



TOM SUOZZI WINS THE SPECIAL ELECTION FOR CONGRESS

The Indian Panorama was one of the first newspapers to endorse Tom



Tom Suozzi wrests New York's 3rd Congressional District seat. Screen shot / NBC News

FEBRUARY 15, 2024

NEW YORK (TIP): Tom Suozzi won back New York's 3rd Congressional District seat that he earlier held for three terms. He defeated his less-known Republican rival Mazi Pilip,

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The Indian Panorama's 18th-year gala Celebrates Talent, Commitment, Community

FOUR PERSONS TO BE HONORED FOR THEIR SINGULAR ACHIEVEMENTS

FEBRUARY 16, 2024

BY PARVEEN CHOPRA

HICKSVILLE, NY (TIP): The Indian Panorama is celebrating its 18th year of publication with a Gratitude Gala on February 25 in a grand way. Says its Founding Editor and Publisher Prof Indrajit Singh Saluja, "I want to celebrate community, and say my heartfelt thanks to our readers, friends, supporters, and advertisers for the love and support they have blessed us with all these years."

Prof Indrajit Saluja has become synonymous with his weekly newspaper, a labor of love.

CONTD ON PAGE 7



CHIEF GUEST
Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj,
India's Permanent Representative
to the United Nations



GUEST OF HONOR
Ambassador Binaya Srikanta
Pradhan, Consul General of
India at New York



GUEST OF HONOR
US Congressman
Tom Suozzi
(NY District 3)

FIA's Dance Pe Chance 40th edition thrills and entertains



Swearing-in ceremony. Ambassador Binaya Srikanta Pradhan administering the oath of office to officers of FIA

FEBRUARY 10, 2024

TRENTON, NJ (TIP): FIA's Dance Pe Chance competition, held on February 10, 2024, at Patriots War Memorial Theater in Trenton, NJ, was a spectacular showcase of talent and artistic expression. Featuring contestants ranging from 6 to 60 years old, the event captivated an audience of approximately 1700 people with vibrant performances inspired by Bollywood themes and Indian culture.

The competition celebrated the rich heritage and artistic expressions of India, with performers

presenting a fusion of tradition and modernity across various dance styles. From classical to contemporary, each performance left the audience mesmerized.

The incorporation of Broadway-styled production values, such as a huge LED backdrop, captivating lighting, and intricate costumes, added an extra layer of grandeur and spectacle to the performances, transporting the audience into the world of dance and storytelling.

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Blitz India Editor-in-Chief to address the Indian community at the Consulate

Journalists Beyond Borders to be launched at the event graced by leading media persons



BlitzIndia Chairman and Editor-in-Chief Mr. Deepak Dwivedi (left) and Mr. Sandeep Saxena, CEO of BlitzIndia are visiting New York to launch the US edition of BlitzIndia.

FEBRUARY 16, 2024

NEW YORK (TIP): The Editor-in-Chief of Blitz India, Mr. Deepak Dwivedi, will be the keynote speaker at a major media event co-organized by the Consulate of India and The Indian Panorama on February 26.

Mr. Dwivedi will speak on 'Indo-US relations with Emphasis on Cooperation in Trade and Commerce, and with a Special Reference to SDGs'. It is a topic close to the heart of this veteran journalist and academic who launched Blitz India as the country's first chronicler of development news.

CONTD ON PAGE 38

Supreme Court nulls electoral bonds scheme, seeks info on donors



A five-judge Constitution Bench pronounces the judgment in New Delhi on Thursday, February 15. Photo / ANI

FEBRUARY 15, 2024

NEW DELHI (TIP): Ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, the Supreme Court on Thursday, February 15, declared "unconstitutional" the electoral bonds scheme that allowed individuals and companies to make unlimited

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GUEST COMMENT

Electoral bonds: Apex court rightly annuls contentious scheme

Mired in controversy since its inception, the electoral bond scheme for political funding has been annulled by the Supreme Court. A five-judge Constitution Bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud said the scheme was violative of the right to freedom of speech and expression under Article 19(1)(a) of Constitution, adding that the fundamental right to privacy also included the citizens' right to 'political privacy and affiliation'. The court has directed the State Bank of India (SBI) to disclose the details of each electoral bond encashed by various parties over the years.

The verdict is a big blow to the BJP-led

NDA in the run-up to the Lok Sabha elections. Notifying the scheme in January 2018, the Modi government had touted it as a 'transparent' alternative to cash donations made to political outfits. Then Finance Minister Arun Jaitley had exuded confidence that the electoral bond scheme would considerably cleanse the political funding system. However, the initiative ran into rough weather over allegations of 'selective confidentiality' and denial of a level playing field.

The government's insistence on ensuring the anonymity of the donors and keeping the citizens in the dark struck at the heart of the scheme, whose

avowed main objective was transparency. Paradoxically, the government itself was in a position to access the donors' details by demanding their data from the SBI. The Opposition had every reason to tear into the scheme as the BJP grabbed the lion's share of the bonds, even as the Election Commission of India (ECI) adopted an evasive approach. Last year, the apex court had rapped the ECI for not maintaining data on funding received through electoral bonds despite the interim order it had passed in April 2019. It is hoped that the poll panel and the SBI will finally lift the dubious veil of secrecy and make the details public.

(Tribune, India)

READER'S COMMENT

“Citizens United” in USA vs India’s Supreme Court holding that anonymous electoral bonds scheme is violative of the right to information under Article 19(1)(a)



BY RAVI BATRA

It is said that my dear mentor, Tip O'Neill, the legendary Speaker of our House of Representatives, said "money is the mother's milk of politics."

For democracy to function, we must have political parties to offer up their best candidates that can champion what their party's platform is. Political parties to do their necessary work require money - from the rich to the poor - be it \$5 or \$5Billion.

Integrity of the electoral politics is the business of every nation state, to make sure only a nation's citizens are voting, and that the ballot box is not tampered with. This includes the necessity to block foreign money from playing in one's political process - for to permit same would be to allow a nation to surrender its sovereignty at the ballot box.

That said, our Supreme Court in "Citizens United" ruled that "independent expenditures, including those made by corporations, do not give rise to corruption or the appearance of corruption." By so doing, it held that "Political Speech" is a core part of "Free Speech" of every American, and permitted non-candidate controlled entities to put their message out so long

as it was not coordinated or controlled by the candidate running. This created "soft money," which is undisclosed to the public, as opposed to "hard money," which is disclosed, regulated and limited, but can be used by the candidate as she or he wishes. While Citizens United brought calls of "the sky is falling," today after a decade, the proof is that money generally favors - albeit, not by much - the party in power. So, the sky did not fall.

India's Supreme Court's holding, while altruistic, stands as a weak dam to hold back the citizenry of India's powerful desire to do what they wish to do to support those they wish to support."

(Ravi Batra is an eminent attorney)

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Prof. Deepak Dwivedi
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FIA's Dance Pe Chance 40th edition thrills and entertains

CONTD FROM PAGE 1

Over 700 children from 14 dance academies spread across four states enthralled the crowd of about 1700 with 27 mesmerizing performances, showcasing their talent, discipline, technique, and costumes in FIA's oldest cultural competition.

Present at the event were Chief Guest, Hon. Consul General of India, Mr. Binaya S Pradhan, Hon. Deputy Consul General Dr. Varun Jeph, Chairman of TV Asia Mr. H.R.Shah, Chairman of Parikh Worldwide Media, Dr Sudhir Parikh along with other dignitaries from the Diaspora.

Hon. CG Mr. Binaya S. Pradhan administered the oath of office bearers to the newly elected executive committee of FIA, which includes President Dr. Avinash Gupta, Executive Vice President Mr. Saurin Parikh, Vice President Ms. Smita Miki Patel, 2nd Vice President Deepak Goel, General Secretary Ms. Priti Patel, Joint Secretary Mr. Mahesh Dubal, Treasurer Mr. Sanjeev Singh, Joint Treasurer Mr. Haresh Shah and



FIA Board members with Ambassador Binaya Srikanta Pradhan and the Deputy Consul General Varun Jeph



A Kaleidoscope of Talent as Performances Grace the Stage, Creating a Spectacular Visual Feas

Immediate Past President, Kenny Desai.

The Hon. Consul General expressed delight and honor to be part of the event, deeming it the largest Indian cultural gathering he's attended outside India. He commended FIA's team for their dedication, eagerly anticipating FIA's upcoming Indian Independence Day celebrations. He emphasized the Consul General's commitment to bridging the gap between India and the USA and serving the Indian Diaspora 24/7.

Mr. Ankur Vaidya, FIA Chairman, extended a warm welcome to esteemed guests and expressed gratitude to FIA's entire team for their diligent efforts. He acknowledged the parents' support in nurturing their children's talents showcased at Dance Pe Chance, underscoring FIA's longstanding dedication spanning over forty years.

FIA President Dr. Avinash Gupta highlighted the competition's role in engaging youth and uniting through performing arts, fostering connections to India's cultural legacy and diverse music. He emphasized the event's significance in celebrating Indian Republic Day.



Event Chair Mr. Saurin Parikh described the event as a platform for individuals of all ages to express their

passion for dance while honoring Indian traditions. He praised performing arts for its unifying capacity and ability to inspire people from varied backgrounds.

A distinguished panel of judges, including Uma Kapoor, a renowned choreographer and arts educator, Pooja Bindal, a distinguished choreographer and dance teacher, Pranaya Akula, an esteemed artistic director and founder of Pranavam School of Dance, and Mitali Das, a multifaceted marketer, choreographer, and fitness instructor, provided invaluable feedback and critiques, elevating the caliber of performances and inspiring participants to push the boundaries of artistic expression.

AMONG THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THE EVENT WERE THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF WINNERS IN VARIOUS CATEGORIES:



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MINOR CATEGORY - WINNERS

JUNIOR CATEGORY - WINNERS



Performers Dance with Joy, Displaying Graceful Movements and Traditional Costumes at Dance Pe Chance



DPC Chair Saurin Parikh and Dignitaries: The Faces Behind Dance Pe Chance's Resounding Success

- First Place: Rudra Dance Academy
- Second Place: Aum Dance Creations
- Third Place: Shehnaaz Dance Academy
- Best Choreography: Rudra Dance Academy
- First Place: Rudra Dance Academy
- Second Place: Aum Dance Creations
- Third Place: Dance4Ever
- Best Choreography: Rudra Dance Academy



DPC 2024 Choreographers Join President Dr. Avinash Gupta, Hon.CG Mr. Binaya S. Pradhan, Hon. DCG Dr. Varun Jeph, and Event Chair, Mr. Saurin Parikh on Stage.



Rudra Dance Academy's Young Stars Shine Bright as they Celebrate Winning \$2000 Prize in the Minor Category



Aum Dance Creations Secures Second Prize in Junior Category, Receiving a \$1000 Cheque Prize



Mudra Melody Secures Third Place in the Senior Category, Garnering a \$500 Cash Prize



Distinguished Panel of Judges at Dance Pe Chance: Uma Kapoor, Pooja Bindal, Pranaya Akula, and Mitali Das

SENIOR CATEGORY - WINNERS

- First Place: Shivaay Dance Academy
- Second Place: Rudra Dance Academy
- Third Place: Mudra Melody
- Best Choreography: Mudra Melody

ADULT CATEGORY - WINNERS

- First Place: Rudra Dance Academy
- Second Place: Nitya Rhythm Dance Academy
- Third Place: Mudra Melody

CONTD ON PAGE 6

CONTD FROM PAGE 5



Families of Dance Pe Chance Participants Radiate Joy and Pride as They Support Their Young Dancers



Young talents adorned in vibrant traditional attire mesmerize with their graceful movements and disciplined steps at Dance Pe Chance.



Dance Pe Chance Comes Alive with Colorful and Spirited Performances Celebrating Heritage.



Group of Victorious Performers Cheers with Glee on Stage at Dance Pe Chance

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- Best Choreography: Nitya Rhythm Dance Academy

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- Rising Star Category: Elevation Beats (Junior)
- Voting App Category: Rudra Dance Academy (Junior)

The event was expertly emceed by Mamta Narula, founder and CEO of Ultimate Media, alongside Rohi Singh, DPC Committee member, and Miss NJ 2018. Their seamless orchestration of the evening, marked by engaging banter and insightful commentary, added a layer of sophistication and charm to the

proceedings.

The celebration concluded with the distribution of mementos, trophies, and prizes underscoring FIA's steadfast commitment to nurturing creativity and fostering collaboration among upcoming generations. Every participant, manager, and choreographer was treated to meals, certificates, a rehearsal, and a complimentary seat, courtesy of FIA and its generous sponsors. Overall, the event was a remarkable celebration of Indian culture, heritage, and artistic expression, leaving a lasting impression on all who attended.

(Based on a Press Release)

The Indian Panorama's 18th-year gala Celebrates Talent, Commitment, Community

CONTD FROM PAGE 1

He is not only an eminent editor but also a well-respected community leader who has forged links across the ethnic and political spectrum.

His friends, supporters, and who's who of the community are set to grace the gala at the glittering Pearl Banquet Hall in Hicksville not only to felicitate The Indian Panorama but also to wish him a long life on his 80th birthday.

DIGNITARIES

Presiding the delightful event will be Hon. Ruchira Kamboj, India's Ambassador to the United Nations, the first woman diplomat to hold that position.

The new Consul General of India in New York, Ambassador Binaya Srikanta Pradhan will be offered a welcome toast by the community at the event.

The newly elected Congressman, Hon'ble Tom Suozzi, whom the Indian Panorama endorsed on the first day of his campaign, has promised 'my loyal friend' Prof Saluja that he will be there to personally thank Long Island's Indian community, with whom he has forged bonds over the years.

HONOREES

The four eminent people to be honored at the gala with whom The Indian Panorama has had a long association, are:



Dr. V.K. Raju -Life Achievements Honor

DR V.K. RAJU - Life Achievement Honor award. The President and Founder of the Eye Foundation of America, he has a mission to eliminate childhood blindness from the world. He has helped start two eye hospitals in India and held free eye camps in 30 developing countries.

MRS. RANJU BATRA - Excellence in Promotion of Diplomacy Award. She is the Chairperson of Diwali Foundation USA which holds the Diwali Stamp -



Mrs. Ranju Batra - Excellence in Promotion of Diplomacy Award

Power of One awards event at the UN every year to honor diplomats. She also led the campaign to get USPS to release the Diwali stamp.



Mr. Harry Singh Bolla - Excellence in Entrepreneurship Award

MR. HARRY SINGH BOLLA - Excellence in Entrepreneurship Award. He is the Founder and CEO of Bolla Oil Corporation which runs a chain of gas stations and convenience stores in the New York area. Through his Bolla Charity Foundation, he gives back to the community here and extends help to the needy in India.



Mrs. Purnima Desai - Excellence in Culture Award

MRS. PURNIMA DESAI - Excellence in Culture Award. As Founder and President of Shikshayatan Cultural Center and Sriniketan Foundation, she

has been instrumental in encouraging and supporting Indian culture through music and arts training and events. She has also produced and directed over a thousand cultural programs.

BLITZ INDIA US LAUNCH



Mr. Deepak Dwivedi, Chairman and Editor-in-Chief, BlitzIndia



Mr. Sandeep Saxena, CEO, BlitzIndia

The Indian Panorama's gala event will also get an international sheen. The US edition of Blitz India will be jointly launched by its Chairman and Editor-in-Chief, Deepak Dwivedi, CEO Sandeep Saxena, and Prof Saluja. Blitz India, the country's first chronicler of development news, has several editions in India and was launched in the UK last year.

At the event for the ages, Prof Saluja will



Mr. Parveen Chopra, Founder of ALotusInTheMud.com

also introduce ALotusInTheMud.com, founded by his friend, Mr. Parveen Chopra. Launched at the Indian Consulate in January, 2023, Lotus is a web magazine presenting free content on wellness and spirituality, a first by an Indian American.

The attendees at the gala will also be welcomed and entertained with both traditional Indian and contemporary touches.

ABOUT PROF SALUJA



Prof. Indrajit S Saluja, Publisher & Chief Editor, The Indian Panorama

For Prof Saluja, The Indian Panorama is an expression and extension of his love for India as well as a platform to project the rich South Asian culture and how our successful community has made a place in the melting pot of America. A trilingual, he has also helped start newspapers in Hindi and Punjabi.

Started 18 years ago in New York, The Indian Panorama also has a Dallas edition now. It reaches the Indian diaspora in the entire US and the world. Its editorial content is the right mix of community news as well as Indian and American current affairs.

Indefatigable Prof Saluja's spirit and intensity of work belie his years. He came to the US over 20 years ago after having a long career as a Professor of English Literature at leading colleges in India. Alongside, he founded a prominent monthly magazine titled 'Punjab Beat'.

Robert Frost's words "The woods are lovely, dark and deep, but I have miles to go before I sleep", aptly characterize Prof. Saluja's journey in life.



MAKE THE FARMER FEEL HEARD & HONORED



BY RAJESH
RAMACHANDRAN

LET THE ONGOING PROTEST NOT FESTER INTO A WOUND THAT BECOMES GANGRENOUS

It is the kinnow season, and the fruit is sold at the doorstep for Rs 50 a kilo. Well, nothing out of the ordinary for most of the readers who are consumers. But this year's kinnow crop has a story of toil and tears. The fruit is selling at Rs 3-10 in the Abohar mandi, which is probably the biggest kinnow trading place in the world. What is being sold by the farmer for Rs 3 is being bought at Rs 50 by the consumer from the rehriwala in Chandigarh. If this anomaly does not call for a strident agitation, what does? And that's what is happening at the Punjab-Haryana border.

Vergheese Kurien ensured that all that was sold by a farmer was bought by an organization that made profit and distributed it in terms of a better price for the farmer's produce.

Gurpreet Singh of Patti Sadiq village in Abohar tehsil of Fazilka district wants answers to this basic question. The Union Government had honored him with a national award for his successful farm diversification efforts. There cannot be a better example of a progressive and articulate farmer than Gurpreet, who has done his masters and then bachelors in education and yet chose to be a full-time farmer. He diversified into kinnow from the wheat-paddy cycle, keeping 20 of the 27 acres of his ancestral land just for the fruit crop. But he is thoroughly disappointed.

All he has got is Rs 10.30 per kg of kinnow, which is just one-fifth of what the consumer pays the retailer. Punjab Agro, which entered the market in November-December, Gurpreet claims, has skipped his farm and bought the fruit from political influential people at the rate of Rs 12.60 per kg. His claims are unverified. But the fact is this year, the crop is good. And suddenly, all the buyers who had paid Rs 27/kg last year, encouraging the farmers to grow kinnow vigorously, have vanished. It could be because of higher import duty levied by a neighboring country. But these reasons are just excuses for the ears of the farmer, who is reduced to penury for the fault of having a bumper crop.

The fact remains that what is bought at one end of the chain for Rs 3 is sold at the other at Rs 50 within a distance of 300 km. The Punjab farmers who are protesting at the Haryana border are seeking a correction to this fundamental flaw in the Indian agri-commodity market. The city slickers who incessantly attack Punjab's farmers for demanding a legal guarantee for the minimum support price (MSP) and those who justify the abominable use of drones against protesters should pause and wonder: will they sell their products or services below the cost price? Will they suffer seeing their products being resold for 5-18 times the original price without an iota of value addition in their own neighborhood?

Gurpreet, the progressive farmer who cares for his land, soil and water table and is concerned about the water-guzzling paddy crop, has a fairly simple solution - marketing and value addition through research and development. The Bharat Ratna for agriculture scientist Dr MS Swaminathan could not have come sooner (this time around, Gurpreet has not made money from his crop, going by the Swaminathan comprehensive cost formula). But there is another greater Ratna of Bharat, who needs to be talked about in the context of Gurpreet's concerns about marketing - Vergheese Kurien.

He ensured that all that was sold by a farmer was bought by an organization that made profit and distributed this profit in terms of a better price for the farmer's produce. Can there be a greater model for agricultural marketing than Amul? What Amul's



It is obvious that the empowered farmers of Punjab are trying to corner the government, making it commit the blunder of tear-gassing them using drones. Photo / PTI

"THIS PROTEST COULD BECOME A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY FOR PM NARENDRA MODI IF HE DECIDES TO TURN THE TABLES - OFFER 'MODI KI GUARANTEE' TO THE FARMERS AS WELL. ACCEPT THEIR DEMANDS; MAKE THEM FEEL VICTORIOUS. THERE IS NOTHING THAT AN INDIAN FARMER WON'T GIVE WHEN HE FEELS HEARD AND HONORED."

producer-shareholders have received is what every Indian farmer deserves. Unless the produce is bought at the farmgate at a profit, the Indian farmer will be reduced to begging for government intervention and legal guarantees.

India is the biggest buyer of edible oil with an annual import bill pegged at \$20 billion, yet sunflower seed farmers had to block roads at Shahabad near Kurukshetra in Haryana last year to get what is their due - the MSP of Rs 6,400 per quintal at which the government was supposed to buy the crucial commodity that burns a hole in the consumer's pocket. That year, farmers sold their mustard crop to traders at Rs 4,400 per quintal when the MSP was supposed to be

Rs 5,450 (Nous Indica: 'Pamper the farmers, make them rich')

Every year, there are some farmers who dump their produce on the roads or run tractors over vegetables or fruits to make visuals that would pry open the eyes of the government. They obviously don't find a way out other than the MSP backed by a legislation and assured procurement. The pro-government economists and commentators who talk about a fiscal disaster and throw numbers totaling many lakhs of crores of rupees do not even understand that the consumer is already paying those many lakhs of crores and much more without farmers getting any of it. If the market is playing foul, it's the responsibility of the government to discipline it, offering sustainable profits to the producer.

And if he does not get it, he will block the road at an opportune moment when the government is most vulnerable. It is obvious that the empowered farmers of Punjab are talking for all their brethren across the country and trying to corner the government, making it commit the blunder of tear-gassing them using drones and suffer a public relations disaster. This is legitimate oppositional politics. Sadly, a protester died of a heart attack at the Shambhu border on Friday, adding to the government's discomfiture in the run-up to the polls.

At the same time, this protest could become a golden opportunity for PM Narendra Modi if he decides to turn the tables - offer 'Modi ki guarantee' to the farmers as well. Accept their demands; make them feel victorious. There is nothing that an Indian farmer won't give when he feels heard and honored. Let the protest not fester into a wound that becomes gangrenous.

(The author is editor-in-chief of Tribune India)

Swimming against the current: How Suozzi won the special election



BY GEORGE ABRAHAM

THE MEDIA IS DUMBFUNDED AT HOW SUOZZI WON IN AN INCREASINGLY RED DISTRICT. THE ANSWER IS SIMPLE: FOLLOW POLICIES AND PROGRAMS THAT MAKE COMMON SENSE AND BENEFIT THE PEOPLE, AND YOU WILL HAVE THEIR VOTE. TOM SUOZZI HAS JUST PROVED THAT POINT TO THE NATION!

"There is little doubt that Suozzi won in a Republican majority district because of his sensible stand on several issues. He didn't shy away from discussing the border crisis. For many of the residents in the Bellerose-Floral Park area, the migrant crisis is no longer an issue affecting Texas or Arizona. The migrants are at their doorstep as the city has housed hundreds of them on the grounds of the Creedmoor Psychiatric Center. It has unsettled many of the residents in the area, who are concerned about the safety and security of their families. The recent attack on NYPD cops has only heightened their apprehensions about the soundness of policy the Biden Administration is pursuing. The Eastern part of Queens is home to a large number of immigrants from around the world. Yet, they are not ready to endorse the current wave of illegal migration that is rocking many parts of the country and inflicting heavy financial burdens on taxpayers. Mr. Suozzi truly understood the pulse of the people in that regard and distanced himself from Biden's policies."

Mr. Tom Suozzi, who recently won the special election to replace George Santos, the disgraced Congressman, stood at his campaign headquarters in Bayside Terrace, addressed his supporters last Friday, and urged them to go out and knock on doors. While speaking, he said, "There is said to be no Chinese dream or French dream or Russian dream but only American dream and let us keep that alive." It is a slogan that we hardly hear from many of the progressive democrats who portray this country as inherently racist and beyond redemption. He also talked about finding solutions to the array of problems the country is facing rather than keeping bickering and engaging in a never-ending turf battle.

Undoubtedly, Suozzi's message resonated with the electorate in Long Island and the eastern part of Queens comprising the New York District 3, and he won a great victory. Pat Mathew, a resident of New Hyde Park, summed up the reason for his victory and said: "I am a registered Republican, and along with 3 of my friends, we cast a vote this time for Suozzi. He is a known quantity and not part of the extreme leftwing



Mr. Tom Suozzi on campaign trail

File photo

fringe of the Democratic Party".

There is little doubt that Suozzi won in a Republican majority district because of his sensible stand on several issues. He didn't shy away from discussing the border crisis. For many of the residents in the Bellerose-Floral Park area, the migrant crisis is no longer an issue affecting Texas or Arizona. The migrants are at their doorstep as the city has housed hundreds of them on the grounds of the Creedmoor Psychiatric Center. It has unsettled many of the residents in the area, who are concerned about the safety and security of their families. The recent attack on NYPD cops has only heightened their apprehensions about the soundness of policy the Biden Administration is pursuing. The Eastern part of Queens is home to a large number of immigrants from around the world. Yet, they are not ready to endorse the current wave of illegal migration that is rocking many parts of the country and inflicting heavy financial burdens on taxpayers. Mr. Suozzi truly understood the pulse of the people in that regard and distanced himself from Biden's policies.

The Asian Indian community, known for its hard work and disciplined living, is increasingly wary of the rising crime in their neighborhoods. Even riding the subway in New York has become a life-challenging experience as many people are pushed in front of the oncoming trains, and some have paid with their dear lives. Many immigrants who have come ashore have fled crime and violence in their own homelands. America was a breath of fresh air, a nation that respected individual liberty and freedom. The Constitution guaranteed protection for the lives and property of every citizen. However, the progressive policies of those governing us appear to be ripping apart that safety and security layer we took for granted. The defunding of the police movement and the cash bail reform in New York have all contributed directly or indirectly to the lawlessness that is taking place before our eyes. Suozzi once again rose to that challenge and positioned himself on the side of the citizens who were

concerned about the rising crime in the neighborhoods.

Moreover, the labor movement has also embraced him as someone who champions their cause. He supports a higher minimum wage, which could be a double-edged sword if that results in reduced labor participation or higher prices. Nevertheless, he argued that one may not be able to survive in New York with the current wages. He also agreed that higher taxes and rampant inflation are putting undue hardships on the middle class.

Although the Asian Indian community is generally in agreement with most of the policy positions by Suozzi, there is a fringe group among the Hindu community from the North that posted negative comments across social media. One of them wrote, "No Indians should vote for Suozzi as he is anti-India and anti-Hindu. He wrote a letter against the revocation of the 370 article and refused to retract". Their ire towards Suozzi is palpable because he stood for the human rights of all people in India, including the Christians and Muslims. Many of these Hindutva Vadis want it both ways: they want all the freedom and opportunities as minorities in the U.S. but are unwilling to grant the same rights to the minorities in India. They are mostly aligning themselves with the Christian nationalists in America while remaining silent on the onslaught of Hindu fundamentalists who are destroying churches and persecuting Christians. Their duplicity on this issue is hardly surprising! However, most South Asians sided with Suozzi because of his even-handed human rights and religious freedom policies.

It is obvious that People want the gridlock in Washington to end, and towards finding effective solutions to improve the lives and safety of every citizen of this nation. The media is dumbfounded at how Suozzi won in an increasingly red district. The answer is simple: follow policies and programs that make common sense and benefit the people, and you will have their vote. Tom Suozzi has just proved that point to the nation!

(The author is Vice Chair of IOC USA)

Globalization has failed to spur cosmopolitanism



BY NEERA
CHANDHOKE

GLOBALIZATION HAS BRED APPREHENSION AMONG SELF-APPOINTED CUSTODIANS OF RELIGION THAT THEIR PEOPLE ARE LOSING FAITH IN OLD ORTHODOXIES

"ANALYSTS OF EARLY GLOBALIZATION TOLD US THAT THE UNIMPEDED PROGRESS OF A HOMOGENIZING JUGGERNAUT OF CULTURE WOULD SWEEP EVERYONE UP IN A COMMON COIL. BUT THE PROCESS HAS ALSO PRODUCED AN INTENSIFIED, EVEN IRRATIONAL, SENSE OF A RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY AND HOSTILITY TOWARDS OTHERS WHO ARE OUR FELLOW CITIZENS, OUR NEIGHBORS, OUR FRIENDS, AND OUR ALLIES. THE CLOSING IN OF THE INDIAN MIND HAS PUSHED AWAY SYNCRETISM AND EMBRACED TRIBALISM AROUND TOTEMS."

It is, perhaps, the greatest paradox of our times that the advent of globalization in the 1980s and liberalization/privatization in India in the early 1990s has not been accompanied by the expansion of imagination and cosmopolitanism, but by the closing in of community boundaries. From the 1950s onwards, scholars and statesmen focused on 'composite' or 'syncretic' culture.

In his 1987 essay, Prof Rasheeduddin Khan, who taught at the Centre for Political Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, had written that the Indian civilization was profoundly influenced by the Indo-Aryan stream, which provided the Vedic philosophy, and the Indo-Muslim strand, which was based on the intertwining of the Bhakti Movement and Islamic Sufism. He wrote: "It is not surprising... to realize that the composite culture in India originated in an environment of reconciliation rather than refutation, cooperation rather than confrontation, coexistence rather than mutual annihilation of the politically dominant Islamic strands."

Khan and other authors, including Aziz Ahmed, did not deny that there was violence between Hindus and Muslims in the medieval period. They creatively



Globalization, which has produced its own discontent, has also intensified insecurity and anxieties about collective identity.

Image / iStock

drew our attention to the fusion of two cultures in the creative field and in everyday life. The former was manifest in architecture and painting, the latter in shared worship at Sufi shrines and the increasing adoption of Urdu as the language of communication across vast swathes of India.

Since the 1990s, the eruption of ethnic wars across the world and the rise of Hindutva in India have consigned this notion to the margins of history. No one wants to remember the syncretism that the postcolonial generations were brought up on. Religious communities have shut their doors and hatched them down against the Other - now defined as the enemy.

This seems paradoxical in the context of the rapid transmission of the trans-border flow of information, new symbols, new ways of communication and new ways of producing and consuming things. We witness an immediacy to history. It brings wars in Ukraine and the Gaza strip right into our homes. We see the Oscars along with audiences in the west, read the same books, watch the same television series and movies and listen to the same music. Conflict zones in critical sites, as well as celebrations, are as real to us as our own sites of conflict, award ceremonies, sports, reading habits and music. We participate in political protests across the world; we follow the same fashion styles; we adhere to the same canon of aesthetics. There is no refuge, no safe haven against the violence we witness on our television screens.

But globalization, which has produced its own discontent, has also intensified insecurity and anxieties about collective identity. We are back to the early decades of the 19th century, when Raja Ram Mohan Roy asked the question: Who are we? Roy used the wisdom of ancient sacred texts to critique extant practices, such as rituals, superstitions, fasts and belief in false prophets. He initiated a major movement of social reform against Brahmanical domination, gender discrimination and irrational customs.

Today, we see the reinforcement of the same Brahmanical domination in the return of rituals, temple worship, fasts and the entry of saffron-clad 'godmen' in politics. The rediscovery of Hinduism in the 19th century brought social reform; the Hindutva campaign of the contemporary era has reinforced orthodoxy amidst globalizations.

Analysts of early globalization told us that the unimpeded progress of a homogenizing juggernaut of culture would sweep everyone up in a common coil. But the process has also produced an intensified, even irrational, sense of a religious community and hostility towards others who are our fellow citizens, our neighbors, our friends, and our allies. The closing in of the Indian mind has pushed away syncretism and embraced tribalism around totems.

Communities are, however, an invention. The hardening of boundaries is a reaction to factors that range from the insecurity that the community's identity is in danger to the silver tongue of demagogues. This

community rejects 'strangers'.

We have lost our syncretic culture and, alongside, we have lost our ability to be human: to suffer the pain of others, to shed tears with them, to rejoice in their victories, to be saddened by their defeats. We have, above all, lost the spirit of tolerance enunciated by Emperor Akbar.

Akbar's tolerance was described in the memoirs of his son and successor Jahangir: "Followers of various religions had a place in the broad scope of the peerless empire - unlike other countries of the world, like Iran, where there is room for only Shi'ites, and... Turan (Central Asia), where there is room for only Sunnis. Just as all groups and practitioners of all religions have a place within the spacious circle of God's mercy, in accordance with the dictum that the shadow must follow its source, in my father's realm, which ended at the salty sea, there was room for the practitioners of various sects and beliefs, both true and imperfect, and strife and altercation were not allowed. Sunni and Shiite worshipped in one mosque and Frank and Jew in one congregation. Utter peaceableness was his established way." We ignore this message only at our own peril.

Globalization has not spurred cosmopolitanism; it has bred apprehension among self-appointed custodians of religion that their people are losing faith in old orthodoxies, and that the radical project of challenging caste, class and patriarchal hierarchies in a global civil society will strip these 'defenders of the faith' of power.

In the process, we have become lesser human beings.

Indian-American motel owner shot dead after altercation over room tariff

FEBRUARY 15, 2024

ALABAMA (TIP): A 76-year-old Indian-origin motel owner has been shot dead in the US state of Alabama following a confrontation over room rent.

Pravin Raojibhai Patel, the owner of the Hillcrest Motel in Sheffield, was gunned down last week after which police arrested 34-year-old William Jeremy Moore, Alabama-based news outlet al.com reported.

Moore was arrested shortly after the incident as he was trying to break into an abandoned house on 13th Avenue, Sheffield Police Chief Ricky Terry said.

According to investigators, Moore wanted to rent a room at the motel when an altercation with Patel took place on February 8, following which the former pulled a handgun and shot the elderly man.

"When searching Moore, the murder weapon was found in his possession," Terry said.

The police chief added that Moore is currently being held in the Sheffield City Jail until a warrant is issued after which he will be transported to the Colbert County Jail.

Jemeriz Owens, who works as a barber across the street from Patel's motel, told WAAY 31 news channel that he heard three gunshots go off back-to-back.



The victim Pravin Raojibhai Patel.

Photo credit / gunmemorial.org

"He (Patel) was outside. He was just trying to get somebody to leave, and they didn't want to leave and they shot him," Owens said.

Patel's body was transported to the Alabama Forensics Lab for an autopsy and a funeral service was held for him at Morrison Funeral Home in Tuscumbia on February 12, according to his obituary.

Calling the incident a "senseless act of

violence", the Asian American Hotel Owners Association (AAHOA) said on Thursday that the country's hotel owners are "deeply saddened, shocked, and outraged".

"Senseless acts of violence have no place in our communities, and our hearts are breaking for Pravin's family, including his wife, children, and grandchildren," said AAHOA Chairman Bharat Patel.

"No family should have to endure what Pravin's family is going through, and we send our condolences to everyone who knew and loved him."

Hoping that authorities will help the Patel family find justice, AAHOA Alabama Regional Director Sanjay M Patel said the motel owner spent more than four decades in the town of Sheffield, owning and operating the same business.

"He was a very family-oriented person, jolly, and a keen businessman. Everyone in town knew him as a familiar face in the community after being there for 40-plus years, and the family was well-known in the community for being genuine and caring," Sanjay Patel said.

Beginning this year, a series of unfortunate incidents involving the Indian community in the US have been reported. (Source: IANS)

28-year-old Indian-origin woman dies in flooding as severe weather batters Australia's Queensland



28-year-old Indian-origin woman dies in flooding as severe weather batters Australia's Queensland

Image for representation

FEBRUARY 16, 2024

MELBOURNE (TIP): An Indian national has died in a flooding incident in Queensland as wild weather battered the region with severe rain and thunderstorms, the Indian High Commission in Canberra said on Friday, February 16.

Expressing condolences, the Indian mission said it is in touch with the family and providing all possible assistance.

"Heartbreaking tragedy in Australia: an Indian national lost her life in a flooding incident near Mount Isa, Queensland. Deepest condolences to the family of the deceased. Mission team is in touch for all necessary assistance," the Indian High Commission posted on X.

While further details are awaited, the victim's name was not revealed by the mission.

The local media reported that a 28-year-old woman was found dead inside a partially submerged car in floodwaters in Queensland on Friday.

Australia's Bureau of Meteorology in the country has issued a severe thunderstorm alert for parts of southeast Queensland, which includes heavy rainfall warnings across Logan, Redland City and parts of Brisbane.

According to the most recent update by the bureau, a severe thunderstorm was likely to produce heavy rainfall that may lead to flash-flooding in some parts of the state.

(Source: IANS)

9 Indians slapped with serious crime prevention orders for role in attempt to smuggle migrants, money laundering in UK

The group was recently convicted of removing 15.5 million pounds from the UK to Dubai hidden in suitcases, as well as attempting to smuggle 17 migrants into the country



The terms of their SCPOs include restrictions on finances, assets, bank accounts and the purchase of international travel tickets.

Image for representation

FEBRUARY 14, 2024

LONDON (TIP): Nine Indian-origin members of a crime group in the UK received Serious Crime Prevention Orders (SCPO) to limit their ability to engage in serious and organized crime.

The group was recently convicted of removing 15.5 million pounds from the UK to Dubai hidden in suitcases, as well as attempting to smuggle 17 migrants into the country.

Swander Dhal (38), Jasbir Kapoor (36), Diljan Malhotra (48), Charan Singh (46), Valjeet Singh (35), Jasbir Dhal Singh (33), Jaginder Kapoor (48), Jacdar Kapoor (51) and Amarjeet Alabadis (32) received lengthy prison sentences in addition to the recent SCPOs.

The terms of their SCPOs include restrictions on finances, assets, bank accounts and the purchase of international travel tickets, the National Crime Agency (NCA) said on Tuesday.

The terms will come into effect once the offenders have served their jail sentences.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

Haryana man sentenced for stealing \$150,000 from elderly woman in US

Sukhdev Vaid, 24, admits targeting elderly Americans via an international computer-hacking scheme that resulted in more than \$1.2 million in total losses



Haryana man sentenced for stealing \$150,000 from elderly woman in US

Image for representation

FEBRUARY 15, 2024

NEW YORK (TIP): An Indian national hailing from Haryana has been sentenced to more than four years in prison for his role in stealing \$150,000 from an elderly woman in the US state of Montana. Sukhdev Vaid, 24, admitted targeting elderly Americans via an international computer-hacking scheme that resulted in more than \$1.2 million in total losses, US Attorney Jesse Laslovich said on Wednesday, February 14.

The court ordered that upon his release from custody, Vaid would be remanded to the Bureau of Customs and Immigration Enforcement for deportation, and asked him to pay \$1,236,470 restitution. "It has become all too common for people outside of our country to victimize Montanans, especially as it relates to wire fraud, and get away with it. But not this time. Vaid is going to federal prison," Attorney Laslovich said.

"'Phantom Hacker' scams layer imposter tech support, financial, and government personas to gain access to someone's computer and personal information. Sadly, these scams are increasingly targeting our seniors," said Special Agent in Charge Shohini Sinha of the Salt Lake City, FBI.

Sinha said what added to the depravity of the case was that the scammer travelled overseas to collect the victim's money in person.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

SIGNING OF LOI FOR GUATEMALAN INTEROCEANIC CORRIDOR (GIC). (DRY CORRIDOR PROJECT) IN GAUTEMALA



Ambassador Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra facilitated the signing of Lol worth US\$10 Billion between Grupo Odepal, S.A. and Lakshmi Capital for the construction of the Guatemalan Interoceanic Corridor.



The parties with signed copies of Letter of Intent to construct the Dry Corridor Project with Ambassador Dr Manoj Kumar Mohapatra.

FEBRUARY 15, 2024

GUATEMALA CITY (TIP): In recent times, Indian companies' interest and involvement in Guatemala, particularly across sectors such as pharmaceuticals, automobiles, business process outsourcing (BPO), and textiles, has increased. The establishment of Yash Pakka Inc, with an investment of US \$350 million, stands out as a noteworthy initiative, showcasing how Indian enterprises are effectively leveraging Guatemala's strategic location to access markets in the Western Hemisphere. This endeavor has garnered attention from various conglomerates, with a recent example being a textile company making a substantial investment of approximately \$300 million in Guatemala. The growing

demand for the Guatemalan market among Indian businesses has spurred a series of Indian business delegations to explore new avenues for partnerships in the region. These developments have further attracted companies like SRAM & MRAM to explore opportunities in this dynamic region.

SRAM & MRAM, a company under Hiranandani Group, has shown a keen interest in investing a significant amount in various infrastructure development projects across Latin America, particularly in the northern triangle region. SRAM & MRAM is a United Kingdom-based company with branches in several countries. The company has its core competencies in Agro-products and Information Technology, Hedge Fund

Management, FOREX Management, Hospitality Services, etc. Recognizing the immense potential within the Latin American market. SRAM & MRAM, through its subsidiary company, Lakshmi Capital has reached out to the Embassy to seek insights into market dynamics. The company has pledged to invest a substantial total amount of US \$17 billion, with a significant portion, amounting to US \$10 billion, earmarked for the, namely the Guatemala Inter-oceanic Corridor. This project is planned to be structured under the Build-Operate-Transfer (BoT) model.

On February 13, 2024, a significant milestone was reached with the official signing of a Letter of Intent between M/s Grupo Odepal, S.A. and M/s Lakshmi Capital, representing an investment commitment of US \$10 billion for the construction of the Guatemalan Interoceanic Corridor (GIC). This ambitious project aims to develop a state-of-the-art Multimodal Transport System stretching across a land strip spanning 372 kilometers in length and 140 meters in width, effectively connecting the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

The GIC project encompasses several key components, including the establishment of two new deep-water ports on each coast of Guatemala, which will be linked by a double-track railway system. Additionally, a pipeline network will be constructed for the transportation of hydrocarbons coast to coast, complete with storage tanks and buoys in the ports to facilitate efficient operations. Furthermore,

the GIC will feature six strategically distributed industrial, commercial, and services zones along the inter-oceanic land strip, aimed at promoting economic growth and facilitating trade. Moreover, the project will provide various ancillary services to support the region's development, including the implementation of water collection and distribution systems, the establishment of an electricity generation and distribution network, deployment of fiber optic connections for enhanced communication infrastructure, ecological development and compensation initiatives, establishment of tourism promotional centers, and improvement of people transportation facilities.

In addition to the GIC project, the company is also involved in significant developmental projects in the Municipality of Xela, with the signing of five additional impactful projects totaling an investment of US \$1.2 billion. These projects include the implementation of a hydroelectric system, a cable car system, supply of 7000 buses, construction of a waste management plant, and development of a 75MW solar energy plant in the region. Embassy of India in Guatemala acknowledges the potential impact of Indian involvement in the region for which it proactively supporting these projects in the region by exploring avenues for the participation of Indian companies in significant infrastructural endeavors within the area.



The signing of the Letter of Intent (LOI) was attended by prominent dignitaries from Guatemala, including Ministers, Congressmen, Mayors, members of the diplomatic fraternity, and businessmen.

VISIT OF 20-MEMBER BUSINESS DELEGATION FROM FIEO TO GUATEMALA AND EL SALVADOR

FEBRUARY 15, 2024

GUATEMALA CITY (TIP): India's proactive engagement with the untapped Central American market underscores its aspirations to emerge as a leader among global South nations. This outreach has proven highly attractive to numerous Indian companies, catalyzing a significant increase in bilateral trade. Notably, this surge in trade has unlocked vast opportunities not only for large conglomerates but also for small and medium enterprises. As part of this strategic direction, Guatemala and El Salvador recently hosted a successful visit by a delegation of 20 Indian companies from Federation of Indian Export Organizations (FIEO) led by Mr. Khalid Khan. This delegation engaged in a series of productive Business-to-Business meetings with local companies in Guatemala City and San Salvador from February 12 to 16, 2024.

FIEO is an apex body of the Government recognized Export Promotion Councils, Commodity Boards and Export Development Authorities in India. It was set up in 1965 by Ministry of Commerce, Govt. of India to focus the efforts of all stakeholders engaged in promotion of trade from the country. FIEO exchanges business delegations, establishes MoUs with counterpart organizations overseas, and arranges exhibitions, catalogue shows abroad. It provides the crucial interface between International Trading community of India with the Central and State Governments, Financial Institutions, Ports, Railways, Surface Transport and all engaged in Export Trade Facilitation. It directly and indirectly serves the interests of over 200,000 exporters from every Industry and Services sector in India.

Guatemala has emerged as India's largest trading partner in the Central American region, with bilateral trade reaching US\$573.21 million in the 2021-22 period. This trend has continued to strengthen, with bilateral trade increasing to US\$693 million in the 2022-23 period, indicating a notable upward trajectory. Similarly, India has been steadily expanding its trade presence in El Salvador, with trade reaching US\$126 million in the financial year 2022-23. The top products exported from India to the Central American region include pharmaceuticals, textiles (especially cotton yarn and fibers), engineering products, automobiles (two and three-wheelers), motor vehicles/cars, auto



Business-to-Business meeting at San Salvador, El Salvador



Ambassador Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra presented souvenir to H.E. Ms. Maria Luisa Hayem, Hon'ble Minister of Economy of El Salvador at San Salvador.



Ambassador Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra highlighted the huge potential of Central American market and reiterated Indian Government's commitment to increase bilateral trade

components and parts, iron and steel, industrial machinery and parts, and electrical machinery and equipment. On the other hand, India primarily imports wood, wood charcoal, coffee, and aluminum scrap from these regions.

FIEO launched its campaign in Guatemala in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce of Guatemala, with approximately 90 Guatemalan companies participating in the Business-to-Business meetings. The inaugural ceremony was graced by Ambassador Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra, Mr. Jorge Briz Abularach, President of the Chamber of Commerce, and Mr. Julio Eduardo Orozco, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of Guatemala. Mr. Rohit Tejpal, Deputy Director of FIEO, delivered a presentation outlining the organization's approach and future prospects. The delegation received an overwhelming response from local companies, demonstrating their keen interest in partnering with visiting countries. During

the event, FIEO signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Chamber of Commerce to strengthen collaboration in investment, trade, quality standards, technology transfer, and economic cooperation. Delegation members also had the opportunity to interact with Guatemala's apex export councils such as PRONACOM, AGEXPORT, Invest Guatemala, and the Chamber of Industry to gain insights into trade regulations and discuss ways to enhance bilateral trade relations.

The journey of the business delegates from FIEO continued as they proceeded to El Salvador to explore the vast potential of this rapidly growing economy. Upon arrival, the delegates were warmly welcomed by the Honorable Minister of Economy of El Salvador, Ms. Maria Luisa Hayem, along with Ambassador Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra and Mr. Salvador Gome Goche, President of Invest in El Salvador. Ambassador Ariel Galindo, former Ambassador of El Salvador in India, played a pivotal role in encouraging local companies to participate in the business meetings. Despite being an unexplored destination for the visiting delegation, the enthusiastic response from local companies bolstered their excitement and prompted them to further explore the local market the following day. The delegates ventured into areas such as Santa Tecla and other prominent locations to gain insights into the local market dynamics and opportunities for collaboration.

The B2B Meetings in these two countries



FIEO and Chamber of Commerce Guatemala signed an MoU to enhance mutual cooperation

facilitated exploration of potential trade opportunities, allowing businesses from both countries to identify areas of mutual interest and collaboration. The delegation gained insights of Guatemalan and El Salvador markets, helping them understand regulatory environments, consumer behavior, and market trends, which is crucial for successful market entry. These meetings can not only serve as a forum to promote investment opportunities, encouraging businesses to invest in each other's countries and contribute to economic growth but also provide a platform for networking, enabling companies to connect with potential partners, suppliers, and distributors, thereby expanding their business networks. Embassy of India in Guatemala looks forward to many more such visits in future to enhance the trade relations between Indian and these Central American Countries.



Business Meetings Guatemala were conducted the premises of Chamber of Commerce of Guatemala

US-India Business Council launches task force to align leadership between two nations on artificial intelligence



USIBC president Atul Keshap.
File photo / PTI

FEBRUARY 15, 2024

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): The US India Business Council on Thursday announced the launch of its AI Task Force (AI-TF) which it said is a pivotal step in aligning US and Indian leadership on Artificial Intelligence (AI).

The business body, which represents leading global companies operating across the United States, India, and the Indo-Pacific region, said that AI-TF will advance AI concepts and principles, drive multi-stakeholder processes, and promote the development and commercialization of AI technologies.

The AI-TF builds on the Chamber of Commerce's AI principles and endorsement of the OECD's recommendations on AI, it said.

"The AI-TF is a game-changer, especially needed amid the rapidly evolving landscape of Artificial Intelligence. Through this initiative, we seek to harness the immense potential of AI, propelling competitiveness in both US and Indian economies and our citizen-led societies," USIBC president Atul Keshap said.

He said that the USIBC looks forward to shaping a future where AI is a catalyst for progress.

"Together, we look forward to shaping a future where AI is a catalyst for progress, bringing forth advancements that uphold our shared values and democratic principles and drive economic prosperity for both our great democracies," he said.

The new committee members, include Kamal Ahluwalia, president at Ikigai Labs and Todd Skinner, president of International at TransUnion; alongside USIBC Board Chairman and executive vice chairman of Nasdaq Ed Knight.

"The creation of USIBC's AI-TF is a major step toward fostering a deeper partnership on the most innovative and transformative technologies of our time," said Knight.

"The Task Force will encourage a principled approach to AI adoption, ensuring that these transformative technologies can be harnessed in a manner that is safe and secure," he said.

(Read full story at
www.theindianpanorama.news)

Biden admin working 'very hard' to thwart attacks against Indian students: White House

FEBRUARY 16, 2024

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): US President Joe Biden and his administration are working very hard to thwart and disrupt attacks on Indian and Indian American students, the White House has said.

The announcement by John Kirby, Coordinator for Strategic Communications at the National Security Council in the White House comes amid a slew of attacks on Indian and Indian American students in various parts of the country.

"There is no excuse for violence, certainly based on race or gender or religion or any other factor. That's just unacceptable here in the United States," Kirby told reporters here when asked about the series of attacks on students from India and also those from the Indian American community.

"The president and this administration have been working very, very hard to make sure we're doing everything we can to work with state and local authorities to try to thwart and disrupt those kinds of attacks and make it clear to anybody who might consider them that they'll be held properly



US President Joe Biden and his administration are working very hard to thwart and disrupt attacks on Indian and Indian American students, says John Kirby

accountable," Kirby said.

Vivek Saini, a student working part-time in a department store, died following an attack by a drug addict in Lithonia, Georgia in January. Syed Mazahir Ali, an Indian student at Indiana Wesleyan University was assaulted in February.

Deaths of at least four Indian American students have been reported

in the last several weeks.

Akul Dhawan of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and Neel Acharya of Purdue University died apparently due to heavy drinking followed by long exposure to low temperatures at night in January.

Shreyas Reddy Benigeri, an Indian-origin student at the Lindner School of Business in Cincinnati was found dead in Ohio this month.

Indian American community leader Ajay Jain Bhutoria said he was deeply troubled by the tragic deaths of these students in separate incidents and underscored the urgent need for enhanced safety measures for those pursuing education in the US. College authorities, and local police, must address these challenges promptly, he asserted.

"These incidents understandably worry parents and families in India, and their concerns are shared. It's crucial to address safety issues to ensure the well-being of Indian students studying in the USA," he said, adding that the Indian American community unites in calling for improved safety measures and support systems. (Source: PTI)

IBM CEO Arvind Krishna joins USISPF Board

FEBRUARY 15, 2024



IBM CEO Arvind Krishna has joined the Board of Directors of US India Strategic and Partnership Forum (USISPF)

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): IBM CEO Arvind Krishna has joined the Board of Directors of US India Strategic and Partnership Forum (USISPF), an official announcement said on Thursday, February 15.

Krishna, the 62-year-old Indian-American CEO among other things, is also a member of the Board of Directors of the New York Federal Reserve Bank and serves on the Board of Directors of Northrop Grumman.

"His knowledge about technology is unmatched, and his track record for leading market transitions in areas like hybrid cloud business, quantum computing, and artificial intelligence is remarkable," said USISPF chairman Jon Chambers.

He said that Krishna is a true visionary and a leader who is always focused on what's good for society at large.

Shantanu Narayen, Chair and CEO of Adobe and vice chairman of USISPF, said Krishna's strong leadership and deep technical expertise in AI, cloud, quantum computing, and global operations will be invaluable as India continues to be an incubator for the transformative power of technology.

"When you think of the various diaspora success stories and the rise of the Indian-American CEO across Fortune 100 companies, you think of Arvind Krishna at IBM. At a time when the US and India are working to secure a deeper collaboration in the field of critical and emerging technologies, Arvind's deep expertise in this sector will be an invaluable asset," said USISPF president and CEO Mukesh Aghi.

"For years, Arvind has successfully built strong commercial links between the US and India. During the pandemic, Arvind's indefatigable efforts helped USISPF supply essential materials in oxygen cylinders and concentrators to help aid the several million COVID-19 victims in India," he said.

An industry and IBM veteran spanning over three decades with the tech giant, Krishna has led the building and expansion of new markets for IBM in artificial intelligence, cloud, quantum computing, and blockchain.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

US House passes Quad bill

FEBRUARY 16, 2024

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP):

The US House of Representatives has passed the Quad bill which instructs the Biden administration to establish a Quad Intra-Parliamentary Working Group to facilitate closer cooperation between the US, Australia, India and Japan.

Passed by a roll call vote of 379 to 39 votes, the 'Strengthen US-Australia-India-Japan Cooperation' or the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue

(Quad) bill says that the joint cooperation between the US, Australia, India and Japan should be strengthened.

It directs the State Department to submit to Congress, within 180 days of the bill's enactment, a strategy to increase engagement and cooperation with the Quad, and within 60 days of its enactment, to enter into negotiations with Japan, Australia and India to establish a Quad Intra-Parliamentary Working Group to facilitate closer cooperation.

It also would establish a US group, which would have a maximum of 24 members of Congress, to represent the US in the working group. It also would establish guidelines for annual meetings and group leadership. Under the bill, the group would be required to submit an annual report to the congressional foreign affairs committees.

Two Democratic lawmakers voted against the bill. One of them being Congresswoman Ilhan Omar from Minneapolis.

Introduced by Congressman Gregory Meeks, the bill requires the State Department to report to Congress a strategy for bolstering engagement and cooperation with the Quad.

The strategy shall address cooperation on issues including (1) preparing for the next pandemic, (2) co-developing new innovative technologies, and (3) deepening economic engagement and integration. (Source: PTI)



Introduced by Congressman Gregory Meeks, the bill requires the State Department to report to Congress a strategy for bolstering engagement and cooperation with the Quad.



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Indian Army Chief, US counterpart reaffirm commitment to deepen military ties

Army Chief Gen Manoj Pande on Wednesday, Feb 14, held high-level discussions with his American counterpart Gen Randy George on matters of bilateral importance and ways to enhance mutual commitment towards global peace and security.

The Indian Army put out a post on X regarding General Pande's four-day official visit to the US that began on February 13. General Pande visited the US Army Geospatial Centre at Fort Belvoir and also interacted with the vice-president of National Defense University at Fort McNair.

The visit holds significance amid the two countries deepening military cooperation and strategic partnership. The tour is aimed at exploring avenues for more significant training, co-development and co-production engagements.

The Indian Army has a global threat perception and it was shared with the US counterparts. The Army Chief also visited the Indian Embassy in Washington DC and interacted with Sripriya Ranganathan, Charge d'Affaires, and discussed important ongoing and prospective initiatives.

General Pande inspected guard of honour on arrival at Fort Myers. Thereafter, in a solemn ceremony, he laid a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery, the Army said on X. The deliberations are aimed at sharing insights, ideas and best practices between the two armies. *Source: TNS*

55% of electoral bond donations went to BJP: Data

NEW DELHI (TIP)

In what is being considered a landmark judgement, the Supreme Court on Thursday, 15 February, struck down the much-touted electoral bonds scheme, stating that it was "unconstitutional."

In the six years of the scheme, which came into existence in January 2018, a total of over Rs 16,518 crore was reportedly collected by all the political parties, as per a report by the Delhi-based non-profit Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR), one of the petitioners in the case.

However, all the political parties together received nearly than Rs 12,000 crore. To be precise, the actual number is Rs 11,986.66 crore.

Explaining the existing gap of over Rs 4,500 crore, ADR Programme and Research Coordinator Shelly Mahajan told South First, "The Rs 16,518 crore amount is the total amount of electoral bonds that have been purchased by the donors till January this year. But, the audit reports submitted by the political parties are till the last fiscal year (FY 2022-23). Once, the audit reports for the FY 2023-24 are submitted, this gap will be covered as well."

About the data published by the ADR on their website, she said, "The data has been compiled based on the RTIs filed by us to the State Bank of India (SBI), the regulatory authority to issue the electoral bonds. It has also been obtained by other transparency activists with whom we consulted."

The ruling Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) stands at the top, having received 54.77 percent (Rs 6,565.975 crore) of the total political donations from FY 2017-18 to FY 2022-23. That's well more than half the entire donated amount in the given period.

In comparison, the Indian National Congress (INC), the other national political party and the primary Opposition at the Centre, was able to secure a meagre 9.37 percent (Rs 1,123.29) of the cumulative amount — around one-sixth of what the BJP got.

Starting in 2018, after the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led Union government released a notification, the electoral



bond was treated like a promissory note. It was a bearer instrument payable to the bearer on demand.

Unlike a promissory note, which contains the details of the payer and payee, an electoral bond had no information on the parties in the transaction at all, providing complete anonymity and confidentiality to the parties.

Over the years, the bonds faced criticism from the Opposition parties over a lack of transparency.

As for the contributions, the BJP bagged nearly Rs 1,300 crore through electoral bonds in the fiscal year 2022-23. This amounted to seven times more than what the Congress got in the same period.

In the 2022-23 fiscal, the Congress received donations of Rs 171 crore from electoral bonds, a drop of Rs 65 crore from the 2021-22 FY, when it got Rs 236 crore.

In the same FY, the BJP amassed a capital of worth Rs 1775 crore — a significant share of which came from the electoral bonds, Rs 1,033 crore.

This means that BJP secured Rs 797 crore more than the Congress in FY 2021-22, just when the world started to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Source: The South First

Sonia Gandhi's letter to Rae Bareilly states inability to contest upcoming Lok Sabha election due to age

NEW DELHI (TIP)

Former Congress president Sonia Gandhi, who on Wednesday, Feb 14, filed her nomination for the Rajya Sabha from Rajasthan, has in a letter to the people of her pocket borough, Rae Bareilly, said that she would not be able to contest the upcoming Lok Sabha election because of ill-health and age.

Uttar Pradesh Congress President Ajai Rai said "there was no doubt" that Rae Bareilly "would remain with the Nehru-Gandhi family". Political circles are abuzz with speculation whether her daughter Priyanka Gandhi Vadra would contest the seat.

In her letter to the people of Rae Bareilly in Hindi, Sonia, 77, wrote: "I'll not contest the next election because of my (poor) health and age. I'll not get the opportunity to serve you directly after taking this decision but my mind and heart will definitely remain with you. I know that you will support me and my family in every crisis."



"I am proud to say that whatever I am today, I am because of you and I have always done my best to honour your trust," Sonia, who has represented Rae Bareilly five times since 2004, wrote.

In the message to voters, Sonia further said: "My family in Delhi is incomplete without you. It is complete when I come to Rae Bareilly and meet all of you. My ties with you are very old. I have inherited these ties as a good fortune from my in-laws." Noting that the ties of her family with Rae Bareilly are "very deep-rooted", she said the constituency had sent her

father-in-law, Feroze Gandhi, to the Lok Sabha in the first general election held after Independence.

"After that, you accepted my mother-in-law, Indira Gandhi," she noted. "Ever since, our relationship grew stronger on the difficult road to affection despite the highs and lows of life and our faith in this bond grew stronger. You allowed me space to walk along on this shining path. I came to you after losing my mother-in-law and husband and you accepted me with open arms," the former Congress chief said. "I can never forget your staunch support for me through the adverse circumstances through the last two Lok Sabha elections," Sonia recalled.

Sending her respect to elders and love to youngsters, she said: "I will see you soon." Rai, the Uttar Pradesh Congress president, said in Varanasi: "There is no doubt that the Rae Bareilly Lok Sabha seat will remain with the Nehru-Gandhi family. They have served the constituency for more than six decades and would continue doing so."

Asked whether Priyanka would be the next candidate from there, Rai said: "Priyanka will win from wherever she contests in UP. Besides Rae Bareilly, Amethi will also remain their preferred constituency."

Arvind Chaturvedi, a spokesperson for the Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee (UPCC), claimed that Priyanka was all set to contest from Rae Bareilly.

A source in the Congress said: "The UPCC has suggested that Priyanka join Rahul's Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra in Varanasi and continue with him till Rae Bareilly."

Rahul will enter Uttar Pradesh with his Yatra through Chandauli district on Friday. C.P. Rai, chairman of the media cell of the state Congress, said: "Rahul will enter the state from the Naubatpur area in Chandauli. He will be in Varanasi on Saturday and take out a procession. Later, he will offer prayers at Kashi Vishwanath temple and address a rally in Godaulia."

Source: Telegraphindia



PM Modi, Qatar Emir discuss ways to deepen ties

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday, Feb 15, held talks with Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani to strengthen bilateral ties but neither side spoke on Doha freeing eight former Indian Navy personnel who were sentenced to death or the \$78 billion deal to import Qatari gas from 2029 for the next 20 years, said to be the world's largest-ever extension of a gas contract.

"Had a wonderful meeting with Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad. We reviewed the full range of India-Qatar relations and discussed ways to deepen cooperation across various sectors. Our nations also look forward to collaborating in futuristic sectors which will benefit our planet," posted the PM on X.

PM Modi arrived in Doha on Wednesday night after a two-day visit to the United Arab Emirates. Shortly after his arrival, Modi met Qatari Prime Minister-cum-Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani. "The two leaders exchanged views on expanding bilateral cooperation in sectors such as trade, investment, energy, finance, and technology. They also discussed recent regional developments in West Asia and emphasised the importance of upholding peace and stability in the region and beyond," said the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). "During the meeting, they discussed cooperation relations between the two friendly countries and ways to support and develop them, especially in the fields of energy, commerce and investment," said the Qatari Foreign Ministry. *Source: TNS*

Ajit Pawar faction is real NCP: Maha speaker echoes EC

MUMBAI (TIP)

Maharashtra assembly speaker Rahul Narwekar ruled on Thursday, Feb 15, that deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar's party was the real Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and turned down demands to disqualify either faction's lawmakers, marking a victory for the state's ruling coalition just months ahead of general elections.

The decision – which came weeks after the Election Commission of India also ruled against NCP patriarch Sharad Pawar – is another jolt to the senior leader. Narwekar held that the test of legislative majority was decided in favour of Ajit Pawar after the other two grounds – party constitution and leadership structure – were found to be inconclusive.

The decision was similar to Narwekar's ruling in the Sena vs Sena case in January, where he also found in favour of chief minister Eknath Shinde but refused to disqualify lawmakers of either faction. The battle for both regional behemoths, the Sena and the NCP, is now likely to be decided in the Supreme Court.

"...I hold that the preliminary issue as to which faction is the real political party is discernible from the legislative majority, which existed when the rival factions emerged. Further I hold that the Ajit Pawar faction had an overwhelming legislative majority when the rival factions emerged," Narwekar said in a 22-page ruling.

The speaker – who had been asked by the apex court to announce his decision by February 15 – dismissed disqualification petitions filed by either faction, saying that the grounds mentioned did not fall under the jurisdiction of the 10th schedule of the



Ajit Pawar and Sharad Pawar.

Constitution that deals with the defection of elected representatives.

He, however, decided to reserve his verdict on the chief whip of the party, which is expected to come within a week.

The decision sparked a political controversy. Sharad Pawar faction leader Jitendra Awhad called it a ridiculous judgment. "The assembly speaker Narwekar is playing the role of Dhritarashtra and has become shameless," he said. Anil Patil, whip of the Ajit Pawar faction, said that Narwekar gave the verdict as per law.

On February 6, ECI termed the Ajit Pawar faction as the real NCP and allowed it to use the party's name and its electoral symbol. The next day, Sharad Pawar's faction was renamed Nationalist Congress Party – Sharadchandra Pawar, and was recognised by ECI as a temporary move for the Rajya Sabha polls slated on February 27.

The twin decisions are a boost to the Ajit Pawar-led faction as it safeguards the ruling coalition and affirms Ajit Pawar's control over the NCP, leaving Sharad Pawar and his supporters to approach the Supreme Court with just months to go for crucial general elections. It also caps, for now, a feud between Sharad Pawar and his nephew Ajit, who joined hands with the BJP

and Shinde in a surprise move in 2023.

In his ruling, the speaker proclaimed the NCP split as intraparty dissent and termed the disqualification petition filed against the Ajit Pawar faction as a tool to silence the opposition against Sharad Pawar.

He said forging new alliances and undoing old relationships is the reality of today's politics and cannot constitute defections.

"I see members, their political leaders and their parties as if through a kaleidoscope: making and breaking into new forms, forging new alliances, undoing old relationships, striking out in unknown directions. This is in the very nature of politics as we see it unfolding before our eyes. It is the reality of politics today. Surely every such action cannot qualify as defection within the meaning of the 10th schedule," Narwekar said.

To determine which faction constituted the real NCP, he determined three grounds – party constitution, leadership structure and legislative majority.

Narwekar said there was no dispute about the constitution of the NCP, and both factions claimed that their leader was validly elected, the speaker found legislative majority as the only relevant criterion.

He said that the claim of the Ajit Pawar faction that it had the support of 41 of the party's 53 legislators was not disputed by the Sharad Pawar faction. They also didn't dispute that the Ajit Pawar faction held a majority not only in the Maharashtra assembly but also in the legislative council and the Nagaland assembly. Narwekar said that the developments in the NCP were the result of intraparty dissent and the 10th Schedule was being misused to suppress dissent. *Source: HT*

ED summons Trinamool leader Mahua Moitra in FEMA case

NEW DELHI (TIP)

In fresh trouble for Trinamool Congress leader and expelled Lok Sabha MP Mahua Moitra, the Enforcement Directorate has summoned her for questioning in an alleged foreign exchange violation case.

The summons have been issued in connection with violations of the Foreign Exchange Management Act and Moitra has been asked to appear at the agency's office in New Delhi on Feb 19.

The Trinamool leader was expelled from the Lok Sabha in December last year based on an Ethics Committee report on the alleged 'cash-for-query' charges against her. She had challenged the expulsion in the Supreme Court, where her petition is currently pending.

Moitra was accused of taking bribes, including Rs 2 crore in cash and "luxury gifts", from businessman Darshan Hiranandani for asking questions in Parliament that were critical of the Narendra Modi government.



She was also accused of sharing her email ID as a Member of Parliament as well as her login details to the parliamentary website to enable Hiranandani to post

the questions directly. The Trinamool leader had vehemently denied the bribery charges but admitted that she had shared her credentials which, she had claimed, was a common practice.

Moitra is being investigated by the CBI as well, which is conducting a preliminary enquiry into the allegations against her on the directions of the Lokpal. Under a preliminary enquiry, the agency cannot arrest an accused or conduct searches, but it can seek information, examine documents and also question the Trinamool leader.

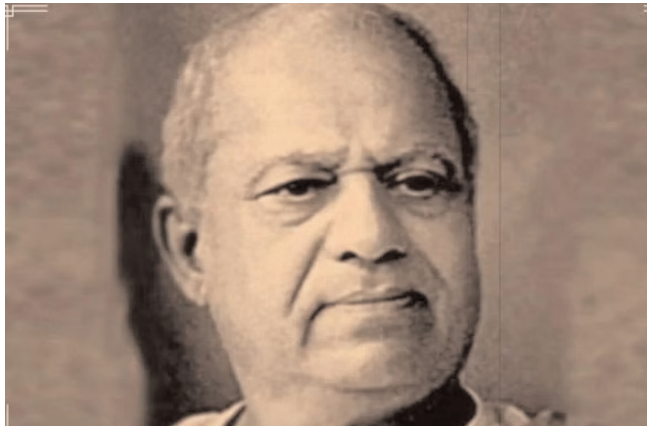
Trinamool Congress chief and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had claimed that Moitra's expulsion was a blatant act of "vendetta politics" by the BJP, a party that has been the focal point of the fiery leader's attacks.

"This is vendetta politics of BJP. They killed democracy... It is injustice. Mahua will win the battle. The people will give a befitting reply to the BJP. They will be defeated in the next election," Banerjee had said.

India in history this Week

FEBRUARY 16 TO FEBRUARY 22

16 FEBRUARY



1944 Dada Saheb Phalke died.

1982 The Jawaharlal Nehru International Gold Cup football tournament was held in Calcutta for the first time in 1982.

1987 A missile with submarine capable of hitting the submarine was inducted into the Indian Navy in 1987.

2008 Tata Motors launched a vehicle for the Army on February 16, 2008, called a Light Specialist Vehicle, to allow the Army to show its power through it.

2009 On February 16, 2009, former President Pranab Mukherjee presented the Interim Budget for the year 2009-2010.

17 FEBRUARY

1915 Gandhiji visited Santiniketan for the first time.

1931 Lord Irwin welcomed Gandhiji to the Viceroy's residence.

2007 Veteran Gandhian Smt. Arunaveen Desai passed away in Gujarat.



2014 On 17 February 2014, the Election Commission banned the transmission of exit polls until the last phase of voting was over.

18 FEBRUARY



2007 68 people were killed in bomb blast in the Samjhauta Express going from Delhi to Lahore.

1905 Shyamji Krishnavarma founded the India Home Rule Society in London in 1905.

1911 In 1911, the first delivery of the aircraft by air was done in India.

1964 The Royal Indian Navy (Navy) rebellion occurred in 1946 in Mumbai.

1971 India established its first satellite contact with Britain in 1971 through the Arvi satellite station.

1979 The US gave India a check for Rs 1664 crore in 1979, which is considered to be the largest check in the world.

19 FEBRUARY

1891 Daily publication of Amrit Bazar Patrika started.



1630 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, the first ruler of the Maratha Empire, was born.

1389 In 1389, Sultan Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq II of Delhi was assassinated.

1986 In 1986, the first computerized railway reservation ticket was introduced in India.

20 FEBRUARY

1987 Mizoram, India's northeastern state got the status of 23rd state. It was a part of the state of Assam before it became a union territory.

1983 A large-scale violence erupted before the assembly elections to be held in the north eastern state of Assam. It also led to the death of 600 people.

1968 The first heart transplant was done in 1968 at KEM Hospital in Mumbai.

1950 In 1950, Sharat Chandra Bose, the elder brother of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, passed away.



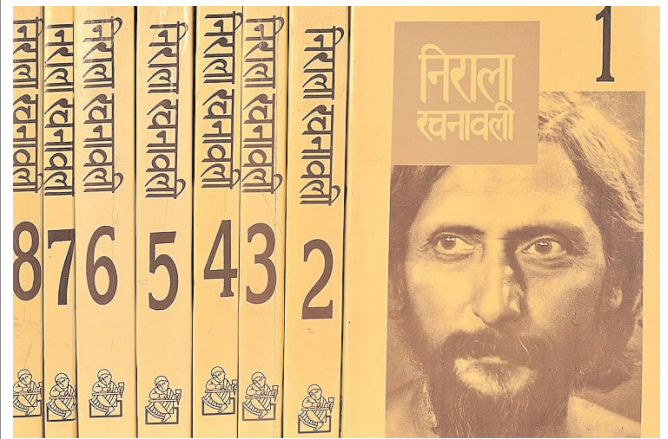
1999 Prime Minister of India Atal Bihari Vajpayee took a historic bus tour of Pakistan in 1999.

1999 The sports channel started on Doordarshan in 1999.

1987 Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram became the 23rd and 24th states of India in 1987.

1986 Himachal Pradesh became the 24th state of the Indian Union in 1986.

21 FEBRUARY



1996 Birth of great poet and writer Suryakant Tripathi Nirala in 1896.

1959 Press Club of India established in 1959 in New Delhi.

1999 Former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and former Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif signed the Lahore Declaration in 1999.

2008 On February 21, 2008, Anil Ambani's Anupam Global Soft was acquired by Reliance Communication.

2008 Private Airlines Jet Airways entered into a strategic alliance with Air Canada on 21 February 2008.



2013 A series of bomb blasts took place in Hyderabad on February 21, 2013, in which around 17 people died and 119 were badly injured.

22 FEBRUARY

1944 Mahatma Gandhi's wife Kasturba Gandhi died.



1958 Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the country's first Education Minister, died.

1845 The East India Company bought Serampore and Balasore from the Dutch East India Company in 1845.

1999 India's popular economist Jagdish Bhagwati was appointed as the head of the Center for Indian Politics Economy in Columbia on February 22, 1999.

2006 Japan prohibited imports of all poultry products, including meat and eggs, from India in 2006.

'GODDESS OF MELODY' YUNGCHEN PERFORMS 'ONE DROP OF KINDNESS'

BY MABEL PAIS

"We have been lucky to work with Yungchen's wonderful voice and music, which encapsulate the spirit, understanding and compassion of Tibetan culture."

- Peter Gabriel, singer-songwriter-musician

Yungchen Lhamo, as part of the (WMI) World Music Institute's Women's Voices Series, performs on Saturday, February 24, 2024 at the First Unitarian Church (info@firsttubrooklyn.org), 48 Monroe Place, Brooklyn, NY 11201. The performance starts at 8 p.m.; doors open at 7 p.m.

Yungchen Lhamo, a critically acclaimed Tibetan singer-songwriter, has been called "The Queen of Kindness". She was born and raised in Lhasa, Tibet, which she left in 1989 to make a pilgrimage to Dharamshala, India. From there, inspired to share her voice and music with the world, she moved to Australia in 1993 and then to New York in 2000.

Her name, which translates as 'Goddess of Melody,' was given to her by a lama at birth. Yungchen's remarkable voice and message of peace and loving kindness have inspired thousands of artists and audiences around the world.

She has performed and recorded with Natalie Merchant, Peter Gabriel, Annie Lenox, and Bono, among others, and her recordings have been used in the film *Seven Years in Tibet* and many Tibetan documentaries.

WMI presents Yungchen Lhamo in person after a wonderful WMI Plus At Home Session in 2022. She will



Yungchen Lhamo with singer Peter Gabriel
Credit / yungchenlhamo.com

perform material from her seventh album 'One Drop of Kindness' (Real World). The album is a fresh take on an ancient practice, a work whose seven songs - or better still, seven offerings - are flavored by musicians on everything from piano, flute, drums and electric guitar to didgeridoo, Indian violin, the Turkish cümbüs-oud and the Armenian duduk-oboe. Learn more about

Yungchen at yungchenlhamo.com.

This performance is part of WMI's WOMEN'S VOICES series that celebrates the role that female artists play in the preservation and promotion of their respective cultures and traditions.

THE FIRST UNITARIAN CONGREGATION IN BROOKLYN (FUUB.ORG)

The First Unitarian Congregational Society in Brooklyn is a joyful, caring, religious community that inspires and empowers people to Grow spiritually, Care for one another, and Work for justice and stewardship of the earth. Learn more at fuub.org.

THE WORLD MUSIC INSTITUTE (WMI)

Founded in 1985, World Music Institute (WMI) has served as one of the leading presenters of world music and dance within the United States. WMI is committed to presenting the best in traditional and contemporary music and dance from around the world with the goal of inspiring wonder for the world's rich cultural traditions, promoting awareness and appreciation and encouraging cross-cultural dialog and exchange.

For all queries, contact World Music Institute at info@worldmusicinstitute.org / (212) 545-7536

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RACHNA NIVAS RECLAIMS THE DIVINE FEMININE

BY MABEL PAIS

"Rachna is one of the most accomplished Kathak practitioners working in the U.S. today. A radical artist whose practice is both deeply respectful of tradition but also interrogative, she keeps alive one of the most important lineages of Indian classical dance and is a crucial figure for understanding the integration of Indian culture into the American dance mosaic."

- Linda Murray, Curator of the Jerome Robbins Dance Division.

Rachna Nivas performs 'Reclaiming the Divine Feminine' on Friday, March 1 and Saturday, March 2, 2024 at 7:30pm at New York Live Arts, 219 W. 19th Street, New York, NY 10011.

RECLAIMING THE DIVINE FEMININE

Rachna Nivas' 'Reclaiming the Divine Feminine' takes audiences into the dark and mystical realm of tantra and its radial hailing of supreme feminine power as the primordial energy that pervades all things in time and space.

Through classical Indian kathak dance, live music, and special lighting and prop design, Nivas embodies the wildness of Kali - Goddess of time and death who represents the bold paradoxes of feminine wholeness: she is intoxicating and terrifying, beautiful and grotesque, ascetic and erotic, loving and rageful; she is the force that binds us and the force that sets us free.

According to Nivas, the tantric wisdom goddesses (mahavidyas) are some of the most radical yet invisible iconography of South Asian civilization. She says, "Tantra, which was birthed in tribal India, has been highly denigrated and stereotyped in the West to be about sex and freakish practices. It's tragic how little folks know about this powerful paradigm, even in India itself due to its unorthodox departure from patriarchal structures and what we consider 'wild' and 'horrific' imagery of a woman."

The phrase "divine feminine" has been gaining



Rachna Nivas
Credit / rachnanivas.com

popularity recently, but Nivas hopes to expand and deepen its understanding. She says, "Tantra's 'divine feminine' is a rare concept in that she is not just a revered nurturing consort to a male deity, but rather an entirely independent and autonomous power, not depicted with a partner or even as a mother. My own life has taken me to deep self-inquiry and brought me to discover how profound and liberating these goddesses are. They have the power to transform and reclaim a woman's wild limitlessness nature."

HOW DID NIVAS START THIS JOURNEY?

'Reclaiming the Divine Feminine' is a project that germinated from Nivas' 6-month research journey for the Jerome Robbins Dance Division prestigious Dance Research Fellowship at New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. The 2022-23 theme being Dance and Ecology, Nivas presented a culminating talk and dance with live music titled 'Nature, Woman, and the Macrocosm: How Indian classical dance transmits a consciousness of indivisibility.' It showcased the intersectionality of Indian classical dance with

ecofeminism, interconnectedness, and non-duality.

Dispelling western myths of tantra and elevating the intersections of ecofeminism, interconnectedness, and Eastern principles of non-duality, 'Reclaiming the Divine Feminine' illuminates a woman's treacherous path to transforming her shadows and reclaiming her wild limitless nature.

With an opening act by Nivas' apprentice company dancers, and original musical score composed by India-based composer Jayanta Banerjee, this performance promises to haunt, provoke, and enchant.

Live Musical Artists: Jayanta Banerjee, sitar; Satyaprakash Mishra, table; Neha Tummala, vocals; Varshini Narayanan, Bansuri flute

RACHNA NIVAS

Rachna Nivas is a performing artist, choreographer, educator, community organizer, scholar, and activist of Indian classical art. She is one of the most accomplished kathak dance practitioners of her generation. For more information, visit rachnanivas.com.

LEELA DANCE COLLECTIVE

Leela Dance Collective is a bi-coastal artist-led and women-led internationally touring dance company bringing the richness and depth of kathak, Indian classical dance to contemporary audiences worldwide through traditional works and cross-genre collaborations. Learn more at leela.dance/the-collective.

TICKETS

Regular-priced tickets, and student-discount tickets are available online at newyorklivearts.org/event/independent-works-reclaiming-the-divine-feminine.

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

NJYS HONORS JAZZ & CLASSICAL ICONS PERFORMING AT BLACK HISTORY MONTH EDUCATION CONCERT

BY MABEL PAIS

The New Jersey Youth Symphony (NJYS) will perform a free Education Concert on Wednesday, February 21 at 10:00-11 a.m. in the Union County Performing Arts Center (UCPAC) at 1601 Irving Street, Rahway, NJ 07065.

Nearly 1,000 elementary and middle school students will be in attendance - 600 students from Union County public schools and 300 students from Paterson Public Schools - for this special event to celebrate Black History Month with powerful music selections by Duke Ellington and William Grant Still. Led by Helen H. Cha-Pyo, the NJYS Youth Symphony will be joined by guest

artist and tenor saxophonist Lance Bryant for the performance.

Artistic Director and Principal Conductor Helen H. Cha-Pyo said, "As we celebrate our 45th anniversary season, the New Jersey Youth Symphony remains dedicated to training its students in a supportive yet rigorous environment, while encouraging them to use music to serve and inspire others. With our NJYS Youth Symphony musicians, predominantly high school students who serve as positive role models, we aim to ignite passion and excellence in our younger audience members."

"Hosting this educational concert is central to our

mission, as it celebrates the legacies of Black composers including Duke Ellington and William Grant Still, while offering an immersive experience for attendees. Through creative and engaging introductions to each section of the orchestra, we aim to make this concert memorable and educational. Opening with the singing of the Black National Anthem 'Lift Every Voice and Sing' underscores our dedication to celebrating the contributions of Black artists to our cultural heritage. We are honored to share this musical experience with our community, fostering a deeper appreciation for diversity and inclusion in the arts."

NJYS HONORS BLACK HISTORY MONTH WITH CONCERT

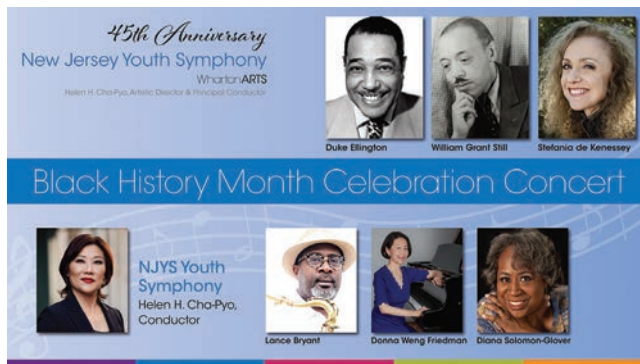
BY MABEL PAIS

The New Jersey Youth Symphony (NJYS), a program of Wharton Arts, presents a Black History Month Celebration Concert

(whartonarts.org/calendar/black-history-month-celebration-concert) on Sunday, February 25 at 3:00 p.m. at the Union County Performing Arts Center (UCPAC), at 1601 Irving Street, Rahway, NJ 07065. Conductor Helen H. Cha-Pyo will lead the NJYS Youth Symphony in Duke Ellington's 'Three Black Kings' featuring tenor saxophonist Lance Bryant, William Grant Still's 'Afro American Symphony,' and the world premiere of Stefania De Kennesey's 'Microvids for Symphony Orchestra' and 'Piano' featuring pianist Donna Weng Friedmann and narrator Diana Solomon-Glover.

TICKETS

To purchase tickets, go to UCPAC.org. Tickets are priced for adults; students and seniors get discounted tickets. Use code FAMILYPACK for five tickets.



Black History Month Celebration Concert Credit / Wharton Arts

Said Cha-Pyo, "This season holds special significance as we celebrate Duke Ellington's 125th birth year, and the excitement is palpable as NJYS prepares to perform his final composition, 'Three Black Kings,' featuring the incredible Lance Bryant on tenor saxophone. Additionally, marking the 45th season of the New Jersey Youth Symphony (NJYS), each signature concert features premiere

performances of new works by BIPOC and women composers. I am particularly thrilled about presenting Stefania De Kennesey's 'Microvids' with dynamic pianist Donna Weng Friedmann and eloquent reciter Diana Solomon-Glover. Closing the concert is William Grant Still's beloved 'Afro American Symphony,' paying homage to the Dean of African American Composers. Our dedicated youth musicians and I are passionately committed to delivering a program that celebrates the richness of Black excellence, and we hope you will join us in this musical celebration."

"I'm so excited to perform as a featured soloist with the New Jersey Youth Symphony," said Bryant. "It's a rare experience to play with a full orchestra. In fact, it's a first for me! And all the more special, since we're playing Duke Ellington's last extended composition, written at the end of a long life of composing music of the best quality. 'Three Black Kings' is everything we come to expect from Ellington. It's rich, elegant, adventurous, and soulful-a final masterpiece from our maestro."

NJYS HOLDS ANNUAL OPEN REHEARSALS WEEK

BY MABEL PAIS

The New Jersey Youth Symphony (NJYS), a program of Wharton Arts, holds its annual Open Rehearsals Week (whartonarts.org/calendar/2024-open-rehearsals-week), February 26-March 3, 2024.

Young musicians in grades 2-11 are warmly welcomed to meet the passionate NJYS conductors and immerse themselves in a live rehearsal at this behind-the-scenes look at any of the New Jersey Youth Symphony's 15 ensembles. Open Rehearsals Week is free but advance registration is required. To view the Open Rehearsals Week schedule and sign up to attend, visit NJYS.org.

NJYS CELEBRATES 45 YEARS

BY MABEL PAIS

Wharton Arts celebrates the New Jersey Youth Symphony's 45th Anniversary Season this year with an exciting Alumni Weekend, May 4-5, 2024, and 45th Anniversary Concert on Sunday, May 5 at 3:00 p.m. at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark. Throughout the 2023-24 season, NJYS honors its vibrant history and bright future with premieres of new compositions and beloved music from the inaugural season in 1979. Alumni are warmly invited to perform alongside current students at the 2024 Playathon and spring concerts in May. For more information, go to NJYS.org.

WHARTON ARTS

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

Wharton Arts is New Jersey's largest independent non-profit community performing arts education center serving



Students at Rehearsal

Credit / Wharton Arts

over 2,000 students through a range of classes and ensembles.

Wharton Arts is located in Berkeley Heights, New Providence, and Paterson, NJ and reaches students from 12 counties. All of Wharton Arts' extraordinary teaching artists, faculty members, and conductors

hold degrees in their teaching specialty and have been vetted and trained to enable Wharton's students to achieve their personal best. Learn more at whartonarts.org.

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

ATHENA FILM FESTIVAL READIES FOR 14TH EDITION

BY MABEL PAIS

Opening Film Co- Producer Jannat Gargi of 'COPA 71'

Co-Producer Sapana Sakya of 'Here, Hopefully'

Producer Reaa Puri of 'Tracing History'



Banu (Feature) Credit / athenafilmfestival.com

The Athena Film Festival (AFF) at Barnard College, a partnership between Barnard's AthenaCenter for Leadership and the initiative Women and Hollywood, will take place from February 29 through March 3 for its 14th edition on the Barnard campus, 3009 Broadway, New York, NY 10027.

The annual festival showcases narrative features, documentaries, and short films; in-depth conversations with filmmakers and thought leaders; and a wide variety of events focused on amplifying women's leadership through storytelling around women's sports, Indigenous perspectives, reproductive justice, disability representation, and more.

2024 ATHENA FILM FESTIVAL LINEUP

The lineup and full descriptions can be found below and on the AFF website (aff24.eventive.org). A selection of shorts will also be available to be screened through the festival's virtual platform.

NARRATIVE FEATURES

Animalia

France, Morocco, Qatar; Director, Writer: Sofia Alaoui;

Producers: Margaux Lorier, Toufik Ayadi, Christophe Barral

Dancing Queen

Norway; Director: Aurora Gossé; Writer: Silje Holtet;

Producer: Thomas Robsahm

Earth Mama

USA, United Kingdom; Director, Writer: Savannah Leaf;

Producers: Sam Bisbee, Shirley O'Connor, Medb Riordan, Cody Ryder

Fancy Dance

USA; Director, Writer, Producer: Erica Tremblay; Writer: Miciana Alise;

Producers: Deidre Backs, Heather Rae, Nina Yang Bongiovi, Tommy Oliver

Fitting In

Canada; Director, Writer: Molly McGlynn; Producer: Jennifer Weiss

Girl

United Kingdom; Director, Writer: Adura Onashile;

Producers: Rosie Crerar, Ciara Barry

The Persian Version

USA; Director, Writer, Producer: Maryam Keshavarz;

Producers: Peter Block, Luca Borghese,

Anne Carey, Ben Howe, Cory Neal

Until Branches Bend

Canada, Switzerland; Director, Writer: Sophie Jarvis; Producers: Sara Blake, Magali Gillon-Krizaj, Tyler Hagan, Olga Lamontanara, Michela Pini

DOCUMENTARY FEATURES



Bye Bye Tiberias (Documentary)
Credit / athenafilmfestival.com

Breaking the News

USA; Directors, Producers: Heather Courtney, Princess A. Hairston, Chelsea Hernandez; Writer: Jamie Boyle; Producer: Diane Quon

COPA 71

Opening Film - New York Premiere
United Kingdom; Directors: Rachel Ramsay, James Erskine;

Producers: Victoria Gregory, Anna Godas, Jannat Gargi

The Disappearance of Shere Hite

USA; Director, Producer: Nicole Newnham; Producers: Molly O'Brien, R.J. Cutler, Elise Pearlstein, Kimberley Ferdinando, Trevor Smith

Going to Mars: The Nikki Giovanni Project

USA; Directors, Writers, Producers: Michèle Stephenson, Joe Brewster;

Producers: Tommy Oliver, Taraji P. Henson

Hummingbirds

USA; Directors: Silvia Del Carmen Castaños, Estefanía Contreras

Co-Directors, Producers: Jillian Schlesinger, Miguel Drake-McLaughlin, Diane Ng, Ana Rodríguez-Falcó; Producers: Leslie Benavides, Rivkah Beth Medow

Is There Anybody Out There?

United Kingdom; Director: Ella Glendining; Producer: Janine Marmot

No One Asked You

USA; Director, Writer, Producer: Ruth Leitman;

Producers: Rachel Rozycki, Andrea Raby

Periodical

USA; Director: Lina Lyte Plioplyte; Producer: Pegah Farahmand

The Philadelphia Eleven

USA; Director, Producer: Margo Guernsey; Producer: Nikki Bramley

Q

Lebanon, USA; Director, Producer: Jude Chehab; Producer: Fahd Ahmed

Twice Colonized

Canada, Denmark, Greenland; Director, Co-Writer: Lin Alluna;

Writer: Aaju Peter; Producer: Emile Hertling Péronard

Uncharted

USA; Director, Producer: Beth Aala

Your Fat Friend

USA, United Kingdom; Director, Producer: Jeanie Finlay

SHORTS

As You Are

USA; Director, Writer, Producer: Daisy Friedman;

Producers: Justine Sweetman, Eve Robitshek, Aspen Nelson

Beneath the Surface - New York Premiere

US; Director: Cai Thomas; Producer: Lauren Grace Cargo

FLOAT! - New York Premiere

USA; Director: Azza Cohen; Producers: Kathleen Borschow, Melissa Fajardo

Following Valeria - US Premiere

Germany; Director, Writer: Nicola Fegg; Producer: Julia Niethammer

Here, Hopefully

USA; Director: Hao Zhou; Producers: Tyler Hill, Sanjna Singh, Sue Ding, Chloé Walters-Wallace, Sapana Sakya

Hex the Patriarchy

USA; Director, Producer: Anne Brashier; Writer, Producer: Heather Muriel Nguyen; Producer: Xan Churchwell

How to Carry Water

USA; Director, Writer: Sasha Wortzel; Producers: Colleen Cassingham, Jess Devaney, Anya Rous

In the End We're All Music - US Premiere

Germany; Director: Katharina Schneidenbühl; Writer: Nathalie Zeidler; Producers: Felix Sommer, Thomas Slatter

ISTINA (Wahrheit) [Truth]

Serbia, Germany; Director: Tamara Denic; Writer: David M. Lorenz;

Producer: Christian Sié

MADELAINE - New York Premiere

Nicaragua; Director: Leonor Zúniga; Producer: Roberto Guillén

Makeover Movie

USA; Director, Writer, Producer: Sue Ding

MnM

USA; Director: Twiggy Pucci Garçon; Producers: Colleen Cassingham, Jess Devaney

The Night Doctrine

USA; Directors, Writers, Producers: Mauricio Rodriguez Pons, Almudena Toral; Writer, Producer: Lynzy Billing

Run Amok - New York Premiere

USA; Director, Writer: Nitzan Mager; Producer: Lela Meadow-Conner

The Script

USA; Directors: Brit Fryer, Noah Schamus; Writer: Noah Schamus;

Producers: Colleen Cassingham, Jess Devaney

SULAM (The Ladder)

USA; Director, Writer, Producer: Noam Argov;

Producers: Bethiael Alemayoh, Sappir Argov

Take Me Home

USA; Director, Writer: Liz Sargent; Producer: Minos Papas

Tracing History

USA; Director, Writer: Jalena Keane-Lee
Producer: Reaa Puri

TICKETS

Passes and tickets (aff24.eventive.org) and updates and 2024 honorees to be announced. Visit the Athena Film Festival (athenafilmfestival.com) website for regular updates and more information.

THE ATHENA FILM FESTIVAL

Founded in 2011, the Athena Film Festival (athenafilmfestival.com) champions diverse, nuanced, and complex stories of women leaders through its annual showcase of narrative films, documentaries, and short films, alongside powerful and thought-provoking conversations, and its numerous year-round creative development programs. To date, more than 540 films have been screened at the festival - 90% directed by women or nonbinary individuals - and Athena's creative development programs have supported more than 700 filmmakers.

THE ATHENA CENTER AT BARNARD COLLEGE

The Athena Center for Leadership (athenacenter.barnard.edu) is a hub for changemakers at Barnard College. The Center prepares Barnard students to lead change in this extraordinary moment and throughout their lives.

WOMEN AND HOLLYWOOD

Women and Hollywood (womenandhollywood.com) educates, advocates, and agitates for gender parity and inclusion across the entertainment industry. Over the past 16 years, it has grown to be one of the most respected initiatives focused on women's issues and popular culture, and its founder, Melissa Silverstein, has become a well-respected leader on the subject.

BARNARD COLLEGE

Barnard College (barnard.edu) provides a singular educational experience, as a world-renowned college focused on excellence across the arts and sciences, with all the academic resources of Columbia University and the City of New York as an extended classroom. Founded in 1889, Barnard was one of the few colleges in the nation where women could receive the same rigorous and challenging education available to men. Today, Barnard is one of the most selective academic institutions in the country and remains devoted to empowering extraordinary women to become even more exceptional.

ARTEMIS RISING FOUNDATION

Artemis Rising Foundation is dedicated to supporting media projects that transform our culture and challenge the status quo. Led by its founder and CEO, Regina K. Scully, the foundation champions powerful stories about some of the most challenging social justice issues of our time - including gender bias, healing, trauma, mental health, addiction, and women's empowerment.

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



Hrithik Roshan on crutches after muscle injury

Hrithik Roshan took to his Instagram handle and revealed he had been injured. He posted a photo of himself on crutches and said it was due to a muscle pull. He narrated what strength means to him as he recalled the time when his grandfather was injured but refused to be in a wheelchair.

In the mirror selfie, the Fighter actor is seen in his casual look while standing with the help of his crutches. He wrote, "Good afternoon. How many of you out there ever needed to be on crutches or a wheelchair n how did that make you feel?"

Remembering the time when his grandfather injured himself, he added, "I remember my grandfather refusing to sit on a wheelchair at the airport because it wouldn't align with his own mental image of himself as "strong". I remember saying "But Deda, its just an injury and nothing to do with how old you are! It will help heal the injury n not damage it further!" It made me so sad to see how strong he needed to be just to hide the fear n embarrassment on the inside. I couldn't make sense of it. Made me feel helpless. I argued that the age factor is not applicable cause he needs the wheelchair for an injury and not his old age. He refused n kept the strong image on display for strangers (who literally didn't care). It worsened his pain and delayed the healing."

He went on to talk about how men are conditioned to believe that they are strong and continued, "There definitely is merit in that kind of conditioning, its a virtue. It's the mentality of a soldier. My dad comes from the same conditioning. MEN are strong. But if you say soldiers never need crutches And even when they medically do, they must refuse, just for the sake of keeping the illusion of strong intact, Then I just think that the virtue has been stretched so far that it borders on plain stupidity."

Sharing his take on strength, he added, "I believe true strength is being relaxed, composed and fully aware that nothing, not crutches, not a wheelchair, not any inability or vulnerability - and certainly not any sitting position can lessen or alter the image of that GIANT that you are on the inside. Strength is not always being Rambo against all odds with a machine gun saying "f**k em!" That's applicable sure. Sometimes. And it's the kind we all aspire for. Even me."

Teri Baaton Mein Aisa Uljha Jiya box office collection sees huge jump on Valentine's Day

Teri Baaton Mein Aisa Uljha Jiya box office collection day 6: Shahid Kapoor and Kriti Sanon's romantic comedy earned almost as much on Wednesday as it did on its opening day in India. As per a report by Sacnilk.com, Teri Baaton Mein Aisa Uljha Jiya, made almost double of its Feb 13 earnings – Rs 3.85 crore nett – on Feb 14.

Per the portal, Teri Baaton Mein Aisa Uljha Jiya collected roughly Rs 6.75 crore nett at the domestic box office on Feb 14, taking its India total to around Rs 41.35 crore nett in six days. On its opening day, the Kriti Sanon and Shahid Kapoor film had earned Rs 6.7 crore nett in India.

Over the opening weekend, Teri Baaton Mein Aisa Uljha Jiya saw a jump in numbers at the domestic box office, collecting Rs 9.65 crore nett and Rs 10.75 crore nett on Saturday and Sunday, respectively. On its first Monday, Teri Baaton Mein Aisa Uljha Jiya saw a dip in numbers, earning Rs 3.65 crore nett in India.

Written and directed by filmmakers Amit Joshi and Aradhana Sah, Teri Baaton Mein Aisa Uljha Jiya features Shahid Kapoor as a robot scientist, who falls in love and decides to marry a robot, named Sifra (Kriti Sanon). Teri Baaton Mein Aisa Uljha Jiya is produced by Maddock Films, and also stars veteran



stars Dharmendra and Dimple Kapadia.

An excerpt from Hindustan Times' review of the film read, "Teri Baaton Mein Aisa Uljha Jiya puts all other futuristic films and shows to shame that entertained us or at least tried to keep us hooked to the world of robots and science. Remember Rajinikanth as

Chitti? He was endearing and kept us intrigued each time he pulled off a stunt onscreen or did some mischief. He was genuinely funny! Rewind a little more and pick TV series Small Wonder or its desi version Karishma Ka Karishma, where a female robot lives with a family as their second child." *Source: HT*

Rakul Preet Singh, Jackky Bhagnani to get married on Feb 21; wedding card surfaces

Bollywood actress Rakul Preet Singh and producer-actor Jackky Bhagnani are all set to tie the knot on February 21.

The painted card has the mandap surrounded by coconut trees and the sea in the backdrop.

The opening card is in blue and white which has the hashtag #ABDONOBHAGNANI.

After dating for a few years, Rakul and Jackky have chosen Goa to be the venue for their wedding. The two had reportedly fallen in love in the same location, according to reports. Jackky's debut film was 'Kal Kissne Dekha', which came out in 2009. He then starred in films such as 'F.A.L.T.U', 'Ajab Gazabb Love', 'Rangrezz' and 'Youngistaan' among many others. Rakul made her acting debut with the Kannada film 'Gilli' in 2009. She stepped into the world of Hindi cinema with 'Yaariyan' after which she starred in films such as 'De De Pyaar De', 'Runway 34', 'Chhatriwali', 'I Love You' and 'Doctor G' among many others.





Jennifer Lopez, Ben Affleck twin in black

Jennifer Lopez and Ben Affleck attended the Los Angeles premiere of her *This Is Me...Now: A Love Story* at the Dolby Theatre on Feb 13 night.

Derek Hough, America Ferrera, Fat Joe, and Xochitl Gomez are among the other celebrities who attended the red carpet debut.

Her new musical film, *This Is Me...Now: A Love Story*, is a musical and visual retelling of the real events. It is a sequel to her 2002 album *This Is Me...Then*. She wore an embellished black and silver strapless gown. The velvet bodice included a plunging V-neck that rested right above her waistline. Ben donned a black suit for the day.

The project, which included appearances from stars such as Trevor Noah and Jane Fonda, has been a long time coming for Lopez who revealed at a press conference last week that her real-life love story with Affleck pushed her to complete it.

Ewan McGregor joins Anne Hathaway in David Robert Mitchell's adventure film

Ewan McGregor will star opposite Anne Hathaway in an untitled adventure film directed by David Robert Mitchell for Warner Bros. Ewan McGregor, who is known for working in the TV series *Obi-Wan Kenobi*, has signed on to act opposite Anne Hathaway in Warner Bros Motion Picture Group's presently unannounced new picture from David Robert Mitchell, the director of *It Follows* and *Under the Silver Lake*.

The film's plot is unknown, but it has previously been described as a 'thrilling ride' that will be shot in Imax. Mitchell will direct from his own original story and co-produce with JJ Abrams and Hannah Minghella for Bad Robot, as well as Matt Jackson of Jackson Pictures. Jake Weiner and Chris Bender from Good Fear Content will serve as executive producers. Sheila Walcott and Zach Hamby are in charge of the project for Warner Bros. Motion Picture Group (WBMPG).

McGregor recently reprised his role as Jedi Master Obi-Wan Kenobi in Disney+'s Emmy-nominated limited series by the same name. He previously earned an Emmy for his starring performance in Netflix's *Halston* and has also appeared in films such as *Birds of Prey*, *Doctor Sleep* and *Christopher Robin*. He will shortly appear in the Showtime and Paramount Global miniseries *A Gentleman in Moscow*,



which he also executive produces.

His other films coming up for release include Niclas Larsson's TIFF dramedy *Mother Couch*, in which he stars opposite Rhys Ifans, Taylor Russell and Ellen Burstyn; and *Bleeding Love*, the

SXSW-premiering drama he produced and starred in, opposite daughter Clara McGregor. McGregor is represented by UTA and attorney Robert Offer of Sloane, Offer, Weber & Dern.

Source: ANI

Julia Roberts was subjected to 'awful' bullying on 'Steel Magnolias' set

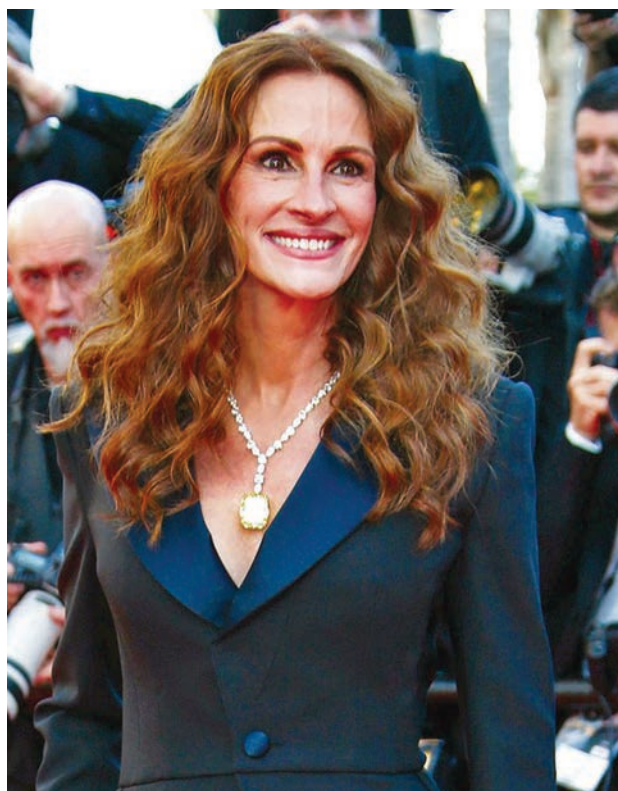
Actress Sally Field has shared that Hollywood star Julia Roberts was subjected to 'awful' bullying on the set of *Steel Magnolias*.

The 77-year-old actress was part of an all-star cast for the 1989 film alongside Shirley MacLaine and Dolly Parton, but alleged that the then-newcomer, Roberts, who was nominated for an Oscar for her role as the tragic Shelby, was always being 'picked on' by director Herbert Ross. So along with colleagues, she had to 'come to her aid' and 'rally around her' during production.

She shared, "Herb was pretty much giving me the freedom to do whatever. But he was very, very, very hard on Julia. If you ever talk to Julia, she'll tell you. We would all rally around Julia, because she was the baby. She was sort of the newcomer. And she was wonderful, and he just picked on her. It was awful."

The Academy Award-winning star was then asked if she was subjected to the same sort of behaviour from Herb — who died in 2001 at the age of 74 — but she insisted that would never have happened because she was a 'warrior' despite her small stature.

Source: IANS



Expensive to be famous, says Sharon Stone

Actress Sharon Stone claims that being famous is a drag, as she had to keep picking up \$3,000 dinner tabs! Sharon said she regularly paid huge dinner cheques when she was out: "You go out to dinner, and there are 15 people at the table, and who gets the cheque? You get the \$3,000 dinner check every single time." She also said it was 'very expensive to be famous'. But she said she was far from stingy.

In her 2021 memoir *The Beauty of Living Twice*, Sharon said she handed a huge chunk of her pay cheque for 1995 Western *The Quick and the Dead* to Leonardo DiCaprio, 49, so he could also feature in the movie.

She told about giving the actor the cash after seeing him in *What's Eating Gilbert Grape*, "He was a superstar. I wanted to be in a great movie, not a stupid movie, so I got the best people to surround me that I possibly could."



SUNAK'S PARTY LOSES 2 BYPOLLS TO LABOUR

LONDON (TIP): British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak suffered two heavy blows to his leadership ahead of a general election later this year as the Opposition Labour Party overturned strong Conservative majorities to win by-elections in England on February 16.

Labour's Dan Egan won the House of Commons seat of Kingswood, south-west England, and the party's Gen Kitchen won Wellingborough, in the East Midlands region of England. The results reflect double trouble for the British Indian leader as the Conservatives had won both seats by decisive margins at the last general election under Boris Johnson in December 2019.

Another emerging trend saw the far-right Reform UK – the re-organised anti-immigration Brexit Party – coming third, ahead of the Liberal Democrats and Green Party, piling further pressure on the Conservatives on contentious issues such as migration. (PTI)

ALBANESE 1ST OZ PM TO GET ENGAGED WHILE IN OFFICE

SYDNEY (TIP): It is not often, especially on Valentine's Day, for a Prime Minister of a major country to blush on his official X handle. But that is what Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese did in between posts expressing solidarity with Ukraine and welcoming the peaceful conduct of elections in Indonesia.

Albanese said his live-in partner for three years Judie Haydon accepted his marriage proposal made on a balcony of his official residence, known as the Lodge, on Valentine's Day after a romantic dinner at an Italian restaurant.

"It is such a joy to be able to share this news with people and it is wonderful I found a partner who I want to spend the rest of my life with. Last night was a very great occasion here at the Lodge. We couldn't be more happy," he posted on X along with a video of the couple walking hand in hand.

Smiling widely, his would-be wife, a financial services professional, said the couple was overwhelmed by congratulatory messages, even from people they did not know.

Asked by a reporter whether the wedding would be held before Australia's next election, Albanese replied in the video, "We will now have those discussions between us, which I think people would understand, and sort out those details, but we just want to live in the moment at this point." Albanese, 60, has an adult son with his first wife. They divorced after a 19-year marriage. (TNS)

Russian Opposition leader and Putin critic Alexei Navalny dies in prison

MOSCOW (TIP): Alexei Navalny, Russia's most famous Opposition leader, died on February 16 after collapsing and losing consciousness at the penal colony north of the Arctic Circle where he was serving a long jail term, the Russian prison service said.

Navalny, 47, rose to prominence more than a decade ago by lampooning President Vladimir Putin and the Russian elite whom he accused of vast corruption, avarice and opulence.

The Federal Penitentiary Service of the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous District said in a statement that Navalny "felt unwell" after a walk at the IK-3 penal colony in Kharp, about 1,900 km (1,200 miles) north east of Moscow.

He lost consciousness almost immediately, it said.

"All necessary resuscitation measures were carried out, which did not yield positive results. Doctors of the ambulance stated the death of the convict," the prison service said, adding that causes of death were being established.

Putin has been told about Navalny's death, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said. Putin, who is running for re-election in a month, was shown on a television clip visiting a factory in the Urals.

Supporters of Navalny said they could not confirm he was dead, but that if he was then they believed he had been killed.

"Russian authorities publish a confession that they killed Alexei Navalny in prison," Navalny aide Leonid Volkov wrote on social media. "We do not have any way to confirm it or to prove this isn't true."

Condemnation quickly poured in from Western governments.

"Dreadful news about Alexei Navalny..



If the report about his death in Russian prison is true it represents another terrible crime by Putin's regime," Swedish Foreign Minister Tobias Billstrom said on X.

"The ruthlessness against Navalny shows again why it is necessary to continue to fight against authoritarianism." DEATH IN JAIL

Navalny's lawyer was on his way to the "Polar Wolf" prison in Kharp where Navalny died. Russian state television showed a press conference by the central bank.

Russian newspaper editor and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Dmitry Muratov told Reuters on Friday the death of jailed opposition leader Alexei Navalny was "murder", and said that he believed harsh treatment had led to his demise.

"My sincere belief is that it was the conditions of detention that led to

Navalny's death ... His sentence was supplemented by murder," Muratov said, offering condolences to his family.

Navalny earned admiration from Russia's disparate opposition for voluntarily returning to Russia in 2021 from Germany, where he had been treated for what Western laboratory tests showed was an attempt to poison him with a nerve agent.

Navalny said at the time that he was poisoned in Siberia in August 2020. The Kremlin denied trying to kill him and said there was no evidence he was poisoned with a nerve agent.

In an interview in Moscow in 2011, Navalny was asked by Reuters if he was afraid of challenging Putin's system.

"That's the difference between me and you: you are afraid and I am not afraid," he said. "I realize there is danger, but why should I be afraid?" Reuters

Gunshots fired at house of Hardeep Singh Nijjar's aide in Canada

BRAMPTON (TIP): A gunfire was directed at a half-completed house of Inderjit Singh Gosal, said to be aide of slain Hardeep Singh Nijjar, in Brampton. The banned Sikhs for Justice (SFJ) said separatists would hold a rally outside the Indian consulate in Toronto on February 17.

The SFJ said a construction crew found a bullet hole in a window of an unfinished house of Gosal. The Peel Regional police said they were not ruling out more shots having been fired at the house. The police also said it was "too early" to link the shooting to Gosal's role in Khalistani activities.

"No threat and violence can stop me from advocating for the liberation of Punjab from Indian occupation," Gosal



stated. A similar incident took place on February 1 when the local police briefly arrested two minors for allegedly firing shots at the Surrey residence of Simranjeet Singh, said to be Nijjar's aide. (TNS)

JAPAN'S SPACECRAFT TRANSMITS DATA OF 10 LUNAR ROCKS

TOKYO (TIP): An unmanned lunar spacecraft has captured and transmitted data analyzing 10 lunar rocks, a greater-than-expected achievement that could help provide clues about the origin of the moon, a Japan space agency official said February 14. For four days, the Smart Lander for Investigating Moon, or SLIM — which landed on the moon last month — has used its multi-band spectral camera to study rock composition, and worked on examining lunar rocks, said Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency project manager Shinichiro Sakai.

The lunar mission is Japan's first. The spacecraft made a historic precision touchdown on January 20, though it landed the wrong way up, with its solar panels initially unable to see the sun and was turned off after a brief communication with Earth. (AP)

Israel raids Gaza hospital as Rafah concerns deepen

JERUSALEM/DOHA (TIP): Israeli forces said on February 15 they had raided the biggest functioning hospital in Gaza as footage showed chaos, shouting and gunfire in dark corridors filled with dust and smoke. Israel's military called the raid on Nasser Hospital "precise and limited" and said it was based on information that Hamas militants were hiding and had kept hostages in the facility, with some bodies of captives possibly there. Hamas called that lies.

Health authorities in the Hamas-run Palestinian enclave said Israel had forced out displaced people and families of medical staff sheltering in Nasser Hospital.

Some 2,000 Palestinians arrived in the southern border city of Rafah overnight while others pushed north to Deir Al-Balah in central Gaza, they said.

Israel's air and ground offensive since October 7 has since devastated tiny, crowded Gaza, killing 28,663 people and forcing nearly all its more than 2 million inhabitants from their homes.

Fighting at the hospital comes as Israel faces growing international pressure to show restraint, after vowing to press its offensive into Rafah, the last relatively safe place in Gaza.

Israel has also claimed that its air strike in the Lebanese city of Nabatieh on Wednesday night had killed a senior commander of Hezbollah's elite Radwan Force, his deputy and a third fighter.

Meanwhile, Hezbollah said Israel would



"pay the price" for killing 10 civilians, including five children, in southern Lebanon, the deadliest day for Lebanese civilians in four months of hostilities across the Lebanese-Israeli border.

Hezbollah said three of its fighters had been killed but did not identify any as commanders, which it has done in the past. Seven of the civilians were killed in Nabatieh late on Wednesday when a rare Israeli strike on the southern city hit a multi-storey building, sources in Lebanon said. The dead were from the same extended family, and included three children. — Reuters

NO HOSTAGE IN HOSPITAL: HAMAS

Israel says raid on Nasser Hospital was 'precise and limited' as it was based on information that Hamas militants were hiding and had kept hostages in the facility. Hamas has rubbished Israel's claim.

ISRAEL TO PAY PRICE, WARNS HEZBOLLAH

Hezbollah says Israel will "pay the price" for killing 10 civilians in southern Lebanon on Wednesday night. Israel claimed a senior commander of Hezbollah's elite Radwan Force was among those dead. (Reuters)

6 KILLED, 18 INJURED BY MISSILE STRIKE IN RUSSIAN CITY OF BELGOROD, OFFICIALS SAY

KYIV (UKRAINE) (TIP): A missile strike on the Russian city of Belgorod near the Ukraine border on February 15 killed six people, including a child, and injured 18 others, a Russian official said. It was the latest in exchanges of long-range missile and rocket fire in Russia's war on Ukraine.

Hours earlier, Russia fired two dozen cruise and ballistic missiles at a broad area of Ukraine, hitting multiple regions after a midnight strike in Ukraine's northeast killed five people in an apartment building, authorities said.

Five of the 18 people injured in Belgorod, a city of around 340,000 people, were children, regional Gov. Vyacheslav Gladkov said on Telegram. Tass news agency reported that 15 people were hospitalised.

A shopping centre and a school stadium were hit in Belgorod, according to Roman Starovoit, the governor of Russia's Kursk region, which is next to Belgorod. "There are many casualties: dead and wounded," he said on Telegram.

Russia's Ministry of Defence said air defence systems destroyed 14 missiles over the Belgorod region that were launched by Ukraine using a RM-70 Vampire multiple launch rocket system.

Belgorod city, 25 miles (40 kilometres) north of the Ukrainian border, has been a regular target of Ukrainian fire, putting its residents on edge. Dozens of people were killed and injured in an attack there over Russia's New Year holiday weekend.

Those assaults have undermined President Vladimir Putin's attempts to reassure Russians that life in the country is largely going on as normal.

In Ukraine, five people were killed and 10 were wounded in the nighttime attack on the village of Velykyi Burluk, in the Kharkiv border region, regional Gov. Oleh Syniehubov said.

Hours later, missiles targeted the capital Kyiv, the southern Zaporizhzhia region and Lviv in western Ukraine, among other places. The Ukrainian air force said it intercepted 13 of the 26 missiles fired across the country. Frequent Russian long-range bombardments are occurring as the almost two-year war has become bogged down in mostly trench and artillery warfare, which is destructive but is not bringing much change to the 1,500-kilometer (930-mile) front line.

Thursday's salvos on Ukraine were notable for the geographic spread of its targets and the wide variety of missiles deployed by the Kremlin's forces.

Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy says that one of his priorities is improving Ukraine's air defence systems. (AP)

Linked to rights abuse, Prabowo Subianto claims victory in Indonesia poll

JAKARTA (TIP): Defence Minister Prabowo Subianto, an ex-General linked to past human rights atrocities, claimed victory in Indonesia's presidential election on February 14 based on unofficial tallies.

The 72-year-old candidate, who was once banned by the US from entering for two decades due to his human rights record, told thousands of supporters in a sports stadium in the capital, Jakarta, that the victory, according to an early, unofficial "quick count," was "the victory of all Indonesians."

There was no declaration by electoral officials and the two former provincial governors who also contested the election in the world's third-largest democracy have not conceded defeat.

Subianto was an army general during the brutal period of the Suharto dictatorship that ended just over 25 years ago. He served as a special forces commander in a unit linked to torture and disappearances, allegations that he vehemently denies.

According to the unofficial tallies conducted by Indonesian polling agencies, Subianto had between 57% and



59% of votes, with more than 80 per cent of the vote counted in polling places sampled. The quick counts are based on the actual vote count at a sample of polling stations across Indonesia. The laborious official count may not be finished for up to a month, but quick counts have provided an accurate picture of the results of all four presidential elections held in Indonesia since it began direct voting in 2004.

"We are grateful for the quick count results," he said in the speech. "We should not be arrogant, we should not be proud, we should not be euphoric, we still have to be humble, this victory must be a victory for all Indonesian people."

To avoid a runoff against his rivals, Anies Baswedan and Ganjar Pranowo, Subianto needs more than 50% of all votes cast and at least 20% in each of the country's provinces. — AP

PPP, PML-N PARLEYS ON POWER SHARING DEFERRED

ISLAMABAD (TIP): A meeting between the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) coordination committees, which was expected to take place on Friday for finalising government formation in the Centre, has been postponed, according to a media report.

The meeting was reportedly postponed as the PML-N's committee has yet to consult on the matter with the party's senior leadership, Geo News reported. The second round of talks between the two parties to decide on the power-sharing formula between them for the formation of a coalition government will be held on February 11, it said.

The Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari-led PPP has promised to back PML-N in the formation of a government as well as the election of the next prime minister, on the condition that Nawaz Sharif's party will support them in elections to key constitutional offices like that of the President. (PTI)

COALITION DEAL FINALISED, SHEHBAZ SHARIF SET TO BE PAKISTAN PM

ISLAMABAD/LAHORE (TIP): A day after being nominated by the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), 72-year-old Shehbaz Sharif, the younger brother of Nawaz Sharif, is very likely to become Pakistan's next PM as a post-poll alliance of leading political parties, led by them, struck a deal to form a coalition government. The last week's elections produced a split mandate. The surprise move means the party of Imran Khan will not be in power, despite independent candidates backed by his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) winning the maximum number of seats in the February 8 elections marred by allegations of rigging.

Earlier, Shehbaz along with Asif Ali Zardari of Pakistan Peoples Party, Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui of Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P) met at the residence of Shujaat Hussain of Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) for a consultative meeting and agreed on government formation. "Today we have united to tell the nation that we all accept the split mandate. I am thankful to Zardari and Bilawal (Bhutto) that they decided for their party to vote for the PML-N," he said.

PML-N Information Secretary Marriyum Aurangzeb said PML-N senior vice president Maryam Nawaz, considered the political heir of Nawaz Sharif, had been nominated for the post of the CM of Punjab province. (PTI)

PTI names Ayub Khan's grandson PM candidate

ISLAMABAD (TIP): The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), led by jailed ex-PM Imran Khan, on February 15 nominated generay secretary Umar Ayub Khan, grandson of former military dictator Ayub Khan, as its PM candidate.

Besides, the party gave a call for nationwide peaceful protests on Saturday against "rigging" in elections besides its marginalisation in the country's politics, saying it would not allow the people's mandate for it to be stolen by rivals parties. Two of the major political parties — the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) — had on Tuesday stated they would form a coalition government after the February 8 inconclusive elections. Their move means that imran's party will not be in power, despite independent candidates backed by it gaining the maximum number of seats in the National Assembly.

In a change of tactics, the PTI said it would hold countrywide protests over the weekend against the alleged rigging in elections while joining the national and provincial assemblies.



The party previously had opted to either boycott or walk out of the assemblies while launching protests but the new strategy showed that it wanted to build pressure from within parliament and also outside on the streets to press for its demand to rectify the results, which it

says were rigged.

PTI senior leader Barrister Gohar Ali Khan told journalists after meeting Imran Khan in Adiala Jail that his party chief has given instructions to hold peaceful protests across the country. (PTI)

'Operation Dunki': Nepal Police bust trafficking racket in Kathmandu; free 11 Indian hostages, mostly students from Punjab and Haryana

KATHMANDU (TIP): Eleven Indian nationals, mostly students, held hostage for over two weeks with a promise to facilitate travel to the USA, were rescued as Nepal police busted a human trafficking racket and arrested eight Indian mafia members along with their Nepali accomplice here.

Nepal police named it 'Operation Dunki' as the case turned out to be similar to the situation shown in popular Indian actor Shah Rukh Khan's 2023 movie Dunki. The rescued persons and mafia members came mostly from the Indian states of Punjab and Haryana.

The 11 persons were kept as hostages in a rented house for more than two weeks on the outskirts of Kathmandu, police said on February 15.

The Kathmandu District Police Range team carried out the operation starting Wednesday night and the raid continued till the wee hours.

Acting on a tip-off, raided a private residence belonging to a Nepali national at Dhobikhola Corridor, Ratopul, and rescued the 11 Indian nationals, who were taken hostage in the pretext of sending them to the USA via Mexico.

The agents, including the Indian mafia members, charged the Indian nationals, mostly students, Rs 4.5 million per person with the false promise of sending to the USA, and an additional USD 3,000 was charged as a visa fee upon their



arrival here in Kathmandu, District Police chief Senior Superintendent of Police Bhupendra Bahadur Khatri told a press meet here.

Cases would be booked against each of the accused under sections pertaining to abduction, taking hostage, and human trafficking as per the Nepalese law, he said, adding, that a Nepali accomplice, who helped them in providing logistic services, was also arrested.

The freed Indians are staying at a hotel in Kathmandu as per the arrangements made by Nepal Police and they will be sent back to India coordinating with the Indian Embassy, Foreign Ministry, and other officials concerned, the police

chief said.

When the hostages stayed at the rented house for more than two weeks, they were mentally and physically tortured, threatened, and locked in the rooms, he said.

"Some of us were told, on a knife-point, to contact our family in India to assure them that we were safe and on the way to USA," one of the rescued persons told PTI.

All the documents, including visa and boarding passes, were forged while the police have recovered the passports of the victims along with fake rubber stamps and other forged documents from the site, Khatri said. (PTI)

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VALENTINE'S
Party



HOLI

**RAANG
DAY**

MARCH

APRIL

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT



Baisakhi
Mela

MAY

JUNE

BOAT
Party



Teeyan **ਦੀ ਆੜੀ**

JULY

AUGUST

BOLLYWOOD
Nights



New York
KABADDI CUP

SEPTEMBER

OCTOBER

GARBA - RAAS
Concert



DECEMBER

NYE 2025



Skin care habits that can worsen acne

Are you faithfully treating your acne but still seeing new breakouts? Your skin care routine could be to blame. Here you'll find some skin care habits that can worsen acne and dermatologists' tips to help you change those habits.

Try a new acne treatment every week or so.

This approach can irritate your skin, which can cause breakouts.

Woman rinsing face with water

Washing your face throughout the day can irritate your skin and cause acne breakouts.

WHAT TO DO INSTEAD: Give an acne treatment time to work. You want to use a product for 6 to 8 weeks. It takes that long to see some improvement. If you don't see any improvement by then, you can try another product. Complete clearing generally takes 3 to 4 months.

Apply acne medication only to your blemishes

It makes sense to treat what you see, but this approach fails to prevent new breakouts.

WHAT TO DO INSTEAD: To prevent new blemishes, spread a thin layer of the acne medication evenly over your acne-prone skin. For example, if you tend to breakout on your forehead, nose, and chin, you would want to apply the acne treatment evenly on all of these areas of your face.

Use makeup, skin care products, and hair care products that can cause acne

Some makeup, along with many skin and hair care products, contain oil or other ingredients that can cause acne breakouts. If you continue to use them, you may continue to see blemishes.

WHAT TO DO INSTEAD: Use only makeup, sunscreen, skin, and hair-care products that are labeled "non-comedogenic" or "won't clog pores." These products don't cause breakouts in most people.

Share makeup, makeup brushes, or makeup applicators

Even if you use only non-comedogenic products, sharing makeup can lead to blemishes. Acne isn't contagious, but when you share makeup, makeup brushes, or applicators, the acne-causing bacteria, oil, and dead skin cells on other people's skin can wind up in your makeup. When you use that makeup, you can



transfer their bacteria, oil, and dead skin cells to your skin. These can clog your pores, leading to breakouts.

WHAT TO DO INSTEAD: Make sure you're the only person who uses your makeup, makeup brushes, and makeup applicators.

Sleep in your makeup

Even non-comedogenic makeup can cause acne if you sleep in it.

WHAT TO DO INSTEAD: Remove your makeup before you go to bed. No exceptions. If you're too tired to wash your face, use a makeup remover towelette. Just make sure it's a non-comedogenic towelette.

Wash your face throughout the day

Washing your face several times a day can further irritate your skin, leading to more breakouts.

WHAT TO DO INSTEAD: Wash your face twice a day — when you wake up and before you go to bed. You'll also want to wash your face when you finish an activity that makes you sweat.

Dry out your skin.

Skin with acne is oily, so it can be tempting to apply astringent and acne treatments until your face feels dry. Don't. Dry skin is irritated skin. Anytime you irritate your skin, you risk getting more acne.

WHAT TO DO INSTEAD: Use acne treatments as directed. If your skin feels dry, apply a moisturizer made for acne-prone skin. You'll want to apply the moisturizer twice a day, after washing your face.



Things you must do before hitting the gym every morning

There are certain ways which can help us stick to our routines. Be it through motivation to lose weight for an upcoming wedding or just staying in a good shape, following will help you lose weight in a better way and stick to your exercise regime.

Hydrate

Hydrating yourself before your workout is essential. The amount of water that you should consume varies according to your age, sex, weight and height but as a thumb rule, consume 20 ounces (590 ml) of water at least half an hour before gymming. At the same time, try to drink a quantity that doesn't make you feel bloated.

Have black coffee

Coffee is known to stimulate thermogenesis. This process helps your body derive energy from food and hence, burns more fat. Caffeine also helps in mobilizing fatty acids from tissues, enhancing performance by up to 12 per cent.

Have a good sleep

A good night sleep is the simplest recipe to a healthy body and a healthy workout. A well rested body has a better mechanism and will help you feel more energetic. Just make sure that you do not run to the gym sluggish. Have a gap between waking up and hitting the gym so that your body isn't too stiff.

Eat before gym

Usually our morning gym routines do not include eating before hitting the gym. We get up, dress up and get going. But for a better and high intensity workout, have something before your workout.

FOOD CORNER

Fish biryani

INGREDIENTS

1 kilograms fish fillets, 1 cup ghee, 4 teaspoon powdered, turmeric, 5 chopped onion, 2 teaspoon coriander powder, 6 cloves, 1 cup beaten yoghurt (curd), 2 tablespoon sultanas, 5 cup basmati rice, 1 teaspoon salt, 5 tablespoon cashews, 4 teaspoon Red chilli powder, 2 inches cinnamon, 5 chopped tomato, 3 litre water

For Marination

1 teaspoon powdered turmeric
2 ml lemon juice

METHOD

- Mix the marinade ingredients, lemon juice and turmeric and rub into fish fillets. Keep aside for about 30 to 45 minutes.
- Heat 2 tablespoon ghee in a pan. Saute rice for about 10 to 15 minutes. Add 2 teaspoon salt, 1

teaspoon turmeric powder and 3 litres of warm water. Mix gently and bring to a boil.

- Lower the flame and cover pan with a lid and cook till water is absorbed. Heat 1 cup of ghee. Fry the sultanasa and remove. Add cashewnuts and fry till golden brown. Fry onions in the same pan till golden brown. Add chilli powder, coriander powder and 3 teaspoon turmeric powder. Add 8 to 10 teaspoon of water and the whole spices. Mix well.
- Fry for about 3 to 4 minutes, stirring all the time. Add the fish pieces along with 2 teaspoon salt and saute for about 5 to 8 minutes. Pour 1 cup of water and bring it to a boil. Add tomatoes and curd. Reduce heat and cook till gravy thickens. Grease a heavy bottomed pan with 1 tablespoon ghee. Spread the fish pieces, rice and reserved sultanas and cashewnuts in layers. Repeat until the topmost layer is rice garnished with sultanas and cashewnuts. Cover pan and cook over low heat for 5 to 8 minutes. Remove and serve hot, garnish with fried onions or spring onions.



Novel AI model may lead to personalised tuberculosis treatments: Study

Scientists have developed a new Artificial Intelligence (AI) model to predict treatment outcomes of tuberculosis (TB) patients, an advance that may lead to personalised treatments for the bacterial disease.

The study, published in the journal *iScience*, analysed multimodal data including diverse biomedical data from clinical tests, genomics, medical imaging and drug prescriptions from TB patients.

By analysing data from patients with varying levels of drug resistance, the researchers discovered biomedical features predictive of treatment failure.

They also uncovered drug regimens effective against specific sets of drug-resistant TB patients.

"Our multimodal AI model accurately predicted treatment prognosis and outperformed existing models that focus on a narrow set of clinical data," said Sriram Chandrasekaran, corresponding author and associate professor at the University of Michigan, US.

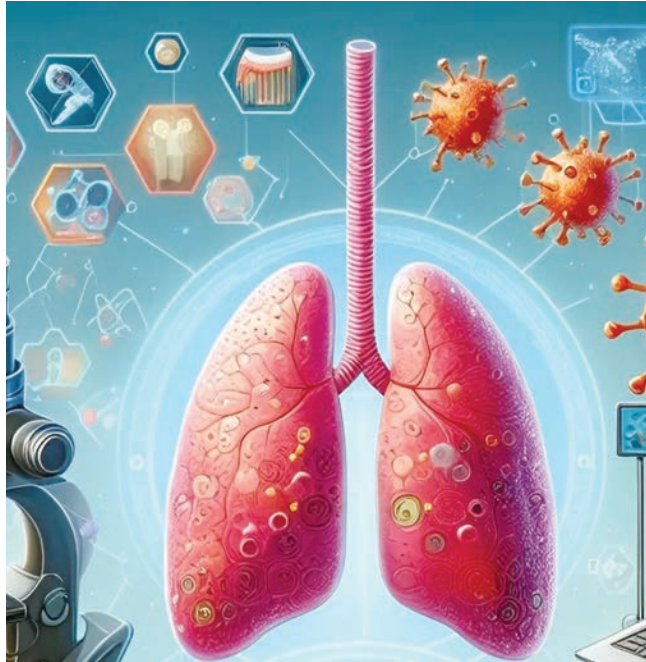
"We identified drug regimens that were effective against certain types of drug-resistant TB across countries, which is very important due to the spread of drug-resistant TB," added study first author Awanti Sambarey, a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Michigan.

Using AI, the team examined more than 5,000 patients.

"This is real-world data we're talking about, so patients from different countries have different admission protocols. We worked with more than 200 biomedical features in our analysis; we examined demographic information such as age and gender as well as prior treatment history," Sambarey said.

"We also noted if the patients had other comorbidities, such as HIV, and then we worked with several imaging features such as their X-ray, CT scans, data from the pathogens, drug-resistance data, as well as genomic features and what mutations the pathogen had," she said.

The researchers noted that it is very difficult clinically to look at the data all together. That is where the role of AI comes in handy.



The team also studied the impact of the type of drug resistance present.

"You can look at a specific snapshot of the data, such as genomic features and find what mutations the infecting pathogen had, and ask what some of the long-term treatment implications are," Sambarey added.

The researchers found that certain drug combinations worked better in patients with some types of resistance but not others, leading to treatment failure. They also found that drugs with antagonistic pharmaceutical interactions could result in worse outcomes.

"Using AI to weed out antagonistic drugs early in the drug-discovery process can avoid treatment failure down the line," Chandrasekaran noted.

"Instead of a one-size-fits-all treatment approach, we hope that the study of multimodal data will help physicians treat patients with more personalized treatments to provide the best outcomes," Sambarey added. *Source: PTI*



Saturated fatty acids play vital role in brain's storage of memories: Research

Researchers at the University of Queensland have demonstrated the vital role that saturated fatty acids play in the brain's storage of memories. A new cure for neurodegenerative illnesses may now be possible, thanks to research conducted by Dr Isaac Akefe of the Queensland Brain Institute at the University of Queensland. He has also discovered the genes that underlie the process of memory creation. The findings were published in the *EMBO Journal*.

"We've shown previously that levels of saturated fatty acids increase in the brain during neuronal communication, but we didn't know what was causing these changes," Dr Akefe said. "Now for the first time, we've identified alterations in the brain's fatty acid landscape when the neurons encode a memory. An enzyme called Phospholipase A1 (PLA1) interacts with another protein at the synapse called STXBP1 to form saturated fatty acids."

The brain is the body's fattiest organ, with fatty compounds called lipids making up 60 per cent of its weight. Fatty acids are the building blocks of a class of lipids called phospholipids. The work done in Professor Frederic Meunier's laboratory has shown that STXBP1 controls the targeting of the PLA1 enzyme, coordinating the release of fatty acids and directing communication at the synapses in the brain. "Human mutations in the PLA1 and STXBP1 genes reduce free fatty acid levels and promote neurological disorders," Professor Meunier said.

"To determine the importance of free fatty acids in memory formation, we used mouse models where the PLA1 gene was removed. We tracked the onset and progression of neurological and cognitive decline throughout their lives. We saw that even before their memories became impaired, their saturated free fatty acid levels were significantly lower than control mice. This indicates that this PLA1 enzyme, and the fatty acids it releases, play a key role in memory acquisition." *Source: ANI*

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A simple blood test to predict risk of heart attack within six months

A simple blood test can help detect several important biological processes that are active during the months before a heart attack, suggests a study.

Heart attacks are the most common cause of death in the world and are increasing globally. Many high-risk people are not identified or do not take their preventive treatment.

Now, researchers at Uppsala University in Sweden have found that the blood test can predict if you are at an increased risk of having a heart attack within six months.

The problem, according to the researchers, is that risk factors have previously been verified in studies involving five to ten years of follow-



up, where only factors that are stable over time can be identified.

"However, we know that the time just before a heart attack is very dynamic. For example, the risk of a heart attack doubles during the month of a divorce, and the risk of a fatal heart event is five times as high during the week after a cancer

diagnosis," said cardiologist and professor of epidemiology Johan Sundstrom.

"We wanted to develop methods that would enable the health services to identify people who will soon suffer their first heart attack," Sundstrom said, in the paper published in the journal *Nature Cardiovascular Research*.

The research group had access to blood samples from 1,69,053 individuals without prior cardiovascular disease in six European cohorts. Within six months, 420 of these people suffered their first heart attack. Their blood was then compared with blood from 1,598 healthy members of the cohorts. *Source: IANS*



ChatGPT to get 'memory' to remember who you are, what you like

OpenAI is testing "memory" for its AI chatbot ChatGPT, which will allow the bot to remember information about you and your conversations over time.

You can explicitly tell ChatGPT to remember something, ask it what it remembers, and tell it to forget conversationally or through settings.

"You can also turn it off entirely. We are rolling out to a small portion of ChatGPT free and Plus users this week to learn how useful it is. We will share plans for broader roll out soon," OpenAI said in a statement.

"ChatGPT's memory will get better the more you use it and you'll start to notice the improvements over time".

The users can turn off memory at any time. While memory is off, they won't create or use memories.

"If you want ChatGPT to forget something, just tell it. You can also view and delete specific memories or clear all memories in settings," the company informed.

If you'd like to have a conversation without using memory, use temporary chat. *Source: IANS*

Supermassive black hole in milky way spinning rapidly, taking shape of rugby ball

The centre of our Milky Way galaxy is home to a supermassive black hole that is spinning so quickly that it is warping spacetime into an oval form resembling a rugby ball. The result is based on a thorough analysis of X-ray and radio measurements from NASA's Chandra X-ray Observatory, an X-ray telescope in space. The giant black hole, known as Sagittarius A* or Sgr A* is located about 26,000 light-years away from Earth.

"Black holes have two fundamental properties. The first is their mass, or how much they weigh. The second is their spin, or how quickly they rotate. Determining either of these two values tells scientists a great deal about any black hole and how it behaves," NASA explained.

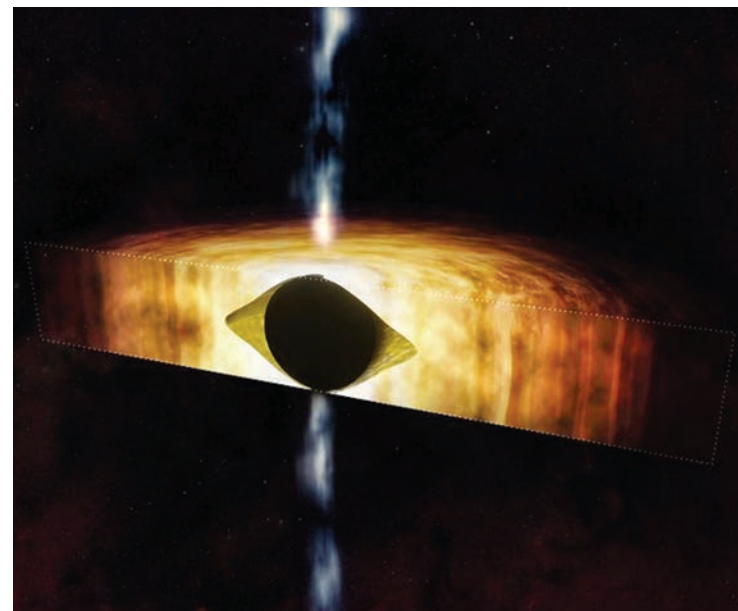
Scientists have been unable to determine Sgr A*'s exact rotational speed, but they are certain that it weighs roughly four million times that of the Sun. This new study utilizes a method based on material movement towards and away from the black hole to calculate the spin rate of Sgr A* using X-ray and radio data.

The results show that the black hole is spinning very fast. The American space agency stated, "Scientists think that it is rotating so quickly that it is warping spacetime around it into a shape that looks like an American football."

The concept of time paired with the three dimensions of space is called spacetime. Although black holes have long been known to have this ability, there is now substantial proof that the black hole in the Milky Way galaxy is doing so.

"Our work may help settle the question of how fast our galaxy's supermassive black hole is spinning. Our results indicate that Sgr A* is spinning very rapidly, which is interesting and has far-reaching implications," said Ruth Daly of Penn State University, who is the lead author of the new study.

The spinning of a black hole also has several other implications. It can act as an important source of energy. Extraction of spin energy from spinning supermassive black



holes can result in narrow outflows in the form of jets. Although Sgr A* is not very active right now, this new discovery suggests that it may become more so in the future.

"A spinning black hole is like a rocket on the launch pad," said Biny Sebastian, a co-author from the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg, Canada. "Once the material gets close enough, it's like someone has fueled the rocket and hit the 'launch' button."

According to the space agency, if the properties of the matter and the magnetic field strength close to the black hole change in the future, part of the enormous energy of the black hole's spin could drive more powerful outflows. If the star wanders too close to the black hole, this source material coming from gas or from the remnants of a star will be torn apart by the black hole's gravity. *Source: NDTV*

WhatsApp working on 'favourite contacts filter' feature for web

SAN FRANCISCO (TIP)

Meta-owned WhatsApp is reportedly working on a new 'favourite contacts filter' feature, allowing users to prioritise their conversations and offer greater control and efficiency in the messaging experience.

The new feature spotted by WABetaInfo mentioned that it will appear with a dedicated chat filter in a future update of WhatsApp Web.

According to the report, the new feature will allow users to choose their favourite contacts and let them manually add the ones they care about most, and easily access them through a dedicated filter.

"By allowing users to mark specific contacts as favourites, WhatsApp enables them to prioritise key conversations, ensuring quick and easy access to those they frequently interact with," the report said.

"The introduction of favourite contacts not only simplifies the process of reaching out to frequently contacted users but also adds a layer of customisation, allowing them to improve their messaging experience to suit their preferences," it added.

Meanwhile, WhatsApp is reportedly preparing to allow third-party messaging apps on its platform, ahead of the European Union's Digital Markets Act (DMA) that will come into force in March.



Dick Brouwer, an engineering director at WhatsApp, told Wired that the company is ready to offer interoperability on the platform with over 2 billion users.

"There's real tension between offering an easy way to offer this interoperability to third parties while at the same time preserving the WhatsApp privacy, security, and integrity bar. I think we are pretty happy with where we have landed," he was quoted as saying in the report.

Source: IANS

Google enables OS upgrades for older PCs

Google will allow businesses to install an auto-updating version of the Chrome operating system to Windows devices, potentially preventing millions of PCs from hitting landfills after Microsoft ends support for Windows 10 next year, parent company Alphabet said. The company said ChromeOS Flex will continue receiving regular security updates and features like data encryption, allowing users to keep using their Windows 10 systems.

Microsoft has said that its Windows 10 will reach the end of support on Oct. 14 2025, and will no longer provide regular security updates, bug fixes, or technical support. It has asked customers to transition to Windows 11 or explore other options. However, a report from Canalys Research suggests that the termination of Windows 10 support could send about 240 million PCs to landfills, as demand for devices without security updates could be low.

Still, many PCs with Windows 10 could remain functional for years after the end of OS support.

ChromeOS is significantly less popular than other operating systems. In January 2024, it held a 1.8% share of the worldwide desktop OS market, far behind Windows' share of about 73%, according to data from research firm Statcounter.



Stop card-based commercial payments: Central bank to Visa

The Reserve Bank on Feb 15 asked card network Visa to stop making payments through intermediaries to entities which do not accept card payments, saying a large amount of funds are involved in the activity without legal sanction, according to sources.

As per information available, only one card network has operationalised this arrangement in the country so far, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said without naming Visa. However, sources said the card network is Visa.

Visa did not immediately offered any comments, but indicated it may come with one later. The central bank said as the matter is under detailed examination, the card network has been advised to keep all such arrangements under abeyance, till further orders.

"It has come to the notice of RBI that a card network had an arrangement that enables businesses to make card payments through certain intermediaries, to entities that do not accept card payments," the central bank said in a statement.

US economy is booming but Japan, UK slipped into recession

The US economy managed to shake off Wall Street's gloomy forecasts and dodge a long-predicted slump last year — but the same can't be said for two other members of the G7. Japan and the UK are both officially in recession, according to figures published Thursday, after Gross Domestic Product (GDP) fell for two consecutive quarters to close out 2023.

Japan had the second-largest economy until 2010 when it was surpassed by China. Last year, Japan's nominal GDP was USD 4.2 trillion, while Germany's was USD 4.4 trillion (or USD 4.5 trillion, depending on the currency translation).

The data show how the Japanese economy has increasingly lost competitiveness and productivity, while the population is shrinking as Japanese people age and have fewer children. Immigration is one possibility for addressing Japan's labor deficit, but the country has been highly unaccepting of foreign labor, except for temporary stays, leading to accusations of discrimination and a lack of variety.

Because nominal GDP is measured in dollars, a lower Japanese yen played a significant role in the country's slip to fourth position. However, experts believe Japan's relative weakness is due to a declining population as well as lacking productivity and competitiveness.

Real GDP is a measure of the worth of a country's goods and services. The yearly rate represents what would have occurred if the quarterly rate had lasted a year.

Japan has long been seen as "an economic miracle," emerging from the ashes of WWII to become the world's second-largest economy after the United States. This continued until the 1970s and 1980s. However, for the majority of the past 30 years, the economy has developed only marginally, primarily languishing in the doldrums since the bursting of its financial bubble in 1990.

The Japanese and German economies are driven by robust small and medium-sized firms with high productivity.

Germany, like Japan in the 1960s-1980s, surged ahead for the majority of this century, dominating global markets for high-



end products such as luxury vehicles and industrial gear, selling so much to the rest of the world that exports accounted for half of its GDP.

However, its economy, which was among the worst performers in the world last year, dropped by 0.3% in the fourth quarter.

After Japan, Britain's economy entered a recession in the second half of 2023, presenting a difficult backdrop for Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, who has promised to boost growth ahead of the projected 2024 election.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) reported that gross domestic product (GDP) declined by a worse-than-expected 0.3% in the three months to December, after falling by 0.1% between July and September. The ONS reported that economic output declined by 0.1% in monthly terms in December, following a 0.2% increase in November. According to the ONS, the manufacturing, construction, and wholesale sectors contributed the most to the fall in GDP.

According to the ONS, the fourth-quarter GDP decrease was the largest since the first quarter of 2021. Britain's economy has remained stagnant for nearly two years. The Bank of England expects it to pick up somewhat in 2024.

Source: Agencies

Walmart to focus on sourcing from India

Walmart has sourced goods worth over USD 30 billion from the Indian market in the last two decades for its global operations, a company official said on Tuesday. Now the Bentonville-headquartered firm has a goal to triple its sourcing of goods from India up to worth USD 10 billion per year by 2027, said Walmart Inc Executive Vice President, Sourcing Andrea Albright.

Walmart is encouraging MSMEs (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises) and entrepreneurs with proper training and believes that there is a tremendous opportunity to continue to contribute to India's growing economy, she said.

The company has been doing business in India for the last 25 years, Albright said.

"We have already sourced more than USD 30 billion in products from India," she said speaking at the Walmart Growth Summit.

The company is building an ecosystem and taking a people-led approach to connect its work across the country.

"Investing in high growth markets like India helps us strengthen our



relationships with established suppliers, but also developing relationships with new ones to build long-term surety and diversity and global supply," she added. Under its Walmart Vriddhi initiative, which is designed to support MSMEs in modernising, expanding, and reaching their domestic ambitions, the company has trained 50,000 people so far, Albright added.

"That is an amazing achievement. We have hit this goal early," she said, adding, "Our focus is to recruit and train new suppliers to fulfil our purchase orders around the world. These orders often lead to the creation of new jobs. It also allows our suppliers to invest back in their local communities." Source: PTI

Global banks boost India bond marketing as index day nears

Wall Street banks are ramping up efforts to attract new business in India, as billions are set to flow into the country's trillion-dollar sovereign debt market following the inclusion of nation's bonds in global debt indexes.

Morgan Stanley, Barclays Plc., Citigroup Inc. and Deutsche Bank AG are among institutions that have, or are in the process of engaging with global investors who could potentially invest large amounts of money in India, according to people familiar with the matter.

Barclays is hosting a roadshow with key India finance ministry and central bank officials in Mumbai and New Delhi this week, while Morgan Stanley is set to hold one in London, after having conducted a roadshow in Asia. Citibank has already held calls with global investors regarding operational procedures and is planning additional meetings, said the people, asking not to be identified because the matter is private.

This flurry of activity comes ahead of

the addition of the nation's sovereign bond market to JPMorgan Chase & Co's global debt indexes from June, a move that may lure up to \$40 billion of inflows. Foreigners own just above 2% of the government bonds, leaving ample room for more buyers. India's bonds are held mostly by local investors and this marketing campaign by foreign banks reflects the nation's weight in the index, which is at par with China.

Global funds have already begun to increase their holdings of index-eligible bonds since JPMorgan's September announcement, adding 665 billion rupees (\$8 billion) of holdings, data from the Clearing Corp. of India show.

While many large foreign institutional investors have a presence in India, smaller funds are not registered. A targeted approach via calls, roadshows and one-on-one meetings is being used to lure first-time investors from financial hubs such as Hong Kong, London, Singapore, Dubai and New York, the people said. Source: Bloomberg



BEJAN DARUWALLA AND CHIRAG DARUWALLA

WEEKLY HOROSCOPE - FEB 19 TO FEB 25, 2024

By Chirag Daruwalla - Son of Astrologer Bejan Daruwalla

will be impressive. You will complete your work with skill and agility in conversation. You will receive some good messages this week. There will be victory in the law court.



SAGITTARIUS

Sagittarius

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



LEO

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, troubles will arise for you.



CAPRICORN

Capricorn

Ganesha says that this week money will be spent on your noble works and religious activities. You will get all possible support from your friends and coworkers. This week your mind will be engaged in religious activities. Happiness and interaction with family will be good.



ARIES

Ganesha says that you will get good news this week. You will enjoy a better time with your family members. You will participate in religious activities and charity-related activities. Government work will be Entire without any hindrance. This week luck is going to be good.



VIRGO

Ganesha says that this week you may get opportunities to achieve success 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. Domination will bring wealth.



AQUARIUS

Ganesha says that there will be business growth 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.



TAURUS

Ganesha says that this week you will be successful in making new plans related to work. You will start good relations with big businessmen or officials. The relationships you build will prove useful in satisfying you. With the help of your friends, you will be successful in defeating your enemies.



LIBRA

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



PISCES

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



GEMINI

Ganesha says that this week you are going to overcome inauspicious situations. You will defeat your enemies. You will have a good time with family members. During this period, you will get good profits from real estate.



SCORPIO

Ganesha 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.



CANCER

Ganesha says that this week people will get a lot of love from family members. Faith in religion will increase. Your personality

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**BIRTHDAY HOROSCOPE : FEBRUARY 19 TO FEBRUARY 25
BY VEDIC ASTROLOGER NASTUR BEJAN DARUWALLA**

FEBRUARY 19

Ganesha says today may find you concentrating on the personal relationships you have and the connections you have with other people. Maintain the friendships you already have while still being open to making new ones. It may be simpler for you to connect with others as a result of your charisma and other people abilities, which may be highlighted. Nevertheless, it is imperative that you establish positive limits and make time for your own self-care.

FEBRUARY 20

Ganesha says today is a day to celebrate love and affection with friends and family. It's possible that you'll feel more passionate and impetuous than normal, so make sure to give some thought to what you're going to do before you do it. Spend some quality time demonstrating to your significant other how much you value the connection you share. Be willing to explore new possibilities for

a romantic relationship if you are currently unattached.

FEBRUARY 21

Ganesha says today is a good day to focus on your personal growth, trust your instincts, and make choices that align with your values and long-term goals. Today is a good day to focus on your personal growth and trust your instincts. Your ability to be realistic and your attention to detail will be of great assistance to you as you manage these issues.

FEBRUARY 22

Ganesha says in today's world, communication is essential. You can find yourself in circumstances that require you to articulate your thoughts in a way that is unequivocal and confident. Be sure to listen to what other people have to say, and look for areas of agreement to help you avoid arguments.

FEBRUARY 23

Ganesha says today is a day is a day for getting in touch with your feelings and expressing them. It's possible that you'll feel more sensitive and intuitive than usual, in which case, it's important that you pay heed to the voice of your intuition. You should probably also spend some time with the people you care about and be as honest as possible about your emotions.

FEBRUARY 24

Ganesha says today is an excellent day for you to concentrate on your own requirements and concerns. Spend some time caring for yourself and indulging in the pursuits that bring you the most pleasure. You might also consider devoting some time to contemplating the objectives and concerns you have towards the future.

FEBRUARY 25

Ganesha says you might experience feelings of restlessness or a need for



VEDIC ASTROLOGER NASTUR BEJAN DARUWALLA

change. Take advantage of new possibilities, and push yourself to do things that take you out of your comfort zone. You will be able to overcome any challenges that come your way because of your flexibility and resourcefulness.

Nastur Bejan Daruwalla is available for astrological consultations.
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Ratha or Surya Saptami

Ratha Saptami or Surya Saptami marks the birth of Surya to sage Kashyapa and his wife Aditi and hence celebrated as Surya Jayanti. A legend is narrated by the Kamboja empire's King Yashovarman, a noble king who had no heir to rule his kingdom. On his special prayers to God, he was blessed with a son.

Ratha Saptami, also rendered Magha Saptami, is a Hindu festival that falls on the seventh day (saptami) in the bright half (Shukla Paksha) of the Hindu month Magha. It is symbolically represented in the form of the sun-god Surya turning his ratha (chariot) drawn by seven horses (representing the seven colors) towards the northern hemisphere, in a north-easterly direction. It also marks the birth of Surya and is hence also celebrated as Surya Jayanti (the sun-god's birthday).

Ratha Saptami is symbolic of the change of season to spring and the start of the harvesting season. For most Indian farmers, it is an auspicious beginning of the New Year. The festival is observed by all Hindus in their houses and in innumerable temples dedicated to Surya, across India.

Sun worship is deep rooted in the Vedas of the Hindu religion and its antiquity also relates to several mythologies of the world such as that of China, Egypt and Mesopotamia. The Gayatri Mantra japa – the sacred Vedic chants to Savitr (the Vedic sun god) – is popularly recited by adherents. As Puranic Hinduism evolved, the worship of the sun was consolidated.

Religious significance

The symbolic significance of the ratha and the seven horses reigned to it is that it represents the seven colors of the rainbow. The seven horses are also said to represent the seven days of a week starting with Sunday, the day of Sun god Surya. The chariot has 12 wheels, which represents the 12 signs (each of 30 degrees) of the Zodiac (360 degrees) and constituting a full year, named Samvatsara. The Sun's own house is Leo (Simha) and he moves from one house to the next every month and the total cycle takes 365 days to complete. The Ratha Saptami festival seeks the benevolent cosmic spread of energy and light from the sun god. Ratha Saptami also marks the gradual increase in temperature across South India and awaits the arrival of spring, which is later heralded by the festival of Gudi Padwa, Ugadi, or the Hindu lunar New Year day in the month of Chaitra.

Sun worship

On the day of Surya Saptami, the Sun God is offered Arghya with Ganges water. Praise the Sun God with lamps, camphor, incense, red flowers etc. Praise should be done facing the sun. It does not cause physical skin diseases etc. Sun has great importance in ancient astrology and modern science. The Sun is considered to be the one who gives life to the flora and fauna. Surya Purana should be recited on this day. The charioteer of the sun is believed to be Arun, who is paralyzed. Children are mute and paralyzed at birth. Lord Surya removes these defects with his light.

Legend

A legend is narrated by Yashovarman, the king of the Kamboja kingdom, a great king who had no heir to rule his kingdom. On special prayer to God, he got a son. The king's vow did not end here, as his son was seriously ill. A saint who went to the king advised that his son should worship Ratha Saptami and Surya Saptami with reverence to get rid of his past sins. Once the king's son did this, his health recovered and he ruled his kingdom well.

Sun temples

There are Surya temples all across India where Ratha Saptami is fervently celebrated. However, the most famous one is the World Heritage Site of the Konarak Sun Temple, in Konark, Odisha. Besides Konark, there is another sun temple in Odisha, the Biranchinarayan



Temple, Buguda, Ganjam District. There are sun temples in Modhera, Gujarat, created by king Bhimdev of the Chaulukya dynasty, in Arasavalli, Andhra Pradesh and in clusters of Navagraha temples in Tamil Nadu and Assam. The Sun Temple at Martand (Jammu and Kashmir) and Sun Temple of Multan are temples, which were destroyed during Muslim conflicts in the past.

Religious observances

Vishnu, in his form as Surya, is usually worshipped on this day. Usually, Rathasaptami begins in households with a purification bath (bathing is also done in a river or sea) by holding several Ekka (Calotropis Gigantea) leaves on their head while bathing and chanting a verse which is supposed to invoke the benevolence of the deity in all that one indulges in during the rest of the year. Argyam or (Tharpanam) (water held in the palms) is offered to the sun god on this day while chanting hymns are performed to the sun god. It also involves doing a puja with the ritual Naivedhya (food offering to God), and offering of flowers and fruits. Important prayers offered to the Sun god on this occasion are the Adityahridayam, Gayathri, Suryashtakam, Surya Sahasram namam. The preferred time for the pooja is within one hour after sunrise. In places like Mysore and Melkote, ceremonial processions carry the Surya Mandala - the icon of Surya.

Arka (in Sanskrit, meaning a ray or flash of lightning) leaves, also called Aak in Hindi, Ekka (in Kannada), Jilledu in Telugu, Erukku in Tamil and Calotropis Gigantea (bowstring hemp) in English. Arka is also a synonym for Surya or Sun. Its significance to sun god

“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

could be compared to the significance of tulasi (Ocimum tenuiflorum) leaves to Vishnu. Arka leaves are also used for worship of god Ganesha known by the name Arka Ganesha and also for Hanuman worship. Its stems, called samidha (sacrificial offerings of wood) are used for the yajna ritual as a sacrificial offering to a ritual fire. Its shape is said to represent the shoulders and chariot of sun god. Its use during the ritualistic ceremonious bath involves placement of seven leaves - one on the head, two on the shoulders, two on the knees and two on the feet. On this day, in South India, Kolam is drawn with coloured rice powder depicting a chariot and seven horses as symbolic of the Ratha Saptami. Cowdung cake is also burnt at the centre of this depiction and milk boiled on the fire is offered to the sun god. In some of the important Vaishnavite temples such as the Tirumala, Srirangam, Srirangapattana and Melukote, Ratha Saptami is one of the important festivals of the year. The ratha yatra of Veera Venkatesha of Sri Venkatramana Temple in Mangalore is held on this day and is famously known as Kodial Teru or Mangaluru Rathotsava.

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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

FEBRUARY 16 TO FEBRUARY 22

16th February

1892 Prof. Sahib Singh, a renowned scholar of GurSikhism, was born.

1923 Waryam Singh of Dhugga and Dalipa of Dhammian join the Babbar Khalsa.



1986 Foundation stone was laid for the reconstruction of Akal Takht after Operation Bluestar. Sri Akal Takht was severely damaged in this operation. Although the Government of India forcibly repaired the building under curfew, through Baba Santa Singh, main leader Budha Dal, this is not accepted by Guru Khalsa Panth. This building repaired by Government of India was torn down and Baba Santa Singh punished for his cooperation with the government in this matter.

17th February



1984: The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) fired indiscriminately upon Sri Darbar Sahib complex at Amritsar. As a result three visiting devotees were killed.

18th February



1850 Maharaja Dalip Singh reached Fatehghadh, Uttar Pradesh, India. Maharaja Dalip Singh was

forcibly separated from his mother Maharani Jind Kaur and sent to Fatehgarh, (Farrukhabad, district of Uttar Pradesh in India) by Lord Dalhousie.

1921 Khadur Sahib Gurudwaras were brought under control of SGPC.

19th February

1848: Jathaedar Ganda Singh and two associates were hanged until death in Lahore. On January 30, 1848 Jathaedar Ganda Singh (Jathaedar of Sri Akal Takhat), Akali Kharak Singh, Bibek Singh, Hira Singh, Mastan Singh, Muhar Singh, and Hukam Singh protested the entry of some British officers into the Darbar Sahib without removing their shoes. This resulted in a clash between the Akalis and the government officials. One official (subedar) was killed and a company commander got injured. Some Sikhs also got injured. The tyrant Mr. Lawrence arrested the Sikhs. Jathaedar Ganda Singh and his two of his companions were hanged. Six more Sikhs were sent to the jails of Barailey, outside Punjab.

1921 Mahants and Pujaris of various historical Gurudwaras, held a convention to express themselves against Singh Sabha reformers and call on the government to restore the status quo ante at the Golden Temple, Amritsar. Because of the resolve of the reformers and unity within Guru Khalsa Panth, the reformers were victorious in their efforts.

1949 Master Tara Singh was arrested at Narela, under sedition charges. He was on his way to Delhi to attend a Conference.

20th February



1921 Shaheedi Saka of Sri Nankana Sahib took place. Nankana Sahib is the birth place of Guru Nanak Dev Ji. At the time of this incident, this place was being managed by Mahant Narayan Dass. A Jatha of 150 GurSikh reformers, led by Bhai Lahshman Singh, were visiting Nankana Sahib to seek Gurudwara reforms and its liberation, through non-violent and peaceful means. However, the managing Mahant had hired 28 Pathans and goondas from Majha, collected arms and ammunition besides other weapons, which caused a scare in the surrounding areas. He attacked the unscheduled Jatha, fired upon them without any warning and hounded them from room to room. At least one of them was tied to a tree and burnt alive. When a massacre inside the shrine was on, a group of Sikh devotees arrived outside. Mahant Narain Das on horseback ordered the killing of each and every long haired Sikh, and his men pursued some of them in the fields up to the railway station, killing and burning most of them. He also tried to burn down the dead

bodies in a group inside the shrine. Those struck outside were thrown into kilns or burnt alive. The Guru Granth Sahib was riddled with bullets. This incident sent a wave of indignation among the Sikhs and other people throughout the world. The holy shrine of Nankana Sahib was eventually liberated. Additionally, this single incident triggered off a Gurudwara liberation movement throughout Punjab. The main objective of this movement was to consolidate the management of all historical Sikh Shrines under a single elected body which came to be known as the Sharomani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee or SGPC for short.

1924 1st Shaheedhi Jatha of 500 Akali Sikhs, under the command of Jathedar Udham Singh of village Verpal, that marched from Sri Akal Takhat for Jaito, reached jaito Nabha territory. 1949 In spite of the arrests of hundreds of GurSikhs, the Sikhs held a Conference. All the participants were arrested and jailed for different terms. Participation in religious functions was banned and the Sikh shrines were sealed. Such were the rewards for their sacrifices towards India's independence.

21st February

1849 2nd Anglo-Sikh war was fought at Gujrat. This was the last war between the Khalsa forces and the British that resulted in a severe defeat for Khalsa forces and triggered the annexation of the Khalsa Raj.

1915 Marked the revolt within India against British occupation. Sikhs played a major role in this revolt.

1921 Karam Singh of Daulatpur organised a political conference at Mehtapur.

1921 Sri Nankana Sahib's keys and control was handed over to SGPC. The news of Nankana Massacre spread like wild fire. Within hours Sikhs from all everywhere marched on to Nankana Sahib, despite the road blocks, re-routed trains and deployment of troops to cordon off the area. By the afternoon, 1000 Akalis and some members of the SGPC confronted the Deputy Commissioner and were resolved to advance on the Gurudwara or be shot by the troops. Bhai Kartar Singh Jabbar with a Jatha of 2200 entered the Gurudwara Janam Asthan, Shri Nankana Sahib defying Deputy Commissioner's orders. The show of force at this time retrieved the Sikh prestige.

22nd February

1845 Rani Jindan attempted to cross over to the British with Dalip Singh but her attempt was foiled by Sikh army.

1923 1923: Third meeting took place at Jassowal.

1924 British government accused Akali Singhs of firing upon Nabha rulers.

1956 Master Tara Singh and Nehru held talks on Punjabi Suba. The talks lasted until Feb. 24, 1956.



Situated at an altitude of 2730 m above sea level, Gulmarg is a popular skiing destination located in Pir Panjal Range of Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir. Surrounded by snow-covered lofty Himalayas, meadows of flowers, deep ravines, evergreen forested valleys, Gulmarg also has the world's second-highest Gondola ride.

Gulmarg is one of the top honeymoon destinations in India. Gulmarg has also been developed as an adventure hub as the Indian Institute of Skiing, and Mountaineering is located here. A lot of courses on trekking, mountaineering, skiing, and snowboarding are offered by IISM. There are a lot of other private tour operators in Gulmarg as well, which provide similar courses and facilities for skiing and snowboarding. Known for its scenic beauty, Gulmarg has also been a popular destination for shooting various Bollywood films.

Gulmarg Gondola

Gulmarg Gondola is the second longest and second highest cable car in the world and the prime attraction Gulmarg is known for. Divided into two phases, it ferries almost 600 people per hour to and from the Apharwat Mountain, which is where most of the winter sports happen in Gulmarg.

Phase 1 of Gulmarg Gondola ferries people from Gulmarg Resort to Kongdoori Station (middle station). It starts at 2,990 m and has a vertical rise of 400 m. Every hour it ferries 1500 people to the height of 3100 m from where several easy runs for skiing are accessible.

Phase 2 of Gulmarg Gondola connects Kongdoori Mountain to Apharwat Peak. The cable car ascends 1,330 vertical metres to a height of nearly 4,000m and carries 600 people per hour. After arriving at the station, you can further have a 30 minutes trek to reach the mountaintop. From here the LOC or the Line of Control is visible.

The Gulmarg Gondola affords a magnificent view of Nanda Devi, LOC, and Pir Panjal range. Apart from cherishing the beauty of Himalayan ranges, tourists can enjoy other activities like horse riding and snow skiing.

Kongdori Phase I

Kongdori Phase 1 in Gulmarg is the initial stage of the Kongdori Gondola, one of the highest cable cars in the world. Situated in the Pir Panjal range, this phase is the starting point for an exhilarating journey that provides breathtaking views of the snow-covered peaks. Visitors can access the Kongdori Phase 1 from Gulmarg and experience the charm of the meadows and dense forests during the ascent. The cable car ride from Kongdori Phase 1 to Apharwat Peak unfolds panoramic vistas, making it a must-visit destination for nature enthusiasts and adventure seekers alike.

Apharwat Peak

Situated at a height of 4200 metres above the mean sea level, Apharwat Peak in Gulmarg is one of the most breathtaking places. Remotely positioned near LOC with Pakistan, the region receives heavy rainfall and is covered in snow for most of the year. Apharwat Peak

Gulmarg: The skiing paradise of India



is where winter sports in Gulmarg takes place.

Imbued with snow-clad mountains and surrounded by pearly white meadows, the area is a perfect honeymoon destination and the most picturesque tourist spot in Srinagar.

Drung Waterfall (Frozen Waterfall)

The Drung Waterfall is an extremely popular tourist attraction located in the Tangmarg tehsil of Gulmarg, Baramulla. A cascading waterfall set amidst majestic mountains, it freezes completely during winter due to the extremely low temperature. This frozen waterfall is a must-visit in the area.

The cascading waterfall mixes with the water that originates from the magnificent glaciers and makes for an unforgettable sight. During the summers, one can spend some quiet time here while enjoying views of the waterfall, lakes, streams, surrounding greenery as well as explore the caves.

The area is even more breathtaking during the wintertime when everything is frozen; the waterfall freezes as it comes down, forming icicles. Even the lake and streams freeze, though they remain accessible, and one can have some fun in the ice-cold waters if brave enough! There are stalls around that serve tea and snacks for people to have while they take in the magnificent scenes. There is also a small temple in the vicinity.

Skiing in Gulmarg

Gulmarg is a hill town in Jammu and Kashmir which is lately gaining a lot of popularity for its ski terrain. Ideal for both amateur and professional skiers, the



place has several skiing operators and institutes that can tutor you on the same.

Gulmarg is normally blessed with unbelievable amounts of snow. It ranks in the realms of Utah and Niseko in the snowfall stakes. The average annual snowfall is not well documented, but it is thought to be about 14 metres, while in the year 2004 it came around 20 metres.

Alpather Lake

Alpather Lake is a high altitude lake set between the twin Apharwat Peak in Gulmarg. It is popularly known as the Frozen Lake as it remains completely frozen from November to June. It is popular for the one-day trek which starts from Gulmarg and covers a distance of almost 13km.

The one-day trek to Alpather Lake from

Gulmarg is a must-try for adventure seekers. The trek is moderately difficult and covers a distance of about 13 km, following the route from Gulmarg to Khilanmarg, Apharwat Ridge and finally, Alpather Lake. The trek offers a challenging yet fulfilling experience and is the perfect way to explore the beauty of the surrounding area.

In winter, the frozen lake is a surreal sight with ducks walking on the ice instead of swimming in the water. The stark beauty of the frozen lake is a sight to behold and is a must-visit for those looking to escape the hustle and bustle of city life. During summers, the lake is surrounded by a lush landscape of flowers and trees, making it a perfect place to relax and enjoy the beauty of nature.

Source: Holidify.com

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BROTHER AMONG TWO ARRESTED, TWO OTHERS BOOKED

FEBRUARY 12, 2024

LUDHIANA (TIP): An NRI belonging to the city has paid his gratitude to the Punjab Police for taking action on his complaint related to a property fraud done to him, without making him visit India amid his apprehension of threat to his life. The complaint pertained to Saggar House, a prime property worth over Rs 100 crore situated on the Rani Jhansi road.

The suspects were identified as Kulwinder Singh Grewal, a resident of Sarabha Nagar, Anmol Saggar, his brother Atul Saggar and complainant's real brother Rohit Saggar, all from Kundanpuri. A case under Sections 420 (cheating), 467 (forgery of valuable security, will), 468 (forgery for purpose of cheating), 471 (using as genuine a forged document) and 120-B (criminal conspiracy) of the IPC was registered against them. Kulwinder and Rohit have been arrested.

In a complaint submitted online to the Punjab DGP, Mohit Saggar, who resides



Two years on, FIR filed on NRI's property fraud complaint

Photo for representation / File photo

in Chicago, US, stated that on March 9, 2022, Rohit allegedly forged his signature and sold his share of ancestral property to Kulwinder. He stated that the forgery stood proven as he had never visited India after the year 2000. Kulwinder further sold the property to others.

"Kulwinder and his associates wanted to grab my share in the said property. Earlier also, they had caused damage to my property and I had submitted complaints about it. On March 9, 2022, I came to know that Kulwinder, in connivance with Atul, Anmol and my

brother sent some unidentified persons to the house. They forcibly trespassed on the property, broke a major portion of the building and loaded the bricks and other material in a vehicle. They not only wanted to take unlawful possession of the property, but also caused damage to the structure," he stated. The complainant stated that he apprehended threat to his life at the hands of the suspects if came to India.

"I had sent a complaint to the Punjab DGP Gaurav Yadav, who further marked it to Parveen Sinha, ADGP, NRI Wing. At last, Dr Narinder Bhargav, DIG, NRI Wing, Ludhiana, conducted a probe and registered a case," he said.

Dr Bhargav told The Tribune that during the police investigation, the role of the suspects, including the brother of the complainant, was established and a case was registered. While two of the persons named in the FIR had been arrested, raids were on to nab the remaining suspects, he added.

(Source: TNS)

CONTD FROM PAGE 1

Tom Suozzi wins the special election for Congress

Nassau County legislator, by a double-digit margin.

He flipped a Republican held seat which became vacant when the disgraced George Santos was expelled from Congress.

CNN projected Suozzi's victory at about 10.30 pm on Tuesday, February 13, and said Mazi had conceded defeat.

Even though media reports said it was going to be a close race, Suozzi prevailed easily. The contest for this congressional seat had national stakes because Republicans enjoy only a razor-thin majority in the House. Under national media glare, the contest also attracted big spending by both candidates and their parties.

In every campaign speech Suozzi hammered home the point that amid growing polarization in the country, he is the one with a record of working across the aisle.

In his victory speech, Suozzi stressed his campaign trail theme of bipartisan cooperation.

"There are divisions in our country where people can't even talk to each other. All they can do is yell and scream at each other," he said, acknowledging the demonstrators who interrupted his speech, shouting against his support to Israel. "That's not the answer to the problems we face in our country. The answer is to try and bring people together to try and find common ground."

"The way to make our country a better place is to try and find common ground. It is not easy to do." Suozzi told supporters at his election night party in Woodbury.

Suozzi is a friend of the Indian community which has a major presence in Nassau County. He served as Mayor of Glen Cove before being elected Nassau County Executive. He was elected to Congress from New York Congressional District 3 in 2016 and was re-elected in 2018 and 2020. He did not contest in 2022 for the NY3 seat he held because he ran for New York State governor.

Trained as an attorney and CPA, Tom Suozzi has committed his 30-year public service career to delivering for his constituents. His philosophy of working with anyone who shares his goal of solving

problems and delivering for his constituents has guided his career and led to notable accomplishments on issues including protecting the environment, common-sense gun safety, full access to reproductive health care, immigration, caring for our veterans, affordable healthcare, and fiscal responsibility.

The Indian Panorama was one of the first media houses to endorse Suozzi way back in early December soon after he received the Democratic nomination.

Blitz India Editor-in-Chief to address the Indian community at the Consulate

Blitz India CEO Mr. Sandeep Saxena, accompanying Mr. Dwivedi on the US visit, will introduce the pioneering newsweekly as an effective platform to channel all efforts in India towards the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Blitz India has several editions in India and its UK edition was launched last year. Its US launch is scheduled to be launched on February 25 at the 18th-year Gratitude Gala of The Indian Panorama.

The February 26 event to be presided over by Consul General of India in New York, Ambassador Binaya Srikanta Pradhan, will also witness the formal launch of body of journalists by the name 'Journalists Beyond Borders'(JBB), founded in July 2022 by Prof Indrajit Singh Saluja, chief editor of The Indian Panorama. JBB aims to unite the fraternity of journalists the world over to protect and promote through journalism human rights, human values, and world peace. Its greater mission is to use the power of the press to educate people everywhere on the values of non-violence, peaceful coexistence, clean environment, and health for all.

Supreme Court nulls electoral bonds scheme, seeks info on donors

anonymous donations to political parties. Noting that voters have right to know, a five-judge Constitution Bench led by CJI DY Chandrachud said the scheme violated Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution, which guaranteed right to freedom of speech and expression and included right to information within its ambit.

"We are of the opinion the information about funding

to a political party is essential for a voter to exercise their freedom to vote in an effective manner. The electoral bonds Scheme and the impugned provisions to the extent that they infringe upon the right to information of the voter by anonymizing contributions through electoral bonds are violative of Article 19(1)(a) (right to freedom of speech and expression)," the Bench said. The Bench, which also included Justices Sanjiv Khanna, BR Gavai, JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, said the disclosure of information regarding electoral bonds was necessary to identify corruption and quid pro quo transactions in governance. "Such information is also necessary for exercising an informed vote," it added.

The top court ordered the State Bank of India to stop issuing electoral bonds immediately and submit all details by March 6 to the Election Commission which shall make all donations public by March 13. All electoral bonds within the 15-day validity period shall be returned by political parties to the purchasers, it added.

Justice Khanna delivered a separate but concurring judgment. Welcoming the verdict, petitioner Association for Democratic Reforms' counsel Prashant Bhushan said: "This is a salutary judgment which will enhance our democratic process." The Constitution Bench also declared unconstitutional amendments made to the Representation of the People Act (RPA), 1951, the Income Tax Act, 1961, and the Companies Act, 2013, through the Finance Act, 2017, to facilitate introduction of the scheme.

Earlier, political parties had to declare all contributions more than Rs 20,000 with no exceptions, and maintain a record of all donations exceeding Rs 20,000 for tax purposes. In a financial year, companies could contribute a maximum of 7.5% of their average net profits from the preceding three years. The amendments did away with the restrictions to allow political parties to receive funds through electoral bonds.

Introduced through the Finance Act, 2017, an electoral bond is a bearer instrument like a promissory note which can be purchased by an Indian citizen or an Indian company whose identity would remain secret from everybody except the SBI from whom it has to be purchased. Once purchased, the buyer can give it to a political party, which could encash it using its bank account.



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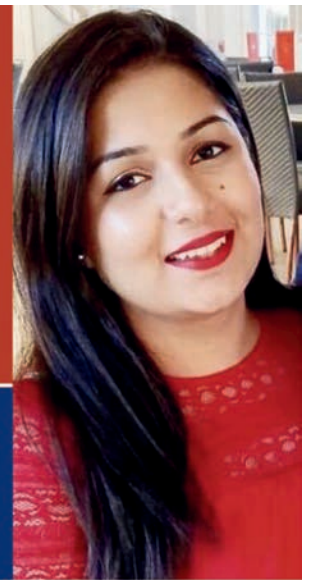
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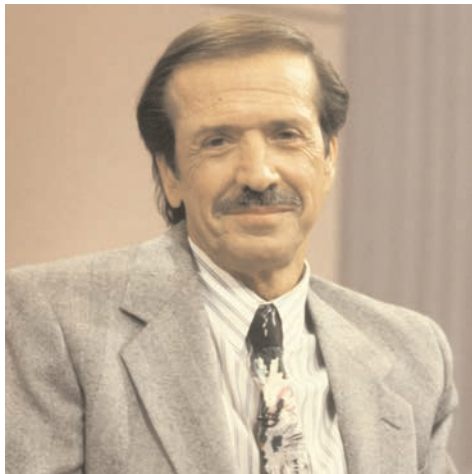


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History This Week

FEBRUARY 16 - FEBRUARY 22

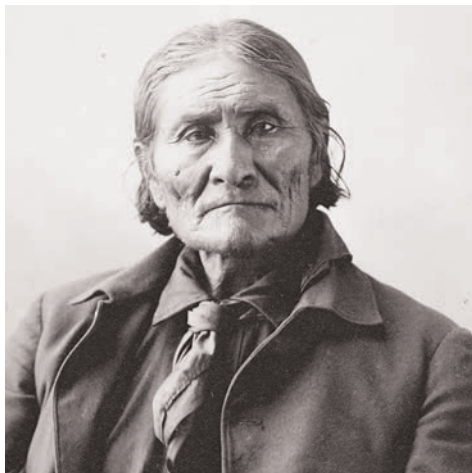
FEBRUARY 16



Birthday - Entertainer and politician Sonny Bono (1935-1998) was born in Detroit, Michigan. Following a career as a popular singer, he became mayor of Palm Springs, California, then became a Republican congressman, serving until his accidental death from a skiing mishap.

FEBRUARY 17

February 17, 1865 - During the American Civil War, Fort Sumter in South Carolina was returned to the Union after nearly a year and a half under Confederate control. The fort had been the scene of the first shots of the war.



February 17, 1909 - Apache Chief Geronimo (1829-1909) died while in captivity at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. He had led a small group of warriors on raids throughout Arizona and New Mexico. Caught once, he escaped. The U.S. Army then sent 5,000 men to recapture him.

FEBRUARY 18



Birthday - American politician Wendell Willkie (1892-1944) was born in

Elwood, Illinois. He was the Republican nominee for president in 1940, running against Franklin D. Roosevelt.

FEBRUARY 19



February 19, 1942 - Internment of Japanese Americans began after President Franklin Roosevelt issued an Executive Order requiring those living on the Pacific coast to report for relocation. Over 110,000 persons therefore shut down their businesses, sold off their property, quit school and moved inland to the relocation centers.

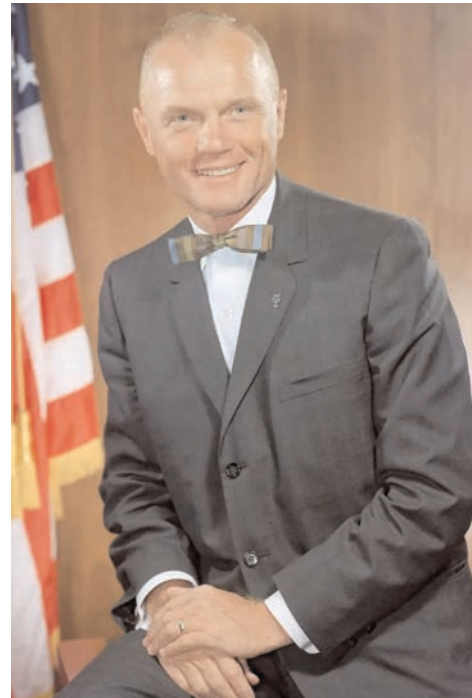


Birthday - Astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543) was born in Torun, Poland. Considered the founder of modern astronomy, he theorized that the sun, not the earth, was the center of the solar system.

FEBRUARY 20



February 20, 1943 - German Field Marshal Erwin Rommel broke through American lines at Kasserine Pass in North Africa as inexperienced U.S. Troops lost their first major battle of World War II in Europe, with 1,000 Americans killed.



February 20, 1962 - Astronaut John Glenn became the first American launched into orbit. Traveling aboard the "Friendship 7" spacecraft, Glenn reached an altitude of 162 miles (260 kilometers) and completed three orbits in a flight lasting just under five hours. Glenn was the third American in space, preceded by Alan Shepard and Virgil "Gus" Grissom who had each completed short sub-orbital flights. All of them had been preceded by Russian cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin who was the first human in space, completing one orbit on April 12, 1961 - a feat that intensified the already ongoing Space Race between the Russians and Americans. Glenn's successful flight showed the Americans had caught up and was followed in September 1962 by President John F. Kennedy's open call to land an American on the moon before the decade's end.

FEBRUARY 21



February 21, 1965 - Former Black Muslim leader Malcolm X (1925-1965) was shot and killed while delivering a speech in a ballroom in New York City.



February 21, 1972 - President Richard Nixon arrived in China for historic meetings with Chairman Mao Tse-tung and Premier Chou En-lai.



February 21, 1994 - CIA agent Aldrich Ames was arrested on charges he spied for the Soviet Union from 1985 to 1991.

FEBRUARY 22



February 22, 1956 - In Montgomery, Alabama, 80 participants in the three-month-old bus boycott voluntarily gave themselves up for arrest after an ultimatum from white city leaders. Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks were among those arrested. Later in 1956, the U.S. Supreme Court mandated desegregation of the buses.



Birthday - George Washington (1732-1799) was born in Westmoreland County, Virginia. He served as commander of the Continental Army during the American Revolution and became the first U.S. President.



India go down to Aussies in goal fest

Skipper Harmanpreet Singh's brace went in vain as the Indian men's hockey team conceded three goals in the final quarter to lose 4-6 to Australia in a FIH Pro League match in Bhubaneswar on Feb 15.

It was Australia who started and finished the match in style with the Indians dominating in the middle period.

Harmanpreet (12th, 20th minutes) converted two penalty corners, while Sukhjeet Singh (18th) and Mandeep Singh (29th) were the other goal getters for India. Blake Govers struck twice for Australia in the second minute besides Aran Zaleski (40th), Lahlan Sharp (52nd), Jacon Anderson (55th) and Jack Welch (58th).

Badminton: Indian men lose 2-3 to China

The Indian men's team felt the absence of star doubles duo of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty as it suffered a narrow 2-3 loss to China in the Badminton Asia Team Championships group tie at Shah Alam on Feb 15.

Star shuttlers HS Prannoy and Lakshya Sen won their singles matches but China fought back with wins in the two doubles contests to make it 2-2. National champion Chirag Sen then lost 15-21 16-21 to Wang Zheng Xing in the fifth match as India conceded the tie.

Already through to the knock-out stage, India finished second in the group, with China taking the top spot.

Rohit, Jadeja tons help India weather early wobble against England

RAJKOT (TIP)

Captain Rohit Sharma and middle-order batter Ravindra Jadeja smashed defiant hundreds to drag India out of the doldrums and into a comfortable 326/5 on the opening day of the third Test against England on Feb 15.

India were reeling at 33/3 inside the opening hour after Mark Wood proved the value of extra pace on a docile track at the Saurashtra Cricket Association Stadium.

Rohit and Jadeja rebuilt the innings with a 204-run stand to drag the hosts back into the contest.

Jadeja, who was batting on 110 at stumps, his fourth Test hundred, with nightwatchman Kuldeep Yadav on one at the other end, departed for 112 early on the second day of the Test.

Rohit's stellar 131 contained three sixes, 14 fours and plenty of drama.

The opener suffered a blow to his helmet, was dropped in the slip and succeeded in having an lbw decision against him reversed en route his 11th Test hundred innings.

With the five-match series poised at 1-1, Rohit's decision to bat on a flat surface was hardly surprising but Wood tormented the batters with his express speed.

The fast bowler had Yashasvi Jaiswal (10) caught in the slip in his second over and Shubman Gill fell caught behind for a duck in Wood's next.

England captain Ben Stokes,



India's captain Rohit Sharma (R) with Ravindra Jadeja celebrates after scoring a century (100 runs) (AFP)

playing his 100th Test, introduced spin in the ninth over and was rewarded immediately as Tom Hartley dismissed Rajat Patidar for five.

Wood continued to bowl with relentless hostility at the other end, hitting Rohit on his helmet grille on one occasion. The opener got a life on 27 when he edged Hartley and Joe Root spilled the catch at slip.

Rohit was adjudged lbw to James Anderson but the decision was reversed after replays confirmed the ball had hit bat first.

Rohit and Jadeja denied England a breakthrough in the second session dragging India back into the contest. Rohit took 157 balls to bring up his hundred and the muted

celebration indicated his resolve to carry on but Stokes and Wood combined to scupper that plan.

The short-ball tactics they pursued against Rohit paid off as the batter slapped the ball from Wood to Stokes at midwicket.

Debutant Sarfaraz Khan shrugged off early jitters and raced to a 48-ball fifty before his entertaining knock of 62 was cut short.

Jadeja was on 99 when his hesitation led to Sarfaraz being run out. A furious Rohit was seen hurling his cap on the floor in the pavilion after the dismissal. Wicketkeeper Dhruv Jurel also made his Test debut for India in the match. *Source: Reuters*

Kylian Mbappe to leave PSG at season end; France captain can join Real Madrid as free agent

The writing is on the wall for Paris Saint Germain (PSG) as French forward Kylian Mbappe has dropped a transfer bombshell on Thursday. Tipped to join La Liga giants Real Madrid in the next transfer window, PSG superstar Mbappe has informed officials at the Paris-based club that he wants to leave Parc des Princes this summer. Real Madrid can sign their long-term transfer target Mbappe on a free transfer prior to the start of the new season.

As per the latest developments in the Mbappe transfer saga, the French captain is planning to leave PSG when his contract expires at the end of the season. One of the finest players in the modern era of the beautiful game, Mbappe arrived in Paris from Monaco back in 2017. The 25-year-old extended his contract from 2022 until 2024. However, Mbappe has declined to activate a clause that would have allowed him to stay another year at PSG.



According to a report filed by The Athletic, it has been learned that Mbappe has communicated his decision to PSG. Though Mbappe has informed PSG about parting ways, terms of his exit are yet to be fully agreed in Paris. An official announcement is expected once the situation is finalised in next few months. A source close to PSG also told news agency AFP that Mbappe intends to leave the Paris-based club when his contract expires at the end of the season.

Mbappe earns around 200m per year and Real Madrid have emerged as the frontrunners to sign the wantaway PSG star. According to multiple reports, Mbappe is expected to take a pay cut to join record-time European champions. Mbappe has guided PSG to five Ligue 1 titles. The former Monaco star has netted 20 goals in the league this season. Mbappe-starrer PSG will host Nice on Friday. The French club is leading the Ligue 1 standings by 11 points.



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Luckily through GEMROP an initiative funded by EFA to screen premature babies throughout hospitals in India, the triplets were able to receive an expensive surgery free of charge. The boys are now the age of 4 with perfect vision.