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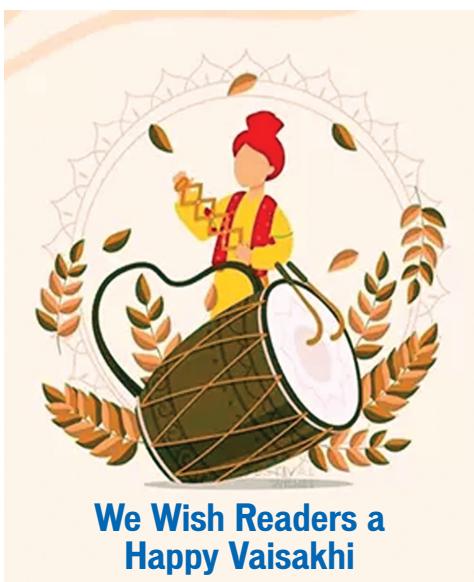
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Vaisakhi celebrated with Enthusiasm at the Indian Consulate in New York

THE INDIAN PANORAMA DOCUMENTARY ON VAISAKHI AND SURATI ARTS BHANGRA EARNED WOVS OF THE GATHERING



Organizers and guests with Acting Consul General Dr. Varun Jeph

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VAISAKHI, THE KHALSA SIRJANA DIVAS, AND CELEBRATIONS WORLDWIDE
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APRIL 20, 2024
NEW YORK CITY (TIP): The 100 plus gathering in the ornate Ball Room of the Indian Consulate in New York enjoyed every moment of their presence at the

Vaisakhi celebrations organized by The Indian Panorama with the support of the Consulate General of India.

What engrossed the gathering the most was a documentary on Vaisakhi which

traced the glorious history of Punjab from the times of the Vedas, Punjabis, and the creation of Khalsa by the Tenth Master of the Sikhs,

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Congressional Black Caucus lineup to oust Indian-American Congressman Thanedar



The Congressional Black Caucus has lined up to oust Indian American Congressman Shri Thanedar

APRIL 20, 2024

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): In one of the rarest instances, the Congressional Black Caucus has lined up to oust one of the sitting lawmakers, Indian American Congressman Shri Thanedar, who is seeking his re-election from the 13th Congressional District of Michigan.

Black Caucus Chair Steven Horsford and his immediate predecessor Joyce Beatty in a significant political move announced to endorse Adam Hollier over Thanedar in the Democratic primary.

In the American political tradition, a sitting lawmaker is rarely opposed by their party leadership in the primary.

The 13th Congressional District of Michigan has a black majority, and this was the first time that it did

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Indian-origin mayoral candidate wants to run London like a 'seasoned CEO'

APRIL 21, 2024

LONDON (TIP): Tarun Ghulati, the Indian-origin candidate in the race to challenge Sadiq Khan from winning a third term as Mayor of London, has said that the citizens of the UK capital have been let down by all the major political parties and he wants to run London like a "seasoned CEO" which delivers profits for all.

The Delhi-born businessman believes his investment expertise is what London needs

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Indian-origin candidate for London Mayor Tarun Ghulati addresses a gathering in London.

Photo : PTI



European Union's ambassador to India Herve Delphin describes the new visa regime as another step towards enhancing people-to-people contact between the two sides. File photo

Indians can now get multiple entry Schengen visa with longer validity as EU eases norms

APRIL 22, 2024

NEW DELHI (TIP): Frequent Indian travellers to Europe will now be able to apply for multiple entry Schengen visa of up to five years, with the European Commission effecting certain changes in the existing rules.

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COMMENT

Happy Vaisakhi



BY
INDRAJIT SALUJA

Nothing could give us greater pleasure than to present an edition with a great reading. Here we are with a Vaisakhi special edition which focuses on the joyful harvest season festivities and the spiritual renewal brought about by the creation of the Khalsa.

The festival serves as a reminder of the core values of Sikhism: equality, justice, and selfless service. In modern times, the Sikh faith's commitment to these values remains relevant and inspiring, offering a path of compassion and integrity in a complex world. As Sikhs continue to uphold the principles established by their Gurus, they contribute positively to society and work towards a more just and equitable world.

Vaisakhi falls on the 13th or 14th of April each year and is celebrated with great enthusiasm and joy by Punjabis and Sikhs around the world. In addition to marking the harvest season, Vaisakhi commemorates the birth of the Khalsa in 1699. On this day, Guru Gobind Singh called for a gathering at Anandpur Sahib, where he established the Khalsa Panth, a community of committed Sikhs dedicated to upholding the principles of faith, justice, and equality.

The festival is marked by religious rituals, including prayers and readings from the Guru Granth Sahib, the holy scripture of Sikhism. Sikhs visit gurdwaras (places of worship) and participate in processions known as Nagar Kirtans, which are accompanied by music, hymns, and displays of martial arts known as gatka. Vaisakhi is also a time for community service and charity, reflecting the core Sikh values of selflessness and humility.

The establishment of the Khalsa on Vaisakhi in 1699 was a pivotal moment in Sikh history. Guru Gobind Singh sought to

create a community that would stand against injustice and oppression while upholding the values of faith, courage, and equality. To initiate the Khalsa, the Guru tested the courage of his followers by asking for volunteers willing to sacrifice their lives for the cause. Five brave individuals stepped forward, and they were initiated into the Khalsa as the Panj Pyare (Five Beloved Ones).

THE PANJ PYARE WERE GIVEN AMRIT (HOLY WATER) AND INSTRUCTED IN THE FIVE KS, SYMBOLS OF SIKH IDENTITY AND COMMITMENT.

KESH: Uncut hair, symbolizing respect for natural beauty and a rejection of vanity.

KARA: A steel bracelet, representing unity and strength.

KANGHA: A wooden comb, signifying cleanliness and orderliness.

KACHERA: Special undergarments, symbolizing modesty and self-control.

KIRPAN: A ceremonial sword, representing the duty to defend the weak and fight for justice.

The initiation of the Panj Pyare set the foundation for the Khalsa community, which is guided by principles of courage, discipline, and selflessness.

CORE VALUES OF SIKHISM

Sikhism, founded in the 15th century by Guru Nanak, emphasizes a set of core values that guide the lives of its followers. These values align closely with modern principles of freedom, equality, human rights, and humanity. The core values of Sikhism include:

EQUALITY: Sikhism teaches that all humans are equal, regardless of their caste, race, gender, or social status. This belief is rooted in the teachings of Guru Nanak, who rejected the caste system and social hierarchies.

SEVA: The principle of selfless service to others is central to Sikhism. Sikhs are encouraged to engage in seva, or community service, as a way of giving back and uplifting society.

HONESTY: Sikhs are taught to earn an honest living and avoid deceit and exploitation. Truthfulness and integrity

are essential aspects of Sikh character.

JUSTICE: Sikhism upholds the importance of fighting against injustice and standing up for the rights of the oppressed. The Khalsa was established to defend those who could not defend themselves.

MEDITATION AND SPIRITUALITY: Sikhs practice meditation and prayer to connect with the divine. The repetition of God's name (Naam Japna) is a fundamental practice in Sikh spirituality.

COMMUNITY AND SHARING: Sikhs believe in the importance of community and sharing resources with others. This is exemplified by the practice of langar, a communal meal served at gurdwaras, which is open to all regardless of background.

SIKHISM IN MODERN TIMES

Sikhism's emphasis on equality, justice, and human rights makes it highly relevant in today's world, where these values are increasingly prioritized. The Sikh faith's commitment to freedom and dignity aligns with contemporary movements for social justice and equality.

Sikhism's liberal and progressive outlook is evident in its rejection of dogma and emphasis on personal spirituality. The Guru Granth Sahib, the central religious text of Sikhism, contains teachings from multiple spiritual traditions, promoting an inclusive and universal approach to faith.

Sikhism also embraces scientific reasoning and rational thought. Sikh teachings encourage followers to seek knowledge and truth, emphasizing the harmony between science and spirituality.

Moreover, the Sikh community's tradition of seva and charity contributes positively to society, especially in times of crisis. Sikhs are known for their dedication to providing aid and support to those in need, reflecting their commitment to selflessness and compassion.

Let's celebrate this Vaisakhi in the true spirit of Sikhism created by the Sikh Gurus from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh.

Happy Vaisakhi!

GUEST COMMENT

India's upcoming general elections

BY FARWA AAMER

As India gears up for its forthcoming elections, there's a prevailing confidence in the prospects of the ruling BJP, setting the stage for Prime Minister Modi's likely third term in office. This anticipation extends beyond India's borders, drawing attention from global observers, including neighboring nations and major powers like the United States and China.

Prime Minister Modi's adept diplomacy, his administration's leadership in forums, notably the G20, and India's rising

economic potential have remarkably elevated India's stature on the world stage. Many nations in the Global South seem to favor another term under PM Modi's leadership, while the current Biden administration in the United States also sees promise in his reelection. This optimism stems from the significant strides made in enhancing strategic, economic, and defense partnerships between India and the U.S. in recent times.

Given the ruling party's many strengths despite the controversies surrounding its nationalistic policies and some polarizing views on PM Modi's aspirations for a 'new

India', the opposition still faces a formidable challenge at the polls.

The 6-week long electoral process, starting April 19, marks a pivotal moment in India's democratic journey. Observers worldwide will closely monitor this process, acknowledging its potential to influence the nation's democratic resilience in the future. The response of global stakeholders to India's electoral exercise remains crucial, raising questions about whether their future engagement will hinge on the elections' adherence to democratic principles or be guided by broader strategic interests and values.

(Farwa Aamer is Director of South Asia Initiatives at the Asia Society Policy Institute)



Acting Consul General Dr. Varun Jeph gives his remarks

contd from page 1

Shri Guru Gobind Singh ji on the day of Vaisakhi in 1699 at Shri Anandpur Sahib, one of the Five Holy seats of Sikhism.

The documentary focused on the contribution of the Punjabis, in particular the Sikhs, in various spheres from arts to sports and battlefield.

The rich Punjabi culture depicted in the documentary filled the Punjabis in the gathering with nostalgia and pride. And, to top it all was a thrilling Bhangra performance by Surati For Performing Arts dancers Jeevika Bhat and Bineet Kaur. They literally set the gathering on fire. The thrill of Bhangra impelled the gathering to take to the dance floor and join the dancers in Bhangra, which probably is the most popular form of dance worldwide.

The Founder and Artistic Director of Surati For Performing Arts, Rimli Roy, who is a recipient of the 2024 Individual Artist Fellowship Award from the New Jersey State Council in the Arts, spoke about the forthcoming Holi celebrations being organized by her institution, extended an invitation to all. She thanked the Acting Consul General Dr. Varun Jeph and Prof. Indrajit Saluja,



Prof. Indrajit Singh Saluja welcomes guests



Prof. Indrajit S Saluja felicitated the Actg. Consul General Dr. Varun Jeph with a replica of Golden Temple and a shawl.

to literature to social life, to professional life , to sports and the battlefield.

Dr. Jeph called upon the gathering to view the Consulate as their home where they are always welcome and assured them that the Consulate was committed to providing the most efficient consular services.

He also applauded the Indian American community for their great contribution to both their motherland and their country of adoption. He thanked them for being a strong bridge between India and the US.

A number of guests spoke on the occasion. Master Mohinder Singh, a former President of the Sikh Cultural Society, Richmond Hill, New York which manages Gurdwara Sikh Cultural Society - the largest gurdwara on the East Coast, and one of the founders and a former President of Gurdwara Baba Makhan Shah Lobana Sikh Center, Richmond Hill, NY, spoke about the great Sikh tradition from Guru Nanak Dev Ji, the First Master of the Sikhs.

Others who addressed included Dr. Sudhir Parikh, an eminent allergist, Chairman of Parikh Worldwide and owner of ITV; Harpreet Singh Toor, a former Chairman of the Sikh Cultural Society, and a candidate for New York State Assembly; Ravi Batra, an eminent attorney and chair of the National Advisory Council on South Asian Affairs; Vikas Singh Dhall, a former Chairman of Gurdwara Guru Gobind Singh, Plainview; Dr. VK Raju, a world renowned ophthalmologist and President of the Eye Foundation of America which is working to prevent childhood blindness, and has come up with a slogan "A World Without Childhood Blindness", and Smt. Purnima Desai, President of Shikshayatan and Sriniketan-institutions to promote Indian music, dances and other art forms and Sanskrit language.



Master Mohinder Singh , Purnima Desai, Vikas Singh Dhall, Dr. VK Raju, Attorney Ravi Batra, Rimli Roy



Dr. Varun Jeph felicitated speakers and artists on behalf of The Indian Panorama

Each of the 100 plus guests was a distinguished person.

The Media in full force graced the occasion. Those present included Dr. Sudhir Parikh, publisher, Parikh Worldwide and owner of ITV; Rajeev Bhambri, publisher of India Abroad group of papers; Sunil Hali, publisher of The Indian Eye and owner of a Radio station and a TV channel; Sharanjit Singh Thind, owner and publisher of the South Asian Insider and a TV channel;

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publisher of The Indian Panorama for inviting her over to perform at the Vaisakhi celebrations.

Earlier, Prof. Indrajit S Saluja welcomed the Acting Consul General Dr. Varun Jeph who in his address, described the creation of the Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh ji as a historic development which changed the course of history of India. He dwelt on the core values of Sikhism and praised the tradition of valor, courage and bravery of the Sikhs. He also mentioned some Sikhs who made significant contribution in various fields from arts

Six Indian American students win \$90,000 Paul & Daisy Soros Fellowships

APRIL 17, 2024

NEW YORK (TIP): Six Indian Americans are among the 30 winners of the 2024 for new Americans, a merit-based graduate school program for immigrants and children of immigrants.

Selected from 2,323 applicants, the 30 Paul & Daisy Soros Fellows are chosen for their achievements and their potential to make meaningful contributions to the United States across fields of study, according to a press release. They each will receive up to \$90,000 in funding to support their graduate studies at institutions across the country.

Six Fellows with Indian American heritage in the 2024 class of distinguished new Americans are: Aayush Karan, Akshay Swaminathan, Keerthana Hogirala, Malavika Kannan, Shubhayu Bhattacharyay and Ananya Agustin Malhotra.

Since the Fellowship's founding 26 years ago, the program has provided more than \$80 million in funding, and recipients have studied a range of fields from medicine and the arts to law and business.

"As we welcome these impressive new Fellows to our community, I am filled with pride and hope for the bright futures they will have professionally and as they give back to our country. Their stories demonstrate the strength and vitality inherent in the immigrant identity—they aren't afraid to take risks and think big," Daisy Soros, co-founder of the program, said.

"Congratulations to the new Fellows. Celebrating the exceptional cohort of 2024 Paul & Daisy Soros Fellows for New Americans, we highlight the remarkable achievements and boundless potential of these outstanding individuals."

In addition to receiving up to \$90,000 in funding for the graduate program of their choice, the 2024 Paul & Daisy Soros Fellows join a distinguished community of past recipients.

The alumni network includes US Surgeon General Vivek Murthy, who is the first surgeon general of Indian descent and helped lead the national response to Ebola, Zika, and the coronavirus.

The application for the 2025-26 academic year is open and due by October 31, 2024.

Six Fellows with Indian American heritage:

Aayush Karan: Fellowship awarded to support work towards a PhD in quantum science and engineering at Harvard University

Aayush Karan was born to parents who emigrated from India to the United States to conduct research in cancer biology, moving throughout the country largely in the Midwest before eventually settling in Wisconsin.

From bedtime Indian folk tales to fantasy novels, to his own parents'



Aayush Karan, Akshay Swaminathan, Keerthana Hogirala, Malavika Kannan, Shubhayu Bhattacharyay and Ananya Agustin Malhotra are among the 30 Paul & Daisy Soros Fellows chosen for their achievements and their potential to make meaningful contributions to the United States across fields of study

journeys, stories were a central feature of Aayush's life, compelling him to pursue many avenues of storytelling growing up, including classical piano and creative writing.

His parents' wholehearted encouragement of these pursuits along with their intense devotion to impactful research fostered a keen desire to establish meaningful relevance to broader audiences and communities—something that has strongly guided Aayush's passion for scientific research.

Aayush first fell in love with pure mathematics in high school, publishing research in low-dimensional topology for which he was named a Regeneron Science Talent Search finalist and a Davidson fellow.

As an undergraduate at Harvard, he went on to concentrate in computer science, physics, and mathematics with a secondary in economics, graduating summa cum laude in 2023. Aayush was elected marshal of the Junior 24 for Harvard's chapter of Phi Beta Kappa and awarded the Sophia Freund Prize for academic standing.

He was also awarded a 2022 Barry Goldwater Scholarship for his undergraduate research extending his background in mathematics to highly relevant scientific applications, including designing folding algorithms for RNA sequences, factual correctors for large language models, and compilers for optimization problems on near-term quantum devices.

Aayush is now pursuing classical and quantum computational learning as a PhD student in the Quantum Science and Engineering program at Harvard. In the long run, he hopes to be actively involved

in advancing the frontier of artificially intelligent systems and ensuring their broadly transformative potential is safely and effectively realized.

Ananya Agustin Malhotra: Fellowship awarded to support a JD at Yale

Born and raised in Georgia, Ananya Agustin Malhotra is the daughter of immigrants from Obando, Bulacan, Philippines and New Delhi, India. Raised in a bi-cultural and interfaith household, Ananya is deeply motivated by her mother and father's family histories to advocate for a more just and peaceful future United States foreign policy.

Ananya's interests lie at the intersection of global history, international law, and peace and security issues. She graduated summa cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa from Princeton University with a concentration in the School of Public and International Affairs.

Her undergraduate thesis, based on oral histories with New Mexican Downwinders, explored the human legacies of the 1945 Trinity Test and the US nuclear age. At Princeton, Ananya served as president of the Sexual Harassment/Assault Advising, Resources, and Education (SHARE) Peer Program, where she was first introduced to survivor-centered advocacy.

As a Rhodes Scholar at the University of Oxford, Ananya earned an MPhil in modern European history with distinction, studying the histories of empire and anticolonialism in shaping international order.

Her dissertation research explored the role of epistemology in the global intellectual history of decolonization and has been published in Global

Histories and the Journal of the History of Ideas blog.

For the last four years, Ananya has advocated for nuclear disarmament and risk reduction through her research, scholarship, and public commentary. Ananya has worked in Washington, DC at the Nuclear Threat Initiative and at the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft to advance policies aimed at fostering a safer and more peaceful world.

Ananya has also worked or held internships at the Logische Phantasie Lab, UN Women, and the European Roma Rights Centre, and is a member of the Younger Generation Leaders Network on Euro-Atlantic Security (YGLN) and the British American Security Information Council's Emerging Voices Network.

She has authored and co-authored several policy briefs and has collaborated on projects with Princeton University's Program on Science and Global Security. Some of her other writing and work can be found in Inkstick Media, Antonym Magazine, the American Oxonian, and the Oxford Review of Books.

Akshay Swaminathan: Fellowship awarded to support an MD/PhD in biomedical data science at Stanford University

Akshay Swaminathan was born in Wood-Ridge, New Jersey to Indian immigrants from Tamil Nadu, India. His paternal grandparents immigrated to Westchester, New York in 1969, where they were one of the only Indian families in the area.

They coped with this unfamiliar environment by maintaining a love and connection to their cultural roots, a tie that was inherited by Akshay early in his childhood through learning Carnatic music. His experiences learning Indian music and language taught him the importance of overcoming generational, linguistic, and social barriers to connect with others.

In high school, after discovering an online community of polyglots, Akshay began self-studying foreign languages, eventually developing pedagogical techniques that helped him learn over ten languages.

At Harvard College, he discovered joy in using languages to connect with and serve people from different backgrounds. He served as executive director of Refresh Bolivia, a global health nonprofit, where he and his teammates built a primary healthcare clinic that serves 10,000 indigenous residents in Cochabamba.

He also led Harvard Chinatown ESL, a program offering free English classes to adult Chinese immigrants, and he published five textbooks to teach English to Chinese speakers.

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Indian -origin Ajay Banga, Satya Nadella, Alia Bhat, Sakshi Malik on TIME Magazine's 100 Most Influential People list

April 17, 2024

NEW YORK (TIP): Bollywood star Alia Bhatt, World Bank President Ajay Banga, Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella, and British actor with Indian roots, Dev Patel, have made it to Time magazine's '100 Most Influential People' list for 2024.

Another prominent Indian who features in the list is wrestler Sakshi Malik, India's only female Olympic medalist who led the protest against the alleged sexual harassment of female grapplers by former Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh.

"Proud to be included in the 2024 #TIME100 list," Sakshi wrote on X.

Tom Harper, the director of the streaming film 'Heart of Stone', Alia's first Hollywood project, heaped praises on the actress, calling her a "truly international star".

"Despite her fame, Alia is self-effacing and funny on sets. There is a grace to the way she goes about her work: focused, open to ideas, and willing to take creative



Bollywood star Alia Bhatt, World Bank President Ajay Banga, Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella, and British actor with Indian roots, Dev Patel, have made it to Time magazine's '100 Most Influential People' list for 2024.

risks. One of my favorite moments in the film came from an improvisation at the

end of a take where she took the emotional thread and ran with it.

"Alia's superpower is her ability to mix movie-star magnetism with authenticity and sensitivity. As an actor, she is luminous, and as a person, she brings the grounded assurance and creativity that make a truly international star."

Alia is the only Bollywood actor to feature in the Time magazine list.

The other names with an India connect featured in the list include astronomer Priyamvada Natarajan, senior US Department of Energy official Jigar Shah, and chef and rights activist Asma Khan.

The also features singer-songwriter Dua Lipa, Oscar-awardee American actress Da'Vine Joy Randolph, and Oscar-nominated actors Jeffrey Wright and Colman Domingo.

Also featured in the list are film personalities Taraji P Henson, Elliot Page, Michael J. Fox, Sofia Coppola, and Hayao Miyazaki.

(Source: IANS)

Indian American National Security expert Radha Plumb becomes DoD's Chief Digital and AI Officer



Dr. Radha Plumb has assumed charge as the Department of Defense (DoD) Chief Digital and Artificial Intelligence Officer (CDAO).

APRIL 12, 2024

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): Indian American national security expert Dr. Radha Plumb has assumed charge as the Department of Defense (DoD) Chief Digital and Artificial Intelligence Officer (CDAO). Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III administered the oath of office to Plumb in an April 9 ceremony at the Pentagon with family and colleagues in attendance. Plumb most recently served as the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment.

"It is an honor to serve in this role at a critical time for our nation. AI and digital innovation provide crucial new technologies and capabilities for our warfighters," said Plumb. "I am looking forward to collaborating with partners from military leaders to industry partners and academia to our allies and partners to ensure we deliver digital and AI

technological advancements at speed and scale." Plumb assumes the role of CDAO having completed her last assignment working acquisition matters related to DoD, including building out and maintaining a robust national security industrial base and supply chain, according to a media release.

She brings significant technical expertise in data and AI development as well as creative acquisition approaches combined with strategic acumen to advance the CDAO's innovative efforts. Her combination of government and industry experience will provide a unique advantage to drive accelerated adoption of data, analytics, and AI across DOD. Prior to her work with the DoD, Plumb has worked in various industry positions including Google, RAND and Facebook.

Plumb received her PhD in economics from Princeton University and at the outset of her career, she was an assistant professor at the London School of Economics and a Robert Wood Johnson Health Policy Scholar at Harvard. The CDAO became operational in June 2022 and is dedicated to integrating and optimizing artificial intelligence capabilities across the DoD.

The office is responsible for accelerating the DoD's adoption of data, analytics, and AI, enabling the Department's digital infrastructure and policy adoption to deliver scalable AI-driven solutions for enterprise and joint use cases, safeguarding the nation against current and emerging threats.

2 Indian-origin men among 6 arrested in Canada's biggest-ever heist

\$22.5 million were robbed from Toronto's main airport



Parmpal Sidhu, 54, and Amit Jalota, 40, both from Ontario, were arrested on Wednesday, April 17. Ammad Chaudhary, 43, Ali Raza, 37, and Prasath Paramalingam, 35 were the other three arrested.



APRIL 19, 2024

OTTAWA (TIP): At least two Indian-origin men are among six persons arrested in connection with a brazen multimillion-dollar gold heist at Toronto's main airport last year, the biggest gold theft in Canada's history.

The Canadian authorities also issued warrants for three more persons in the case, Peel Regional Police (PRP) said.

On April 17, 2023, an air cargo container carrying more than 22 million Canadian dollars' worth of gold bars and foreign currency was stolen from a secure storage facility using fake paperwork, police say. The gold and currency had just arrived on an Air Canada flight from Zurich, Switzerland.

At least two former Air Canada employees allegedly helped in the audacious theft, police say. One is now in custody and an arrest warrant has been issued for the other.

Two persons of Indian origin—Parmpal Sidhu, 54, and Amit Jalota, 40, both from Ontario, were arrested on Wednesday along with Ammad Chaudhary, 43, Ali Raza, 37, and Prasath Paramalingam, 35.

Durante King-Mclean, a 25-year-old man from Brampton is currently in custody in the United States on firearms trafficking-related charges, and investigators have been in touch with him and his legal counsel. (Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

Vibrant Eid Celebrations: Indian Muslim Community Lights Up New York's Consulate General of India



From left, Ahmed Shakir, Ilayas Quraishi, Sibu Nair, Kashif Hussain, Yusuf Salaam, Jenifer Rajkumar, John Liu, and Dr. Varun Jeph delivering remarks at the Consulate General of India in New York on April 21, 2024.

April 22, 2024

NEW YORK CITY (TIP): On April 21, 2024, the Indian Muslim Community (IMC) of NY/NJ/CT continued its tradition of showcasing unity and strength by hosting the Eid Celebrations 2024 at the Consulate General of India (CGI) in New York. The event began with a stirring Quran recitation and translation by Sumayya Ahmed, setting the tone for a day filled with cultural richness and community spirit.

Welcoming the gathering, Dr. Varun Jeph, Acting Consul General of India in New York, highlighted the significance of Eid in India's cultural landscape, emphasizing its reflection of the nation's millennia-old composite culture and unity in diversity. He underscored the importance of celebrating diversity, a value shared by both India and the diverse city of New York.



Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer addressing the audience via his video message.

Despite being unable to attend in person, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer conveyed his heartfelt wishes through a video message, emphasizing the theme of unity in love and faith during challenging times marked by division and bigotry.

New York State Assemblywoman Jenifer Rajkumar, the first Indian woman elected in the state, shared her deep connection with the Muslim community and her efforts to empower it. She highlighted initiatives such as expanding halal food options in public schools and ensuring the allowance of the Muslim call to prayer in New York City.



Ilayas Quraishi receiving New York State Assembly's special citation from Jenifer Rajkumar

Special citations from the State of New York were presented to IMC's founding member Ilayas Quraishi and others, recognizing their contributions to the community. Quraishi expressed humility and gratitude for the community's support in preserving the tradition of celebrating Eid at the CGI in New York.

Reflecting on the journey of Indian Muslims in the United States, Quraishi emphasized the shared humanity and values of compassion, generosity, and unity that Eid represents. He acknowledged the responsibility of representing over 200 million Indian Muslims and Indian American Muslims in the United States.



IMC's core committee members along with Dr. Varun Jeph, Jenifer Rajkumar, Yusuf Salaam and representatives of New York State Governor, New York City Mayor, and New York City Public Advocate

New York State Senator John Liu acknowledged the significant Muslim population in India and the thriving Indian American community in New York, emphasizing the importance of unity and solidarity.



Full house at the Eid Celebration

Councilman Yusef Salaam highlighted the symbolic significance of Eid, representing gratitude, brotherhood, and unity among Muslims worldwide.

Deputy Public Advocate Kashif Hussain expressed

gratitude for the invitation and presented citations from the New York Public Advocate to community members for their contributions.

The event also received messages of support from New York Governor Kathy Hochul and presentations from various community leaders, including Sibu Nair, Deputy Director of Asian American Affairs for New York State.



A ghazal performance being presented by Suman Laskar



Sumayya Ahmed recited the Quran to start the event



Zoha Ahmed explained the significance of Eid at the event



Surya Makkar played traditional drums at the event

The celebrations featured a diverse range of cultural performances, including explanations of Eid's significance, ghazal performances, traditional drumming, and stand-up comedy, showcasing the rich cultural heritage of the Indian Muslim community.

The Indian Muslim Community's Eid Celebrations at the Consulate General of India in New York served as a testament to the community's resilience, unity, and commitment to fostering inclusivity and understanding in society.

(Based on a press release issued by Ilayas Quraishi)

Gayatri Dave to represent India at 'MS. Queen of The World International 2024' in New York



Gayatri Dave was crowned 'Ms. Queen of The World India' in October , 2023

APRIL 17, 2024

NEW YORK (TIP): For internationally certified clinical nutritionist Gayatri Dave (33) who consults clients across India and Indians living in the USA, pageantry was never a part of her life plan. After winning 'Ms. Queen of The World India' in October last year, Gayatri has had her sights set on the international finale scheduled for next week from

April 22 - April 25 at Symphony Space Theatre in NYC.

As a part-time fashion model, she did a photoshoot at the beginning of last year and her pictures garnered much praise. A school friend of hers suggested she explore pageants; even though she initially dismissed the idea thinking she didn't fit the age bracket. However, after some contemplation and online exploration, she stumbled upon CocoBerry Academy which is an individual training institute for modeling and pageantry.

Despite not fitting in the typical Miss or Mrs. category, her mentors including national pageant director Urmimala Boruah encouraged her to participate assuring her that age and height weren't hindrances. Gayatri pursued her passion by participating and winning in the Ms. category. 'MS.' category was created taking into account the growing number of unmarried/single women above 30 years of age or who are divorced or are widowed. Why should any tag deter anyone from pursuing their dreams? This category gives women a chance to change any personal setbacks that they may have faced into comebacks. Today it brings her immense pride to be at this juncture in her life to get a chance to represent India at 'Queen of the World International' 2024 finale under the

mentorship of Alice Lee Giannetta, Founder, CEO of the pageant. Her journey wasn't about winning a crown, but about self-discovery and overcoming self-doubt.

ACADEMICS

Gayatri Dave is a practicing clinical nutritionist based in Mumbai catering to clients across India and Indians living in the USA for the past 10 years. She is a Psychology Graduate and a Certified Integrative Nutrition & Health Coach from Institute of Integrative Nutrition (IIN), New York City, USA. Prior to accomplishing her international qualification, she completed PGDM in Diet and Nutrition and an additional Diploma in Dietetics, Health and Nutrition (DDHN). Additionally, she is also a diploma holder in Advanced Cosmetology.



The Nutritionist
Gayatri Dave

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

CONT'D FROM PAGE 3

Baldev Grewal, a senior journalist and publisher of Sher-e-Panjab; Jay Jasbir Singh, owner and publisher of Hum Hindustani, a Hindi language newspaper, Parveen Chopra, a senior journalist and publisher of ALotusintheMud.com, a lifestyle publication, Preetpal Kaur, owner and publisher of a newspaper - Preetnama- and a TV channel. Others from the media world included Harvenderpal Singh (HP Singh) from

Parikh Worldwide, Kripa Ranjan Prasad from ITV, and Mohammed Zahid from TV Asia.

Consul, Community Affairs, AK Vijayakrishnan coordinated the event, and was ably assisted by his team of dedicated workers, in particular, Anurag. Mr.

Vijayakrishnan proposed a vote of thanks.

The guests were treated to snacks and beverages during social hour, and later after the event, to a delicious dinner, catered by the Royal Indian Palace, 118-06 Richmond Hill, NY 11419 (Phone 718-846-7600).



Consul, Community Affairs , AK Vijayakrishnan proposed a vote of thanks



A View of the gathering



Jeevika Bhat and Bineet Kaur giving a Bhangra performance

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All sorts of Machiavellian tactics are being used to ensure victory in the polls



BY JULIO RIBEIRO

"OUR PRIME MINISTER MAKES STATEMENTS AGAINST HIS OPPONENTS EVERY DAY, SOMETIMES MORE THAN ONCE OR EVEN TWICE A DAY. USUALLY, HE ACCUSES THEM AND THEIR PARTIES OF CORRUPTION. THEY, IN TURN, ACCUSE THE BJP OF THE SAME EVIL. HERE, THE PARTY IN POWER IS IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT. IT CAN MAKE IT EXTREMELY DIFFICULT FOR OPPOSITION PARTIES TO COLLECT FUNDS FOR FIGHTING ELECTIONS. THE BJP IS USING ITS POLE POSITION QUITE LIBERALLY IN ITS QUEST FOR A THIRD TERM. BUT THE PM HAS NOW STEPPED BEYOND CORRUPTION TO TERRITORY ON WHICH, BY LAW, HE IS NOT ALLOWED TO ENTER. ANY REFERENCE TO RELIGION IS OUT OF BOUNDS DURING ELECTIONEERING. OBLIQUE REFERENCES ARE DEFTLY MADE BY POLITICIANS LIKE MODI. HE CASTIGATED THE CONGRESS FOR ITS ABSENCE FROM THE INAUGURATION OF THE RAM MANDIR IN AYODHYA."

Radharao Gracias is a firebrand lawyer in Goa. He speaks his mind whenever the occasion merits this course. Last week, I received via email a sample of his activism. Radharao, a former MLA, had lambasted local BJP supporters on X (formerly Twitter) for offering people free tickets on a train from Goa to Vailankanni (Tamil Nadu), the passage paid for by 'vested interests'.

Any reference to religion is out of bounds during electioneering. Oblique references are deftly made by politicians like Modi.

The pilgrimage to Vailankanni is much sought after by Catholics as some miracle was reported to have occurred in that coastal town in Tamil Nadu in the past. Since I do not believe in miracles, I had not taken the trouble to ascertain what exactly drives the believers to frenzy. But the bulk of our believers do believe in the supernatural. That is the reality.

Radharao's lament is that BJP supporters conceived of a Machiavellian plan to dispatch a substantial number of Catholic voters to a destination where they would love to go. The train to Vailankanni from Goa departs every week on Mondays. All the tickets for May 6 were bought, probably by 'vested interests', soon after election dates were announced. Radharao alleged that they were being offered free of charge to Catholic voters to ensure their absence on May 7, the day of polling in the small state that sends only two MPs to the Lok Sabha.

This, then, is a new tactic to ensure poll victory. The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Goa, Cardinal Filipe Neri Ferrao, alerted his flock not to travel on May 6 since it was their duty to vote the next day.

Whether diabolical or just plain funny, stories like the one circulated by Radharao are doing the rounds elsewhere in India too. A parrot picked the name of one Thangar Bachan, a PMK candidate, as the winner from the Cuddalore Lok Sabha seat in Tamil Nadu. The DMK government led by CM MK Stalin promptly arrested the owner of the parrot for spreading fake news.

Tribal women in Palghar (Maharashtra) returned to the BJP pracharakas in their area the saris and the shopping bags with Modi's picture that were obviously given to them as inducements, proclaiming that they wanted employment and not these items.

The Catholic Archbishop of Idukki in Kerala favored a public screening of The Kerala Story, which depicts the story of girls from his state who were subjected to 'love jihad'. They were not only converted to Islam but also joined the ISIS in Syria, where their husbands were fighting the 'kafirs'.

In a multi-religious country like India, instances of romance between Muslim, Hindu and Christian boys and girls are inevitable. The Sangh Parivar has raised its hackles over such marriages, terming



Ploy: Ex-MLA Radharao Gracias has accused the BJP of a bid to keep Goa's Catholic voters away from polling booths by offering them a free pilgrimage to Vailankanni in Tamil Nadu

Credit: iStock

them cases of 'love jihad'. I know of many Muslim women married to Hindu or Christian men. No objections were raised, except perhaps by the parents of the girls. Protests are heard mainly when Hindu girls marry Muslim boys!

The induction of the Kerala girls and their Muslim bridegrooms into the outlawed ISIS is, of course, another matter. That is truly sinful. If that wicked angle is not present, love between man and woman should not be interfered with only on the ground that they belong to different religions.

Talking of Kerala, AK Antony, a former Congress Chief Minister who later became the Defense Minister, has a son who joined the BJP and is fighting the Lok Sabha elections on the saffron party's ticket. Antony was known for his uprightness and integrity. He publicly announced that he wished for his son's defeat. In a country where politics has become a family profession and where tickets are sought by politicians for their sons or daughters, a father disowning his son is a rare occurrence. But Antony is made of a different timber.

Our Prime Minister makes statements against his opponents every day, sometimes more than once or even twice a day. Usually, he accuses them and their parties of corruption. They, in turn, accuse the BJP of the same evil. Here, the party in power is in the driver's seat. It can make it extremely difficult for Opposition parties to collect funds for fighting elections. The BJP is using its pole position quite liberally in its quest for a third term.

But the PM has now stepped beyond corruption to territory on which, by law, he is not allowed to enter. Any reference to religion is out of bounds during electioneering. Oblique references are deftly made by politicians like Modi. He castigated the Congress for its absence from the inauguration of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya.

That was clever of him. He knew in his heart of hearts that by inaugurating the temple himself and not getting it done by the Shankaracharyas, he would effectively ensure that the Congress and some other opponents would stay away. And 'stay away' is what they did. That gave Modi the opportunity to castigate them on a matter that would resonate with the Hindu masses.

Last week, Modi thought of another stick to beat his opponents with. He pounced on a video foolishly put out by Lalu Yadav's son Tejaswi, showing him and his father cooking meat in the family kitchen in Patna. Watching the culinary skills of the father-son duo was none other than Modi's 'bête noire', Rahul Gandhi! That was enough to get the mind tick faster.

Modi lambasted the trio for eating 'non-vegetarian' food during the holy month of Sawan, when pious Hindus abjure meat, fish and eggs. He obviously calculated that the pious Hindu voter would veer to his camp, forgetting that that vote was already his for the picking. Modi's disgust with meat-eaters will reverberate with the people of Gujarat. There is a preponderance of vegetarians in Modi's home state, where the majority of the people do not eat meat or fish. In my ancestral state of Goa, the local Saraswat Brahmins are avid fish-eaters like the Brahmins of Bengal.

Modi should stick to the charge of corruption, which is his constant refrain against his opponents. The people believe that charge to be true. Similarly, when the Opposition hurls that same charge at the BJP, the common man believes that, too, to be true since there has been no respite in the last decade from the daily demands made by government and municipal employees for 'speed money'.

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

US Billionaires and Israel Hold Reins of US Presidential Candidates



BY DAVE MAKKAR



US Billionaires Have Doubled Their Wealth Since 2017
Trump Tax Overhaul

On Saturday, April 6, 2024, over 100 ultra-rich individuals assembled for an exclusive fundraising dinner for Trump, billed as "Inaugural Leadership Dinner." It was hosted by billionaire investor & hedge founder Paul Johnson at his lavish Palm Beach estate in Florida. The purpose behind this event was to bolster the electoral campaign of former President Trump, aiming to facilitate his return to the presidency as the 47th President of the United States on November 5th, 2024.

Attendance at this event came with a significant financial commitment, ranging from \$250,000 per person for those serving on the "host committee" to an extraordinary \$824,600 per person for those designated as "chairmen." There was a slot for "co-chair" also. Individuals contributing at the highest level were granted the privilege of being seated at Trump's table during the dinner.

Few weeks before the event, billionaire host Paul Johnson discussed the upcoming fundraiser for Trump with CNN, stating, "I'm pleased to support President Trump in his re-election efforts." He praised Trump's policies on the economy, energy, immigration, and foreign policy as beneficial for the country. However, he didn't mention Trump's 2017 Billionaires Tax cuts that favored wealthy individuals like himself. Paul had previously supported Ron DeSantis' campaign but switched to Trump when he became the presumptive nominee. Johnson had also funded Trump's campaigns in 2016 and 2020. Another billionaire co-chair of the event supporting Ron DeSantis was Robert Bigelow, owner of Budget Suites of America and founder of Bigelow Aerospace.

After the event, Trump's campaign announced it had raised \$50.5 million in Palm Beach, Florida, setting a record for single-event fundraising. This amount nearly doubled the \$26 million raised by Biden's campaign at a Hollywood star-studded gathering, which also included former Presidents Bill Clinton and Barack Obama, at Radio City Hall in New York.

It's evident that the ultra-wealthy individuals who attended Trump's fundraiser and donated substantial amounts of money cannot be equated with average Americans who have often been deceived by both Democrats and Republicans in every election cycle. These donors are aware of Trump's legal issues, including the December 2023 ruling by the Colorado Supreme Court that found Trump had been "engaged in an insurrection." Although the US Supreme Court ultimately allowed Trump to remain on the 2024 ballot

in Colorado, it did not overturn the state's high court decision regarding Trump's involvement in an "insurrection."



Donald Trump at a court in Manhattan, New York

File / CNN Screenshot

Let's examine some prominent legal state and federal cases pending against former President Trump from the perspective of Trump's ultra-rich donors. Unlike average Americans, these elites are well aware that in a civil case, damages are measured in dollars, while in a federal case, they can lead to jail time or house arrest.

1. PROPERTY OVER VALUATION CIVIL FRAUD CASE:

NY AG Letitia James utilized a state law dating back to 1956, granting the attorney general's office extensive authority to investigate and penalize corporations for wrongdoing. This law imposes a lower burden of proof than other fraud cases, crucially requiring prosecutors to not demonstrate the defendant's intent to commit fraud or financial harm to anyone. Despite Mr. Trump's repeated claims that the banks he dealt with profited, Judge Engoron found him liable for falsifying business records, issuing false financial statements, conspiracy to commit insurance fraud, and conspiracy to falsify business records.

In addition to the \$355 million penalty, representing repayment of what the judge deemed "ill-gotten gains" from Trump's fraudulent financial statements, Trump must pay interest on that amount at a rate of 9% per annum, as prescribed by New York law. James' office calculates that, to date, Trump owes an additional \$98.6 million in interest, bringing his total penalty to \$453.5 million. The interest will continue to accrue until Trump settles the debt.

Initially, Ms. James may have anticipated Trump's inability to furnish a bond while appealing the verdict, enabling her to seize his property. However, legal experts question the validity of her stance, considering it speculative and lacking evidential support. Her assertions regarding inflated figures rely on assumptions about potential bank actions, such as higher interest rates, which remain unsubstantiated. Moreover, it's widely acknowledged that Trump organizations have historically secured favorable deals, casting doubt on the alleged misconduct.

The appeal in AG James' Civil Fraud case against Trump concerning property value manipulation to get lower interest rates from the banks, is likely to encounter challenges, potentially even reaching the Supreme Court due to the substantial fine involved. The outcome of this case carries significant implications for banking institutions, putting considerable pressure on them. The exorbitant nature of the fine raises serious constitutional concerns, potentially exceeding reasonable bounds relative to the court's findings. Such fines, if disproportionate, could potentially violate

WHERE IS VOTER'S CHOICE?

constitutional protections against excessive penalties, necessitating judicial scrutiny.

Shark Tank star Kevin O'Leary While appearing on Fox News spoke about the \$454 million bond amount Trump is required to pay following a lawsuit brought by James. He said, "it has absolutely nothing to do with Donald Trump at this point." "This is an attack on America." "And I don't know how you can look at it any other way."

This reminds me of Adani Groups CFO in Jan 2023 standing by Indian National Flag, accused a US investment firm Hindenburg of launching "a calculated attack on India, its economy and investors", by publishing a report accusing the group of "brazen stock manipulation, group's offshore entities interlinked corporate structure, and accounting fraud scheme over the course of decades." "IndiaStandsWithAdani" was among the top trending hashtags on Twitter in response to the exposure.

2. MANHATTAN DA, STORMY DANIELS HUSH MONEY CRIMINAL CASE:

Trump's role in a hush-money payment to a porn star, Stormy Daniels who threatened during the 2016 presidential campaign to go public with her story of a sexual encounter with him. The payment was made by Trump's attorney Michael Cohen, who was reimbursed by him after becoming President. While paying hush money is not inherently criminal, D.A. Alvin Bragg charged Trump with 34 felonies for falsifying business records related to the payments and the reimbursement of Mr. Cohen. By covering up the potential scandal during the presidential campaign, thus Trump interfered in the 2016 election, DA Bragg has argued. In 2023, Trump pleaded not guilty to 34 felony counts of falsifying business records. He denies having a sexual encounter with Daniels. His lawyers argue the payments to Cohen were legitimate legal expenses and were recorded correctly.

This is the only case out of 4 criminal cases against Trump that may have a verdict before Nov. 5, 2024. If convicted, Trump could face 4 years of jail time. This is the only case where he cannot pardon himself, even if he becomes US President in November 2024. It's important to note that this is a state case, and he illegally paid Stormy Daniels. However, it's unlikely that he will go to jail, as sitting Presidents are typically not incarcerated during their term. The Trial started on April 15, 2024.

3. E JEAN CARROL SEXUAL ASSAULT & DEFAMATION:

In May 2023, columnist Ms. Carroll was awarded \$5 million for sexual assault by Trump in 1996 and defamation. Even after that, Trump repeatedly denied knowing E. Jean Carroll, prompting her to sue him again in New York City. In January 2024, she obtained a jury verdict for an additional \$83.3 million in damages. This is particularly embarrassing for former President Trump, as if he were to be elected President on November 5, 2024, he would be the only President in US history to have been indicted for sexual assault.

It's worth noting that in Indian politics, having allegations or even convictions related to sexual offenses has unfortunately become somewhat normalized. Currently, PM Modi's party BJP, is notorious for having the highest number of sexual abuse offenders, including rape cases. A bomb maker and a terrorist also represent BJP in the Indian Parliament.

contd on page 10

contd from page 9

4. GEORGIA ELECTION CASE:

The GA election case involves 18 co-conspirators facing 34 felony charges. At the core of this case is the alleged conspiracy to overturn the 2020 election. Charges filed under RICO, essentially used against corrupt organizations, were pioneered by a prominent young attorney, Rudy Giuliani, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, targeting mob activity. Giuliani is named in this case as a co-conspirator.

The racketeering law was initially designed to dismantle organized crime groups. In essence, prosecutors assert that Mr. Trump headed a criminal enterprise designed to maintain his hold on power. Trump is facing 13 counts, including racketeering and conspiracy to commit forgery.

5. CLASSIFIED DOCUMENTS MISHANDLING CHARGES:

The grand jury indictment brings 40 felony counts against Trump related to his alleged mishandling of classified documents after his presidency, to which he has pleaded not guilty. The case marks the first federal indictment of a former U.S. president. Trump is charged separately for each of 32 documents under the Espionage Act. The other eight charges against him include making false statements and engaging in a conspiracy to obstruct justice. The judge has set a pretrial hearing for May 14, 2024, and the trial for May 20, 2024.

Special Counsel Smith's team acknowledged that though there are "superficial similarities" in the Trump case to similar such cases. But they stand apart in meaningful ways, including Trump's "extensive and repeated efforts to obstruct justice and thwart the return of documents bearing classification markings." They cite the Hur report as noting that Biden, by contrast, alerted authorities to the presence of classified documents, willingly returned them, consented to searches of his homes and otherwise cooperated with the investigation. Smith's team rejected additional Trump arguments seeking to dismiss the case, including the former president's claim that he is immune from prosecution for acts committed in office.

6. FEDERAL ELECTION CHARGES:

Trump has pleaded not guilty to four federal charges in the case before the Supreme Court ? three for conspiracy and one for obstruction ? for falsely claiming election fraud and tried to overturn the legitimate election results.

Trump wants the Supreme Court to dismiss his indictment on federal charges "he tried to steal the 2020 election", arguing criminal prosecution presents a "mortal threat" to the independence of the presidency.

"The President cannot function, and the Presidency itself cannot retain its vital independence, if the President faces criminal prosecution for official acts once he leaves office," Trump's lawyers told the court last month in his major brief before the oral arguments. They'll get a chance to respond to Smith's arguments in their final legal filing before facing the nine Supreme Court justices on April 25, 2024.

Special Counsel Jack Smith in his brief has said, "No president before Donald Trump has suggested the Constitution grants him criminal immunity and the Supreme Court shouldn't now find that it does.

"The effective functioning of the presidency does not require that a former president be immune from accountability for these alleged violations of federal criminal law," Smith wrote. "To the contrary, a bedrock principle of our constitutional order is that no person is above the law including the president."

Citing examples from history that brought the U.S. to the edge of a Constitutional crisis, Smith pointed out in his brief that President Gerald Ford pardoned Richard Nixon precisely because he otherwise faced prosecution.

Likewise, he argued, the special counsel that investigated the Iran-Contra affair considered whether

President Ronald Reagan's actions were criminal.

"The absence of any such absolute immunity claim throughout our history weighs heavily against its novel recognition now." Smith also argued that any immunity former presidents enjoy for official acts would not apply to Trump because attempting to overturn an election and thwart the peaceful transfer of power is the "paradigmatic example of conduct that should not be immunized, even if other conduct should be."

"Nothing in constitutional text, history, precedent, or policy considerations," "supports the absolute immunity that petitioner seeks."

The legal filings come ahead of the Supreme Court's April 25 oral arguments in Trump's appeal of a decision that he's not immune from prosecution. It will hear oral arguments, on the question of whether a former president is shielded from prosecution for official acts, an argument Trump has raised in Classified Documents case & 2020 Election case brought by special Counsel Jack Smith.

Even if Trump loses his appeal, the Supreme Court may not reach a decision quickly enough for a trial to proceed in time for a verdict before the November election.

Trump has repeatedly claimed that the charges are politically motivated. If he returns to the White House, he could appoint an attorney general who would seek to dismiss any pending federal charges. Trump could also simply pardon himself, although his power to do so is debated.

BILLIONAIRES SUPPORTING BIDEN



Joe Biden

File photo

"An even larger group of billionaires, along with two former Presidents Obama and Clinton, supported Biden in 2020 and are continuing to support his re-election campaign for the US presidency in 2024." Especially, Obama's endorsement was not only a public show of support in 2020 and now in 2024, but also brought with it a network of donors, organizers, and volunteers who had been part of his successful campaigns of 2008 and 2012. Some people refer the Biden presidency as proxy 3RD term of Obama. These billionaires and 2 former presidents are fully aware of the disastrous 4 years of Biden Presidency.

1. AFGHANISTAN WITHDRAWAL

One of the most controversial decisions of Biden's presidency was the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan. Critics argue that the withdrawal was poorly planned and executed, leading to a rapid takeover of the country by the Taliban and leaving many Afghans who assisted the U.S. at risk, later to be executed by Taliban.

2. IMMIGRATION

Biden administration has faced criticism for its handling of immigration issues, particularly at the southern border. Critics argue that the administration has not effectively managed the influx of over 10 million illegal migrants, leading to overcrowded detention facilities and humanitarian concerns. It also brought the influx of these migrants to several cities that led to financial crisis for these cities, for providing humanitarian aid to them.

3. SUPPLY CHAIN ISSUES AND INFLATION

The Biden administration's failure to address

challenges related to supply chain disruptions and rising inflation. Critics argue that the administration has not taken sufficient action to address these issues, leading to increased costs for consumers and businesses. In the first quarter of Biden Presidency, the inflation dropped from 2.5% to 0.8%. After that the consumers experienced runaway inflation that peaked at 9.1% on June 1, 2022. On Jan 1, 2023, it was 6.1% and currently it is 3.1%.

4. COVID-19 VARIANTS AND RESPONSE

While the Biden administration managed to do reasonably well in vaccine distribution, critics argue that it has been slow to adapt its COVID-19 response to new variants of the virus. Some also believe that messaging around public health measures has been inconsistent.

5. ENERGY POLICY

Biden's approach to energy policy, including efforts to transition to renewable energy, has been a disastrous blow to the consumers with higher prices. It has potentially harmed the U.S. energy sector and leading to job losses in traditional energy industries.

6. CRIME AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Rising crime rates in some Democrats controlled cities have led to criticism of the administration's approach to public safety and law enforcement. Some critics argue that calls to "defund the police" from parts of the Democratic Party have contributed to a perception of increased lawlessness.

7. PARTISAN GRIDLOCK

Despite campaign promises to unify the country, the Biden administration has faced challenges in working with a deeply divided Congress. Many of its legislative priorities have faced opposition from Republicans, leading to gridlock on key issues like voting rights, infrastructure, and immigration reform.

8. CACKLING VP KAMALA HARRIS

The most scaring to death issue is, if for any reason, Biden's Cackling VP Kamala Harris takes over as President of the United States of America. Poll after poll that include foreign media also, says that Kamala is the worst VP in US history. In an NBC poll, last year she literally ran -17% (Negative Seventeen percent) approval rating.

9. MISHANDLING OF UKRAINE & ISRAEL-PALESTINE WAR

Biden has failed in his handling of the issues in Ukraine and the Israel-Palestine conflict during his presidency. Biden's handling of Ukraine and the Israel-Palestine conflict has been criticized for being inadequate or ineffective. There are critics that feel that no one in Biden administration talk about 40,000 Palestinians mostly women & children killed by Israeli forces with American Military and cash aids.

10. GENOCIDE IN GAZA

Large number of young black voters raised as Democrats openly say that Biden has aided and abetted Genocide in Gaza, may vote for independent candidate, paving the way for a smooth victory for Trump, who is more Pro-Israel than Biden.

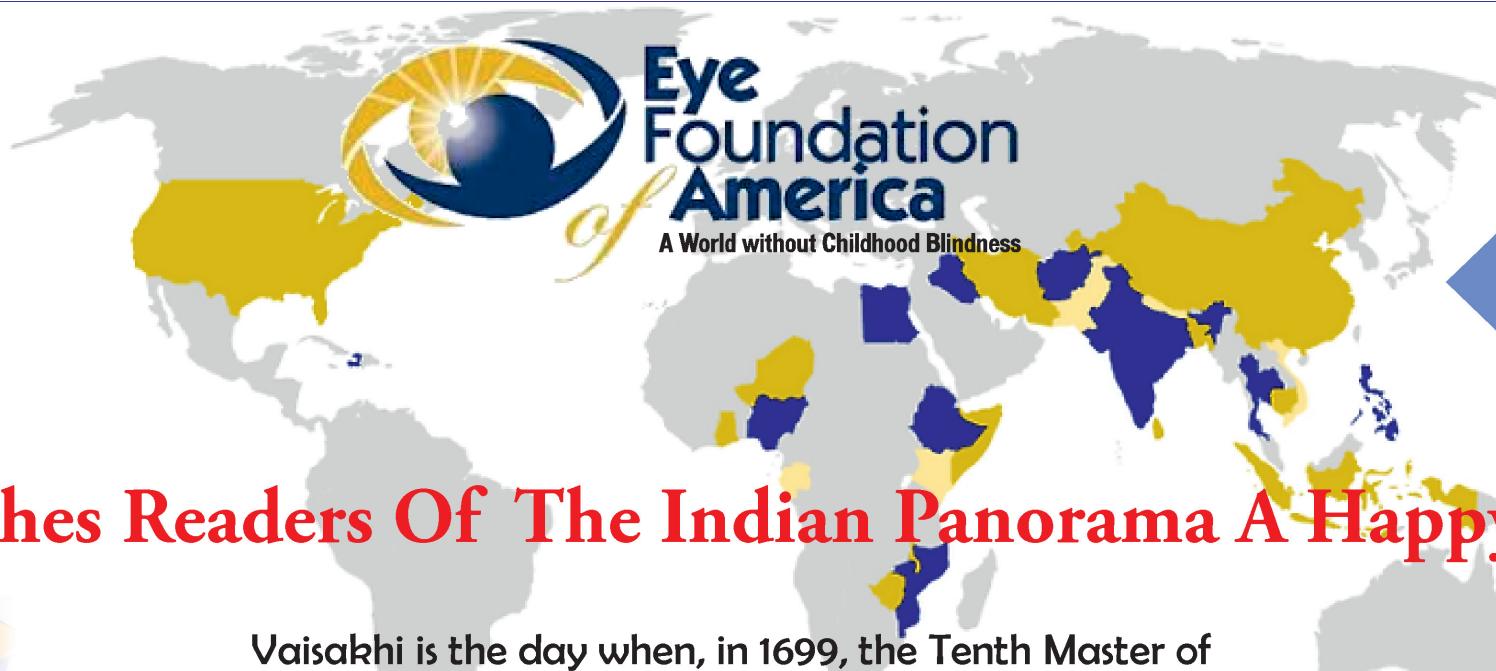
11. BIDEN INVOLVEMENT IN CASH FOR INFLUENCE PADDLING AS VP OF OBAMA

Biden family's Banks statements, emails & statement of associates shows that Biden as VP of Obama, was involved in the family influence paddling scheme, getting money from foreign govt. for unknown favors shown to them.

12. BIDEN'S AGE

The billionaires and both former Presidents supporting Biden know it too well when it comes to Biden's age; there are 3 things in play, 1. Age, 2. Age, & 3. Age. It is not like Trump's legal issues that may go away after becoming President.

contd on page 63



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Vaisakhi is the day when, in 1699, the Tenth Master of the Sikhs, Guru Gobind Singh created the Khalsa, the pure, popularly known as the Sikhs to challenge the tyranny of the Mughal rulers and to seek equality and justice for all.

Vaisakhi is also the day when farmers in Punjab celebrated the arrival of the new crop with a lot of fanfare. A time to rejoice, farmers dressed in their best sang and danced to the traditional musical instruments which included Dhol (drum) and pipes of various kinds, among others.



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INDIA ELECTIONS 2024: 19 APRIL 2024 TO 1 JUNE 2024

Phase 1: 63.41% voting in Naxal-affected Bastar; CRPF jawan killed in grenade explosion

RAIPUR/JAGDALPUR, (TIP)

Voter turnout of over 63 per cent was recorded on Friday, April 19, in Chhattisgarh's Naxal-affected Bastar Lok Sabha constituency, which saw the death of a CRPF constable after a grenade accidentally went off and injury to an officer in an IED blast, officials said.

Polling in the constituency started at 7 am and it was held in different time slots amid tight security in the first phase of elections. A voter turnout of 63.41 per cent was registered till 5 pm, an election official said. The voter turnout in the constituency stood at 66.04 per cent in 2019.

Polling at booths in Kondagaon, Narayanpur, Chitrakot, Dantewada, Bijapur and Konta Assembly constituencies and 72 centres in the Jagdalpur Assembly segment under the Bastar Lok Sabha seat ended at 3 pm, he said. At booths in the Bastar Assembly constituency and 175 centres of the Jagdalpur Assembly constituency, polling was held from 7 am to 5 pm, the official said.



Security personnel on poll duty in Chhattisgarh's Bastar district.

The turnout figure might go up as the final figures from several booths were yet to be received, he added.

At least 60,000 state and paramilitary personnel were deployed across the constituency to ensure peaceful polling.

Residents of 56 villages cast votes at

polling booths set up in their own villages for the first time in the Lok Sabha elections, he said.

A Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) jawan deployed on security duty was killed when a shell of an under-barrel grenade launcher (UBGL) accidentally

exploded at Galgam village under the Usoor police station limits in Bijapur district, a police official said. The incident occurred while security personnel were out on an area-domination exercise near a polling booth, the official added. "Constable Devendra Kumar, belonging to the CRPF's 196th battalion, suffered serious injuries in the blast and was airlifted to Jagdalpur, but he died during treatment," he said.

In another incident, an assistant commandant of the CRPF was injured when a pressure improvised explosive device (IED) planted by the Naxalites exploded in the Bhairamgarh police station area of Bijapur district, the police said. The explosion occurred near the Chihka polling booth under the Bhairamgarh police station while a team of security personnel was out on an area-domination operation. During the exercise, Manu HC, an assistant commandant belonging to the CRPF's 62nd battalion, came in contact with the pressure IED, triggering a blast that caused injuries on his left leg and hand, he said.

Source: PTI

Rajinikanth, Kamal Haasan, Dhanush, Vijay Sethupathi vote in Chennai

CHENNAI, (TIP)

Superstar Rajinikanth and Kamal Haasan cast their votes at their respective polling booths in Chennai on April 19. Actor Dhanush exercised his duty at the St Francis Xavier School, TTK Road. Vijay Sethupathi cast his vote at the Chennai High School in Kilpauk. Voting for the Lok Sabha Elections 2024 began on April 19. Tamil Nadu goes to vote in the first phase of the elections. Rajinikanth was accompanied by his publicist and his team at the polling booth. He greeted everyone and flashed his inked finger for the photographers and videographers.

A video of Superstar Rajinikanth arriving at his booth and casting his vote was shared widely on social media. He was mobbed by fans while exiting the polling booth.



Rajinikanth, Kamal Haasan, Dhanush, Vijay Sethupathi vote in Chennai.



A member of Shompen tribe in Andaman and Nicobar Islands that voted for the LS poll for the first time.



Amit Shah files his nomination in Gandhinagar on Friday. ANI

Amit Shah files nomination from Gandhinagar

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday, April 19, filed his nomination for the Gandhinagar Lok Sabha seat and said the General Election was all about giving a third term to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Shah was accompanied by Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel when he submitted his nomination to the Gandhinagar Collector and District Election Officer MK Dave in the state capital at 12.39 pm, considered as "Vijay Muhurat".

Talking to reporters, Shah said this General Election was all about giving a third term to PM Modi so that he could make India a developed nation by 2047.

He said Modi's third term would be crucial because his first two terms went into correcting the mistakes made by the previous Congress-led UPA government. "This election is all about making Narendra Modi our PM for the third time. Modiji has resolved to turn India into a developed country by 2047 and number one in all sectors. The next five years are crucial if we want to achieve that because the last 10 years went into filling pits (gadde) created by the previous UPA government," Shah said. The next five years would be used to create a strong foundation for "Viksit Bharat", he said.

The opposition Congress has fielded party secretary Sonal Patel from Gandhinagar. Voting for all 26 Lok Sabha seats in Gujarat will be held in the third phase on May 7.

'Pink booths' see heavy rush of women voters

Enthusiasm was witnessed among women and first-time voters who came out to exercise their franchise in the Udhampur Lok Sabha constituency poll.

Pink booths established by all district administrations in the constituency witnessed heavy rush of women voters throughout the day.

As polling began this morning, a large number of women electors thronged the 'pink booth' set up at the Government Girls' Higher Secondary School in Doda town to exercise their right to franchise despite heavy rain. Long queues of women were seen at these pink booths in Udhampur, Kathua, Ramban, Doda and Kishtwar where only women staff was present. These booths were set up to ensure that more and more women take part in the voting process.

Sadaf Jan (45), a resident of Udhampur who voted, said that the pink booths have provided relief to the women who otherwise are reluctant to come out of their homes for voting. She said that the voting process was made easy through these booths.

Nineteen pink booths were set up only in Udhampur district for the elections. Even security personnel deployed at these booths are women. Mansi Sharma, a resident of Kathua district, said that long queues of men and women at polling booths might have made many women reluctant to stand there for long time. "However at the pink booths, the presence of only women voters and staffers made it possible for all women to come and cast their vote," said Sharma.

PHASE 1 POLLING

Despite rain, 65% turnout in Udhampur

JAMMU (TIP)

Despite inclement weather and heavy rain on Friday, April 19, substantial voting percentage of 65.08 per cent (till 5 pm) was witnessed in Udhampur Lok Sabha constituency — a seat where Union Minister Jitendra Singh is eyeing a hat-trick and Congress candidate Chaudhary Lal Singh is the main challenger.

Heavy rain started in the morning which deterred polling in the early hours. Polling started in the constituency having mountainous and tough terrain at 7 am. All the districts in the constituency, including Udhampur, Kathua, Ramban, Doda and Kishtwar, witnessed heavy rain till around 11.30 am. Over 8.44 per cent voter turnout was recorded in the initial two hours of polling in the constituency in a peaceful manner.

Interestingly, the voter turnout in 2019 Lok Sabha poll was 70.2 per cent while in 2014, it was 70.95.

Aged and first-time voters also turned out in large numbers at the polling stations. 102-year-old Kehar Singh from Shara in Kathua, who cast his vote at Middle School, Shara, in Basohli, became the centre of attraction for the people coming to vote.



Women after casting their vote at Tikri village in Udhampur on April 19. ANI

After rain stopped for some time, the voting percentage increased considerably. Till 1 pm, the constituency had recorded 43.11 per cent polling. The constituency has a total of 16.23 lakh voters, including 8.45 lakh male and 7.77 lakh female voters. As many as 23,637 people with disability (PWDs) and 403 centenarians are also among the registered voters.

A total of 2,637 polling stations were established in the constituency. People along the International Border (IB) in

Kathua district also thronged the 25 polling stations established close to the border. A total of over 11,000 polling staff, including reserve, were deployed in the constituency.

Every polling station was provided with Assured Minimum Facilities besides wheel chairs. There were 19 polling booths manned by women (also called pink polling stations), 14 polling booths manned by specially abled persons and 17 looked after by youths. 20 green polling stations were also set up.

Source: TNS

4 lakh voters in 6 Nagaland districts, but none turns up amid shutdown call

KOHIMA (TIP)

Polling personnel in six eastern districts of Nagaland waited for nine hours in booths, but not one of the four lakh voters of the region turned up following a shutdown call given by an organisation to press for its demand for "Frontier Nagaland Territory" (FNT).

CM Neiphiu Rio on Friday, April 19, affirmed that the state government did not have any problem with the Eastern Nagaland People's Organisation's (ENPO) demand for FNT as it has already recommended autonomous powers for the region. The ENPO is the apex body of the seven tribal organisations of the eastern region. Officials said there was no movement of people or vehicles on major streets in eastern Nagaland except those of the administrations



A polling station wears a deserted look in Shamator, Nagaland. PTI

none came up to cast votes in those nine hours. Those 20 MLAs also did not exercise their franchise.

Of the 13.25 lakh voters in Nagaland, the six districts in Eastern Nagaland have 4,00,632 voters. Speaking to reporters after casting his vote at his village in Touphema, some 41 km on the outskirts of the state capital, the chief minister said he accepted the draft working paper for FNT which was handed over to him in the presence of Home Minister Amit Shah.

"Everything looks okay except the power-sharing the elected legislators of the region and members of the proposed FNT," he said. The CM said the state had already recommended an autonomous body so that the region got sufficient packages.

Source: PTI

Sources in the CEO's office said

INDIAN-ORIGIN MAN AWAITING DEPORTATION BECAUSE OF HIS ILLEGAL ENTRY TO US DIES IN HOSPITAL



Jaspal Singh who was awaiting deportation because of his illegal entry into the United States has died at a hospital in Atlanta.

Photo for representation only

APRIL 18, 2024

ATLANTA, GA (TIP): An Indian national awaiting deportation because of his illegal entry into the United States has died at a hospital in Atlanta, federal authorities said Wednesday, April 17.

The Indian Consulate in New York has been notified about the death of Jaspal Singh, 57, US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) said, adding that his next of kin have also been notified about it.

Singh died at a hospital in Atlanta on April 15. An autopsy is pending to determine the official cause of death, ICE said.

Singh, an Indian citizen, first entered the US legally on October 25, 1992. On January 21, 1998, an immigration judge ordered Singh's removal from the US, and on an unknown date, Singh returned to India voluntarily.

On June 29, 2023, he was arrested by US Customs and Border Protection's Border Patrol officers while illegally reentering the United States at the US-Mexico Border.

Border Patrol transferred custody of Singh to Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO), Atlanta. He was detained at a federal processing center in Atlanta where he continued his immigration proceedings.

When a non-citizen dies at a detention center, it is mandatory for the ERO to make notifications to Congress, nongovernmental organization stakeholders and the media and posts a news release with relevant details on its public website within two business days.

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Canada curtails staff at its missions in India

APRIL 14, 2024

OTTAWA (TIP): Canada has reduced dozens of its Indian staffers posted in its missions in India, months after New Delhi forced Ottawa to downsize its diplomatic presence. A Canadian high commission spokesperson on Friday said the slashing of the size of Indian staff was necessary given the reduction of Canadian staff in the country.

THE TRIGGER

In Sept last year, Canadian PM Justin Trudeau's alleged 'potential' involvement of Indian agents in killing of separatist Hardeep Nijjar

Rejecting charge, India then asked Ottawa to downsize its diplomatic presence in the country to ensure parity.

"I can confirm that the government of



Canada has implemented some staff reductions across our network of missions in India," the official said. "The decision to implement reductions across our network of missions in India was sadly necessary given the reduction of Canadian staff available to effectively

manage and maintain in-country operations."

The spokesperson said the high commission expressed its sincere gratitude for the resilience, dedication and service of its local staff in India. "Canada will continue to deliver core services to Canadians in India. We also confirm that Canada's visa application centers in India are operating as normal," the spokesperson added.

The ties between India and Canada came under severe strain following Canadian PM Justin Trudeau's allegations in September of a "potential" involvement of Indian agents in the killing of Khalistani separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar on June 18 in British Columbia. New Delhi had rejected the charge. (Source: PTI)

Congressman Krishnamoorthi introduces bill addressing healthcare workforce gap



Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi has introduced the bicameral Welcome Back to the Health Care Workforce Act, legislation that will address the dramatic shortages plaguing the US healthcare sector.

APRIL 11, 2024

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP) : Indian American Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-IL) has introduced the bicameral Welcome Back to the Health Care Workforce Act, legislation that will address the dramatic shortages plaguing the US healthcare sector.

Of the two million college-educated immigrants currently living in the US, including a large percentage from India, roughly 14% hold health-related degrees, he noted in a press release. These talented individuals are not working in the field, contributing to the nation's significant shortage of qualified health professionals and workers, as highlighted by the Migration Policy Institute.

This underutilization of internationally educated professionals, unable to overcome barriers to fully integrate into the health care workforce in America, is contributing to fewer health care professionals while adding greater strain to our health care system, the release stated. In addition, this gap is responsible for an estimated \$10 billion in unpaid federal, state, and local taxes annually.

"Every day, I hear from my constituents about the difficulties of accessing care due to the ongoing

healthcare workforce shortage our country faces," Krishnamoorthi said.

"I'm proud to introduce the Welcome Back to the Health Care Workforce Act to ensure our health care sector is fully staffed through supporting community partnerships, streamlining licensing and credentialing for qualified health care workers trained overseas, and expanding opportunities to address classroom and clinical instructor shortages."

The companion bill in the Senate was introduced by Sen. Tim Kaine (D-VA).

"I recently met with students who shared with me their frustrations of immigrating to the United States, having a degree and significant experience, and not being able to find a job in their field that's commensurate with their skills," Kaine said.

"At a time when I'm hearing from hospitals and other health care employers about how difficult it is to find workers, we should be making it easier for these individuals to enter the health care workforce."

Meanwhile, the House Committee on Oversight and Accountability Wednesday unanimously passed Krishnamoorthi and Congresswoman Nancy Mace's (R-SC) Allowing Contractors to Choose Employees for Select Skills (ACCESS) Act.

This bipartisan legislation would eliminate arbitrary education and experience requirements that exclude skilled workers from participating in government contracts, opening the door to more diverse and qualified candidates to apply for government positions.

"Degree-based discrimination deprives qualified Americans of opportunities to compete for jobs," Krishnamoorthi said.

(Read full story at
www.theindianpanorama.news)

INDIAN AMERICAN STUDENT ARRESTED FOR SETTING TWO FIRES IN CAMPUS LIBRARY



Amogh Upadhy stands accused of setting fire to the Martin Luther King Jr. Library at San Jose State University.

APRIL 17, 2024

SAN JOSE, CA (TIP): A 19-year-old Indian American sophomore at San Jose State University has been arrested and accused of arson following investigations into two fires at the Martin Luther King Jr. Library on campus.

Cal Fire, in conjunction with the San Jose State University Police Department and the Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) Arson and Bomb Unit, launched a probe into the fires that occurred on March 31 and April 8. Through meticulous canvassing, analysis of surveillance footage, and pursuit of leads, authorities identified the suspect as Amogh Upadhy.

Upadhy, who was raised in Dublin, California, stands accused of setting fire to the library. Despite his background in robotics and machine learning, Upadhy's motive for the alleged arson remains unknown.

According to his LinkedIn profile, Upadhy attended Dublin High School from August 2018 to June 2022. In August 2022, he entered San Jose State University to pursue a bachelor's degree in engineering technology. Additionally, in September 2023, he obtained his certification as an Amazon Web Services cloud practitioner.

Upadhy was arrested on April 12 and is currently being held on \$400,000 bail. He faces four counts of arson.

TVS MOTOR LAUNCHES THE TVS RONIN MOTORCYCLE IN GUATEMALA



Ambassador Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra was joined by officials from TVS Motors Guatemala during the launch event

APRIL 14, 2024

GUATEMALA CITY (TIP): TVS Motor Guatemala launched its new range of motorcycle with brand name TVS Ronin on 12 April 2024 marking a significant milestone in India's growing presence in the Guatemalan automobile industry.

Ambassador Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra, accompanied by officials from TVS Motor Guatemala and esteemed local stakeholders, ceremoniously unveiled the much-anticipated TVS Ronin during an exclusive launch event. In his address to the audience, Ambassador Mohapatra underscored the pivotal role TVS Motors in propelling innovation and entrepreneurship within Guatemala's automobile sector. He assured that Embassy of India in Guatemala remains steadfast in its commitment to extending unwavering support to such endeavors that promote economic cooperation and innovation. He emphasized that India's exports to Guatemala have achieved a significant

milestone, surpassing the commendable mark of US\$500 million in the 2023-24 financial year. This achievement not only exceeded the expectations from both the countries but also represented a notable growth of approximately 9% compared to the previous financial year until February 2024. India views Guatemala as the most favorable destination in the Central American region, owing to its strategic location and conducive business environment. Situated at the heart of Central America, Guatemala serves as a gateway to the region, offering access to diverse markets and trade routes. Ambassador Mohapatra commended TVS Motor Company for its innovative approach to motorcycle design and its contribution to Guatemala's automobile industry.

Speaking at the launch event, Mr. Ramiro Castillo, General Manager of TVS in Guatemala, expressed his excitement about introducing TVS Ronin to the Guatemalan market. He emphasized the motorcycle's ability to inspire spontaneity and versatility among riders, enhancing their overall riding experience. Ms. Karina Paredes, TVS Marketing Manager for Guatemala, highlighted the significance of TVS Ronin's launch in Guatemala, underscoring the motorcycle's unique design, advanced technology, and connectivity features.

The introduction of TVS Ronin marks TVS Motor Company's bold entry into a new lifestyle segment, carving out a distinct niche within the motorcycle industry. Tailored to embrace the unscripted modern lifestyle, TVS Ronin embodies a harmonious fusion of style, riding comfort, and cutting-edge technology. Boasting innovative features such as ABS rain and city brakes, Glide Through Technology (GTT), and Bluetooth connectivity, TVS Ronin sets a new standard in the retro-modern motorcycle category. Its debut in Guatemala serves as a testament to TVS Motor Company's unwavering dedication to delivering premium-quality products that cater to the diverse preferences of global consumers.

The automobile sector stands among the top five industries that India exports to Guatemala. With the introduction of affordable vehicles such as tuk-tuks and motorcycles, India has effectively penetrated the rural market, facilitating mobility and accessibility in rural



Ambassador Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra took a test drive of the TVS Ronin bike during the launch event.

areas. The launch of TVS Ronin signifies a significant stride in India's expanding presence in the Guatemalan market. Under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Indian government has consistently prioritized bolstering trade relations with Guatemala and other nations across the globe. Efforts aimed at enhancing bilateral trade and investment have been diligently pursued, fostering an environment conducive to mutual growth and prosperity. The launch of TVS Ronin marks a significant step towards strengthening India-Guatemala relations and fostering mutual growth and development.

* **TVS RONIN** is TVS Motor's first premium lifestyle offering to create a segment of its own in the motorcycle world.

* **TVS RONIN** is the perfect combination of style, riding comfort and technology for those who live the #Unscripted #Conducetupropiahistoria lifestyle.

IRS Announces Tax Refund Increase as It Rakes in Near-Record \$4.7 Trillion From Taxpayers

TAX REFUNDS BOOSTED BY 3 PERCENT

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has disclosed that it raked in nearly \$5 trillion in taxes from Americans in the last fiscal year, while boosting the amount it paid out in refunds by nearly 3 percent and boasting that it kept its pledge not to increase audit rates for those earning less than \$400,000 per year.

After a record \$4.9 trillion haul in the 2022 fiscal year, the IRS collected a slightly lower but still substantial \$4.7 trillion last year, according to the IRS's annual Data Book for fiscal year 2023.

The eye-catching tax-intake amount was made possible in part due to a significant funding boost of \$78 billion that the IRS used in part to hire more

enforcers and deploy advanced technologies like artificial intelligence to squeeze more dollars from non-compliant taxpayers.

"Initial investments of Inflation Reduction Act funding in compliance operations, including hiring additional staff to more adequately address areas of noncompliance, began in fiscal year 2023," IRS Commissioner Danny Werfel wrote in the report. "We continued to make progress developing and using innovative approaches to better understand, detect and resolve potential

noncompliance, such as leveraging new technology and data analytics to fairly enforce tax laws."

The IRS got roughly \$79.4 billion in supplemental funding when President Joe Biden signed the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 into law, though Congress later clawed back around \$1.4 billion.

At the time, many Republicans opposed the funding boost, warning that a large portion of the money would be used to hire an "army of 87,000" tax enforcers who would come down hard on ordinary Americans and squeeze them for "every

last penny."

As claims of the "army of 87,000" enforcers captured the spotlight, the IRS went to great pains to push back on this notion, including by pledging repeatedly that audit rates wouldn't rise for Americans making less than \$400,000 per year. Critics panned the promise as empty, while the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (TIGTA), the watchdog overseeing the IRS, warned that this pledge could be hard to keep because the IRS uses outdated income thresholds and has no way to identify the complete population of taxpayers that meet the \$400,000 criterion.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)



Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service

Musk postpones India visit, cites 'very heavy' Tesla obligations

Tesla CEO Elon Musk's two-day visit to India, where he was supposed to announce plans to enter the Indian market, has been postponed. Elon Musk was scheduled to visit India on April 21 and 22 and meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

In a post on X, Elon Musk said his visit to India had to be delayed due to "very heavy Tesla obligations".

"Unfortunately, very heavy Tesla obligations require that the visit to India be delayed, but I do very much look forward to visiting later this year," the SpaceX CEO tweeted.

Musk has to reportedly attend a crucial conference call on April 23 in the United States to answer questions about Tesla's first quarter performance.

Last week, Musk posted on X that he was "looking forward" to meeting PM Modi.

Musk, who also owns SpaceX, was expected to announce an investment of \$2-3 billion to build a factory for entry-level cars amid the long-awaited Tesla Inc's entry into the Indian market. Recently, the government announced a policy lowering high tariffs on imported cars if firms invest locally. The billionaire entrepreneur was also expected to unveil plans to introduce Starlink, a satellite network that provides high-speed internet connection.

Musk, the world's fourth-richest man, was also expected to meet Indian space tech startups during his visit. The government had reportedly invited companies like Skyroot Aerospace, Dhruva Space, Piersight, and Digantara for talks with the SpaceX CEO in New Delhi. PM Modi has met Elon Musk twice before -- during a Tesla plant visit in 2015 and during his state visit to the US in 2023. In a recent interview, PM Modi said Musk was a supporter of India.

SC asks two states to give status of cases on Patanjali's Ramdev

NEW DELHI (TIP)

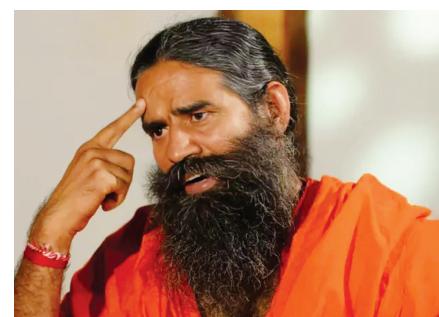
The Supreme Court on Friday, April 19, asked Bihar and Chhattisgarh to share the status of criminal cases pending against yoga guru and entrepreneur Ramdev over his alleged derogatory remarks about modern medicine during the Covid pandemic three years ago.

The cases were filed by the Bihar and Chhattisgarh state units of the Indian Medical Association (IMA) in response to a video that circulated on social media where Ramdev advised his followers not to rely on allopathy -- as modern medicine is often referred to in India -- for treating Covid-19. This statement was made in May 2021.

Ramdev's petition sought a direction to club the two first information reports (FIR) and hold the trial in Delhi. The two complaints against him were filed by the Bihar and Chhattisgarh state units of IMA.

"These cases are of 2021. Charge sheet would have been filed by now. If this prayer (for clubbing) has to be considered, we need to know what the status of these cases is," a bench of Justices MM Sundresh and PB Varale.

A larger case against Ramdev, filed by the national chapter of IMA, is going on in court, and Ramdev and Patanjali managing director Balakrishna have been facing the ire of a bench of justices Hima Kohli and Ahsanuddin Amanullah over



misleading advertisements that they published in leading newspapers in December 2023 and January this year.

In an earlier case, the IMA served him a defamation notice of Rs 1000 crore and demanded an apology. Later, Ramdev wrote a letter to the then Union health minister stating that he meant no ill-will as he had great regard for doctors.

The court on Friday also allowed Ramdev to implead the complainants who have lodged cases against him, meaning that IMA state units will now get a say before any decision is taken on Ramdev's plea for clubbing or quashing the cases.

The Indian Medical Association (IMA), which filed complaints in 2021 alleging that Ramdev's remarks were likely to cause prejudice to Covid control mechanisms and may dissuade people from availing proper treatment, will need to be heard despite objections from the solicitor general.

A bench of Justices MM Sundresh

and PB Varale was hearing Ramdev's plea seeking a stay on criminal proceedings. The court granted Ramdev liberty to implead the complainants and posted the matter for hearing after the summer vacations, which start on May 20 and end in July.

Senior advocate Siddharth Dave, appearing for Ramdev, told the court that he will add the complainants in the two FIRs and objected to a short affidavit filed by IMA opposing the petition.

Although the IMA's central body was represented in court, the bench directed the two state IMA units to be added as a party to know their response on the petition. The court directed the Bihar and Chhattisgarh governments to file the status of the two FIRs in two weeks and posted the matter for hearing after the summer break.

Solicitor general Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Union government, said, "We can't have strangers to a proceeding to be given a say. The petition for clubbing is between the complainant and the accused. We have serious objection to IMA as they are opposed to Ayurveda."

Advocate Prabhas Bajaj, appearing for IMA, informed the bench that IMA is appearing in this case as it has been named as a party in the petition and notice was issued to it by the top court on October 9, 2023.

Source: HT

Meet Baldev Kumar, 1st non-native to contest polls in J&K post Article 370 repeal

SRINAGAR (TIP)

Punjab resident Baldev Kumar has become the first person from outside Jammu and Kashmir to contest Lok Sabha polls in the Union Territory after the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019.

Kumar (67), a resident of the Naya Gaon area of Mohali in Punjab, filed his nomination papers from the Anantnag-Rajouri Parliamentary constituency as an independent candidate on Friday.

He is among 25 candidates who are in the fray from the constituency, which will go to polls on May 7.

Kumar claimed that he decided to contest the polls on the insistence of a "large" number of local people whom he has "served for the last 20 years".

"I worked for the people during the 2014 floods, I have sponsored the education of a number of students, I have facilitated patients from Kashmir when they went to

Punjab for medical check-ups and kept a kothi (house) for them where they can stay when they go there for treatment," Kumar told PTI.

Baldev Kumar said he has been requesting the administration to build a 'Kashmir Bhawan' in Punjab, especially for the patients, but to no avail.

"Medha Patkar (Activist) got 20 acres of land for her NGO from the Gujarat government but I have not been allotted even two acres for a Kashmir Bhawan for the patients from J&K.

"The people have told me that I have to be in power and only then can I build a Kashmir Bhawan. So, I decided to contest the polls," he said. Asked if he has Jammu and Kashmir's domicile certificate, he said, "I have no domicile as I have not stayed in one place".

Kumar is the first non-resident person to contest polls in Jammu and Kashmir after the abrogation of Article 370 and bifurcation

of the erstwhile state on August 5, 2019.

In the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, NCR resident Shams Khwaja contested, and lost the polls from the erstwhile Anantnag Parliamentary constituency.

He was the first-ever non-resident to contest the polls in Jammu and Kashmir. Objections were raised against his candidature, but those were overruled by election authorities in 2019.

The Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir is presently run by the Lt Governor-led administration after the PDP-BJP government collapsed in June 2018 with the national party pulling out of the alliance. The last assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir were held in 2014.

The Lok Sabha elections in Jammu and Kashmir are being conducted in five phases with voting in each of the five parliamentary constituencies of the Union Territory to be held in each phase.

भारत निर्वाचन आयोग
Election Commission of India

Candidate Details

Party Name:	Independent
Name:	निर्दलीय
BALDEV KUMAR	
Parliament Constituency:	ANANTNAG-RAJOURI



Doordarshan changes logo colour from red to saffron, sparks row

National broadcaster Doordarshan has changed the colour of its historic flagship logo from red to saffron. The announcement was made through the official X handle of DD News, which in a post, said, "While our values remain the same, we are now available in a new avatar."

"Get ready for a news journey like never before.. Experience the all-new DD News!" it added. The move was slammed by member of the Rajya Sabha and ex-CEO of Prasar Bharati (DD, AIR), Jawhar Sircar, who said he has been watching the national broadcaster's "saffronisation".

"National broadcaster Doordarshan colours its historic flagship logo in saffron! As its ex-CEO, I have been watching its saffronisation with alarm and feel — it's not Prasar Bharati any more — it's Prachar Bharati!" (sic), he wrote on X.

Congress's Manish Tewari, who was the Information and Broadcasting Minister from 2012 to 2014, alleged the logo colour change was the government's attempt to capture government institutions.

In an exclusive conversation with India Today TV, Tewari said, "This is an attempt on the part of the government to saffronise and capture the government institutions. The said move clearly undermines the neutrality and credibility of India's public broadcaster."

In response, BJP's Andhra Pradesh state vice-president said, "When Doordarshan was launched in 1959, it had a saffron logo. Now, as the government reintroduces the original logo, liberals and Congress are outraging over it."

Sweet mangoes turn sour in Kejriwal-ED legal battle

NEW DELHI (TIP)

Is Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal "deliberately" eating mangoes and sweets to spike sugar level? A Delhi court will deliver its verdict on the chief minister's fresh plea seeking permission to allow him to consult a doctor for 15 minutes daily on Monday, April 22.

During a court hearing on Friday, the court observed that there appears to be a "deviation" from what Kejriwal was allowed to eat in home-cooked meals and what was supplied to him. "The deviations are certainly there. And they are without order of the court," the court was quoted by Live Law as saying.

What's the case?

Kejriwal filed a fresh plea on Friday, seeking direction to jail authorities to administer insulin and allow him to consult his doctor through video conferencing daily for 15 minutes. He also sought to allow his wife to join and remain present on the video call.

The development came a day after his counsel said he would withdraw the earlier petition and "will file a better one". The Delhi chief minister said that since the beginning of his judicial custody, his blood sugar levels have fluctuated at an alarming rate due to acute diabetes, which is posing a high risk to his health.

The court had asked the jail authorities on Thursday to submit a report on Kejriwal's diet in Tihar jail, including the medicines taken by him.

Arvind Kejriwal is currently in judicial custody and lodged in Tihar jail in connection with a probe into the alleged 'scam' linked to the now-scraped Delhi's excise policy. He was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on March 21 and sent to judicial



custody till April 15, after being in the ED custody for some time. His judicial custody was later extended to April 23.

The ED had claimed on Thursday that Kejriwal is "deliberately eating mangoes and sweets" in jail, despite being a diabetic, to increase his sugar level in a bid to create a medical ground to get bail.

However, Kejriwal's counsel denied the allegation levelled by the Enforcement Directorate.

While the ED claimed on Friday that "the content of his [Kejriwal's] diet does not match the prescribed diet of the doctor", the Delhi CM's lawyer argued that "out of 48 meals sent from home, mangoes were there only three times.

Advocate Zoheb Hossain, appearing for the ED, told the court, "Please see the diet prescribed to him. It has no reference to any sweet or fruits or sweet items. It is on that basis the submission was made. On that limited submission the report was called."

Reacting to this, Kejriwal's counsel Abhishek Singhvi was quoted by Bar and Bench as saying, "No mangoes have been sent after April 8. The mangoes have been made to look like sugar bullets. Their sugar level is much less than brown rice or white rice."

"They said I used sugar with tea. I used sugar-free in my tea. Because I am a diabetic. How petty and political and ridiculous ED can get...I am asking the court to direct the jail superintendent to ensure adequate treatment is provided. It doesn't mean that I am a prisoner I've no right to health." Kejriwal's counsel said.

"Is he a gangster? Is he a hardcore criminal? That he cannot get 15 minutes VC daily (with his doctor)," the counsel added.

The counsel for jail authorities alleged that Kejriwal stopped taking insulin sometime back. "On the whole, blood sugar levels have been maintained. Although he is claiming he is getting home-cooked food, as rightly pointed out by the ED, the prescription has no stipulation that there should be some fruits etc. He is not following the prescribed diet in the food sent from his home," the counsel was quoted as saying.

The lawyer also presented the AIIMS report before the court and said, "The food that has to be avoided are mangoes, bananas, chiku etc. Home cook food should follow this diet prescribed by AIIMS."

Noting these claims, the court told Kejriwal's counsel, "There is a diet chart filed on April 1. Are you aware? And home cooked food was permitted as per that chart. I want a few clarifications, (whether) food was sent as per the diet chart or not."

Singhvi then argued on behalf of Kejriwal, "I don't think it's the law, that the jail authorities argue an application that the applicant cannot get home-cooked food. I followed the diet chart with a small exception that mangoes were sent three times and one time alloo poori in prashad."

SC issues notice to Centre over couple's plea on Surrogacy Act

NEW DELHI (TIP)

Can married couples be allowed to have a second child via surrogacy even though they have a healthy first child? Faced with this question, the Supreme Court on Friday, April 19, issued notice to the Centre on a petition challenging a law debarring married couples from having a second child through surrogacy if they have a healthy first child.

A Bench led by Justice BV Nagarathna asked the Centre to respond to a provision of the Surrogacy Act which excluded couples unable to conceive a child after previously giving birth via surrogacy.

Section 4 (iii)(C)(ii) of the Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021 requires couples willing to have a child through surrogacy to secure an eligibility certificate to the effect that they do not have any surviving child—biologically, through adoption or surrogacy. The 'intending couple' should

WHAT THE LAW SAYS

- Couples seeking a child via surrogacy must secure an eligibility certificate
- Must mention they don't have any child, biologically via adoption or surrogacy
- Couple should be married with females aged 23-50 and males 26-55

be married between 23 and 50 years in case of females, and between 26 and 55 years in case of male on the day they are issued an eligibility certificate.

Challenging the restriction under 4 (iii)(C)(ii) of the Act, the petitioners contended that the impugned provision was "irrational, discriminatory and without any sound determining principles and in gross violation of the



reproductive rights of a woman guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution".

The petitioners—a married couple unable to conceive the second time—submitted that they had been prevented from exercising their right to reproductive choice. They have urged the top court to strike down Section 4 (iii)(C)(ii) of the Surrogacy (Regulation)

Act, 2021, or at least read down the relevant provisions to allow them to exercise their right to reproductive choice.

"Having two children helps inculcate values of sharing and caring and strengthens family bonds. Furthermore, it is in the best interests of the surviving child to have a genetically linked sibling. A biological sibling could be a match for bone marrow, tissue or organs in the event that a need for any of those arises," they submitted.

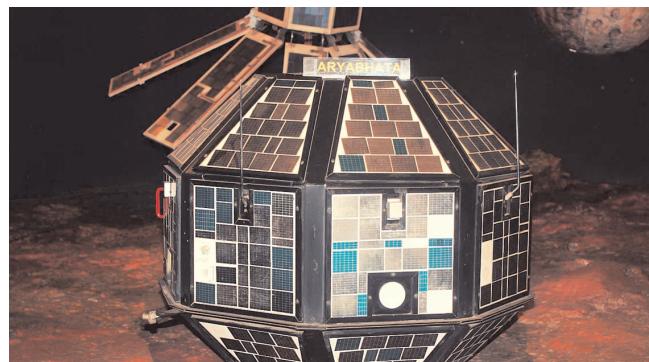
The court was seized of PILs challenging the validity of the Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021, the Assisted Reproductive Technology (Regulation) Act, 2021 (ART Act), and the Rules framed thereunder. Two pleas challenging validity of Section 2(1) (s) of Surrogacy Act, which excluded unmarried women from being surrogate mothers, were also pending.

India in history this Week

APRIL 19 TO APRIL 25

19 APRIL

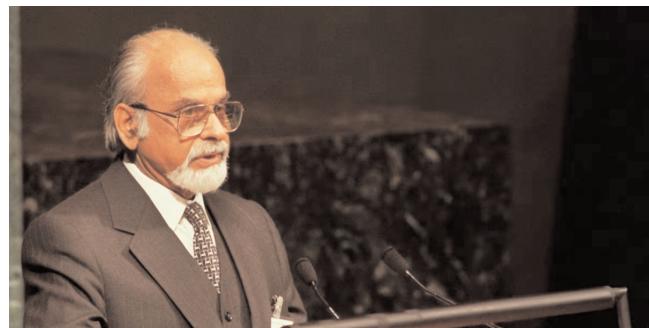
- 1451 Bahol Lodi captured Delhi.
1950 Shyama Prasad Mukherjee becomes the first Minister to resign from the Union Cabinet.



1975 India enters the space age by launching its first satellite Aryabhata. It was the first scientific satellite of India.

1882 Start of first maternity hospital in Calcutta.
1971 India defeated the West Indies and won the Test cricket series.

20 APRIL



1997 Indra Kumar Gujral became the 12th Prime Minister of the country.

21 APRIL

- 1451 Bahol Khan Lodi, the founder of the Lodi dynasty, became the ruler of Delhi in 1451.
1938 The famous poet Mohammad Iqbal, author of Saare Jahan Se Achcha Hindostan Hamara..., died in Lahore, Pakistan.
1996 Sanjay Thapar of the Indian Air Force was landed on the Northern Dhruv by parachute.
1526 Ibrahim Lodi was killed in the first battle of Panipat in 1526 between Babar and Ibrahim Lodi, the ruler of the Mughal Empire.
1720 Baji Rao I succeeded Peshwa Balaji Vishwanath in 1720.
2001 India lodged a strong protest over the brutal killing of Indian soldiers in Bangladesh.



1924 Birth of India's first shooter Karni Singh in 1924, honored with the 1961 'Arjuna Award'.

22 APRIL



1921 Netaji Subash Chandra Bose resigned from the Indian Civil Service in 1921.

1970 Earth Day was celebrated for the first time in the world.

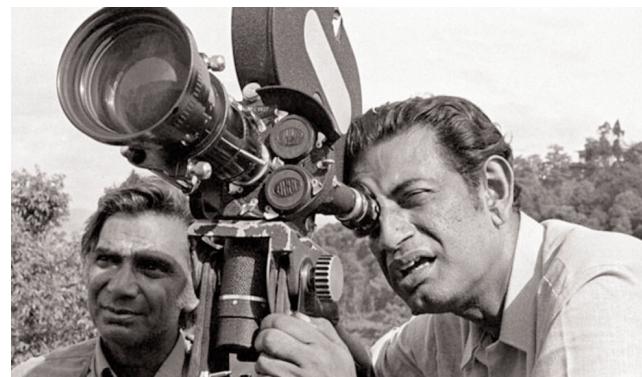
1958 Admiral RD Katari became the first chief in the Indian Navy in 1958.

1974 Indian writer Chetan Bhagat was born in 1974.
1969 The famous revolutionary of 'Kakori Kand' Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee passed away in 1969.

23 APRIL

1858 Babu Veer Kunwar Singh of Jagdishpur, the hero of India's first freedom struggle passed away.

1987 The Supreme Court ruled the widows share in the property.



1992 Satyajit Ray, who was awarded the Bharat Ratna, the famous Indian filmmaker-director, died in 1992.

1995 Celebration of World Book Day began.
1984 Scientists found out about the AIDS virus in 1984.
2005 The first video was uploaded to YouTube in 2005.

1504 Birth of the second Sikh religious leader Guru Angad in 1504.

24 APRIL

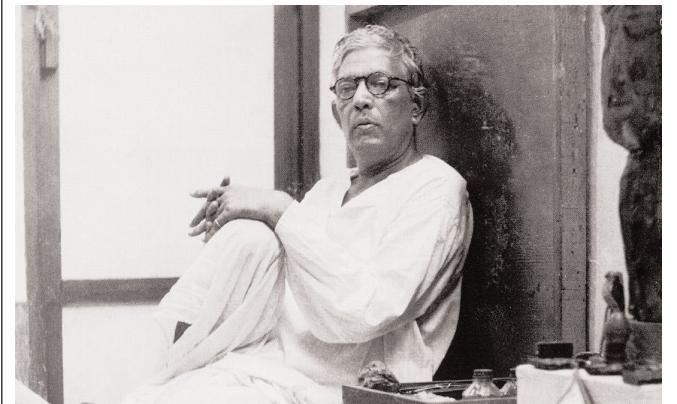


1973 Sachin Ramesh Tendulkar, the country's greatest cricketer who was considered among the best batsmen in the world in the history of cricket, was born

on this day.

1815 The Gorkha Regiment, considered the first and bravest battalion of the Indian Army, has completed 200 years today.

1815 The foundation stone of Gorkha Regime was laid in 1815 in Himachal.



1972 The famous Indian painter Gemini Roy died on this day in 1972. He was also awarded the Padma Bhushan in 1955.

25 APRIL



1968 Hindustani classical music singer Bade Ghulam Ali Khan died.

1982 Doordarshan aired a colorful picture for the first time in 1982.

1933 On this day, the terrorists who hijacked the Air Indian plane were killed.

2000 On this day, the mastermind of Kandahar Hijack, Bilal alias Lalu Mian, was arrested from West Bengal.

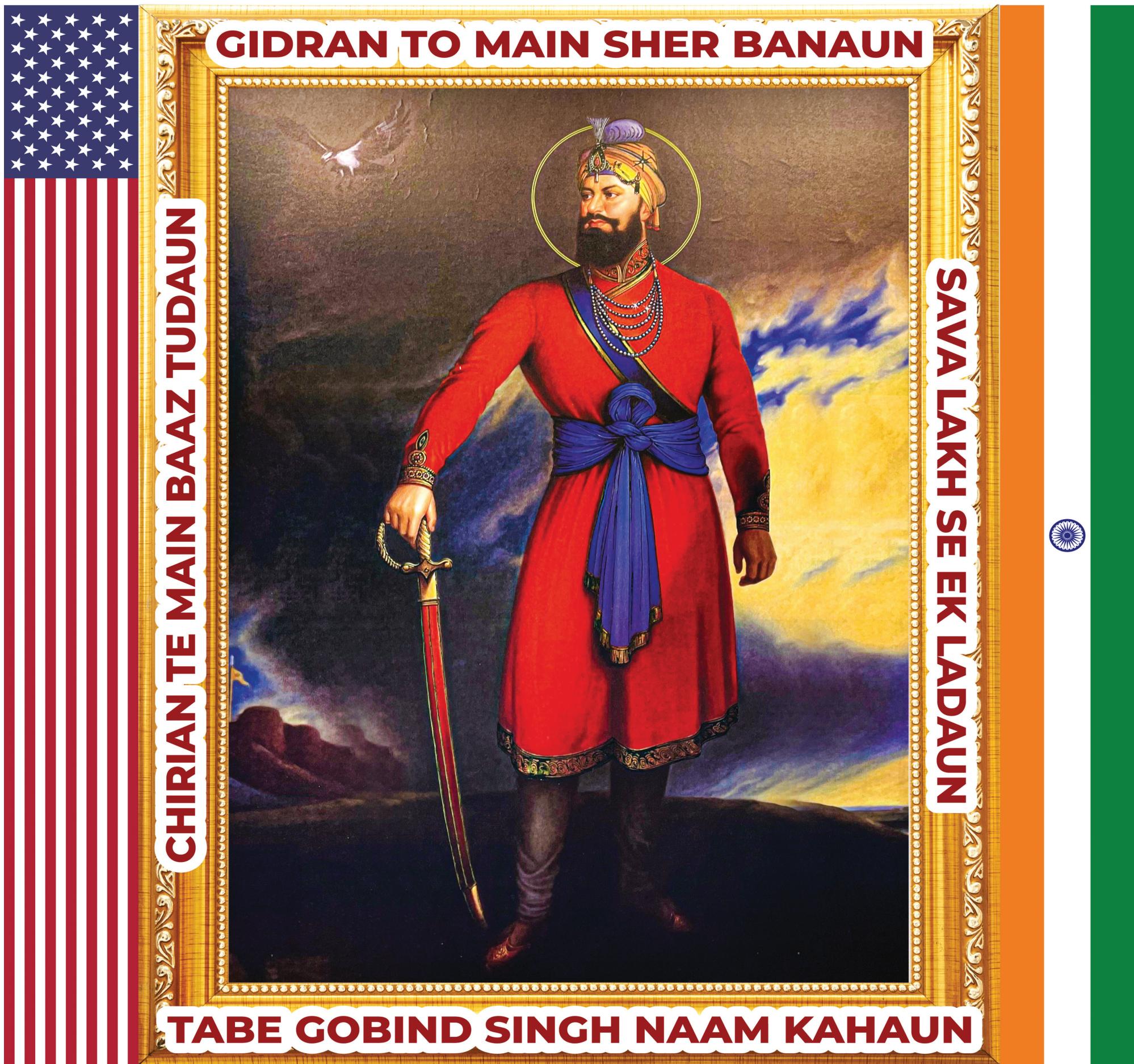
2007 The new campus of the Virala Institute of Technology and Sciences opened in 2007 in Panama (Bahrain).

2010 In 2010, the Indian Navy began the process of procuring new Light Utility Helicopters (LUHs) in place of the old Chetak helicopters.

1969 India's famous football player IM Vijayan was born in 1969.



Khalsa ੴ 1699



Ranju Batra
Chair



Vaisakhi, the Khalsa Sirjana Divas, and celebrations worldwide



BY
PRABHJOT SINGH

Vaisakhi, after Diwali, has emerged as the biggest Indian festival whose celebrations with fervor and gaiety are gradually gaining the tones of acceptance of a global event. It has given the overseas Punjabis in general and the Sikhs a distinct socio-economic-cultural identity. Besides its religious significance - birth anniversary of the Khalsa, the pure - it has traditionally been correlated to the start of harvesting season (of wheat crop) in north India reflecting in the process great socio-economic strides the farming community of North has made. Besides, for many Indian communities, it marks the start of a New Year.

After the Covid pandemic subsided, major public events including commemorating Vaisakhi through City Parades or Nagar Kirtan processions resumed again last year. They could not be organized in 2021 and 2022. Instead, special gatherings were held at Sikh temples - gurdwaras - by following the safety protocols of wearing face masks and maintaining a physical distance.

Last year, "nagar kirtan procession" was replaced by a special congregation held at Toronto on April 24. Similarly, other major cities in North America also held special "Vaisakhi" celebrations by following the official guidelines.

It was on this day in 1699 that the 10th Sikh Guru, Sri Guru Gobind Singh, chose the historic town of Sri Anandpur Sahib for the launch of the Khalsa. Though main religious celebrations are held at Takht Sri Kesgarh Sahib (Sri



Anandpur Sahib), Golden Temple (Amritsar) and Takht Sri Damdama Sahib (Talwandi Sabo), the Sikhs all over the world mark the festivities not only by holding special congregations in gurdwaras but also in a global show of their progress in social, political, art, culture, sports, and economic fields as followers of one of the most recent and modern religions.

Since Sikhism had its origin in Pakistan - Nankana Sahib, the birthplace of first Sikh Guru, Sri Guru Nanak Dev - groups of the devout also visit Sikh shrines there as part of Vaisakhi celebrations that are held in the second week of April every year. After almost 230 years of the birth of Guru Nanak Dev, Sri Guru Gobind Singh had given the Sikhs new identity of the Khalsa by introducing the concept of Saint Soldier.

Vaisakhi celebrations' global significance can be measured from ever expanding numbers of cosmopolitan and metropolitan cities the world over that reverberate to the beats of bhangra and



display of traditional martial art of gatka as part of "Nagar Kirtan processions" or Sikh Parades. Sikhs pride in claiming themselves to be one of the most affluent minorities in the world

While Sikhs in India have Nagar Kirtan processions and special congregations on the Vaisakhi day, overseas Punjabis make it special with lavish celebrations. There, Nagar Kirtan processions or Sikh parades alone do not mark the celebrations. They, in fact, come as a socio-cultural package comprising competitions in games, sports and cultural events besides holding of special religious congregations that continue for weeks together.

Holding of community kitchens, illumination of the entire route of the procession and distribution of literature about Sikhism besides updated copies of telephone and business directories have come to stay as integral part of celebrations. One of the latest additions

to the event witnessed in some major North American cities has been the use of smaller aircraft for showering floral petals over the processions.

This year, the "Vaisakhi" celebrations will have added significance as India is all set to hold its Parliament elections, ending in the first week of June. The process has already started in some parts of the country.

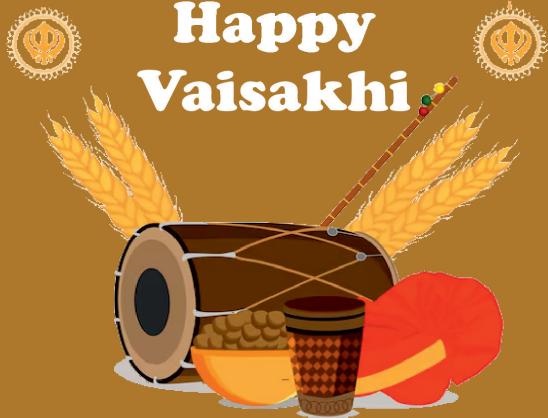
Since the Sikhs are a growing political minority, leaders of various political parties, both at state and central level, make it a point to get their presence noticed during the celebratory processions or special congregations in major centers like New Delhi, Mumbai, Nanded Sahib, Patna Sahib, Amritsar, Sri Anandpur Sahib, Sri Talwandi Sabo, and many other places.

Though celebrations are held worldwide, major focus remains on Sikhs in Europe (UK, Germany, Italy, France, Greece, the Netherlands and Sweden), Americas (USA, Canada), Australia and



Continued on Page 22

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From Page 20



Canadian Commemorative Stamp on Tercentenary of Khalsa.

New Zealand, Africa (Kenya) and Asia (Malaysia, Thailand and Fiji).

Besides the major Commonwealth nations like England, Canada, Australia and New Zealand several other countries have accorded recognition to some of the major Sikh festivals in general and Vaisakhi in particular. In 2015, for example, the Malaysian government allowed Sikhs an off day on Vaisakhi day.

In 1999, when the entire world celebrated the tercentenary of the Khalsa, Canada became the first country other than India to take out a commemorative stamp to mark the event. Vaisakhi celebrations are now held inside Parliament complexes, including Parliament Hill in Ottawa, besides several Provincial Parliaments in other Commonwealth nations. In the United States, Sikh Parades are taken out in almost every major city, including New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Yuba City.

In England, besides London, they are organized in several cities, the biggest being in Birmingham.

Historically, the Sikhs had to struggle hard not only to shrug off the blot of "second rate citizens" in many parts of the erstwhile Commonwealth but had to fight hard democratically for their rights and absorption in mainstream of their new countries of abode.

In fact, the concept of the Nagar Kirtan processions, or the Sikh Parades has proved to be an effective tool for the overseas Sikh community to introduce itself as a peaceful and hard-working group that had no qualms of making countries of their present abode as their homes.

It has been this commitment that has helped them to script an unprecedented success story the world over. Though the Punjabis - described as Hindus - started reaching Canada in early 1900, they were denied voting rights in British Columbia from 1907 onwards. They had to wait for 40 long years to win back the right to vote. In 1947, the requirement to be a voter was changed to Canadian citizenship in addition to being a British subject. It was in 1950 that the first Sikh - Naranjan Garewal - was elected to the City Council of Mission in British



Columbia.

The first ever-Sikh Parade or Nagar Kirtan procession was organized on January 19, 1908, along Second Avenue in Vancouver. On August 28, 1912, Hardial Singh Atwal earned the distinction of becoming the first Canadian born Sikh.

Each Nagar Kirtan Procession comprises among other things a tastefully decorated truck trailer that carries scared Guru Granth Sahib in a golden or silver palanquin, five baptized Sikhs (Panj Pyaras) who carry Kesari flags (Nishan Sahibs), Gurbani reciting groups or "Parbhats Pheris" besides Bhangra and gatka players.

The scale at which the Nagar Kirtan processions are now organized in North America started in 1978 when the Canadian Sikhs organized a massive Nagar Kirtan procession to mark the 500th birth anniversary of Guru Amar Dass. Since then, holding of Sikh Parade has become an annual feature.

Many historians and social scientists subscribe to the view that the Nagar Kirtan or Sikh Parade paved the way for consolidation of the overseas Sikh community as a strong political group that ultimately saw a turbaned Sikh - Gurbax Singh Malhi - in the Canadian House of Commons. It was he, who six

years later, persuaded the then Liberals to hold inside the Parliament Hill a big celebration to mark the tercentenary celebrations of Khalsa on Vaisakhi Day. In May 1999, Canada issued a 49-cent special commemorative stamp to mark the tercentenary of the Khalsa.

Not only major TV channels but also the mainstream Media runs special features and articles on Sikhs and their immense contribution to the economic growth of the new countries of their abode. Success stories of young Sikh boys and girls, too, are played up as a build up for the Vaisakhi supplements.

Since then, Vaisakhi celebrations

Continued on Page 24

Happy Khalsa Sajna Divas & Happy Vaisakhi



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From Page 22

inside Parliaments and State Assemblies have become a regular feature not only in Commonwealth countries but also in some European and African nations.

The celebrations not only ensure holding of competitions, tournaments, folk events and religious congregations but also organization of lavish feasts where the local populace is invited as a part of "know your neighborhood communities better" programme launched by some of the enterprising Overseas Sikh Organizations. This was necessitated more as a mode of defense and awareness to thwart growing incidents of hate violence witnessed in several parts of North America after the 9/11 terrorist attack.

While people in Tamil Nadu celebrate Vaisakhi as Puthandu, the festivities are known as Vishu in Kerala. In Bengal, this seasonal festival is celebrated as Naba Barsha (New Year). In neighboring Assam, it is called Rongali Bihu.

In Bihar, celebrations are again connected to the observation of the start of a new solar year. It is called Vaishakha in Bihar in honor of the Sun God. While in Haryana, like Punjab, Vaisakhi continues to be a major religious and socio-economic festival. However, in the hill state of Himachal Pradesh, people make a pilgrimage to Jwala Ji temple and take a holy dip in the hot springs there.

Traditionally, religious celebrations comprise of taking out a nagar kirtan procession - that normally is done a day or two before the actual Vaisakhi day - besides holding of a special religious congregation at gurdwaras where at community kitchens - langars - jalebis are a special attraction.



Normally one or more jathas (groups) of Sikhs go to Pakistan to join the Vaisakhi celebrations at Gurdwara Sri Janam Asthan, Nankana Sahib, the birthplace of Sikhism, besides other historic shrines there. The political uncertainty notwithstanding jathas of Sikh pilgrims went there this year also though the size was much smaller.

(The author is a senior journalist. He can be reached at prabhjot416@gmail.com)

Vaisakhi is not only a Sikh festival, but it is celebrated in different parts of India as the start of a new Solar year. According to Sikh religious calendar - Nanakshahi - the first day of "desi" month of Vaisakh is observed as Vaisakhi. It was on this day that five devout had volunteered to sacrifice their lives in response to a call made by the 10th Sikh Guru, Guru Gobind Singh. The five - Bhai Daya Singh, Bhai Dharam Singh, Bhai Mukham Singh, Bhai Himmat Singh and Bhai Sahib Singh - later had the distinction of baptizing Guru Gobind Singh after their own captivation at a special congregation held at Takht Sri Kesgarh Sahib.

Bihu celebrations in Assam.





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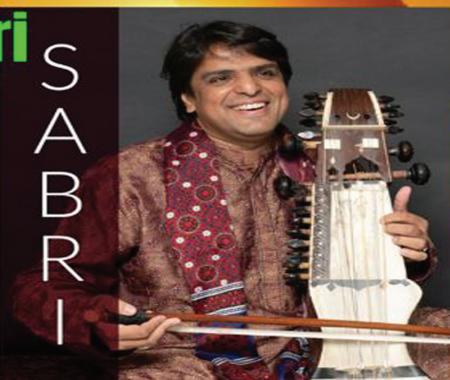


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Vaisakhi: The story behind the Sikh festival



The Sikh celebration called Vaisakhi happens annually either on 13th or 14th day of April. The origins of Vaisakhi stem from a spring harvest festival native to the Punjab region of South Asia, but more importantly marked as a religious significance for Sikhs.

"Vaisakhi celebrates the culmination of a centuries-long journey, from the foundation of the faith in 1469, to ensure equality of all people — regardless of race, gender, faith, nationality, or any other identity," Sumeet Kaur Bal, communications director for Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund, told NBC News. "This journey culminated in the institutionalization of the Sikh identity and our shared values, which occurred on Vaisakhi."

In 1699, Guru Gobind Singh Ji (1666-1708) — the tenth Sikh guru-prophet — gathered a record number of Sikhs to formally establish the Khalsa Panth, a community of initiated Sikhs. The Khalsa Panth was formalized and entrusted as the collective body with authority. It is important to note that Sikhism was born at a time of great inequality and injustice in India — which in many ways continues today, according to Bal.

"Guru Gobind Singh Ji vested power in the Khalsa Panth, or Sikh familyhood, to be politically and civically engaged and combat injustice in the world around us, but to have this engagement guided and fueled by our understanding of

religion," Bal said.

Sikhism is a monotheistic faith founded on the principles of equality, freedom of religion, and community service. As the fifth-largest religion in the world, one of the core teachings of the Sikh tradition is that all Sikhs must cultivate spirituality while also serving the world around us. Sikhs, both men and women, cover their uncut hair with a turban which represents a commitment to equality and justice.

"One of the many terms that captures this outlook is sant-sipahi, which translates to saint-soldier," Simran Jeet Singh, senior religion fellow for the Sikh Coalition, told NBC News. "Maintaining such a balance is a difficult thing to do, yet being both spiritually focused and politically engaged is an integral part of the Sikh faith."

Additionally, Baisakhi is a harvest festival and the start of the new agricultural year in Punjab, where farmers give thanks for the bountiful harvest and pray for future prosperity. For Hindus, Baisakhi is associated with the Vaisakha festival, celebrated as the solar new year. It is a time for bathing in sacred rivers, worship, and community fairs, as mythologically, it is believed that Goddess Ganga descended to Earth on this day, leading many to take holy dips in rivers like the Ganges, Jhelum, and Kaveri.

Baisakhi is celebrated with great enthusiasm, especially in Punjab and Haryana. People participate in

traditional folk dances like Bhangra and Gidda, wear vibrant clothes, and enjoy festive foods. In essence, it's a festival that embodies the spirit of joy, reflection, and renewal, marking the beginning of a new year and commemorating significant historical events.

Welcoming the Festival of Joy and Happiness

Baisakhi is celebrated with great pomp and extreme happiness, especially by the Sikhs. The gurdwaras are cleaned and

decorated. Many people throng to the gurdwaras to offer prayers and seek the blessings of the almighty for the prosperous year ahead. Overall, the Baisakhi celebrations are carried out by the Sikhs in a very well planned manner.

Morning Prayer in the Gurdwaras

In the morning, the Sikh people take bath and wear the new clothes. The Sikh families then assemble at the gurdwaras to attend a specially organized prayer in the morning. After the prayer is over, the



Continued on Page 28

Happy Khalsa Sajna Divas and a Happy Vaisakhi



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Founder President : Sant Baba Prem Singh Sikh Cultural Society NY

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From Page 26

devotees are distributed a sweet known as the 'Kada Prasad'.

Langar for the worshippers

In the afternoon, around lunch time, a langar (vegetarian food) is organized for the devotees in the gurdwara. All the people whether they are rich or poor are equally served the same food. There is no discrimination followed in the gurdwara.

Procession of Guru Granth Sahib

The procession of Guru Granth Sahib is known as Nagar Kirtan in Punjabi. It is a religious procession accompanied by holy hymns and is an important part of the festival of Baisakhi. The procession is always led by the Panj Pyare (the five beloved ones who form the central part of the Khalsa), who are dressed in saffron. They are followed by the holy book of the Sikhs, Guru Granth Sahib, and other members of the procession. The road through which the procession is to pass is cleared beforehand by the sewadars (volunteers). The procession finally comes to a halt at a particular Gurudwara where Ardas (prayers) is offered.

Worshippers dance their heart out

Any Baisakhi celebration is termed to be incomplete without the memorable dance performances. There are two prominent forms of dance that are performed by the Sikhs – bhangra and giddha. Bhangra is essentially a high energy dance that involves plenty of jumping. It is generally performed by both men and women. Giddha is another folk dance traditionally performed by the women. The dance reflects the celebratory mood of the women and their joyful spirits.

Day to Receive Guru's Blessings for Sikhs

According to a popular legend in Sikhism, it was on the day of Vaisakhi in 1567 that Guru Amar Das had first institutionalized Vaisakhi as one of the special days when all Sikhs would gather to receive the guru's blessings at Goindwal.

Foundation of Arya Samaj

The day of Vaisakhi Festival is also important for the Hindus as it on this day in 1875 that Swami Dayanand Saraswati founded the Arya Samaj - a reformed sect of Hindus who are devoted to the Vedas for spiritual guidance and have discarded idol worship.

Attainment of Nirvana by Gautam Buddha

For the Buddhist, the day of Vaisakhi Festival is significant, as according to a popular legend it was on this auspicious day that Gautam Buddha attained enlightenment or Nirvana under the Mahabodhi tree in the town of Gaya. For this reason, the day of Vaisakhi is celebrated as Buddha Purnima in several parts of the country.

Vaisakhi Celebration in India

The auspicious day of Vaisakhi is celebrated all over India though under different names and with different set of rituals. People of Assam celebrate April



13 as Rongali Bihu, while those in West Bengal celebrate it as Naba Barsha. Bihar celebrates Vaisakhi as Vaishakha in honour of the Sun God, Surya while Kerala celebrates it as Vishu and Tamil Nadu as Puthandu. In Kashmir, a ceremonial bath and general festivity mark Vaisakhi while in Himachal Pradesh devotees flock to the temple of Jwalamukhi and take a holy dip in the Hot Springs.

Celebrations around the world

Most of us know that Vaisakhi celebration commemorates the anniversary of the Khalsa which was laid down by Guru Gobind Singh. Though it signifies its establishment in India, Sikh communities all around the world engage in an overwhelming festivity to mark this auspicious day.

Pakistan

The festivities of Vaisakhi are widely celebrated by the Sikhs of Western Punjab in Pakistan. The celebrations are observed on the Panja Sahib complex in Hasan Abdal, numerous Gurudwaras in Nankana Sahib and various historical sites in Lahore.

Malaysia

Earlier Malaysia did not observe Vaisakhi to be considered as a public holiday, since the Sikh community ranked among the minorities here. However in 2013 Prime Minister Najib Razak announced that all Sikh government servants would be granted leave on the same occasion. The celebrations in Malaysia typically take place in the form of 'open houses'.

United States

Los Angeles and Manhattan are the two primary places that epitomize Vaisakhi celebrations. The Sikhs of Manhattan offer 'Seva' to the community by offering food and contribute to the completion of labour oriented tasks. A full day Kirtan is also hosted at the Gurudwara which is



followed by a procession.

United Kingdom

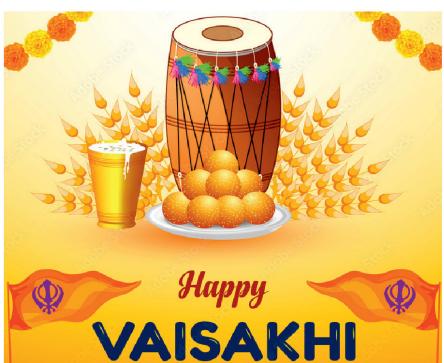
Birmingham being the largest concentration of Sikhs makes a point to celebrate this festival king size. More than one lakh people make it to the festivity at the Handsworth Park. This year it's going to get bigger as the Council of Sikh Gurdwaras in Birmingham is marking their 25th anniversary. The celebration will be followed by a Simran which is the remembrance of

God by repetition or recital of his name during a spiritual meditation.

Canada

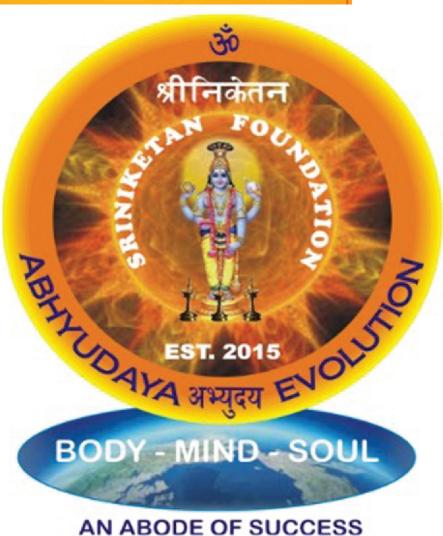
Canada has the most of Sikh population and the celebrations of Vaisakhi here are considered as a global phenomenon. A massive parade is observed with more than 2 lakh participants. With an array of entertaining performances, the celebrations consist of floats represented by various communities.

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The creation of Khalsa

Khalsa, the purified and reconstituted Sikh community, instituted by Guru Gobind Singh on March 30, 1699 (Vaisakhi Day). His declaration had three dimensions: it redefined the concept of authority within the Sikh community; it introduced a new initiation ceremony and code of conduct; and it provided the community with a new religious and political vision. Khalsa is used to denote both the body of initiated Sikhs and the community of all Sikhs.

The early Sikh community had been shaped by three levels of authority: the masands ("Guru's deputies") were responsible for local congregations; the Guru was the active central authority; and the revealed word as recorded in Sikh scriptural text served as the symbolic base. With the establishment of the Khalsa, the authority of the masands was eliminated. They were expected either to become members of the community on a par with all others or to leave the fold.

Gobind Singh also introduced a new initiation rite. More commonly called amrit pahul ("the nectar ceremony") but also known as khande ki pahul (literally, "ceremony of the double-edged sword"), it was centred on a belief in the transformative power of the revealed word. The word was recited while water for initiation was stirred with a double-edged sword. Every Sikh who underwent the ceremony became a member of the Khalsa, was assigned the name Singh ("Lion"), and was expected to observe a rigorous code of conduct (rahit) symbolized by the wearing of five items: kes (long hair), kangha (a comb), kachha (a pair of shorts), karha (a steel bracelet), and kirpan (a sword). The names of these items begin with the Punjabi letter k and thus came to be known as the five Ks. The Singhs were also expected to forswear tobacco, alcohol, and certain types of meat.

In its third aspect the Khalsa embodied a concrete political agenda: the pledge to realize the rule of the Sikh community (Khalsa Raj, "kingdom of God") in the Punjab. These three interlocking dimensions have made the institution of the Khalsa perhaps the most powerful force in shaping Sikh identity during the past three centuries. Initially a male institution, it is now open to women (who take the name Kaur ["Princess"] as well, though Khalsa authority remains firmly in male hands).

The story of creation of Khalsa

It was the Baisakhi. The year was 1699. As usual, Sikhs from far and near had gathered together at Anandpur to celebrate the New Year Festival. However, the gathering was a bit different that day. This year Guru Gobind Rai had sent a message that



every Sikh who could afford to come, must come to the annual fair. They should come to Anandpur with their hair and beard uncut; and that they should wear turbans instead of caps or scarves.

By noon, well over twenty thousand Sikhs (eighty thousand by one estimate) had assembled in the fair ground at Anandpur to participate in the festivals of the Baisakhi Day. Everybody was excited and looked forward to meeting the Guru as if this unusual 'message' was especially sent for him. Also, there was a large and richly festooned tent pitched on a hillock overlooking the extensive fair grounds.

It was afternoon. Word went round that the Guru was in the marquee and he would be coming out soon to meet his Sikhs. All eyes were turned towards the tent and everyone was waiting patiently for Guru's Darshan (appearance) and to receive his blessings. But it took a little longer than expected.

At last their patience was rewarded. Guru Gobind came out of the tent clad in a strangely coloured uniform. It was saffron coloured from top to toe with a blue waist band. There was a long sword hanging from his left side. He walked briskly and came to a specially erected platform near the tent. The skies were clear and bright; and the Guru seemed to be standing so near, although he was actually at some distance from the people in the back. He had a strange smile on his face. Suddenly he stopped staring at the crowd, he pulled his sword out and raised it high with his right hand. There were a million voices and then a sudden hush.

Now, like a thunder, the Guru spoke, "My dear Sikhs, I am glad to see so many of you here today. Today I have



planned to offer you something special, but for this I need your help. Indeed, I need your head. I need the head of a Sikh who claims his faith in me."

There was a deadly silence all around. Everybody was too stunned to walk away or even whisper. Then the Guru flashed his sword again, raised his voice and repeated, "My Sikhs, I want a head and nothing less than a head. If anyone among you claims to be a true Sikh, then come forward and prove it." He looked so fierce and blood thirsty.

Before he had finished his last sentence, a tall lean Sikh was already moving forward towards the Guru on the platform. His name was Daya Ram and he was from Lahore. Reaching the Guru, he folded his hands, bent his head forward and said, "O, Lord, the true Guru, I claim to be your humble Sikh. My head is ready for you. Please take it."

Hurriedly, the Guru held him by the

arm and led him into the tent. Soon after the crowd inside heard the sound of a sword striking a body. They then heard a voice, Waheguru and then a loud thud. Then they saw the Guru coming out of the tent, looking even more fierce. Fresh blood dripped down his sword. The crowd was truly horrified. Nobody needed to be told what had happened inside the tent.

Once again the Guru stood on the platform. Once again he raised his sword and addressed the crowd, "Well, my Sikhs! I want a second Sikh who would willingly offer his head to me." This new demand made the people even more scared. But they dare not ask or challenge the Guru for his seemingly wrongful act. However, as he was repeating his strange call, another Sikh began to move forward. His name was Dharam Das, and he was from Delhi.

Dharam Das stood before the Guru and said in a humble voice, "O, my true king, I offer my head to you, please take

Heartiest Greetings on Khalsa Sajna Divas and a Happy Vaisakhi

“ Let us pledge to follow the path of Gursikhi
as recommended by Guru Gobind Singh Ji ”



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Daler Singh
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President, Gurdwara Baba Makhan Shah
Lobana Sikh Center, New York

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it, it is yours." Now the Guru seemed pleased as he quickly took him inside the tent. This time again, the crowd heard a voice saying Waheguru and then a loud thud. Everyone gasped. They were sure that Dharam Das, too, had been put to death.

Again the Guru emerged from the tent with a sword drenched in blood. He looked as fierce as before. With a terrifying look in his eyes he again shouted to the crowd, "Come, come my Sikhs, who comes next. I still want some more. Now I want a third head. I want a Sikh who has faith in me."

The people were terrified. They thought perhaps the Guru had gone mad. He was asking too much. Now they were no longer spell bound by the events which had taken place just before. They could think. They began to move; they whispered with each other. They began to slip away from the crowd. Some just fled for their lives.

In the mean time another Sikh named Mohkam Chand had reached the Guru on the platform. He was from Dwarka. With folded hands he requested the Guru to accept his head. The Guru did not wait or waste a minute, and did the same as he had done with the other two.

For the fourth time, the Guru stood before the crowd and repeated his demand for yet another head. Now the crowd was even more restless. Some people were slinking away but most stood their ground. They all were really scared, and it did not take long before they saw yet another Sikh on the platform offering his head to the Guru. His name was Sahib Chand and he was from Bihar. The Guru dealt with him in the same way as with the other three before him.

The crowd was getting thinner every moment. By the time the Guru came back and asked for a fifth head, only the very faithful had stayed behind. But there seemed to be no shortage of volunteers. Soon, another Sikh named Himmat Rai moved forward. He was, at once, led to the tent, but this time the Guru did not return quickly. The people outside began to wonder. Their horror began to change into hope. At least the Guru had stopped asking for more heads. They waited nervously and prayed 'Waheguru'.

Then the Guru appeared. He was followed by five other men. They, too, were dressed in saffron colour, with blue scarves tied round their waists and turbans. They looked very much like the Guru himself. All stood on the platform facing the crowd. Their faces beamed with joy and satisfaction.

As soon as the people near them recognised that they were the same Sikhs who they thought had been killed by the Guru, they immediately started cheering them and saluted them with loud shouts of 'Sat Siri Akal!' Soon everybody joined in, and the whole atmosphere was vibrant with the deafening sounds Sat Siri Akal. Many people who had left the fair ground in fear and disappointment heard these cheers and rushed back to see what was happening. They could not believe their



eyes. Everything had happened so fast. They could not understand. Had the dead been brought back to life?

When the cheering crowd had stopped, the Guru spoke to the crowd, "My dear Sikhs; we all remember that when Guru Nanak gave a test to his Sikhs only one passed it. His name was Lehna, who then became Guru Angad. Now two hundred years after the first test, I have given you another final test. However this test was not for Guruship, but for the 'nationhood'. I call it the Khalsa, the brotherhood of the pure at heart. You have witnessed the birth of the Khalsa. These Sikhs standing beside me are my Panj Piaray (five beloved ones). Each of them is a saint and a soldier in one. These five Sikhs are dedicated and daring enough to lead; and strong enough to support the edifice of the Khalsa."

Later the Guru introduced his Sikhs to a new kind of initiation ceremony called the Amrit (Baptism). First he Baptised the 'Panj Piaray' and gave them a new name - 'Singh'. Then he himself was baptised by 'the five' and called himself Gobind Singh. After this all Sikhs present at the fair ground were asked to receive Amrit. It was estimated that well over 20,000 Sikhs were baptised the same day.

Significance of the creation of the Khalsa

The creation of the Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh was the greatest achievement of his genius. It gave birth to a movement which had far-reaching effects. It brought a new belief into being and released a new dynamic force into the arena of Indian History.



Khalsa produced men of uncommon bravery and sacrifice

By the creation of the Khalsa, the Great Guru laid the foundation of a brotherhood, which produced in the fullness of time, men of uncommon bravery, unique and devotion and rare spirit of sacrifice. Men like Banda Bahadur, Bhai Mani Singh, Baba Deep Singh, Bhai Taru Singh and Jassa Singh Ahluwalia were among them which the Khalsa produced within only fifty years after its inception.

He converted the Sikhs into a race of saint-soldiers

The Khalsa created brotherhood who though worshipped the supreme Being at heart, was ever ready to take up arms against injustice and oppression. Guru

Gobind Singh "withdrew followers from the undivided attention which their father had given them to regard the sword as their principal stay in their world."

It brought a tremendous change in the character and psychology of the Hindus

Before the creation of the Khalsa, the bulk of the Hindus were cowardly, disunited and ill-organized. They were prey to mutual jealousies. They had no love for religion, race or country. Centuries of suppression had reduced them to mere dregs of humanity. They were changed as it by magic into something rich and strange. The sweepers, the barbers, the washermen and the confectioners who had for generations lived as crawling slaves, became

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Happy Khalsa Sajna Divas And a Happy Vaisakhi



DARSHAN SINGH BAGGA

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- Director, Long Island 9/11 Memorial
- Vice President, National Federation of Indian Associations
- Chairman, Glen Cove Long Island Gurdwara
- Founder / President, Punjabi Cultural Society
- Founder / President, Sikh Center Gurdwara, Flushing (Honored as Sikh role model by Hem Kunt Foundation, USA)
- Founding Patron, World Punjabi Organization (USA) Sikh Forum Inc. Plainview
- Former Vice President, Sikh Forum Inc. Plainview
- Former Chairman, India Association, LI-India Center
- Executive Committee Member, Richmond Hill First Sikh Gurdwara in 1973-74

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doughty warriors who were ready to rush into the jaws of death at their bidding of their Guru. It has been aptly remarked that the tenth Guru transformed "Jackals into lions and sparrows into hawks." Guru Gobind Singh effectually roused the dormant energies of a vanquished people and filled them with a lofty although fitful longing for social freedom and national ascendancy."

The Khalsa was purified of superstitions and blind faith

The creation of the Khalsa freed the Sikhs from superstitions and unnecessary ritual practices. They had no faith in idol worship and of ostentations. They were enjoined upon to be in one True Lord. Gobind Singh took away from his followers their ancient solace of superstitions.

It gave new life to depressed and down trodden communities

The creation of the Khalsa had a miraculous effect in uplifting the depressed and down trodden communities. The members of the low castes who were regarded as unclean and polluted in the Hindu society became leaders among men of high birth. They came forward as Sikhs and fought side by side with the Kshatriyas and Brahmins for the cause of Dharma. The members of the low castes proved to be the backbone of the Khalsa and proved to be real patriots and doughty warriors who made sacrifices for their country and faith.

It made the Sikhs a unified community

The creation of the Khalsa made all the Sikhs equal. They considered themselves as blood relations having acquired common heritage from their common Gurus. The external marks of Sikhism i.e., the five K's gave them a sense of brotherhood, equality and religious unity. Their eating in the common kitchen, sitting together, gave a death-blow to the caste system. The status of one Sikh was in no way superior to that of the other. This principle of equality led to unity and cohesion amongst the followers of the Gurus.



It led to wars between the Guru and the hilly Rajas

One of the immediate results of the foundation of the Khalsa was that it excited the jealousy of hilly chiefs and brought Guru Gobind Singh into conflict with them. They saw in the democratic teachings and the military zeal of the Guru a threat to their influence and power. Besides, they thought that they would be the first victims of Guru's ambition. Consequently, the hilly chiefs felt much concerned and lost no time in initiating hostilities against the Guru. Thus was started the long drawn warfare between the two parties.

It made Sikhism distinct from Hinduism

The distinguished marks of the Khalsa namely the five K's, the appellation of Singh, the new mode of salutation and total abstention from smoking- the essential tenets of the

Khalsa made Sikhism more distinct from Hinduism. Thereafter, the possibilities of the Sikhism being absorbed by the Hinduism became very remote.

Khalsa saved Hinduism from annihilation

The creation of the Khalsa saved Hinduism from annihilation. Aurangzeb had started a program of wholesale conversion of the Hindus. His officers followed a policy of religious persecution of Hindus, demolished their temples and subject them to unheard cruelties. At such a juncture, the creation of the Khalsa gave a new lease of life to the Hindus religion. By their military valor, sacrifice and services, they saved them from the tyranny of the Mughal Government. Even after the death of Guru Gobind Singh, the Khalsa continued its struggle against injustice and oppression and did not

rest till it had completely overpowered the enemy.

It gradually made the Khalsa political power in the Punjab

The great legacy of the creation of the Khalsa was the "Sikh struggle for independence" in the Punjab. The Khalsa first thought against the Mughals and then against the Afghans and did not rest till it had achieved the goal after a long and determined struggle for almost a century the Punjab under Ranjit Singh became a sovereign state.

Guru Gobind Singh in no way gave up the essentials of Guru Nanak's teachings. Like his predecessors, Guru Gobind Singh insisted on the worship of the One True Lord, with the same ideal, devotion and humility and for the same glorification of the Name. He did not want his followers to forget their Lord in the worldly pursuits.



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Guru Gobind Singh: The Founder of Khalsa

Guru Gobind Singh was the tenth and last Sikh Guru, a spiritual leader, philosopher, poet and a great warrior. Born as Gobind Rai, he emerged as tenth Sikh Guru at age nine after his father Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Sikh Guru, was beheaded publicly on the orders of Mughal emperor Aurangzeb as he refused to convert to Islam. Such atrocity led Guru Gobind Singh to found the Sikh warrior community called Khalsa that marked a significant event in the history of Sikhism. He also introduced the five articles famous as the Five Ks and commanded the Khalsa Sikhs to wear at all times. Other contributions of the Guru includes writing important texts on Sikhism and holding Guru Granth Sahib, the religious scripture of Sikhism, as the eternal living guru of the Sikhs.

Childhood & Early Life

He was born Gobind Rai on January 5, 1666 in Patna Sahib, Bihar, India in the Sodhi Khatri family of the ninth Sikh guru, Guru Tegh Bahadur and his wife Mata Gujri. The first Maharaja of Sikh Empire Ranjit Singh later built the Gurdwara Takht Sri Patna Sahib in the site of the house where Guru Gobind Singh was born and lived for the first four years of his life. The Guru returned to Punjab with his family in 1670 and later relocated with them to ChakkNanaki on the edge of Shivalik Hills in March 1672 where he did his schooling.

In 1675, the Kashmiri Pandits approached Guru Tegh Bahadur to protect them from oppression of the Islamic satrap of Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb called Iftikar Khan. According to the composition Bachittar Natak written by Guru Gobind Singh, his father promised to protect the Kashmiri Pandits and was summoned to Delhi on a pretext by Aurangzeb and on his arrival, Tegh Bahadur was asked to convert to Islam. Tegh Bahadur was arrested along with his associates after he refused and was beheaded in public on November 11, 1675, in Chandni Chowk, Delhi. Such execution only toughened determination of the Sikhs to fight against atrocities of the Muslims in safeguarding their human rights and identity as Sikhs.

The martyrdom of his father led the Sikhs to formally install the nine year old Gobind Rai as the tenth Sikh Guru on March 29, 1676, on Vaisakhi. He continued with his education which apart from reading and writing also included archery, horse riding and other martial arts. Till 1685 he stayed in Paonta Sahib.

In 1699, the Guru asked the Sikhs to assemble at Anandpur Sahib on Vaisakhi. The Guru with a sword in hand called for a volunteer from among the crowd who is ready to sacrifice his head. On his third call one person named Daya Ram (later called BhaiDaya Singh) came forward.



The Guru took him in a tent and returned alone to the crowd with blood dripping from his sword. Another volunteer was called by the Guru who was again taken inside the tent and after some time the Guru returned alone with the bloody sword. He continued the process with three more volunteers but after the fifth volunteer went inside the tent, the Guru came out with all the five volunteers unharmed. The Guru blessed the five volunteers namely BhaiDaya Singh, BhaiDharam Singh, Bhai Sahib Singh, BhaiMohkam Singh and Bhai Himmat Singh and called them the PanjPyare (the five beloved ones) and the first Khalsa in the Sikh tradition. The Guru then took an iron bowl and prepared a solution of water and sugar stirring it with a double-edged sword calling it Amrit (nectar). The five volunteers then received the nectar from the Guru amidst recitations from the Adi Granth. With this the khandekapahul (baptization ceremony) of the warrior community of Khalsa was initiated. A new surname of "Singh" meaning lion was given to them by the Guru. The Guru then asked the five baptized Sikhs to baptize him as a Khalsa and with this the Guru became the sixth Khalsa and from this time he came to be known as Guru Gobind Singh.

The Guru commanded the Sikhs to wear five items all the time which included Kesh (uncut hair), Kangha (a comb made of wood), Kara (a bracelet made of iron), Kachera (a tieable undergarment made of 100% cotton) and Kirpan (a large iron dagger for self-defense). A code of discipline was introduced by him for the Khalsa warriors. These included prohibition of

tobacco, eating 'halal' meat that is slaughtered as per Muslim ritual, fornication and adultery. The Khalsas consented never to communicate with followers of the rivals or their successors. The principle of equality was institutionalised in Sikhism with initiation of both men and women from different castes as Khalsa. The Guru played an instrumental role by institutionalising Khalsa in Sikhism thus strengthening the Sikhs in their resistance on the continuous persecution of the Mughal Empire under Aurangzeb. He came up with different concepts that posed indirect challenge to the biased tax system of the Islamic authorities.

Adi Granth, the first official edition of the Sikh scripture was compiled by the fifth Sikh Guru, Guru Arjan. It contained hymns of previous Gurus and of other saints. Adi Granth was eventually expanded into the Guru Granth Sahib. In 1706, Guru Gobind Singh released the second rendition of the religious scripture with addition of one salok, dohramahala 9 ang, 1429 and all the 115 hymns of Guru Tegh Bahadur. The rendition came to be known as Sri Guru Granth Sahib. The Guru Granth Sahib composed by Guru Nanak Dev and other Sikh Gurus including Guru Arjan Dev, Guru Ram Das, Guru Angad Dev, Guru Amar Das, Guru Tegh Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh and also containing traditions and teachings of Indian saints (saints), like Namdev and Kabir as also two Muslim Sufi saints Sheikh Farid and BhagatBhikan was declared as the eternal living guru for Sikhs by Guru Gobind Singh.

Hostility between the Sikhs and the Muslims increased following execution of Guru Tegh Bahadur. Guru Gobind Singh believed in a DharamYudh that is to fight to defend righteousness and fought thirteen wars against the Mughal Empire and the kings of Siwalik Hills but never held captive or destroyed place of worship of other religions. Among the conflicts, the Second Battle of Anandpur (1704) witnessed a fierce battle and towards its end Aurangzeb offered a safe passage out of Anandpur for the Guru, his family and followers which the Guru accepted. However the two batches of the Sikhs were attacked while they were leaving Anandpur and the one including the Guru's mother Mata Gujri and his two sons Zorawar Singh aged 8 and Fateh Singh aged 5 was captured. The two sons died after they were buried live into a wall when they refused to convert to Islam while Mata Gujri died hearing her grandsons' death. The Guru lost two of his other sons Ajit Singh and Jujhar Singh, along with other Sikh soldiers during the Battle of Chamkaur (1704).

In 1705 following the Battle of Chamkaur where Aurangzeb and his army betrayed after making a promise the Guru wrote a defiant letter to Aurangzeb in Persian language titled Zafarnama (literally, "epistle of victory"). In the letter the Guru sternly censured and accused Aurangzeb and his commanders for being immoral, both in governing and in war conduct and predicted end of Mughal Empire in near future due to its immorality, persecution and untruthfulness.

Last Years & Death

The Guru and his soldiers stayed at different places following the Second Battle of Anandpur in 1704 including hiding in the Machhiwara jungle of southern Panjab. Following a succession struggle after death of Aurangzeb in 1707, Bahadur Shah, the official successor wanted to meet the Guru in person in the Deccan area of India to reconcile with him. While the Guru camped at Nanded on the banks of Godavari River two Afghans, Jamshed Khan and Wasil Beg managed to enter his vicinity and Jamshed Khan stabbed the Guru. The Guru retaliated and killed Jamshed Khan while Wasil Beg was killed by the Sikh guards. The Guru succumbed to the wounds of the assault on October 7, 1708 which was followed by resurgence of the Sikh-Mughal war. While it is considered that Muslim army commander and the Nawab of Sarhandh Wazir Khan sent the assassins to kill the Guru, some scholars opine that they were sent by the Mughal army stationed nearby.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh built the Takht Sri Hazur Sahib in Nanded to commemorate the place of assassination of the Guru.

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HAPPY

Vaisakhi



From Page 36

Teachings of Guru Gobind Singh

Be A Warrior & A Saint

Be a warrior with a noble cause who stands against injustice, promises to uphold dharma, is inwardly spiritual, is a fearless soul and is compassionate within oneself.

Serve Humanity

There is no religion greater than humanity. Guru Gobind Singh devoted his life to the happiness of his people and made many sacrifices to serve mankind. One must do as much as possible to serve and help those in need or trouble. If required, even pick up the weapon to battle injustice.

Power of Love

Love has the power to turn something basic into something gold or something ordinary to something extraordinary. Guru Gobind Singh believed that God is one and omnipresent. Those who love God and his creations shall attain divinity and salvation.

Everyone's Equal

He believed in non-discrimination, fairness, justice and freedom for everyone irrespective of the caste, colour, religion or creed they belonged to. He had the deepest regard for all religions and believed that the difference is only man-made.

Be Humble

Guru Gobind Singh never thought of himself to be a big-shot. Instead, he claimed to be the servant of God. He said that it was the people who believed in him, who gave him the status of a guru. Rest, the world is filled with people like him. He asked everyone to practice humility, have a kind heart and doesn't expect anything in return, not even gratitude.

Be Mindful of your Speech

The words have the power to either transform a life or cut a wound so deep that is beyond healing. Guru Gobind Singh taught his people to be mindful and cautious when speaking to others. He was also against verbal abuse, cursing, gossiping, slandering or being spiteful to anyone.

Be a model human

Other than these, there are 52 hukams (or instructions) by Guru Gobind Singh that encourage the ordinary homemaker to live a good and righteous life.

The 52 Hukams of Guru Gobind Singh

- Dharam dee kirat karnee – Make a righteous living.
- Dasvand denaa – Donate a tenth share of your earnings.
- Gurbani kantth karnee – Memorize Gurbani.
- Amrit Vela uthnaa – Arise during Amrit vela (early morning).
- Piaar naal Sikhaa di Seva karni – Devotedly serve the Sikh who serves others.
- Gursikhaa paaso Gurbani dae arth samajhane – Learn the meanings of Gurbani from Gursikhs.
- Panj Kakaar dee rehit drirh rukhnee – Follow the discipline of The Five Ks strictly. Adhere resolutely to the five articles of faith.
- Shabad da abhiaas karna – Practice and rehearse the shabads.
- Sat Saroop Satgur daa dhian dharnaa – Contemplate and assimilate the beautiful truth of the True Enlightener.
- Guru Granth Sahib Jee noo Guru mananaa – Believe in and accept Guru Granth Sahib as the Guide to enlightenment.
- Kaarjaan dae arambh vich ardaas karnee – When undertaking any task, first perform the prayer of Ardas.



- knowing Wondrous Enlightener.
Sugandh (kasam/saunh) dae kar itbaar janaaoun vaalaee tae yakeen nahee karna – Have no faith in oaths sworn by one attempting to convince another of sincerity.
- Sutanter Vicharna - Rule Independently.
- Raajniti vi parhnee – Read about politics.
- Dushman naal saam, daam, bhed, aadik upaao vartnae ate uprant yudh karna dham hai – When dealing with enemies, practice diplomacy (through conciliation, economics, or causing division of the opposing group), and exhaust all of these techniques before justifying battle with the adversary.
- Shastar vidya te ghorh-savaari da abhiaas karna – Practice and exercise weaponry and horsemanship.
- Doosrae dharmaaa dae pustakaa, vidyaa parhnee. Par bhrosaa drirh Gurbanee, Akaal Purakh ute hi rakhna – Read the books and science/knowledge of other religions. But keep your trust in Gurbani and Akal Purakh [The Timeless Being] resolute, firm, and tight.
- Guroopdaesa noo dhaaran karna – Follow the Guru's teachings.
- Raheraas da paath kar kharae ho kae ardaas karnee – After reciting Rehras [evening prayers], stand up and perform Ardas.
- Saun valae sohilaa atae 'paun guru pani pita...' salok parhnaa – Recite the late evening prayer Sohila [3 hymns] and the verse "Pavan guru pani pita..." before sleeping.
- Kes nange nahi rakhne – Do not leave your hair uncovered.
- Singhaa da adhaa naam nahee bulaunaa – Address a Singh [or Kaur] by their entire name including Singh [or Kaur], do not shorten it by half or call them nicknames.
- Sharaab nahi peeni-piauni – Do not drink or serve alcoholic beverages.
- Sir munae noo kanaiaa nahee daenee. Uos ghar daeve jithae Akal Purukh dee sikhee ha, jo karza-ai naa hovae, bhalae subhaa da hovae, bibaekaa atae gyanvaan hovae – Do not give a daughter's hand in marriage to a shaven one. Give her to a household where the Undying divine personification Akal Purakh and tenets of Sikhism are respected, to household without debt, of a pleasing nature, which is disciplined and educated.
- Subh kaaraj Gurbanee anusaar karna – Maintain all business affairs in accordance with scripture.
- Chugalee kar kisae da kam nahee vigaarnaa – Do not defame anyone by gossiping about their business.
- Kaurha bachan nahee kahinaa – Do not speak bitter words.
- Darshan yaatraa gurdwaaraa dee hee karnee – Make pilgrimages only for seeing Gurdwaras.
- Bachan karkae paalnaa – Keep all promises made.
- Pardaesee, lorvaan, dukhee, apung manukh dee yataahshkat seva karnee – Do as much as possible to serve and aid foreigners, those in sadness, need, disability or trouble.
- Dhee Putaree da dhan bikh Kar jananaa – Realize that taking the earnings of a daughter is poison [don't be greedy].
- Dikhaavae da Sikh nahee banana – Do not act a Sikh outwardly only for show.
- Sikhi kesaa-suaasa sang nibhaaounaa – With every breath, live as a Sikh who has uncut hair. Know this to be equal to the Guru and give it the utmost respect.
- Chori, yaari, tthugi, dhokaa, dagaa nahee karna – Abstain from thievery, adultery, cheating, deception, fraud, and pillaging.
- Sikh da itbaar karna – Have confidence in a Sikh.
- Jhutthi gavaahee nahee daenee – Do not make false testimonies.
- Dhroh nahee karna – Do not participate in treason.
- Langar Parshaad ik ras vartaaunaa – Serve langar [free community kitchen of a gurdwara] and prashad with impartiality.



Happy Vaisakhi

May the vibrant colors of
Baisakhi fill your life with joy,
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Sikhs believe in one God. He is the same for all people of all religions. Sikhism teaches equality of all people. Sikhism preaches that people of different races, religions, or sex are all equal in the eyes of God. Sikhism teaches the full equality of men and women.

Sikhism emphasizes daily devotion to the remembrance of God. One should remember God at all times.

Sikhism teaches religious freedom. All people have the right to follow their own path to God without condemnation or coercion from others.

Sikhism emphasizes a moral and ethical life. A Sikh should represent moral responsibility and righteousness.

Sikhism rejects all forms of rituals such as idol worship, pilgrimages, fasting, and superstitions.

Sikhism teaches service to others. The primary task in life should be to help the poor, needy, and oppressed. The Sikhs have a long heritage of speaking out against injustice and for standing up for the defenseless.

Sikhs are supposed to be saints, scholars, and soldiers.

The word Sikh means disciple or student. Sikhs are the disciples of God who follow the writings and teachings of the ten Sikh Gurus.

Three Principles of Sikhism

- Kirat Karo - Work hard and honestly
- Wand Ke Chhako - Share what you have with the needy
- Naam Jappo - Always remember God throughout the day

Facts about Sikhism

- Sikhism is the fifth largest religion in the world.
- It is a distinct religion with its own unique, divine scriptures and beliefs.
- The Sikh religion originated in the Punjab region of India in the 15th century by Guru Nanak Dev.
- Sikhism is a monotheistic religion.
- Sikhism advocates equality for men and women of every race and religion.
- Many Sikhs throughout history are respected for having sacrificed their own lives, so that people of other religions may have freedom to worship in the manner of their choice.
- There are over 30 million Sikhs worldwide.
- Sikhs live in just about every major country around the world.
- The vast majority of Sikhs live in the Punjab, a part of northern India.
- There are over one million Sikhs in the United States and Canada. Sikhs have lived in North America for over 100 years.
- About a half million Sikhs are estimated to live in the United Kingdom.
- The first Sikh migration to the United Kingdom was in the 1950s.

Faith

- Sikh men and women cover their heads at all times as an expression of respect to their Gurus.
- The Sikh turban symbolizes discipline, integrity, humility, and spirituality. The turban is a mandatory part of Sikh faith, not a social custom, or a hat that can be

Beliefs of Sikhism



easily taken on or off.

- The universal symbol of Sikhism is the khanda, the double-edged sword flanked by two daggers (representing worldly and spiritual powers, bound by the oneness of God).
- The traditional greeting used by Sikhs is "Waheguru ji ka Khalsa, Waheguru ji ki Fateh" which means "The Khalsa belongs to God, Victory belongs to God". Another traditional greeting is "Sat Sri Akal" which means "Immortal God is Truth".
- As a Sikh combs their hair daily, he or she should also comb their mind with the Guru's wisdom.

Kachhera

- Cotton boxer shorts, symbolizing self-control and chastity; prohibition of adultery.

The Oneness of God

Like the people of ancient times, the common people of Guru Nanak's day paid tribute to a large number of minor gods and goddesses which were then known to Hinduism. They were attached to these in superstitious bondage and fear evolved over the centuries, and which had no relation at all to religion as such. Instead of deriving comfort, therefore, such adherents suffered more from fear and worry. Superstitious ceremonies were encouraged by Brahmin priests and astrologers who made handsome profits out of the gullibility of the people. It was to exterminate these practices and to counteract these evil influences that Guru Nanak emphasized strict monotheism in his teachings. He, therefore, composed the Mool Mantra and taught it to all his followers:

There is one God
His Name is Truth
The All-pervading Creator,
Without fear, without hatred
Immortal, unborn, self-existent,
By grace, the Enlightener.

True in the beginning, true throughout the ages,

True even now, Nanak, and forever shall be true. (Japji, Mool Mantra)

His devoted follower, Lehna, who was destined to become the second Guru, took this verse seriously to heart. Lehna, on becoming Guru Angad, propagated this thesis, and said that it was intended to be learned and understood and repeated by all Sikhs in order to remind them of God's One-ness and of His other most important attributes. God is Everything to the Sikh:

His attributes are endless and all goodness, mercy and love are contained in Him. He has created all things and remains enshrined within them as both mind and matter. He is immanent. He is also transcendent; for He can and does exist without creation, above and beyond everything. He is All-powerful; nothing exists or happens without His knowledge or without His permission; He sees into all things and directs even the smallest affairs of His creatures. God is the Divine Father who cares for His children, bestows upon them all the manifold blessings of this world and listens to their prayers. He knows the most secret desires of every heart and is the essence of love and forgiveness. God is directly accessible to everybody and man's soul itself is a part of the Immortal One.

Service

The way to salvation is a twofold path: the path of love or simran, and the path of seva, or service to mankind. Love means little until it is exposed in action, so the Sikh cannot rightly remain inactive, but of necessity, he must engage himself in the affairs of the world, while also following the path of earnest meditation. He is expected to seize every opportunity of helping his fellow-beings and of serving them in any way he can, without expecting rewards. To do this, therefore, he must have no selfish desires; his mind must be free of greed and attachment to power or riches, and he must have a truly humble heart.

Brotherhood

"The Fatherland of God and the brotherhood of man" is one of the main themes of Guru Nanak's message. All are welcomed into the fold of Sikhism without regard of caste, class, color, race, sex, or creed; all are treated on equal terms. Nobody is, therefore, favored simply because of superior birth or secular influence. One of the main complaints of the Hindus against Guru Gobind Singh, the Tenth Guru, was that by creating the Khalsa, he was destroying the caste system. It is to be remembered that since Guru Nanak's day, it had been customary for all visitors to the Guru's court to eat together at the communal free kitchen (langar) provided; and it was the Guru's rule that no one be looked down upon or refused. There is no priestly class or religious hierarchy amongst the Sikhs, and any Sikh man or woman may take part in the religious ceremonies, as well as officiate at these. These principles Guru Gobind Singh maintained.

Humility

No man can inspire to reach God if his own heart is full of pride and egotism. Man must always beware of the pitfalls of assumed or false humility. Even deliberate self-abasement can be a form of pride, since it arises out of egotism and self-esteem. True humility lies in being aware of one's own abilities and shortcomings; it lies in the knowledge that God alone is the Doer of all actions; He alone is the Giver of all gifts; it is only by His favor that we enjoy riches, honor and achievement in this world.

Five Sikh Symbols

The Five Ks are the five items of dress and physical appearance given to Sikhs by Guru Gobind Singh when he gathered together the first members of the Khalsa on Vaisakhi day in 1699. These symbols give Sikhs a unique identity signifying discipline and spirituality. However, these items cannot be reduced to just symbols and must be worn in their full form.

Kesh

- Uncut hair, which is kept covered by a turban, or dastaar.
- Kesh are a traditional symbol of holiness in India, and the turban is a symbol of leadership.
- The dastaar is worn by men and some women to cover their long hair.

Kirpan

- A ceremonial sword, symbolizing readiness to protect the weak, and defend against injustice and persecution.
- The kirpan is normally worn with a cloth shoulder strap called a gatra.
- The kirpan exemplifies the warrior character of a Sikh.

Kara

- A steel bracelet, symbolizing strength and integrity.
- Steel is symbolic of strength yet resilient under stress. In the same way, the human soul must become as strong and unbreakable as steel which has been tempered in the furnace.

Kangha



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Bloodbath on Vaisakhi: The Jallianwala Bagh Massacre

April 13, 1919, marked a turning point in the Indian freedom struggle. It was Vaisakhi that day, a harvest festival popular in Punjab and parts of north India. Residents of Amritsar decided to assemble at Jallianwala Bagh on the day to discuss the confinement of Satya Pal and Saifuddin Kitchlew, two leaders fighting for Independence and scrapping of the Rowlatt Act, which armed the British government with powers to detain any person without trial.

The crowd had a mix of men, women and children and the protest was a peaceful one. The gathering included pilgrims visiting the Golden Temple who were merely passing through the park, and some who had not come to protest. Suddenly, as many as 90 British Indian Army soldiers, commanded by Colonel Reginald Dyer, appeared and without any warning to the people, ordered firing on the completely peaceful and defenceless crowd. The fusillade continued till Dyer's ammunition ran out.

This cold-blooded carnage, Dyer admitted later, was perpetrated "to strike terror not only in the city of Amritsar, but throughout the Punjab". The official inquiry ordered by the British government said there were 379 deaths but the Congress claimed that more than 1,000 people died in the massacre.

A well, located inside the premises of the Jallianwala Bagh, stands testimony to the brutal killings of the innocent who jumped into it in panic to save themselves from the firing. 120 dead bodies were later recovered from the well. The last known survivor of the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre, Shingara Singh, died in Amritsar on June 29, 2009, at the age of 113.

The massacre marks one of the most heinous political crimes committed by the Britishers during the twentieth century. It became a turning point in the history of India's struggle for freedom. The Jallianwala Bagh site in Amritsar is now a national monument. It houses a museum, a gallery, and a number of memorial structures.

Popular resentment had been accumulating in Punjab since the beginning of the War (World War I), mainly due to the ruthless drive – by the British — for recruiting soldiers and forced contribution to the war fund. Gandhiji's call for a country-wide hartal to protest against the Black Acts received a tremendous response from Punjab on March 30 and again on April 6.

Gandhiji's call for a country-wide hartal to protest against the Black Acts received a tremendous response from Punjab on March 30 and again on April 6.

The agitated mood of the people and Hindu-Muslim solidarity demonstrated on the hartal (strike) days and on April 9 celebration of the Ramnavami festival



made the Lt Governor Michael O'Dwyer's administration panicky.

Gandhiji's entry into Punjab was banned: two popular leaders of Amritsar, Kitchlew and Satya Pal, were arrested. These provocations led to hartals and mass demonstrations in Lahore, Kasur, Gujranwala and Amritsar.

In Amritsar, the police firing on demonstrators provoked some of them to commit acts of violence. The next day the city was handed over to Brigadier-General Dyer. Dyer began his regime through indiscriminate arrests and ban on meeting and gatherings.

On April 13 – the day of Vaisakhi festival – a meeting was called in the afternoon at the Jallianwala Bagh a ground enclosed on all sides. Thousands of people, many of whom had come from surrounding villages to the fairs in Amritsar and were unaware of the ban order, gathered in the meeting.

Suddenly Dyer appeared there with troops and without any warning to the people, ordered firing on the completely peaceful and defenceless crowd. The fusillade continued till Dyer's ammunition ran out. Atleast about a thousand people, if not more, are estimated to have been killed. This cold-blooded carnage, Dyer admitted later, was perpetrated "to strike terror not only in the city of Amritsar, but throughout the Punjab?"

The massacre stunned the people and became a turning point in the history of India's struggle for freedom. Rabindranath Tagore wrote a strong letter of protest to the Viceroy, dated May 31, 1919, renouncing his Knighthood

"....The disproportionate severity of the punishments inflicted upon the unfortunate people and the methods of carrying them out, we are convinced, are without parallel in the history of civilised governments.... The accounts of insults



and sufferings undergone by our brothers in the Punjab have trickled through the gagged silence, reaching every corner of India and the universal agony of indignation roused in the hearts of our people has been ignored by our rulers, possibly congratulating themselves for what they imagine as salutary lessons....the very least that I can do for my country is to take all consequences upon myself in giving voice to the protest of the millions of my countrymen, surprised into a dumb anguish of terror. The time has come when the badges of honour make our shame glaring in their incongruous context of humiliation, and I for my part wish to stand shorn of all special distinctions, by the side of those of my countrymen, who, for their so called insignificance, are liable to suffer a degradation not fit for human beings...."

The Hunter Committee

The Hunter Committee was appointed by the British government. Halfway through its proceedings, the Hunter

Committee suffered the setback of being boycotted by Indian nationalists, represented by the Congress, because of the government's refusal to release Punjab leaders on bail.

Of the eight members in all, the Committee had three Indian members. The conduct of the Indian members is a study in principled independence and courage.

The following erudite exchange on the pointed killings ordered by Dyer on April 13, 1919 took place during the hearings of the Hunter Committee that took place in Lahore on November 19, 1919.

The excerpt that follows was part of a detailed and rigorous cross examination of General Dyer. Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, a lawyer from Bharuch, Gujarat, who lived in Bombay conducted this particular part of the cross-examination.

Chimanlal Setalvad: "You took two armoured cars with you?"

Dyer: "Yes."

Chimanlal Setalvad: "Those cars had machine guns?"

Dyer: "Yes."



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From Page 42

Chimanlal Setalvad: "And when you took them you meant to use the machine guns against the crowd, did you?"

Dyer: "If necessary. If the necessity arose, and I was attacked, or anything else like that, I presume I would have used them."

Chimanlal Setalvad: "When you arrived there you were not able to take the armoured cars in because the passage was too narrow?"

Dyer: "Yes."

Chimanlal Setalvad: "Supposing the passage was sufficient to allow the armoured cars to go in, would you have opened fire with the machine guns?"

Dyer: "I think, probably, yes."

Chimanlal Setalvad: "In that case the casualties would have been very much higher?"

Dyer: "Yes."

Chimanlal Setalvad: "And you did not open fire with the machine guns simply by the accident of the armoured cars not being able to get in?"

Dyer: "I have answered you. I have said that if they had been there the probability is that I would have opened fire with them."

Chimanlal Setalvad: "With the machine guns straight?"

Dyer: "With the machine guns."

Chimanlal Setalvad: "I take it that your idea in taking that action was to strike terror?"

Dyer: "Call it what you like. I was going to punish them. My idea from the military point of view was to make a wide impression."

Chimanlal Setalvad: "To strike terror not only in the city of Amritsar, but throughout the Punjab?"

Dyer: "Yes, throughout the Punjab. I wanted to reduce their morale; the morale of the rebels."

Chimanlal Setalvad: "Did it occur to you that by adopting this method of 'frightfulness' – excuse the term – you were really doing a great disservice to the British Raj by driving discontent deep?"

Dyer: "I did not like the idea of doing it, but I also realised that it was the only means of saving life and that any reasonable man with justice in his mind would realise that I had done the right thing; it was a merciful though horrible act and they ought to be thankful to me for doing it. I thought I would be doing a jolly lot of good and they would realise that they were not to be wicked."

Setalvad's cross examination followed Lord Hunter's and that of one more British member. Dyer had already admitted to Lord Hunter that although "a good many" in the crowd might not have heard of his ban on the public meeting, he had ordered the firing at Jallianwala Bagh without giving any warning. He went further when he said before the Committee that, although he could have "dispersed them perhaps even without firing". He felt it was his "duty to go on firing until (the crowd) dispersed".

An eight-member committee headed by Lord William Hunter, former solicitor general in Scotland constituted the Inquiry Committee. Apart from Setalvad, then Vice Chancellor, Bombay University, two other Indians were part of the Committee. Sir Chimanlal Setalvad,



Pandit Jagat Narain, Member of the Legislative Council of the Lt. Governor of U.P. and Sultan Ahmed Khan, Member for Appeals, Gwalior State.

Lord Hunter, Justice Rankin and WF Rice, Add. Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department, Major-General Sir George Barrow, Commanding the Peshawar Dn and Smith, Member of the Legislative Council of the Lt. Governor of UP were the members. The questioning was done, in turn, by eight members.

Following up on the admissions by Dyer to the two British members before him, Setalvad probed Dyer on the two armoured cars that he had been forced to leave out. Dyer's callousness stood exposed: even after the firing had left almost 400 dead and many more injured, when asked by Setalvad if he had taken any measures for the relief of the wounded, Dyer replied, "No, certainly not. It was not my job. But the hospitals were open and the medical officers were there. The wounded only had to apply for help." All three Indian members of the Hunter Committee displayed a remarkable degree of independence faced with sharp differences with the British members. The differences arose over the recording of conclusions.

The Hunter Committee ended up giving two reports – the majority report by the five British members and the minority report by three Indian members.

Both reports indicted Dyer, in no uncertain terms. The differences were in the degree of condemnation, in so far as Jallianwala Bagh was concerned.

The report by the British members' report condemned the action by Dyer on two counts: that he opened fire without warning and that he went on firing after the crowd had 'begun to disperse'. Though his intention to create a moral effect throughout Punjab was 'a mistaken conception of duty', the British members thought it was "distinctly improbable that the crowd would have dispersed without



being fired on". Even the British members of the Hunter Committee, rejected the official stand that Dyer's action had 'saved the situation in the Punjab and averted a rebellion on a scale similar to the (1857) mutiny'.

The minority report, drafted by Chimanlal Setalvad, on behalf of all the Indian members was not only more severe in general. It specifically condemned Dyer for "suggesting that he would have made use of machine guns if they could have been brought into action." Members expressed strong anguish at the fact that even after the crowd had begun to disperse, Dyer had continued the firing "until his ammunition was spent."

Citing Dyer's own admission in cross examination, the Indians disagreed with the opinion expressed by the British members of the Committee that the crowd was unlikely to have dispersed without the firing. In conclusion, the Indian members of the Hunter Committee described Dyer's conduct 'as inhuman and un-British and as having caused great disservice to British rule in India'.

Faced with both reports, the then

Viceroy of India, Chelmsford conceded that Dyer "acted beyond the necessity of the case, beyond what any reasonable man could have thought to be necessary, and that he did not act with as much humanity as the case permitted". Dyer had no option but to resign and return to England in disgrace.

Apologists for the Raj in Britain however, bought into Dyer's claim that it was this bloody firing by Dyer that had saved the Raj in India. This not only reduced the punishment meted out to Dyer, he was also treated as some sort of a hero on his return. In fact, the inquiry itself could only be instituted only after an indemnity law had been passed protecting Dyer and other recalcitrant officers from criminal liability.

Setalvad had been knighted by the British monarch, just a few months before the Jallianwala Bagh inquiry. He was then vice-chancellor of Bombay University. In his memoirs published in 1946, Recollections and Reflections, Setalvad disclosed that within the British and Indian members of the Hunter Committee had developed "a sharp cleavage of opinion".



HAPPY VAISAKHI

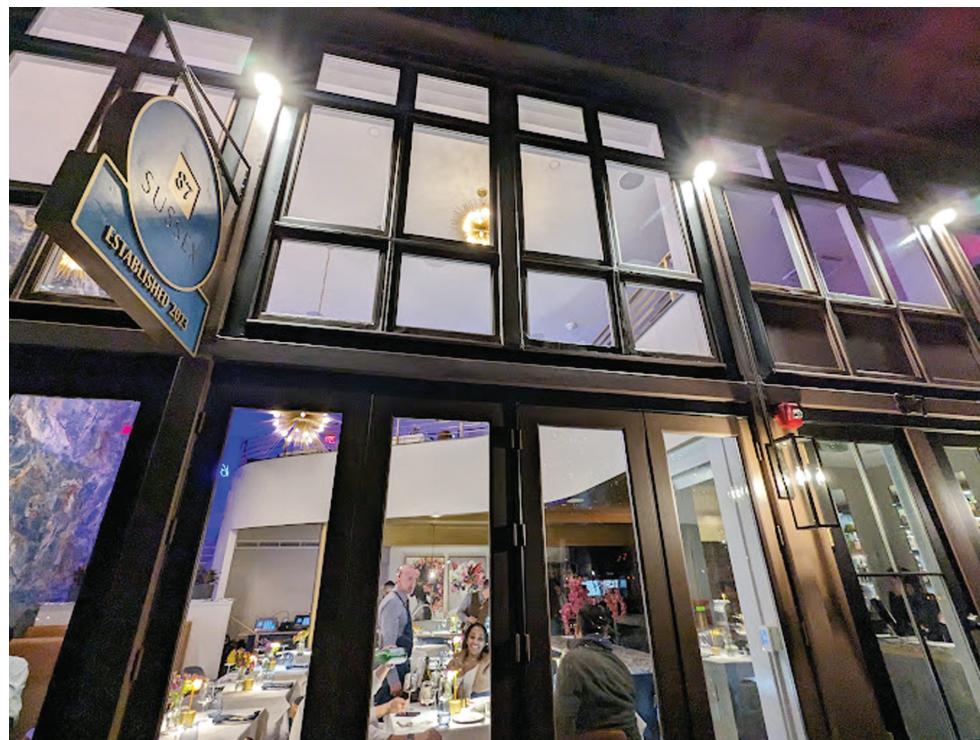
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BY MABEL PAIS

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Like the décor, the menu is unforgettable once experienced. Chef Brian Walter, an honorary James Beard Foundation Member, is the Executive Chef at 87 Sussex. He creatively infuses unity between world flavors that will make it a memorable and unique dining adventure where guests will expand their palate.

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Dipal Patel

Credit : Dipal Patel

DIPAL PATEL, 43, serial business entrepreneur, and co-owner of 87 Sussex, recently spoke to the team at The Indian Panorama newspaper.

TIP: TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF. WERE YOU BORN IN INDIA?

DP: I was born here in Bergen County, not too far from Jersey City. And my father came in the early 70s, did his education here. And then my mom came later on, and then I was born here.

TIP: FROM WHERE ARE YOUR PARENTS ORIGINALLY? GUJARAT?

DP: Gujarat, as you can tell with the Patel last name, Gujarat, Ahmedabad; really right in the city of Ahmedabad, that's where their ancestry is. What was the city, and now what was less of a city at that time, and it's certainly part of the bigger city at this time right now.

TIP: SURE, AHMEDABAD HAS CHANGED QUITE A BIT. SO, WHERE DID YOU GO TO SCHOOL?

DP: My undergrad was at Rutgers. And then I did my graduate work at Harvard Business School.

TIP: SO, HOW DID YOU GET INTO BUSINESS? THE RESTAURANT BUSINESS?

DP: The core of our business at HEXA (my company) is real estate. We have done a lot of real estate development with regards to residential, industrial, commercial, hospitality. Also, I was very much involved with the Mandir that was built in Robbinsville, New Jersey. I was responsible for the real estate there as well, finding it and getting it approved. So I have sort of a very diverse real estate background.

I've done a lot of different things. And even our restaurants in Jersey City with 87 Sussex and Satis, which are right next door to each other. You know, we started off thinking about them as operational

businesses within real estate. We own both real estate, actually, three condos there in Paulus Hook.

So real estate is at the core of what we do. And in this particular case, we have two fantastic businesses within those real estate, that being Satis and 87 Sussex.

So, you know, and we have hospitality experience. We own and manage some hotels - real estate.

But this was the first time that we got into the restaurant business. And it's not for the faint of heart for sure, as you may have heard, but it is something that my partner and I are very passionate about.

TIP: DESCRIBE YOUR TEAM AND BUSINESS CULTURE.

DP: And we're very, very fortunate to have a fantastic team. When we first bought Satis, we still had most of the employees from that acquisition two years ago.

And we really bought (into) the culture of a team and a business. And that's why someone like me who has zero experience with the restaurant could even contemplate going into that business.

So we consider ourselves very fortunate. We built the 87 Sussex physically; we built it as well. But the business as a restaurant, again, we have a fantastic team there with a great chef, a lot of great managers. And so we're just extending the culture from next door to the new restaurant, new menu, new look, new feel.

But, you know, many of the courses business practices that my partner, Robert (Bobby) Hugen, who has had a very successful time in the pharmaceutical world had employed and many of the things that we employ in our business right now you know are the same things that we bring to the restaurant industry: that is taking care of your people, good product quality, good service. And, if you do those things right, you can be successful in any business.

New Jersey, it's considered very much a melting pot of.... if New Jersey, as a state, is a melting pot, Jersey City is really a microcosm. Microcosm of that.... maybe one of the biggest microcosms of that melting pot.

So even our menu and our culture there is that we are, you know, there's a Sanskrit saying, "Vasudeva Kurtumbakam," that whole world is one family, my family.... which we believe as Americans, we believe the same thing.

And that's what we believe in our company. That's what we believe in our restaurant. We should be able to come together as one family, as one species, enjoy and celebrate different cultures and heritages.

TIP: YOU SPEAK ABOUT YOU WATCHING YOUR PARENTS WORKING HARD.

DP: Absolutely. Absolutely.

TIP: DID YOUR PHILOSOPHY OF HARD WORK COME NATURALLY TO YOU?

DP: Well, no, it didn't come naturally.

I think I learned, I saw that in my parents, you know, and that is every first generation, second generation child here, my father and my mother worked very, very hard. You know, the tremendous sacrifices that they made for my brother and me. And, you know, we grew up in that environment. And many of my friends and, you know, many Indian Americans, as you both probably know as well, the people around you, that's a part of our culture. It's a part of what we see, whether it's in India or here, that hard work, but it's not.

I wouldn't say that it's natural. I think it's something we learn, we see from our elders. We see the value in that, we see the value creation from that. And so then it becomes somewhat natural that it makes sense to work hard, to be focused on the things that are important.

TIP: TELL US ABOUT YOUR IMMEDIATE FAMILY.

DP: I'm married. My wife is a civil engineer. I have two children: a son of 16 years and a daughter of 12.

TIP: HOW DO YOU BALANCE WORKING HARD IN THE BUSINESS WITH FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES?

Even with the balancing of working hard, our families are very important to us, right? So making sure that our kids extend that culture to the next generation, spending time with them and making sure that that is a focus of their lives. So we learn that, we see that.

And the other thing I'd say is that you talked about the philosophy or culture of a business.

My company's name is HEXA and is derived from the shape of the hexagon. And so there's some sort of scientific and some non-scientific aspects of hexagons, which really have intrigued me for a long time. The angles of a hexagon and how (the word is "tessellate"), they come together, is the most efficient way for the actual shape to "tessellate" or come together with other hexagons. So, you find that hexagons are a natural example. The honeycomb is one of the most famous ways, but there are many molecular structures.

TIP: HOW DID YOU LEARN THE RESTAURANT BUSINESS? WAS 87 SUSSEX ALREADY EXISTING?

DP: 87 Sussex was not existing. 87 Sussex was John's Pizzeria. And we bought the real estate. That entire 87 Sussex address we bought. And then we converted that space into 87 Sussex. And given our real estate and construction expertise already, we built it in-house.

contd on page 47

contd from page 46



The Patel family: Dipal, wife & two children. The Robbinsville Mandir is in the background

Credit : Dipal Patel

But what I was referring to is Satis, which is right next door to 87 Sussex, on the corner of Washington Avenue and Sussex, that we bought as an operational business and real estate. That was about two years ago. And, so we learned in some ways, the restaurant business there. We have the staff that is exceptional at that restaurant as well.

And the culture of a restaurant, as we learned it, we are now applying it to the '87 Sussex. And again, we have a fantastic chef there, Chef Brian Walter, who has put the product together and essentially

your menu is your product.

TIP: YEAH, IT'S VERY GOOD. WAS CHEF BRIAN WALTER HIRED BY YOU? WAS HE ALREADY THERE AT SÁTIS?

DP: No, no, he was hired by us. He was hired by us, yes.

TIP: HOW IS SÁTIS'S MENU DIFFERENT FROM 87 SUSSEX.... BECAUSE THEY'RE NEXT DOOR TO EACH OTHER?

DP: Yeah. No, very different. And that's a very good question. And something that I often tell our team from a business perspective, you have to have a different

dining experience, right?

You can't have two restaurants right next to each other that have the same experience because you cannibalize your business on one side with the other one.

So it's a very different menu, a very different look and feel. I'm not sure if you've been to Satis, but if you go from one to the next, you will feel like you're in two different worlds in some ways and that distinction is important for us as a business because the people who choose to go to a restaurant need to have a different experience. They can't be going to the same place as an extension of it. So the look, the feel, the menu, the people, everything is going to be different, different than Satis. Yeah.

options there, which are sort of special to me, particularly on the menu.

TIP: YEAH, YOU HAD A CLASSIC TAGINE, I THINK. YOU HAVE A TAGINE DISH RIGHT NOW, WHICH IS VEGETARIAN.

DP: Yeah, Yeah, so that was the... the initial menu. We're now expanding the menu and the new menu will have the vegetarian, so it'll be a whole separate section.

And I believe in the next, if it hasn't happened this week already, next week, we have our grand opening. So before that, for sure, the spring menu will be up and including the vegetarian menu, there will be a brunch menu. Also that Brian may have mentioned that's has come out. So we have a lot of different options.



Offering fine dining

Credit : Dipal Patel

TIP: ARE YOU A VEGETARIAN? ARE YOU THINKING OF INCREASING THE VEGETARIAN MENU OFFERS?

DP: The other thing I wanted to mention which might be relevant to you is (that) I am a vegetarian, was born and raised a vegetarian and we are actually launching a vegetarian part of the menu there because there are many vegetarians like me and I always felt like there were never really great gourmet options for vegetarian food and it's not necessarily that it's Indian food. It is, again, classic new American fare, but there will be a very plant-based vegetarian, even some vegan-friendly

TIP: IS THE UPSTAIRS OF THE RESTAURANT FOR SPECIAL OCCASIONS?

DP: We have a private event menu. So we have (the) upstairs space (that) has a lot of opportunity for birthdays and baby showers and weddings and corporate events and things like that, that we can do in-house in this space with great food. So a lot of different new offerings will be coming out shortly.

Suprotim Bose contributed to this article.

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

May the divine light of Waheguru fill your life with joy and happiness

We Wish Readers a Happy Vaisakhi





Richa Chadha reminisces about her schoolgirl gang Saste Qatil

Soon-to-be mother Richa Chadha reminisced about her school days on Sunday, sharing a throwback picture of her 'best girl gang' named Saste Qatil. Richa took to Instagram stories and reshared a picture posted by a fan page named "Richa Chadha _merizindagi". The blurred picture shows the Madam Chief Minister actress wearing a white shirt and a black bandana on her head. She gives an intense look, posing alongside her two girl besties. Richa did her schooling from Sardar Patel Vidyalaya, New Delhi.

The post is captioned, "LOL! This photo is from school days, when we made up a gang (to kinda combat one stupid boy gang that was kinda toxic). We ironically named this girl gang Saste Qatil. Don't miss the bandana and the attitude. Pic was taken in Barista at Janpath, next to People Tree... Delhi peeps would know! Best years of my life. Best girl gang ever!" *Source: IANS*

Parineeti Chopra expresses gratitude for 'Chamkila'

Parineeti Chopra, who plays Amarjot (Amar Singh Chamkila's wife) alongside Diljit Dosanjh, is receiving rave reviews for her performance in Imtiaz Ali's 'Chamkila'. The actor expressed her gratitude in a crisp note on her Instagram story. Parineeti also mentioned that she had waited for a film like this for years.

Parineeti Chopra expressed her gratitude for playing Amarjot, Diljit Dosanjh's on-screen wife in 'Chamkila'. She wrote a note on Instagram, which can be read, "I am glad that I was able to make an impact with my work in Chamkila. This is something I've waited for years (sic)."

She continued, "Thank you @imtiazaliofficial for believing in my talent and giving me this opportunity (sic)."

A few days back, Parineeti Chopra shared a glimpse of how they tried to recreate real-life instances from Chamkila and Amarjot's life on-screen. Posting a video, she wrote, "Diljit and I had the privilege of playing the role of two legends who changed the music landscape in India. Recreating their famous images in the film and seeing them again today gives me goosebumps. Cannot wait to share the world of Chamkila with everyone. Wouldn't have been the same without my jodidaa @diljitdosanjh! (sic)."

For the unaware, both Diljit and Parineeti have lent their voices to some of the original 'Chamkila' songs in Punjabi. The film also showcased live music recordings done on location, capturing the rawness and exuberance of each moment as Diljit and Parineeti sang live in multiple instances.



Vidya Balan shares 'mantra' for successful marriage

Vidya Balan, who is gearing up for her upcoming film Do Aur Do Pyaar with Pratik Gandhi, recently revealed the mantra to her successful marriage. The Parineeta actress spoke about the importance of open communication in relationships.

"I believe every couple has their own unique mantra, but in my opinion, if we openly communicate with each other about everything, it can be very helpful," the actress said.

Discussing her relationship with her husband Siddharth Roy Kapur, Vidya Balan shared, "Siddharth and I discuss everything, if someone feels bad or gets angry, or if there's love, we express it honestly to each other, which is very important. Sharing everything is crucial for a couple. And spending a lot of time together, especially enjoying biryani together, is very important."

Vidya Balan and Siddharth Roy Kapur got married in Mumbai on December 14, 2012, following a few years



of courtship.

Do Aur Do Pyaar directed by award-winning ad filmmaker Shirsha Guha Thakurta, marks her feature debut and is scheduled to hit the theatres on April 19.

Vidya Balan's bad romance

Vidya said that the 'boy' cheated on her and how she came to know about it. "I have been cheated on. The first boy I dated cheated on me and I have to tell you he was just an a**. I remember we had just broken up and I bumped into him in college on Valentine's Day and he turned around and said that 'I am just going to meet my ex-girlfriend for a date.' And I was like what? He literally crushed me that day but I have done better than that in life for myself," she said.

Vidya is now married to film producer Siddharth Roy Kapur. She is also rumoured to have previously dated actor Shahid Kapoor.



Henry Cavill, Natalie Viscuso expecting first child

Man of Steel star Henry Cavill and girlfriend Natalie Viscuso are set to welcome their first child.

Cavill spoke to entertainment outlet Access Hollywood at the New York City premiere of his upcoming film 'The Ministry of Ungentlemanly Warfare' where he shared the news.

"I'm very excited about it. Natalie and I are both very excited about it. I'm sure you'll see much more of that," the actor told the publication when she asked him about embracing fatherhood.

Cavill, 40, and Viscuso, who is in her late 30s, made their relationship Instagram official in April 2021 when they shared a photo of themselves playing chess on their respective profiles.

The couple made their red carpet debut in New York City in late 2022 for the premiere of Cavill's Netflix movie 'Enola Holmes 2'.

Viscuso is a television executive at Vertigo Entertainment. She and Cavill are also collaborating on a screen adaptation of the miniature wargame 'Warhammer 40,000'. *Source: PTI*

Sofia Vergara showered love on her boyfriend – orthopedic surgeon doctor Justin Saliman. The actor posted a picture of him on Instagram Stories and later deleted it. Sofia also revealed that she underwent knee surgery and is currently recovering.

On Sunday, Sofia took to Instagram Stories to share a picture of Justin and wrote, "If you ever get a mayor [sic] knee surgery make sure you aet a handsome doctor who will sleep with you that night!!!!"

In the picture, Justin was seen standing near her bed while smiling at her. Sofia soon deleted the picture. The two are yet to officially announce their relationship, but reports of their romance first began in October last year.

Sofia had announced her divorce from Joe Manganiello in July 2023, seven years after they tied the knot. It was finalized in February this year. As per Page Six, the couple said in a statement, "We have made the difficult decision to divorce. As two people that love and care for one another very much, we politely ask for respect of our privacy at this time as we navigate this new phase of our lives. Sofia and Joe have been growing apart for a while

Tom Cruise still gives Dakota Fanning birthday gifts

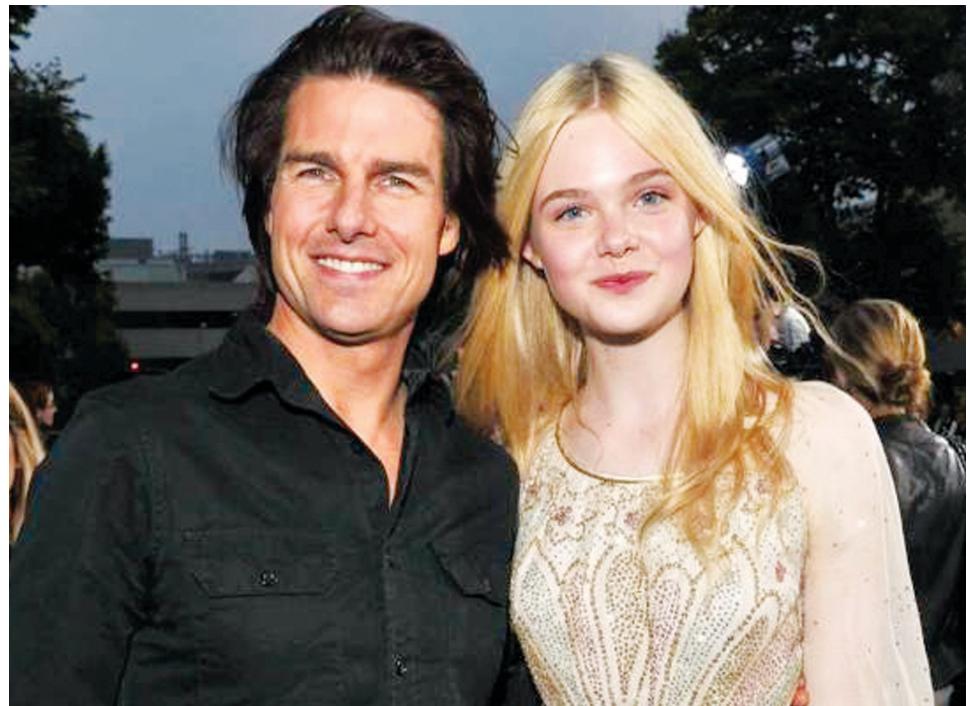
Actress Dakota Fanning says she got her first mobile phone as a gift from her War of the Worlds co-star Tom Cruise when she turned 11.

In a recent interview, Fanning and Andrew Scott, her co-star on Netflix's series Ripley, played a quiz and one of the questions was "Who gave Dakota her first cellphone?" In his response, Scott said, "Okay, well it's going to be some Hollywood icon ... Tom Cruise." Fanning confirmed Cruise gifted her a Motorola Razr for her 11th birthday while they were filming 2005's War of the Worlds.

"Oh, my God, I was so excited. I didn't have anybody to call or text at that time. You know, I was 11. But I loved having it. I loved it. I felt so cool," she recalled. Fanning added the Mission: Impossible star has sent her a gift every year since 2005.

"Tom sends me a birthday gift every year, and has since that birthday," she said.

Dakota Fanning's new M. Night Shyamalan-produced psychological thriller The Watchers can hopefully make up for her 2005 horror flop Hide and Seek, giving her a much-needed redemption in the genre. The Watchers, which hits theaters later this year, is the directorial debut of Shyamalan's daughter, Ishana Night Shyamalan. Fanning stars as a young woman who is stranded in the woods when her car breaks down. Her character soon wanders into an isolated room



containing three strangers and a one-way mirror with mysterious creatures watching from the other side.

Fanning's The Watchers co-stars – also trapped in this strange room, being watched by the creatures – include Barbarian's Georgina Campbell and Halo's Olwen Fouéré. The first teaser trailer for The Watchers promised a truly terrifying moviegoing experience, and the new footage released at CinemaCon has only confirmed that. The excitement for The Watchers' refreshing

psychological horror premise and Fanning's role is even greater due to the redemptive opportunity it presents after her disappointing last live-action entry in the horror genre, which arrived in 2005 when she was still a child actor.

In 2005, Fanning starred in a psychological horror movie called Hide and Seek. She played Emily Callaway, the daughter of Robert De Niro's character David Callaway, a widower struggling to move on from his wife's death.

Sofia Vergara gushes over 'handsome doctor' Justin Saliman after knee surgery

now and are taking some distance from each other to contemplate their future." The actor has a son, Manolo Gonzalez Vergara, with her first husband, Joe Gonzalez.

While speaking to El País earlier this year in January, Sofia had opened up about her divorce and why she split. "Well, I'm newly divorced from my second husband [actor Joe Manganiello], who I was with for 10 years. My marriage broke up because my husband was younger; he wanted to have kids and I didn't want to be an old mom. I feel it's not fair to the baby. I respect whoever does it, but that's not for me anymore."

The actor shot to fame with her role as Gloria in Modern Family, which earned her four Emmy nominations. The actor was last seen in Griselda. She played Griselda Blanco in the series, also known as the Godmother of Cocaine. The series is directed by Andrés Baiz, produced by Eric Newman and Sofia Vergara herself.



ITALY URGES 'DE-ESCALATION' AS G7 TO DISCUSS REPORTED STRIKE ON IRAN

CAPRI (TIP): Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani called on April 19 for an "absolute de-escalation" following reports that Israel carried out a strike on Iran, saying G7 counterparts would discuss it at talks in Capri.

"We invite everyone to be cautious to avoid an escalation," he told RAI news from the Italian island, where Rome is hosting a meeting between foreign ministers of the Group of Seven nations. The G7, which includes the UK, US, France, Germany, Japan and Canada, wants an "absolute de-escalation" in the Middle East, he said. "We are monitoring the situation closely. We will address the situation with the foreign ministers at the G7 session this morning in Italy," Canadian Foreign Minister Melanie Joly said on X.

Iran's state media reported explosions in the central province of Isfahan Friday, as US media quoted officials saying Israel had carried out retaliatory strikes on its arch-rival.

Israel had previously warned it would hit back after Iran fired missiles and drones at Israel almost a week ago, in retaliation for a deadly strike on Iran's embassy in Syria which Tehran blamed on its foe.

Fears of a major regional spillover from the Gaza war have since soared.

G7 ministers including US Secretary of State Antony Blinken have been on Capri since Wednesday and are due to wrap up on Friday lunchtime. The Middle East crisis was first on the agenda on Thursday morning. Friday's sessions were focused on rising tensions in the Indo-Pacific, but Tajani confirmed the Iran situation would be "discussed". (AFP)

CHINA AND INDONESIA CALL FOR CEASE-FIRE IN GAZA

JAKARTA (TIP): The Chinese and Indonesian foreign ministers called for an immediate and lasting ceasefire in Gaza after a meeting in Jakarta on April 18, condemning the humanitarian costs of the ongoing war that has killed tens of thousands of Palestinians.

Indonesia's Minister of Foreign Affairs Retno Marsudi told reporters that the two countries share the same view about the importance of a ceasefire and of resolving the Palestinian problem through a two-state solution.

"I am sure that China would use its influence to prevent escalation," Marsudi said, adding that China and Indonesia "would also fully support Palestine's membership in the UN."

The meeting took place on the second day of a six-day tour during which Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi will also visit Papua New Guinea and Cambodia. (AP)

Israel, Iran play down apparent Israeli strike; muted responses could calm tensions for now

JERUSALEM (TIP): Israel and Iran on April 19 both played down an apparent Israeli airstrike near a major air base and nuclear site in central Iran, signaling the two bitter enemies are ready to prevent their latest eruption of violence from escalating into a full-blown regional war.

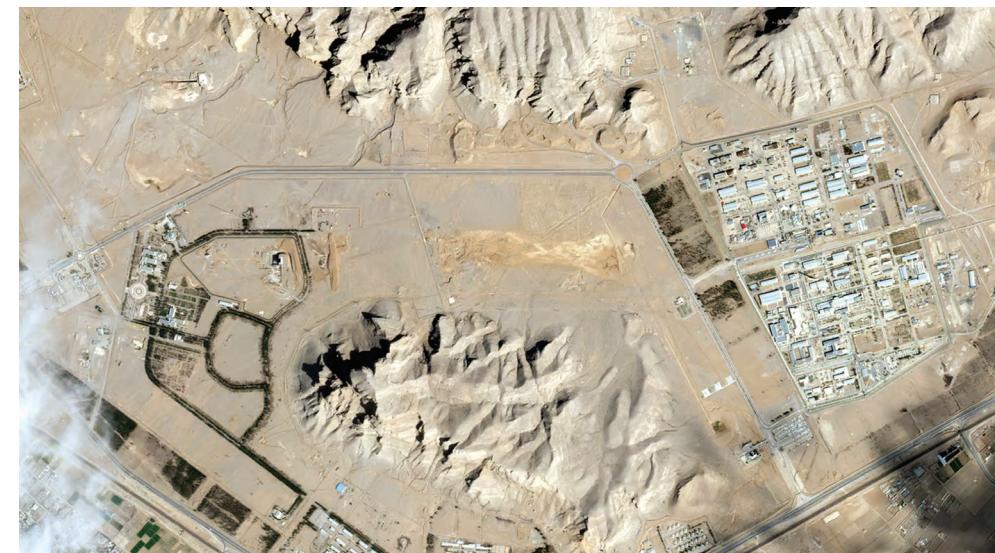
But the indecisive outcome of weeks of tensions — which included an alleged Israeli strike that killed two Iranian generals, an unprecedented Iranian missile barrage on Israel and the apparent Israeli strike early Friday in the heart of Iran — did little to resolve the deeper grievances between the foes and left the door open to further fighting.

"It appears we're closer than ever to a broad regional war, despite the fact that the international community will most likely make a great effort to de-escalate tensions," wrote Amos Harel, the military-affairs commentator for the Israeli daily Haaretz.

Israel has long considered Iran to be its greatest enemy — citing the Islamic Republic's calls for Israel's destruction, its controversial nuclear program and its support for hostile proxies across the Middle East.

This satellite image from Planet Labs PBC shows Iran's nuclear site in Isfahan, Iran, April 4, 2024.

These tensions have risen since Hamas and Islamic Jihad, Iranian-backed Palestinian groups, attacked Israel on Oct. 7, sparking a devastating Israeli offensive in Gaza that has continued for



more than six months. Hezbollah, an Iranian-backed proxy in Lebanon, immediately began striking Israeli targets, opening up tit-for-tat fighting along a second front, while Iranian-backed militias in Iraq, Syria and Yemen have also fired missiles and drones at Israel throughout the war.

While Israel and Iran have waged a shadow war for years, mostly in neighboring Syria, they have largely avoided direct confrontations. That changed after an April 1 airstrike killed two Iranian generals at an Iranian diplomatic compound in the Syrian capital of Damascus. Although Israel did not comment, Iran blamed Israel for the strike and vowed revenge.

Iran responded with its first-ever direct attack on Israel, launching over

300 missiles and attack drones late Saturday night. Israel, working with a U.S.-led international coalition, said it intercepted 99% of the incoming fire, though a handful of missiles managed to land, causing minor damage to an Israeli military base and seriously wounding a young girl.

In Friday's attack, Iranian state television said that air defense batteries fired in several provinces over reports of drones in the air. Iranian army commander Gen. Abdolrahim Mousavi said crews targeted several flying objects.

"The explosion this morning in the sky of Isfahan was related to the shooting of air defense systems at a suspicious object that did not cause any damage," Mousavi said. (AP)

Staff and shoppers return to 'somber' Sydney shopping mall six days after mass stabbings

SYDNEY (TIP): Shoppers and workers returned to a "really quiet" Sydney mall on April 19, where six days earlier an assailant stabbed six people to death and wounded more than a dozen others in an attack that police believe targeted women.

Westfield Bondi Junction mall near world-famous Bondi Beach had opened Thursday, although shops inside were closed, for a "community reflection day." New South Wales state Premier Chris Minns described it as "the first step in healing" in what has been a traumatic week for Australia's largest city.

There was a large police and security presence, with guards wearing black stab-proof vests posted on each level of the mall. Visitors numbered in the hundreds, but were fewer than the usual expected on a Friday during school holidays.

One visitor, Anthony Simpson, shopping with his two children,



described the atmosphere at the usually busy shopping center as "somber."

"It's got an eerie feeling, I guess you could say," Simpson said.

Another shopper, local Bondi resident Stephen Roy, simply said the mall was "really quiet."

Authorities said counseling services

were available on site for retail workers and visitors.

Echoing similar calls made by the NSW government, the union that represents retail workers asked shoppers to be mindful and sensitive of how they interact with the shopping center's staff. (AP)

Laborers and street vendors in Mali find no respite as deadly heat wave surges through West Africa

BAMAKO (TIP): Street vendors in Mali's capital of Bamako peddle water sachets, ubiquitous for this part of West Africa during the hottest months. This year, an unprecedented heat wave has led to a surge in deaths, experts say, warning of more scorching weather ahead as effects of climate change roil the continent.

The heat wave began in late March, as many in this Muslim majority country observed the holy Islamic month of Ramadan with dawn-to-dusk fasting.

On April 18, temperatures in Bamako reached 44 degrees Celsius (111 Fahrenheit) and weather forecasts say it's not letting up anytime soon.

The city's Gabriel-Touré Hospital reported 102 deaths in the first four days of the month, compared to 130 deaths in all of April last year. It's unknown how many of the fatalities were due to the extreme weather as such data cannot be made public under the regulations imposed by the country's military rulers.

Cheikh A Traoré, Mali's general director for health, said significantly more elderly people have died during this period although there were no statistics available due to the measures.

Mali has experienced two coups since 2020, leading a wave of political instability that has swept across West and Central Africa in recent years. Along with its political troubles, the country is



also in the grip of a worsening insurgency by militants linked to al-Qaida and the Islamic State group.

The Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre says that a lack of data in Mali and other West Africa countries affected by this month's heat wave makes it impossible to know how many heat-related deaths there were but estimated that the death toll was likely in the hundreds if not thousands.

The heat is also endangering already vulnerable children in Mali — 1 million under the age of 5 were at risk of acute

malnutrition at the end of 2023 due to protracted violence, internal displacement, and restricted access to humanitarian aid, according to the World Food Program.

Professor Boubacar Togo, head of pediatrics at Gabriel-Touré, told The Associated Press that the hospital has had six cases of meningitis in children in the last week, an unusually high number. He also added that there were many illnesses with diarrhea as a leading symptom. Togo did not elaborate or offer specific data. (AP)

FRANCE EVICTS HUNDREDS OF MIGRANTS FROM PARIS SQUAT AHEAD OF OLYMPICS

VITRY-SUR-SEINE (TIP): French authorities on April 17 evicted hundreds of migrants from a squat in a southern suburb of Paris with just 100 days to go until the Olympics, encouraging them to board buses to other parts of France.

Charities have accused the authorities of seeking to clear homeless people from the French capital to make it look better for the Games from July 26 to August 11.

The abandoned office building in Vitry-sur-Seine had been home to up to 450 migrants, most of them undocumented but awaiting social housing, according to non-governmental organisations who visited to help them.

Several had left the building earlier in the week after authorities announced the upcoming eviction.

Clutching their belongings in bags, suitcases or trolleys, the some 300 people who had remained left calmly on Wednesday morning under the eye of police in riot gear, looking worried about their next step.

Most were young men, but several young mothers with children were also among the crowd.

One by one, holding documents in plastic folders, they approached immigration officials sitting behind tables to explain their situation in broken French or stilted English.

Buses waited outside, ready to take them to the central city of Orleans or the southwestern city of Bordeaux. (AFP)

Remote Indonesia volcano erupts again after thousands evacuated

TAGULANDANG (TIP): A remote Indonesian volcano sent a tower of ash spewing into the sky on April 19, after nearly half a dozen eruptions earlier this week forced thousands to evacuate when molten rocks rained down on their villages. Mount Ruang in Indonesia's outermost region of North Sulawesi started erupting late Tuesday, stirring a spectacular mix of fiery orange lava, a towering ash column and volcanic lightning.

Officials on Friday morning said Ruang had calmed, but it started to belch ash again hours later after authorities maintained the highest alert level and told residents to stay out of a six-kilometre (four-mile) exclusion zone.

"I was very surprised, the mountain erupted again. We are scared," said Riko, a 30-year-old resident of neighbouring Tagulandang island.

The country's volcanology agency said the eruption sent a plume of smoke 400



metres (1,312 feet) above the peak.

"There was an eruption of Mt Ruang, North Sulawesi" at 1706 local time, 0906

GMT, it said in a statement.

"The ash column was observed to be grey in colour... leaning towards the

south."

Hundreds of locals on neighbouring Tagulandang island were earlier seen cleaning up volcanic material from the harbour and their yards on Friday morning with the help of soldiers and police officers, according to an AFP journalist.

Some described their panic and rush to safety when the eruptions began days ago.

"I evacuated. There was a house. I stayed there. And then it rained and rocks fell. I prayed: 'God have mercy, please help me God,'" Ninice Hoata, a 59-year-old teacher, told AFP on Tagulandang.

Other residents pleaded for more assistance and expressed fears of another eruption before it struck.

"We really need tarpaulin assistance as soon as possible, to temporarily cover the leaking roof," said 64-year-old Herman Saho. "We are worried there will be a follow-up (eruption) because there is information about that." (AFP)

SRI LANKA FAILS TO STRIKE DEAL WITH SOVEREIGN BONDHOLDERS FOR USD 12 BILLION DEBT RESTRUCTURING

COLOMBO (TIP): The Sri Lankan government on April 17 said it failed to reach an agreement with its bondholders for restructuring around USD 12 billion debt, in the latest setback for the cash-strapped island nation which is aiming to meet targets for the next tranche of the IMF bailout.

Sri Lanka aims to complete debt restructuring agreements with private creditors and sovereign bondholders by June, in time for the next review of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) bailout programme.

The Finance Ministry said that the government held restricted discussions over the past three weeks with nine members of the Ad Hoc Group of Bondholders but could not strike a deal.

"Despite constructive discussions, the parties did not come to an agreement on restructuring terms," said the statement issued by RMP Ratnayake, Deputy Treasury Secretary.

It said that the government considered two separate proposals sent by the bondholders in March and early this month, while the bondholders rejected the government's proposal for a 28 per cent haircut. (PTI)

READY TO SUPPORT PAKISTAN TO IMPROVE ITS ECONOMIC SITUATION: IMF

WASHINGTON (TIP): The International Monetary Fund is ready to support cash-strapped Pakistan in key reform to help the country improve and stabilise its economic situation. Currently, Pakistan has expressed interest in a new programme in order to help the country address some of the key challenges, Jihad Azour, Director of the Middle East and Central Asia Department at the IMF told reporters here on the sidelines of the annual Spring Meetings of the IMF and the World Bank. The current programme that was initiated ten months ago allowed Pakistan to achieve a certain number of important milestones in terms of economic stability, he said.

The last review was successful and will be put forward to the board, which will end a programme that helped Pakistan address acute economic imbalances and maintain its economic stabilities, the IMF official hoped. "Those measures also allowed Pakistan to increase its buffers. Currently, the authorities have expressed interest in a new programme in order to help Pakistan address some of the key challenges," Azour said. (PTI)

Five Japanese workers narrowly escape suicide bombing that targeted their vehicle in Pakistan

KARACHI (TIP): A suicide bomber detonated his explosive-laden vest near a van carrying Japanese autoworkers, who narrowly escaped the attack on April 19 that wounded three bystanders in Pakistan's port city of Karachi, police said.

The van had been heading to an industrial area where the five Japanese nationals worked at Pakistan Suzuki Motors, local police chief Arshad Awan said. He said police escorting the Japanese returned fire after coming under attack, killing an accomplice of the suicide bomber whose remains were found from the scene of the attack.

"All the Japanese who were the target of the attack are safe," he said.

Pakistan's President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif denounced the attack on the Japanese nationals. In separate statements, they praised police for quickly responding and foiling the attack. They also vowed to eliminate terrorism and prayed for the speedy recovery of those wounded in the attack.

Images on local news channels showed a damaged van, as police officers arrived at the scene of the attack. Awan said the three passersby who were wounded in the attack were in stable condition at a hospital.

Police were escorting the van after receiving reports about possible attacks on foreigners who are working in Pakistan on various Chinese-funded and



other projects, said Tariq Mastoi, a senior police officer. He said a timely and quick response from the guards and police foiled the attack and both attackers were killed.

No one immediately claimed responsibility, but suspicion is likely to fall on a small separatist group or the Pakistani Taliban who have stepped up attacks on security forces in recent years. Insurgents have also targeted Chinese who are working in Pakistan on projects relating to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, which includes a multitude of megaprojects such as road

construction, power plants and agriculture.

In March, five Chinese and their Pakistani driver were killed when a suicide bomber in northwest Pakistan rammed his explosive-laden car into a vehicle when they were heading to the Dasu Dam, the biggest hydropower project in Pakistan, where they worked.

However, Japanese working in Pakistan have not been the target of any such attacks.

Karachi is the largest city in Pakistan and the capital of southern Sindh province. (AP)

70 killed as Afghanistan hit by heavy rains

KABUL (TIP): Around 70 people have been killed by heavy rains lashing Afghanistan over the past five days, the government's disaster management department said April 17.

Afghanistan was parched by an unusually dry winter which desiccated the earth, exacerbating flash-flooding caused by spring downpours in most provinces.

Disaster management spokesman Janan Sayeq said "approximately 70 people lost their lives" as a result of rains between Saturday and Wednesday.

Fifty-six others have been injured, he said, while more than 2,600 houses have been damaged or destroyed and 95,000 acres of farmland wiped away.

Giving a smaller death toll last week, Sayeq said most fatalities at that point had been caused by roof collapses resulting from the deluges.

Neighbouring Pakistan has also been hammered by spring downpours, with 65 people killed in storm-related incidents as rain falls at nearly twice the historical average rate.



70 people have been killed so far by the heavy rains in Afghanistan. Image used for representation.

The United Nations last year warned that "Afghanistan is experiencing major swings in extreme weather conditions".

After four decades of war the country ranks among the nations least prepared to face extreme weather events, which

scientists say are becoming more frequent and severe due to climate change.

At least 25 people were killed in a landslide after massive snowfall in eastern Afghanistan in February, while around 60 were killed in a three-week spate of precipitation ending in March. (AFP)

BEST WISHES FOR A

Happy Vaisakhi



Arish K. Sahani
646-644-2139

Everyone thinks of 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 BECOME A BETTER HUMAN?**



BEST WISHES FOR

Happy Vaisakhi



DAVE MAKKAR, RASHMI MAKKER,
SURYA MAKKAR, PRACHI MAKKAR



BEJAN DARUWALLA AND CHIRAG DARUWALLA

**ARIES**

Ganesha says that the People of the Aries zodiac sign will have to remember "Santosham Param Sukham" this week. They have to understand that whatever progress or opportunities they are getting in life as a result of hard work and effort is not less. At the beginning of the week, there will be slow progress in career and business. There is a possibility of some trouble or unnecessary delay in important tasks. In such a situation, control your speech and behavior otherwise things may get spoiled. However, in the second half of the week, the decision may come in your favor in any dispute related to money property, etc. Meeting an influential person during this period will give big benefits in the future. There will be intensity in love relationships. You will get an opportunity to spend time happily with your love partner. At the end of the week, there will be chances of a short or long-distance trip with the family. Health will be normal.

TAURUS

Ganesha says that people of the Taurus zodiac sign need to be careful in their career, business, and personal life and take any big decision carefully. There will be busyness in your life from the beginning of the week. Additional workload may increase in the workplace, while your opponents may try to hinder your plans and work. During this time, control your anger and keep solving even the smallest problems instead of postponing them, otherwise, you may have to face big problems in the future. While making any major decision in business, do not forget to take advice from your well-wishers. People of Taurus zodiac will need to take special care of their health this week. Take full care of your eating habits and keep your lifestyle healthy. A long or short journey in connection with work is possible in the middle of the week. To strengthen love relationships, one should avoid ignoring the feelings of one's love partner.

GEMINI

Ganesha says that people of the Gemini zodiac may have to face some life-related difficulties at the beginning of this week. While finding a solution to a problem, you should avoid ignoring the feelings of your relatives. In such a situation, try to resolve any issue peacefully. Be it career or business, it will be beneficial to work in a planned manner this week, otherwise, even your finished work may get stuck. Think about expanding your work in business as per your efficiency. Do not make the mistake of making any big decision under the influence of people. In the second half of the week, the health of a senior member of your family may become a matter of concern for you. During this time, you will get an opportunity to participate in some auspicious work. Your love partner will become your strength in difficult times. Sweetness will remain in married life.

**WEEKLY HOROSCOPE - APRIL 22 TO 28, 2024****By Chirag Daruwalla - Son of Astrologer Bejan Daruwalla****CANCER**

Ganesha says that this week will be full of auspiciousness and good fortune for Cancer people. People who are searching for employment will get new opportunities at the beginning of the week. With the help of an influential person, your career dream will come true. All obstacles coming in important works will be removed. You can get great relief, especially in court cases. The decision may come in your favor. There will be participation in religious-social activities in the middle of the week. During this period, your respect, position, and reputation will increase. You will get full support from family members while making any big decision. In the second half of the week, traveling for business will bring huge benefits. During this time, it is also possible to meet a loved one or an influential person, with whose help there will be possibilities of profit in the future. This week is auspicious for you in terms of love relationships. If you were thinking of proposing to someone then your decision will be fulfilled. Whereas the relationships of people who are already in a love relationship will become stronger. Sweetness will remain in married life.

**LEO**

Ganesha says that people of the Leo zodiac sign need to keep their minds calm this week and avoid ego. This week, you should avoid making any major decisions out of anger or emotions, otherwise, you may not only have to suffer financial loss but relationships built over years may also get affected. If you find yourself confused about the solution to a problem, seek the advice of a well-wisher. In case of confusion, it would be better to postpone any major decision till further notice. The second half of the week is going to provide some relief compared to the first half. During this time, incomplete tasks will be completed with the help of a friend. Seniors will be kind to you in the workplace also. Those working abroad can get the desired benefits this week. This week there may be a sudden new turn in your love relationship. Instead of a dispute, resolve any misunderstanding through dialogue. Married life will be happy. Be careful of seasonal and chronic diseases.

**VIRGO**

Ganesha says that at the beginning of this week, people of the Virgo zodiac will see the desired progress in their careers and businesses. During this period, despite minor obstacles, you are going to make good financial gains. Your accumulated wealth will also increase. Employed people will get new sources of income, but you will have to be very careful in the second half of the week. Employed people will need to take along both their seniors and juniors. Don't fall prey to people's diplomacy even by mistake. Any major concern related to children may bother you. Even in personal life, there may be arguments and quarrels in the relationship with the spouse. Proceed with caution in love affairs and avoid expressing your love, otherwise there is a possibility of social stigma. At the end of the week, there will be chances of going on a long-distance journey. Take special care of your luggage and health during travel. Also, drive the vehicle carefully.

**LIBRA**

Ganesha says that this week will be a factor of happiness and progress for the people of the Libra zodiac sign. You will be successful if you work in a planned manner this week. Auspicious and religious activities will be completed in the family. The economic situation is normal but will improve. The dream of getting transferred to the desired job or workplace at the desired place will be fulfilled. Disputes related to land and buildings will be resolved and there will be profit from their purchase and sale. In fulfilling your wish, you will get special support from an influential person or a good friend. Retail traders will benefit more than wholesale traders. However, working in a planned manner in business will increase the chances of profit. There will be intensity in love relationships. Mutual trust will increase and you will get many opportunities to spend time with your love partner. There will be a happy atmosphere in the house due to receiving some good news from the children. Health will be normal.

**SCORPIO**

Ganesha says that this week the people of Scorpio zodiac will be restless regarding their work and progress in it. The mind will be worried due to slow progress in career and business. In such a situation, you will need to take a big step thoughtfully and patiently. Take decisions wisely in important tasks. Be cautious of opponents' conspiracies in the workplace. Long or short-distance travel is possible this week. There will be financial profit in business, but excess expenditure will also remain. However, money will also be spent on auspicious works. Meeting new people will prove beneficial in taking the business forward. This week may prove to be a bit ups and downs in terms of love relationships. Any kind of misunderstanding with your love partner can create a rift in your relationship. Avoid any suspicious situation, otherwise, tension may increase suddenly. There will be sweetness in married life along with sour and sweet disputes.

**SAGITTARIUS**

Ganesha says that this week will generally prove to be beneficial and prosperous for the people of the Sagittarius zodiac sign. At the beginning of the week, long or short-distance travel will not only bring financial gain but will also make contact with influential people. Due to which profitable plans will be made in future. Employed people may get a promotion and a bigger position this week. Be careful while investing money to expand the business and do not forget to take advice from your well-wishers while making such a decision. You will get an opportunity to participate in some religious-social work in the middle of the week. During this period, your respect and honor in the society will increase. There will be a possibility of visiting a religious place with family or close friends. This week the dream of buying and selling land and buildings can be fulfilled. Relationships with love partners will become stronger. Married life will be happy.

CONT'D ON PAGE 55

BIRTHDAY HOROSCOPE : 22ND TO 28TH APRIL

BY VEDIC ASTROLOGER NASTUR BEJAN DARUWALLA

APRIL 22

Ganesha says you will notice that you're overly excited today. Your extrovert behavior and your cheerful disposition are highly appreciated in the social circle. Your strong leadership qualities will make you confident enough that you will be able to do all the work very well. Success will come your way if you work really hard. Today will bring in some good fortune as the planets align in your favor.

APRIL 23

Ganesha says today your day will be very kind. Today you will be able to complete the remaining task in projects. You may complete your work early, due to which you will be able to enjoy your time with family. You may plan for a trip with your partner. Your business will go great today. Today things will turn out the way you want as you have a lot of luck. One new opportunity will arise which will come immediately today itself and make you a lot of profits. Stars are in your favor which will help you navigate through any problems easily regarding this new opportunity.

APRIL 24

Ganesha says you will notice that things are working out for you without much effort. Little good things will keep happening throughout the day. It is great that everything will work out for you today but do not get lazy and focus on the things you need to get done today. You are very lucky today because you will get what you wish for, make sure you use the luck you have today to benefit yourself and not others because only then it will remain a positive thing for you.

APRIL 25

Ganesha says wake up and meditate the first thing in the morning; it will be beneficial for your personal as well as professional life. You will make great profits in your business hence you will have a good day today. You will lean more towards altruism today considering the spiritual awaking in your sign. Ensure that you do not drift away from your dreams & ambitions as you might come across a few distractions today. Ensure that you're ethical both in your personal & professional life.

APRIL 26

Ganesha says you will feel a lot of love and care coming towards you from

family friends as well as your partner. Your day will be a tough one today but you will feel supported and cared for in all ways, at the end of the day you will feel very satisfied with where you are in your life currently. Your partner's loving and caring nature will make you fall in love with your partner a lot today. You will experience firsthand how beautiful it is to be loved and cared for by someone you trust and love with all your heart.

APRIL 27

Ganesha says your love life has been on a roller coaster, but you will experience stability for today. Try to say what you have been thinking. Expressing your feelings will help you better your love life. Venus will bring love and the moon will bring fortune in your face today. You are entering a new phase that marks the start of a lane named success. Along with your old commitments you will be taking on additional responsibilities today, but it won't seem like hard or tough work as you will enjoy doing it thoroughly.

APRIL 28

Ganesha says you are very lucky today because you will get what you wish for;



VEDIC ASTROLOGER NASTUR BEJAN DARUWALLA

make sure you use the luck you have today to benefit yourself and not others because only then it will remain a positive thing for you. You will tend to focus more on your financial issues hence your love life will be on a back seat. Immense support from your partner might surprise you a little bit. Try to have patience and understanding. You are extremely close to finding that person that will support you in everything, do not annoy that person.

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CONTD FROM PAGE 54**CAPRICORN**


Capricorn Ganesha says that this week will prove to be better for Capricorn people than last week. There will be participation in religious-social activities at the beginning of the week. Long or short-distance travel with family is also possible. Your health will remain favorable during this period. You will find yourself mentally and physically very strong. You will heave a sigh of relief as the money stuck in your business suddenly comes back. However, during this time, avoid investing money in any scheme in which there is a possibility of any kind of risk. Jobs will become an additional source of income for people. There will be an increase in the accumulation of wealth. Any dispute related to land or buildings will be resolved with the help of a senior or influential person. Maintain trust in each other in love relationships and do not ignore your love partner's feelings under any circumstances. There will be sweetness in married life and your life partner will stand with you like a shadow in any difficult situation.

AQUARIUS


Aquarius Ganesha says that for the people of Aquarius sign, this week will prove to be better than last week. This week you will get special support from seniors and juniors in your workplace. The search of people wandering in search of employment will end. If you do business then this week you will get the desired profit and your business will progress. Especially the journey undertaken in connection with business will prove to be auspicious and profitable. People associated with politics may get some big responsibility or a big position this week. Overall, this week you are going to get the full fruits of your hard work and effort. People preparing for examination competitions may get to hear some good news. At the end of the week, there will be an atmosphere of happiness in the house due to the

arrival of a loved one. During this period, programs like picnics, etc. can be organized. There will be intensity in love relationships. Sweetness will remain in married life. Pre-existing health problems will be reduced.

**PISCES**

Ganesha says that people of Pisces may have to wander here and there in connection with work this week. The mind will be worried about family-related problems. You may have to go to court in case of land, building, or ancestral property disputes.

However, it would be better if you resolved it through mutual agreement. Your opponents will be active in the workplace. In such a situation, do not give importance to small things and concentrate on your goal. It would be better to maintain coordination with everyone in the workplace. If you do business then invest money in any scheme only after thinking. In the second half of the week, whether it is family or your love relationship, take the help of dialogue instead of dispute to remove any misunderstanding. Do not ignore the feelings of your loved ones under any circumstances, otherwise, you may have to repent later.

॥ SHREE GANESHAY NAMAH !!



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Nastur Bejan Daruwalla

Make your perfume last longer with these simple tips

Isn't it very disheartening when your expensive perfumes that cost an arm and a leg fade away in just a few minutes? Of course, we all want to smell good all day long but a few mistakes can wear it off by midday. Most people don't realise but the right application of perfume can actually help your fragrance last longer.

Here's listing some tips and tricks to get the most out of your perfume

Moisturize your skin

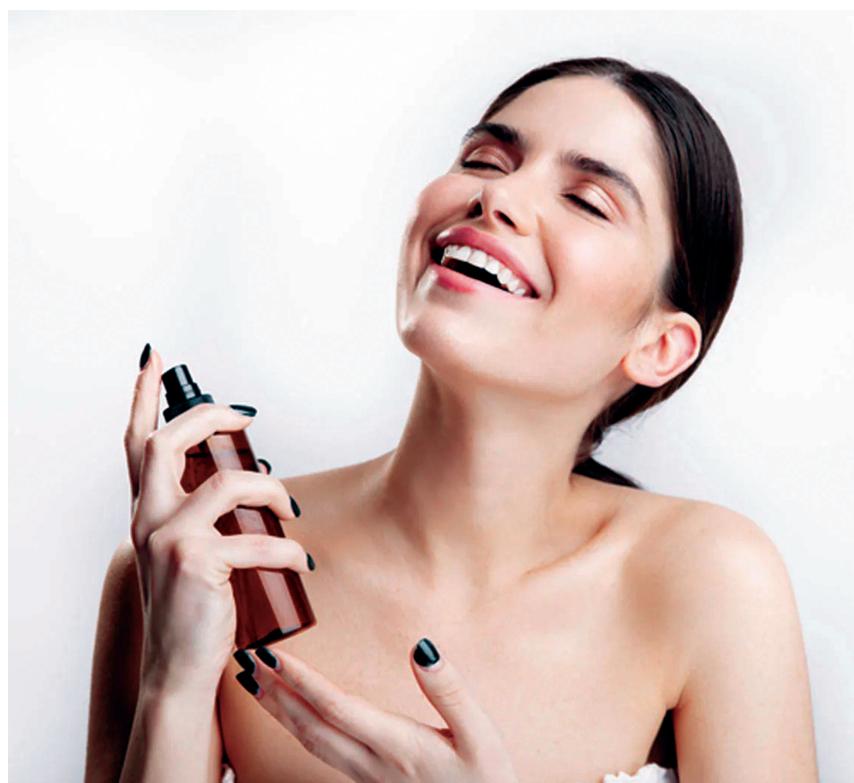
Perfumes and fragrances last the longest on oily skin. Apply a generous amount of non-scented moisturizer or petroleum jelly before applying perfume as it can help it lock in and make you smell good all day long.

Apply it right after your shower

Right after a shower when your skin is a little damp and hydrated, your pores would be open and clean. This is the best time to apply perfume as it would penetrate deep into your skin and last for an elongated period of time.

Spritz on your pulse points

Fragrances react to heat and pulse points emanate heat. So applying perfume directly to your pulse points has a higher chance of



lasting longer.

Don't rub just pat

It is almost a reflex to apply your perfumes and rub it instantly but this is one paramount mistake in the application. Rubbing your fragrance together can not only diminish the fragrance notes quality but in fact, it can also make

the entire profile go haywire. The right way of application is to pat your perfume instead of rubbing it.

Layering the same moisturizer

If you apply a moisturizer that has the same scented notes as your perfumes, it can intensify the fragrance and also make it last for a longer duration.

FOOD CORNER

Coconut chicken curry

INGREDIENTS

2 lemongrass stalks, 1 large shallot, chopped, 4 garlic cloves, 1 (2-inch) piece ginger, peeled, thinly sliced, 1 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes, 1 teaspoon ground turmeric, 1 tablespoon vegetable oil, 4 chicken legs, drumsticks and thighs separated, Kosher salt, freshly ground pepper, 4 kaffir lime leaves (optional), 1 (3-inch) cinnamon stick, 4 cardamom pods, cracked, 2 star anise pods, 1 (15-ounce) can unsweetened coconut milk, 1 teaspoon coconut sugar or light brown sugar, 1/4 cup unsweetened shredded coconut, Chopped cilantro and chives (for serving).

Method

- Remove tough outer layers from lemongrass. Finely grate bottom third of 1 stalk and set aside; discard the rest of the stalk. Trim and discard top third of remaining stalk, then bruise stalk by giving it a few whacks against a cutting board (this helps release the essential oils). Tie it in a loose knot; set aside.
- Pulse reserved grated lemongrass with shallot, garlic, ginger, red pepper flakes, turmeric, and 2 Tbsp. water in a food processor, adding a splash or two of water if needed, until a paste forms. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium. Season chicken with salt and pepper and cook, skin side down, until skin is lightly browned and crisp, 8–10 minutes. Transfer to a plate.
- Cook spice paste in same skillet, stirring, until very fragrant, about 5 minutes (it will begin to darken
- slightly as the water evaporates and the paste begins to fry in the fat left behind). Add kaffir lime leaves (if using), cinnamon, cardamom, star anise, coconut milk, coconut sugar, and reserved knotted lemongrass to skillet. Bring to a simmer, add chicken, and cook, turning pieces occasionally and scraping bottom of skillet often, until chicken is falling-apart tender and coconut milk has broken (the fat will separate from the liquid and start to brown the chicken and other aromatics), about 1 1/2 hours.
- Toast shredded coconut in a dry small skillet over medium heat, tossing occasionally, until golden brown, about 5 minutes. Let cool.



These are also common in K-beauty masks aimed at fighting acne. These natural clays absorb excess sebum and impurities from the pores, leading to a clearer complexion. They are also effective in gently exfoliating the skin, which helps to prevent dead skin cells from clogging pores.



Beauty masks to battle acne

Korean skincare has become famous worldwide and its promising results have also taken the world by storm. Even though the beauty industry and various Tiktok recommendations will show an array of products that will give you the sought-after glass skin, contrary to the belief, Korean skincare is quite simple and effective. What sets K-beauty skincare apart is the meticulous attention to ingredients that target specific skin concerns, such as acne. And the best part is that you can find all these effective ingredients probably in your kitchen. After all, rice is not just to stir fry but also to apply on your face.

Here's listing Korean skincare products to give you acne-free, glowing skin:

Rice Water And Green Tea

By now everyone would be quite aware of the rage behind rice water. Incorporating a plethora of benefits, rice water can not only help in reducing acne, but its antioxidant properties also help brighten the skin and reduce blemishes. Mixing it with tea tree oil, which is an anti-inflammatory ingredient can do wonders for your skin. These masks aim to soothe irritated skin, reduce redness, and prevent future breakouts without stripping the skin of its natural oils. Simply mix fermented rice water with a few drops of tea tree oil, keep this paste on your face for 15-20 minutes and then give it a cold water rinse.

Hyaluronic Acid And Glycerin

Hydration is also a key in K-beauty. Even for oily and acne-prone skin types, maintaining moisture balance is crucial. K-beauty masks often include hyaluronic acid and glycerin, humectants that draw water into the skin, keeping it hydrated but not greasy. This is essential because overly drying the skin can actually lead to more oil production and, subsequently, more acne.

Snail Mucin

Power packed with goodness of glycoproteins, hyaluronic acid and glycolic acid, this product might not sound very appealing but can do wonders for you. It promotes cell regeneration, and hydration and exfoliates the skin all at the same time, respectively—ideal for fading acne scars and marks. To make this, pour 2 cups of cornstarch into your mixing bowl, and add 1 cup of water. (If you want more or less slime than 2 cups worth, just mix the cornstarch and water to a 2:1 ratio.) Mix until combined. Keep it for 15 min and get ready to see a hydrated and nourished skin.

Kaolin or Bentonite clay

These are also common in K-beauty masks aimed at fighting acne. These natural clays absorb excess sebum and impurities from the pores, leading to a clearer complexion. They are also effective in gently exfoliating the skin, which helps to prevent dead skin cells from clogging pores.



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Hypertensive disorders of pregnancy up cardiovascular risk of death after giving birth

Researchers at Rutgers Health discovered that hypertensive problems during pregnancy are substantially related to deadly cardiovascular disease up to a year after birth. All hypertensive disorders that cause dangerously high blood pressure during pregnancy—chronic hypertension, gestational hypertension, preeclampsia without severe features, preeclampsia with severe features, superimposed preeclampsia, and eclampsia—except gestational diabetes, were associated with a doubling in the risk of fatal cardiovascular disease compared to women with normal blood pressure.

Eclampsia, a syndrome in which hypertension issues cause seizures, was linked to a roughly 58-fold increase in fatal cardiovascular disease, according to a study published in *Paediatric and Perinatal Epidemiology*.

"Maternal and postpartum mortality rates in the US are higher than in other high-income countries and rising, but more than half of cardiovascular disease-related deaths are preventable," said lead author Rachel Lee, a data analyst at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. "This study provides new information about how each hypertensive disorder is related to fatal cardiovascular disease, so healthcare providers can monitor patients with such complications more closely and develop strategies for keeping them healthy postpartum."

The researchers used the Nationwide Readmissions Database to examine pregnancy-related mortality rates for females 15 to 54 years old from 2010 to 2018. Data from more than 33 million delivery hospitalizations identified hypertensive disorders in 11 percent of patients, but that number increased with time. In 2010, 9.4 per cent of patients in the study had hypertensive disorders of pregnancy. By 2018, that figure had risen by more than half to 14.4 per cent.

"We've gotten better at predicting, diagnosing, and treating preeclampsia in this country, so the risk of death is falling for any individual patient with that condition," said Cande Ananth, chief of the Division of Epidemiology and Biostatistics in the Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology, and Reproductive Sciences at



Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and senior author of the study.

Unfortunately, Ananth noted, the sharp increase in the number of patients who develop chronic hypertension has more than offset the improved ability to treat it.

"Cases of chronic hypertension are rising sharply among people of childbearing age, but optimal treatment strategies remain uncertain," he said. "While we're treating more pregnant people with mild hypertension with antihypertensive medications, there remain many questions about the right definitions of hypertension in pregnant compared to non-pregnant individuals."

Source: ANI

Study finds 80% microplastics in blood clots behind heart attack, stroke

A team of scientists in China detected a whopping 80 per cent of microplastics from blood clots that may have contributed to stroke, heart attack, and deep vein thrombosis.

Microplastics—any type of plastic less than 5 mm long—have long been known as a significant environmental and health concern worldwide.

The new study, published in the journal *eBioMedicine*, showed that the blood clot samples were found in the cerebral arteries in the brain, coronary arteries in the heart, and deep veins in the lower extremities of 30 patients.

"Microplastics found in 80 per cent of clots retrieved from blood vessels after heart attack, stroke, or



deep venous thrombosis. This is really bad news. Plastics are everywhere in modern life," Tatiana Prowell, Associate Professor of Oncology at Johns Hopkins University in the US, wrote in a post on X.

The study stressed the need to accurately investigate the impact of

microplastics on human health. It showed that the presence of microplastics may increase the severity of heart attack, stroke, or deep venous thrombosis.

"Our findings suggest that microplastics of different concentrations, polymer types, and physical properties are present in human thrombi (blood clots) and that higher levels of microplastics may be associated with disease severity," said the researchers from the First Affiliated Hospital of Shantou University Medical College in China.

"Future research with a larger sample size is urgently needed to identify the sources of exposure and validate the observed trends in the study," they added.



Eat plain yoghurt to lower diabetes risk, combat insulin resistance

Regular consumption of plain yoghurt may help people to reduce their risk of diabetes and also reduce insulin resistance, say doctors.

Yoghurt has long been known to curb the risk of diabetes. However, the US Food and Drug Administration in March made the first-ever qualified health claim that eating yoghurt may reduce the risk of Type-2 Diabetes (T2D).

Based on limited scientific evidence, the regulatory body said that "at least three servings of yoghurt per week may reduce the risk of T2D incidence for the general population", revealed a study published in the journal *Diabetes & Metabolic Syndrome: Clinical Research & Reviews*.

However, "yoghurt will not cure or treat people with T2D", said researchers from the University of Pennsylvania in the US in the paper.

Speaking to IANS, Vandana Verma, Principal Dietitian at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, said that the approval of yoghurt for managing blood sugar is due to its probiotic content, which promotes gut health.

"The gut microbiome plays a vital role in regulating glucose metabolism and insulin sensitivity, essential for blood sugar management. Probiotics in yoghurt may enhance these functions, making it potentially beneficial for individuals with diabetes or at risk of it," she said.

However, she emphasised that all yoghurts are not equal. "Some may lack probiotics or contain added sugars, reducing their health benefits. Opting for plain yoghurt with live cultures and avoiding added sugars is preferred. Additionally, incorporating yoghurt into a balanced diet with fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins, coupled with regular exercise, is crucial for managing and reducing diabetes risk," the dietitian said.

Yoghurt is a product of high nutritional value and a rich source of nutrients like proteins, vitamins, and minerals as well as beneficial microbes. Source: IANS

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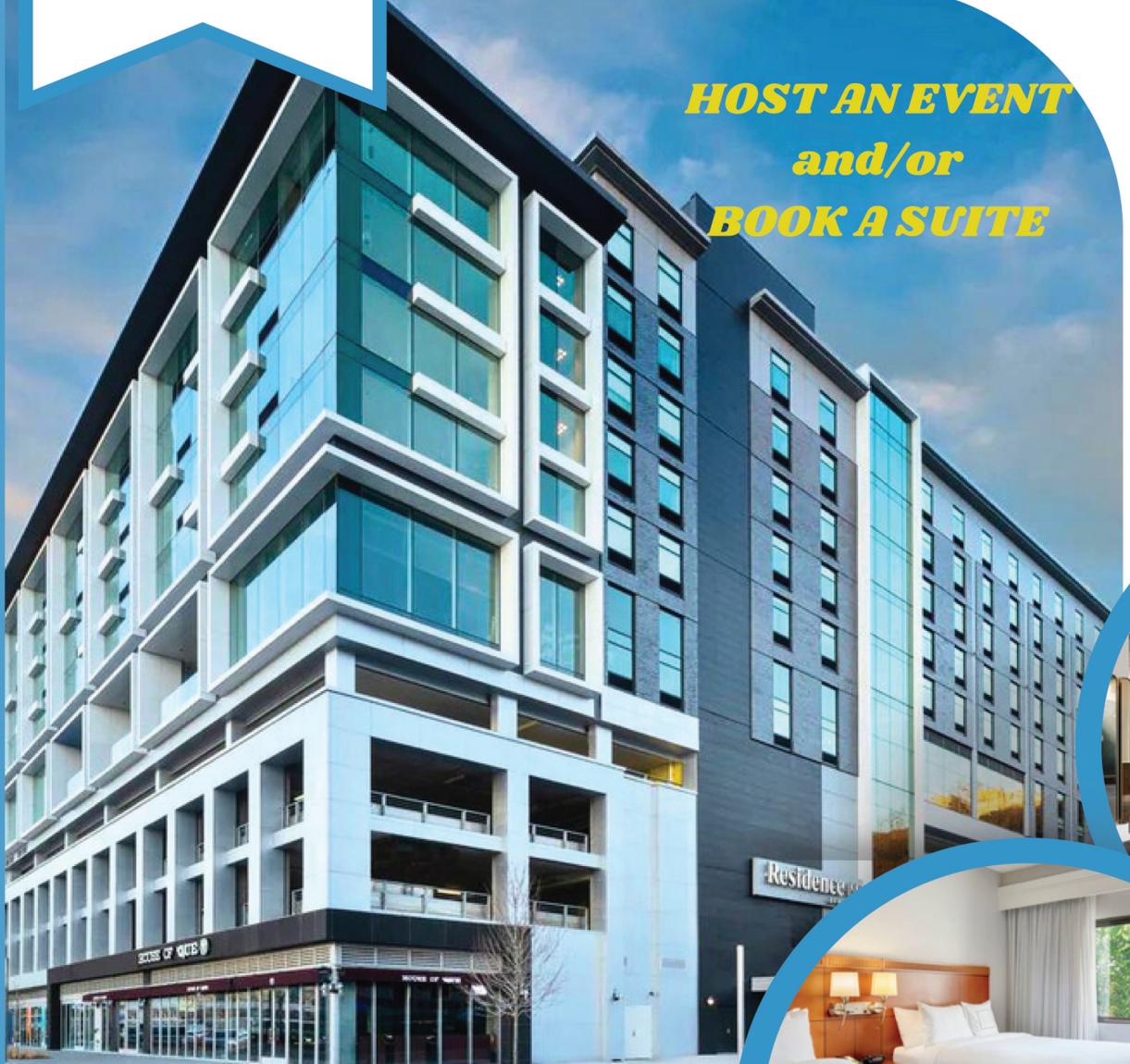


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New X users will need to pay for posting: Elon Musk

In a dampener for new X users, Elon Musk has announced they may be charged for posting content on the social platform.

In reply to an X user, the Tesla and SpaceX CEO said that unfortunately, 'a small fee for new user write access is the only way to curb the relentless onslaught of bots.'

'Current AI (and troll farms) can pass 'are you a bot' with ease,' Musk posted.

He further said that the onslaught of fake accounts also uses up the available namespace, 'so many good handles are taken as a result'.

'That is way harder than paying a tiny fee. This is only for new users. They will be able to do write actions for free after 3 months,' the billionaire elaborated.

In October last year, the platform began charging new unverified users \$1 per year in New Zealand and the Philippines.

Earlier this month, Musk-led platform announced a mega purge of spam accounts.

Several X users lost followers as the social media platform kicked off the exercise to remove bots.

The action came as spam and porn bots swarmed the platform in the past few months, leaving users flummoxed.

Musk had announced that a system purge of bots and trolls was underway.

Source: IANS

'Hidden' galaxy with billions of stars discovered by Hubble telescope

The Hubble Space Telescope has captured the picture of a galaxy with billions of stars, located 100 million light years away from the earth. The spiral galaxy, IC 4633, is located in the constellation Apus, Nasa said in a statement.

"IC 4633 is a galaxy rich in star-forming activity and also hosts an active galactic nucleus at its core. From our point of view, the galaxy is tilted mostly towards us, giving astronomers a fairly good view of its billions of stars," it said.

However, Nasa said that the galaxy's features are partially obstructed due to a stretch of dark dust which covers the lower right of the picture. The cloud overlapping IC 4633 is a dark nebula, also known as MW9 and the South Celestial Serpent.

"This dark nebula is part of the Chamaeleon star-forming region, itself located only around 500 light-years from us, in a nearby part of our Milky Way galaxy," it said.

The dark clouds in the Chamaeleon region occupy a large area of the southern sky, covering their constellation but also encroaching on nearby constellations, like the Apus.

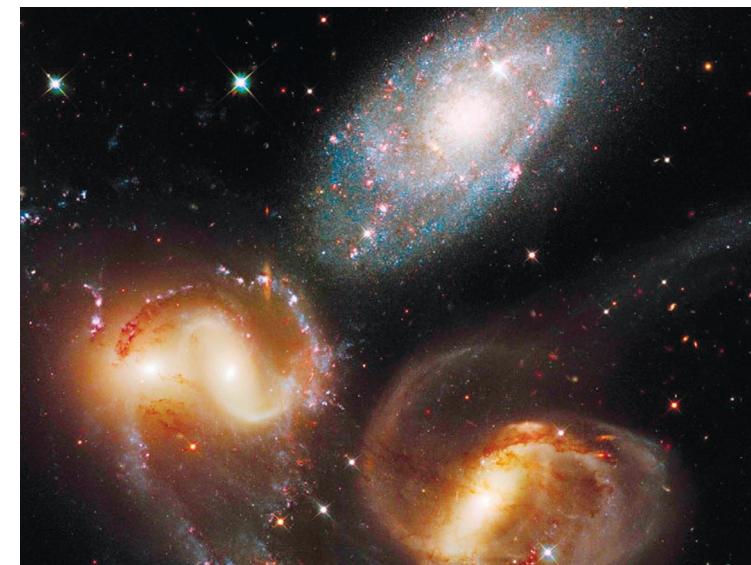
"Classified as an integrated flux nebula (IFN) — a cloud of gas and dust in the Milky Way galaxy that's not near to any single star and is only faintly lit by the total light of all the galaxy's stars — this vast, narrow trail of faint gas that snakes over the southern celestial pole is much more subdued looking than its neighbors," the space agency said.

The cloud is studied for its large amount of young stars, particularly the cloud Cha I, which has been captured by both the Hubble Telescope and the James Webb Space Telescope.

Earth's mysterious twin Venus is leaking

Gases, including oxygen, are stripping away from the upper layers of the atmosphere of planet Venus, which is important to understand how the planet lost its water, a study said.

During its journey to Mercury in 2021, the joint European and Japanese mission BepiColombo performed its second fly-by of Venus and found that carbon and oxygen ions were



escaping from the unexplored region of the planet's magnetic environment, the study of which was published in Nature Astronomy journal. "These results have important implications regarding the evolution of Venus's atmosphere and, in particular, the evolution of water on the surface of the planet," the study stated. Over a period of 90 minutes, BepiColombo measured the number and mass of charged particles it encountered, capturing information about the chemical and physical processes driving atmospheric escape in the flank of the magnetosheath.

Venus doesn't have an intrinsic magnetic field in its core like Earth. But, a weak, comet-shaped "induced magnetosphere" is created around the planet due to solar winds with electrically charged particles in Venus's upper atmosphere. The region around the magnetosphere is called the "magnetosheath", where the solar wind is slowed and heated.

ChatGPT is now more direct and less verbose in its responses: OpenAI

Sam Altman-run OpenAI has said it has made its AI chatbot called ChatGPT more direct and less verbose.

In a post on X, the company said its new GPT-4 Turbo model is now available to paid ChatGPT users.

"We've improved capabilities in writing, math, logical reasoning, and coding," said the company. The new AI model has been trained on publicly available data up to December last year.

"When writing with ChatGPT, responses will be more direct, less verbose and use more conversational language," OpenAI posted.

The company said it continues to invest in making its AI models better and looks forward to seeing what the users do with those.

"If you haven't tried it yet, GPT-4 Turbo is available in ChatGPT Plus, Team, Enterprise, and the API," it added.

Meanwhile, the AI company allegedly transcribed more than a million hours of YouTube videos to train GPT-4.

The New York Times reported last week that OpenAI knew this was not legal but "believed it to be fair use".



An OpenAI spokesperson was quoted as saying that the company uses "numerous sources including publicly available data and partnerships for non-public data," to maintain its global research competitiveness.

WhatsApp testing new feature, will let users know which contacts were online recently

WhatsApp has been working on a number of features in the last few months and they have all made headlines. Be it encouraging new conversations with the suggested contacts feature or letting Indian users make international payments, the instant messaging platform is trying to enhance customer experience. As per latest news, WhatsApp has another feature in store that might help you decide whom you should text first.



A report in WA Beta Info says that WhatsApp is working on a feature that will show you a list of contacts that were online recently. A screenshot shared by the portal shows a list of contacts who were active on the instant messaging platform recently. It is to be noted that only a few selected contacts, who were recently online, will be shown in this list. This feature could prove to be useful if you want to check who was recently active on the messaging platform and is most likely to answer your texts or pick up your calls first. This feature could also enhance users' messaging experience by removing the need to individually check the activity status of each contact. Keeping users' privacy in mind, WA Beta Info report adds that the feature won't show users' last seen and online status in these lists.



India's crude import bill drops 16% but dependency hits new high

India's crude oil import dropped 16 per cent in the last fiscal on lower international rates but the dependency on overseas suppliers rose to a new high, official data showed.

India imported 232.5 million tonnes of crude oil, which is refined into fuels like petrol and diesel, in the 2023-24 fiscal, almost the same as in the previous financial year. But it paid \$132.4 billion for the imports in FY24 as against \$157.5 billion import bill in 2022-23, Oil Ministry's Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC) data showed.

The world's third-largest oil importing and consuming nation has been able to add to its domestic production drop, raising its import dependence. Import dependence of crude oil soared to 87.7 per cent in 2023-24, up from 87.4 per cent, according to PPAC.

Domestic crude oil production was almost unchanged at 29.4 million tonnes in 2023-24. Besides crude oil, India spent \$23.4 billion on import of 48.1 million tonnes of petroleum products like LPG. It also exported 62.2 million tonnes of products for \$47.4 billion.

India's Infosys falls as annual revenue outlook disappoints

BENGALURU (TIP)

Shares of Infosys fell as much as 2.9% on Friday, April 19, a day after India's No.2 software services exporter forecast annual revenue below expectations, raising doubts over predictions of early recovery in the sector.

Its shares were down at 2% at 1,390 rupees by 09:19 a.m. IST, their lowest since Nov. 2023.

The stock is down 8% this year, the worst performer among top-tier Indian IT services companies. Larger rival Tata Consultancy Services is up 2.3%, while the Nifty IT services index is down 5.7%.

Some analysts termed Infosys' quarterly performance and outlook "disappointing." "Results of both TCS and Infosys suggest recovery is likely to be even more modest versus earlier, with sluggish large segments, existing business leakages and weaker discretionary demand hurting," Ambit Capital said in a note.

TCS last week reported fourth-quarter revenue below estimates on weak client

Sundar Pichai's strict missive to Google employees: 'This is a workplace, not...'

WASHINGTON (TIP)

Sundar Pichai said that employees need to be more focused "in how we work, collaborate, discuss and even disagree." The message came in a blog post by the Google CEO following nine employees of the company being arrested for staging sit-in protests. The employees were protesting against the company working closely with Israel after which another 28 employees were fired in connection to the protests.

Sundar Pichai said that the company has a culture of vibrant, open discussion "that enables us to create amazing products and turn great ideas into action". Emphasizing that it is important to preserve this culture, he said, "Ultimately we are a workplace and our policies and expectations are clear: this is a business, and not a place to act in a way that disrupts coworkers or makes them feel unsafe, to attempt to use the company as a personal platform, or to fight over disruptive issues or debate politics."

"When we come to work, our goal is to organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful. That supersedes everything else and I expect us to act with a focus that reflects that," he added.

Chris Rackow, head of security at Google, also sent a stern message to employees saying that every employee should know how to conduct themselves in a workplace. He said, "If



you're one of the few who are tempted to think we're going to overlook conduct that violates our policies, think again."

Alphabet-owned Google has announced a significant internal reorganisation aimed at accelerating its advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) and strengthening its position in the tech industry. The move involves consolidating various teams responsible for AI development, Android, and hardware products.

In a statement released on Thursday, Google revealed plans to merge its Research and DeepMind divisions' teams focusing on building AI models. This consolidation aims to streamline AI development efforts, facilitating closer collaboration between research

and practical application teams.

Furthermore, Google will relocate its Responsible AI teams from the Research division to DeepMind. This shift aims to ensure that AI models are developed with safety considerations from the outset, aligning with global concerns about AI ethics and regulation.

The consolidation comes in the wake of the successful development of Google's advanced AI model, Gemini, by the DeepMind team. Gemini, unveiled last year, boasts capabilities to process various data formats, including video, audio, and text. However, Google faced criticism following inaccuracies in historical image generation, prompting a pause in certain image generation functionalities.

Tesla asks investors to OK Musk's 56 billion dollar pay again

Tesla Inc. asked shareholders to vote again on the same \$56 billion compensation package for Chief Executive Officer Elon Musk that was voided by a Delaware court early this year.

In its proxy filing issued Wednesday, Tesla also said it will call a vote on moving the company's state of incorporation to Texas from Delaware. The carmaker will convene its annual meeting on June 13.

Tesla Chair Robyn Denholm criticized the Delaware Chancery Court's January decision, writing in the proxy that it amounted to second-guessing shareholders who had approved Musk's performance-based award in 2018. Chief Judge Kathaleen St. J. McCormick described the company's directors as "supine servants of an overweening master" and said they hadn't looked out for the best interests of investors.

"Because the Delaware Court second-



guessed your decision, Elon has not been paid for any of his work for Tesla for the past six years that has helped to generate significant growth and stockholder value," Denholm wrote.

The shareholder who sued Tesla over the CEO's compensation criticized it as excessive and opaque. Musk, who runs six companies, said early this year he preferred to work on artificial intelligence and robotics products elsewhere unless he owns a 25 per cent stake in Tesla. He now owns about 13 per cent of the company.



spending, while analysts said the country's top IT services company faces near-term growth headwinds.

At least fourteen analysts cut their target price on Infosys after its results as per LSEG data. The median target price of 39 analysts has fallen to 1,650 rupees from 1,720 rupees on March 19.

While there were some hopes of recovery for Indian IT companies in fiscal year 2025, Infosys missing its already lowered revenue guidance for fiscal year 2024 "raises concerns on growth predictability," Emkay Global said in a note.

Source: Reuters

CONT'D FROM PAGE 4

Six Indian American students win \$90,000 Paul & Daisy Soros Fellowships

He is the founder of Start Speaking -a platform to help language learners build spoken fluency-and has created resources for languages ranging from Quechua to Medical Chinese.

As a data scientist, Akshay builds data-driven tools for patients, clinicians, and policymakers with a focus on real-world deployment. He has over 40 publications applying quantitative methods to problems in healthcare and is the co-author of the book *Winning with Data Science*, published by Columbia University Press.

At Flatiron Health, Akshay developed methods to analyze observational clinical data to support FDA decision making. As Head of Data Science at Cerebral -a virtual mental health company-he and his team deployed a suicide detection system that has served over 500,000 patients across the US.

Akshay is an MD candidate and Knight-Hennessy Scholar at Stanford University and is now pursuing a PhD in biomedical data science. Under the mentorship of Nigam Shah, he is developing approaches to safely and effectively use artificial intelligence to deliver healthcare.

Akshay plans to become a physician who combines data science and medicine to strengthen health systems in low-resource areas.

Keerthana Hogirala: Fellowship awarded to support an MBA/MPP at the University of Chicago

Keerthana Hogirala was born in Tirupati, India and immigrated to the United States with her parents and younger brother when she was six. From the outset, her parents worked long hours through multiple jobs to maintain the employment and finances required to extend their immigration and keep their family secure in their new home. To alleviate some of the pressure her parents felt, Keerthana took on responsibilities for her family's well-being and her and her brother's education from an early age.

After over a decade of persistent effort, uncertainty, and anxiety, her family finally gained citizenship. This experience taught Keerthana to take nothing for granted, always be prepared for the unknown, and do something meaningful with the opportunities her parents made possible for her.

That last motivator in particular pushed Keerthana to study neuroscience at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign where she focused on child development, trauma-informed care, and social welfare.

She also led Volunteer Illini Projects, one of the largest student-run, student-staffed volunteer organizations in the country, and helped scale local non-profits serving marginalized populations. Eventually, during field research for her senior thesis, she realized she felt far more energized and hopeful about working directly with children than pursuing academia.

After graduating, Keerthana became a special education teacher for early childhood students at a Title 1 school in the District of Columbia Public Schools (DC Public Schools). She was confronted daily with structural failures that prevented her vulnerable students from receiving necessary wraparound supports.

To develop systems-level solutions for students, she transitioned to DC Public Schools' central administration to work for the chief operating officer. In central administration, Keerthana was one of the core leaders managing DC schools' COVID-19 pandemic response, overall operations, and eventual city-wide school reopening.

To meet the city's urgent needs during an unprecedented crisis, she introduced innovative new approaches system-wide in operations, strategy, design, and technology. This led to her subsequent role as chief of staff for the chief technology officer where she oversaw the school system's technology strategy, data governance, and multi-year digital transformation initiative.

Building off her professional experiences, Keerthana is pursuing an MBA and MPP dual degree at the University of Chicago to explore how technology and cross-sector collaboration can be leveraged to create effective, integrated systems of essential services.

Her hope is to address critical public needs and advance social development, particularly for underserved populations. In recognition of her commitment to public service and leadership, Keerthana was one of three full-time students selected by the Booth School of Business to be a Neubauer Civic Scholar and given a full-tuition merit scholarship to pursue her MBA.

Within the Harris School of Public Policy, she is a Harris Merit Scholar and the sole recipient of the Knas Family Scholarship which together awarded her a 90% tuition merit scholarship to pursue her MPP.

Outside of school, she is a member of Leadership Now Project, a government advisor for US Digital Response, a Chicago fellow at New Leaders Council, and a long-time supporter of progressive political and advocacy campaigns.

Malavika Kannan: Fellowship awarded to support an MFA in fiction

Malavika Kannan was born in Johnstown, Pennsylvania and grew up in Central Florida in a tightly knit community of Indian immigrant families. Her parents both emigrated from South India in the 1990s, and Malavika's earliest memories include regular visits to the public library with her parents, putting on ridiculous plays with her sister, and listening to stories of Indian mythology from her grandparents. She has known she wants to be a writer for a very long time.

Like many young people in Florida, Malavika grew up aware of the impacts of gun violence, police violence, and racism on her community. Her first consciously, proudly American experience occurred at 16, when she and her high school classmates organized a school-wide walkout against gun

violence. As a teenager, Malavika organized safer, juster communities with organizations like March For Our Lives, the Women's March, and Giffords.

Malavika's formative experiences as an organizer influence her writing, an art form she views as inherently political, imaginative, and community oriented. Malavika writes about identity, culture, and politics for The Washington Post, Teen Vogue, Refinery29, and The San Francisco Chronicle, amassing an audience of nearly 50,000 online.

During the pandemic, Malavika began writing a young adult novel about a queer Indian American girl growing up, fighting violence, and finding love in Florida. That novel became All the Yellow Suns, a coming-of-age story published by Little & Brown in the summer of 2023. Malavika had the surreal experience of completing a five-stop book tour, being profiled by The Los Angeles Times, and seeing her book in the hands of girls all over.

Now a senior at Stanford University, Malavika has immersed herself in creative writing, South Asian studies, and women's literature, and will graduate with a BA in comparative studies in race & ethnicity, submitting two honors theses: a research thesis on Dalit women's environmental writing, and a literary novel about college students during the pandemic.

Malavika will pursue an MFA in fiction to hone her literary craft and prepare for a career as a novelist and professor of literature. She is grateful for all the opportunities she's been given and hopes to continue writing queer brown girls into the narrative, and to make her family proud.

Shubhayu Bhattacharyay: Fellowship awarded to pursue an MD at Harvard University

Shubhayu Bhattacharyay was born in Kolkata, India and spent his early childhood in Thailand and Vietnam before settling in the South Bay of Los Angeles. Over long-distance phone calls and on the shared family bed, Shubhayu learned his native Bengali language and culture from his grandparents.

An appreciation of his heritage helped Shubhayu cherish the cultural diversity of his predominately immigrant neighborhood and perceive healthcare challenges shared between his communities in India and Los Angeles.

At Johns Hopkins University, Shubhayu double majored in biomedical engineering and applied mathematics and statistics with a minor in Spanish. He was supported by the Milken Scholars Program and graduated with full departmental and Tau Beta Pi honors. During college, Shubhayu founded Auditus Technologies, a company inventing individualizable, accessible hearing devices for adults living with dementia.

Shubhayu started to consider a medical career in the summer after his first year of college, when he met traumatic brain injury (TBI) survivors participating in a brain-computer interface study.

Their stories motivated Shubhayu to think of ways his interest in computational neuroscience might



contribute towards an improved quality of life after TBI. Mentored by Professor Robert Stevens at Johns Hopkins, Shubhayu invented and published results from the first computational bedside system to sense and classify motor function in TBI patients in the intensive care unit.

In 2020, Shubhayu received a Gates Cambridge Scholarship to pursue a PhD in clinical neurosciences at the University of Cambridge under the supervision of Professors Ari Ercole and David Menon.

For his thesis, Shubhayu developed AI methods which improve the detail of information provided for prognostic counseling and suggest individually optimized treatment plans during the ICU management of TBI. His work has generated publications in leading digital health and neurotrauma journals, open access software packages, and invited talks at international conferences.

During his graduate studies, Shubhayu volunteered at Headway Cambridge and Peterborough, a charity-run rehabilitation center for acquired brain injury survivors, where he helped start an evidence-based program for building psychological resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Shubhayu is currently an MD student at Harvard Medical School with aspirations of becoming a physician-engineer in neurocritical or neurosurgical care. At Harvard, he is researching sources of bias in medical AI to protect patient safety and equity in the clinical deployment of decision support systems for TBI care. Shubhayu's mission is to enhance the precision and global accessibility of TBI care with big data.

CONT'D FROM PAGE 1

Congressional Black Caucus lineup...

not have a black representing them in the House of Representatives.

"From the U.S. Army to Governor Whitmer's cabinet, Adam Hollier has spent his life serving his community and his country. I know he will continue that service as an effective representative and put people over politics. Adam is the kind of leader who understands the importance of protecting our freedoms, fighting for our rights, and ensuring opportunities for everyone," Horsford said in a statement.

Hollier "is exactly the kind of leader we need standing with us in Congress," said Beatty. "While some politicians would rather tweet than show up, Adam always steps up, shows up, and delivers results," she said. US media described it as an unusual development.

Thanedar is the first Indian American to represent Michigan in Congress. He defeated his Republican opponent by 47 percentage points in 2022 and in the process, he broke a 67-year streak of a Black Michigander representing Detroit.

In the first quarter, he raised USD5 million and garnered over 15 endorsements from influential elected officials and organizations. He has received endorsements from lawmakers Ami Bera, Judy Chu, Robert Garcia, Marcy Kaptur, Ro Khanna, Raja Krishnamoorthi, Ted Lieu, Seth Magaziner, Brad Sherman, and Dina Titus.

Human Rights Campaign, Laborers International Union of North America (LiUNA), National Education Association, Michigan Education Association, and Newtown Action Alliance have also endorsed him.

"Together, we will continue to fight for progress, equality, and opportunity for all residents of Michigan's 13th," he said in an earlier statement early this month. Thanedar said he remains committed to engaging with voters, listening to their concerns, and advocating for policies addressing the challenges of the community.

(Source: PTI)

Indian-origin mayoral candidate...

to revive its fortunes as the "global bank of the world" by attracting the investment it needs. The 63-year-old is standing as an Independent candidate among 13 contestants in the fray for the local elections on May 2, when Londoners will vote for their Mayor and also for members of the London Assembly.

"I view London as a unique global city, akin to the 'global bank of the world' where diverse cultures converge to flourish," Ghulati said in a speech this week. "As Mayor, I will build London's balance sheet such that it is the premier choice for investment, safeguarding safety and prosperity for all its residents. I will transform and run London effectively and efficiently like a seasoned CEO. London will be a profitable corporate where profitability means the wellbeing of all. You will all be part of the journey. Let's do it for our London, our home," he said.

Safety on the streets of the city is among his other major priorities, with visible community policing and more officers patrolling on the beat on the agenda.

"It is about having enough bobbies on the beat, having the resources for police officers to do their jobs, which means making the streets safe for women to walk at night, with muggers and burglars being caught and punished," he said.

Scraping some of the Labour Party incumbent Sadiq Khan's unpopular policies, such as the high costs associated with Ultra Low Emissions Zone (ULEZ) charges and Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) across the city, also make up Ghulati's key policy planks. "We did not want ULEZ, LTNs or 20mph speed limits and many other poor policies... Climate change is happening and we need to mitigate its effects but that cannot be done by making everyone live 15 minutes from home or to penalize commuters in areas with little public transport. What changes we need to make must be paced with public opinion, not imposed in an arbitrary way on wallets coping with the cost of living,"

said Ghulati, who has called London his home for 20 years.

He is equally scathing about the Conservative Party candidate for Mayor, Susan Hall, who he claims failed to block the Mayor's controversial policies despite being an Assembly member for London for many years.

"I would not be a candidate for Mayor if the political candidates were doing what they should be doing. They have let us down. This is all about London and Londoners," he declared.

Creating more affordable housing, minimizing council tax, increasing focus on tourism to the UK capital and ensuring free school meals are among some of Ghulati's other focus areas. He claims to have canvassed from borough to borough across London to garner the required signatures to support his mayoral candidature. Ghulati also features in the official mini manifesto booklet, which costs each candidate GBP 10,000.

The winning mayoral candidate will be responsible for all local issues affecting Londoners, from transport and policing to housing and the environment.

Indians can now get multiple entry...

European Union's ambassador to India Herve Delphin described the new visa regime as another step towards enhancing people-to-people contact between the two sides. "On April 18, the European Commission adopted specific rules on the issuing of multiple entry visas to Indian nationals, which are more favourable than the standard rules of the visa code that applied to date," an EU readout said.

It said this new visa 'cascade' regime for Indian nationals residing in India who apply for Schengen (short-stay) visas in India will provide easier access to visas with multi-year validity for travellers with an established travel history.

"According to the newly adopted visa 'cascade' regime for India, Indian nationals can now be issued long-term, multi-entry Schengen visas valid for two years after having obtained and lawfully used two visas within the previous three years," the readout said.

"The two-year visa will normally be followed by a five-year visa, if the passport has sufficient validity remaining. During the validity period of these visas, holders enjoy travel rights equivalent to visa-free nationals," it said. The changes in the visa norms came in the context of "strengthened" relations under the EU-India common agenda on migration and mobility, which seeks comprehensive cooperation on migration policy between the two sides, it added.

Schengen visas allow the holder to travel freely in the Schengen area for short stays of a maximum of 90 days in any 180-day period. The visas are not purpose-bound, but they do not grant the right to work.

The Schengen area consists of 29 European countries of which 25 are EU states.

The countries are Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland and Sweden, along with Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

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US Billionaires and Israel Hold Reins...

All of them are discounting the Federal Special Counsel's report that described the 81-year-old Biden's memory as "hazy," "fuzzy," "faulty," "poor" and having "significant limitations." It noted that Biden could not recall defining milestones in his own life such as when his son Beau died or when he served as vice president. The report ruled out prosecution of Biden over his retention of highly classified materials as a private citizen. Special counsel Robert Hur suggested he (Biden) would seem too feeble to prosecute: "It would be difficult to convince a jury that they should convict him of a serious felony that requires a mental state of willfulness."

The rhetoric that "America stands for freedom" has

been echoed by every U.S. president since 1947. However, none have shown the courage to address the issue of Palestine's liberation from what many consider to be Israel's illegal occupation. Israel is often cited as the only country in the world that is illegally occupying another country. Despite this, the United States has provided over \$300 billion since 1948 to support Israel, contributing to the ongoing plight, casualties from bombings, and humanitarian suffering of Palestinians.

A particularly concerning aspect is the behavior of the U.S. Congress, which consists of 535 members-100 Senators and 435 Representatives. There appears to be a visible competition among them to demonstrate who is more loyal to Israel and who can more effectively suppress information about Israel's alleged illegal occupation of Palestine.

In the absence of term limits, the U.S. Congress, rather than being a noble place to serve the country, has become a lucrative career opportunity for politicians from both parties to serve themselves. There's a competitive race among politicians to serve the longest, aiming to capitalize on the power, perks and influence-peddling that come with long tenures.

The longest-serving U.S. Senator in history was Robert C. Byrd of West Virginia. He served in the Senate for over 51 years, from January 3, 1959, until his death on June 28, 2010. On the House side, the longest-serving member was John Dingell Jr. of Michigan, who served for 59 years from December 13, 1955, to January 3, 2015. He succeeded his father, John Dingell Sr., who served in Congress for 22 years from March 4, 1933, until his death on September 19, 1955, establishing the Dingell family as one of the most enduring political dynasties in U.S. history.

Nancy Pelosi has served in the U.S. Congress for 35 years, from 1987 to 2022, representing California's 12th Congressional District. Her net worth was estimated to be as high as \$171.4 million in a 2021 report by The Washington Free Beacon. While her annual salary of \$179,000, which alone would not make her a millionaire, it appears that the rest of her wealth comes from influence-peddling and stock investments, possibly based on inside information.

The other concerning aspect of the U.S. electoral system is that it allows leaders to choose their voters. Many congressional districts are non-competitive, meaning they heavily favor either Republicans or Democrats. This lack of competitiveness is often a result of gerrymandering, which is conducted by leaders of both parties to benefit themselves. Similarly, many states lean heavily towards one party or the other, further reducing political competition and choice for voters.

In conclusion, the influence of U.S. billionaires and Israel on the selection of presidential candidates and members of the Congress raises important questions about the democratic process and the representation of the American people's interests. While financial support plays a significant role in modern political campaigns, voters must remain vigilant and informed to make choices that align with their values and priorities. It's crucial for voters to look beyond the candidates endorsed by powerful interests and evaluate each candidate's policies, integrity, and commitment to serving the public good. Voters must demand "Term Limits" in both houses of the Congress and more transparency in their financial dealings. By staying engaged, asking critical questions, and voting based on their convictions, voters can help ensure that their voices are heard and that their elected leaders truly represent them.

(Dave Makkar is a social activist. He can be reached at davemakkar@yahoo.com)



US Capitol

File photo

Mahavir Janma Kalyanak

Mahavir Janmakaalyanak is the main festival of Jainism. Mahavir Janmakaalyanak is also known as Mahavir Janma Kalyanak Divas. Lord Mahavira is the twenty-fourth and last Tirthankara of Jainism. This festival falls in the month of March and April and according to the Jain calendar, the 13th 'Sud' day of Chaitra month is also known as 'Veer Teras'. Mahavira was named "Vardhaman", which means "one who grows" as the prosperity of the kingdom increased at the time of his birth. Mahavir Swami was born as the son of King Siddhartha of Kundagrama, Ikshvaku dynasty and Queen Trishala.

Lord Mahavira Birth

Lord Mahavira was born about two and a half thousand years ago in Kundalpur in Chaparan district of Bihar, some such historians believe and some believe that Mahavira was born in the democratic state of Vajji and its capital was Vaishali. Lord Mahavira was born 599 years before Christ. At the age of 30, Mahavir ji left the world in a state of disenchantment and after taking sannyasa left the path of autism. After 12 years of hard penance, he received only knowledge, after which he spread knowledge in Samvasaran. At the age of 72, he attained salvation from Pavapuri.

Lord Mahavira was the twenty-fourth and last Tirthankara of the Jain religion. According to Jain philosophy, all Tirthankaras were human beings but they have attained a state of perfection or enlightenment through meditation and self-realization.

They are the Gods of Jains. The concept of God as a creator, protector and destroyer of the universe does not exist in Jainism. Also, the idea of God's rebirth as a human being to destroy the devil is not accepted in Jainism.

The legend says he spent nearly twelve and a half years in meditation to attain spiritual knowledge and to be free from all desires, feelings and attachments. He learned to be equal towards everyone including animals.

He avoided hurting anyone with or without any intention. After serving the severe punishment, his powers were fully developed. Hence, he was given the name Mahavir meaning brave and courageous.

Once he attained the knowledge, Lord Mahavir travelled on foot across India, spreading his teachings and enlightened spiritual wisdom to follow people. He was the twenty-fourth and last Tirthankara in Jainism.

Teachings of Lord Mahavira

The five important teachings, which he laid and are strictly followed within Jains

- Non-violence (Ahimsa) – not to cause harm to any living beings
- Truthfulness (Satya) – to speak the harmless truth only
- Non-stealing (Asetya) – not to take anything not properly given
- Chastity (Brahmacharya) – not to indulge in sensual pleasure
- Non-possession/Non-attachment (Aparigraha) – complete detachment from people, places and material things

Concept of God

- The universe and all of its substances or phenomena, according to Jainism are everlasting.
- In terms of time, it has no beginning or end. The universe operates according to its own set of cosmic rules.
- All chemicals alter or modify their forms on a regular basis. Nothing in the cosmos can be destroyed or produced.
- There is no requirement for someone to originate or govern the universe's affairs.
- As a result, Jainism rejects God as the universe's creator, survivor and destroyer.



Important information

Mahavir Janma Kalyanak 2024

Sunday, 21 April 2024

Did you know: Lord Mahavira is the twenty-fourth and last Tirthankara of Jainism.

- Jainism, on the other hand, believes in God, not as a creator but as a flawless entity
- A freed soul is one who has destroyed all of his karma. In Moksha, he lives eternally in a perfect joyful condition.
- Infinite knowledge, boundless vision, endless power, and infinite happiness are all available to the emancipated spirit. The Jain faith considers this living entity to be a God.
- Every living thing has the ability to become God.
- As a result, Jains do not worship a single God, but rather a plethora of Jain Gods, whose number continues to grow as more sentient beings achieve emancipation.

Rebirth and Realms

Mahavira's main teachings are rebirth and realms of life. Mahavira thought that life existed in a variety of forms including animals, plants, insects, bodies of water, fire and wind according to the Acaranga Sutra.

He taught that a monk should never touch or disturb any of them (even plants) and that he should never swim, ignite a fire or wave his arms in the air since these activities may harm other creatures dwelling in those forms of matter. Mahavira taught that existence is cyclic and that the soul is rebirth in one of the Trilok — the heavenly, hellish or earthly realms of existence and suffering — following death.

"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

Teaching of Lord Mahavira

Mahavira made religion simple and natural free from involved ritual complexities. His teachings reflected the internal beauty and harmony of the soul.

Mahavir taught the idea of the power of human life and stressed the importance of a positive attitude towards life.

Mahavira's message of non-violence (Ahimsa), truth (Satya), non-stealing (Acharya), celibacy (Brahmacharya) and non-possession (Aparigraha) is full of universal compassion.

Mahavir said that A living body is not merely an integration of limbs and flesh but it is the abode of the soul which potentially has perfect perception (Anant darshana), perfect knowledge (Anant jnana), perfect power (Anant virya), perfect bliss (Anant sukha). Mahavir's message reflects the freedom and spiritual joy of the living being. Mahavir focuses attention on all living beings, irrespective of their size, shape, and form how spiritually developed or undeveloped are equal and we should love and respect them. This way he preached the gospel of universal love.

Mahavir rejected the concept of God as a creator, a protector and a destroyer of the universe. He also criticizes the worshipping of gods and goddesses as a means of material gains and personal benefits.

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"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."



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Sikh History This Week

APRIL 19 TO APRIL 25

19th April



Prakash Utsav, Fifth Patshah, Guru Arjan Dev Ji.

GURU ARJAN DEV (1563-1606) Guru Arjan, the 'Prince of Martyrs' and the 'Prophet of Peace', proffered his precious life to nurture the glory that was to be the Sikh Panth. The Fifth Master's life was marked by divine bliss and sublime sacrifices, born of a sweet acceptance of God's Will. Gifted with a quintessential poetic afflatus, and immeasurable imaginative sympathies, the Guru gave the movement of Sikhism a definite direction, perspective and program. He made the new faith coeval or coextensive with the whole gamut of existence and raised its exquisite edifice on values for which there is neither death nor change.

Guru Arjan Dev adorned the sacred throne of Guru Nanak from Sept. 1, 1581 to May 30, 1606. Born at Goindwal on April 15, 1563, he was the youngest and noblest son of Guru Ram Das and Mata Bibi Bhani. On 23 Hadh sunmat 1636, he married Ganga Devi, daughter of Krishan Chand of Mau village. He had an innate poetic sensibility which was exquisitely displayed in the epistles that he sent to his father from Lahore. They are deeply expressive of the pangs of separation and the exuberance of Love. The Fourth Master's decision to make Guru Arjan his spiritual heir was bitterly opposed by Prithvi Chand who contended that being the eldest son, he alone was entitled to the Guruship. Thus, he could never reconcile himself to his younger brother's installation as Guru.

Under Guru Arjan Dev the Sikh movement registered great progress. In sunmat 1645, he cemented the Santokhsar sarovar. Further, the Guru not only completed the construction of the Sarovars started at 'Guru Ka Chak' by his predecessor but also constructed two more Sarovars. He had the Harmandar built in the middle of Amritsar Sarovar and invited a celebrated Muslim divine, Mian Mir, to lay its foundation stone in sunmat 1645. Remarkable for its architectural and aesthetic beauty and unique in its conception, the temple with its four doors symbolizes the inborn equality of all mankind.

1621 Patshahi Ninth, Sri Guru Teg Bahadur Sahib, enlightened this planet with his birth.



In the galaxy of immortal martyrs who laid down their precious lives to keep ablaze the flame of faith and freedom, the name of the Ninth Master, Guru Teg Bahadur stands out radiantly prominent. Doubtless, there have been prophets who sacrificed themselves at the altar of their own religion, but the uniqueness of the Ninth Master's martyrdom lies in the fact that he courted death in defending the religion of the persecuted Hindus who had sought his shelter when they were forced to choose between death and Islam. Guru Teg Bahadur, the second martyr Guru, who was born at Amritsar in 1621, was the youngest son of Guru Hargobind Sahib, the Sixth Master (1595-1645). Guru Har Rai, the Seventh Master (1630-61), and Guru Hari Krishna, the Eighth Master (1656-1664); however, preceded him as Gurus. He adorned the sacred throne of Guru Nanak from 1664 to 1675. His installation as Guru enraged Dhirmal and the masands, who were the most contentious claimants to the Guruship.

1758 Sikhs gather in huge numbers for Baisakhi in Amritsar and performed cleanings and kar-sewa. Maratha Sardar Ragunath Rao and Malhaar Rao donated Rs. 25,000. They were honored on Panth's behalf.



1854 Maharaja Dalip Singh, the last ruler of Punjab, was sent to England.

20th April

1613 Guru Hargobind had to marry Nanaki despite his refusal. This was an unfortunate upshot of the jubilation in Sikh community caused by Guru Sahib's release from seven years of incarceration. Within a few months two brides were pledged to him by their parents. Under the customs prevalent at that time, on Guru Hargobind's refusal, those girls would have remained unmarried throughout their life. So he had to marry Nanaki on March 28, 1613, and Mehrai also called Marwahi on July 26, 1615. The first incident occurred too close to his release. Taken aback at the second incident, he announced that no one should pledge his daughter to him in future.

1816 Khalsa Forces march towards Kashmir which was annexed by Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

1923 Second attempt to murder Lambardars and Chaukidars of Pindori Nijjaran also fails.

1998 Sri Akal Takht today issued a hukamnama banning serving of langar on tables and chairs.

21st April

1913 Ghadar Party was organised. GHADAR PARTY, a revolutionary group, founded in United States of America (USA) for the independence of India. Its members were Indian residents, primarily Sikhs, settled in USA. Their prime objective was to actively cause rebellion among members of the British forces, thereby forcing the fall of the British empire and hasten their departure from India.

22nd April

1922 A police party raids Birring to arrest Kishan Singh Gargaj and Master Mota Singh. This marks the beginning of arrests of Babbar Akalis.

1978 Akand Path of Sri Guru Granth Sahib was concluded and Bhog ceremony by Guru Khalsa Panth for the 13 GurSikhs killed in the Amritsar Massacre were completed uninterrupted.

23rd April



1624 Foundation of Kiratpur laid by Guru Hargobind Ji.

1923 The government of Punjab takes steps to release the Akalis arrested in connection with the Guru Ka Bagh morcha.

1924 2 GurSikhs of the 3rd Shahidi Jatha of 500 Akalis for Jaito Morcha tortured to death in Nabha Jail.

1984 15 Sikhs killed and several injured in Ferozepore, while the water, power, and other supplies of 20 Sikh shrines was cut-off.

1984 Eight Sikhs Killed by India's Central Reserve Police Force.

24th April

1923 SGPC declares its dissociation with the Babbar Akalis.

1955 Akali Dal decided to launch a peaceful agitation for Punjabi Suba.

1980 Gurbachan Singh, Chief of fake Nirankaris, murdered.

25th April

1635 Battle of Kartarpur between Mughals and Sikhs led by Guru Hargobind Ji.

1809 Amritsar agreement between Ranjit Singh and British Government. An agreement was reached between the Maharaja Ranjit Singh and British Government in Amritsar. This represent the very first agreement among the Sikhs and the British government. As a result the Phulkia Riyasat was placed under the control of the British.





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Jaisalmer: The Golden City

Jaisalmer, a mesmerizing destination nestled in the heart of the Thar Desert, is a jewel in the crown of Rajasthan. Often referred to as the "Golden City," Jaisalmer captivates visitors with its sandstone architecture, picturesque landscapes, and rich cultural heritage. The city is adorned with lakes, ornate Jain temples and havelis.

One of the standout attractions in Jaisalmer is the magnificent Jaisalmer Fort, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of the largest fully preserved fortified cities in the world. Constructed using golden-yellow sandstone, the fort seems to blend seamlessly with the surrounding desert, earning it the moniker "Sonar Quila" or the Golden Fort. Inside, visitors can explore narrow winding lanes, intricately carved havelis, and the imposing Maharaja's Palace.

The havelis of Jaisalmer, such as Patwon Ki Haveli and Salim Singh Ki Haveli, showcase the city's opulent architectural heritage. These grand mansions boast exquisite carvings, delicate balconies, and intricate facades, providing a glimpse into the affluent lifestyle of the merchants who once inhabited them. The Gadi Sar Lake, a historic water reservoir surrounded by temples and ghats, adds a tranquil touch to the vibrant city. The Jain Temples within the fort premises showcase stunning architecture and intricate marble work. A camel safari in the vast expanses of the Thar Desert is an essential Jaisalmer experience. The golden dunes, changing hues during sunrise and sunset, create a magical setting for an unforgettable adventure. Camping under the star-studded desert sky adds to the allure of the desert safari. Jaisalmer, like other cities in Rajasthan, celebrates its cultural vibrancy through festivals like the Desert Festival. This three-day extravaganza showcases the rich folk culture of Rajasthan, featuring traditional music, dance, camel races, and vibrant processions.

Desert National Park

Most national parks in India boast of dense forests and large water bodies, this one is an exception. Although one may not see a tiger or rhino, spotting wildlife that calls the desert their home is a thrill in itself. Keep your eyes out for hares, foxes, the blackbuck, the endangered Great Indian Bustard, Russell's viper and several migratory birds in the winter months.

Jaisalmer Fort

What sets it apart is that unlike most forts in Rajasthan, locals inhabit this one. One can shop, eat and sightsee while strolling through it. What is unusual to see though is the large number of 'Free Tibet' banners that dot shops.

Longewala

JP Dutta's Border (1997) was a hit at the box office. And while most believe it



is a work of fiction, a visit to Longewala - on the road to Tanot - will prove otherwise. Border Security Force (BSF) officers stationed here show you the well that was poisoned by Pakistanis in the 1971 war, an enemy tank and crane still there and a memorial to those who sacrificed their lives for the country.

Border

The Indo-Pak border lies less than 20 km from Tanot. Though not as famous as the Wagah Border, one can see the last Indian pillar and the Pakistani outpost from here. Visitors, however, are not allowed after sunset. One also needs prior approvals from the BSF to go there. Interestingly, Jaisalmer's proximity to Pakistan is also visible in the local markets with paan masala from across the border sold openly in shops.

Bada Bagh

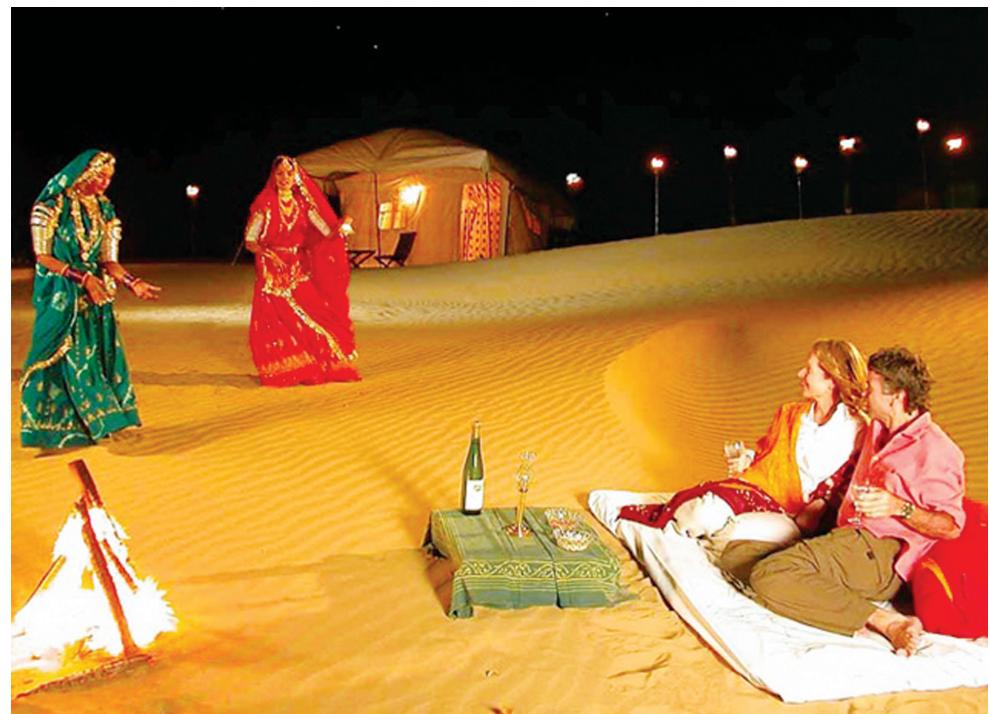
Other points of interest you could also head to are Patwaon-Ki-Haveli, Thar Heritage Museum, Maharaja's Palace, Gadi Sar Lake (with boating) and Vyas Chhatri.

Kuldhara

Rajasthan may be famous for India's most haunted spot, Bhangarh, but you could get a dose of the eerie in Jaisalmer too. According to legend, an entire community vanished overnight 200 years ago at a place close to Jaisalmer. Though there are several tales on the reason behind their sudden disappearance, today all that remains - as proof of their existence - is the abandoned village of Kuldhara. What's more, according to locals, the villagers left behind a curse bringing death to anyone who tried to inhabit it.

Tanot Mata's Temple

This serene spot lies about 120 km from Jaisalmer. It is the last village before the Indo-Pak border. What makes it unique is



that the BSF maintains it. They took over the day-to-day functioning after bombs dropped by Pakistan in the vicinity of

the temple in the 1965 did not explode. In fact, they now lie on display within the temple premises.



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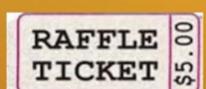


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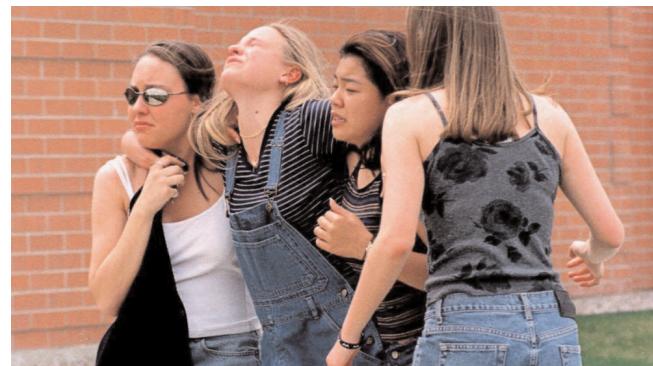


History This Week

APRIL 19 - APRIL 25

APRIL 20

April 20, 1914 - Miners in Ludlow, Colorado, were attacked by National Guardsmen paid by the mining company. The miners were seeking recognition of their United Mine Workers Union. Five men and a boy were killed by machine gun fire while 11 children and two women burned to death as the miners' tent colony was destroyed.



April 20, 1999 - The deadliest school shooting in U.S. history occurred in Littleton, Colorado, as two students armed with guns and explosives stormed into Columbine High School at lunch time then killed 12 classmates and a teacher and wounded more than 20 other persons before killing themselves.



Birthday - Adolf Hitler (1889-1945) was born in Braunau am Inn, Austria. As leader of Nazi Germany from 1933 to 1945, he waged a war of expansion in Europe, precipitating the deaths of an estimated 50 million persons through military conflict and through the Holocaust in which the Nazis attempted to exterminate the entire Jewish population of Europe.

APRIL 21

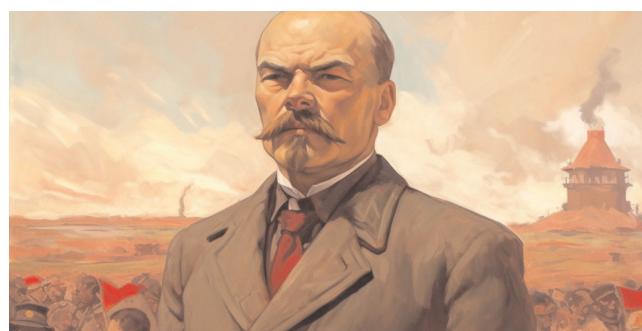
April 21, 1836 - The Battle of San Jacinto between Texans led by Sam Houston and Mexican forces led by Santa Anna took place near present day Houston. The Texans decisively defeated the Mexican forces thereby achieving independence.

April 21, 1918 - During World War I, the Red Baron (Manfred von Richthofen) was shot down and killed during the Battle of the Somme. He was credited with 80 kills in less than two years, flying a red Fokker triplane. British pilots recovered his body and buried him with full military honors.

**APRIL 22**

April 22, 1864 - "In God We Trust" was included on all newly minted U.S. coins by an Act of Congress.

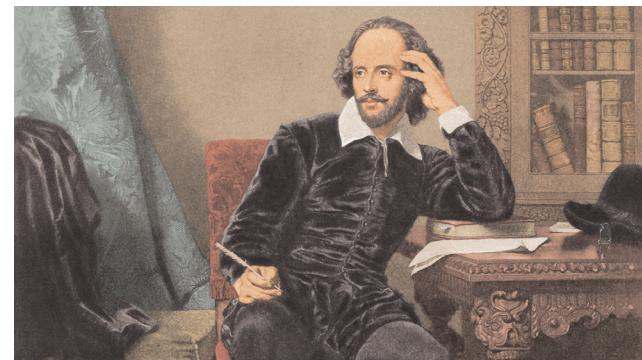
April 22, 1889 - The Oklahoma land rush began at noon with a single gunshot signaling the start of a mad dash by thousands of settlers. They were seeking to claim part of nearly two million acres made available by the federal government. The land originally belonged to Creek and Seminole Indian tribes.



Birthday - Vladimir Lenin (1870-1924) was born in Simbirsk, Russia. He led the Russian Revolution of October 1917 which toppled Czar Nicholas and paved the way for a harsh Communist regime. Following his death in 1924, his body was embalmed and placed on display in Moscow's Red Square, becoming a shrine that was visited by millions during the years of the Soviet Union.

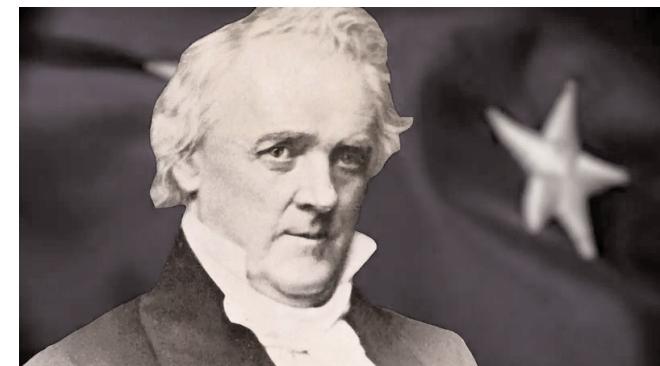
APRIL 23

April 23rd - Established by Israel's Knesset as Holocaust Day in remembrance of the estimated six million Jews killed by Nazis.



Birthday - William Shakespeare (1564-1616) was born at Stratford-on-Avon, England. Renowned as the most

influential writer in the English language, he created 36 plays and 154 sonnets, including Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet and The Merchant of Venice.



Birthday - James Buchanan (1791-1868) the 15th U.S. President was born in Cove Gap, Pennsylvania. He was the only life-long bachelor to occupy the White House, serving just one term from 1857 to 1861.

APRIL 24

April 24, 1800 - The Library of Congress was established in Washington, D.C. It is America's oldest federal cultural institution and the world's largest library. Among the 145 million items in its collections are more than 33 million books, 3 million recordings, 12.5 million photographs, 5.3 million maps, 6 million pieces of sheet music and 63 million manuscripts. About 10,000 new items are added each day.

April 24, 1915 - In Asia Minor during World War I, the first modern-era genocide began with the deportation of Armenian leaders from Constantinople and subsequent massacre by Young Turks. In May, deportations of all Armenians and mass murder by Turks began, resulting in the complete elimination of the Armenians from the Ottoman Empire and all of the historic Armenian homelands. Estimates vary from 800,000 to over 2,000,000 Armenians murdered.

APRIL 25

April 25, 1967 - The first law legalizing abortion was signed by Colorado Governor John Love, allowing abortions in cases in which a panel of three doctors unanimously agreed.



Birthday - Radio inventor Guglielmo Marconi (1874-1937) was born in Bologna, Italy. He pioneered the use of wireless telegraphy in the 1890's. By 1921, Marconi's invention had been developed into wireless telephony (voice radio).

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Candidates chess: Gukesh last man standing, Pragg & Gujrathi's chances suffer blow

Teenaged Indian Grandmaster D Gukesh produced another fantastic performance to crash through the defences of Azerbaijan's Nijat Abasov and regain a share of the lead but R Praggnanandhaa and Vidit Gujrathi bowed out of contention after the 12th round of the Candidates chess tournament in Toronto.

With American Hikaru Nakamura scoring a victory over Firouzja Alireza of France, it is now a three-way lead at the top.

Gukesh and Nakamura joined overnight leader Ian Nepomniachtchi of Russia, who drew with Praggnanandhaa, on 7.5 points and the three are now followed by Fabiano Caruana of the United States, who is on seven points.

Praggnanandhaa is still fifth with six points with Gujrathi following him on five points.

However, with just two rounds to come in the eight-player double round-robin tournament, it is almost impossible for the duo to finish on the podium. Alireza and Abasov fill up the rear of the table with 4.5 and three points, respectively.

In the women's section, the Chinese domination was cemented by Zhongyi Tan, who played out a draw with Nuryul Salimova of Bulgaria.

Russian Kateryna Lagno was only able to squeeze out half-a-point against another Chinese Tingjie Lei.

India's Koneru Humpy did well to hold Aleksandra Goryachkina of Russia to a draw, while R Vaishali scored her second straight victory at the expense of Anna Muzychuk of Ukraine.

While Tan on eight points, Lei is half-a-point behind. The trio of Humpy, Lagno and Goryachkina are a distant third with six points. Vaishali moved to 5.5 points to take the sixth spot, ahead of Salimova and Muzychuk.

The 17-year-old Gukesh is only the second youngest in history to ever compete in the Candidates and the last time someone younger played was way back in 1959 — when Bobby Fischer stormed into the chess world.

IPL 17 Rahul, de Kock slam fifties as LSG score 8-wicket win over CSK

LUCKNOW (TIP)

Openers KL Rahul and Quinton de Kock produced a chasing masterclass on a slow pitch to power Lucknow Super Giants to a comfortable eight-wicket win over Chennai Super Kings in their IPL match.

Asked to bat first, Ravindra Jadeja came up with a solid unbeaten 57 before Moeen Ali (30 off 20) and MS Dhoni (28 off 9) went on a six-hitting spree to take CSK to a fighting 176/6.

In reply, Rahul (82) and de Kock (54) batted with authority during their match-winning alliance of 134, the highest partnership for any wicket at the Ekana Stadium, as LSG scored 180/2 in 19 overs to recover from back-to-back losses and consolidate their position in the table. CSK, who came into the match with two straight wins, slumped to their third loss.

Guilty of not capitalising on his starts, Rahul finally lived up to the expectations, smashing nine fours and three sixes in his 53-ball knock, while de Kock overcame a scratchy start to hit five fours and a six in his 43-ball knock.

Rahul was the aggressor, playing some magnificent strokes to give LSG a flying start as the powerplay yielded 54 runs. After 10 overs, LSG were 89 for no loss.

A one-handed catch from Jadeja finally ended Rahul's fabulous



KL Rahul (82) played the role of an enforcer to perfection, his magnificent strokes giving LSG a flying start. PTI

knock but it was too late.

Earlier, Rahul was spot on with his bowling changes as the pacers put the CSK batters under pressure initially before spinner Krunal Pandya tightened the noose in the middle overs.

"Feels good at the end of the day. When you win, it looks like you make all the decisions right. Impossible to get all right. Depends on the kind of wicket we are

playing on and the kind of batters there are. We spend time doing homework on tactics and we spoke about them not settling against one style of bowling," Rahul said.

Brief scores

CSK: 176/6 in 20 overs (Jadeja 57*, Rahane 36, Moeen 30, Dhoni 28*; Krunal 2/16) vs LSG: 180/2 in 19 overs (Rahul 82, de Kock 54).

Source: PTI

Indian free style wrestlers miss out on Paris Games qualification

BISHKEK (TIP)

In a huge setback to Indian wrestling, Aman Sehrawat missed out on securing a berth for the Paris Games after losing his semifinal at the Asian Olympic Qualifier while Deepak Punia and Sujeeet Kalkal were not allowed to compete after they reported late for weigh-in, here on Friday, April 19.

Competing in 57kg category, Aman began in tremendous fashion, trampling his first two rivals—Yerassyl Mukhtaruly and Sungwon Kim—by technical superiority but was pinned by Uzbekistan's Gulomjon Abdullaev after falling behind by 10 points.

A lot of hope rested on Aman, who has emerged as one for the future in a category in which Ravi Dahiya excelled. Among all the wrestlers in men's free style category Asian Games bronze medallist Aman was the country's biggest hope to win a quota place.

Abdullaev began with a left-leg attack and converted that into a take-down. The Uzbek rattled Aman with a sensational four-pointer and within no time, the Indian was under pressure to make a comeback. It made him slow while the speed with



The nightmarish day, from India's point of view, ended with a prodigy, Aman Sehrawat, being handed a harsh reality check after he was pinned by Uzbekistan's Gulomjon Abdullaev in a little over two minutes in the 57 kg category semifinal. (Reuters)

which Abdullaev created opportunities helped him clinch the contest.

Struggling at the edge of a circle to wriggle out of Abdullaev's hold, Aman seemed to have given up and was pinned.

In 74kg, Jaideep had a great start as he pinned

Turkmenistan's Al Arslan Begenjov but lost his quarterfinal to Kyrgyzstan Orozobek Toktomambetov on criteria after being locked 2-2.

Sumit Malik (125kg) also lost his first round to Kyrgyzstan's Lkhagvagerel Munkhtur by technical superiority while Deepak (97kg) faded in qualification round, losing by technical superiority to Arash Yoshida. This was after both Punia and Sujeeet eventually managed to reach Bishkek after being stranded at the Dubai international airport due to incessant rain and flooding but could not report for the mandatory weigh-in on time.

The organisers did not allow late weigh-in despite request from the Indian coaches.

Punia (86kg), who had come close to winning a medal at the Tokyo Games, and Sujeeet (65kg), were on their way to Bishkek when a majority of the flights leaving Dubai got cancelled or delayed because of the flooding at the airport.

The duo, accompanied by Russian coach Kamal Malikov and physio Shubham Gupta, were forced to sleep on the floor and had no access to proper food due to the crisis in Dubai.

Source: PTI

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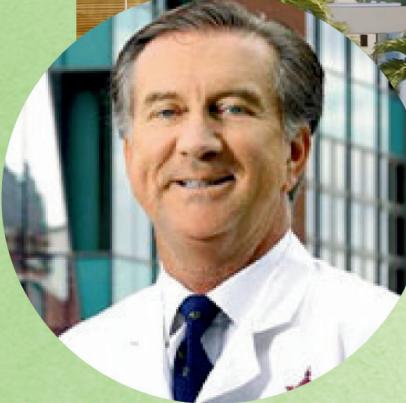
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