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Election Commission of India publishes Electoral bonds data; billionaire tycoons to lesser-known entities among buyers

- Future Gaming and Hotel Services purchased Rs 1,368 crore worth electoral bonds, most among firms
- Twenty-two firms donated more than Rs 100 crore during this period
- BJP received Rs 6,060 crore, highest among all parties

MARCH 14, 2024

NEW DELHI (TIP): Future Gaming and Hotel Services PR whose managing director is the well-known lottery magnate Santiago Martin, is the largest donor to political parties for the period April 12, 2019 to January 24, 2024, the electoral bonds data released by the Election Commission, on receipt from the State Bank of India, revealed.

The firm donated a cumulative sum of Rs 1,368 crore in electoral bonds during this period. Incidentally, the Enforcement Directorate had attached Rs 411 crore in the bank accounts of the firm and other companies in March 2022 and had later filed a prosecution complaint against it under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 before the PMLA Court, Kolkata on September 09, 2023.

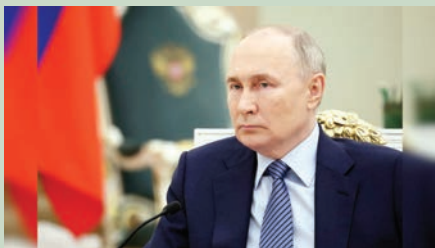
contd on page 36



Future Gaming and Hotel Services MD and lottery baron Santiago Martin (inset).

Photo Credit/ The Hindu

Russia is ready to use nuclear weapons if threatened, Vladimir Putin tells state media



Vladimir Putin said he hoped the US would avoid any escalation that could trigger a nuclear war but emphasized that Russia's nuclear forces are ready for it.

Photo / Wikipedia

MARCH 13, 2024

MOSCOW (TIP): President Vladimir Putin said Russia is ready to use nuclear weapons if there is a threat to Russian statehood, sovereignty or independence.

Speaking in an interview with Russian state television released early on Wednesday, March 13, Putin said he hoped the US would avoid any escalation that could trigger a nuclear war but emphasized that Russia's nuclear forces are ready for it.

Asked if he had ever considered using battlefield nuclear weapons in Ukraine, Putin responded that there had been no need for that. He also voiced confidence that Moscow would achieve its goals in Ukraine and held the door open for talks, emphasizing that any deal would require firm guarantees from the West.

SKM holds Mahapanchayat; Farmers from 18 states attend Delhi event To oppose BJP nominees in Lok Sabha poll



MARCH 14, 2024

NEW DELHI (TIP): A large number of farmers and agricultural laborers from 18 states today attended the "Kisan Mazdoor Mahapanchayat" at the Ramlila Ground here to protest the BJP-led Centre's policies related to the farm sector.

The protesters resolved to launch a countrywide agitation against the BJP during the upcoming Lok Sabha elections for

contd on page 36

Biden, Trump set for November 2024 clash



Donald Trump and Joe Biden are set for a face off in November 2024

MARCH 13, 2024

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): US President Joe Biden and his predecessor Donald Trump secured their parties' presidential nominations with impressive wins in another round of key primaries, setting the stage for a grueling 2020 rematch between them in November.

contd on page 36

(ALSO READ THE BIDEN-TRUMP REMATCH AND THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF PRESIDENTIAL REMATCHES ON PAGE 10)



West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee suffers 'major injury', admitted to hospital

MARCH 14, 2024

KOLKATA (TIP): West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday, March 14 evening suffered a major injury on her forehead and was admitted to a hospital, the TMC said.

The 69-year-old leader had a fall at her Kalighat home in south Kolkata after she returned after attending a programme, her family said. "Our chairperson @MamataOfficial sustained a major injury. Please keep her in your prayers," the party posted on X along with pictures of Banerjee bleeding from her forehead.

Mamata Banerjee was admitted to the state-run SSKM Hospital in Kolkata. Photo credit: AITC/X

contd on page 36



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COMMENT

New York City: A Tale of
Two RealitiesBY
INDRAJIT SALUJA

New York City, often hailed as the center of the universe, is a marvel to behold. Its majestic skyline, picturesque rivers, and vast green spaces paint a picture of urban beauty intertwined with nature. The city's rich history, pulsating with diversity and cultural heritage, draws millions of visitors from around the globe. It's a melting pot of opportunities, offering top-tier education, world-class medical facilities, cutting-edge fashion, and unparalleled entertainment. However, beneath this glamorous facade lies a stark reality—a city struggling to maintain its infrastructure amidst rapid urbanization.

While New York City boasts of its towering skyscrapers and bustling streets, it is also grappling with the consequences of unchecked development. The once-charming streets are now congested with a ceaseless stream of vehicles, turning daily commutes into nightmarish ordeals. Pedestrians navigate through crowded sidewalks, jostling for space in a sea of humanity. Yet, perhaps the most glaring issue plaguing the city is the deplorable condition of its roads.

The sorry state of New York City's roads is a testament to the negligence by its administration. Potholes riddle the streets like scars on a once-flawless visage, reminding residents and visitors alike of the city's neglect. It's a heart-wrenching sight to witness the deterioration of infrastructure in a city known for its grandeur. The uneven roads, akin to those found in third-world towns, serve as a grim reminder of the disparity between perception and reality.

One cannot help but lament the toll these roads take on both vehicles and their occupants. The incessant jostling and rattling as vehicles navigate through pothole-ridden streets exact a heavy toll on their mechanical integrity. Countless dollars are squandered on

vehicle maintenance, expenses that could have been avoided had the city prioritized road upkeep. It's a cruel irony that citizens, who dutifully pay their taxes expecting basic amenities in return, are instead burdened with the cost of navigating through crumbling infrastructure.

The question arises: Can the city be held accountable for the financial losses incurred by its residents due to poor road conditions? The prospect of a class-action lawsuit against the City of New York looms large, as citizens contemplate seeking recompense for the damages inflicted upon their vehicles. Mayor Adams, the custodian of the city's future, must heed this warning before it's too late. The specter of a civil suit seeking millions in damages could tarnish the city's reputation and deplete its coffers.

It's high time for the city administration to wake up from its slumber and address the pressing issue of road maintenance. The adage "prevention is better than cure" holds true in this scenario, too. Investing in proactive measures to repair and maintain the city's roads is not only a prudent financial decision but also a moral obligation. Neglecting this responsibility is tantamount to betraying the trust of the very citizens who breathe life into the city's bustling streets.

Moreover, the ramifications of neglecting infrastructure extend beyond financial losses. The deteriorating roads pose a significant risk to public safety, endangering the lives of motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians alike. Accidents caused by road hazards can have devastating consequences, leaving families shattered and communities grieving. The city must recognize its duty to ensure the safety and well-being of its inhabitants by addressing this pressing issue without delay.

GUEST COMMENTS

Square one: on the US presidential election 2024
as a Biden-Trump rematch

Both Republicans and Democrats need alternative voices to articulate their vision

With the exit of Nikki Haley, former Governor of South Carolina, from the U.S. Republican nomination race for the 2024 presidential election, the country is now set to witness a rematch of the 2020 contest between the incumbent, President Joe Biden, and his challenger, former President Donald Trump. It is hardly a surprise that the contest has reverted to this match-up yet again, given that they are the only two leaders who have made the cut as viable candidates for their respective parties over the many months on the campaign trail. On the Republican side, Ms. Haley likely reflected the hopes of some among those who stood for the conservative values of the Republican Party mainstream, which is facing an unprecedented challenge from Mr. Trump and his nativist-populist style of politics. Nevertheless, voters at the primaries and caucuses clearly leaned towards Mr. Trump, perhaps under the assumption that he had left behind, at the end of his term in the Oval Office, an unfinished political agenda to Make America Great Again. On the Democratic side, at 81 years of age, it is Mr. Biden's ability to yet again live up to the rigors of being in office that remains a question mark, even among the party faithful. Yet more worrying from the perspective of the long-term prospects of the Democratic Party is the fact is that there has been no other leader from among their ranks with the national stature and sufficient charisma to navigate the party through an election in which they are challenged by the likes of Mr. Trump.

While polls have given Mr. Trump a robust lead over Mr. Biden, at this stage in the election cycle, the outcome of the political clash between the two men will depend on factors such as voter turnout, the preferences of independent voters in swing States, and the impact that the many legal cases against Mr. Trump could have on his ability to campaign and persuade voters that he is a victim of a conspiracy by the Democrats. The absence of alternative leadership in both parties beyond the two current contestants suggests that politics in America has not moved past pre-existing conditions of partisan deadlock, even though it is abundantly clear that business-as-usual politics does not serve the U.S.'s national interest. The best that the country could hope for in the next election cycle, perhaps, is for alternative voices within both parties to articulate a new vision undergirding the American Dream, a brand of leadership that embraces the new paradigm of national and global politics today. (The Hindu)

CAA rollout: Challenge for
Centre to dispel fears

Weeks after the consecration of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya and the rollout of the Uniform Civil Code in Uttarakhand, the BJP has ticked another important box in the run-up to the Lok Sabha polls by announcing the implementation of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). Over four years after the law was passed, the Centre has notified the rules to fast-track citizenship for undocumented non-Muslim migrants - Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, Parsis and Christians - who came to India from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan before December 31, 2014, fleeing persecution on religious grounds.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah has asserted that the CAA will not take away anyone's citizenship, even as the Opposition and some religious groups are apprehensive that the enforcement of the law will intensify communal polarization. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has declared that she would fiercely oppose the CAA if it turns out to be discriminatory against people living in India or curtails their existing citizenship rights. The Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) has approached the Supreme Court, seeking a stay on the implementation of the rules that are 'manifestly arbitrary and create an unfair advantage in favor of a class of persons on the grounds of religious identity'.

The passage of the Citizenship Amendment Bill by Parliament in December 2019 and the subsequent presidential assent had triggered protests in parts of the country. There are also fears that Muslim refugees will be singled out as 'illegal migrants' in India. The onus is on the Centre to convince various stakeholders, primarily in states such as West Bengal and Assam which share their borders with Bangladesh, that the law is not politically or electorally motivated but is aimed at weeding out infiltrators and streamlining the grant of citizenship. (Tribune, India)

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The Consulate General of India and the FIA Celebrate the 6th Edition of the Annual International Women's Day

ACHIEVEMENTS OF FOUR EXTRAORDINARY WOMEN RECOGNIZED

MARCH 8, 2024

NEW YORK CITY (TIP): The Consulate General of India in New York, in partnership with the Federation of Indian Associations (FIA) of NY-NJ-CT-NE, proudly celebrated the 6th edition of their annual International Women's Day event at the prestigious India House, New York City, on the eve of International Women's Day. This celebrated event recognized the achievements of four extraordinary women, celebrating their significant contributions across various fields and reinforcing a commitment to empowerment and recognition.

The celebration commenced with a welcoming Meet & Greet, followed by a compelling digital showcase of the FIA's dedication to fostering diversity and gender equality. The night's proceedings were expertly facilitated by Ms. Payal Shah, Co-chair of International Women's Day, who served as the emcee, ensuring a fluid and engaging experience for all attendees.

Emphasizing its long-standing tradition, the FIA and the Indian Consulate highlighted the remarkable achievements of women who have left an indelible mark in their respective areas of expertise. The primary goal was to motivate women to rise above their circumstances and make impactful contributions to their families and communities.

The event was marked by video presentations that not only celebrated past honorees but also introduced this year's awardees, whose endeavors have significantly influenced their fields.

2024 AWARDEES:

Her Royal Highness Maharani Radhikaraje Gaekwad, a visionary committed to education and community empowerment through her philanthropic work.

Hon. Deputy Mayor Ms. Neena Singh, celebrated as the first Indian and Sikh woman Mayor in New Jersey, known for her dedication to mental wellness and community engagement.

Dr. Indu Lew, who rose from a clinical pharmacist to become the Executive Vice President and Chief of Staff at RWJBarnabas Health, demonstrating exceptional leadership in healthcare.

Ms Megha Desai, President of the Desai Foundation, whose work focuses on improving health, livelihood, and menstrual equity for women and children in rural India.

The celebration included heartfelt addresses by FIA President Dr. Avinash Gupta and the Consul General of India, Mr. Binaya Srikanta Pradhan. They both acknowledged the indispensable role of women in society and the significant strides made towards women's empowerment in India, commemorating the spirit of International Women's Day and



Consul General Mr. Binaya Srikanta Pradhan addresses the gathering



FIA President Dr. Avinash Gupta spoke of FIA's dedication to fostering diversity and gender equality



The awardees- Dr. Indu Lew, Ms. Neena Singh, Ms Megha Desai with the Consul General Mr. Binaya Srikanta Pradhan



A view of the gathering



Awardees and organizers with the Consul General Mr. Binaya Srikanta Pradhan (10th from the right) and Deputy Consul General Dr. Varun Jeph (8th from the left).

applauding the awardees' contributions.

A special highlight of the evening was the award ceremony, where CG Mr. Pradhan honored the awardees with a Sash, Trophy, Bouquet, and Proclamation, recognizing their outstanding achievements and contributions. The awardees expressed

gratitude for the recognition, sharing their visions for a progressive future.

The event concluded with a special dinner prepared and served by Dwarka Princeton, a women-owned and operated business, symbolizing the FIA's commitment to supporting women-led enterprises. This annual observance of International Women's Day is a testament to the FIA's ongoing dedication to promoting gender equality and empowering women to enact positive changes in society.

ABOUT THE FEDERATION OF INDIAN ASSOCIATIONS (FIA) OF NY-NJ-CT-NE

The FIA is a preeminent diaspora organization in the United States, dedicated to enhancing cultural ties and advocating for the welfare and interests of the Indian community. With events like the annual International Women's Day celebration, the FIA remains at the forefront of promoting diversity, inclusion, and the empowerment of women across all societal sectors.

(Based on a press release by the FIA)

INDIAN-ORIGIN FORMER FINANCE MANAGER OF AMERICAN FOOTBALL TEAM GETS OVER 6 YEARS IN PRISON



Amit Patel has been sentenced to six-and-a-half years in jail for stealing more than USD 22 million and engaging in an illegal monetary transaction.

Image for representation only

MARCH 13, 2024

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): A 31-year-old Indian-origin former finance manager of the American football team Jacksonville Jaguars has been sentenced to six-and-a-half years in jail for stealing more than USD 22 million and engaging in an illegal monetary transaction, according to court documents.

Amit Patel was sentenced by US District Judge Henry L Adams on Tuesday, March 12, the US Attorney's Office, Middle District of Florida, said in a statement. As part of his sentence, the court entered an order of forfeiture in the amount of USD 22,221,454.40, the proceeds of the wire fraud charge. Patel was also ordered to pay full restitution to the Jacksonville Jaguars, the victim of his offence and his former employer.

Patel pleaded guilty on December 14, 2023. According to court documents, Patel operated a fraud scheme through which he embezzled approximately USD 22,221,454 from the Jaguars over four years.

Specifically, Patel used his role as the administrator for the team's virtual credit card (VCC) program to make hundreds of purchases and transactions with no legitimate business purpose.

A virtual credit card system works similarly to a traditional credit card account but without a physical card.

Patel's fraudulent transactions began in September 2019 and continued until he was fired by the Jaguars in February 2023, the release said.

"This case exemplifies the FBI's relentless effort to protect American companies and their customers," said Mark Dargis, Acting Special Agent in Charge of the FBI Jacksonville Division. "Amit Patel knowingly and wittingly created a deceptive scheme to fund a lavish lifestyle at his employer's expense, and today's sentencing is a warning to other scam artists: the FBI and our partners will continue to aggressively pursue corporate fraud investigations to protect consumers from bearing the costs associated with criminal activity."

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

Indian American executive Dhivya Suryadevara joins Optum Financial as CEO

MARCH 13, 2024

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): Dhivya Suryadevara, former Indian American chief financial officer for Stripe, a global FinTech company, has joined United Health Group as CEO of Optum Financial Services.

"I'm excited to share that I've joined United Health Group (UHG) as CEO of Optum Financial Services," the Chennai born executive wrote in a LinkedIn post.

In her new role she is responsible for furthering its mission to revolutionize how care is financed and paid for, according to her official profile. "The Financial Services business continues to evolve from its origins in health banking and savings accounts to creating new products and services to improve financial access and support for our consumers and providers across the health system."

"UHG is in a unique position to transform our health system, with a mission to help people live healthier lives and help the health system work better for everyone," Suryadevara wrote.



Dhivya Suryadevara has joined United Health Group as CEO of Optum Financial Services

"This is not an easy task, but UHG has the capabilities and the people to make real progress.

"With Financial Services being one of UHG's top strategic priorities, we see extraordinary potential to improve financial access and support for our consumers and providers across the

health system," she posted.

"I'm incredibly honored to have the opportunity to work alongside so many people who are so fiercely determined to make health care better for everyone," Suryadevara added.

Prior to joining UnitedHealth Group, Suryadevara previously served as chief financial officer for Stripe, a global FinTech company that builds economic infrastructure for the internet. In addition to leading the finance organization at Stripe, Dhivya had responsibility for its Operations, Risk and Global Partnerships functions.

Prior to Stripe, Suryadevara was at General Motors, starting as a financial analyst and rising through the ranks to become the automaker's chief financial officer in 2018. Early in her career, Dhivya worked at UBS and PricewaterhouseCoopers. Suryadevara earned degrees from the University of Madras and the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India in 2000 as well as an MBA from the Harvard Business School.

27-year-old Indian-origin student dies in jet ski accident in Florida



Venkataramana Pittala from Telangana died as his watercraft collided with another in Florida

MARCH 14, 2024

TAMPA (TIP): A 27-year-old Indian student died as his watercraft collided with another in Florida, according to media reports.

Venkataramana Pittala from Telangana was driving a rented Yamaha personal watercraft (PWC) that collided with another PWC operated by a 14-year-old boy from the South Florida mainland on Saturday, March 9, according to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC).

Pittala, a student at Indiana University-Purdue University in Indianapolis, was set to graduate in May, according to a GoFundMe page set up to raise funds to send his mortal remains back to his family in Telangana.

Personal watercraft are tandem boats often referred to as jet skis, the name of a popular model manufactured by Kawasaki.

It is unclear if anyone else was injured, a newspaper reported.

The teen was listed as "uninjured" in the FWC report. It lists arrests as "pending", the report said.

The FWC released an incident report on Monday with the names of the two people involved but no details on what transpired.

"This is a two vessel (PWC) accident resulting in one fatality," the report states. "The vessels collided with each other."

According to FWC, 14 is the minimum age to operate a personal watercraft in Florida.

The report doesn't state whether authorities have determined fault. Both personal watercrafts were rented, it said.

Indian American Dr Kamal Verma, acclaimed scholar of South Asian literature, passes away in Washington



Dr Kamal D Verma, an acclaimed scholar of South Asian literature, died of natural causes this week

MARCH 8, 2024

WASHINGTON, D.C (TIP): Dr Kamal D Verma, an acclaimed scholar of South Asian literature, died of natural causes this week here in the American capital. He would have turned 92 in April.

Professor Verma taught for 42 years at the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown (UPJ) in Pennsylvania. After retirement, he continued to serve as Professor Emeritus and an advisor to the University President, focusing on recruiting more diverse faculty and students from South Asia. He was also one of the founding members of the South Asian Review and the South Asian Literary Association - two nationally acclaimed scholarly efforts aimed to promote Indian and other South Asian writers and ideas.

Dr Jem Spectar, President of UPJ, called Dr Verma "a brilliant scholar, an exceptional teacher and guide, a highly respected colleague, and a dear friend". "His students speak of a great intellect: a professor who deepened their critical thinking, analytical, and writing skills, someone who deepened their understanding of our world, and someone whose classes prepared them for lifelong success," Spectar said.

Dr Verma was born in 1932 in Punjab, India. He was the eldest child in a large family, and the first member of his extended family to attend college. He completed his BA from DAV College, Jalandhar, in 1951, followed by a BA in teaching from Agra University in 1953 and an MA in English from Panjab University in 1958.

In India, he became the principal of a teacher's college in Punjab where he served until 1963, when he departed for the United States on a Ford Foundation Fellowship to obtain his Specialist in Education degree at the University of Northern Iowa. He then pursued further professional studies in literature, leading to his PhD from the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Canada.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

Three Indian American women among 14 win GSV Power of Women award

MARCH 13, 2024

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): Three Indian American women - Anupama Vaid, Bijal Shah and Shalinee Sharma - are among 14 winners of 2024 Power of Women award instituted by GSV Ventures, a multi-stage venture capital firm focused on more than \$7 trillion global education and workforce skills sector.

The Power of Women award recognizes influential female leaders who are bringing about a world that provides equal access to the future through the promise of education, according to a media release.

"As entrepreneurs and innovators in EdTech these women are achieving successful outcomes at scale in the education and skills sector," it says. Power of Women is presented by Cambium Learning Group.

The honorees will receive their award at the Arizona State University ASU+GSV Summit 2024, April 14-17, 2024, in San Diego.

INDIAN AMERICAN WINNERS ARE:

ANUPAMA VAID, PRESIDENT & FOUNDER, PARENTSQUARE

Anupama (Anu) Vaid came up with the idea for ParentSquare during a sabbatical when her children were young, recognizing the need to enhance the parent experience in school communications.

She holds a degree in Computer Engineering. Anu and her husband, Sohiti, CEO of ParentSquare, started



Anupama Vaid, Bijal Shah and Shalinee Sharma - are among 14 winners of 2024 Power of Women award instituted by GSV Ventures

ParentSquare in 2011. They spent the first few years developing the platform based on school needs and gaining industry insights.

The company expanded its team in 2014, securing its first round of funding and partnering with schools beyond their hometown of Santa Barbara. Since then, ParentSquare has been growing.

They recently acquired Remind, one of the largest free services in education used in over 80% of public schools and by 60% of teachers in the US. Together they serve over 18 million student families on their paid platform.

BIJAL SHAH, INTERIM CEO, GUILD

Bijal Shah is the Interim CEO at Guild, a Public Benefit Corporation that partners with America's largest

companies to provide employer-funded education, skilling, and career mobility to their workforces.

In her role, Shah oversees Guild's work with the nation's largest employers - including Walmart, Chipotle, Discover, Hilton, Target, The Walt Disney Company, and healthcare systems like Providence Health and UHealth - to unlock opportunities for America's workforce.

In the last year, more than 5 million Americans have had access to Guild's Career Opportunity Platform to gain new skills, knowledge and support.

For its work, Guild earned recognition as one of Time's Most Influential Companies, received Fast Company's 2020 World Changing Ideas Award, and has been named to CNBC's Disruptor 50 and LinkedIn's Top Startups.

Prior to Guild, Shah held executive and leadership roles at Ibotta and in corporate strategy at Visa. She works with the Board of Directors of Girls, Inc. and was named one of Denver Business Journals' 40 Under 40 recipients. Shah graduated from the University of Pennsylvania and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology-Sloan School of Management. She lives in Denver with her husband and two children.

SHALINEE SHARMA, CEO, CO-FOUNDER, ZEARN

Shalinee Sharma is a math expert and is the CEO and co-founder of Zearn, a nonprofit educational organization behind the top-rated math learning platform used by 1 in 4 elementary-school and 1 million middle-school students nationwide.

At Zearn, Sharma and her team are committed to helping all kids believe that they are math kids. In addition to her role at Zearn, she serves on the Braven Board of Directors, is a Pahara-Aspen Fellow and serves as co-chair of the Brown University Advisory Council for the College.

Before founding Zearn in 2012, Sharma spent more than a decade at Bain & Co. leading work for clients in various sectors including technology and education.

She has a Master of Business Administration from Harvard Business School and a Bachelor of Arts from Brown University. A child of refugees, Sharma is passionate about universal access to an excellent education.

Indian-origin Cognizant CEO Ravi Kumar joins USISPF board

MARCH 12, 2024

WASHINGTON, D.C.

(TIP): The US-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF) has named Ravi Kumar S, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Cognizant to its Board of Directors.

At the helm of Cognizant, Kumar sets the strategic direction of the company and has inculcated a strong client-first culture at all levels, according to a media release. Since taking over in

January 2023, Kumar's focus at Cognizant has been on ensuring sustainable growth and prioritizing long-term shareholder value.

USISPF President and CEO, Dr Mukesh Aghi said, "Ravi is a doyen in the tech industry and is a foremost thought leader who has unparalleled insights on the dynamic and fast-changing nature of the tech sector."

"At USISPF, our ethos is building stronger bridges between the United States and India, and the services sector, particularly IT, with the export of IT services remains, one of India's flagship contributions to the United States tech economy.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

First Indian American Sikh woman Mayor Neena Singh honored in New York

MARCH 11, 2024

NEW YORK (TIP):

Neena Singh, first Indian and Sikh woman Mayor of Montgomery township in New Jersey, was among the four prominent Indian and Indian American women honored in New York for their achievements and contributions to society at a function on the occasion of International Women's Day presided over by the recently posted Consul General of India Binaya Pradhan.

Besides Singh, Maharani Radhikaraje Gaekwad, Indu Lew and Megha Desai were other honorees at the event hosted by the Consulate General of India in New York and the Federation of Indian Associations.

Gaekwad is a visionary committed to education and community empowerment through her philanthropic work and is known for her dedication to mental wellness and community engagement, said a FIA release.

Indian-origin attorney Binaifer Nowrojee named president of Open Society Foundations

MARCH 12, 2024

WASHINGTON, D.C.

(TIP): Indian-origin human rights lawyer Binaifer Nowrojee has been appointed the new president of The Open Society Foundations, founded by billionaire investor George Soros, promoting democratic principles and human rights, through grants in more than 100 countries.

Kenya-born Nowrojee, who currently serves as the vice president of Programs, will take over from Mark Malloch-Brown when he steps down from his role in June 2024, according to a media release.

"She embodies the spirit of OSF, past and present. I am confident she will ably lead OSF into the challenging next phase of our work," said Alex Soros, chair of OSF.

"When I established the Open Society Foundations, I wanted them to be truly global," said Soros. "At the outset, that was merely an aspiration. But now I feel that this ambition has been fulfilled with Binaifer Nowrojee as president of the Foundations, supported by an international team."

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)



The US-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF) has named Ravi Kumar S, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Cognizant to its Board of Directors



Neena Singh, first Indian and Sikh woman Mayor of Montgomery township in New Jersey, was among the four prominent Indian and Indian American women honored in New York for their achievements and contributions to society at a function on the occasion of International Women's Day. Consul General of India Mr. Binaya Srikanta Pradhan presented her the award.



Binaifer Nowrojee has been appointed the new president of The Open Society Foundations

Legislator Carrié Solages Honored as an Inwood Civic Association 'Citizen of the Year'



Nassau County Legislator Carrié Solages (D - Valley Stream) was named one of the Inwood Civic Association's Citizens of the Year on Sunday, March 10 during a celebration held at the Inwood Country Club



Photos Credit / Office of Legislator Carrié Solages

MARCH 13, 2024
INWOOD, N.Y. (TIP) Nassau County Legislator Carrié Solages (D - Valley Stream) had the high honor of being named one of the Inwood Civic Association's Citizens of the Year on Sunday, March 10 during a celebration held at the Inwood Country Club. Legislator Solages was recognized by the

Civic Association alongside Town of Hempstead Councilwoman Melissa "Missy" Miller. Portions of Inwood were included in the previous iteration of the Third Legislative, and Legislator Solages built close bonds with the community and advocated for the Five Towns Community Center, worked closely with leaders of community

organizations like Gammy's Pantry, and pushed for EZ Pass service for the Atlantic Beach Bridge, crucial artery that connects Lawrence and Atlantic Beach to the mainland over NY 878 over the west end of Reynolds Channel and provides direct access to the Rockaway Peninsula. "It was extremely humbling and gratifying to be recognized by the Inwood

Civic Association and all of the community leaders and friends I have built such close bonds with during the course of our shared advocacy," Legislator Solages said. "Inwood will always have a special place in my heart, and I will never waver as an ally in the mission to make this beautiful, diverse community the 'first of the Five Towns' in the years to come."

'Chalo India' - Global Diaspora Campaign Launched at the Indian Consulate



MARCH 10, 2024
NEW YORK CITY (TIP): The Consulate General of India, in New York organized a special event on the launch of 'Chalo India - Global Diaspora Campaign' on March 7, 2024.

'Chalo India' is a unique initiative which was launched by Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, on March 7, 2024 at a public event in Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir. It is aimed at encouraging the Indian diaspora around the world to visit India, and to inspire their friends and families to explore the vast and diverse tourism opportunities India offers.

The launch event at the Consulate was attended by many members of the Indian-American community, professionals, travel bloggers and representatives of the travel and tourism industry.

Speaking on the occasion, Consul General Mr. Binaya S. Pradhan acknowledged the United States as the



largest source of international tourists to India. He emphasized the significant potential for further growth, given India's rich cultural diversity and the state-of-the-art tourism infrastructure that has been developed in recent years.

Referring to the Indian diaspora as India's cultural ambassadors in the United States, Consul General encouraged them to travel more often to India, and invite at least five American friends of theirs to explore the plethora of tourism experiences in India.

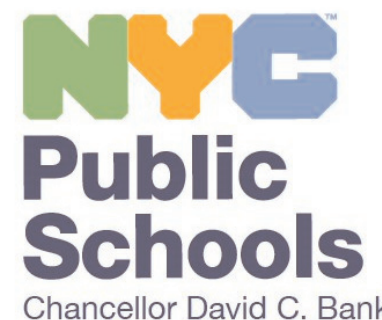
(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

NYC KICKS OFF SIXTH ANNUAL CIVICS WEEK

MARCH 13, 2024
NEW YORK CITY (TIP): NYC Public Schools (NYCPS) and DemocracyNYC, on March 11, kicked off the sixth annual Civics Week, including the 2024 Student Voter Registration Drive, a celebration of youth voice and civic empowerment, at PS K721, the Brooklyn Occupational Training Center. Schools Chancellor David C. Banks and Chief Democracy Officer Kathleen Daniel gave opening remarks and spoke with students about the importance of civic engagement.

Throughout the week, students in all grades across the city will be visited by elected officials and will participate in classroom activities and events designed to empower them to create change as active participants in their community. High Schoolers across the City will pre-register and register to vote, adding to the total of 90,000 new voters registered through Civics Week since these efforts began.

This year is also a celebration of the expansion of the Civics for All Partner District program, with a total of 22 districts opting in to bring Civics for All programming to their schools. Civics for All is a multifaceted initiative designed to narrow the Civic Empowerment Gap and provide equitable civic learning experiences for all NYC students. These opportunities include participation in public speaking programs, events that



Chancellor David C. Banks

strengthen student voice and build school community, and voter registration drives.

"Now, perhaps more than ever, we must ensure our students engage with the issues of the day responsibly," said Schools Chancellor David C. Banks. "To change the world, you must first learn to think critically and engage in public discourse, and the expansion of the Civics for All program opens the doors for thousands more students to gain these invaluable skills. Civics for All is an essential resource for our educators as they nurture the next generation of leaders."

"Teaching our students how to participate in democracy and exercise one of their most sacred rights by voting is critical to create a culture of engagement and empowerment in our City," said Chief Democracy Officer Kathleen Daniel.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

Suozzi Appointed Co-Chair of Democrats for Border Security Task Force

MARCH 12, 2024

WASHINGTON, DC (TIP):

Congressman Tom Suozzi (NY-03) and Congressman Henry Cuellar (TX-28), on March 12, launched the Democrats for Border Security Task Force, a group of 26 House Democrats dedicated to addressing our country's immigration and border crisis and countering the surge of illicit narcotics threatening communities across the country. Suozzi and Cuellar will serve as Co-Chairs of the newly formed Task Force.

"America's southern border and immigration system aren't working, and it is time to fix it. This task force will advocate for commonsense, bipartisan compromise to achieve much-needed and long-overdue comprehensive immigration reform. Our approach to the immigration and border crisis is unequivocal; we will work with anybody from any wing of any party if they genuinely care about solving this problem," said Rep. Suozzi. "Too many in politics today are focused on pointing out the problem and keep busy figuring out what tricks they have 'up their sleeves' to



Congressman Tom Suozzi has been appointed Co-Chair of Democrats for Border Security Task Force

weaponize the border crisis, this task force will 'roll up our sleeves' to try to fix it."

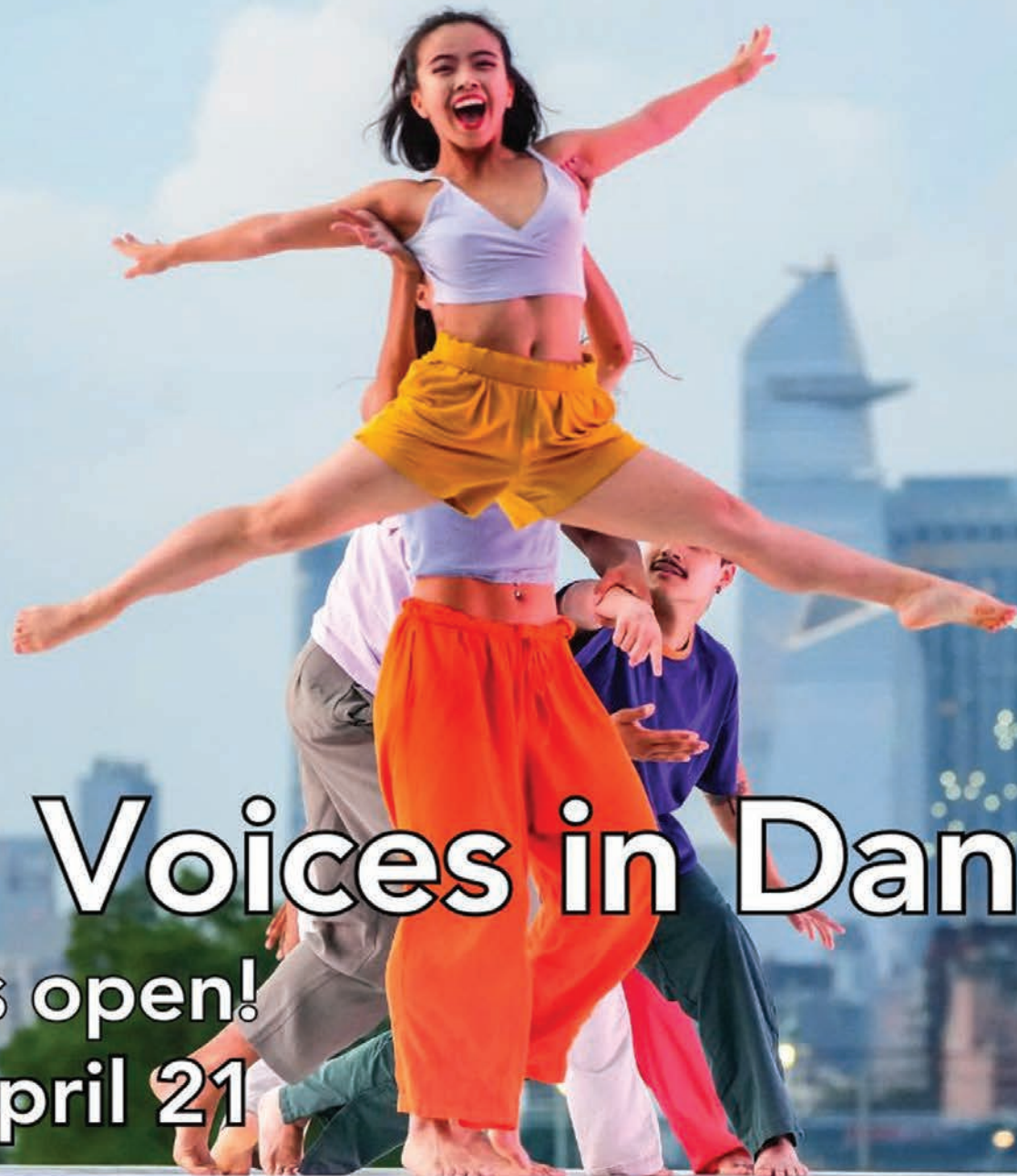
"Cities across the country are now

feeling the consequences of the humanitarian crisis at the border - something border communities have been dealing with for years," said Rep.

Cuellar, Ranking Member of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security. "This crisis is unsustainable, and Democrats need a forum to approach border security policy as the GOP continues to play partisan politics with the issue. The crisis at our border demands solutions today, and it is unfortunate that a bipartisan Senate bill aimed at addressing the situation was killed before we even had a chance to debate its contents. I'm proud to lead my fellow Democrats on this Task Force so we can find sensible solutions that will secure the border while respecting the rights of migrants to claim asylum."

The goal of the Task Force will be to provide a platform for House Democrats to contribute to ongoing discussions regarding border security and collaborate with colleagues. The Task Force will hold meetings with Administration officials, NGOs, and local officials from border communities to better inform members of the realities of the border crisis while giving House Democrats a platform to discuss sensible border security measures.

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The ossified American electoral system

THE SEVEN 'SWING STATES' ARE ALL-IMPORTANT FOR REPUBLICANS AND DEMOCRATS



BY MANOJ JOSHI

"This archaic system is not based on the popular vote but on an electoral college. When an American citizen votes on the Tuesday following the first Monday of November (this year, November 5), he/she is not voting for the candidate but a slate of electors. Though there is no constitutional compulsion, these electors pledge to vote for one of the candidates when the 538-strong electoral college meets on the first Tuesday after the second Wednesday in December, (this year, December 17). A simple majority of 270 or more electoral votes is needed to win the election. In 2020, Biden won 306 electors against Trump's 232, and he also got 7 million more votes than Trump."

Amid the election season in the US, it is important to understand that the American electoral system is ossified - the results in certain states are a foregone conclusion and thus they are clearly identified as red (Republican) and blue (Democratic) states. The 2024 presidential election will really depend on the outcome in just seven of the 50 states and about 100,000-200,000 voters.

An analysis of Super Tuesday primaries, along with US census data, tells us that Trump has wide Republican support, but it varies demographically.

This archaic system is not based on the popular vote but on an electoral college. When an American citizen votes on the Tuesday following the first Monday of November (this year, November 5), he/she is not voting for the candidate but a slate of electors. Though there is no constitutional compulsion, these electors pledge to vote for one of the candidates when the 538-strong electoral college meets on the first Tuesday after the second Wednesday in December, (this year, December 17). A simple majority of



The American system is based on an electoral college, not the popular vote

270 or more electoral votes is needed to win the election. In 2020, Biden won 306 electors against Trump's 232, and he also got 7 million more votes than Trump.

Sparsely populated Wyoming, North and South Dakota have three electoral votes each; California has 54 and Texas 40. As per predictions, California will go blue and Texas red. States can and do flip between blue and red, but no one is expecting that this time around.

The seven 'swing states', where the election will be decided, are Arizona (11 electoral votes), Georgia (16), Michigan (15), Nevada (6), Pennsylvania (19), Wisconsin (10) and North Carolina (16). In 2020, Joe Biden won all of them except North Carolina. Currently, Donald Trump is leading in five of these states and Biden desperately needs to retain Michigan, a state with a significant number of Arab-Americans who are angry with his West Asia policy.

An analysis of the Super Tuesday primaries, along with US census data, tells us that Trump has wide Republican support, but it varies demographically. He has done better in counties with lower levels of college education and lower incomes. His support is strong in rural counties, but not in large metro areas. Also, support is in places with population older than 50; he is less popular with younger voters, who had favored Biden overwhelmingly in 2020. There is also a gap between those who voted for Haley in the primaries - who tended to be college-educated and against a federal abortion ban and not too happy with Trump's personality.

If the Democratic Party is able to

convert some of the energy Biden displayed in his State of Union (SOTU) address last Thursday into its campaign hereafter, it will go some way in blunting doubts about his age (81). What is clear, though, is that Biden retains that "fire in the belly" that has made him a successful politician.

However as of now, the opinion polls have been saying something else. A New York Times-Siena poll at the beginning of this month said if the elections were held today, 48 per cent would vote for Trump and 43 per cent for Biden. The President's problems have been accumulating - doubts about his fitness, the backlash over US support to Israel, fears over immigration on the southern border and the continuing worries over the impact of inflation. Even as Trump has consolidated his hold over the Republican Party, Biden's Democrats are splintering. He is having trouble in retaining the support of younger voters as well as non-college-educated Blacks and Hispanics.

And then there are third-party candidates. In the US system, it is not easy for such candidates to get onto the ballot, but this time there are three - the well-funded Robert F Kennedy Jr, Jill Stein of the Green Party and Cornel West, the leftist political activist. There is also a threat from No Labels, a political organization, to come up with a candidate who will target Republican and Democratic votes. They have no chance of winning, but by depriving a candidate of 5-10 per cent of the vote, they can alter the verdict in particular states, skewing the larger result. As of

now, their impact is falling heavier on Biden than Trump.

Eight months are a long time in the presidential elections, and the opinion polls are not always accurate. Issues will be rejigged and new ones can surface. The rate of inflation is declining and people's skeptical assessment of the economy could change. A ceasefire in West Asia and even Ukraine could shift views, and a Trump conviction in any of his cases could change perceptions of some swing voters.

A Biden victory would have largely predictable consequences, but what will a Trump win bring? There has been an old-fashioned consistency and achievement in Biden's policies. He has restored the American alliance system and revitalized the US economy, even while maintaining a tough line on China and Russia. He has indicated that the US remains part of the global system by supporting policies to fight climate change and re-engaging with the WHO.

With Trump, it's different. He is now in complete control of the Republican Party and is, in a sense, 'unchained'. At the best of times, he is unpredictable and inconsistent. This time, he is going in with a plan to pack the entire government and the judiciary with his supporters and negate all checks and balances on presidential powers. He could walk out of NATO, abandon Ukraine and give up on free trade. The only comfort is that while his approach to India will be transactional, it will not be hostile and could even be friendly.

(The author is a Distinguished Fellow, Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi)

Europe loath to learn from past disasters



BY ABHIJIT
BHATTACHARYYA

EUROPE'S COMBAT CACOPHONY IS REACHING A CRESCENDO. NO ONE IS INTERESTED IN CEASEFIRE AND PEACE TALKS.

"IT SEEMS THAT BE IT THE US OR THE UK, FRANCE, POLAND AND RUSSIA, ALL ARE BENT ON ESCALATING THE RUSSO-UKRAINE 'LOCAL' WAR INTO AN INTERNATIONAL CONFLICT. DOES EUROPE WANT TO REPEAT ITS HISTORY AND NOW KILL 60 CRORE, 10 TIMES MORE THAN THE DEATH TOLL IN THE 1939-45 WAR? DEPLORABLY, THE INFLUENTIAL AND POWERFUL EUROPEANS APPEAR TO BE IN A TRANCE AND, HENCE, UNABLE TO COMPREHEND THE MISTAKES OF THEIR PREDECESSORS, WHOSE COLLECTIVE STUPIDITY AND ARROGANCE ARGUABLY RESULTED IN THE MOST GORY AND BLOODCURDLING CHAPTER IN THE HISTORY OF EUROPE, WHICH GLOBALISED THE BUSINESS OF MURDER FOR MONEY."

In the second half of the 19th century, seven aggressive European imperial states (Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, Britain, Germany and Belgium) divided Africa through 'botanists, buccaneers, the Bible, bureaucrats, bankers and businessmen'. In 1875, less than one-tenth of Africa was colonised by Europeans; by 1895, one-tenth remained unappropriated. In 1916, Lenin termed it 'imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism'.

Before the 19th-century partition of Africa, 5 million sq km of Indian territory was usurped (through the 18th century and later) by the British. State power and responsibility were brazenly bequeathed to a band of businessmen, accompanied by machine-gunners, who forced South Asia to succumb to the lords of London. The operation was outsourced to a private corporation, which went on the rampage on behalf of the Crown through the state-backed



The non-EU Trio. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, US President Joe Biden, UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak

Facebook photo

'might is right' policy, supplemented by the unabashed assertion of native panegyrists that the 'King does no wrong'.

Europe of yore also tried proving that whereas non-Europeans are always wrong, Europe is always right because the West is the king and the rest are subservient subjects. Thus, whereas the global expansion of Europe constituted the 'white man's burden' to civilise the non-white, the opposite is strictly 'no-no' and a 'no-go' for 'others' without the pleasure of the King.

Then came the 20th century, and Europe's power started waning despite the fruits of the Industrial Revolution. The faultlines emerged fast and furious in the European mainland. With opportunities for overseas expansion drying up, colony-championing Western imperialists fought the bitter intra-Europe World War I of 1914-18 (like today's Russia-Ukraine war and the divided Europe). Though World War I exhausted, crumbled and shrank Europe, it couldn't stop another savage civil war, euphemistically referred to as World War II (1939-45), which dragged all continents into one continent's issues. Thus, both wars proved to be a true precursor of globalisation, reflected in global violence because of interdependence and interconnection between the biggest and the smallest and the richest and the poorest nations.

Ironically, despite being a conglomeration of a handful of small duchies and dukes and princes and principalities - possessing limited land with few feudal landlords, serfs, bourgeoisie and proletariat - Europe, with its bloody past, still mesmerises most Third-World rulers. Hence, whatever the economic, political or diplomatic proposals emanate from

there, many non-Europeans are overawed, little realising that the imperial grandeur of the West has faded and it's now in decay.

Nevertheless, mainland Europe's rulers also fear the East. Anything from there is looked upon with scepticism. This inexplicable psyche could be caused by the fear of the ethnically different and robust Mongols' short-lived presence in the West. Hence, Russophobia exists in the official blue book of the West, and the mutual suspicion and hatred gave birth to war in eastern Europe in February 2022.

Two years of intra-Slav manslaughter have already created multiple crises, ranging from economic to agricultural, military, industrial and political. The 27-member European Union (EU) is against Moscow, but perhaps no longer unanimously. There are differences between France and Germany. Besides, whereas farmers of EU nations are on the streets, fighters of non-EU Ukraine face bullets from the EU's 'common enemy', Russia. Thus, amid the war between two belligerent non-EU Slav states, the business of firearm-makers prospers.

Owing to the declining demography of virtually all 27 EU nations, none of them today can join Ukraine on the ground. Further, NATO's 'common security threat' clause makes it well-nigh impossible for anyone to join the fight because that is bound to result in an all-out intra-Europe war - the fire will burn all, from Madrid to Moscow, Stockholm to Stalingrad, London to Leningrad. But still, the EU is yelling and itching for war from outside the battlefield.

Surely, Europe hasn't learnt any lesson from its past disasters and the colossal loss of around 6 crore people in six years (1939-45). Russia lost three crore soldiers,

Germany 70 lakh, Poland 62 lakh, Yugoslavia 17 lakh, Hungary 8.5 lakh, France 8.2 lakh, Austria 4.8 lakh and the UK four lakh. Even distant India lost around one lakh soldiers fighting abroad under British masters, who created a man-made famine, conniving and conspiring with a section of native traders to kill lakhs of Indians at home through forced starvation.

Today, Europe's orchestrated cacophony for combat is reaching a crescendo. No one is interested in ceasefire and peace talks. The situation has reached such a sorry state that even United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres deplored the deadlock over the Russia-Ukraine war and Israel's pounding of Gaza since October 2023. He publicly concedes that the 194-member world arbitration organisation is now 'fatally undermined'. Can it then be said that the two non-EU combatants are more powerful than the 194-member UN club? Let the UN then at least give its tacit approval to a European civil war to push the whole world into the jaws of a nuclear Armageddon. It seems that be it the US or the UK, France, Poland and Russia, all are bent on escalating the Russo-Ukraine 'local' war into an international conflict. Does Europe want to repeat its history and now kill 60 crore, 10 times more than the death toll in the 1939-45 war? Deplorably, the influential and powerful Europeans appear to be in a trance and, hence, unable to comprehend the mistakes of their predecessors, whose collective stupidity and arrogance arguably resulted in the most gory and bloodcurdling chapter in the history of Europe, which globalised the business of murder for money.

(Abhijit Bhattacharyya is an author and columnist)

The Biden-Trump Rematch and the Historical Context of Presidential Rematches



BY DAVE MAKKAR

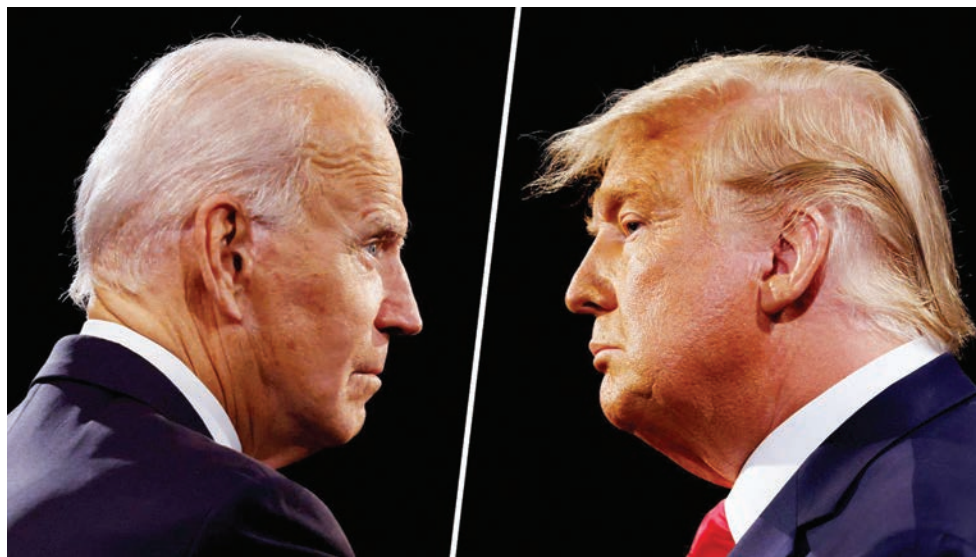
IN REFLECTING ON THE BIDEN-TRUMP REMATCH AND ITS PLACE WITHIN THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF PRESIDENTIAL REMATCHES, IT BECOMES EVIDENT THAT ELECTORAL DYNAMICS AND POLITICAL RIVALRIES HAVE LONG SHAPED THE AMERICAN POLITICAL LANDSCAPE.

A YouGov-University of Massachusetts Amherst poll conducted in January found that 45% of Americans believe a Biden-Trump rematch is bad for the country. Another 26% say the rematch is neither good nor bad, while just 29% view it as good for the nation.

Following the primaries on March 12th, 2024, Trump and Biden emerged as the presumptive presidential candidates for their respective parties, setting the stage for an inevitable rematch between them.

Based on FiveThirtyEight's most recent polling averages, Biden's approval rating is currently at 38.1%, while Trump's stands slightly higher at 42.6%. This indicates that both individuals are not favored by a majority of Americans.

While the upcoming Trump-Biden rematch in November 2024 bears some



President Joe Biden and former President Donald Trump face off

terms.

THE OTHER REMATCHES:

Former Ohio Republican congressman and governor William McKinley defeated Democrat William Jennings Bryan in both the 1896 and 1900 presidential elections. Bryan ran for president in 1896, 1900, and 1908 as a Democrat.

In 1836, Martin Van Buren, who served as Vice President under Andrew Jackson, secured victory for the Democrats by defeating William Henry Harrison of the Whig Party. However, in a rematch four years later in 1841, Harrison emerged triumphant and assumed the presidency.

John Quincy Adams and Andrew Jackson competed twice for the presidency. Initially, in 1824, Adams emerged victorious, while in 1828, Jackson unseated the incumbent Adams to assume the presidency.

Then there was John Adams, a Federalist who served as the nation's second president, and Thomas Jefferson, its third, representing the Democratic-Republican party. They competed for the presidency during the first contested presidential election to succeed George Washington in 1796. Adams emerged victorious, with Jefferson elected as vice president. Four years later, Jefferson ran against and defeated the incumbent Adams.

In reflecting on the Biden-Trump rematch and its place within the historical context of presidential rematches, it becomes evident that electoral dynamics and political rivalries have long shaped the American political landscape. From the early contests between John Adams and Thomas Jefferson to the more recent battles between William McKinley and William Jennings Bryan, these rematches underscore the enduring nature of democracy and the ever-evolving nature of political competition. As we anticipate the outcome of the Biden-Trump rematch in November 2024, history continues to provide valuable insights into the intricacies of presidential elections and the resilience of the American electoral process.

(Dave Makkar is a social activist)

similarity to a singular rematch from the 19th century, there exist several other instances of presidential rematches that transpired much earlier in United States history.

Seventy-two years ago, in 1952, Republican Dwight D. Eisenhower secured a landslide victory by winning 39 out of 48 states over Illinois Democratic Governor Adlai Stevenson II, thus becoming the first Republican president in 20 years. In 1956, as the incumbent president, Eisenhower won reelection by an even larger margin, defeating Democrat Governor Adlai Stevenson II once again. This time, Eisenhower won 41 states out of 48, clinching 57% of the popular vote. Stevenson managed to carry only six Southern states and the border state of Missouri, making him the first losing candidate since William Jennings Bryan in 1900 to secure Missouri.

The election of 1888 and its subsequent rematch in 1892 serve as a more fitting parallel to the upcoming Biden-Trump rematch in November 2024. In 1888, former Republican Senator from Indiana, Benjamin Harrison, triumphed over the incumbent Democratic President, Grover Cleveland. However, in the 1892 election, Cleveland staged a comeback and reclaimed victory over Harrison. Notably, Grover Cleveland held the presidency as both the 22nd and 24th president, winning elections in 1884 and 1892. His tenure marks a unique distinction as he remains the only president to serve two non-consecutive

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The Indian Panorama is grateful to Dr. V.K. Raju and the Eye Foundation of America for their work and support

BY I.S. SALUJA

The Indian Panorama is grateful to Dr. V.K. Raju, President of the Eye Foundation of America and the board of directors of the Eye Foundation of America for their noble humanitarian work and great support to the publication. Their collaboration in publishing the special edition to pay tribute to Martyrs of India on the Martyrs Day is worth appreciation and deserves our gratitude.

We take this opportunity to briefly introduce the eminent eye surgeon and a great philanthropist and his team dedicated to creating a world without childhood blindness.



Dr. V.K. Raju

VK Raju, MD, FRCS, FACS

Ellis Island Award Nominee 2019

Ophthalmologist, Regional Eye Associates
President and Founder, Eye Foundation of America

President and Founder, Goutami Eye Institute

Clinical Professor, West Virginia University

Director, International Ocular Surface Society

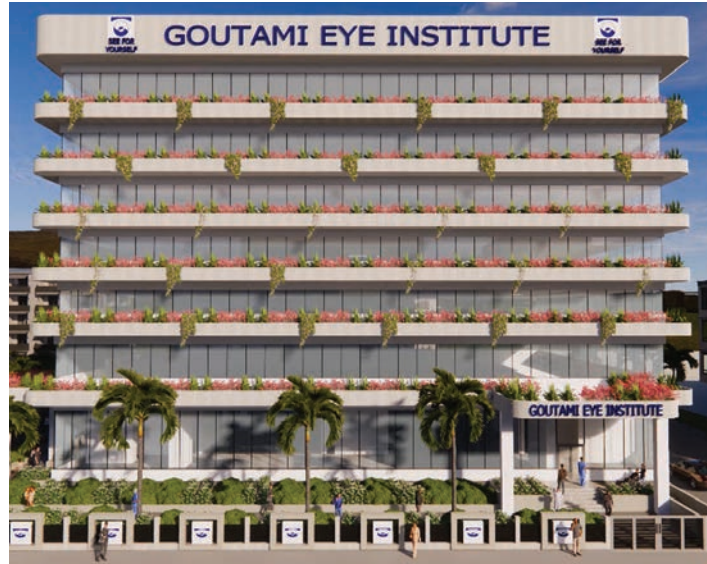
Adjunct Professor, GSL Medical School

Adjunct Professor, Wilmer Eye Institute, Johns Hopkins University

Author: Musings on Medicine, Myth, and History-India's Legacy

Dr. VK Raju received his medical degree from Andhra University, India and Residency and Fellowship in UK. He is a fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons and a Fellow of the American college of Surgeons.

V.K.Raju, MD, FRCS, FACS is a clinical professor of ophthalmology at West Virginia University, WV, USA, and practicing ophthalmologist at Regional Eye in Morgantown, WV, USA. In 1977, work began on what is now known as the Eye Foundation of America. With Dr. Raju's guidance, the Eye Foundation of America's work has grown. To date, the Eye Foundation of America has performed over 4 million vision screenings in rural areas of over 30 countries across the world, the latest being Guatemala in November, 2023. Through the Eye Foundation of America, over 400,000 sight-saving surgeries have been performed at no



New green Goutami Eye Institute under construction

cost. Over 800 medical professionals, including many residents and ophthalmologists, have been trained to identify and treat eye diseases.

Dr. Raju remains highly involved as the Founder and President of the Eye Foundation of America to this day, returning to India every few months to participate in educational programs, vision screening camps, and surgeries.

His insatiable drive to improve the



Dr. V.K. Raju with President Jimmy Carter

lives of others has also resulted in the recent culmination of another lifelong goal. The construction of another eye hospital is underway with wings devoted to specialties including ocular oncology, pediatric ophthalmology, and the retinopathy of prematurity, a disease effecting premature babies.

Dr. VK Raju has received awards from American Academy of Ophthalmology four times for his teaching, research and international service. A partial list of awards include Doctor Nathan Davis International award of Excellence in Medicine by American Medical Association Foundation, Lifetime Achievement Award from WV State Medical Association, the President's Lifetime Achievement Award from President Barack Obama, Mahatma Gandhi Pravasi Samman award for Achievement in Medicine, House of Lords, London. He also received the Martin Luther King, Jr. Achievement



Dr. Raju receiving The Indian Panorama Lifetime Achievement Honor from Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj, India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations

Award from West Virginia University. He was also inducted into Medical Missions Hall of Fame by University of Toledo and Medscape placed him among the best doctors in America. Recently, he was awarded The Indian Panorama Lifetime Achievement Honor by Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj, India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations.

For over 40 years, Dr. Raju has dedicated himself to eliminating

In this world, nothing is more important than children's nutrition and education. If we give them nutrition and education, they will take care of themselves.

Since 1977, Eye foundation of America is striving to do just that.

"Be part of that effort".

He often speaks about the colossal work which needs to be done to prevent childhood blindness. He is passionate



The Eye Foundation of America Board of Directors

avoidable blindness in children and adults through outreach programs, surgeries, and educational efforts. V. K. Raju has published over 100 scientific articles, 17 book chapters, and 2 books. Still, he will tell you, "My work is only the beginning." Only this morning, Dr. Raju shared with me two quotes. Now these quotes are a pointer to his mind.

"Of all the senses vision is the most precious."

(SARVENDRIYANAM NAYANAM PRADHANAM- in Sanskrit.

80% of our learning is through vision.

Join us in giving a gift of vision "

Another now.

"There is nothing new under the sun."

about his vision of a world without childhood blindness.

Luckily for him, he says, he has been blessed with a wonderful team who are always there to share his vision and work for its realization. Let me introduce the readers of The Indian panorama to this great team.

We have no doubt that the vision of Dr. Raju to have a world without childhood blindness will be realized. If human effort could create a world without polio, why can't the world be free from childhood blindness?

**WE WISH YOU, DR. RAJU
AND YOUR DEDICATED
TEAM ALL SUCCESS.**

Four, including three Indians, arrested while entering US illegally from Canada



MARCH 14, 2024

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): Three Indian nationals are among four people arrested in Upstate New York after they jumped off a moving freight train coming from Canada in their bid to enter the US illegally.

US Border Patrol agents arrested the four, including a woman, on March 12. The investigation concluded that all four people were undocumented non-citizens.

Border Patrol agents assigned to the Buffalo Station spotted four people jumping off a moving freight train on the International Railroad Bridge in the city of Buffalo.

The men left the woman who became immobile due to an injury and were caught shortly after a foot pursuit. The injured woman received first aid from Erie County Sheriff's deputies and U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers (CBP). After treatment, the woman was transported by ambulance to a local medical centre.

Border Patrol agents were able to identify that the woman and two men were from India and the third man was from the Dominican Republic.

The three men are being processed for removal and detained in Batavia Federal Detention Facility awaiting a deportation hearing for charges under Sections 212 and 237 of the Immigration and Nationality Act, a media release said.

The woman remains at a local medical centre awaiting further medical treatment.

This is a great example of how our Border Patrol agents, CBP officers and law enforcement partners work tirelessly to protect the Western New York area," said Chief Patrol Agent Thomas G. Martin, US Border Patrol Buffalo Sector.

India-US security cooperation will become even more important in the years ahead: Richard Verma

MARCH 15, 2024

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): India-US security cooperation will become even more important in the years ahead and the work of the two countries on emerging technologies will take on even more promise, a top American diplomat said on Thursday, March 14, reiterating the remarks of President Joe Biden that this is the defining partnership of the 21st century.

"As both President Biden and Prime Minister Modi have said, our impact on each other is important, but what we can do for the world is even more important. Whether it's addressing food insecurity or battling the next pandemic or connecting millions to the digital economy, there is so much we can do together," Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources, Richard Verma, wrote in a blog post in his recent return from India.

Verma is the highest-ranking Indian-American ever in the State Department. He was also the first ever Indian-American to serve as the US Ambassador to India.

"So, where are we headed?" Verma wrote as he described in detail the significant growth in the India-US relationship over the last few decades.

He identified defense, democracy and technology as three key areas of



"Our security cooperation will become even more important in the years ahead", wrote Richard Verma in his blog.

cooperation between the two countries.

"Our security cooperation will become even more important in the years ahead. The threats we face are real, but building our collective capabilities, increasing sharing of information, and improving maritime domain awareness and interoperability will ensure India continues to be a provider of net security across the Indo-Pacific region and beyond," Verma wrote.

"Our work on protecting, preserving, and strengthening democracy will continue to be even more important, with

the rise of authoritarian leaders and movements. This includes continuing to strengthen a global rules-based order architecture, ensuring we bridge the divide on income inequality, and battling mis and disinformation. Democracy must continue to deliver for our peoples," he said.

"Our work on emerging technologies will take on even more promise. New and emerging technologies offer tremendous opportunities for economic growth and development. At the same time, recent disruptive cyber attacks, carried out by criminals and nation states, demonstrate the risk that cyber vulnerabilities can pose to global peace and security," said the top American diplomat.

"We must work together to tackle data privacy issues, such as identity theft, by exchanging knowledge on data protection issues. Through the Digital Connectivity and Cybersecurity Partnership, the US is working closely with India to build and maintain internet infrastructure and strengthen cybersecurity protections. From semiconductors to critical minerals to space exploration and innovation in clean energy, battling climate change, and so much more, this is about economic and physical security," Verma wrote.

Virginia State Senate commends Indian origin journalist for his "dedication to journalism and foreign policy."



Virginia State Senator, Suhas Subramanyam and T. Vishnudatta Jayaraman

MARCH 10, 2024

RICHMOND, VA (TIP):

On March 8, 2024, the Virginia State Senate approved a formal resolution with a voice vote commending Washington Bureau Chief of News India Times, T. Vishnudatta Jayaraman, for his "dedication to journalism and foreign policy."

The resolution was introduced by Indian-American Virginia State Senator, Suhas Subramanyam, who is also a Democratic candidate for US Congress from Virginia's 10th Congressional district.

Introducing Jayaraman in the Senate gallery, on March 4th, Senator Subramanyam referred to him "as the recipient of the prestigious Ashoka Award for social change," while commending his dedication to journalism and foreign policy.

He further said, on January 27th, Jayaraman "received a Distinguished Service Award 'for advancing media coverage for the Indian diaspora and fostering US-India relations' from the Indian Ambassador to United States Taranjit Sandhu and of course, you Madam President," referring to Lieutenant Governor of Virginia and President of the Senate, Winsome Sears. The National Council of Asian Indian Associations hosted the event to commemorate India's 75th Republic Day Celebrations on January 27th in McLean, Virginia.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

Indian American indicted in a Ponzi scheme

MARCH 14, 2024

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): An Indian-American has been indicted by a grand jury in a Ponzi scheme with the FBI urging victims of the investment adviser in Texas to come forward.

Siddharth Jawahar, 36, has been ordered imprisonment until sentencing by the court. The FBI on Wednesday, March 13 said it is seeking potential Miami-area victims of Jawahar who has been accused of running a multimillion-dollar Ponzi scheme.

According to the indictment, from July 2016 through roughly December 2023, Jawahar took in more than \$35 million from Swiftarc investors but spent about \$10 million on investments in companies.

Jawahar used the money from new investors to repay older investors and to fuel an extravagant lifestyle that included flights on private planes, stays at luxury hotels and expensive outings at lavish restaurants, the indictment says.

In 2015, Jawahar began investing the majority of client funds in a single investment, Philip Morris Pakistan (PMP), the indictment says, and eventually, 99 per cent of client funds were consolidated into the PMP investment.

Jawahar did not tell investors of a dramatic decline in the value of PMP, instead misled investors about the share price and their profits. The indictment says Jawahar also did not tell investors when the Texas State Securities Board revoked Swiftarc Capital's authority to conduct investment activities on June 7, 2022, and ordered Jawahar to cease from engaging in fraud.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)



Siddharth Jawahar, 36, has been ordered imprisonment until sentencing by the court

Photo via Crunchbase

US lawmakers call for addressing Green Card backlog and resolving H-1B issues at immigration summit

MARCH 13, 2024

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): Eminent lawmakers from both the Democratic and Republican parties at an immigration summit have called for urgently addressing the Green Card backlog, an issue that is majorly impacting Indian professionals and the issues related to the H-1B visa.

At the first-of-its-kind 'Tech Immigration Summit' at the US Capitol on Monday, March 11 hosted by the Foundation for India and Indian Diaspora (FIIDS), the lawmakers pushed for removing the seven per cent country quota when it comes to issuing Green Card or legal permanent residency to foreign guest workers in specialized categories.

In the absence of such a move, the Green Card waiting period for Indian immigrants would be more than 20 years and over 70 years in many cases.

A Green Card, known officially as a Permanent Resident Card, is a document issued to immigrants to the US as evidence that the bearer has been granted the privilege of residing permanently.

Congressman Ro Khanna, who is also co-chair of the Congressional India Caucus, called for a rational immigration policy.

"We know that immigrants have helped build Silicon Valley, that so many of the companies that have started, that have created so many jobs that have created so much employment have been founded by immigrants from India, from China, from Asia, the Middle East, from Europe," he said.

Khanna is co-sponsor and lead of the Eagle Act, which he said would get rid of

the country caps so that people aren't perpetually in status because that hurts American workers.

"You are hurting American workers by allowing corporations to underpay folks on an H-1B, and you're hurting the families on H-1B. And that's why we need to move them to green cards and ultimately citizenship," he said.

"It will help raise wages, help American workers, and help these families. We also should be providing a Green Card to folks who are educating in the United States. It makes no sense that we're paying for someone's education at college or giving them STEM, and then we're telling them that they have to go back to where they came from when American taxpayers are funding the education. I'd rather stay here, create the jobs here instead of offshoring those jobs," Khanna said.

"We made a lot of progress on these bills. We need to now get it again through the House. But the obstacle, as you know, has been the Senate, as is often the case," Khanna said.

Congressman Eric Swalwell said 40 per cent of his constituents in California were born outside of the United States.

"If we want to take on the bigger challenges, we need the fix. If we want to cure cancer in America, we need to fix a broken immigration system. If we want to see fewer emissions when it comes to how we get our energy, we need to fix our immigration system. If we want to pay less in childcare, we need to fix our immigration system," he said.

The American immigration system is broken, Indian-American Congressman Shri Thanedar said.

"We need legal immigration solidified;

our businesses need that. Every time I meet CEOs of companies, they tell me how important it is to be able to find a skilled workforce. Today we are losing so many people to Australia to Canada because they're taking advantage of our broken immigration system.

"We need to be able to keep the skilled workforce in the US. That's going to help our GDP, that's going to help our businesses to grow, and that's going to create more American jobs," he said.

"It's in the best interest of the United States to continue to welcome immigrants and make it easier. I think the current system is so stressful to the employees and their families," he said. Congressmen Rich McCormick and Raja Krishnamoorthi called for passage of the relevant legislation from the US Congress.

Khanderao Kand from the Foundation for India and Indian Diaspora Studies (FIIDS) said technology immigrants are leading entrepreneurs in big industries.

"From an innovation point of view, the largest innovators, patent holders are coming from the immigration background," he said. Technology professionals, when they settle, they create jobs and wealth in the United States.

"However, their situation, particularly the largest source of technology professionals coming from India, they are shackled by the seven per cent country quota. This policy created a huge backlog resulting in the green card processing for new applicants for more than a hundred years. They will never be able to get their green card unless technology policies are



Technology professionals, when they settle, they create jobs and wealth in the United States, said Khanderao Kand from the Foundation for India and Indian Diaspora Studies.

changed. That's why we hosted this immigration summit. We addressed the issues like, seven per cent quota, EAD, OPT, various such kinds of issues," Kand said.

"We also discuss about the bills pending in the Congress," he said.

In addition to several US lawmakers, representations from think tanks, and an official from the Department of State, there were testimonies from the various impacted people, whether they are the pending backlog green card, or could be the documented dreamers, or the family members or the students, all of them.

"In addition to that, technology entrepreneurs came, and they presented their thought processes. So overall, this summit has been very successful and we hope that we can make a dent in the policies both within the Congress and the administration," Kand said.

US House passes bill to ban TikTok

MARCH 13, 2024

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): The US House of Representatives on Wednesday passed a bill to ban Chinese social media app Tiktok, which is very popular among kids, in the United States.

India was the first country to ban TikTok in 2020 after it became public knowledge that the popular Chinese social media platform was being used for gathering personal data and spying on others.

Passed by the House by 352 to 65 votes, the bill now heads to the US Senate for it to be sent to the White House for the President to sign it into law. While 197 Republican lawmakers voted for the measure and 15 against, on the Democratic side, 155 voted for the bill and 50 against.

The bill, "Protecting Americans From Foreign Adversary Controlled Applications Act", was co-authored by Indian American Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi, a Democrat, and



Congressman Mike Gallaghe from the Republican party.

"This bill is not a ban and it is not about TikTok. It is about ByteDance...a 100 per cent owner of TikTok. ByteDance is controlled by the Chinese Communist Party. In fact the editor-in-chief of ByteDance is the secretary of the Chinese Communist Party cell embedded at the very highest ranks of the company," Krishnamoorthi said.

He said the bill ensures that ByteDance divests itself of the vast majority of the ownership at TikTok. "Our intention is for TikTok to continue to operate but not under the control of the CCP," Krishnamoorthi said.

Former vice president Mike Pence said the passage of this legislation demonstrates that appeasement to Communist China is over, allowing TikTok to continue operating in the United States while under CCP control is simply unacceptable.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

US says it is concerned about CAA and closely monitoring its implementation

MARCH 15, 2024

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): The United States on Thursday, March 14 said it is concerned about the notification of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act in India and is closely monitoring its implementation.

"We are concerned about the notification of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act on March 11," State Department Spokesperson Matthew Miller told reporters at his daily briefing.

"We are closely monitoring how this act will be implemented. Respect for religious freedom and equal treatment under the law for all communities are fundamental democratic principles," Miller said in response to a question.



State Department Spokesperson Matthew Miller said: "We are concerned about the notification of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act on March 11".

The Indian government implemented the Citizenship (Amendment) Act 2019 on Monday, paving the way for the grant of citizenship to undocumented non-Muslim migrants from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan who came to India before December 31, 2014.

The government also came out with a press statement to say that Indian Muslims need not worry as the CAA will not impact their

citizenship and has nothing to do with the community which enjoys equal rights as their Hindu counterparts.

The Indian government has maintained that the CAA is about granting citizenship and that no citizen of the country will lose citizenship.

SC to hear pleas seeking stay of CAA rules on March 19

The Supreme Court on Friday agreed to hear pleas seeking a stay of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), 2019 on March 19. Upon the matter being mentioned by senior advocate Kapil Sibal, Chief Justice DY Chandrachud said that the matter will be listed next week.

A clutch of over two hundred petitions, filed in the top court since 2019, have challenged various CAA provisions which aim at granting fast-track citizenship to non-Muslim refugees who came to India because of religious persecution in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan on or before December 31, 2014. The law has been questioned on grounds of religious discrimination against Muslims and arbitrariness. While the CAA was passed by the Parliament in December 2019, the Union government issued the rules for it on Monday, March 11.

The notification of the Act triggered criticism from Opposition leaders, who claimed that the notified rules were “unconstitutional”, “discriminatory” and violative of the “secular principle of citizenship” enshrined in the Constitution.

Critics of the CAA also argued that by excluding Muslims from its purview and linking citizenship to religious identity, the law undermines the secular principles enshrined in the Indian Constitution.

The Centre, however, has maintained that the CAA is about granting citizenship and that no citizen of the country will lose citizenship. *Source: HT*

Kovind-led panel backs ‘one nation, one election’

NEW DELHI (TIP)

A high-level committee led by former president Ram Nath Kovind on Thursday, March 14, unanimously backed simultaneous polls for the Lok Sabha, state assemblies, and local bodies, state and local tiers and called for a raft of constitutional amendments to achieve the goal, potentially setting the stage for the far-reaching but controversial reform that can reshape the world’s largest democracy.

The eight-member committee submitted its 18,626 page-long report to President Droupadi Murmu on Thursday morning, outlining a phased approach to synchronise elections, beginning first with Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies, and following up with local body polls within 100 days. “Simultaneous polls will help save resources, spur development and social cohesion, deepen the foundations of democratic rubric and help realise the aspirations of India, that is Bharat,” the report said.

“Simultaneous elections will bring fundamental transformation in the electoral process and overall governance. It will result in optimising scarce resources and also encourage voters to participate in the electoral process in larger numbers,” the panel added.

To be sure, simultaneous elections do not mean that voting across the country for the three tiers of government must take place on a single day. “In a country as large as India, it is not possible to have that. Pragmatism requires elections to be held in phases,” clarified the panel.

The proposal was welcomed by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). “It is a historic day for the country’s democratic system,” Union home minister Amit Shah said in a post on X.

The Opposition, led by the Congress, said the recommendations could hurt democracy.

“How can there be One Nation, One Election when the current regime is not accepting the people’s mandate? Also, it’s against the spirit of decentralisation of the panchayats and everything else. So let’s see what the recommendations are,” Congress leader Priyank Kharge said. From the first



Ram Nath Kovind panel on Thursday submitted report on ‘one nation, one poll’ to President Droupadi Murmu.

elections in Independent India in 1952 until 1967, elections were held simultaneously across the country. But since the Lok Sabha and state assemblies can be dissolved before their tenures end, the state and national elections came to be held at different times after that.

Several committees, including a parliamentary panel, the Niti Aayog and the Election Commission of India, have studied simultaneous polls in the past, backing the idea but flagging logistical concerns.

The report said that the panel – set up by the Union government on September 2, 2023 — received responses from 47 political parties, with 32 favouring simultaneous elections. These parties — which include the BJP, the Biju Janata Dal (BJD), Janata Dal United (JDU) and the Shiv Sena — said the proposal will save scarce resources, protect social harmony, and stimulate economic development. However, 13 political parties opposed simultaneous elections — including Congress, BSP, Aam Aadmi Party, CPI(M) — expressing concerns that it could violate the basic structure of the Constitution, be anti-democratic and anti-federal, marginalise regional parties, encourage the dominance of national parties, and lead to a presidential form of government. *Source: HT*

Yediyurappa booked after woman accuses him of sexually assaulting her minor daughter

BENGALURU (TIP)

Former Karnataka chief minister BS Yediyurappa, 81, was on Friday, March 15, booked under the stringent Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act after a woman lodged a complaint alleging the veteran Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader sexually assaulted her 17-year-old daughter on February 2.

Karnataka home minister G Parameshwara said the complaint was lodged on Thursday night. “After examining the details, police have registered a case. Until the investigation is done, I cannot comment on the details... She [the woman] typed the complaint and gave it to the police. They will probe.”

Yediyurappa vowed to deal with the matter legally. “I have come to know that a complaint has been filed against me by a woman. It must have been about a month back that they used to visit but I did not pay attention. But one day, when I was told they were crying, I called them and asked what happened.”

Yediyurappa added he was told that they had been wronged. “I then called the police commissioner [B] Dayananda and asked him to hear them out...But then she started talking against me then and there. I thought she was unwell and asked the police commissioner to investigate.”



In his first reaction after being booked under POCSO Act for alleged sexual assault of a minor, former Karnataka CM B S Yediyurappa asserted he tried to help a woman who had come to his house crying, but she later “started talking against him”.

Yediyurappa said this has now been twisted and a First Information Report has been filed. “We will do what is legally required. I did not think helping someone would result in this. I had even given some money to them,” he said.

A police officer said the case has been registered under Section 8 of POCSO (sexual assault) and the Indian Penal Code’s Section 354A (sexual harassment).

KEJRIWAL MOVES SESSIONS COURT OVER SUMMONS

Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal has moved a Delhi sessions court against the summons issued to him by the additional chief metropolitan magistrate, barely a few days before he is to make a physical appearance before the magisterial court over a complaint of non-compliance filed against him by the Enforcement Directorate (ED).

Special judge Rakesh Syal of Delhi’s Rouse Avenue Court is expected hear the arguments on the application today. Kejriwal was directed to appear before the magistrate on March 16.

ED had approached the magistrate court on February 3 and March 6 with a complaint seeking initiation of proceedings against Kejriwal under Section 174 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) for not appearing before investigators despite repeated summons issued to him under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) in connection with the Delhi excise policy case.

As per Section 174 of the IPC, a person not appearing despite summons issued by a public servant shall be punished with imprisonment up to one month and a fine of Rs 500.

The federal investigating agency has so far issued eight summons to Kejriwal — March 4, February 26, February 19, February 2, January 18, January 3, and December 22 and November 2 last year — asking him to join the investigation into an alleged money laundering case related to the Delhi liquor excise policy case.



CEC Rajiv Kumar (centre) welcomed the two newly-appointed Election Commissioners Gyanesh Kumar (right) and Dr Sukhbir Singh Sandhu.

Gyanesh Kumar, Sukhbir Singh Sandhu assume charge as Election Commissioners

Newly appointed election commissioners Gyanesh Kumar and Sukhbir Singh Sandhu assumed charge on Friday, March 15.

The former bureaucrats were appointed as election commissioners on Thursday, March 14. They are the first ones to have been appointed as members of the poll panel after the new law on the appointment of Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and ECs came into force recently.

Welcoming them, CEC Rajiv Kumar spoke about the significance of their joining at a historic point when the Election Commission is all set to conduct Lok Sabha elections, a spokesperson said.

If voted to power, INDIA bloc to be farmers' voice: Rahul

NASHIK (TIP)

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Thursday, March 14, said the opposition INDIA alliance, if voted to power, will be the "voice of farmers" and frame policies to protect them.

He was addressing a farmers' rally at Chandwad in Maharashtra's Nashik district along with NCP (SP) head Sharad Pawar and Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut, as part of the Congress' ongoing 'Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra'.

"The INDIA alliance government will be the voice of farmers and work to protect their interests," Gandhi said.

He promised loan waiver for farmers, restructuring of crop insurance scheme to benefit cultivators, to protect crop prices in formulation of export import policies and to make efforts to exclude agriculture from GST and work on only one tax.

The Lok Sabha member from Wayanad also reiterated the Congress' promise of a legal guarantee to minimum support price (MSP) as per the Swaminathan committee report.

The former Congress president claimed 20 to 25 people in the country have wealth equivalent to 70 crore of the country's population.



The Narendra Modi government waived off Rs 16 lakh crore debt of industrialists, he further claimed.

"This amount is equivalent to 24 years of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGA) under which Rs 35,000 crore is spent every year to give employment to the poor people," Gandhi said.

He said the previous Congress-led UPA government had waived off Rs 70,000 crore debt of farmers.

"If the loans of rich people can be written off, farmers also should get the benefit," he said.

Criticising the Agnipath scheme

(under which soldiers are enrolled as Agniveers by the armed forces), Gandhi said the Agniveers are excluded from pension and martyrdom status and are given training for only six months.

"Like soldiers who protect our country's borders, farmers protect citizens within the country. If we don't safeguard our jawans and kisans, the country cannot progress," he said.

NCP (SP) leader Sharad Pawar accused the central government of being apathetic to the plight of farmers and the agriculture sector.

"Due to lack of a proper price for their produce, farmers are debt-ridden and committing suicide. The UPA government had waived off Rs 70,000 crore loan of farmers," he said.

"It is our collective responsibility to defeat the anti-farmer, anti-youth government which invites inflation," the former Union minister said.

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut said the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) is with Rahul Gandhi in the struggle to fight for people's causes.

The MVA comprises the Congress, the Shiv Sena (UBT) and the NCP (Sharadchandra Pawar). It is part of the national-level opposition INDIA bloc. *Source: PTI*

Indian Film Critic and Curator Murtaza Ali Khan Attends 74th Berlin International Film Festival as State Guest of Germany

NEW DELHI (TIP)

Murtaza Ali Khan, noted Indian film critic and curator, was invited by the Federal Republic of Germany to attend the prestigious 74th Berlin International Film Festival. As a distinguished guest of the Federal Republic of Germany, Khan's participation underscored the strong cultural ties between India and Germany. The festival was held in Berlin from 15 - 25 February, 2024.

Hosted by the Foreign Office of the Federal Republic of Germany through its Visitors Programme, Khan's attendance at the Berlinale presented a unique opportunity for him to engage with various luminaries from the global cinema industry. During his visit, Khan got a firsthand taste of the vibrant culture of Germany. His itinerary included visits to prominent institutions such as Deutsche Kinemathek - Museum für Film und Fernsehen, Film University Babelsberg Konrad Wolf, Federal Foreign Office, and Goethe-Institute, Berlin. Additionally, Khan participated in events organized by Berlinale Talents and engaged in discussions on film financing and location promotion.

The Berlin International Film Festival, established in 1951, is renowned for its rich history and serves as a vital platform for intercultural exchange and critical exploration of societal issues. Khan's presence at the festival as a critic, cultural writer, and curator further enhances the dialogue between India and Germany, reinforcing the festival's commitment to fostering global understanding through cinema.

This year the Berlin International Film Festival



Murtaza Ali Khan attended the 74th Berlin International Film Festival as State Guest of Germany.

witnessed a very strong Indian presence with films such Raam Reddy's 'The Fable,' Siddhartha Jatla's 'In the Belly of a Tiger,' PS Vinothraj's 'The Adamant Girl,' Gavati Wad's 'O Seeker,' Nishi Dugar's short film 'Sour Candy,' and Subarna Dash's animated short film 'The Girl Who Lived in the Loo,' among others. 'The Fable,'

starring Manoj Bajpayee alongside Deepak Dobriyal, Priyanka Bose, and Tillotama Shome, made its debut at the 2024 Berlinale in the festival's competitive Encounters section, garnering praise from critics and audiences worldwide.

In a tribute to a three-decade-long illustrious, the Tagore Centre at the Indian Embassy in Berlin paid homage to Manoj Bajpayee. The event, hosted by Trisha Sakhlecha, Director of the Tagore Centre, coincided with the premiere of 'The Fable' at the 74th Berlinale. The celebration, commemorating both Manoj Bajpayee's 30-year career and the foundation of the Tagore Centre, drew a diverse crowd of fans from India and Germany. Parvathaneni Harish, the Ambassador of India to Germany, also graced the occasion alongside various distinguished dignitaries, including the German Diplomat Karsten Warnecke, the former Ambassador and Executive Director of the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF), who currently heads the Cultural & Societal Relations with Asia, the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean at the Federal Foreign Office.

Murtaza Ali Khan's participation in the Berlin International Film Festival holds special significance for Indo-German cultural exchange as Khan is set to curate a rare retrospective for the Indian audiences based on the legendary German filmmaker Fritz Lang known for films such as Metropolis, M, The Testament of Dr. Mabuse, etc. Back in 2022, Khan had curated and presented a very unique film festival dedicated to the city of Berlin at the India Habitat Centre for the Embassy of Germany.

India in history this Week

MARCH 15 TO MARCH 21

15 MARCH

1947 Riots erupted in Punjab in 1947.
2007 The agreement between Vodafone and Essar concluded in 2007.



2008 In 2008, Kiran Bedi, the country's first female IPS officer, was selected for the German honor 'Animation Medicine' for her outstanding contribution to prison reform and human rights defense.



1564 Mughal emperor Akbar removed Jizya tax in 1564.

16 MARCH

1846 According to the Amritsar Agreement, Kashmir was taken over in 1846 under Gulab Singh, the Hindu king of Jammu.

1942 The V-2 rocket was launched in 1942, but it exploded at the same time.

2012 India's master blaster Sachin Tendulkar became the first player to score 100 centuries in international cricket in 2012.



1693 Born in 1693 to Malharrao Holkar, the promoter of the Holkar dynasty of Indore.

17 MARCH

1527 Rana Sangram Singh of Chittorgarh was defeated by Babur in the battle of Agra.

1782 Salbai's settlement was signed between the East India Company and the Maratha rulers.

1959 The Buddhist religious Dalai Lama arrived in India from Tibet in 1959.



1987 Indian cricketer Sunil Gavaskar retired from Test cricket in 1987.

1962 Indian American astronaut Kalpana Chawla was born on 17 March 1962 in Karnal district of Haryana.



2000 On this day in 2000, Lalu Prasad Yadav was processed in case of possessing disproportionate assets.

1991 On this day in 1991, India's first automated satellite IRS-IA became a successful test after completing its three years.

18 MARCH



1910 On 18 March 1910, Gopal Krishna Gokhale proposed before the British Legislative Council for the provision of free and compulsory primary education.

1944 On 18 March 1944, Azad Hind Fauj of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose crossed the border of Burma.

1922 The British court sentenced Mahatma Gandhi to six years in the sedition case in 1922 after the Civil

Disobedience Movement.

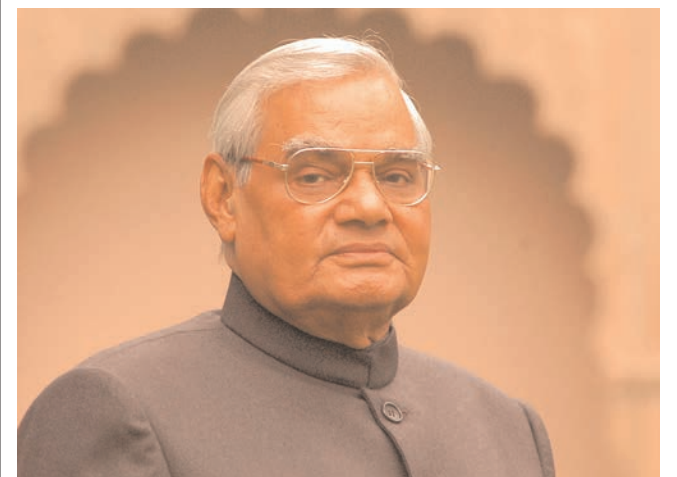
2009 The Union Cabinet recommended imposition of President's rule in Meghalaya in 2009.

19 MARCH

1944 The Azad Hind Fauj hoisted the national flag in 1944 in Northeast India.

1972 Friendship Agreement signed between India and Bangladesh in 1972.

1998 Atal Bihari Vajpayee became Prime Minister for the second time in 1998.



1848 On this day in 1848, Shatapatra Kaulam was started in a newspaper called Prabhakar.

1954 On this day in 1954, the first helicopter was operated in the country.

20 MARCH



2014 Khushwant Singh, a journalist, writer and historian who was recognized for his impeccable comment, died.

1351 Muhammad Tughlaq Shah Do died in 1351.

1921 Doctor Alexander was born in 1921.

1970 The Satyashodhak Samaj was formed in 1970.

1992 The great creator Satyajit Rai received the Bharat Ratna.

1987 The Food and Drug Administration approved the anti-AIDS drug AZT. It was the first drug approved by the US government to treat AIDS.

21 MARCH

1836 First public library started in Kolkata, now its name is National Library.

1858 Rebel soldiers of Lucknow surrender.

1887 Establishment of Prathana Samaj in Bombay.

1916 Shehnaist Ustad Bismillah Khan was born.

1791 British army was captured in 1791 by defeating Tipu Sultan of the then Bangalore.

1975 The then President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed declared Emergency under Section 352 at the request of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1975.

Hon'ble Mayor of Xela, Mr. Juan Fernando Lopez visits India to get valuable insights into various infrastructural projects

HON'BLE MAYOR'S VISIT TO INDIA HOLDS IMMENSE SIGNIFICANCE IN STRENGTHENING BILATERAL RELATIONS AND FOSTERING COLLABORATION BETWEEN XELA AND INDIA



Hon'ble Mayor of Xela Mr. Juan Fernando Lopez and his team visited Cable Car system operated by Usha Breco Ropeways in Haridwar, Uttarakhand

MARCH 13, 2024

GUATEMALA CITY (TIP): India's robust economic growth, coupled with its expanding global footprint, has positioned the country as a key player in the international arena. With Indian companies actively engaging in Central American market, India's role in fostering economic ties and partnerships with countries like Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras has become increasingly significant. As the fifth largest economy globally and poised to become the third largest in the near future, India's economic prowess has garnered attention worldwide. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India has embarked on various initiatives aimed at spurring economic growth, fostering innovation, and enhancing global cooperation. His visionary leadership has propelled India onto the global stage, with initiatives such as 'Make in India', 'Digital India', and 'Skill India' driving economic growth and innovation across various sectors. These initiatives and India's remarkable achievements in successful infrastructural development have not only bolstered India's domestic economy but also have garnered global attention like Central American governments



The delegation concluded with a tour of the Waste Management Plant in Mumbai, where insights into its technicalities and operations were shared



The delegation visiting manufacturing unit of Force Motors in Pune

which are now eagerly embracing Indian companies to invest in and bolster their own infrastructural projects.

In a significant stride toward strengthening infrastructure and economic development, Lakshmi Capital has made significant strides by securing five impactful projects with the Municipality of Xela (Quetzaltenango) in Guatemala, totaling an investment of US \$1.2 billion. These projects include a hydroelectric system, cable car system, supply of 700 buses, a waste management plant, and a 75MW solar energy plant in the region. The Municipality of Xela and Laxmi Capital have already signed Letters of Intent for these projects, with processes currently at an advanced stage.



The delegation administered manufacturing of vehicles at Eka Motors in Pune

In order to personally witness the progress and impact of these projects and to get valuable insights, Hon'ble Mayor of Xela, Mr. Juan Fernando Lopez has recently visited India to experience live demonstrations of these projects and their technical capabilities in India, which will be replicated during the final implementation of projects in Xela. During his visit, Mayor Lopez engaged with Indian officials,



The delegation enjoyed a ride in a vehicle manufactured by Tata Motors



The delegation is acquiring firsthand information about auto manufacturing and supply processes at Ashok Leyland's facility in Chennai

business leaders, and key stakeholders to explore avenues for partnership and collaboration. Site visits to Indian companies and facilities, meetings with industry experts, and discussions on areas of mutual interest formed the core of his agenda, with the aim of forging lasting partnerships that benefit both Xela and India.



The delegation visited the solar power plant in Avdi, Tamil Nadu getting the information on intricacies of operation of Solar power energy

The delegation led by Mayor Juan Fernando Lopez of Municipality of Xela and Mr. Wendal Rodas, CMD, Lakshmi Capital, embarked on a transformative journey through India, exploring opportunities for collaboration and partnership in various sectors. The visit commenced with a visit to the Cable Car System by Usha Breco Ropeways in Haridwar, where the delegation gained insights into innovative

CONTD ON PAGE 18

El Salvador and Lakshmi Capital sign two impactful Infrastructure Projects



A team led by Ambassador Dr Manoj Kumar Mohapatra and Hon'ble Ibrahim Bukele had a joint meeting to finalize the technical aspects of the metro line project in San Salvador.



Ambassador Dr Manoj Kumar Mohapatra with Hon'ble Mr. Ibrahim Bukele during signing of MoUs

MARCH 13, 2024

GUATEMALA CITY (TIP): Embassy of India is Guatemala aims to propel indigenous production across diverse sectors following the vision of Prime Minister Modi's encapsulated in "Make in India" and "India Goes Global". With a primary emphasis on facilitating business operations, enhancing infrastructure, and upgrading skills, these guiding principles aim to strengthen India's global footprint. Through strategic collaborations, outreach to investors, and diplomatic efforts, India seeks to assert its influence, promote mutual prosperity, and contribute to shaping a more interconnected and inclusive global landscape. This proactive approach towards bolstering trade and investment with Latin and Central American nations has resulted in strengthened economic bonds and increased collaboration across various sectors. By focusing on expanding market access, fostering technological exchange, and encouraging joint

ventures, India is paving the way for deeper engagement with the region. India's significant role in infrastructural development, particularly in sectors such as transportation, energy, and urban infrastructure, has played a pivotal role in driving sustainable growth and development in Central America. As part of these efforts, India is in advanced stages of collaboration with the Government of El Salvador through investments from Lakshmi Capital, an Indian company, to facilitate critical infrastructure projects. These projects include the construction of metro lines and the supply of buses, which will contribute significantly to the region's socio-economic advancement.

Recently, Lakshmi Capital, and the Ministry of Public Works and Transportation of the Republic of El Salvador signed a Memorandum of Understanding in San Salvador on 16 February 2023 for construction of 22 km metro line project (extending from initial proposal of 11 kms) in San Salvador. The MoU was signed

between Minister Romeo Rodriguez of Ministry of Public Works, Government of Republic of El Salvador and Transportation and Mr. Russell Alexander Luther Rodas of Laxmi Capital in the presence of Ambassador of India in Guatemala, Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra. Following thorough technical discussions, the Concession Agreement is anticipated to be signed in the first week of April 2024. A team of Delhi Metro is also scheduled to visit El Salvador from 18-22 March, 2024 to oversee the technicalities of Metro line project in the region.

Extending this collaboration to improve the infrastructural development in the region and with proactive approach of the El Salvadorian Government, the parties also signed another MoU to supply 5000 buses on 22nd February 2024. These milestones will pave the way for a visit by a delegation led by Hon'ble Mr. Ibrahim Bukele to India to administer technical know-how of these transformative projects. Furthermore, discussions have already been started with Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) for construction-related matters with regard to metro line project, and with Ashok Leyland and Tata Motors for bus procurement.

The metro line project and the provision of buses are geared towards revitalizing the economy and modernizing transportation infrastructure in the nation. Under the esteemed guidance and visionary leadership of President-elect Bukele, significant strides are being made by both countries towards realizing the established objectives. This collaborative effort underscores the strengthening bonds of friendship and mutual respect between India and El Salvador, fostering enhanced bilateral relations and mutual prosperity. India remains committed to further collaborating with the Government of El Salvador to advance other agendas such as atomic energy development, initiatives in non-renewable energy, digital transformation, and more.

CONTD FROM PAGE 17

Hon'ble Mayor of Xela, Mr. Juan Fernando Lopez visits India to get valuable insights into various infrastructural projects



Hon'ble Mayor dedicated time to nurture the environment, planting trees at the Avdi Solar power plant

transportation solutions. The journey continued with visits to renowned Indian companies, including Force Motors and Tata Motors in Pune and Ashok Leyland in Chennai, where Mayor Lopez witnessed the manufacturing processes of buses and electric vehicles. Impressed by India's automotive sector development, he expressed enthusiasm for potential collaborations with Indian companies to upgrade Xela's transportation services. The delegation also explored India's strides in renewable energy, visiting a solar power plant in Avdi, Tamil Nadu, executed by Bharat Electronics Limited. Mayor Lopez commended India's significant contribution to promoting renewable energy globally and participated in a tree plantation initiative at the solar power plant, symbolizing his commitment to sustainability. The visit concluded with a tour of a Waste Management Plant in Mumbai, providing insights into waste management practices and operations.

Despite a busy schedule, Mayor Lopez took the time to immerse himself in India's rich history and breathtaking beauty. From the vibrant streets of Delhi

to the timeless elegance of the Taj Mahal, the delegation experienced the cultural and architectural wonders of India. Additionally, Mayor Lopez had the enriching experience of immersing himself in Indian spirituality by visiting a Shiva temple on the auspicious occasion of Shivratri, celebrating the divine union of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati.

Through this journey, Mayor Juan Fernando Lopez and his delegation forged meaningful connections and laid the groundwork for future collaborations between Xela and India. The visit not only highlighted India's economic and technological advancements but also showcased its rich cultural and historic heritage, leaving a lasting impression on Mayor Lopez and his team. The visit of Mayor Juan Fernando Lopez of Xela, Guatemala, to India holds immense significance in strengthening bilateral relations and fostering collaboration between Xela and India. With a focus on exploring opportunities for investment, technology transfer, and knowledge exchange, Mayor Lopez's visit aims to deepen the bonds of friendship and cooperation between the two nations.

IMMERSE YOURSELF IN THE FESTIVAL OF COLORS AT NYC SEAPORT



South Street Seaport Celebrations

BY MABEL PAIS

Immerse yourself in the vibrant Festival of Colors, Holi, symbolizing the onset of Spring. The South Street Seaport neighborhood celebrates Holi on Saturday, March 23, 2024. You can get free General Admission to the South Street Seaport Museum 11am - 5 pm and explore the introduction galleries at 12 Fulton Street and the historic ships at Pier 16 throughout the day.

Holi originated on the Indian Subcontinent as a vibrant festival of colors, symbolizing the onset of Spring. Today, this joyous celebration has transcended borders and is embraced worldwide as a spirited way to welcome the season, promote inclusivity, and revel in playful and colorful festivities.

The festivities commence at 11am aboard the 1885 tall ship 'Wavertree,' where you'll discover the culinary delights of Holi and savor a tasty treat. The celebration continues on Seaport Square, featuring the Colors of Krishna's Love puppet show, which shares the history of Holi; interactive dance workshops and performances; and the iconic throwing of colorful pigments--the quintessential part of Holi.

After the colorful revelry, head to Pier 16 and participate in the creation of a collaborative mural inspired by the balloon fights that characterize Holi celebrations across India.

These activities, presented in collaboration with The Culture Tree and the Seaport, promise a day filled with cultural richness, interactive experiences, and the shared spirit of Holi. Explore below for details on special all-ages activities happening at the Seaport Museum. Learn more at seaportmuseum.org/holi

FOODS OF HOLI

MARCH 23 | 11AM | 'WAVERTREE' | FREE



Priya Krishna

Begin the Holi celebration with a family-friendly book reading and a captivating talk on the traditional foods of Holi by Priya Krishna, an award-winning food reporter for 'The New York Times.' Priya will share insights from her new book, 'Priya's Kitchen Adventures,' an illustrated cookbook for kids and parents that draws inspiration from her childhood experiences traveling the globe with her family.



Anu Sehgal

Credit / theculturetree.com

Following the reading, there will be an interactive cooking segment led by Anu Sehgal, founder and CEO of 'The Culture Tree,' which will culminate in a tasting of Shahi Toast, a sweet Holi delicacy. Participants will

also receive the recipe to recreate this treat at home.

Advanced registration is encouraged for this free family program but walk ups will be accommodated as possible. Please be aware that the treat contains nuts, dairy, and gluten.

HOLI COLLABORATIVE MURAL

MARCH 23 | 11AM-5PM | PIER 16 | FREE WITH GENERAL ADMISSION

Visitors of all ages are invited to continue the Holi celebration on Pier 16 with the Museum by joining in to create a vibrant collaborative mural inspired by the colorful pigment and balloon fights of the annual festival.

Every participant will be provided with a colorful paintball to add their touch to the mural, creating a collective masterpiece. Let's roll up our sleeves together and celebrate the kaleidoscope of colors that define Holi.

Supplies are limited. This activity takes place outdoors at Pier 16 and walk ups are welcome. No additional registration required.

EXTEND YOUR VISIT

General Admission includes access to all current exhibitions on view in the introduction gallery space at 12 Fulton Street and access to the 1885 tall ship 'Wavertree.' Free timed tickets for a tour of the 1908 lightship 'Ambrose' are available separately at no additional cost.

THE CULTURE TREE

The Culture Tree promotes cultural literacy about South Asia through language and educational and cultural programs. The goal is to create empathy, respect and understanding towards all different cultures and further inclusivity, while still helping address questions about Identity with heritage cultures.

The Culture Tree partners with museums, galleries, schools and libraries to implement its classes and programming. Programs include celebration of key festivals and events, puppet shows, bilingual storytime, mindful eating, mindfulness and language classes in key South Asian languages.

Culture Tree is made up of cultural and diversity consultants who advocate for cultural literacy and diversity and equity in children's programming and education. Learn more at theculturetree.com

THE SOUTH STREET SEAPORT MUSEUM

The South Street Seaport Museum, located in the heart of the historic seaport district in New York City, preserves and interprets the history of New York as a great port city. Founded in 1967, the Museum houses an extensive collection of works of art and artifacts, a maritime reference library, exhibition galleries and education spaces, working 19th century print shops, and an active fleet of historic vessels that all work to tell the story of "Where New York Begins." Learn more at seaportmuseum.org

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

MUCH CHERISHED FILM 'MATILDA' NARRATED LIVE BY DEVITO IN NJ SYMPHONY CONCERT

BY MABEL PAIS



Matilda

Crediit / njsymphony.org



Danny DeVito, Director

Crediit / njsymphony.org

New Jersey native Danny DeVito this March narrates the film 'Matilda,' while David Newman's enchanting score is performed live to picture! Acclaimed actor, producer and director Danny DeVito will join famed film composer David Newman and the New Jersey Symphony in a very special performance of 'Matilda' in Concert at the State Theatre New Jersey in New Brunswick, NJ, on Friday March 22, 2024. The performance will also feature celebrity guest appearances by actors who played characters in 'Matilda,' including Pam Ferris (Trunchbull), Rhea Perlman (Mrs. Wormwood) and Mara Wilson (Matilda).

STORY

Based on Roald Dahl's award-winning book and directed by Danny DeVito, from a screenplay by Nicholas Kazan & Robin Swicord, 'Matilda' is the story of a little girl (Mara Wilson) who loves books and wants to go to school. Belittled by mean parents and terrorized by a disparaging school headmistress, Matilda uses her secret telekinetic gift to stand up for herself, her friends, and the lovely Ms. Honey. This humorous and touching coming-of-age story will have audience members young and old humming in their seats!

Watch this video - youtu.be/8Cb1c7wS57Q

Celebrating almost 3 decades, the film adaptation of Road Dahl's literary masterpiece, expertly brought to life by Danny DeVito, is experiencing a remarkable resurgence in popular culture, now attaining a revered status among enthusiasts.

This revival has manifested in various ways, including cast reunions, captivating BuzzFeed re-enactments, a Tony Award-winning musical and the recent publication of "Where Am I Now?" by Mara Wilson, the actress who portrayed

the indomitable Matilda in the film. Recognized as one of the top 10 children's novels by the esteemed School Library Journal, 'Matilda' has firmly secured its place as one of the most cherished and enduring tales for young readers worldwide.

PROGRAM

MATILDA IN CONCERT

Friday, March 22, 7:30 pm
State Theatre of New Jersey in New Brunswick

Danny DeVito narrator
David Newman conductor

NEW JERSEY SYMPHONY

TICKETS

For Tickets & more information, visit njsymphony.org/matilda or call 1.800.ALLEGRO (255.3476).

An add-on VIP experience package is available, which includes a post-concert meet and greet and photo op with Danny DeVito and David Newman. The VIP experience tickets cost an additional fee when ordering concert tickets.

More information and tickets are available at njsymphony.org/matilda.

DANNY DEVITO

Danny DeVito has amassed a formidable and versatile body of work as an actor, producer and director that spans the stage, television and film.

In 1968, Danny landed his first part in a movie when he appeared as a thug in the obscure *Dreams of Glass* (1970). Despite this minor triumph, Danny became discouraged with the film industry and decided to focus on stage productions. He made his Off-Broadway debut in 1969 in 'The Man With the Flower in His Mouth.'

He followed this up with stage roles in 'The Shrinking Bride,' and 'Lady Liberty.' In 1975, he was approached by director Milos Forman and Michael Douglas about

appearing in the film version of 'One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest' (1975), which would star Jack Nicholson in the leading role. With box office success almost guaranteed and a chance for national exposure, Danny agreed to the role.

But his big break came in 1978 when he auditioned for a role of Louie DePalma, played flawlessly by Danny on an ABC sitcom pilot called 'Taxi' (1978), which centered around taxicab drivers at a New York City garage. The producers, realizing he was perfect for the part, brought him on board. The show was a huge success, running from 1978 to 1983. He was well-praised by critics, winning an Emmy award and being nominated three other times.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Devito played memorable roles in movies like 'Romancing the Stone' (1984), 'Ruthless People' (1986), 'Throw Momma from the Train' (1987) and 'Twins' (1988).

He also had a great deal of success behind the camera, directing movies like 'The War of the Roses' (1989) and 'Hoffa' (1992) and more.

In 1992, along with his wife Rhea Perlman, Danny co-founded Jersey Films, which has produced many popular films and TV shows, including 'Pulp Fiction' (1994), 'Get Shorty' (1995), 'Man on the Moon' (1999) and 'Erin Brockovich' (2000). DeVito has many directing credits to his name as well, including 'Throw Momma from the Train' (1987), 'The War of the Roses' (1989), 'Hoffa' (1992), 'Death to Smoochy' (2002) and the upcoming 'St. Sebastian.'

In 2006, he returned to series television in the FX comedy series 'It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia' (2005). With a prominent role in a hit series, DeVito's comic talents were now on display for a new generation of television viewers. In 2012, he provided the title voice role in Dr. Seuss' 'The Lorax' (2012). Learn more at imdb.com/name/nm0000362

DAVID NEWMAN

David Newman is one of today's most accomplished creators of music for film. In his 30-year career he has scored more than 110 films, ranging from 'War of the Roses,' 'Matilda,' 'Bowfinger,' and 'Heathers' to the more recent 'Girls Trip,' 'Night School' and 'Serenity.' His music has brought to life the critically acclaimed dramas 'Brokeback Palace' and 'Hoffa'; comedies such as 'Galaxy Quest' and 'Throw Momma from the Train'; and award-winning animated films 'Ice Age,' 'The Brave Little Toaster,' and 'Anastasia.' He holds an Academy Award nomination for his score to 'Anastasia.'

In 2021, after a decade of conducting numerous live music-to-film concerts for the classic 'West Side Story' film, Newman arranged the score for Steven Spielberg's bold new re-imagining of the legendary Leonard Bernstein & Stephen Sondheim musical, earning him a Grammy nomination in 2022.

Passionate about nurturing the next generation of musicians, Newman has served on the faculty of the Aspen Music Festival in the Film Scoring Program. Learn more at davidlouisnewman.com.

THE NEW JERSEY SYMPHONY

Learn more about the Emmy and Grammy Award-winning New Jersey Symphony at njsymphony.org or email information@njsymphony.org.

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

XIAN ZHANG CONDUCTS TCHAIKOVSKY'S BELOVED FIFTH SYMPHONY

BY MABEL PAIS

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

The New Jersey Symphony will present Tchaikovsky's beloved Fifth Symphony, conducted by Xian Zhang, in three March performances (see program below).

Composed in 1888 at his country house, Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 5 is widely recognized and one of the composer's most popular symphonies. The Fifth was a part of Zhang's inaugural program as New Jersey Symphony Music Director in October of 2016.



Tom Borrow

Credit / njsymphony.org

'Musical America's' "New Artist of the Month" in December of 2021, pianist Tom Borrow will play Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 24 in his New Jersey Symphony debut on these performances. Borrow was born in Tel Aviv and performs regularly around the world with orchestras like The Cleveland Orchestra, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra and BBC Symphony Orchestra, among others.

Also on the program is David Ludwig's 'NightVision,' which premiered at New Jersey Performing Arts Center with the New Jersey Symphony in 2001. Ludwig is currently Dean at The Juilliard School, and 'NightVision' is considered his breakout orchestral work.

Enjoy a lively Classical Conversation starting one hour before the concert on Friday, March 15, and Sunday, March 17. Learn more about the music from New Jersey Symphony musicians, guest artists and other engaging insiders.

PROGRAM

Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony
New Jersey Symphony Classical
Newark: Thursday, March 14, 2024, 1:30 pm New Jersey Performing Arts Center
Princeton: Friday, March 15, 2024, 8 pm Richardson Auditorium
Morristown: Sunday, March 17, 2024, 3 pm Mayo Performing Arts Center

XIAN ZHANG CONDUCTOR



Xian Zhang

Credit / njsymphony.org

Tom Borrow piano

NEW JERSEY SYMPHONY

David Ludwig NightVision
Mozart Piano Concerto No. 24
Tchaikovsky Symphony No. 5

TICKETS

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

DC ENVIRONMENTAL FILM FEST RETURNS IN A CRUCIAL YEAR

BY MABEL PAIS

The DC (District of Columbia) Environmental Film Festival returns to theaters in a crucial year.

(Photo here)

With a high-stakes election coming up this November, the Environmental Film Festival in the Nation's Capital (DCEFF) is offering opportunities for audiences to come out and engage with filmmakers, organizers, and experts on issues like climate change, environmental justice, and conservation efforts.

The Festival, March 21-30, which celebrates its 32nd year, hosts screenings of over 60 eye-catching and exciting new films at venues across the D.C. Metropolitan Area, including Smithsonians, foreign embassies, and universities, as well as the National Academy of Sciences and National Museum of Women in the Arts.

On Thursday March 21, the Festival will open at Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History with the U.S. Premiere of Academy Award-winner Luc Jacquet's new film 'Antarctica Calling.' 'The March of the Penguins' director will also be on hand



'First We Bombed New Mexico'

Credit / dceff.org

for a post-screening conversation about his career and what drew him back to the vanishing continent.

On Sunday, March 24, DCEFF will honor Hip Hop Caucus President & CEO Rev. Lennox Yearwood with its Environmental Champion Award in a special event followed by a screening of Underwater Projects, which highlights climate injustice in sinking Norfolk, Virginia. Additional guest highlights

include: Famed oceanographer Dr. Sylvia Earle in conversation at the National Portrait Gallery; Merlin Sheldrake, author of New York Times Bestseller 'Entangled Life' will be on hand for a double-feature of new films exploring the world of fungi, including one narrated by Icelandic singer-songwriter Björk; and Soul Fire Farm co-founder and author Leah Penniman will participate in a screening and

conversation of 'Farming While Black,' which chronicles the efforts of Penniman and other Black farmers to reclaim their agricultural heritage.

In terms of this year's film lineup, the Festival offers something for everyone. Highlights include: 'First We Bombed New Mexico,' a film that aims to tell "the story that [Oscar-frontrunner] Oppenheimer doesn't" about the forgotten communities still facing negative effects from the Trinity nuclear tests; the regional premiere of National Geographic's family-friendly Billy & Molly: An Otter Love Story; and additional titles exploring human connections to wildlife like 'Mongolia, Valley of the Bears' and semi-experimental moth film 'The Night Visitors' (both of which are taking home Festival awards, which totaled \$45,000 in filmmaker support this year).

TICKETS & SCHEDULE

For Tickets and the full schedule for the Environmental Film Festival, visit dceff.org.

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



Waheeda Rehman donates personal film memorabilia to Film Heritage Foundation

Legendary Bollywood actress and Padma Shri awardee Waheeda Rehman has donated her personal film memorabilia to Film Heritage Foundation (FHF) for preservation.

The actress was honored with India's highest film honour, the Dadasaheb Phalke award, last year, and has worked with some of the most renowned filmmakers of the country like Guru Dutt, Satyajit Ray, Basu Bhattacharya and Yash Chopra, during her career. The roles essayed by her in films have gone on to become classics in the history of Indian cinema. In a career spanning over five decades, she has worked in more than 90 feature films. Her accolades include a National Film Award and the Padma Bhushan in 2011.

The memorabilia includes the saree she wore to the premiere of C.I.D. in 1956, her photo albums and photographs and lobby cards from Kaagaz Ke Phool, Chaudvin Ka Chand, Sahib Bibi Aur Ghulam and Baat Ek Raat Ki. *Source: IANS*

Salman Khan teaming up with A R Murugadoss for new film

A meeting between Salman Khan, AR Murugadoss and Sajid Nadiadwala, earlier this year, had sparked speculations of a collaboration between the three. There were many reports that carried the news of a potential Salman Khan film being directed by AR Murugadoss. An official confirmation was being awaited, but the wait is finally over as both Salman Khan and AR Murugadoss have officially confirmed the collaboration. The anticipation is palpable as Salman Khan gears up for his next big project. Salman recently revealed news of this collaboration, promising another triumphant return on Eid 2025. Fans are eagerly awaiting to see what this dynamic trio has in store for them.

Sharing a photo of all the three of them in separate frames, Salman Khan announced the yet untitled project from his official handle, saying he was glad to join hands with the two. "Glad to join forces with the exceptionally talented, @a.r.murugadoss and my friend, #SajidNadiadwala for a very exciting film !! This collaboration is special, and I look forward to this journey with your love and blessings. Releasing EID 2025," he captioned his social media announcement post.

AR Murugadoss also announced the collaboration on his own handle and assured his fans of an "unforgettable cinematic experience".

Sajid Nadiadwala has a rich history of producing successful films with Salman Khan including hits like Judwaa, Kick and Mujhse Shaadi Karogi?.

Notably, Nadiadwala made his directorial debut with the film Kick in 2014. AR Murugadoss is a well-known figure in Tamil cinema and made his entry into Bollywood with the remake of his own Tamil film Ghajini. He also directed Akshay Kumar in Holiday, another successful remake, based on the Tamil film Thuppakki.

The collaboration between these experienced figures in the industry adds a layer of excitement to Salman Khan's upcoming project, hinting at a blend of creative expertise and cinematic flair. A source previously gave Pinkvilla information about the major project, saying that the action thriller will be filmed in Portugal and other European countries, with some scenes in India. It is the most ambitious production that Sajid Nadiadwala has ever undertaken, with a massive budget of Rs 400 crore.



Kareena, Tabu, Kriti Sanon set the dance floor on fire in Ghagra song from Crew

A new song, Ghagra, from Kareena Kapoor Khan, Tabu and Kriti Sanon-starrer Crew has been unveiled.

Ghagra is a party anthem in which the terrific trio radiates infectious energy, joyously celebrating amidst the dynamic beats of the dance number set in a vibrant club space. It is the reprised version of Ila Arun's iconic song. The film will be hitting the theatres on March 29. Earlier it was slated to release on March 22 but the makers have decided to push the film's release. Crew is a story of three women and is touted as a laugh-riot, set against the backdrop of the struggling airline industry. However, their destinies lead to some unwarranted situations and they get caught in a web of



lies.

The movie marks the second collaboration between Ektaa R

Kapoor and Rhea Kapoor after the 2018 female buddy comedy Veere Di Wedding. *Source: ANI*

'PEHLE STOMACH BURN, AB ABS KA TURN', SARA DROPS WORKOUT VIDEO

Actress Sara Ali Khan, who recently sustained a burn injury on her belly, has shared a workout video in which she could be seen doing abs burnout exercises.

Sara, who is currently gearing up for the release of her two films — 'Ae Watan Mere Watan' and 'Murder Mubarak' — had suffered a minor burn injury on March 6 when she accidentally spilled hot coffee on her belly while she was busy with promotional activities. The actress, known for her work in 'Kedarnath', took to Instagram where she shared a reel video. The snippet shows Sara in light blue shorts and a matching sports top, working out in gym while flaunting her toned abs. "Pehle stomach burn... Ab abs ka turn... You gotta work so you can earn... the sarso ka saag for which you yearn..." Sara captioned the post. The video has already garnered 1.3 million views, with fans showering love on Sara.





Brad Pitt secures another victory against ex-wife Angelina Jolie

Brad Pitt is clearly at an advantage in 'War of the Rosés.' The latest court ruling is favouring Pitt, who has been handed up-to-the minute victory in the battle to control the French vineyard he owned with ex-wife Angelina Jolie. This marks his second consecutive win after the previous one in February. This big win implies that the Bullet Train star's legal team has all the rights to take the lawsuit to court, in which the A-lister is suing Jolie. According to Mail, Jolie's legal team had been trying to reverse a court decision in LA that agreed with her ex-husband's claim. The big claim made by Pitt, where he mentioned Jolie selling her share of their beautiful vineyard to Russian oligarch Yuri Shefler without his consent in 2021, has been the center of dispute between the Hollywood heavyweights since their divorce. However, the court has now dismissed claims that his lawsuit was "frivolous, malicious, and part of a problematic pattern," marking another win for the Fight Club star.

The Fall Guy is a funny, romantic, stunt-filled delight

David Leitch's action comedy *The Fall Guy*, with Barbie star Ryan Gosling and *Oppenheimer* star Emily Blunt, premiered at the SXSW this week. The first reviews hail it as "delightful," "funny," and "surprisingly romantic" among other things.

The *Vulture* review lauded Ryan's comic skills by stating, "Gosling, whose comedic talents were criminally undervalued until last year's runaway hit *Barbie*, gets to flex them again here, bringing his deadpan, affably dim charm to the role of Colt Seavers, a hot-shot stunt double for megawatt movie star."

The *Variety* review echoed the thought and claimed Ryan is very well-cast. "The *Fall Guy* is funny, it's sexy, and it features the boy-toy version of Barbie scene-stealer Ryan Gosling — which is to say, this time around, he embodies the ultimate action figure," it read.

The *Vulture* review said that the 'genuine romance' between Ryan and Emily's characters is the most surprising thing about the film. It stated, "Blunt and Gosling have splendid chemistry — the kind of onscreen magnetism shared by people who are not just insanely hot but also simply know how to look at each other." The *Guardian* review seemed to agree: "It's all a fizzy, funny, convincingly romantic delight, a tribute to the craft of making big movies with big stunts



that is heartfelt in its appreciation without taking itself too seriously."

However, the *Wrap* review called *The Fall Guy* "dull," in comparison to Dev Patel's action flick *Monkey Man*, which premiered the same evening at SXSW. "Where that directorial debut from Dev Patel felt fresh and alive, this one plays as a stale attempt at an action-comedy that quickly runs out of steam," it stated.

Based on Glen A. Larson's 1980s

television series of the same name, *The Fall Guy* stars Ryan as Colt Seavers, a stuntman on the hunt for a missing movie star he once doubled for. The film also stars Emily as Gosling's ex-girlfriend Jody, and Aaron Taylor-Johnson. Supporting them in the film is Stephanie Hsu (*Everything Everywhere All at Once*), Winston Duke (*Black Panther*), Hannah Waddingham (*Ted Lasso*) and Teresa Palmer (*A Discovery of Witches*).

Dev Patel and his directorial debut, *Monkey Man*, have taken Hollywood by storm! This intense action story of a young man, who seeks revenge for his mother's death, is a visual extravaganza and an emotional experience, say those who watched the film at SXSW.

However, more than making a much-deserved spectacular directorial debut, what the 33-year-old *Slumdog Millionaire* star has managed to do is take Indian mythology and make it mainstream Hollywood cinema. This is a feat that no one else has achieved.

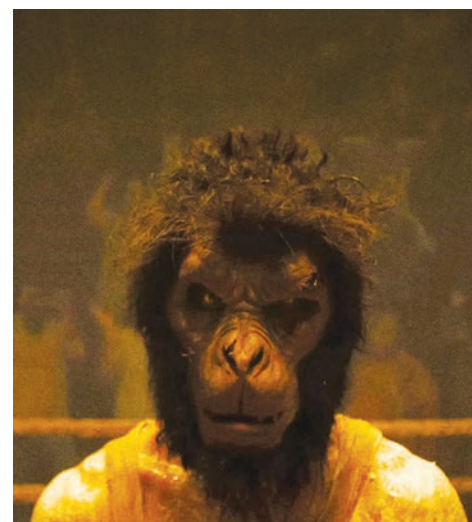
Set in Mumbai, *Monkey Man* is inspired by Lord Hanuman. Dev revealed he was introduced to the *Ramayana* and Lord Hanuman's stories by his grandfather, who used to narrate them to him when he was a child. After the screening on Monday, Dev explained to the audience on why he found inspiration from Lord Hanuman. Hanuman is a god who is symbolised by devotion, loyalty, valour, strength, humility and discipline. And the character that Dev plays in the film — Kid — embodies these qualities as well.

"Hanuman really captivated me. He has been sort of an emblem for my father and many in my family. If you go to any gym in India, there's Arnold Schwarzenegger,

Ronnie Coleman and Hanuman. What baffled me growing up was this iconography of this super-strong being who could hold mountains in one hand and split his chest open. It reminded me of the iconography of Superman. I was like, this is amazing, I wish the world knew about it. When you go deep into it, he is sort of a guy who has lost faith in himself and had to be reminded of who he was," said the Lion actor, who hails from a Gujarati Hindu family.

But *Monkey Man* delves much deeper, especially into the caste system in India, socio-political issues, and the exploitation that is inherent in Indian society. Dev added, "I really wanted to touch on caste system in India, the idea where the poor are at the bottom, slaving away in these kitchens, then you go to the land of the kings and above them, you have God, a man-made god that is polluting and corrupting religion, and then you have heaven."

Writing the screenplay with Paul Angunawela and John Collee, *The Last Airbender* star has taken Indian



mythology to the world, weaving a story which they can relate to and understand. He combined two of his biggest passions — love for action films and love for the stories narrated by his grandad — and created a world on screen that has captured the imagination of the Western audience. While director SS Rajamouli took a Telugu film, *RRR*, which included a

slice of Indian history, to the global audience, Dev has pushed the envelope a significant step further by making a Hollywood action drama inspired by Indian mythology, set in India, but having global appeal.

There have been many Indian films inspired by the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, and Indian filmmakers continue to tap into these epics for stories. However, this is the first time that the West has been exposed to a mainstream Hollywood film that has its roots in these epics and set in an Indian milieu. What Dev has done is successfully combine elements of Indian cinema (mother sentiment, Mumbai milieu, revenge story, caste, etc) with the Hollywood action genre, and possibly created a new genre of cinema that has takers.

Monkey Man is slated for release on April 5, 2024 worldwide and with the amazing response it has received at SXSW, Dev Patel and his film are likely to inspire more filmmakers in India, and possibly the West, to tap into Indian mythology for mainstream films. *Source: HT*

UKRAINE FIRES MISSILES AT POLL-BOUND RUSSIA

MOSCOW (TIP): Ukraine fired at least eight missiles at Russia's Belgorod border region, killing one person and wounding six, local officials said March 14, as Kyiv's forces apparently kept up their efforts to rattle the Kremlin on the eve of Russia's presidential election.

Also, in Russia's Kursk border region, Ukrainian forces attempted a cross-border raid that was repelled, according to local authorities. It was not possible to independently verify the Russian claims.

The Ukrainian assaults on Russian territory in recent days, including long-range drone attacks and alleged incursions by Ukraine-based Russian proxies, have come as President Vladimir Putin heads for near-certain reelection. Putin has sought to persuade Russians to keep him in power against a backdrop of what he says are foreign threats to the country. — AP

PLAN TO INSTALL NEW LEADERS IN HAITI APPEARS TO CRUMBLE AFTER POLITICAL PARTIES REJECT IT

PORT-AU-PRINCE, HAITI (TIP): A proposal to install new leadership in Haiti appeared to be crumbling March 13 as some political parties rejected the plan to create a presidential council that would manage the transition.

The panel would be responsible for selecting an interim prime minister and a council of ministers that would attempt to chart a new path for the Caribbean country that has been overrun by gangs. The violence has closed schools and businesses and disrupted daily life across Haiti.

Jean Charles Moïse, an ex-senator and presidential candidate who has teamed up with former rebel leader Guy Philippe, held a news conference Wednesday to announce his rejection of the proposed council backed by the international community.

Moïse insisted that a three-person presidential council he recently created with Philippe and a Haitian judge should be implemented.

"We are not going to negotiate it," he said in a loud voice as he wiped his forehead with a handkerchief. "We have to make them understand."

His ally, Philippe, who helped lead a successful revolt in 2004 against former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and was recently released from a United States prison after pleading guilty to money laundering, said no Haitian should accept any proposal from the international community.

It was not immediately clear who he was awarded a position on the council if it was rejected by certain political parties. (AP)

UK redefines extremism to counter hate crime, radicals

LONDON (TIP): The UK government on March 14 issued a new, "more precise" definition of extremism in response to increased threats since the October 2023 Hamas terror attacks in Israel and to protect liberal democratic principles against extreme right-wing and Islamist extremists.

Extremism in the UK is now defined as the promotion or advancement of an ideology based on violence, hatred or intolerance, that aims to negate or destroy the fundamental rights and freedoms of others; undermine, overturn or replace the UK's system of liberal parliamentary democracy and democratic rights; or intentionally create a permissive environment for others to achieve the results in the first two categories.

PM FLAGGED ISSUE

Earlier this month, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak warned that Britain's multi-ethnic democracy was being deliberately undermined by both Islamist and far-right extremists, and more needed to be done to tackle the problem.

Antisemitic incidents rose by 147% in 2023, fuelled by the October 7 attacks, according to Community Security Trust, a Jewish safety watchdog.

The previous definition, introduced in 2011 under the government's Prevent strategy, defined extremism as "vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths



and belief".

UK Levelling Up and Communities Secretary Michael Gove said the update was needed to safeguard the UK as a multi-national, multi-ethnic, multi-faith democracy "success story", which is stronger because of its diversity.

"But our democracy and our values of inclusivity and tolerance are under challenge from extremists. In order to protect our democratic values, it is important both to reinforce what we have in common and to be clear and precise in identifying the dangers posed by extremism," said Gove.

The minister said the new measures would ensure that the government does

not inadvertently provide a platform to those setting out to subvert democracy and deny other people's fundamental rights. He also indicated it marks the first in a series of measures to tackle extremism and protect British democracy. The new definition is not statutory, does not create new powers and has no effect on the existing criminal law of the country.

It will be used by ministerial departments and officials alongside a set of engagement principles to ensure they are not "inadvertently" funding or legitimising groups or individuals who attempt to advance extremist ideologies. — PTI

Rare protest by Chinese official media against police crackdown on coverage of deadly blast

BEIJING (TIP): In a rare show of defiance, Chinese media on March 14 protested against the attempts by police to block the coverage of a suspected gas leak explosion at an eatery in the country's north, which killed seven persons and injured 27.

The blast that rocked a fried chicken shop in Yanjiao township in the city of Sanhe, near Beijing, on Wednesday is suspected to have been caused by a gas leak.

As Chinese official media and foreign journalists rushed to cover the explosion, which killed two people and injured 27 others, they were forcibly prevented by local authorities from the scene, raising a rare controversy over the country's press restrictions.

A journalist with state broadcaster CCTV was interrupted while reporting live from the scene of the blast. The journalist was seen surrounded by several uniformed police officers who blocked the camera and shouted about the potential danger at the scene, according to a video that circulated online.

The video of the report was no longer

available on CCTV's website as of Thursday, the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post newspaper reported.

In another video, reporters were seen surrounded by a group of uniformed police officers asking them to leave the scene.

A reporter with state-run China Media Group, of which CCTV is a division, was heard saying, "We three reporters are shoved by a dozen people".

The state-run All China Journalists Association objected to the official crackdown, saying that officials should not "simply and brutally obstruct journalists in the normal performance of their duties for the sake of controlling public opinion". The association urged officials to make it easier for media to conduct on-site interviews when reporting emergencies.

The police crackdown against media was seen as an attempt by the local officials to downplay the coverage, fearing reprisals as last month, Chinese President Xi Jinping ordered steps to curb occurrences of recurring incidents of building fires due to various causes

and protect people's lives and property and social stability.

As the videos of media protests went viral on the Chinese social media platform Weibo, akin to X, local authorities on Thursday issued a statement saying they were "deeply remorseful" and apologised to the journalists, the Post report said.

The media protest against the official crackdown also figured in the Chinese foreign ministry briefing, as many foreign journalists were reportedly prevented from covering the evening.

When questioned on restrictions imposed on journalists, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said local officials have issued a statement on the incident.

China welcomes foreign journalists conducting reporting activities under the law and is willing to facilitate if the media faces any problems, Wang said.

Fire and gas explosions have been taking place almost every month, prompting President Xi to order the concerned agencies to take pre-emptive measures. (PTI)

Kremlin says Putin didn't threaten to use nuclear weapons, US took him out of context

MOSCOW (TIP): The Kremlin said on March 14 that comments on nuclear weapons that Russian President Vladimir Putin made in an interview with state media did not constitute a threat to use them, and accused the US of deliberately taking the remarks out of context.

Putin said in the interview published on Wednesday that Russia was technically ready for nuclear war and that if the US sent troops to Ukraine, it would be considered a significant escalation of the conflict.

Commenting on Putin's words, White House spokesperson Karine Jean-Pierre told reporters that Washington understood that the Russian leader was restating Moscow's nuclear doctrine, but accused Russia of deploying "reckless and irresponsible" nuclear rhetoric throughout the Ukraine conflict.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov



said on Thursday that Putin had merely been answering a journalist's questions on the subject and restating the already well known circumstances in which Russia would theoretically be forced to use nuclear weapons.

Peskov also drew attention to the fact that Putin had said in the same

interview that the idea of using tactical nuclear weapons in Ukraine had never crossed his mind.

Asked about the White House comments, Peskov said: "This was deliberately taking something out of context. Putin made no threats about the use of nuclear weapons in this interview. The president was just talking about the reasons that could make the use of nuclear weapons inevitable."

"These are the reasons that are stated in our relevant documents, which are well known throughout the world. Moreover, everyone in the West deliberately failed to notice his words that it had never occurred to him to use tactical nuclear weapons (in Ukraine), despite the various situations that have developed in the course of the fighting. This is a deliberate distortion of the context and an unwillingness to hear President Putin," he added. (Reuters)

RIO POLICE RELEASE 17 HOSTAGES FROM GUNMAN ON A BUS, 2 PEOPLE WOUNDED

RIO DE JANEIRO (TIP): Brazilian police said on March 12 they released 17 hostages from a gunman that took over a crowded bus in Rio de Janeiro and wounded at least two people.

Rio police said in its social media channels that all hostages aboard a bus parked at one of the city's main terminals had been freed "after a successful work of negotiation" led by its elite squad.

The man's motive remains unclear, Police Col Marco Andrade said in an interview on TV news channel Globo News. "We have children and older people inside the bus," Andrade said, adding that very little was known at this stage.

The bus was parked at the Sao Cristovao terminal in the city centre and was scheduled to head to the neighboring state of Minas Gerais.

Police cars and ambulances could be seen waiting near the bus, while thousands of passengers were stranded waiting for information on scheduled travel.

People interviewed on TV said they heard several gunshots, causing panic inside the crowded terminal.

One wounded person was sent to a nearby hospital, police said. (AP)

Israeli jets hit more Hezbollah targets in Lebanon's Bekaa

BEIRUT (TIP): Israeli warplanes struck deep into Lebanon for a second consecutive day on March 13, hitting a facility belonging to Hezbollah in the Bekaa Valley and killing at least one member of the Iran-backed group, sources in Lebanon said.

Ship carrying aid to Gaza leaves Cyprus

A ship carrying 200 tonnes of aid for Gaza left Cyprus on Tuesday in a pilot project to open a sea route to deliver supplies to a population aid agencies say is on the brink of famine

Aid groups say it is nearly impossible to deliver aid in much of the territory because of Israeli restrictions and ongoing hostilities. The US has also announced plans to construct a sea bridge near Gaza in order to deliver aid

The Israeli military said its fighter jets had "struck two Hezbollah military command centres" in the Baalbek area, in response to Hezbollah rocket launches towards northern Israel earlier in the day.

The violence marked an uptick of the conflict between Hezbollah and Israel which has been fought in parallel to the Gaza war and fuelled fears of an all-out conflict between the heavily armed adversaries.

Hezbollah said in a statement it had fired more than 100 Katyusha rockets at 7 am (0500 GMT), targeting several Israeli military posts, in response to Israeli shelling of the Bekaa Valley region on Monday night.

At least one civilian was killed and



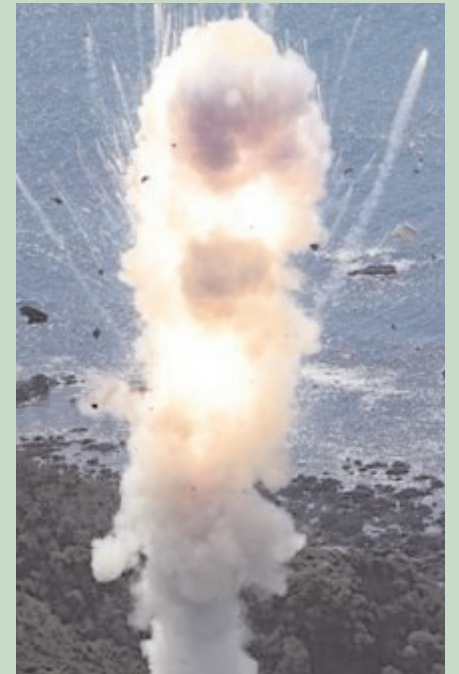
several others were wounded in Monday's strikes by Israel, one of which hit the southern entrance to the city of Baalbek, about 2 km (1.2 miles) from its ancient Roman ruins, two security sources in Lebanon and the Baalbek governor, Bashir Khader, said.

The Israeli military said in response to Monday's rocket launches, its fighter jets had struck sites in the Baalbek area which Hezbollah used to store "significant assets used to strength its weapons arsenal".

"A military compound in the area of Khiam and terrorist infrastructure in the area of Bint Jbeil were also struck," the Israeli military added.

The Hezbollah member was killed and several more were wounded in an airstrike in the Bekaa Valley village of Nabi Chit, said one of the Lebanese sources. The targeted region is a stronghold of the Shi'ite Islamist group near the Lebanese-Syrian border. — Reuters

SCARY SIGHT: JAPAN'S 1ST PRIVATE-SECTOR ROCKET EXPLODES SECONDS AFTER LAUNCH



TOKYO (TIP): A rocket that was supposed to become Japan's first from the private sector to put a satellite into orbit exploded shortly after takeoff on March 13, a livestreamed video showed.

Online video showed the rocket called Kairos blasting off from Wakayama Prefecture, in central Japan, a mountainous area filled with trees, but exploding midair within seconds.

A huge plume of smoke engulfed the area, and flames shot up in some spots. The video then showed spurts of water trying to put out the blaze.

There were no reports of injuries, and the fire has been brought under control, according to the fire department in Kushimoto city, Wakayama.

Tokyo-based startup Space One, behind the rocket launch, did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Live footage on public broadcaster NHK relayed a voice announcing to the crowd gathered to watch the takeoff from a safe distance. NHK showed debris scattering from the sky, and later charred pieces strewn about on the ground. The cause of the problems was still under investigation, according to NHK.

The launch was already delayed several times, with the last postponement coming on Saturday, after a ship was spotted in a risk area, according to Japanese media reports.

If it had succeeded, Space One would have been the first private company to put a rocket into orbit.

Tokyo-based Space One was set up in 2018, with investments from major Japanese companies, including Canon Electronics, IHI, Shimizu and major banks. (AP)

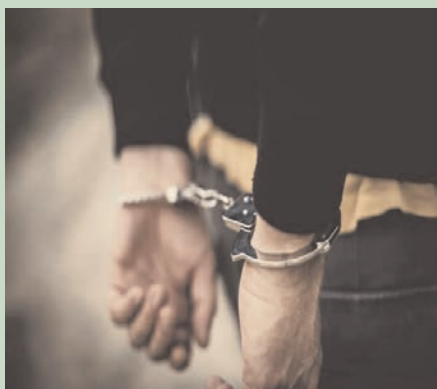
NEPAL PM WINS TRUST VOTE IN PARL FOR THIRD TIME

KATHMANDU (TIP): Nepal Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' on March 14 secured a vote of confidence in Parliament, as the Himalayan country struggled to maintain political stability.

Prachanda, 69, a former guerilla leader of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist Centre) — the third largest party

in the House of Representatives — got 157 votes in the 275-member lower house. He needed 138 votes to win the trust vote, his third since December 2022. (PTI)

21 INDIANS ARRESTED IN SRI LANKA FOR WORKING ILLEGALLY WHILE ON TOURIST VISA: REPORT



COLOMBO (TIP): Sri Lankan authorities have arrested 21 Indian nationals for illegally operating an online marketing centre in the island nation, violating the relaxed tourist visa norms, a media report said on Wednesday.

The 21 Indian men in the age group of 24 to 25, who were in Sri Lanka on tourist visas, were taken into custody on March 13 by the Department of Immigration and Emigration, the Daily Mirror newspaper reported.

After a preliminary inquiry, the department raided a rented house in Negombo city, where those arrested were found operating an online marketing centre. The house had been converted into an office space where computers and other devices had been installed, the report said.

Under Sri Lanka's law, those who visit the island nation on tourist visas are prohibited from engaging in any paid or unpaid work.

The Indian nationals had used the free-of-charge visa condition that Sri Lanka has granted to a set of countries till March 31 as part of an ongoing pilot project to promote tourism in the cash-strapped country.

They had arrived in Sri Lanka in February and March on tourist visas, a senior immigration official told the newspaper.

The arrested Indian nationals were transferred to the department's detention centre in Welisara on the orders of relevant authorities, the report said. (PTI)

Ex-Pakistan PM Nawaz Sharif's sons' arrest warrants in Panama Papers scandal-linked cases cancelled

ISLAMABAD (TIP): In a major relief to ex-Pakistan prime minister Nawaz Sharif's family, an anti-corruption court on March 14 cancelled the permanent arrest warrants against his two sons, who recently returned from the UK after a seven-year self-imposed exile.

Hassan Nawaz and Hussain Nawaz left the country in 2018 after they were named in the 2016 Panama Papers scandal.

They faced charges in three corruption cases related to the Panama Papers but never appeared before the courts, which declared them absconders.

The brothers returned to Pakistan on Tuesday after an Islamabad anti-corruption court on March 7 suspended the perpetual arrest warrants against the two until Thursday, clearing the last hurdle for their safe return to the country.

On Thursday, Hassan and Hussain appeared at the Islamabad-based Accountability Court, which, after hearing the arguments, cancelled the permanent arrest warrant issued in the Flagship, Al-Azizia and Avenfield corruption cases.

The court also approved their bail against a surety bond worth Rs 50,000 each.

Both sons of the former prime minister also applied for exemption from attending court on the next hearing. The court adjourned the hearing till Friday.

The brothers, who are British nationals, were implicated in the cases in 2018 along with their father, Nawaz Sharif, sister Maryam Nawaz and her husband, Muhammad Safdar.

Nawaz Sharif, Maryam and Safdar were convicted in the Avenfield while the



three-time former premier was also convicted in the Al-Azizia cases and acquitted in the Flagship case.

All of them separately challenged convictions in the Islamabad High Court. Maryam and Safdar were the first to get relief in 2022 when they were acquitted while Nawaz Sharif was still living in London. Last year, he returned and, after brief proceedings, was acquitted in all cases.

After their acquittal, only the two brothers were required to face the courts, as they were not formally tried due to their absence. Like their father, the two brothers are likely to get acquitted in all three cases as the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), which had instituted these cases against them, has given them a clean chit.

Since the Sharif family and their

party—the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N)—are being patronage by the current military establishment, all the cases against them have either been closed or acquitted.

In October last year, Nawaz Sharif returned to Pakistan after a four-year self-imposed exile in the UK, and after brief proceedings, he was acquitted in all cases.

His younger brother, Shehbaz Sharif, was elected as Pakistan's prime minister for a second time after the PML-N and the Pakistan Peoples Party agreed on a power-sharing deal to form a coalition government.

Maryam, the 50-year-old daughter of Nawaz Sharif, took oath as the first-ever woman chief minister of Pakistan's most populous and politically crucial Punjab province on February 26. (Reuters)

Al-Qaida's Yemen branch says leader Khalid al-Batarfi dead in unclear circumstances

DUBAI (TIP): : The leader of Yemen's branch of al-Qaida is dead, the militant group announced late March 11, without giving details.

Khalid al-Batarfi had a \$5 million bounty on his head from the U.S. government over leading the group al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula over years that saw him imprisoned, freed in a jailbreak and governing forces in Yemen amid that country's grinding war.

Though believed to be weakened in recent years due to infighting and suspected U.S. drone strikes killing its leaders, the group known by the acronym AQAP has long been considered the most dangerous branch of the extremist group still operating after the killing of founder Osama bin Laden.

Al-Qaida released a video showing al-Batarfi wrapped in a white funeral

shroud and al-Qaida's black-and-white flag.

Militants offered no details on the cause of his death and there was no clear sign of trauma visible on his face. Al-Batarfi was believed to be in his early 40s.

The leader of Yemen's branch of al-Qaida is dead, the militant group announced Sunday, March 10, 2024, without giving details.

An attack by al-Qaida-allied group in northwest Syria kills, wounds dozens of troops, activists say

The group made the announcement on the eve of Ramadan, the Muslim holy fasting month that Yemen will begin Monday.

In the announcement, the group said Saad bin Atef al-Awlaki would take over as its leader. The U.S. has a \$6 million

bounty on him, saying al-Awlaki "has publicly called for attacks against the United States and its allies."

"Although in decline, AQAP remains the most effective terrorist group in Yemen with intent to conduct operations in the region and beyond," a recent United Nations report on al-Qaida said.

Estimates provided to the U.N. put AQAP's total forces as numbering between 3,000 and 4,000 active fighters and passive members. The group raises money by robbing banks and money exchange shops, as well as smuggling weapons, counterfeiting currencies and ransom operations, according to the U.N.

Al-Batarfi took over as the head of the branch in February 2020. He succeeded leader Qassim al-Rimi, who was killed by a U.S. drone strike ordered by then-President Donald Trump. (AP)

Holashtak: Why not do auspicious work for eight days

In the Hindu calendar, the period of Holashtak holds great significance. Commencing from the Ashtami date of Shukla Paksha in the month of Phalgun, Holashtak, spanning eight days leading up to the festival of Holi, is a time of caution and reflection as per religious beliefs.

Derived from the combination of 'Holi' and 'Ashtak,' Holashtak signifies a period of astrological significance where all major planets are believed to exert fierce energies, rendering it inauspicious for conducting any auspicious activities. Dr Mrityunjay Tiwari, Head of the Astrology Department at Shri Kallaji Vedic University, provides insights into the significance and duration of Holashtak for the year 2024.

This year, Falgun Shukla Ashtami Tithi begins at 09:39 PM on March 16 and concludes at 09:53 AM on March 17. Hence, based on Udayatithi, Phalgun Shukla Ashtami Tithi falls on March 17, marking the commencement of Holashtak. Holashtak ends with Holika Dahan on Phalgun Purnima, scheduled for March 24 2024. Consequently, the eight-day period of Holashtak concludes on March 24, followed by the celebration of the Holi festival on March 25.

Activities avoided during Holashtak

- No auspicious work or new ventures are initiated.
- Major rituals such as marriages, naming ceremonies, house warming and head-shaving ceremonies are postponed.
- Observers maintain good conduct, practice restraint, and celibacy.
- However, Holashtak also presents opportunities for spiritual practices and penance:
- Devotees engage in penance and follow strict spiritual disciplines.
- Collecting small pieces of wood daily for Holika Dahan is customary.
- Donations of food, clothing, money, and other items are encouraged, resulting in virtuous outcomes.
- The period is conducive for chanting, tantra, mantra sadhana, and spiritual pursuits, considered ideal for Tantra Sadhana and Siddhi.

Legend has it that during Holashtak, devotee Prahlad faced trials from his father Hiranyakashyap in his steadfast devotion to Lord Vishnu. Ultimately, Lord Vishnu's incarnation as Narasimha vanquished Hiranyakashyap, illustrating the triumph of devotion over adversity.

Rituals

With the start of Holashtak, people start decorating the branch of a tree using colorful pieces of clothes. Each individual ties a piece of cloth on the branch and it is then finally buried in the ground. Few communities even burn these pieces of clothes during Holika Dahan.

Also on the beginning day of Holashtak, Falgun Shukla Paksha Ashtami, and a place is chosen for Holika Dahan. On each day small sticks are gathered and collected at the place of Holika Dahan.

The festival of Holi finally comes to end on the day of 'Dhuleti'.

The day of Holashtak is ideal for doing 'Daan' or offering donations. During this time one must generously donate clothes, grains, money and other essential commodities as per their financial status.

Significance

Holashtak is a word made from two different words, 'Holi' and 'Ashtak' (8th day) implying the eight days of Holi. In the Hindu community, the period of Holashtak is considered to be unfavourable.



Therefore auspicious ceremonies like marriages, child naming sanskar, housewarming and any other 16 Hindu Sanskars or rituals are avoided during this period. In some communities people even do not prefer starting a new business venture during the Holashtak period.

There are certain reasons why the period of Holashtak is considered inauspicious. Three of them are as follows:

For one, it is believed that the planets of religious significance like the Sun, Moon, Mercury, Jupiter, Mars, Saturn, Rahu and Venus undergo transformations and it is unfavourable to auspicious activities because of uncertainty of the results.

As per a legend claimed by the Vishnu Puran and the Bhagvata Puran, the king of demons, Hiranyakashipu warned his son Prahlada against worshiping Lord Vishnu. Despite the warning, Prahlada continued to worship the Lord with full devotion and steadfast loyalty. This angered Hiranyakashipu so much that he began torturing Prahlada to the extent that he even tried to kill his son. He abused Prahlada for eight days, from Ashtami to Purnima of the Hindu Phalgun month. Hiranyakashipu later entrusted his sister, Holika to kill Prahlada. Holika was born with a blessing that she would never get harmed by fire. She grabbed Prahlada on her lap and sat on fire with the intention of killing him. However, Prahlada was protected by Lord Vishnu for his undying faith and devotion. He came out completely unharmed while Holika died in the fire. The eight days before the Holika Dahan incident that marked the torture of Prahlada is called the Holashtak, and is considered inauspicious and unfavorable in the Hindu religion. In another legend according to the Shiv Puran,

“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

Lord Shiva chose to enter a meditational trance soon after Sati embraced death by fire. She was later reborn as Goddess Parvati who wished to marry Lord Shiva, but he resorted to meditation and ignored her feelings. The heavenly Lord of love and carnal desires, Lord Kama Deva was summoned to arouse passion in Lord Shiva so that he would agree to marry Goddess Parvati. Lord Kama Deva struck Lord Shiva with Kamabana to arouse feelings in him which, however, disturbed Lord Shiva in his meditation. This angered him and he opened his third eye at Kama Deva, reducing him to ashes on the day of Phalgun Ashtami. Lord Kama Deva's wife Rati, who was a faithful devotee of Lord Shiva, prayed to him for her husband. This earned Lord Shiva's pity, and he later revived Lord Kama Deva from the ashes. This period has been considered as Holashtak ever since.

The period of Holashtak is considered to be very favourable for Tantriks as they can easily achieve their goals through 'Saadhna'. The celebrations of Holi start with the beginning of Holashtak and come to an end on 'Dhuleti', the day following Falgun Purnima.

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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.”

Benefits of using tea powder for healthy hair

Many of us want thick, luscious hair, and the secret to achieving it might just be in your kitchen cupboard! Tea, a common beverage, has a lot of health benefits. Did you know it could also work wonders for your hair? Tea — whether black, green or herbal — is packed with antioxidants, such as polyphenols and catechins, which fight oxidative stress and inflammation that can lead to hair loss. Vitamins like vitamin E and minerals like iron found in tea are vital for healthy hair growth. Without wasting much time, let's take a look at the benefits of using tea powder water in hair.

Hair Growth

Tea powder, when used in hair care, provides hair growth by improving blood circulation to the hair follicles. The caffeine in tea powder penetrates deep into the follicles, nourishing them and promoting healthy hair growth.

Rich in Antioxidants

Tea powder is packed with antioxidants like polyphenols and catechins, which are known for their ability to combat oxidative stress. These antioxidants protect the hair follicles from damage caused by free radicals, reducing the risk of hair loss and promoting overall scalp health.

Provides Essential Nutrients

Tea powder contains essential nutrients like vitamin E and iron, which are crucial for maintaining healthy hair. Vitamin E promotes hair growth by supporting a healthy scalp, while iron helps in the production of red blood cells, which



carry oxygen and nutrients to the hair follicles.

Strengthens Hair Follicles

Regular use of tea powder strengthens the hair follicles, making them less prone to breakage. The strengthening effect of tea powder helps in maintaining overall health and reducing the risk of split ends and breakage.

Reduces Hair Loss

Tea powder contains compounds that promote the production of DHT, a hormone known to

contribute to hair loss. By reducing the levels of DHT in the scalp, tea powder helps in reducing hair fall and promoting the growth of new, healthy hair.

How to prepare?

Prepare the tea and let it cool to room temperature. Avoid using hot tea, as it can damage your hair. Shampoo your hair as usual, then rinse it with the tea. Gently massage the tea into your scalp, leave it on for a few minutes, and then rinse with cold water.

Source: News18



Tips for incorporating bold colors and patterns in interior design

Colour-blocking

Color blocking involves using contrasting colours in solid blocks to create a visually striking effect. This technique can be applied to walls, furniture, and accessories. Start with a base color that sets the tone for the space. Bold and vibrant colors like emerald green, royal blue, or fiery red work well for this purpose. Once the base color is chosen, select one or two complementary or contrasting hues to create the blocks of color.

Mixing Patterns with Confidence

Mixing patterns is an advanced interior design technique that requires a keen eye for detail and a sense of balance. For instance, a room with bold floral wallpaper can be complemented by geometric patterned throw pillows in coordinating colors.

Statement Furniture and Accent Pieces

To make a bold statement, incorporate furniture and accent pieces in striking colors or patterns. A vibrant sofa or an eye-catching statement chair can instantly become the focal point of a room. When selecting bold furniture pieces, be mindful of the overall colour scheme of the room. Consider jewel tones like sapphire, amethyst, or emerald for a luxurious feel, or opt for unconventional patterns such as animal prints or graphic designs for a contemporary touch.

Ceiling Drama

Often overlooked, the ceiling provides a unique opportunity to infuse bold colors and patterns into a space. A vibrant ceiling can draw the eye upward, creating a sense of height and drama. Consider using bold wallpaper, a striking paint color, or even a mural on the ceiling to make a statement.

FOOD CORNER

Gujiya

Ingredients

For the dough

2 cups refined flour, 1 cup clarified butter, Water (to mix)

For the filling

1 cup khoya, 1 cup sugar, 1 tsp green cardamom, powdered, 1 tbsp almonds, finely chopped, ghee (for deep-frying)

For the syrup

1 cup sugar 1 cup water

Method

Prepare the dough

- Rub 1/4 cup ghee into the flour and knead into a stiff dough with water.
- Leave to rest for at least half an hour.



Prepare the filling

- Saute the khoya over medium heat till it looks slightly fried.
- Take off the heat and when it cools, mix in the sugar, cardamom and almonds.
- Shape the filling into ovals about 21 cm length and 1 cm thickness.
- Make balls of the dough and roll out into 1 cm / 1/8

- in thick rounds.
- Take a round, wet the edges with water and place a piece of filling over one half.
- Fold the other half over and press the edges together to seal.
- Either cut off the edge with a fancy cutter or make a design by pinching and twisting all along the sealed edges.
- Make all the gujiyas in this way. Heat ghee in a kadahi. To check if the ghee is hot enough put a piece of dough in it. If it comes up at once, add as many gujiyas as fit in comfortably.
- Turn them over and lower the heat to medium. Fry till golden brown on all sides. Lift out and leave to drain on absorbent paper.
- Make sugar syrup by cooking water and sugar together, till one thread consistency
- Dip the gujiyas in it, lift and let dry on a plate.
- Fry the rest, increasing the heat for a few seconds before adding the next lot.
- Can be eaten hot or at room temperature and can be stored in air-tight containers.

Early morning superfoods to prevent diabetes, control blood sugar

Bitter gourd juice

Known for its bitter taste, bitter gourd is a rich source of compounds (Charantin key bioactive compound) that can help regulate blood sugar levels. Consuming bitter gourd juice (karela juice) in the morning can enhance insulin sensitivity, reducing the risk of diabetes. Bitter gourd contains Polypeptide-p which may help improve insulin sensitivity. Vicin and lectin present in the veggie may stimulate insulin secretion from pancreas. Bitter gourd may help inhibit the activity of alpha-glucosidase, an enzyme involved in the digestion of carbohydrates. This can result in a slower absorption of glucose leading to better blood glucose control. Inclusion in the diet aligns with traditional Ayurveda practices, making it a valuable addition to combat diabetes in India.

Soaked fenugreek seeds

Fenugreek (methi) seeds are a staple in Indian kitchens and are renowned for their anti-diabetic properties. These seeds contain soluble fibre, which aids in controlling blood sugar levels. Consuming soaked fenugreek seeds or incorporating them into morning meals can contribute to improved glycaemic control. Fenugreek may help in reducing appetite, which could be beneficial for individuals with diabetes who need to manage their weight. Some studies suggest that fenugreek may help lower total cholesterol and triglyceride levels, which is important for overall cardiovascular health, especially in individuals with diabetes who are at a higher risk of cardiovascular complications.

Amla juice

Amla or Indian gooseberry, a powerhouse of vitamin C, is known for its antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. Regular consumption of amla can help manage diabetes by regulating blood sugar levels. Including amla juice or fresh amla in the morning



routine can be a tasty and effective strategy for diabetes prevention.

Turmeric water

Turmeric or Haldi, a spice commonly used in Indian cuisine, contains curcumin, known for its anti-inflammatory and antioxidant effects. Research suggests that curcumin may help lower blood sugar levels and improve insulin sensitivity. Incorporating a pinch of turmeric in warm water or milk in the morning can be a simple yet impactful habit.

Cinnamon tea

Cinnamon or Dalchini may aid in diabetes management by potentially improving insulin sensitivity and influencing glucose metabolism. Studies suggest its ability to lower fasting blood sugar levels and provide antioxidant benefits. Cinnamon is rich in antioxidants, which can help combat oxidative stress in the body. Chronic inflammation and oxidative stress are associated with diabetes and its complications. The anti-inflammatory properties of cinnamon may contribute to its potential benefits in diabetes management.

Source: HT

Those above 40 must test for glaucoma: Experts

If you have a family history of glaucoma, are over 40 years of age or experiencing symptoms such as pain in the eye, pressure, headaches, or seeing rainbow-coloured halos around lights, it is essential to undergo an eye test.

Ignoring these signs may lead to irreversible peripheral vision loss associated with glaucoma.

Siddharth Agrawal, faculty at the ophthalmology department of KGMU, said glaucoma is caused by a buildup of fluid within the eye, leading to pressure that can damage the optic nerve.

He underlined the importance of regular eye checkups, especially for those above 40. He advised people to be especially vigilant if they have a family member with glaucoma, experience frequent spectacle changes, or have any discomfort in their eyes.

Another faculty SK Bhaskar, said the fluid buildup inside the eye, called aqueous humor, needs to drain properly to maintain healthy pressure.

Excessive steroid use can also contribute to eye problems. He said due to awareness, more patients are being diagnosed, and the number of glaucoma patients has grown by 10 per cent in the past five years, partly due to increased awareness and better detection methods.

However, many people mistake glaucoma for



cataracts, delaying proper treatment. Unlike cataracts, glaucoma causes permanent vision loss if left untreated.

Bhaskar emphasised the importance of eye pressure and retinal tests for anyone over 40 experiencing vision problems. Early detection allows for timely treatment and helps prevent vision loss, he added. Source: IANS



Researchers develop blood test for diagnosing fibromyalgia

Diagnosing the chronic pain condition, fibromyalgia, could be made easier by a blood test developed by researchers in a new study.

They said the test can isolate and analyse specific chemical signals in the blood that could help differentiate the condition from other rheumatic diseases and long Covid, all of which present similar symptoms.

The researchers, led by The University of Texas, US, said that the blood test was a step forward in accurately diagnosing fibromyalgia and personalising treatment for patients.

The study, published in journal Biomedicines, would also open up new avenues for research into the pathology and clinical care of the chronic condition, they said. Fibromyalgia is characterised by widespread muscle pain and fatigue, sleep disturbances, and mood and cognitive changes.

"This tool is fast, accurate and non-invasive, and can easily be integrated into the clinical environment to improve the quality of life of patients with fibromyalgia," said study author Silvia de Lamo Castellvi, a researcher from the Chemical Engineering Department of Universitat Rovira i Virgili, Spain.

For the study, the researchers collected blood samples from three different groups of people - those diagnosed with fibromyalgia, those with similar rheumatic diseases and those without any of these conditions (controls).

The samples were then "illuminated" using Raman spectroscopy, which involves using a special laser light to study how molecules in blood, such as amino acids, reacted to it. Based on these interactions, the researchers discerned differences in the chemical characteristics of the blood samples from all these groups.

The results highlighted that "chemical signatures" of amino acid molecules in blood could distinguish fibromyalgia from other diseases, they said.

The test is currently undergoing validation and could be available at health centres in about two years' time, according to the researchers. Source: PTI

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AI will be smarter than any single human by next year: Elon Musk

Elon Musk, who is currently locked in a battle with ChatGPT maker OpenAI, said that artificial intelligence (AI) will probably be smarter than any single human by next year.

Musk has sued Sam-Altman-run company, alleging that it had breached the "founding agreement" via its partnership with tech giant Microsoft.

OpenAI has hit back, saying they are not in any kind of founding agreement with Tesla and SpaceX CEO Elon Musk.

In a fresh post on X, the billionaire said that AI is going to be smarter than humans by next year. "By 2029, AI will probably be smarter than all humans combined," Musk added.

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A new era in photography: How low-light tech is redefining smartphone cameras

The landscape of smartphone technology is ever-evolving, with continuous innovations reshaping every facet of these omnipresent devices. Amid this evolution, numerous smartphones tout their camera capabilities as superior.

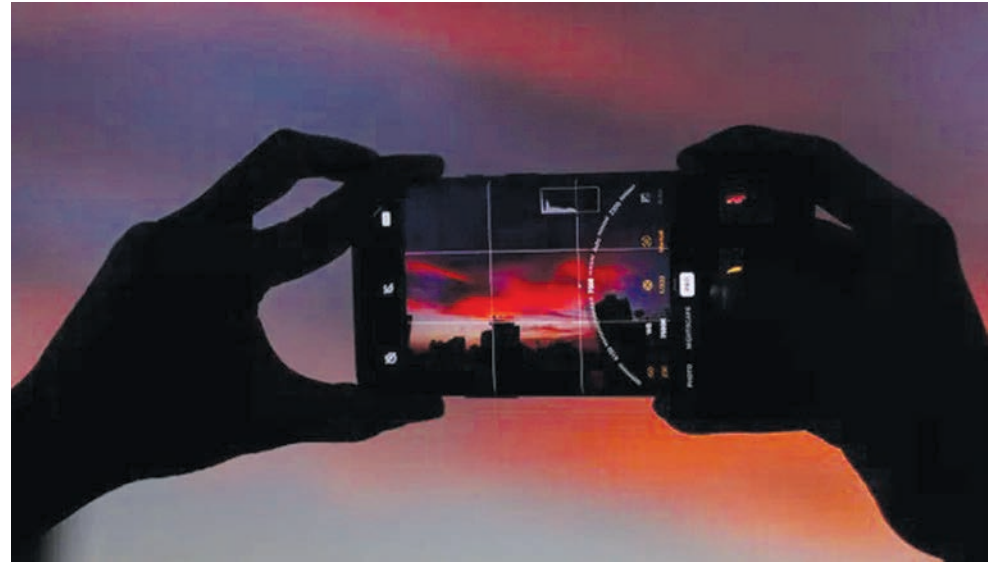
However, the definition of "the best" remains a topic worth deliberating. What truly constitutes the best camera, and where should consumers direct their attention amidst this claim-heavy market? This is a debate worth exploring, according to realme.

From single to multiple lens systems, the evolution of smartphone cameras has also been remarkable. Innovations like optical image stabilization, low-light photography, and AI-enhanced image processing have turned smartphones into powerful photography tools.

With its latest upcoming release, NARZO 70 Pro 5G, realme is bringing you an amalgamation of the two innovations, all without burning a hole in your pocket.

In a collaborative endeavor, realme and Amazon have developed the state-of-the-art NARZO 70 Pro 5G smartphone. This next-generation device is specifically engineered to meet the sophisticated and reliable needs of Gen-Z users.

The NARZO 70 Pro 5G, touted as the smoothest smartphone with the best camera, will come equipped with a robust camera setup that guarantees high-quality photos and videos under various lighting conditions. Its main feature is a 50 MP rear



camera, complete with Optical Image Stabilization (OIS) and a Sony IMX890 sensor, designed to minimize blur from minor hand movements and capture detailed, vibrant images.

Complementing the primary sensor are two additional lenses of 8MP and 2MP, providing the versatility to capture wide-angle shots and add depth-of-field effects to your photos.

A key highlight of the NARZO 70 Pro 5G's camera system is its remarkable low-light performance, facilitated by a large sensor and sophisticated image processing algorithms, making it an excellent choice for night or indoor photography. The significance of low-light capabilities in smartphone cameras lies in their ability to

capture high-quality images under poor lighting conditions. This feature enhances the versatility and performance of the camera, enabling users to take clear, detailed photos regardless of the time or place. The technology behind this involves optimising hardware components and utilizing advanced image processing techniques.

With superior sensors, the NARZO 70 Pro 5G stands out from its competitors. This makes it the top choice for a low-light camera under 30K, further asserting its dominance in this category.

The NARZO 70 Pro 5G stands as a symbol of realme's dedication to providing top-tier technology at an accessible price point. *Source: IANS*

Mars, the next-door cosmic neighbour to Earth, is the next target for the human species to raise a colony, and as this effort pans out, more and more intriguing information is pouring out.

New findings reveal how Mars has had a deep impact on Earth's oceans for millennia without us knowing about it. Mars causes the churning of Earth's ocean every 2.4 million years, which is linked to periods of increased solar energy and a warmer climate.

No, the current bout of climate change being experienced by Earth is not due to Mars. It's all human-induced, the scientists have categorically said. In a study published in the journal *Nature Communications*, researchers looked at how geological-timescale climate change affects ocean circulation and how this could help scientists model future climate outcomes. They were trying to understand if ocean-bottom currents become more vigorous or more sluggish in a warmer climate.

Researchers analysed more than half a century of scientific drilling data from hundreds of sites worldwide to understand the vigour of deep-sea currents through time.

What they found was the vigour of these deep-sea currents shifts every 2.4 million years and they term this cycle as the "astronomical grand cycles." This occurs due to the interaction between the orbits of Earth and Mars.

We were surprised to find these 2.4-million-year

Mars secretly makes Earth's oceans dance to its tunes

cycles in our deep-sea sedimentary data. There is only one way to explain them: they are linked to cycles in the interactions of Mars and Earth orbiting the Sun," Dr Adriana Dutkiewicz from the University of Sydney explained.

The gravity of the two planets messes with each other, creating a dance called resonance.

This dance affects the shape of their orbits, called eccentricity, or how circular they are. For Earth, this means cycles of about 2.4 million years with periods of more sunlight and warmer weather.

The scientists found that during warmer times, the deep-sea record shows more breaks, connected to stronger deep ocean currents.

The study also points out that deep whirlpools, known as eddies, played a big role in warming seas in the past. These eddies might help prevent ocean stagnation some thought could happen if a crucial ocean current (AMOC) slows down.

However, they don't move water like the AMOC, which shifts water between different latitudes. These eddies are more like giant whirlpools that reach the deep ocean floor, causing erosion and building up sediment, like underwater snowdrifts.



5 public sector banks to reduce govt stake to meet Sebi norms

Five public sector lenders, including Bank of Maharashtra, IOB and UCO Bank are planning to reduce government stake to less than 75 per cent to comply with Sebi's minimum public shareholding (MPS) norms, Financial Services Secretary Vivek Joshi has said.

Of 12 public sector banks (PSBs), four were complying with MPS norms as on March 31, 2023. "As part of an ongoing effort, three more PSBs have complied with minimum 25 per cent public float during the current financial year. Remaining five PSBs have laid out action plans to meet MPS requirement," he said.

Currently, government holding in Delhi-based Punjab & Sind Bank is 98.25 per cent. It is followed by Chennai-based Indian Overseas Bank at 96.38 per cent, UCO Bank 95.39 per cent, Central Bank of India 93.08 per cent, Bank of Maharashtra at 86.46 per cent. As per the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi), all listed companies must maintain an MPS of 25 per cent.

However, the regulator had given special forbearance to state-owned banks. They have time till August 2024 to meet the requirement of 25 per cent MPS. Joshi said banks have various options to bring down the stake, including follow on public offering or Qualified Institutional Placement.

Depending on market condition, each of these banks will take a call in the best interest of shareholders, he added. Without giving a timeline, he said, efforts were on to meet the requirement. *Source: PTI*

Samsung poised to win over \$6 billion for expanded US investment

WASHINGTON (TIP)

THE United States plans to award more than US\$6 billion to Samsung Electronics, helping the chipmaker expand beyond a project in Texas it has already announced, according to sources familiar with the matter.

The money from the 2022 Chips and Science Act would be one of several major awards that the Commerce Department is expected to announce in the coming weeks, including a grant of more than US\$5 billion to Samsung's Asian rival, Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC), sources familiar with the plans said earlier. The sources spoke on condition of anonymity in advance of the official announcements.

The federal funding for Samsung, South Korea's leading chipmaker, would come alongside significant additional US investment by the firm, the sources said. In 2021, the company announced a US\$17 billion project in Taylor, Texas, near an existing Samsung plant in Austin. It is not yet clear where the additional investment would be located.

The pending announcement only represents a preliminary agreement that could still change, and no final decision has been made. Samsung and the Commerce Department declined to comment, while the White House did not respond to a request for comment.

The Chips Act set aside US\$39 billion in direct grants – plus loans and loan guarantees valued at US\$75 billion – to



persuade the world's top semiconductor companies to make chips on American soil after decades of production abroad.

The Commerce Department earlier announced three Chips Act grants to producers of older-generation semiconductors. Officials have been negotiating for months with makers of cutting-edge chips that will fuel the artificial intelligence boom, and have set aside about US\$28 billion for those advanced projects, Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo has said.

Intel – the main American competitor to Samsung and TSMC – has been in talks for a Chips Act package of more than US\$10 billion spanning both grants and loans.

Intel's incentive deal is expected to be announced next week, one of the sources said, with the other advanced chipmakers set to follow.

It is not clear whether companies beyond Intel are in line to receive loans or financing guarantees. Samsung has indicated that it is not interested in loans, according to sources familiar with the matter.

There is also the separate issue of US\$3.5 billion in Chips Act grants for production of military chips – money that is expected to go to Intel and has thrown a wrench in negotiations over the past few weeks after the Pentagon pulled out from its portion of the funding.

China fastest in replacing workers with robots, US think tank says

China has 12½ times more robots in its workforce than expected, an independent think tank in Washington Information Technology and Innovation Foundation (ITIF) said in a report. This indicates that Chinese workers are being replaced by robots at the fastest rate in the world, the report claimed, adding, "China does not yet appear to be leading in robotic innovation, but ... it is likely only a matter of time before Chinese robotics companies catch up to the leading edge."

The US think tank found that China is using automation far more than expected based on what workers get paid in manufacturing. The country is using 12½ times more robots than predicted – a huge jump from 1.6 times more in 2017.

On the other hand, the United States uses only 70 percent of the robots it should be using.

The report included research into major companies and insights from global experts. It also found out that



production and deployment rates of robotics in China were increasing rapidly as the Chinese government has made robotics industry a priority.

Robert D. Atkinson, ITIF president and author of the report, said, "China is already the largest industrial robot market in the world. In 2022, 52 per cent of all industrial robots in the world were installed in China, up from 14 per cent a decade earlier."

Last-minute relief for Paytm, customers can continue using app for payments

The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) on Thursday, March 14, granted approval to Paytm-owner One97 Communications Ltd to participate in UPI as a Third-Party Application Provider (TPAP) under the multi-bank model.

Axis Bank, HDFC Bank, State Bank of India, and YES Bank will act as Payment System Provider (PSP) banks to Paytm.

YES Bank shall also be acting as merchant acquiring bank for existing and new UPI merchants for One97 Communications Ltd (OCL). "@Paytm" handle shall be redirected to YES Bank, NPCI said in a statement.

OCL provides payment services under the Paytm brand.

"This will enable existing users and merchants to continue to do UPI transactions and AutoPay mandates in a seamless and uninterrupted manner," it said.

Paytm has been advised to complete



migration for all existing handles and mandates, wherever required, to new PSP banks at the earliest.

The NPCI's decision comes a day ahead of the Reserve Bank deadline asking customers and merchants of Paytm Payments Bank Ltd (PPBL) to shift their accounts to other banks by March 15.



**BEJAN DARUWALLA AND
CHIRAG DARUWALLA**



ARIES

Ganesha says that this week will prove to be more auspicious and favorable for the people of Aries than the previous week. Despite this, you should avoid blindly trusting anyone regarding career, business, etc., otherwise, you may have to suffer losses. May fall. At the same time, you will also have to pay attention to your health, otherwise, you may lose a golden opportunity. Especially seasonal diseases can become a major cause of your problems. Due to this, you may have to make trips to the hospital, etc. Despite these problems, you will get the desired profit in business this week. The wish of expansion of business will be fulfilled. You will get full support of good fortune from close friends. Time is very auspicious from an economic point of view. You will heave a sigh of relief when a major worry related to a dear family member goes away. You may get some good news from your children in the latter part of the week. This week will prove to be auspicious for you from the point of view of a love relationship. Love relationships will become stronger. Married life will remain happy.



TAURUS

Ganesha says that at the beginning of the week, any major problem will be solved with the help of well-wishers. For those who have been searching for employment for a long time, their search will be completed, and they will get a good opportunity. People associated with business will benefit from the sudden rise in the market. Investments made in the past will also become a major reason for your profit. You will get an opportunity to participate in some auspicious or religious program in the middle of the week. After a long time, you will meet a dear person, who will refresh old memories. This time will prove to be auspicious for the students preparing for examinations and competitions. Any good news related to children will be a big reason for your happiness and respect. In the latter part of the week, seniors will praise your work. During this time, you may get a big position or important responsibility related to work. This week will prove to be auspicious for you from the point of view of a love relationship. Marriage of

WEEKLY HOROSCOPE - MAR 18 TO MAR 24, 2024

By Chirag Daruwalla - Son of Astrologer Bejan Daruwalla

unmarried people can be fixed. Married life will remain happy. Health will be normal.



GEMINI

Ganesha says that for the people of the Gemini zodiac, this week will prove to be the solution to major problems related to life. During this period, journeys undertaken in connection with career and business will bring desired success. You will get to know influential people, with the help of whom you will get the opportunity to get involved in profitable schemes in the future. There will be profit from buying and selling of land and buildings in the second half of the week. If you were thinking of working or making a career abroad, then the obstacles coming in the way will be removed. In the second half of the week, you may spend more money out of pocket on home repairs or luxuries. If you have been thinking of buying a vehicle for a long time, your wish may be fulfilled this week. This week is going to be mixed from the love relationship point of view. There may be some difficulties in reconciling with your love partner. Due to a busy work schedule, you will be able to pay less attention to your spouse or family. However, you yourself may have stomach-related problems.



CANCER

Ganesha says that at the beginning of the week, while any misunderstanding with a loved one will be resolved, there may be physical and mental suffering due to seasonal illness. Due to poor health, your planned work may get postponed, due to which your mind will remain worried. During this period, working women will face some difficulties in maintaining coordination between home and workplace. Youth may lose interest in studies. However, from the middle of the week, you will start getting full support of good fortune and you will be seen moving forward towards your goal, albeit slowly. The special thing is that the obstacles related to your work will be removed, in you will get full support from your friends. If all the work is completed on time, your confidence, enthusiasm, and bravery will increase. People who were ill due to some reason will see improvement in their health. There will be participation in religious-social activities in the latter half of the week. During this time, you can also go on a trip to any religious or tourist place. Love relationships will deepen. Your love partner will become your strength in difficult times. Married life will remain happy. Take good care of your health.



LEO

Ganesha says that Leo people need to move forward with a very careful step this week, otherwise, you may have to give up. There is a possibility of injury at the beginning of the week, in such a situation, drive slowly and avoid doing things in a hurry. During this period, some chronic diseases may emerge due to careless eating habits or irregular daily routines. During this time, you will also need to be very cautious about seasonal diseases. In the middle of the week, you may have to run around a bit more due to court-related matters. In such cases, do not resort to any kind of shortcut or lie, otherwise, you may have to face difficulties in the future. The latter part of the week may bring some relief for you. During this time, you will get full support from both seniors and juniors in your workplace. This week is going to prove to be mixed from the love relationship point of view. This week you will be seen getting angry with your love partner. Your love relationship will become even stronger amidst bitter and sweet disputes. Married life will remain happy.



VIRGO

Ganesha says that people of the Virgo zodiac may have to face some difficulties at work this week. There will be some irritability in your nature due to the planned work not being completed on time. This week, people of the Virgo zodiac sign will have to avoid doing distant losses to gain near ones. Avoid violating the law under any circumstances, otherwise, you may have to face financial loss as well as humiliation. The second half of the week is going to be a little better than the first half. During this time, you will start getting some support from luck, due to which you will see some progress in your career and business. Obstacles coming in the works related to power and government will be removed. People associated with politics may get important positions. Fame will increase in society. People associated with business will get benefits, even if less. Those who do business in partnership should be careful while transacting money during this period. However, increase your passion thoughtfully in love affairs. Those who are already in a love relationship should avoid ignoring the feelings of their love partner.



LIBRA

Ganesha says that people of the Libra zodiac sign will spend most of this week

reviving relationships with their relatives. People who do business related to foreign countries may get financial benefits at the beginning of the week. This time is also going to be very auspicious for people doing work related to land and construction. Business-related issues will be resolved. However, amid all these positive results, there may be financial worries if you spend more money out of your pocket. In such a situation, this week, spread your legs as much as you have a sheet. The latter half of the week may be a bit challenging for businesspeople. During this time, you may have to run around a lot for a particular task, due to which you will remain physically tired. If you want to keep your love relationship better, then you will have to take some time for your loved ones from your busy schedule. Married life will remain happy despite bitter and sweet disputes.



SCORPIO

Ganesha says that the people of the Scorpio zodiac will need to control their speech and behavior this week, otherwise, there may be a dispute with the family members. Similarly, your speech and behavior will play a big role in achieving the desired success in your career and business. In such a situation, do not give importance to small things of people and move along with everyone. Employed people may face the additional burden of some important work in the middle of the week. To solve this, you will have to work alone. During this period, do not do any work which may tarnish your reputation. During this time, drive the vehicle carefully and sign any paper only after reading and understanding it properly. During this time, you may remain a little worried about the health of an elderly person in the house. Some misunderstandings may arise in love relationships. Your mind will remain restless if you are not able to meet or talk to your love partner. However, one of your female friends can prove to be very helpful in getting your love relationship back on track. Married life will remain happy.



SAGITTARIUS

Ganesha says that people of the Sagittarius zodiac sign will be in a state of confusion this week regarding making important decisions related to life. It is going to be very difficult for you to choose between right and wrong this week. In such a situation, you should take advice from a confidant or postpone things for some time. At the beginning of the week, some important responsibilities may fall on your shoulders, but due to not

BIRTHDAY HOROSCOPE : MARCH 18 TO MARCH 24 BY VEDIC ASTROLOGER NASTUR BEJAN DARUWALLA

MARCH 18

Ganesha says may your day be very kind today. Today you may be able to complete the remaining tasks in the projects. You can complete your work quickly so that you will be able to enjoy your time with your family. You can plan to go somewhere with your partner. Your business can do well today. Today things can go according to your wish because you are getting a lot of luck. A new opportunity can come your way, which can come today itself and can bring you a lot of profit. The stars are in your favor, which can help you to easily solve any problem regarding this new opportunity.

MARCH 19

Ganesha says you are very lucky today because you can get what you want; Make sure that you use the luck that you have today for your own benefit and not for others because only then it can remain a positive thing for you. You may focus more on your financial issues hence your love life may take a back seat. A spouse's full support can surprise you a bit. Try to be patient and understanding. You are very close to finding that one person who can support you in everything, don't make that person angry.

MARCH 20

Ganesha says meditate first thing in the morning; This can be beneficial for your personal and professional life. You can make a good profit in your business, so today can be a good day for you. Looking at the spiritual awakening in your zodiac today, you can lean more toward charity. Make sure that you do not stray away from your dreams and ambitions as you may face some distractions today. Make sure that you are ethical in both your personal and professional life.

MARCH 21

Ganesha says you may feel lots of love and care from family friends as well as from your partner. You may have a tough day today but you may feel supported and cared for all the way, at the end of the day you may feel very satisfied with where you are currently in your life. Your partner's loving and caring nature can make you fall in love with your partner a lot today. You can experience for yourself how beautiful it is to be loved and cared for by someone you trust and love with all your heart.

MARCH 22

Ganesha says your love life has been full of ups and downs, but today you can experience stability. Try saying what you're thinking. Expressing your feelings can help you improve your love life. Venus may bring love today and Moon may bring luck to your face today. You are entering a new phase that marks the beginning of a lane called success. Along with your old commitments, you may also take up additional responsibilities today, but it will not seem like a tough or daunting task as you may enjoy completing it.

MARCH 23

Ganesha says you can see that things are working for you without much effort. Small auspicious works can continue to happen throughout the day. It is great that everything may go well for you today but do not be lazy and focus on the things that you need to do today. You are very lucky today because you can get what you want, make sure you use today's luck for your benefit and not for others because only then it can remain a positive thing for you.

MARCH 24

Ganesha says you can see that today



VEDIC ASTROLOGER NASTUR
BEJAN DARUWALLA

you are a little too excited. Your outgoing behavior and jovial nature are highly appreciated in the social circle. Your strong leadership qualities can make you so confident that you will be able to do all the work very well. If you work really hard then success can kiss your feet. Today may bring some good fortune as the planets are in your favor.

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CONTD FROM PAGE 31

being able to manage time to fulfill them, you will be very worried because, during this time, domestic problems will also dominate your head. The mind of the youth may deviate from studies. If you are preparing for an exam or competition, you will have to work hard to achieve your desired success. Similarly, whether it is your business or office work, leaving it in the hands of someone else will prove to be a loss-making deal. If you want your boss to appreciate your work, then do not be careless in any of your work and try to complete it on time. If your love relationship with your love partner had deteriorated, then this week it can come back on track. In difficult times, your love partner will be seen standing with you every moment and will be your support while lending a hand. Will have pleasant moments with your spouse.



CAPRICORN

Ganesha says that for Capricorn people, this week is going to be like thick ghee at times and dry gram at times. In the beginning of the week, you will feel lonely due to not getting the support of your loved ones at the right time. Due to this, aggression and irritation may be seen in your nature. You will feel a lack of confidence and enthusiasm within yourself. In such a time, you should neither lose courage nor forget, remember the Ram Mantra and solve

the problems one by one. The middle of the week will provide auspicious results for businesspeople. At this time, you will get full support of good fortune. If the money stuck in the market comes out, then the desired money will be gained from the travels done in connection with the business. If you are thinking of buying land, a building, or a vehicle, then you must take the opinion of your well-wishers while making any decision related to it. This week has been moderately fruitful from a health point of view. In such a situation, take special care of your health and diet. Avoid making decisions due to emotions regarding a love relationship, otherwise, you may

have to face difficulties.



AQUARIUS

Ganesha says that the journey will prove to be tiring but fulfilling and profitable. There may be some obstacles in acquiring ancestral property. If you are looking for employment or transfer, you may have to wait a little longer for this. The latter part of the week is going to be of some relief for you. During this period, there are chances of improvement in your financial condition also. With the help of close friends, you will be successful in solving domestic

problems. You will get a chance to participate in some religious or auspicious program with family members. During this time, there will be an atmosphere of happiness due to the arrival of some new thing in the house. Any big achievement from the children's side will become a reason for your respect. Love relationships will deepen.



PISCES

Ganesha says that if you have been worried about problems related to your home or workplace for some time, then this week you will find a solution. With the help of an influential person, stalled work related to power will be completed. The work of employed people will be completed on time, due to which a different enthusiasm and confidence will be seen within them. People will praise your work. Take special care of your belongings and health during travel, otherwise, you may become a victim of seasonal diseases. This week you will get the desired profit in business. But get encouraged by this and avoid risky investments under any circumstances. During this period, you will have money coming in from various sources, but your expenses will also remain in excess. In such a situation, you should control your waste. You will have to work hard to get the desired results in exams and competitions. Married life will remain happy.

|| SHREE GANESHAY NAMAH ||



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Masinagudi: An enchanting hill station with diverse wildlife

Masinagudi is a quaint hill station located just a 1-hour drive away from Ooty. The Mudumalai National Park is the highlight here and is popular amongst visitors.

Masinagudi is considered one of the most perfect jungle getaways in South India. Apart from Mudumalai, the Bandipur Tiger Reserve is also a popular hotspot here. One can engage in wildlife spotting, fishing, go on many exciting safaris by hiring private jeeps, sit by the stunning Moyar River or even go boating there, the possibilities here are endless. Visit the Theppakadu Elephant Camp for an unforgettable experience amongst elephants as you go right into their abodes.

Mudumalai National Park

Located at a distance of 17 km from Masinagudi, Mudumalai National Park is a heaven for nature and animal lovers.

This National Park is enthusiastically involved in preserving tigers and is home to quite a number of them. This place is also replete with other animals and birds too including elephants, deers, monkeys, leopards, sloth bears, black Flycatcher, eagle, woodpecker bulbuls and wood owl. You can even opt for a Jeep Safari to explore this national park to the fullest.

Theppakadu Elephant Camp

Even though similar activities were carried out in this area since 1910 or even before, the 'camp' was officially established in 1972. The camp provides visitors with the wonderful experience of interacting with the elephants - bathing them, feeding them, etc.

The camp houses well trained elephants and hence there is minimum risk attached.

Bandipura Tiger Reserve and National Park

Located at a distance of around 12 km



from Masinagudi, Bandipura Tiger Reserve and National Park is another popular destination to visit amongst nature and animal lovers.

Known for conserving tigers this place is home to a large number of animals and birds. Some of them include elephants, spotted deer, gaurs, antelopes, Python, jackal, Peafowl, Indian Rollers, eagles and kingfisher. You can even indulge in jeep safari or bus safari or elephant safari to enjoy the beauty of national park to the fullest and see as many animals and birds as possible.

Moyar River

A serene and tranquil river namely Moyar River is situated at a distance of 7 km from Masinagudi. This river is the best place to sit and relax.

You can either dip your feet or your body in the cold water of the river to rejuvenate and refresh yourself. This river also provides picturesque views of nature as it is surrounded by verdant



trees and hills.

Nilgiri Tea Plantations

Masinagudi is rich in lush green tea plantation and a number of them are

located here. You can visit tea plantation and take a lazy stroll amidst fields that are enveloped in the aroma of tea. You will also get to learn and explore the workings of how tea is produced.



CONTD FROM PAGE 1

Election Commission of India publishes Electoral bonds data; billionaire tycoons to lesser-known entities among buyers

Twenty-two firms donated more than Rs100 crore during this period. Here is a list of top buyers of electoral bonds.

- Future Gaming and Hotel Services: Rs 1,368 crore
- Megha Engineering and Infrastructure Ltd: Rs 966 crore
- Qwik Supply Chain Private Ltd: Rs 410 crore
- Vedanta Ltd: Rs 400 crore
- Haldia Energy Ltd: Rs 377 crore
- Bharati Group: Rs 247 crore
- Essel Mining and Industries Ltd: Rs 224 crore
- Western UP Power Transmission: Rs 220 crore
- Keventer Foodpark Infra Ltd: Rs 194 crore
- Madanlal Ltd: Rs 185 crore
- DLF Group: Rs 170 crore
- Yashoda Super Speciality Hospital: Rs 162 crore
- Utkal Alumina International: Rs 145.3 crore
- Jindal Steel and Power Ltd: Rs 123 crore
- Birla Carbon India: Rs 105 crore
- Rungta Sons: Rs 100 crore

In total, electoral bonds worth over ₹12,155 crore were purchased by donors during this period and more than ₹12,769 crore were encashed by all the parties in the period.

The information has been put up in public domain by the Election Commission of India (ECI) after The State Bank of India (SBI) had disclosed this information on March 12. The Supreme Court had directed the ECI to host this information on its website by March 15.

The SBI supplied this data in two sets. The first set contains the date of purchase of each Electoral Bond, the name of the purchaser of the bond, and the denomination of the bond purchased.

HERE ARE THE LINKS TO BOND DATA.

https://bsmedia.business-standard.com/_media/bs/data/general-file-upload/2024-03/e-bonds1.pdf

https://bsmedia.business-standard.com/_media/bs/data/general-file-upload/2024-03/e-bonds2.pdf

Electoral bonds were introduced in the country on January 28, 2017 by then Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs, Arun Jaitley. The objective was to facilitate transparent political funding. These bonds, issued exclusively by SBI, served as a designated financial instrument that offered individuals and corporate entities the opportunity to contribute funds to political parties discreetly, as those bonds had no identification of the donor and the political party to which it was issued.

Electoral bonds were available in denominations of Rs 1,000 and could be acquired from SBI branches during specific periods stipulated by the government. Political parties could then redeem those bonds through their designated accounts within a prescribed timeframe.

The anonymous political funding via electoral bonds was made unconstitutional by the SC, in its landmark judgement on 15 February 2024 and the five-judge Constitution bench mandated the ECI to disclose donors, the amounts donated by them, and the recipients.

According to the affidavit submitted by SBI on March 13, between April 2019 and February 15, 2024, a total of 22,217 electoral bonds were issued. Of these bonds, 22,030 were redeemed by political parties, while the remaining 187 were redeemed, with the funds deposited into the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund.

According to data presented in Lok Sabha during the Budget session, Minister of State in the Finance Ministry Pankaj Chaudhry said that a total of Rs

16,500 crore were collected from 30 tranches of electoral bonds issued between March 2018 to January 2024. He added, "The commission paid to the State Bank of India by the Government of India for the issuance and redemption of Electoral Bonds from Phase I to Phase XXV is about Rs 8.57 crore. Also, the amount paid by the Government of India to Security Printing & Minting Corporation of India Ltd (SPMCIL) to date is about Rs 1.90 crore." (Agencies)

Biden, Trump set for Nov 2024 clash

Biden, 81, won the Democratic presumptive nomination on Tuesday, March 12, after easily clinching the presidential primaries in Georgia, as the number of delegates in his kitty crossed the halfway mark of 3,933 pledged delegates. A total of 1,968 delegates were required to win the Democratic nomination for the November 5 presidential election.

With wins in another round of key primaries, Donald Trump and Joe Biden have set the stage for a 2020 rematch in November.

The last presidential rematch came in 1956 when Republican President Dwight D Eisenhower again defeated Adlai Stevenson, the Democratic opponent he had four years prior.

Four states - Georgia, Hawaii, Mississippi, Washington - one American territory and Democrats living abroad held their primaries on Tuesday. Biden would formally be declared the party's nomination during the Democratic National Convention in Chicago in August.

Trump, 77, reached the 1,215 delegates necessary with an allocation of delegates from Washington state. Trump will be officially nominated at the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee this July. He will lead the Republican Party in a third consecutive presidential election after clinching the nomination on Tuesday.

Their rematch, long anticipated, but hardly clamored for, is broadly expected to mirror the 2020 campaign, though Trump will run this time under the specter of 91 felony charges.

Trump is scheduled to become the first former American president to go on trial in a criminal case on March 25 in New York, where he faces charges he falsified business records to hide hush money payments to a porn star.

Other charges are related to allegations that he plotted to overturn his 2020 election defeat; played a lead role in the January 6, 2021, insurrection at the US Capitol and illegally took classified documents from the White House.

SKM holds Mahapanchayat; Farmers from 18 states attend Delhi event

not accepting their demand for guaranteed minimum support price (MSP) for crops. The Mahapanchayat was organized by the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM), whose leaders said a resolution was unanimously passed to "expose, protest and punish BJP". They also accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his government of not fulfilling the promises made to the farmers during the last General Election.

The SKM urged the farmers to observe March 23 as "Save Democracy from the Threat of Money and Muscle Power Day" in all villages by organizing protests against the BJP for declaring Union Minister of State Ajay Mishra Teni as party candidate from Lakhimpur Kheri instead of punishing him. Mishra's son Ashish is an accused in the Lakhimpur Kheri violence case in which four protesting farmers were killed after being run over by a car driven allegedly by him.

BKU (Tikait) spokesperson Rakesh Tikait said the Mahapanchayat was the beginning of the battle for guaranteed MSP. BKU (Charuni) President Gurnam Singh Charuni said the SKM was united, and that talks were underway with farmer leaders staging protests at Shambhu and Khanauri borders. SKM leader Darshan

Pal said they had established a communication network in all states and they would inform the people how the government had "betrayed farmers"

The demands of the farmers include guaranteed MSP and procurement of all crops as per the C2+50% formula, comprehensive loan waiver, non-privatization of electricity, action against Mishra and the registration of an FIR on murder charges against the Union Home Minister, former Haryana CM and Home Minister for the death of farmer Shubhakaran Singh on the Khanauri border.

The protesters have accused the authorities of deliberately diverting drain water to the venue. (TNS)

West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee suffers 'major injury', admitted to hospital

TMC national general secretary and Mamata's nephew Abhishek Banerjee got her admitted to the hospital, according to party sources.

"She fell somewhere inside the home and was immediately shifted to the hospital. She was bleeding from the forehead and stitches were required," her brother Kartik Banerjee told a Bengali news channel.

According to sources, she was admitted to the Woodburn Ward of the state-run SSKM Hospital in Kolkata.

A team of senior doctors are attending to her, hospital sources said.

According to senior TMC leader Sukhendu Sekhar Ray, Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar enquired about the Chief Minister's health condition and expressed "deep anguish and wished her speedy recovery."

Dhankhar is also a former West Bengal Governor.

State BJP president Sukanta Majumdar wished her a speedy recovery. "Our prayers are with her for a quick return to good health," he posted on X.

State Congress president Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury also wished her a quick recovery.

CONTD FROM PAGE 6

'Chalo India' - Global Diaspora Campaign Launched at the Indian Consulate

Soon, a dedicated website on 'Chalo India Global Diaspora' would be The Chalo India website will open to diaspora members for account creation in due course. Visit <https://www.chaloindia.gov.in/> to register and get notified.

The Consulate General of India in New York holds regular thematic webinars promoting different facets of Indian tourism, such as wedding, destinations in India, beaches, river, cruises, adventure travel, spiritual tourism, health and well-being, tourism, etc. It also participates in several tourism related expose and shows bringing out the best that India offers to tourists in America.

NYC KICKS OFF SIXTH ANNUAL CIVICS WEEK

The Mayor's Public Engagement Unit (PEU), the Civic Engagement Commission, and DemocracyNYC are supporting these efforts by hosting voter registration drives in 15 schools. Additional voter registration drives are being coordinated by student ambassadors and teachers in over 185 high schools.

Since its inception in 2019, over 90,000 New York City students have registered to vote during Civics Week. Additional voter registration drives are being coordinated by student ambassadors and teachers in 185 high schools. This year, students will be registered through PEU, teacher, and student ambassador efforts.

For students in kindergarten through eighth grade, schools will utilize resources from the Civics for All initiative of NYCPS to help students build their civic knowledge and hone their civic engagement skills.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

Sikh History This Week

MARCH 15 TO MARCH 21

15th March



1553 Bhai Jetha, Guru Ram Das, married Bibi Bhani.

1749 Patiala Forces, under the command of Bibi Sahib Kaur, defeated Marhattha Army in a battle fought at near Ambala.

1766 During the reign of 12 misls, the Khalsa Forces defeated the Maharattas in a battle near Dhaulpur.

1960 Akali Dal executive asked the Sikh members to resign Congress Legislative party and form a separate Group.

1984 Indian Government imposed restrictions on All India Student Federation. As a result, the Federation threatened to disrupt University exams until these restrictions were lifted. Government attempted to hold university exams in April but they were unsuccessful. These exams were finally held under military rule in the month of July.

16th March



1764 Sikhs captured Lahore and issued their own coins.

1781 Sikhs attack Shahdara Patpat, Delhi.

1789 Khalsa Forces invaded Delhi.

1846 A new and separate treaty was signed in Ambala, between Raja Gulab Singh and the British. Kashmir was sold to Gulab Singh for one crore as part of the indemnity due from Lahore Darbar. Lal Singh Wazir opposed the ceding of Kashmir to Gulab Singh. As a result he was removed and banished from Punjab.

1849 Punjab, the domain of the Sikhs, was annexed by the British East India Company, after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

1956 Regional formula for Punjab agreed between Hukam Singh and Jawaharlal Nehru as a secret deal.

1961 The passing away of Bhai Sahib Randhir Singh Ji, a Sikh saint of renown and head of the Akhand Kitani Jatha.

1983 Police force under the command of a Deputy Superintendent of Police, Mr. Pandey, threw a hand grenade on a jeep carrying some Sikh pilgrims. The grenade was followed by a shower of bullets from machine guns of the policemen. During this attack a young Sikh boy, Hardev Singh, was killed and two others seriously wounded.

17th March



1823 Maharaja Ranjit Singh victoriously entered Peshawar for the first time, after winning numerous wars with Pathans.

1923 Second attempt to kill Labh Singh Dhadda also fails.

1972 Gurcharan Singh Tohra asked Fateh Singh to retire from active politics. 1973 The Federal Government of the United States of America officially recognizes the Sikh Dharma Brotherhood.



18th March

Maharaja Ranjit Singh assumed the governing control of Peshawar.

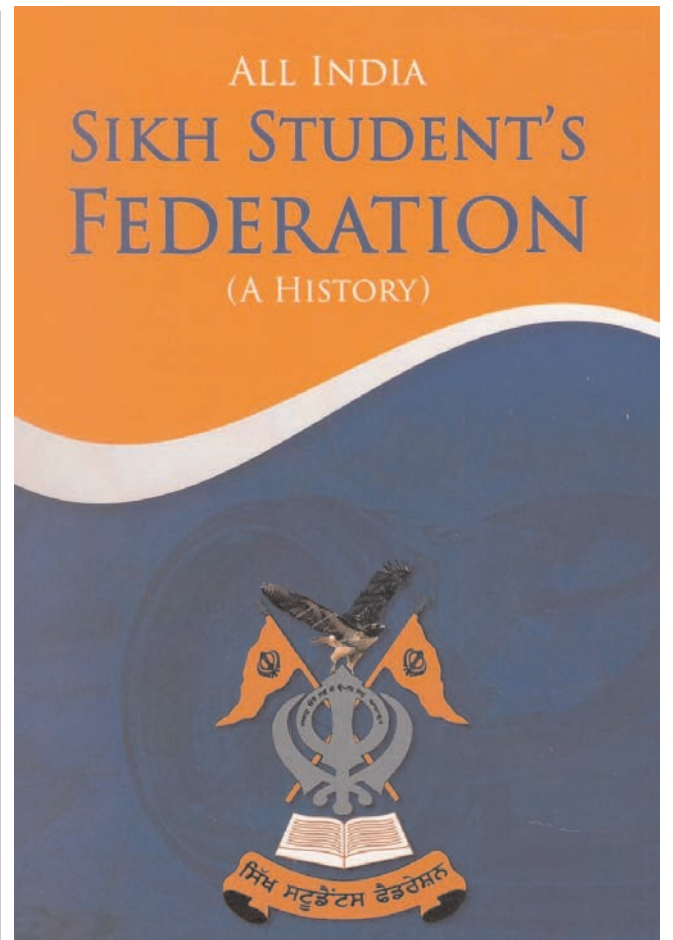
19th March

1922 A diwan at Sangowal is held by Kishan Singh Gargaj.

1923 Labh Singh of Garhshankar is murdered.

1981 Dal Khasal members, took out a procession at Anadpur Sahib during Hola Mohalla festival, in support of Khalistan. They carried a map of the proposed Sikh state on placards.

1984 All India Sikh Student Federation (AISSF) was banned by Indian government. As a result thousands of innocent Sikhs were Punjab formed the Senior Sikh Sophisticates Forum to strenthen arrested from their



home.

20th March

1761 GurSikhs greatly harassed Ahmad Shah's returning forces from his 5th invasion, successfully engaged them near Goindwal and rescued Hindu women captured by him.

1914 Baba Gurdit Singh of Sarhali village charter a ship, Kamagata Maru, to satisfy the condition of the Canadian Privy Council Order No. 920. There were 376 passengers in it including 346 Sikhs. It started its journey for Canada reaching there on the 23rd May 1914, but the ship was not allowed to entry and was compelled to leave Canadian waters on 23rd July 1914.



1922 A conference at Apra takes place.

1931 Sikhs presented 17 demands charter for the Round Table Conference.

1956 Hukam Singh was elected Deputy Speaker of Indian Lower House.

21st March

1664 Ninth Patshah, Guru Tegh Bahadur visited Delhi.

1758 Sikhs captured Sirhind.

1921 Karam Singh Daulatpur organizes a conference at Mahalpur.

1986 One group of the Akalis called for a protest procession at Chandigarh. This procession was fired upon by the BSF and CRPF indiscriminately, killing several Sikhs.



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History This Week

MARCH 15 - MARCH 21

MARCH 15

March 15, 44 B.C. - Julius Caesar was assassinated in the Senate chamber in Rome by Brutus and fellow conspirators. After first trying to defend himself against the murderous onslaught, Caesar saw Brutus with a knife and asked "Et tu, Brute?" (You too, Brutus?) Caesar then gave up the struggle and was stabbed to death.



Birthdays - Andrew Jackson (1767-1845) the 7th U.S. President was born in a log cabin in Waxhaw, South Carolina. As a boy he volunteered to serve in the American Revolution. Captured by the British, he refused an order to clean an officer's boots and was slashed by his sword. Jackson later gained fame as a hero during the War of 1812. In politics he helped form the new Democratic Party and became the first man from an impoverished background to be elected President, serving from 1829 to 1837.

MARCH 16

March 16, 1968 - During the Vietnam War, the My Lai Massacre occurred as American soldiers of Charlie Company murdered 504 Vietnamese men, women, and children. Twenty-five U.S. Army officers were later charged with complicity in the massacre and subsequent cover-up, but only one was convicted, and later pardoned by President Richard Nixon.



March 16, 1968 - New York Senator Robert Kennedy announced his intention to run for the Democratic presidential nomination.

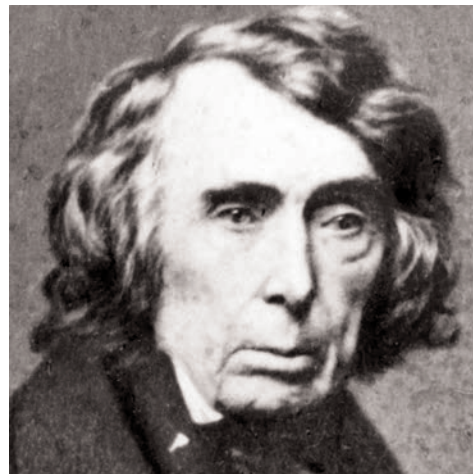
Birthdays - James Madison (1751-1836) the 4th U.S. President was born in Port Conway, Virginia. He played an important role in the formation of the new U.S. Constitution following the American Revolutionary War. During

the War of 1812, President Madison was forced to flee Washington, D.C., while the British attacked and burned the White House and other important public buildings.

MARCH 17

March 17th - Celebrated as Saint Patrick's Day commemorating the patron saint of Ireland.

March 17, 1776 - Early in the American Revolutionary War the British completed their evacuation of Boston following a successful siege conducted by Patriots. The event is still commemorated in Boston as Evacuation Day.



Birthdays - U.S. Supreme Court Justice Roger B. Taney (1777-1864) was born in Calvert County, Maryland. He became the 5th Chief Justice in 1836, best known for the Dred Scott decision.

MARCH 18

March 18, 1974 - The five-month-old Arab oil embargo against the U.S. was lifted. The embargo was in retaliation for American support of Israel during the Yom Kippur War of 1973 in which Egypt and Syria suffered a crushing defeat. In the U.S., the resulting embargo had caused long lines at gas stations as prices soared 300 percent amid shortages and a government ban on Sunday gas sales.



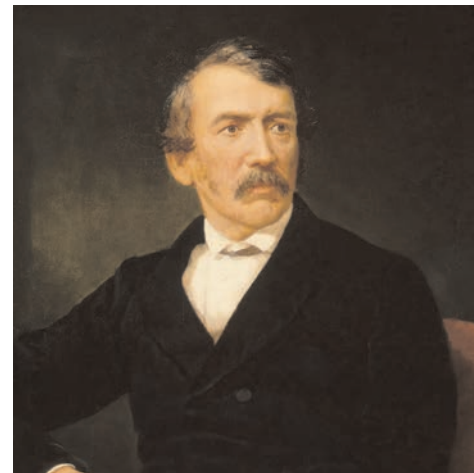
Birthdays - Grover Cleveland (1837-1908) the 22nd and 24th U.S. president was born in Caldwell, New Jersey. He was the only president to serve two nonconsecutive terms and was also the only president to be married in the White House.

MARCH 19

March 19, 2003 - The United States launched an attack against Iraq to topple dictator Saddam Hussein from power.

The attack commenced with aerial strikes against military sites, followed the next day by an invasion of southern Iraq by U.S. and British ground troops. The troops made rapid progress northward and conquered the country's capital, Baghdad, just 21 days later, ending the rule of Saddam.

Birthdays - William Bradford (1589-1657) was born in Yorkshire, England. He sailed aboard the Mayflower during its 66-day voyage from Plymouth, England to Massachusetts in 1620. The small ship carried over 100 passengers and a crew of 30. It was originally bound for Virginia but landed far north on Cape Cod. The Mayflower Compact was then drawn up as a form of government. Bradford became the first governor of the new Plymouth Colony, serving a total of 30 years, and was largely responsible for its success.



Birthdays - Explorer and medical missionary David Livingstone (1813-1873) was born in Blantyre, Scotland. He arrived at Cape Town, Africa, in 1841 and began extensive missionary explorations, often traveling into areas that had never seen a white man. In his later years, he sought the source of the Nile River. He also became the subject of the famous search by news correspondent Henry Stanley who located him in 1871 near Lake Tanganyika in Africa after a difficult search and simply asked, "Dr. Livingstone, I presume?"

Birthdays - Wyatt Earp (1848-1929) was born in Monmouth, Illinois. He became a legendary figure in the Wild West as a lawman and gunfighter, best known for the shootout at the O.K. Corral in 1881, in which the Earp brothers (Wyatt, Virgil and Morgan) fought and defeated the Ike Clanton gang.

Birthdays - American politician William Jennings Bryan (1860-1925) was born in Salem, Illinois. He was defeated three times as a candidate for the presidency. He advocated a "free silver" monetary standard through unlimited coinage of silver rather than the gold standard. During a speech at the 1896 Democratic convention he electrified the delegates, stating, "You shall not press down upon the brow of labor this crown of thorns. You shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold!" In 1925, he was the successful prosecutor in the Scopes 'monkey' trial in which a teacher was convicted of violating Tennessee's Anti-

Evolution Bill forbidding the teaching of the theory of evolution. However, he died just 5 days after the verdict.

MARCH 20

March 20, 1995 - A nerve gas attack occurred on the Tokyo subway system during rush hour resulting in 12 persons killed and 5,000 injured. Japanese authorities later arrest the leader and members of a Japanese religious cult suspected in the attack.



Birthdays - American psychologist B.F. Skinner (1904-1990) was born in Susquehanna, Pennsylvania. He pioneered theories of behaviorism and developed the Skinner box, a controlled environment for studying behavior.

MARCH 21

March 21, 1918 - During World War I, the Second Battle of the Somme began as German General Erich von Ludendorff launched an all-out drive to win the war. The battle began with a five-hour artillery barrage followed by a rush of German troops. The offensive lasted until April 6th and resulted in the Germans gaining about 35 miles of territory. Allied and German casualty figures for both battles approached 500,000.

March 21, 1943 - A suicide/assassination plot by German Army officers against Hitler failed as the conspirators were unable to locate a short fuse for the bomb which was to be carried in the coat pocket of General von Gersdorff to ceremonies Hitler was attending.



Birthdays - Organist and composer Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) was born in Eisenach, Germany. His output included thousands of compositions, many used in churches. Among his best known works; The Brandenburg Concertos for orchestra, The Well-Tempered Clavier for keyboard, the St. John and St. Matthew passions, and the Mass in B Minor.



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Mumbai's players celebrate with the championship trophy after ending the team's eight-year barren run. PTI

Mumbai clinch Ranji Trophy for 42nd time

Domestic heavyweights Mumbai ended their eight-year barren run to lift a record-extending 42nd Ranji Trophy title on Thursday, March 14, beating a resolute Vidarbha by 169 runs on the fifth and final day of a thoroughly engrossing summit clash.

The fate of the final -- Mumbai's 48th in the 90 years of the tournament's history -- here at the iconic Wankhede Stadium was sealed when the hosts set a 538-run target for the visiting team.

Vidarbha captain Akshay Wadkar (102) and the unheralded Harsh Dubey (65) kept Mumbai at bay for the entire first session after Vidarbha resumed on 248 for five, needing another 290 runs to win. The team was eventually bowled out for 368.

In a contest that ebbed and flowed, Mumbai came out as the winners after Vidarbha frustrated them for long periods of play in the last two days.

Wadkar led the fight for his side with his first century of the year while also crossing the 600-run mark this season. Dubey brought up only his second fifty of the first-class career.

Together, they forged the longest stand of the innings, consuming 255 balls in 194 minutes from day four until a little after the resumption of the second session on the final day.

Wadkar fell shortly after play resumed -- leg before off Tanush Kotian (4/95) -- and once the pair was broken, it all ended in a jiffy for the visitors who have now lost the Ranji Trophy final on the third instance after winning two titles.

Pant fit to keep wickets in IPL, Shami ruled out

NEW DELHI (TIP)

Rishabh Pant has been cleared to keep wickets in the Indian Premier League (IPL) beginning next month but pace bowler Mohammed Shami will miss the T20 tournament following heel surgery, the country's cricket board (BCCI) has said.

India wicketkeeper Pant was involved in a near-fatal car crash in December 2022 that required him to undergo multiple surgeries and kept him out of the 50-over World Cup on home soil last year.

The Delhi Capitals' captain was initially expected to play purely as a batter in the 10-team IPL, which begins in Chennai on March 22.

"After undergoing an extensive 14-month rehab and recovery process ... Rishabh Pant has now been declared fit as a wicketkeeper-batter for the upcoming IPL 2024," BCCI secretary Jay Shah said in a statement.

A strong showing in the IPL could earn the 26-year-old a place in India's squad for the T20 World Cup in June.

Shami, who missed India's recent home series against England and underwent surgery, is a doubt for the World Cup. He is not expected to be back before September this year. "The fast bowler successfully underwent surgery on February 26th, 2024, for his right heel problem. He is currently being monitored by the BCCI medical team and is ruled out of the upcoming IPL 2024," the BCCI statement read.

Fellow seam bowler Prasidh Krishna has also been ruled out of the IPL with a quadriceps tendon injury.

There is, however, no update on KL Rahul, who hasn't played since the first Test against England in January.



India wicketkeeper Pant was involved in a near-fatal car crash in December 2022 that required him to undergo multiple surgeries and kept him out of the 50-over World Cup on home soil last year.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) vice-president Rajeev Shukla expressed happiness at star Indian player Rishabh Pant being declared fit to play as a wicketkeeper-batter in Indian Premier League (IPL) starting from March 22 and expressed hope that the attacking left-hander will perform well.

Shukla said, "Rishabh Pant has been declared fit for batting and wicketkeeping. He was injured in an accident. BCCI provided all possible help to him and now he is coming back on the ground. It is a matter of happiness for us since he is a great player. We hope he will perform very well in the future. The selectors will

take a call on the T20 World Cup team and Rishabh's place in it, as of now he is fit for IPL and we are happy about it."

BCCI took to their official X account and stated that after taking part in an extensive 14-month recovery process Pant has been given the green signal to take part in IPL 2024.

"After undergoing an extensive 14-month rehab and recovery process, following a life-threatening road mishap on December 30, 2022, @RishabhPant17 has now been declared fit as a wicketkeeper batter for the upcoming #TATA@IPL 2024," BCCI wrote.

European Golden Boot race: Contenders in 2023-24 season

The European Golden Boot race is slowly coming to a wrap for the 2023-24 European football season. The award is presented to the leading goalscorer in league matches from the top division of a European league, and is awarded by the European Sports Media. Manchester City's Erling Haaland won the award in the 2022-23 season, scoring 36 goals.

Meanwhile, Lionel Messi has bagged the most European Golden Boot awards, winning six in total. He is followed by Cristiano Ronaldo (4), Eusebio (2), Gerd Muller (2), Dudu Georgescu (2), Fernando Gomes (2), Ally McCoist (2), Mario Jardel (2), Thierry Henry (2), Diego Forlan (2), Luis Suarez (2) and Robert Lewandowski (2).

1. Harry Kane

The English forward leads the race with 30 points, but his goals have failed to put Bayern Munich in contention for the Bundesliga title. The German giants are currently second with 57 points, behind Bayer Leverkusen (67).

2. Lautaro Martinez



2022 World Cup winner Lautaro Martinez is in second position, with 23 goals. Although Inter Milan are out of the Champions League, they are on course to clinch the Serie A and are top of table with 75 points, ahead of second-placed Milan (59).

3. Serhou Guirassy

The Guinea international is third in the European

Golden Boot race, with 21 goals. Having joined VfB Stuttgart permanently this season, he has been in hot form this season. In this season, he scored 10 goals in the first five matches, including his first Bundesliga hat-trick, to equal a record set by Robert Lewandowski in 2020-21. He also set the Bundesliga record for most goals by a player in the first seven matches of a season, by bagging a hat-trick within 15 minutes in a 3-1 win vs Wolfsburg.

4. Kylian Mbappe

PSG star Kylian Mbappe is fourth, with 21 goals. Although this is his last season, he isn't that far off from Kane, and will be looking to make a late push for the award. Mbappe will be departing PSG after this season, and is expected to join Real Madrid.

5. Akor Adams

Nigerian Akor Adams is fifth in the leaderboard with 22 goals. His goals for Lillestrom is also considered in the race. Currently, he is representing Montpellier in Ligue 1.



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