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PANORAMA

18th YEAR

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# 1 INDIAN AMERICAN WEEKLY : SINCE 2006

VOL 18 ISSUE 09 • NEW YORK / DALLAS • MARCH 01 - 07, 2024

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# The Indian Panorama celebrates the 18th Year of Publication with a renewed commitment to upholding the highest standards of journalism



The Indian Panorama publisher and chief editor Prof. Indrajit S Saluja honoring the chief guest Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj, India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations. From L to R: Ravi Batra, Ranju Batra, Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj, Congressman-elect Tom Suozzi, Prof. Indrajit Saluja, Sudhir Parikh, Dilip Chauhan. Photo / Mohammed Jaffer - SnapsIndia

- Thanks patrons for their support and loyalty
- Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj honors four eminent Indian Americans
- Tom Suozzi, Congressman-elect, felicitates The Indian Panorama

PARVEEN CHOPRA  
FEBRUARY 26, 2024

HICKSVILLE, NY (TIP): The Indian Panorama celebrated its 18th year of publication uniquely by hosting a grand Gratitude Gala on February 25 here.

For The Indian Panorama's Founding Editor and Publisher Prof Indrajit Singh Saluja, it was a double celebration as he also cut a cake for his 80th birthday.

In a busy program, India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj presided and presented awards to four honorees. Congressman-elect Tom Suozzi dropped by to thank Prof Saluja and the Indian community for their support. The Indian Panorama also lent its platform to launch Blitz India's US edition.

CONTD ON PAGE 11

## Nikki Haley picks up first two Senate endorsements ahead of Super Tuesday

SEN. LISA MURKOWSKI, R-ALASKA, AND SEN. SUSAN COLLINS, R-MAINE, ARE BACKING THE GOP PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE. VOTERS IN THEIR STATES HEAD TO THE POLLS NEXT WEEK FOR SUPER TUESDAY.



Nikki Haley said: "As president, I will fight to make Alaskans and all Americans proud by restoring fiscal sanity, energy dominance, and limited government". File photo

MARCH 1, 2024

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): Republican presidential candidate Nikki Haley received her first two endorsements from senators on Friday, March 1, giving her a boost before Super Tuesday as she trails former President Donald Trump in the race for the GOP nomination.

Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, and Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, both backed the former South Carolina governor in separate statements.

"I'm proud to endorse Gov. Nikki Haley," Murkowski said in a statement released by the Haley campaign. "America needs someone with the right values, vigor, and judgment to serve as our next President-and in this race,

CONTD ON PAGE 42

## Rishi Sunak makes impassioned plea to protect British democracy

MARCH 1, 2024



British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak. File photo

LONDON (TIP): Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has issued an impassioned plea for Britain to protect its democracy as he warned that extremist forces were out to tear the country apart and undermine its multi-faith identity.

Referencing his own Hindu beliefs, the British-Indian leader on Friday, March 1, stressed that the enduring values of the UK are about embracing migrants of all faiths and ethnicities and urged protesters to ensure peaceful demonstrations are not hijacked by extremist forces.

CONTD ON PAGE 42

:- INSIDE :->

WOMEN'S DAY PAGE 21  
TRIBUTE TO PANKAJ UDHAS PAGE 25



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## COMMENT

# Celebrating 18 Years of Excellence: The Indian Panorama's Gratitude Gala



BY  
INDRAJIT SALUJA

It was an evening of joy, celebration, and gratitude as The Indian Panorama welcomed patrons, well-wishers, and friends to the Gratitude Gala, marking the 18th year of the newspaper's publication. The event was not just a milestone celebration but a testament to the unwavering support and encouragement received from a diverse community. The sheer number of guests in attendance not only made the evening vibrant but also served as a powerful affirmation of the publication's quality and the satisfaction of its readers.

The highlight of the evening was the presence of Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj, India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations. Her inspiring words of wisdom resonated with everyone present, serving as a source of encouragement for the dedicated team behind The Indian Panorama. The presence of Congressman-elect Tom Suozzi, a true friend of the Indian American community, added a layer of significance to the celebration. With three terms as a US Congressman, his encouragement was a valuable endorsement of the publication's

impact.

The Gratitude Gala also recognized and honored four distinguished individuals chosen by The Indian Panorama board for their remarkable contributions in their respective fields. Dr. VK Raju, a distinguished ophthalmologist and President of the Eye Foundation of America, has dedicated the past 40 years to the noble cause of eradicating childhood blindness worldwide. His tireless efforts have made a significant impact, aligning with The Indian Panorama's commitment to positive change.

Ranju Batra, a relentless advocate, secured recognition for India's festival of lights, Diwali, by successfully lobbying for a Diwali postal stamp from the US administration. Beyond this achievement, she actively promotes diplomats and diplomacy through her organization, instituting the Diwali-Power of One awards to honor diplomats contributing to global peace. Her dedication aligns with the values championed by The Indian Panorama.

Harry Singh Bolla's inspiring journey from humble beginnings to billionaire status exemplifies the spirit of giving back to society. His philanthropic endeavors serve as an example worth emulating and resonate with The Indian Panorama's commitment to social responsibility.

Purnima Desai, through her institutions, Shikshayatan Cultural

Center and Srininiketan Foundation, has been a stalwart in promoting Indian culture for over four decades. Her unwavering dedication aligns with the publication's mission of fostering cultural understanding and appreciation.

The evening was not just about accolades and recognition; it was a platform for meaningful communication between the diverse group of guests and honorees. The young talents who graced the stage with exceptional performances in music and dance added an extra layer of joy to the celebration. The dedicated volunteers who flawlessly managed the event deserve special appreciation, as their efforts contributed to the seamless flow of the evening.

Acknowledgment is due to colleagues from the media world who stood in solidarity with The Indian Panorama. Special gratitude is extended to Gary Sikka, the owner of Pearl Banquet Hall, whose hospitality provided the perfect backdrop for the Gratitude Gala.

In expressing gratitude, The Indian Panorama extends thanks to everyone associated with the event. Patrons, friends, and family members played a pivotal role in making the evening truly memorable. As The Indian Panorama embarks on the journey ahead, the support received at the Gratitude Gala serves as a powerful motivator to continue the pursuit of excellence and meaningful journalism.

## GUEST COMMENT

## Supreme Court slams Patanjali

### PRINCIPLE OF INTEGRITY IN ADVERTISING UPHELD

In a scathing indictment of Patanjali Ayurved's advertising practices through which the 'entire country is being taken for a ride', the Supreme Court on Tuesday issued contempt notices to the company and its Managing Director, Acharya Balkrishna. Stemming from a petition by the Indian Medical Association, the case highlights the menace of misleading advertisements, which continue unabated despite previous warnings to the company. The SC had in November warned Patanjali that a fine of Rs 1 crore would be imposed per product if a false claim was made regarding its efficacy in curing a particular disease. The court also restrained the firm from advertising

products intended to treat specific diseases listed under the Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act, 1954. The message is loud and clear: deceptive advertising aimed at increasing commercial gains will not be tolerated, especially in the critical field of healthcare. Such measures are crucial to preventing erosion of public trust.

The SC has cautioned the firm against making adverse statements about other systems of medicine. Underpinning the significance of strict enforcement of rules, the court has also rightly questioned the functioning of the regulatory bodies and government agencies concerned. The clarification

sought by the court on the action taken by the Centre under various laws should help in exposing the gaps in the implementation of policies intended to uphold advertising standards.

The SC's firm stance sets a precedent for accountability in the health sector and reaffirms the principle that commercial interests must not eclipse public welfare. Those who indulge in unethical practices must face the consequences of their actions. It is hoped that intense judicial scrutiny will finally prompt the serial offenders to mend their ways.

(Tribune, India)

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# Indian American healthcare executive Smriti Kirubanandan appointed MD of Accenture's healthcare practice

**FEBRUARY 28, 2024**

**WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP) :** Indian American healthcare business executive Smriti Kirubanandan is joining Accenture as Managing Director of the firm's healthcare practice.

Kirubanandan, 36, "emerges as a contemporary Renaissance figure, achieving significant milestones as a Growth and Partnerships Executive with a distinctive background in Robotics and Public Health," according to a company press release.

Expressing her "excitement to join a leadership that values kindness, expansiveness, and believes in the power of equity and unity, Kirubanandan highlighted the role of individuals as "value creators, architects of change, and genuine guardians of the healthcare galaxy" in these challenging times.

"I am grateful and excited to share that I have started my journey with Accenture as Managing Director in

Healthcare practice," she wrote on LinkedIn.

Kirubanandan's passion for emerging technologies and unwavering dedication to advancing healthcare are evident in her remarkable accomplishments, the release stated.

Beyond her corporate success, she wears multiple hats, demonstrating expertise as a raw vegan chef and nutritionist, actively engaging in community service, and spearheading initiatives to combat food insecurity, it stated.

In recognition of her outstanding contributions, the World Economic Forum bestowed upon Smriti Kirubanandan the title of Young Global Leader in 2023.

Kirubanandan has "helped organizations globally to build the capacity to empower people to engage in wellness programs," the WEF stated noting she is "responsible for educating

small farmers in Africa to lift them out of poverty to improve food & nutrition insecurity, impacting 2 million people per year."

Additionally, she was recently elected as a fellow of the British Royal Society of Arts, highlighting her global impact. She holds a distinguished position within the Young Leaders Circle at the Milken Institute and serves as the visionary Founder of the HLTH Forward Podcast.

This celebrated media platform serves as a collaborative nexus, bringing together healthcare leaders, policymakers, and artists to address challenges within the healthcare system and collectively devise strategies for its advancement, according to the release.

In 2022, she was appointed to serve the Los Angeles County food equity round table as a Nutrition & Policy Advisor to design and strategize programs to address food insecurity by educating and improving access and affordability to



nutritious food.

Kirubanandan gained her Bachelor of Science in Computer Science and Engineering focused on Robotics (BSCEN), followed by her master's in engineering management (MSEM) from USC and master's in public health (MPH) from UCLA.

## Indian American executive Reema Poddar elected to Oceaneering International board



Reema Poddar has been elected to the Board of Directors of Texas-based technology company Oceaneering International, Inc. as an independent, non-executive director for a two-year term.

**FEBRUARY 29, 2024**

**HOUSTON (TIP) :** Indian American business executive Reema Poddar has been elected to the Board of Directors of Texas-based technology company Oceaneering International, Inc. as an independent, non-executive director for a two-year term.

Poddar has also been appointed to the Nominating, Corporate Governance and Sustainability Committee of the Board. Her initial term of office will extend until Oceaneering's Annual Meeting of Shareholders in 2026, according to a media release.

Poddar has 30 years of software industry experience, including product strategy, product development and digital business transformation. She has been recognized as a leader in data analytics, machine learning, artificial intelligence, cloud services, cyber security, industrial automation, the

Internet of Things (IoT), and diversity, equity and inclusion.

She has served in executive roles at global firms ranging from startups to Fortune 500 corporations, including holding executive roles at General Electric, GE Digital, Emerson, Philips, Teradata Corporation, AdFender Inc., OptimEyes.AI and Intellution, Inc.

Poddar currently serves on the board of directors of MeridianLink, Inc. and Accion Labs Group Holdings, Inc., and on the board of advisors for OptimEyes.AI. Previously, Poddar served on the corporate council board of advisors to the Dean of UC San Diego Jacobs School of Engineering.

Poddar holds a master's degree in computer applications from Bangalore University, India and a master's degree in physics from Mahatma Gandhi University, India.

Kevin McEvoy, Oceaneering's Chairman of the Board, stated, "We are pleased to welcome Ms. Poddar to Oceaneering's Board. Our strategic, robotics-focused vision will be strengthened by her successes as an experienced technology executive and respected thought leader and change agent.

"Her experience in setting product and technology strategy, building and delivering innovative, commercially viable products and services, accelerating digital transformations, and delivering results in the digital market is relevant and meaningful to Oceaneering."

Oceaneering is a global technology company delivering engineered services and products and robotic solutions to the offshore energy, defense, aerospace, manufacturing, and entertainment industries.

## Two Indian Americans bag Gates Cambridge Scholarship at the University of Cambridge

**FEBRUARY 28, 2024**

**NEW JERSEY (TIP) :** Two Indian Americans - Sadhana Lolla and Ishan Kalburge - are among 26 academically outstanding and socially committed US citizens selected to be part of the 2024 class of Gates Cambridge Scholars at the University of Cambridge.

The US Scholars-elect, who will take up their awards this October, are from a wide range of backgrounds, according to a media release. Nineteen are women, six are men and one would prefer not to specify. Thirteen will pursue PhDs while 13 will undertake one-year master's degrees.

"In the rural Indian village that my family calls home, I grew up witnessing my grandmother labor endlessly without assistive technology," says Sadhana Lolla, who plans to pursue an MPhil in technology policy.

"Her experiences, and those of millions of women, elderly, and people with disabilities worldwide, underpin my dedication to pursue artificial intelligence solutions that bring robotic assistive technology to underprivileged communities."

"My background as a machine learning researcher and roboticist has enabled me to deeply appreciate the transformative power of technology, while also recognizing that technologists and governments must work together to leverage cutting-edge artificial intelligence to uplift those who need it the most," she says.

"By pursuing the MPhil in technology policy," Lolla says, "I hope to bring regulators, researchers, and the technology industry together to design policy solutions that promote bias-free, robust, and trustworthy artificial intelligence while spurring innovation."



Sadhana Lolla and Ishan Kalburge - are among 26 academically outstanding and socially committed US citizens selected to be part of the 2024 class of Gates Cambridge Scholars at the University of Cambridge.

"I also hope to uplift the voices of vulnerable communities in conversations about technological development and deployment," she says. "I'm thrilled to join the Gates Cambridge community and work together with such a diverse and talented group of peers to improve the lives of others."

Lolla previously studied Computer Science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Ishan Kalburge, who will do a PhD in engineering, will look at how the human brain forms internal representations of uncertainty.

He hopes to develop computational models that emulate such representations to advance our understanding of human cognition in health and disease and pave the way for developing trustworthy and energy-efficient artificial intelligence.

While at Cambridge, he will also work to expand STEM outreach initiatives in under-resourced communities and lead dialogue on developing responsible AI regulatory policies.

(Read full story at  
[www.theindianpanorama.news](http://www.theindianpanorama.news))

# Eight Indian-origin women among 50 CNBC Changemakers



Besides Indian American business leaders Revathi Advaiti, Sandhya Ganapathy, Dr Geetha Murali, Ritu Narayan, and Aradhana Sarin, the list features Svanika Balasubramanian, Dipali Goenka and Dr Suneeta Reddy from India.

**MARCH 1, 2024**

**NEW YORK (TIP):** Five Indian American and three other Indian origin women are among this year's 50 "CNBC Changemakers: Women Transforming Business," an annual list spotlighting women whose accomplishments have left an indelible mark on the business world.

Besides Indian American business leaders Revathi Advaiti, Sandhya Ganapathy, Dr Geetha Murali, Ritu Narayan, and Aradhana Sarin, the list features Svanika Balasubramanian, Dipali Goenka and Dr Suneeta Reddy from India.

"The women named to the inaugural CNBC Changemakers list are creating a pattern of what it takes to defy the odds, innovate and thrive in a volatile business landscape," says CNBC.

"From startup founders to S&P 500 C-suite growth drivers, from personalities shaking up the media industry to figures taking women's sports further into the

mainstream, the 2024 Changemakers have broken new ground and set the stage for others to follow," it says.

"By focusing on women who left an indelible mark on the economy and business world in 2023, CNBC Changemakers recognizes the accomplishments of names in the news and many who have flown under the radar" it says.

Indian Americans on the list are:

Revathi Advaiti, Flex, Chief Executive Officer

Notable in 2023: Advaiti forged a key Biden administration partnership on US/India relations and accelerated climate tech and EV adoption.

Named CEO in February 2019 after starting her career as a shop-floor supervisor in Oklahoma, Advaiti has helped build Flex into one of the most trusted manufacturing partners across a variety of industries by embracing the company's "do the right thing, always" ethos.

Advaiti has also looked to create stronger alliances between the private and public sector, leading to factory visits from President Joe Biden and US Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm, as well as her participation at the White House's "Innovation Handshake" between the US and India and a state dinner for Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

In March, she was named by Biden to the Advisory Committee for Trade Policy and Negotiations. The visits from Biden

and Granholm highlighted the role that Flex is playing in the clean energy transition and the future of electrification.

Sandhya Ganapathy, EDP Renewables North America, Chief Executive Officer

Notable in 2023: Leveraged the Inflation Reduction Act to drive a clean energy transition with diverse leadership.

Ganapathy sees her mission as helping to create a cleaner nation - and a cleaner world. She took over the helm at EDP Renewables North America as CEO in 2022.

The Houston-based company is one of the top five renewable energy operators in the US, operating 60 wind farms and 12 utility-scale solar parks.

The company's projects generate close to nine gigawatts of clean energy annually, enough to power about 2 million homes.

EDP Renewables North America has created more than 1,000 jobs in the US and invested \$17 billion in capital in local communities across the US, according to the company.

Dr Geetha Murali, Room to Read, Chief Executive Officer

Notable in 2023: Released a multimedia storytelling project to empower millions of girls to create change.

Murali is leading the effort to combat illiteracy and gender inequality through the development of a love of reading in marginalized children.

In 2023, the organization launched She

Creates Change, a multimedia storytelling project intended to broaden its reach by encouraging young women and girls to create change in their own communities and achieve educational goals.

The multimedia project, the first of its kind, tells stories via physical books, live action and animated films, using techniques from vivid abstract imagery to Claymation, and audio productions, with iterations in dozens of languages intended to reach a broad audience.

Room to Read says that as of 2024, it will have benefited the same number of children over the past four years as the organization did during its first twenty.

Ritu Narayan, Z?m, Founder & Chief Executive Officer

Notable in 2023: Expanded school bus service to more major cities and is transitioning to all-electric fleets.

Narayan struggled with managing her career while making sure her kids could get from point A to point B. So, she started Z?m, a transportation company that focuses on students while using technology to create more efficient and environmentally friendly routes.

Z?m raised \$140 million in series E financing in early 2024, putting the company's valuation at \$1.3 billion. The company currently serves thousands of schools, including school districts in Los Angeles, San Francisco and Seattle.

(Read full story at [www.theindianpanorama.news](http://www.theindianpanorama.news))

## British Indian doctor's rock band embarks on UK-wide tour



Gulzar (Gulz) Singh Dhanoya's rock band embarks on UK tour

**FEBRUARY 29, 2024**

**LONDON (TIP):** A 25-year-old British Indian doctor whose passion for music resulted in a band with some of his fellow medical colleagues has embarked on his first UK-wide tour, with the launch show in London recently proving a sell-out.

Gulzar (Gulz) Singh Dhanoya started the indie-rock band named Gulz during his university days as a medical student. It was over the Covid pandemic that the singer-songwriter plucked up the courage to put out some of his musical creations onto the audio streaming service SoundCloud and soon this one-man project struck a chord with an ever-expanding fan base. The lead singer and songwriter is now busy rehearsing with

his four bandmates for their next live gig in Birmingham on March 16.

"How it usually works is that now I go away and think of an idea for a song and its very bare bones. Then we go into a studio rehearsal room and all of us together kind of think about our parts and we just keep playing it over and over. It's a great way to kind of balance our creative ideas," Gulz told the media.

While two of his other bandmates are also National Health Service (NHS) doctors like him, two are professionals in other fields which he feels helps bring some flexibility to striking a balance with late-night hospital shifts. He admits sometimes wondering how they are all able to commit to their music with stressful full-time jobs.

"It's a huge commitment. Obviously, the working day is long and then it fits in shows and rehearsals and social media stuff. It's like a second job and one that doesn't realistically pay compared to a 'normal' job. It's very cliché, but it's just because we love it," he said.

Born in Newcastle to a Punjabi father born in India and mother born in Southall, west London, music was a part of Gulz's life from a very young age.

From strains of Mohammed Rafi to Stevie Wonder, his musical influences were an eclectic mix - something that chimes with the kind of tunes he is now creating lyrically and musically.

"I began by sort of writing music that sounds like the music I like and have tried to retain that in some ways. I just try to weave certain themes of my life at the time into the stuff that I'm writing, be it relationships and breakups or just having some fun," he said.

Currently based in Brighton and completing his second foundation year as a junior doctor in the National Health Service (NHS), Gulz plans to take some time off later this year to focus entirely on music for some time. Asked about the ongoing strikes by NHS junior doctors demanding better pay and working conditions, Dr Dhanoya says the band fully supports their medical colleagues in industrial action.

"We always hope the next set of strikes will be the last one because junior doctors don't want to have to strike. But sadly, there's no other way to be heard by the government. The working conditions and pay right now are not acceptable. There's so much responsibility that

doctors have, with people's lives at stake literally, and the working conditions and pay do not reflect that at all," he said, pointing out that in real terms all his colleagues are fighting for is an extra GBP 5 an hour.

Juggling their work shifts and rehearsals, the band is all set to perform at the Sunflower Lounge in Birmingham and then their tour is slotted for his home crowd in Newcastle followed by Manchester towards the end of next month. Beyond that, Gulz is open to bookings and asked if a tour to India may be in the offing, the doctor-musician sounds very excited at the prospect of playing a gig in the country he has so far only visited with family to spend time with cousins in Punjab.

"After August, I'm out of contract, which sounds dramatic but it's actually a really good thing because it means that I've got a lot more flexibility in my time and work. So, I would love to go to India and perform, in case any promoters out there want to reach out," he said.

Meanwhile, the band - dubbed the doctors/rockers - have sold-out shows in the UK to look forward to with tickets selling out fast on their socials.

# Indian American computer engineer Ashok Veeraraghavan wins award for revolutionary imaging technology

FEBRUARY 28, 2024

**HOUSTON (TIP):** Trailblazing Indian American computer engineer Ashok Veeraraghavan has won the 2024 Edith and Peter O'Donnell Award in Engineering for his revolutionary imaging technology that seeks to make the invisible visible.

Veeraraghavan, Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering and Computer Science, George R. Brown School of Engineering at Rice University, was bestowed with the award by The Texas Academy of Medicine, Engineering, Science, and Technology (TAMEST).

Imagine taking a pristine picture through fog, smoke and rain. Imagine taking interior images of the human body through skin, bone and other tissue that scatter light and limit human vision, says a media release about Veeraraghavan's revolutionary technology.

Veeraraghavan and his team at Rice work on creating imaging systems that use novel multi-dimensional image sensors along with machine learning algorithms to undo the effects of light-scattering and see-through scattering media such as fog, smoke, rain and human tissue.

Recently, with support from researchers at the University of

Maryland, his team has developed a new technology dubbed NeuWS, an acronym for "neural wavefront shaping."

At its core, NeuWS is about undoing the effects of light scattering by using wavefront shaping and a novel machine-learning algorithm. Scattering is what makes light, which has a lower wavelength unusable in many scenarios. If you can undo the effects of scattering, imaging can go much further.

Capturing images through rain and fog is certainly interesting, but this technology could have lifesaving applications, the release stated.

Through NeuWS-like technologies, there could be a time in the future where a firefighter entering into a room filled with smoke could be equipped with goggles that allow them to have clear visibility.

Automakers could be able to install car headlights that can see through a host of dangerous weather conditions. Surgeons could be able to see blood vessels through the skin tissue without making a single cut.

While several further advances are needed to make any of these scenarios possible, their work has made significant progress and make all of this potentially feasible.

"Dr. Veeraraghavan is tackling one of

the hardest problems in imaging, what many consider to be a 'holy grail problem' of optical engineering," said nominator Alan Bovik, PhD (NAE), Professor, Cockrell Family Regents Endowed Chair in Engineering at The University of Texas at Austin.

"Every time we improve our ability to see what is unseen, the number of things we can do increases. The NeuWS technology is going to allow us to see things we cannot even imagine today."

Born in Chennai, Veeraraghavan earned a BTech in electrical engineering from Indian Institute of Technology, Madras in 2002.

He also earned master's and doctoral degrees from the Department of Electrical in 2004 and Computer Engineering at the University of Maryland, College Park 2004 in 2008.

After joining the ECE Department in 2010, he was promoted to Associate Professor in 2017 and professor in 2020. He co-developed FlatCam, a small sensor chip with a mask that substitutes lenses in typical cameras.

Veeraraghavan is one of five Texas-based researchers receiving the TAMEST 2024 Edith and Peter O'Donnell Awards. Each is chosen for their individual contributions addressing the essential role that science and technology play in



Ashok Veeraraghavan has won the 2024 Edith and Peter O'Donnell Award in Engineering for his revolutionary imaging technology that seeks to make the invisible visible.

society, and whose work meets the highest standards of exemplary professional performance, creativity and resourcefulness. The Edith and Peter O'Donnell Awards annually recognize rising star Texas researchers who are addressing the essential role that science and technology play in society, and whose work meets the highest standards of exemplary professional performance, creativity and resourcefulness.

Founded in 2004 TAMEST is composed of the Texas-based members of the three National Academies (National Academy of Medicine, National Academy of Engineering and National Academy of Sciences), the Royal Society and the state's eight Nobel Laureates.

## Four Indian American brothers win \$7 billion in California property dispute



A jury Monday, February 26, ordered Haresh Jogani to pay his brothers Shashikant, Rajesh, Chetan and Shailesh Jogani more than \$2.5 billion in damages and to divide up shares of their Southern California property empire.

MARCH 1, 2024

**LOS ANGELES (TIP):** In one of the largest verdicts in the US in a decade, four brothers from India have been awarded \$7 billion after a 20-year legal battle with a fifth brother over alleged breach of a family partnership agreement.

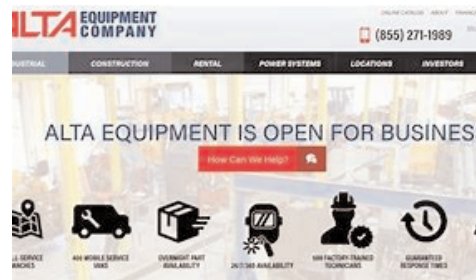
After a five-month trial, a jury Monday ordered Haresh Jogani to pay his brothers Shashikant, Rajesh, Chetan and Shailesh Jogani more than \$2.5 billion in damages and to divide up shares of their Southern California property empire.

In total, the Los Angeles Superior Court jury awarded the four successful brothers \$2.5 billion in monetary damages and more than \$4.5 billion in property interests, making the award one of the largest in the United States this year, according to the plaintiffs' attorneys.

(Read full story at

www.theindianpanorama.news)

## Indian American executive Sidhartha Nair joins Alta Equipment Group as director



Sidhartha Nair has joined Alta Equipment Group Inc, a leading provider of premium material handling, construction and environmental processing equipment and related services, as a director.

MARCH 1, 2024

**SAN FRANCISCO (TIP):** Indian American executive Sidhartha Nair has joined Alta Equipment Group Inc, a leading provider of premium material handling, construction and environmental processing equipment and related services, as a director.

Nair, 52, currently is the Head of Strategy, Americas Region, for Mercedes-Benz Mobility and leads Strategic and Transformation activities in the US, Canada and Mexico since December 2021.

Nair brings global experience and knowledge of startup, new market entry, growth, and digital transformation of businesses at different periods in their life cycle, according to a media release.

(Read full story at

www.theindianpanorama.news)

## Indian American Former MSNBC host Mehdi Hasan launches Zeteo, a new digital media venture



Mehdi Hasan is preparing to launch his own digital media company, Zeteo

FEBRUARY 28, 2024

**WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP):** British Indian American liberal commentator Mehdi Hasan, who departed from MSNBC last month following the controversial cancellation of his weekly show in November, is preparing to launch his own digital media company, Zeteo.

Named after the Greek word meaning "to seek," Zeteo is scheduled to make its debut in April on the Substack platform. The company's flagship offerings will include a weekly streaming show titled "Mehdi Unfiltered," hosted by Hasan himself, alongside a weekly podcast and a range of written contributions from prominent figures. Subscribers can access the platform for \$6 per month, with an annual subscription option available.

(Read full story at

www.theindianpanorama.news)

## Indian American Sikh teen rolls out album of Gurbani Shabad Kirtan in 31 ragas of Guru Granth Sahib



12-year-old Arjanveer Singh has come out with an album of Gurbani Shabad Kirtan in 31 ragas of Guru Granth Sahib, qualifying him as a prodigy.

FEBRUARY 29, 2024

**ALBANY, NY (TIP):** A 12-year-old Arjanveer Singh has come out with an album of Gurbani Shabad Kirtan in 31 ragas of Guru Granth Sahib, qualifying him as a prodigy. Based at Albany, New York he learned the recital of Gurbani Kirtan in classical Ragas pointed towards his dedication towards Gurmat philosophy. About his feat he said it was an initiative aimed at connecting children worldwide with the 'Ragmatic Shabad Kirtan' of Guru Granth Sahib. He rendered Gurbani Kirtan in Ragas such as Aasaa, Wadhans, Sorath and others.

He learnt Gurbani Kirtan based on 31 ragas of Guru Granth Sahib from renowned Sangeet Kirtankar Dr Gurnam Singh, former head of Gurbani Sangeet Chair of Punjabi University through Baljinder Singh, the head of the Rara Sahib Samprada.

(Read full

story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

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**Sunday March 24 - Satya Narayan Katha at 6pm**

**followed by Holika Dahan & Aarti**

**Monday March 25 Holi**

**Holi Celebration - Sunday March 31 12-2pm**

**MARCH 8, 2024 KAKAD AARTI 8:30AM**

**FOLLOWED BY SAI ABHISHEKHAM**



## Indian American Minita Sanghvi secures Democratic nomination for New York's 44th senate district



Minita Sanghvi has secured the Democratic nomination for New York's 44th State Senate district

**FEBRUARY 26, 2024**

**NEW YORK (TIP):** Indian American Minita Sanghvi has secured the Democratic nomination for New York's 44th State Senate district, propelled by critical endorsements from the Saratoga County Democratic Committee and Schenectady County Democratic Committee.

Endorsing Sanghvi, Saratoga County Democratic Committee Chairwoman Martha Devaney praised her as a committed advocate and proven problem solver. Devaney highlighted Sanghvi's multifaceted background, including her roles as a dedicated parent, respected educator, and effective public servant, as evidence of her capacity to deliver results transcending partisan lines. Devaney expressed confidence that Sanghvi embodies the leadership qualities deserving of New York's 44th State Senate

district.

Frank Salamone, Chair of the Schenectady County Democratic Committee, echoed this sentiment, emphasizing Sanghvi's successful track record as Saratoga Springs Commissioner of Finance. Salamone lauded her fiscal responsibility and highlighted key city improvements under her leadership, including the establishment of a third fire station, a 24/7 homeless shelter, and essential infrastructure enhancements. Salamone voiced certainty that Sanghvi's commitment to infrastructure development and economic stimulation would benefit the region if elected as state senator.

The 44th State Senate district, encompassing Saratoga County, Niskayuna, and the City of Schenectady, currently under Republican incumbent Jim Tedisco, has witnessed a shifting political landscape. While traditionally Republican, a surge in registered Democrats, outnumbering Republicans by nearly 6,000, signals changing demographics. President Biden's decisive victory over Donald Trump in the 2020 election within the district further underscores this trend.

(Read full story at [www.theindianpanorama.news](http://www.theindianpanorama.news))

## 87 people living in basement taken to migrant shelter

**MARCH 1, 2024**

**RICHMOND HILL, NY (TIP):** An onsite building inspection in New York led to the discovery of 87 people living in a Queens basement Monday, February 26, according to law enforcement sources, says a NewsNation report.

NewsNation says the incident happened around 11:40 p.m. at 132-03 Liberty Ave. in Richmond Hill. The FDNY arrived at the building to conduct an onsite inspection. They entered the basement and found 87 people living there, according to sources.

Mayor Eric Adams said a 311 call was what prompted an investigation into the building during a news conference Tuesday. WPIX reached out to the FDNY for comment. The people were transported to a migrant shelter in the Bronx, sources said. The Office of Emergency Management confirmed to WPIX that it responded to the scene. The backyard of the building was filled with what appeared to be delivery bikes, photos from the scene show. The building's owner, 47-year-old Ebou Sarr, told WPIX on Tuesday that he was charging migrants \$300 a month to live in the building. He said most of the migrants are from Senegal, and that he was providing them with breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

Sarr also said he's looking at commercial properties to help them find a place to live. "The city is saying that they have no place for these people," Sarr said. "It's not true." Officials have not confirmed if the



The backyard at 132-03 Liberty Ave. in Richmond Hill, where 87 people were allegedly living in the basement and later taken to a migrant shelter, according to sources. Credit: PIX11 News

people living in the basement were migrants.

When asked about the situation during Tuesday's news conference, the Adams administration said that there is a housing problem in the city - but also defended its handling of the migrant crisis.

"What we discovered last night in some ways is also symptomatic of a larger crisis that this city is facing that we've talked about repeatedly in terms of the housing shortage in this city," said Maria Torres-Springer, the deputy mayor for housing. "It is not a new thing that too many people make desperate choices about where to live and what to pay for and at the root of that is the fact that we haven't built enough housing."

(Read full story at [www.theindianpanorama.news](http://www.theindianpanorama.news))

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# BJP's 370-seat target overly optimistic

WITH THE INDIA BLOC COMING TO ITS SENSES, THE RULING PARTY MAY NOT FIND THE GOING EASY



BY JULIO RIBEIRO

I am convinced that Narendra Modi is going to be the Prime Minister for another five-year term. What I seriously doubt is whether his prediction that the BJP will win 370 seats (and the NDA will get 400) in the Lok Sabha elections will come true.

It is incumbent on the party firmly backed by the majority community to suppress its tendency of misusing its powers to humble the Opposition.

In Maharashtra, which sends 48 MPs to the Lower House, it seems that the Congress, the Sharad Pawar-led NCP and the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena faction will each win a few seats in their respective spheres of influence. The BJP has made major inroads into rural constituencies. Along with its new-found friends, the Shinde faction of the Sena and the Ajit Pawar-led NCP, it will win a few more than the Opposition, but certainly not the figure it quotes.

The Hindi-speaking belt is firmly on its side, but here, too, the going is not going to be so smooth that it can afford to let its guard down. The farmers' renewed agitation is confined mainly to Punjab, a state where the BJP has little influence. Jat farmers of Haryana and Uttar Pradesh have been weaned away by the bestowal of the Bharat Ratna on the tallest Jat leader, former PM Chaudhary Charan Singh. The award ahead of the Lok Sabha elections was one very clever move.

What was far from clever, though, was the attempt to tamper with the result of the Chandigarh mayoral poll. It resulted in prosecution being ordered against the presiding officer by the Supreme Court, whose judgments in the electoral bond case and the Chandigarh episode have alerted the party in power to refrain from venturing into such escapades.

The fate of the presiding officer should serve as a warning to officials wanting to prove their loyalty to the powers that be. The apex court's decision on the electoral bond scheme has cast a shadow over the willingness of corporates to blindly help the party in power. They should revert to the system followed by the Tata Group and the Aditya Birla Group to donate to all political parties by crossed cheques, properly accounted for. That system was working seamlessly till the electoral bonds were invented.

It is natural for the party in power, particularly one riding a wave as the BJP is at present, to get the bulk of the donations made by corporates. But it is not normal for a ruling party to ensure through government agencies controlled by it to choke the funding



The BJP is looking to improve upon its 2019 tally of 303 Lok Sabha seats

Credit / PTI

of Opposition parties. The 'freezing' of bank accounts of the Congress by the income tax (I-T) authorities in the run-up to the General Election was a very ham-handed and mean method of ruffling feathers and it was not appreciated by even BJP supporters. Mercifully, the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal intervened and restored sanity.

Modi was on a roll after he took over the role of the high priest and inaugurated the Ram Janmabhoomi Temple in Ayodhya. Even normally tepid followers of religion, in this case of the religion of India's majority Hindus, were positively affected by the pomp and splendor associated with the January 22 function. Modi's popularity went up by a few notches.

This glorious moment was repeated a few days later when he persuaded Qatar to free eight former Navy personnel, who had initially been sentenced to death (later commuted to imprisonment) for suspected spying. Our Prime Minister succeeded in his mission, thus displaying the strength of the country's soft power in the Muslim world of West Asia.

Unfortunately, the comparatively petty-minded acts of trying to change the mandate in the Chandigarh mayoral poll and the I-T Department's action against the Congress have neutralized the gains that Modi had generated.

It is incumbent on the party, now firmly backed by the majority community in its stronghold of Hindi-

speaking states, to suppress its tendency of misusing its powers to humble the Opposition. Educated voters have realized that their favored party is needlessly needling its political opponents and making obvious attempts to lure Opposition bigwigs with threats of investigations by Central agencies like the ED, the CBI and the income tax authorities. Once they cross over, their sins are forgiven. Some of them are even made ministers or Rajya Sabha MPs!

One cannot be sure if the use of such tactics will be halted once electioneering begins in earnest. The Congress and its allies in the INDIA bloc have woken up to the realization of the likely fate of their leaders if the BJP gets the 370 seats that Modi has quoted. In Delhi, Haryana and Gujarat, AAP and the Congress have reached an understanding. Though late in the day, it may help them salvage a few seats.

The south, which includes Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Karnataka, is not going to go the BJP way. In Kerala and Tamil Nadu, the BJP is likely to draw a blank. Karnataka will contribute the biggest number to the BJP's kitty, but even that will not make a difference.

In the east, West Bengal is still Mamata Banerjee territory. It has 42 seats to offer. The BJP has made sizeable gains in Bengal, but not enough to dislodge Mamata.

In the North-East, the regional players go along with the ruling party

**"The north, except Punjab and Himachal, is solidly with the BJP. But with the INDIA bloc coming to its senses, it is possible that the BJP will not reach the figure of even 303, its tally in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. The figure of 370, quoted by Modi, is far too optimistic."**

for their own survival. But after the Sangh Parivar's activities in Manipur, the Baptist Christians of Nagaland, Mizoram, Meghalaya and the hill districts of Manipur have been having second thoughts on this score. Only Odisha and Tripura can be counted upon to partner the BJP. In any case, the number of Lok Sabha seats in the North-East is extremely small.

The north, except Punjab and Himachal, is solidly with the BJP. But with the INDIA bloc coming to its senses, it is possible that the BJP will not reach the figure of even 303, its tally in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. The figure of 370, quoted by Modi, is far too optimistic.

(The author is former governor and a highly decorated retired Indian Police Service Officer)



# Change and continuity in India's Palestine policy

**INDIA'S HISTORICAL POLICY TOWARDS PALESTINE HAS BEEN EVOLVING, BUT A PERMANENT FIX TO THE PALESTINE QUESTION SHOULD NOT BE LOST SIGHT OF**



BY STANLY JOHNY

Historically, India has been a firm supporter of the Palestine cause. And even when India's relationship with Israel flourished in the past three decades, New Delhi has maintained a careful balance between its new partnership and historical commitment towards Palestine. In recent years, there have been questions on whether India is abandoning this balance and tilting towards the Jewish state in a changing West Asia, where even Arab nations have been ready to sidestep the Palestine question for better bilateral ties with Israel.

Immediately after the October 7 Hamas attack in Israel, in which at least 1,200 people, mostly civilians, were killed, Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a post on X, said he was "deeply shocked by the news of [the] terrorist attack". He said, "We stand in solidarity with Israel at this difficult hour."

Mr. Modi, who became the first Indian Prime Minister to visit Israel in 2017, has a good personal chemistry with Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Supporters of Mr. Modi and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) hardly conceal their admiration towards Israel's aggressive security model. On October 26, barely three weeks after the Hamas attack, India abstained from a vote at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) that called for an "immediate, durable and sustainable humanitarian truce" in Gaza. India explained its stand by saying that there was no explicit condemnation of the October 7 "terror attack in the resolution". All these factors suggested that India's historical policy towards Palestine was undergoing a paradigm shift.

## EVOLVING APPROACH

India's Palestine policy has evolved over the years. When the UN General Assembly voted on a resolution to partition Palestine into a Jewish state, an Arab state and an international city (Jerusalem) in November 1947, India, along with Pakistan and the Arab bloc, voted against it. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru had compared the settler Zionists in historical Palestine to the Muslim League of undivided India. His position was that India, having gone through the horrors of Partition, should not support the partition of Palestine. But when the state of Israel was declared in May 1948, India swiftly adopted a pragmatic line: in 1950, it recognized Israel, but stopped short of establishing full



Israel forces fire as Palestinians rush for food aid in Gaza, dozens die in chaos

Credit / South China Morning Post

diplomatic relations. Throughout the Cold War, India, an advocate of Third World autonomy, was one of the most vocal supporters of the Palestine cause.

After it established full diplomatic relations with Israel in 1992, bilateral ties between New Delhi and Tel Aviv began to deepen and broaden (today, Israel is one of India's major defense and technology partners). But India publicly maintained its support for "a negotiated solution, resulting in a sovereign, independent, viable and united State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, living within secure and recognized borders, side by side at peace with Israel, as endorsed in the Arab Peace Initiative, the Quartet Road map and relevant UNSC Resolutions" - this means that India supported the creation of a Palestine state with East Jerusalem as its capital and based on the 1967 borders.

This position has evolved further after Mr. Modi became Prime Minister. In February 2018, when he visited Ramallah in the occupied West Bank, he called for dialogue to find a permanent solution to the crisis, but stopped short of saying anything on the status of Jerusalem or borders. It does not mean that India supports Israel's claim over the whole of Jerusalem (New Delhi voted against the U.S. decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital), but it will not talk about the contentious issues such as the capital and border any more, while remaining a partner of Israel and a supporter of the two-state solution. Realpolitik displaces the moral content of India's Palestine policy.

## AFTER OCTOBER 7

A close analysis of India's voting

record at the UN, post-October 7, and the statements made by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) suggests that this position of balancing has not changed. It is neither a strong moral critic, like Brazil or South Africa, of the way Israel is conducting the war, nor a mute spectator or enabler of Israel, like the United States or the United Kingdom.

A few days after Mr. Modi's tweet declaring solidarity with Israel over the "terror attack", the MEA stated that India backed "a sovereign, independent viable state of Palestine". After its first abstention, there were at least four votes at the UNGA on Israel.

On November 12, 2023, India voted in favor of a resolution that condemned Israeli settlements "in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem and the occupied Syrian Golan". Two weeks later, New Delhi voted in favor of another resolution that expressed "deep concern" over Israel's continuing occupation of Syria's Golan Heights. On December 12, India supported a resolution that called for "an immediate humanitarian ceasefire". And on December 19, it voted for the Palestinian right to self-determination.

The voting record speaks for itself. One cannot have a two-state solution if Israeli settlements continue in Palestinian territories. And the only path towards a solution is diplomacy, not war, as there is no balance of power between Israel, the mightiest military in West Asia, and the Palestinian militants. So, in essence, if one supports the two state-solution, there should be a call for an immediate end to violence, support dialogue, condemn settlements and, in principle, back Palestinian right to self-determination. This is what India has

done, unlike the U.S., which claims to be supporting the two-state solution while voting against all resolutions at the UN and refusing to back the ceasefire call.

## INDIA'S INTERESTS

The support for the Palestine cause, even if limited, is rooted in tangible national interests. Israel's ongoing offensive in Gaza, which has killed over 30,000 people, wounded some 70,000 and displaced nearly 90% of Gaza's population of 2.3 million, is one of the gravest humanitarian tragedies of the 21st century. Israel, despite this rogue behavior, manages to avoid the wrath of the international laws and system mainly because of the unconditional support it enjoys from the U.S. But America's support for Israel and Tel Aviv's disregard for Palestinian lives and international laws have created strong reactions in the Global South. South Africa took Israel to the International Court of Justice, while Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva accuses Israel of committing "genocide" in Gaza. China has repeatedly called for a ceasefire, while Russia is hosting different Palestinian factions, including Hamas.

India, which aspires to be a leader of the Global South, cannot ignore these voices and sentiments. That is why External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said at the Munich Security Conference last month that Israel "should be and should have been mindful of the civilian casualties in Gaza", which is India's sharpest criticism of the Israel war till now.

The October 7 attack and Israel's retaliatory war have also turned the strategic clock in the region back. Before October 7, India was gearing up to work in the post-Abraham Accords strategic reality through its cooperation with the Arabs, Israelis and Americans. But further Arab-Israel reconciliation is now on hold. The U.S.'s reputation stands as tarnished as that of Israel. If Saudi-Israel normalization is not taking place, the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) will have to wait. If the crisis persists and Houthis continue to target vessels in the Red Sea, it would create lasting economic pains for India. A prolonged war in Gaza would also enhance risks of a wider conflict in the region, involving Iran, Israel and America, who are all India's partners. An immediate end to the war, restoration of order and stability in West Asia and a permanent fix to the Palestine question are as much in India's interests as anybody else's in West Asia. This should be the guiding core of India's Act West policy.

(Stanly Johny is an editor with The Hindu)

# A new low for Congress high command

Himachal crisis was triggered by the top brass' refusal to address brewing rebellion against



BY RAJESH  
RAMACHANDRAN

**"The Congress central leadership has effectively alienated all senior leaders who can hold the hand, read the pulse and count a legislator in or out. Their services are no longer required in the post-Sonia Gandhi Congress. All the old leaders are being painted with a tar brush without new ones replacing them. So, Congress lawyer-leader Abhishek Manu Singhvi had to cut a sorry figure and say that he could not judge the character of those whom he supped with a day before the Rajya Sabha election. It is surprising because everybody else knew about a brewing rebellion against Sukhu, which the central leadership refused to address."**

About seven years ago, there was a Rajya Sabha election in Gujarat that disproved the invincibility of the new BJP's election-winning machine. Then Congress president Sonia Gandhi's political adviser Ahmed Patel was seeking his fifth consecutive term in the Upper House. There were three seats up for grabs: two for the BJP and one for the Congress. Then BJP president Amit Shah and Union minister Smriti Irani were the BJP candidates who sailed through. The Leader of the Opposition in the Gujarat Assembly, Shankersinh Vaghela, had split the Congress and taken away a chunk of the MLAs. Yet, the Congress had 44 legislators, which was enough for Patel's victory.

Indian democracy is still waiting for the primary Opposition party's leadership to come of age.

But the difference between the late Patel and Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu is that the former planned for the worst-case scenario. Two Congress MLAs



For a central leadership that has always encouraged rebellion within, Priyanka Gandhi did not know how to control the levers of intra-party competition in Himachal Pradesh. -File photo

backstabbed the party candidate. However, their votes were declared invalid as they had shown their ballot papers to BJP leaders. Yet, the masterstroke was Patel preparing for a last-minute twist in the tale. He had a BJP rebel and an MLA of BJP ally JD(U) cross-vote for him. These two votes made all the difference. Patel's victory in August 2017, three years after Modi came to power, was a big morale-booster for the Congress and the Opposition, proving that the BJP could be checkmated in its citadel.

There are no geniuses in politics, but only planners and doers. Patel was credited with magical machinations. But there was no sleight of hand or clairvoyance. His was a basic problem-solving approach towards a political situation. Elections need numbers and they need to be counted, again and again. The basic dictum of power politics is that those who stand closest would serve the hardest blow and the first lesson is to be prepared with extra numbers when the nearest ones slink away. Patel's magic was to be prepared with a BJP and a JDU cross-voter each. But to count legislators and add up numbers, leaders need to have interpersonal chemistry.

The Congress central leadership has effectively alienated all senior leaders who can hold the hand, read the pulse and count a legislator in or out. Their services are no longer required in the post-Sonia Gandhi Congress. All the old leaders are being painted with a tar brush without new ones replacing them. So, Congress lawyer-leader Abhishek Manu Singhvi had to cut a sorry figure and say that he could not judge the character of those whom he supped with a day before the Rajya Sabha election. It is surprising because everybody else knew about a brewing rebellion against

Sukhu, which the central leadership refused to address.

Earlier, the Congress top brass had always encouraged and rewarded rebellion, using rebels to keep satraps under check. Sukhu is the best example of a rebel rising up to topple the legacy of the biggest Congress mass leader in Himachal - Virbhadr Singh. Sukhu's claim to fame has always been as the high command's loyalist poking the six-term Chief Minister, who was an MLA nine times and an MP five times. The current crisis has proven that being a rebel is no real qualification to lead.

His detractors accuse him of punishing PWD officials for helping Virbhadr's widow, state party president and Congress' Mandi MP Pratibha Singh, during a foundation stone-laying ceremony. Obviously, such a CM would not know what's cooking in his party.

Indira Gandhi could afford to keep top local leaders on their toes. For, she was not merely Nehru's daughter but a child of the freedom movement. She knew local leaders and their competitors without any interlocutors introducing her to them. Not Rajiv Gandhi, whose infamous sackings in Andhra Pradesh led to the rise of Telugu pride and the Telugu Desam Party. And definitely not Priyanka Gandhi, who is not an elected member of any House. Democracy cannot be an exercise of power which has not been validated by the people directly or indirectly.

The primary task of the high command is to listen to the competing claims of the CM and his detractors. Most of the legislators, even ministers, do not have access to Priyanka or his brother. This has been the sad story of the Congress for a long time. It is now a family business run by proxies, with the owners refusing to look at the books.

Many important functionaries in the Himachal Congress knew that the Rajya Sabha poll may end up messy. A former top leader openly, though privately, said it before the polls. But nobody was listening. Sukhu refused to hold the hands of his colleagues to read their pulse. And his government machinery was rendered useless by sundry advisers.

For a central leadership that has always encouraged rebellion within, this time round, Priyanka did not know how to control the levers of intra-party competition. Himachal is a bipolar polity, which does not offer a third alternative to defectors. Turncoats, in fact, find it difficult to make room for themselves in the opposite camp carrying the stigma of being a defector in society. Yet, if Congress legislators decide to move out of the party, it can only be because of the complete failure of the state and central leaders to "judge the character" of their own glorified selves. They almost surrendered the only government in north India to the BJP.

And it took Karnataka Deputy CM DK Shivakumar and former Haryana CM Bhupinder Singh Hooda to bring the government back from the brink. And these are the kind of leaders that Rahul Gandhi may not like to associate with. Unfortunately, all mass leaders who have earned their spurs are out of Rahul's charmed circle, reducing it to a bunch of featherweight hangers-on. That leaders like Shivakumar and Hooda should have been pressed into service before the poll and not afterwards is a lesson that Rahul and Priyanka have not yet learnt. Indian democracy is still waiting for the primary Opposition party's leadership to come of age.

(The author is editor-in-chief of Tribune group of newspapers)

# The Indian Panorama celebrates the 18th Year of Publication with a renewed commitment to upholding the highest standards of journalism



Attorney Ravi Batra introduced Ambassador Kamboj as a giant of a diplomat who has brought India much respect at the United Nations



Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj in her address described the Indian diaspora as the best in the world, and praised Prof. Indrajit Saluja, publisher and chief editor of The Indian Panorama for maintaining the highest standards of journalism



Congressman -elect Tom Suozzi spoke highly of the Indian Americans and characterized the US-India relations as strong and getting stronger.



Tom Suozzi was presented a replica of the Golden Temple, the Vatican of the Sikhs.  
L to R: Ranju Batra, Sunil Hali, Purnima Desai, Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj, Tom Suozzi, FIA President Avinash Gupta, GOPIO President Lal Motwani, Prof. Saluja



Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj presented to Dr. V.K. Raju, President of the Eye Foundation of America, the lifetime Achievement Honor. L to R: Dr. Leela Raju, Secretary of the Eye Foundation of America, Ambassador Kamboj, Dr. V.K. Raju, Prof. Saluja



Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj congratulating her friend Ranju Batra after honoring her with the Excellence in Promotion of Diplomacy Award. L to R: Deepak Dwivedi, Ambassador Kamboj, Ranju Batra, Abha Bhatnagar, Prof. Saluja



Ambassador Kamboj presented to Purnima Desai the Excellence in Culture Award. L to R: Ms Desai, Ambassador Kamboj, Purnima Desai, Flora Parikh, Jag Kalra

**CONTD FROM PAGE 1**

Even as Prof Saluja expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the guests present in the chandeliered ballroom of Pearl Banquet Hall, as well as his readers and the Indian community for their loyal support over 18 long years, he chose to honor four eminent Indian Americans at the event. All were honored with a citation scroll, a shawl, and a model of

the Golden Temple.

The four honorees are well-known in the community. Dr. V.K. Raju (Life Achievement Honor) is an eminent ophthalmologist who is on a mission to eliminate childhood blindness through his Eye Foundation of America.

Ranju Batra (Excellence in Promotion of Diplomacy Award) honors diplomats at the Diwali Stamp - Power of One

awards every year after she secured the Diwali Stamp from USPS.

Harry Singh Bolla (Excellence in Entrepreneurship Award) runs a billion-dollar chain of gas stations and has started a charity to support good causes here in New York and India. He could not be present in person to receive the award.

Purnima Desai (Excellence in Culture Award) is the founder of Shikshayatan

Cultural Center and Sriniketan Foundation to encourage and support Indian music and arts through training and events.

They were also presented citations from Nassau County Executive Bruce Blakeman.

Introducing the Chief Guest, Ravi Batra said Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj



Own Murtaajiz Naqvi, Executive Director, Nassau County Office of Asian American Affairs, on behalf of Bruce Blakeman, Nassau County Executive, presents a Citation to Dr. VK Raju.



Own Murtaajiz Naqvi, Executive Director, Nassau County Office of Asian American Affairs, on behalf of Bruce Blakeman, Nassau County Executive, presents a Citation to Ranju Batra



Prof. Indrajit Saluja felicitated his friend Parveen Arora on completion of a year of founding of ALotusInTheMud.com



Own Murtaajiz Naqvi, Executive Director, Nassau County Office of Asian American Affairs, on behalf of Bruce Blakeman, Nassau County Executive, presents a Citation to Purnima Desai



Blitz India US edition is launched by Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj



Deepak Dwivedi and Prof. Indrajit Saluja present a Citation to Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj



Journalists Beyond Borders, an international organization of Journalists founded by Prof. Indrajit Saluja is formally launched by Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj. Ashok Arora, the International Legal Advisor to The JBB exhibited the JBB logo

**CONTD FROM PAGE 11**

joined her post when India was already a Member of the UN Security Council and she took it to a higher trajectory.

Ambassador Kamboj in her brief address commended The Indian Panorama for not only being a mirror of the vibrant roots of our culture but also

showcasing the journey of the Indian diaspora. She also called the US diaspora the best in the world. She lauded the achievements of the Indian community in the US, describing their journey as nothing short of inspirational. She emphasized the diaspora's significant role in fostering excellence and

innovation globally.

Ambassador Kamboj congratulated all the honorees, and in particular, Ranju Batra whom she has come to know well because of her work at the UN. She commended Ranju for creating goodwill and earning a name for her country of origin.

Tom Suozzi (D-NY3) said he sees the US-India relationship as the most important in the next 50 years. "These two will define the long-term global world," and whether it would abide by the "noble principles" outlined in the constitutions of both countries. While in

**CONTD ON PAGE 13**

**Guests went ga ga over the variety entertainment presented by Battery Dance group, students of Shilpa Jhurani, students of Rimli Roy, and the Soorme Bhangra group**



Students of Shilpa Jhurani give a dance performance



Soorme Bhangra Dance Group give a dance performance

Students of Rimli Roy give a dance performance

All photos / Mohammed Jaffer -SnapsIndia

**CONTD FROM PAGE 12**

the US Congress (he took the oath of office on February 28), Suozzi said he would do everything possible to represent the diverse Indian community in his district.

The new Consul General of India in New York, Ambassador Binaya S.

Pradhan could not make it because of a conflict in scheduling.

Blitz India Chairman and Editor-in-Chief Deepak Dwivedi and CEO Sandeep Saxena flew in from New Delhi for the US launch of their news weekly, which is India's first chronicler of development news. The duo was joined by

Prof Saluja and other dignitaries and mediapersons to release printed copies of the paper.

Two more media events followed. Journalists Beyond Borders (JBB), a fraternity organization founded by Prof Saluja in 2022, was formally launched. Local publishers and editors joined in to

reveal its logo. Through journalism, JBB aims to protect and promote human rights, human values and world peace. Prof Saluja used the occasion to felicitate his friend Parveen Chopra, Founder and Editor of ALotusInTheMud.com, on the first anniversary of his wellness and

**CONTD ON PAGE 14**

## THANK YOU, DEAR GUESTS, FOR YOUR GRACIOUS PRESENCE



CONTD FROM PAGE 13

spirituality web magazine.

Copies of The Indian Panorama's 18th year Gratitude Gala souvenir were distributed among the guests. All guests were also gifted a model of the Golden Temple, the Vatican of the Sikhs.

Video messages were screened from Padma Bhushan Sant Chatwal, India's Ambassador to Guatemala Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra, Emmy-nominated film director and actor Tirlok Malik, and Prabhjot Singh, a senior journalist from Chandigarh.

The standing-room only audience was hooked on to the show, beginning with the very first item when two lithe dancers from Battery Dance took to the floor. The last item was the adrenaline-pumping bhangra dance. In between, dancers trained by Shilpa Jhurani and Rimli Roy showed their classical moves. The artists were profusely applauded by the audience for their mesmerizing performances and thanked by Prof. Saluja.

The guests at the gala included Padma Shri Dr Sudhir Parikh, Chairman and CEO of Parikh Worldwide Media and ITV Gold, who congratulated Prof Saluja for his "great work in the media," over the 18 years of The Indian Panorama. Dilip Chauhan from NYC Mayor's office congratulated The Indian Panorama on

CONTD ON PAGE 15



**CONTD FROM PAGE 14**

behalf of Mayor Eric Adams. Zahid Syed, Director, Community Affairs with the Town of Hempstead and Rokeya Akhter, Community Coordinator with Queens District Attorney's office also graced the occasion.

Blakeman, Nassau County Executive sent his representative Own Murtajiz Naqvi, Executive Director, Nassau County Office of Asian American Affairs to present Citations to the Honorees- Dr. VK Raju, Ranju Batra, Harry Singh Bolla and Purnima Desai.

Prominent Community organizations were represented: Gobind Munjal and Dr Jagdish Gupta from AIA, Dr Avinash Gupta, Srujal Parikh, and Alok Kumar

from FIA-Tristate, Thomas Abraham from GOPIO, Pradeep Tandon from IALI, and George Abraham from IOC-USA, Shiv Dass, President, Jackson Heights Indian Merchants' Association, besides many others.

Veteran Sikh community leader Master Mohinder Singh, a former president of Gurdwara Sikh Cultural Society, Richmond Hill, and a founder President of Gurdwara Baba Makhan Shah Sikh Center was present with Gurmej Singh, a former president of Gurdwara Baba Makhan Shah Lobana, besides many others from the Sikh community.

The media fraternity stood in solidarity with Prof. Saluja: they included, besides Dr. Parikh, Sunil Hali (Promoter, Radio Zindagi, and Publisher, The Indian Eye),

Sharanjit Singh Thind (Editor-Publisher, South Asian Insider), Varinder Bhalla (Publisher, Bollywood Insider).

The evening's program was ably emceed by Piya Jyoti Kachroo, ITV anchor and producer.

The sumptuous dinner with a top-of-the-shelf bar was enjoyed by the guests. Prof. Saluja expressed his heartfelt thanks to Pearl CEO Gary Sikka and his staff for excellent food and hospitality.

Prominent guests included Arish Sahani, Sudhir Vaishnav, Gobind Bathija, Baldev Singh Grewal, Shiv Dass and Ashok Arora.

Guests came from various parts of the US and even India. They included Bidisha Roy, Assistant Editor of The Indian Panorama (TIP) from Tampa, Florida, Zia Khan, a celebrated photographer who looks after TIP's Dallas edition, and Parminder Singh Aujla, TIP's California representative, from Sacramento,

Politician Puneet Ahluwalia came from Virginia, social activist Murtaza from Pennsylvania. Harry Singh Panaser, Mrs. Manjit Kaur Panaser, Harvenderpal Singh, Seema Jagtiani, Nutan Dabholkar, Dave Makkar, Mrs. Rashmi Makkar, Prachi and Surya Makkar, Rimli Roy, Rupinder Singh, and many more from New Jersey.

From India came Arminder Arora and his wife Tripti Arora, Sparsh and Bhola.

Those at the event from the electronic media included Pardeep Gill from Global Punjab, Munish Byala, and Gurinder Hothi. Photographers included Mohammed Jaffer, Vijay Shah and Kripa Prasad.

Prof Indrajit Saluja has become synonymous with his weekly newspaper, a labor of love. He is not only an eminent editor but also a well-respected community leader who has forged links across the ethnic, ideological, and political spectrum. His friends from all

**CONTD ON PAGE 17**

# Birthday celebration



Family and friends celebrate Prof. Saluja's birthday . Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj graciously joined the celebrations



Prof. Saluja and his family felicitate Pia-Jyoti Kachroo, the fantastic Master of Ceremonies for the grand show

**CONTD FROM PAGE 16**

over the US and even India, supporters, and who's who of the community wished him a long life on his 80th birthday.

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 has a Dallas edition.

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'.

Prof Saluja feels proud that throughout its eventful journey, the Indian Panorama has remained true to its motto, **EVER TRUTHFUL**". "This commitment is not just a slogan but a guiding principle, a promise to our readers, and a testament to the collective effort that sustains the publication," he insists.



Parveen Chopra  
founded  
ALotusInTheMud.com,  
the premier wellness  
and spirituality  
magazine, in 2022 as a  
social enterprise)



**WE ARE GRATEFUL, DEAR PATRONS, FOR YOUR STEADFAST SUPPORT.**



# It is Time to Go Back, Only to Move Forward in Time

FEBRUARY 28, 2024

**CHICAGO, IL (TIP):** Prayagraj Hule is a renowned Vedantic Scholar. He recently concluded a 5-day series on self-help at the International University of Vedic Wellness in Streamwood, IL.

His talks resonated with people across Chicago land, leaving a profound impact on the youth and individuals of diverse backgrounds. This universal message transcended race and religion, offering knowledge that spoke to the shared human experience.

In collaboration with the University, Prayagraj will offer youth and adult retreats in 2024 as well as online sessions throughout the year. For more information contact Aparna Kulkarni 847-306-7616 or AparnaK@umasinc.com.

**UNEARTHING HUMAN NATURE :** Vedanta is a science which deals with human beings. An encyclopedia which has the compilation of subtlest thoughts related to human relationship with the Transcendental Self. Rendered by several enlightened sages of India. These great people dedicated their lives thousands of years ago to reflect upon the mystery of human origin, purpose of living and constitution of human inner nature. The effort of such crystalline contemplation culminated in the Vedanta philosophy, which decoded the apogee of happiness. Present day humans are disconnected with their roots and live in ignorance about this state of Bliss.

**THE LABYRINTH :** Today, the world over alma maters and mushrooming educational institutions are priming students with a lot of data. No doubt valuable to earn wealth and mark the material progress of nations. But limit the young in their rational approach and application of the knowledge provided. Very few truly implement the knowledge gained. The rest just follow a beaten pattern to work. Consequently, the young become victims of contemporaneity pressure. Affliction is arising out of work culture and impending personal perils caused by lack in clarity of balancing their work and professional life.

**THE UNRESTRAINED MIND, THE IGNORANCE OF INTELLECT :** The youth are unaware of Vedantic education. People hence find themselves tormented by the pernicious traits of an ungoverned mind. The lack of higher values absent in present day education has made humans weak. They find challenges in life difficult to handle, mostly, amongst well-educated and the rich. Depression and stress related ailments have risen to alarming proportions. Divorce has reached record breaking numbers world-wide. The human mind turns

malignant when left unattended to make decisions by itself in absence of intellect. As a result, greed has led to decadence in society. Humans have turned greedy to amass ill gained wealth and devour millions, billions, without paying any heed to others living juxtaposed in denial. Ultimately, the greedy only find themselves isolated and lonely.

**THE PROBLEM LIES ELSEWHERE :** Knowledge gained from universities has no doubt raised the standard of human living, made people wealthy and indulgent. But are they happy? By their own admission people have lost their morals, peace and cheer. Standard of life has deteriorated to a substantial level.

The lack of Vedantic knowledge also makes it difficult for individuals to unravel one's true aptitude. As a result, few flourish in their natural field of work. Others experience work as a burden, instead of finding it a source of pleasure and joy. Vedanta brings in clarity to discover one's aptitude and subsequently identify a suitable field of work. One then finds success by employing the right technique of action guided by the intellect. When work becomes a pleasure, so does the working environment.

**LIVE TO GIVE :** Giving should be preceded by thinking. Take a look at the charity structure in the world. Ideally, it should be the confluence of feeling and thinking to give society punctiliously. A true philanthropist will initiate research if wealth gives charity and has resolved a whirlwind of present predicaments. Corporation's today have started charity enclaves, urged by the government to be socially responsible. But has this changed the mind-set of people? Seldom has the donor looked into the effect and effort of organizations and hence the persisting quandaries in the world still remain recurring. Genuine philanthropists share their wealth. But most charitable entities are unable to reach the bottom of the problem. Applying balm to a wound is calming. But that will not help in getting to the source of the disease. True charity is supposed to lift a person spiritually. Make one independent to progress along with others. Not make them dependent and selfish, lethargic and diseased. Remember, "Candent living brings forth Prudent giving".

**THE TIME IS TICKING :** Few care about Vedantic intellectual education. An education is beyond the precincts of secular education provided by schools and universities. The educated should mull over the recent graph of wars, poverty, crimes, rapes, stress, divorces... These unfortunate escalations of events have gripped all



Prayagraj Hule

Photograph / Asian Media USA

families in the world. Even children are not spared, as crime perpetrated on children is on the rise.

Pressure on children has led them not to cooperate with parents and educators. Eager to leave homes, the moment they reach the periphery of youth. Therefore, the necessity of bringing in a value system alongside secular education in society should be implemented imminently. The good and spiritual side of human's has to be tapped. The negative will then slowly diminish. Vedanta impacts an individual to harness one's mind. By imbibing its knowledge, you gain intellectual clarity. This then creates collectively awakened human beings to be more affable and reaching out. There is a saying: "You cannot reach God unless you serve & love the expressions of God".

**FOR THE YOUTH :** The future of every country is the power of youth. Parents must pause for a moment and look behind at the legacy they leave, Asian families in recent times a tradition of debts. Westerners, a tradition of separation is in relationships, angst in their behavioral habits and pills to pop anxiety. This directly affects every child.

The youth get influenced by anyone higher in stature. They want to emulate everything their icons do. It is hereby the responsibility of all leaders to leave trails of culture and wisdom that follows sound intellectual reason. Social media has become the death knell of values, a harbinger of sorrow. A disorder which is the eating up concentration of youth and even adults. Use it to evolve, benefit others, but don't get abused by it, harm others and devolve!

An effort has to be made to save the youth. Leaders need to plan a paradigm shift in education. An awakened person would leave behind a cleaner world and not unresolved filth for the young to remove. Albert Einstein made an apt, wise statement: 'We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them'.

Oh folks! Isn't it time to wake up? Awaken the intellect with the knowledge of Vedanta.

It is hence time to go back only to move forward in Time.

(Press release by Prayagraj Hule)



Tamil Nadu Foundation Golden Jubilee flier

## Tamil Nadu Foundation Golden Jubilee Celebrations

FEBRUARY 28, 2024

**CHICAGO, IL (TIP):** Tamil Nadu Foundation (TNF), established in 1974 in Baltimore, stands as the oldest and largest U.S.-based humanitarian organization dedicated solely to Tamil Nadu. Over the last 50 years, TNF has evolved as a social organization impacting the lives of less privileged children and families through Education, Women Empowerment, Rural Development and Health & Hygiene.

Over the past five decades, TNF Life Members, TNF Chapters, and TNF Convention donors have collectively supported over 700 projects, positively impacting more than 500,000 underprivileged individuals across Tamil Nadu. This includes providing aid to over 200,000 students in government schools through TNF's flagship ABC education initiative, assisting over 60,000 victims of the 2015 floods, aiding more than 20,000 victims of Cyclone Gaja in 2018, and donating over 1 million USD during the challenging COVID-19 pandemic.

To commemorate TNF's Golden Jubilee, a significant milestone, we are delighted to

announce our celebratory event scheduled from May 24 to 26 in Rosemont, IL (Chicago), marking fifty years of our Foundation's impactful journey.

TNF lifetime members and the Tamil diaspora are eager to celebrate their accomplishments, reflecting on our journey from a small group of visionaries to impacting over 250,000 children and families across 650 villages in Tamil Nadu. The event promises a rich blend of music, dance, and informative sessions, providing an opportunity to engage with our Youth Force, the future bearers of our mission, and to minimize administrative costs through event profits, ensuring that 100% of donor dollars directly benefit the beneficiaries in Tamil Nadu.

### Event Highlights:

- o Grand Music Concert: Featuring the legendary "Isai Gnyani Ilayaraja."
- o Therukoothu: By Sangagiri Rajkumar with 260 participants (Attempting to make Guinness record).
- o "EGAI" Tamil Symphony: A spectacular musical event by Dr. Kanniks

Kannikeswaran featuring over a hundred artists.

- o Fusion Dance Performance: Showcasing 150 local talents.
- o Tamil Isai - Featuring traditional Tamil musical instruments.
- o The Renowned YouTube - Village Cooking Channel Team.
- o Emerge 2024: An all-day Entrepreneurs Event sponsored by TNF and ATEA.
- o Youth Conference: Organized by young adults.
- o College Alumni Gathering: Expecting participation from over 25 colleges.
- o Districts Parade: Representing 38 districts from Tamil Nadu.
- o Other high-quality programs from TNF Chapters and local organizations.

Guests from various parts of North America and at least 50 other countries will converge to witness this mega event. Visit [www.tnfusa.org](http://www.tnfusa.org) for more details.

(Photographs and Press release by Asian Media USA)



Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar at a meeting in Lucknow. PTI

## Don't seek votes on caste, religious lines: EC to parties

With Congress leaders feverishly pitching for caste census and Prime Minister Narendra Modi betting big on the Ram Temple ahead of the Lok Sabha polls, the Election Commission (EC) has said that no appeal should be made on the basis of caste and communal feelings of electors.

In a set of advisories issued on Friday, March 1, to the political parties, the election body said no temple, mosque, gurdwara or any other place of worship could be used for election propaganda or electioneering.

"No appeal shall be made on the basis of caste or communal feelings of the electors. No activity which may aggravate existing differences or create mutual hatred or cause tension between different castes/communities/religious/linguistic groups can be attempted," the EC said.

"References that ridicule the relations between devotee and deity or suggestions of divine censure shall not be made," it said. The poll body went on to add that political parties and leaders should not make false statements and utterances aimed at misleading the voters.

# Govt signs Rs 39,125 cr deals for BrahMos missiles, radars, aero engines

NEW DELHI (TIP)

In a big push for the ongoing self-reliance drive in the defence manufacturing sector, the defence ministry on Friday, March 1, signed five contracts worth Rs.39,125 crore for BrahMos missiles, ship-borne Brahmos systems, close-in weapon systems, high-power radars, and aero-engines for MiG-29 fighter planes.

"These deals will further strengthen indigenous capabilities, save foreign exchange and reduce dependency on foreign origin equipment manufacturers," the defence ministry said in a statement.

Two of these deals were signed with BrahMos Aerospace Private Limited — one for around 200 BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles worth Rs.19,518.65 crore and the other for ship-borne BrahMos systems worth ₹988.07 crore. The Cabinet Committee on Security, headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved these deals recently to boost India's naval power. The BrahMos missile has been developed by India and Russia.

"These missiles would be utilised to meet combat and training requirements of the Indian Navy. This project is likely to generate employment of 9 lakh man-days in the joint venture entity and around 135 lakh man-days in ancillary industries...The ship-borne BrahMos system is the Indian Navy's primary weapon for maritime strike operations fitted on board various frontline warships. This project is likely to generate employment of around 60,000 man-days over a period of 7-8 years," the statement said.

It is the fastest cruise missile in the world with a speed of Mach 2.8, nearly three times the speed of sound. BrahMos variants can be launched from land, air and sea, and all three variants are in service in the Indian armed forces. BrahMos missiles can strike targets at 290



Defense Minister Rajnath Singh after signing two contracts with L&T India in New Delhi on Friday, March 1. ANI

km and its extended range variant can hit targets at 500 km.

Two contracts were signed with Larsen & Toubro Limited for close-in weapon systems (CIWS) worth Rs 7,668.82 crore for terminal air defence of select locations in the country, and high-power radars (HPR) with advanced surveillance features for ₹5,700 crore to boost air defence capabilities.

CIWS is planned for deployments at various locations across India to protect vital assets from all types of low-flying, low-signature aerial threats, including unmanned aerial vehicles, L&T said in a statement. It consists of air defence guns, tracking radars and search radars linked to a command and control station.

"The CIWS project will boost and encourage active participation of Indian aerospace, defence and associated industries including MSMEs. The direct and indirect employment generated by this project would be about 2,400 persons/year over five years," the defence ministry statement said.

## India, China in 'constructive communication' to settle Ladakh standoff: Chinese military

BEIJING (TIP)

China and India have maintained "constructive communication" to find a mutually acceptable solution to resolve the standoff in eastern Ladakh, the Chinese military has said, underlining that Beijing attaches "great importance" to ties with New Delhi to jointly maintain peace at the borders.

The Indian and Chinese troops are locked in a standoff in certain friction points in eastern Ladakh even as the two sides completed disengagement from several areas following extensive diplomatic and military talks.

"The two sides had positive, in-depth and constructive communication on resolving the border issues of each other's concern and agreed to reach a mutually acceptable solution at an early date," Ministry of National Defence spokesperson Senior Colonel Zhang Xiaogang told the Chinese media at a press briefing here on Thursday, referring to the commander-level talks held on February 19 between India and China.

"China attaches great importance to the China-India military-to-military relations and hopes that India and China will work towards the same goal, enhance mutual trust, properly settle differences and jointly maintain peace and tranquillity in the border areas," he was quoted as saying by China Military Online, the official news



The Indian and Chinese troops are locked in a standoff in certain friction points in eastern Ladakh.

portal of the Chinese Defence Ministry.

The talks held on February 19 were the 21st round of talks between the two militaries to resolve the eastern Ladakh logjam, which will enter its fourth year in May this year. The Chinese military action in May 2020 resulted in the Galwan Valley clash that marked the most serious military conflict between India and China in decades.

According to the Chinese military, the two sides have so

far agreed to disengage at four points—the Galwan Valley, the Pangong Lake, Hot Springs, and Jianan Daban (Gogra) — contributing to the de-escalation of tensions along the border.

But the talks were deadlocked over reaching a similar agreement at Depsang and Demchok, where the Indian side strongly pressed for resolution of two lingering issues. Both sides issued separate press releases on the 21st round of talks.

A press release issued by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on the latest talks said the two sides agreed to maintain communication on the way ahead through the relevant military and diplomatic mechanisms.

"The discussions built on the previous rounds, seeking complete disengagement in the remaining areas along the LAC (Line of Actual Control) in eastern Ladakh as an essential basis for the restoration of peace and tranquillity in the India-China border areas," it said in a statement. The MEA said the two sides shared their perspectives on this in the talks held in a "friendly and cordial" atmosphere. "The two sides have agreed to maintain communication on the way ahead through the relevant military and diplomatic mechanisms. They also committed to maintain peace and tranquillity on the ground in the border areas in the interim," it said.

Source: PTI



People run for cover after the blast in Bengaluru on March 1. PTI

## 10 injured in Bengaluru cafe blast, CM hints at use of IED

A low intensity bomb blast at a popular eatery here on Friday left 10 persons injured even as the police invoked the stringent UAPA provisions in the case.

The police suspect that an improvised explosive device (IED) fitted with a timer inside a bag could have exploded. Officials from the local unit of the NIA arrived at the spot and conducted inquiry. The Bengaluru police have registered a case under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and Explosive Substances Act.

The cafe which is located at Whitefield's Brookfield area, a vibrant neighbourhood, a business centre as well as a tech hub. It is usually crowded with employees from nearby offices during the lunch hours. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said investigation was on to ascertain the cause and nature of the explosion at the cafe, and added it might have been caused by an "improvised explosive" device.

"The incident should not be politicised and everyone should cooperate," Siddaramaiah said, adding strict action would be taken against those involved.

Describing the explosion as a "bomb blast", state police chief Alok Mohan said nobody was seriously injured in the incident.

# India to see warmer summer, more heatwave days this year

NEW DELHI (TIP)

The summer months of March to May are likely to be hotter than usual across most of the country, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Friday, March 1, while also predicting El Nino conditions to persist for most of this period, which could in turn result in a higher number of heatwave days.

Some regions, however, including the northwest that includes Delhi, could record normal to below normal nighttime lows and daytime peaks, especially over the first 15 days of March when a series of western disturbances are predicted to bring rain in these regions.

IMD customarily puts out a forecast for the summer season in the first week of March every year, with the temperatures in the 12-week period from then having significant implications for public health and agriculture. For instance, unusually hot weather or excessive spells of rain in March could hurt a number of winter crops that are close to harvest in April and May.

"We are expecting maximum temperatures to remain below normal till around March 15 over northwest India. This is mainly because we are expecting cloudy skies and rainfall due to consecutive WDs," said M Mohapatra, director general, IMD.

The rain spells, Mohapatra added, could hurt some crops. "During the next two weeks we expect intense rain and even hailstorm in some regions of northwest India. That can be damaging for the wheat crop. Light to moderate



rain will be beneficial in some areas. Farmers have been advised to prepare," he said.

But after that, temperatures are likely to pick up for most parts of the country due to the El Nino phenomenon in the equatorial Pacific, which has cascading impact on weather across the world.

"El Nino conditions have weakened but they are still prevailing and expected to continue till May. El Nino is associated with above normal number of heatwave days also. So, we can expect a hot summer," added Mohapatra.

The 12 weeks of the beginning of the summer will also coincide with hectic political activity with large gatherings across the country in campaign rallies as it heads into general elections, which will culminate with the last of the voting roughly around the first week of May. Heatwaves could potentially be a cause for concern in many parts.

The summer season is classified from March to end of May, before the monsoon season officially starts from June.

The IMD director general said that of

late, the transition from winter to summer temperatures has been quicker than usual. "We have observed that spring is arriving early. It is because winter is diffusing sooner than before. A milder winter end is nothing but spring. This is being seen globally due to global warming," said Mohapatra.

According to Friday's forecast, above-normal maximum/day temperatures are likely over most parts of the country, except over some isolated areas of northwest, northeast, central and peninsular India. The minimum or night time temperatures are also likely to be above normal over most parts of the country, IMD said.

Monthly maximum temperatures for March will be likely to be above normal over most areas of peninsular, northeast and west central India. Night time temperatures are likely to be above normal over most parts of the country except some isolated areas along the Himalayas where normal to below normal minimum temperatures are most likely in March, IMD added.

The weather department has also warned that above-normal number of heatwave days are likely over most parts of the country except over northeast India, western Himalayan region, southwest peninsula and west coast during March to May.

The IMD forecast went into some detail on the El Nino phenomenon, saying that majority of climate models gave indicated it will persist through March-May 2024 and then transition to ENSO-neutral thereafter.

Source: HT

## Sandeshkhali must be avenged by voting against TMC: Modi

NEW DELHI (TIP)

Launching a scathing attack on West Bengal's ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC) for "turning a blind eye" to the cases of sexual abuse of women at Sandeshkhali, PM Narendra Modi on Friday, March 1, appealed to people to avenge the excesses by voting against the TMC in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

"Har chot ki jawab vote mein hona chahiye," the PM said, while addressing a rally at Arambag in Hoogly district of West Bengal. "The entire country is deeply upset after seeing what the TMC has done to the sisters of Sandeshkhali," he said.

Referring to Khanakul, the ancestral village of 19th century social reformer Raja Ram Mohan Roy, which was close to the venue of the public meeting, he said, "Even the soul of Raja Ram Mohan Roy would be pained by the happenings at Sandeshkhali." PM Modi said while the TMC beat the drum of "maa, maati and maanush", what it did in reality was very different. He also slammed the INDIA bloc for keeping silent on the



PM Modi with W Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee in Kolkata. PTI

Sandeshkhali atrocities. He accused Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge of insulting the people of Bengal by saying "such incidents do happen in Bengal". "For INDIA bloc leaders, supporting the

corrupt and appeasement politics are of prime importance rather than stand by those tortured in Sandeshkhali.

The TMC is confident that it has the support of the minorities, but the Muslim sisters and mothers too will vote against it," he said. The PM, who is on a two-day visit to West Bengal to kick off BJP's poll campaign, also raked up the issue of corruption and reminded the crowd about the visuals of wads of bank notes recovered by central agencies from the residences of TMC leaders during raids. "The Lok Sabha elections will mark the beginning of the countdown of the TMC's exit from power in Bengal," he said.

PM Modi also accused the state government of ignoring execution of projects for which funds had been already released by the Centre. "The government is sending funds to Bengal, but the TMC government is not utilising these and instead creating blockades," he claimed.

Source: TNS

# India in history this Week

## MARCH 1 TO MARCH 7

### 01 MARCH



1983 Mary Kom was born to make the country proud by winning medals in the Olympic and Commonwealth Games.

1928 In 1928, Indian scientist CV Raman ji presented his research on diffraction of light to the world.

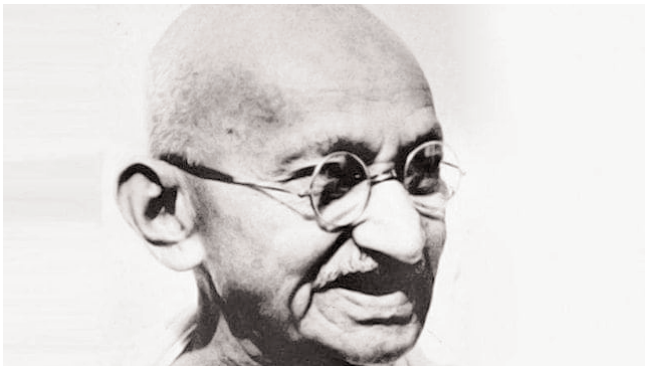
2009 In 2009, President Pratibha Patil announced Chawla to be the next Chief Election Commissioner.

2010 Former Prime Minister of India Manmohan Singh made an extradition treaty between the two countries during his visit to Saudi Arabia on 1 March 2010. With this, 10 signed in many fields including sci-tech and business.

2010 India beat Pakistan in the first match of the Hockey World Cup on 1 March 2010. India defeated Pakistan 4-1 in this match.

1872 The world's first Yellowstone National Park was established in 1872.

### 02 MARCH



1930 Gandhiji wrote a letter to British Viceroy on Salt Law.

1982 Indira Gandhi inaugurated the Mahatma Gandhi Road Bridge.

1984 Mother Teresa University was inaugurated in Tamil Nadu.

1994 Presidential rule in Jammu and Kashmir was extended.

1997 The first indigenous HIV detection kit was built in Bangalore in 1997.

1986 The great painter Kashinath Ghanekar died.

### 03 MARCH

1885 The Indian Appropriation Rule was implemented by the Congress Party on this day in 1885.

1930 The movement started by Harijans to enter the Kala Rama Temple.

1931 Delhi Pact was signed by Mahatma Gandhi and Viceroy Irving.

1967 The International Space Treaty was signed by India in Moscow.

1993 Sharad Pawar was elected as the Chief Minister of Maharashtra.

1839 World famous businessman (Jamsetji Tata) was born.



### 04 MARCH

1879 Bethune College of Calcutta was established in 1879.

1906 Hakim Abdul Majeed started the Hamdard dispensary in Delhi in 1906.

1924 In 1924, Shyam Lal Gupta composed the song Raising the Flag.

1951 Eleven countries participated in the first Asian Games in Delhi in 1951.

1961 In 1961 I.N.S. Vikrant was brought to Belfast.



### 05 MARCH

1931 Mahatma Gandhi ended the Civil Disobedience Movement.



1905 Sushila Didi, a freedom fighter who was instrumental in the revolutionary activities of Bhagat Singh, was born in Punjab.

2010 GP, one of the famous entrepreneurs of India. Birla died.

1783 Establishment of Geological Survey of India.

2009 Indian industrialist Vijay Mallya bought Bapu's legacy for Rs 18 lakhs

1949 The Jharkhand Party was founded in India in 1949.

1990 The government announced an interim relief of Rs 360 crore for the five lakh victims of the 1984 Bhopal gas tragedy.

2002 The Commonwealth Summit was held in 2002.

2008 India successfully test-fired the BrahMos missile from the sea into the ground.



2009 IFFCO (Indian Farmers Fertilizer Co-operative Limited) became the first company in the world to make annual sales of 10 million tonnes of fertilizer in 2009.

### 06 MARCH

1915 Mahatma Gandhi and Tagore had their first meeting in Shantiniketan in 1915.

1947 The Economic Times started editing from Bombay.

1962 The great revolutionary Ambika Chokrovarti died in 1962.

1971 Sunil Gavaskar started his Test career in 1971.

1990 India won the Indira Gandhi Gold Cup hockey tournament.

1991 Chandrasekhar resigned as Prime Minister in 1991.

2000 India and China first spoke in Beijing on the security issue.

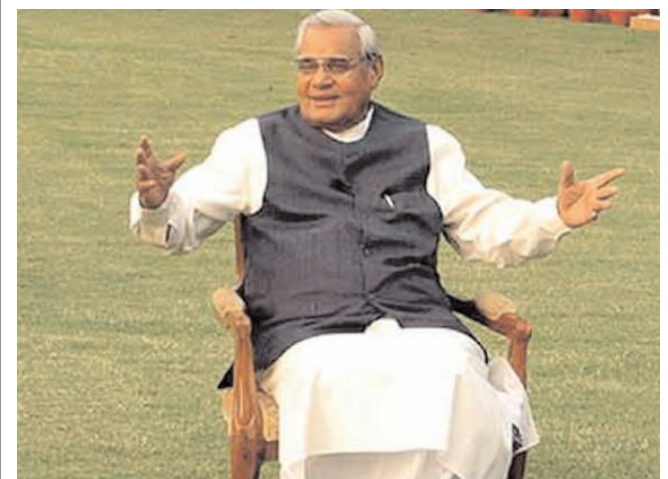
### 07 MARCH

1956 A huge steel tube plant was opened in Jamshedpur on this day in 1956.

1987 Sunil Gavaskar made history. Please tell that on this day, he scored 10,000 runs in a Test match.

1994 India and Iraq signed three Memorandum of Understanding in Tehran.

1998 Former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee was given the leadership of BJP's MP Party.



1835 Proposal was made to promote the propagation of European literature and science in India.

1985 The first antibody test for AIDS, the ELISA-type test, was started.

2007 Pakistan and India prepared in 2007 to help investigate terrorism.

1961 Renowned freedom fighter and senior leader Govind Ballabh Pant died in 1961.

# International Women's Day

**International Women's Day, which falls on March 8, is a global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. The day also marks a call to action for accelerating gender parity. Significant activity is witnessed worldwide as groups come together to celebrate women's achievements or rally for women's equality.**

International Women's Day (IWD), grew out of the labor movement to become a recognised annual event by the United Nations (UN).

The seeds of it were planted in 1908, when 15,000 women marched through New York City demanding shorter working hours, better pay and the right to vote. A year later, the Socialist Party of America declared the first National Woman's Day.

The idea to make the day international came from a woman called Clara Zetkin, communist activist and advocate for women's rights. She suggested the idea in 1910 at an International Conference of Working Women in Copenhagen. There were 100 women there, from 17 countries, and they agreed on her suggestion unanimously.

It was first celebrated in 1911, in Austria, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland.

Things were made official in 1975 when the United Nations started celebrating the day. The first theme adopted by the UN (in 1996) was "Celebrating the Past, Planning for the Future".

International Women's Day has become a date to celebrate how far women have come in society, in politics and in economics, while the political roots of the day mean strikes and protests are organised to raise awareness of continued inequality.

## RUSSIAN REVOLUTION: A TURNING POINT

Throughout the early 20th century, International Women's Day became increasingly associated with the fight for women's suffrage and labour rights. In 1917, Russian women observed a strike for 'Bread and Peace' on March 8th, which marked the beginning of the Russian Revolution.

The date coincided with International Women's Day, and the strike played a significant role in the eventual overthrow of the Tsarist regime and the granting of women's



suffrage in Russia.

## RECOGNITION BY THE UNITED NATIONS

Following these events, International Women's Day continued to be celebrated annually, spreading to other countries and becoming a symbol of women's solidarity and activism.

During the mid-20th century, the focus of International Women's Day expanded to address a broader range of issues affecting women, including reproductive rights, workplace discrimination, and violence against women.

While much progress has been made since the inception of International Women's Day, significant challenges remain. Gender inequality persists in many aspects of society, including access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities.

Women continue to face discrimination and violence based on their gender, and their voices are often marginalised in decision-making processes.

## RENEWING COMMITMENT TO EQUALITY

As we commemorate International Women's Day each year, let us renew our commitment to building a more inclusive and equitable world, where every woman and girl has the opportunity to fulfil her potential and contribute to the betterment of society.

Together, we can strive towards a future where gender equality is not only a goal but a reality for all.

## WHY 8 MARCH?

Clara's idea for an

International Women's Day had no fixed date.

It wasn't formalised until a war-time strike in 1917 when Russian women demanded "bread and peace" - and four days into the strike the Tsar was forced to abdicate and the provisional government granted women the right to vote. The date when the women's strike commenced on the Julian calendar, which was then in use in Russia, was Sunday 23 February. This day in the Gregorian calendar was 8 March - and that's when it's celebrated today.

Purple, green and white are the colors of the day, according to the International Women's Day website.

"Purple signifies justice and dignity. Green symbolizes hope. White represents purity, albeit a controversial concept. The colours originated from the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) in the UK in 1908," they say.

## HOW IS WOMEN'S DAY CELEBRATED?

International Women's Day is a national holiday in many countries, including Russia where flower sales double during the three or four days around 8 March.

In China, many women are given a half-day off work on 8 March, as advised by the State Council.

In Italy, International Women's Day, or la Festa della Donna, is celebrated by the giving of mimosa blossoms. The origin of this tradition is unclear but it is believed to have started in Rome after World War Two. In the US, the month of March is Women's History Month. A presidential proclamation issued every year honours the achievements of American women.

## SIGNIFICANCE OF WOMEN'S DAY

International Women's Day holds immense significance globally as a day dedicated to celebrating the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women. It serves as a reminder of the contributions women have made to society, often in the face of adversity and discrimination.

Moreover, Women's Day highlights the persistent challenges women continue to

## What Is The IWD 2024 Theme?

The theme of this year's Women's Day is 'Invest in women: Accelerate progress'. This theme means that establishing gender equality and women's well-being in all aspects of life is more important than ever in order to develop strong economies and a healthy world. When we value and respect women from all different backgrounds, the world gets better for everyone.

Here are key areas needing joint action:

### Investing in women, a human rights issue

Time is running out. Gender equality is the greatest human rights challenge, benefiting everyone.

### Ending poverty

Due to the COVID pandemic and conflicts, 75 million more people have fallen into severe poverty since 2020. Immediate action is crucial to prevent over 342 million women and girls living in poverty by 2030.

### Gender-responsive financing

Conflicts and rising prices may lead 75% of countries to cut public spending by 2025, negatively impacting women and their essential services.

### Shifting to a green economy

The current economic system disproportionately affects women. Advocates propose a shift to a green economy and care society to amplify women's voices.

### Supporting feminist change-makers

Despite leading efforts, feminist organizations receive only 0.13% of official development assistance.

face, including gender-based violence, unequal access to education and healthcare, and under-representation in leadership roles.

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

While Women's Day is a time for celebration, it also serves as a reminder of the work that remains to be done. Gender inequality persists in various forms, including unequal pay, lack of access to education and healthcare, and gender-based violence.

Addressing these challenges requires concerted efforts from governments, civil society, and the private sector to enact policies and programs that promote gender equality and empower women and girls.

## WHY DO WE NEED IT?

Gender inequality persists in areas like pay, education, healthcare, and violence. IWD raises awareness, celebrates women, and pushes for change toward equal opportunities and rights.



# INTERFAITH LEADERS STAND IN SOLIDARITY TO STEM RISING TIDE OF HATE

BY MABEL PAIS



Tree of Life Synagogue

Photo / Courtesy NJPAC

The New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) hosts an in-person 'Standing in Solidarity' event on March 4, 2024 which opens an evening of reflection and inspiration on the importance of interfaith collaborative actions to stem the rising tide of hate.

The 'Standing in Solidarity' program - 'A Tree of Life: Uprooting Hate Through Interfaith Actions' - that follows is inspired by lessons learned in 2018 after the mass murder of 11 worshippers in the 'Tree of Life' synagogue in Pittsburgh. It was the largest antisemitic attack in U.S. history and in its wake, faith leaders united to comfort their Jewish neighbors and spearhead advocacy campaigns to combat gun violence.

Six years later there remains an urgent need for constructive conversations among people from different faith groups, as an uptick of Antisemitic and

Islamophobic hate crimes has followed the start of the war in Gaza last fall. In addition, hate crimes are known to increase during presidential election seasons, according to The Leadership Conference Education Fund. Local and National faith leaders guide public conversation at NJPAC. Watch this video - [youtu.be/WgBM23MyzZg](https://youtu.be/WgBM23MyzZg)

## PROGRAM

FILM: Abridged screening of 'A Tree of Life: The Pittsburgh Synagogue Shooting'  
Chase Room @ 6 PM

## PANEL DISCUSSION:

Chase Room, 7-8:30 PM  
Panelists  
Rabbi Matthew D. Gewirtz  
Rev. Dr. Ambassador Suzan Johnson Cook  
Imam Mohamed Magid  
Moderator  
Rev. Frederick Davie

"This is an important time for us to build bridges across chasms of difference," says Rabbi Matthew D. Gewirtz, President of the Coalition of Religious Leaders for the State of New Jersey and one of the 'Standing in Solidarity' panelists. "There are many of us who are feeling existentially lonely and without a sense that others care about our respective communities. We are obliged to prop each other up." Gewirtz is Senior Rabbi of Temple B'nai Jeshurun in Short Hills.

Rev. Dr. Ambassador Suzan Johnson Cook is former U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom.

Imam Mohamed Magid is Executive Religious Director of All Dulles Area Muslim Society Center in

Virginia, Commissioner of U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom and Chairman of International Interfaith Peace Corps.

Rev. Frederick Davie, moderator, is Senior Strategic Advisor to the President at Union Theological Seminary, Vice Chair of U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom and Senior Advisor for Racial Equity at Interfaith America.

"Racism, antisemitism, gun violence - it is more important than ever that thoughtful, collaborative conversations about these essential societal issues take center stage in our community," says John Schreiber, President and CEO of NJPAC. "As a home for respectful civic dialogue, NJPAC is pleased to host this one-of-a-kind interfaith discussion and film screening."

## CO-PRODUCER

The program is co-produced by NJPAC's 'Black and Jewish Understanding Project' which seeks to foster alliances between Black and Jewish communities in the Greater Newark area through dialogues, mentorship programs and other initiatives.

## RSVP

To RSVP, visit [njpac.tfaforms.net/145?id=a2FUc000001vp3MAA](https://njpac.tfaforms.net/145?id=a2FUc000001vp3MAA) and for more information, visit 'A Tree of Life' - [youtube.com/watch?v=YTWUyx7dMA](https://youtube.com/watch?v=YTWUyx7dMA)

## STANDING IN SOLIDARITY

'Standing in Solidarity' is NJPAC's ongoing series of social justice conversations, often paired with a PSEG True Diversity Film Series screening.

The New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC)  
Learn more at [NJPAC.org](https://njpac.org)

## HOMEOWNERSHIP & RACIAL WEALTH GAP IN NEWARK

BY MABEL PAIS



Map of Homeownership in Newark

Photo / Courtesy NJPAC

Drawing from the archives of the Newark Public Library, the Newark History Society looking at the home ownership and the racial wealth gap in Newark examines the range of challenges Newark faces and how the city overcomes. This FREE presentation happens on March 5, 2024 at the Newark Public Library at 6 pm.

The world's largest concentration of wealth is in the New York City metropolitan area, yet the region contains many under-resourced cities, including Newark. What historical factors created this division between low-income Newark and its wealthy neighbors along lines of race, housing, income and social class?

The agents of change are more complex and nuanced than a simple narrative of redlining and white flight following the 1967 uprising. From discriminatory actions by the Federal Housing Administration and highways that carved through the urban fabric, to suburbs that pulled middle-class families away from Newark and factories that relocated outside of the city, contemporary poverty in Newark was more than a century in the making.

## PRESENTER

The presenter is Myles Zhang, urban historian and doctoral candidate at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Light refreshments will be served.

### RSVP

Join the discussion VIRTUALLY @ [njpac.tfaforms.net/145?id=a2FUc000001kf7MAA](https://njpac.tfaforms.net/145?id=a2FUc000001kf7MAA)

Join the discussion IN-PERSON @ [njpac.tfaforms.net/145?id=a2FUc0000025GXMAA](https://njpac.tfaforms.net/145?id=a2FUc0000025GXMAA) (at the Newark Public Library Main Branch @ 5 Washington Street, Newark, NJ 07102)

## SRFF HONORS WOMEN'S DAY WITH DEDICATED FILM PROGRAMS

BY MABEL PAIS

On the occasion of International Women's History Month, SRFF celebrates Women Filmmakers with a dedicated program of films, a webinar with all the women filmmakers of SRFF 2024, and a participation in NGO CSW's 68th UN Forum.

The 11th Edition of the SR Socially Relevant™ Film Festival, NY ([ratedsrffilms.org](https://ratedsrffilms.org)) opens March 13 at the Maysles Documentary Center and continues March 14 at MRHS, March 15-17 at Cinema Village, March 18 at the National Arts Club for the Awards Ceremony.

In a preview of this in-person event, two webinars take place respectively on March 8, with all the women filmmakers of the SRFF 2024 Selection (26 in total), and March 11, when SRFF participates as a partner organization in the NGO CSW's (the Committee on the Status of Women) 68th annual UN Forum, with two films made by women and about women, followed by a panel discussion. The two films are 'Lego Oma,' by Karina Sturm (Germany), and 'Women on the Move,' by Alice Lemkes (UK). Both of these webinars take place at noon (EST). Details and registration links may be found on the SRFF website ([ratedsrffilms.org](https://ratedsrffilms.org)) schedule page.

"We're proud to have had the opportunity to present over 700 socially relevant films from 40 countries over the past 10 years. The work of talented and dedicated filmmakers has offered us the bonus of learning about the human condition, filmmaking, and ways of engaging an audience as the first steps towards raising awareness of social issues." Festival Founding Artistic Director Nora Armani said.

## TICKETS

Early Bird tickets (limited time availability), the Trio, are available at [ratedsrffilms.org](https://ratedsrffilms.org). Regular ticket prices only are available after that.

Press and Media are invited.

Students enter for free with a valid ID

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



SRFF Poster

Photo / [ratedsrffilms.org](https://ratedsrffilms.org)

# RED BARAAT USHERS IN THE FESTIVAL OF COLORS

BY MABEL PAIS

**"This year's 'discovery' [WOMAD UK Festival], though, was Red Baraat, a cacophonous bhangra funk band from Brooklyn. Think Punjabi weddings, Delhi street brass bands, modern jazz and rock." - The Telegraph (UK)**

The World Music Institute (WMI) with Brooklyn Bowl, as part of WMI's 'LET'S DANCE' Series, presents 'Red Baraat - Festival of Colors', a pioneering Indian bhangra band merging hard driving North Indian bhangra with elements of hip-hop, jazz and raw punk energy. The band will present its performance at the Brooklyn Bowl (61 Wythe Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11211) on March 9, 2024 at 8 PM. This is a standing show with very limited seating. Doors open at 6 PM.

Red Baraat ([redbaraat.com](http://redbaraat.com)), conceived by dhol player Sunny Jain is known for its signature blend of genres including elements of hip-hop, jazz, hard-driving north Indian bhangra and punk energy. The band's mission is one of manifesting joy and unity in all people.

Red Baraat's annual 'Festival of Colors' sold out quickly when WMI presented it last year - This year too, the band will present this uniquely New York celebration of the Hindu holiday of Holi with its colorful array of South Asian sounds.

Traditionally, Holi is marked by public gatherings of families and strangers sharing songs, dance, and the exchange of 'colors' - colorful dry powder or colored water playfully thrown amongst the crowds of revelers. It signifies the victory of good over evil, the arrival of spring, and for many, a festive day to meet others, play and laugh, forget and forgive, and repair ruptured relationships.

Created with no less a purposeful agenda than manifesting joy and unity in all people, Red Baraat's spirit is worn brightly on its sweaty and hard-worked sleeve.

*Listen to/watch their performance - [youtu.be/k4PXINoUmAk](https://youtu.be/k4PXINoUmAk)*

2018 also saw the band touring Kazakhstan, United Arab Emirates, US, Canada and Europe. They headlined the renowned WOMAD Festival in Cáceres, Spain in front of 10,000 people, performed the Vienna Konzerthaus (Philharmonie) in Austria and had the crowd jumping at Rudolstadt Festival in Germany. The release of Red Baraat's 2nd album in 2013, *Shruggy Ji*, debuted at #1 on the Billboard World Music



Red Baraat performance

Credit/ [worldmusicinstitute.org](http://worldmusicinstitute.org)

charts in the USA and propelled the band on a world tour that has yet to stop. They've performed at Bonnaroo, Austin City Limits, globalFEST, Lincoln Center, New Orleans Jazz Fest, and Colours of Ostrava, just to name a few. Along the way they sold out rooms as diverse as the Luxembourg Philharmonic and the New York City's legendary rock club Bowery Ballroom, and performed at the request of The White House (Obama), TED and Olympic Games.

The band's 2018 album release, 'Sound The People,' hit the top 10 on the World Music Charts Europe and was heralded in the US as the anthem soundtrack for the South Asian diaspora by US hipster, indie-rock magazine, *Stereogum*: "The album is full of moments that hit with the force of a spiritual awakening...The funk, ska-punk, and other American forms that make their way into the music are layered intricately within the same threadwork as the ragas on which these songs are pulled from. Each piece is a gesture of cultural harmony, rendering not only genre irrelevant, but the geographic placement of those sounds." - STEREOGUM

Reemerging in 2021 with a renewed focus, energy and sound, Red Baraat headlined the Wolf Trap Performing Arts Center with master percussionist, Zakir Hussain, performed at the Dubai World Expo, and toured its 11th annual Red Baraat Festival of Colors.

But even as it's clear that Red Baraat

has built a startling history of performances in iconic settings, the band's bread and butter remains the sweaty clubs, festivals, packed performing arts centers, and college auditoriums that keeps the band on the road all over the world the last several years. It's here where Red Baraat does what it does best - communing with their audience in a joyful, near hedonistic celebration of music and dance which, tellingly, draws a crowd even more diverse than the players on stage. The universality of what Red Baraat does is undeniable. And this is no happy accident. It is the product of intention and design. Says Jain, "The band...our songs...are addressing the multiplicity of viewpoints," says Jain. "There's 'Zindabad,' which means 'Long Live' in Hindi. In that song, we're saying that we celebrate life, we celebrate devotion - but we also celebrate agitation and revolution. If we can unite people of all backgrounds and ethnicities to partake in the exuberance of life through the universal language of music, then life is that much sweeter."

*"Their infectious rhythms roll over the audience like a hurricane and let the audience breathe only in a short ballad pause." - RHEIN MAIN PRESS (GERMANY)*

Samir LanGus ([samirlangus.com](http://samirlangus.com)) is a Grammy Award-nominated gnawa musician, born and raised in the city of Ait Melloule, Morocco whose passion for

music stems from the variety of street sounds of his home city. Gnawa music is a body of Moroccan religious songs and rhythms. Its well-preserved heritage combines ritual poetry with traditional music and dancing. It is deeply hypnotic trance music marked by low-toned, rhythmic melodies played on a skin-covered lute called a sintir or guembri. The method involves call-and-response singing, hand-clapping, and cymbals.

Currently based in NYC, LanGus adds his own contemporary spin to the traditional spiritual trance music, mixing jazz instrumentation and North African tradition with New York attitude.

## PROGRAM

6 PM - Doors and DJ / 8 PM - Samir LanGus / 9:30 PM - Red Baraat  
Standing show with very limited seating

## TICKETS

For tickets, visit [worldmusicinstitute.org/red-baraat-festival-of-colors-2024](http://worldmusicinstitute.org/red-baraat-festival-of-colors-2024)

## LET'S DANCE SERIES

The LET'S DANCE series brings us all together on the dance floor moving our bodies to the infectious beats of DJs and live bands from around the world.

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

# LEAP INTO SPRING WITH MPAC EVENTS

BY MABEL PAIS

In March 2024, the Morristown Performing Arts Center (MPAC) signals in spring with several events. See the March calendar below.

**Ticketed MPAC events:**

## THE MAN IN BLACK: A TRIBUTE TO JOHNNY CASH

Friday, March 1, 2024 at 8 pm

Close your eyes and imagine it's the 1960s, and you are hearing the unique sound of Johnny Cash for the first time. That's the feeling you'll experience as Shawn Barker stars in this remarkably authentic performance that delivers the raw prowess that made Johnny Cash a music icon with a signature sound immediately recognized and never forgotten.

## THE FOUR PHANTOMS IN CONCERT

Saturday, March 2, 2024 at 8 pm

Four former Phantoms from the Tony Award-winning show -- Brent Barrett, Ciarán Sheehan, Franc D'Ambrosio, and John Cudia - take the stage for an extravagant celebration of the iconic music of Broadway and beyond.

## DIANA KRALL

Wednesday, March 6, 2024 at 7:30 pm

Diana Krall is the only jazz singer to have eight albums debut at the top of the Billboard Jazz Albums chart. Her unique artistry transcends any single musical style and has made her one of the most recognizable artists of our time. As 'The New York Times' notes, Krall possesses "a voice at once cool and sultry, wielded with a rhythmic sophistication."

## SPYRO GYRA 50TH ANNIVERSARY WITH SPECIAL GUEST JEFF LORBER FUSION

Thursday, March 7, 2024 at 7:30 pm

A double bill of contemporary jazz legends! Over the past 50 years, Spyro Gyra has performed more than 10,000 shows and released 35 albums, garnering platinum and gold records and crossover hits such as "Morning Dance" and "Shaker Song." Known for his smooth style of weaving together elements of funk, rock and electric jazz, Grammy Award-winning keyboardist Jeff Lorber helped pioneer the post-fusion sound of contemporary jazz.

## PATTI LUPONE: A LIFE IN NOTES

A personal musical memoir on and off the stage  
Friday, March 8, 2024 at 8 pm



Patti LuPone

Photo / mayoarts.org

Three-time Tony Award winner Patti LuPone describes her new concert as a "personal musical memoir," and what a memoir she has! Patti takes to the stage with her longtime musical director Joseph Thalken to celebrate, through song, her legendary career.

## THE CAT IN THE HAT

Tuesday, March 12, 2024 at 4 pm

The classic Dr. Seuss's story of the mischievous 'Cat in the Hat' comes to life! Ages 3 and up

## PETER FRAMPTON: NEVER EVER SAY NEVER TOUR

Wednesday, March 13, 2024 at 7:30 pm

Grammy award winner Peter Frampton ("Show Me the Way", "Baby, I Love Your Way," "I'm in You") is heading back out on the road and bringing his "Never Ever Say Never" Tour to Morristown!

## LIMITED TICKETS

## MASTERS OF ILLUSION

Thursday, March 14, 2024 at 7:30 pm

As seen on CW! (California Television Broadcasting Network) Featuring jaw-dropping grand illusions, acts of deception and hysterical comedy, Masters of Illusion stars the world's greatest award-winning magicians who combine fantasy, fervor and flair with magic created in front of your eyes.

## CELTIC WOMAN 20TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR

Friday, March 15, 2024 at 8 pm



Celtic Woman

Photo / mayoarts.org

Celtic Woman's fresh fusion of traditional Irish music and contemporary songcraft celebrates Ireland's history while reflecting the vibrant spirit of modern Ireland. The group's repertoire encompasses Irish classics, contemporary songs, classical favorites and stirring originals.

## VIC DIBITETTO

Saturday, March 16, 2024 at 7 pm

Comedian Vic DiBitetto churns energy, honesty and humanity into nonstop laughter. He's been called a cross between Rodney Dangerfield and Ralph Kramden. The bottom line is, DiBitetto leaves his audiences breathless with laughter.

## LIMITED TICKETS

## THE PEKING ACROBATS

Saturday, March 23, 2024 at 3 pm and 7:30 pm

The Peking Acrobats push the limits of human ability by defying gravity with amazing displays of contortion, flexibility and control to create exuberant entertainment with the festive pageantry of a Chinese carnival.

## JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER ORCHESTRA WITH WYNTON MARSALIS

Featuring Special Guest, Kurt Rosenwinkel

Sunday, March 24, 2024 at 7 pm

Guitarist Kurt Rosenwinkel, one of the most respected composers and improvisers of 21st century jazz, performs the New Jersey premiere of his Jazz at Lincoln Center-commissioned suite alongside the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis.

## GAELIC STORM AND THE HIGH KINGS: THE MIGHTY TOUR 2

Wednesday, March 27, 2024 at 7:30 pm

A double bill of Irish music where traditional and modern sounds intersect. Celtic juggernaut Gaelic Storm grows stronger with each live performance, and after two decades and over 2,000 shows, it is a true force with which to be reckoned. The High Kings, the true heirs of Ireland's folk heritage, have been internationally acclaimed singers of Irish folk songs since they first arrived on the scene in 2008.

## MANHATTAN COMEDY NIGHT

Friday, March 29, 2024 at 8 pm

Enjoy some laughs with our popular stand-up series showcasing the rising stars of comedy. Mature content, language. Adults only.

## SOUTHERN ROCKFEST FEATURING A BROTHER'S REVIVAL AND CLASSIC SKYNYRD LIVE

Saturday, March 30, 2024 at 7 pm

A double bill that pays tribute to two of Southern rock's greatest bands. Classic Skynyrd Live, performed by Southern Steel, pays homage to the music of Lynyrd Skynyrd that has been loved by fans for generations. A Brother's Revival, led by former Allman Brothers bassist David "Rook" Goldflies, brings the music of the Allman Brothers to life.

## GUEST ATTRACTION:

## NEW JERSEY BALLET: 'LEAP INTO SPRING'

Saturday, March 9, 2024 at 7:30 pm and Sunday, March 10, 2024 at 2pm.

'Leap into Spring' features George Balanchine's 'Concerto Barocco,' considered the quintessential Balanchine ballet of its period. 'Concerto Barocco' is music made visible as two elegant yet dynamic lead ballerinas each depict one of the instrumental soloists in a virtuosic double violin concerto. Plus additional works.

## THE MAYO PERFORMING ARTS CENTER (MPAC)

Online: [www.mayoarts.org](http://www.mayoarts.org)

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/MayoPerformingArtsCenter>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/mayopac/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/MayoCenter>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/MayoCenter>

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



(1951-2024)

# Pankaj Udhas: Velvet voice of ghazal falls silent

Renowned ghazal singer Pankaj Udhas, whose velvet smooth voice gave expression to the many colors of love, longing and heartache in songs such as “Chitthi Aye Hai” and “Aur Ahista Kijiye Baatein”, died here on Monday, Feb 26, after prolonged illness. He was 72.

Udhas, who also made a mark as a playback singer in many Hindi films, including “Dayavan”, “Naam”, “Saaajan” and “Mohra”, died around 11 am at the Breach Candy hospital.

“With a very heavy heart, we are saddened to inform you of the sad demise of Padmashri Pankaj Udhas on 26th February 2024 due to a prolonged illness,” his daughter Nayaab wrote in an Instagram post.

“This is not only a personal loss, but the whole nation has lost a prolific singer and a great human being,” Breach Candy Hospital Trust said in a note.

The last rites of the singer, who hit his peak in the 1990s, were performed on Feb 27. He is survived by wife Farida and daughters Reva and Nayaab.

President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi were among the many who mourned the singer’s death.

“Pankaj Udhas ji, honored with Padma Shri and other awards, made an important contribution in popularising music. My condolences to his family and fans,” the president said.

According to the prime minister, Udhas’ singing conveyed a range of emotions and his ghazals spoke directly to the soul.

“He was a beacon of Indian music, whose melodies transcended generations. I recall my various interactions with him over the years. His departure leaves a void in the music world that can never be filled. Condolences to his family and admirers. Om Shanti,” Modi said.

Udhas, one of those credited for making the genre popular along with Talat Aziz and Jagjit Singh, released his first album “Aahat” in 1980 and went on to release over 50 albums in a four-decade career. This was apart from the songs, evoking gentle romance, he crooned as a playback singer.

He is perhaps most famous for “Naa Kajaare ki dhar”, “Aye ghame zindagi kuch to de mashwara”, “Maikhane se sharab”, “Chandi jaisa rang hai tera sone jaise baal”, “Aaj fir tum pe pyaar aaya”, “Mohabbat inayat karam dekhte hain”, “Jaaneman karwate badal badal” and “Chahat desh se aane wale” Udhas was synonymous with ghazals, an Arabic word that means “conversing with the beloved”. It developed in Persia in the 10th century AD from the Arabic verse form ‘qasida’, according to rekhta.com But he was much more than that.

“Ghazal singer, art lover & an avid reader. I love to travel to different destinations; I relish different cuisines. Apart from ghazals, I listen to Beatles,” his Facebook profile says.

Udhas, who received the Padma Shri in 2006, was also a science graduate working to eradicate thalassemia, according to his X profile.



He was born in Gujarat’s Rajkot town to a family of musicians. His father Keshubhai Udhas played the string instrument dilruba. And his two elder brothers Manhar Udhas and Nirmal Udhas were well-known singers too.

The young Pankaj initially started learning tabla at the Sangeet Natya Academy in Rajkot. But he was more inclined towards Hindustani classical music and started learning from Ghulam Qadir Khan.

Shah Rukh Khan recalled in an interview that he earned his first money by working as an usher in an Udhas concert and used the Rs 50 to travel to Agra to see the Taj Mahal.

Udhas is also credited with making John Abraham a popular face, giving him the opportunity to appear in his album “Mahek” in 1999. The songs “Chupke chupke sakhiyon se baatein” and “Yun mere khat ka jawab aya” were a rage and the actor became a familiar face.

Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur said Udhas’ death is an “irreparable loss” to the music world.

“Deeply saddened the news of passing of Pankaj Udhas ji. His career, spanning more than 4 decades, enriched our music industry and gifted us with some of the most memorable and melodious renditions of gazals,” he wrote on X.

Long time friend and fellow singer Anup Jalota said he knew Udhas had been unwell for the last several months but didn’t realise he would go away so



soon.

“I’ve lost my friend. We would discuss everything. Pankaj, Talat and I... our trio was famous. We had great fun together. We would do concerts together. He has had a great contribution in making ghazals popular and accessible. It can never be forgotten,” Jalota said.

Anuradha Paudwal who collaborated with Udhas on many songs, including “Mohabbat, inayat, karam” and “Tere khamosh hoton se”, said she was shocked by news of his death.

“He was a very good artist for the world but to me he was a very close and dear friend... We studied together in St. Xavier’s and then we both joined the industry. We recorded many duets, many of them were popular. He was a great singer, a great artist, very soft spoken... but over and above that, he was a very

nice human being. He was close to everyone,” Paudwal told PTI.

Actor Madhuri Dixit, who featured in “Saaajan”, her 1991 film with Sanjay Dutt and Salman Khan, also remembered Udhas’ hit number “Jeeye toh jeeye kaise bin aap ke” from the film.

“Deeply saddened by the loss of a music legend, Pankaj Udhas Ji. His gazals touched the souls of people worldwide. His legacy will forever linger in our hearts! Om Shanti,” she said in a post on X.

Singer Daler Mehndi said his heart was heavy with the news of the death of the gentlest music exponent.

“Chitthi na koi sandesh... wishing you a beautiful, peaceful journey ahead... sureeley Pankaj-ji, your songs remain etched in our memories,” he said in an X post. Source: PTI



## Akshay, Tiger's Mast Malang Jhoom reminds fans of Naatu Naatu

The makers of the upcoming action thriller film *Bade Miyan Chote Miyan* unveiled the second track titled *Mast Malang Jhoom*.

Helmed by Ali Abbas Zafar, the film stars Akshay Kumar and Tiger Shroff in the lead roles. On Wednesday, Zee Music Company took to Instagram and treated fans to the full song video and captioned it, "Energy— Mast. Beats — Malang. Groove — Jhoom. It's time to dance to the beats of Mast Malang Jhoom!#MastMalangJhoom Song out now." In the party track, Akshay and Tiger are seen performing their energetic dance moves.

Sonakshi Sinha also seen shaking a leg with Akshay and Tiger. The song sung by Vishal Mishra, Arijit Singh and Nikhita Gandhi. Composed by Vishal Mishra and energetic lyrics penned by Irshad Kamil. As soon as the song was released, fans chimed in the comment section. One of the users wrote, "Amazing jodi with superb song in Bollywood History." Another user commented, "This vibe is amazing." "What moves," another comment read.

# Deepika Padukone, Ranveer Singh announce they are expecting their first child

Bollywood star couple Deepika Padukone and Ranveer Singh are expecting their first child. They announced her pregnancy in February 2024. According to reports, Deepika is said to be in her second trimester. The star couple had gotten married in 2018. Her delivery is due in September 2024.

Deepika and Ranveer shared a post announcing their pregnancy on Thursday, Feb 29, The post read, "September 2024," with cute motifs of baby clothes, baby shoes and balloons.

Earlier, there were speculations circulating that Deepika Padukone might be pregnant. These rumours stemmed from observations that she reportedly hid her baby bump while wearing a glittering saree at the 77th British Academy Film Awards (BAFTA). Deepika Padukone was adorned in a couture saree and custom jewellery designed by Sabyasachi Mukherjee.

Deepika Padukone and Ranveer Singh met on the sets of Sanjay Leela Bhansali's *Goliyon Ki Rasleela Ram-Leela*. They dated for five years before getting married in November 2018.

When asked about becoming a parent, Deepika had a smile on her face and told *Vogue*, "Absolutely. Ranveer and I love children. We look forward to the day when we will start our own family."

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

On the work front, Deepika was last seen in Shah Rukh Khan's superhit, *Jawan*. She will next be seen in the Rohit Shetty directorial, *Singham Again*. She will be sharing screen space with Ranveer Singh, Ajay Devgn, Akshay Kumar, Tiger Shroff and Kareena Kapoor, among others.



## Taapsee to marry long-time boyfriend, badminton coach Mathias Boe in March

Taapsee Pannu, who was last seen in *Dunki* along with Bollywood megastar Shah Rukh Khan, is set to tie the knot with her longtime partner Mathias Boe.

The couple is set to exchange wedding vows in a grand celebration which will reportedly be a blend of traditions of Sikhism and Christianity. While the two like keeping a low key about their relationship but have never been secretive about it.

Taapsee Pannu has been dating the Indian badminton team's coach for nearly 10 years now. Recently, the actress opened up about her relationship when she told Raj Shamani that she met Mathias the year that she was making her debut film, 2013's *Chashme Baddoor*. "I have been with the same person since then and I have no thoughts of leaving him or being with anyone else because I am way too happy in the relationship," she said.

Meanwhile, on the work front, Taapsee Pannu was recently seen in Rajkumar Hirani's *Dunki*. The film also starred Shah Rukh Khan and was released in December 2023. *Dunki* was widely loved by all and collected over Rs 450 crore at the global box office.



Next, Taapsee will be seen in the comedy-drama film, *Woh Ladki Hai Kahan*. The movie is written and directed by Arshad Syed and will also star Prateik Babbar and Pratik Gandhi in the lead roles.

## VIKRANT MASSEY'S 'THE SABARMATI REPORT' ON 2002 GODHRA INCIDENT TO RELEASE ON MAY 3

Vikrant Massey, who is basking in the success of his last film '12th Fail', has announced his next. Titled 'The Sabarmati Report', the film will be about the unfortunate burning of the Sabarmati Express in Gujarat's Godhra exactly 22 years back, on February 22, 2002.

Vikrant Massey announced the film with a short video. In the video, he plays a journalist, Shrabhan Kumar, who is breaking the news of the Godhra incident. As he reads on the teleprompter that it was an accident, he fumbles and then sternly claims that it wasn't any accident.

Sharing the teaser, he wrote, "Paying homage to the 59 innocent people who lost their lives in the Godhra train burning incident 22 years ago, today. Presenting 'The Sabarmati Report', in cinemas on 3rd May, 2024. (sic)"

'The Sabarmati Report' will also feature Raashii Khanna and Ridhi Dogra, apart from Massey. Directed by Ranjan Chandel and produced by Shobha Kapoor, Ektaa R Kapoor, Amul V Mohan and Anshul Mohan, the film will be hitting the screens on May 3.





## Chris Geere to join Amy Schumer in upcoming film 'Kinda Pregnant'

Actor Chris Geere, known for his roles in Detective Pikachu and You're the Worst, is set to join Amy Schumer in the romantic comedy Kinda Pregnant.

The film will be directed by Tyler Spindel and is being made for the streaming platform Netflix with Happy Madison producing reported entertainment news outlet Deadline.

Written by Julie Paiva, the film follows Lainy (Schumer), who gets jealous of her pregnant best friend and ends up wearing a fake baby bump. Amidst all this, she meets the man of her dreams.

Geere, 42, has been a part of several shows including Single Parents, A Million Little Things, and Modern Family. Schumer, 42, was last seen in Netflix's Amy Schumer: Emergency Contact which she also directed.

## Glen Powell: Sydney Sweeney Is So Easy To Work With And So Fun

'Anyone But You' has definitely brought the limelight onto Glen Powell and Sydney Sweeney. The two may have been accused by critics for not having too much chemistry onscreen in their romcom, but the two definitely seem to have fallen head over heels for one another in real life. Glen Powell recently made a statement that showed how much he wants to spend more time with Sydney Sweeney. So much so that he is trying to find out the next script that they can work together on. Sweet, isn't it?

While talking to Variety, Glen Powell said, "When you find somebody that you really jive with, Sydney is so easy to work with and so fun. We're definitely trying to find the next thing. Please send us all the scripts you got. You know we're here for it. It's been really wonderful to read a lot. Sydney reads everything, by the way, and in record time. She's the fastest reader I think I've ever met."

# Selena Gomez reveals how boyfriend Benny Blanco embarrassed her

Selena Gomez said that her boyfriend, Benny Blanco, embarrassed her in front of Jason Segel.

During an appearance on "Jimmy Kimmel Live!" on Friday, the "Only Murders in the Building" star, 31, shared that she spied on the "Forgetting Sarah Marshall" actor at the Emmy Awards.

"He looked at me and she started waving," Gomez said before explaining that she immediately began waving back because she's a fan of Segel's sitcom "How I Met Your Mother."

"This is kind of embarrassing. This is such a weird habit, but every night I fall asleep to the same show," she revealed. "It'll either be 'Friends' or something comfy. But lately, it's 'How I Met Your Mother.' So I fall asleep every night just watching the show and I'm a fan."

Horrifyingly, Gomez "slowly realized" that Segel "was waving to someone behind me" and the encounter only got worse.

"He felt awkward and then inclined to come over," she explained. "And then my boyfriend goes, 'Oh, she falls asleep to you every night.'"

In December 2023, the "Wizards of Waverly Place" alum confirmed on social media that she and Blanco, 35, had been dating for six months.

At the time, she called the music



producer, whose real name is Benjamin Levine, "the best thing that's ever happened" to her and proclaimed that he treats her "better than any human being on this planet."

Since then, the couple have not been shy about expressing their feelings for each other.

On Valentine's Day, Gomez shared a photo of them sitting next to each other while sticking their tongues out at the camera. She also flashed a peace sign while Blanco held two fingers up to his lips.

"I love you," she wrote above the photo with a white heart.

## Ben Affleck didn't want 'relationship on social media' with JLo but caved in

Actor-director Ben Affleck and actress-singer Jennifer Lopez rekindled their romance in 2021 after almost 20 years. However, the Argo star had a request. JLo has 253 million followers on Instagram, and Ben didn't want their relationship to play out in front of her followers.

Ben made the revelation in the new Prime Video documentary The Greatest Love Story Never Told. "Getting back together, I said, 'Listen, one of the things I don't want is a relationship on social media,'" the actor and director, 51, recalls.

"Then I sort of realised it's not a fair thing to ask. It's sort of like, you're gonna marry a boat captain and you go, 'Well, I don't like the water.'"

Despite Ben's apprehensions, the couple has made it work, getting engaged in April 2022 and tying the knot in Las Vegas that July. In the years since, Jennifer, 54, has occasionally shared photos and videos of Ben to her social media feeds. This includes a video of them singing Sam Cooke's What A Wonderful World in the car on his birthday in August. "We're just two people with different kinds of approaches trying to learn to compromise", he says. *Source: IANS*



## RUSSIANS GATHER IN SUBDUED DEFIANCE TO LAY NAVALNY TO REST

**MOSCOW (TIP):** Standing under grey skies holding bouquets, Russians lined up patiently along pavements leading towards opposition politician Alexei Navalny's funeral on March 1, two weeks after his death in a Siberian penal colony.

By the time the coffin was being driven to a cemetery on the opposite bank of the Moskva River, thousands had gathered, chanting Navalny's name. Some called President Vladimir Putin, who Navalny's allies accuse of ordering his death, a murderer.

The Kremlin denies any state involvement in his death. The protest went a little further. The Kremlin said any unsanctioned gatherings in support of Navalny would violate the law, and police had deployed hours before the funeral, erecting metal barriers.

Mourners were forced to mill around a short distance from the site of the funeral, the Church of the Icon of the Mother of God in the Moscow district of Maryino where Navalny used to live, and from the Borisovskoye cemetery where he was later taken and buried.

Among the mourners were foreign dignitaries, including US Ambassador Lynne Tracy, who stood solemnly in black outside the church before the funeral carrying red roses. No mourners would give reporters their full names.

Inside the church, Navalny's mother Lyudmila sat holding a candle as priests in white robes stood over the coffin. Navalny's top aides, all based outside Russia, struggled to contain their emotions as they broadcast live video of the farewell to their leader.— Reuters

## IRAN VOTES IN FIRST PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION SINCE '22 PROTESTS

**DUBAI (TIP):** Iran on March 1 held the country's first parliamentary election since the mass 2022 protests over mandatory hijab laws after the death in police custody of Mahsa Amini, with questions looming over just how many people will turn out at the polls.

Iranian officials and even Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei have urged the public to cast ballots, but polling stations in the country's capital, Tehran, appeared to see few voters. Initial election results are expected as early as Saturday. Parliament terms run for four years. — AP

# Rishi Sunak makes impassioned plea to protect British democracy

**LONDON (TIP):** Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has issued an impassioned plea for Britain to protect its democracy as he warned that extremist forces were out to tear the country apart and undermine its multi-faith identity.

Referencing his own Hindu beliefs, the British-Indian leader on March 1 stressed that the enduring values of the UK are about embracing migrants of all faiths and ethnicities and urged protesters to ensure peaceful demonstrations are not hijacked by extremist forces.

"Immigrants who have come here have integrated and contributed. They have helped write the latest chapter in our island story. They have done this without being required to give up their identity," said Sunak in a speech outside 10 Downing Street.

"You can be a practising Hindu and a proud Briton as I am, or a devout Muslim and a patriotic citizen as so many are, or a committed Jewish person and the heart of your local community, and all underpinned by the tolerance of our established, Christian church," he said.

"But I fear that our great achievement in building the world's most successful multi-ethnic, multi faith democracy is being deliberately undermined. There are forces here at home trying to tear us apart," he added.

He was speaking soon after what he characterised as the "beyond alarming" win in a byelection on Thursday of a controversial politician, George Galloway, in Greater Manchester following a campaign dominated by the divisions of the Israel-Hamas conflict.



He said on too many occasions recently, the streets of Britain had been hijacked by small groups who are hostile to British values and have no respect for its democratic traditions.

"Islamist extremists and the far right feed off and embolden each other. They are equally desperate to pretend that their violence is somehow justified when actually these groups are two sides of the same extremist coin... both loathe the pluralist, modern country we are," he said.

The British Prime Minister stressed that both these groups of extremists were spreading the poison of extremism with the aim of draining Britain's confidence.

He added: "No country is perfect, but I am enormously proud of the good that our country has done."

"I stand here as our country's first non-white Prime Minister, leading the most diverse government in our country's

history to tell people of all races, all faiths and all backgrounds it is not the colour of your skin, the God you believe in or where you were born, that will determine your success but just your own hard work and endeavour." Sunak reiterated his support for a new protocol agreed with the police forces of the country earlier this week to take action against violent activities that threaten the personal security of members of Parliament and also any violence during serial protests taking place in response to the Israel-Hamas conflict. He said threats of violence and intimidation are alien to the British way of doing things and must be resisted at all times.

"I love this country. My family and I owe it so much. The time has now come for us all to stand together to combat the forces of division and beat this poison. We must face down the extremists who would tear us apart," he urged. (PTI)

# Thailand plans to legalise surrogacy for foreign couples

**BANGKOK (TIP):** Thailand is amending a law to allow foreign couples to seek surrogacy services in the country, a senior health official said on March 1.

In 2015, Thailand introduced tough regulations to control surrogacy and banned the process for foreign couples after several high profile scandals that led to a crackdown on the country's unregulated "wombs for hire" industry.

"We will amend the law that will allow foreign couples to receive surrogacy service here based on regulations," Arkhom Praditsuwan, deputy director-general of Health Service Support Department, told Reuters.

Those eligible must be legally married, regardless of their gender, and the child from surrogacy must be guaranteed protection and rights in the couple's home country, Arkhom said.

Foreign couples will be allowed to bring their own surrogate or use a Thai



surrogate, and those undergoing the process will need to be vetted by a government committee, he said.

The proposed law changes will be submitted for cabinet approval later this month as part of a wider reform of regulations on surrogacy, in-vitro fertilisation and artificial insemination to allow Thais, including same-sex couples, greater access to these services as well as enhancing medical tourism, Arkhom said.

If the cabinet approves the amendment, it will be submitted to parliament and the senate for consideration.

Thailand made commercial surrogacy illegal in 2015 and only allows surrogacy, controlled by a government committee, for Thai couples or a Thai who has married a foreigner for at least three years and who faces difficulty in having children. (Reuters)

# Over 100 Palestinians waiting for aid killed in Israeli firing

**RAFAH (GAZA STRIP) (TIP):** Israeli troops fired on a crowd of Palestinians waiting for aid in Gaza City on February 29, witnesses said. More than 100 people were killed, bringing the death toll since the start of the Israel-Hamas war to more than 30,000, according to health officials.

It's a serious incident, says white house

The White House said on Thursday it is looking into reports of Israeli fire on Palestinians, describing it as a "serious incident"

"We mourn the loss of innocent life and recognise the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza, where innocent Palestinians are just trying to feed their families," a White House spokesperson said

Initially, there were reports of an Israeli strike on the crowd, but witnesses later said Israeli troops opened fire as people pulled flour and canned goods off of trucks.

Israeli officials acknowledged that troops opened fire, saying they did so after the crowd approached in a threatening way. The officials insisted



on anonymity to give details about what happened, after the military said in a statement that "dozens were killed and injured from pushing, trampling and being run over by the trucks".

Gaza City and the surrounding areas in the enclave's north were the first targets of Israel's air, sea and ground offensive, launched in response to Hamas' October 7 attack. Aid groups

say it has become nearly impossible to deliver humanitarian assistance in most of Gaza because of the difficulty of coordinating with the Israeli military, ongoing hostilities and the breakdown of public order, with crowds of desperate people overwhelming aid convoys. The UN says a quarter of Gaza's 2.3 million Palestinians face starvation; around 80% have fled their homes. — AP

## JAPAN POPULATION DOWN BY LARGEST MARGIN IN 2023, BIRTHS AT RECORD LOW

**TOKYO (JAPAN) (TIP):** The number of babies born in Japan in the year 2023 fell to a record low from a year earlier as the country's population shrank by its largest ever margin, government data showed, according to a report by Kyodo News. The figure for babies was down by 5.1 per cent to 758,631, according to preliminary data released by the health ministry on Feb 26, the Japanese news agency reported.

A country's birth rate is the ratio of live births to the total population in a given year. It is usually expressed as the number of live births per 1,000 people.

The figure has remained below the 800,000 mark since the year 2022. Japan's population, including foreign residents, fell by 831,872, with deaths outnumbering births. A forecast by the Japanese government's National Institute of Population and Social Security Research has estimated births in the country to decline to below 760,000 in the year 2035.

The fast pace of dip in newborns has been attributed to late marriages and people staying single, Kyodo News reported stating that Prime Minister Fumio Kishida administration has termed the period leading up to 2030 as "the last chance" to reverse the trend.

The number of births hit a peak in the year 1973 at around 2.09 million babies and fell to below 1 million in the year 2016. Meanwhile, according to government data, the number of deaths in Japan also hit a record 1,590,503, while the number of marriages fell to its lowest level since the end of World War II at 489,281 unions. (ANI)

## Journalists used AI to trace German far-left militant well before police pounced

**BERLIN (TIP):** Investigative journalists using artificial-intelligence tools were on the trail of a fugitive member of the notorious Red Army Faction well before German police announced a breakthrough in the 30-year-old case earlier this week.

Daniela Klette, 65, a member of the leftist militant group, was arrested on Monday in her Berlin flat on suspicion of committing a string of robberies and at least one attempted murder between 1999 and 2016 to finance her underground life.

German police and security services have drawn criticism over their failures in some politically charged investigations.

Their defenders say strict privacy laws limit their ability to use the kinds of artificial intelligence-enhanced tools that a German TV podcast deployed to track down Klette last year.

Daniela Behrens, the interior minister of Lower Saxony state where many of the crimes were committed, hailed Klette's arrest as a major breakthrough and a tribute to the diligence of the police and prosecutors on the case.

Last year, however, an ARD television podcast tracked Klette, one of three RAF militants still sought 26 years after the group announced its dissolution, by putting the picture from her wanted notice through image search tool PimEyes.

This yielded online images of a much older woman going by the name "Claudia



Ivone" who, until the Covid pandemic struck in 2020, regularly took part in Berlin's Afro-Brazilian scene and was a practitioner of Brazilian martial dance capoeira.

"I strongly recommend that you follow this trace," Bellingcat investigative journalist Michael Colborne recalled telling the podcasters in an interview with Die Zeit weekly on Thursday. He said he had run the pictures through a host of face comparison tools and kept turning up the same result.

The ARD podcasters passed their finding to law enforcement authorities, who on Tuesday said they had been put back on Klette's trail in November by a tip from the public.

"For reasons of investigation tactics we make no disclosures about our detection methods," prosecutor Alexander Hege said when asked if the podcast was the original source of the tip. (Reuters)

## IRANIAN SINGER WHO WON GRAMMY FOR MAHSA AMINI PROTEST ANTHEM IS SENTENCED TO PRISON IN IRAN

**DUBAI (TIP):** An Iranian singer who won a Grammy presented by US first lady Jill Biden has been sentenced to more than three years in prison over his anthem supporting the 2022 protests over the death of Mahsa Amini. Shervin Hajipour posted on Instagram on March 1, the same day that Iran held its parliamentary election, what appeared to be part of the judgment against him. It said Hajipour received a three-year, eight-month sentence on charges of "propaganda against the system" and "encouraging people to protest".

The court issued its sentence in part because it found he hadn't properly expressed regret over publishing the song.

It also imposed a two-year travel ban and ordered him to create a song about "US crimes", as well as make posts about those crimes online.

Hajipour thanked his lawyers and his agent for their support.

"I will not mention the name of the judge and the prosecutor so that they don't get insulted and threatened, because insults and threats are not in the religion of humanity," he wrote. "Finally, one day we will understand each other. Until then."

Hajipour already had served some prison time, but was out on bail pending the court's decision. It was unclear if he had already reported to serve his sentence.

Iranian state-run media, focused on the election on Friday, didn't note Hajipour's sentence. Iran's mission to the United Nations in New York didn't respond to a request for comment.

Hajipour's song "Baraye", or "For" in English, begins with: "For dancing in the streets", "for the fear we feel when we kiss".

The lyrics list reasons that young Iranians posted online for why they had protested against Iran's ruling theocracy after Amini's death in September 2022, allegedly for not wearing her mandated headscarf to the liking of security forces.

The protests quickly escalated into calls to overthrow Iran's clerical rulers. A subsequent security crackdown killed more than 500 people, with more than 22,000 detained. Jill Biden awarded Hajipour the Grammy's new song for social change special merit award during the ceremony last year.

"This song became the anthem of the Mahsa Amini protests, a powerful and poetic call for freedom and women's rights," Biden said at the ceremony.

"Shervin was arrested, but this song continues to resonate around the world with its powerful theme: Women, life, freedom." (AP)

## PAKISTAN PREZ POLL ON MARCH 9; ZARDARI IS FRONTRUNNER

ISLAMABAD (TIP): The polling to elect Pakistan's new President will be held on March 9, the election commission announced on March 1, a position that former President Asif Ali Zardari is almost certain to win again after nearly 11 years. The new President would replace incumbent Arif Alvi, whose term ended last year. However, he has continued since the new electoral college was not yet formed. Alvi's successor could not be elected due to the absence of the National Assembly and provincial assemblies which were dissolved in August 2023. (PTI)

## PAKISTAN'S FIRST WOMAN CM MARYAM NAWAZ IMPRESSED BY PM MODI'S ECONOMIC MODEL

LAHORE (TIP): Prime Minister Narendra Modi's economic model is the talk of the town in Pakistan.

The first woman CM of Punjab, Maryam Nawaz is impressed by PM Modi's economic model. Maryam intends to implement programmes similar to the model. However, Amjad Ayub Mirza raised a question on the practicability of the implementation of her policies. Maryam said she would make policies to transform Punjab into an economic hub.

According to Geo News, Maryam's assumption of the chief minister's office marks her debut in public office, posing the challenge of surpassing the legacies of 'Mohsin Speed' and Shehbaz Sharif in public perception through exemplary performance.

Critics suggest that the (Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz) PML-N chief organiser's engagement with citizens needs enhancement, especially on social media platforms, to foster better "Citizen Engagement." (ANI)

# Pakistan: Nawaz Sharif officially nominates brother Shehbaz for PM's post

ISLAMABAD/LAHORE (TIP): The parliamentary party of the PML-N headed by three-time former Pakistan premier Nawaz Sharif on February 27 formally nominated his younger brother Shehbaz Sharif for the post of prime minister to head a coalition government.

The parliamentary members' meeting of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) was held in Islamabad with party supremo Nawaz Sharif, 74, in the chair. Shehbaz, 72, had led a coalition government for 16 months till August 2023 before the caretaker government took over following the announcement of elections.

The nomination of Shehbaz Sharif as the next prime minister by the elder brother, who himself was eyeing the plum post for a record fourth time, had surprised many within and outside the



party. Outgoing National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf has called the National Assembly session on Thursday. (PTI)

## Sri Lanka ends visa extensions to war-hit Russians, Ukrainians

COLOMBO (TIP): Thousands of Russians and Ukrainians staying in Sri Lanka on extended visas due to the war have been asked to leave the island nation within two weeks, officials said.

The immigration controller has issued a notice to the tourism ministry that the Russian and Ukrainian tourists must leave the country within two weeks from February 23 as their visas have lapsed, they said.

Over 3,00,000 Russians, 20,000 Ukrainians have arrived since the war broke out in 2022. They have been asked to leave in 2 weeks.

President Zelenskyy admits 31,000 troops have been killed so far in the war.

However, President Ranil Wickremesinghe's office issued a notice that says he has ordered an investigation



as to how the decision to ask them to leave had been made without a cabinet decision to revoke the previous extension of stay.

The President's Media Division said the Sri Lankan Government had not officially decided to revoke the visa extensions previously granted to these tourists.

Russian and Ukrainian tourists had been allowed extended stays in the country due to the war breaking out between the two European countries. Nearly 3,00,000 Russians and 20,000 Ukrainians have arrived in Sri Lanka since the outbreak of the war in 2022.

However, the number of tourists currently residing on the island nation on extended visas is not available.

Authorities said the decision to allow them longer stays was then made because of flight shortages.

Immigration authorities said there had been complaints of abuse of tourist visas by Russian and Ukrainian nationals running illegal businesses, employing foreigners, and deploying payment methods for services bypassing local systems. (PTI)

## 46 killed in fire at 7-storey commercial building in Bangladesh's capital Dhaka



DHAKA (TIP): A massive fire that ripped through a seven-storey commercial building in Bangladesh's capital Dhaka overnight has killed at least 44 people and injured 22 others, the health minister said on March 1.

The fire on Thursday night engulfed the Green Cozy Cottage building in the capital's Baily Road area that houses several restaurants and shops.

The fire broke out around 9.50 pm on Thursday at a popular restaurant named 'Kacchi Bhai' on the building's first floor and quickly spread to the upper floors that had more restaurants and a garment shop, according to fire service officials.

Health Minister Samanta Lal Sen said around 2 am that 33 bodies were brought to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) and 10 others to the Sheikh Hasina National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery. Another victim died at the Police Hospital.

The condition of those injured is "critical", he told reporters at a briefing.

Fire officials said 75 people, including 42 in unconscious state, were taken out of the seven-storey building. Thirteen fire service units were mobilised, the officials said.

The minister, a burn wound specialist,

said 22 people are being treated at both health facilities and their condition is "critical".

"The respiratory system of those who have survived so far has been seriously damaged," Sen told reporters at the DMCH.

Doctors said some of the bodies were burned beyond recognition and feared that the death toll could rise.

Witnesses and officials said to escape the fire, people rushed to the upper floors. Many were rescued by firefighters using ladders, they added.

IGP Chowdhury Abdullah Al Mamun in a press briefing said that 44 people died and 75 had been rescued. Some of the rescued individuals received first aid treatment before returning home safely.

He also said the dead victims included the daughter of a police officer.

Fire Service DG Moin said the 42 unconscious included 21 women and four children.

"It was a dangerous building with gas cylinders on every floor, even on the staircases," he said.

He believes the fire originated from a gas leak or stove. The building has only one exit - the staircases, according to him.

Most of the people died as they jumped off the building or from burns or suffocation, said firefighters who brought the fire under control around 12.30 am. Smoke was still brewing from the building at that time.

The first death was reported around 1 am when the firefighters took the bodies one by one to a freezing truck waiting outside the building, local media reported. (PTI)



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# Layer perfume to create signature scent

## Single Note Fragrances are the Easiest to Blend

If you are new to layering your scents, start with your perfumes that have predominately one note in them. For instance, a fragrance with a single note of vanilla is going to layer very well on top of a fragrance with a single note of gardenia. For those of you that like woody scents try layering a fragrance with a single note of oud wood on top of a fragrance with a single note of Turkish rose.

## Order Matters

Did you notice in the examples above that I listed the fragrances with the heavier notes first? When you are layering your scents spray the stronger fragrance first so that it doesn't overpower the lighter fragrance.

## Number of Sprays

This one is a bit tricky because everyone's body chemistry is different. Personally, when layering, I don't exceed the amount of sprays that I would apply if I was only wearing one fragrance. An easy equation to remember as you practice layering is 1 spray of the heavier scent and 2 sprays of the lighter scent.

## Stay in the Same Family

The general rule for layering your scents is to stay in the same family. In other words, layer your fresh citrus scents with other perfumes/colognes that are fresh and citrusy. Here's a fragrance hack for those of you that want to be a bit more adventurous with your scents. There are notes in your fragrance



that you can layer with almost anything regardless of the family they're in and you'll still smell come out with an awesome exotic scent. Vanilla, musk, and the vast majority of citrus/orange scents can be layered with notes outside of their respective families.

## Layering Starts in the Shower

I alluded to this earlier in the intro, but I want to discuss it a little further. Layering consists of more than applying two-three different perfumes. It also consists of the scented lotion, shower gel, aftershave and even deodorants you use beforehand. (When you use these other scented products it actually helps make the perfume you apply last longer.)

## Scents that Clash

In studying how to make my own fragrance the goal was never to create scents that clashed, but in

experimenting and trying out different scents it happens, I haven't figured out all of the combinations that clash, but here are a few no-no's that personally did not work for my nose.

## Layering Can be Subtle

Many people fall into the trap of thinking that layering their scents is only good for intensifying their overall aroma. This isn't true you can also layer your fragrances to create a very nice, soft and subtle impression for when you're going on an interview or on the job. To create a subtle impression with your scent, stick to using scented body wash, aftershave and lotion or a scented body balm. Personally, I would skip spraying the fragrance if the occasion is an interview or an important meeting. But if you're up for spraying a fragrance the last layer should be an eau de toilette scent.



## Foods for glowing skin

### Avocado

Packed with antioxidants like lutein and beta carotene, avocados help soften the skin as well as hydrate it if applied topically. You can use a moisturising mask of avocado with 1 teaspoon honey to reap the benefits of this super fruit. You'll feel the difference instantly! You can also check our interesting recipes to include avocado in your daily diet; perhaps, combine avocado with orange juice as a salad dressing or mix it up with cilantro and cumin for a dip or a sauce for a creamy portion of pasta.

### Oranges

The peel of the orange, actually contains more vitamin C than the orange itself. The peel contains antimicrobial and antibacterial properties so using it regularly in face packs will give you clear and brighter skin in no time. What's in season will make your skin glow. Orange peel and yoghurt face pack can instantly rejuvenate your skin; all you need is 1 tablespoon of orange peel powder and 2 tablespoon of yoghurt to do the trick. You can also add 1 tablespoon of sandalwood powder and 1 tablespoon of walnut powder to 1 tablespoon of orange peel powder with a few drops of lemon juice and rose water to get bright skin.

### Pumpkin

Pumpkins have it all - antioxidants, vitamins (A and C) and minerals. Pumpkins are rich in zinc which is vital in the creation of new skin cells, and also helps regulate oil production, improve skin tone and reduce the appearance of open pores. All you have to do is eat a handful of pumpkin seeds to brighten your complexion and get the glow you've always wanted. You can also apply a DIY face mask of 3 teaspoons pumpkin, ½ teaspoon honey and ½ teaspoon milk for 15-20 minutes.

## FOOD CORNER

# Spicy Chicken Masala

## Ingredients

2 Tbsp Mustard oil, 2 Tbsp Curry leaves, 1 tsp Kalonjee, 1 tsp Saunf, 2 tsp Garlic, 1 Cup Onion, chopped, 1 Cup Tomatoes, chopped, 1/2 tsp Ginger, 5 Nos Green Chillies, 1 Kg Boneless Chicken, 1 tsp Salt, 1 tsp Tomato puree, 1 Tbsp Red chilli powder, 1 tsp Cumin powder, 1 tsp Black salt, 1 tsp Peppercorn (crushed), 1 Cup Water, 1 Tbsp Mint, 1 Cup Coriander

## Method

- Heat mustard oil in a pan.
- Add curry leaves and fry on a low flame.
- Take out the fried curry leaves and put kalonjee, saunf and garlic in the same oil. Roast them together until yellowish-

brown.

- Now add chopped onion and mix them until golden brown.
- Add tomato puree, ginger and green chillies to the pan and mix well.
- Cover the pan and let it cook for a while.
- Now open the pan and add the boneless chicken pieces to the cooked masala.
- Mix the chicken thoroughly to coat it well with the masala.
- Add some salt and tomato puree. Stir well.
- Bring to simmer, and add red chilli powder, cumin powder, black salt and crushed peppercorn. Mix well.
- Add a cup of water and let it cook till simmer.
- Put a cup of mint leaves followed by coriander leaves. Mix thoroughly.
- Add the fried curry leaves in the end. Mix well and cook till simmer.
- Serve hot with little garnishing of coriander leaves.





# Your smart watch isn't a medical device - but it is tracking all your health data

For millions of people, smartwatches aren't just a piece of technology. They can use them to take control of their health in ways never thought possible. As you go on your morning run, a smartwatch can monitor the rhythmic pounding of your feet and your heart's steady beat. The watch can record the distance covered and the intensity of your workout, guiding you towards your fitness goals.

During lunch, you can use it to log calories for a BLT sandwich. As deadlines loom, they can offer gentle reminders to take a moment for yourself. And as you doze off, they might pick up instances of apnoea or other sleep disturbances.

But some users could also conflate health tips with medical advice. Device and app developers have consistently made it clear that their products cannot replace a professional medical doctor's advice or treatment.

A smartwatch is not a medical device as defined by law. In the UK, medical devices are strictly regulated in a way that other devices such as smartwatches are not. These regulations provide users with better legal protections and clarity as well as providing for resolution in the event of a mishap.

## What qualifies

The key legal framework in the UK is the Medical Devices Regulations 2002 (UK MDR). Once a product has been identified as a medical device under UK MDR, further classification of it takes place, ranging from low risk (stethoscopes and wheelchairs) to high risk (pacemakers, heart valves, implanted cerebral simulators).

If a device is designed to go inside the body, or if it contains medicinal substances, it is more likely it is treated as high risk. Depending on the risk classification, the law then imposes stringent standards to protect users from harm. These include obligations on the manufacturers and developers to ensure their devices are safe, through conducting risk impact assessments, periodic audits and other actions.



All matters relating to medical devices in the UK fall under the responsibility of the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). The MHRA conducts surveillance of medical devices available in the UK and has the authority to make decisions regarding their marketing and distribution. It is also the MHRA's duty to ensure that manufacturers and developers are complying with the regulations.

## Pursuit of wellness?

An important question is how one distinguishes a device, digital tool or app as one used for a medical purpose – which is how the UK MDR defines a medical device – versus one that is used for general health and wellness. The latter would include, for example, meditation apps or step counters.

Traditionally, smart watches have been treated as smart, wearable technology. On the face of it, they offer users insight into their general health and wellness, helping them make necessary lifestyle adjustments to improve their health or fitness goals. *Source: PTI*

# Norovirus outbreak in the US: Know about the highly contagious stomach bug

Norovirus, commonly known as the stomach bug, has been spreading quickly in the northeastern parts of the United States. Norovirus is a highly contagious virus that leads to vomiting, diarrhoea, nausea, and stomach pain, according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Despite often being dubbed the "stomach flu," it's not related to influenza.

Norovirus spreads through various means, including direct contact with an infected person, consuming contaminated food or water, and touching contaminated surfaces, followed by touching the mouth or eating without washing hands.



Symptoms of norovirus typically emerge 12 to 48 hours after exposure and include nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, stomach cramps, low-grade fever, and muscle pain.

While the illness is usually short-lived, lasting less than three days, it

can be particularly severe for young children, the elderly, and individuals with a weak immune system.

The CDC emphasises the importance of thorough handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after using the toilet or changing diapers and before preparing or consuming food, as the cornerstone of prevention.

Alcohol-based hand sanitisers are less effective against norovirus.

Additional preventive measures include rinsing fruits and vegetables, staying home when sick, and avoiding food preparation for others until two days after symptoms have ceased.



## Foods to avoid as post-workout meals

Certain foods may not be ideal choices for post-workout meals due to factors such as slow digestion, high fat content, or potential to cause digestive discomfort. Continue reading as we share a list of foods you should avoid post-workout.

### Fried foods

High in unhealthy fats and can be hard to digest, slowing down the absorption of nutrients. Instead try grilled or baked lean protein sources like chicken or fish.

### Sugary cereals

Sugary cereals have high sugar content that can lead to an energy crash after an initial spike in blood sugar. Whole-grain cereal with added protein (such as Greek yogurt or milk) for sustained energy may be a better alternative.

### High-fat foods

High-fat foods slow down digestion which may cause discomfort during exercise, and fats can slow down the absorption of nutrients. Opt for moderate amounts of healthy fats, such as avocados or nuts, consumed a few hours before the workout.

### Soda or sugary drinks

These drinks have high sugar content and empty calories without providing essential nutrients. Water, coconut water, or a protein shake with water or low-fat milk are encouraged instead.

### Spicy foods

Spicy foods may cause digestive discomfort and heartburn during physical activity. Choose milder seasonings and spices for post-workout meals.

### High-fibre foods

High-fibre foods that have too much fibre can cause bloating and gas during exercise. Opt for moderate amounts of easily digestible fibre, such as from fruits or whole grains. *Source: NDTV*

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## Samsung unveils Galaxy Ring with health-tracking features

Samsung Electronics on Monday unveiled the long-awaited Galaxy Ring smart device for the first time at the ongoing Mobile World Congress (MWC).

The ring-type digital healthcare device was showcased in three colours and nine sizes at the South Korean company's booth on the opening day of this year's MWC, which kicked off at Fira Gran Via in Barcelona, Spain, according to Samsung.

Galaxy Ring will be comfortable to wear while sleeping, and the ring's inner surface will wrap around the user's finger to measure detailed health data, said the company.

But Samsung Electronics said it has no plan to disclose details of specifications until the official launch, reports Yonhap News Agency. Also, the wearable devices were presented within transparent boxes, limiting the hands-on experience for visitors.

The disclosure of Galaxy Ring came about a month after Samsung Electronics teased the new ring-type device during the Galaxy S24 Unpacked event held in California last month.

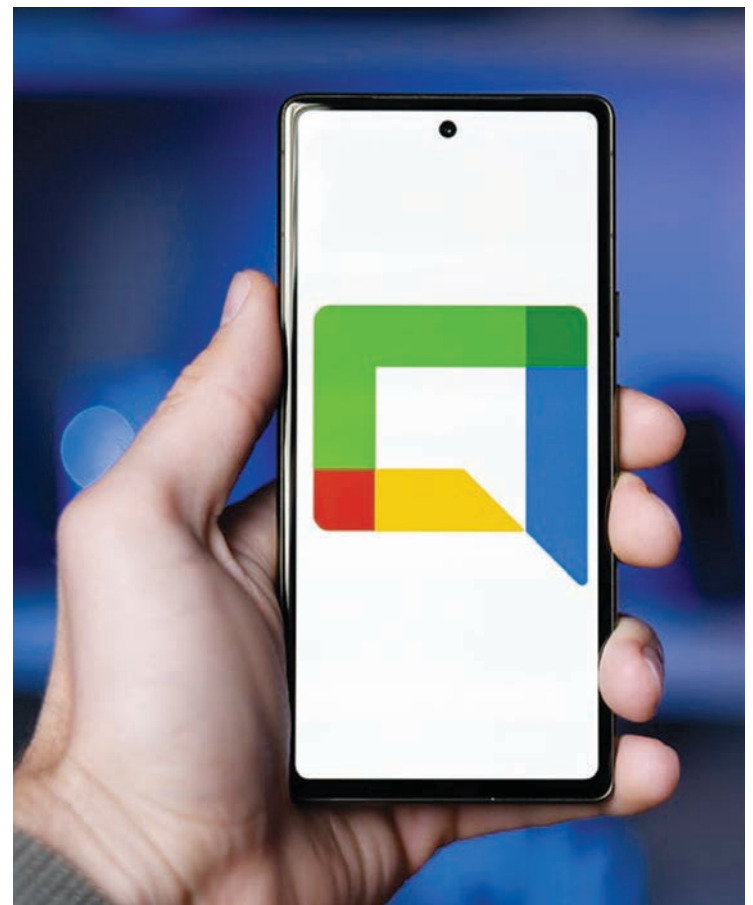
# Google Chat gets new feature to help users find out most important conversations

Google Chat has received a new feature that is aimed at helping users understand priority conversations without having to read the messages. The new feature makes it easy for users to know the participants in unread threads to gauge what is more relevant to them. Google Chat was developed by the tech giant to replace its older (and now defunct) text messaging and video calling platform Google Hangout. While the text messaging feature went to it, Meet was promoted as the company's sole video-calling platform.

The new update was announced via a post on the Google Workspace blog which explained the feature further. In 2023, a feature was added to Google Chat's Spaces, which is what the company calls groups. This feature allowed users to reply to a particular message via in-line reply threads. This was a convenient feature that allowed for separate and more focused discussions without derailing the main conversation. However, there was one challenge.

If a user was returning to Spaces after a break, they would come across multiple threads, not knowing what was being discussed without manually opening them and going through the replies. The new update solves this problem by adding participant avatars to all unread threads to make it more apparent what the discussion is about. Google said, "In order to provide you with more context upfront, you will now see participant avatars for unread threads in the conversation view. Without having to click to open the thread side panel, it will now be much easier to decide which threads to read and reply to."

This feature will be available to all Google account holders, including Google Workspace customers, Workspace Individual subscribers, and users with personal accounts. The Google Chat feature does not require any admin control (for Workspace users) and will remain on by default. It will also be available on the web, Android, and iOS. The tech giant started its rollout on Monday, Feb 26, but it may take up to two weeks to reach all users.



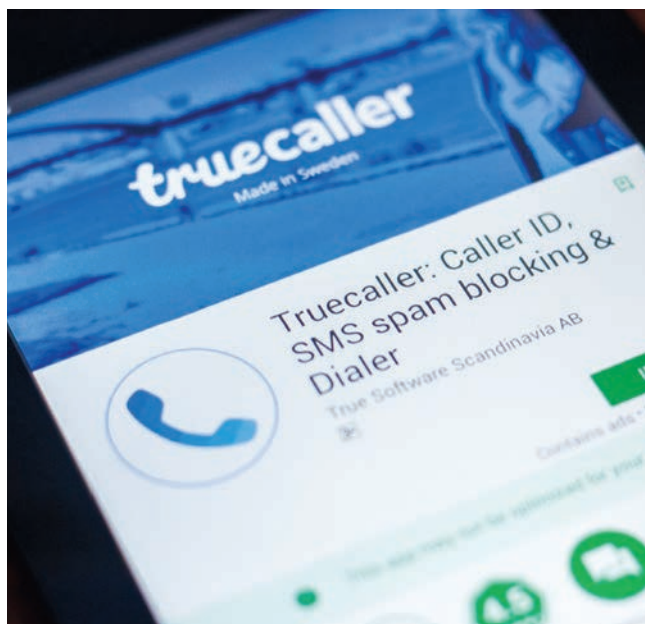
Recently, Gboard, Google's keyboard app for smartphones, also received a new feature called the "Scan Text" mode that allows users to click a picture of text and insert it into the text field. It uses optical character recognition (OCR) technology to extract the text and insert it into Gboard's app.

## Truecaller launches AI-powered call recording for iOS, Android users in India

Truecaller has brought its call recording and artificial intelligence (AI)-powered transcription features to India. The feature was initially introduced in the US in June 2023, but after less than a year, the company is expanding it to more regions. Both Android and iOS users will be able to record incoming and outgoing calls and transcribe them using the help of AI. It is being added as a premium feature and will only be available to the paid users of the app.

In an announcement, Truecaller stated that this feature will allow users to directly record calls within the app, and will eliminate the need to use any third-party app for call recordings. Further, the company has leveraged AI to also offer a transcription feature that will provide full transcription of the recorded calls, once the call has ended. Interestingly, the app used to offer call recording earlier, but had to discontinue after Google added restrictions for apps using an API designed for accessibility features to record calls.

The call recording part works differently for both iOS and Android. The iPhone operating system is more restrictive when it comes to third-party call recording, so Truecaller users will need to go to the Search page and tap Record a call, which will prompt the app to call



a recording line, which the company says is a special number provided by them. After that, users can call the person they wish to record the call of, and click the

option to merge both calls. Once the call is merged, recording will begin and the user will get a push notification. The app maker stated that all the recorded calls are stored locally on the device, however, users can create a backup on iCloud.

On Android, the process is rather straightforward. The Truecaller dialler includes a dedicated recording button that can start and stop recording. If a user is not using the app's dialler, they will see a floating button to record. For both platforms, once the call has ended, a push notification will indicate when the transcription is ready. Transcriptions are available in English and Hindi languages. Users can listen to recordings, rename them, delete unwanted ones, or share them with other apps.

It should be noted that the Google Pixel 8 series and supported models from older generations, as well as Samsung smartphones supporting Galaxy AI already have an inbuilt feature to transcribe calls in real-time. However, users who do not have such a feature in their smartphone can use Truecaller at a cost. It is part of the app's paid features, and users will need to subscribe to Truecaller's Premium plan. In India, the paid tiers start at a monthly cost of Rs. 75 and a yearly price of Rs. 529.

## India's GST revenue up 12.5% to Rs 1.68 lakh cr in February

Gross Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenue collected for February was Rs 1.68 lakh crore, a 12.5% increase compared to that in the same month last year.

This growth was driven by a 13.9% rise in GST from domestic transactions and 8.5% increase in GST from import of goods. GST revenue net of refunds for February 2024 is Rs 1.51 lakh crore, a growth of 13.6% over that for the same period last year, stated an official news release.

However, the revenue dipped by about Rs. 4,000 crore when compared to the intake of Rs. 1.72 lakh crore in January. GST collections in February missed becoming the fourth month in this financial year to cross Rs 1.70 lakh crore in collections.

As of February 2024, the total gross GST collection for the current fiscal year stands at Rs 18.40 lakh crore, which is 11.7% higher than the collection for the same period in the last fiscal. The average monthly gross collection for fiscal '23-24 thus stands at Rs 1.67 lakh crore whereas the average was Rs. 1.5 lakh crore in the previous fiscal.

GST revenue net of refunds as of February for the current fiscal is Rs. 16.36 lakh crore, a growth of 13% over that the same period last year. "Overall, the GST revenue figures demonstrate continued growth momentum and positive performance," said the official news release. *Source: TNS*

# Google starts removing 10 apps from Play Store for not paying service fee

NEW DELHI (TIP)

Google on Friday, March 1, began removing some apps, including popular matrimony apps, from its Play Store in India over a dispute on service fee payments.

Google said that 10 companies in the country, including "many well-established" had avoided paying fees despite benefiting from the platform.

It did not name the firms but a search of Play Store on android phones did not give results for matrimonial apps such as shaadi.com, matrimony.com and BharatMatrimony. Balaji Telefilms' Altt (formerly ALTBalaji), audio platform Kuku FM, dating service QuackQuack, Truly Madly also disappeared from the Play Store.

The dispute is over Google imposing a fee of 11 per cent to 26 per cent on in-app payments after anti-competition body CCI ordered scrapping of an earlier system of charging 15 per cent to 30 percent. Google went ahead to remove the apps not paying the fee after the Supreme Court did not provide interim relief to companies behind these apps in their battle against the search giant's platform fees. While BharatMatrimony founder Murugavel Janakiraman described the move as "dark day" for the Internet in India, Kuku FM co-founder Vinod Kumar Meena in a statement said that Google was behaving like a 'monopoly'. QuackQuack founder Ravi Mittal said the company would comply



with rules to get back on the marketplace.

Google previously sent notices of Play Store violations to matrimony.com, which runs the app BharatMatrimony, and Info Edge, which runs a similar app, Jeevansathi.

Info Edge founder Sanjeev Bikhchandani said it had cleared all pending Google invoices in a timely manner and was compliant with its policies. "Indian companies will comply - for now. But what India needs is an App Store/ Play Store that is a part of digital public infrastructure - like UPI and ONDC. The response needs to be strategic," he said in a post on X tagging Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and his office.

The Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI), an industry association that represents some of the largest Indian startups as well as international firms, said in a statement that it has advised Google, an IAMAI member, to not

delist any apps from Google Play. The industry body said it is able to confirm that Google had sent notices to at least four of the group's members.

In a blog post, Google said 10 Indian companies had chosen for an extended period of time not to pay for the "immense value they receive on Google Play". "For years, no court or regulator has denied Google Play's right to charge," it said, adding that the Supreme Court on February 9 also "refused to interfere" with its right to do so.

Google asserted that allowing a small group of developers to get differential treatment from the vast majority of developers who are paying their fair share creates an uneven playing field putting all other apps and games at a competitive disadvantage.

"After giving these developers more than three years to prepare, including three weeks after the Supreme Court's order, we are taking necessary steps to ensure our policies are applied consistently across the ecosystem, as we do for any form of policy violation globally," Google said.

It went on to say that enforcement of the policy, when necessary, can include removal of non-compliant apps from Google Play. Google, however, added that existing users will be able to continue to access the apps without interruption and that it continues "to offer our support to help developers get into compliance".

*Source: PTI*

## Reliance-Disney merger may face CCI scrutiny over dominance fears

NEW DELHI (TIP)

Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Industries and Walt Disney India's merger could attract antitrust scrutiny, experts have predicted. The Reliance-Disney merger is set to create India's biggest TV player with over 120 channels. The valuation of the entity is pegged at \$8.5 billion.

Lawyers have flagged concerns that the combined entity's strong portfolio of cricket broadcast rights could impact advertisers. It has been estimated that the Reliance-Disney merger will have a 35 percent viewership share in Indian television. In the past, both Reliance and Disney have shelled out billions of dollars to win the telecast rights of cricket tournaments.

While the overall TV space will be closely assessed by the Competition Commission of India (CCI), six antitrust lawyers said cricket rights are going to be in the spotlight as the regulators examine market share and the power of the



combined entity.

K.K Sharma, a former head of mergers at CCI, said the combined Disney-Reliance combo will raise eyebrows among regulators given the market power they will exert, especially in the cricket segment, requiring "deeper scrutiny."

Sharma, now a senior partner at Singhanian and Co, told Reuters, "With Disney and Reliance together, hardly anything of cricket will be left. The regulator gets concerned even when there is a possibility of dominance. Here, it is not merely dominance but almost absolute control over cricket."

## Bitcoin surpasses \$60,000 for 1st time in two years

Cryptocurrency Bitcoin on Thursday, Feb 29, surpassed \$60,000 for the first time in more than two years. The jump comes amid surging optimism that demand for the token is widening beyond committed digital-asset enthusiasts, according to Bloomberg.

On Feb 29, the token rose as much as 5.12% to \$63,649 by 9:30 am (local time) in New York. Earlier, Bitcoin spiked to \$63,968 on Wednesday but soon lost the gains to end at below \$59,000.

Bitcoin had last traded at the \$60,000 mark in November 2021, after reaching an all-time high of almost \$69,000 earlier that same month. According to Bloomberg, Bitcoin has jumped over 40% already this year atop the successful debut of the US ETFs (Exchange-Traded Fund), which directly hold the token.

According to Chris Newhouse, a DeFi analyst at Cumberland Labs, Bitcoin is approaching new yearly highs off the back of increased spot demand and momentum



traders taking positions after a week of consolidation. Besides this, a projected reduction in Bitcoin's supply growth is also adding to the upbeat sentiment in the cryptocurrency market.

"Optimism around Bitcoin is being driven by a few factors working together: the spot BTC ETF inflows in the US, the upcoming reduction of new Bitcoin issuance known as the halving, and overall renewed optimism around the crypto asset class as a whole," Jonathon Miller, managing director of the Kraken Australia digital-asset exchange, told Bloomberg.



BEJAN DARUWALLA AND CHIRAG DARUWALLA

## WEEKLY HOROSCOPE - MAR 4 TO MAR 10, 2024

By Chirag Daruwalla - Son of Astrologer Bejan Daruwalla

prestige. Most of the time women will be spent in religious works. Youth time is better. At the end of the week, there may be more expenditure on amenities. During this, make the final decision in money-related matters only after understanding your circumstances. Also, drive slowly.



## LEO

Ganesha says that the people of the Leo zodiac should come out of the world of dreams and face reality this week. Don't depend on destiny or any other person. Do not tell anyone else until the work is done. At the beginning of the week, some good news can be received from the children's side. Do not forget to consult a well-wisher before investing money in business. There is a possibility of going on a long journey in the middle of the week. Will get a chance to spend more time with their love partner. Love affairs will get strengthened.



## VIRGO

Ganesha says that This week will be moderately fruitful for people of the Virgo zodiac sign. At the beginning of the week, the mind will be affected by an unknown fear. There will be a need to work harder in the workplace. In this regard, long or short-distance travel may also have to be done. People associated with politics need to take steps thoughtfully, otherwise even a well-planned matter may go wrong. Stay away from people who create misunderstandings in the family and reach a decision with discretion. In the middle of the week, there may be an excessive expenditure on the purchase of any special work or item. During this, there will be relatively less support from family members. Do not ignore the feelings of the love partner under any circumstances. Life partners will get full support in times of crisis. At the end of the week, some good news can be received from the children's side.



## LIBRA

Ganesha says to control both your anger and speech at the beginning of the week. There can be a dispute in the family, especially with a brother or sister. Any senior advice will prove beneficial to settle property-related disputes. During this, adopt positive thinking and do not let the inferiority complex enter your brain. If there is a possibility of going two steps forward by taking one step back, then do not hesitate to take it back. Will feel a lot of relief with the help of a female friend. At the end of the week, the mind will be upset due to unnecessary expenditure. Take any decision in career business carefully. Respect each other's feelings in love relationships. There will be some decrease in the pleasures of married life.



## SCORPIO

Ganesha says that for people of the Scorpio zodiac, this week is going to fulfill their wishes. Positive results will be seen in the workplace. Salaried people will get the full support of their seniors. This time is auspicious for working women. If you have been looking for a job for a long time, then your search can be entire this week. There will be a possibility of buying land,

buildings, vehicles, etc. Students will get good news. In the middle of the week, due to not getting cooperative behavior from siblings, there can be some mental pain. In any case, do not get lost, by the end of the week the solution to the problems will be found. Avoid any kind of show-off in love affairs or you may have to be embarrassed.



## SAGITTARIUS

Ganesha says that Sagittarius people will have to understand well that there is no shortcut to success. This week, if you want, you can get the desired results by working hard. Do not ignore health-related problems at the end of the week, otherwise, you may end up in the hospital. You will get the full support of your life partner in an emergency of life. Will get a chance to spend better time with their love partner. Time is favorable for students and youth. Success will be achieved by working hard.



## CAPRICORN

Ganesha says that at the beginning of the week, things will be as per your wish but, in the middle, you may have to compromise with the circumstances. The advice of a senior will prove beneficial to settle disputes related to parental property etc. Take a big decision in financial matters only after careful consideration. Students preparing for competitive exams will have to work harder for prosperity. At the end of the week, the mind will be worried about the health of an aged person in the home. Material happiness will be spent on things related to resources. There will be mutual happiness and cooperation in a love relationship. You will get the full support of your life partner while facing the challenges of life.



## AQUARIUS

Ganesha says that Aquarius people may face some difficulties at the beginning of the week. In this time of crisis, you will get to know the true identity of your loved ones. Due to this, it will be very easy for you to make important decisions in the future. To achieve a specific goal, students and youth have to manage their time. Do not create any kind of misunderstanding in love relations, otherwise, a third person can take advantage of it. At the end of the week, there will be a chance to spend a better time with the family. A short and pleasant journey is possible.



## PISCES

Ganesha says that during this week, you will get the full support of luck. But in the middle of the week, control your emotions and avoid telling your secret things to someone else, otherwise, he may take undue advantage of it. Be honest with your spouse, otherwise, you may have to be humiliated in society. Will get a chance to spend more time with their love partner. The help of a friend will work as a lifeline in strengthening the love relationship. Most of the time women will be spending time performing religious works.



## ARIES

Ganesha says that at the beginning of this week, the people of Aries will spend most of their time participating in auspicious works and having fun. During this, a short and pleasant journey is also possible. People associated with the business will get the expected profit. More money can be spent than expected on things related to home repair or luxuries. In the middle of the week, there can be differences between brothers or fathers regarding something. Be careful during this, the opposing side may try to take advantage of the opportunity. Avoid any kind of haste in a love affair, otherwise, the things made can get spoiled. You will get the full support of your spouse in married life.



## TAURUS

Ganesha says that the people of Taurus will have to manage their time this week. Spend according to your pocket, otherwise, you may face a financial crunch. Be sure to take the opinion of your well-wishers before investing money in a business or any scheme. In the middle of the week, with the help of close friends or a relative, there will be chances of profit in a particular work. Full cooperation will be received from the parents. Don't stray from your goal. Caution is expected in a love affair.



## GEMINI

Ganesha says that this week will prove to be the end of long-standing troubles for Gemini. Misunderstandings or disputes with love partners will end. Love affairs will get strengthened. New opportunities will be available in terms of career and business. Those doing occupations related to foreign countries will get special benefits. Working with planning in financial matters is sure to bring profit. At the end of the week, there may be a dispute with family members regarding ancestral land or property. Resolve family issues with a calm mind. Especially do not ignore the feelings of your spouse. During this time, the brains of the students may get distracted from their studies.



## CANCER

Ganesha says that Cancer sign people will be able to expand their long pending plans at the beginning of the week. Full cooperation of subordinates will be received in the workplace. Relatives will accept your love and a love affair can turn into a marriage. Full cooperation will be received from the parents regarding the special work. There will be an increase in social honor and

**BIRTHDAY HOROSCOPE : MARCH 4 TO MARCH 10  
BY VEDIC ASTROLOGER NASTUR BEJAN DARUWALLA**

**MARCH 4**

Ganesha says today your day will be full of happiness; you may get some good news from your family. You may spend time with family and your partner. Today you may feel good about having your family and partner with you in every step of your life. You may plan to buy a new house. Your partner may surprise you with a gift today. Try to spend as much time as you can with your partner as it's important for the two of you to make your bond strong.

**MARCH 5**

Ganesha says you may receive more than you can give in your professional as well as personal life and your social status is likely to elevate. Positive thoughts may fill up your mind. On the career front, you may take steady steps to ensure personal growth. Today is a balanced day for you. Pay attention to your physical as well as mental health. Spending some time with the outside world or among friends may help you gain new perspectives and prepare you better to deal with the daily tribulations of life.

**MARCH 6**

Ganesha says today your day will be good. Family members may give you good news. You may plan to buy a new vehicle for your partner. You may get your ancestral property transferred to your name. You may recover from your past disease today. Today, you will have an extraordinary day. You may plan to meet your old friends today, which may make you emotional. You and your partner may enjoy the day together. You may plan to buy a new house today.

**MARCH 7**

Ganesha says you will have a good day today. Your dreams are likely to come true with your hard work and dedication. You may get countless opportunities to fulfill your aspirations and prove your hard work. You will have an adventurous day today. You and your partner may plan for a trek today. You may impress your seniors with your hard work.

**MARCH 8**

Ganesha says you will have a great time with your loved ones and your partner today. Today is a good day for

you to start afresh. New beginnings are in your cards today and you will go through a very pivotal moment in your health today and it will shape you to be the best version of yourself that you can be, in the future.

**MARCH 9**

Ganesha says you are likely to enjoy your day with your partner today. You may understand your partner today better by communicating your thoughts and lending an ear to them might strengthen your ties. You may experience a roller coaster of emotions as new emotions come your way. You are likely to succeed in anything you do today. You may get new opportunities today. You are likely to work on multiple tasks and excel in all of them today.

**MARCH 10**

Ganesha says, today your aims and aspirations may get new wings. Your dreams may start to take shape now. You are likely to bring positive changes to your lifestyle, which may fill you with a positive sense of energy. You may plan to travel to a tourist destination with your friends soon. You and your partner



**VEDIC ASTROLOGER NASTUR BEJAN DARUWALLA**

will have a great day. You may plan to go for a romantic dinner with your partner. If you are single, you are likely to tie a knot with your lover. You may start taking interest in making your relationship more serious today.

**Nastur Bejan Daruwalla is available for astrological consultations.**

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**E**kadashi is the eleventh day of the Shukla Paksha or the bright fortnight of waxing Moon and the Krishna Paksha or the darkish fortnight of the waning Moon, as consistent with the Hindu Lunar calendar. Occurring twice a month, Ekadashi is taken into consideration on an auspicious day with the aid of the Hindus who take a look at Vrat or speedy at the day and worship Lord Vishnu/Shri Krishna, to whom this holy day is devoted. Since ancient times fasting on Ekadashi has been observed to delight and receive the benefits of Lord Vishnu.

Besides the Hindus, the Jains additionally take into account Ekadashi, a holy day. In Leap years, there are 26 Ekadashis and otherwise, there are 24. As in line with the Ekadashi rules, the day is to be spent chanting Lord Vishnu's name, hearing the Ekadashi Vrat Katha and really essential to stay unsleeping in cognizance, at some point of the night of Ekadashi, making a song praises of Lord Vishnu. Each Ekadashi has its own tale or Vrat Katha, which suggests the strength of Ekadashi Vrat or rapid.

Vijaya Ekadasi is found on the 11th day of Krishna Paksha or the dark fortnight/waning Moon section of the month of Phalguna (Hindu calendar), which falls in February-March. It is also known as Phalguna-Krishna Ekadasi.

Those who examine the quick should ruin it after dawn tomorrow of Ekadashi. It is to be referred to that one ought to smash the quick (Parana) inside Dwadashi Tithi. Dwadashi ends at 5:10 PM on 10th March. Another essential attention is that one has to not smash the fast all through Hari Vasara that's the fourth length of Dwadashi. The excellent time to interrupt the fast is pratah kala (morning).

#### SIGNIFICANCE OF VIJAYA EKADASHI

The term Vijaya means victory or to win. Observing an entire speedy on Vijaya Ekadasi meticulously together with the specified rituals for the day blesses the devotee to be victorious and a success in this existence and the following lifetimes.

Lord Krishna has repeatedly stated to Yudhishtira, in His narrations of each of the Ekadasi testimonies and significance that even listening or reading the memories of of Ekadasi is enough to garner merits equal to acting a Horse sacrifice or Ashwamedha Yajna. Removes all of the misgivings, misdeeds and sins.

- Gives clarity of thoughts and nullifies all of the guilt emotions.
- Increases religious, emotional and intellectual strengths.

#### THE STORY OF VIJAYA EKADASI

The tale is from the antique Hindu text Skanda Purana. It is narrated by means of Lord Sri Krishna to Yudhishtira. The tale had been advised to Narad Muni by using Lord Brahma and is based totally on the epic Ramayana.

When Lord Rama changed into exile in conjunction with His spouse Devi (Goddess) Sita and brother Laxmana, the demon King Ravana abducted Devi Sita. When Lord Rama and Laxmana found Devi Sita missing, Lord Rama (Lord Vishnu's avatar), turned into crushed like any other common man. It became Jatayu, the vulture and devotee of the Lord who had attempted to save Devi Sita from being forcefully taken away with the aid of Ravana and got fatally injured. But before Jatayu breathed His ultimate, He conveyed the message of Devi Sita's abduction to Lord Rama. Later Lord Rama met the King of monkeys, Sugriva who became geared up to aid the Lord with his navy of monkeys in His search for Sita Devi.

Lord Hanuman, called absolutely the devotee of Lord Rama, turned into sent across to Lanka (now Sri Lanka), the dominion of Ravana to look for Sita Devi. Lord Hanuman did locate Sita Devi in Ashoka / Ashok Vatika(lawn). Lord Hanuman delivered the message of Lord Rama to Sita Devi and confirmed Her Lord Rama's ring as a evidence of His authenticity as a messenger of Lord Sri Ram. On mastering that Sita

# Vijaya Ekadashi



#### Important information

**Vijaya Ekadashi 2024**

**Wednesday, 06 March 2024**

**Ekadashi Tithi Begins : 06 March 2024 at 06:30 am.**

**Ekadashi Tithi Ends : 07 March 2024 at 04:13 am.**

**Note: Smarta Ekadashi should be celebrated on 06 March and Bhagwat Ekadashi on 07 March.**

Devi became indeed in Lanka as a captive, Lord Rama determined to wage battle in opposition to Ravana. So, Lord Rama, Laxmanjee alongside Sugriva and his military of monkeys reached the beaches of the ocean to pass over to Lanka. But the Lord immediately understood that the sea turned into too deep and perilous with crocodiles inhabiting it and crossing it would be a feat by itself.

In this case, Lord Rama asked His loving brother Laxmanji to signify some approach via which he merits it without difficulty. On the notion of Laxmanji, Lord Rama visited the exceptional sage Bakadalbhya, who had His Ashram in a nearby island. The sage without delay understood that Lord Rama became none apart from Lord Vishnu, Himself and the all-understanding Supreme Lord became simply playing

His role as an individual. So sage Bakadalbhya asked Lord Rama why the Lord needed to method a trifling sage-like Him? Lord Rama respectfully advised Him approximately the project of crossing the ocean with His monkey soldiers. Hearing this, Bakadalbhya Muni informed Lord Rama, that observing the auspicious Vijaya Ekadasi will make certain the success of crossing the sea as well as a victory over Ravana. Having stated that the sage went on to specify the rituals to be observed for the Vijaya Ekadasi.

Lord Rama heard the rituals and accompanied each phrase of the ritual of the Vijaya Ekadasi as informed through Bakadalbhya Muni that gave Him the benefit of being able to cross over the ocean with the Vanar Sena (military of Monkeys) and ultimately defeating the powerful King Ravana of Lanka and get His loving spouse Devi Sita back with Him, in which She belonged.

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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."

**"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**

# Sikh History This Week

## MARCH 1 TO MARCH 7

### 1st March

1923 Assa Singh of Phakrudi was arrested from Kiratpur Sahib.

1925 15th Shahidi Jatha of 500 valiant Akali Satyagrahies started their march from Sri Akal Takhat, Amritsar, towards Gangsar, Jaito.

### 2nd March



1909: Kapur Singh, the Sikh scholar, statesman and administrator, was born at Mannan Kalan Chakk. The Sikh scholar, statesman and administrator, was born on 2 March 1909 at Mannan Kalan Chakk. His parents (father: Sardar Didar Singh, and mother: Harman Kaur) were upper middle class peasants at Lyallpur, now known as Faisalabad in the modern-day Pakistan. Young Kapur Singh spent his early childhood at Faisalabad where the environment was saturated with the Sikh renaissance movement spearheaded by the Singh Sabha ideology.

1928: Nehru Committee accepted Sikhs right to bear Kirpan.

### 3rd March



1644 Sixth Patshah, Guru Hargobind Ji departed from this planet at Kirtapur. This is the actual date of Joti Jot, although it is observed on a different date by Guru Khalsa Panth.

1762 Ahmad Shah Abdali, upon reaching Lahore, displays the heads of Sikhs by hanging them on doors and walls.

1921 Speaking at Shaheedi Diwan, Gandhi sought to integrate the Gurudwara reform movement into the national movement against colonialism. He wanted them "to dedicate their martyrdom to Bharat mata and believe that the Khalsa can remain free only in a free India." With this event Gandhi, in his immitable style took politics into religion which the Central Sikh League, a political organisation, had carefully avoided by leaving the reform movement to the SGPC. Gandhi was a "Hindu holy man with political cloak" in quest for

power. Siks weren't immediately taken in. However, the damage had been done. Gandhi had sown the seeds of division in the Tat Khalsa which sprouted only a few months later.

1923 Dacoity at Jamser railway station ius committed by the Babbar Akalis.

1924 3rd Shahidi Jatha of 500 valiant Akali Satyagrahies, led by Sardar Santa Singh of Chuck No. 133, Sargodha, courted arrest at Jaito.

1947 Muslim League asked to form government in the Punjab. Sikh leaders met in the chamber of Assembly, Lahore. A mammoth crowd raised provocative slogans. At this point, Master Tara Singh came out, unleashed his sword and said "we shall lay down our lives but won't concede Pakistan." With this, it became famous that Master Tara Singh had cut off the Pakistan Flag. In actuality, Master Tara Singh did not tear any flag. However, being a fiery speaker, it was perceived that he did.

### 4th March

1716 Marked the killing of Sikhs in Delhi, under the protection of Sarabrah Khan. 100 Sikhs were killed on the first day.

1953 Akali led government of PEPSU province dismissed without any ground.



1988 Jasbir Singh Rode, a nephew of Jarnail Singh Bhindrawalae, who had been nominated as the Chief Granthi of Sri Akal Takhat, was won over by Rajiv Gandhi, while he was in jail. Under a secret agreement he was released on this day. He tried to confuse the Sikh masses as planned but the Sikh nation rejected him in the same manner as Ragi Darshan Singh. He called a meeting of Sarbat Khalsa at Talwandi Sabo on April 13, 1988. Even this congregation declated that the Sikh nation would not compromise its freedom.

### 5th March

1716 Marks the begining of systematic execution of 740 Sikh soliders. After their surrender at the fort of Gurdas Nangal, Banda Singh Bahadur, the valiant Sikh General and his 740 solidiers were taken to Delhi. From Mar. 5 through Mar. 11, these solidiers along with Banda Bahadur were executed in groups of 100. They were given the option to adopt Islam and escape execution. However, each one of these solidiers refused the offer and instead willingly accepted shahadet with unflinching faith and fortitude.

1748 Khalsa Panth gathered at Anandpur Sahib for Holla Mehla observations and resolved to gather in Amritsar for Vaisakhi celebrations.

1892 The foundation stone for Khalsa College, a Shiromani education institution for Sikhs, was laid in Amritsar by J.B. Loyal. Prof. Gurmukh Singh was instrumental its establishment after more than a decade of tireless efforts. The College Council was controlled by its Vice-President Sit Attar Singh Bhadaur with Jawahar Singh serving as General Secretary.

1921 Gurudwara Sach Khand (Chuharkana) Sahib was forcibly taken over and brought under the control of SGPC.

1948 Khalsa Panth gathered at Anandpur Sahib for Holla Mehla observations and resolved to gather in Amritsar for Vaisakhi celebrations.

1955 Punjabi Suba Conference was held at Patiala.

1971 Elections to Indian Lower House were held. Akali Dal won 1 of the 13 Punjab seats.

### 6th March

1752 The cooperation between Sikhs and Mir Mannu snapped as a result of Kaura Mal's death. This was evident from action during Abdali's third invasion. The Sikhs under the patronage of Diwan Kaura Mal, a Khulasa Sikhs, had cooperated with Mir Mannu. henceforth, Mir Mannu as a nominee of Afghans pursued the policy of extirpating Sikhs. If nothing else, their women and children were taken to Nakhas, Lahore, in hundreds, and were subjected to gruesome torture and martyred. In 18 months, he killed about 30,000 Sikhs. The peasentry crushed, because of the Afghan depredations and roving provincial troops in search of the Sikh families, joined the Khalsa fold in large numbers who offered them protection.

1752 Diwan Kodha Mal, also known as Mitha Mal, died while fighting in Lahore.

1834 Peshawar occupied by Sikhs. Ranjit Singh sent a force under Hari Singh Nalwa, Ventura and Court under nominal command of Prince Nau Nihal Singh. Pathan chiefs sent their families away as they were aware of the duplicity Of Shah Shujah and Ranjit Singh's intention to occupy Peshawar. They agreed to enhance the tribute but the Sikh army occupied Peshawar on the pretext that the Prince wanted to see the town and the Pathan chiefs left the city. Hari Singh Nalwa was appointed Governor of Peshawar along with the Governorship Of Hazara. British did not appreciate Sikh occupation of Peshawar. Sikh coins struck from Peshawar.

1921 Gurudwara Manak Sahib was forcibly taken over and brought under the control of SGPC.

### 7th March



1921 Gurudwara Tham Sahib was forcibly taken over and brought under the control of SGPC.

1959 SGPC at its general meeting accepted the announcement of Sri Damdama Sahib as Guru Khalsa Panth's fifth Takhat.

1966 The formation of Punjabi Suba was declared.

1966 On the occasion of Hola Mohalla festival at Takhat Sri Kesgarh, Sri Anandpur Sahib, Khalsa Panth declared that all Hindi letters from the official boards, signs, and milestones be obliterated throughout the state and the Sikhs removed all those.



# Sikkim: A window onto Himalaya

Sikkim is the second smallest state in India, and is wedged between Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan, and West Bengal, but encompasses an astounding range of pristine natural beauty of the Himalayas. A traveller's guide to Sikkim explores the stunning beauty of this Himalayas hill town. The Sikkimese call their land 'Ney Mayal Lyang' that translates to 'heaven.'

Sikkim is located in the north eastern part of India, but is not a part of the Seven Sister states. The state is famous for dazzling waterfalls, virgin forests, Tibetan style Buddhist Gompas, alpine meadows, rhododendron flowers and more. Kanchenjunga (also Kanchendzonga) at 8598 m is the third highest peak in the world, and lies in Sikkim.

More than 60 percent of the former Himalayan Kingdom of Sikkim is mountainous, and there are sizeable numbers of 6000 m peaks on the eastern and western borders of the state. Sikkim has an impressive literacy rate of more than 70 percent. It was merged with India in 1975, and is a prosperous state today.

Weather in most parts of Sikkim is pleasant throughout the year (except in higher altitudes), and that makes it a favourite of holidaymakers from the Indian plains in the summer months. Bengalis throng the tourist towns of Sikkim during their holiday season of Durga Puja in October-November. The state abounds in a variety of flora and fauna, and lucky ones may also sight the endangered red panda.

## PELLING

Pelling lies in West Sikkim, perched at an altitude of 2100 m and is approximately 120 km away from Gangtok. At first glance Pelling looks like a cluster of concrete hotels, but there are unparalleled views of the snowy peaks. Sunrise over the Kanchenjunga is Pelling's biggest charm. With plenty of budget accommodation options, it also makes for a great base to explore other parts of West Sikkim.

Chief sights in and around Pelling are Pemangyatse Monastery, built more than 300 years ago, which is beautifully located amid green gardens; a huge Buddha statue and statues of reincarnations of Padmasambhava; and Pemangyatse Monastery, famous for the Chaam dances (masked dances) held in February/March.

## YUKSOM

The historic little town of Yuksom was the first capital of Sikkim when three Lamas converged from different directions and crowned the first Chogyal (King) in 1641. There is still a stone throne that marks the coronation spot, and is known as Norbugang Chorten, the site is called Norbugang Park. Yuksom has the charming feel of a hamlet; it is lower in altitude than Pelling and is situated in a valley. If you are coming to Yuksom (Also Yuksam) from Pelling, then a short detour will bring you to Rimbi Waterfalls which is quite a sight in the monsoon. Just 9 km before Yuksom, you will cross the Kanchenjunga Waterfall, which is a majestic waterfall falling from a great



height.

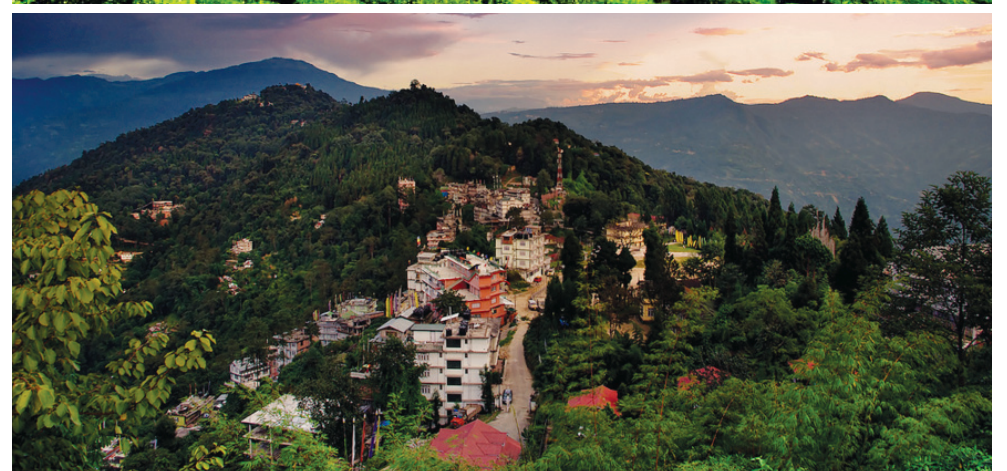
There is a small pond known by the name of Kathok Lake in Yuksom, a short walk will bring you to a ridge where once stood a palace of the King of Sikkim. There are also two new colourful Gompas above Yuksom, but the most beautiful monastery is the 1701 built Dubdi Monastery. The path to Dubdi Monastery is lined with prayer flags and is located amid lush greenery.

## TASHIDING

If coming from Yuksom, you will come across one of Sikkim's prettiest falls. The Phamrong waterfalls are around halfway on the Yuksom-Tashiding route. Tashiding is a small town located high above the confluence of the Rangeet and Rathong rivers. Tashiding Gompa is the most sacred monastery in Sikkim, the mere sight of Thongwa Rangdol Chorten – a chorten inside the complex, is said to cleanse every one of their sins. The monastery is said to have been built in 1641 and is set in an idyllic location surrounded by many ancient looking white chortens. Tall prayer flags in white (called Darchor) line up the staircase path to Tashiding Monastery, while the views from the Gompa are superb. Intricately carved mani stones with the Buddhist mantra, Om Mani Padme Hum are piled up on one another to form a mani wall near the monastery complex.

## RUMTEK MONASTERY

Undoubtedly, this is Sikkim's most famous monastery, and every visitor to Sikkim is likely to visit the Rumtek Monastery, even in a 3-4 day trip to Sikkim. Rumtek Village is 24 km away from Gangtok (Sikkim's capital), and the monastery is the headquarters of the Black Hat Sect (one of the oldest sects of Tibetan Buddhism). There are two buildings of Rumtek Monastery, one is relatively newer (built in 1966), and the older Rumtek Monastery was founded in 1740 by the fourth Chogyal of Sikkim. A



path leads to a shrine called Golden Stupa, it is a chorten made of silver and gold, and studded with precious stones such as turquoise, amber and coral. It is recommended to attend the morning prayers at Rumtek Monastery.

## TSOMGO LAKE

Pronounced Changu, this scenic lake is perched at 3750 m above sea level and lies 40 km away from Gangtok on the way to Nathu La. The drive to Tsomgo Lake is spectacular, and the lake itself is a pristine

water body surrounded by wildflowers for most of the year. A particularly mentionable tourist attraction is that visitors can go for yak rides near the periphery of the lake. Tsomgo Lake freezes in the cold winters, but can still be accessed if the road is open. A visit to the lake requires a special permit from the Tourism Office in Gangtok. The permit can be arranged by a travel agent for a small fee, and there are lots of taxis and shared taxis available for a visit to Tsomgo Lake.

## 27-year-old Indian American dies in fire in Manhattan residential building in US



Fazil Khan was killed in the fire that broke out in a six-story residential building at 2 St. Nicholas Place in Harlem, Manhattan

**FEBRUARY 28, 2024**

**NEW YORK (TIP):** A 27-year-old Indian national, who worked as a journalist here, tragically lost his life in a "devastating" fire caused by a lithium-ion battery in an apartment building in Manhattan.

Fazil Khan was killed in the fire that broke out in a six-story residential building at 2 St. Nicholas Place in Harlem, Manhattan, which left about 17 other people injured. The New York City Fire Department said its marshals had determined that the "devastating" fire was caused by a lithium-ion battery.

Khan was a journalist with the New York-based media company The Hechinger Report, which is focused on innovation and inequality in education.

The Consulate General of India in New York expressed condolences on Khan's death and said it is extending all possible assistance to repatriate his mortal remains to his family in India.

"Saddened to learn about the death of 27-year-old Indian national Fazil Khan in an unfortunate fire incident in Harlem, NY," the Consulate said in a post on media.

The Consulate said it is in touch with Khan's family and friends.

"We continue to extend all possible assistance in repatriation of his mortal

remains to India," the Consulate said.

Khan was a data reporter at The Hechinger Report and according to his profile on media, he was an alumnus of Columbia Journalism School.

The Hechinger Report said in a post on X that it learned on Saturday that Khan died in a fire in the New York City building where he lived.

"We are devastated by the loss of such a great colleague and wonderful person, and our hearts go out to his family. He will be dearly missed," it said.

Firefighters said the fire originated in the building's 3rd floor. At 2.14 pm on Friday, the FDNY responded to the 2-alarm fire at 2 St. Nicholas Place in Harlem. Firefighters arrived within minutes to find people on the fire escape. People were also seen hanging out the windows on the fifth floor, the fire department said. Victims were trapped on the fifth floor of the building.

The fire department had said there were a total of 18 patients, out of which four were in critical condition.

Joseph Pfeifer, the Fire Department's first deputy commissioner, had said on Friday that one person was in critical condition at the scene but died at the hospital. At the time, the victim's identity had not been released.

The fire department said that fires caused by lithium-ion batteries have increased dramatically in New York City with deadly consequences.

These rechargeable batteries are found in electric bikes and scooters, cars, laptops, tablets, phones and common household devices. Lithium-ion battery fires have caused deaths, serious injuries and devastating damage to property around the city, the department said on its website.

## Indian-American jeweler indicted in multi-million dollar international trade fraud

**FEBRUARY 28, 2024**

**NEWARK, NJ (TIP):** An Indian jeweler has been indicted for illegally evading customs duties for millions of dollars of jewelry imports into the US and operating unlicensed money transmitting businesses, a US attorney has said.

Monishkumar Kirankumar Doshi Shah (39) -- based out of both Mumbai and New Jersey -- was arrested over the weekend and appeared on February 26 before US Magistrate Judge André M Espinosa in the Newark federal court.

Shah alias "Monish Doshi Shah" was released on a bond of USD 100,000, with home detention and location monitoring.

He has been charged on a complaint with one count of conspiracy to commit wire fraud and one count of operating, aiding and abetting the operation of an unlicensed money transmitting business.

From January 2015 through September 2023, Shah engaged in a scheme to evade duties for shipments of jewelry from Turkey and India to the US, according to documents.

He would ship or instruct his conspirators to ship goods from Turkey or India, which would have been subject to an approximately 5.5 per cent duty if shipped directly to the US, to one of Shah's companies in South Korea, these stated.

Federal prosecutors alleged that Shah's conspirators in South Korea would change the labels on the jewelry to state that they were from South Korea instead of Turkey or India, and then ship them to Shah or his customers in the US, thereby unlawfully evading the duty.

He would also make and instruct his customers to make fake invoices and packing lists to make it look like Shah's South Korean companies were actually



Konishkumar Kirankumar Doshi Shah has been charged on a complaint with one count of conspiracy to commit wire fraud and one count of operating, aiding and abetting the operation of an unlicensed money transmitting business.

ordering jewelry from Turkey or India.

During the scheme, Shah shipped millions of dollars of jewelry from South Korea to the US, prosecutors alleged.

From July 2020 through November 2021, Shah operated numerous purported jewelry companies in New York City's Diamond District, including MKore LLC (MKore), MKore USA Inc. (MKore USA) and Vruman Corp (Vruman), it said.

He used these entities to conduct millions of dollars in illegal financial transactions for customers, including converting cash to checks or wire transfers, the documents said.

Shah would also collect cash from customers and use conspirators' jewelry companies, also located in the Diamond District, to convert the cash into wires or checks.

The documents said that at times, Shah and his conspirators moved more than a million dollars of cash in a single day. In exchange for their services, Shah and his conspirators charged a fee.

Prosecutors said that none of Shah's or his conspirators' companies were registered as money transmitting businesses with New York, New Jersey, or the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN). (Source: PTI)

**CONTD FROM PAGE 1**

### Nikki Haley picks up first two Senate endorsements ahead of Super Tuesday

there is no one better than her. Nikki will be a strong leader and uphold the ideals of the Republican Party while serving as a President for all Americans."

Collins told the Bangor Daily News that Haley "has the energy, intellect, and temperament that we need to lead our country in these very tumultuous times." Haley's campaign confirmed the endorsement to NBC News. Voters in Alaska, Maine and more than a dozen other states will cast ballots on Super Tuesday, when 865 Republican delegates will be up for grabs. Haley has yet to win a primary or caucus.

On Friday, Haley expressed her gratitude to Murkowski in a news release announcing her first Senate endorsement, saying that the senator "represents the best of Alaska."

"As president, I will fight to make Alaskans and all Americans proud by restoring fiscal sanity, energy dominance, and limited government," Haley said.

Murkowski and Collins have long been critical of Trump, and they both voted to convict him during his second impeachment trial following the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol.

Haley has received only one endorsement in the House, from Rep. Ralph Norman, R-S.C. He announced his endorsement more than a year ago.

Trump, meanwhile, has been endorsed by about 80

Republicans in the House and more than half of GOP senators.

### Rishi Sunak makes impassioned plea to protect British democracy

"Immigrants who have come here have integrated and contributed. They have helped write the latest chapter in our island story. They have done this without being required to give up their identity," said Sunak in a speech outside 10 Downing Street.

"You can be a practicing Hindu and a proud Briton as I am, or a devout Muslim and a patriotic citizen as so many are, or a committed Jewish person and the heart of your local community, and all underpinned by the tolerance of our established, Christian church," he said.

"But I fear that our great achievement in building the world's most successful multi-ethnic, multi faith democracy is being deliberately undermined. There are forces here at home trying to tear us apart," he added.

He was speaking soon after what he characterized as the "beyond alarming" win in a byelection on Thursday of a controversial politician, George Galloway, in Greater Manchester following a campaign dominated by the divisions of the Israel-Hamas conflict.

He said on too many occasions recently, the streets of Britain had been hijacked by small groups who are hostile to British values and have no respect for its democratic traditions.

"Islamist extremists and the far right feed off and

embolden each other. They are equally desperate to pretend that their violence is somehow justified when actually these groups are two sides of the same extremist coin... both loathe the pluralist, modern country we are," he said.

The British Prime Minister stressed that both these groups of extremists were spreading the poison of extremism with the aim of draining Britain's confidence. He added: "No country is perfect, but I am enormously proud of the good that our country has done."

"I stand here as our country's first non-white Prime Minister, leading the most diverse government in our country's history to tell people of all races, all faiths and all backgrounds it is not the color of your skin, the God you believe in or where you were born, that will determine your success but just your own hard work and endeavor." Sunak reiterated his support for a new protocol agreed with the police forces of the country earlier this week to take action against violent activities that threaten the personal security of members of Parliament and also any violence during serial protests taking place in response to the Israel-Hamas conflict. He said threats of violence and intimidation are alien to the British way of doing things and must be resisted at all times.

"I love this country. My family and I owe it so much. The time has now come for us all to stand together to combat the forces of division and beat this poison. We must face down the extremists who would tear us apart," he urged. (Source: PTI)



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# History This Week

## MARCH 1 - MARCH 7

### MARCH 1

March 1, 1781 - Formal ratification of the Articles of Confederation was announced by Congress. Under the Articles, Congress was the sole governing body of the new American national government, consisting of the 13 original states. The Articles remained in effect through the Revolutionary War until 1789, when the current U.S. Constitution was adopted.



March 1, 1932 - The 20-month-old son of aviation pioneer Charles A. Lindbergh was kidnapped from his home in Hopewell, New Jersey. The Lindberghs then paid a \$50,000 ransom. However, on May 12, the boy's body was found in a wooded area a few miles from the house.

March 1, 1961 - President John F. Kennedy established the Peace Corps, an organization sending young American volunteers to developing countries to assist with health care, education and other basic human needs.

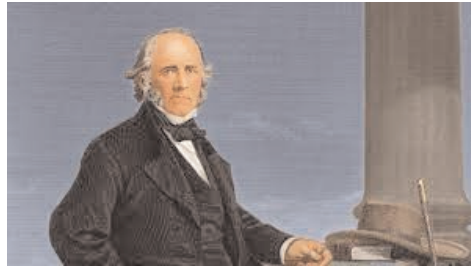
March 1, 1974 - Seven former high-ranking officials of the Nixon White House were indicted for conspiring to obstruct the investigation into the Watergate break-in. Among those indicted; former chief of staff H.R. Haldeman, former top aide John Ehrlichman, and former attorney general John Mitchell.

Birthday - American band leader Glenn Miller (1904-1944) was born in Carilinda, Iowa. His music gained enormous popularity during the 1940's through recordings such as Moonlight Serenade and String of Pearls. On December 15, 1944, his plane disappeared over the English Channel while en route to Paris where he was scheduled to perform.

### MARCH 2

March 2, 1943 - During World War II in the Pacific, a Japanese convoy was attacked by 137 American bombers as the Battle of Bismarck Sea began. The convoy included eight destroyers and eight transports carrying 7,000 Japanese soldiers heading toward New Guinea. Four destroyers and all eight transports were sunk, resulting in 3,500 Japanese drowned, ending Japanese efforts to send reinforcements to New Guinea.

Birthday - American soldier and politician Sam Houston (1793-1863) was born in Rockbridge County, Virginia. As a teenager he ran away and joined the Cherokee Indians who accepted him as a



member of their tribe. He later served as a Congressman and Governor of Tennessee. In 1832, he became commander of the Texan army in the War for Texan Independence, defeating the larger Mexican army in 1836 at the Battle of San Jacinto. He then served as Senator and Governor of the new state of Texas but was removed in 1861 after refusing to swear allegiance to the Confederacy.

### MARCH 3

March 3, 1913 - A women's suffrage march in Washington D.C. was attacked by angry onlookers while police stood by. The march occurred the day before Woodrow Wilson's inauguration. Many of the 5,000 women participating were spat upon and struck in the face as a near riot ensued. Secretary of War Henry Stimson then ordered soldiers from Fort Myer to restore order.



Birthday - Railroad car builder George Pullman (1831-1897) was born in Brocton, New York. He improved railroad sleeping accommodations, developing the folding upper berth and lower berth designs. His company went on to become the biggest railroad car building organization in the world.

Birthday - Telephone inventor Alexander Graham Bell (1847-1922) was born in Edinburgh, Scotland. Bell and his father were involved in teaching deaf persons to speak. Bell developed an interest in the vibrating membrane as a method of electrically transmitting sounds. His very first sentence spoken on the newly invented telephone on March 10, 1876, was to his assistant, "Mister Watson, come here, I want you."

### MARCH 4

March 4, 1681 - King Charles II of England granted a huge tract of land in the New World to William Penn to settle an outstanding debt. The area later became Pennsylvania.

March 4, 1789 - The first meeting of the new Congress under the new U.S. Constitution took place in New York City.



March 4, 1830 - Former President John Quincy Adams returned to Congress as a representative from Massachusetts. He was the first ex-president ever to return to the House and served eight consecutive terms.

March 4, 1933 - Newly elected President Franklin D. Roosevelt took office and delivered his first inaugural address attempting to restore public confidence during the Great Depression, stating, "Let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself..." His cabinet appointments included the first woman to a Cabinet post, Secretary of Labor, Frances Perkins.

Birthday - Revolutionary war hero Casimir Pulaski (1747-1779) was born in Poland. Before aiding in the American Revolution, he was a military leader in Poland's struggle against Imperial Russia. He joined the Americans in 1777 and fought alongside General Washington at Brandywine, then served at Germantown and Valley Forge. He was mortally wounded during a heroic charge in the Siege of Savannah, Georgia.

Birthday - American football legend Knute Rockne (1888-1931) was born in Voss, Norway. He coached the Notre Dame Football team for 13 seasons, amassing an overall record of 105 wins, 12 losses and 5 ties. He became famous for his locker room pep talks and the saying, "Win one for the Gipper." He was killed in an airplane crash on March 31, 1931, in Kansas.

### MARCH 5

March 5, 1770 - The Boston Massacre occurred as a group of rowdy Americans harassed British soldiers who then opened fire, killing five and injuring six. The first man killed was Crispus Attucks, an African American. British Captain Thomas Preston and eight of his men were arrested and charged with murder. Their trial took place in October, with colonial lawyer John Adams defending the British. Captain Preston and six of his men were acquitted. Two others were found guilty of manslaughter, branded, then released.

March 5, 1868 - The U.S. Senate convened as a court to hear charges against President Andrew Johnson during impeachment proceedings. The House of Representatives had already voted to impeach the President. The vote followed bitter opposition by the Radical Republicans in Congress to Johnson's reconstruction policies in the South. However, the effort to remove him failed in the Senate by just one vote and he remained in office.

March 5, 1933 - Amid a steadily worsening economic situation, newly



elected President Franklin D. Roosevelt proclaimed a four-day "Bank Holiday" to stop panic withdrawals by the public and the possible collapse of the American banking system.

March 5, 1946 - The "Iron Curtain" speech was delivered by Winston Churchill at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri. Churchill used the term to describe the boundary in Europe between free countries of the West and nations of Eastern Europe under Soviet Russia's control.

### MARCH 6



March 6, 1836 - Fort Alamo fell to Mexican troops led by General Santa Anna. The Mexicans had begun the siege of the Texas fort on February 23rd, ending it with the killing of the last defender. "Remember the Alamo" became a rallying cry for Texans who went on to defeat Santa Anna in the Battle of San Jacinto in April.

Birthday - Renaissance genius Michelangelo (1475-1564) was born in Caprese, Italy. He was a painter, sculptor, architect, poet and visionary best known for his fresco on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel and his sculptures David and The Pieta.

### MARCH 7



Birthday - Stephen Hopkins (1707-1785) was born in Providence, Rhode Island. He was the state's colonial governor and was a signer of the Declaration of Independence.



Brothers Inaki Williams and Nico Williams starred with goals and traded assists. REUTERS

## Copa del rey: Brothers of destruction sink Atletico as Bilbao make final

Brothers Inaki and Nico Williams teamed up with goals and assists to each other as Athletic Bilbao defeated Atletico Madrid 3-0 to reach their third Copa del Rey final in five seasons.

Gorka Guruzeta also scored for Athletic as it advanced 4-0 on aggregate after having won the first leg 1-0 in Madrid three weeks ago. The Basque Country club will play the April 6 final in Seville against Mallorca, who eliminated Athletic rivals Real Sociedad on penalties. "Inaki and I have been getting along very well," Nico said. "This victory goes to my parents who are in Ghana. Ghana will be a party."

Nico and Inaki are sons of Ghanaian parents who migrated to Spain before they were born. They are among the few Black athletes to ever play at the club that historically fields only players from Spain's northern Basque Country region or adjoining areas. "We have fought hard to be able to enjoy things like this," Inaki said. "It's a night to enjoy and to be proud."

There was fan trouble ahead of the match, with Athletic saying one of its supporters was hospitalised with serious injuries after an altercation with Athletic fans. *Source: AP*

# KL Rahul ruled out of Dharamsala Test, Jasprit Bumrah returns to team

NEW DELHI (TIP)

Senior India batter KL Rahul will not feature in the fifth and final Test against England in Dharamsala owing to an injury while pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah will return to the team, the BCCI said on Feb 29.

Rahul, who continues to feel sore in his right quadriceps, has travelled to London to get an expert opinion on his injury.

The wicketkeeper-batter became unavailable after the series-opener in Hyderabad in January and as per the BCCI, he was 90 per cent fit before the third Test in Rajkot earlier this month.

"KL Rahul, whose participation in the final IDFC First Bank Test was subject to fitness, has been ruled out of the fifth and final Test in Dharamsala. The BCCI Medical Team is closely monitoring him and coordinating with specialists in London for further management of his issue," the Board said in a release.

Meanwhile, Bumrah, who was released from the squad for the fourth Test in Ranchi in line with the team's workload management policy, will link up with the squad in Dharamsala for the final Test, beginning March 7.

India have already taken an unassailable 3-1 lead, following the victory in the fourth Test in Ranchi.

Rahul's absence from the final Test means Rajat Patidar remained with the squad but the MP batter can't be sure of his place in the playing eleven,



having aggregated only 63 runs in six innings.

All-rounder Washington Sundar has also been released from the squad.

"He will join Tamil Nadu for their Ranji Trophy semi-final fixture against Mumbai, starting March 2. He will join the India squad after the completion of the domestic fixture for the fifth Test, if need be," the BCCI said.

Rahul needs to be fully fit before the IPL where he will lead Lucknow Super Giants and is expected to bat in the middle order to bolster his chances of making the India squad for the T20 World Cup in the US and the Caribbean.

It is the same quadriceps injury that had sidelined Rahul for almost four months last year.

Having got injured during the IPL, Rahul returned to action during the

Asia Cup in September last and made instant impact. In the Test tour of South Africa last year, Rahul was the only century-maker for India in the drawn series.

The BCCI also said senior pacer Mohammed Shami is recovering well after undergoing a surgery on February 26 for his right heel problem. "He is recovering well and will soon head to the National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru to commence his rehabilitation process," the Board said of Shami.

India's updated squad for fifth Test: Rohit Sharma (c), Jasprit Bumrah (vc), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Shubman Gill, Rajat Patidar, Sarfaraz Khan, Dhruv Jurel (wk), KS Bharat (wk), Devdutt Padikkal, R Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohd Siraj, Mukesh Kumar, Akash Deep. *Source: PTI*

## UPW hand Gujarat their third straight defeat

BENGALURU (TIP)

The Gujarat Giants' disappointing streak in the WPL 2024 continued as they suffered their third consecutive defeat in the competition, losing to the UP Warriorz by 6 wickets on Friday, March 1. Led by Alyssa Healy, the Giants were restricted to setting a 143-run target, which the Warriorz easily chased down, courtesy of a heroic innings by Grace Harris.

Matchday 8 at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru saw the Warriorz win the toss and follow the consistent trend of teams opting to chase in the WPL 2024. The first innings saw the Warriorz's bowling attack, spearheaded by Sophie Ecclestone, emerge as the clear winners over the Giants.

Despite starting brightly in the powerplay of the first innings, Gujarat failed to keep up the momentum. Captain Beth Mooney (16) was the first to fall, trying to hit Ecclestone out of the park. Her opening partner Laura Wolvaardt was the second batter to fall inside the 10-over mark, once again off Ecclestone who once again showed why she was the No. 1 T20 bowler in the world. The dip and turn of Ecclestone caught Wolvaardt off



A brilliant knock by Grace Harris gives back to back WPL 2024 win to UP Warriorz. (Photo: X/WPL2024)

guard and she handed a simple catch to Chamari Athapaththu at mid off.

Apart from Giants wicketkeeper Phoebe Litchfield and Ashleigh Gardner, who scored 35 runs off 26 balls, and 30 off 17 respectively, none of the other batters in her team managed to contribute significantly to the

scoreboard.

The score was never going to be enough to tame the strong UP batting unit and that turned out to be true as a strong finish by Grace Harris propelled her side to 3rd place on the WPL table.

The tournament is shaping up magnificently for Grace Harris, as her powerful and unbeaten knock of 60 runs off 33 balls has secured her the new owner of the orange cap in WPL 2024.

Despite Warriorz being dealt a significant blow when their in-form opening batting pair failed to replicate their previous performance against the Mumbai Indians, Harris emerged as the hero of the highest order. Showcasing a beautiful array of shots, she boasted 9 fours and 2 sixes, rescuing her side from a difficult situation and leading them to victory.

Having lost their opening two games of this edition of WPL against Royal Challengers Bangalore and Delhi Capitals, the Warriorz have bounced back in the most impressive fashion. This is something that the Giants will only hope to replicate in order to get their season running.



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**Peter J McDonnell, MD Director Wilmer Eye Institute, Johns Hopkins**



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