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US Trade Representative Katherine Tai to travel to New Delhi next week for US-India trade policy forum ministerial meet

JANUARY 5, 2024

NEW YORK (TIP): US Trade Representative Katherine Tai is scheduled to travel to New Delhi next week and will co-chair the ministerial-level meeting of the United States-India Trade Policy Forum with Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal.

On January 13, Tai will meet with civil society representatives, business leaders and stakeholders to discuss the Biden-Harris Administration's engagement and commitment to fostering closer ties between the two countries.

Tai's visit marks the first trip to India in the new year by a senior Biden administration official.

Tai and Goyal will co-chair the 14th ministerial-level meeting of the United States-India Trade Policy Forum (TPF).



Ambassador Tai will travel to India from January 12-14 and begin her trip with a meeting with Goyal. She is also scheduled to meet Minister of External Affairs S Jaishankar later.

Photo/ @AmbassadorTai/X

During this year's meeting, Tai and Goyal will "discuss a broad set of issues to enhance the resiliency of the trade relationship, including agriculture, industrial products, services, and the protection of intellectual property, among other topics," a statement issued by the Office of the US Trade Representative said on Friday.

Last year, Goyal and Tai had co-chaired the 13th ministerial-level meeting of India-United States Trade Policy Forum in Washington DC on January 11. During his January 9-11 visit to the US last year, Goyal had also met with CEOs, addressed the Indian community and held roundtable meetings with business leaders and think-tanks in New York.

(Source: PTI)

NEW YORK A.G. SEEKS \$370 MILLION FROM TRUMP AFTER CIVIL FRAUD TRIAL



Along with the steep financial penalty, Ms. James, a Democrat, is asking that Mr. Trump, a Republican, be barred from participating in New York's real estate industry and from running any company in the state.
Official portrait

JANUARY 5, 2024

NEW YORK (TIP): The New York attorney general on Friday, January 5, asked the judge who had overseen the civil fraud trial of Donald J. Trump to penalize the former president about \$370 million, saying the trial had demonstrated that he had gained that amount through unlawful conduct, New York Times report says.

The sum was well over the \$250 million that the attorney general, Letitia James, had estimated in the fall of 2022, when she sued Mr. Trump, accusing him of inflating his net worth to obtain favorable treatment from banks and insurers.

The trial began in October and proceedings ended last month, but Mr. Trump's fate is not yet settled. The attorney general's penalty request came in a post-trial brief filed on Friday.

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Adrienne Adams reelected council speaker; Fariás in, Powers out as majority leader

JANUARY 3, 2024

NEW YORK CITY (TIP): City Council Speaker Adrienne Adams was reelected by a unanimous vote at the council's charter meeting Wednesday, January 3, - a foregone conclusion leading up to the meeting that nonetheless kicks off the new two-year session and Adams' second term as speaker. Adams was first elected speaker in 2022, becoming the first Black speaker of the council.

But while most of the council's other leadership appointments predictably remained the same as last session, there was one surprise shakeup. Council Member Amanda Fariás, who was elected to represent the 18th District in the Bronx in 2021, was appointed majority leader of the council, a role that Council Member Keith Powers filled in the last session. Powers, who has represented Manhattan's East Side in the council since 2018, is term-limited and ineligible to run again in 2025, as is Adams.



Adrienne Adams on Wednesday, January 3, was unanimously reelected as Speaker of the New York City Council.

Photo / John McCarten/ NYC Council Media Unit

"Designating Council Member Fariás as Majority Leader is a step towards preparing the institution for its next generation of leadership and expanding representation," council spokesperson Mara Davis said in a statement. "She will be the first Latina to hold this position, and it marks the first time the top leadership positions of the New York City Council will all be women,

CONTD ON PAGE 36

Eight Indians held in Qatar get 60 days to contest their jail terms



MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said the legal team had been given 60 days to appeal against the jail terms.

Photo: Videograb/MEA

JANUARY 4, 2024

NEW DELHI (TIP): The death penalty of eight former Indian Navy officials, who had been in the custody of Qatari authorities since August 2022, has been commuted to "varying quantum" of jail terms, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Thursday, January 4. MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said the legal team had been given 60 days to appeal against the jail terms.

CONTD ON PAGE 36

Judge denies Rudy Giuliani's request to extend deadlines in Georgia election case



JANUARY 5, 2024

ATLANTA (TIP): The Fulton County judge overseeing the Georgia election interference case has denied Rudy Giuliani's request to push back a deadline for motions to be filed in the case. In an order Friday, January 5, Fulton County Superior Court Judge Scott McAfee rejected Giuliani's extensions request, keeping in place a Monday deadline.

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The Judge's order comes as Giuliani faces mounting legal woes, and fees
Photo / Fulton County Sheriff's Office



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COMMENT

Shaping a Harmonious 2024: A Call for Global Unity and Empathy



BY
INDRAJIT SALUJA

As we embark upon the threshold of another new year, the year 2024, it's crucial to ponder the image we wish to paint upon the canvas of the future. Do we aspire to witness a world embroiled in relentless conflicts, plagued by divisions between the privileged and the disenfranchised? Or do we collectively yearn for a world where unity reigns supreme, where the resonance of shared humanity echoes louder than the discord of disparity?

The responsibility to shape the world we yearn for lies squarely in our hands. Let us fervently strive to erect a world where the ethos of one global family, as espoused by the ancient Indian wisdom-'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' (the whole world is one family)-is not merely an ideal but a lived reality. But where do we commence this monumental undertaking? It commences from the grassroots-the underprivileged, the impoverished, the marginalized, and the ailing individuals who are in dire need of attention, support, and compassion.

One of the cardinal pillars of nurturing a more equitable world rests on bridging the gaping chasm between the affluent and the impoverished. It is

imperative that those blessed with financial stability and governmental influence extend their hands in support of those grappling with adversity. Only when this disparity is alleviated can we envisage a world with reduced conflict and enhanced livability.

The task at hand necessitates a collective readiness and unwavering commitment. We stand at the crossroads of history where the echoes of past conflicts reverberate in our collective consciousness. The devastation wrought by world wars and the ongoing conflicts in regions like Europe and the Israeli theater stand as stark reminders of the catastrophic toll of discord. It is our solemn duty to ensure that the pages of history are not marred by similar tragedies in the future.

Imagine a world where the resonance of unity drowns out the cacophony of conflict. A world where the basic needs of every individual are met with dignity and where compassion serves as the guiding light for every decision. This is the world we should strive to build-one where disputes are resolved through dialogue and empathy rather than through violence and animosity.

This transformation necessitates a paradigm shift-a shift from self-interest to collective welfare, from division to unity, from indifference to empathy. Governments, organizations, and individuals must collaborate synergistically, pooling their resources and expertise to uplift the downtrodden and pave the path for a more harmonious coexistence.

Let us commit ourselves to a world where diplomacy triumphs over aggression, where compassion supersedes apathy, and where the downtrodden are uplifted through collective efforts. Each one of us holds the power to contribute towards this vision, whether through philanthropy, advocacy, volunteering, or simply fostering a culture of understanding and inclusivity in our communities.

The canvas of 2024 remains blank, awaiting strokes of benevolence, unity, and empathy. As we step into this new year, let us pledge to paint a picture where humanity stands united, where conflicts are relegated to the annals of history, and where the indelible colors of compassion and solidarity illuminate our shared journey ahead. The world of our dreams is within reach-let us seize this opportunity to transform it into a tangible reality. Let us welcome, in this spirit, the New Year 2024.

GUEST COMMENT

Shielding SEBI: On Supreme Court's ruling and SEBI probe

SC SHOULD HAVE PUSHED IT TO DO MORE WHILE NOT REVIEWING POLICY ACTIONS

The Supreme Court of India's ruling on a batch of petitions, filed in the wake of a U.S.-based short seller's allegations of malfeasance including stock price manipulation at the Adani group of companies, has squarely tossed the ball back to the markets regulator's court. The Court has opted to subordinate petitioners' entreaties to protect larger public interest to its chariness to substitute "its own wisdom over the regulatory policies" of the Securities and Exchange Board of India. In its 46-page order, the Bench headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud is emphatic in observing that "SEBI has prime facie conducted a comprehensive investigation" that "inspires confidence", and that "the facts of this case do not warrant a transfer of investigation from SEBI" given that "prima facie no deliberate inaction or inadequacy" was found in the regulator's conduct of its probe. Strikingly, the Bench has completely skirted the fundamental

questions that the Court-appointed Expert Committee in its May 2023 report had opted to leave as a 'matter between SEBI and the Court' - the determination of possible violations pertaining to minimum public shareholding and related party transactions. The Bench has instead seized upon prayers urging the Court to direct SEBI to revoke its amendments to the Foreign Portfolio Investors Regulations and Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements - amendments that were at the heart of petitioners' submissions of regulatory failure - and roundly denied them on grounds that there was neither "any illegality", nor were the norms "capricious, arbitrary or violative of the Constitution".

The ruling has also done little to assuage investors' concerns about SEBI's approach to getting to the bottom of the allegations raised by Hindenburg Research in its January 2023 report. Without elaboration on any of the regulator's findings, the Court has

blandly observed that "SEBI has completed 22 out of the 24 investigations into the Adani group" and that completion of the remaining two "are pending due to inputs being awaited from foreign regulators". The Bench has directed SEBI to complete these "expeditiously". While the Court's reluctance to review the policy actions of a 'specialized regulator' is understandable, the decision to leave the crucial question of SEBI's perceived tardiness in investigating allegations of corporate malfeasance and market manipulation by a large conglomerate back to the remit of the very same watchdog hints at a degree of judicial abstinence that may only undermine the larger public good. The Court is surely aware of past instances where it has found SEBI wanting in alacrity of enforcement, a facet flagged by the experts' panel appointed in this case as well. After all, 'justice must not only be done, but it must also be seen to be done'.

(The Hindu)

Indian community activist in US welcomes move allowing diaspora members to contribute to Ram Mandir



The Ram Mandir will be consecrated on January 22, where Prime Minister Modi, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and more than 6,000 people are expected to attend the grand "Pran Pratishtha" ceremony.

Photo / Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust

JANUARY 3, 2024

NEW YORK (TIP): As preparations are underway for the consecration of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, a prominent Indian community activist here has welcomed measures allowing diaspora members to contribute to the development of the temple.

Social activist Prem Bhandari had earlier appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to allow members of the Indian diaspora across the world to contribute to the development of the Ram Temple in Uttar Pradesh.

Asserting that there are over 3.5 crore Non-Resident Indians and Persons of Indian Origin around the world, he said that many of them would like to contribute to the development of the temple.

Provisions have now been made on the website of Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra for holders of the Indian as well as Non-Indian Passport to make donations and contributions.

The website notes that the Trust has obtained registration under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA)

2010, and "devotees holding Non-Indian Passport can now voluntarily contribute towards the objectives of Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust." Bhandari, who founded the 'Overseas Friends of Ram Mandir' organization, welcomed this step and urged members of the 3.5 crore-strong Indian diaspora across the globe to contribute to the Trust.



"We thank Prime Minister Modi and are grateful to him for making us part of this historic event. Sitting thousands of miles away from Ayodhya, we feel connected to the temple," Bhandari said.

the New Year and is providing them with the link to send their voluntary donations directly to the temple.

Bhandari said that the prime minister thinks not just about the 140 crore Indians living in the county but also about the sentiments of the 3.5 crore diaspora living across the globe by allowing its members to contribute to the Ram Mandir.

"January 22 will be a historic day. We are so fortunate that we are seeing the inauguration of Ram Mandir in our lifetime. It is a dream come true," Bhandari said, adding that this day would not have been possible without the contributions of so many people and the "visionary leadership" of the prime minister.

"We feel as if Lord Ram is returning to Ayodhya on January 22 after vanvas. Such is the atmosphere and happiness there. Ayodhya will be the global capital of Hinduism soon," he said.

The Ram Mandir will be consecrated on January 22, where Prime Minister Modi, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and more than 6,000 people are expected to attend the grand "Pran Pratishtha" ceremony.

(Source: PTI)

Ahead of the Pran Pratishtha (installation of the deity) ceremony in Ayodhya on January 22, Bhandari said it will be a "historic opportunity" and Indian devotees from around the world will now be able to contribute any amount they deem fit for this special occasion that has come after 550 years.

He added that he, along with the Overseas Friends of Ram Mandir organization, has started reaching out to Indian diaspora members globally from

Indian Missions in Vancouver, New York and Nicosia bag One District One Product Award



Photo caption: EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar and Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal present ODOP Awards in New Delhi on January 3
Photo / X@MEAIndia

JANUARY 4, 2024

NEW YORK CITY (TIP): 'One District One Product' is among the several initiatives of the Government of India in line with Prime Minister Modi's vision of "Aatma Nirbhar Bharat", a self-reliant India. The idea is to select, brand, and promote One Product from each District of the country, harnessing traditional strengths and technology for holistic development.

The prestigious ODOP Awards were conferred upon Indian Districts, States and Indian Missions abroad by EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar and Commerce and Industry Minister Mr. Piyush Goyal on

January 3 as part of the 'Aatma Nirbhar Bharat Utsav'. The Awards aim to recognize and honor those who have demonstrated exceptional accomplishments in furthering economic development through the ODOP approach.

Consulate General of India in New York was among the three Indian Missions to receive the prestigious ODOP Award 2023. It was declared the runners-up in the category of India's Foreign Missions for its contribution in promoting ODOP items in the world.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

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INDIAN-ORIGIN JASHANPREET SINGH APPOINTED AS CANADA JAIL OFFICER



Jashanpreet Singh Brar has become a Correctional Officer in Vancouver

JANUARY 2, 2024

VANCOUVER (TIP): A 24-year-old man, who is the son of a retired Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) of Muktsar Police, has become a Correctional Officer in Canada's Vancouver.

A Correctional Officer supervises prisoners during work assignments, meals and recreation periods.

Jashanpreet Singh Brar has gone to the Maple country on a study visa in August 2017. He was an alumnus of Bhai Mastan Singh Public School here.

After completing his study in Canada, Jashanpreet worked part-time as a security officer and an executive at a liquor store.

His father Kaur Singh Brar said, "I am feeling proud that my son is following in my footsteps. I had joined the state police in 1992 as a constable and retired as an ASI. My son has today (January 2) joined the duty as a Correctional Officer in Canada. My daughter is also settled in Canada and working as a private dentist. Both of my children were brilliant in their studies."

"We belong to an agrarian family of Kotli Sanghar village. None of us had earlier got a government job abroad."

I am feeling proud that my son is following in my footsteps. I had joined the state police in 1992... My son has today (January 2) joined duty as a Correctional Officer in Canada. - Kaur Singh Brar, father of Jashanpreet

Indo-British Sikh woman 'Polar Preet' claims record for fastest solo ski across Antarctica

JANUARY 1, 2024

LONDON (TIP): Having already broken two Guinness World Records for polar exploration, British Sikh Army medic Harpreet Chandi has said she now has a third one.

By covering 1,130 km of Antarctic ice in 31 days, 13 hours and 19 minutes, Chandi, also known as Polar Preet, claims she has become the fastest woman to ski solo across Antarctica, media reported.

"I'm tired but so glad I made it. This was completely different to my last expedition... I completely pushed myself to my limits on my last expedition, a speed attempt is completely different," the 34-year-old said, speaking from the South Pole.

"After my last expedition, I knew I could cope well on the ice which gave me the confidence to tackle this head on," she added.

The Guinness World Records will need to verify the claim, which can take several months, and if confirmed, it would beat the previous record holder, Canadian Caroline Cote, by a day, 14 hours and 34 minutes.

For the trek, Chandi left the Hercules inlet on the Ronne ice shelf on November 26, and arrived at the South Pole at 2.24 am UK time on December 28.

She skied for between 12 and 13 hours a day on average and pulled a 75 kg sled that had everything she needed to survive behind her.

"It was definitely not a sprint, but I had to constantly weigh up my effort and how long I would ski for each day. Too long or too fast and I was going to burn out. Too



By covering 1,130 km of Antarctic ice in 31 days, 13 hours and 19 minutes, Harpreet Chandi, also known as Polar Preet, claims she has become the fastest woman to ski solo across Antarctica.

slow or finish too early and I'd miss out on the record," she told the media.

Calling Antarctica an amazing place and glad that it allowed her a safe passage, Chandi said: "It's an absolute privilege to be here. It is not a place any person can conquer; it is a place you treat with respect and hope it allows you safe passage."

Chandi is on a career break from military service where she was a physiotherapist providing rehabilitation for injured soldiers and officers.

Speaking about her journey, she said her focus was on what she could control, not what she couldn't.

"I couldn't control the conditions -- the blistering sun, the whiteouts, the temperatures of minus 30 degrees C, but I can control how I dealt with them. Just

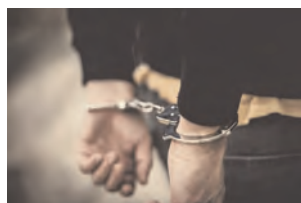
keep taking it one step at a time," Chandi, who was named Member of the British Empire recently, said.

Also honored as 'woman of the year' at the Women in Defense Awards 2022, Chandi made history by becoming the first woman of color to complete a 700-mile Antarctic journey -- solo and unsupported -- to the South Pole in 2021.

Chandi said she never thought she would return to Antarctica this year but returned after realizing that this expedition was just not about pushing herself, but also about inspiring others to challenge their boundaries, and break their barriers.

"One of my biggest motivations in those dark times on the ice is the thought of inspiring others to face their own challenge," she said.

Indian-American medical biller arrested for stealing more than USD 1 million



Amrish Patel and his two companies-Medlink Services and Medlink Partners-were charged on Wednesday, January 3, with 27 felony counts for the thefts they allegedly committed from January 2012 through January 2019, New York Attorney General Letitia James announced.

Photo for representation / iStock

Patel and the companies were charged with one count of insurance fraud in the first degree, one count of grand larceny in the first degree, one count of grand larceny in the second degree, one count of grand larceny in the third degree, one count of scheme to defraud in the first degree, 11 counts of falsifying business records in the first degree, and 11 counts of workers' compensation fraud. (Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

JANUARY 5, 2024

NEW YORK (TIP): A 61-year-old Indian-origin medical biller has been arrested for stealing more than USD 1 million from doctors who provided medical care to injured workers in New York, according to the Attorney General's Office here.

Amrish Patel and his two companies-Medlink Services and Medlink Partners-were charged on Wednesday with 27 felony counts for the thefts they allegedly committed from January 2012 through January 2019, New York Attorney General Letitia James announced.

Patel and the companies were

2 Indian-origin men arrested for committing Visa fraud in US

DECEMBER 30, 2023

BOSTON (TIP): Two Indian-origin men have been arrested and charged with one count each of conspiracy to commit visa fraud in the US.

Rambhai Patel, 36, and Balwinder Singh, 39, allegedly staged armed robberies so that "victims" could apply for immigration benefits, the US Attorney's Office for the District of Massachusetts said on Friday, December 29.

Patel was arrested in Seattle on December 13, 2023, and following an initial appearance in the Western District of Washington, he was ordered detained pending trial.

Singh was also arrested on the same day in Queens, and had his initial appearance in the Eastern District of New York.

While Singh appeared in federal court in Boston on Friday afternoon, Patel is expected to appear at a later date in the same court.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)



Rambhai Patel, 36, and Balwinder Singh, 39, allegedly staged armed robberies so that "victims" could apply for immigration benefits.

Photo for representation only / iStock

Sikh medic Dr Amritpal Singh Hungin knighted by King Charles III

DECEMBER 30, 2023

LONDON (TIP): A British Sikh senior medical professional with over 30 years of general practice (GP) experience has been knighted by King Charles III in the 2024 New Year Honors list.

Dr Amritpal Singh Hungin, Emeritus Professor of General Practice at Newcastle University, received a Knighthood for services to medicine on Friday night, including nearly 30 Indian-origin healthcare professionals, philanthropists and community activists honored for their selfless service to society.

SELFLESS SERVICE

Dr Amritpal Singh Hungin, Emeritus Professor of General Practice at Newcastle University, received a Knighthood for services to medicine

Nearly 30 Indian-origin healthcare professionals, philanthropists and community activists honored for their selfless service to society

Professor Pali Hungin, as he is known, was the founding Dean of Medicine at Durham University and a former president of the British Medical Association (BMA). "The New Year's Honors List recognizes the exceptional achievements of people across the country and those who have shown the highest commitment to selflessness and compassion," said British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak. "To all honorees,



Dr Amritpal Singh Hungin, Emeritus Professor of General Practice at Newcastle University, received a Knighthood for services to medicine on Friday, December 29 night, including nearly 30 Indian-origin healthcare professionals, philanthropists and community activists honored for their selfless service to society.

you are the pride of this country and an inspiration to us all," he said.

Among the British Indian Officers of the Order of the British Empire (OBEs) include Baldev Parkash Bhardwaj for services to the community in Oldbury, West Midlands; Dr Dipankar Datta, Chair of the South Asia Voluntary Enterprise, for services to charity; Munir Patel, CEO of XRAIL Group, for services to rail exports; Dr Shriti Pattani, President of the Society of Occupational Medicine, for services to occupational health; Rajwinder Singh, Principal Project Sponsor of the Prison Infrastructure Team at the UK's Ministry of Justice, for public service; Vinaichandra Guduguntla Venkatesham, CEO of Arsenal Football

Club, for services to sport.

The Cabinet Office said more than 1,200 recipients had been awarded this year for their exceptional achievements, including Members of the Order of the British Empire (MBEs) conferred upon a cross-section, including British Indians such as Dr Sanjay Bhandari, Chair of anti-racism charity Kick It Out for services to sport and Jayshree Rajkotia, Trustee and Vice Chair of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, UK, for services to Indian culture.

Other Indian-origin recipients of MBEs include Tajinder Kaur Banwait for services to business and to the beauty industry; Dr Manav Bhavsar for services to healthcare, particularly during Covid-19; Nilesh Bhasker Dosa for services to social equality; Dr Dinendra Singh Gill for services to pre-hospital and trauma care in Wales; Dr Gian Parkash Gopal for services to the Hindu community and to multi-faith Cohesion in Oxfordshire; Jasdeep Hari Bhajan Singh Khalsa for charitable services to the Sikh community; Dr Meenakshi Nagpaul for services to the NHS; and Satish Manilal Parmar for public service, among others.

Healthcare and charity work also dominates among the Indian-origin Medalists of the Order of the British Empire (BEMs) such as Chandra Shekhar Biyani for services to medical education and Harbaksh Singh Grewal for services to charity. (Source: PTI)

INDIAN AMERICAN LEGAL SCHOLAR VED PRAKASH NANDA DIES



"Deeply saddened by the passing away of Professor Ved Prakash Nanda Ji, a distinguished academic whose contributions to the legal field are invaluable. His work highlights his strong commitment to legal education," Modi posted on X.

JANUARY 2, 2024

DENVER (TIP) : Noted Indian American legal scholar, Professor Ved Prakash Nanda passed away on January 1. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar among others condoled his death.

Nanda, who was awarded Padma Bhushan, India's third highest civilian honor in 2018 for his contributions to literature and education was a Distinguished University Professor and Thompson G. Marsh Professor of Law at the University of Denver, Colorado.

He founded the International Legal Studies Program there in 1972 and directed the Ved Nanda Center for International and Comparative Law established in his honor by alumni and friends, who have also endowed a professorship in his name.

He received Honorary Doctor of Law from Soka University, Tokyo, Japan, and Bundelkhand University, Jhansi, India, and has taught and lectured at several universities in the US and abroad, according to his official profile.

Nanda was also an Honorary Professor of Law at the University of Delhi, India. He held many leadership positions in the global international law community, including the World Jurist Association, American Society of International Law, International Law Association, American Law Institute, and the American Bar Associations Human Rights Center and Section of International Law.

He also served as a US delegate to the World Federation of the United Nations Associations in Geneva and on the governing council of the United Nations Association of the USA.

Nanda was an officer and board member in several international and national NGOs. He was the Chair of the Uberoi Foundation for Religious Studies.

Nanda received numerous national and international awards and authored or co-authored 24 books and over 225 chapters and law review articles in international and comparative law, writes a column for the Denver Post, and is a regular commentator in both the electronic and print media. (Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

Wealthy Indian-origin couple, daughter found dead in US



The bodies of Rakesh Kamal (57), his wife Teena (54) and their 18-year-old daughter Ariana were found in their Dover mansion around 7.30 pm on Thursday, December 28, Norfolk district attorney Michael Morrissey said.

DECEMBER 30, 2023

BOSTON (TIP): A wealthy Indian-origin couple and their teenage daughter were found dead in their USD 5 million mansion in the US state of Massachusetts in an apparent domestic violence incident, according to media reports.

The bodies of Rakesh Kamal (57), his wife Teena (54) and their 18-year-old daughter Ariana were found in their Dover mansion around 7.30 pm on Thursday, Norfolk district attorney Michael Morrissey said.

Teena and her husband, who also went by Rick, had previously run a now-defunct education systems company called EduNova.

The district attorney, who described the "terrible tragedy" as a "domestic violence situation", said a gun was found near the husband's body. He declined to say whether all three family members were shot dead, and by whom, a newspaper reported. The couple appeared to have faced financial problems in recent years, online records show.

Indian-origin real estate developer charged with perpetuating USD 93 million fraud scheme

JANUARY 4, 2024

NEW YORK (TIP): An Indian-origin real estate developer has been charged by federal authorities in the US with perpetuating a USD 93 million fraud scheme.

Rishi Kapoor, a Miami-based developer, faces charges filed by the Securities and Exchange Commission on Wednesday, January 3.

The SEC announced that it obtained an asset freeze and other emergency relief concerning the alleged USD 93 million real estate investment fraud perpetrated by Kapoor. The SEC also charged real estate company Location Ventures, its affiliate Urbin and 20 other related entities in connection with the fraud scheme, a statement said.

According to the SEC's complaint, from approximately January 2018, until at least March 2023, Kapoor and certain of the defendant entities solicited investors by, among other things, making several material misrepresentations and omissions regarding Kapoor, Location Ventures, Urbin, and their real estate developments.

The false statements allegedly included misrepresenting Kapoor's compensation; his cash contribution to the capitalization of Location Ventures; the corporate governance of Location Ventures and Urbin; the use of investor funds; and Kapoor's background. (Source: PTI)



Rishi Kapoor, a Miami-based developer, faces charges filed by the Securities and Exchange Commission on Wednesday, January 3
Photo for representation

SUOZZI URGES BIPARTISAN APPROACH TO ADDRESS IMMIGRATION CRISIS



States people are angered by the inaction of their federal government on comprehensive immigration reform and border security, says Suozzi.

JANUARY 2, 2024

GLEN COVE, NY (TIP): Former Congressman Tom Suozzi, on January 2, called on President Biden, as well as House Speaker Mike Johnson and House Leader Hakeem Jeffries, to find common ground on border safety and immigration reform and urged the passage of bipartisan legislation to solve the migration crisis at the southern border and reform the immigration process.

In separate letters to the President and Speaker Johnson and Minority Leader Jeffries, sent this morning, Suozzi urged that they "prioritize immigration issues" and offered up proposals for a "comprehensive, moderate solution that finally secures our border and recognizes

the hardships and suffering that have resulted from the federal government's decades-long failure to address this very real problem."

At a Zoom press conference held this morning, Suozzi stated, "The residents of New York's 3rd Congressional District and the American people are angered by the inaction of their federal government on comprehensive immigration reform and border security."

Suozzi continued that "one party, one chamber bills will not bring safe borders and immigration reform." He stressed that "together, we must find common ground and pass a bipartisan, bicameral bill that will secure our borders and finally address the hardships and suffering caused by decades of inaction."

Suozzi also discussed his prior proposal, crafted with former Republican Congressman Peter King in 2019, to bring "common sense solutions to secure our borders," including better radar technology, improved ports of entry, enhanced physical barriers, more immigration judges, and more border patrol agents.

During the press conference, Suozzi pointed out that a key component of his 10-Point Plan, released on December 19, 2023, included common-sense measures to address the immigration crisis. Suozzi proposes that Congress provide more border security funding to hire additional border patrol agents, immigration judges, and asylum officers, as well as securing and implementing more smart

technology. He also is in favor of enhanced physical barriers and an "Ellis Island" plan to help secure the border and bring order to the current crisis."

"We should build a new, comprehensive complex at the border to expedite the processing of migrants. We should hire more immigration judges who would rule on asylum cases without delay," Suozzi stated in his remarks. "Those migrants who have credible claims for asylum would be more effectively processed. And a clear protocol would be put in place to quickly deny entry to those who do not qualify. A workable plan to deport those applicants denied entry would be implemented."

Joining Suozzi at his press conference, the Minority Leader in the Nassau County Legislature, Delia DeRiggi-Whitton expressed her disappointment in Suozzi's opponent, Mazi Pilip, who has served for the last two years in the legislature with DeRiggi-Whitton.

"I had hoped that she would be someone who could make a difference in the legislature, someone who would speak up. But I have been so disappointed with her. She has followed the party line on every vote. She is not, in any way, proactive," DeRiggi-Whitton said.

The Minority Leader added that "at our recent budget meetings, Pilip never even asked a single question."

"I've tried reaching out to her, tried to engage her in conversation, and she's never tried to even speak with me," revealed DeRiggi-Whitton. "That's not the

kind of Congressperson this district needs," she added.

Pilip's unwillingness to discuss important issues or policy, as well as her refusal to debate, has been noted in news accounts of her candidacy. Newsday recently reported that, in the county legislature, "a review of two years' worth of transcripts shows Pilip speaks much less frequently than her colleagues. At many meetings, the only words she said into her microphone were "here" during roll call attendance and "aye" during vote tallies."

When asked specifically which of Pilip's votes troubled her, DeRiggi-Whitton replied,

"Democrats recently proposed a budget amendment to bolster the Nassau County Police Department by hiring 100 new police officers, and Mazi Pilip voted 'NO,' along with every other Republican."

"She had the chance to stand up for the people of Nassau, and instead, she stood down for her party. She had a chance to show her independence, a chance to vote for 100 new cops, and she refused," DeRiggi-Whitton added later.

DeRiggi-Whitton concluded her remarks by saying, "We have lost a year of representation in Congress with George Santos. We can't afford to lose any more time. We can't wait for Mazi Pilip to 'catch up.' She later added, "We need someone in Congress like Tom Suozzi, who knows exactly how things work in Congress, or should I say, don't work. Tom Suozzi can fix it."

GLOBAL PUNJAB TV UNDER NEW LEADERSHIP: VIKAS VOHRA, TAPENDER KUMAR AND JASPAL SHETRA TAKE THE HELM



JANUARY 3, 2024

NEW YORK (TIP): Global Punjab TV, a prominent media company, has undergone a transformative change with the acquisition by Vikas Vohra, Tapender

Kumar and Jaspal Shetra. The trio bring a wealth of experience and vision to steer Global Punjab TV into a new era of success.

Notably, the media giant is expanding its reach and launched it on Sling TV in the USA, marking a strategic move to captivate a wider South Asian audience. This initiative aims to strengthen the channel's presence in the international market and cater to the diverse tastes of viewers in the United States.

Excitingly Global Punjab TV is gearing up for its imminent launch in India on Many Cable / OTT Platforms promising a blend of quality content and innovation.

"With a commitment to providing engaging and culturally relevant programming, the channel aspires to become a household name across the nation", said Head of The Channel Pardeep Gill.

Vikas Vohra expressed his enthusiasm for the journey ahead, stating, "We are thrilled to lead Global Punjab TV into a new chapter. Our focus is on delivering content that resonates with our audiences worldwide. We look forward to shaping the future of Global Punjab TV and creating memorable viewing experiences."

New York State Assemblywoman Jenifer Rajkumar introduces "SMOKEOUT ACT" to shutter illegal smoke shops in the State

Assemblywoman's Bill will close 36,000 illegal smoke shops statewide, including 1,500 illegal shops fueling crime in New York City

JANUARY 2, 2024

SOUTH QUEENS, NY (TIP): Assemblywoman Jenifer Rajkumar (D-AD 38) introduced the SMOKEOUT Act (A8428), one of her major priorities for passage this Albany session. The SMOKEOUT Act (Stop Marijuana Overproliferation and Keep Empty Operators of Unlicensed Transactions) grants municipalities across the State, including New York City, the power to immediately shutter all illegal, unlicensed smoke shops once and for all.

Illegal smoke shops are able to operate with almost total impunity because local municipalities lack authority to enforce cannabis shop violations. The 2021 bill passed in Albany legalizing recreational cannabis established a Cannabis Control Board as the only agency in the entire State authorized to close



"I am proud to announce today that in our State Capitol this session, I am introducing a bill to expand the City's power to shut down the illegal, unlicensed smoke shops that are plaguing our communities. These unlicensed illegal smoke shops are endangering the children of our community and they are hotbeds of crime", said Assemblywoman at the December mayoral town hall.

File photo

unlicensed cannabis retailers and order the seizure of merchandise. Currently, New York City can only raid a smoke shop if there is suspicion of certain other violations, such as untaxed cigarettes. Even then, the City cannot close the shops.

Upon passage of Assemblywoman Rajkumar's SMOKEOUT Act, New York City and all municipalities across the State will have the authority to close illegal smoke shops and seize all merchandise. This will allow New York City Mayor Eric Adams, and law enforcement statewide, to get into action swiftly shutting down smoke shops and permanently eliminating their blight. Mayor Adams says when granted the enforcement power from Albany, he could clear up the smoke shops problem in 30 days. (Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

Please Join

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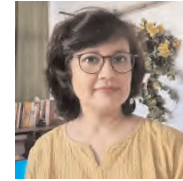
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The See Saw called 2023, some sparkles and some tears



BY PRITI PRAKASH

Time is all powerful. It is said to be a healer, and so I believe. It's never possible to talk of all what happened in the fleeting year in this small space but amplifying what have become memories will surely play some small role in glorifying them in the pages of history.

As I pen down my year roundup, everything blurs in before the humanitarian crisis unfolding with the war in West Asia. On the very Christmas eve Israel carried out the deadliest of attacks on the refugee camps killing 100 people. It's nothing but a massacre carrying on for the last 3 months. As the world celebrates the new year this part of humanity is crying, weeping over the loss of their loved ones, running to save their lives amidst the disaster and destruction spread around them. It's hell broken loose there. With the rest of the world reduced to spectators, with a few failed efforts against the adamancy of the Israeli PM Netanyahu, the conflict is dangerously engulfing the entire West Asian region. Every day is an evolving condition, each day the conflict has a new development.

The century will be infamously remembered for the 2 devastating wars....Russia-Ukraine & Israel- Hamas. Their ripple effects have been game changing for the world both geopolitically & geoeconomically. Energy & food security and its weaponization, dedollarization, terrorism, wars are factors that have reshaped the world dynamics in the last 2 years.

Domestically, Indians had their share of moments of pride and also of misfortunes. I am not a pessimist but human sufferings do tend to disturb and take precedence. Manipur was in flames and human rights were violated, on the other hand India successfully landed on the Moon. Sadly, our women wrestlers protested for days against a predator public representative to finally see themselves only resigning from a bright career which any sportsperson takes years and endless hard work to build. They were so helpless that they decided to give up their medals and awards. That for 'respect of women' and games.

The recently concluded assembly elections in 4 states were an equal shocker. Much to the surprise of Congress and psephologists BJP won the 3 main Hindi belt states of Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh having only lost in Telangana in the South. These 3 states hold the key to 2024 general elections that have now sealed BJP's incumbency at the national level next year as India goes to polls.

Delhi had its fair share of limelight as pollution like every season broke a record high with AQI touching 400+. Living a healthy life is a huge ask in these modern times when with all the technological advances stubble burning the conventional way isn't going anywhere. Sprinklers or no sprinklers.

The century will be infamously remembered for the 2 devastating wars....Russia-Ukraine & Israel- Hamas. Their ripple effects have been game changing for the world both geopolitically & geoeconomically. Energy & food security and its weaponization, dedollarization, terrorism, wars are factors that have reshaped the world dynamics in the last 2 years.



Speaking of tech, ChatGPT and AI were the new discovery and challenges too. AI is a two-edged sword that stands to benefit as well as put mankind to severe threats and disadvantages. Humans can be replaced with AI involving much lesser cost. As the threats are equally serious in nature the world is finding ways and laws to regulate its free and uncontrolled effects.

What we need to seriously worry is Climate Change. Much touted at various international fora and matter of global discourse it's more of lip service detached from tangible outputs. Paradoxically, the developed countries that are responsible for the climate crisis unfolding in the underdeveloped and developing countries that are bearing the brunt of drastic climate downside like floods, torrential rains, quakes, droughts and acute temperature fluctuations. Wonder if it's now late enough to reverse the change nature is manifesting.

It was India's moment with G20 this year. New Delhi hosted the mega event and delivered a successful G20 Joint Statement with full consensus of all countries and inclusion of Africa in the group. The clout of India was on display when US President along with his European and Gulf countries

counterparts displayed exceptional bonhomie. G20 was also an opportunity to give a major infrastructural boost to the country as various other meetings were held in different states showcasing their culture and boosting tourism too.

How did India fare on the world stage! The last months have seen some tensions between India -Canada and India- US relations relating to the cases of the alleged killing of Khalistani terrorist Hardeep Singh Nijjar on Canadian soil and a plan to kill Gurpatwant Singh Pannun on US soil. Canada -India relations saw a setback with dismissing additional diplomats that took a hit on the consular services of both countries. With China, 15 rounds of border talks haven't yielded any result and China refuses to retreat from occupied Indian territory, although trade continues to flourish between both the countries.

India's relations with its neighbors have seen ups and downs. Sri Lanka was visited by Chinese Research Ship with India resisting. New Delhi was visited by Bangladesh, Nepal Prime Ministers. With a pro-China govt in Maldives, Indian troops have been ordered to leave Male that has the possibility of India - Maldives relations growing sour. With political unrest in Myanmar how will India respond will be seen particularly

with the problem of refugee influx from Myanmar into Indian border states staring in our face. Bhutan has approved building a 1000 km border village at its border with India that will facilitate a buffer with India countering China. In Pakistan, with the return of Nawaz Shariff and likelihood of his being the economically battered country's next leader, the future might hold some glimpse of better times. Afghanistan having the Taliban in power and its embassy in India not formally functional as such, despite Taliban sources claiming normalcy, we wonder if Indian government's stand on recognizing the terror outfit will see any change in 2024.

Meanwhile, the Indian Navy officials languishing in Qatar jails have got a little respite with their death sentence being commuted to life imprisonment. Expecting a pardon from the Qatari Emir, a usual practice of pardoning prisoners on Qatar's National Day, the families of these officials are waiting in hope. It's a test of India's clout and PM Modi's personal capital with the Gulf's richest nation's leader. I am sure we are not asking for too much.

It would be amiss if the state of Press is not mentioned here. The fourth pillar of democracy, the vigil keepers, the messengers, as they are called, have had their share of rough rubbings with the govt. 2023 saw journalists being rounded up, harassed, threatened, killed and the news organizations raided, access to Parliament curtailed for reporting facts and ground reality. Newsclick being one of the targets to be silenced, its Editor still is behind bars, their computers, digital gadgets and cameras confiscated and charges fabricated against them. The takeover of major media houses by corporate has changed media landscape totally. Mass job losses, contractual working and the sword of recently passed 3 criminal bills has announced the death knell of press freedom. Wonder how long will the few independent digital platforms or journalists survive, come 2024 elections. The G model says use media for winning elections and dump them once you are there.

A few months to go for General Elections 2024 and the stage is set for India to witness a mega event of the inauguration of the magnificent Ram temple at Ayodhya. This will set the agenda for 2024 elections. With the BJP win in the 3 Hindi heartland states its already half work done. The numbers will decide the power of the opposition and other parties that have come together to fight BJP and its Hindutva agenda in 2024.

Right now, people need employment, poverty alleviation, respite from inflation, jobs and social security. Hope, the year 2024 brings in the much-needed balm. Let's be the change makers.

(The author is a Journalist / Blogger / Travel enthusiast)

Civil society under siege, in India

A free civic space regulated under constitutionally guaranteed principles is the essence of democracy. India is lucky to have an unusually diverse and vibrant civil society. However, constitutional freedoms are themselves under siege. It will be important to recognize and protect these freedoms by social and political forces who repose their faith in the Constitution.

The anti-communal and progressive civic space is under the most serious attack by the state. This is also the section of society that will unite against Hindu nationalism under any party that offers the prospect of secularism, interpreted as *assarva dharma sama bhava* (equal respect for all religions), and citizen well-being with economic growth.

THE SCALE OF ATTACK

We explored the range of instruments deployed by the state to limit the civic space of 15 organizations, small and big, relying on domestic and foreign donations. These organizations include the well-known ones that have been attacked such as Amnesty International, the Centre for Equity Studies, Citizens for Justice and Peace, Lawyers Collective, Centre for Promotion of Social Concerns and Act Now for Harmony and Democracy (ANHAD), among significant others, who will remain unnamed.

The organizations we studied were viewed as being either neutral, moderate, or strong regarding their views on minority rights, Dalit rights, Adivasi (tribal) rights and equity promotion.

Our findings suggest that organizations that were actively fighting against communalism were the most significantly under attack. We coded the attacks on a scale where a high level of attack has occurred on organizations that have not only run out of funds but also whose leaders have either been sent to prison or have charges that can potentially incarcerate them. These would include organizations such as Citizens for Justice and Peace (CJP), Amnesty India, Oxfam, Centre for Equity Studies and Lawyers Collective.

Moderately attacked institutions are those whose activities have been severely curbed because of multiple attacks by the state. These organizations have almost come to a grinding halt. They include the Centre for Policy Research (CPR) and a significant non-governmental organization (NGO) with American funding working in the non-communal space. Moderately attacked institutions also include fiercely anti-communal NGOs such as ANHAD. Some of the organizations in this area are even neutral on the anti-communal issue. An analysis of the moderate section in our scale suggests that the civic space has shrunk to such an extent that the Indian state is not even leaving a non-communal organization such as the CPR alone. The current chair of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister and the Deputy Chairman of the NITI Aayog chaired by the Prime Minister are both from the CPR. One of the allegations against the CPR appears to be that it had some connections with Adivasi rights movements that impacted the mining interests of the tycoon Gautam Adani.

Institutions that have been impacted by relatively low levels of attacks are generally not active in the anti-communal area, even though they may be pursuing significant human rights causes. These are institutions that have been attacked by just one instrument. The woes of organizations such as Navsarjan, which is a leader in Dalit rights, and Save The Children's work on child rights are less compared to the ones that have been hit moderately or at a high level.

We also found that the disciplining instruments deployed by the state can impact organizations. Greenpeace, for example, has transitioned from one that faced high intensity attack to one that now faces a low level of attack by our definition.

'OUR FINDINGS SUGGEST THAT ORGANIZATIONS THAT WERE ACTIVELY FIGHTING AGAINST COMMUNALISM WERE THE MOST SIGNIFICANTLY UNDER ATTACK'



BY RAHUL MUKHERJI



&

ADITYA SHRIVASTAVA



The last bastion for India's democracy is being targeted, with the anti-communal and progressive civic space under the most serious attack by the state

Photo for representation

In the process, Greenpeace had to change its identity from one that was strong on its rights-based mobilization towards advancing environmental concerns and Adivasi rights to one that has become much more lukewarm in that regard.

A RANGE OF INSTRUMENTS

We now turn to the variety of instruments that are being deployed. Attacks with penal consequences that can lead to imprisonment are charges of money laundering and investigations. We have not included the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act in our analysis and restricted ourselves to actions that largely afflict NGOs. The amendments, in 2019, to the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002, brought through the Finance Act enabled the Department of Revenue to work with a broader definition of proceeds of crime. This has resulted in the now well-known attacks on NGOs and Opposition politicians by the Enforcement Directorate.

The Emergency-era law from 1976, the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010 (FCRA), was made stringent in 2010 under the United Progressive Alliance government, and again under the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government in 2020. The BJP has used both the 2010 and 2020 provisions to take the right of NGOs to access foreign funds away from about 18,000 organizations between 2015 and 2022. Curiously enough, the FCRA's impact on foreign funding of political parties has been considerably weakened over time. But the same instrument has now been deployed with lethal effect on NGOs. Apart from the FCRA provisions, foreign donors are also intimidated by a Prior Reference Category List of around 80 internationally reputed donors who are monitored and intimidated for pursuing any human rights related causes.

Under the FCRA, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) too is empowered to investigate NGOs and their personnel with lethal impact. For example, the CBI has filed a supplementary charge sheet against Amnesty

India and its chair of the Board, Aakar Patel. Such an action can have penal consequences. And the tedious process itself is punishment.

Domestic funding of non- and anti-communal NGOs is also under siege. Sections 12A and 80G of the Income-Tax Act provide tax exemptions for NGOs and donors, respectively. The 2020 amendments now make renewals of 12A and 80G certificates mandatory every five years. And donor data including their PAN card numbers must be made available to the Ministry of Finance. These provisions enable the state to intimidate domestic donors who wish to fight communalism and crony capitalism.

When the state has no excuse to penalize NGOs, it uses income-tax surveys as a way of collecting data that can be used to further escalate and institute more cases either by the CBI or the Tax Department.

BUILDING ON THE OPPOSITION'S STAND

The last bastion and ray of hope for India's democracy is its civic space. It is under serious threat. In the 2023 Assembly elections, the Congress's leaders (and now Chief Ministers) Siddaramaiah (Karnataka) and A. Revanth Reddy (Telangana) both took a clear secular position alongside welfare pledges that mobilized the anti-communal civic space against the BJP. Picking strong regional leaders will be critical for INDIA. Whether it was the "Eddelu Karnataka" (Wake-up Karnataka) or similar social movements in Telangana, they had one thing in common. Secular and progressive social and political forces came together in both these States. The Opposition INDIA bloc will not only need to fight like a single party. It will also need to mobilize the anti-communal and progressive civic space in its favor to save democracy.

(Rahul Mukherji is Professor and Chair, Modern Politics of South Asia, South Asia Institute, Heidelberg University, Germany. Aditya Shrivastava is German Chancellor Fellow, South Asia Institute, Heidelberg University, Germany)

Israel at a crossroads after apex court verdict

ISRAELI OBSERVERS DON'T FEEL THAT THE COURT JUDGMENT WOULD END THE PRESENT DOMESTIC TURMOIL



BY VAPPALA
BALACHANDRAN

Four developments, directly or indirectly related to the Israel-Hamas war, have taken place this week. On New Year's Day, Israel's Supreme Court pronounced the long-awaited judgment on the amendment passed by the parliament on July 24, 2023. In an 8-7 verdict, the court struck down the Netanyahu cabinet's amendment to the 'basic law' that had removed the court's power to declare the government's decisions as 'unreasonable'. This amendment had triggered 10-month-long protests and created unprecedented fissures within the Israeli society before the brutal Hamas attack of October 7, 2023.

On January 2, Israel assassinated Saleh al-Arouri, deputy head of the political bureau of Hamas and co-founder of its military wing Izzedine Al-Qassam Brigades, in a drone attack while he was holding a meeting in Beirut. Some other high-ranking Hamas members were also killed. This made Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati condemn the strike as an 'Israeli crime' aimed at dragging Lebanon into a "new phase of confrontations" in the present war. Al-Arouri was second only to Hamas chief Ismail Haniyeh and was the operational link with Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah. Yahya Sinwar and Al-Arouri were reportedly leading the present phase of the war in Gaza.

Israel is considering contesting South Africa's suit at the International Court of Justice, filed on December 29, 2023, for an urgent order declaring that Israel had breached its statutory obligations under the Genocide Convention during its war in Gaza. The Netanyahu government is particularly sore with South Africa for comparing the plight of Palestinians with that of the Blacks in South Africa during the apartheid era. Israeli paper Haaretz reports that the name of American lawyer Alan Dershowitz is being considered for the hearing.

The fourth development is the reported decision by the US authorities to reduce their naval presence in the region by the withdrawal of US aircraft carrier Gerald Ford and its task force from the West Asian seas, leaving only one carrier, Dwight D Eisenhower, there. Israeli media has attributed this setback to the 'tense' Biden-Netanyahu exchanges on the Gaza war, his 'dismissive' attitude towards the Palestinian Authority (PA) and



The Netanyahu cabinet's 'basic law' amendment had triggered 10-month-long protests and created unprecedented fissures within Israeli society.

Photo / Tribune

the statements of Netanyahu's right-wing colleagues about the future management of Gaza by excluding PA.

The January 1 court judgment must be studied in the peculiar background of Israel not having a written Constitution, although United Nations Resolution 181 on the partition of Palestine (November 1947) and Israel's declaration of independence (May 1948) had envisaged the drafting of a Constitution. This was not done due to many reasons. Firstly, the draft prepared by Shalom Zvi Davidowitz, an American rabbi living in Israel, contained many references to God which were opposed by the 'secular' lobby.

According to historian Anita Shapira, discussions in 1949-50 did not settle anything and reached a deadlock. Hence, the first Knesset decided on a compromise resolution by Israeli politician Yizhar Harari that instead of a single document, a series of 'basic laws' would be written by the future Knessets. This was called the 'Harari Resolution'. As a result, 11 'basic laws' were written between 1958 and 1992. Israel is guided by these laws.

Shapira also quoted Israel's founding father David Ben-Gurion, a 'lifelong' socialist, who spoke against having a written Constitution due to a peculiar reason - that Israel did not have its 'Aliyah' (migration) yet. She

also felt that Ben-Gurion was trying to avoid internal quarrels, especially with religious parties.

Suzie Navot, Vice-President of Israel Democracy Institute, quoted Ben-Gurion: "Let them come, let them make Aliyah, and then we'll see. If all of them come from America, we will have a Constitution like America's. If all of them come from Russia, perhaps we will have a different Constitution." She added that the religious parties felt that they already had a "Constitution, the Torah, and there was no need for another one written by human beings".

Israeli observers do not feel that the court judgment would end the present domestic turmoil. They quote Netanyahu's statement (July 28, 2023) that Israel would enter 'uncharted territory' if the court struck down his amendment to the highly contentious 'reasonableness' law. When asked whether he would abide by the court ruling to strike it down, he refused to say anything. But his party Likud said it was "unfortunate that the court decided to issue a ruling at the heart of the societal disagreement in Israel when IDF soldiers from right and left are fighting and endangering their lives".

The Times of Israel (January 2) said the country could "plunge into a full-scale constitutional crisis". Justice Minister Yariv Levin, the main force behind this legislation,

defiantly said that the court judgment would not "stop PM Netanyahu's coalition from responding". He did not say how the government would respond. However, Benny Gantz, who joined the government on a wartime, emergency basis, called for the court's decision to be respected.

Others were more specific. While one group of Israel watchers felt that Netanyahu's all-out war against Hamas, despite international opprobrium over civilian deaths in Gaza, was meant to revive his domestic popularity, which was badly scorched by the protests, others said that he was already in the campaign mode. The Jerusalem Post, in an op-ed written before the court verdict, said Netanyahu "has made little secret of his plan to remain in office after the war". The latest ploy is to declare that only he could stop another Oslo process - he is the only leader who can prevent the Americans (Biden) from imposing the 'two-state' solution.

As such, his campaign pitch to the 'rightist' lobby would be that if it votes for someone else, such as Yair Lapid, Benny Gantz, Naftali Bennett or Yossi Cohen, it will get 'another Oslo'. His argument would be that only he can stop that from happening.

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



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INDIAN AMERICAN NIKESH ARORA PALO ALTO CEO BECOMES A NON-FOUNDER BILLIONAIRE



Nimesh Arora, a SoftBank veteran and now the CEO of cybersecurity company Palo Alto Networks, has entered the billionaires' club after a hefty paycheck he received from the firm.

JANUARY 3, 2024

SAN FRANCISCO (TIP):

Nimesh Arora, a SoftBank veteran and now the CEO of cybersecurity company Palo Alto Networks, has entered the billionaires' club after a hefty paycheck he received from the firm.

He received a \$125 million stock and options compensation package from Palo Alto when he was hired in 2018.

Since then, the company's share price has more than quadrupled and Arora's stake is now worth \$830 million (\$1.1 billion Singapore dollars), according to a report.

At Google, his compensation package was about \$51 million in 2012 and he received stock awards worth at least \$200 million by the time he left.

He joined SoftBank Group in 2014 and amassed a \$135 million first-year compensation package.

Arora was president and chief operating officer of SoftBank Group from 2014 to 2016 and received a total compensation of over \$200 million, a Japanese record at the time.

If we combine the pay awards Arora received in his career, his net worth stands at \$1.5 billion, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index.

"That makes him a rare non-founder billionaire tech chief executive," the report noted.

On June 1, 2018, Arora took on the role of CEO and chairman at Palo Alto Networks.

Arora began his career at Fidelity Investments in 1992, holding a variety of finance and technology management positions, ultimately serving as vice president, finance of Fidelity Technologies.

Committed to managing China ties responsibly: US

JANUARY 2, 2024

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): US President Joe Biden on Monday, January 1, assured his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping that he is committed to managing the bilateral ties "responsibly" as the two leaders exchanged congratulatory messages to mark the 45th anniversary of the diplomatic relations between the two countries.

The two presidents met on the sidelines of the APEC summit in San Francisco in November and agreed to cool down the raging tensions between the top two economies of the world.

In his message to Xi, Biden said that since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1979, the ties between the US and China have facilitated prosperity and opportunities for both the countries and the world. Biden said he is committed to "managing this important relationship responsibly", adding that he looks forward to continuing advancing the US-China relationship based on the progress made by the predecessors of the two leaders and through multiple meetings and discussions between the two heads of state, China's state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

Their summit took place after a comprehensive round of talks between



US President Joe Biden on Monday, January 1, assured his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping that he is committed to managing the bilateral ties "responsibly"

Joe Biden and Xi Jinping / File photo

high-level officials of the two countries. In his letter, Xi urged Biden to earnestly implement the outcomes of the summit, saying history has already proven and will continue to fully prove that mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation are the right way for China and the US to get along with each other as two major countries. Xi pointed out that he and Biden, during their meeting in San Francisco, laid out a future-oriented "San Francisco Vision," charting the

course for the development of China-US relations.

Xi Jinping stressed that he was willing to work with Biden to continue to steer the course of China-US relations to benefit the two countries and their people and promote the cause of world peace and development.

During their summit, Xi and Biden agreed to resume high-level military communications which were severed after then-US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi visited Taiwan in 2022.

Indian American Republican candidate Sen. Niraj Antani raises more than \$600,000

JANUARY 3, 2024

OHIO (TIP): Ohio's Indian American state Sen. Niraj Antani said Wednesday, January 3 that he has raised \$612,348 in 38 days for his Congressional campaign. The fundraising efforts covered the 4th quarter, commencing from his campaign announcement on November 14th and concluding on December 31. Notably, this substantial amount was generated without relying on general election funds or self-funding.



Niraj Antani raises \$612,348 in 38 days for his Congressional campaign

March 19, 2024.

"This sum vaults Senator Antani into the top tier of this race," said Antani's campaign manager Nathan VanVlymen. "We feel very confident we will outraise and outwork all of our opponents."

On November 13, Antani told the local media that he would be serving out his full term which ends December 31, 2024. "Today, I am announcing that I am not seeking reelection for the state Senate."

Antani, born and raised in southern Ohio, was the first Member of the Ohio General Assembly to endorse President Trump for the 2024 election. If elected, he would become the 1st Republican Hindu member of Congress.

Antani is currently serving his first term in the Ohio Senate, having previously served three terms as State Representative in the Ohio House of Representatives.

Expressing his gratitude to his supporters, Sen. Antani, who represents the state's sixth senate district, stated, "I am deeply grateful to my supporters. I have fought for the American Dream every day in the Ohio legislature, and I'll do the same in Congress."

The announcement comes following the retirement of Congressman Brad Wenstrup from Ohio's 2nd Congressional District on November 8, 2023. Ohio's 2nd Congressional District, spanning 16 counties across approximately 150 miles in southern Ohio, exhibits a significantly Republican-leaning partisan voter index. The Republican primary in Ohio is scheduled for

Tax Season 2024: IRS launches Tax Professional Awareness Week from Jan 8

JANUARY 5, 2024

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): With the 2024 tax filing season just around the corner, the IRS is launching a special Tax Professional Awareness Week on Monday, Jan. 8, to assist tax professionals on what to expect during the filing season and start 2024 on the right foot.

The special week is the IRS' latest effort in support of taxpayers and the tax community. Each year, millions of taxpayers seek the help of tax professionals to prepare their federal tax returns and other filings.

"As the 2024 tax season rapidly approaches, Tax Professional Awareness Week highlights the vital role they play in helping taxpayers and our nation," said IRS Commissioner Danny Werfel. "Tax professionals play a critical role in ensuring the integrity of our tax system. We continue to urge taxpayers who need help to reach out to a trusted tax professional, including those who work with recognized national organizations."

A significant number of taxpayers eligible for refundable credits such as the Earned Income Tax Credit or Child Tax Credit choose to enlist the assistance of tax preparers and rely on paid tax professionals to accurately file their returns.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)





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Governor cannot sack minister sans CM's advice: Supreme Court

Amid a raging debate over the role of Governors, the Supreme Court on Friday, January 5, said the Governor of a state had to act on the recommendation of the Council of Ministers.

A Bench led by Justice AS Oka dismissed an appeal against the Madras High Court's order refusing to entertain a petition seeking sacking of V Senthil Balaji as a minister in the Tamil Nadu Government following his arrest in a money laundering case, saying no interference was called for under Article 136 of the Constitution under which the top court entertains special leave petitions.

"Prima facie, the high court is right that the Governor could not have dismissed the minister. The Governor has to act on the recommendation of the Council of Ministers. After having heard the petitioner in person and perusing the impugned judgment of the high court, we concur with the view taken by the high court," the Bench said.

While referring to the Governor's discretionary powers in such matters, the high court had said, "If the Governor chooses to 'withdraw his pleasure' in respect of a minister, he must exercise his discretion with the knowledge of the Chief Minister and not unilaterally. In the present case, the Chief Minister had never consented for the exercise of discretion by the Governor."

Balaji was arrested on June 14, 2023, by the Enforcement Directorate in a money laundering case related to a cash-for-jobs scam when he was the Transport Minister in the AIADMK government. Balaji was divested of his portfolios in the current DMK Government following his arrest but continued to be a minister. *Source: TNS*

Navy's MARCOS rescue 21 sailors from 'hijacked' ship

NEW DELHI (TIP)

Marine commandos, abbreviated to MARCOS, of the Indian Navy on Friday, January 5, chased and boarded a Liberian-flagged merchant vessel that was taken over by armed hijackers in the Arabian Sea, and rescued the 21-member crew, including 15 Indians.

The dramatic rescue came after the Indian Navy deployed a maritime patrol aircraft, drones and guided missile destroyer INS Chennai to assist MV Lila Norfolk, whose crew informed the UK Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) on Thursday evening that five to six "unauthorised armed persons" had boarded the vessel 460 nautical miles east of Eyl in Somalia. All crew members of the merchant vessel were safely evacuated from a strongroom in which they had been sheltering to avoid being taken hostage. "Sanitisation by the marine commandos has confirmed absence of the hijackers," a navy spokesperson said.

No pirates were found on board and the vessel was proceeding towards Bahrain. It was not immediately clear when or how the hijackers fled the merchant vessel.

Steve Kunzer, CEO of Lila Global, the operator of MV Lila Norfolk, confirmed the crew was rescued by the Indian Navy warship, and that the "vessel and crew are all safe".

The attempted hijacking by pirates was "probably abandoned with the forceful warning" from the Indian Navy and the interception of the merchant vessel by INS Chennai, the navy spokesperson said. INS Chennai remained with MV Lila Norfolk and



The Indian Navy thwarts a hijacking attempt of the MV Lila Norfolk in the Arabian Sea, January 5, 2024. (Indian Navy)

provided support to restore power generation and propulsion so that the vessel could proceed to its next port of call.

After Indian Navy helicopters issued a warning and helped "sanitise" the upper decks, the marine commandos from INS Chennai boarded MV Lila Norfolk and cleared the rest of the vessel. Predator MQ9B drones and the maritime patrol aircraft kept a close watch during the entire operation lasting several hours.

The operation began soon after the crew of MV Lila Norfolk reported the incident to the UKMTO, a facility run by Britain's Royal Navy that tracks the movement of merchant shipping in strategic waterways. The Indian Navy also coordinated with other agencies and a multi-national force in the area.

INS Chennai, which was diverted from an anti-piracy patrol in the region, intercepted MV Lila Norfolk at 3.15pm on Friday. Earlier, the patrol aircraft overflew the ship and ascertained that the crew was safe.

"The Indian Navy remains committed to ensuring safety of merchant shipping in the region along

with international partners and friendly foreign countries," the spokesperson said.

MV Lila Norfolk, a bulk carrier, was sailing from Brazil to Bahrain, according to websites that track merchant shipping.

Kunzer thanked the agencies that assisted in the rescue operation, particularly the Indian Navy, Captain Rohit Bajpai, the director of the navy's Information Fusion Centre-Indian Ocean Region, and officials of the directorate general of shipping. "We also want to thank the professionalism of our crew who reacted safely and responsibly under the circumstances," he said in a statement.

No group claimed responsibility for the hijacking. There have been growing concerns about shipping in regional waters following a string of attacks carried out by Yemen's Houthi rebels in support of the Hamas. The region where the incident occurred is also where Somali pirates are known to operate.

The Indian Navy increased surveillance of the Arabian Sea after these attacks. It has currently deployed four destroyers — INS Kochi, INS Kolkata, INS Mormugao and INS Chennai — Talwar-class frigates and missile boats, and also used P-8I long-range patrol aircraft to ensure maritime security in the region.

Last month, the Indian Navy deployed a maritime patrol aircraft and a destroyer after the Malta-flagged MV Ruen was boarded by hijackers in the Arabian Sea. The navy subsequently evacuated an injured crew member of the vessel to Oman for treatment. *Source: HT*

SC dismisses plea seeking to declare Netaji as 'son of the nation'

NEW DELHI (TIP)

Leaders like Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose are "immortal" and do not need bestowing of a recognition through a judicial diktat, the Supreme Court said on Friday, January 5, refusing to entertain a public interest litigation (PIL) that sought a directive to declare Bose a "son of the nation" and an apology from the Congress for allegedly belittling his role in India's freedom struggle and not revealing the truth about his disappearance or death.

According to the top court, judicial orders for a declaration to acknowledge Bose's role in the country's freedom struggle would be improper, for it may not be compatible with the stature of a leader like him to need a word of recognition from a court of law.

"Who does not know a leader like Netaji? Everyone in the country knows him and his contribution. You don't need a declaration from the court of his greatness. Leaders like him are immortal," said a bench of justices



Surya Kant and KV Viswanathan.

The court was hearing a PIL by Cuttack-based Pinak Pani Mohanty, who sought a declaration from the court that independence from British rule was attained by Bose-led Indian National Army (Azad Hind Fauz). Mohanty's petition questioned the Congress's role in recognising Bose's contribution, adding the political party chose to keep the files on Bose's disappearance/death under wraps.

The PIL demanded that the Union government should declare Bose's birthday on January 23 as a "national day" and the leader as a "son of the nation".

The bench, during the hearing, told Mohanty that iconic freedom fighters like Bose did not have to wait for an order of a court to the authorities for a commendation of their role. "Leaders like him are in fact beyond the grant of recognition by any court. They are great people and not just us, the entire country owes to leaders like him," said justice Kant, speaking in Hindi.

While Mohanty said that the court should issue notice to the government to grant recognition due to Bose, the bench responded that the declarations that the petitioner wanted were in the realm of policy decisions. "Besides, even the family may not take it as a matter of pride that a court had to intervene," it added.

The bench also referred to the Supreme Court's order in 1997 when a controversy over awarding Bharat Ratna "posthumously" to

Bose had reached the top court. The petitioner in the case, Bijan Ghosh, had taken strong exception to the use of the word "posthumously" in the 1992 press communique intending to confer the highest civilian award on Bose, arguing the Government of India was yet to officially accept the alleged report of Bose's death in an air-crash in Taiwan in August 1945. At the time, the family members of Bose had also conveyed to the government their unhappiness at the announcement and expressed their unwillingness to accept such an award.

In its judgment in 1997, the court took on record the Centre's statement that in deference to the sentiments expressed by the public and by the members of the family of Bose, the government did not proceed further to confer the award and wrapped up the petition. The court had further refused to go into the issue as to whether there was enough material to conclude that Bose died either in the 1945 air-crash or at any time thereafter.



EAM S Jaishankar (left) with his Nepal counterpart FM NP Saud (Twitter/@DrSJaishankar)

India commits \$75 million for rebuilding earthquake-hit infrastructure in Nepal

India will provide a financial assistance package of Nepali ₹1,000 crore or \$75 million for rebuilding infrastructure damaged by an earthquake that hit western Nepal in November last year, external affairs minister S Jaishankar said on Friday, January 5.

Jaishankar provided details about the aid package for reconstruction in quake-hit areas in Jajarkot while jointly inaugurating the new central library of Tribhuvan University, built with Indian assistance, with his Nepalese counterpart NP Saud.

He said he told Nepal Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal about India extending the financial assistance package during a meeting on Thursday. "We shall continue to stand by the people of Nepal and contribute to the efforts of the government of Nepal in this regard," Jaishankar said.

The two foreign ministers also jointly inaugurated other reconstruction projects taken up in Nepal following the earthquakes of 2015 and 2023. This included 25 schools, 32 health projects and a cultural heritage project.

Nepal had given priority to post-earthquake reconstruction in the housing, education, health and cultural heritage sectors to which India contributed \$1 billion to these efforts. This amount includes a grant of \$250 million and a line of credit of \$750 million.

ED officials attacked during raid in Bengal

KOLKATA (TIP)

A team of officers from the Enforcement Directorate (ED) attempting to raid the house of a local Trinamool Congress (TMC) leader in West Bengal was attacked by a hundreds-strong mob on Friday, January 5, morning, triggering a Centre vs state row and deepening cracks within the Opposition alliance.

At least three ED officers sustained injuries after they were chased by the mob and pelted with bricks and stones at Sandeshkhali in the North 24 Parganas district while trying to search the premises of Shahjahan Sheikh, the local TMC convener, in connection with a multi-crore ration distribution scam.

"Three officers have suffered grievous injuries as the mob has marched towards ED officials with an intention to cause death... other officers had to escape from the place of the incident without conducting search to save their lives as the mob became very violent," ED said in a statement. The agency — which already arrested state food minister Jyotipriyo Mullickin October in connection with the case — said that the mob comprising 800-1,000 people attacked ED officials and 27 accompanying paramilitary personnel with sticks, stones and bricks, while shouting slogans against the agency and the central government. ED vehicles were also badly damaged, the statement added. Sheikh is an associate of Mullick.

"We are taking legal opinion," said a senior ED official, adding that the Union home ministry was informed of the incident.

The unprecedented attack prompted a wave of condemnation, with state governor CV Ananda Bose summoning chief secretary BP Gopalika, home secretary Nandini Chakraborty and



Security personnel inspect a vehicle of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) team which was attacked during a raid in West Bengal's Sandeshkhali, in North 24 Parganas on Friday. (ANI)

director general of police Rajiv Kumarseeking a report on the matter.

"The sole responsibility for the wanton violence lies with the (state) government. If government fails in its basic duty then the Constitution of India will definitely take its course. As governor, I reserve all my constitutional options for appropriate action at the appropriate moment," Bose said in a video message.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) said law and order was coming apart in the state on chief minister Mamata Banerjee's watch. Addressing reporters in Delhi, BJP spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia said, "The ED officers, who were carrying out an investigation, came under attack by TMC goons and Rohingyas, who infiltrated Bengal. Jungle Raj is prevailing in West Bengal under the very nose of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee."

Union minister of state for home Nisith Pramanik termed the incident

an attack on the Constitution and the nation's federal structure. "I condemn what happened in Sandeshkhali. No issue could be more contemptuous than attacking a central agency going to a state. It's not just an attack on the team of a central agency but on the entire Constitution," he said.

He found surprising support from the Congress, an ally of the TMC as part of the 28-party Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA).

Senior Congress leader and leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury alleged that he would not be surprised if any official is "murdered" in the state in the future. "After the attack by goons of the ruling government on ED officials, it is clear that there is no law and order in the state. Today, they were injured, tomorrow they can be murdered. Such a thing would not come as a surprise to me," he said.

AAP picks Maliwal for RS, Sanjay Singh renominated

NEW DELHI (TIP)

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Friday, January 5, nominated Delhi Commission for Women (DCW) chairperson Swati Maliwal to the Rajya Sabha, and renominated sitting parliamentarians Sanjay Singh and ND Gupta for second terms in the Upper House.

Singh is in jail for his alleged role in corruption linked to the Delhi excise policy 2021-22. He has denied all charges and the party has said the case, being investigated by both the Central Bureau of Investigation and the Enforcement Directorate, stems from "political vendetta"

The nominations to the Upper House were announced by the party's political affairs committee chaired by Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal, who is also the AAP's national convener.

"DCW chairperson Swati Maliwal has been nominated for the first time. The PAC has decided to continue with Sanjay Singh and ND Gupta for their respective second term as Rajya Sabha members," the party said in a statement.



Swati Maliwal and (right) Sanjay Singh.

However, sitting Rajya Sabha MP Sushil Kumar Gupta — the AAP's Haryana state president — has been dropped.

Delhi's three Rajya Sabha seats, all held by the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), will become vacant on January 27, when the MPs' six-year terms end. Nominations for the seats began on Wednesday. January 9 is the last date for nominations; the scrutiny of nominations will take place on January 10; the last day for the withdrawal of candidatures will be January 12; and polling will take place on January 19 between 9am and 4pm.

Since the AAP has 62 of the 70 seats in the Delhi assembly, the party has sufficient number of MLAs in the assembly to ensure all three elections.

Delhi's transport commissioner Ashish Kundra has been appointed as returning officer for the polls, while Delhi assembly deputy secretary Neeraj Aggarwal has been appointed as assistant returning officer.

Hours after she was nominated to the Upper House, Maliwal resigned as DCW chief. In a post on X, she wrote, "Saw many ups and downs while here. Dedicated his every day to the welfare of Delhi and the country. The fight is not over, it is just beginning..."

Maliwal served as DCW chairperson since 2015, and it was not immediately known who will replace her.

Meanwhile, Singh, who was taken into ED custody on October 4, on Friday sought permission from a Delhi court to sign his papers for renomination to Rajya Sabha, which was granted.

Singh was among those involved in creating the AAP in 2012. He is also a member of the party's political affairs committee.

Celebrating Swami Vivekananda Jayanti as National Youth Day

Swami Vivekananda (born January 12, 1863, in Calcutta (now Kolkata), (died July 4, 1902, near Kolkata), was a Hindu spiritual leader and reformer in India who attempted to combine Indian spirituality with Western material progress, maintaining that the two supplemented and complemented one another. His Absolute was a person's own higher self; to labor for the benefit of humanity was the noblest endeavor. (Britannica).

Swami Vivekananda's birthday is celebrated in India as the National Youth Day.

Every year on January 12, India celebrates National Youth Day to commemorate the anniversary celebrations of Swami Vivekananda, one of the great thinkers and religious leaders of all time. Swami Vivekananda's ideas have been a driving force for our country because he made important contributions to moving the country and society on a new and emerging path. He believed in the potential of youth and was a devout follower of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa.

Swami Vivekananda made significant contributions to modernizing and motivating interpretations of Hinduism and philosophy. Because he was an inspiration to young people, his birthday is also observed as National Youth Day in the country.

National Youth Day: History

In 1984, the Indian Government first declared to celebrate the birthday of Swami Vivekananda i.e. 12 January as National Youth Day. Since then the day has been celebrated as National Youth Day all over the country. The government's main aim is to make a better future for the country by motivating the youths through the way of their life and ideas of the Swami Vivekananda. It is a great way to wake up the eternal energy of the youth as well as to make the country develop.

Celebrations

National Youth Day or Yuva Diwas or the birthday of Swami Vivekananda is celebrated every year at many centers of Ramakrishna Math, Ramakrishna Mission, and their branches with great enthusiasm and joy according to the Indian culture and tradition. A great mangal aarti, devotional songs, meditation, religious speech, sandhya aarti, etc. are performed. Also, at various schools, and colleges it is celebrated by performing the parade, speech on Swami Vivekananda, recitations, songs, conventions, essay-writing competitions, seminars, etc. To inspire the Indian youth's writings and lectures of Swami Vivekananda are also performed by the students. Several competitions are also performed not only in India but outside the country to promote education, trust among youths, etc. to make the country developed.

"It's all in the mind" is the theme for National Youth Day 2024.

Relevance of National Youth Day

Since 1985, the Indian government has recognised January 12 as National Youth Day, the anniversary of Swami Vivekananda's birth. As per the official communication from the government, "It was felt that the philosophy of Swamiji and the ideals for which he lived and worked could be a great source of inspiration for the Indian Youth."

According to predictions, 53% of India's



population will be under the age of 30, with the remaining 47% being adults aged 30 and above. The Youth in India report, 2022, recognizes anyone between the age group of 18-29 as a youth. As of 2021, according to this parameter, 22 percent of India's population is youth which makes India the youngest country in the world. Today, India has more than 260 million people who fall under the category of youth. To put this in perspective, this number is bigger than the population of Pakistan.

Swami Vivekananda life and teachings

Swami Vivekananda was a Hindu monk and one of the most celebrated spiritual leaders of India. He was more than just a spiritual mind; he was a prolific thinker, great orator and passionate patriot. He carried on the free-thinking philosophy of his guru, Ramakrishna Paramhansa forward into a new paradigm. He worked tirelessly towards betterment of the society, in servitude of the poor and needy, dedicating his all for his country. He was responsible for the revival of Hindu spiritualism and established Hinduism as a

revered religion on world stage. His message of universal brotherhood and self-awakening remains relevant especially in the current backdrop of widespread political turmoil around the world. The young monk and his teachings have been an inspiration to many, and his words have become goals of self-improvement especially for the youth of the country. For this very reason, his birthday, January 12, is celebrated as the National Youth Day in India.

Early Life and Education

Born Narendranath Dutta, into an affluent Bengali family in Calcutta, Vivekananda was one of the eight children of Vishwanath Dutta and Bhuvaneshwari Devi. He was born on January 12, 1863, on the occasion of Makar Sankranti. Father Vishwanath was a successful attorney with considerable influence in society. Narendranath's mother Bhuvaneshwari was a woman endowed with a strong, God-fearing mind who had a great impact on her son.

As a young boy, Narendranath displayed

sharp intellect. His mischievous nature belied his interest in music, both instrumental as well as vocal. He excelled in his studies as well, first at the Metropolitan institution, and later at the Presidency College in Calcutta. By the time he graduated from the college, he had acquired a vast knowledge of different subjects. He was active in sports, gymnastics, wrestling and body building. He was an avid reader and read up on almost everything under the sun. He perused the Hindu scriptures like the Bhagvad Gita and the Upanishads on one hand, while on the other hand he studied western philosophy, history and spirituality by David Hume, Johann Gottlieb Fichte and Herbert Spencer.

Spiritual Crisis and Relationship with Ramakrishna Paramhansa

Although Narendranath's mother was a devout woman and he had grown up in a religious atmosphere at home, he underwent a deep spiritual crisis at the start of his youth. His well-studied knowledge led him to question the existence of God and for some time he believed in Agnosticism. Yet he could not completely ignore the existence of a Supreme Being. He became associated with Brahmo Movement led by Keshab Chandra Sen, for some time. The Brahmo Samaj recognised one God unlike the idol-worshipping, superstition-ridden Hinduism. The host of philosophical questions regarding the existence of God roiling through his mind remained unanswered. During this spiritual crisis, Vivekananda first heard about Sri Ramakrishna from William Hastie, the Principal of the Scottish Church College.

Earlier, to satisfy his intellectual quest for God, Narendranath visited prominent spiritual leaders from all religions, asking them a single question, "Have you seen God?" Each time he came away without a satisfying answer. He put forward the same question to Sri Ramakrishna at his residence in Dakshinewar Kali Temple compounds. Without a moment's hesitation, Sri Ramakrishna replied: "Yes, I have. I see God as clearly as I see you, only in a much deeper sense." Vivekananda, initially unimpressed by the simplicity of Ramakrishna, was astonished with Ramakrishna's reply. Ramakrishna gradually won over this argumentative young man with his patience and love. The more Narendranath visited Dakshineswar, the more his questions were answered.

Spiritual Awakening

In 1884, Narendranath underwent a considerable financial distress due to the death of his father as he had to support his mother and younger siblings. He asked Ramakrishna to pray to the Goddess for the financial welfare of his family. On Ramakrishna's suggestion he himself went

to the temple to pray. But once he faced the Goddess he could not ask for money and wealth, instead he asked for 'Vivek' (conscience) and 'Bairagya' (reclusion). That day marked the complete spiritual awakening of Narendranath and he found himself drawn to an ascetic way of life.

Life of a Monk

During the middle of 1885, Ramakrishna, who had been suffering from throat cancer, fell seriously ill. In September 1885, Sri Ramakrishna was moved to Shyampukur in Calcutta, and a few months later Narendranath took a rented villa at Cossipore. Here, he formed a group of young people who were ardent followers of Sri Ramakrishna and together they nursed their Guru with devoted care. On 16 August 1886, Sri Ramakrishna gave up his mortal body.

After the demise of Sri Ramakrishna, around fifteen of his disciples including Narendranath began to live together in a dilapidated building at Baranagar in North Calcutta, which was named Ramakrishna Math, the monastic order of Ramakrishna. Here, in 1887, they formally renounced all ties to the world and took vows of monkhood. The brotherhood rechristened themselves and Narendranath emerged as Vivekananda meaning "the bliss of discerning wisdom".

The brotherhood lived off on alms donated voluntarily by patrons during holy begging or 'madhukari', performed yoga and meditation. Vivekananda left the Math in 1886 and went on a tour of India on foot as a 'Parivrajak'. He travelled the breadth of the country, absorbing much of the social, cultural and religious aspects of the people he came in contact with. He witnessed the adversities of life that the common people faced, their ailments, and vowed to dedicate his life to bring relief to these suffering.

Lecture at the World Parliament of Religions

During the course of his wanderings, he came to know about the World Parliament of Religions being held in Chicago, America in 1893. He was keen to attend the meeting, to represent India, Hinduism and his Guru Sri Ramakrishna's philosophies. He found assertion of his wishes while he was meditating on the rocks of Kanyakumari, the southernmost tip of India. Money was raised by his disciples in Madras (now Chennai) and Ajit Singh, Raja of Khetri, and Vivekananda left for Chicago on May 31, 1893 from Bombay.

He faced insurmountable hardships on his way to Chicago, but his spirits remained as indomitable as ever. On 11 September 1893, when the time came, he took the stage and stunned everyone with his opening line "My brothers and sisters of America". He received a standing ovation from the audience for the opening phrase. He went on to describe the principles of Vedanta and their spiritual significance, putting Hinduism on the map of World Religions.

He spent the next two and a half years in America and founded the Vedanta Society of New York in 1894. He also travelled to the United Kingdom to preach the tenets of the Vedanta and Hindu Spiritualism to the western world.

Teachings and Ramakrishna Mission

Vivekananda returned to India in 1897 amidst warm reception from the common and royal alike. He reached Calcutta after a series of lectures across the country and founded the Ramakrishna Mission on May 1, 1897 at Belur Math near Calcutta. The goals of the Ramakrishna Mission were



Swami Vivekananda at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago, 1893.

based on the ideals of Karma Yoga and its primary objective was to serve the poor and distressed population of the country. The Ramakrishna Mission undertook various forms of social service like establishing and running school, collages and hospitals, propagation of practical tenets of Vedanta through conference, seminars and workshops, initiating relief and rehabilitation work across the country.

His religious conscience was an amalgamation of Sri Ramakrishna's spiritual teachings of Divine manifestation and his personal internalization of the Advaita Vedanta philosophy. He directed to achieve the divinity of the soul by undertaking selfless work, worship and mental discipline. According to Vivekananda, the ultimate goal is to achieve freedom of the soul and that encompasses the entirety of one's religion.

Swami Vivekananda was a prominent nationalist, and had the overall welfare of his countrymen topmost in his mind. He urged his fellow countrymen to "Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached".

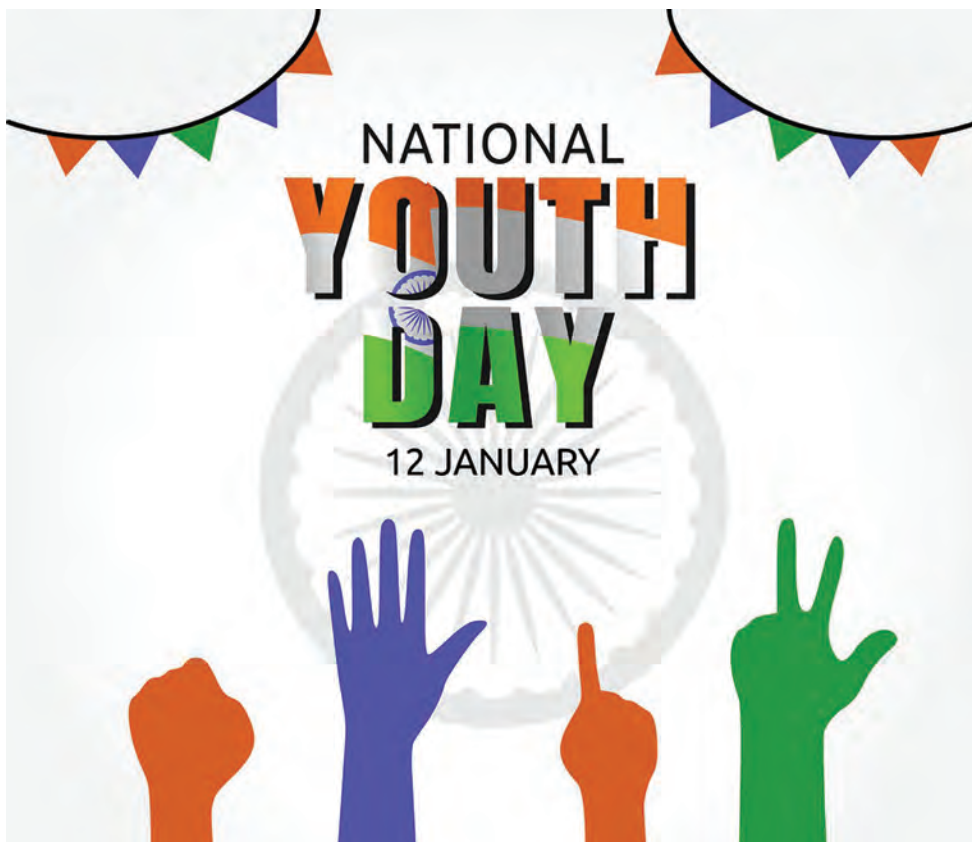
Death

Swami Vivekananda had predicted that he will not live till the age of forty. On July 4, 1902, he went about his days' work at the Belur Math, teaching Sanskrit grammar to

the pupils. He retired to his room in the evening and died during meditation at around 9. He is said to have attained 'Mahasamadhi' and the great saint was cremated on the Banks of river Ganga.

Legacy

Swami Vivekananda revealed to the world the true foundations of India's unity as a nation. He taught how a nation with such a vast diversity can be bound together by a feeling of humanity and brother-hood. Vivekananda emphasized the points of drawbacks of western culture and the contribution of India to overcome those. Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose once said: "Swamiji harmonized the East and the West, religion and science, past and present. And that is why he is great. Our countrymen have gained unprecedented self-respect, self-reliance and self-assertion from his teachings." Vivekananda was successful in constructing a virtual bridge between the culture of East and the West. He interpreted the Hindu scriptures, philosophy and the way of life to the Western people. He made them realize that in spite of poverty and backwardness, India had a great contribution to make to world culture. He played a key role in ending India's cultural isolation from the rest of the world.



Quotes of Swami Vivekananda

"Talk to yourself once in a day, otherwise you may miss meeting an intelligent person in this world."

"You cannot believe in God until you believe in yourself."

"You have to grow from the inside out. None can teach you, none can make you spiritual. There is no other teacher but your own soul."

"We are what our thoughts have made us; so take care about what you think. Words are secondary. Thoughts live; they travel far."

"Truth can be stated in a thousand different ways, yet each one can be true."

"Arise! Awake! And stop not until the goal is reached."

"Ask nothing; want nothing in return. Give what you have to give; it will come back to you but do not think of that now."

"Never think there is anything impossible for the soul. It is the greatest heresy to think so. If there is sin, this is the only sin; to say that you are weak, or others are weak."

"That man has reached immortality who is disturbed by nothing material."

"Our duty is to encourage every one in his struggle to live up to his own highest idea, and strive at the same time to make the ideal as near as possible to the Truth."

"The moment I have realized God sitting in the temple of every human body, the moment I stand in reverence before every human being and see God in him - that moment I am free from bondage, everything that binds vanishes, and I am free."

"All the powers in the universe are already ours. It is we who have put our hands before our eyes and cry that it is dark."

"If money helps a man to do good to others, it is of some value; but if not, it is simply a mass of evil, and the sooner it is got rid of, the better."

"When an idea exclusively occupies the mind, it is transformed into an actual physical or mental state."

"We are responsible for what we are, and whatever we wish ourselves to be, we have the power to make ourselves. If what we are now has been the result of our own past actions, it certainly follows that whatever we wish to be in the future can be produced by our present actions; so we have to know how to act."

"Take up one idea. Make that one idea your life - think of it, dream of it, and live on that idea. Let the brain, muscles, nerves, and every part of your body, be full of that idea and just leave every other idea alone. This is the way to success."

CELEBRATING THE "INCONVENIENT" MLK



Martin Luther King, Jr. 2024 event logo

Credit / apollotheater.org

BY MABEL PAIS

UPTOWN HALL: THE INCONVENIENT KING

Date: Sunday, January 14, 2024

Time: 2:00 PM EST

Location: Apollo's Historic Theater

Price: Free with RSVP

Website:

apollotheater.org/event/uptown-hall-mlk-the-inconvenient-king

PROGRAM

The Apollo has a decades-long

tradition of serving as a convener for its community as well as people from across New York City. That tradition continues as The Apollo partners with WNYC in our 18th annual celebration of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and his enduring legacy on the culture.

This year's presentation focuses on a renewed commitment to understanding the context, confronting the complexity, and elevating our collective consciousness in the face of injustice and discrimination.

NPR's 'Notes from America' host, Kai Wright moderates the first hour of this year's celebration. Music, spoken word and other forms of creative expression round out the afternoon. Check back for updates on this program.

In collaboration with March On Washington Film Festival.

UPTOWN HALL: The Inconvenient King is part of The Apollo's Winter/Spring 2024 season.

TICKETS

Free tickets are available at ticketmaster.com/event/00005F9DCCE65

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There is an overall 4 ticket limit for this event.

ATTENDEE REQUIREMENTS

This is a free event but a ticket is required. Free tickets are also available at The Apollo box office. You must show your e-ticket at check in. Seating is by general admission, registration and or possession of a ticket does not guarantee entry. Doors open at 1PM. Tickets not scanned by 1:30PM on the day of the event will be released to patrons in the standby line.

This event will be recorded for broadcast and theater entry will confirm consent to be included in the recording.

ACCESSIBLE TICKETS

To better accommodate attendee needs, Apollo Theater has requested that special seating accommodations be solicited online and through their representatives. Contact Apollo Theater Box Office with questions at (212) 531-5305.

APOLLO APPRENTICES PRESENT: MLK YOUNG CHANGEMAKERS

Event Date: Monday, January 15, 2024

Event Time: 4:00 PM EST

Location: Apollo's Soundstage

Price: Free with RSVP

Website: apollotheater.org/event/apollo-young-producers-presents-young-changemakers-2024

THE BELOVED COMMUNITY



Young Changemakers 2024 logo

Credit / apollotheater.org

This year's 'MLK Young Changemakers: The Beloved Community' explores the roots of Dr. King's activism and the everyday faith that powered his vision of a beloved global community. The discussion will focus on issues of climate change, global migration and voting rights.

Join The Apollo as the changemakers of tomorrow share their voices and resources to help the next generation become catalysts within their own beloved communities. With live performances and opportunities for direct action, this is THE space for youth on the National Day of Service. This event is curated by The Apollo's Apprentices.

Uptown Hall: The Beloved Community is part of The Apollo's Winter/Spring 2024 season.

This event will have ASL Interpretation.

FEATURED PANELISTS

DAVIDA PADI : Davida Padi is a Ghanaian-American storyteller studying Social Media Strategies and Legal Studies with an Environmental Studies Concentration. She works at the intersection of mental health, climate change, and technology. Davida has worked with the UN Foundation's United To Beat Malaria, MTV, and the Biden-Harris White House Administration. Davida is a Gilman Scholar, Johnson & Johnson Scholar, and a 2021 Martin Luther King Observance Committee Scholarship Awardee. She has been featured in Teen Vogue 21 Under 21.

DR. NYLE FORT: Dr. Nyle Fort is a minister, activist, and scholar. He works with organizers, artists, students, educators, faith leaders, and community members to build what Dr. King described as the Beloved Community: a global society rooted in the principles of love, freedom, and justice. Nyle has studied, lectured, and organized across the United States, India, Belgium, The Netherlands, Britain, Palestine, and more. He is currently an Assistant Professor of African American and African Diaspora Studies at Columbia University and a faith-based organizer with the Dream Defenders.

AJANI STELLA : Ajani Stella is the founder and leader of Kids Fight Climate Change, a unique climate education group dedicated to teaching young people about the climate crisis. He is a 17-year-old climate activist living in New York City. He was named one of 30 under 30 worldwide for environmental education by the North American Association for Environmental Education. Ajani has been engaged with climate action since he spoke to the New York City Teachers Retirement Fund Board of Directors about divesting from fossil fuels when he was ten years old.

F.L.O.G.I.C. : F.L.O.G.I.C. is a New York-based Christian duo composed of sisters Breanna and Taylour Dickerson. Born and raised on Long Island, New York, the sisters grew up singing and praise dancing in church, and their Pentecostal C.O.G.I.C. roots are the foundation for what they describe as

"Worship Hip-Hop." They were hand-selected for America's Got Talent Season 14.

RANA ABDELHAMID : Rana Abdelhamid is an internationally acclaimed human rights organizer, 1st Degree Black Belt, public speaker, and social entrepreneur focused on the empowerment of marginalized communities. In 2022, she ran for election to the U.S. House of Representatives in New York's 12th congressional district. Rana has been named a Truman Scholar and a Running Start Rising Political Star, and she has received a NYC Council Proclamation and an International Youth Advocate award from the UNAUSA Foundation.

BRENNAN BRINK : Brennan is the migrant shelter and immigration consultant at the Interfaith Center of New York (ICNY) as well as a 3rd year M.Div. student at Union Theological Seminary in New York City. At ICNY, Brennan helps to strengthen and unify the work of Houses of Worship as they respond to the Asylum Seeker Crisis in New York City.

FATOUMATA THAIM : Fatoumata, now the Civic Leadership Youth Coordinator at the Muslim Community Network NY (MCN), embarked on a transformative journey from Senegal to New York City in 2009. In 2018, she founded the Noko-Boku Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to providing educational resources annually to elementary schools in villages and rural areas. Now positioned at MCN, Fatoumata is poised to contribute significantly to the organization's mission and the growth of youth leadership.

To learn more about each panelist, visit apollotheater.org/event/apollo-young-producers-presents-young-changemakers-2024

TICKETS

For Free tickets, visit apollotheater.org/event/apollo-young-producers-presents-young-changemakers-2024

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

PBS DOCS MAKE OSCAR CONTENDING SHORTLIST



'Beyond Utopia,' poster

Credit / pbs.org/independentlens

BY MABEL PAIS

This winter season of INDEPENDENT LENS, a Public Broadcasting Station's subsidiary, presents two acclaimed, Oscar®-contender documentaries that will debut in January. 'Beyond Utopia,' the gripping story of families who risk everything escaping North Korea, and the documentary short 'If Dreams Were Lightning: Rural Healthcare Crisis' which explores the lives of people living in the rural South with limited or no access to healthcare, both recently made the shortlist for the 96th Academy Awards®.

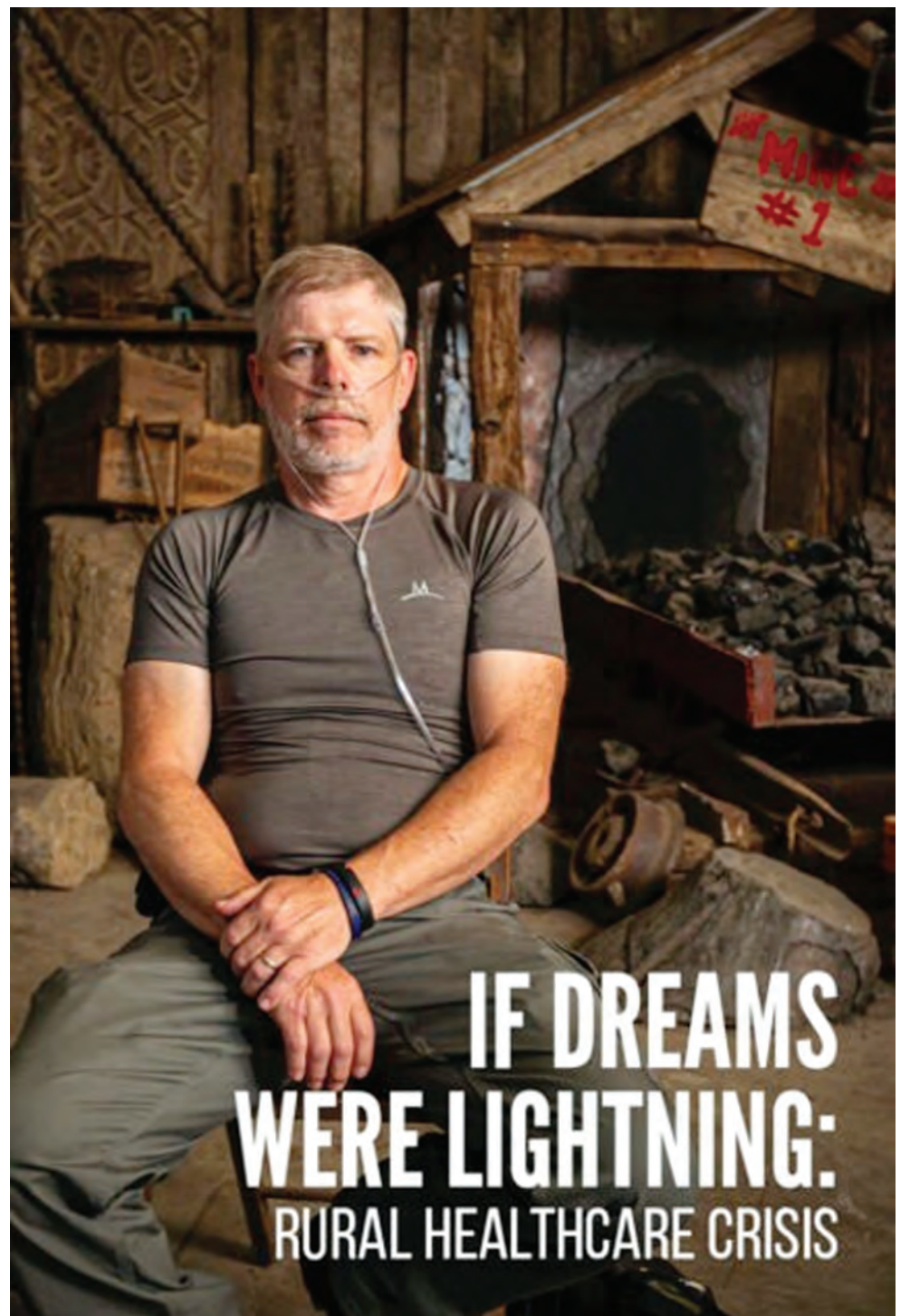
'BEYOND UTOPIA' WILL DEBUT ON JANUARY 9, 2024, AT 10 P.M. ET ON PBS AND THE

PBS App (pbs.org/pbs-app) - check local listings. They grew up believing their land was paradise. Now, they risk everything in escaping it. In an unforgettable documentary, follow families on a treacherous journey to defect from their homeland of North Korea, as the threat of severe

punishment and possible execution looms over their passage, revealing a world many have never seen.

'If Dreams Were Lightning' will be available to stream on January 10, 2024 on the PBS App and will also be accessible via PBS's flagship YouTube Channel (youtube.com/PBS). Rural hospitals around America are closing at alarming rates, leaving communities without care. Oscar and Emmy-nominated director Ramin Bahrani visits Appalachia, where American communities are left with limited or no access to healthcare. Explore the rural healthcare crisis in the South through the eyes of those struggling in it and the dedicated doctors trying to reach them.

The films enter the Winter Slate on INDEPENDENT LENS, the award-winning PBS documentary anthology series presented by ITVS. The films cover a wide range of timely issues including racial tensions, gentrification, mental health, representation, and humanity through the lens of individuals, families, and



'If Dreams Were Lightning,' poster

Credit / pbs.org/independentlens

tight-knit communities.

THE INDEPENDENT LENS WINTER SEASON CONTINUES

Rounding out the slate includes two films chronicling the fights of two distinct Black American neighborhoods-'Racist Trees' on January 22 and 'Razing Liberty Square' on January 29. Continuing on February 5 with the inspiring end-of-life story 'Sister Úna Lived a Good Death,' and on February 19 with the headline-making 'Breaking the News,' the season closes on March 25 with 'Greener Pastures,' an intimate look at farmers' lives in the American Midwest.

For more information, visit pbs.org/independentlens

INDEPENDENT LENS

Independent Lens is an Emmy® Award-winning PBS documentary series. With founding executive producer Lois Vossen, the series has been honored with 10 Academy Award nominations and features

documentaries united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement, and unflinching visions of independent filmmakers. Stream anytime on the PBS App. For more visit pbs.org/independentlens.

ITVS

Independent Television Services (ITVS) is the largest co-producer of independent documentaries in the United States. For more than 30 years, the San Francisco nonprofit has funded and partnered with documentary filmmakers to produce and distribute untold stories. ITVS incubates and co-produces these award-winning titles and premieres them on its Emmy® Award-winning PBS series, Independent Lens. ITVS titles appear on PBS, WORLD, NETA, and can be streamed on various digital platforms including the PBS App. For more information, visit itvs.org.

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



Janhvi Kapoor calls dating actors 'chaotic'

The upcoming episode of Koffee with Karan Season 8 is gearing up for an enticing debut, promising a candid conversation with the Kapoor sisters, Janhvi and Khushi. The promo hints at an episode filled with sizzling moments and fiery revelations, with a spotlight on Janhvi Kapoor sharing insights into both her personal and professional life. In a sneak peek into the episode, Janhvi Kapoor delves into her experiences with dating actors, revealing the chaotic nature of relationships within the industry. Host Karan Johar prompts Janhvi to share her perspective on navigating relationships with fellow actors, to which she candidly responds, "It is chaotic for sure. Vanity is such a big part of this profession. I am extremely vain; this profession is where you need to be obsessed with yourself at all times. It consumes you." Highlighting the challenges of dating actors, Janhvi emphasizes the competitive and peculiar dynamics that often arise in such relationships. She acknowledges the importance of being with someone comfortable enough to let you have your moments but expresses reservations about the inherent tension that comes with dating actors. Janhvi shares, "But I find with actors, they get very competitive and very weird." When Karan queries if she would consider dating an actor given her current comfort level, Janhvi candidly admits that the tension in such relationships is something she finds challenging to handle, specifically within the demanding realm of the film industry.

Deepika opens up about wanting to become a mother, starting family with Ranveer

Deepika Padukone spoke about how she and actor-husband Ranveer Singh 'hope to inculcate the same values in their children' that her parents have brought her up with. In an interview with Vogue Singapore, the actor reflected on her how her parents Prakash Padukone and Ujjala Padukone raised her sister Anisha Padukone and her. She also discussed starting her own family with Ranveer.

Deepika Padukone praised her parents, saying, "When I meet the people I have grown up with — my aunts, uncles, family friends — they always mention how I haven't changed one bit. That says a lot about our upbringing... In this industry, it's easy to get carried away by fame and money. But no one treats me like a celebrity at home. I am a daughter and a sister first. I don't want that to change. My family keeps me grounded and Ranveer and I hope to inculcate the same values in our children."

When asked if becoming a mother 'is something she looks forward to then', Deepika Padukone said, "Absolutely. Ranveer and I love children. We look forward to the day when we will start our own family."

Last year in November, Ranveer Singh and Deepika Padukone were in Belgium as they celebrated their fifth wedding anniversary. Ranveer and Deepika tied the knot on November 14, 2018 at Italy's Lake Como after dating for six years. They first met on the sets of Sanjay Leela Bhansali's romantic film Goliyon Ki Rasleela Ram-Leela. They later also starred in Bajirao Mastani and Padmaavat.

Deepika will be seen soon in the sci-fi action film Kalki 2898 AD opposite Prabhas. She also has director Siddharth Anand's aerial action film Fighter opposite Hrithik Roshan, which will be released on January 25, 2024. She will also be seen in Rohit Shetty's Singham Again. Ranveer will also be seen in the action film.



Aamir Khan's daughter Ira marries long-time partner Nupur

Superstar Aamir Khan and film producer Reena Dutta's daughter Ira Khan on Wednesday tied the knot with her long-time partner Nupur Shikhare. Ira, who is the founder and CEO of a mental health support organisation, registered her marriage with Nupur, a celebrity fitness trainer, at a five star hotel in suburban Bandra.

The marriage was attended by their close family members, including Aamir; his ex-wives Reena Dutta and Kiran Rao, among others. The ceremony was followed by a reception at the same hotel.

Ahead of the wedding, Nupur, who is in his 30s, was seen jogging from his residence in Santacruz to the wedding venue, wearing an athleisure outfit. He later danced along with his friends to dhol beats outside the venue.

Videos from the ceremony circulating on social media showed Nupur and Ira signing the marriage documents, surrounded by their families and friends, while the guests cheered for them.

Ira, 26, was dressed in a traditional outfit. The couple will have another wedding ceremony in Udaipur on January 8, followed by a grand reception in Mumbai on January 13.



Ranbir puts on police uniform, shoots an ad with Rohit Shetty

What are the chances that fans can get to see Ranbir Kapoor in a Rohit Shetty cop film? The actor surprised fans dressed in a cop uniform and sporting a moustache as he shot for an advertisement with the director. Ranbir's look has impressed fans, who commented on the possibility of him doing a film where he plays a police officer. Several pictures of Ranbir dressed as a police officer emerged on social media, which were posted by his fan accounts on X (formerly Twitter). In one of the pictures, he was seen sitting on a chair waiting for a shot. In one shot, the actor looked handsome as he was seen walking towards the set in a pair of black shades. A third picture saw Ranbir do a fist bump with director Rohit Shetty.





Gypsy Rose eyes Kim Kardashian for prison reform partnership

Gypsy Rose Blanchard, fresh out of prison, has her sights set on a powerful ally in the realm of prison reform – none other than Kim Kardashian. While they haven't sat down for a chat just yet, Gypsy is eager to glean insights from Kim's experience in the justice system and her impactful work on prison reform.

Back in November, Gypsy reached out to Kim on Twitter from behind bars, expressing gratitude for recommending an HBO documentary about her case. In her tweet, Gypsy floated the idea of teaming up with Kim to bring about tangible change in the justice system.

Now that she's out, Gypsy still sees Kim as a potential partner in her mission. She believes that Kim's expertise can help her navigate the social media landscape and amplify her advocacy for prison reform.

Despite the shoutout on social media, there's been no direct communication between Gypsy and Kim post-Gypsy's release. However, the door is wide open for a future collaboration.

DiCaprio, Cameron Diaz among Hollywood stars named in Jeffrey Epstein court documents



Amid great hype, a new batch of previously secret court documents was unsealed late Wednesday, January 3, related to Jeffrey Epstein, the jet-setting financier who killed himself in 2019 while awaiting trial on sex-trafficking charges.

The new documents include a bunch of names from Hollywood. Stars such as Leonardo DiCaprio, Cate Blanchett, Cameron Diaz, Bruce Willis and Kevin Spacey have been name dropped. However, simply their mention doesn't not imply that they have been party to any wrongdoing.

One of the witnesses claimed that Epstein "would be on the phone a lot at that time, and one time he said, 'Oh, that was Leonardo, or that was Cate Blanchett or Bruce Willis. That kind of thing.'" The person then added that they had indeed not even met Leonardo DiCaprio.

Social media has been rife in recent weeks with posts speculating the documents amounted to a list of rich and powerful men who were Epstein's "clients" or "co-conspirators." There was no such list. The first 40 documents in the court-ordered release largely consisted of already public material revealed through nearly two decades of newspaper stories, TV documentaries, interviews, legal cases and books about the Epstein scandal.

Still, the records — including transcripts of interviews with some of Epstein's victims and old police reports — contained reminders that the millionaire surrounded himself with famous and powerful figures, including a few who have also been accused of misconduct. The documents being unsealed are related to a lawsuit filed in 2015 by one of Epstein's victims, Virginia Giuffre. She is one of dozens of women who sued Epstein for abusing them at his homes in Florida, New York, the U.S. Virgin Islands and New Mexico. This suit was against Ghislaine Maxwell, Epstein's former girlfriend who is now serving a 20-year prison term for helping recruit and abuse his victims.

Even before the documents were released, misinformation about what was in them abounded. Social media users wrongly claimed that late-night host Jimmy Kimmel's name might appear in the documents, spurred by a crack New York Jets quarterback Aaron Rodgers made Tuesday on ESPN's The Pat McAfee Show. Kimmel said in a response on X that he had never met Epstein and that Rodgers' "reckless words put my family in danger."

The Bachelorette star Rachel Lindsay, Bryan Abasolo heading for a divorce

After finding love on "The Bachelorette" and four years of marriage, Marquette University Law School graduate Rachel Lindsay and her husband Bryan Abasolo are heading for divorce.

Abasolo filed for divorce from Lindsay in the Los Angeles County Superior Court, according to USA Today. The former couple has been separated since Sunday, the filing states.

Abasolo lists "irreconcilable differences" as the reason for his split from Lindsay. "Many of you know me as a chiropractor, and also a husband, my proudest role so far," Abasolo said in a statement he shared on Instagram Tuesday. "After more than 4 years of marriage, Rachel and I have made the difficult decision to part ways and start anew ... Sometimes loving yourself and your partner means

you must let go."

He asked for respect of their space "as we figure out our next steps."

While Lindsay hasn't directly addressed the matter on social media, earlier this week, she called this past year "one of the hardest" of her life in an Instagram post. The post included a video compilation in which Abasolo was included and tagged.

Lindsay finished third on Waukesha native Nick Viall's season of "The Bachelor." When Lindsay was named "The Bachelorette" in 2017, she became the first Black lead in the franchise's history.

Abasolo would end up proposing to Lindsay in Spain during the finale of the show to the dismay of fans on social media, who largely rooted for runner-up Peter Kraus, according to USA Today reports.

The couple tied the knot in August 2019 in Mexico, and opted to not have it televised.

Lindsay has appeared on other reality shows, including "The Bachelor Winter Games" and "Ghosted: Love Gone Missing." And, she's become a fixture in the entertainment news industry, hosting the popular "Higher Learning" podcast. She recently left her correspondent position at the entertainment news show "Extra."

According to the divorce petition, Abasolo is seeking spousal support, though an amount is not specified, a USA Today report said. Additionally, Abasolo requested to terminate the court's ability to reward spousal support to Lindsay.

Abasolo is also seeking ownership rights for his shared properties with Lindsay, which include a residence in North Hollywood.



THREE KILLED AS TRAINS COLLIDE ON INDONESIA'S MAIN ISLAND OF JAVA

BANDUNG (TIP): Two trains collided on Indonesia's main island of Java on January 5, causing several carriages to buckle and overturn and killing at least three people, officials said.

The accident happened about 500 meters (yards) from Cicalengka train station in West Java's Bandung city, said Ayep Hanapi, a spokesperson for PT Kereta Api Indonesia, the national railways.

He said the Turangga express train traveling from Surabaya, the capital of East Java province, to Bandung hit a commuter train heading to Padalarang from Cicalengka station.

At least three people were killed and several others were injured, West Java Police spokesperson Ibrahim Tompo said.

Television video showed several carriages overturned or badly mangled. One carriage plunged into a nearby rice field. People screamed as panicked passengers tried to get out of the train. Some walked through the fields carrying suitcases and other items as ambulances evacuated the injured.

About 106 passengers on the commuter train and 54 on the Turangga have been rescued, said Hery Marantika, head of Bandung's Search and Rescue Agency. (AP)

Angry farmers block German Economy Minister on ferry, cops use pepper spray to disperse crowd

BERLIN (TIP): German Economy Minister Robert Habeck expressed concern on January 5 after farmers angry at government plans to cut tax breaks for agriculture trapped him on a ferry in the northern town of Schluettziel.

Around 30 protestors prevented Habeck from disembarking the vessel on Thursday as he returned from a winter break on the North Sea island of Hallig Hooge, a police spokesman told AFP.

After negotiations failed to end the farmers' blockade, Habeck decided to stay on the ferry and travel back to the island.

Order restored, Habeck returned to the mainland at around 1:50 am Friday (0050 GMT), police said.

In total, around 100 farmers descended on the port in their tractors to intercept the minister, with police using pepper spray to disperse the crowd.

"I regret that it was not possible to establish talks with the farmers," Habeck said in a statement.

"What worries me... is that the mood in the country is becoming so inflamed," he said.

The incident was "shameful and goes against the rules of democratic coexistence", Chancellor Olaf Scholz's



spokesman Steffen Hebestreit said on X, formerly Twitter.

"Blockades of this kind are a no-go," the head of the German Farmers' Association (DBV) Joachim Rukwied said in a statement.

Farmers have been up in arms over government plans to withdraw tax breaks for the agricultural sector this year.

Thousands travelled to Berlin to protest the move in December, blocking roads with their tractors and dumping manure on the street.

The display of disaffection

precipitated the government to partially walk back the planned subsidy cuts on Thursday.

A discount on vehicle tax for agriculture would remain in place, while a diesel subsidy would be phased out over several years instead of being abolished immediately, the government said. The agriculture sector however said the move did not go far enough and urged the government to completely reverse the plans, announced after a shock court ruling forced the government to find savings in the budget for 2024. (AFP)

Iran mourns those slain in Islamic State-claimed suicide blasts as death toll rises to 89

KERMAN (TIP): Iran on January 5 mourned those slain in an Islamic State group-claimed suicide bombing targeting a commemoration for a general slain in a U.S. drone strike in 2020, as the death toll in the attack rose to at least 89.

Despite the militants claiming responsibility for the attack, the wider tensions shaking the Middle East during Israel's war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip became intertwined with the funeral in the usually peaceful city of Kerman, about 820 kilometres (510 miles) southeast of the capital, Tehran.

The top commander of Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard linked the attack to the U.S. The gathered crowd shouted: "Death to America!" and "Death to Israel!"

"If you are a man, fight with us. Why do you kill oppressed and defenceless women and children?" Gen. Hossein Salami said.

Iranian state television also sought to link America to the attack. At one point, it re-broadcast comments from 2016 from then-presidential candidate Donald Trump, who wrongly accused then-President Barack Obama of being the "founder" of the extremist group.

Critics have blamed Obama's decision



IRANIAN STATE TELEVISION ALSO SOUGHT TO LINK AMERICA TO THE ATTACK. AT ONE POINT, IT RE-BROADCAST COMMENTS FROM 2016 FROM THEN-PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE DONALD TRUMP, WHO WRONGLY ACCUSED THEN-PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA OF BEING THE "FOUNDER" OF THE EXTREMIST GROUP.

to pull troops from Iraq in 2011 for allowing the group, once an affiliate of al-Qaida, to thrive and ultimately hold

vast swathes of Iraq and Syria in its self-declared caliphate by 2014. U.S. troops under both Obama and Trump then

battled alongside allied forces to retake that territory.

In Wednesday's attack, one suicide bomber killed himself, then another 20 minutes later as people and emergency workers tried to help the wounded. The attack targeted a commemoration for Guard Gen. Qassem Soleimani, killed in 2020 by a U.S. drone strike as he led its expeditionary Quds Force.

Soleimani had been part of the Iranian response to the Islamic State group in Syria, while focusing on keeping embattled Syrian President Bashar Assad in power. He also had extensive ties to proxy groups around the wider Mideast, including Hamas. But the U.S., which killed Soleimani as part of wider tensions over its collapsed nuclear deal with world powers, saw Soleimani as the mastermind behind deadly roadside bombings targeting American soldiers in Iraq. The two attacks killed at least 89 people and wounded about 280 others, authorities said Friday in updating the death toll. The Islamic State group claimed the attack Thursday in a statement that named the two bombers and described it as part of a new campaign linked to Israel's war in the Gaza Strip. (AP)

Families in Gaza search desperately for food and water, wait in long lines for aid

MUWASI (TIP): Stranded in a corner of southern Gaza, members of the Abu Jarad family are clinging to a strict survival routine.

They fled their comfortable three-bedroom home in northern Gaza after the Israel-Hamas war broke out nearly three months ago. The 10-person family now squeezes into a 16-square meter (172-square foot) tent on a garbage-strewn sandy plot, part of a sprawling encampment of displaced Palestinians.

Every family member is assigned daily tasks, from collecting twigs to build a fire for cooking, to scouring the city's markets for vegetables. But their best efforts can't mask their desperation.

At night "dogs are hovering over the tents," said Awatif Abu Jarad, an older member of the family. "We are living like dogs!"

Palestinians seeking refuge in southern Gaza say every day has become a struggle to find food, water, medicine and working bathrooms. All the while, they live in fear of Israeli airstrikes and the growing threat of illnesses.

Israel's bombardment and ground invasion of Gaza, now in its 13th week, have pushed almost all Palestinians toward the southern city of Rafah along the Egyptian border. The area had a prewar population of around 280,000, a figure that has bulged to over 1 million in recent days, according to the U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees.

Rafah's apartment blocks are crammed



with people, often extended families who have opened their doors to displaced relatives. West of the city, thousands of nylon tents have sprung up. Thousands more people are sleeping in the open, despite the cool and often rainy winter weather.

Most of northern Gaza is now under the control of the Israeli army, which early in the war urged Palestinians to evacuate to the south. As the war progressed, more evacuation orders were issued for areas in the south, forcing Palestinian civilians to crowd into ever smaller spaces, including Rafah and a nearby sliver of land called Muwasi. Even these purportedly safe spaces are often hit by airstrikes and shelling.

The war broke out on Oct. 7 after Hamas militants stormed into southern

Israel, killing about 1,200 people and abducting 240 others. The fighting has killed over 22,400 Palestinians, according to the Health Ministry in the Hamas-run territory, which does not differentiate between civilians and combatants.

According to Nouman, Awatif's brother, the conflict drove the family the entire length of Gaza. They fled their home in the northern border town of Beit Hanoun on the first day of the war and stayed with a relative in the nearby town of Beit Lahia.

Six days later, the intensity of Israeli strikes in the border area sent them south to Al-Quds Hospital in Gaza City. As people started to evacuate the hospital two days later, they traveled to the Nuseirat urban refugee camp in central Gaza, making the 10-kilometer (6-mile)

journey on foot.

They stayed in a cramped U.N. school building in Nuseirat for over two months, but left on Dec. 23 as the Israeli army turned its focus toward Hamas targets in central Gaza refugee camps.

They escaped to Muwasi on Dec. 23, believing it was the safest option. On the first night, they slept out in the open. Then they bought nylon and wood in a Rafah market to build a tent.

Nouman, an accountant, sleeps on the nylon-covered floor with his wife, sister, six daughters and one grandchild. They sleep on their sides to conserve space.

He said the tent cost 1,000 shekels, about \$276. "It is completely crazy," he said. In Rafah's demand-driven war economy, larger pre-built family tents now range from \$800 to \$1,400.

The family's hardship begins at 5 a.m. Nouman said his first job is to start a small fire to cook breakfast, while his wife and daughters knead dough for flatbread and then wash their utensils and metal cooking griddle.

After eating, their attention turns to fetching water and food, tasks that take up most of the daylight hours.

Nouman said he and several of his younger relatives collect jugs of water from one of the public pipes nearby, water that is exclusively used for washing and not suitable for drinking. Next, they head to one of the dozens of drinking water tankers dotted across the city, where they wait in line for hours. (AP)

Japan Airlines pilots had no 'visual contact' before collision

TOKYO, JAPAN (TIP): Pilots on a Japan Airlines plane that burst into flames just after all 379 passengers and crew escaped had no "visual contact" with the other aircraft in the collision, the airline said on January 5.

The three pilots were also unable to see the fire from the cockpit when it first broke out and were informed of it by cabin crew, a JAL spokesman told AFP.

The airliner hit a coast guard plane after landing at Tokyo's Haneda Airport on Tuesday evening. All but one of the six people on the smaller aircraft were killed.

A ball of flame erupted from the airliner before it came to a halt and was consumed by a huge blaze, eventually leaving a charred husk on the tarmac.

But the pilots said they had no "visual contact" with the other plane, although one of them spotted "an object" right before impact, according to JAL.

"After the plane landed and around the time when the front wheels touched or were about to touch the ground -- during those few seconds, they said they felt an impact," the spokesman said.

The chief flight attendant, one of nine on board, reported to the cockpit that the plane was burning as the cabin crew needed permission to open the emergency exits, broadcaster NHK reported.

By this time, the cabin was filling with smoke and getting hotter, with babies crying and people begging for the doors to be opened, footage showed.

In one video clip, a young voice can be heard shouting: "Please let us out. Please. Please open it. Just open it. Oh, god."

There were eight emergency exits but the evacuation began from two slides at the front of the plane because of the fire.

Crew members opened a third exit at the rear themselves because the broken intercom system meant they couldn't request that the cockpit do so.

It took 18 minutes to evacuate the entire plane, with the pilot the last person to set foot on the tarmac at 6:05 pm.

Soon afterwards, the aircraft was an inferno and dozens of fire engines were trying to put out the blaze, a process that ended up taking eight hours.

"Honestly, I thought we wouldn't survive," another woman told broadcaster NHK.

In the end, only two passengers suffered physical injuries such as bruises or twisted limbs, JAL said.

"Passengers seemed to have followed instructions in a textbook manner," Terence Fan, an airline industry expert from Singapore Management University told AFP.

CONFUSION ON RUNWAY : Investigators from Japan, France, Britain and Canada were probing the crash on Thursday, with the charred remains of the two planes still littering one of Haneda's four runways.

The flight and voice recorders from the coast guard plane have both been found, as has the flight recorder from the passenger jet -- but not its voice recorder.

The transport ministry has released transcripts of the flight controllers' communications, which show they approved the JAL flight's landing.

But the coast guard plane was instructed to go to a spot near the runway, the transcripts showed. (AFP)

'DEEPLY SHOCKED', SAYS CHINA ON IRAN TWIN BOMB BLASTS

BEIJING (TIP): China said on January 5 it was "deeply shocked" by twin bomb blasts that killed at least 95 people in Iran, with whom Beijing has close ties.

The two explosions on January 4 -- labelled a "terrorist attack" by Iran's state media and regional authorities -- sparked fears of a widening conflict in the region.

Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said Beijing was "deeply shocked by the serious terrorist attack... which resulted in heavy casualties".

"We express our deep condolences to the victims and our sincere sympathy to the injured and the families of the victims," he said at a regular press conference.

"China opposes all forms of terrorism, strongly condemns terrorist attacks and firmly supports Iran's efforts to maintain national security and stability," he added.

Iran blamed the blast on Israel and the United States and its supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has vowed a "harsh response". The United States has denied involvement. (AFP)

Pak court issues arrest warrants to over 100 PTI activists for their involvement in May 9 violence

LAHORE (TIP): A Pakistani anti-terrorism court on Friday issued arrest warrants to more than 100 activists of Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party for their alleged involvement in the attack on the ISI building in Punjab province during the anti-government protests.

On May 9, violent protests erupted after the arrest of Khan, the former prime minister and PTI party chief, by paramilitary Rangers from the premises of the Islamabad High Court in connection with an alleged corruption case.

His party workers vandalised a dozen military installations, including the Jinnah House (Lahore Corps Commander House), Mianwali airbase and the ISI building in Faisalabad.

The Army headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi was also attacked by the mob for the first time.

"The Anti-Terrorism Court issued arrest warrants of over 100 PTI leaders and workers allegedly involved in the attack on Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) offices in Faisalabad city (some 130kms from Lahore) during riots on May 9, 2023," a court official told PTI here on Friday.

The PTI leaders who are contesting next month's general elections from the



Faisalabad district are also among those whose arrest warrants have been issued, he said.

The wanted men of the PTI have reportedly been hiding since May.

The Pakistan Army is already conducting the trial of 102 suspects involved in the attacks on military installations including the ISI building in Faisalabad during violent protests that erupted on May 9 across the country following the arrest of former prime minister and PTI supremo Khan.

PTI central spokesperson Raof Hasan said that "every draconian measure" has been employed by the state to have the party decimated and Imran Khan deleted

from people's memory.

"This includes driving Khan out of office using the influence of pelf and power, registering over 180 fake and fraudulent cases against him from corruption to jeopardising national interests, arresting him and convicting him on one count with proceedings moving at an accelerated pace in others, and subjecting him to maltreatment and humiliation," he said.

Raof further said such measures also include exerting pressure on the PTI leaders to leave him, incarcerating them for prolonged periods and thwarting their bail by re-arresting them in other cases, abducting and torturing others to

change political loyalties, denying it the right to hold political rallies and depriving it of its election symbol.

The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) has expressed deep concern over the deterioration in the state of human rights in the country.

"The blatant manipulation of the electoral landscape has been witnessed in which one political party among others has been singled out for systematic dismemberment. The state's clampdown on dissent, whether on freedom of opinion, expression or assembly, has further constricted civic spaces in the country at a time when people must be allowed to express their will freely ahead of the national election next month," the HRCP said.

Currently over 10,000 PTI workers and leaders are languishing in jails in different parts of the country after May 9 events.

Imran Khan is also detained at Adiala Jail Rawalpindi since August last in different cases.

The PTI alleges that under the 'London Plan' PMLN supremo Nawaz Sharif will be made prime minister in the wake of the February 8, 2024 polls with the blessing of the military establishment and Khan and his party will be crushed. (PTI)

FIVE KILLED AS PACKED TRAIN CATCHES FIRE IN BANGLADESH

DHAKA (TIP): Five people were killed in Bangladesh after a passenger train caught fire on Friday, with police suspecting an arson attack during unrest ahead of national elections boycotted by the opposition.

Fire service officer Rakjibul Hasan said at least four coaches caught fire on the Benapole Express, which was arriving in the capital Dhaka from the western city of Jessore.

"We have recovered five bodies," police commander Khandaker Al Moin told reporters.

Witnesses said the train caught fire at Gopibagh, in an old part of Dhaka not far from the megacity's main rail terminal. An unnamed rescuer told private broadcaster Somoy TV that hundreds of people had rushed to pull people out of the burning train.

"We rescued many. But the fire spread quickly," he said.

Somoy TV said some Indian citizens were also travelling in the train. "We suspect the fire incident was an act of sabotage," police chief Anwar Hossain told AFP, without giving more details.

Last month the police and government blamed the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) for another train fire that left four people dead. (AFP)

Nepal halts work permits to Russia, Ukraine after death of Nepali citizens fighting for Russian army

KATHMANDU (TIP):: The Nepal government has suspended the issuance of work permits to its citizens to travel to Russia and Ukraine following the death of at least 10 Nepalese citizens who joined the Russian Army in the ongoing war between the two neighbours, media reports said on Thursday.

Nepal's Department of Foreign Employment, in a notice, said that the matter was of serious concern as several Nepali youths were being illegally recruited into the Russian Army, My Republica newspaper reported.

"The DoFE has stopped the approval of work permits to Russians and the Ukrainians because of the reports of deaths of Nepali citizens joining the Russian Army. Lately, Nepali youths are being illegally recruited into the Russian Army. So far, 10 Nepalis serving in the Russian Army have died," the report said.

Russia and Ukraine have engaged in a full-scale war since February 2022.

At least 10 Nepali nationals serving in the Russian Army have been confirmed killed so far while fighting Ukrainian forces.

According to Milan Raj Tuladhar, the Nepali ambassador to Russia, it is estimated that around 150-200 Nepali nationals have been serving in the Russian Army, according to another report by The



"THE DOFE HAS STOPPED THE APPROVAL OF WORK PERMITS TO RUSSIANS AND THE UKRANIANS BECAUSE OF THE REPORTS OF DEATHS OF NEPALI CITIZENS JOINING THE RUSSIAN ARMY. LATELY, NEPALI YOUTHS ARE BEING ILLEGALLY RECRUITED INTO THE RUSSIAN ARMY. SO FAR, 10 NEPALIS SERVING IN THE RUSSIAN ARMY HAVE DIED," THE REPORT SAID.

Kathmandu Post.

On December 4 last year, Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal said that the government had information that some Nepali nationals are serving in the Ukrainian Army too.

However, the government does not have exact data on how many Nepali citizens are currently serving in the Russian and Ukrainian armies.

The government has asked the Russian government to repatriate Nepalese currently serving in Russian forces as soon as possible, Nepal's Ministry of Foreign Affairs was quoted as saying.

Meanwhile, the ministry had stated that diplomatic efforts are on to rescue and repatriate Bibek Khatri, who was fighting for Russia and has been captured by the Ukrainian Army. (PTI)

India in history this Week

JANUARY 5 TO JANUARY 11

05 JANUARY



2014 Indian communication satellite GSAT-14 was successfully placed into orbit.



2009 Omar Abdullah, President of National Conference, sworn in as Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir.

2006 India and Nepal extend the duration of the transit treaty by 3 months.

1957 Central Sales Tax Act comes into effect.

1955 Birth of West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in Calcutta (now Kolkata).



1941 Birth of cricketer Mansoor Ali Khan Pataudi in Bhopal.

1934 Birth of Bharatiya Janata Party leader Murli



Manohar Joshi.

1890 Advocate Gyanendra Mohan Tagore died.

1671 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj captured the Salhar region from the Mughals.

1659 Aurangzeb defeated Shah Shuja in the Battle

of Khajwah.

06 JANUARY



1966 Oscar-winning Indian composer AR Rahman was born.



1959 One of the all-rounders of the country, Kapil Dev was born on this day.

1932 Famous Hindi writer Kamleshwar was born.

1928 Indian playwright and theatergoer Vijay Tendulkar was born.

1885 Bharatendu Harishchandra, one of the leading Hindi poets and writers of modern India, died.



1918 Bharata Vyas, the famous lyricist of Bollywood, was born.



07 JANUARY



1967 Irrfan Khan, who rejuvenated the characters of Hindi cinema world, stepped into the world.

1980 After less than three years of the overthrow of power due to emergency, the people of India once again handed over the reins of the country to Indira Gandhi.

08 JANUARY

1965 The first Indian cinema film to win internationally acclaimed filmmaker Bimal Roy. On this day, he said goodbye to the world.

1984 The first Indian woman pilot Sushma Mukhopadhyay died.

09 JANUARY

1982 The first Indian scientific expedition reaches Antarctica.



1915 Mahatma Gandhi arrives in Mumbai after returning from South Africa.



1934 Mahendra Kapoor, the famous playback singer of Hindi cinema, was born.

10 JANUARY

1916 British Ambassador Sir Thomas Roe meets Jahangir in Ajmer.

11 JANUARY

1922 The first insulin was given to patients with diabetes.

1954 Nobel laureate Kailash Satyarthi was born who raised a voice against child labor.

Slim down your face with hair contouring

Hair color contouring can make your face look slimmer, wider, rounder, or more defined—it's like Photoshop for your hair, and it's your secret weapon to a fab look without the daily makeup grind.

What is it about?

Hair contouring is a process of high-lighting and low-lighting certain parts of your mane to either enhance or subdue certain features. Similar to how face and body contouring works, one may use colour techniques to create the hair contouring effect. Highlighting and shading certain parts of the hair can create an illusion of a different face shape, depending on what you want to accentuate. Puja Singh, hair professional explains, "Like with any art form, light shades are for highlighting and darker shades are for creating a shadow effect, similarly to adopt this technique in hair contouring with colours, one might follow these simple guidelines.

Be Aware

Using healthier, natural hair-safe products are essential to avoid side effects. It is also advisable that every individual reads the ingredients list to be sure of the products being used on themselves.

Your hair color and cut can define your face

The way you cut and colour your hair can really change your personality. The right colour and cut can make you look not just younger but also slimmer than you are.

Helpful tips

- A very short haircut will make you face appear wider.
- A mid-length, layered haircut can make it look slimmer.
- A side fringe can make your face appear thinner, even if



- you have a short haircut or bob.
- Long hair that covers your cheekbones looks stylish and gives your face a lean look.
- Light colored hair falling on your cheeks can make your face look wide.
- Get low lights or darker shades in the front hair that covers your cheeks and keep highlights or lighter colours for the crown.
- Coloring can enhance your face colour too, and can really add a lot of character to your face.

How does it work

Hair contouring is about applying highlights and lowlights in certain parts of your hair, to create an illusion of a different face shape.

This technique of colouring the hair can give your cheekbones a visual depth.

Hair contouring suits everyone because it is customised to your face shape and your hair colour tone.

It uses the freehand colouring method and is a low-maintenance style.

It is a pretty intensive act and one has to be clear about the basic rules and guidelines. However, depending upon the face cut and contouring requirement, it may take around one to two hours.



Use raw milk on your face to get skin of your dreams

Milk is beneficial for your health, because it's packed with vitamins, biotin, potassium, calcium, lactic acid, magnesium, selenium, and protein. But did you know raw milk can do wonders for your skin too? Yes it's true, milk can keep you fit, inside and out.

There are various reasons why raw milk is the perfect home remedy for youthful and glowing skin. It helps to protect skin from free radicals, fades spots and marks, brightens your skin, enhances hydration, slows down wrinkles, fine lines, and the ageing process, and also promotes skin elasticity. What's more, it can give you radiant skin.

You can use raw milk in many ways. Let's find out how:

- It can be used as a cleanser. Milk drives out all the dirt and dead skin cells from the clogged pores, preventing further blackheads and acne. It also removes fats from the oily areas and moisturises dry skin areas.
- Use: Dab a clean cotton ball in milk, apply it all over the face and massage in circular motion for five minutes. Wash with warm water.
- Milk is good for dry and flaky skin. It helps replenish lost oils making the skin smooth and moisturised throughout the whole day.
- Use: Dip a cotton ball in milk and dab all over the face. Allow it to stand for 20 minutes and wash with cold water. For best results, apply a mixture of mashed banana and milk on face, wash after half an hour.
- Exfoliating scrub: Milk is naturally rich in AHA (alpha hydroxyl acid) -- a compound found in expensive beauty products. It mildly removes excess dead cells off the skin's surface, thus revealing a soft and radiant skin.
- Use: Add milk to honey to create a natural scrub. Massage gently and wash with warm water after 15 minutes to get a glowing skin naturally.
- Lightens tans: If you want to get rid of tanners laced with chemicals, milk is the best option available. Milk has high lactic acid which contains skin lightning properties.
- Use: Make an equal mix of milk and green tea. Dip a cotton cloth and apply it all over the tanned skin. Wash after 15 minutes. Use it thrice a week before bath for best results.
- Soothes sun burn: Cold milk relieves sun burns and inflammations. It creates a thin protein film that protects the skin and cools off burning sensation.
- Use: Apply full cream milk on the affected area as it contains healthy fats that soothes and lubricates skin.
- Foot spa: Milk softens cracked feet and toes by removing dead skin cells, making it clean and moisturised.
- Use: Soak your feet in warm milk-water mixture for some time and relax. Rub the cracked area with pumice stone and dry with a towel. Get soft and clean feet.

Mozzarella Sticks

INGREDIENTS

- 300 gm mozzarella
- 1/2 cup chickpeas flour
- 1 cup sunflower oil
- 1/2 cup all purpose flour
- 1/2 cup crushed breadcrumbs

Method

- Cut the cheese into 1/2-1 inch sticks and keep aside.
- Mix the maida and besan flour in a bowl. Add enough water and mix to a thick batter.
- Spread the breadcrumbs on a plate. Dip the cheese sticks in the batter and roll them in the breadcrumbs.
- Place them on a parchment paper and keep it in the fridge for 2 to 3 hours or overnight.



This is to ensure the cheese does not melt while frying and it has a crispy coating.

Heat oil in a deep frying pan. Fry the mozzarella sticks until light golden brown.

Remove and drain excess oil. Serve with a dipping sauce of choice.

Add these foods to your diet to control blood pressure naturally

When we think about trying to lower high blood pressure, we usually think of limiting salt and processed foods. But a heart-healthy diet is more than just lowering your sodium intake. The DASH diet (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension), which is specifically designed to help manage blood pressure, emphasizes eating many fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy, and other fiber-rich foods. Incorporating many of these foods that lower blood pressure into your diet can be a great way to facilitate a healthier lifestyle. And, there are even foods that lower blood pressure quickly so you can get started on your journey to better health.

Low-fat or fat-free yogurt

Low-fat dairy products are a great source of calcium, which is one of the main compounds that help fight high blood pressure. Feller adds that potassium, protein, vitamins, and minerals from yogurt are great compliments to your diet as well. A 12-ounce serving of low-fat yogurt will give you about 30 percent of the recommended amount of calcium for the day.

Bananas

Bananas are rich in potassium, with one average-sized banana packing about 420 milligrams. That's about nine percent of the



recommended daily intake. Prest notes that potassium is great for blood pressure management and research has shown diets low in potassium are associated with higher blood pressure. Bananas are also rich in fiber and lend a natural sweetness to smoothies, baked goods, and frozen treats. Peel and freeze mushy bananas when they start to go bad.

Berries

Berries, but specifically blueberries, are packed with nitric oxide, a gas that helps increase blood flow, thus lowering blood pressure. A March 2015 study by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics found that even less than an ounce of blueberries a day can help significantly lower blood pressure.

Leafy greens

Leafy greens that include kale, spinach, collard greens, arugula, Swiss chard, beet greens, and romaine lettuce are excellent sources of potassium and magnesium. These work together to regulate blood pressure, Bland says. Think outside of the salad and glorify your greens in omelets, smoothies, and sandwiches.

Beets

Similar to blueberries, beets are high in blood pressure-reducing nitric oxide. Research has shown that drinking beetroot juice can help lower your systolic blood pressure by four to five mmHg. Try adding beetroot juice to your diet, and if you buy store-bought juice, make sure there isn't added sugar.



Is liposuction safe? Risks and side effects of this cosmetic procedure

Liposuction is a cosmetic procedure that can be safely and effectively carried out by an experienced surgeon where contour and proportion are improved when excess fat deposits are removed from specific areas of the body, which is the primary objective of liposuction. Your appearance is vital to who you are as they say only 5% of our communication is verbal hence, the way we present ourselves is often the first window to our personality for the external world.

Today, more than ever before, we look at ourselves as well as others, all thanks to social media and the flooding of images blurring the distinction between private and public and in the pursuit of self-confidence and well-being, modern medicine has granted us remarkable tools to get perfectly sculpted bodies and redefine our contours. In an interview with HT Lifestyle, Dr Anand K, Chief Consultant- Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery at SPARSH Hospital in Bangalore, insisted that despite its wide application, patients should be mindful of the advantages and downsides hence, he highlighted -

He added, "It's imperative for individuals considering liposuction to consult with a board-certified plastic surgeon, discussing their medical history and expectations. Open communication and a thorough understanding of the procedure contribute to a positive outcome. As with any surgery, individual responses can vary, so choosing a qualified professional and following pre- and post-operative guidelines are key to a successful liposuction experience."

Delving into the world of liposuction, a transformative procedure that has empowered individuals to embrace their bodies with renewed vigor, Dr Sharmistha Bhattacharyya, MBBS, MS, MCh (AIIMS, New Delhi) and Consultant Plastic Surgeon in Delhi NCR, shared, "Liposuction, often termed as 'lipo,' is a minimally invasive surgical procedure designed to remove excess fat deposits and sculpt specific areas of the body. Although sometimes marketed falsely or associated with concussion as a weight loss procedure, liposuction is a body contouring procedure, and not in any way of form a replacement for traditional weight loss procedures, e.g. bariatric procedures. Source: HT

Study finds better ways to diagnose diabetes during pregnancy

Researchers have found a connection between pregnancy weight and certain blood markers in women with gestational diabetes mellitus (GDM).

The study, which revealed the potential for precision diagnostics in identifying diabetes during pregnancy, showed an increased risk of adverse pregnancy outcomes.

The research highlighted the importance of a more nuanced approach to diagnosing GDM, as traditional treatments haven't been shown to yield consistent outcomes.

Published in Nature Communications Medicine, the findings suggested that exploring non-glycemic markers such as insulin profiles and triglyceride levels could enhance the risk.

"In our full text screening of 775 studies, we found that only recently has there been a focus on clinical, biochemical, or sociocultural markers that could improve who is at greatest risk of poor outcomes, and on comparing clinical outcomes between different subtypes of GDM," said Ellen C Francis, an assistant professor in the Department of Biostatistics and Epidemiology at Rutgers School of Public Health.

The lead author of the study added, "The data from these studies indicate that in the future, we may be able to refine how we diagnose GDM by using anthropometric or biochemical information in



combination with current diagnostic approaches."

Francis underlined the need for further research to establish causal links between insulin resistance, higher triglycerides, and adverse outcomes in pregnancy. The findings revealed that future diagnostic approaches could integrate anthropometric or biochemical information with current methods.

Further research is recommended, including mechanistic studies on precision biomarkers, diverse population studies, and exploration of genetic and multi-omics data to understand heterogeneity within GDM and its outcomes, suggested the researchers.

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ISRO to use Musk's SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket to launch communication satellite in 2024

ISRO's commercial arm NewSpace India Ltd has announced plans to launch its communication satellite GSAT-20 onboard Elon Musk-owned SpaceX's Falcon-9 rocket in the second quarter of 2024, to meet the broadband communication needs of the country. GSAT-20 (renamed as GSAT-N2) is a high throughput Ka-band satellite. Ka-band satellites deliver high-speed broadband internet connectivity and digital video and audio transmission. In a statement, the state owned NSIL said the bulk of the high throughput satellite (HTS) capacity onboard GSAT-20 satellite has already been secured by Indian service providers. GSAT-20 offers Ka-band HTS capacity with 32 beams having pan-India coverage including in Andaman and Nicobar and Lakshadweep islands, it said. "NSIL is realising GSAT-20 satellite through ISRO and will be launched onboard Falcon-9 under a launch service contract between NSIL and SpaceX, USA. GSAT-20, weighing 4,700 kg, offers HTS capacity of nearly 48Gbps. The satellite has been specifically designed to meet the demanding service needs of remote/unconnected regions," the statement read. According to NSIL, it is mandated to build, launch, own and operate satellites in "demand-driven mode" for meeting service needs of the user. As part of this, NSIL successfully undertook its first demand-driven satellite mission, GSAT-24 in June 2022, wherein the capacity onboard the satellite was fully secured by satellite television service Tata Play.

Source: PTI



Is Megapixel era over? Periscope Lens taking over flagship phone cameras

It's no secret that smartphones are constantly evolving. Every smartphone brand across the globe invests heavily into their R&D to be able to innovate the next best phone for their users.

One important feature of these phones that has undergone major changes over the years is the camera. From a mere 0.1 MP in the first ever mobile phone camera, to the 200 MP smartphone cameras of today, camera technology has come a long way.

However, the latest innovation in camera technology has evolved further, with periscope cameras coming out as the shiny new feature in flagship phones. So as they grow in popularity, is it safe to assume that the desirability of a higher megapixel count in flagship phones is slowly dying? It's a longstanding myth amongst smartphone users that the higher the number of megapixels in their camera, the better will be the output of images it'll produce. More MP doesn't necessarily equate to higher resolution. Interestingly, cameras with fewer MPs can sometimes produce better quality images than those with a higher MP count.

When it comes to flagship-level smartphone cameras, the quality of the pixels is generally more crucial than their quantity in a camera sensor. The impact on image quality from the size and caliber of the camera's lens can be significant, often outweighing the effect of the sensor's MP count. Another key point to keep in mind is how the camera's image processor handles the photo data. Many cameras are designed to auto-sharpen the image, which can sometimes make the picture quality worse, especially if it's already been hit by diffraction. So, it's not surprising to see a 100 MP mid-range phone camera producing lower quality photos than a 50 MP flagship-level camera.

The quality of a picture is influenced by a combination of hardware, software, and personal preferences. Understanding the workings of smartphone cameras, their individual components, and



how their performance is measured can shed light on why megapixels aren't the sole determinant of camera quality. The f-stop value or aperture, which is the opening through which light reaches the sensor, is closely linked to the sensor size.

When it comes to zoom, most smartphone cameras typically offer Digital Zoom rather than Optical Zoom. While Optical Zoom involves actual lens movement, Digital Zoom relies on software algorithms to enlarge pixels. Image stabilisation in smartphones usually comes as Digital, which might result in minor video shakiness. In contrast, Optical Image Stabilisation, using small gyroscopes to move the camera lens, helps maintain image steadiness.

Until just last year, the main strategy for boosting image quality in premium-level smartphones was to ramp up the megapixel count. However, in the realm of high-end smartphones, the trend is now leaning more towards enhancing the overall image quality instead of just upping the number of pixels. Top smartphone brands are encouraging this by introducing the periscope camera in their newer frontrunners from this year.

Source: IANS

3D-printed chip showing body's reaction to drugs could end need for animal tests

Scientists have developed a pioneering 3D-printed device that could speed up patient access to new medicines and eliminate the need for animal testing. Thousands of animals are used in the early stages of developing medicines worldwide every year, yet many drugs tested on animals do not end up showing any clinical benefit.

Now researchers at the University of Edinburgh have designed a groundbreaking "body-on-chip" that perfectly mimics how a medicine flows through a patient's body. The plastic device means scientists can test drugs to see how different organs react without the need for live animal testing.

The device invented in Edinburgh is the first of its kind in the world. Made using a 3D printer, the chip's five compartments replicate the human heart, lungs, kidney, liver and brain. They are connected by channels that mimic the human circulatory system, through which new drugs can be pumped.

The plastic device uses positron emission tomography (PET) scanning to produce detailed 3D images showing what is going on inside the tiny organs. "The PET imagery is what allows us to ensure the flow [of new drugs being tested] is even," said Liam Carr, the inventor of the device.

PET scanning involves injecting tiny amounts of radioactive compounds into the chip to transmit signals to an extremely sensitive camera, allowing scientists to better assess the effect of new drugs.

"This device is the first to be designed specifically for measuring drug distribution, with an even flow paired



The plastic device uses positron emission tomography (PET) scanning to produce detailed 3D images showing what is going on inside the organs. Photograph: Murdo MacLeod/The Guardian

with organ compartments that are large enough to sample drug uptake for mathematical modelling. Essentially, allowing us to see where a new drug goes in the body and how long it stays there, without having to use a human or animal to test it."

Carr added: "The platform is completely flexible and can be a valuable tool to investigate various human diseases, such as cancer, cardiovascular diseases, neurodegenerative diseases and immune diseases.

"Because of this flexibility, the uses are bound only by the availability of these cell models, and the scientific questions we can think of.

"For example, we could have a fatty liver disease model in the device and use this to see how having a diseased liver affects other organs such as the heart, brain, kidneys, etc, and could even combine multiple

diseased cell models to see how diseases can interfere with each other."

Carr's supervisor, Dr Adriana Tavares, of Edinburgh's Centre for Cardiovascular Science (CVS), said linking five organs together on one device would help scientists effectively study how a new drug might affect a patient's whole body.

"This is a really important area of medical research, as we continuously learn about how diseases traditionally perceived to be restricted to an organ or system can have diverse effects across other distant organs or different interconnected systems.

"Devices such as the body-on-chip platform are essential to unravel the mechanisms underlying systemic effects of local diseases as well as investigate off-target effects of drugs, which might be therapeutically useful or detrimental."

She added: "This device shows really strong potential to reduce the large number of animals that are used worldwide for testing drugs and other compounds, particularly in the early stages, where only 2% of compounds progress through the discovery pipeline."

Tavares said there were other benefits beyond simply eliminating the need for using animals in early drug development. "This non-animal approach could significantly reduce cost of drug discovery, accelerate translation of drugs into the clinic, and improve our understanding of systemic effects of human diseases, by using models that are more representative to human biology than animal models."

Source: The Guardian

Adani overtakes Mukesh Ambani as India's richest man, both climb spots on world rich list

Gautam Adani, Chairperson of the Adani Group of companies has overtaken Reliance Industries Chairman Mukesh Ambani on the Bloomberg Billionaire's Index (BBI), to become India's and Asia's richest man.

While Adani has seen his worth climb into the top 12 on the world rankings, Ambani is just one rung below at 13. Both have moved up spots since last year.

Earlier in December 2023, the billionaire had climbed to the 15th spot, reaching within close distance of Ambani who was then at 14.

With a net worth of \$97.6 billion, the Adani Group founder is now the world's 12th richest person and the richest Indian and Asian on the list. He has gained \$7.67 billion from the last list position and amassed \$13.3 billion year-to-date (YTD). Earlier last year, Adani saw his net worth slide many spots amid the Hindenberg allegations.

In January 2023, Hindenburg Research, a New York-based short seller, accused the Adani Group of prolonged stock manipulation and accounting irregularities. These claims were refuted by the Adani Group. After these allegations, declines in the stock prices of Adani Group companies resulted in a staggering decrease of almost 60 percent in Adani's fortune, plummeting by up to \$69 billion.

Reliance, Disney edge closer to mega India merger deal

Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries and Walt Disney have appointed law firms and started antitrust due diligence of their planned Indian media and entertainment merger, four people familiar with the matter said.

Reliance has appointed law firm Khaitan & Co and Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas, while Disney has roped in AZB & Partners, the people said.

The appointments are the latest sign of progress as Reliance and Disney, which each have a major streaming service as well as 120 television channels between them, look at merging into an entity to create an entertainment superpower in the world's most populous nation. Reliance Industries is expected to have a majority stake in the entity.

A fifth source said senior Disney executives from Burbank headquarters and top Reliance officials from Mumbai travelled to London in late December and signed a non-binding term sheet on the deal. Reliance said it had "no comments to offer", calling the story "speculative", without elaborating.

Source: Reuters

US regulator denies Apple, Disney bids to skip votes on AI

NEW YORK (TIP)

The top U.S. securities regulator has ruled that Apple and Disney cannot avoid shareholder votes about the use of artificial intelligence proposed by a labor group.

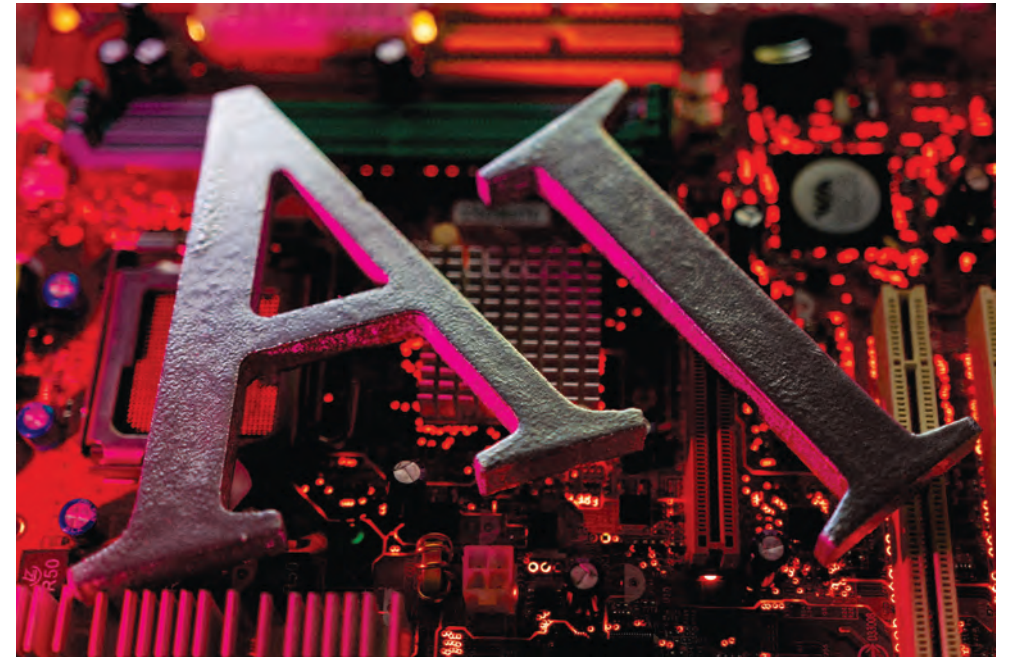
In a January 3 notice, the US Securities and Exchange Commission rejected a request by the iPhone maker and the entertainment giant to exclude from its upcoming annual meetings a call for reports on the use of AI.

Corporations have adopted new technology for its promised efficiencies. But this trend has raised fears that it will replace many creative and professional workers or unfairly take over their jobs, issues recently highlighted in Hollywood labor disputes and the recent New York Times lawsuit. Are.

Similar shareholder proposals were filed by the pension trust of the largest US labor union federation, the AFL-CIO, which also has AI measures pending at four other technology companies.

In Apple, the group asked for a report on the company's "use of AI in its business operations and disclosure of any ethical guidelines the company has adopted regarding its use of AI technology." In a similar request, it also asked Disney to report on its board's role in overseeing the use of AI.

In its support statement at Apple, the AFL-CIO wrote that "AI systems should not be trained on copyrighted works, or the voices, likenesses, and performances



of professional artists, without transparency, consent, and compensation to creators and rights holders. "

Brandon Reese, deputy director of the AFL-CIO's investment office, said the SEC's ruling could pave the way for settlements with Apple and Disney that would bring them in line with AI disclosures from other companies like Microsoft.

In contrast, Apple and Disney "haven't even begun to grapple with these ethical issues" around AI, Rees said.

Apple and Disney did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Both companies had argued that the proposals could be removed from their ballots because they were related to "normal business operations", such as the company's choice of technologies.

The SEC disagreed. "In our view, the proposal goes beyond normal business matters and does not seek to micromanage the company," the agency wrote in separate letters.

Source: Reuters

India's economy pegged to grow at 7.3% this year

NEW DELHI (TIP)

The Indian economy will grow at 7.3% in the fiscal year 2023-24 according to the first advanced estimates released by the National Statistical Office (NSO) on Friday — a number that is a full percentage point higher than the International Monetary Fund's October forecast of 6.3%, and also higher than estimates put forth by the Reserve Bank of India and many research firms.

While experts have flagged technical issues related to price adjustment leading to some statistical noise in the GDP numbers, better than expected growth data ahead of the interim budget and months before the 2024 general election process begins will give a big boost to the government's economic narrative. The growth, powered by government investment and spending, will make India the world's fastest growing major economy by a bit.

A 7.3% GDP growth rate for the fiscal year 2023-24, when read with a 7.7% growth in the period between April and September — GDP growth was 7.8% and 7.6% in the quarters ending June 2023 and December 2023 — means that the Indian economy is expected to grow at 7.3% in the period between October 2023 and March 2024. This is significantly higher than RBI's December projection of 6.5% and 6% GDP growth in the quarters ending December 2023 and March 2024.

What explains this impressive performance by the Indian economy in 2023-24? It is useful to begin answering this question with what does not. Private Final Consumption Expenditure (PFCE) — it accounts for 58% of total GDP in 2023-24 — growth in 2023-24 is expected to be just 4.4%. If one were to exclude the 2020-21 contraction on account of the pandemic and the lockdown, 2023-24 PFCE (a measure of consumption) growth is the lowest since the 2.9% print in 2002-03 according to data from the Centre



for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE). PFCE growth in 2022-23 was much higher at 7.5% despite a high base of 11.2% in the previous year. More than anything, this shows that mass consumption is not driving India's current extraordinary boom and underlines the concerns around what many economists have termed a K-shaped recovery in the economy.

On the other hand, Government Final Consumption Expenditure (GFCE) growth has increased from 0.1% in 2022-23 to 4.1% in 2023-24. Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF) has continued to grow in double digits for the third consecutive year, even though the momentum has come down from 11.4% in 2022-23 to 10.1% in 2023-24. Much of this is expected to have come from government's infrastructure spending rather than private sector.



BEJAN DARUWALLA AND CHIRAG DARUWALLA

ARIES



Ganesha says that this week will give mixed results. You need to control your anger. Excellence will be seen in your nature and behavior. Married life will be good. You may have health-related problems.

TAURUS



Ganeshji says that this week someone's health in the family will deteriorate and mental stress will increase. Your relations with colleagues at the workplace will be good. Reputation may increase. Will cooperate with full devotion in religious activities and auspicious works. You will get fame among the people of your society.

GEMINI



Ganesha says that this week is very important for religious activities. There will also be opportunities for travel. Religious functions will take place at home. You will be successful in your work with your intelligence. There will be sweetness in married life. This week you will be successful in conquering your enemies.

CANCER



Ganeshji says that this week money will be spent on your noble works and areas related to religion. You will get every possible support from your friends and collaborators.

WEEKLY HOROSCOPE - JAN 8 TO JAN 14, 2024

By Chirag Daruwalla - Son of Astrologer Bejan Daruwalla

This week your mind will be engaged in religious activities. Happiness and interaction with family will be good.

relationships you build will prove useful in bringing you satisfaction. You will be successful in defeating your enemies with the help of your close friends.

LEO



Ganeshji says that business will increase this week. Relationships will be established with people holding high positions and you will have a good time with them. Interaction with new people will increase and business contacts will be established with them. This week you will get all possible support and help from family members and friends.

SAGITTARIUS



Ganesha says that this week you are going to overcome inauspicious situations. You will defeat your enemies. Better time will be spent with family. There will be an environment of happiness in the family. You will get better profits from real estate during this period.

VIRGO



Ganesha says that you will not be successful in business this week. Good relations will be established with people holding high positions. There will be happiness in the house, so it is important that you change your habits. This week, good relations will be formed with high-ranking people. There will be an atmosphere of happiness after receiving some good news related to the family.

CAPRICORN



Ganeshji says that this week people will get a lot of love from family members. Faith in religion will increase. Your personality will be impressive. You will complete your work with efficiency and agility in conversation. You will receive some good messages this week. There will be success in the law court.

LIBRA



Ganeshji says that you will get good news this week. You will have a good time with your family members. You will participate in religious activities and areas related to charity. Government work will be completed without any interruption. Your luck is going to be good this week.

AQUARIUS



Ganesha says that this week you will get respect and benefits in the government sector. Good relations will be established with highly placed people. You will be attracted to politics, but you should be a little careful with people associated with politics, otherwise, problems will arise for you.

PISCES



Ganesha says that this week you may get opportunities to achieve in politics and you will be friends with high-ranking people in government service. Being of generous nature, you will work for the welfare of others. There will be financial gain from dominance.

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BIRTHDAY HOROSCOPE : JANUARY 8 TO JANUARY 14 BY VEDIC ASTROLOGER NASTUR BEJAN DARUWALLA



**VEDIC ASTROLOGER NASTUR
BEJAN DARUWALLA**

JANUARY 8 : Ganesha says today, the universe encourages a journey of self-discovery and introspection. Embrace your unique qualities and stand firm in your beliefs. It's a day rich in opportunities for personal growth and learning. In your relationships, prioritize honesty and open communication to deepen bonds. Professionally, trust your instincts; they are particularly sharp today, guiding you in making sound decisions. Financially, exercise caution and think long-term to ensure future stability. As the day ends, reflect on your personal growth and the small steps you've taken on your life's journey. Remember, each step, no matter how small, is significant.

JANUARY 9 : Ganesha says this day brings a focus on harmony and balance. The alignment of the stars suggests a need to find equilibrium in your life. It's a perfect day to resolve any lingering conflicts, whether in your personal or professional life. The energy of the day supports reconciliation and understanding. In love, seek to understand before being understood, fostering a deeper connection with your partner. Career-wise, teamwork will be more fruitful than solo efforts. Collaborate and share ideas for the best outcomes. Financially, balance your budget and avoid extremes in spending or saving. Embrace the peace that comes with a balanced life, and you'll find the day ends on a note of contentment and satisfaction.

JANUARY 10 : Ganesha says today's cosmic energy shifts towards action and initiative. It's a day to take charge of your life, especially in areas where you've felt stagnant. The universe is urging you to step out of your comfort zone and embrace new challenges. In relationships, it's a day to make the first move, whether it's starting a new romance or mending an old one. Professionally, your leadership skills will shine. Take the lead on projects or propose new ideas at work. Financially, it's a favorable day for investments or starting new financial ventures. However, ensure you do your research before diving in. As the day closes, you'll feel a sense of accomplishment and progress, knowing you've taken steps towards your goals.

JANUARY 11 : Ganesha says on this day, the stars align to highlight the importance of adaptability and flexibility. Life may throw some unexpected situations your way, and your ability to adjust will be key. In personal relationships, be open to new perspectives and willing to compromise. This approach will help maintain harmony and understanding with loved ones. In your career, unexpected changes could arise. Embrace these as opportunities for growth and learning. Financially, it's a day to be cautious with investments and avoid risks. Adaptability doesn't mean recklessness. As the day ends, take time to appreciate the lessons learned and how they contribute to your personal growth and resilience.

JANUARY 12 : Ganesha says today's celestial energy focuses on creativity and expression. It's an ideal day to channel your inner artist and engage in creative pursuits. Whether it's painting, writing, or simply brainstorming, let your imagination run wild. In relationships, express your feelings and thoughts creatively. A heartfelt poem or a thoughtful gesture can strengthen bonds. Professionally, think outside the box. Innovative ideas and creative solutions to problems are highly favored. Financially, consider creative ways to manage your finances, perhaps through a new savings plan or investment strategy. As the day draws to a close, reflect on how your creative expressions have enriched your day and brought joy to yourself and others.

JANUARY 13 : Ganesha says this day brings a focus on introspection and inner wisdom. It's a day for meditation, reflection, and understanding your deeper desires and motivations. In relationships, this introspection will help you understand your needs and communicate them more effectively to your partner. Professionally, use this inner knowledge to guide your career choices and navigate workplace dynamics. Financial decisions should be made with a long-term view in mind, considering not just immediate gains but also future stability. As the day ends, you'll find that this journey within has brought clarity and a sense of peace, preparing you for the days ahead.

JANUARY 14 : Ganesha says today's astrological focus is on connection and communication. The stars are aligned in a way that enhances your ability to connect with others on a deeper level. In personal relationships, open and honest conversations will lead to stronger bonds and mutual understanding. It's a great day for heart-to-heart talks or clearing up any misunderstandings. Professionally, effective communication will be key. Whether it's a presentation, meeting, or just day-to-day interactions, your words will have a powerful impact. Financially, it might be a good day to seek advice or discuss plans with a financial advisor. As the day concludes, you'll appreciate the power of words and the connections they can forge, leaving you feeling more interconnected with the world around you.

**Nastur Bejan Daruwalla is available
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Ram Janaki Temple – The Birthplace of Goddess Sita

Janaki Temple, the birthplace of goddess Sita, is located in Janakpur, Province No. 2 of Nepal. The temple is famous for Hindu Pilgrims all around the World. Lying in the heart of Janakpur, this temple of goddess Sita is evidence of the proud history of the kingdom of Janak on which several ancient stories are based. Ram Janaki Temple is one of the many UNESCO world heritage sites of Nepal.

The most important historical reference to Janakpur is the Ramayana. As mentioned in the first millennium BC text, present Janakpur was the capital city of the South Asian Kingdom Videha, founded by King Mathava Videgha with his priest Gotama Rahugana when they first crossed the Sadanira (Gandaki) river. They were believed to be the ancestor of King Janak, who also ruled in this Maithali Realm during the Ramayana period, nearly 7000 years ago.

Valmiki's Ramayana says goddess Sita was found in a furrow while King Janak was plowing the field in his kingdom. Since King Janak had no children, he declared Sita as his daughter and thus, is also known as Janaki (daughter of King Janak). The temple was named after the goddess Sita as Janaki Mandir. Various remnants of 11th and 12th century AD can be found in this temple, and every corner of Janakpur reflects the story of Ram Sita.

The Janaki Mandir is also known as Naulakha Mandir (meaning nine lakhs) as the exact Nine Lakh Rupees was spent in building this temple and occupies an area of 4860 sq. km. It was built by Queen Brish Vanu of Tikamgarh, India, in 1910 AD. It is believed that in 1657, a golden statue of Devi Sita was discovered in the spot where the temple stands today.

This temple is not only the birthplace of Devi Sita but is also the place that carries the pureness of the marriage of Rama and Sita. Also, in this kingdom of King Janak lies where the fossilized portion of the broken bow exists. The bow was the divine of Lord Shiva and has a story related to Rama Sita Marriage. The bow was Shiva Dhanush, also referred to as 'Pinaka,' was crafted by Lord Vishwakarma.

Since Lord Shiva gifted Pinaka to King Devarratha of Mithila, who was the ancestor of King Janak, it was there in King Janak's palace that no one except Sita could lift. Later, King Janak declared that whosoever could lift and string the Shiva Dhanush shall marry Sita.

Many princes from around the World attended Sita's Swayambara to lift the Pinaka after King Janak's declaration. None of the attendees were able to lift the bow but Lord Rama. However, the Pinaka was broken when he tried to string it, and people believe that the broken Pinaka's fossils still lie in the Dhanushadham of Janakpur.

This is how Rama was able to marry Sita because of Shiva Dhanush. The competition of lifting the bow is believed to be held in Rangbhumi Maidan (or Barah Bigha), about 0.5 km away from the temple. Every Sunday in the month of Magh (Jan/Feb), a Makar Mela takes place in Dhanushadham.

Makar Mela is a tradition that has not been broken since the Vedic period, and thousands of devotees visit this place to attend the mela.

In the present, Janaki Mandir territory is the Vivah Mandap situated on the right side of the main temple, where the marriage of Lord Rama and Goddess Sita is said to happen. The vivah mandap shows the marriage ceremony of Rama and Sita in the form of statues.

The Mandap is built in Pagoda Style with four other small temples at each of its four corners. Surrounded by a beautiful garden, the Mandap has the footprints of Lord Rama and Sita.

Surrounded by Maithali arts and culture makes the temple is more special and beautiful. The story of Rajarshi Janak and his daughter Sita, Ram Sita's marriage, is also portrayed in the Maithali Chitrakala format, which is a beautiful thing to view inside the



temple.

The Janaki Temple is made in 'Mughal' form, an Indo-Islamic architectural design, and perfect artistry. The temple is in a three-storied structure made entirely with stones and marbles. Altogether, 60 rooms are there in the temple ornamented with colored glass, carvings, and paintings, as well as beautifully framed windows and turrets.

There is two entrance to the temple, east and north side. As one enters pass the 30-meter high arched gate, a shrine with the grand idol of goddess Sita can be seen in the central part of the temple, which is also known as Janaki Mahal. Behind the Janaki Mahal is the Janak Temple devoted to the father and mother of goddess Sita.

There are similar shrines in the temple complex

“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

called Sannadhis and have idols of Lord Rama and other statues of Sita, Lakshman, and Urmila. There's a black stone called Saligram in Janaki temple that King Janak used to worship. Saligram is considered one of the highly powerful stones and is a direct symbol of God Vishnu. A cultural museum on the left side of the temple contains the ancient traditional Mithila dresses and jewelry.

The devotees from India, Sri Lanka, and Nepal visit the temple at various festivals like Ram Navami, Vivah Panchami, Chhat, Holi, and other festivals. The temple priest allows the visitors to offer prayers to gods and goddess idols inside the temple, and Saligram King Janaka worshiped.

Source: Vedicfeed

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

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

“Indians alone can save India, and India and Hinduism are one.”

Sikh History This Week

JANUARY 5 TO JANUARY 11

5th January



1666 Prakash Utsav Tenth Patshah, Guru Gobind Singh Ji. GURU GOBIND SINGH JI (1666-1708), tenth Patshah of the Sikh faith, was born on Saturday, Dec. 22, 1666 at Patna Sahib to father Guru Tegh Bahadur Patshah and Matta Gujri. On, Nov. 11, 1675, he assumed Guruship at Anandpur Sahib.

Since early childhood, Guru Sahib was keen on weapons and their use. It is for this reason, that Guru Sahib became a scholar on weapons and mastered their usage, at a very early age. Guru Sahib continually emphasized scholarly works throughout his life. As a result, scholars around the world traveled long distances to participate and receive honors in his courts. He was always surrounded by renowned scholars. One of Guru Sahib's objective was to translate all scholarly works in Gurmukhi and commissioned several such translations. His vision of Sikh Kaum included a communion of scholars. In an attempt to turn Anandpur Sahib as the center of knowledge, Guru Sahib actively encouraged and sent Sikhs to study at various renowned institutions in the world.

To uplift the suppressed people, Guru Sahib instituted the tradition of Amrit during Vaisakhi diwan of sunmat 1756 at KeshGadh Sahib. Further he established a communion of Amritdharis (who received Amrit) and called it Khalsa. Guru Sahib, himself was the sixth member of the Khalsa order. Witnessing the false practices and prevalent injustices, Guru Sahib propagated the message of Guru Nanak so vigorously that the neighboring hill rulers felt threatened. Without understanding either his message or appreciating his objectives, these rulers suddenly turned enemies and attacked on several occasions. Each time Guru Sahib had to fight for his defense.

In sunmat 1761, the Turk forces sought Guru Sahib to leave Anandpur Sahib under promises that were proven false through subsequent events. Once Guru Sahib was out of Anandpur Sahib, he was attacked and suffered heavy losses. The hard work of 52 poets, accumulated over the years, along with several commissioned translations was burned by the enemies of knowledge. However, Guru Sahib patiently but bravely faced the enemy and escaped into the neighboring forest. Here with his influence, Guru Sahib turned this ghost land into Saint land and the forest into civilized Malwa. With his message of patience and valor, Guru Sahib preached the importance of sacrifice and true knowledge.

He had four sons from Mata Jeeto and Sundari, namely, Baba Ajit Singh, Baba Zujar Singh, Baba Zorawar Singh, and Baba Fateh Singh Ji. All four sacrificed their lives to protect and further the growth of the institutional plant sown by Guru Sahib.

After bestowing Guruship to Guru Granth Sahib, Guru Sahib left this earth on Oct. 7, 1708, near the banks of Godawari river in Nanded, Guru Gobind Singh bravely fulfilled the responsibilities of Guruship and guided the Sikh Panth for 32 years, 10 months, and 26

days. He spent a total of 41 years, 9 months, and 15 days during his visit to this earth.

1923 Karam Singh of Jhingar and Dalip Singh of Gossal were arrested.



1924 Morcha launched for the possession of lands belonging to Gurudwara Pheru, Lahore. BHAJI PHERU was born in Anbmadhi village to khatri father Bhinane. His parents named him Pheru. In sunmat 1713, he became a Sikh of Guru Har Rai Sahib. Apparently, he came to Guru's darbar while traveling on business. After some time Guru Sahib established him as the Masand of Naka. When Guru Gobind Singh warned against the abuses by Masands and ordered that they be brought in his presence dragged by their beards, Bhai Pheru presented himself dragging his own beard. Guru Sahib impressed by this deed, honored him with the title of Sachi Dahdhi (true beard) and Sangat Sahib. Bhai Pheru never started his own discipleship. He did nirol prachar of the Guru's baani. Yet some people claim to be his disciples and refer to themselves as sangat sahib kae.

6th January



1846 Battle of Budowal between Sikhs and British.
1989 Sirdar Satwant Singh and Kehar Singh hanged for gunning down Indira Gandhi. As Prime Minister of India, she had ordered the June 1984 attack on Harimandir Sahib by the Indian Armed Forces.

Sardar Satwant Singh and Sardar Kehar Singh were hanged till death. They were co-accused with Sardar Beant Singh for gunning down Indira Gandhi on October 31, 1984. Sikh Panth holds Indira Gandhi, then Prime Minister of India, responsible for the desecration of Harminder Sahib in 1984's Bluestar operation.

7th January

1924: 62 members of the SGPC were arrested from the precincts of Sri Darbar Sahib under Section 120, 121 (2) Indian Penal Code (Sedition) and Section 17A and 17B of the Act of 1908 by Special order of Punjab Governor.

1974: Through the efforts of Bhai Sahib Harbhajan Singh Yogi, the US Army Dress Code was amended to



allow Sikhs to wear beards and turbans and to maintain the five Kakkars.

8th January



1685 Baba Aalla Singh, founder of Patiala State, was born. BABA AALLA SINGH JI was born in village Phull to father Baba Ram Singh "Phulwansi" and mother Saabhi. He was introduced to amrit by Baba Deep Singh Ji, in TheekriWalae village. In sunmat 1810, he laid the foundation stone of a temporary structure for the Patiala fort while the construction of a permanent structure began in sunmat 1820. Simultaneously he founded the Patiala city. Barnala, Longowal, Sunaam, Bathinda, and Patiala were under his control. He passed away on 22nd Aug. 1765 in Patiala.

9th January

1961 Fateh Singh broke his fast after assurances regarding Punjabi Suba from the Indian Government.

1983 Akali Dal organized a convention for GurSikh intellectuals in connection with the Dharam Yudh Morcha.

10th January

1770 Sikhs attack Delhi from Panipat side.

1943 Harbans Singh Babbar of Sirhala was arrested.

11th January

1666: Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji released from prison.



1843: A friendship treaty was signed between Maharaja Sher Singh and Amir Dost Mohamed Khan, ruler of Kabul. This treat was signed during Mohamed Khan's visit to Lahore.

Diu: Land of Scenic Beauty

Located near the port of Veraval, Diu is a small island which was earlier a Portuguese colony and is now guarded by beaches all around. Diu takes up most popularity given the ample number of beaches, along with Gujarat's southern coast such as the Nagoa beach, but has a lot more to offer too. Alcohol is legal in Diu

The Diu Fort, a primary imprint of the Portuguese on the area's heritage and architecture makes up a popular tourist attraction. Another interesting place is the Vanakbara, a small fishing village whose charm has tints of colourful fishing boats and humming of day to day activity. This perfect add-on to a visit to Gujarat will complete your experience with interesting museums such as the Sea Shell Museum, temples and churches.

Naida Caves

Located outside the city wall of the Diu Fort, the Naida Caves are a group of interlinked caves constructed by the Portuguese. The caves are only a short distance away from the Diu town and they feature a big network of tunnels with square hewn steps that remain completely unexplored. Naida Caves is one of the most underrated tourist attractions of Diu but it is as wholesome for an explorer or a history buff as for a photographer.

Naida Caves got their shape eventually after the Portuguese ruled over Diu and broke down sections of a huge rock formation that they used for construction. Interestingly, these caves were formed due to geological irregularities and natural processes over time. Naida Caves is slowly being recognized as one of the most magnificent attractions since prehistoric times. The caves also have a natural opening that lets in sunlight, making it photogenic. During the 20th century, when the Portuguese were not ready to leave Diu, Operation Vijay was launched to seize control by the Indian Army and several soldiers were stationed at the Naida Caves during that time.

Nagoa Beach

Famous for its pristine beauty and swaying palm trees, Nagoa Beach in Diu is an ideal and a recommended place for tourists all over the world. The place is well connected with the resorts, hence it making it easy for the travellers to relax and explore its beauty at the same time.



The beach is surrounded by beautiful palm trees swaying in the cool breeze which creates an exotic environment for the travellers to laze around. The serene beauty of the beach due to its white sands and quiet blue water is worth experiencing and enjoying.

The beach is located in the Nagoa hamlet of Bucharwada village and serves as an attraction for its Hoka trees which produces a unique kind of fruit. It is very much known for its water sports along with camel and pony riding. Sunbathing can turn out to be the most intoxicating experience at the Nagoa Beach. Shops and restaurants act as refreshments which are one of its kinds. The beach extends over an area of 2 km from one end to the other. A walk along the shore mixed with witnessing the sunrise and sunset is a great way to relax one's mind.

Gangeshwar Mahadev Temple

Situated amidst serenity and scenic beauty, the Gangeshwar Temple is dedicated to the transformer of Hindu trinity, Lord Shiva. This ancient Hindu Temple is located 3 km away from Diu in the Fudam Village of Gujarat. Believed to

have been built by the Pandavas, this temple is famous for its five Shiva Lingas, i.e. rocks in the shape of Lord Shiva which are present in the middle of the sea. Only the tip of these rocks can be seen whenever there is a high tide because the sea water submerges them.

Gangeshwar refers to Lord Shiva who is considered to be the Lord of River Ganga since it descended to earth starting from the tresses of Lord Shiva who is also the presiding deity of the Gangeshwar Mahadev Mandir.

Diu Fort

Fort Diu, located on the Western coast of Indian was built by Portuguese during their colonial rule and is now under the administration of Indian government. The fort - cum - castle, is known as 'Praça de Diu' in Portuguese, is situated on the southern tip of Gujarat and is at the mouth of the Gulf of Khambhat.

The Fort of Diu is a colossal structure that occupies a prominent place on the tourist's list. The enchanting fort commands a magnificent view of the sea, and a jetty constructed on the northwestern coast is still underused and

was once used to trade with Cambay, Broach and Surat in Gujarat. The lighthouse that one can climb leads to the highest point on the island and provides a spectacular view of the surrounding. Cannonballs litter the entire place, and the parapet has a fantastic array of cannons.

Along with the Basilica of Bom Jesus in Old Goa, Diu fort was listed as the seven wonders of Portugal but during their colonial rule. This new achievement further highlighted the importance of the fort and put it on the world tourism map. Diu fort forms a striking structure on the coast of the island.

Sunset Point

A beautiful hillock located near the Chakritirath beach in Diu, offers its visitors a mesmerizing view of sunset from here. The hillock and the surrounding areas have been beautifully landscaped and illuminated. Chakratirth Beach is centrally located and contiguous to the Diu Town. Visitors also go to the Khodidhar beach which is another sunset viewpoint.



contd from page 1

New York A.G. Seeks \$370 Million From Trump After Civil Fraud Trial

Mr. Trump's lawyers, in one of their own filings, wrote that "the attorney general has woefully failed to prove her case and is not entitled to any of the relief," including any financial penalty.

A lawyer for Mr. Trump did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the \$370 million figure.

Next week, the lawyers will make closing arguments in front of the trial judge, Arthur F. Engoron. The nature of Ms. James's lawsuit meant that there was no jury; Justice Engoron has said he will try to issue a ruling on the case by the end of this month.

Along with the steep financial penalty, Ms. James, a Democrat, is asking that Mr. Trump, a Republican, be barred from participating in New York's real estate industry and from running any company in the state.

Justice Engoron, also a Democrat, has in the past been persuaded by Ms. James's arguments. Before the trial began, he ruled in her favor, finding that Mr. Trump had committed fraud by inflating the value of his assets, and thus, his net worth. The bulk of the trial concerned whether the former president's conduct had violated other New York laws, as well as the potential consequences for his wrongdoing.

The trial was a contentious affair, as lawyers for Ms. James and Mr. Trump clashed on issues major and minor, and the former president frequently attended the proceedings, using the hallway outside the courtroom as a campaign stop. There, he inveighed against the attorney general, the judge and the judge's chief law clerk, whom he attacked as politically biased, prompting Justice Engoron to issue a gag order barring Mr. Trump from commenting on court staff.

The former president's lawyers argued that the proceedings had stemmed from Ms. James's political bias, and they repeatedly moved to derail the trial, calling multiple times for a favorable verdict based on what they said was a lack of sufficient evidence. Justice Engoron was unconvinced. On Dec. 18, five days after the proceedings ended, the judge denied the motions, appearing dismissive of Mr. Trump's case.

He wrote that some of the lawyers' arguments "personify frivolity," took issue with the testimony of their financial experts and again took issue with Mr. Trump's often-raised argument that the valuation of the assets in question was subjective.

"Let no one be fooled," Justice Engoron wrote. "Valuations, as elucidated ad nauseam in this trial, can be based on different criteria analyzed in different ways. But a lie is still a lie."

Eight Indians held in Qatar get 60 days to contest their jail terms

"On December 28, the Court of Appeal in Qatar gave a verdict in which the death sentence was commuted and replaced with varying quantum of jail terms. Our legal team has received a copy of the court's order, which is a confidential document. But I can confirm that the death sentence has been removed," Mr. Jaiswal said. "As far as the next step is concerned, 60 days are there when the matter can come up for appeal in the Court of Cassation which is the highest court of Qatar," he added.

The eight men - Captain Navtej Singh Gill, Captain Saurabh Vashisht, Commander Purnendu Tiwari, Captain Birendra Kumar Verma, Commander Sugunakar Pakala, Commander Sanjeev Gupta, Commander Amit Nagpal, and Sailor Ragesh - were employed by the Al Dahra company in Doha and were allegedly accused of breaching sensitive secrets at the time of their arrest. Although both India and Qatar have been secretive about the charges due to their sensitive nature, the former navy personnel were reportedly involved in training various security-related service providers for Qatar, and the company was also involved in producing high-tech Italian-origin

submarines that are known for stealth capabilities.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's first public outreach to the Qatari leadership when he met Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani on the sidelines of COP28 on December 1 is believed to be significant towards the latest development in the high-profile case. In a social media post, Mr. Modi had said that he had discussed the "well-being of the Indian community in Qatar" with the Emir.

Adrienne Adams reelected council speaker; Farias in, Powers out as majority leader

and women of color. Council Member Keith Powers has been a critical member of Speaker Adams' leadership team, and there are no plans for that to change."

Powers also characterized the decision as a matter of passing the baton to the large class of new members who entered the council in 2022. "It's a conversation that we had with the speaker about making sure that we're promoting some of the new members," he told City & State after the meeting. "It's something we discussed. We're in continued conversations about my role and what's going to happen next, and I'm looking forward to that." Powers said that the switch isn't a sign that he plans to make an early exit from the council. "This is the greatest job I've ever had, and it always will be," he said. "I'm here until the end."

The start of the last session in 2022 - which saw a vacancy in the speaker seat that Adams secured out of a crowded field of competitors, the addition of dozens of new members to the body, and the first majority female council - was met with more fanfare. But Wednesday's meeting nonetheless struck a celebratory, first-day-of-school tone. (The meeting was essentially the first day of school for the body's four new members - Chris Banks, Kristy Marmorato, Yusef Salaam and Susan Zhuang.) Special guests at the meeting included state Attorney General Letitia James, who administered the oath of office to Adams, along with Reps. Greg Meeks and Adriano Espaillat, and former City Council Member Paul Vallone.

Still, this year's speaker vote was largely procedural, and no other members were nominated. "I thought this was my chance," cracked Republican Minority Leader Joe Borelli, as he cast his vote for speaker. "It wasn't. I support Adrienne E. Adams."

(Source: City and State)

Judge denies Rudy Giuliani's request to extend deadlines in Georgia election case

The judge wrote that Giuliani "does not articulate exactly what discovery must still be reviewed, or why the review has not been completed in the approximately four months that have passed since arraignment."

He added that while Giuliani "claims to have filed 'many' motions concerning discovery, none appear on the docket."

A spokesperson and attorneys for Giuliani did not immediately respond to requests for comment Friday night.

Attorneys for Giuliani, who was indicted along with 18 co-defendants for allegedly violating Georgia's racketeering laws in connection with the 2020 election, previously told the court they were "still processing" voluminous discovery in the case and asked for a deadline extension.

In addition to the racketeering charge, Giuliani is accused of conspiring to pressure state officials to act on false election claims.

Four defendants in the case have pleaded guilty, while Giuliani and former President Donald Trump, who each face 13 criminal counts, pleaded not guilty.

Trump has sought unsuccessfully to delay various legal challenges until after the election. His lawyers have contended that the Fulton County district



attorney's proposed Aug. 5 start date for the trial "would be the most effective election interference in the history of the United States."

Friday's order comes as Giuliani faces mounting legal woes, and fees.

Last month, he filed for bankruptcy protection after being hit with a \$148 million verdict in a defamation lawsuit that centered on false claims he made about election workers to boost Trump's stolen election claims.

Giuliani's former lawyers sued him last year over allegations that he had not paid legal fees that they said amounted to \$1.36 million. He responded to the lawsuit by saying the amount sought was excessive.

Giuliani also faces a \$10 million lawsuit filed by Noelle Dunphy, a woman whose allegations included Giuliani's harassing her and discussing the selling of presidential pardons after she was hired in 2019. Giuliani has denied the claims.



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History This Week

JANUARY 5 TO JANUARY 11

JANUARY 5



January 5, 1925 - Nellie Tayloe Ross of Wyoming became the first female governor inaugurated in the U.S.

January 5, 1968 - Alexander Dubcek became first secretary of Czechoslovakia's Communist Party. He introduced liberal reforms known as "Communism with a human face" which resulted in Soviet Russian troops invading Prague to crack down.

January 5, 1972 - President Richard Nixon signed a bill approving \$5.5 billion over six years to build and test the NASA space shuttle.

January 5, 1976 - In Cambodia, the Khmer Rouge led by Pol Pot announced a new constitution which legalized the Communist government and renamed the country as Kampuchea. During the reign of Pol Pot, over 1 million persons died in "the killing fields" as he forced people out of the cities into the countryside to create an idyllic agrarian society. Educated and professional city people were especially targeted for murder and were almost completely annihilated. In January of 1979, the Pol Pot was overthrown by Cambodian rebels and Vietnamese troops.

Birthday - King Juan Carlos I of Spain was born in Rome on January 5, 1938. He was chosen by Francisco Franco to inherit his right-wing dictatorship and was sworn in as King on November 22, 1975, two days after Franco's death. The new King then announced his intention to mold Spain into a broadly based democratic society.

JANUARY 6



January 6, 1941 - President Franklin Roosevelt delivered his State of the Union address to Congress asking for support for the lend-lease program aiding Allies fighting the Axis powers. Roosevelt also defined four essential freedoms worth defending; freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear.

January 6, 1990 - Poland's Communist

Party disbanded and then reorganized as the Social Democratic Party, an opposition party to Solidarity.

January 6, 2021 - In Washington, D.C., thousands attended a "Save America Rally" near the White House at the Ellipse, a park located south of the White House grounds. There, President Donald Trump and others addressed the crowd to express opposition to the certification of the Electoral College results of the 2020 presidential election which would finalize Joe Biden as the victor. Events escalated when several hundred departed the rally and advanced toward the United States Capitol building. They breached security perimeters and entered the Capitol building, thereby disrupting the joint session of Congress convened to certify the election results. The incursion led to the evacuation and secure sheltering of Congress members, staff, and Vice President Mike Pence. The ensuing chaos included vandalism, theft of government property and violent confrontations with law enforcement, resulting in numerous injuries to law enforcement and civilians, overall including five fatalities. The unprecedented breach led to a lockdown of the Capitol and the deployment of the National Guard and other law enforcement agencies to restore order. The events were widely condemned by political leaders from both major parties and led to a nationwide discussion about political rhetoric, security, and the state of democracy in the United States. In the aftermath, numerous individuals were arrested and charged for their roles in the events. The House of Representatives impeached President Trump for the second time on January 13, charging him with "Incitement of Insurrection," though he was later acquitted by the Senate.

JANUARY 7

January 7, 1999 - The first presidential impeachment trial in 130 years began as members of the U.S. Senate were sworn in by Supreme Court Chief Justice William Rehnquist to decide whether President Clinton should be removed from office. House prosecutors had delivered two articles of impeachment charging Clinton with perjury and obstruction of justice.

January 7, 2021 - At approximately 3:40 a.m. local time, under heightened security, the U.S. Congress certified the Electoral College results of the 2020 presidential election, officially confirming Joe Biden as the President-elect. This action followed a tumultuous day whereby protesters had breached the Capitol causing to a temporary halt of the electoral count.

JANUARY 8

January 8, 1959 - Charles de Gaulle took office as the first president of France's Fifth Republic. De Gaulle had led the Free French government in exile during Nazi occupation. Following the war, he advocated a strong presidency to balance the powerful National Assembly.

He was chosen to head the new government following years of political instability in which no French government was able to stay in power for more than a few months. On this day in 1966, he took office for a second term.



January 8, 1964 - President Lyndon Johnson declared War on Poverty during his State of the Union message before Congress.

January 8, 1982 - The American Telephone and Telegraph (AT&T) Company was broken up as a result of an antitrust suit. AT&T gave up 22 local Bell system companies, opening the U.S. telephone system to competition.

January 8, 1987 - The Dow Jones industrial average first topped the 2,000 mark.

Birthday - Elvis Presley (1935-1977) was born in Tupelo, Mississippi.

JANUARY 9

January 9, 1960 - With the first blast of dynamite, construction work began on the Aswan High Dam across the Nile River in southern Egypt. One third of the project's billion-dollar cost was underwritten by Soviet Russia. The dam created Lake Nasser, one of the world's largest reservoirs, at nearly 2,000 square miles and irrigated over 100,000 acres of surrounding desert. The dam was opened in January of 1971 by President Anwar Sadat of Egypt and President Nikolai Podgorny of the Soviet Union.



Birthday - Richard M. Nixon (1913-1994) the 37th U.S. President, was born in Yorba Linda, California. He served as vice president under Dwight D. Eisenhower from 1953-61, then made an unsuccessful run for the presidency, narrowly losing to John F. Kennedy. Nixon ran for governor of California in 1962 and lost. He then told reporters he was leaving politics. However, he re-emerged in 1968 and ran a successful presidential campaign against Hubert Humphrey. He won re-election by a landslide in 1972, but resigned two years later amid impeachment proceedings resulting from the Watergate scandal.

Birthday - Carrie Lane Chapman (1859-1947) was born in Ripon, Wisconsin. She was the women's rights pioneer who founded the National League of Women Voters in 1919.

JANUARY 10

January 10, 1912 - The flying boat airplane, invented by Glenn Curtiss, made its first flight at Hammondsport, New York.

January 10, 1920 - The League of Nations officially came into existence with the goal of resolving international disputes, reducing armaments, and preventing future wars. The first Assembly gathered in Geneva ten months later with 41 nations represented. More than 20 nations later joined, however, the U.S. did not join due to a lack of support for the League in Congress.



January 10, 1922 - Arthur Griffith was elected president of the newly formed Irish Free State.

January 10, 1946 - The first meeting of the United Nations General Assembly took place in London with delegates from 51 countries. The U.N. superseded its predecessor, the League of Nations.

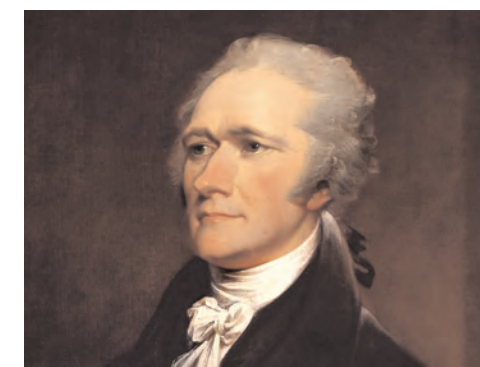
January 10, 1984 - The U.S. and Vatican established full diplomatic relations after a break of 116 years.

JANUARY 11

January 11, 1861 - Alabama seceded from the Union in events leading to up the American Civil War.

January 11, 1964 - The U.S. Surgeon General declared cigarettes may be hazardous to health, the first such official government report.

January 11, 1990 - In Lithuania, 200,000 persons demanded political independence from Soviet Russia after Mikhail Gorbachev, leader of the Soviet Union, publicly warned that separatism could lead to tragedy. Independence was achieved in September of 1991, three months before the collapse of the Soviet Union itself.



Birthday - Alexander Hamilton (1755-1804) was born in the British West Indies. He was a founder of the United States who favored a strong central government and co-authored the Federalist Papers, a series of essays in defense of the new Constitution. He was selected by George Washington to be the first Secretary of the Treasury. He died from a gunshot wound received during a duel with Aaron Burr.



Rohit Sharma and Shreyas Iyer celebrate India's win after the latter scored the winning runs. PTI

Pitch-imperfect? Rohit bats for pitches back home

There should be a review of how pitches are rated with India receiving undue criticism according to Test captain Rohit Sharma in the wake of his side's seven-wicket win over hosts South Africa on a seaming surface with variable bounce at Newlands.

With variable bounce and sideways movement through the four-and-a-half, Rohit described the conditions as dangerous, but added he had no problem playing on such surfaces as long as it was accepted that Indian pitches will turn from Day 1.

"I don't mind being on pitches like this as long as everyone keeps their mouth shut in India and no one is talking about the pitches there," Rohit said. "Yes it is dangerous, but you come here (South Africa) to challenge yourself and you must face up to it."

Rohit believes there is inconsistency in the way match referees rate pitches in different countries.

"In India, when it turns on Day 1, people say 'Oh, there is a puff of dust'. We need to stay neutral, especially match referees. I would love to see how the pitches are rated. I still can't believe the (Cricket) World Cup final pitch (in Ahmedabad) was rated below standard. A player (Australia's Travis Head) got a hundred there. They must rate pitches based on what they see, not based on countries," he said.

Rohit added there should be no difference in the rating of a pitch based on spin or seam on Day 1.

"We know pitches in India will spin but people don't like it because it turns from ball one. But if it seams from ball one, that is OK? That is not fair," he said.

Source: Reuters

India win shortest Test in cricket history

CAPE TOWN (TIP)

India chased down a modest victory target of 79 to claim a seven-wicket win over hosts South Africa in the second Test at Newlands on January 4 and share the two-match series 1-1 after an extraordinary game finished inside five sessions.

India ended their second innings on 80/3 as they launched an assault to try and negate a difficult wicket that was still helping the bowlers.

Rohit Sharma finished not out on 16 and Shreyas Iyer on 4, with Yashasvi Jaiswal (28), Shubman Gill (10) and Virat Kohli (12) being the wickets to fall.

There will be plenty of scrutiny of the Newlands pitch with the match completed in 642 balls, the shortest ever Test in which there has been a winner, beating Australia's 656-ball victory over South Africa in 1932.

"Obviously it's a great feat, but having said that we had to learn from whatever mistakes we made (in the first test)," India captain Rohit Sharma said. "The bowlers still have to put the ball in the right areas and the boys got rewarded for it. When you come to this part of the world, it's always difficult but we take pride in our performance outside of India."

South Africa, who won the toss and elected to bat, will look back desperately on a poor first innings in which they were bowled out for 55 on a record-breaking opening day.

They gave themselves a fighting chance by dismissing India for 153 when the visitors lost six wickets



Jasprit Bumrah took 6/61 as the tourists bowled South Africa out for 176 in their second innings. Reuters

for the addition of no runs, the first time that has happened in 147 years of Tests.

But India seamer Jasprit Bumrah took 6/61 as the tourists bowled South Africa out in their second innings for 176 on the stroke of lunch on the second day to set up the win.

Bumrah bowled a superb probing line but also profited from poor shot selection from the home batters, who seemed in a hurry to score runs on the tricky wicket.

South Africa opener Aiden Markram scored a quickfire 106 as he defied the conditions but lost partners at regular intervals, which forced him to try his hand.

Markram raced to his century in 99 balls but played one big shot too many as he skied a Mohammed Siraj delivery to Rohit Sharma at mid-off to end an innings of 17 fours and two sixes.

"A tough one for us, we were positive coming into the game, but the first innings with the bat ... India bowled well and used the conditions to a tee," retiring South Africa captain Dean Elgar said.

"It (the wicket) was a bit of a ripper, to the naked eye it looked a nice one, but it played different to what everyone thought it would play. I still don't regret my decision to bat first but they outskilled us in the first session." Source: Reuters

Junior wrestlers protest in Delhi, blaming Vinesh Phogat, Bajrang Punia and Sakshi Malik for halting their careers

NEW DELHI (TIP)

Holding up banners reading 'UWW, save our wrestling from these 3 wrestlers,' young wrestlers from Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, and Himachal Pradesh voiced their grievances at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi on Wednesday, January 3. They chanted slogans against Bajrang Punia, Sakshi Malik, and Vinesh Phogat, whom they alleged were hindering their wrestling careers.

The junior wrestlers claimed that protests held last year, over accusations of sexual harassment against Ex WFI president Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh have led to the loss of a crucial year in their sporting journeys.

The tumult in the wrestling fraternity stemmed from the suspension of the newly-elected wrestling body by the ministry, citing alleged improprieties linked to Brij Bhushan's associate, Sanjay Singh. Amidst the turmoil, the Ministry of Sports has established an ad-hoc panel on December 27 to stir the sport.

Since January 2023, the wrestling landscape has been mired in a standstill, with national camps and competitions put on indefinite hold due to the WFI's dual suspensions, the protestors claimed. Lakshmi from Mathura who has been practising the sport for the last 5 years said, "Senior wrestlers should support and foster promotion of the sport, instead they are discouraging it...No championships have taken place since last one year, do they expect us to reach the Olympics without participating in championships?"

"Wrestling has come to a halt since the protests last year. I was set to compete at the under-15 nationals, and many of us had diligently prepared for it. Why are they denying young wrestlers the opportunity?" asked 15-year-old Anushka Pandit, who joined the protest from Dadri, Uttar Pradesh.

The ad-hoc panel, managing wrestling affairs in the country, on Wednesday announced organisation of U15 and U20 National championships within six weeks, hours after junior wrestlers held a protest.

Source: The Indian Express



The young wrestlers during a protest at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi on Wednesday, January 3.



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In 2018 Prasanth, Sushanth and Nisanth were diagnosed and treated for Prematurity Retinopathy. An illness in premature babies which can cause blindness.

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