat climate change through education and public policy initiatives.

Sreekrishnan is endorsed by State Sen. Dave Cortese, state Sen. Nancy Skinner, Assembly Majority Leader Cecilia Aguiar-Curry, Cupertino community leader Mahesh Nihlani, Ajay Bhutoria, White House Commissioner on Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Affairs, among others.

"As a child of immigrants growing up here, I benefited from the diversity and energy in this District," she states on her website.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

Two Indian students found dead in Connecticut under suspicious circumstances

JANUARY 15, 2024

HARTFORD, CT (TIP): Two students-one from Wanaparthy in Telangana and another from Srikakulam in Andhra Pradesh--were found dead in their Connecticut accommodation, a family member said on Monday, January 15.

The students were identified as G Dinesh (22) from Wanaparthy in Telangana and Nikesh (21) from Srikakulam in Andhra Pradesh.

Family members of the Telangana student are clueless about the cause of his death and also of his roommate's.

"Dinesh's friends who live in a nearby room called us on Saturday night and informed us about his death and his roommate's. We have no clue as to how he died," Dinesh's family members said.

According to a family member, Dinesh went to Hartford, Connecticut in the US for higher studies on December 28, 2023, while Nikesh reached a few days later.

Incidentally, they were mutual friends of some common friends and became roommates after going to the US.

A member of Dinesh's family noted that they have sought the help of Union Tourism Minister G Kishan Reddy and Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy to bring back Dinesh's mortal remains.

Wanaparthy MLA Megha Reddy has also chipped in to help bring back Dinesh's body. He called on the family members of the deceased student and comforted them.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)



G Dinesh (22) from Wanaparthy in Telangana and Nikesh (21) from Srikakulam in Andhra Pradesh were found dead in their Connecticut accommodation.

Photo for representation only

FIA Inaugurates 2024 Official Brochure with Gujarat Chief Minister Shri Bhupendra Patel



At the FIA 2024 official brochure in Gandhinagar. From L to R: Rohit Korat of Gracia Marcom, Srujal Parikh, Board Member and Trustee of the FIA, Chief Minister of Gujarat, Shri Bhupendra Patel, and Ankur Vaidya, Chairman of the Federation of Indian Associations NYNJCTNE

JANUARY 20, 2024

GANDHINAGAR, GUJARAT/ NEW YORK (TIP): The Federation of Indian Associations of NYNJCTNE (FIA) marked a significant milestone during their visit to India by collaborating with the Chief Minister of Gujarat, Shri Bhupendra Patel, for the inauguration of FIA's 2024 official brochure.

The meeting took place at Sachivalay, the esteemed address of the Chief Minister. In attendance were Ankur Vaidya, Chairman of the Federation of Indian Associations NYNJCTNE; Srujal Parikh, Board Member and Trustee of the FIA; and Rohit Korat of Gracia Marcom.

Chief Minister Shri Patel lauded the

substantial contributions of Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) and Non-Resident Gujaratis (NRGs) towards the development and prosperity of India and Gujarat. He underscored the significant strides Gujarat has made in maintaining a strong economic growth trajectory.

Mr. Ankur Vaidya presented the myriad efforts, initiatives, and activities that the FIA undertakes in serving the Indian diaspora. He emphasized the organization's commitment to fostering a sense of community and cultural heritage among Indian diaspora.

On this occasion, Mr. Vaidya and Mr. Parikh, on behalf of FIA, conveyed their heartfelt compliments to the Chief Minister on the successful completion of the 10th biannual Vibrant Gujarat Summit. Additionally, they extended a formal invitation to Shri Patel for the 42nd Annual India Day Parade in New York City, slated for August 2024. This parade, celebrated with great fervor, is renowned for being the largest India Day parade outside India, held for the past 42 years.

The event concluded with a shared sense of pride and anticipation for the continued collaboration between the FIA and the state of Gujarat in fostering cultural ties and mutual growth.

For further information, please contact: info@fianynjct.org

Spread the Warmth- Blankets Donation

JANUARY 18, 2024

LONG ISLAND, NY (TIP): The Indo American Lions Club's motto, "WE SERVE" is best represented through charities like these that involve giving and serving the community. The club has carried out many projects for underprivileged under the leadership of President Shyam Gajwani. During the frigid winter weather, the Club Organized "Spread the Warmth" Project -and distributed Plush Blankets on Wednesday January 10th 2023 at the Royale Restaurant during the monthly meeting.

This project was organized by Project Chair Sanju Sharma and co-Chair: Anchit Aery. The President Shyam Gajwani welcomed all the recipients. Secretary & Project Chair-Sanju Sharma invited the Representatives of various organizations to introduce themselves. The blankets were handed over to the Disabled American Veterans, All War Veterans homeless veterans, Social Services department of Nassau County, Homeless shelters, Roosevelt Bible Church distribution center, Martin Luther King Center of Long Island.

This was a very humbling experience for all the members present. It is really hard to imagine someone surviving the bitter frigid cold weather without a warm wrap or blanket.

The project chair showed gratitude to the members for their contribution and help to make this project successful. She



Lions Club officials with recipients of blankets donation

thanked President Shyam Gajwani, Founder President -Indu Gajwani, Sr. Vice President- Kanak Golia, Vice President Anju Sharma, Treasurer Vijay Shah, Co-chair Anchit Aery, Yogini Oza, BOD-Saurabh Sheth & Nimesh Shah, Shila Shah, Shyam Agarwal for their help in setting up the blankets. She also thanked Vijay Kumar 'Banjara' (a nonmember) for his help in loading the blankets..

In the second phase of this project more blankets will be distributed next week to Pamanock Queens community Center, United Methodist Church, Town of Oyster Bay. Three hundred fifty blankets will be distributed to spread warmth in our community.

Our Club members find it an extremely humbling experience, while spreading the warmth during this challenging Season.

Legislator Davis Commemorates Martin Luther King Day at Hempstead Village March

JANUARY 16, 2024

HEMPSTEAD VILLAGE, NY (TIP): Nassau County Legislator Scott M. Davis (D - Rockville Centre) joined with community leaders and government colleagues on Monday, Jan. 15 for the Village of Hempstead's annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Reflection march through Hempstead Village and ceremony at Hofstra University.

Legislator Davis was joined at the event by New York State Senator Kevin Thomas; Hempstead Village Mayor Waylyn Hobbs, Jr.; Deputy Mayor Jeffrey Daniels; and Village Trustees Clariona Griffith, Kevin D. Boone, and Noah Burroughs.

The ceremony featured keynote speaker Pastor-elect Curtis Brown of the Rising Star Baptist Church and a panel discussion focused on Dr. King's legacy in the Mack Student Center. The event also honored the family of New York City surgeon Dr. Emil Naclerio, who saved Dr. King's life in 1958 after he was stabbed in the chest while signing copies of his first book.

"Through his fearless efforts to eradicate injustice and racism from our society, Dr. King established a model for the pursuit of a more equal and inclusive society that is followed to this day," Legislator Davis said. "It was truly a pleasure to be a part of this great tradition in Hempstead



Photos / Office of Legislator Scott M. Davis

Village that celebrates the life and legacy of a singular civil rights pioneer in the history of our nation."

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Iran-Pak clash adds to the chaos

TANGLED AND MULTI-LAYERED GEOPOLITICS OF WEST ASIA HAS ENTERED THE SOUTH ASIAN STRATEGIC CALCULUS



BY C UDAY BHASKAR



IT MAY BE INFERRED THAT BOTH IRAN AND PAKISTAN HAVE ACTED TO ESTABLISH THE CREDIBILITY OF THEIR DETERRENCE POSTURE. HOWEVER, GIVEN THE SHADOWY NATURE OF TERROR-RELATED INTELLIGENCE INPUTS AND THE IDENTITY OF THE MAIN STATE ACTORS BEHIND PROXY GROUPS, IT IS DIFFICULT TO ARRIVE AT AN OBJECTIVE AND INFORMED ASSESSMENT ON WHETHER THE ACTIONS BY THE TWO STATES WERE MEASURED AND APPROPRIATE, OR IMPULSIVE.

In a couple of dramatic developments last week, Iran launched air attacks on its nuclear-armed neighbor Pakistan and was subjected to tit-for-tat strikes. Though billed as counter-terrorism operations, the use of missiles and fighter jets raised concerns that the conflict could escalate into a war. However, both nations have now agreed to defuse tensions. On January 19, Pakistan stated that it desired to work with Iran in "the spirit of mutual trust and cooperation" and would strengthen coordination on counter-terrorism.

Whether China will use its leverage in the region to promote stability or discord, driven by Beijing's penchant to fetter India, remains a moot point.

There is an ironic twist in the way Iran and Pakistan are responding to perceived threats from terror groups across their border, given that both nations have honed the strategy of covert state support to non-state entities engaged in terror activities to advance their geopolitical objectives. The Iran-Pakistan border areas are largely inhabited by a restive Balochi population that has been ruthlessly oppressed by both states to quell separatist aspirations. Over the last few decades, the Shia-Sunni theological divide has fueled terror groups that are also influenced by religious fervor in the extended West Asian region, where the Iran-Saudi geopolitical and socio-religious competition has a long history. Another significant factor is the age-old Arab-versus-Persian ethnic fault lines and Iran's distinctive strategic identity and aspirations in the Islamic world.

In the current instance, despite the welcome turn of events wherein a potential Iran-Pakistan crisis was averted, it is evident that the tangled and multi-layered geopolitics of West Asia has entered the South Asian strategic calculus and this will pose many challenges to India in the near future. The extended region that encompasses South and West Asia was convulsed in recent decades by the tectonic events of 1979 - the overthrowing of the Shah of Iran and the emergence of political Shia-Islam; the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan that brought the Cold War to the region; and the rise of militancy-cum-terrorism symbolized by Kalashnikov-wielding mujahideen driven by religious zealotry.

India felt the negative effects of the 1979 upheaval in the early 1990s. Following the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, a triumphant Pakistan, which had supported the Afghan



The strikes and counterstrikes come amid the conflict in the Middle East growing and Pakistan's struggle with political and economic issues

mujahideen, stepped up its anti-India terror activities and the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir was badly scarred.

More recently, the October 7, 2023, Hamas terror attack on Israel and the disproportionate reprisal that Tel Aviv is prosecuting have had a non-linear consequence that has adversely impacted the world at large. This is manifested in Houthi attacks on global merchant shipping, and once again, a non-state entity with state support (Iran) has posed an intractable challenge to the major powers and the safety of critical SLOCs (sea lines of communication).

Iran's locus in the larger southern Asian strategic template, Tehran's nuclear aspirations and anxieties, its deeply ingrained anti-US/anti-Israel orientation and the proximity to both China and Russia will shape the regional strategic framework in the years ahead. This, in turn, will have acute relevance for India, given China's ambitions related to Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) that has

the Xi Jinping imprimatur. Both Iran and Pakistan have critical areas to advance BRI objectives.

Thus, it is instructive that Beijing was seen as the preferred mediator for defusing the current Iran-Pakistan situation, and while there has been no official confirmation, the possibility that China had a quiet role in lowering the bilateral temperatures remains high. Whether China will use its leverage in the region to promote stability or discord, driven by Beijing's penchant to fetter India, remains a moot point, but it will be a significant element in the affairs of the subcontinent.

Iran's mid-January counter-terror actions, which included strikes against Iraq, Syria and Pakistan, mark a departure from the norm that Tehran had followed until now. The use of air power and precision-guided weapons could become the new benchmark for such exigencies. While Tehran has claimed that it took action based on intelligence inputs in each case, domestic political compulsions are

also significant drivers.

Early in January, a terrorist attack in Kerman, southeast of Tehran, resulted in the death of nearly 100 people at a memorial for Iran's top commander Qasem Soleimani. Subsequently, the ISIL/ISIS claimed responsibility for this dastardly attack, making it clear that Iran had to take action against ISIS to assuage the anger and grief of its citizens.

In the case of Pakistan, the rationale offered by Iran is that it was targeting bases of the Jaish al-Adl, a Sunni Baloch armed group operating from Balochistan (formerly designated as Jundallah) that was involved in a mid-December attack in the Sistan province. The January 16 attack was purportedly carried out to pre-empt another strike.

It may be inferred that both Iran and Pakistan have acted to establish the credibility of their deterrence posture. However, given the shadowy nature of terror-related intelligence inputs and the identity of the main state actors behind proxy groups, it is difficult to arrive at an objective and informed assessment on whether the actions by the two states were measured and appropriate, or impulsive.

Dissuading non-state terror groups through resolute military action can be protracted and costly and yield negative returns, as demonstrated by the US-led 'global war on terrorism' in the wake of the 9/11 attacks.

Jittery deterrence holds even greater significance in a troubled region armed with weapons of mass destruction, and the Iran-Pakistan tit-for-tat attacks provide valuable crisis management lessons for regional policymakers.

(The author is Director, Society for Policy Studies)

World Economic Forum: Annual Carnival at Davos For Rich & Powerful



BY DEVENDRA MAKKAR

Since 1971 "World Economic Forum"(WEF) has been holding an annual most expensive carnival at Davos, the super luxury ski resort in Switzerland. Here Billionaires talk to millionaires and pretend to discuss how to end inequality and other world problems in most luxurious settings with most lavish & expensive food, wines, champagne and hard liquor served for them! 2,500 participants from 90 countries, world's richest, most powerful and downright famous about 0.00004% of the world's 7.4 Billion population deciding the world's fate behind a curtain of extremely tight security, secrecy and doublespeak. Since then these rich have become more rich and poor has become more poor. According to Oxfam in 2016, only world's 8 richest headed by the Microsoft founder Bill Gates were worth \$426bn (£350bn), equivalent to the wealth of 3.6 billion people. According to Credit Suisse's global wealth report published in Nov. 2017, "The world's richest people have seen their share of the globe's total wealth increase from 42.5% at the height of the 2008 financial crisis to 50.1% in 2017, or \$140 Trillion."

Jody Williams (the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize winner) said, "These guys just want to convince people that they care about others, which they don't, and then get back to making money as fast as they can,"

Larry Summers an economist & former Treasury Secretary under President Clinton once told a reporter that Davos is fundamentally an exercise in corporate speed-dating. "Everyone comes because everyone else comes." A hedge-fund manager or a C.E.O. can pack into a few days the dozens of meetings-with other executives, with heads of state or their deputies, with non-governmental organizations whose phone calls might otherwise have been ignored-that it would normally take months to arrange and tens of thousands of Gulfstream miles to attend. They conduct these compressed and occasionally fruitful couplings, the so-called bilateral meetings, either in private rooms that the WEF has set aside for this purpose or in hotel rooms, restaurants, and hallways. All that's missing is the hourly rate.

This year the 4 day exclusive carnival for the world's richest and most powerful was held from January 23rd to 26th 2018. Membership and partnership fees range from 60,000 Swiss francs (\$62,243) to 600,000 Swiss francs (around \$622,000) "depending on the level of engagement." Every participant has to pay extra \$27,000, a fee over and above the membership or partnership fees. That still does not include Hotel accommodation and air fare. On top of that Participant has to be only from the world's top thousand companies.

Every participant wears a color coded badge based on a series of closely guarded criteria. The color of the badge denotes a role and a degree of access for the participant. The holographic is the top badge for senior government policy makers and the coveted pass is the white one that grants delegates free rein. A Strategic Partner gets a blue dot on the white and has access to an exclusive lounge. The Green is for "Entourage" with very limited access and Media Reporters wear "Orange" and can't get in a lot of places. Apart from fees, WEF also accepts grants, donations and legacies. They also subsidize the scores of academics, scientists, artists, journalists, and N.G.O. chiefs who attend for free. Everyone, whether he pays or not, has to be invited. WEF Founder Chairman Klaus Schwab says, "You cannot buy your way in, it's a large club meeting and you do need an invitation!"

The man behind this annual super luxury 4 days carnival with a fancy theme rather a fancy slogan for each year for billionaires and millionaires by invitation only; is a German academic Klaus Schwab. He is the founder and Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum (WEF) that he started in 1971 as European Management Forum and in 1987 changed the name to 'World Economic Forum'. His salary and benefits are undisclosed but average employee at WEF makes over 200,000 Swiss francs per year and operate from a swanky super luxurious Head Quarter



The annual meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland from January 15 to January 19, 2024, brought together 3,000 participants from around the globe. That included 1,600 business leaders, 350 heads of state and government ministers, and hundreds of academics, civil society leaders, and entrepreneurs. It was an elite affair as always, with sky-high lodging fees, champagne nightcaps, and chances to see and be seen by people holding some of the most influential jobs on the planet.

in Geneva. Over the years WEF has also become a very successful money-making enterprise, with revenues of 280,000 Swiss francs and a surplus of 1.2 million Swiss francs in the financial year from July 2016 to June 2017.

Klaus Schwab here and there do indulge in stage managed self-criticism. In 2012 when the theme of the WEF was "The Great Transformation" he said "Capitalism, in its current form, no longer fits the world around us." "We have sinned." He also spoke of the danger of "intergenerational conflict." However, the benefits of economic growth remain elusive for many.

For the 2018 WEF theme "Strengthening Cooperation in a Fractured World" in Sep. 2017, he wrote in a WEF statement that "Our collective inability to secure inclusive growth and preserve our scarce resources puts multiple global systems at risk simultaneously." "Our first response must be to develop new models for cooperation that are not based on narrow interests but on the destiny of humanity as a whole."

280 sessions many of them were closed door exclusive meetings, even the media is not allowed in them. As you can imagine, with that many meetings, surrounded by varying degrees of secrecy outsiders have no clue what is going on behind closed doors. The public ones, which anyone can attend are just for media hype. The closed ones; which only those participants with a white badge can attend and then the totally private ones that you don't even know have happened. Those are where the big deals are discussed, behind closed doors.

On top of that often, there are dozens of private parties by invitation from the host only, organized every day by big corporations for their clients or head of the state or its officials making a sales pitch to CEO's of big corporations to come and set up their shops in their countries. Indeed these are the most lavish and the best dinner parties in the world with world renowned music bands or stars from the entertainment industry to entertain the guest. This year's well-known participants include actors Cate Blanchett, Shah Rukh Khan and musician Paul Williams and singer Elton John and few well known music bands.

Effect on common Americans: USA is always represented at WEF carnival at Davos by the largest contingent of super rich and powerful. This year again USA ranked First with 840 participants! After 47 years of participation at WEF by the richest and most powerful of USA; 78% of the U.S. population now lives paycheck to paycheck, with essentially zero savings. CEOs, tech entrepreneurs, and other members of the "1%" are doing exceptionally great. There has never been a better time for wealthy Americans! But the truth is, for majority of Americans, the situation is getting much, much worse every year. The middle class; the most politically and economically stable part of the American society is being pushed down into upper lower class by the rich and powerful.

According to Productivity Pay tracker chart, Since 1973, pay and productivity have diverged.

Productivity has grown 5.9x more than worker's hourly pay

Change 1948-1973: Productivity +96.7% Hourly pay +91.3%

Change 1973-2016: Productivity +73.7% Hourly pay +12.5%

The income, wages, and wealth generated over the last four decades have failed to "trickle down" to the vast majority largely because policy choices made on behalf of those with the most income, wealth, and power got the 90% share that has exacerbated inequality. In essence, rising inequality has prevented potential pay growth from translating into actual pay growth for most workers. The result has been wage stagnation.

According to Economic Policy Institute, CEO compensation increased from \$1.5 million in 1978 to \$16.3 million in 2014, or 997 percent, a rise almost double stock market growth. Over the same time period, a typical worker's wages grew very little: the annual compensation, adjusted for inflation, of the average private-sector production and nonsupervisory worker (comprising 82 percent of total payroll employment) rose from \$48,000 in 1978 to just \$53,200 in 2014, an increase of only 10.9 percent. Due to this unequal growth, average top CEOs now make over 300 times what typical workers earn.

From East to West and from North to South at WEF, no one said any thing on the ongoing Israeli brutal occupation of Palestine, stealing of its land and human genocide of Palestinians since 1967. This is despite the fact that Israel is the only country in the world that is illegally occupying another country in the world. They did lip service to the rising global economic inequality, poverty and hunger; human rights and freedom of free speech violations, mistreatment of women, environmental degradation and widespread armed conflicts. No one from the elite club of the world's richest & most powerful, called for the "Re-modelling of the Capitalism" to fight all these problems in the universe.

All these years of WEF, if political leaders could not be persuaded to change their minds on basic human rights, freedom of speech, human and equal status for women, environment protection and stop to widespread armed conflicts. And if billionaires could not be persuaded to pledge money to eradicate rising economic inequality, global poverty and hunger; with the conversations and meetings they have had there, the WEF have failed miserably. So it is safe to say that, in terms of the WEF's stated commitment of "improving the state of the world," is nothing but gross misrepresentation rather pure lie.

On top of that the problem with WEF is; it is fundamentally illegitimate because it has no democratic basis whatsoever. It is not transparent because they do not open up their books to the public and they allow secret meetings that are not even open to some of the participants or televised for public or open to media scrutiny. On top of that the richest participants at the WEF have let down the humanity by allowing massive global economic inequality.

"Davos Man" phrase was originally coined by the Political scientist Samuel P. Huntington because the vast majority of WEF members were originally men; the term later expanded to include the Davos woman. Davos man/Davos woman refers to the members of the WEF a collection of leaders from a variety of fields from around the world. Huntington argued in his 2004 article "Dead Souls" The Denationalization of the American Elite" that the Davos man's view of a global identity is not shared by the majority of common citizens. He decried a post-national wealthy globe-trotting elite. "Davos Man" can be either a capitalist oppressor or a Commie conspirator. Either way, he is a windbag, a pedant, and a hypocrite.

(Source: EPI analysis of Bureau of Labor Statistics and Bureau of Economic Analysis data <https://www.epi.org/productivity-pay-gap/>)
New Jersey, US based Devendra Makkar is a social activist and author. He can be reached at davemakkar@yahoo.com

Only Voters Can Truly Disqualify Trump



BY NOAH MILLMAN

I count myself among those who consider Mr. Trump to be manifestly unfit to serve in any office ever again because of his actions on that day, even if he is not held criminally liable. But being unfit is not the same thing as being ineligible. What makes the Colorado Supreme Court - or any court - believe that it has a privileged understanding of those events that is beyond the capacity of the public to discern?

Perhaps the public is misinformed, or refuses to let itself be accurately informed, even at this late date, about what happened. The need for expertise and deliberation is why we have a representative democracy; the people do not act directly to make laws, but act through their representatives.

Intense debate has accompanied the decision by the Supreme Court to review the decision by Colorado's highest court to bar Donald Trump from the state's primary ballots based on Section 3 of the 14th Amendment - about the precise meaning of the word "insurrection," the extent of Mr. Trump's culpability for the events of Jan. 6 and other legal issues.

I'm not going to predict how the Supreme Court will rule, or whether its ruling will be persuasive to those with a different view of the law. But there's a critical philosophical question that lies beneath the legal questions in this case. In a representative democracy, the people are sovereign, and they express their sovereignty through representatives of their choice. If the courts presume to pre-emptively reject the people's choice, then who is truly sovereign?

The question of sovereignty was central to the purpose of the 14th Amendment in the first place. The Civil War - unquestionably an armed insurrection - was fought because of slavery. That was the reason for the war.

But its justification was a dispute over sovereignty, whether it resided primarily with the people of the individual states or with the people of the United States, who had established the Constitution.

The answer was settled on the battlefield, but it was ratified through the 14th Amendment, which defined who is a citizen of the United States and established that the "privileges or immunities" of same supersede any state laws that might abridge them. From now on, there would be no ambiguity: Under the Constitution, the people of the United States are sovereign, and this sovereignty supersedes the sovereignty of the people of the individual states whenever the privileges and immunities of the former are in conflict with the will of the latter.

Section 3 of that amendment was similarly enacted in order to secure federal supremacy. Rebel officers might well have retained strong popular support in the former Confederate states, but Section 3 prevented the rebellion from being continued by electoral means. The



A Trump Rally

File photo

people of South Carolina might prefer to be represented by former rebels, but the people of the United States, whose sovereignty trumps South Carolina's, forbid it.

WHOSE SOVEREIGNTY, THOUGH, TRUMPS THE PEOPLE AS A WHOLE?

Donald Trump is the overwhelming favorite to win the Republican nomination for president and has a close to even-odds chance of winning the general election. That would seem to have no bearing on his eligibility to run. If a majority of the country wanted Barack Obama or Arnold Schwarzenegger or Selena Gomez to be president, it would be out of luck. The Constitution renders them ineligible: Mr. Obama has already been elected twice, Mr. Schwarzenegger was not born a U.S. citizen and Ms. Gomez is under 35 years old.

For that very reason, though, those individuals aren't likely to run - and if they did try to run, their ineligibility would be manifest, recognized by everyone. Similarly, former Confederate officers and officials, by serving in the Confederacy, had explicitly declared themselves insurrectionists. Congress passed a broad amnesty in 1872 to lift the penalties associated with the involvement of most in insurrection, including that imposed by Section 3 of the 14th Amendment; some individuals not covered by the amnesty petitioned successfully for the restoration of their civil rights, and in other cases the prohibition was simply not enforced. But the essential fact of participation in the insurrection was not in dispute.

The situation with Mr. Trump could not be more different. An overwhelming majority of his party, and apparently about half of the country as a whole, considers him to be eligible to be president again. Moreover, these voters believe this even though, as President Biden said recently, "we saw with our own eyes" what happened on Jan. 6.

I count myself among those who consider Mr. Trump to be manifestly unfit to serve in any office ever again because of his actions on that day, even if he is not held criminally liable. But being unfit is not the same thing as being ineligible. What makes the Colorado Supreme Court - or any court - believe that it has a privileged understanding of those events that is beyond the capacity of the public to discern?

Perhaps the public is misinformed, or refuses to let itself be accurately informed, even at this late date, about what happened. The need for expertise and deliberation is why we have a representative democracy; the people do not act directly to make laws, but act through their representatives.

It's notable in that regard, then, that impeachment - the remedy the Constitution provides for a president

who violates his oath of office - does not involve the courts but the people, acting through their representatives. And the court of the people already had the opportunity to weigh in on Mr. Trump's culpability for the events of Jan. 6. He was impeached an unprecedented second time by the House of Representatives for his actions on that day. But in the trial that followed in the Senate, Mr. Trump was acquitted.

That does not mean he is innocent. But it does mean that the Colorado Supreme Court has, in effect, declared that it outranks the Senate, and can overrule that body's decision.

Some Republican senators, including the minority leader, Mitch McConnell, effectively asked the courts to do just that during the impeachment debate. Arguing that they had no authority to try a president whose term had ended, they refused to consider the facts of the case. But this was not a principled view. The Senate had already voted separately on the question of jurisdiction, and a majority determined that they did have the ability to try a president whose term had ended. Once that question was settled by the Senate itself, senators who thought Mr. Trump was guilty, including those who voted the other way on the jurisdictional question, could vote their consciences on the matter at trial.

Since the senators still voted to acquit, it must be because they did not think he was guilty, or did not deserve punishment for his guilt. Or, reflecting gross cowardice, perhaps they did not want the responsibility for convicting him, and preferred the courts to shoulder that responsibility instead.

That's precisely what the Colorado Supreme Court has decided to do. But in so doing, it has usurped the proper prerogative of the people. It is saying, in so many words, that the people's representatives got it wrong in the impeachment trial, and the people themselves are incapable of seeing what is in front of their eyes. Therefore, the court must save the people from the possibility of making a catastrophically wrong decision.

Democracy cannot be saved in this fashion, not even from the threat of a demagogue with contempt for the rule of law. It can be saved only by democratic means. If the people's representatives failed to do their duty, as they did in Mr. Trump's impeachment trial, the last line of democracy's defense is the sovereign people themselves. At the point that we cannot trust them, democracy is dead already.

(Mr. Millman has written extensively about politics, policy and culture, and is the author of the newsletter Gideon's Substack)

(Source: New York Times)

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Embassy of India Facilitates Tech Collaboration and Infrastructural Initiatives in Guatemala and El Salvador



Minister Romeo Rodríguez of Ministry of Public Works, El Salvador and Mr. Russell Alexander Luther Rodas of Laxmi Capital exchanging the signed Letter of Intent to initiate Metro Line Project in El Salvador



Presentation by representative of Bharat Electronic Limited at the Business Meet organized by Embassy of India on 12 January 2024

JANUARY 18, 2024

GUATEMALA CITY (TIP): India, under the visionary direction set by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on 3T (Tourism, Technology & Trade), has positioned itself as a formidable player in the global arena across various technological domains during last decade. In this direction, a team of Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL), a Navratna PSU under the Ministry of Defence, Government of India is currently in Guatemala to pave the way for a substantial venture in the country, focusing on a comprehensive site survey for a forthcoming 170MW solar energy project. The site survey is being designed to intricately assess and analyze potential locations that can optimally harness solar energy for efficient power generation. This thorough examination includes an in-depth analysis of solar irradiance levels, topography, weather patterns, and environmental considerations. The ambitious 170MW solar energy project is poised to make a substantial contribution to Guatemala's energy

requirements, delivering clean and sustainable power to support the nation's developmental needs. This collaborative venture underscores the commitment of the Indian government to contribute to Guatemala's economic growth, energy security, and sustainable development. Beyond being a significant stride for BEL in the renewable energy sector, this project symbolizes a milestone in Guatemala's journey towards a greener and more sustainable energy future. The presence of BEL in this significant endeavor reflects the shared vision of India and Guatemala in fostering technological advancements and addressing the global imperative of sustainable energy solutions.

India has witnessed rapid progress in electronics and telecommunications, fueled by the 'Make in India' initiative, which has boosted indigenous manufacturing and innovation. Central America recognizes the significance of advanced technologies like electronics, defense, aeronautics, and radar technology for regional development.

Local companies understand the potential of these sectors in improving connectivity, communication networks, and access to digital services, fostering economic growth, education, and healthcare. Governments emphasize enhancing defense and security infrastructure, with growing interest in aeronautics and radar technology for transportation, disaster management, and surveillance. Acknowledging these needs, the Embassy of India facilitated a Business Meet on January 12, 2024, connecting local authorities, companies, and experts in these crucial sectors.

In a concerted effort to disseminate crucial information and catalyze the advancement of indigenous technology, the Embassy proactively sought the participation of a representative from Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) to address a gathering of Guatemala companies in the sector of telecommunication, defense systems, engineering goods and security systems. Representative from Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) delivered a succinct presentation, acquainting the audience with BEL's diversified

expertise in areas such as homeland security solutions, smart cities, e-governance solutions, space electronics (including satellite integration), energy storage products (including e-vehicle charging stations and solar), network and cyber security, railways and metro solutions, airport solutions, Electronic Voting Machines, telecom products, passive night vision devices, medical electronics, composites, and software solutions. Notably, there was a keen interest among the participants, particularly inquiring about smart cities and security-related technologies.

Under the astute guidance of Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra, the Indian Ambassador to Guatemala, the Embassy of India has played an active and pivotal role in organizing such insightful events aimed at disseminating valuable technology to the host country. It has been learned that the Embassy, in collaboration with Lakshmi Capital, an Indian company, is spearheading various infrastructural projects in the region, anticipating an investment of USD 6 billion. Advanced negotiations with the Government of El Salvador have resulted in the initiation of a metro line project and the supply of 5000 buses, representing a substantial investment of USD 1 billion. A Letter of Intent has already been signed between the parties. Similar discussions are underway with the Government of Guatemala for projects such as a metro line in Guatemala City, a train line across the country, and solar power initiatives. Furthermore, the Embassy is actively engaged in progressing discussions and is on the verge of signing a Letter of Intent with the Mayor of Xela for projects encompassing cable cars, the supply of 700 buses, installation of a hydraulic turbine, and project on solid waste management. These collaborative initiatives not only bolster the growing bilateral relations between India and Guatemala but also leverage India's robust technological capabilities to fortify these ties.



Signing of Lol between COITZA and BEL for 170MW of Solar Power Project

Global Dissemination of India's Educational Transformation: The initiative of Embassy and EdCIL in Promoting the National Education Policy (NEP)



Ambassador Dr Manoj Kumar Mohapatra, underscored the significance of leveraging India's robust education system to strengthen bilateral relations

JANUARY 18, 2024

GUATEMALA CITY (TIP): The Embassy of India in Guatemala organized a seminar on January 17, 2024, centered around the theme "Leveraging the National Education Policy-2020 of India for Furthering Bilateral Educational Relations." The event saw physical participation of approx. 50 esteemed dignitaries, educational leaders and academics from Guatemala with virtual presence from El Salvador and Honduras. The seminar was focused on highlighting India's commitment to promoting international collaboration in education.

The National Education Policy (NEP) of 2020 in India marks a transformative shift in the country's education landscape, emphasizing holistic and flexible learning. Its requirements include the restructuring of curriculum frameworks, promoting multi-disciplinary studies, and fostering critical thinking skills. The NEP aims to align education with the evolving needs of the 21st century, nurturing creativity,

and encouraging a deeper understanding of subjects. Its importance lies in creating an inclusive and equitable educational system that addresses diverse learning needs. The success of the NEP is evident in its emphasis on skill development, flexibility in choosing subjects, and integrating technology into education. The Indian government committed to generate a well-educated populace contributes to economic growth, innovation, and global competitiveness. Moreover, the NEP enhances the appeal of Indian institutions, making them attractive to foreign students seeking a dynamic and forward-thinking educational environment. The emphasis on research, innovation, and global exposure positions India as an educational hub, fostering international collaboration and cultural exchange.

EdCIL (India) Limited plays a pivotal role in the successful implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) in India. As a premier government-owned consultancy organization, EdCIL is actively engaged in providing expert guidance and support in various aspects of education policy execution. Its role spans from facilitating policy advocacy to aiding in the development of educational infrastructure. EdCIL contributes to the NEP by assisting in the formulation and execution of policies related to curriculum design, teacher training, and educational technology integration. The organization's expertise in project management and educational consultancy is harnessed to ensure effective implementation at various levels of the education system. EdCIL's commitment to fostering excellence in education aligns seamlessly with the objectives of the NEP, making it an instrumental partner in reshaping and revitalizing the Indian education landscape.

The Embassy of India assumes a crucial role in disseminating the National Education Policy (NEP) globally, underscoring India's dedication to holistic and innovative education. To proficiently convey the transformative



The seminar on National Education Policy 2020 of Govt of India received an overwhelming response from the audience

changes ushered in by the NEP, the embassy relies on the expertise of EdCIL (India) Limited. EdCIL's extensive background in educational consultancy and project management positions it as a valuable collaborator in elucidating the fundamental features and advantages of the NEP to an international audience. Harnessing EdCIL's support allows the embassy to effectively communicate information about the NEP, spotlighting its progressive strategies in curriculum design, teacher training, and technology integration. EdCIL's assistance guarantees a thorough and accurate representation of the NEP's goals, contributing to a nuanced understanding of India's initiatives for educational reform on the global platform.

During the seminar, Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra, the Ambassador of India to Guatemala in his welcome address, underscored the rapidly growing bilateral relations between India and Guatemala and the significance of leveraging India's robust education system to strengthen bilateral relations. He extended a warm invitation to Guatemalan students to explore the diverse educational opportunities available in India. Mr. Manoj Kumar, Chairman & Managing Director (CMD) of EdCIL (India), presented the Opening Remarks, emphasizing the transformative aspects of India's

National Education Policy-2020. He highlighted the adaptability of the Indian education system to modern trends while maintaining its cultural roots. Mr. Kumar also discussed the collaborative efforts needed to enhance educational ties between the two nations. The President of CEPS - Council of Private Higher Education in Guatemala, M.A. Walter Ramiro Mazariegos Biolis, addressed the gathering, expressing his support for strengthened educational partnerships. President Biolis assured the collaboration of Guatemalan universities and academic institutions, as well as government bodies, to facilitate a seamless exchange of students and ideas between the two countries. Dr. B Chandrasekhar, Executive Director (ED) of EdCIL (India), delivered a comprehensive presentation highlighting the unique features of the Indian education system. Dr. Chandrasekhar discussed the emphasis on inclusivity, affordability, and quality in Indian education, making it an attractive option for international students. He encouraged collaboration in research and academic programs between Indian and Guatemalan institutions.

The Embassy will host a meeting involving the Rector of San Carlos University, Guatemala, and EdCIL in the first week of February 2024 to delve deeper into the potential impact of the National Education Policy on enhancing the education system in Guatemala. Embassy further extended an open invitation to foreign students, including those from Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras, to explore the rich tapestry of educational opportunities in India, shaped by its ancient traditions and modern advancements. India welcomes students from around the world to embark on a transformative journey of learning and personal growth within its diverse and vibrant academic landscape.



Participants from Guatemala during the Seminar



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Maldives Foreign Minister Moosa Zameer during a meeting in Kampala on Thursday, January 18. PTI

EAM S Jaishankar takes up pullout of troops with Maldives

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Thursday, January 18, held a “frank conversation” with his Maldivian counterpart Moosa Zameer in Kampala, days after Maldives’ President Mohamed Muizzu asked India to withdraw all the Indian military personnel from the island nation by March 15.

Zameer said the ongoing “high-level discussions” on the withdrawal of Indian military personnel figured in his talks with Jaishankar, adding Male is committed to further strengthening and expanding bilateral cooperation. The meeting between the two ministers took place on the sidelines of a ministerial meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in the Ugandan capital.

12 students, 2 teachers die as boat capsizes in Gujarat’s Vadodara

VADODARA (TIP)

At least 14 people – 12 schoolchildren and two teachers – were killed after a seemingly overcrowded boat carrying a school group on a picnic overturned into the Harni lake in Gujarat’s Vadodara on Thursday, January 18, evening, local officials said.

Rescuers from National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) looked for survivors and bodies late into the evening as darkness fell, with 13 children having been rescued.

Initial investigations suggested that the boat was loaded far beyond its capacity and that there were no life-jackets on board, senior government officials said.

“The incident took place around 5pm when children from New Sunrise School located on Waghodia Road in Vadodara were out for a picnic. The children were from Class 1 to Class 6. The maximum capacity of the boat is around 14 passengers, but more than 31 people were crammed on it at the time of the accident besides the four operators,” local officials, who did not wish to be identified, said. Videos taken shortly after the incident showed rescuers on inflatable boats trying to guide at least half a dozen divers look for survivors or bodies.

The lake was re-developed by the Vadodara civic body for recreational purposes. This is the deadliest boating accident in the city since August 11, 1993, when 22 people were killed after an overloaded boat capsized in the Sursagar lake, which is also maintained by the Vadodara civic body.

A first information report, or FIR, has been filed against five individuals, including the promoters of the company operating the boats. The state government has also initiated a high-level inquiry into the matter, to be headed by the Vadodara district magistrate. A comprehensive report is to be filed within the next 10 days in this regard.

The contract for operating the boat was with a firm called



The boat being fished out from the Harni lake in Vadodara. PTI

Sri Kotiya Project, which was promoted by a person named Paresah Shah, Anupam Singh Gahlaut, commissioner of police, Vadodara said. “We have booked the owners of the boat and its management under various sections, including section 304 of the Indian Penal Code (punishment for culpable homicide not amounting to murder),” Gahlaut said.

“So far, we have recovered 12 bodies of schoolchildren and two of teachers... NDRF officials and others are still carrying out search operations. The water level is about 25 feet deep. The students had gone on the boat in batches and the accident happened with the final batch. There were 27 students, four teachers and four operators in the boat that sank,” said Gahlaut, adding that based on early estimates, all students appeared to be accounted for. An investigation has been initiated into the incident, Gahlaut said, adding that while their immediate focus was on rescue efforts, they will also probe the role of the school management for negligence.

Five Manipur civilians die in fresh clashes

GUWAHATI (TIP)

Five civilians were killed and three Border Security Force (BSF) personnel were injured in fresh violence that spread through several districts in Manipur on Wednesday, January 17, night and Thursday morning. This comes a day after two police personnel were killed and six others injured in an attack by armed militants in Tengenpual on Wednesday morning, taking the toll over the two days to seven dead and nine injured. Across Thursday, there were violent protests in several parts of the state that continued to be tense, with security personnel and the administration struggling to put a lid on violence that has now lasted eight months.

Senior police officials confirmed that in Bishnupur district, four people, all Meiteis, were killed by armed miscreants at Ningthong Kha Khunou around 2pm on Thursday. The deceased have been identified as Ningthoujam Nabadeep (40), Oinam Bamonjao (63), Oinam Maniomba (37) and Thiyam Somen (56). “Four persons were killed in an attack by armed miscreants on Thursday afternoon. We have managed to recover all the bodies and sent them to Regional Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS) in Imphal for postmortem and other formalities,” Meghachandra Singh, Bishnupur superintendent of police said.

The four killed were reportedly tilling a farm when they came under attack, and after the deaths, there were protests that erupted in several places in parts of the



Imphal Valley. In a separate incident earlier in the morning, a gunfight broke out between armed village volunteers at Kangchup in Imphal West district, where a 23-year-old identified as Takhelambam Manoranjan, a Meitei, was killed.

Since May 2023, Manipur has been in the throes of ethnic violence between the majority Meitei community and the tribal Kukis, with other communities increasingly sucked into the violence that has continued unabated. Over the past eight months, at least 207 people have lost their lives, and over 50,000 people have been displaced. The fallout of the long-running ethnic hostilities has meant that the Meiteis, who live largely in the plains of the Imphal valley, and the Kukis, who predominantly live in the hills, have withdrawn to their respective strongholds. In response, security forces have

created buffer zones in different border districts, which have also been divided on ethnic lines. They have also set up camps and are posted on the highway to ensure that the groups remain separated, do not enter each other’s districts, and trigger violence. But often, militants from both groups use the hills and the jungle area to cross into other districts and attack each other, according to security officials. The sweeping ethnic violence has also led to the creation of community based armed defence volunteers, underlining how faultlines have deepened beyond the Meitei-Kuki divide, pitting different communities and groups against each other.

Thursday’s incidents come after a violent Wednesday night, when three BSF personnel sustained bullet injuries after a mob attacked security forces and police installations in Thoubal. “An irate mob targeted the 3rd Indian Reserve Battalion (IRB) in Khangabok, Thoubal district. Security forces repelled them using minimum necessary force,” said a statement issued by Manipur Police around 1am on Thursday.

The statement added that the mob attempted to breach Thoubal police headquarters and that armed miscreants from among the mob fired with live rounds. “As a result, three personnel from BSF sustained bullet injuries namely constable Gourav Kumar, ASI Sobram Singh, and ASI Ramji. The injured security forces have been evacuated to Raj Medicity for treatment,” the statement said.

Source: HT



Trinamool's Mahua Moitra vacates Delhi bungalow days after eviction notice

Trinamool Congress leader Mahua Moitra vacated her government-allotted Delhi bungalow on Friday, January 19. Moitra, who was expelled as a Lok Sabha MP in December last year, had received an eviction notice from the Directorate of Estates (DoE) on Tuesday.

According to Mahua Moitra's representative, she had fully vacated the bungalow by 10 am on Friday morning and the possession was handed over by her lawyers to the Directorate of Estates.

On January 18, Moitra failed to get any relief from the Delhi High Court, which refused to stay the DoE notice and asked her to vacate the government bungalow.

Justice Girish Kathpalia said no specific rule had been brought before the court which dealt with the eviction of MPs from government accommodation after they cease to be lawmakers.

Moitra was expelled from Lok Sabha after an ethics panel held her guilty of "unethical conduct" for allegedly accepting gifts from businessman Darshan Hiranandani and sharing her user ID and password of the Parliament website with him.

The panel had initiated a probe based on a complaint filed by BJP MP Nishikant Dubey who accused Moitra of asking questions in the Lok Sabha to target the Adani Group and Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the behest of businessman Darshan Hiranandani in exchange for gifts.

Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal refuses to appear before ED, says BJP targeting him ahead of polls

NEW DELHI (TIP)

Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday, January 18, skipped summons from the Enforcement Directorate, calling them illegal, and alleging they were part of a conspiracy to stop him from campaigning for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

Later in the afternoon, he left for Goa, where he is assessing the Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP's) preparedness in the state for the general elections.

ED had asked Kejriwal, who is also the AAP national convenor, to appear before it in connection with its money laundering probe into alleged irregularities in Delhi's 2021-22 excise policy. This was the fourth time Kejriwal skipped summons by ED — he previously failed to appear before the agency on November 2, on December 22, and on January 3.

Kejriwal and his party have repeatedly objected to the summons saying it is not clear whether he was asked to appear as a witness or suspect; as chief minister or as AAP chief; and that the agency has not made available any details of its line of questioning.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), meanwhile, accused Kejriwal of "evasive behaviour".

In response to a question about the summons, he said, "ED sent me fourth notice asking me to appear on January 18 or 19. All the four summonses are illegal and invalid. Different courts have termed such general, non-specific ED summons illegal and have quashed them. I have written to ED multiple times on why the ED notices are illegal, but ED has not responded." Alleging that the notices are part of a political conspiracy, Kejriwal added, "The probe (in the excise case) is going on for two years, but they have found nothing. The courts have asked them how much money was recovered and what other things such as cash, gold were recovered... Two months before Lok Sabha polls, I have been summoned. BJP leaders are saying that I will be arrested. How the BJP knows that I will be arrested? It is because the BJP is running ED... The purpose of the summons is to arrest me before polls and stop me from campaigning."

People aware of the matter said Kejriwal was also upset by the language used by ED in a communication dated January 12, that was addressed to the chief minister.

According to the people, Kejriwal objected to the use of the phrases "excuse", "extraneous reasons", "camouflage your real motive", and "intentionally disobeying your summons" in the ED communication, and in response, wrote to the central



agency, stating that its "bias and prejudice against me are apparent from various innuendos hurled at me".

AAP has accused ED of dropping or stalling investigations of leaders the moment they become associated with BJP.

Claiming that the agency was acting in a "blatantly biased" manner, a senior party official, on condition of anonymity, said, "Narayan Rane was being investigated by ED in a ₹300 crore money laundering case. After joining BJP in 2019, no raids or further investigation has taken place."

Meanwhile, the BJP accused Kejriwal of making excuses to skip the ED summons.

"Kejriwal may make excuses, but he will have to honour the ED summons and the law will take its course. Kejriwal has to answer a lot of questions related to the excise policy," said Delhi BJP secretary Harish Khurana.

ED likely to issue 5th summons to Kejriwal

With Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal skipping his fourth summons in connection with a money laundering probe stemming from the investigation into alleged irregularities in the Delhi excise police 2021-22, Enforcement Directorate (ED) officials said their case is now left in limbo, even as they are deliberating on their next steps. People familiar with the developments said a fresh, fifth summon is likely to be issued to Kejriwal, but a call on the same is yet to be taken. "A call is yet to be taken on the next steps. But the Delhi CM has once again disregarded our summons to join investigations," said an officer, who didn't want to be named.

Source: HT

Assam Police file case against Rahul Gandhi-led Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra

JORHAT (TIP)

An FIR has been lodged against the 'Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra' and its chief organizer KB Byju for reportedly straying from the approved route within Jorhat town, Assam, on Thursday, January 18, PTI reported citing police sources.

According to an official statement, the march took an unauthorized direction in the town, deviating from the permitted KB Road route, causing a "chaotic situation" in the area.

"Some people fell due to the sudden rush of people and a stampede-like situation was created. A suo motu FIR has been registered at Jorhat Sadar Police Station against the Yatra and its chief organiser," he added.

As per the official, the FIR states that the Yatra failed to adhere to the norms set by the district administration and violated road safety regulations. In response, Leader of the Opposition Debabrata Saikia informed PTI that the FIR is a strategic move aimed at generating unwarranted obstacles for the



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi waves as he leads the party's 'Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra', in Jorhat on Thursday, January 18.

Yatra.

"There was no police manning the traffic diversion at the PWD point. The assigned route was too small and we had a huge gathering. So, we took a detour for

just a few metres. Himanta Biswa Sarma is scared of the Yatra's success on the first day (in Assam) and now wants to derail it," he added.

Furthermore, Congress' Bharat Jodo Nyaya Yatra reached Assam's Majuli. Party leader Jairam Ramesh said, "No rules have been broken. Assam Chief Minister is making all attempts to stop people from joining the Bharat Jodo Nyaya Yatra. No one can stop this yatra. We are in Assam for the next 7 years. Let them arrest us, we accept the challenge."

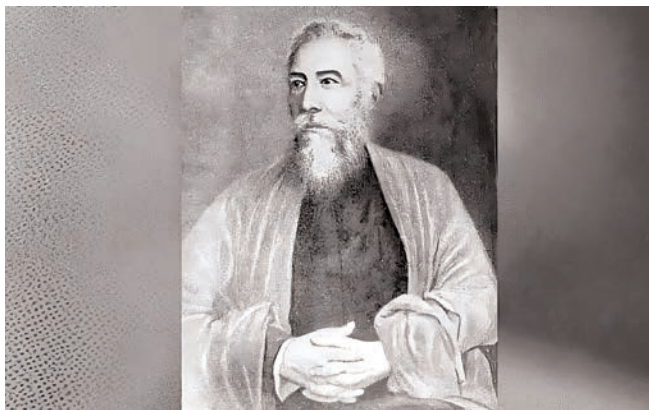
Meanwhile, Rahul Gandhi in a post on X said, "The Chief Minister of Assam is the most corrupt Chief Minister of India, whose only work is to loot public money under the guise of hatred."

The Assam segment of the march is scheduled to persist until January 25, covering a distance of 833 km across 17 districts. The Yatra, under the leadership of the Congress MP, began its journey from Manipur on January 14 and is slated to conclude on March 20 in Mumbai.

India in history this Week

JANUARY 19 TO JANUARY 25

19 JANUARY



1905 Devendranath Tagore Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore's father and Indian thinker, died.



1905 Rajneesh, popularly known as Osho, died in Pune.



1966 On this day, the Congress Party chose Indira Gandhi as its leader for the post of Prime Minister of India. Indira Gandhi was the only daughter of India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru.

20 JANUARY

Abdul Ghaffar Khan, the greatest activist of Pashtun independence and called Frontier Gandhi, passed away.



1817 Hindu college was established in Calcutta (now Kolkata).



1945 National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, who is considered the master mind of surgical strike, was born.

21 JANUARY

2008 India successfully launched an spy satellite of Israel and installed it in Polar Orbit.

1958 Copyright Act enacted.



1945 Renowned lawyer and freedom fighter Ras Bihari Bose died.

22 JANUARY

1965 Steel factory started in Durgapur, West Bengal.

1966 Mughal emperor Shah Jahan died.

1963 The National Library for the Blind was established in 1963 in Dehradun.

23 JANUARY

1897 India's freedom fighter Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose was born in Cuttack, Odisha.



1926 Bal Thackeray, Indian politician and founder of Shiv Sena was born.

1966 Indira Gandhi became the third Prime Minister of India.

1977 Janata Party was formed.

2009 The ban on smoking scenes in film and television programs is over.

24 JANUARY

1950 On this day, the Constituent Assembly elected the first President of the country. Apart from this, the National Anthem was adopted by the Constituent Assembly on 24 January 1950.



1966 Air India's Boeing 707 crashes near the summit of Monblaw in the hills of the Alps. 117 people died in it.

1950 Jana Gana Mana was accepted as the national anthem.

1857 University of Calcutta was established.



1950 Dr. Rajendra Prasad became the first President of independent India.

1951 Prem Mathur became India's first female commercial pilot in 1951.

1952 The first International Film Festival was held in Bombay in 1952.

2002 The Indian satellite INSAT-3C successfully orbited in 2002.

25 JANUARY

1971 Himachal Pradesh came into existence as a state.

1980 The Indian Brahmo Samaj was started in 1880 by the famous social reformer Keshav Chandra Sen.

1980 After a gap of three years, in 1980, Padma Vibhushan, Bharat Ratna, etc. civil honors started being awarded again.

1980 The famous philanthropist Mother Teresa was awarded the Bharat Ratna in 1980.

2002 In 2002, Arjan Singh became the first Air Marshal of the Indian Air Force.





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Architecture of Ram Mandir Ayodhya

By Dr. Ujjwala Anand Palsuley

After a struggle of around 500 years, finally, our generation is fortunate to see the expedited process of the temple construction of Shri Ram Mandir at the birthplace of Maryadapurushottam Prabhu Shri Ram. In modern times, with the contribution of scholars like Senior Archaeologist B. B. Lal., K.K. Mohammad, and others, one could consolidate the traces of earlier temple remains. The image of the current temple was released somewhere in the 1980s while progressing the long ongoing movement of temple construction.

The original design for Ram Mandir was devised in 1988 by the Sompura family of Ahmedabad headed by Chandrakant Sompura who is the chief architect of the temple assisted by his two sons, Nikhil Sompura and Ashish Sompura. These Sompuras have contributed to the design of over 100 temples worldwide for at least 15 generations, including the Somnath temple.

The question raised by many people about the 'design' of the Ram temple. There are many assumptions made by people and 'opinions' are available widely. The hypothesis of many is that Shri Ram mandir at Ayodhya is made to look like Somnath temple, in Gujarat. Both these temples have a special place in the hearts of the people. Both of these are hundreds of kilometers away and were constructed after independence in 1947 to reinstate the pride of Hindus and mark the epitome of Hindu beliefs.

However, there is a logical explanation about the architectural style selected for these temples, and also there is a reason why these two are similar. These reasons are beyond their current political patronage.

This article attempts to describe the architectural style of the new Ram temple and its nuances. It gives a detailed account of the religious and architectural continuity of heritage in this region.

1. Spiritual significance of Ayodhya

The Sapta Puri (seven cities) are a group of seven Hindu tirtha, or holy pilgrimage sites, located in India. Pilgrimage to these sites is said to bless the pilgrim with moksha (liberation from the cycle of birth and death).

So Ayodhya is the first out of 7 important places for Hindus for spiritual liberation. Every Hindu wishes to visit these seven cities in their lifetime even in modern times.

Ayodhya is the place where Shri Rama was born. The modern town is located on the banks of river Sharayu. There are over 100 temples in this town, a few of these are the Temple of Rama and his wife Sita, called the Kanak Bhavan; the Hanuman temple called the Hanuman Garhi on top of a hill where, apart from a Hanuman statue in a sitting posture, there is also a 6 inches (15 cm) tall image of Hanuman always bedecked by flowers; the Kshireswaranath temple of Sita,



Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Mandir construction work. (Twitter/@ShriRamTeerth)

established by Kausalya, Rama's mother. In addition, there are several kunds and ghats with linkage to characters; such as the Brahma kund built in honor of Brahma's visit here, Sita kund, Bharat kund, Lakshman ghat where Lakshman, Rama's brother took a bath, Rama ghat (also called Swargadwar meaning gateway to heaven).

2. History of the region of Ayodhya

Ayodhya, meaning unconquerable, has been part of India's oral history through its epic- Ramayana, which was the capital of the legendary Ikshvaku kings of Kosala, including Rama. 6 According to the Ramayana, Ayodhya was founded by Manu, the progenitor of mankind, and measured 12x3 yojanas in area. 7 Both Ramayana and Mahabharata describe Ayodhya as the capital of the Ikshvaku dynasty of Kosala, including Rama and Dasharatha. The Purana-Pancha-Lakshana also describes the city as the capital of Ikshvaku kings, including Harishchandra.

Buddhist Pali literature like Samyutta Nikaya and the Vinaya Pitaka mentions this city named Saketa near Shravasti which is believed to be the city of Ayodhya. Jain Prakrit-language texts mention this city called Saketa (Sageya or Saeya in Prakrit) as an important city of the Kosala Mahajanapada. Fourth century onwards, multiple texts, including Kalidasa's Raghuvamsha, mention Ayodhya as another name for Saketa.

The later Jain canonical text Jambudvipa-Pannati describes a city called Viniya as the birthplace of Lord Rishabhanatha, and associates this city with Bharata Chakravartin; the Kalpa-Sutra describes Ikkhagabhumi as the birthplace of Rishabhadev. The index on the Jain text Paumachariya clarifies that Aojjha (Aodhya), Kosala-puri ("Kosala city"), Viniya, and Saeya (Saketa) are synonyms. The post-Canonical Jain texts also mention "Aojjha". For example, the Avassagacurni describes it as the principal city of Kosala, while the Avassaganijjuttu names it as the capital of Sagara Chakravartin. The Samyutta Nikaya and Anguttara Nikaya mention that Buddha resided at Saketa at times. The early Jain canonical texts (such as Antagada-dasao, Anuttarovavaiya-dasao, and Vivagasuya) state that Mahavira visited Saketa; Nayadhammakahao states that Parshvanatha also visited Saketa. The Jain texts, both canonical and post-canonical, describe Ayodhya as the location of various shrines, such as those of snake, yaksha Pasamiya, Muni Suvratasvamin, and Surappia.

Archaeological and literary evidence suggests that the site of present-day Ayodhya had developed into an urban settlement by the 5th or 6th century BC. The site is identified as the location of the ancient Saketa city, which probably emerged as a trade center located at the junction of the two important roads, the Shravasti-Pratishthana north-south road, and the Rajagriha-Varanasi-

Shravasti-Taxila east-west road. As a busy town frequented by travelers, it appears to have become important for preachers such as Gautama Buddha and Mahavira.

It continued to be an important center during the Maurya rule and was part of the Magadha Empire. Excavations at Ayodhya have resulted in the discovery of a large brick wall, identified as a fortification wall by archaeologist B. B. Lal. This wall was probably erected in the last quarter of the third century BC. After the decline of the Maurya empire, Saketa appears to have come under the rule of Pushyamitra Shunga. The first-century BC inscription of Dhanadeva suggests that he appointed a governor there. The Yuga Purana mentions Saketa as the residence of a governor and describes it as being attacked by a combined force of Greeks, Mathuras, and Panchalas. Patanjali's commentary on Panini also refers to the Greek siege of Saketa.

The Vayu Purana and the Brahmanda Purana also state that seven powerful kings ruled in the capital of Kosala. The historicity of these kings is attested by the discovery of the coins of the Deva dynasty kings, including Dhanadeva, whose inscription describes him as the king of Kosala (Kosaladhipati). The east-west route connecting Pataliputra to Taxila, which earlier passed through Saketa and Shravasti, appears to have shifted southwards during this period, now passing through Saketa,

Ahichhatra, and Kanyakubja.

After the Deva kings, Saketa appears to have been ruled by the Datta, Kushan, and Mitra kings, although the chronological order of their rule is uncertain. Historian Bakker theorizes that the Dattas succeeded the Deva kings in the mid-1st century AD, and their kingdom was annexed to the Kushan Empire by Kanishka. Saketa appears to have remained a prosperous town during the Kushan rule. Before or after the Kushans, Saketa appears to have been ruled by a dynasty of kings whose names end in "-Mitra", and whose coins have been found at Ayodhya. They may have been members of a local dynasty that was distinct from the Mitra dynasty of Mathura. These kings are attested only by their coinage: Sangha-mitra, Vijaya-mitra, Satya-mitra, Deva-mitra, and Arya-Mitra; coins of Kumuda-sena and Aja-varman have also been discovered.

Later, an important development during the Gupta time was the recognition of Saketa as the legendary city of Ayodhya. The 436 AD Karamdanda (Karmdand) inscription, issued during the reign of Kumaragupta-I, names Ayodhya as the capital of the Kosala province, and records commander Prithvisena's offerings to Brahmins from Ayodhya. Later, the capital of the Gupta Empire was moved from Pataliputra to Ayodhya. Paramartha states that King Vikramaditya moved the royal court to Ayodhya. Xuanzang also corroborates this, stating that this king moved the court to the "country of Shravasti", that is, Kosala. A local oral tradition of Ayodhya, first recorded in writing by Robert Montgomery Martin in 1838, mentions that the city was deserted after the death of Rama's descendant Brihadbala. The city remained deserted until King Vikrama of Ujjain came searching for it, and re-established it. He cut down the forests that had covered the ancient ruins, erected the Ramgarh fort, and built 360 temples.

After the fall of Harsha's empire, Ayodhya appears to have been variously controlled by local kings and the rulers of Kannauj, including Yashovarman and the Gurjara-Pratiharas. Archaeological evidence including images of Vishnu, Jain Tirthankaras, Ganesha, the Sapta Matrikas, and a Buddhist stupa suggests that the religious activity in the area continued during this period. The latest remains of the temples, idols, and symbols found on site, are majorly from the Gurjara-Pratihara period in Ayodhya.

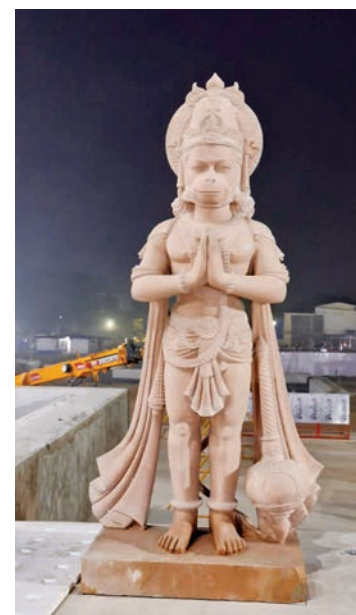
This gives a brief justification of the architectural style selected for the new temple to be constructed at Ayodhya at Ram Janmbhoomi.

3. Gurjara-Pratihara Dynasty

The Gurjara-Pratihara was a dynasty that ruled much of Northern India from the mid-8th to the 11th century. They ruled first at Ujjain and later at Kannauj. The Gurjara-Pratiharas were instrumental in controlling Arab armies moving east of the Indus River. Nagabhata-I (730-760 AD) defeated the Arab army which attacked India under Junaid and Tamin. In the Gwalior



Divya Darshans of Shri Ram Lalla, along with his brothers at Shri Ram Janmbhoomi, Ayodhya. (Twitter/@ShriRamTeerth)



Idols of elephant, lion, Hanuman Ji & Garuda have been installed at the entrance gate of Shri Ram Janmbhoomi Mandir. These have been sculpted from pink sandstone sourced from Rajasthan's Bansi Paharpur village. (Twitter/@ShriRamTeerth)

inscription, it is recorded that Gurjara-Pratihara emperor Nagabhata "crushed the large army of the powerful Mlechcha king." Kannauj became the center of the Gurjara-Pratihara state, which covered much of northern India during the peak of their power; c. 836-910.

Some temples made by Pratihara kings are Teli-ka Temple in Gwalior Fort, Bateshwar Temples Morena and Osian Jain Temple near Jodhpur.

4. Brief about the Maru Gurjara style of temple architecture in India

Maru-Gurjara architecture or Solaki style is the style of West Indian temple architecture that originated in Gujarat and Rajasthan from the 11th to 13th centuries, under the Chaulukya dynasty also called Solaki dynasty. The ancient name of Rajasthan was Marudesh while Gujarat was called Gurjaratra. The term "Maru-Gurjara" was coined by art and architectural historian Madhusudan

Dhaky, who also coined the terms "Surara", "Maha-Maru", and "Maha-Gurjara" to describe other historical styles of Western Indian architecture. The Maru-Gurjara style is a synthesis of the Maha-Maru style of Marwar region in Rajasthan and the Maha-Gurjara style of Gujarat.

Although originating as a regional style in Hindu temple architecture, it became an especially popular temple style and mainly under Jain patronage later spread across India, then later to diaspora communities around the world. The style developed from that of the dynasties preceding the Solankis, mainly the Gurjara-Pratihara dynasty, and the local dynasties under it. Many of the broad features of this earlier style are continued in the Maru-Gurjara style.

The beginnings of the new style can be seen in the small Ambika Mata temple in Jagat, Rajasthan. The earliest inscription here records a repair in 961

which was well before the Solankis came to power.

This style of temple architecture is another form of the Nagar style of architecture preceding to this like the Chandela temples of Khajuraho. As per George Mitchell, in the Jagat temple (and others he names) "the Pratihara style was fully evolved in its Western Indian expression". The main temple characteristic of these temples is that the shikhara has a curvilinear shape. In later examples, free-standing Kirti-Toranas and a Kunda or a temple tank could be found at the front of the temples. It started as a regional form but soon acquired supra-regional dimensions.

The Maru-Gurjara temples have 3 divisions in their elevation, namely, The pitha, The main hall called mandovara, and the shikhara. The whole temple stands on a khara-sila which is similar to the Jagati of the other Nagar temples.

The mandovara is the temple wall of the Maru-Gurjara temples. It has 3 main sections, namely, The vedhi-bandha is a series of binding moldings around the main portion of the wall, The Jangha is the main part of the wall, and the varandika is the series of moldings in the form of cornices. The varandika is finally topped by a projecting sun shade in the shape of ribbed tiles, known as khurachadya.

Shikhara-At the base of the shikhara is the rathika bearing an image of a deity. The curvilinear shikhara is topped by a massive amalaka over which rests the candrika (capstone) and kalasha.

Gudha-mandapa: The roof of the mandapa is either the phamsana (stepped-pyramidal) or samvarana (bell roof).

The tangled carvings on the walls of the temples demonstrate that the art of sculpture had attained its height. The heavy carvings on the ceilings of the Mandapa create a distinctive style of these temples. The decorative themes include lines of horse riders, elephants, and kirttimukhas. No surface is left undecorated. The heavy sculptural treatment of the architecture indicates a link between Maru-Gurjara architecture.

A few of the earlier temple made by the Maru-Gurjara dynasty are:

The Somnath temple, dedicated to Shiva, was the most famous in Gujarat but was very largely destroyed by the Ghaznavid ruler Mahmud in a raid in 1024-1025 CE. It was then rebuilt but sacked again when the Delhi Sultanate conquered the area at the end of the 13th century. The ruins have recently been restored and rebuilt in what is intended as the Solanki style.

The Sun Temple, Modhera, Gujarat, was built in 1026-27 CE, just after Mahmud Gazni's raid. The shikhara is now missing, but the lower levels are well-preserved, and there is a large step well tank of the same period in front of the temple. There is a large detached mandapa between the main sanctuary building and the tank, which is slightly later. The carving of all parts is extremely luxuriant and exquisitely refined in the rendering of detail.

This style of architecture is also adopted by many Jain temples in Gujarat and Rajasthan and has been followed till today. A few famous temples are Dilwara Temple at Mount Abu, The Ajitanatha Temple, the largest and earliest of the cluster of Taranga Jain temples, constructed in 1161, Kumbharia Jain temples- a complex of five Jain temples in Kumbhariya, Banaskantha district built between 1062 - 1231 CE, the Bhadreswar Jain Temple, constructed in 1248, The clustered group of Girnar Jain temples constructed from 1128, 1231, 1453 and another 15th-century. Many of these temples are destroyed during Islamic invasions.

5. Ram Mandir at Ayodhya

The original design for Ram Mandir was planned in 1988 by the Sompura family of Ahmedabad. However, it went through certain changes in 2020, including the Vastu shastra and the Shilpa shastras. The Sompuras have contributed to the design of over 100



temples worldwide for at least 15 generations, including the Somnath temple.

Salient Features of Shri Ram Mandir

The Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Temple construction is managed wholly by the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust. The estimated cost of the temple's construction is expected to range between Rs 1,400 crore to Rs 1,800 crore.

Architecture of Main Temple

The Ram Mandir in Ayodhya is designed in traditional Nagar architectural style with a Maru Gujarat sub-style. The temples are built with stone or brick on a square or rectangular plane with shikhara located in the center. In this architectural style, the temple is surrounded by small towers called Mukha Mandapa.

A few facts stated by the trust are

The temple is in the traditional Nagar style. The temple has a length (east-west) of 380 feet, a width of 250 feet, and a height of 161 feet. It is three-storied, with each floor being 20 feet tall. There will be a total of 392 pillars and 44 gates in the temple.

The Garbha-griha will have a Ram Lalla, in a child form. Shri Ram Darbar will be housed on the first floor. Five mandaps will adorn the temple-Nritya mandapa, Ranga mandapa, Sabha Mandapa, Prarthana mandapa and Kirtana mandapa.

All the pillars and walls of the temple are decorated with statues and sculptures of gods, goddesses, and other figurines very peculiar feature of the Maru Gurjara style of Temple architecture.

Temple is housed on a high platform i.e. Jagati. Entry to the temple is from the East side and there will be a flight of 32 steps, the name of the main entry is Sinhadwar. The temple is universally accessible to make sure that even the elderly and physically challenged will be taken care of.

The prakara or the enclosure wall around the temple is square with each side measuring 732 m and the width of



With the installation of Golden Doors in the Garbhagriha of Bhagwan Shri Ramlalla Sarkar, installation work of all golden doors on the ground floor stands completed. (Twitter/@ShriRamTeerth)

this is 14 feet. The four corners will have four temples of the deity Sun, Bhagawati, Ganapati, and Shiva. On the northern side of the complex is Annapoorna goddess's temple. And the southern side will have the Hanuman temple. Sita kund is also part of the complex, which also has a mythological significance.

The temple complex will also have temples dedicated to Valmiki, Vasishtha, Vishwakarma, Agastya, and Shabri along with Devi Ahilya. The ancient temple of Shiva which was on site already been renovated with Navratna Kuber Tile in the southwestern part and a statue of Jatayu is also been installed there.

The temple is constructed using all the modern scientific knowledge of services and support systems keeping the material authentic and traditional Indian material used for temples in India. It is said that the stone is brought from Bundelkhanda, granite from Karnataka, Marble from Makrana, Balua stone from Bharatpur, timber for doors from Ballarsha, masons for carving from Hyderabad, masons from Tamilnadu, and Odisha. The inclusion of soil from Thailand in the consecration ceremony symbolizes a global recognition of Lord Rama's legacy. It transcends geographical boundaries, reinforcing the

universal appeal of Ayodhya as a spiritual center.

The temple is constructed using traditional Indian materials, using indigenous technology, however, special attention is given to the environment and water conservation.

In conclusion, along with being a testament to religious faith, Shri Ram Mandir stands as an architectural marvel. The temple, with its rich symbolism and cultural resonance, stands as to endure legacy of Rama and the collective spirit of the devotees involved in its creation. The temple architecture truly justifies the style of architecture of the archaeological findings as well as the following temples constructed during the period from the 7th to 11th century which is also a significant timeframe when other eminent temples were constructed by Maru Gurjara kings in the region.

As a living spiritual heritage of India, the temple endures the legacy of Shri Rama. This temple will go a long way in making Ayodhya the spiritual capital of India.

(The author is amongst others a Conservationist, Ph. D. in Dravidian and Khmer temple Architecture, Cambodia and Founder of Samrachana - Heritage Conservation & Research Initiative, Pune.)

Ram Lalla idol installed in sanctum sanctorum

As part of the elaborate rituals leading up to the Pran Pratishtha ceremony to be held on January 22, the idol of Ram Lalla was placed in the 'Garbha Griha' of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya on Thursday, January 18, amid joyous chants of 'Jai Shri Ram.'

The statue of Ram Lalla sculpted by Karnataka sculptor Arun Yogiraj has been selected for installation at Ram Temple.

The 'parisar praves' (temple entry) of the idol of infant god Ram, or Ram Lalla, took place in Ayodhya on Wednesday, January 17, the second day of the weeklong rituals in the run up to the January 22 consecration ceremony that will be presided over by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The 51-inch idol was brought on an open truck from Vivek Srishti Trust, an International Yoga and Meditation Institute, where it was carved by renowned sculptor Arun Yogiraj of Karnataka, to the sanctum sanctorum of the Ram Temple amid chants of "Jai Shri Ram" by devotees.

The idol was covered throughout the 10-km journey.

Before reaching the temple site, the vehicle also stopped at the historic Hanuman Garhi temple (Lord Hanuman is considered the protector of Ayodhya). Seven women performed 'kalash puja' on the bank of the Saryu, collecting water from the river in copper pitchers and taking them to the Ram Mandir.

Anil Mishra, member of the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust and the jajman (host) of the seven-day long rituals, joined the women in the ritual. This water will be used to bathe the deity.

A second silver idol of Ram Lalla was taken around the temple campus for 'parisar bhraman'. This small idol, placed in a flower palanquin, was created as a substitute for the new idol to perform Vedic rituals and was carried by temple priests.

"As the new idol weighs 150kg, it will not be feasible to relocate/shift it several times during the 'pran pratishtha' ceremony. So, as a substitute, a small silver idol has been prepared. If required during the ceremony, this silver idol will be shifted to perform vedic rituals," said office bearers of the Trust.

This smaller idol will also be seated in the sanctum sanctorum of the Ram Temple. According to the Trust, the Vedic rituals of worshipping 16 pillars and four gates of the Yagya Mandap of the temple were performed.

Meanwhile, Ram Mandir Construction Committee Chairman Nripendra Mishra has said that the construction of the sanctum sanctorum is complete. "The temple of Ram Lalla will have 'garbhagriha (sanctum sanctorum)', five mandaps and that temple will be on the ground floor. That temple is complete," he told ANI.

Quiet flows the Saryu as 'Sabke Ram' towers over Ayodhya

In line with the 'Sabke Ram' philosophy reflecting the universality of devotion to Lord Ram, Ayodhya continues its centuries-old bond with amity, the crowning glory of which is set to be the Pran Pratishtha (consecration ceremony) here on January 22.

Even the turbulence of the 'Mandir Andolan' during the late 1980s and early 1990s could not melt the ties between Hindus and Muslims of Ayodhya who have lived together for centuries in the erstwhile capital of Awadh, known for its cultural synthesis and communal harmony.

"The strong bond between Muslims and Hindus can be understood from the fact that key litigants in the Ram Janambhoomi- Babri Mosque case, Hashim Ansari and Mahant Ramchandra Paramhans, fought the case bitterly in court but were friends once they stepped outside," said Azim Siddiqui, a teacher and social worker.

"The duo travelled to court in the same rickshaw for the case and returned together after the hearings. Even as



The Ram Lalla idol inside the sanctum sanctorum of the Ram temple in Ayodhya on Thursday, January 18.

hundreds of kar sewaks and leaders of Hindu organisations arrived in Ayodhya to launch the movement in 1990, Ansari and Ramchandra Paramhans remained friends. When Paramhans died in 2003, Hashim wept and attended the last rites," Siddiqui said.

Decades later, Hashim Ansari's son Iqbal Ansari, a former litigant and now an invitee to the ceremony, said, "A large number of devotees from across the country will visit Ayodhya after inauguration by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It will generate employment; the people of Ayodhya also want development. Hindus and Muslims are interdependent for livelihood, there should be no tussle on religion or temple."

"The Muslims accepted the Supreme Court verdict awarding the land to the Hindus for the construction of the temple. There was no protest by the Muslims against the SC ruling. There is peace and harmony in the city," Iqbal Ansari further said as a group of Muslims were seated around a bonfire lit on the pavement outside his house in Panji Tola.

Vouching for the harmony in the city, a trader, Khaliq Ahmed, said, "The flowers, garlands, scarves, sindoor (vermillion), incense stick, khadau (footwear) and dresses for the deities installed in the temple and other articles required for religious rituals are supplied by the Muslims. The economy of Muslims and bhakti of the Hindus is interdependent in Ayodhya. No one can break this relationship. Ayodhya is the land of Ram, it's land of tranquility and peace. The relation between the two communities is amazing."

Delving into the history of this relationship between the communities, Siddiqui said, "Around 1772, the first nawab of Awadh (Saadat Ali Khan) established Faizabad, now renamed Ayodhya, as his capital on the bank of the River Ghaghara (known as Saryu locally in Ayodhya). The city developed under the second Nawab Safdarjung. His successor Shuja- ud- Daula developed it as a centre of trade and culture. Several structures, including Gulab Bari, Moti Mahal and the tomb of Bahu Begum, market and roads were constructed in the city."

"The Nawabs gifted land to the Hindus for the construction of temples and mutts. The land on which famous Hanumangarhi temple is located was also donated by the Nawab. He also gave funds for construction of the temples. The bond with Muslims and Hindus is strong

since the Nawabi era. The turbulence of Ram temple movement during the late 1980s and 1990s could not melt the ties between the two communities," Siddiqui added.

Similarly Khaliq Ahmed underlined the ethos of peaceful co-existence in the temple town.

"There are several mosques in Ayodhya. Daily namaz and azan is being performed in these mosques. In various countries, mosques have been attacked and restrictions have been imposed on namaz but, in Ayodhya, the Muslims are going fearlessly to mosques to offer namaz," Khaliq Ahmed said.

Mohammad Ashraf, owner of a wholesale egg shop located 500 metres from Ram Janambhoomi area, said, "We are living with the Hindus since generations, our relations did not sour during the Ram temple movement. We respect Lord Ram as well as the faith of the Hindus."

The comment comes even as the state government machinery is working round the clock to give final touches to preparations for inauguration of the Ram temple by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on January 22.

Hordes of workers are laying tiles on the pathway leading to the newly constructed Ram temple. A trimmer is pressed to grind the stone and plaster model to shape the design. The sound of machines and dust fills the area.

Ayodhya Waqf Board president Azam Qadri said, "Ayodhya is revered by Muslims as well. A large number of Muslims visit Ayodhya to pay obeisance at Hazrat Sheesh Alaihis Salam Dargah. PM is working for the development of all communities. He should pay attention to the development of the Muslim spots as well."

Shia cleric Maulana Sayyad Shamim Haider Rizvi said, "The Muslim community welcomes the inauguration of the Ram temple and development of the religious place. The temple may pave way for communal harmony and restoration of the Ganga -Jamuni Tehzeeb." "Crores of Hindus have faith in Ram temple. Hindus living in Ayodhya are celebrating the construction of the temple. The Muslims will join the celebration," said Dr Adeel Mustafa, a medical practitioner. Sayyad Ashfaq, who runs an English language coaching centre in Ayodhya, said, "We welcome the launch of development projects in Ayodhya. Construction of the Ram temple will benefit all communities and castes residing in the district."

Source: HT and agencies

IS RACE A SOCIAL CONSTRUCT?

BY MABEL PAIS

Ujju Aggarwal, panelist

For generations, skin color has been exploited to divide humanity into "races," used to sow division and justify systems of power and oppression.

But race is a human-invented classification system, not a biological category.

Could a change in our understanding of what race is (and more important, what it isn't) bring an end to the racial wealth gap? If race were recognized as a social construct, could we better protect voting rights and build equitable access to healthcare and education?

Join NJPAC's 'Standing in Solidarity' conversation on race, what it is and how it impacts our social order and public policies. This 'PSEG True Diversity Film Series' selection is "The House We Live In," the third episode of the documentary series 'RACE: The Power of an Illusion.'

HOW TO PARTICIPATE:

Register at



Moderator & Panelists - (left to right): Angela Onwuachi-Willig, Ujju Aggarwal, Jean-Pierre Brutus, Sara Munjack, George Shulman

Photo / Courtesy NJPAC

njpac.tfaforms.net/145?id=a2FUc0000001K1VMAU

Watch in advance "The House We Live In" (youtu.be/YvY3Ok6YpbU) from the three-part docuseries 'RACE - The Power of An Illusion' (California Newsreel, 2003 - racepowerofanillusion.org)

Join NJPAC for a virtual panel discussion on Mon, Jan 22, at 7PM.

PANELISTS

Ujju Aggarwal, Activist and Assistant Professor of Anthropology and Experiential Learning at The New School
Jean-Pierre Brutus, Senior Counsel in the Economic Justice Program at the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice

Sara Munjack, Director of Marketing & Partnerships at Consciously Unbiased

George Shulman, NYU professor working in the fields of political thought and American studies

MODERATOR

Angela Onwuachi-Willig, Dean and Professor at Boston University School of Law.

SOCIAL JUSTICE SERIES MOVES FROM SCREEN TO STAGE

BY MABEL PAIS



Mayor Ras Baraka

Photo / Courtesy NJPAC

The New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) will reimagine its long-running social justice conversation series, Standing in Solidarity, as a series of in-person events in 2024.

Launched in 2020, these free monthly conversations and other events focus on a range of social justice topics from voting rights and Native American identity to the impact of racism in the workplace.

Many of the programs are part of the 'PSEG True Diversity Film Series' which pairs screenings of socially engaged cinema with provocative, post-screening talks by a panel of activists, academics and journalists engaged with the topic.

"NJPAC took a deep dive into exploring important and complicated social justice issues in 2020, and our commitment to serving as a town square where our

community can come together to talk through these challenging topics has only grown over the last four years," said John Schreiber, President and CEO of NJPAC.

"We are excited to reimagine these programs as in-person gatherings. With our partners PSEG and the PSEG Foundation, we look forward to hosting some passionate, thoughtful and inspiring dialogues when 'Standing in Solidarity' begins its 2024 run."

Since the program launched in the early months of the pandemic, the series has been convened virtually via Zoom. The sole in-person event - 'Slavery's Impact on the Black Experience in New Jersey' - was held in June 2023 in honor of Juneteenth.

"Since 2014, the PSEG Foundation has proudly donated more than \$2.6 million to NJPAC to purposefully support this unique film platform, empowering diverse audiences through its impactful reach. As we humbly approach a decade of partnership, we're humbled by this milestone and appreciate our shared dedication to confronting complex social justice issues," said Calvin Ledford, President, PSEG Foundation, and Director, Corporate Social Responsibility.

"We eagerly anticipate the reimagined program offering attendees firsthand, in-person conversations to explore the complexities of these deeply personal and pressing issues, for greater tolerance and empathy. We look forward to thoughtful discussions and continuing our partnership with NJPAC to champion social justice through the compelling art of storytelling."

The 'PSEG True Diversity Film Series' was conceptualized in 2014 as a way to build community inclusion and promote tolerance and understanding. Panel conversations followed the screening of issues-based films and documentaries on topics such as racism, criminal justice reform, voting rights and mental health. The first event took place in 2015 with a screening of 'Jasper, Texas' and a panel conversation on the subject of race relations. In 2017 the 'PSEG True Diversity Film Series' evolved from quarterly programs

to monthly events.

When 'Standing in Solidarity' was created in the summer of 2020, the PSEG film series became the main vehicle for monthly social justice conversations. Due to the pandemic, the program pivoted to a virtual format in the summer of 2020 and most of the programming has remained on Zoom since that time.

The in-person Standing in Solidarity programs will take place in March, May and June of 2024 and will be livestreamed. Stay tuned for each program's titles.

PSEG FOUNDATION

The PSEG Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Public Service Enterprise Group (PSEG) (NYSE:PEG), prioritizes investments in promoting environmental sustainability, social justice, and equity and economic empowerment.

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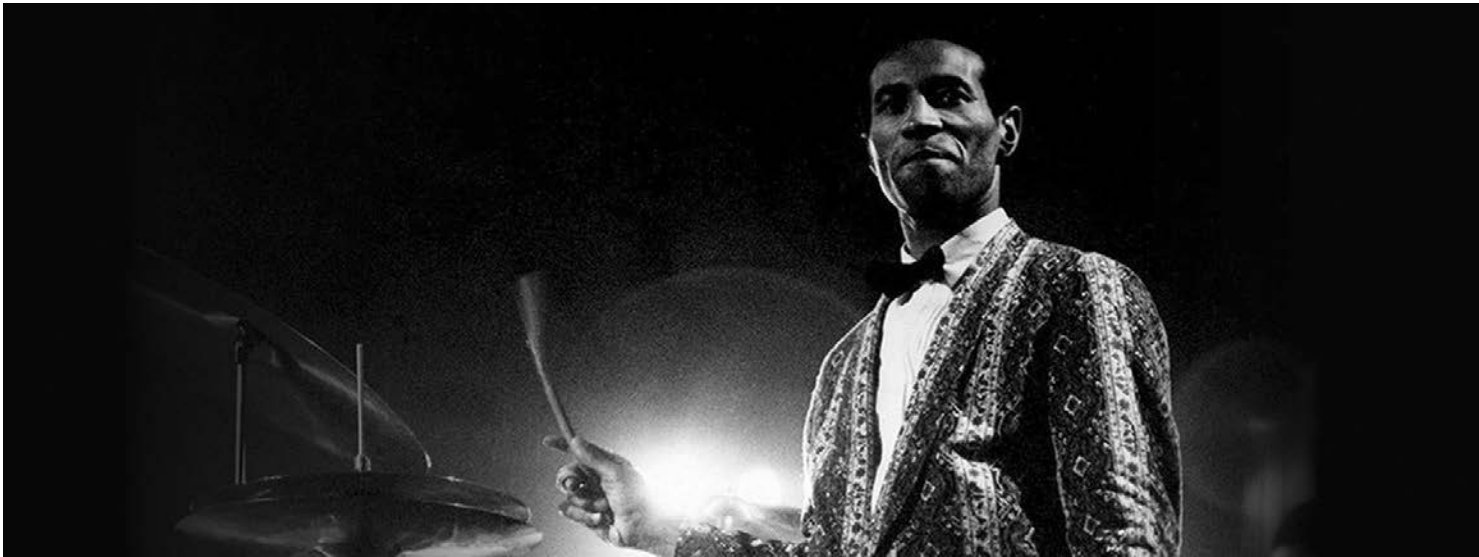
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Website: njpac.org/takeastand
Hashtag: #NJPACTakeAStand
Youtube: Standing in Solidarity playlist

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

CELEBRATE CENTENNIAL AND IMPACT OF MAX ROACH



Max Roach

Photo / Courtesy NJPAC

BY MABEL PAIS

The New Jersey Performing Arts Center celebrates the centennial and impact of percussionist, drummer, jazz composer, and social activist Max Roach with two events: A Concert and a Film Screening + Discussion, held on different dates at separate locations.

Grammy winner Cassandra Wilson shares her distinctive voice as Newark celebrates the centennial of Max Roach on Friday, January 26 at NJPAC's Prudential Hall at 8 p.m.

Cassandra Wilson is featured on recordings by musicians such as Terence Blanchard, Bill Frisell, Charlie Haden, Angelique Kidjo, and Luther Vandross, and earned critical acclaim for her performance on Wynton Marsalis' Pulitzer Prize-winning Blood on the Fields album. Joining the celebration will be revered poets Sonia Sanchez and Saul Williams. Extraordinary

musicians who share their gift of the special occasion are Ravi Coltrane, saxophone; Eric Revis, bass; Nduduzo Makhathini, Piano; and Nasheet Waits, Drums.

This unique production that only NJPAC curates will celebrate and educate many on the life of Maxwell Lemuel Roach. Roach is among the most excellent jazz musicians ever; he performed with Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker, Duke Ellington, Charles Mingus, and Sonny Rollins. He is widely considered one of the most influential drummers in the history of jazz.

Renowned throughout his performing life, Roach has won an extraordinary array of honors. He was one of the first to be given a MacArthur Foundation "genius" grant, cited as a Commander of the Order of Arts and Letters in France, twice awarded the French Grand Prix du Disque, elected to the International Percussive Society's Hall of Fame and the Downbeat

Magazine Hall of Fame, awarded Harvard Jazz Master, celebrated by Aaron Davis Hall, given eight honorary doctorate degrees, including degrees awarded by the University of Bologna, Italy and Columbia University.

CONCERT PROGRAM

MAX ROACH CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION:

'Freedom Now Suite' CONCERT WITH CASSANDRA WILSON

FRI January 26 @ 8:00 p.m.

MAX ROACH CENTENNIAL: 'FREEDOM NOW SUITE'

Cassandra Wilson - vocals
Sonia Sanchez - poet
Saul Williams - poet
Ravi Coltrane - saxophone
Eric Revis - bass
Nduduzo Makhathini - piano
Nasheet Waits - drums

The revolutionary 1960 album 'We Insist! Max Roach's Freedom Now Suite' explored issues of social justice and racial inequality through the lens of jazz and poetry. In celebration of the centennial of Max Roach (1924-2007)-drummer, bebop pioneer and civil rights activist-this landmark work is reimagined for today's world.

In affiliation with Jazz at Lincoln Center, this special one-night only concert is led by musical director Nasheet Waits (of Max's percussion ensemble M'Boom) featuring vocalist Cassandra Wilson, poets Sonia Sanchez and Saul Williams, saxophonist Ravi Coltrane, pianist Nduduzo Makhathini, and bassist Eric Revis.

Experience the modern evolution of the Freedom Now Suite, a piece that continues to live, expand and inspire across generations. #MAXROACH100

"We American jazz musicians of African descent have proved beyond all doubt that we're master musicians of our instruments. Now what we have to do is employ our skill to tell the dramatic story of our people and what we've been through." - Max Roach to 'Downbeat'

TICKETS

For Tickets, visit NJPAC.org or the box office at One Center Street, Newark, New

Jersey 07102 or call 888.GO.NJPAC.

PROGRAM: FILM SCREENING + PANEL DISCUSSION

Thu January 18 @ 7:00 p.m.

Max Roach Centennial: 'The Drum Also Waltzes' Documentary

Film Screening + Panel Discussion

Celebrate Max Roach's centennial with a screening of the new documentary 'Max Roach: The Drum Also Waltzes' at The Newark Museum of Art.

Afterwards, a panel discussion will include Max's son Raoul Roach and the film's director / producers Sam Pollard and Ben Shapiro.

'Max Roach: The Drum Also Waltzes' explores the life and music of the legendary drummer, composer, bandleader and social activist through a remarkable series of creative peaks, struggles and personal reinventions - from the Jim Crow era to the Civil Rights years, surveying the heady days of post-war modern jazz to hip hop and beyond. #MAXROACH100

TICKETS

This event is FREE and will be held at The Newark Museum of Art, Newark, NJ.

THE NEW JERSEY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER (NJPAC)

The New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC), located in downtown Newark, N.J., is America's most diverse performing arts center, and the artistic, cultural, educational and civic center of New Jersey - where great performances and events enhance and transform lives every day.

NJPAC brings diverse communities together, providing access to all and showcasing the state's and the world's best artists while acting as a leading catalyst in the revitalization of its home city.

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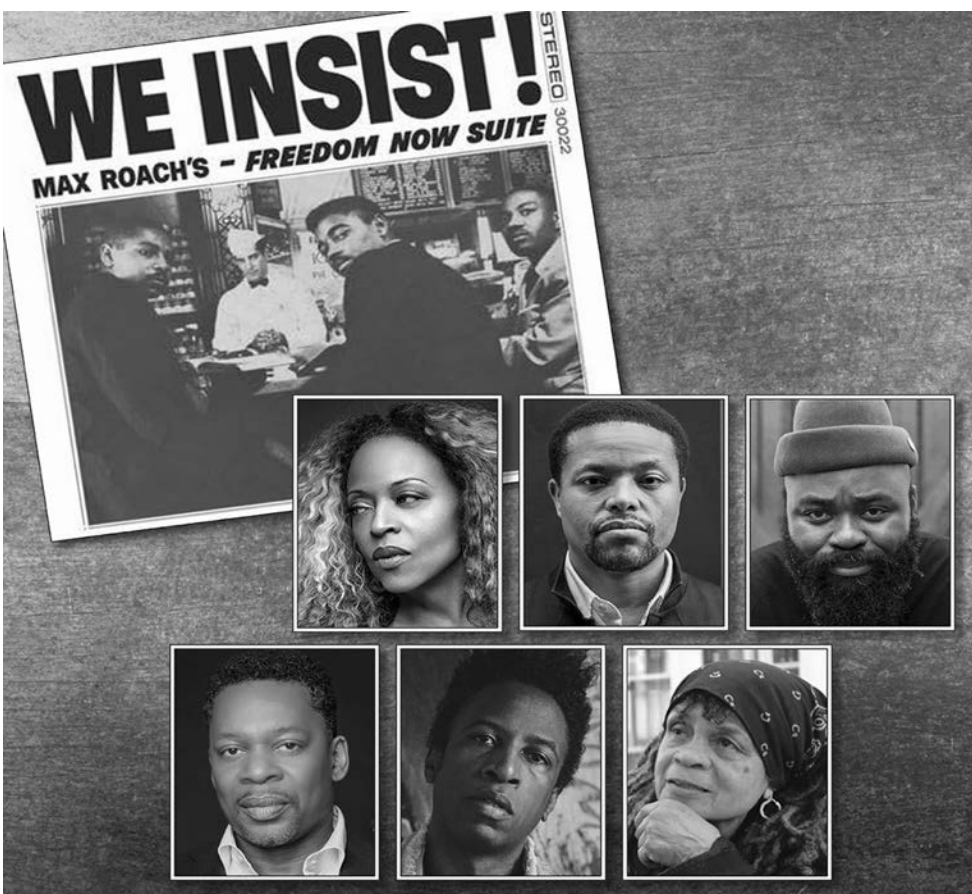
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(Mabel Pais writes on Social Issues, Spirituality, The Arts and Entertainment, Education, Cuisine, Health & Wellness, and Business)



'Freedom Now Suite' Concert participants

Photo / Courtesy NJPAC

LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATION BLENDS EAST AND WEST



Year of the Dragon

Credit / njsymphony.org

BY MABEL PAIS

The New Jersey Symphony (NJPAC) presents a special performance celebrating the Lunar New Year and ringing in the Year of the Dragon, featuring conductor Yue Bao and pianist Tony Siqui Yun, on Saturday, February 3, 2024, at 7:30 pm.

First developed by music director Xian Zhang in 2019, the Lunar New Year Celebration honors the start of the Chinese calendar by weaving together the best in classical music from the East and the West. Guest conductor Bao leads a program that includes "Yellow River Boatman's Song" from Xian Xinghai's 'Yellow River Concerto,' one of the most famous pieces to come from China in the 20th century, and 'Spring Festival Overture' by Li Huanzhi, who was influenced by Xian.

In addition to playing the 'Yellow River Concerto' selection, Yun will perform the "Allegramante" movement from Ravel's Piano Concerto in G, showing the versatility of this rising star in classical music, who won the Gold Medal at the First China International Music Competition in 2019. The performance also includes selections from Huang Ruo's 'Folk Songs for Orchestra,' Dvořák's Slavonic Dance No. 8, Verdi's "Va Pensiero" from Nabucco, and Zhou Tian's 'Gift.'

The Symphony will be joined by the Peking University (PKU) Alumni Chorus, which consists of former members of PKU's student choir alongside singers from the Chinese community in New York and New Jersey. The evening will also feature a performance by the Edison Chinese School Lion Dance Team.

PRE-CONCERT CULTURAL EXCHANGE

All Concert ticket holders are invited to attend a pre-concert Cultural Exchange Festival in the lobby with musical performances, crafters, demonstrations and more, starting at 6 pm.

More information and concert tickets are available njsymphony.org/lny.

LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATION VIP EVENT

Patrons can enhance their concert experience with the Lunar New Year Celebration VIP Event. In addition to the concert, the VIP event adds early access to the pre-concert Cultural Exchange Festival preferred seating for the concert, an after-party with sumptuous desserts, and additional VIP perks such as a VIP reception before the concert and valet parking. More information and event tickets are available at njsymphony.org/lnycelebration.

PROGRAM

Pre-Concert Cultural Exchange Festival
Lobby - 6 pm

For more information and concert tickets are available njsymphony.org/lny.

2024 LUNAR NEW YEAR CONCERT CELEBRATION

Year of the Dragon
Yue Bao conductor
Tony Siqui Yun piano
Peking University Alumni Chorus
Edison Chinese School Lion Dance Team

NEW JERSEY SYMPHONY

Newark -> Saturday, February 3, 7:30 pm, New Jersey Performing Arts Center

Symphony will perform selections from Huang Ruo's Folk Songs for Orchestra and Zhou Tian's Gift, plus perennial favorites like Spring Festival Overture. Rising star pianist Tony Siqui Yun will perform selections from the Yellow River Concerto and Ravel's Piano Concerto in G.)

**After-Party with sumptuous desserts!
VIP perks such as access to an exclusive reception, valet parking and premier concert seating.**

For more information, contact Jesse Goodale, Manager of Special Events, at events@njsymphony.org or at 973.735.1729.

TICKETS & MORE INFORMATION

For more information about the New Jersey



NJ Symphony with Lunar New Year Performers in Concert

Credit/ njpac.org

LI HUANZHI SPRING FESTIVAL OVERTURE

Xinghai "Yellow River Boatmen's Song" from Yellow River Concerto
Ravel "Allegramente" from Piano Concerto in G
Ruo Huang Selections from Folk Songs for Orchestra
I. Flower Drum Song from Feng Yang
IV. Girl from the Da Ban City

Dvořák Slavonic Dance No. 8, Op. 46
Verdi "Va Pensiero" from Nabucco
Traditional Jasmine Flower Song
Zhou Tian Gift

For more information on concerts and tickets:
njsymphony.org/events

2024 LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATION VIP EVENT

Saturday, February 3 at 6 pm | New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark

Join the NJ Symphony in celebrating the Year of the Dragon at the New Jersey Symphony's Lunar New Year Celebration VIP Event. The celebration continues the Symphony's tradition, started by Music Director Xian Zhang, of blending music from East and West in a celebration of cultural collaboration. Net proceeds from this event will raise critical funds that support Xian Zhang's artistic vision. You won't want to miss it!

YOUR FULL-NIGHT VIP EVENT TICKET INCLUDES:

Pre-concert Cultural Exchange Festival with crafters from the Zhejiang province in China, musical performances on traditional Chinese instruments, dancers, singers and a Qipao fashion show!

Lunar New Year Celebration Concert with preferred seating (Under the baton of conductor Yue Bao, the

Symphony, visit njsymphony.org or email information@njsymphony.org.

Tickets can be purchased by phone 1.800.ALLEGRO (255.3476) or at njsymphony.org.

THE NEW JERSEY SYMPHONY

The Emmy and Grammy Award-winning New Jersey Symphony is redefining what it means to be a nationally leading, relevant orchestra in the 21st century. The Symphony is renewing its deeply rooted commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion by championing new, and often local, artists; engaging audiences for whom the inspiring depth and breadth of classical music will be a new experience; and incorporating the broadest possible representation in all aspects of the Symphony's organization-all to better reflect and serve its vibrant communities. Since 2021, Music Director Xian Zhang has worked together with composer, violinist, educator and social-justice advocate Daniel Bernard Roumain, the orchestra's Resident Artistic Catalyst, to offer programming that connects with diverse communities in Newark and throughout New Jersey.

CONNECT WITH NJ SYMPHONY:

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Guru Gobind Singh: The Saint Soldier and founder of Khalsa Panth

GURU GOBIND SINGH WAS THE LAST OF THE 10 GURUS, THE ONE WHO TRANSFORMED THE SIKH FAITH. HIS BIRTH ANNIVERSARY FALLS ON JANUARY 19

Guru Gobind Singh Sahib, the 10th master of the Sikhism, was born on 7th day of the month of POH, samvat 1723, (22nd December, 1666 AD) at Patna Sahib in Bihar. Guru ji was a great revolutionary whose greatest achievement was the creation of the Khalsa Panth on Baisakhi Day of 1699 at Anandpur Sahib in Punjab. Guru ji was a linguistic familiar with many languages like, Persian, Arabic, Sanskrit as well as his native Punjabi. Guru ji codified Sikh law, wrote martial poetry and music, fought many battles and won. Guru ji wrote the renowned holy Granth called the Dasam Granth. The noted prayers included in this Granth are Jaap Sahib, Chandi Di Vaar, Tav-Prasad Savaiye, Zafarnamah, Bachittar Natak, Akal Ustat, Chaupai Sahib and more.

Guru Gobind Singh Sahib Ji was a revolutionary prophet who practiced his spiritual ideals to counter the forces of tyranny and injustice. Tyranny in all its forms – social, political, and religious was to be countered and annihilated. A state which could not provide basic human rights, social justice, equality and religious freedom was to be opposed. A God oriented person, owed primary allegiance to God, truth, conscience and morality. Guru Gobind Singh was concern were universal, integrated and without any boundaries. The martyrdom of Guru ji's father, mother, four sons and hundreds of followers for the lofty ideals of freedom, justice and righteousness were unique in the annals of human history. Guru Gobind Singh Ji ignited that spark in human nature that inspired mankind to build lives of compassion, love and commitment to justice and also to suffer and make sacrifices for the cause of righteousness.

Sir J. D. Cunningham, the noted author of the book "History Of The Sikhs", wrote about Guru Gobind Singh Sahib Ji as under:

A living spirit possess the whole Sikh people and the impression of Guru Gobind Singh Ji has not only elevated and attired the constitution of their minds but has operated materially and given amplitude to their physical frames, "The Khalsa ideals transformed the life, outlook and aspirations of the people and imparted a new direction to Indian history".

In the words of Gurudev Rabindra Nath Tagore, "Guru Gobind Singh Ji appeared on the Indian National scene with the message of militarism of the community for the defence of social equality and religious freedom. In order to execute his plan, Guru Gobind Singh Sahib Ji unified the Sikhs, taught them how to face any crisis calmly and boldly and generated a new hope and



confidence “.

Guru Gobind Singh Sahib Ji came to reside Anandpur Sahib along with his parents, when he was a child of 7 years old. After some years, a deputation of Kashmiri Pandits came to Anandpur Sahib and met his father, the 9th Sikh Guru, Shree Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib ji. They narrated the cruel acts of Mughal rulers towards the Hindu community and sought Guru Ji's help. Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji became silent and was absorbed in deep thoughts. Guru Gobind Singh Ji, who was, at that time, a child of just 9 years of age, asked his father about the reason for his silence. Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji explained that these helpless people from Kashmir had no one to protect their Dharma. The sacrifice of a great and brave soul was needed. The child, Guru Gobind Singh Ji, immediately said, "Who can be more brave and greater than you? Please have mercy on them and do what is necessary

to protect "Hindu Dharma “.

Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji was pleased to hear this and went to Delhi to sacrifice his life only to save the Hindu Dharma. The Mughal emperor Aurangzeb asked Guru Ji to either embrace Islam or face death. Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji replied, "My religion is most dear to me. I am not afraid of death." At this, Aurangzeb ordered the execution of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji.

Guru Ji was to be beheaded at the Main Bazar of Chandni Chowk, Delhi. At the Chandni Chowk in Delhi, where the great Gurudwara Sri Sisganj Sahib stands today, was the place chosen for Guru Ji's execution. Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji died a hero's death. Guru Ji's execution only strengthened the resistance against Aurangzeb's religious fanaticism. When Guru Gobind Singh was told that no one came forward to protest because of the fear of death, Guru Ji declared that he would lay the

foundation of the Khalsa Panth and would train it in such a way that its members would be ready to sacrifice everything for the right cause.

Guru Gobind Singh Ji's creation of Khalsa Panth in 1699 AD, on the Baisakhi day at Anandpur Sahib was an event of world significance. Noted historian Arnold Toynbee has called it the precursor and forerunner of Lenin's communist party two centuries later in the history, an idealistic minority fighting with the weapons of adversity in the name of God, for the sake of majority.

Guru Ji baptised the 5 chosen Sikhs by administering Amrit, prepared by a double edged sword, sweetened by dissolving "Battashas" in to the water, to them. They were called as the five chosen loved ones, Panj Pyare.

They were given the surname of Singh, and were called as Khalsa, the army of lord God:

**"Khalsa Akalpurkh Ki Fauj,
Pargatiyo Khalsa,
Parmatam Ki Mauji!"**

(KHALSA is the army of the eternal God raised by him out of his pleasure)

Guru Ji held his Chosen five in so high esteem that he knelt before them and asked them to initiate himself into the Khalsa Panth in the same manner as he had done them. Guru Ji was then administered Amrit in the same way and was given the surname Singh (Previously Guru Ji's name was Gobind Rai)

The Khalsa, with God's light shining within was meant to be a global society. They were not to form a separate denomination as that was totally against the Guru Ji concept of universal brotherhood. The creation of the Khalsa Panth was a crowning event of Guru Gobind Singh Ji's life. Ideologically, the creation of the KHALSA PANTH aimed at a well balanced combination of the ideals of Bhakti and Shakti, of moral spiritual excellence and militant valour and heroism of the highest order. They were expected to salute one another with words,

**"Wahe Guru Ji Ka Khalsa
Wahe Guru Ji Ki Fateh!"**

This was meant to remind that they were knighted as God's soldiers to carry out his mission and that victory was theirs.

But the Khalsa, the 'Singhs', were not to be merely soldiers. It was imperative that they must at the same time be saints deeply devoted to God, singing his hymns as composed by Sikh Gurus, observing the daily religious discipline prescribed in Rahit Maryaada of the Khalsa Panth and bearing a high moral character. Guru Gobind Singh Ji, though, was a

matchless warrior, always remained a Saint at heart. Guru ji was a Saint who had dedicated himself to God, a God intoxicated philosopher. Guru ji was a sincere lover of mankind who wanted to see all manmade differences created by barriers of formal religion and social distinctions brought in by caste, to be obliterated from the society.

Guru ji left for his heavenly abode on October 7th, 1708 at a place, Naded, in Maharashtra due to a conspiracy hatched against him by Nawaab Wazir Khan of Punjab. Guru ji, before leaving for his heavenly abode, declared that the Sikh community be guided by the decisions of "Panj Piayrey", the chosen five, chosen from among the devotees. Guru ji handed over the stewardship of the Sikh Panth, the Sikh way of life, to holy Guru Grant Sahib Ji. Those, who wished to seek God, can find him in the holy Guru Grant Sahib Ji.

In conclusion, it can be said that Guru Gobind Singh Sahib Ji, the son of martyred Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji, the great grandson of 5th Sikh Guru, Shree Guru Arjan Dev Ji, who also attained martyrdom at Lahore. (Guru Arjan Dev Ji was martyred for compiling the 1st official version of the holy scripture called the Adi Granth, which later was expanded in to the holy Guru Granth Sahib Ji.), laid at the altar of Almighty, all that that he could call his own, his father, mother, his four sons and even his entire life for the freedom of all including those who considered themselves his enemy.

The man and his philosophy

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

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

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

As a prophet, the Guru is unique. His teachings are very scientific and most suitable for all times. Unlike many other



prophets he never called himself God or 'the only son of God.' Instead he called all people the sons of God sharing His Kingdom equally. For himself he used the word 'slave' or servant of God.

A splendid Divine Light shone in the darkness of the night. Pir Bhikan Shah a Muslim mystic performed his prayers in that Easterly direction (instead of towards the West, contrary to his daily practice), and guided by this Divine Light, he travelled with a group of his followers until he reached Patna Sahib in Bihar. It was here that Gobind Rai was born to Mata Gujri. It is said that Pir Bhikan Shah approached the child and offered two bowls of milk and water, signifying both the great religions of Hinduism and Islam. The child smiled and placed his hands on both bowls. The Pir bowed in utter humility and reverence to the new Prophet of all humanity.

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

Early Life

Gobind Rai's father, Guru Teg Bahadur, the Ninth Guru, was then travelling across Bengal and Assam. Returning to Patna in 1670, he directed his family to return to the Punjab. On the site of the house at Patna in which Gobind Rai was born and where he spent his early childhood now stands a sacred shrine, Sri Patna Sahib Gurdwara, Bihar.

Gobind Rai was escorted to Anandpur (then known as Chakk Nanaki) on the foothills of the Sivaliks where he reached in March 1672 and where his early education included reading and writing of Punjabi, Braj, Sanskrit and Persian. He was barely nine years of age when a sudden turn came in his life as well as in the life of the community he was destined to lead.

Kashmiri Brahmins come to Anandpur

Early in 1675, a group of Kashmiri brahmins under the leadership of Pandit Kirpa Ram, mad in desperation by the religious fanaticism of the Mughals General, Iftikar Khan, (he had threatened them with forced conversion

to Islam) visited Anandpur to seek Guru Teg Bahadur's advice. Aurangzeb had ordered the forced conversion of all Hindus and thought that if the respected Kashmiri brahmins accepted Islam, others in the country would be easily converted. They had been given six months to decide or suffer the consequences. Time was running out!

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

"None could be worthier than you to make such a sacrifice," remarked Gobind Rai in his innocent manner. Guru Teg Bahadur advised the brahmins to return to their village and tell the authorities that they would accept Islam if Guru Teg Bahadur could first be persuaded to do so.

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

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

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

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

Stay at Paonta Sahib

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

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

Martial training

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

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

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

Following the appointment in 1694 of the liberal Prince Muazzam (later Emperor Bahadur Shah) as viceroy of north-western region including Punjab, there was however a brief respite from pressure from the ruling authority. In

Sambat 1756 (1699 A.D), Guru Gobind Singh issued directions to Sikh sangats or communities in different parts not to acknowledge masands, the local ministers, against whom he had heard complaints. He asked the Sikhs to send their offerings directly to Anandpur.

The Masands

The Guru received various complaints against the priests, masands who robbed the poor Sikhs and misappropriated the collections. Guru Sahib abolished this order and severely punished the miscreants. Hereafter, the faithful were to bring their offerings directly to the Guru at the time of the annual Vaisakhi fair.

The Guru wanted to create a strong self-respecting community. He inspired the Sikhs with courage and heroism and a life of simplicity and hard work. He started an arms factory at Anandpur in order to manufacture swords and lances needed for his soldiers. Once when the Brahmins insisted that he should offer worship to goddess Durga in order to seal victory, he agreed and kept up the farce till nothing came out of it. At the crucial moment, the Guru unsheathed his sword exclaiming, "The sword is the Durga which will give us victory over our enemies."

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

Creation of the Khalsa

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

The panj pyare

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

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

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

Amrit Sanchar

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

Then he anointed with five sprinkles in the hair.

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

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

Guru asks for Amrit

After the Guru had administered Amrit to his Five Beloved Ones, he stood up in supplication and with folded hands, begged them to baptize him in the same way as he had baptized them. He himself became their disciple (Wonderful is Guru Gobind Singh, himself the Master and himself the disciple). The Five Beloved Ones were astonished at such a proposal, and represented their own unworthiness, and the greatness of the Guru, whom they deemed God's Vicar upon earth. They asked him why he made such a request and why he stood in a supplicant posture before them. He replied, "I am the son of the Immortal God. It is by His order I have been born and have established this form of baptism. They who accept it shall henceforth be known as the Khalsa."

The Khalsa is the Guru and the Guru is the Khalsa. There is no difference between you and me. As Guru Nanak seated Guru Angad on the throne, so have I made you also a Guru. Wherefore administer the baptismal nectar to me without any hesitation." Accordingly the Five Beloved Ones baptized the Guru with the same ceremonies and injunctions he himself had employed.

The rise of the Khalsa

The Guru was then named Gobind Singh instead of Gobind Rai. Guru Gobind Singh was the first one to take Amrit from the Khalsa, the Five Beloved Ones. About 80,000 men and women were

baptized within a few days at Anandpur. "The creation of the Khalsa was the greatest work of the Guru. He created a type of superman, a universal man of God, casteless and country less. The Guru regarded himself as the servant of the Khalsa. He said, "To serve them pleases me the most; no other service is so dear to my soul." The Khalsa was the spearhead of resistance against tyranny." (Miss Pearl, S. Buck)

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

Siege of Anandpur

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

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

Sikhs tricked by the Mughals

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Kirtan is a term meaning the singing of hymns from the Guru Grath Sahib, the Sikh holy book. Celebrations always include music, singing and chanting scriptures and hymns.

The processions are led by traditionally dressed Panj Piaras.

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

Amrit Ceremony

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

Contributions of Guru Gobind Singh



The Amrit Ceremony is the initiation rite introduced by Guru Gobind Singh when he founded the Khalsa in 1699. A Sikh can go through this initiation as soon as they are old enough to understand the full commitment that they are making.

The ceremony takes place in a Gurdwara, before the Guru Granth Sahib, and in the presence of 5 initiated Sikhs (who represent the Panj Piyaras, the first 5 Sikhs to be initiated). During the ceremony, hymns are recited from the Sikh scripture, prayers are said, and the principles of Sikhism are affirmed. Then amrit is prepared. Amrit is a mixture of sugar and water that has been stirred with a double-edged sword. The candidates for initiation drink some of the amrit from the same bowl, and have it sprinkled on their eyes and hair.

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

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

Khalsa initiation

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

The Guru introduced them for several

reasons:

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

The 5 Ks taken together symbolise that the Sikh who wears them has dedicated themselves to a life of devotion and submission to the Guru. The 5 Ks are 5 physical symbols worn by Sikhs who have been initiated into the Khalsa.

The five Ks are:

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

Various reasons and symbolisms have been put forward for the Sikh practice of keeping hair uncut.

- Throughout history hair (kesh) has been regarded as a symbol both of holiness and strength.
- One's hair is part of God's creation. Keeping hair uncut indicates that one is willing to accept God's gift as God intended it.
- Uncut hair symbolizes adoption of a simple life, and denial of pride in one's appearance.

- Not cutting one's hair is a symbol of one's wish to move beyond concerns of the body and attain spiritual maturity.
- A Sikh should only bow his head to the Guru, and not to a barber.
- It is a highly visible symbol of membership of the group.
- It follows the appearance of Guru Gobind Singh, founder of the Khalsa.
- Sikh women are just as forbidden to cut any body hair or even trim their eyebrows, as Sikh men are forbidden to trim their beards.

Kara – a steel bracelet

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

Kanga – a wooden comb

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

Kachha – special underwear

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

Kirpan – a ceremonial sword

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

The Kirpan can symbolise:

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

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

The symbols have become greatly more powerful with each passing year of Sikh history. Every Sikh remembers that every Sikh warrior, saint, or martyr since 1699, and every living member of the Khalsa, is united with them in having adopted the same 5 Ks.

Sikh History This Week

JANUARY 19 TO JANUARY 25

19th January

1908: First Gurdwara Sahib in Canada 19th, 1908 the was officially opened at 1866 west 2nd Avenue Vancouver B.C., under the management of the Khalsa Diwan Society. This Gurdwara Sahib served the Greater Vancouver Sikh community until new Gurdwara Sahib was occupied on April 25th, 1970. The 2nd Avenue property was sold for \$100,000 to build a bigger (present) Gurdwara Sahib. It was very unfortunate to lose this historical Sikh monument.

20th January



1706 Guru Gobind Singh Sahib reached Talwandi, where he set camp, outside the village, is the location of Gurduara Damdamaa Sahib. Dam damaa means breathing place. That is take a breather after the many battles he had been through.

1841 After Gulab Singh left Lahore, Sher Singh occupied the fort. Dhian Singh became the Wazir. The Sandalwalia Sardars, hostile to the ruling group, started entering into intrigues.

1926 The British Government announced the judgement in Babbar Akali case. As a result, 5 Babbar Akalis were ordered to be hanged, 11 were sentenced to life imprisonment, and 38 were imprisoned four years. Approximately 90 religious, high spirited, daring fighters formed the Babbar Akali group. They had promised freedom to the masses and vigorously fought the British, especially in the Duaba and Malwa regions.

1986 Sentences handed in the case of Indian Airline hijacking.

21st January



1831 The King of England sent valuable gifts to Maharaja Ranjit Singh as a gesture of friendship. The gifts were really meant to be a bait of friendship! The British had encroached into his territory and came all the way to the other side of river Satluj and finally attacked the Sikh kingdom as soon as he breathed his last, after buying all the Dogras. What followed afterwards is a history!

1846 Budhowal battle was fought and won by the Sikh troops against the East India Company. Sikhs defeated Harry Smith at Budhowal and captured his baggage. Sikhs also attacked and burned down large part of Ludhiana cantonment. Harry Smith fought a

minor skirmish with Ranjodh Singh at Atwal.

22nd January

1848 Mool Raj, Governor of Multan, revolted against the British but was defeated.

MOOL RAJ: During Maharaja Ranjit Singh's reign, Mool Raj was an efficient and loyal Governor of Multan. He was the son of Diwan Sawanmal Chaupadhae and appointed Governor by the Lahore darbar. During his reign, two British officers were killed by the Lahore forces. As a result, the British Resident of Lahore, John Lawrence, wanted to dismiss Mool Raj. On account of his loyalty to the kingdom of Ranjit Singh, he revolted against the British East India Company who were forcibly annexing Ranjit Singh's Punjab. He put up a brave defense of the fort of Multan but was defeated on this day. The British arrested and imprisoned him in Calcutta jail, where he died in 1850.

1849 Multan fell to the British.



1986 The additional session judge announced his judgement in the case of Indira Gandhi's murder. Satwant Singh and Kehar Singh were to be hanged. The sentence was carried out on Jan. 6, 1989. Indira Gandhi was gunned down at her residence on Oct. 31, 1984, as a retribution for her role in operation Blue Star, during which the Indian Army attacked and desecrated Sri Harimandir Sahib, Amritsar.

23rd January

1923 Dhanna Singh Behbalpur joins the Babbar Akali Jatha.

1923 Second attempt to kill Arjan Singh Patwari of Haripur also ends in a fiasco. He was alleged to be responsible for Master Mota Singh's arrest.

1948 Dr. B.R. Ambedkar suggested the Sikhs to struggle for a Punjabi speaking state.

1960 Sirdar Tirath Singh accepted shahadat in Delhi, in connection with the Punjabi Subha morcha.

24th January

1849 Chatter Singh joined with Sher Singh against the British while the British forces spared from Multan battle joined their forces.

1923 Praggur is raided to arrest Kishan Singh Garhgaj.



1928 Raghbir Singh RajaSasi formed the Central Sikh Association.



1943 Maharaja Ripudaman Singh of Nabha passed away at Kadia-Kunal.

Among the 12 Sikh misls, Nabha reign represented the major branch of Phullkiyan misl. The Nabha family began with Gurdit Singh, the eldest son of Chaudhary Tilok Singh, who in turn was the eldest son of Baba Phull. As a result, Nabha is also known as Chaudhary da Garh (house of Chaudhary).

1960 129 members of the SGPC and over 100,000 GurSikhs took a vow to lay lives for Punjabi Suba.

1993 Kesri Nishan hoisted at The Hague.



25th January

1921 Morcha of Taran Taran marked the beginning of Gurudwara Reform Movement. Hazara Singh became the first martyr of the movement.

1922 Karam Singh of Daulatpur arranged diwan at Nawanshehar.

1936 The Nankana Sahib Committee established the Guru Nanak Prachar Trust.





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Vidyut Jammwal and Nora Fatehi turn up the heat with sizzling hot chemistry

Vidyut Jammwal teams up with Nora Fatehi for a sizzling romantic number, Dil Jhoom, from their upcoming film, Crakk- Jeetega Toh Jiyegaa.

Set in breathtaking and exotic international locales, the soulful rendition is sung by Vishal Mishra and Shreya Ghoshal, the song is a beautiful remake of Ali Zafar's hit number Jhoom.

Recently, Ali took to social media expressing his emotions on his song being remade by such loved artistes creating a huge stir on social media.

The soft romantic number beautifully captures the essence of the film's romantic narrative with Vidyut and Nora setting it apart with fresh chemistry.

Talking about why he chose Jhoom to be a part of his film, Vidyut says, "Jhoom has been a constant on my romantic playlist. The melody feels just right, resonating with pure emotion."

Bhakshak teaser: Bhumi Pednekar plays an investigative journalist



Inspired by true events, Netflix India's upcoming crime drama Bhakshak premieres on February 9. The film is a Red Chillies Entertainment production, directed by Pulkit and produced by Gauri Khan and Gaurav Verma. It stars Bhumi Pednekar, Sanjay Mishra, Aditya Srivastava and Sai Tamhankar in pivotal roles. The makers released the teaser of the film on Thursday, January 17.

Bhakshak explores the journey of an unwavering woman's quest to seek justice. Bhumi Pednekar as Vaishali Singh portrays the role of an investigative journalist who wants to bring to light a heinous crime, laying bare the ground reality of crimes against women. While the teaser doesn't reveal much, it features Bhumi back in a deglamourised avatar after her urban comedy Thank You For Coming last year.

At the end of the teaser, Bhumi is seen telling a girl, "Bachchon ke adhikar ke liye lad rahe hain hum, samajh rahi ho? (We're fighting for girls' rights, do you get it?)" In a statement, director Pulkit echoed the thoughts. "Our aim was to shed light on the harsh realities of society and spark conversations that lead to meaningful change. I'm looking forward to more people joining this important dialogue," he said. Red Chillies Entertainment, the production house owned by Shah Rukh Khan, has been busy making the superstar's last two global blockbusters, Atlee's crime thriller Jawan and Rajkumar Hirani's Dunki, which released in cinemas last year. Bhakshak marks the banner's first digital release in a couple of years. Its last digital output was Jasmeet K Reen's 2022 dark comedy Darlings, which was a co-production with lead actor Alia Bhatt's Eternal Sunshine Productions, and also released on Netflix India.

Gaurav Verma, Producer at Red Chillies Entertainment, said in a statement, "We believe in storytelling that not only entertains, but also enlightens. Source: HT

Twinkle Khanna graduates from UK's Goldsmith College; husband Akshay Kumar calls her 'super woman'

Twinkle Khanna has completed a master's programme in fiction writing from Goldsmiths, University of London, and the actor-turned-author has said her graduation ceremony was 'even more perfect' than she ever imagined.

Khanna, who recently came out with the novel 'Welcome To Paradise', shared a video from the event on her official Instagram account on Tuesday.

'And it's here. Graduation day. My first day at Goldsmiths feels like it was both yesterday and years ago. A sunny day, a pretty sari, and having my family with me make this day even more perfect than I ever imagined,' she wrote.

Khanna, a former actor known for films such as 'Barsaat', 'Baadshah', 'Jodi No.1' and 'Mela', enrolled at the UK-based college in 2022.

'There comes a stage when the easiest way to grow is horizontally, but we have to push ourselves to grow in myriad other ways,' she further said in the post.

Khanna's husband, actor Akshay Kumar accompanied her to the graduation ceremony.

In a post on X, Kumar congratulated his wife, whom he described as a 'super woman'.

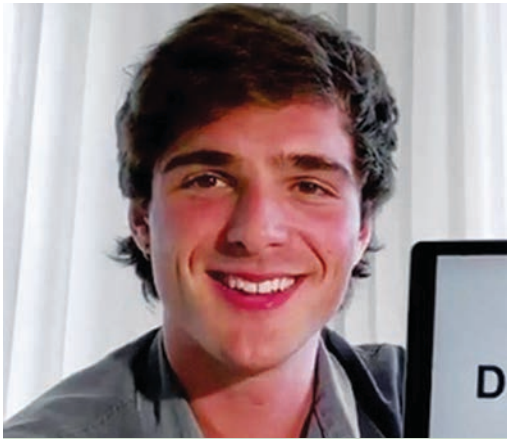
'Two years ago when you told me you wanted to take up studies all over again, I wondered if you meant it. But the

day I saw you work so hard and perfectly manage a full-fledged student life along with home, career, me and kids, I knew I had married a super woman. Today on your graduation, I also wish I had studied a bit more to know enough words to tell you how proud you make me, Tina. Congratulations and all my love,' the actor wrote.

Khanna, 50, and Kumar, 56, are celebrating their 23rd wedding anniversary. The couple are parents to son Aarav and daughter Nitara.

Bollywood celebrities showered Twinkle Khanna with best wishes in the comment section. Preity Zinta wrote, "Wow Tina, you're a true rock star! Congratulations, my witty one. You are beautiful and aspirational. More power to you," accompanied by clapping hands and red hearts emojis. Bobby Deol posted clapping hands and a red heart emoji. Karisma Kapoor said, "Congratulations." Comedian Kiku Sharda commented, "Awesome, congratulations," with clapping hands emojis. Saba Pataudi posted, "Congratulations," with clapping hands and a black heart emoji. Jackie Shroff's wife, Ayesha Shroff said, "Congratulations!!!!" with clapping and red heart emojis. Ayushmann Khurrana's wife, writer Tahira Kashyap said, "Amazing amazing amazing! My Wonder Woman," along with red heart emojis. Phew!





Jacob Elordi calls it quits with Olivia Jade for second time

Actor Jacob Elordi reportedly has ended his romantic relationship with Olivia Jade for the second time. It was reported that the actor portraying Nate Jacobs on 'Euphoria' and the former 'Dancing with the Stars' season 30 contestant broke up following their alleged first split in 2022.

The news was revealed by Us Weekly. The media outlet confirmed that the 26-year-old actor and the 24-year-old daughter of fashion designer Mossimo Giannulli and actress Lori Loughlin have decided to go their separate ways. However, the former couple has not said anything about the alleged breakup. The report came a few days after Jacob and Olivia sparked split rumours. Earlier in January, a number of social media users noticed that she had stopped following the "Priscilla" actor on Instagram. Meanwhile, he notably does not follow anyone on the social media platform. The 'Saltburn' actor and the YouTube content creator were romantically linked for the first time back in December 2021.

Sofia Vergara opens up about her high-profile divorce from Joe Manganiello



Sofia Vergara recently opened up about navigating her public divorce from Joe Manganiello. During an interaction with CBS Sunday Morning, the actress disclosed that she anticipated the media frenzy that ensued at the time when the news of their separation surfaced in June 2023.

"You're out there (in the public eye) and people know that's part of being a celebrity," Vergara said. "I knew it was gonna happen. You can't hide those things," she explained.

When questioned about how she managed to navigate the public scrutiny surrounding their divorce, the actress credited her ability to endure it, partly, to the nature of the media coverage it received.

Vergara shared that she was surprised by the "type of media coverage" her divorce got. She'd thought that the press would add and invent things while reporting their split but "They kind of just said what it was and, and that was it," she said.

In July 2023, the couple issued a joint statement, revealing their "difficult decision" to opt for a divorce after seven years of marriage. The statement, emphasizing their mutual love and care, urged privacy during the transitional period in their lives. Two days later, Manganiello officially filed for divorce, citing "irreconcilable differences" as the reason. The divorce documents obtained by People specified the date of separation as July 2.

Having overcome that challenging phase, Vergara shared that she has redirected her attention to living her best life in the present and future. In the CBS interview, she mentioned, "And, you know, I've been moving on." The Modern Family alum has been spotted on numerous dates in recent months with orthopedic surgeon Justin Saliman. Meanwhile, Manganiello has entered spending time with actress Caitlin O'Connor. "I'm looking forward to the upcoming TV show," she mentioned, referring to her Netflix limited series, Griselda. In the forthcoming miniseries directed by Andrés Baiz, produced by Eric Newman and Sofia Vergara, the actress takes on the role of Griselda Blanco. Griselda Blanco, known as the Godmother of Cocaine, was a significant figure in the cocaine-based drug trade and the Miami underworld during the 1980s.

Source: HT

Brad Pitt would go 'longest without showering': Ex-roommate Jason Priestley

Actor and filmmaker Jason Priestley was Brad Pitt's roommate and he revealed the Hollywood star's shocking hygiene habit. According to the Beverly Hills, 90210 alum, Pitt wasn't huge on hygiene back then. "We used to play this game to see who could go the longest without showering," Jason said. "I think about it now and I'm like, 'Dude, how disgusting. What were you thinking?'"

As for who would win? "Brad," Priestley shared. "Always Brad." However, the 54-year-old noted that it's unlikely Brad has stuck with the same routine. "I don't think he does that anymore," Priestley said "but back then he could go a long time without showering." Jason and Brad, 60, were roommates back in the '90s when they were both up-and-coming actors. The duo lived in a two-bedroom apartment located in what Jason called the "really crappy part" of Los Angeles alongside a third friend. In his 2015 memoir, the Tru Calling actor recalled that the pair were basically "broke" as they struggled to find acting work.

"We lived on Ramen noodles and generic beer—the kind that came in white cans labelled 'beer,' Jason wrote in the book, "and Marlboro Light cigarettes." But after Priestley was cast in Beverly Hills, 90210 and Pitt shot to fame in Thelma and Louise, the two lost contact with each other. Still, Jason has nothing but fond memories of the Oscar winner.

Source: IANS



Arnold Schwarzenegger held at Munich airport over 'unregistered' luxe watch

Hollywood star Arnold Schwarzenegger couldn't believe that he ended up being detained at Munich airport upon his arrival to Germany. He had been held for three hours after failing to declare his luxury watch, and he was left baffled by the debacle.

"This is the problem that Germany is suffering from," the 76-year-old told German newspaper Bild.

"You can no longer see the forest for the trees."

The actor, who travelled from the US, was detained on January 17, after trying to take an "unregistered" watch from Swiss luxury brand Audemars Piguet through customs. According to reports, he would auction the timepiece during a fundraising dinner at his World Climate Summit in Kitzbuhel, Austria, on Thursday, reports aceshowbiz.com.

Of the ordeal, Thomas Meister, a Munich Customs press officer, told CNN: "He did not declare a product. A product that was imported from non-EU countries in order to remain in the EU." Thomas added: "And this process applies to everyone."

While he was displeased by the detention, Arnold reportedly managed to be cooperative. "He cooperated at every step even though it was an incompetent shakedown, a total comedy of errors that would make a very funny cop movie," a source said.

OFFICIALS REPORT AT LEAST 13 DEAD IN SHELLING OF A MARKET IN RUSSIAN-OCCUPIED UKRAINE

KYIV (TIP): At least 13 people were killed January 21 by shelling at a market on the outskirts of the city of Donetsk in Russian-occupied Ukraine, local officials reported Sunday.

A further 10 people were injured in the strike on the suburb of Tekstilshchik, said Denis Pushilin, head of the Russian-installed authorities in Donetsk. He said that the shells had been fired by the Ukrainian military.

In a preliminary toll the Donetsk mayor Alexei Kulemzin had earlier reported eight dead in the shelling on the northeast of the city.

The Ukrainian city fell under the control of pro-Moscow separatists in 2014 and is regularly targeted by Kyiv's forces.

During the night of January 1 four people died and 13 were wounded, including journalists, in strikes on Donetsk, the Russian-controlled authorities said.

Kyiv has not commented on the event and the claims could not be independently verified by The Associated Press.

Emergency services continue to work on the scene, Pushilin said. (AFP)

IRAN LAUNCHES SATELLITE IN NEW AEROSPACE MILESTONE

TEHRAN (TIP): Iran's Revolutionary Guards launched a research satellite January 19, a minister said, putting it into a higher orbit in a new milestone for its aerospace programme that has faced Western criticism.

The United States has repeatedly warned Iran against such launches, saying the same technology can be used for ballistic missiles, including ones designed to deliver a nuclear warhead.

The Islamic republic says its satellite and rocket launches are only for civil or defence purposes, denying any ambition to develop a nuclear weapons capability.

"The Soraya satellite of the Iranian Space Organisation... was successfully launched with the Ghaem-100 satellite carrier of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps," the official IRNA news agency said.

"This is the first time that Iran has successfully placed a satellite in orbits higher than 500 kilometres (310 miles)," IRNA said.

The news agency cited Telecommunications Minister Issa Zarepour as saying that the satellite, which weighs about 50 kilograms (110 pounds), was put in orbit 750 kilometres above Earth.

Locator map for Iran with its

Strike kills Hezbollah fighter, civilian in Lebanon, amid seeming Israeli shift to targeted killings

SIDON (TIP): An Israeli airstrike hit two vehicles near a Lebanese army checkpoint in south Lebanon on January 21, killing a Hezbollah member in one car and a woman in the other and wounding several other people, Lebanese state media and health officials reported.

The strike appeared to be part of a shift in Israeli strategy toward targeted killings in Lebanon after more than three months of near-daily clashes with Hezbollah militants on the border against the backdrop of the war in Gaza.

Hezbollah announced that one of its members, identified as Fadel Shaar, had been killed in the strike in the town of Kafra.

Several hours later, Lebanon's National News Agency reported that a civilian woman wounded in the strike, Samar al-Sayyed Mohammed, had died of her injuries.

Local civil defense and hospital officials said several others were wounded.

Video from the scene showed a passenger sedan in flames next to a small truck stopped in the middle of the road.

The Israeli military did not comment on the strike.

Since the outbreak of the Israel-Hamas war on Oct. 7, Hezbollah forces have engaged in near-daily clashes with Israeli troops along the border.

While the clashes had previously been limited mainly to a narrow strip within a few kilometers (miles) from the border, Israel in recent weeks appears to have moved to a strategy of targeted killings of figures from Hezbollah and allied groups, sometimes hitting in areas relatively far from the border, as was the case in Sunday's strike.

On Saturday, another strike near the



Lebanese port city of Tyre killed two people in a car — one of them a Hezbollah commander — and two people in a nearby orchard. The commander, Ali Hudruj, was buried Sunday in south Lebanon. The other occupant of the car, tech sector businessman Mohammad Baqir Diab, was identified as a civilian and was buried in Beirut on Sunday.

On Jan. 2, a presumed Israeli airstrike killed a top Hamas official, Saleh Arouri, in a suburb of Beirut, the first such strike in Lebanon's capital since Israel and Hezbollah fought a brutal one-month war in 2006.

Speaking at Hudruj's funeral Sunday, Hezbollah Member of Parliament Hussein Jeshi said Israel had "resorted to the method of assassinating some members of the resistance" to compensate for being unable to reach a military victory against Hamas after

more than 100 days of war in Gaza.

The Lebanese militant group said in a statement later Sunday that it had launched an attack against the town of Avivim in northern Israel in retaliation for the strike in Kafra and for other "attacks that targeted Lebanese villages and civilians."

Israel did not comment on the strike specifically but announced it had struck Hezbollah targets in several locations in Lebanon on Sunday. It later said that an anti-tank missile had hit a house in Avivim and no injuries were reported.

With dangers of a regional conflict flaring on multiple fronts, officials from the United States and Europe have engaged in a flurry of shuttle diplomacy in recent weeks between Israel and Lebanon, attempting to head off an escalation of the conflict into a full-on war on the Lebanese front. (AP)

Iran-backed militants strike US-led coalition base in Iraq

WASHINGTON (TIP): Iran-backed militants launched ballistic missiles at a base hosting US forces in western Iraq, causing one Iraqi and possible American casualties, the US Central Command said January 20.

"Multiple ballistic missiles and rockets were launched by Iranian-backed militants in western Iraq targeting Al-Assad Airbase," CENTCOM said in a social media post, which placed the time of the attack at 6:30 pm Baghdad time (1530GMT) Saturday evening.

Most of the projectiles were intercepted by the base's air defense systems but "others impacted on the base," the statement said.

"A number of US personnel are undergoing evaluation for traumatic brain injuries. At least one Iraqi service member was wounded," it added.

Since mid-October, there have been

dozens of attacks on US and coalition forces in Iraq and Syria, deployed there to fight jihadists of the Islamic State group.

Most have been claimed by "Islamic Resistance in Iraq," a loose alliance of Iran-linked armed groups that oppose US support for Israel in the Gaza conflict.

The group said in a press release Saturday that it had carried out the latest attack.

The use of ballistic missiles marks an escalation in the attacks on US forces in Iraq and Syria, who had previously been targeted with lower-tech rockets and drones.

Saturday's air base attack comes amid soaring tensions in the Middle East following the outbreak of the Israel-Hamas war on October 7.

Ain al-Assad air base hosting US forces in Iraq in the western Anbar province.

Image used for representation.

With every strike and counterstrike, Israel, the US and Iran's allies inch closer to all-out war

Five members of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps were also killed in a strike Saturday in Damascus that Tehran blamed on Israel, threatening reprisals.

Last Monday evening, Iran itself launched a deadly strike in northern Iraq's autonomous Kurdistan region, saying it had targeted a site used by "spies of the Zionist regime (Mossad)."

Washington has on several occasions launched strikes of its own, which it has said were to impede further assaults or to prevent imminent attacks.

According to the Pentagon, dozens of US personnel have been lightly wounded in previous attacks since late October.

(AFP)

As Gaza deaths top 25,000, Hamas defends Oct 7 attacks that sparked current conflict with Israel

PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES (TIP): Palestinian militant group Hamas on January 21 defended its October 7 attacks on Israel but admitted to "faults" and called for an end to "Israeli aggression" in Gaza, where the health ministry said the death toll passed 25,000.

Southern Gaza is the latest focus of Israel's battle to destroy the Islamist group responsible for the deadliest attack in the country's history. In its first public report on the attacks that began the war, Hamas said they were a "necessary step" against Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories, and a way to secure release of Palestinian prisoners. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu later vowed "complete victory" and said his government would not accept Hamas's conditions for releasing hostages still held in Gaza.

Hamas's 16-page report admitted "some faults happened... due to the rapid collapse of the Israeli security and military system, and the chaos caused along the border areas with Gaza".

The report did not make clear why it was issued now, more than three months into the war that began when militants broke through Gaza's militarised border to attack Israelis and foreigners in the streets, in their homes and at an outdoor rave party. This resulted in the deaths of about 1,140 people, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally based on official Israeli figures. With the border fence broken during the attacks, anybody could enter Israel.

Accounts of sexual violence emerged but the scarcity of survivor testimonies and the lack of forensic evidence made it difficult to assess their scale.

NAVAL BOMBARDMENT : Militants seized about 250 hostages during the



attacks, and Israel says around 132 remain in Gaza. At least 28 of them are believed to have been killed, according to an AFP tally based on Israeli figures.

Hamas -- considered a "terrorist" group by the United States and European Union -- said in the report its fighters were committed to "Islamic values", and if civilians were targeted "it happened accidentally and in the course of the confrontation with the occupation forces."

In response to the attacks, Israel has launched a military offensive that has killed at least 25,105 people in Gaza, mostly women and children, according to the latest toll issued on Sunday by the health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza.

In early January, Israel's military said the Hamas command structure in northern Gaza had been dismantled, leaving only isolated fighters.

But witnesses told AFP Israeli vessels were bombarding Gaza City and other areas in the north early Sunday. Hamas has also reported heavy combat in the

north.

The Israeli army said it "eliminated a number of terrorists" in the main southern city of Khan Yunis and killed 15 militants in northern Gaza over the past day. Netanyahu is under intense pressure to return the hostages and account for security failings surrounding the October attacks.

In a video statement released after the Hamas report, he said that "in exchange for the release of our hostages, Hamas demands an end to the war, the withdrawal of our forces from Gaza", the release of Palestinian prisoners and guarantees that Hamas would stay in power. "If we accept this, our soldiers have fallen in vain," Netanyahu said. "If we accept this, we won't be able to guarantee the safety of our citizens."

The United Nations says about 1.7 million people have been displaced in Gaza, with about one million crowded into the Rafah area of Gaza's south near Egypt. (AFP)

INVESTIGATION UNDER WAY AFTER CHINA SCHOOL FIRE KILLS 13

YANSHANPU (TIP): Authorities in central China's Henan Province were on January 21 looking into the cause of a night-time fire that killed 13 schoolchildren as they slept in a dormitory.

The inferno, which took place at the Yingcai School in Yanshanpu village, was reported to the local fire department at 11:00 pm (1500 GMT) on Friday and was put out around 40 minutes later, official news agency Xinhua said.

Thirteen students died in the accident, while one other person suffered injuries.

Dozens of police were in and around a cordoned-off area near the school on Sunday morning, AFP journalists saw.

An official at the scene told AFP: "There is an investigation ongoing inside. Nobody can go in."

Several windows on the side of the school were broken -- the only obvious signs of a major accident at the building.

Vertical metal bars covered the school's windows, AFP saw, while a permanent sign on the building's facade read: "Enter the kindergarten happily and go home happily."

A teacher at the school told state-run Hebei Daily that all the victims were from the same third-grade class of nine and 10-year-olds.

On Sunday morning, a row of shops next to the school stood mostly shuttered, while a small clinic in a crumbling courtyard building appeared unattended.

A few locals went about their day and a couple of children played as police cars made loops around the cordoned-off area.

Some people passing by Sunday morning stared at the scene, and one man at an auto workshop across the street told AFP that he had been unaware of the fire until the following morning.

Authorities in the area are investigating the fire's cause, and at least one person linked to the school has been detained, Xinhua reported Saturday.

No official explanation of the precise cause of the deadly blaze has yet been provided, although some domestic media reports suggested it was related to an electric heating device.

Yanshanpu village lies on the outskirts of Nanyang, a city of nearly 10 million people about 850 kilometres west of Shanghai.

Police stand guard after a school was engulfed by fire in Yanshanpu in China's Henan province on January 20, 2024.

Little information about the boarding school is publicly available, though social media videos published earlier showed young children including kindergarteners wearing smocks with the school's logo as well as older children learning calligraphy. (AFP)

Kidnapping of five sisters sparks outcry in Nigeria

ABUJA, NIGERIA (TIP): The violent abduction of five young Nigerian sisters near Abuja has sparked a national outcry and raised fears about insecurity in the country's capital.

The sisters were seized at the start of the year by armed men who burst into their home just 15 miles (25 kilometres) from Abuja city centre, a family member told AFP.

She said the attackers killed one of the sisters, 21-year-old Nabeeha Al-Kadriyar, when a ransom deadline passed. Negotiations were ongoing for the release of the others.

Kidnapping for ransom has been a major problem in Nigeria with criminal gangs targeting highways, apartments and even snatching pupils from schools.

After public outrage over the sisters' case this week, President Bola Ahmed

Tinubu condemned what he called the "recent spate of kidnappings and bandit attacks".

First Lady Remi Tinubu also voiced concern, while politicians and the media questioned the government's strategy after gangs targeted parts of the heavily-guarded Federal Capital Territory, which is as big as some states but run by a minister rather than a governor.

One tabloid declared at the weekend that Abuja was "under siege".

'Lie low, buy time'

The Nigerian risk consultancy SBM Intelligence told AFP it had documented 283 people abducted in the Federal Capital Territory alone over the past year.

Some experts believe the country's economic crisis is driving a rise in kidnappings as desperate Nigerians turn

to crime for income.

SBM analyst Confidence MacHarry said insecurity around the capital has been growing for years.

"It's been getting worse for some time," he said, citing a 2022 attack on a prison on the outskirts of Abuja as a landmark moment.

Gunmen bombed their way into Kuje jail and freed hundreds of inmates in the raid claimed by Islamic State-allied jihadists.

The minister for the Federal Capital Territory has urged residents not to panic and promised to find a solution.

MacHarry said the government needed a consistent approach and warned periodic crackdowns on criminals in Abuja's satellite towns were not working.

"All the bandits have to do is lie low and buy themselves time," he said. (AFP)

TEEN DIES IN MALDIVES AFTER MUIZZU GOVT DELAYS PERMISSION FOR HIS MEDICAL EVACUATION USING INDIAN DORNIER AIRCRAFT

NEW DELHI (TIP): In a rather tragic incident a 14 year old Maldivian boy died amid allegations that President Mohammed Muizzu denied permission for the use of an Indian Dornier aircraft that could have potentially saved his life, local media reported.

Maldives President, Mohamed Muizzu, office issued a statement on the demise of a child (in the aftermath of Indian Dorniers not being given permission). "Government has asked authorities to revise and modify the current protocols surrounding the emergency transfers of patients," the statement read. This comes at a time when President Muizzu has set a March 15 deadline for 88 Indian personnel, who are associated with the two Dornier aircraft and one helicopter service that they use for humanitarian assistance and medical evacuation, to leave the country. The Dornier aircraft, produced by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) and provided by India, has been used extensively in the island nation for humanitarian purposes. (AFP)

Prachanda expresses concern over recruitment of Nepalis by Russian Army to fight in Ukraine

KATHMANDU (TIP): Nepal Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' on Sunday expressed concern over the woes faced by Nepali youths in Russia after being recruited in the Russian Army to fight in Ukraine and asked Moscow to immediately stop the practice.

Talking to reporters at the Tribhuvan International Airport upon returning home after attending the 19th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in Kampala, Prachanda said that he was trying his best to stop it since the government has no policy to allow Nepalis to join the military force in any other countries except India and the UK.

"The government is very much concerned and serious regarding the reports that Nepali youths are recruited in the Russian forces and mobilised in the Russia-Ukraine war. We don't have such a policy on behalf of the government," Prachanda said.

In Kampala, Nepalese Foreign Minister N P Saud told Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister Vershinin Sergey Vasilievich not to recruit Nepalese nationals into the country's Army and to help repatriate those who have already joined the forces, according to the private secretariat of Saud. (PTI)

Killer drones, rockets, loitering munitions used against Baloch militants in Iran: Pak military



ISLAMABAD (TIP): Pakistan military Thursday said it used multiple weapons, including killer drones, to carry out effective strikes against hideouts inside Iran used by militants of two leading Baloch terrorist groups responsible for recent attacks in the country.

"The precision strikes were carried out using killer drones, rockets, loitering munitions and stand-off weapons. Maximum care was taken to avoid collateral damage," according to a statement issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the military's media wing.

It said that "hideouts used by terrorist organisations namely Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) and Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF) were successfully struck in an intelligence-based operation codenamed Marg Bar Sarmachar'."

The targeted hideouts were being used by notorious terrorists including Dosta alias Chairman, Bajjar alias Soghat, Sahil alias Shafaq, Asghar alias Basham and Wazir alias Wazi, amongst others, it said.

It asserted that Pakistan Armed Forces remain in a perpetual state of readiness to ensure safety of Pakistan citizens against acts of terrorism.

"Our resolve to ensure that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Pakistan is respected and safeguarded against any misadventure, remains unwavering. We reaffirm our determination to defeat all enemies of Pakistan with the

Pakistan makes U-turn, says will restore full diplomatic ties with Iran

NEW DELHI (TIP): Two days after Iran attacked terrorist hideouts in Balochistan, following which Pakistan downgraded ties and retaliated by attacking a border area in the neighbouring country, Pakistan took a U-turn on Friday and said it was willing to restore full diplomatic relations.

In a telephonic conversation with Iran's foreign minister Hossein Amir Abdollahain, Pakistan's foreign minister Jalil Abbas Jilani expressed his country's readiness to work with Iran on all issues based on mutual trust and cooperation. He also underscored the need for cooperation on security issues.

Jilani also spoke about restoration of full diplomatic ties with Iran, implying that Iran's Ambassador to Pakistan would return to Islamabad and Pakistan's Ambassador to Iran would return to Tehran.

"Pakistan's foreign minister stressed that respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty must underpin this cooperation," said the spokesperson of Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The two foreign ministers also agreed that working level cooperation and close coordination on counter terrorism and other aspects of mutual concern should be strengthened. Both of them also agreed to de-escalate the situation.

It may be recalled that after Pakistan retaliated and attacked a bordering area in Iran which led to the deaths of nine people (all Pakistanis), Iran had summoned Pakistan's Charge d'Affaires in Tehran to protest against the attack.

support of the people of Pakistan," the ISPR said.

However, it also said that for going forward, dialogue and cooperation is deemed prudent in resolving bilateral issues between the two neighbouring brotherly countries.

Meanwhile, Iran's official news agency 'IRNA' reported that nine people were killed in the attack targeting a village in the city of Saravan, with Iranian Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi saying all the dead were foreign nationals. (PTI)

India to send back 276 Myanmar soldiers who fled to Mizoram last week

AIZAWL (TIP): India will send back 276 Myanmar soldiers who fled to Mizoram last week following gunfights with an ethnic insurgent group, an official said on Sunday.

With this repatriation, which will continue for two days -- Monday and Tuesday, more than 600 Myanmar soldiers who fled to Mizoram will be sent back to their country, he said.

The 276 personnel will be airlifted by Myanmar air force planes from the Lengpui airport near Aizawl to Sittwe in the neighbouring country's Rakhine state, the Assam Rifles official told PTI.

They entered Bandukbanga village, located at the India-Myanmar-Bangladesh trijunction, in southernmost Mizoram's Lawngtlai district with arms and ammunition on 17 January and approached the Assam Rifles, she said.

They were taken to the nearby Assam Rifles camp at Parva, and later the



majority of them were shifted to Lunglei, she added.

They have been under the supervision of the Assam Rifles since then, the official said.

These 276 soldiers were brought to Aizawl over Saturday and Sunday for their transport to Myanmar from the

Lengpui airport, she said.

The group is headed by a colonel, and has 36 officers and 240 lower-rank personnel, officials said.

Since November, 635 Myanmar soldiers have fled their country and entered Mizoram after their camps were overrun and captured by ethnic armed organisations and pro-democratic forces, officials said.

Of them, 359 soldiers have already been sent back to their country, they said.

While 104 Myanmar army personnel were sent to the border town of Moreh in Manipur from different places in Mizoram by Indian Air Force (IAF) helicopters in November, 255 soldiers were moved via the Lengpui airport by Myanmar air force planes on January 2 and January 9, they said.

Mizoram shares a 510-km-long border with Myanmar. (PTI)

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11:00 am Nine Days Ramayan Paath Arambh

Sunday January 21st 2024

11:00am to 1:00pm Sunder Kand Path

1:00pm to 7:00pm Bhajans Kirtan

7:30 pm Aarti followed by Langar

LIVE TELECAST IN TEMPLE HALL ON YOUTUBE DIRECT FROM AYODHYA INDIA

Monday January 22nd 2024

4:00pm to 7:30pm Bhajans/Kirtan and shiv sthotum Shiv Pujan

7:30pm Ramayana Paath Bhog

WITH LIGHTING OF DIYAS

Kirtan and Bhajans on Sunday and Monday by:

Sandeep Sehgal

Ajay Jha

Vijay Banjara

Anil Dua

Roop Chand

Subhash Thapar

Gobind Bathija

Harbans Kochar

HAPPY
MAKAR SANKRANTI
JANUARY 14

Skincare tips inspired by celebrities

Celebrities are renowned for their flawless and radiant skin, setting beauty standards that captivate audiences worldwide. Inspired by their skincare secrets, here are some tips to help you achieve a Bollywood-worthy glow. From hydration rituals to natural remedies, these practices promise to elevate your skincare routine to star-studded perfection.

Hydration is the Key

Celebrities swear by the importance of staying hydrated for healthy and glowing skin. Drinking an ample amount of water helps flush out toxins from the body, leaving your skin looking refreshed and radiant. Make it a habit to carry a water bottle with you throughout the day to ensure you stay hydrated.

Natural Ingredients for Skincare

Many stars emphasize the use of natural ingredients for their skincare routines. Incorporate ingredients like aloe vera, turmeric, honey, and cucumber into your skincare regimen. These natural remedies are known for their soothing and nourishing properties, promoting a natural glow.

Sunscreen, Always

Celebrities understand the significance of protecting their skin from harmful UV rays. Regular use of sunscreen is a non-negotiable step in their skincare routine. Choose a sunscreen with a high SPF to shield your skin from the sun's damaging effects and prevent premature aging.

Cleansing is Crucial

A clean canvas is the foundation of any skincare routine. Stars stress the importance of cleansing to remove makeup, dirt, and impurities. Use a gentle cleanser suitable for your skin type to maintain clear and healthy skin.

Adequate Sleep for Radiant Skin

Celebrities know that beauty sleep is not just a saying but a reality. Ensure you get enough restful sleep each night to allow your skin to repair and regenerate. Lack of sleep can lead to dullness and dark circles, so prioritize a good night's sleep for a natural glow.



Minimal Makeup for Maximum Impact

Divas often opt for minimal makeup to let their natural beauty shine. Embrace a simple and light makeup routine that enhances your features without clogging your pores. This approach not only keeps your skin healthy but also exudes a fresh and youthful appearance.

Regular Exfoliation

Exfoliation is a key step to remove dead skin cells and promote cell turnover. Bollywood celebrities incorporate exfoliation into their skincare routines to achieve smooth and glowing skin. Use a gentle exfoliator once or twice a week to reveal a brighter complexion.

Healthy Diet, Healthy Skin

Celebrities maintain a balanced and nutritious diet to keep their skin radiant from within. Include fruits, vegetables, and foods rich in antioxidants in your meals. A healthy diet supports your skin's health and contributes to a natural, lit-from-within glow.

Source: TOI



Groom your eyebrows at home

How many times have you missed going to the salon right before an office party, only to dread partying with undone eyebrows? But worry not, we tell you ways you can do it yourself at home.

Tweeze after you shower

While we all know that tweezing can be a real pain in the butt, there's a way to make the whole process a lot less painful. After taking a hot shower, grab your favorite pair of tweezers, and pluck your eyebrows. The warm water helps open up the follicles, which allows the hair to be pulled out much easier.

Align your brows with your face shape

When it comes to your brows, there are a few set of rules you should be aware of before you pluck away your arches: Use a brow pencil as a guide to help you find the beginning, end, and arch of your eyebrows. The beginning of your brow should start right where your nostril begins. Hold the pencil vertically against the bridge of your nose and on top of your nostril to help you find the starting point. (Essentially you want the inside edges of your brows to match the outer bridge of your nose.) To find your arch, place the pencil on the tip of your nose and angle it straight across your pupil. Ladies and gentlemen, that's where your natural arch lies should be.

Finally, to find the end of your brow, simply take the pencil, at an angle, and place it against the end of your nose and eye. If the tail end of your brow hits the place where the pencil ends, then your eyebrows are the perfect length. If your brow is too long, then tweeze some of those hairs away.

Tweeze with good lighting

If there's one thing you need to make sure to have before you tweeze your eyebrows, it's really, really good lighting. The worst thing you can do is try to pluck your eyebrows in a dimly lit bathroom, where you're pretty much asking for a beauty disaster. If you can, take advantage of natural light. Bring a handheld mirror to the most lit area in your home so you can see all those tiny hairs you need to pluck.

Tweeze in the direction of your hair growth

If you see a tiny black hole where you just tweezed, it means you didn't pluck the whole hair follicle. To prevent this next time, tweeze in the direction of your hair growth so you can capture the whole strand with ease.

Fill in the spaces

If you're one of the lucky few who naturally wakes up with Cara Delevingne brows, then I praise you. But if not, to get the best brows possible you want to fill those puppies in—but not too much. First, find a color that complements your brows. Use this guide if you're unsure on how to find the perfect shade.

FOOD CORNER

Honey Chicken

INGREDIENTS

600 gm chicken, 1/2 teaspoon salt, 2 tablespoon butter, 2 tablespoon virgin olive oil, 1 tablespoon lemon juice, 1/2 cup honey

Method

- Firstly, wash the chicken under running water and place it over a chopping board. Cut the chicken into pieces. Now, place a frying pan over medium flame and pour virgin olive oil in it. Once the oil is sufficiently hot, add the chicken pieces and fry for 4-5 minutes and keep them aside in a roasting pan.
- Next, place a saucepan over medium flame and add butter and honey into it. Once the butter is melted, turn off the flame. Now add lemon juice and salt in the same pan and mix well. Now, put the roasting pan into the oven and baste the chicken with butter-honey mixture. Then, bake the



chicken at 200-250 degree Celsius for 45 minutes. Baste the chicken thoroughly at separate intervals. Serve hot!

Obesity may raise risk of blood cancer by over 70 percent: Study

Researchers find that obesity may increase the risk of developing multiple myeloma -- a blood cancer of the plasma cells -- by more than 70 percent.

Smoking habits and exercise may also impact one's likelihood of developing multiple myeloma, said the team from Massachusetts General Hospital in the US.

The research published in *Blood Advances* revealed that individuals with obesity are more likely to have monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance (MGUS) -- a benign blood condition that often precedes multiple myeloma.

"While significant advancements have been made in therapeutics for multiple myeloma, it remains an incurable disease, often diagnosed after patients have already experienced end-organ damage," explained David Lee, from Massachusetts General Hospital.

The team enrolled 2,628 individuals from across the US who were at elevated risk of developing multiple myeloma, based on self-identified race and family history of hematologic malignancies, between February 2019 and March 2022.

They found that being obese was associated with 73 per cent higher odds of having MGUS, compared to individuals with normal weights. This association remained unchanged when accounting for



physical activity.

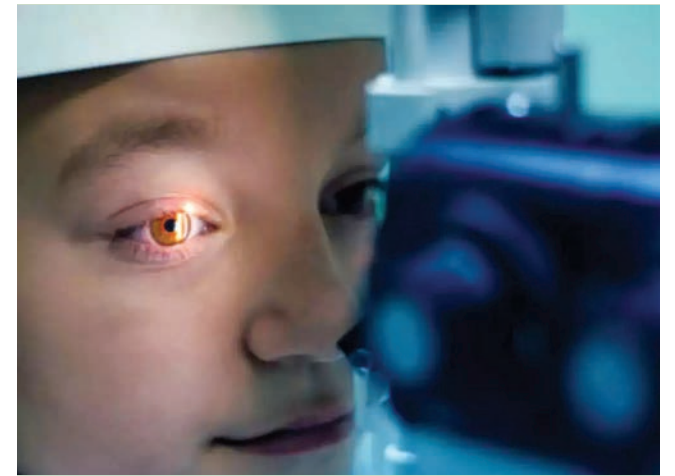
However, highly active individuals (defined as doing the equivalent of running or jogging 45-60 minutes per day or more) were less likely to have MGUS even after adjusting for BMI class, whereas those who reported heavy smoking and short sleep were more likely to also have detectable levels of MGUS.

MGUS, characterised by an abnormal protein produced by plasma cells, is a known precursor to multiple myeloma. Most people with MGUS exhibit no significant symptoms and are not immediately ill. Rather, the presence of MGUS

serves as a warning to monitor for the potential development of more critical conditions, like multiple myeloma, that MGUS can turn into.

"These results guide our future research in understanding the influence of modifiable risk factors, such as weight, exercise, and smoking, on cancer risk," explained Lee.

"Before we can develop effective preventative health strategies to lower the risk of serious diseases like multiple myeloma, we first need to better understand the relationship between MGUS and potentially modifiable risk factors like obesity." *Source: IANS*



Novel contact lenses to diagnose glaucoma developed

Researchers have developed new contact lenses to diagnose glaucoma, an eye condition that can cause irreversible loss of vision if not treated.

Glaucoma affects around 70 million people worldwide, but around half of those living with the condition are not aware of it.

Usually developing slowly over time, many cases of glaucoma are only picked up during routine eye tests, by which time lasting damage may already have been caused, the researchers said.

The new contact lens developed by researchers at the Northumbria University in UK, and Bogazici University in Turkey, can detect changes in eye pressure, which signals possible glaucoma.

Glaucoma occurs when the optic nerve, which connects the eye to the brain, becomes damaged, usually by a build-up of fluid in the front part of the eye, which increases pressure inside the eye—known as Intra-Ocular Pressure (IOP).

The new contact lenses contain micro-sensors that monitor changes in IOP over a period of several hours, sending the data collected wirelessly so it can be analysed by an ophthalmologist and a diagnosis given, the researchers said.

The research, published in the journal *Contact Lens and Anterior Eye*, sets out the findings from an initial pilot study of six participants.

Having determined that the technology works successfully, the researchers now plan to carry out a further study with a larger group of participants, which would take place over the next year.

The lenses would then be made commercially available through their spin-off company GlakoLens, they said.

One of the benefits of using the GlakoLens contact lenses to diagnose glaucoma instead of carrying out a traditional examination is that measurements can be taken more easily over a longer period of time, giving a more accurate diagnosis, according to the researchers. *Source: PTI*

First human trial for deadly Nipah virus vaccine begins in UK

Scientists at the University of Oxford in the UK have launched the first-in-human clinical trial to test a vaccine to protect people against deadly Nipah virus.

Fifty-one people aged 18 to 55 will participate in the trial of the ChAdOx1 NipahB vaccine, developed by researchers at the University of Oxford's Pandemic Sciences Institute, the varsity said in a statement.

Nipah virus is a devastating disease that can be fatal in around 75 per cent of cases. Outbreaks have occurred in countries in South-East Asia, including Singapore, Malaysia, Bangladesh and India, with a recent outbreak in Kerala, India in September 2023.

Despite the first outbreaks of Nipah virus occurring 25 years ago in Malaysia and Singapore, there are currently no approved vaccines or treatments.

"Nipah virus was first identified in 1998, and yet 25 years on the global health community still has no approved vaccines or treatments for this devastating disease," said Professor Brian Angus, the trial's Principal Investigator and Professor in the varsity's Nuffield Department of Medicine.

"Due to the high mortality rate and the nature of Nipah virus transmission, the disease is identified as a



priority pandemic pathogen. This vaccine trial is an important milestone in identifying a solution that could prevent local outbreaks occurring, while also helping the world prepare for a future global pandemic."

The Nipah virus, which is recognised by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as a priority disease requiring urgent research, belongs to the same family of paramyxoviruses as more well-known pathogens like measles. *Source: IANS*

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Soon, watch videos on mobile without SIM card or Internet connection

Mobile users may soon be able to stream videos without a SIM card or an internet connection as Direct-to-Mobile broadcasting could become a reality in the near future.

Addressing a Broadcasting Summit, Information and Broadcasting Secretary Apurva Chandra said trials of the home-grown Direct-to-Mobile (D2M) technology would soon be held in 19 cities and made a strong pitch for reserving the 470-582 MHz spectrum for this emerging technology.

Chandra said a 25-30 per cent shift of video traffic to D2M would unclog the 5G networks, accelerating the nation's digital evolution and democratising content delivery.

Last year, pilot projects to test the D2M technology were carried out in Bengaluru, Kartavya Path and Noida.

Chandra said the D2M technology would help reach nearly 8-9 crore "TV Dark" homes across the country. Of the 280 million households in the country, only 190 million have television sets.

He said there were 80 crore smartphones in the country and 69 per cent of content accessed by users was in the video format.

Chandra said heavy use of video led to the clogging of mobile networks, which resulted in the buffering of content. Developed by Saankhya Labs and IIT Kanpur, the D2M broadcasting technology leverages terrestrial telecommunications infrastructure and public broadcaster-assigned spectrum to transmit video, audio, and data signals directly to compatible mobile and smart devices.

With the potential to reach over a billion mobile devices, the adoption of D2M technology promises transformative benefits, including cost reductions in data transmission and access, improvements in network efficiency and resilience, and potentially leading to the establishment of a nationwide emergency alert system.

Source: PTI

Google removes 17 'underutilised' features from its Assistant app

Google has announced that it is removing some underutilised features in Google Assistant "to focus on delivering the best possible user experience". As per the list shared by the company, Google will be removing 17 features.

Starting January 26, the company said when users ask for one of the removed features, they may get a notification that it won't be available after a certain date. "As we continue to make Google Assistant more helpful, we're prioritising the experiences you love and investing in the underlying technology to make them even better -- which means that some underutilised features will no longer be supported."

Some features being removed include -- the functionality that allows users to use their voice to send an email, video, or audio message. Users will also not be able to use their voice to perform tasks such as making a reservation, sending a payment, or posting on social media. Users also will not be able to manage a stopwatch on Smart Displays and Speakers. Voice control for activities will no longer be available on Fitbit Sense and Versa 3 devices.

Calls made from speakers and Smart Displays will not show up with a caller ID unless you're using Duo.

Moreover, the tech giant said that it is bringing a more consistent experience within the Google app.

According to the company, the microphone icon will now trigger Search results in response to your queries. This change won't let you use the Search bar microphone to do things like turn on the lights or send a message. Google said that Pixel devices will also be affected, as the microphone in the Pixel Search bar will now activate Voice Search instead of Assistant.

Meanwhile, Google has confirmed that it has cut



several hundred jobs across hardware, core engineering and Google Assistant teams.

The layoffs will impact employees in Google's hardware and central engineering teams, as well as workers across Google Assistant, reports CNBC.

Google introduces Circle to Search on Android

Google has been experimenting with ways to search on smartphones since the dawn of Android and the latest attempt involves drawing circles. Circle to Search allows users to draw a circle around information on their device screen to search for the highlighted item. While the feature is officially called Circle to Search, you can also highlight text and scribble on items instead of drawing oval shapes to trigger the new search option.

Circle to Search works anywhere on your device but you'll have to long press the home button or the navigation bar for those using gestures to activate the feature before you start circling items. Google is advertising this feature as more convenient alternative to switching between various apps like screenshotting items and then using Google Lens.

Oldest black hole is 'eating' its host galaxy to death

Researchers have discovered the oldest black hole ever observed, dating from the dawn of the universe, and found that it is 'eating' its host galaxy to death.

The research, published in the journal Nature, used the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) to detect the black hole, which dates from 400 million years after the Big Bang, more than 13 billion years ago.

That this surprisingly massive black hole—a few million times the mass of our sun—even exists so early in the universe challenges the assumptions about how black holes form and grow, the researchers said.

Astronomers believe that the supermassive black holes found at the centre of galaxies like the Milky Way grew to their current size over billions of years.

However, the size of this newly-discovered black hole suggests that they might form in other ways.

According to standard models, supermassive black holes form from the



remnants of dead stars, which collapse and may form a black hole about a hundred times the mass of the Sun.

If it grew in an expected way, this newly detected black hole would take about a billion years to grow to its observed size. However, the universe was not yet a billion years old when this black hole was detected. "It's very early in the universe to see a black hole this massive, so we've got to consider other ways they might form," said lead author Roberto Maiolino, Professor at Cambridge University, UK.

Source: PTI

Samsung gears up to herald 'AI smartphone' era with Galaxy S24 series

In a bid to herald a new 'AI smartphone' era, Samsung is all set to unveil its flagship Galaxy S24 series in the US that will come with industry-leading features.

The company is set to launch three models — Galaxy S24 Ultra, S24 and S24+ — with AI taking a centre-stage for the company.

According to rumours, the devices will house new flatter displays, four-camera array and titanium frame.

One AI feature being talked about is the Google-powered 'Circle to Search'.

The 'Circle to Search' feature is described as "Search any image, video, or text on your screen. Circle, highlight, scribble, or tap to pinpoint what you're curious about, no screenshots necessary".

Reports have also described new features like 'Live Translate' for phone calls, the use of AI to improve zoom at night, as well as an AI-powered 'Note Assist' feature in Samsung's Notes app.

Moreover, the leaks also revealed some of the smartphone specifications, which include a 6.8-inch QHD+ display on Galaxy S24 Ultra, a 6.7-inch QHD+ display on S24+, and a 6.2-inch FHD+ display on S24.

According to the company, the next evolution of Galaxy is on its way.

Ahead of the upcoming event, Samsung released a teaser video, "Galaxy AI is coming."

Source: IANS





Akasa Air says 'confident' about Boeing, orders 150 MAX aircraft

India's Akasa Air said on Thursday, January 18, it had ordered 150 Boeing 737 MAX narrowbody planes, showcasing its confidence in the troubled planemaker as the budget carrier seeks to fly to more destinations at home and abroad.

This is the first major order announcement for Boeing's MAX jetliner programme since a mid-air cabin panel blowout in the United States early this month, although Akasa's order does not include the 737 Max 9 version which is in the spotlight after the incident.

The order was announced at the "Wings India" air show in the southern city of Hyderabad, which has attracted planemakers, airlines and government officials as they make the most of India's travel boom, with a greater focus on international routes. "We feel very confident about the aircraft type that we have ... even seeing Boeing's commitment to the way they've handled this problem," Priya Mehra, Akasa's chief legal, regulatory and strategic relations officer, said.

Akasa's order for 737 MAX 10 and MAX 8-200 does not include the MAX 9 version, which has been largely grounded over the Alaska Airlines cabin panel blowout incident. Mehra said the airline was not looking at diversifying its fleet. *Source: Reuters*

India to grow at 7% in FY25: RBI

Indian economy should record a growth rate of 7% in the next fiscal and inflation is likely to ease further, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said on Wednesday, January 17.

He also credited the government for structural reforms undertaken in recent years, saying they have boosted the medium and long-term growth prospects of the Indian economy. He said amid a challenging global macroeconomic environment, India presents a picture of growth and stability.

Speaking at a CII session on 'High growth, low risk: The India story' here during the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting, Das said recent information on the global economic front has been reassuring with inflation falling, though growth remains low.

Apple overtakes Samsung as top seller of smartphones

Apple ended Samsung Electronics' 12-year run as the largest seller of smartphones in the world, after commanding a 20% market share in 2023, according to a report from International Data Corp.

Samsung ended the year with a 19.4% share, followed by China's Xiaomi, Oppo and Transsion, preliminary data from IDC's Worldwide Quarterly Mobile Phone Tracker showed.

The change in ranking comes after a tough year that saw consumers going slow on smartphone upgrades and choosing cheaper handsets due to high inflation and economic uncertainties.

A slower-than-expected recovery in China, the world's largest smartphone market, also weighed on overall phone sales.

Apple and Transsion, which sells Tecno, Infinix and itel brands, were the only two of the top five smartphone vendors to record sales growth last year, even though the overall market declined 3.2% to 1.17 billion units and hit a decade low.

"While we saw some strong growth from low-end Android players like Transsion and Xiaomi in the second half of 2023, stemming from rapid growth in emerging markets, the biggest winner is clearly Apple," said Nabila Popal, research director at IDC's Worldwide Tracker team.

Phone shipments from Samsung were



The change in ranking comes after a tough year that saw consumers going slow on smartphone upgrades and choosing cheaper handsets due to high inflation and economic uncertainties.

down 13.6%, while iPhone shipments were up 3.7% last year, according to IDC data.

Samsung focused on the mid- to high-end segment for profitability but lost share in the low-end segment, said Amber Liu of research firm Canalys.

Apple, however, is facing pressure in China from a resurgent Huawei as well as

from budget Chinese brands. The iPhone maker is offering discounts of as much as 5% on some models in the country to attract customers.

Microsoft on Friday overtook Apple as the world's most valuable public company, as Wall Street grew more concerned over the demand for its iPhones and other high-end gadgets. *Source: Reuters*

Red Sea unrest is bad news for world's fragile food supply

Chaos in the Red Sea is starting to disrupt shipments of produce from coffee to fruit — and threatening to halt a slowdown in food inflation that brought some relief to strained consumers.

Vessels loaded with foodstuffs are among those avoiding Houthi attacks in the key waterway by sailing around Africa, a longer and costlier route. But unlike gas, oil and consumer goods cargoes that have also been affected, lengthier shipping times risk making perishable foods unsellable.

That's spooking the industry. Italian exporters fear kiwi and citrus fruits will spoil on the way, Chinese ginger is getting pricier and some African coffee cargoes were briefly delayed. Grain is being diverted from the Suez Canal and a livestock carrier bound for the Middle East has changed course.

While the impact is so far limited, it's a reminder of how fragile food supply chains can be. If disruptions worsen,

VESSELS LOADED WITH FOODSTUFFS ARE AMONG THOSE AVOIDING HOUTHİ ATTACKS IN THE KEY WATERWAY BY SAILING AROUND AFRICA, A LONGER AND COSTLIER ROUTE

they could stall the slump in food-commodity costs that had started to filter through to cheaper grocery bills.

"Everyone is a loser here," said Nitin Agrawal, managing director of Euro Fruits, a major Indian grape exporter. The company usually ships to Europe via the Red Sea, but now uses the longer route that's more than quadrupling freight costs and doubling transit times.

That means grape quality will suffer, and most European importers have agreed to higher prices of Indian grapes, which will make them more expensive for consumers, Agrawal said. The European Union generally relies

on India for about a seventh of its table grapes, and more than 35% at the crop's peak in March-April, according to European fresh produce association Freshfel.

Italian exporters, which sell about \$4.4 billion of agricultural produce to Asia, are worried that going around Africa will hurt freshness and add to costs for fruit like apples, kiwi and citrus, said Massimiliano Giansanti, president of farm group Confagricoltura.

It's also a headache for farmers who could have to cut their prices to make up for higher shipping costs.

"We have to sell even if prices fall as we can't prolong the harvesting period," said Sandeep Dagu Sandhan, a grape grower in India's state of Maharashtra, where harvesting has started in some areas. "Exporters always manage to cover their costs. It will be our losses if prices crash."

Source: Bloomberg



BEJAN DARUWALLA AND CHIRAG DARUWALLA

WEEKLY HOROSCOPE - JAN 22 TO JAN 28, 2024

By Chirag Daruwalla - Son of Astrologer Bejan Daruwalla



CANCER

Ganesha says that you will be satisfied with the way every aspect of life is showing improvement this week. An important deal will finally get approved, and you will make good profits. A stalled matter will be resolved. This will give you some relief from the recent stress. Most of you are hardworking and get a lot of work done in less time. Eventually, you will finish the important tasks. In terms of romance, your partner will do something that you did not even expect, and you will feel very happy.

suddenly. But do not panic, with the help and cooperation of your family members, you will be able to deal with these problems. You will have to make continuous efforts to complete all the work in the workplace. Don't neglect your health and exercise due to being troubled by overload at work.



SAGITTARIUS

Ganesha says that this week you will find yourself caught between the responsibilities of home and work. You may become mentally disturbed due to a misunderstanding with a special person. Your loved ones are always with you. They'll be there for you whenever you need them, so don't panic. By adopting a serious attitude toward your life, you will be able to perform better in the workplace.



CAPRICORN

Ganesha says that if you are doing any deal respective to possessions then do not tell anyone. Talking to anyone in this context can create problems. You will not be able to understand the difference between friends and enemies this week. At this time, you are not seen to be in a profitable position in any aspect of life, so be careful and worship your presiding deity.



AQUARIUS

Ganesha says that this week you will be surrounded by insecurities and will be jealous of other people's achievements. It would be better if you abandon negative thinking, recognize your strengths, and stay focused on achieving your goals. Your planets are telling you that you may make some inaccuracies at work this week. Bring positivity to your thoughts and remain calm. Everything will be better than before.



PISCES

Ganesha says that this week is going to be mixed for you. Due to some problems at home, you will not feel like working. Due to this you will remain trapped in worries. Your expenses may increase. So, it would be better if you did not spend money on unnecessary things. Romantically, this week is expected to be very good. This week is going to be very special for the newly married people who are going to start their new married life.



ARIES

Ganesha says that this week will be mixed in every respect. The middle of the week will be sensitive for you. It will now be easy for you to get information about the issues which were troubling you for the last several days. An unknown dissatisfaction will be troubling you this whole week. During this time, do talk to those who are close to you about certain issues. This week can also be a bit troublesome in your personal life. There can be ups and downs in your relationship with your partner. Also, there can be ideological differences between the children.



TAURUS

Ganesha says that you should keep yourself a little organized this week. Keep your bills organized, clear out your cabinets and create a budget for yourself. Whatever you do to plan or organize an event, it will be completed very smoothly, and you will enjoy the benefits of it in the days to come. If needed, you can also take the help of a professional organizer. You may also have to run in vain this week.



GEMINI

Ganesha says that this week is going to be special for you, especially in financial matters. You will feel happy and relieved and may also get some good news regarding the money that has been stuck for many days. The special thing about this week is that you will have a wonderful time with your friends and will also be able to make some profitable deals. However, excessive work pressure can lead to stress, so work comfortably. Don't let unnecessary things or criticism affect your thoughts or mood.



LEO

Ganesha says that it will be difficult for you to spend time with your loved ones this week due to additional responsibilities at the workplace. You will have to postpone an already scheduled trip as you will have to attend an important conference related to work. However, this will not have much impact on your love life. However, there are also indications that you will work smoothly in serious adverse situations at this time and will take control of the situation.



VIRGO

Ganesha says that this week you will be protected from all calamities, especially from those adversaries who want to harm you. You don't need to do anything adverse to them. You may have to struggle a little at the beginning of the week, but it is only for a few days. Be patient and don't get discouraged as it will only make the situation worse. Make the most of this time by spending time with your family and relaxing at home.



LIBRA

Ganesha says that this week you will successfully solve the problems in your personal life. These troubles are temporary and don't let them affect you. Some exciting new developments are expected in personal matters this week. If you are a bachelor, then there are full chances of getting attracted to someone special. You will not have any difficulty expressing your love to your partner.



SCORPIO

Ganesha says that this week there is a possibility that you will find yourself surrounded by many problems



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BIRTHDAY HOROSCOPE : JANUARY 22 TO JANUARY 28, 2024 BY VEDIC ASTROLOGER NASTUR BEJAN DARUWALLA

JANUARY 22

Ganesha says today, you're likely to experience a surge of creativity unlike any other. This is the perfect time to dive into artistic projects or brainstorm innovative ideas. Your energy levels are at their peak, fueling your imagination and drive. Whether it's starting a new painting, writing a piece, or simply redecorating your space, the day is ripe for artistic expression. Embrace this creative wave and let your imagination run wild; the results might surprise you.

JANUARY 23

Ganesha says, conversation today could be a pivotal point in your personal or professional life. This isn't just small talk; it's a discussion that opens up new avenues and opportunities. It could be a chance encounter with a stranger or a planned meeting that takes an unexpected turn. Be open to new ideas and perspectives, as they could lead to significant changes in your life. This dialogue might spark a new partnership, inspire a business idea, or lead to a profound personal revelation.

JANUARY 24

Ganesha says today calls for introspection. It's a day to look inward

and contemplate your future goals and aspirations. Take this time to reassess your path and align your actions with your deepest desires. It's also a perfect day for meditation or a quiet walk-in nature. Reflect on your achievements and set intentions for what you wish to accomplish next. This introspective journey will bring clarity and focus, helping you to navigate the days ahead with a renewed sense of purpose.

JANUARY 25

Ganesha says expect the unexpected today as surprising news comes your way. This news will likely bring a positive shift in your perspective, opening your eyes to new possibilities. It could be a sudden job offer, an unexpected financial gain, or news from a friend that brightens your day. Whatever it is, it's bound to shake up your routine in a good way, injecting excitement and optimism into your life. Embrace this change; it's leading you towards growth and new experiences.

JANUARY 26

Ganesha says today, your focus shifts to personal relationships. It's a day to nurture the bonds you share with others. A small gesture of kindness or a heartfelt conversation can strengthen

these connections significantly. Reach out to a friend in need, spend quality time with family, or express your appreciation to a colleague. These moments of connection are precious and will bring joy and fulfillment to both you and those around you.

JANUARY 27

Ganesha says a challenge at work or in your personal projects will test your skills and resilience today. This isn't just any obstacle; it's an opportunity to showcase your talents and problem-solving abilities. Approach this challenge with confidence and a positive mindset. Remember, every problem has a solution, and this is your chance to shine. Your efforts will not go unnoticed, and overcoming this hurdle will bring a sense of accomplishment and recognition.

JANUARY 28

Ganesha says today, you might find yourself in a reflective mood, pondering life's mysteries and your place in the world. It's a day for deep thinking and philosophical exploration. You may find yourself drawn to books, documentaries, or conversations that challenge your worldview and expand your understanding. This introspective



VEDIC ASTROLOGER NASTUR
BEJAN DARUWALLA

journey is not just about seeking answers; it's about appreciating the questions themselves. Embrace this quest for knowledge and self-discovery; it will enrich your soul and broaden your horizons.

Nastur Bejan Daruwalla is available for astrological consultations.

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Inauguration of Ayodhya Ram Mandir: Astro-numerological significance of January 22

The inauguration of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya on January 22, 2024, is a historic event that is being celebrated by millions of Hindus around the world. The date of the inauguration holds special significance as per various astro-numerological factors. Let us have a look at the divine forces at play on this auspicious day as per the Hindu tradition.

Pausha Hindu Month

The inauguration of the pious Ram Temple is being held during the Pausha month, which is the tenth month in the Hindu lunar calendar and is considered highly auspicious in Hindu traditions. This month holds special significance due to various religious, cultural, and spiritual events that are organised during this period, such as the Kumbh Mela and the Mahakumbh.

Makar Sankranti and Uttarayana

January 22 falls just after Makar Sankranti, a significant Hindu festival that marks the Sun's northward movement into Capricorn (Makar). Uttarayana, as this period is known, is considered a time of auspiciousness, growth, and new beginnings. It is an ideal time for undertaking auspicious tasks like inaugurating the Ram Mandir.

Dwadashi Tithi of Shukla Paksha

The choice of an auspicious date for the inauguration of the Ayodhya Ram Temple, particularly during Shukla Paksha and Dwadashi Tithi, adds a layer of divine favour and positivity to this historic occasion. Shukla Paksha is the waxing phase of the moon. It is associated with the increasing illumination of the moon and symbolises growth, prosperity, and positive energy. Shukla Paksha is considered highly auspicious for beginning new ventures, projects, or ceremonies. In addition, the Dwadashi Tithi is associated with Lord Vishnu, the preserver in the Hindu Trinity. Inaugurating the Ayodhya Ram Temple on this Tithi is symbolic of invoking the divine presence of Lord Vishnu, seeking his blessings for the success and sanctity of the temple. Lord Rama is believed to be the seventh and the most popular avatar of Lord Vishnu.

Moon in Mrigashirsha Nakshatra

On January 22, the Moon will be in Taurus sign in Mrigashira Nakshatra. Taurus is a fixed earth sign associated with stability, security, and material wealth. This is a positive sign for the inauguration of the Ram Mandir, as it suggests that the temple will be a stable and prosperous institution. On this day, the Moon will be placed in Mrigashira Nakshatra. It's seen as a powerful nakshatra for undertaking new ventures and achieving success. It is ruled by the fiery and energetic planet Mars, signifying the beginning of life.

Sun in Uttara Ashadha Nakshatra

The Sun will be in Uttara Ashadha Nakshatra and Capricorn sign on January 22nd. Uttara Ashadha is a Nakshatra associated with leadership, strength, and success. This is a highly auspicious sign for the inauguration, as it suggests that the temple will project India as a global spiritual leader.

Sarvartha Siddhi and Amrita Siddhi Yoga

Both these yogas are considered highly auspicious



astrological combinations in Hindu tradition, and their presence on January 22nd, 2024, further enhances the significance of the Ram Temple inauguration in Ayodhya. They represent longevity, prosperity, and the attainment of blessings. They are also associated with good health, abundance, and divine grace.

Importance of Numbers

The day number, derived from the day of the month, is 22. In numerology, 22 is referred to as the "Master Builder" or the "Master Teacher" number. It symbolises the ability to turn dreams into reality, manifesting ideas on a grand scale. Individuals associated with the number 22 are believed to possess a strong sense of purpose and the capability to bring about positive change in the world. Further, the total sum of the date (22 + 1 + 2024) is 31, which is further reduced to 4 (3 + 1). Number 4 is associated with stability, practicality, and building strong foundations. It is considered a number of hard work, diligence, and the manifestation of goals through disciplined efforts.

January 22 and Manifestation

With the reduced total sum being 4, the numerological energy of January 22, 2024, encourages grounded and practical manifestations. It's a day where attention to detail, organisation, and methodical planning can lead to tangible and enduring outcomes. Additionally, the vibration of 4 suggests a focus on building not just in the material sense but also in terms of personal and spiritual growth. It's a day where individuals may find strength and support in their

"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

spiritual pursuits.

Completion and Foundation

Considering that the total sum of the date is 4, it also carries the essence of completion and laying a strong foundation. The number 4 is often associated with completion. In numerology, it represents a sense of wholeness and the conclusion of a cycle. It suggests that a certain phase or aspect of life is coming to an end, and it's time to take stock of the achievements and lessons learned during that period. Additionally, the number 4 is linked to the concept of building a solid foundation. This implies that after completing a cycle, it's an opportune time to lay the groundwork for future undertakings. This could involve reflecting on past experiences, understanding the challenges faced, and using the gained wisdom to establish a strong base for future success.

*(The author, Neeraj Dhankher, is Vedic Astrologer, Founder - Astro Zindagi)
Source: HT*

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Ajmer: The abode of saint Muin-ud-din Chishti

Surrounded by Aravali ranges, the city of Ajmer is most famous for the Ajmer Sharif Dargah of saint Muin-ud-din Chishti. This makes Ajmer one of the most significant places of Islamic pilgrimage in the world. Located at a distance of 130 km from Jaipur and 14 kms from Pushkar in Rajasthan, the city is firmly bound by its traditions and culture. Ajmer has a unique charm that lies in the ethos and craftsmanship practised over centuries.

Visit Ajmer to witness the exquisite Mughal architecture set in an aura of spirituality. The city is also a renowned religious spot for Jains because of Golden Jain Temple. During the festival of Urs, commemorating the death anniversary of Saint Moinuddin Chishti, believers from across the globe throng the city. A lot of travellers visiting Pushkar stop by Ajmer and make a day trip. Ajmer has also been selected as one of the heritage cities for the HRIDAY (Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana) scheme of the Government of India.

Apart from Ajmer Sharif Dargah and the Jain Temple, there are some other tourist attractions in Ajmer as well. Adhai Din ka Jhopra, Ana Sagar Lake, Foy Sagar Lake, Ajmer Government Museum and Taragarh Fort are some of them. Ajmer is also home to Mayo College, one of the most prestigious boarding schools in India.

Ajmer Sharif Dargah

Ajmer Sharif Dargah, also known as Ajmer Dargah, is the tomb of Moinuddin Chishti is one of the holiest places of worship in India not only for the Muslims but followers of every faith. Being the final resting place of the Khwaja Moin-ud-din Chisti, it has had an enormous contribution in spreading the ethical and spiritual values of Islam amongst masses.

Khwaja Moin-ud-din Chisti was a great Sufi Saint and dedicated his entire life to the upliftment of the poor and downtrodden. The shrine is visited by millions of people every year, as it is considered very sacred by people of all religions. Ajmer Sharif was built by the Mughal Emperor Humayun, hence justifying the rich Mughal Architecture.



The Dargah has various constituents like tombs, courtyards and Daalaans. The major among these structures are- Nizam Gate, Buland Darwaza, Jama Masjid, Aulia Masjid, Dargah Shrine, Mehfilkhana and about a dozen of other prominent establishments.

One can spot two huge cauldrons in the inner courtyard of the shrine. These containers have a capacity of 2240 kg and 4480 kg and are used during special occasions to cook sweet delicacies like Kheer.

Ana Sagar Lake

The gorgeous Ana Sagar Lake is a magnificent artificial lake that is located in the city of Ajmer in Rajasthan, India. This lake is best visited during the sunsets when the views are extraordinarily marvellous to look at. The sight of the lake from the nearby temple is particularly

enchanting. Do not forget to take a camera to capture the fantastic and heavenly views that you behold here. However, the lake may dry up during the summers.

The Ana Sagar Lake is surrounded by Daulat Bagh Gardens, which is a splendid garden full of vast open spaces and lush greenery, and the Khobra Behroon temple- two popular attractions of Ajmer that tourists prefer to visit along with a day trip to the beautiful lake. The lake is only 13 kilometres away from the main city of Ajmer. An island can be spotted in the centre of the lake. Tourists love to indulge in boating or water scooter rides here. The lake is about 4.4 metres deep and spreads over an area of 12 kilometres.

Akbar's Palace

Akbar's palace, constructed in 1570AD is the place where he and his troops stayed in at Ajmer whenever he visited the Ajmer

Sharif Dargah. It is well known for the museum which portrays the age-old military weapons and exquisite sculptures, paintings and other artefacts of the Mughal era. The museum showcases various aspects of the Rajput and Mughal style of living and fighting. The large black marble statue of Goddess Kali situated in the palace is quite famous.

Ajmer Jain Temple

Ajmer Jain Temple or Soniji Ki Nasiyan is a Digambar Jain temple dedicated to Lord Rishabhdev (Agnidev), the first of the 24 Tirthankara of Jainism. The temple is made of red sandstone which is why it is also called the Red Temple. The main attraction of the temple is the main chamber, known as the Swarna Nagari "City of Gold", which has several gold-plated wooden figures, depicting several figures in Jainism.



contd from page 1

Prime Minister Modi unveils Ram Lalla idol at Ayodhya

Orchestrated by Ayodhya's celebrated poet Yatindra Mishra, the grand musical rendition was supported by the Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi.

The instruments included pakhawaj, flute and dholak from Uttar Pradesh, veena from Karnataka, algoja from Punjab, sundari from Maharashtra, mardala from Odisha; santoor from Madhya Pradesh, pung from Manipur, nagada and kali from Assam; and tambura from Chhattisgarh.

There was also shehnai from Delhi, ravanahatha from Rajasthan, shrikhol and sarod from West Bengal, ghatam from Andhra Pradesh, sitar from Jharkhand, santar from Gujarat, pakhawaj from Bihar, hudka from Uttarakhand and nagaswaram, taval and mridangam from Tamil Nadu.

While about 8,000 people are on the long list of invitees, the select list features 506 A-listers, including prominent politicians, leading industrialists, top film stars, sportspersons, diplomats, judges and high priests. To commemorate the occasion, the Centre gave half a day off to all Government employees including Public Sector Banks. Several States have also followed suit and declared a public holiday.

The consecration ceremony was held after the first phase of the temple's construction, made possible by a Supreme Court judgment in 2019 on the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid title suit. The Hindu litigants argued that the Babri Mosque was constructed at the site of a temple marking the birthplace of Lord Ram. In 1992, the 16th-century mosque was demolished by "kar sevaks".

UN condemns Israel as Gaza death toll crosses 25K mark

In the southern Gaza city of Khan Yunis, where Israel has been increasing pressure on Hamas in recent weeks, the military said that snipers, backed by air support, had "eliminated a number of terrorists."

In southern Lebanon, two Hezbollah fighters were killed when an Israeli drone hit their vehicle security sources said. Their ranks were not revealed but a source close to the Iranian-backed group said they were not senior figures. It was the latest strike in an area where Israel has targeted dozens of Hezbollah fighters. Israel's military said it does not comment on foreign reports.

Hezbollah has been trading fire across Lebanon's southern border with Israeli forces in support of the militia group's Palestinian ally Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

The level of death, destruction and displacement from the war already is without precedent in the decades-old Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Yet Israeli officials say the fighting is likely to continue for several more months.

Missile attacks in Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Yemen have thrown into sharp focus the increasing risk of the war in Gaza triggering a wider regional conflict pitting Iran and its allies against Israel and the US.

After Israeli strikes killed 5 military advisers of Iran in Syria's Damascus, missiles and rockets launched by Iran-backed militants in Iraq, where such groups have targeted US forces, hit al-Asad air base, the US Central Command said. A number of US personnel were being evaluated for traumatic brain injuries and one Iraqi service member was wounded. (Agencies)

Suoizzi leads Pilip in tight race to replace Santos in NY-3: PIX11 poll

Suoizzi had support from 51% of "very likely" voters and Pilip got 37%.

There is not an overwhelmingly clear top issue for NY-3 voters. About 26% of voters said immigration was their top concern, 22% said the economy and 15% said

crime.

Abortion access, an issue that generally favors Democrats, was only at 4%. Abortion rights are protected by law in New York; however, the special election in this swing district is widely viewed through a national lens and Democrats are focused on abortion since the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade.

Another red flag for Democrats is the approval of President Joe Biden in NY-3. The poll found only 33% of those surveyed approve of the job he is doing.

Drilling down on the issues, most NY-3 voters are in favor of continued foreign aid to support two major conflicts abroad: 60% favor continued support of Israel in its war in Gaza and 51% support continuing to help Ukraine with the Russian invasion.

On the migrant crisis, there is a plurality of NY-3 voters who would like to see the federal government foot the bill. Of those surveyed, 45% said the federal government needs to pay back New York for the cost of supporting migrants; 18% said it should be a mix of New York City, Texas - which is doing the busing from the border - and the federal government; 14% said this city should be handling this on its own.

PIX11 News will host a special one-hour forum featuring NY-3 candidates Suozzi and Pilip on Tuesday, Jan. 30, from 7 to 8 p.m. You can tune in to PIX11 News or stream the forum on PIX11.com and PIX11+, which is available on Roku, Amazon Fire TV, Apple TV, and Samsung.

The Emerson College Polling/PIX11 New York Third District poll was conducted January 13-15, 2024. The sample consisted of 975 registered voters, with a credibility interval, similar to a poll's margin of error, of +/- 3.1 percentage points. The data sets were weighted by gender, age, party, race, and education based on US Census parameters, and New York voter registration and voter turnout data by regions (NY SOS). Data was collected by contacting a list of cellphones via MMS-to-web, landlines via Interactive Voice Response (IVR) and emails provided by Aristotle, along with an online panel of voters provided by Alchemer. (Source: PIX 11)

Times Square in New York echoes with bhajans to celebrate Ram Lalla's Pran Pratishtha

The Indian community, which turned out in huge numbers for the celebrations, wore traditional Indian attire and were seen holding saffron flags with Shri Ram portraits inscribed on them.

Taking to X, Indian embassy in the US said, "Indian Diaspora illuminated Times Square with a spectacular celebration of the Pran Prathistha at Ram Mandir, Ayodhya. #AyodyaRamTemple Dressed in traditional Indian attire, they passionately chanted bhajans and songs, showcasing India's cultural heritage, vibrancy and unity." Separately, the Mayor of the city of Worcester, Massachusetts, Joe Petty, also extended his warm greetings to the Hindu community over the Pran Pratishtha ceremony.

This comes as the mayor issued his proclamation for the 75th Republic Day of India and said, "In the City of Worcester, we encourage all residents to recognize and participate in its observance and extend our warmest congratulations to the American Hindu, Sikh, Jain, and Asian-American communities on the auspicious inauguration of the Shri Ram Temple in Ayodhya (Bharat)."

It added, "We extend heartfelt congratulations to the American Hindu, Sikh, Jain, and Asian-American diaspora communities on the momentous inauguration of the Shri Ram Temple in Ayodhya, India, planned for Jan 22, and are thankful to Foundation of Indian-Americans (FIA), New England, for helping us to acknowledge and recognize both historic celebrations."

The mayor also joined the US-India community for the celebrations held over the Pran Pratishtha of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya.

Taking to X, the Indian embassy in New York said, "Mayor of the City of Worcester, Massachusetts,



@MayorJoePetty extends warm greetings to the community on the 'auspicious inauguration of the Shri Ram Temple in Ayodhya' in his proclamation for the 75th Republic Day of India. He joined the US-India community @FIANewEngland in the celebrations and highlighted our spirit of democracy, diversity & unity and the rich cultural heritage and traditions."

Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust announced on Sunday that the 'Pran Pratishtha' ceremony will be marked by a dazzling musical event titled 'Mangal Dhvani'.

The soiree, featuring some of the biggest names in the world of music, will be staged at 10 A.M.

From the Surya Dwar, the main entrance to Ram Janmabhoomi, to the temple, the streetlights and walkways have been decked up with murals inspired from Ramayana ahead of the consecration ceremony. Lamp posts have been designed with traditional "Ramanandi tilak" motifs. (Source: ANI)

Ambassador Binaya Srikanta Pradhan takes over as India's Consul General at New York

Ambassador Pradhan's diplomatic career includes senior roles in Indian Embassies in Moscow, Turkmenistan, and Pakistan from 2004 to 2012. During 2012-14, he managed India's relations with Afghanistan and Iran at the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi.

Prior to the present assignment, Ambassador Pradhan was High Commissioner of India to Tanzania and Permanent Representative to the East African Community (EAC) from August 2021 to January 2024. During this period India-Tanzania relationship was elevated to 'Strategic Partnership' and the first overseas campus of the prestigious Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras in Zanzibar, Tanzania was set up.

From 2014 to 2019, Mr. Pradhan served as the Chief of Staff to the Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas, Government of India. His international engagements extended to being the Deputy Chief of Mission in the Embassy of India, Moscow, from June 2019 to July 2021.

Ambassador Pradhan demonstrates a keen interest in economic and energy diplomacy. He is proficient in English, Hindi, Russian and Odiya languages.

Beyond his diplomatic pursuits, he finds enjoyment in playing golf. He is married to Ms. Monalisa and they are proud parents of two daughters, Dibyanshi and Diya.

History This Week

JANUARY 19 TO JANUARY 25

JANUARY 19



January 19, 1966 - Indira Gandhi was elected prime minister of India in succession to Lal Shastri who had died eight days earlier. She served until 1975 and later from 1980 to 1984, when she was assassinated by her own bodyguards as she walked to her office. Her only surviving son, Rajiv, became the next prime minister. In 1991, he was assassinated while campaigning for reelection.

January 19, 1983 - Former Gestapo official Klaus Barbie, known as the "Butcher of Lyon," was arrested in Bolivia, South America. He was responsible for deporting Jewish children from Lyon to Auschwitz where they were gassed. He also murdered French Resistance leader Jean Moulin and tortured others. He was exposed by Nazi hunters Serge and Beate Klarsfeld, extradited in 1987, then convicted by the French and died while in prison.

Birthday - Robert E. Lee (1807-1870) military leader of the Confederacy during the American Civil War, was born in Westmoreland County, Virginia. He was the son of a Revolutionary War hero, a graduate of West Point and served in the U.S. Army for 25 years preceding the Civil War. At the outbreak of hostilities, he was offered command of the Union Army, but declined and instead accepted command of the military and naval forces of Virginia.

Birthday - Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849) poet and writer of mystery and suspense tales, was born in Boston, Massachusetts. His works include; The Fall of the House of Usher, Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque, The Murders in the Rue Morgue and his famous poem The Raven.

JANUARY 20



January 20, 1936 - King George V of England died at age 71. The grandson of Queen Victoria, he had reigned since

1910. He renamed his line as the House of Windsor, breaking his association with the family's German line of descent. He was succeeded by his son King Edward VIII who abdicated in December and was succeeded by George VI.

January 20, 1942 - During the Holocaust, Reinhard Heydrich, Himmler's second in command of the SS, convened the Wannsee Conference in Berlin with 15 top Nazi bureaucrats to coordinate the Final Solution (Endlösung) in which the Nazis would attempt to exterminate the entire Jewish population of Europe, an estimated 11 million persons.

January 20, 1945 - Franklin Delano Roosevelt was inaugurated to an unprecedented fourth term as president of the United States. He had served since 1933.

January 20, 1981 - Ronald Reagan became president of the United States at the age of 69, the oldest president to take office. During his inauguration celebrations, he announced that 52 American hostages that had been seized in the U.S. embassy in Tehran, Iran, were being released after 444 days in captivity.

January 20, 1996 - Yasir Arafat became the first democratically-elected leader of the Palestinian people with 88.1 percent of the vote.

JANUARY 21



January 21, 1924 - Soviet Russian leader Vladimir Lenin died of a brain hemorrhage. He led the Bolsheviks to victory over the Czar in the October Revolution of 1917 and had then established the world's first Communist government. Lenin's body was placed in a tomb in Red Square in Moscow and was a much venerated national shrine until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

January 21, 1954 - The USS Nautilus, the world's first nuclear powered submarine, was launched at Groton, Connecticut.

January 21, 1976 - The Concorde supersonic jet began passenger service with flights from London to Bahrain and Paris to Rio de Janeiro, cruising at twice the speed of sound (Mach 2) at an altitude up to 60,000 feet.

Birthday - Ethan Allen (1738-1789) was born in Litchfield, Connecticut. He was a hero of the American Revolution who led the small force that captured Fort Ticonderoga in New York without bloodshed in 1775. The fort contained much needed supplies and ammunition.

Birthday - Confederate Army General "Stonewall" Jackson (1824-1863) was born in Clarksburg, Virginia (as Thomas Jonathan Jackson). He was a West Point graduate who served in the Mexican War then resigned to teach at the Virginia Military Institute. He sided with the

South and became a Brigadier General, earning his nickname at the first battle of Bull Run as his troops held firm while others wavered. "There is Jackson standing like a stone wall," a fellow general commented. He was shot in 1863 by a Confederate lookout who had mistaken him in the dark. "I have lost my right arm," lamented General Lee upon his death.

JANUARY 22

January 22, 1943 - During World War II in the Pacific, Japanese resistance ended in New Guinea, resulting in the first land victory of the war for Allied forces.

January 22, 1973 - Abortion became legal in the U.S. as the Supreme Court announced its decision in the case of Roe vs. Wade striking down local state laws restricting abortions in the first six months of pregnancy. In more recent rulings (1989 and 1992) the Court upheld the power of individual states to impose some restrictions.



Birthday - British essayist, philosopher and statesman Francis Bacon (1561-1626) was born in London. Best known for his philosophical works concerning the acquisition of knowledge; Novum Organum and The Advancement of Learning.

JANUARY 23

January 23, 1937 - In Moscow, 17 leading Communists went on trial, accused of participating in a plot engineered by Leon Trotsky to overthrow Stalin's regime and assassinate its leaders. After a seven-day trial, 13 of them were sentenced to death. Trotsky fled to Mexico where he was assassinated in 1940.



January 23, 1943 - In North Africa, British forces under General Bernard

Montgomery captured Tripoli in Libya. January 23, 1968 - The American ship USS Pueblo was seized by North Koreans in the Sea of Japan amid claims the Navy ship was spying. The ship was confiscated and its crew held in captivity until December, with one fatality.

JANUARY 24



January 24, 1965 - Winston Churchill (1874-1965) died. He had been Britain's wartime prime minister whose courageous leadership and defiant rhetoric had fortified the British during their long struggle against Hitler's Germany. "I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears, and sweat," he stated upon becoming prime minister at the beginning of the war. He called Hitler's Reich a "monstrous tyranny, never surpassed in the dark, lamentable catalogue of human crime." Following the war, he coined the term "Iron Curtain" to describe the barrier between areas in Eastern Europe under Soviet Russia's control and the free West.

January 24, 1972 - Japanese soldier Shoichi Yokoi was discovered on Guam after he had spent 28 years hiding out in the jungle not knowing World War II had long since ended.

JANUARY 25



January 25, 1947 - Gangster Al Capone, who once controlled organized crime in Chicago, died in Miami at age 48 from syphilis.

January 25, 1959 - An American Airlines Boeing 707 made the first scheduled transcontinental U.S. flight, traveling from California to New York.

January 25, 1961 - President John F. Kennedy conducted the first live televised presidential news conference, five days after taking office.

January 25, 1971 - In Uganda, a military coup led by Idi Amin deposed President Milton Obote. Amin then ruled as president-dictator until 1979 when he was ousted by Tanzanian soldiers and Ugandan nationalists. During his reign, Amin expelled all Asians from Uganda, and ordered the execution of more than 300,000 tribal Ugandans.

Birthday - Scientist Robert Boyle (1627-1691) was born in Lismore, Ireland. He formulated Boyle's Law concerning the volume and pressure of gases.

JLF to revolve around Tulsidas and the Ramcharit Manas sessions this year



BY DR YASH GOYAL



The 17th JLF is scheduled to be held in Jaipur from February 1 to 5, 2024

The Jaipur Literature Festival (JLF) is an annual literary festival that takes place in Pink City every year. Founded in 2006, the 17th JLF is scheduled in Jaipur from February 1-5. The festival is an initiative of Jaipur Virasat Foundation which was founded by Faith Singh, originally as a segment of the Jaipur Heritage International Festival and developed into a free-standing festival of literature with international fame. In 2012, a number of events occurred related to Salman Rushdie and the Satanic Verses controversy. JLF has reached every literary corner of the world. What used to be virtual during the Corona period is now becoming visible in foreign cities. The credit to create literary

sensation and others to organise similar events in parts of India certainly goes to Sanjay Roy, William Dalrymple and Namita Gokhale.

Namita, co-founder and co-director of JLF, is a well-known litterateur. She is the author of 23 works of fiction and non-fiction. Her acclaimed debut novel, *Paro: Dreams of Passion*, was published in 1984. She is the recipient of various prizes and awards, including the prestigious Sahitya Akademi (National Academy of Literature) Award 2021 for her novel *Things to Leave Behind*. Following are the excerpts of her Online 10 Q-A with Dr Yash Goyal.

Q. THE 17TH EDITION OF JAIPUR LITERATURE FESTIVAL 2024 WILL BEGIN NEXT MONTH. WITH WHAT INTENTION DID YOU GUYS START JLF IN JAIPUR?

A. We began with a love for literature, across borders, and a deep belief in Indian writing in all its avatars.

Q. SINCE THIS FESTIVAL STARTED FROM JAIPUR, HOW MUCH LITERARY BENEFIT DID RAJASTHAN'S WRITERS GET FROM IT? WHAT IS THE CRITERIA FOR SELECTING A WRITER?

A. We try to programme a range of writers from Jaipur and different parts of Rajasthan. We include new voices, women writers, and the oral heritage as well as established writers and Sahitya Akademi awardees. Shri Nand Bharadwaj and Shri CP Deval have also guided us over the years.

Q. THIS FESTIVAL ALSO FOCUSES ON RAJASTHANI LANGUAGE AND ITS LITTERATEURS. BUT RAJASTHANI LANGUAGE DID NOT GET CONSTITUTIONAL RECOGNITION IN 17 YEARS. WHAT DO YOU THINK OF IT.

A. It is a complex issue. Rajasthani certainly deserves constitutional recognition but the many dialects are cited as a factor in this delay in giving the language its due.

Q. LOK SABHA ELECTIONS ARE GOING TO BE HELD SOON. THERE IS AN ATMOSPHERE OF AYODHYA AND LORD RAM IN THE ENTIRE COUNTRY. WOULD JLF WANT TO KNOW THE MINDS OF LITTERATEURS ON THIS VERY RELIGIOUS SUBJECT IN ANY OF THIS YEAR'S SESSIONS?

A. We have a session on Tulsidas and the Ramcharit Manas which should be of interest to our audiences.

Q. FROM A COMMERCIAL POINT OF VIEW, JLF HAS NOW BECOME GLOBAL. HAS THIS CREATED ANY BRIDGE BETWEEN INDIAN AND FOREIGN WRITERS?

A. The global editions have led to deepened ties with diasporic authors of Indian origin and creative exchanges with international writers we interact with. Many valuable initiatives have resulted from this.

Q. WHAT ARE THE REASONS FOR THE POPULARITY OF JLF IN INDIA AND ABROAD? NOW THERE ARE MANY SUCH LITERARY FESTIVALS IN ALMOST EVERY STATE, DO YOU GUYS FEEL ANY COMPETITION WITH THEM?

A. The Jaipur Literature Festival draws international audiences because the programming is creative, rooted, and provides many different perspectives and points of view. As for competition - we welcome it, for we can all constantly learn from each other.

Q. HOW MUCH DID JLF'S SPONSORS INCREASE IN THESE 17 YEARS? DO THEY ALSO HAVE TO COMPETE FOR ADMISSION IN JLF?

A. We have had many wonderful and supportive sponsors, but these things took a hit during the pandemic years.

Q. YOU ARE ALSO A GREAT WRITER, WHAT KIND OF WRITING DO YOU HAVE PREFERRED IN YOUR LITERATURE? YOUR NOVEL 'THINGS TO LIV BEHIND' RECEIVED THE SAHITYA ACADEMY AWARD, WHAT IS IT ALL ABOUT?

A. I have written 23 books by now - including novels, short stories, anthologies, with themes around the Himalaya, and religion, and the interpretation of myth. There is also a play co-authored with Malashri Lal on the life of Michael Madhusudan Dutt.

'Things to Leave Behind' is a work of historical fiction set in Kumaon in the years 1840 to 1912. I am a Kumaoni and 'Things to Leave Behind' is a tribute to the rich heritage of the region.

Q. YOUR ANOTHER NOVEL 'NEVER NEVER LAND', WHY IS THIS GETTING POPULARITY?

A. My new novel 'Never Never Land' will be released soon. It is set in the familiar landscape of the Himalayas. Let's see how readers respond to it.

Q. JLF'S EVERY SESSION HAS A RECORD NUMBER OF YOUNG BOYS' AND GIRLS' FOOTFALL, WHETHER THEY ATTEND THE SESSION OR NOT? DON'T YOU THINK JLF EMERGED AS THE BEST FASHION AND A JOINT FOR YOUNGSTERS AT LEAST IN PINK CITY?

A. I think it's wonderful that so many young people attend the festival as a lifestyle choice. Reading is to be enjoyed, it's a pleasurable activity, and it's good that they enjoy being there.

Q. WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF JLF IN THE NEXT 5 YEARS?

A. The future can never be foretold - but of this I'm sure, that reading will never go out of fashion. We will go from strength to strength as we continue to creatively interpret the role of the LitFest.

(Yashpal Goyal is Special Correspondent, TIP, Jaipur)



Namita Gokhale, co-founder and co-director of JLF



Asian cup: Uzbekistan hammer India 3-0

Bereft of ideas, a lacklustre India's woes were compounded by their defensive lapses, resulting in a 3-0 drubbing by a dominant Uzbekistan in the AFC Asian Cup at Doha on January 18.

This was India's second successive defeat in Group B, having started their campaign with a 0-2 loss to title contenders Australia. In their opener, India's spirited performance earned them plaudits. However, against the central Asian nation, India's performance was a far cry from their display against the Socceroos.

Uzbekistan scored through Abbosbek Fayzullaev (4th minute), Igor Sergeev (18th) and Nasrullaev (45th+3rd) to register their first win in the competition after being held to a stalemate by Syria in their tournament opener.

Hoping to start on a positive note barely days after their promising show against Australia, India, instead, found themselves on the back foot straightaway and conceded a soft goal early on.

The lightning quick Fayzullaev, placed in a favourable position, found the target with a header past the hapless Gurpreet Singh Sandhu.

Ranked 102 in the world as against their 68-ranked opponents, Igor Stimac's men found the going tough as Uzbekistan looked to rattle the Indian defence with their attacking play.

In a mood to stamp their authority further, Uzbekistan again benefitted from sloppy defending from their opponents. Rahul Bheke gave the ball away at the halfway line. Akash Mishra's clearance hit the post before returning to the field of play, and Sergeev did the rest to put his side 2-0 ahead.

India beat Afghanistan after two superovers for 3-0 sweep

BENGALURU (TIP)

India overcame Afghanistan in a second Super Over in a heart-stopping T20 International to complete a 3-0 series sweep on a night of high drama on January 17. The home side had bagged the series with back-to-back wins in Mohali and Indore, rendering the result of the match academic.

But the final match of the three-match series provided the most drama as Afghanistan, replying to India's mammoth 212/4, racked up 212/6 resulting in deadlock. In the first Super Over, Afghanistan managed 16/1, which India matched as the stalemate continued.

India scored 11/2 in the second Super Over before spinner Ravi Bishnoi sealed their victory in three deliveries, conceding just one run and taking two wickets. "My heart rate was high, but we had a lot of fun," leg-spinner Bishnoi said. "The moment we saw two right-handers come out, I was given the ball. The idea was to bowl back of length to begin with from a little behind the crease."

Earlier, India looked in trouble after they slumped to 22/4 inside five overs after electing to bat. Skipper Rohit Sharma smashed an unbeaten 121 off 69 balls as he and Rinku Singh, who hammered 69 not



Rinku Singh clobbered six sixes in his 39-ball 69 not out.

out, rescued India with an unbroken fifth-wicket stand of 190 off just 95 balls. Karim Janat bled 36 runs in the final over of the Indian innings conceding five sixes in that seven-ball over that included a no-ball.

Nice to see we have some options ahead T20 World Cup: Dravid

India head coach Rahul Dravid was a pleased man after the 3-0 series win over Afghanistan as few fringe players performed well to give the team more options for the T20 World Cup in June.

India played 11 T20s after the ODI World Cup last year and the thinktank was able to have a closer look at some contenders such as Jitesh Sharma and Shivam Dube after frontline players were given a rest. Dravid was quite chuffed at their efforts.

"We've had different people play after the last ODI World Cup for a variety of reasons. But I think it's just nice to see that there are some options (ahead of World Cup) who have put their hand up, and certainly shown that they've got skills to address.

OLYMPICS QUALIFIERS

India shot down by Germany, to face Japan for Paris berth

RANCHI (TIP)

The Indian women's hockey team fought with determination but lost its nerves in the most crucial phase of the penalty shootout, going down to Germany in the second semifinal of the FIH Olympic Qualifier on January 18.

The match was stretched to a penalty shootout, which Germany won 4-3 in sudden death, after the teams were tied at 2-2 in regulation time. With this win, Germany secured a berth in the Paris Olympics. India will have another chance to seal a berth if they beat Japan in the third place match tomorrow. World No. 5 Germany will take on the USA in the final.

Deepika (15th minute) and Ishika Chaudhary (59th) were the goal-scorers for India in the regular time, while Germany's both goals were scored by Charlotte Stapenhorst (27th, 57th).

As expected, the Germans came out attacking from the onset and exerted continuous pressure on the Indian defence on a foggy night, where visibility was a problem. Just 55 seconds from the end of the first quarter, India secured their first penalty corner and Deepika slammed home with a powerful drag-flick to



Deepika is tackled by Selin Oruz during their semifinal in Ranchi on Thursday, January 18. PTI

stun the Germans.

Lack of coordination from the Indian midfield and inability to clear loose balls cost the hosts dearly as

Germany equalised three minutes from half-time when Stapenhorst scored from a field effort.

The Germans continued their relentless efforts after the change of ends but the Indian defence stood tall. Eventually, it became too much to handle for the Indian defence as Stapenhorst scored her second goal to stun the capacity crowd. The Indians, however, did not give up and secured back-to-back penalty corners in the 59th minute, the second of which was put into the goal by Ishika from a rebound, forcing the match into the shootout.

"We will discuss it again. We need to give time to the disappointment," India coach Janneke Schopman said. "We have to rest tomorrow morning and I know they will be ready. Some of them are already ready but we need some time," she added.

"They get a little bit impatient and when they get impatient... but I can't always blame them for it. It was great that we could manage a large part of the game today. I know we can play but we have to show up and have to keep fighting. We don't have a guarantee tomorrow. Japan also wants to go to Paris, so we have a fight in our hands," she added.

Source: PTI

DJ
KUCHAEvent  MasterM
THE METROPOLITANUPCOMING EVENTS
2024

FEBRUARY

VALENTINE'S
Party

HOLI

RAANG
DAY

MARCH

APRIL

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Baisakhi
Mela

MAY

JUNE

BOAT
PartyTeeyan *ਤਿ ਆਗੀ*

JULY

AUGUST

BOLLYWOOD *Nights*New York
KABADDI CUP

SEPTEMBER

OCTOBER

GARBA - RAAS
ConcertDiwali
Club Night

NOVEMBER

DECEMBER

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