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More than 2,000 pro-Palestinian protesters arrested across US campuses: The Guardian

POLICE ARREST MORE THAN 200 STUDENTS AT UCLA AS LAW ENFORCEMENT CLEARS CAMP AT DARTMOUTH, ARRESTING MORE THAN 90 STUDENTS



Pro-Palestinian protesters taken into custody after Columbia University calls in New York police officers. More than 2,000 people have now been arrested during pro-Palestinian protests across dozens of US college campuses in recent weeks.

MAY 3, 2024

NEW YORK (TIP): Police arrested more than 300 pro-Palestinian demonstrators on college campuses on Wednesday, May 1 night into Thursday, May 2 morning, pushing the total past 2,000, according to an Associated Press tally.

More than 200 students were arrested at the University of California, Los Angeles, as police cleared a fortified encampment, and more than 90 students were arrested at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire.

Dozens more were arrested at the University of New Hampshire and at the University of Buffalo. In Oregon, police moved into the school's library on Thursday, which has been occupied by demonstrators since Monday.

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GOPIO PASSES RESOLUTION FOR FULL DUAL NATIONALITY AT THE CONVENTION



GOPIO Convention 2024 being inaugurated with lighting of the lamp by Ambassador Samuel Hinds, Deputy Consul General Dr. Varun Jeph and GOPIO Officials

APRIL 29, 2024

EDISON, NJ (TIP): The Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO) celebrated its 35th Anniversary on April 26-28, 2024 at its Convention 2024

at Royal Albert Palace, Fords, New Jersey, USA. The convention focused on India's Present and the Future and what role the Diaspora Indians can play in

CONTD ON PAGE 50

May consider granting interim bail to Delhi CM Kejriwal in view of Lok Sabha election: Supreme Court

BENCH POSTS THE MATTER FOR FURTHER HEARING ON MAY 7

MAY 3, 2024

NEW DELHI (TIP): Noting the hearing on Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's petition challenging his arrest in a money-laundering case linked to excise policy scam was likely to take time, the Supreme Court on Friday, May 3, said it may consider granting him interim bail in view of the ongoing Lok Sabha polls.

"It appears we can't complete it today. We will post it on Tuesday, May 7 morning itself. Mr Raju one more thing... If it's going to take time, and it does appear it may take time, we may then consider the question of interim bail because of the elections. We may hear on that part because of elections," a



May consider granting interim bail to Delhi CM Kejriwal in view of Lok Sabha election, says Supreme Court of India

Bench led by Justice Sanjiv Khanna told Additional Solicitor General SV Raju who represented the ED. The Bench, which had earlier asked the ED to explain the timing of Kejriwal's arrest,

contd on page 44



Prime Minister Rishi Sunak

File photo

UK's ruling Conservatives suffer big losses in local elections as Labour appears headed for power

MAY 3, 2024

LONDON (TIP): In what appears to be a big setback to British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, his ruling Conservative Party is suffering heavy losses as local election results pour in on Friday, May 3.

contd on page 44



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## COMMENT

Looking beyond empty  
promises and guaranteesBY  
INDRAJIT SALUJA

India, a diverse and culturally rich nation, is currently in the midst of general elections spanning seven phases. With two phases already completed and five remaining, the eyes of the world are turned toward this major democratic event, watching closely the political circus that unfolds. Political parties are competing for power, making lofty promises and giving guarantees of a paradise they would deliver, often focusing on providing freebies and doles to attract voters.

Political parties have been known to make grand promises during elections. They offer guarantees for free housing, free education, free healthcare, and other social welfare measures, seeking to win the hearts and minds of voters. While these promises sound appealing on the surface, their feasibility and long-term impact on the economy and society remain questionable.

One of the significant concerns during these elections is the use of communal politics and divisive rhetoric by some parties, particularly the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The BJP, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has been accused of promoting a Hindutva agenda, which emphasizes the notion of India as a nation for Hindus. This stance

has led to increased polarization and division among different religious and cultural communities in the country.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership has been characterized by his strong oratory skills and persuasive communication. His ability to connect with the masses through speeches and media campaigns has played a key role in his political success. However, critics argue that his promises often lack substance and are primarily aimed at gaining electoral support.

Prime Minister Modi made several major promises during his previous tenures, some of which have not been fully realized. For instance, he pledged to bring back black money stashed abroad and distribute ₹1.5 million to each person in the country. This promise has not materialized, leaving many people feeling cheated.

Another significant promise was to provide every family with a pucca house (a permanent, well-constructed home) with all facilities by 2022. However, progress on this front has been slow, and many families continue to live in substandard housing conditions, and many have no shelter.

The Modi government has often boasted about India's growing economic strength, claiming that the country will be the third-largest economy in the world by 2050. Despite these grand claims, the reality on the ground presents a different picture. India still faces significant economic disparities, with poverty

affecting a large portion of the population.

The government provides 5 kg of food grains per month to 850 million people out of a total population of 1.3 billion to ensure basic survival. This indicates the depth of poverty and the need for more comprehensive economic reforms and social welfare programs.

While the BJP has been criticized for its communal approach, it is essential to note that other political parties are not entirely free from communalism either. Many parties have engaged in similar divisive tactics to appeal to specific vote banks, further exacerbating societal divisions.

The future of India hinges on its ability to address these challenges and move towards a more inclusive, equitable, and harmonious society. The country must focus on uniting its diverse population rather than promoting narrow, divisive agendas. Political parties should prioritize meaningful policies that genuinely uplift the lives of the people and foster national unity.

The general elections in India are a critical moment for the country's democracy. While political parties compete fiercely for power, they must remember their responsibility to uphold the principles of democracy, fairness, and unity. The electorate, too, should remain vigilant and discerning, looking beyond empty promises and guarantees to support leaders who will genuinely work towards a better future for all.

## GUEST COMMENT

Pro-Palestine protests: US must not  
silence dissent by students

The crackdown on pro-Palestine protests at Columbia University and other campuses across the US is an assault on the fundamental principles of free speech and academic freedom. As hundreds of students face arrests, threats of expulsion and disciplinary action for voicing their solidarity with beleaguered Gazans, it is crucial to recognize that silencing dissent only deepens the wounds of injustice and undermines the values that the US claims to uphold. At the heart of these protests lies a demand for justice. Students are calling for their universities to divest from companies complicit in Israel's oppression of Palestinians - a moral stance in response to the ongoing

violence and human rights violations in Gaza.

Instead of addressing the students' grievances, the authorities have resorted to heavy-handed tactics, invoking charges of anti-Semitism to justify their actions. Condemning Israel's excesses is not tantamount to anti-Semitism. It is a legitimate form of protest against injustice, rooted in the principles of human rights and international law. By conflating criticism of the Israeli government with hatred towards Jewish people, detractors are seeking to delegitimize dissent and shield Israel from accountability.

The response from universities and law agencies is worrisome. The use of

force to suppress demonstrations runs counter to the democratic values that institutions of learning should safeguard. Instead of fostering an environment where diverse perspectives can be freely expressed, these actions create a chilling effect, stifling debate and dissent. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has rightly expressed concern over the disproportionate response to these protests, emphasizing the importance of protecting freedom of expression. As the self-proclaimed leader of the free world, the US must not silence divergent voices; it must be a beacon of hope and ensure freedom as well as justice for all.

(Tribune, India)

# Colorful Festivities Mark Grand Celebration of Gujarat & Maharashtra Day at the Indian Consulate in New York



Amidst the celebration, Amul honors its Gujarat heritage by launching in the USA, a fitting tribute to this auspicious occasion

MAY 1, 2024

**NEW YORK (TIP):** The Gujarati Associations of North America hosted a celebration of Gujarat Maharashtra Day in collaboration with the Consulate General of India. The grand celebration, proudly presented by Amul The Taste of India, served as a lively platform to celebrate the formation of the two states on this date in 1960. This celebration is an opportunity for communities to reaffirm their commitment to upholding the values of linguistic diversity, regional autonomy, and cooperative federalism that are crucial to India's democratic fabric

The event was made possible thanks to the collaborative efforts of the Gujarati Associations of North America, the Consulate General of India in New York, and their esteemed partners, including the Federation of Indian Associations FIA-NY-NY-CT-NE, the Gujarati Literary Academy of North America (GLA), and the Albany Dhol Tasha Pathak.

The evening began with a warm welcome by Ms. Priti Patel, the General Secretary of FIA. She set the stage for an unforgettable journey through the cultural landscapes of Gujarat and Maharashtra. Being a proud Gujarati herself, she recited a beautiful Gujarati poem that translates to "Gujarat is one of Bharat's heartbeat, it's the name of a fountain, and of peace and prosperity." Similarly, Pallavi Kabadi addressed the crowd in Marathi, perfectly demonstrating the symphony in the cultures of the two states.

Dr. Avinash Gupta, President of the FIA, Addressed the crowd and introduced our guests and sponsors. Hailing from the Jharkhand himself, he pointed out how

this event is a showcase of unity in diversity in itself when the crowd enthusiastically responded with the Gujarati phrase, "Majama," to his greeting, "Kem Cho." He invited FIA Chairman, Mr. Ankur Vaidya, to join him and welcome Hon. Binaya S. Pradhan, Consul General of India in New York with an ethnic turban or pagdi traditionally worn by men in the Gujarat-Maharashtra region.

Mr. Pradhan delivered an inspiring speech, emphasizing the strong



The NTI School of Dance kicked off the evening with a mesmerizing performance choreographed by Sima and Dani

connections between India and its diaspora. He highlighted that the separation between the two states was a celebration of their unique identities, saying "Today, we are celebrating the birth of the two states. We are also celebrating the economic and social progress they have made in the last 63 years." He also mentioned how the Gujarati community, known for thriving everywhere they go,

dominated the first two waves of Indian immigration to America. He spoke about the history of the communities and their interrelatedness, with a focus on his own roots in Orissa.

The highlight of the evening was the series of mesmerizing performances and thought-provoking speeches that captivated the audience. From the enchanting dances of Nirmity School of Dance and DanceXStudio to the insightful speeches by Poet Ankit Trivedi, Dr. Kenneth X. Robbins, and Dr. Maitree Sabnis, each segment of the program left a lasting impression on all in attendance.

Attendees had the opportunity to attend a fascinating and insightful presentation by Dr. Kenneth Robbins and Dr. Maitree Sabnis on the history of Gujarat and Maharashtra via Zoom. Their works on the history of these two states were the highlight of the event as they shared their knowledge about the origin of the states, including the etymology of their names, and discussed their current-day economic situations and opportunities. Both professors are collaborators who curated and lectured on the Princely States of Gujarat series at the Asiatic Society, and their collaboration includes a book titled

"Gujarat: A Journey Through History and Culture."

Mr. Ankit Trivedi, a well-known name in the field of Gujarati literature, was invited on stage to share his work on this auspicious occasion. He graciously entertained the crowd by reciting his poems and also spoke about his experience and pride in being a part of the community.

Following his engaging performance, The NTI School of Dance presented the first performance of the evening, choreographed by Sima and Dani. The audience was then treated to a performance by the Dance X studio, choreographed by Jay Shrikant.

In a special segment, Mr. Srujal Parikh, Joint Secretary and Board Member of FIA, graced the stage to felicitate the sponsors and partners whose generous support made the event possible. He also celebrated the launch of Amul products in the USA for the first time in history on this



Consul General Hon. Binaya S. Pradhan delivers an inspiring speech, celebrating the birth and progress of Gujarat and Maharashtra in the past 63 years.

auspicious occasion.

Mr. Jayen Mehta, the MD of Amul, The Taste of India, inaugurated the launch and enlightened the crowd through the journey and success of Amul.

The history of Amul was highlighted, from its founding in 1946 to its growth into the world's largest farmer-owned dairy company with an annual turnover of over \$10 billion. The company's mission to become the strongest and largest brand in the world was reinforced by the launch of fresh milk in the US, in partnership with the Michigan Milk Producers. The launch of Amul products in the US was then officially announced, and Joe Dig Leo, the President and CEO of the MMPA, along with Mr. Greg Solin, Mr. Brad Parks, and Sudeep Jain, along with Hon. Consul General Mr. Pradhan and Deputy Consul General Varun Jeph, were called up on stage.

Getting to the most awaited part of the event, which follows a tradition of honoring influential individuals from the states of Gujarat and Maharashtra who have made us proud in their specific domains. Mr. Ankur Vaidya announces the names of all the honorees and sponsors to be felicitated, using this occasion to honor them. He invited Honorable Consul General Binaya Pradhan, along with Deputy Consul General Varun Jeph and Alok Kumar, to felicitate the honorees with the traditional ethnic turban and a memento of the Modhera Sun Temple as a symbolic reference to the occasion. Among these honorees were Hemant Marathe, Mayor of West Windsor, FIA Senior Advisor Padma Shree Dr. Sudhir Parikh, Grammy Award winner Falu Shah, Hamil Davnekar, Gujarati poet and composer Ankit Trivedi, Mr. Jayen Mehta from Amul, the entire team of GANA, Rambhai Gadvi, Legend of Gujarati literature and a founding member of the FIA, GLA President Ashish Desai on stage. He also thanked all the partners and sponsors, including the entire team of Amul, Team Air India, and the entire team of Consul General of NY.

As the evening drew to a close, Bhavisha Patel from Siddhivinayak Temple New Jersey graced the stage with a beautiful performance of "Vagyo Re Dhol," a well-known folk song, leaving the audience spellbound.



Audience engrossed in the Gujarat Maharashtra Day festivities, cherishing the community bond

## INDIAN AMERICAN BHAVINI PATEL LOSES CONGRESSIONAL PRIMARY RACE IN PENNSYLVANIA



Bhavini Patel lost the Democratic primary Congressional race for the 12th Congressional District of Pennsylvania

APRIL 24, 2024

**WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP):** Indian American Bhavini Patel lost the Democratic primary Congressional race from Pennsylvania on Tuesday, April 23 night, but not before giving a tough fight to the incumbent.

Incumbent Congresswoman Summer Lee was projected to be the winner of the primary race for the 12th Congressional District of Pennsylvania. She received 59 per cent of the votes as against Patel's 41 per cent.

As expected, both President Joe Biden and his Republican challenger Donald Trump won their respective presidential primaries. Biden got 94 per cent of the votes from the Democrats.

Trump received 80 per cent and Indian American Nikki Haley, who dropped out of the race in March, surprisingly received nearly 20 per cent of the votes from the Republicans in the Pennsylvania presidential primary.

Patel (30) is a Biden supporter while Lee, the first-time lawmaker, has been an open critic of the president and has supported Palestine in its war against Israel.

"Her (Patel's) loss Tuesday shows that a progressive candidate like Ms Lee can still carry districts like Pittsburgh, despite Ms Patel and her supporters claiming that the incumbent's progressive views and alignment with the 'Squad' in Congress did not accurately reflect the politics of the area," Pittsburgh Post-Gazette said after the election results were out.

The Squad is an informal group of the most progressive members of Congress, most commonly associated with Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Ilhan Omar, Rashida Tlaib and Ayana Pressley.

Originally from Gujarat in India, Patel's mother came to the United States as an immigrant.

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

# Five Indian Americans named to AI Safety and Security inaugural Board

APRIL 30, 2024

**WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP):** Five Indian American CEOs are among 22 inaugural members of the AI Safety and Security Board formed to ensure safe and secure development and deployment of AI technology in the nation's critical infrastructure.

The board will advise the Secretary of Homeland Security, the critical infrastructure community, other private sector stakeholders, and the broader public on these issues, according to a DHS news release.

The Board's 22 inaugural members include representatives from a range of sectors, including software and hardware company executives, critical infrastructure operators, public officials, the civil rights community, and academia.

The Board will develop recommendations to help critical infrastructure stakeholders, such as transportation service providers, pipeline and power grid operators, and internet service providers, more responsibly leverage AI technologies.

It will also develop recommendations to prevent and prepare for AI-related disruptions to critical services that impact national or economic security, public health, or safety.

Indian American members of the Board are: Arvind Krishna, Chairman and CEO of IBM; Satya Nadella, Chairman and CEO of Microsoft; Shantanu Narayen, Chair and CEO of Adobe; Sundar Pichai, CEO of Alphabet; and Arati Prabhakar, Assistant to the President for Science and Technology; Director, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy.

DHS is responsible for the overall security and resilience of the nation's critical infrastructure, which hundreds of millions of Americans rely on every day to light their homes, conduct business, exchange information, and put food on the



table, according to the release.

Critical infrastructure encompasses 16 sectors of American industry, including our defense, energy, agriculture, transportation, and internet technology sectors. The Board will advise DHS on ensuring the safe and responsible deployment of AI technology in these sectors in the years to come, and it will look to address threats posed by this technology to these vital services.

"Artificial Intelligence is a transformative technology that can advance our national interests in unprecedented ways. At the same time, it presents real risks- risks that we can mitigate by adopting best practices and taking other studied, concrete actions," said Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas.

The Board will help DHS stay ahead of evolving threats posed by hostile nation-state actors and reinforce our national security by helping to deter and prevent those threats.

The DHS Homeland Threat Assessment of 2024 warns the public of the threat AI-assisted tools pose to our economic security and critical infrastructure, including how these technologies "have the potential to enable larger scale, faster, efficient, and more evasive cyber attacks-against targets, including pipelines, railways, and other US critical infrastructure."

It also concludes that nation-states, including the People's Republic of China, are developing "other AI technologies that could undermine US cyber defenses, including generative AI programs that

support malicious activity such as malware attacks."

Shantanu Narayen, Chair & CEO, Adobe: "Adobe is honored to be a part of the Artificial Intelligence Safety and Security Board to share learnings and recommendations with Secretary Mayorkas and key stakeholders across the public and private sectors. This Board holds enormous potential to advance AI technology, establishing guidelines that will help AI enhance and secure our nation's critical infrastructure while mitigating any risks it could pose."

Arvind Krishna, Chairman and CEO, IBM: "Artificial intelligence is a game-changing technology that is making businesses smarter, stronger, and safer. AI's ability to analyze threat information at scale can help protect the nation's critical infrastructure from cyberattacks, an imperative that I look forward to advancing as a member of the AI Safety and Security Board."

Satya Nadella, Chairman and CEO, Microsoft: "Artificial Intelligence is the most transformative technology of our time, and we must ensure it is deployed safely and responsibly. Microsoft is honored to participate in this important effort and looks forward to sharing both our learnings to date, and our plans going forward. We thank Secretary Mayorkas for including us in this important endeavor and look forward to the continued partnership."

Arati Prabhakar, Assistant to the President for Science and Technology; Director, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy: "AI is one of the most powerful technologies of our time. President Biden has made clear that we must manage AI's risks so that we can seize its benefits. Thanks to Secretary Mayorkas for taking action to protect America's critical infrastructure-our energy system, banking, health care, and communications-from AI risks and harms."

## Indian American man shot dead after assaulting an officer by hitting his car

APRIL 26, 2024

**SAN ANTONIO, TX (TIP):** A 42-year-old man Indian American man was shot and killed by police in San Antonio, Texas, after he tried to hit an officer who was trying to execute an arrest warrant over the weekend.



Sachin Kumar Sahoo was shot and killed by police in San Antonio, Texas, after he tried to hit an officer who was trying to execute an arrest warrant over the weekend.

That suspect, later identified as Sachin Kumar Sahoo, had allegedly hit a woman with his car Saturday afternoon, local news outlet reported.

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

## Three Indian-origin women killed in South Carolina crash

APRIL 29, 2024

**NEW YORK (TIP):** Three women from India were killed and another person was hospitalized Saturday, April 27, after a speeding sports utility vehicle went airborne and crashed into trees in South Carolina, according to local media reports.



The crash occurred at noon Friday on Staunton Bridge Road along Interstate 85 near Lakeside Road, in Greenville County, media reports said, citing Chief Deputy Coroner Mike Ellis. The coroner's office on Saturday identified the deceased women as Manisha Rajendra Patel, Sangita Bhavnes Patel and Rekhaben Dilip Patel from India. The cause of their death was listed as blunt force trauma.

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

Manisha Rajendra Patel, Sangita Bhavnes Patel and Rekhaben Dilip Patel were killed in a car crash

# Indo-British author Sharbani Basu conferred honorary doctorate by University of London

MAY 1, 2024

**LONDON (TIP):** Kolkata-born historian-author Shrabani Basu has been conferred an honorary doctorate by the University of London for her contributions to the field of literature and study of the shared British Indian history.

The London-based author of bestselling biographical books 'Spy Princess: The Life of Noor Inayat Khan' and 'Victoria and Abdul: The True Story of the Queen's Closest Confidant', made into an Oscar-nominated film starring Dame Judi Dench, received her honorary Degree of Doctor of Literature at a graduation ceremony on Tuesday.

Princess Anne -- the Princess Royal, the sister of King Charles III -- conferred the degree on Basu in her capacity as Chancellor of the university.

"In 2009, it was the University of London that gave us permission to build a memorial for World War II heroine, Noor Inayat Khan, in Gordon Square," said Dr Basu, acknowledging the "humbling and proud moment".

"The university recognized the importance of commemorating Noor Inayat Khan, who was barely known at the time. It was a memorable day when the bust was unveiled in 2012 by Her Royal Highness, the Princess Royal.



Shrabani Basu has been conferred an honorary doctorate by the University of London for her contributions to the field of literature and study of the shared British Indian history.

Today, the memorial is visited by people from around the world, and Noor's story is well known," she said.

In her address at the ceremony, the history graduate from St. Stephen's College in Delhi University traced her journey from India to the UK in the late 1980s as a journalist when she encountered the many hidden gems that found their way into her books.

"For me, as an author, telling the stories of Indians in the First and Second World Wars has been a privilege. Many of

the South Asian diaspora in Britain have ancestors who served in the war. Most know nothing or very little about them. I have seen first-hand how it energizes them when I talk about it. It gives them a connection, a stake in the system, a sense of inclusion," said the author of 'For King and Another Country: Indian Soldiers on the Western Front, 1914-18'.

She also referenced the importance of the study of the Empire in UK schools as a binding and uniting force.

"Much has been debated about the teaching of the Empire in schools. I see this not as something divisive, but one that brings people together and promotes an understanding of each other's culture and histories. Our shared future is, after all, based on our shared past," said the writer, in her early 60s.

In the university's citation for their newest honorary doctorate, Pro Vice-Chancellor Professor Mary Stiasny described Basu as a "thought leader" on India and the British Empire.

"A journalist, 'Sunday Times' bestselling author and historian, Shrabani's work combines her twinned passions of journalism and history and often centers on British rule in India, exploring the past through the lens of hidden stories and marginalized voices," said Stiasny.

## INDIAN AMERICAN EDUCATIONIST RAM SHRIRAM RECEIVES STANFORD'S GOLD SPIKE AWARD



Ram Shriram receives Stanford's Gold Spike Award

MAY 1, 2024

**STANFORD (TIP) :** Stanford University has awarded Indian American educationist Ram Shriram this year's Gold Spike Award, the university's highest annual honor for volunteer service with Angela Nomellini. University president Richard Saller conferred the awards at an April 20 dinner held in their honor, according to a university press release.

The Gold Spike Award is presented by Stanford Associates, an honorary organization of Stanford alumni who have demonstrated significant and long-standing volunteer service to the university.

Ram Shriram "is an intellectually curious changemaker whose far-reaching impact reflects his extraordinary generosity of spirit," according to Stanford Associates. "A visionary leader across the university, he has been a staunch advocate and dynamic fundraiser for groundbreaking efforts including bioengineering and AI, as well as a trusted advisor on matters impacting the entire institution."

A parent of two Stanford alumni, Shriram has served two terms on the Board of Trustees (including as vice chair), where he was known for his wide-ranging expertise and strategic counsel. As a trustee, he led the Board's Special Committee on Online Education; sat on committees for academic policy, planning and management, agenda, compensation, development, finance, globalization, land and buildings, and trusteeship; and was an advisor to current and past university presidents and chairs of the board.

Stanford leaders credit Shriram with helping numerous schools and initiatives reach their strategic objectives. He has co-chaired the People-Centered Computing Task Force, spent seven years on the Stanford SEED Advisory Board, and currently serves on both the Stanford Health Care Board of Directors and the Stanford Institute for Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence Advisory Board.

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

## Indian American astronaut Sunita Williams set for first piloted launch of Boeing's Starliner



Photo caption: Sunita Williams is all set to go on her third mission to the international space station on May 6 on the first piloted flight of Boeing's Starliner spacecraft.

APRIL 26, 2024

**WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP):** Veteran Indian American astronaut Sunita Williams is all set to go on her third mission to the international space station on May 6 on the first piloted flight of Boeing's Starliner spacecraft. Williams and astronaut Barry "Butch" Wilmore, both former Navy test pilots, are set for the launch atop a United Launch Alliance Atlas 5 rocket at 10:34 pm EDT on Monday, May 6, according to a NASA statement. If all goes well, Williams and Wilmore will dock at the space station on May 8 and return to Earth May 15 or shortly thereafter. If the mission goes well, NASA plans to begin operational Starliner crew rotation flights in 2025, alternating crew launches with SpaceX.

Williams and Wilmore, flew to the Kennedy Space Center Thursday afternoon to prepare for the first piloted launch of Starliner, a long-awaited flight running years behind schedule after two uncrewed test flights and extensive work to resolve a variety of technical problems. Two of NASA's most seasoned astronauts with four previous spaceflights, 11 spacewalks and 500 days in orbit between then, landed at the spaceport's 3-mile-long runway in T-38 jet trainers after a flight from the Johnson Space Center in Houston.

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

## Indian students bag NASA awards for Human Exploration Rover Challenge



The "Crash and Burn" award went to the KIET Group of Institutions in Delhi-NCR, while the "Rookie of the Year" went to Kanakia International School in Mumbai.

APRIL 23, 2024

**WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP):** Two Indian students' teams from the New Delhi area and Mumbai have won awards from the NASA for the Human Exploration Rover Challenge.

The KIET Group of Institutions, Delhi-NCR has won the award in the "Crash and Burn" category of the annual Human Exploration Rover Challenge award, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration announced on Monday.

The Kanakia International School from Mumbai was given the "Rookie of the Year" award.

More than 600 students with 72 teams from around the world participated as the HERC celebrated its 30th anniversary as a NASA competition. Parish Episcopal School from Dallas in the United States secured the first place in the high school division and the University of Alabama in Huntsville captured the college/university title.

The annual engineering competition one of the NASA's longest-standing challenges held its concluding event on April 19 and April 20 at the US Space and Rocket Centre in Huntsville, Alabama, near the NASA's Marshall Space Flight Centre.

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

# Empire State Local News Coalition Celebrates Inclusion of \$90 Million Local Media Tax Credit in Final FY 2025 New York State Budget

## FIRST-IN-THE-NATION BILL INCENTIVIZES THE RETENTION AND HIRING OF LOCAL JOURNALISTS

APRIL 22, 2024

**NEW YORK (TIP):** Governor Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature, on April 21, unveiled the final state budget, including a payroll tax credit for local news outlets, modeled on the Local Journalism Sustainability Act, in the sweeping package. With the passage of this bill, New York is now the first state in the nation to incentivize hiring and retaining local journalists. This game changer for the local news industry comes just months after the launch of the Empire State Local News Coalition, an unprecedented, grassroots campaign powered by more than 200 community newspapers across the state.

Senator Brad Hoylman-Sigal, the Senate bill sponsor, said: "I'm elated that our first-in-the-nation Local Journalism Sustainability Act is passing in the state budget. A thriving local news industry is vital to the health of our democracy and it's our responsibility to help ensure New Yorkers have access to independent and community-focused journalism. Thank you to Senate Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins, Governor Hochul, our Assembly Sponsor Woerner and the over 200 local publications of the Empire State Local News Coalition who helped pass our bill. Our efforts will help ensure that our democracy will not die in darkness."

The program--\$30 million per year for three years--allows each eligible newspaper and broadcast business to receive a 50% refundable tax credit against the first \$50,000 of an employee's salary, up to a total of \$300,000



per business. \$4 million will be allocated to incentivize print and broadcast businesses to hire new journalists. The remaining \$26 million will be split evenly between businesses with fewer than 100 employees and those with more than 100 employees, ensuring that hyperlocal, independent news organizations have a fair shot at access to these funds.

After stalling for years, the Local Journalism Sustainability Act catapulted into a top legislative priority this session following the early-2024 founding of the Empire State Local News Coalition and the coalition's mobilization of support from hundreds of New York hometown papers as well as a broad range of stakeholders from around the country, including the Rebuild Local News Coalition, Microsoft, and El

Diario. Organized labor including NYS AFL-CIO, CWA District 1, and national and local news guilds also played a critical role in mobilizing support for this historic bill.

"The Empire State Local News Coalition is thrilled by the state budget's inclusion of a payroll tax credit for local news outlets modeled on the Local Journalism Sustainability Act. New York is now the first state in the nation to incentivize hiring and retaining local journalists—a critical investment given that hundreds of New York's newspapers have closed since 2004, leaving too many New York communities without access to vital local information. The objectivity of this credit shows that there is a fair way for public policy to support local news without jeopardizing journalistic integrity. This program is a model for other states across the U.S. to follow as communities across the country raise their voices to save local news" said Zachary Richner, founder of the Empire State Local News Coalition.

"We're incredibly proud of the 200 newspapers in our coalition, which built an unprecedented grassroots movement in support of saving New York's local news industry in a few short months. We're especially grateful to Senator Brad Hoylman-Sigal, whose tireless advocacy for this tax credit was instrumental in moving it through the legislative process.

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



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# Didi Krishna Helps Unlock Inner Power and Embrace Peace at 4 Transformative Events in New Jersey and New York

MAY 2, 2024

**NEW YORK (TIP):** After successful events in Miami and Dallas conducted recently, Didi Krishna continues her journey of spiritual enlightenment, bringing transformative events to the tristate area and beyond.

Join us as we celebrate Mother's Day and the rich Sindhi community heritage on May 12th at the Sadhu Vaswani Center in Closter New Jersey. This special event promises a vibrant gathering of over 1000 people filled with cultural performances, festivities, and a heartfelt talk by Didi Krishna.

On May 21st, immerse yourself in an unforgettable evening in Manhattan, at Jay Conference center in New York, where Grammy-nominated singer Krishna Das will enchant audiences with a soul-stirring concert. Following the performance, Didi Krishna will share insights on unlocking your inner power, guiding you on a journey of self-discovery and empowerment with 600+ guests including dignitaries like Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj.

Experience the power of unity and multifaith harmony at the World Peace Event by Sadhu Vaswani Center For World Peace on June 1st at Royal Albert palace in New Jersey. Join thousands of participants for an inspiring gathering featuring performances, interfaith dialogue, children's activities, delicious snacks, Indian lunch meals, and a special

peace meditation led by Didi Krishna, the event will also see many dignitaries from the community.

Calling all youth in NYC to rise and thrive with Didi Krishna on June 2nd at Pier 57 in Manhattan. Explore tools to raise your vibrational frequency and navigate life's challenges with resilience and grace.

These events are free to attend and include scrumptious meals and engaging programs. Seats are fast filling so please RSVP on the website below.

Additionally, don't miss the annual 3-day residential Sadhana Camp with Didi Krishna in Stamford, Connecticut, over Memorial Day weekend. Dive deep into the theme & "Design Your Destiny" with Didi Krishna and fellow seekers at a very nominal fee.

Sadhu Vaswani Center For World Peace, a registered non profit and Didi Krishna, the current leader of the Sadhu Vaswani Mission in Pune, India are dedicated to sharing the teachings of Dada J.P. Vaswani and Sadhu T.L. Vaswani as pioneers from the Sindhi Community who lead with compassion, forgiveness, gratitude and service to humanity as their principals to promote peace and foster harmony worldwide.

For event details and registration, visit [www.sadhuvaswanicenter.com](http://www.sadhuvaswanicenter.com). Join us in creating a more peaceful world, one heart at a time as we seek to sow seeds of peace in hearts of humankind.

## CONTACT INFORMATION:

Sadhu Vaswani Center For World Peace

[www.sadhuvaswanicenter.com](http://www.sadhuvaswanicenter.com)

Email:

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[info@sadhuvaswanicenter.com](mailto:info@sadhuvaswanicenter.com)

## ABOUT SADHU VASWANI CENTER FOR WORLD PEACE (USA):

At Sadhu Vaswani Center for World Peace, we seek to sow the seeds of peace in the hearts of humanity through the timeless and profound teachings of Dada J.P. Vaswani and Sadhu T.L. Vaswani. Our pillars of Forgiveness, Compassion, and Gratitude as expressed through selfless service guide us in promoting peace, compassion, and inclusivity globally. As an overseas outpost of the Sadhu Vaswani Mission, headquartered in Pune, India, we honor these teachings through initiatives in education, service, sustainability, interfaith dialogue, and Universal Love. Join us in our mission to cultivate peace, harmony, and unity worldwide.



Didi Krishna Kumari to be in the Tri-States area of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut in May / June to share her Transformative Teachings

## SADHU VASWANI CENTER FOR WORLD PEACE

[info@sadhuvaswanicenter.com](mailto:info@sadhuvaswanicenter.com)

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## STATE ASSEMBLYWOMAN JENIFER RAJKUMAR INTRODUCES BILL TO PROVIDE SURVIVOR BENEFITS TO FAMILY OF FALLEN FDNY OFFICER DEREK FLOYD



Derek Floyd with family  
Derek Floyd / Instagram

MAY 2, 2024

**SOUTH QUEENS, NY (TIP):** Assemblywoman Jenifer Rajkumar, on May 2, announced she is introducing legislation granting retroactive pension eligibility to the late FDNY firefighter Derek Floyd. A former Marine who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, Floyd continued his life of service by joining the FDNY. Due to a disqualifying heart condition, Floyd was terminated last

year only a few months shy of eligibility under the Fire Department Pension Fund. In April, he suffered a fatal heart attack, leaving his wife and two children in a financial crisis. Were Floyd still in the FDNY, they would have been eligible for hundreds of thousands of dollars in survivor benefits.

Assemblywoman Rajkumar's bill will grant retroactive pension eligibility to Floyd, giving his family the support they need in their time of mourning.

Assemblywoman Rajkumar said, "My bill provides Derek Floyd's family with the financial lifeline they need in their time of grief, showing to them and the entire world our profound gratitude for his sacrifices. Floyd honorably served our Nation as a Marine and served our City as one of New York's Bravest. Now is the time for us to serve him and his family. I will not allow his family to be financially devastated. Our City's pension fund must provide them the support they deserve for Floyd's life of service."

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# Iran-Israel war keeps world in suspense



BY YOGESH GUPTA

**THE SITUATION IN WEST ASIA HAS BECOME MORE VOLATILE AND HOLDS DANGEROUS IMPLICATIONS**

**"BY ATTACKING THE IRANIAN CONSULATE IN DAMASCUS - A PROTECTED FACILITY UNDER THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS - ISRAEL SENT A CLEAR MESSAGE TO IRAN THAT ITS AGGRESSIVE ACTIONS WOULD NOT GO UNPUNISHED AND THAT TEL AVIV WOULD GO TO ANY EXTENT TO STRIKE DIRECTLY AT TEHRAN. THE LATTER HAD ALSO AVOIDED ATTACKING ISRAEL, FEARFUL OF AMERICA'S 'IRONCLAD' SUPPORT FOR TEL AVIV AND THE ADVERSE IMPACT OF A LARGE-SCALE CONFLICT ON ITS ECONOMY, WHICH IS REELING UNDER HIGH INFLATION, LOW ECONOMIC GROWTH, SHORTAGE OF VARIOUS COMMODITIES DUE TO SANCTIONS AND DOMESTIC DISCONTENT. IRAN WAS OBLIGED TO TAKE THIS SYMBOLIC ACTION TO RETAIN ITS CREDIBILITY AMONG ITS PEOPLE, FOREIGN PROXIES AND OTHER COUNTRIES SUPPORTING IT."**



Tinderbox: The rivalry between Israel and Iran is turning more vicious as both sides are prepared to launch attacks at each other

Iran reportedly fired about 350 missiles and drones at Israel on April 13 in response to Israel's attack on its consulate in Damascus on April 1, which had resulted in the killing of seven senior military officials, including Gen Mohammad Reza Zahedi, who was handling Iran's relations with the Hezbollah in Lebanon. About 115-130 missiles targeting Israel were intercepted by the Israeli and allied air defenses; others failed in flight and did not reach their target. Iran had alerted the Americans through Swiss, Iraqi, Turkish and Jordanian sources 72 hours in advance about the attack, though without specifying the exact time. Thus, there was no damage, except serious injuries to a seven-year-old Israeli girl. The attack was largely symbolic; the Iranians wanted to tell Israel that they had the capability to hurt it.

It would be difficult for Israel to attack Iran without America's support. Any direct assault by Israel on Tehran's nuclear or military facilities can provoke it.

Tel Aviv's reaction was full of indignation, with the Israeli war cabinet favoring retaliation, though it was divided over the timing and scale of the response. US President Joe Biden told PM Benjamin Netanyahu that Israel had won by thwarting the missiles and that the US would not take part in any counter-offensive against Iran. Two senior Israeli ministers said Tel Aviv would not act alone and build a regional coalition against Iran. The Israeli attack indicated a change of strategy as it had in the past targeted the Iranian associates or proxies mostly in countries involved in supplying weapons or other support to the 'resistance' groups (except nuclear scientists in Iran). Tehran's support for the Hamas in its audacious

attack on Israel in October last year, continuous missile attacks by the Hezbollah in recent days and Houthi attacks on Israeli and American ships in the Red Sea indicated that Iran was feeling emboldened.

By attacking the Iranian consulate in Damascus - a protected facility under the international conventions - Israel sent a clear message to Iran that its aggressive actions would not go unpunished and that Tel Aviv would go to any extent to strike directly at Tehran. The latter had also avoided attacking Israel, fearful of America's 'ironclad' support for Tel Aviv and the adverse impact of a large-scale conflict on its economy, which is reeling under high inflation, low economic growth, shortage of various commodities due to sanctions and domestic discontent. Iran was obliged to take this symbolic action to retain its credibility among its people, foreign proxies and other countries supporting it.

The Arab states were divided in their reaction to the Iranian attack. Saudi Arabia and the UAE reportedly passed on intelligence to the US on Iran's plans to attack Israel, and it helped thwart the massive assault. Jordan actively participated in shooting drones heading to Israel. Several Arab countries allowed the use of their airspace to intercept the Iranian missiles and drones, and some even supplied their forces for assistance. Egypt called for restraint on both sides.

As the Iranian attack became imminent, the US ordered the deployment of aircraft and missile defense systems in the region and coordinated actions between Israel and Arab governments. As per reports, the US operations center in Qatar tracked the missiles and drones launched by Iran through its radars in the Gulf countries.

This information was sent to fighter jets, ships and missile defense systems operating in the region. As soon as the drones and missiles came within range, they were shot down mostly by American and Israeli fighters and some by British, French and Jordanian warplanes.

Besides President Biden, leaders from the UK, Germany, France and other countries have appealed to Israel not to retaliate following the attack. India has asked both countries to go for immediate de-escalation, exercise restraint, step back from violence and return to the path of diplomacy. China expressed 'deep concern' and called on "influential countries (read the US) to play a constructive role in maintaining regional peace and stability". Russia said, "all disagreements be resolved exclusively by political and diplomatic methods". The UN Security Council held an emergency meeting on April 14 to discuss this subject but ended it without any further action.

It would be extremely difficult for Israel to attack Iran directly without America's support. Any direct attack by Israel on Iran's nuclear or military facilities can provoke Tehran and its proxies to launch large-scale missile attacks against Tel Aviv, causing considerable devastation. Tehran has the ability to launch massive drone attacks against the US and allied ships in the Persian Gulf and disrupt the supply of oil and other maritime and air traffic between Europe and Asia. The Biden administration is not in favor of widening the conflict between Israel and Hamas. The Israeli offensive in Gaza has caused widespread devastation, which has angered several important groups in the US, whose support President Biden needs to secure his re-election in November.

The rivalry between Israel and Iran is turning more vicious as both sides are prepared to launch attacks at each other. Iran is looking more to China and Russia as its new allies and has lost interest in the revival of its cooperation with the West. It is not willing to accept the new political and economic framework of cooperation (Abraham Accords) being promoted by the US and wants to reshape the regional order as per its priorities (anti-Americanism, anti-Israelism and the triumph of the Islamic world over the West). The Netanyahu government has shown no inclination to accept the two-state solution to resolve the Palestinian issue. The conflict between Israel and Hamas continues, with no sign of a ceasefire as yet. The Iran-Israel clash is making the situation in West Asia more volatile and unpredictable, with dangerous implications for the world.

(The author is a former ambassador)



# Poll rhetoric threatens India's plurality



BY SHYAM SARAN

THE COUNTRY'S ABILITY TO SUSTAIN A VIBRANT DEMOCRACY IS IN DANGER OF BEING LOST FOREVER

**"ELECTION RHETORIC MUST REMAIN WITHIN THE LIMITS OF CIVILIZED DISCOURSE. THE PURSUIT OF POLITICAL POWER CANNOT BE WITHOUT ETHICAL MARKERS, FOR THAT WILL TAKE US ON A DANGEROUS ROAD OF NATIONAL AND SOCIAL FRAGMENTATION. I WRITE THIS WITH A SENSE OF DEEP CONCERN ABOUT OUR COUNTRY, WHOSE ABILITY TO ACCOMMODATE INCREDIBLE DIVERSITY AND SUSTAIN A VIBRANT DEMOCRACY HAS BEEN OUR PRIDE AND THE ENVY OF THE WORLD. IT IS THIS MOST PRECIOUS OF ASSETS, HONED OVER THE CENTURIES, WHICH IS IN DANGER OF BEING LOST FOREVER. THIS IS A TREASURE WHICH A FUTURE VISHVAGURU MAY BE UNABLE TO RESURRECT."**



When India hosted the G20 summit in September 2023, it was most appropriate to have Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (the whole world is one family) as its defining motto. PTI

the Mediterranean, and the maritime sea routes connecting it to both the eastern and western flanks of the Indian Ocean. Just as Indian religious and political thought, languages and art and architecture flowed out to these geographies outwards from the subcontinent, so, too, did corresponding influences from the latter spread across India. This has bequeathed to Indian culture and to the temperament of its people an innate cosmopolitanism, which makes Indians one of the most adaptable people in the world. We have been the original global citizens of the world.

It is a matter of pride that the country has been able to conduct elections on an unprecedented scale every five years and that there has been a smooth & uneventful transfer of power.

When India hosted the G20 summit in September 2023, it was most appropriate to have Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (the whole world is one family) as its defining motto. But to embrace the whole world, one must begin with embracing the people of one's own country. This is also the reason why the Preamble to the Constitution lays as much stress on fraternity as it does on liberty and equality. Fraternity is particularly important for a diverse country like India. It creates a sense of affinity that transcends differences in caste, creed or religion and in the ways of living. It is fraternity which is the true basis of nationhood. Of belonging to a common cause and engaged in the pursuit of a shared national mission.

The framers of the Constitution recognized that Indian nationalism would have to be built on acknowledging rather than suppressing the multiple identities of its people. And yet, in the final analysis, they did not quite trust

the people of India to successfully balance their separate identities with an overarching concept of equal citizenship. In its final shape, its subsequent amendments and in laws passed by the legislature, the Constitution enabled the coercive power of the state to be progressively strengthened at the expense of the citizen. The state became selective in allowing some assertions of separate identities but in seeking to suppress others, the touchstone being what best served political interests of the moment. Suppression of some identities would be justified on the grounds of a threat to national unity. Others may be promoted and even legitimized to ostensibly advance national unity. The state is able to use its control and influence over the media and information channels to demonize some communities but ennoble others. Political rhetoric, then, aligns with the strategy of the moment. Such rhetoric often takes on a hysterical pitch, which drowns out all reasoned arguments.

In a democracy, the holding of free and fair elections is indispensable but not sufficient. An independent media and a vibrant civil society provide the means to safeguard the ordinary citizen against transgressions by the state. They hold the state accountable on behalf of the citizens and constitute an alternative channel of information for the people. This is also the role played by a powerful and independent judiciary. In history, it has often been the case that the national security and national unity arguments have been used as powerful labels to delegitimize independent institutions and dissenting voices and, eventually, political competition.

India is midway through its 18th General Election. It is a matter of pride

that the country has been able to successfully conduct these elections on an unprecedented scale every five years and that there has been a smooth and uneventful transfer of political power without violence or challenge. An independent Election Commission makes certain that all political parties and politicians play by the rules when seeking votes during their election campaigns. It is expected to make sure that candidates do not use religion, caste or creed to mobilize votes, but it is not always successful, and sometimes it is allegedly selective in imposing penalties. But during the ongoing elections, the rhetoric indulged in by certain political parties and leaders has crossed all limits. There has been a most vulgar and scurrilous attack against our Muslim citizens and charges of 'anti-national' activities have been repeatedly flung at political rivals. There is a thick fog of deliberate misinformation and outright lies designed to mislead and confuse voters. We profess Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam and yet indulge in openly creating dangerous fissures in our fragile social fabric. I have said this before and will repeat it: an overarching national unity cannot be constructed on a Hindu-Muslim binary.

It is easy to dismiss the offensive and threatening statements made against India's Muslims as election rhetoric, which will dissipate once the polls are over, but this is not true. The hurt and pervasive fear they have inflicted will simmer long after the elections conclude. Words once spoken cannot be retracted. The damage is done. As Rahim has said in one of his most celebrated couplets:

*Rahiman jihwa bawari; Kah gai sarag  
paatal*

*Aapu toh kahi bhitar rahi; Jooti khaat  
kapaal.*

(My wayward tongue has said all that lies between heaven and hell. It has said what it wanted and retreated, but it is my head which is receiving painful blows as a consequence).

Election rhetoric must remain within the limits of civilized discourse. The pursuit of political power cannot be without ethical markers, for that will take us on a dangerous road of national and social fragmentation. I write this with a sense of deep concern about our country, whose ability to accommodate incredible diversity and sustain a vibrant democracy has been our pride and the envy of the world. It is this most precious of assets, honed over the centuries, which is in danger of being lost forever. This is a treasure which a future Vishvaguru may be unable to resurrect.

(The author is a former Foreign Secretary of India)

# Autocratization poses a threat to democracy

THE THEORY OF AUTOCRATISATION ALERTS US TO THE FACT THAT POLITICAL PRACTICES AND POLICIES CANNOT BE DIVIDED INTO NEAT COMPARTMENTS



BY NEERA  
CHANDHOKE

"India, despite the whittling away of democratic norms and institutions, has seen at least two major social movements in recent times that have challenged political power. There were massive protests led by university students against the Citizenship Amendment Act in December 2019. In the year that followed, farmers assembled at the borders of the national capital to protest against laws that allegedly favored the corporate sector. Today, Adivasis are opposing the transfer of their land by the government to corporates. The crucial issue of who owns land in the country is being fought in the apex court. Activists and eminent legal personalities won a court battle against electoral bonds. And thousands of Indians wrote to the Election Commission to call out the objectionable language used by the PM to describe our fellow citizens amid the Lok Sabha elections. India has been and will continue to be a home for a million mutinies. We have experienced the process of autocratization. Whether the powers that be will or will not achieve their objective of establishing a closed autocracy depends on our vote."



Wake-up call: What is crucial is the ability of citizens to comprehend the gradual withering away of democracy to the point where the vote is the only weapon available to them. -Credit: PTI

Around 35 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of socialist societies - when Francis Fukuyama triumphantly declared that the future belonged to liberal democracy and the West proceeded to mandate global norms of democracy - we are witnessing waves of autocratization in the Netherlands, Hungary, Italy, Burundi, Israel, Russia and India.

The V-Dem (Varieties of Democracy) Institute, based at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden, stated in its 2024 democracy report that India was one of the worst autocratizers. The country had been downgraded by V-Dem to the status of an 'electoral autocracy' in 2018. Democracy in the country, stated the report, has declined even further on multiple metrics. V-Dem reports categorize countries into four regime types based on their score on the liberal democratic index: liberal democracy, electoral democracy, electoral autocracy and closed autocracy. The report states that 71 per cent of the world's population (5.7 billion people) lives in autocracies. This represents a sharp increase from 48 per cent 10 years ago. A major decline in democracy has taken place in eastern Europe and South and Central Asia. The level of liberal democracy enjoyed by the average Indian is now reportedly down to the levels of 1975, i.e., the Emergency.

According to the report, a country falls into the category of liberal democracy when it institutionalizes free and fair elections, ensures judicial independence, establishes robust constraints on executive overreach, rigorously safeguards civil liberties and upholds equality before the law. The government in India has occasionally used laws on sedition, defamation and counterterrorism to silence critics. A third electoral term

for the BJP government "could lead to further autocratization, given the already substantial democratic decline under Modi's leadership and the enduring crackdown on minority rights and civil society," the V-Dem report says.

Autocratization is diametrically opposite to democratization or the process of deepening democracy. It signifies that today, democracy does not die in military coups, as in Chile in 1973, or through election malpractices. Autocrats now consider sudden takeovers of power politically imprudent. The use of violence to take over the government and the consequent loss of lives provoke outbreaks of outrage and resistance, or, at the least, simmering discontent. Democracy dies when governments slowly but surely subvert institutions that realize and protect democracy to a point where only elections remain. Multi-party elections are held, but under conditions that are palpably unfair. Above all, autocratization implies a massive concentration of power in the chief executive. Elected executives weaken checks and balances and implement measures to prevent the Opposition from challenging power.

Crucially, the substantial decline of core institutions and practices of democracy takes place under the guise of legal proprieties. The process is prolonged, measured and opaque. Contemporary autocrats have perfected the art of eroding democratic institutions while maintaining democratic façades. Piecemeal changes are cloaked in appeals to hyper-nationalism and majoritarianism and through anti-minority and anti-immigrant rhetoric.

Autocratization is a process, not a predestined end to full-blown

authoritarianism. The outcome of the process cannot be predicted. We cannot assume whether there will be a complete democratic breakdown or a return to democracy. Politics is chancy, contingent and unpredictable. Miracles can happen, perhaps. Elections, even if held under unfair conditions, can either kindle the democratic spirit, or spur the stabilization of authoritarian regimes.

What is crucial is the ability of citizens to comprehend the gradual withering away of democracy to the point where the vote is the only weapon available to them. Nevertheless, the power of the vote gives us hope. Perhaps competition between different agendas might enable us, once again, to become what we are meant to be - Aristotle's Zoon Politikon (political animal). Perhaps the autocrat will be deterred by the fact that the idea and ideals of democracy have become the standard for judging existing regimes. After all, after the end of the Cold War, democracy, as a global norm, has been increasingly shaping expectations.

Finally, the theory of autocratization alerts us to the fact that political practices and policies cannot be divided into neat compartments: democracy vs authoritarianism or dictatorship or fascism. There are elements of authoritarian rule in a democratic government. And autocrats or aspiring autocrats hesitate to adopt policies that draw international condemnation or lead to an uprising within the country.

India, despite the whittling away of democratic norms and institutions, has seen at least two major social movements in recent times that have challenged political power. There were massive protests led by university students against the Citizenship Amendment Act in December 2019. In the year that followed, farmers assembled at the borders of the national capital to protest against laws that allegedly favored the corporate sector. Today, Adivasis are opposing the transfer of their land by the government to corporates. The crucial issue of who owns land in the country is being fought in the apex court. Activists and eminent legal personalities won a court battle against electoral bonds. And thousands of Indians wrote to the Election Commission to call out the objectionable language used by the PM to describe our fellow citizens amid the Lok Sabha elections. India has been and will continue to be a home for a million mutinies. We have experienced the process of autocratization. Whether the powers that be will or will not achieve their objective of establishing a closed autocracy depends on our vote.

(The author is a political scientist)

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LUNCH BY *Tom Wah*

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INDIA ELECTIONS 2024: 19 APRIL 2024 TO 1 JUNE 2024

# Feroze Gandhi to Rahul Gandhi: Rae Bareli's tryst with Congress

**The strong foundations that Feroze Gandhi laid in the constituency were later nurtured and strengthened by his wife and former prime minister Indira Gandhi, who won from the seat in 1967, 1971 and 1980, followed by friends and family members of the Gandhi family.**

The surprise nomination of Rahul Gandhi from Uttar Pradesh's Rae Bareli brings the focus back on the VVIP segment which was first represented in the Lok Sabha by the former Congress president's grandfather Feroze Gandhi, who held the seat in the first two elections after Independence.

The strong foundations that Feroze Gandhi laid in the constituency were later nurtured and strengthened by his wife and former prime minister Indira Gandhi, who won from the seat in 1967, 1971 and 1980, followed by friends and family members of the Gandhi family.

Indira Gandhi contested from two seats in 1980 -- Rae Bareli and Medak in Telangana -- and chose to retain the Medak seat. Arun Nehru won the 1980 bypoll and subsequently in 1984.

From Arun Nehru, who was late prime minister Rajiv Gandhi's right-hand man, to Sheila Kaul, another Gandhi kin, Rae Bareli returned several of the Gandhi family members and aides to the Lok Sabha.

The seat was held by Congress' R P Singh in the 1960 bypoll after the demise of Feroze Gandhi, and by another Congress leader Baij Nath Kureel in 1962.

Sheila Kaul, an aunt of Indira Gandhi, represented the seat in 1989 and 1991.

In 1999, another friend of the Gandhis, Satish Sharma represented the Rae Bareli constituency, till Sonia Gandhi shifted there.

The only time the Congress did not represent the seat was in the wake of the Emergency in 1977 when Janata Party's Raj Narain defeated Indira Gandhi, who was then the prime minister, and BJP's Ashoke Singh in 1996 and 1998.

Although Sonia Gandhi upon entering electoral politics chose to make her electoral foray from neighbouring Amethi Lok Sabha seat in 1999, a seat her husband Rajiv Gandhi had held earlier, she soon vacated it for her son Rahul's debut in politics in 2004.

Sonia Gandhi subsequently held Rae Bareli four times between 2004 and 2019, although of late, her winning margins began dwindling. The party's calculation behind fielding Rahul from Rae Bareli instead of Amethi, also rests on the conclusion that Rae Bareli is a better, safer seat for the former Congress president, who lost Amethi to BJP's Smriti Irani in 2019 by nearly 50,000 votes.

Amid criticism that the Congress had given a walkout to Irani in Amethi, sources said, the party in its wisdom believed that Rae Bareli's historical, emotional and electoral importance for the Gandhi family was higher than that of



Feroze Gandhi with Indira Gandhi, and (below) Rahul Gandhi.



## GANDHIS OPT OUT OF AMETHI, RAHUL GANDHI TO CONTEST FROM RAEBARELI

The Congress's 11th-hour, early-morning decision on Amethi and Rae Bareli contained a big twist. Rahul Gandhi, who was expected to make an all-out bid to win back Amethi, has been announced as the party candidate from Rae Bareli, the seat vacated recently by his mother Sonia Gandhi when she moved to Rajya Sabha. In Amethi, the family bastion which defected to the BJP five years ago, the Congress will be represented by Kishori Lal Sharma, a longtime loyalist of the Gandhi family. Priyanka Gandhi Vadra could not be convinced to contest from Raebareli -- which she had nursed for over a decade on her mother's behalf.

The Congress decision was announced on May 3 after weeks of suspense.

Both candidates will file their papers today -- the last day for filing nominations for the fifth phase of election on May 20.

Rahul Gandhi will be filing his nomination later in the day from Raebareli. Sources say Rahul Gandhi will also hold a roadshow before filing his nomination papers. Soon after the candidates were announced for both prestigious seats, Ms Vadra congratulated KL Sharma and said his "loyalty and dedication" will help him win the election.

"Our family has had a long association with Kishori Lal Sharma ji. His passion for public service is an example in itself. Today, it is a matter of joy that the Congress Party has made Shri Kishori Lal Ji a candidate from Amethi. Kishori Lal Ji's loyalty and dedication towards duty will definitely bring him success in this election," she said.

Amethi.

In her farewell message to the people of Rae Bareli, Sonia Gandhi had expressed confidence that the seat which always stood by her and the Gandhis will continue to support her family in future also.

In the message on February 15, former party chief Sonia Gandhi informed voters of her Rae Bareli constituency that she will not contest the upcoming Lok Sabha polls due to health and age issues.

In an emotional message to the constituents of the segment she has represented since 2004, the 77-year-old also threw subtle hints of a possible entry of a member of her family from Rae Bareli.

"I am proud to say that whatever I am today, I am because of you and I have always done my best to honour your trust. Now on account of health and age issues, I will not contest the next Lok Sabha election," she said in the message.

"After this decision, I will not have the opportunity to serve you directly but my heart and soul will always remain with you. I know that you will stand by me and my family in future, just as you have in the past," she said in the message.

The message to the voters came a day after she filed her nomination for the Rajya Sabha seat from Rajasthan.

She entered the Rajya Sabha for the first time and was the second member of the Gandhi family to do so, after Indira Gandhi who was a member of the upper house from 1964 to 1967.

In the message to voters, Sonia Gandhi further said, "My family in Delhi is incomplete without you. It completes when I come to Rae Bareli and meet all of you. My ties with you are very old. I have inherited these ties as a good fortune from my in-laws."

Noting that ties of her family with Rae Bareli are "very deep rooted", she said Rae Bareli sent her father-in-law Feroze Gandhi to Lok Sabha in the first general election held after Independence.

After that, you accepted my mother-in-law Indira Gandhi, she noted, adding that ever since, our relationship grew stronger on the difficult road to affection despite the highs and lows of life and our faith in this bond grew stronger.

"You allowed me space to walk along on this shining path. I came to you after losing my mother-in-law and husband and you accepted me with open arms," the former Congress chief said.

Sending her respect to elders and love to youngsters, she had said in her message, "I will see you soon".

Source: PTI

# Lok Sabha Election 2024 Phase 3: Check State-wise Key Candidates

NEW DELHI (TIP)

The third phase of the voting for the 18th Lok Sabha Elections will be held on May 7 across 94 constituencies, covering 10 states and two Union Territories (UT). The first two phases of the polls saw a voter turnout of 66.14 percent in Phase 1 (April 19) and 66.71 percent in Phase 2 (April 26).

In the third phase, the states that will go to polls are – Assam (4 seats), Bihar (5), Chhattisgarh (7), Goa (2), Gujarat (26), Karnataka (14), Madhya Pradesh (8), Maharashtra (11), Uttar Pradesh (10), West Bengal (4), Jammu and Kashmir (1), Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu (2).

## LIST OF CONSTITUENCIES GOING TO VOTE IN LOK SABHA POLLS PHASE 3

- Assam: Dhubri, Kokrajhar, Barpeta, Gauhati
- Bihar: Jhanjharpur, Supaul, Araria, Madhepura, Khagaria
- Chhattisgarh: Sarguja, Raigarh, Janjgir-Champa, Korba, Bilaspur, Durg, Raipur
- Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu
- Goa: North Goa, South Goa
- Gujarat: Kachchh, Banaskantha, Patan, Mahesana, Sabarkantha, Gandhinagar, Ahmedabad East,



- Ahmedabad West, Surendranagar, Rajkot, Porbandar, Jamnagar, Junagadh, Amreli, Bhavnagar, Anand, Kheda, Panchmahal, Dahod, Vadodara, Chhota Udaipur, Bharuch, Bardoli, Navsari, Valsad
- Karnataka: Chikkodi, Belgaum, Bagalkot, Bijapur, Gulbarga, Raichur, Bidar, Koppal, Bellary, Haveri, Dharwad, Uttara Kannada, Davangere, Shimoga
- Madhya Pradesh: Morena, Bhind,

- Gwalior, Guna, Sagar, Vidisha, Bhopal, Rajgarh, Betul
- Maharashtra: Baramati, Raigad, Dharashiv, Latur (SC), Solapur (SC), Madha, Sangli, Ratnagiri-Sindhudurg, Kolhapur, Hatkanangle
- Uttar Pradesh: Sambhal, Hathras, Agra (SC), Fatehpur Sikri, Firozabad, Mainpuri, Etah, Budaun, Aonla, Bareilly
- West Bengal: Maldaha Uttar, Maldaha Dakshin, Jangipur,

Murshidabad

## KEY CANDIDATES & CONSTITUENCIES

- Union Minister and BJP leader Jyotiraditya Scindia will contest polls from Guna
- The BJP has fielded former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan from Vidisha
- Congress leader Digvijaya Singh will fight the Lok Sabha polls from Rajgarh
- NCP (SP) leader and daughter of Sharad Pawar, Supriya Sule, will contest from Baramati against her sister-in-law, Sunetra Pawar, who is the wife of Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar
- Congress' Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury will contest from Baharampur seat in West Bengal
- Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav's wife Dimple Yadav will fight from Mainpuri
- Union Minister Pralhad Joshi will fight from Dharwad, Karnataka
- Industrialist Pallavi Dempo will contest from South Goa seat on the BJP's ticket
- All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) president Badruddin Ajmal will fight from Assam's Dhubri

## Why phase 3 polls in Gujarat, Karnataka, Goa are crucial for BJP

Ten states and two Union territories, with 94 constituencies, are voting in the phase three of the Lok Sabha elections 2024 on May 7. The states in the fray are Goa, Gujarat, Assam, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, and Uttar Pradesh.

Gujarat, Karnataka and Goa will be under the spotlight as all Lok Sabha seats here go to polls on May 7.

### Two Goa seats

Goa's two Lok Sabha seats—North Goa and South Goa—will see a two-way contest between the Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Congress candidate Ramakant Khalap will fight against BJP's Shripad Yesso Naik from North Goa, while INC's Viriato Fernandes has been fielded against NDA-led BJP's Pallavi Dempo in South Goa. Dempo, is the richest candidate in the fray in the third phase of polling on May 7. In 2019, the BJP had won the North Goa seat while the Congress bagged the South Goa seat.

### Gujarat, PM Modi's home turf

Voting will also take place on 25 out of 26 seats in Gujarat. The only exception is Surat, where BJP candidate Mukesh Dalal secured an uncontested victory



after the nomination of Congress' Nilesh Kumbhani was rejected, and several other contenders stepped back from the race last week.

The Election Commission of India (ECI) earlier informed that Gujarat and Maharashtra had the most nominations out of the 12 states and Union Territories voting in this phase. "In phase 3, Gujarat had a maximum of 658 nominations from 26 Parliamentary constituencies, followed by Maharashtra with 519 nominations from 11," the EC said.

In this phase, 2,963 nominations were filed for 95 Parliamentary constituencies across 12 states and UTs going to the

polls for the Lok Sabha Elections 2024.

For the BJP, Gujarat remains crucial for being the home state of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah. The saffron party has been in power in the Gujarat Legislative Assembly with an absolute majority for about three decades since 1995.

Gujarat is also key because the BJP is facing protests from the crucial Kshatriya community against Union Minister and BJP's Rajkot Lok Sabha candidate Parshottam Rupala, over remarks made by him against the community. The Prime Minister is

campaigning in Gujarat since May 1.

The voting in the third phase will begin at 7 am on May 7 and conclude at 6 pm, providing ample opportunity for citizens to exercise their franchise. Voting for the seven-phase polls to elect the 18th Lok Sabha started on April 19 and will conclude on June 1. The counting of votes will take place on June 4.

### Prajwal Revanna jolt in Karnataka

Fourteen parliamentary seats of Karnataka will also vote in the third phase on May 7. Karnataka sends 28 members to the Lok Sabha. Fourteen seats of the state voted in the second phase on April 26.

Karnataka matters for the BJP for it is the only state in the South where it has gained a dominant presence after winning 25 of the 28 seats in 2019 Lok Sabha elections. It is also key for the BJP's 'Mission South', as the party has failed to make inroads in southern states other than Karnataka and Telangana.

Days ahead of phase 3 polling, the BJP and the JD(S), the alliance partners, have found themselves in a spot after the sexual abuse episode involving Prajwal Revanna, who is also the grandson of former Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda.

Source: Livemint

# MR. IBRAJIM BUKELE, ADVISOR TO THE PRESIDENT OF EL SALVADOR VISITS INDIA

## IMPRESSED WITH TECHNOLOGICAL CAPABILITIES OF INDIA

APRIL 25, 2024

**GUATEMALA CITY (TIP):** Mr. Ibrajim Bukele, Hon'ble Advisor to the President of El Salvador led a 6-member high level delegation from Government of El Salvador to India from April 14th to April 22nd, 2024 to oversee the administration of various infrastructural projects and gain firsthand experience of their operation and manufacturing processes. The delegation also included Mr. Romeo Rodriguez, Hon'ble Minister of Public Works and Transportation, Mr. Nelson Reyes, Hon'ble Vice Minister of Transportation of Government of El Salvador and a team of experts from different fields. The visit marked a significant milestone in the bilateral relations between India and El Salvador focusing primarily on enhancing trade relations and exploring infrastructure development opportunities.

The high-level delegation's visit follows the signing of two significant MoUs between Lakshmi Capital, an Indian company, and the Public and Road Ministry of El Salvador. These MoUs outline plans for the construction of a 22 km Metro line project and the supply of modern and high-tech buses. In an effort to further advance cooperation, India has proposed collaboration with El Salvador to jointly develop 5G networks and tailored solutions to address the region's specific needs and challenges. Indian companies are ready to provide financial assistance and investment opportunities to support the deployment of 5G infrastructure in El Salvador. The purpose of this visit was to offer the Government of El Salvador an opportunity to explore firsthand demonstrations of these projects and their technical capabilities in India. These demonstrations will serve as models for the final implementation of projects in El Salvador,



The delegation led by Mr. Ibrajim Bukele, Advisor to the President of El Salvador, was briefed on 5G technology by the Reliance Jio team at their premises.

facilitating a smoother transition and ensuring successful outcomes.

The delegation reached Mumbai on 14 April 2024 where they met representatives of the Reliance Jio, a leading telecommunications company in India emerged as a key player in driving technological advancements and digital transformation. During the meeting on 5G technology, significant strides were made in exploring avenues for technological collaboration. Reliance Jio, a pioneer in telecommunications, showcased its expertise and innovative solutions, providing invaluable insights into the potential implementation of 5G technology in El Salvador's telecom sector. The discussions underscored the mutual commitment to fostering transformative change and advancing connectivity infrastructure, laying the foundation for future cooperation between India and El Salvador in the realm of telecommunications. Additionally, the team visited the Centre for Development of Telematics (CDoT) office in New Delhi, where they had the opportunity to meet with officials. This visit provided a platform for discussions on telecommunications development and technology innovation. Engaging with CDoT officials allowed the delegation to gain insights into cutting-edge research and development initiatives in the telecommunications sector. It further facilitated exchanges on potential



The delegation from El Salvador visited the R&D center of Ashok Leyland in Chennai



The delegation visited the Ashok Leyland Ennore Factory to oversee the manufacturing of buses. collaborations and knowledge sharing between India and El Salvador in advancing telecom infrastructure and services.

During the meeting with Ashok Leyland on the manufacturing and operation of buses in Chennai, discussions centered on exploring opportunities for collaboration and technological exchange. Ashok Leyland, a leading player in the automotive industry, provided insights into their manufacturing processes and



The delegation led by Mr. Ibrajim Bukele had a productive interaction with DMRC at Metro Bhavan to learn about the technical intricacies of operating and maintaining metro trains

CONTD FROM PAGE 14

operational expertise. Additionally, the delegation visited Ashok Leyland's Research and Development (R&D) center and assembly unit at Ennore, gaining firsthand experience of their advanced facilities and innovative practices. This visit underscored the potential for partnership and knowledge transfer between India and El Salvador in the manufacturing and transportation sectors.



The delegation visited the casting yard and construction site of the elevated metro arranged by DMRC in New Delhi

The delegation conducted comprehensive site visits and technical assessments at various locations of the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) in New Delhi, essential for the successful planning and execution of the metro line project in San Salvador. DMRC, a government-owned entity, specializes in planning, designing, and implementing metro systems in Delhi, India's National Capital Territory. Managing an extensive network of 392.448 km with 288 stations in Delhi and the National Capital Region, DMRC operates over 5262 train trips daily, serving an impressive daily ridership of approximately 6.5 million individuals. The delegation engaged in detailed discussions and site inspections at DMRC's Mundaka casting yard and Janak Puri elevated metro construction site, focusing on aspects like route alignment, station design, signaling systems, rolling stock procurement, and safety protocols. They also experienced a ride on the Delhi Metro, gaining insights into the technical intricacies of elevated and underground rail routes. Moreover, DMRC has formalized its collaboration with Lakshmi Capital by entering into a Non-Disclosure Agreement, signaling a commitment to elevate cooperation in the technical aspects of the project to a higher level.



Mr. Ibrajim Bukele visited the Shimla-Jakhu Ropeway to observe its operation and was impressed with remarkable technological capabilities of India

The team also visited the Shimla-Jakhu Ropeway to inspect the cable car system and observe its operation. During their visit, they had the opportunity to enjoy a scenic ride, taking in the breathtaking views of the region. Impressed by the advanced technology employed in such a challenging mountainous terrain, the team gained valuable insights into the intricacies of operating a cable car system in such conditions.

This experience further enriched their understanding of innovative solutions for transportation infrastructure, highlighting the importance of adapting technology to meet the unique challenges of mountainous regions in El Salvador.



The delegation also visited the Taj Mahal, Agra despite busy schedule

Despite their busy schedule, the team also made time to visit Agra and explore the iconic Taj Mahal. This architectural marvel, renowned worldwide as a symbol of eternal love, captivated the delegation with its awe-inspiring beauty and historical significance.

Their visit to the Taj Mahal provided a moment of respite and cultural enrichment amidst their packed itinerary, allowing them to appreciate India's rich heritage and architectural grandeur.

Lakshmi Capital, an esteemed Indian firm and subsidiary of the renowned SRAM & MRAM group, has been actively collaborating with the Government of El Salvador. Positioned to provide crucial financial support and investment opportunities, Lakshmi Capital is instrumental in facilitating these impactful projects on a Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) model.

Their funding encompasses various critical aspects including infrastructure investment, technology procurement, construction, expertise and training, as well as compliance with standards and regulations. Through this comprehensive approach, Lakshmi Capital demonstrates its commitment to driving sustainable development and fostering mutually beneficial partnerships between India and El Salvador.

The Government of El Salvador has exhibited steadfast dedication and seriousness in launching these transformative projects, evidenced by numerous meetings held with the Indian counterpart.

Their dedication to leveraging Indian expertise and resources underscores their resolve to advance infrastructure development and technological innovation within their nation. By actively seeking collaboration and embracing Indian capabilities, El Salvador has exhibited a forward-thinking approach to addressing their developmental needs and fostering sustainable growth.

This partnership reflects a shared commitment to progress and underscores the strength of diplomatic ties between India and El Salvador. The involvement of President-elect Bukele's brother and Adviser, Mr. Ibrajim Bukele, in leading this delegation underscores the seriousness and commitment of the local government to advancing these collaborative endeavours.

The new Government of El Salvador, characterized by its proactive stance offers a significant opening for India to showcase its capabilities and establish a strong foothold in the region.

India's robust economic growth, coupled with its impressive infrastructure development and advancements in telecommunications, position it as a global leader in the 21st century.

The successful execution of infrastructure projects in the Central American region not only opens new avenues for India in the infrastructure sector but also presents unparalleled opportunities for Indian companies to penetrate and excel in international markets.

This aligns perfectly with Prime Minister Modi's vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat (self-reliant India) and the Make in India initiative, fostering domestic manufacturing.

As India continues to forge ahead on its path of progress and development, its commitment to inclusive growth and global cooperation remains unwavering, propelling the nation towards a brighter and more productive partnership with global south.

# BUSINESS MEET WITH MUNICIPALITIES IN GUATEMALA ON INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENTS



Ambassador Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra emphasized India's robust economic growth and the importance of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam in the united development of all countries

APRIL 22, 2024

**GUATEMALA CITY (TIP):** Embassy of India organized a business meet with Municipalities and other stakeholders in Guatemala to explore possibilities to invest in infrastructure sector in the region on 19 April 2024. Approximately 70 guests from different municipalities in Guatemala attended the event.

During the year 2023, the Embassy was actively involved in promoting India's investment and influence in the Central American region through various infrastructural initiatives and strategic endeavors. As a result of these concerted efforts, significant milestones have been achieved, expanding our reach beyond the local municipalities in Guatemala. In collaboration with Lakshmi Capital, a prominent Indian company, the Embassy has initiated transformative projects aimed at advancing infrastructure development in El Salvador. This includes signing two MoUs with the Ministry of Public Works, Transport, Housing, and Urban Development of the Government of El Salvador, with investments totaling US\$2 billion for a metro line project and US\$475 million for the procurement of 5000 buses. Similarly, Lakshmi Capital has made significant strides by signing Letters of Intent (LoIs) for five impactful projects with the Municipality of Xela in Guatemala, totaling an investment of US\$1.2 billion. These projects encompass a hydroelectric system, cable car system, supply of 700 buses, a waste management plant, and a 75MW solar energy plant in the region. Additionally, an LoI has been signed for the ambitious Guatemalan Interoceanic Corridor (GIC) project, a Dry Corridor Project requiring a US\$10 billion investment between Lakshmi Capital and Grupo Odepal, S.A. This project aims to establish a cutting-edge Multimodal Transport System spanning a 372-kilometer-long and 140-meter-wide strip of land, linking the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Moreover, Lakshmi Capital has also signed LoIs with the Municipality of El Progreso, Guatemala, for another two projects.

In response to the requirement to involve Indian companies in procuring technology, materials, services, and products, Lakshmi Capital has facilitated several visits by relevant authorities. A team from Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) visited El Salvador to assess the technical aspects of the metro project. Additionally, a high-level government delegation from El Salvador led by Mr. Ibrajim Bukele, Advisor to Hon'ble President of El Salvador visited India from April 14th to April 22nd, 2024, to oversee the operation of these projects. In March 2024, a delegation led by the Mayors of Xela and El Progreso visited India to gain firsthand experience of similar projects. Furthermore, a delegation from the Association of City Bus Companies in Guatemala also visited India to oversee the manufacturing of buses.

These infrastructural projects, coupled with the successful visits by delegations to India, exemplify India's dedication to fostering economic development



Mr. Wendal Rodas of Lakshmi Capital making presentation on the investment opportunities in Guatemala

and improving infrastructure in Central America. The visible impact and successful implementation of these initiatives have drawn significant attention and admiration from municipalities throughout Guatemala. Witnessing the transformative effects of these projects, many municipalities in Guatemala have expressed a keen interest in collaborating with India to develop their own regions. They perceive India as a valuable partner with expertise in infrastructure development, technology transfer, and capacity building, capable of helping them address their developmental challenges and achieve long-term goals. In response to this growing interest from municipalities and other stakeholders, the Embassy organized a business meet where Mayors and representatives from these regions could interact with Indian counterparts, exchange ideas, and explore potential areas of collaboration. This event provided a valuable opportunity to advance India's interests in the region and served as a platform for meaningful discussions, fostering collaboration and partnership between Indian businesses and local governments in Guatemala. Furthermore, it bolstered India's presence in the region and reaffirmed its commitment to bilateral cooperation and economic development.



The event received overwhelming response from the local Municipalities

Ambassador Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra highlighted the significant strides made by India in infrastructure development, attributing this success to Prime Minister Modi's vision of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' (self-reliant India). He emphasized how India's robust economic growth has positioned it as the fastest-growing economy globally, expanding India's influence on regions where its presence was previously limited. This expansion underscores India's commitment to Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, the ancient Indian philosophy that translates to "the world is one family," emphasizing the interconnectedness and united development of all nations. Dr. Mohapatra extended an invitation to all stakeholders to participate in this remarkable infrastructural growth story, emphasizing the inclusive nature of India's development agenda. He reiterated India's commitment to assisting in the

infrastructural development of the Guatemalan municipalities, emphasizing the importance of strengthening ties and promoting shared values. Dr. Mohapatra's remarks underscored India's proactive approach to regional development, emphasizing the importance of self-reliance, inclusivity, and shared prosperity in driving sustainable growth and fostering stronger international partnerships.



Mayor Juan Fernando shared his insights and experience from his recent visit to India, praised India's impressive economic growth and infrastructure development

Mayor Juan Fernando Lopez of the Municipality of Quetzaltenango (Xela) spoke of his recent visit to India during the event, reflecting on the memorable experiences and insights gained. He commended India's remarkable economic growth and impressive infrastructure development, acknowledging the strides made under Prime Minister Modi's leadership. Mayor Lopez expressed confidence in the capabilities of Indian companies to execute the five infrastructure projects planned for Xela. He highlighted the expertise and professionalism demonstrated by Indian firms, which he believed would contribute significantly to the development and modernization of his municipality. Furthermore, Mayor Lopez extended his gratitude to the Government of India for the assistance and support extended to him during his visit to India. Mayor Lopez's remarks underscored the positive impact of international partnerships and the role of India as a reliable partner in supporting the developmental aspirations of regions like Xela. His appreciation for India's economic achievements and infrastructure prowess reflects the growing admiration and confidence in India's capabilities among international stakeholders.



Caplin Point donated 0.5M doses of Metformin to Municipality of Xela received by Mayor Juan Fernando Lopez

During the event, through a collaborative effort between the Embassy of India and M/s Caplin Point, a significant donation of 500,000 doses of Metformin tablets, aimed at treating diabetes, was made to the Municipality of Xela. This donation highlights India's commitment to healthcare initiatives and its dedication to addressing prevalent health challenges in the region. Through collaborative efforts in technology, infrastructure, and healthcare, India is making significant progress in both regional development and improving healthcare accessibility and quality.



# Federation of Indian Associations of Chicago celebrates Festival of Colors Holi with fervor and enthusiasm

APRIL 30, 2024

**CHICAGO, IL (TIP):** The Federation of Indian Associations (FIA) Chicago, a 501(c)(3) organization, hosted a spectacular, vibrant, and colorful Holi celebration marked by a beautifully decorated stage and premises filled with music, dance, Thandai (a special India drink), delicious food, and singing that depicted glorious Indian culture at the Mall of India, Naperville, Illinois, on Sunday, April 21, 2024.

The grand event kicked off with an ensemble by Maharashtra Mandal called 'Dhol Tasha'. This rhythm got the entire crowd, including the mall visitors, to join in the fun and dance together. The mayor of Naperville, Scott Wehrli, joined in the traditional dance and learned a few steps. This was followed by the emcees Nilabh Dubey (Secretary-General) and Sanskriti Sharma taking over the program by inviting FIA Chairman and Founder, Sunil Shah, President Pratibha Jairath, and Past President Vinita Gulabani on the stage. Chairman and Founder Sunil Shah welcomed on the stage the Chief Guest for the day, Consulate General of India, Somnath Ghosh. This was followed by welcoming the Mayor of Naperville, Scott Wehrli, State Representative Michelle Mussman, Mayor of Oakbrook, Larry Herman, and the Alderwoman of Aurora, Shweta Baid. On the stage, the dignitaries were joined by Advisory Board members Pinky Thakkar, Sushma Bhanot, and Dr. Bhupinder Beri. Scott Wehrli spoke about why Naperville gets constantly ranked as the number one city to live in the USA and the contributions of the Indian diaspora in building Naperville into a great city. Larry Herman very well-articulated the fun involved in applying the colors to each, bringing us all together as part of one family. Michelle Mussman, who was attending the Holi festivities with FIA for the eighth time, spoke about how FIA brings the west and east together and



Chief Guest Consul General Somnath Ghosh addressing the audience. Left to Right - Rita Shah (Executive Director), Sunil Shah (Founder Chairman), Sushma Bhanot (Advisory Board), Consul General Somnath Ghosh, Larry Herman (Mayor of Oak-Brook), Michelle Mussman (State Representative), Shweta Baid (Alderwoman)

truly proves there is unity in diversity. Shweta Baid spoke about the vibrant Indian community and the welcoming nature that ensures smooth integration, wherever they live. CG Somnath Ghosh spoke about how the Indian diaspora brings vibrancy and economic development to wherever they live. He also spoke about the world's great democracy, starting the election for the new government, where 1.4 billion people will decide their representatives. The transition of applying colors to the forehead was done by Chairman Sunil Shah and Pratibha Jairath to all the dignitaries. Specially made Holi T-shirts were gifted to all the dignitaries. Thanks to our sponsors, Ghoman Group (Mariott) and Naresh Shah (Rely Care Services).

This was followed by the cultural program. The mic was handed to Richa Chand, the emcee for the entertainment

segment. Culturalists were kicked off by Jitendra Bulasara and Shaila Khedkar, singing patriotic and special Holi songs. We had great performances from many dance schools: Prerna, Kabita, Trusha (Pika Munshi), Bollywood Beatz (Anita Rotiwar), and Suhani Dance Academy (Falguni Rana). The surprise was an amazing dance performance by our very own FIA directors, Falguni Rana, Dolly Bansal, Sonika Khandelwal, Sanskriti Sharma, and Falguni Sukhadia. This was followed by amazing Garbha singing by Jigna Pathak and Jitendra Bulsara. All the dignitaries could not resist joining the dance when the Garbha team sang 'Dholidi Pankhida' hit songs and hundreds of people from the audience jumped in. The cultural were brought to an end by another surprise when Richa Chand and Nilabh Dubey called on stage Chairman Sunil Shah and Executive Director Rita Shah to sing a foot-tapping

duet. The dancing continued with greater fervor and full josh.

The last segment of the program was the actual playing of colors, which was done outside in the open. On the way, as we moved from indoors to outdoors, Vandana Jhingan, representing the press and media in Chicagoland, interviewed CG Somnath Ghosh and Founder Chairman Sunil Shah for the TV News segment. CG Somnath Ghosh spoke eloquently to the press about how FIA is at the forefront of bringing Indian culture to the USA.

The surprises did not end here. Anu Malhotra (Executive Vice President) prepared Thandai (a special milk and dry fruit-based drink) for all the folks who joined the Holi. Dinesh Kapoor, Anu Khetarpal, Smitesh Shah, and Hemendra Shah ensured everyone got the Indian snacks and a special Holi T-shirt before the folks went out to play Holi. The impeccable stage and the outside set-up were done by Neelam Jai. Suresh Bodiwala from Asian Media ensured each memory was well captured on his camera.

The color play of Holi kicked off with Sunil Shah, Pratibha Jairath, Vinita Gulabani, and Sudhir Agrawal blasting the colors 25 feet up in the air. DJ and the Dhol team revved up the spirits with their music, and thanks to Pratibha Jairath for sponsoring the colors, which were free for all the 600 people who joined the sweet celebrations. It was such a colorful moment; amidst the chaos of colors, there were countless moments of joy and camaraderie. FIA thanks and truly appreciates all its attendees, esteemed guests, sponsors, supporters, and media partners for their unwavering support and trust in FIA. The question remained in everyone's mind: 'What next from FIA, Chicago!'

(Photographs and Press release by: Asian Media USA/ Press release by: Nilabh Dubey, FIA General Secretary)

## RAW official was involved in assassination plot of Sikh separatist leader Pannun: media report



Gurbhant Singh Pannun

File photo

APRIL 29, 2024

**WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP):** A RAW official identified as Vikram Yadav was involved in the assassination plot of Sikh separatist leader Gurbhant Singh Pannun in the US and the move was approved by the then Indian spy agency

chief Samant Goel, according to an investigative media report published on Monday, April 29.

Pannun is one of the main leaders of the Khalistan movement and the legal advisor and spokesperson for Sikhs for Justice (SFJ), which aims to promote the idea of a separate Sikh state. The Indian government has declared Pannun a terrorist.

In an investigative report, The Washington Post newspaper said, "That India would pursue lethal operations in North America has stunned Western security officials."

"Yadav's identity and affiliation, which have not previously been reported,

provide the most explicit evidence to date that the assassination plan - ultimately thwarted by US authorities - was directed from within the Indian spy service," the daily reported.

"Higher-ranking (Research and Analysis Wing) RAW officials have also been implicated, according to current and former Western security officials, as part of a sprawling investigation by the CIA, FBI and other agencies that has mapped potential links to (Prime Minister Narendra Modi) Modi's inner circle," it said.

The top American daily -- which is now owned by American billionaire Jeff Bezos, founder and head of Amazon --

said it is investigating a global surge in such campaigns of cross-border repression, as well as the global forces leading India and other nations to employ tactics normally associated with the world's most repressive governments.

For this story, Post reporters conducted dozens of interviews with officials, experts and targeted individuals in New Delhi, Washington, Ottawa, London, Prague and Berlin, it said.

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



## Excise policy 'scam': Delhi High Court asks CBI, ED to respond to Manish Sisodia's pleas for bail

The Delhi High Court on Friday, May 3, sought response of the CBI and ED on former deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia's pleas seeking bail in the corruption and money-laundering cases lodged in relation to the alleged excise policy scam.

Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma issued notices to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Sisodia's pleas challenging a trial court's April 30 order by which his bail petitions were dismissed.

The high court listed the matter for May 8. Sisodia, in an interim application, urged the court to continue the trial court's order allowing him to meet his ailing wife once a week in custody, during pendency of his pleas.

As the counsel for the ED submitted that the probe agency has no objection if the trial court order is continued, Justice Sharma allowed the request.

## Political space given to separatism in Canada: India on Trudeau's Nijjar remarks

India on May 2 rejected fresh comments by Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on the killing of Khalistani terrorist Hardeep Singh Nijjar and said the remarks once again illustrated the political space given in Canada to separatism, extremism and violence.

Trudeau addressed a Khalsa Day event in Toronto on April 28 that was attended by some pro-Khalistan people.

On the sidelines of the event, he told the media that the killing of Nijjar in British Columbia in June last year created a "problem" and that he cannot ignore it, in an apparent reference to his earlier allegations of involvement of Indian agents in the assassination.

"PM Trudeau has made such remarks earlier as well. His remarks illustrate once again the political space that has been given in Canada to separatism, extremism, and violence," external affairs ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said at his weekly media briefing.

# Modi takes swipe at Rahul Gandhi over Rae Bareilly move: 'Don't run...'

KOLKATA (TIP)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday, May 3, took a swipe at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi over the latter's nomination from Uttar Pradesh's Rae Bareilly Lok Sabha constituency, attributing his decision to the fear of losing Kerala's Wayanad seat.

Addressing a rally in West Bengal, PM Modi dared the Wayanad MP to face the BJP in Amethi and not "run or be scared".

PM Modi referred to his old remark that Rahul Gandhi had been searching for a safe seat after voting in Wayanad.

"I had already said that the Shehzada was going to lose in Wayanad. I had said that as soon as the polling was completed in Wayanad, he would start looking for another seat... He is so scared of Amethi that he is running towards Rae Bareilly. They ask everyone 'daro mat'. Today, I also ask them, 'daro mat, bhago mat'... (don't be scared, don't run)," he said.

PM Narendra Modi also took a swipe at Rahul Gandhi's mother Sonia Gandhi for vacating the Rae Bareilly seat and moving to the Rajya Sabha.

"I had already said in the parliament that their (Congress) biggest leader will not dare to fight elections and she will run away. She ran away to Rajasthan and came to the Rajya Sabha," he added.

After a long suspense, the Congress today announced that Rahul Gandhi



will contest the Lok Sabha elections from Rae Bareilly.

Rahul Gandhi's loyalist, Kishori Lal Sharma will contest from Amethi.

Rahul Gandhi entered electoral politics in 2004 from Amethi, a family stronghold. He won the seat in 2004, 2009 and 2014. However, in 2019, Smriti Irani breached the once-impregnable fortress as she defeated Gandhi from the UP seat.

Rahul Gandhi's father, late prime minister Rajiv Gandhi had been Amethi's MP from 1981 until his death in 1991. Sonia Gandhi also represented the constituency in the Lok Sabha, in 1999. Earlier, it was speculated that Priyanka Gandhi Vadra might contest the Lok Sabha polls from her mother's seat. Amethi and Rae Bareilly will go to polls on May 20.

**Amethi candidate Kishori Lal Sharma thanks Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi for fielding 'small worker'**

Kishori Lal Sharma, the Congress

candidate from Uttar Pradesh's Amethi, expressed gratitude to party's national president Mallikarjun Kharge, former party chiefs Rahul Gandhi, Sonia Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra for fielding him from the Gandhi family's stronghold.

"I would like to thank Khargeji, Sonia ji, Rahul ji, and Priyanka ji for giving a 'chotte' karyakarta (small worker) like me an opportunity to contest from a seat that is their family bastion. I will work hard. I have been working in this constituency for the last 40 years. I came here in 1987 as a Youth Congress member and from then I have been here. I started my career with Rajiv ji. In 1987, Rajiv ji brought me here. Then the circumstances were such that I stayed here. We made Sonia ji win from here, Rajiv ji win from here," Kishori Lal Sharma said.

Speaking on Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) allegations that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi "ran away" from the seat, Sharma said that Gandhi was fighting for the whole nation.

"Rahul Gandhi is not someone who runs away from the ground. He is fighting for the whole country. As far as votes are concerned, no one can predict anything. It all lies in the hands of the public. Also, I will be meeting with Priyanka Gandhi today," he said.

## India slams Pakistan at UN, says it harbours most dubious track record on all aspects

UNITED NATIONS (TIP)

In a sharp retort, India has said Pakistan harbours a "most dubious track record" on all aspects, as it slammed "destructive and pernicious" remarks made by Islamabad's envoy in the UN General Assembly here.

India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj's stern response came after Pakistan's UN envoy Munir Akram made lengthy remarks against India, including references to Kashmir, the Citizenship (Amendment) Act and the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, during his address to the UN General Assembly meeting on 'Culture of Peace'.

"One final point...in this Assembly, as we endeavour to cultivate a culture of peace amid these challenging times, our focus remains steadfast on constructive dialogue. We thus choose to set aside the remarks from a certain delegation, which not only lacks decorum but also detracts from our collective efforts due to their destructive and pernicious nature," Kamboj said on May 2.

"We would strongly encourage that delegation to align with the central principles of respect and diplomacy that must always guide our discussions. Or is that too much to ask of a country that harbours a most dubious track record on all aspects in itself?" she said.



Ruchira Kamboj.

Kamboj asserted that terrorism stands in direct opposition to the culture of peace and the core teachings of all religions, which advocate compassion, understanding and coexistence.

"It sows discord, breeds hostility and undermines the universal values of respect and harmony that underpin cultural and religious traditions worldwide. It is essential for Member States to work together actively to nurture a genuine culture of peace and to view the world as a united family, as my country strongly believes," she said.

Source: PTI

## MEA slams US body: Biased report reeks of political agenda

India on Thursday, May 2, hit out at the US Commission on International Religious Freedom's (USCIRF) annual report for recommending to the federal government that India be named as a "country of particular concern" (CPC) for its severe violations of human rights and religious freedoms.

The USCIRF report has made this recommendation for the fifth consecutive year and it has been rejected four times by the US State Department.

"The USCIRF is known as a biased organisation with a political agenda, they continue to publish their propaganda on India masquerading as a report and try to interfere in the world's largest electoral exercise, which they will never succeed," hit back MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal.

It was not just Indians but people from all over the world who have accused the USCIRF report of pussyfooting around Israel's ongoing brutal depredation in Gaza. In 34 references to Israel in its report, a big majority relate to harassment of Jews in countries such as Iran and Russia after Tel Aviv's indiscriminating military assault on Gaza, which entered its 210th day on Thursday. The CPC label is a designation reserved for the world's worst violators of religious freedom. While the USCIRF has named India, it has failed to pull up Israel, which stands indicted by several global bodies ranging from the UN General Assembly (UNGA) to the International Court of Justice (ICJ). *Source: TNS*

## Tharoor warns of 'an India where people are scared to speak on phone'

Congress leader Shashi Tharoor on Thursday, May 2, said in Goa that the BJP government at the Centre posed a fundamental danger to the "idea of India" enshrined in the Constitution.

At a corner meeting in South Goa's Verna, Tharoor said, "Our democracy is definitely under threat. When you vote on May 7, one of the great questions you have to ask yourself is...What kind of India do you want to live in? What kind of India do you want your children to grow up in? Do you want an India that is fearful? Where people are scared to say things on the phone because they don't know who in the government is listening, where people are afraid to express their views openly because of consequences?"

"...Or do you want, instead, an India where people are free to express their views, free to eat what they want, to dress as they wish, to love whom they like, or are you prepared to accept a government that feels it has a place in your bedroom, in your kitchen, in your safe, in your dining room? Because that's the kind of government we have in India today," he said.

# Hassan sex abuse row: Prajwal Revanna accused of rape after fresh complaint

BENGALURU (TIP)

Rape and kidnapping cases have been filed against JD(S) MP Prajwal Revanna and his father and former Karnataka minister HD Revanna in the sex tapes scandal. These are the two fresh cases against the father-son duo in the matter.

The rape case was filed by the Special Investigation Team (SIT) of the Karnataka Police. It has been filed under Section 376 of the IPC. It lists charges under Section 376(2) (N) (committing rape repeatedly), 506 (criminal intimidation), 354A(1)(ii) (demand for sexual favour), 354(B) (assault or criminal force on a woman with the intention to disrobe her), and 354(C) (uploading of nude or semi-nude pictures), and the IT Act.

Prajwal Revanna, who is the grandson of former Prime Minister and JD(S) patriarch HD Deve Gowda, has been named as the sole accused in the FIR. The SIT officers submitted the FIR to the magistrate's court on Thursday.

Besides, a kidnapping case has been lodged against the Karnataka MP by one Raju HD under Section 364A (kidnapping for ransom) and 365 (kidnapping with the intent to secretly or wrongfully confine a person) of the IPC. The complainant claimed that his mother was forcibly taken away on April 29 and later videos of her being sexually harassed went viral on social media.

In the complaint, Raju alleged that he and his mother worked at the Revanna house and farmhouse for six years, and it had been three years since they quit. Shortly before the Lok Sabha elections



Prajwal Revanna

began, a person identified as Satish went to their house and took his mother to a different region.

On the day of the election, Satish brought his mother back home and said to Raju and his mother to elope if the police came to their house. "If they come to you, let me know, I'll take you away," the complainant was allegedly told.

On April 29, around 9 pm, Satish went to Raju's house again and forcibly took the latter's mother, saying HD Revanna ordered her to be brought to him, citing a case will be filed against the complainant, and he might also go to jail if the police find him. On May 1, Raju learnt from his friends and his mother's sexual assault video had gone viral. Later, his relatives told him that in the video, his mother's legs could be seen tied.

On May 1 night, Raju claimed to have called Satish to know about the whereabouts of his mother, pleading to send her back home. However, the complainant was allegedly intimidated, saying an FIR was filed against her mother over an earlier fight that

involved HD Revanna and where she was seen holding a stick in a photo.

"I don't know where my mother was taken. I fear for her life. I request you to take action under the law and find my mother," Raju wrote in the complaint.

Earlier, a case was registered against Prajwal Revanna and HD Revanna for sexual harassment, intimidation, stalking and outraging the dignity of a woman based on a complaint by a woman who worked at their house.

Prajwal Revanna, who is seeking re-election from Hassan constituency in the ongoing Lok Sabha elections, has been embroiled in a massive controversy after multiple explicit videos purportedly of him were shared widely on social media. The JD(S) MP, however, has alleged the videos were morphed and also lodged a complaint in the matter via his polling agent.

The SIT formed by the Karnataka government issued a global lookout notice against him on Thursday at all immigration centres around the world. Prajwal Revanna fled the country soon after the sexual abuse allegations surfaced, and later was reported to have gone to Frankfurt in Germany on April 26.

Prajwal Revanna was supposed to appear before the SIT on Thursday. He, however, filed a plea with a sessions court in Bengaluru seeking anticipatory bail.

However, the Ministry of External Affairs said that the JD(S) MP did not seek political clearance for his Germany trip.

## India lodges protest as Beijing builds infra in PoK's Shaksgam

NEW DELHI (TIP)

India has lodged a strong protest with China for carrying out construction activities in Shaksgam Valley, which the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said was an illegal attempt to alter the situation on the ground.

Shaksgam Valley is a strategically key region that is part of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. "We consider Shaksgam Valley our territory and we have never accepted the so-called China-Pakistan agreement of 1963 through which Pakistan unlawfully attempted to cede the area to China. We have always rejected this and have protested to China not to alter the facts on the ground," said MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal. Terming Shaksgam Valley imbroglio as a vexed



issue, he said India had the right to take required steps. "We further reserve the right to take necessary measures and will take all possible steps to safeguard our interests. It is our territory. We have been protesting as and when required. We have taken a very strong stand on it," he underlined. Asked what the prospect of resolution of the standoff on the border in Ladakh was, Jaiswal said these were serious issues and, therefore, were bound to take time. "The next round of

engagements will take place soon to take things forward," he said.

Over the past several years, China has kept up military pressure on India through its incursions across the Line of Actual Control (LAC). While this fact has been recognised by the international community, a study by Northwestern University shows that China's incursions were strategically planned to make a permanent Chinese presence in these areas.

Border transgressions and incursions are well documented in all three sectors of the 3,488-km-long border that India officially shares with China, which has developed military infrastructure and roads in the disputed region, presenting a threat to India.

# India in history this Week

## MAY 3 TO MAY 9

### 03 MAY

1764 Nawab Mir Qasim of Bengal was defeated by the British.

1896 India's nationalist, politician, diplomat and former Defense Minister of India V.K. Birth of Krishna Menon

1913 The first Indian feature film Raja Harishchandra was released.

1919 The invasion of British India by Amanullah Khan which led to the Anglo-Afghan War.

1930 Birth of famous woman politician Sumitra Singh of Rajasthan.

1969 Third President of India Zakir Hussain passed away.

1977 The birth of the first female mathematician Maryam Mirzakhani to receive the 'Fields Medal', a prestigious world mathematics award.

1981 Indian cine actress Nargis died.

1989 Launch of country's first 50 kW solar power plant in Haryana.

2008 Tata Steel Limited got its first coal mining license in the UK.

1939 Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose established the All India Forward Block.

### 04 MAY

1980 Cole Mines Day was announced.

1799 Tipu Sultan died during a war.

1854 The country's first postage stamp was released in Kolkata.

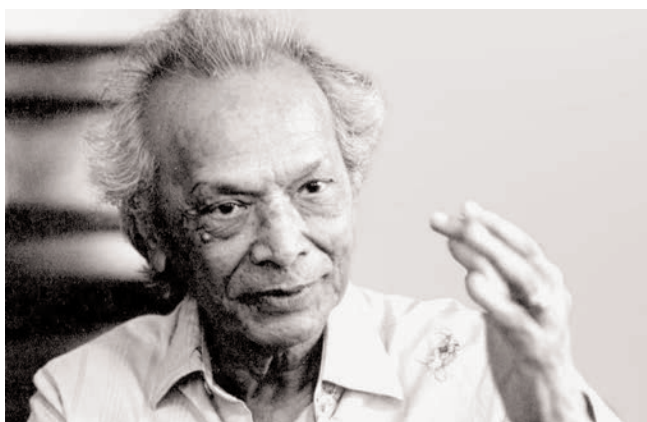


1923 Renowned filmmaker Mrinal Sen was born.

1959 Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru refused the treaty between India and Pakistan.

1980 Mazdoor Day was observed for the laborers working in the coal mines.

### 05 MAY



2006 Music director Naushad Ali, who is said to be the right mix of music and success, said goodbye to the world on this day.

1883 Surendra Nath Banerjee became the first journalist to go to jail.

1479 The third Sikh Guru, Guru Amar Das was

born.

1888 Birth of the great revolutionary Triloknath Chakravarty.

1916 Former President Gyani Zail Singh was born.

### 06 MAY

1944 Gandhiji released from Aga Khan Palace in Pune.

1967 Zakir Hussain became the first Muslim President of India.



2010 Ajmal Amir Kasab, convicted for the 26/11 attack in Mumbai, was sentenced to death.

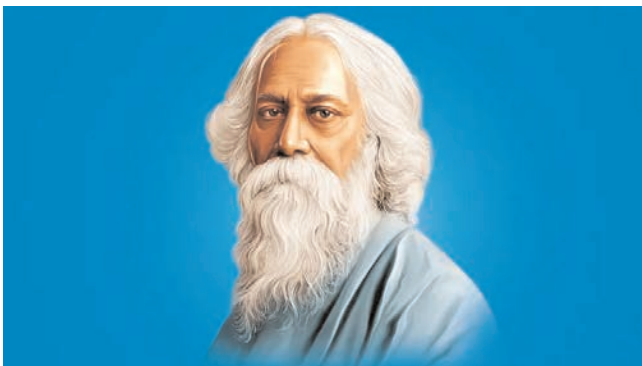
1861 Motilal Nehru, a freedom fighter and politician, was born.

1964 Khajan Singh, one of the famous swimmers of India, was born.

1589 The great musician Mian Tansen died.

1946 Eminent jurist, prominent parliamentary leader and trusted aide of Mahatma Gandhi, Bhulabhai Desai died.

### 07 MAY



1861 Rabindranath Tagore was born into a prosperous family in Calcutta. Tagore is the first person in Asia to receive the Nobel Prize.

1907 The first electric tram car operated in Bombay.

1973 The foundation stone of the new capital of Arunachal Pradesh was laid at Itanagar.

1989 Diplomatic contact between Britain and Iran broke in 1989 after an Iranian fatwa against Indian-origin writer Salman Rushdie.

2002 The International Religious Freedom Commission expressed serious concern over the violence in Gujarat.

1889 Renowned freedom fighter and founder of 'Hindustani Sevalal' N. s. Hardiker was born.

1880 The great Indian Sanskritist and scholar Pandit Pandurang Vaman Kane was born.

### 08 MAY

1933 Mahatma Gandhi kept 21 days fast against British rule.

1929 Birth of India's famous Thumri singer Girija Devi.

1963 The centenary celebrations of the Indian Red Cross Society were celebrated.

1954 The central government included Chandranagar in the state of West Bengal.

1980 The World Health Organization announced the elimination of smallpox.

2000 69-year-old Lord Swarajpal of Indian origin was appointed the vice-chancellor of Britain's fourth-largest university in Britain.

1895 Famous revolutionary and Gandhian activist of Orissa Gopabandhu Chaudhary was born.



1916 Swami Chinmayananda, the famous spiritual thinker of India and world-renowned scholar of Vedanta philosophy was born.

1915 India's freedom fighter Amir Chand passed away.

1915 One of the revolutionaries who fought for India's independence, Bhai Balmukund, died on that day.

1926 Famous historian Tapan Rai Chaudhary was born.

### 09 MAY



1540 King of Shishodia dynasty Maharana Pratap was born in Udaipur, Mewar, who struggled with Mughal Emperor Akbar for many years.

1866 Freedom fighter, philanthropist, thinker and reformer Gopal Krishna Gokhale was also born on this day.

2010 India's Vandana Shiva was selected for the Sydney Peace Prize for women's empowerment and environmental protection in developing countries.

1653 The world-famous historical building and the Taj Mahal, one of the world's wonders, was completed after 22 years of continuous work.

1866 Birth of great leader, social reformer and thinker Gopal Krishna Gokhale.

1874 The first horse-drawn tram car started in Bombay (now Mumbai).

1946 The first Satyagraha movement against the Portuguese rule started in Goa under the leadership of Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia.

1986 The first person to reach Mount Everest, Himalaya, Tenzing Norgay died in 1986.

1998 Famous Indian Ghazal singer and actor Talat Mehmood died in 1998.

Sanjha Punjab USA  
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*Dr. Mamta Joshi*  
Sufi Gazal

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# World Press Freedom Day

**Observed on May 3 every year, The United Nations created this day to highlight the basic principles of press freedom worldwide. By celebrating World Press Freedom Day, journalists and supporters of democracy help protect freedom of speech, access to information, and media independence, which are constantly under attack globally.**

**W**orld Press Freedom Day is observed annually on May 3rd. Established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1993, this day serves to celebrate the fundamental principles of press freedom, assess the state of press freedom throughout the world, defend the media from attacks on their independence, and pay tribute to journalists who have lost their lives in the line of duty.

The day also acts as a reminder to governments of the need to respect and uphold the right to freedom of expression as enshrined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It highlights the importance of a free, independent, and pluralistic media in fostering transparency, accountability, and democracy.

World Press Freedom Day provides an opportunity to raise awareness about the importance of press freedom and the challenges faced by journalists worldwide, including censorship, harassment, imprisonment, and violence. It also encourages dialogue and collaboration among media professionals, policymakers, civil society organizations, and the public to promote and protect press freedom around the globe.

## World Press Freedom Day History

On the recommendation of the twenty-sixth session of UNESCO's General Conference, World Press Freedom Day was proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in December 1993.

May 3 acts as a reminder for the Governments to respect their commitments to press freedom. This day is a reflection for media professionals on issues of press freedom and professionals.

World Press Freedom Day is a support day for media persons who are involved in press freedom, Journalists, media, etc.

## World Press Freedom Day 2024 Theme

World Press Freedom Day is observed every year on May 3. It is significant for the press which deals with the information of the public on the Global Scale.

The Theme of World Press Freedom Day 2024 is "A Press for the Planet: Journalism in the Face of the environmental crisis".

## Significance

The Significance of World Press Freedom Day was to celebrate the principles of press freedom, to prevent the media from attacks, and to assess the state of press freedom.

The main aim of World Press Freedom Day was to raise awareness of the freedom of the press and freedom of expression. This day also represents a



day of reflection for media professionals about issues of press freedom.

The Global Conference provides an opportunity for journalists, civil society representatives, national authorities, and to work together for identifying solutions.

The United Nations has celebrated World Press Freedom Day before 1993. In 1948, Article 19 said that everyone has the Right to Freedom of opinion, everyone has the right to say their opinion without fear, and everyone has the right to receive and impart their ideas through the Press and Media to the people.

## Prizes

UNESCO marks World Press Freedom Day by conferring the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize on a deserving individual, organisation or institution that has made an outstanding contribution to the defence and/or promotion of press freedom anywhere in the world, especially when this has been achieved in the face of danger. Created in 1997, the prize is awarded on the recommendation of an independent jury of 14 news professionals. Names are submitted by regional and international non-governmental organisations working for press freedom, and by UNESCO member states.

The Prize is named in honour of Guillermo Cano Isaza, a Colombian journalist who was assassinated in front of the offices of his newspaper, El Espectador, in Bogotá, on 17 December 1986. Cano's writings had offended Colombia's powerful drug barons.

UNESCO also marks World Press Freedom Day each year by bringing together media professionals, press freedom organisations and UN agencies to assess the state of press freedom worldwide and discuss solutions for addressing challenges. Each conference is centred on a theme related to press freedom, including good governance, media coverage of terrorism, impunity

and the role of media in post-conflict countries.

## UNESCO to host 2024 World Press Freedom Day in Chile

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) will host 2024 World Press Freedom Day ceremonies in Santiago, Chile, from May 2 to 4, 2024. Celebrated every May 3, theme for this year is "A Press for the Planet: Journalism in the face of the Environmental Crisis" and focuses on the importance of journalism and freedom of expression in the context of the current global environmental crisis. The 31st edition of World Press Freedom Day aims to highlight the significant role played by the press, journalism, access, and dissemination of information to ensure and secure a sustainable future that respects the rights of individuals and their diversity of voices, as well as gender equality.

World Press Freedom Day 2024 is an important opportunity for the international community to collectively reflect on these multidimensional challenges, the fundamental role of journalism, and the transformative power that reliable information has to protect our planet, achieve sustainable development, and consolidate democracies.

Partners from the media, academia, and civil society will also organize events in Santiago and around the world centered on this year's theme.

The Day will serve as a platform to bring together key actors and to reflect on the fundamental role of journalism and reliable information in protecting our planet, and discuss topics, including the importance of reliable and accurate information, especially that which denounces and investigates the environmental crisis and its effects.

## The conference will touch on the following

The importance of reliable and accurate information, especially that which denounces and investigates the

environmental crisis and its effects.

Violence faced by journalists and communication workers when promoting sustainable development and environmental protection, encouraging a gender-responsive perspective that promotes non-sexist journalistic discourse.

Support for the media to strengthen their institutional capacities to report on climate change and environmental crises, paying special attention to the viability of the media.

Dis- and misinformation about environmental issues and its impact on public and political support for climate action, effective policies, and the protection of vulnerable communities affected by climate change.

Use the occasion to recall the Santiago Declaration, which stresses the importance of respecting media pluralism and cultural, linguistic, and gender diversity as a fundamental factor of our democratic societies and which should be reflected in all media.

The role of other critical voices, such as scientists and artists, will also be discussed. The urgency of tackling the massive waves of dis and misinformation about the current global environmental crisis will occupy a prominent space in next year's agenda.

World Press Freedom Day 2024 promises to be a pivotal moment for reflection, dialogue, and concerted action towards ensuring a press that is truly dedicated to safeguarding our planet and promoting a sustainable future for all.

## Persecution of Journalists

Latin America and the Caribbean continues to be the region with the highest number of murders of journalists, according to the 2022 UNESCO Director-General's Report on the Safety of Journalists and the Danger of Impunity.

Since 1993, more than 1,600 journalists have been killed for reporting the news and bringing information to the public. In nine out of ten cases the killers go unpunished, according to the UNESCO observatory of killed journalists. Impunity leads to more killings and is often a symptom of worsening conflict and the breakdown of law and judicial systems.

While killings are the most extreme form of media censorship, journalists are also subjected to countless threats - ranging from kidnapping, torture and other physical attacks to harassment, particularly in the digital sphere. Threats of violence and attacks against journalists, in particular, create a climate of fear for media professionals, impeding the free circulation of information, opinions and ideas for all

citizens. Women journalists are particularly impacted by threats and attacks, notably by those made online. According to UNESCO's discussion paper, *The Chilling: Global trends in online violence against women journalists*, 73 percent of the women journalists surveyed said they had been threatened, intimidated and insulted online in connection with their work.

In many cases, threats of violence and attacks against journalists are not properly investigated. This impunity emboldens the perpetrators of the crimes and at the same time has a chilling effect on society, including journalists themselves. UNESCO is concerned that impunity damages whole societies by covering up serious human rights abuses, corruption, and crime.

#### Journalists who were murdered

From high-profile deaths like Jamal Khashoggi's killing inside Istanbul's Saudi consulate, to a shooting outside a journalist's home in Yemen, to an attack on a convoy in South Sudan that killed five, such targeted acts to silence the press reflect government corruption and suppression of people's rights and weaken public trust in a country's judiciary.

#### Jamal Khashoggi (Saudi Arabia)



Jamal Khashoggi, former editor-in-chief of the Saudi newspaper *Al-Watan* and columnist for *The Washington Post*, was killed by a team of Saudi military and intelligence officials on October 2, 2018, shortly after entering the Saudi consulate in Istanbul. Turkish and Saudi courts have tried and sentenced several suspects in the case. It was revealed in September 2020 that, after Khashoggi's murder, U.S. President Donald Trump admitted to helping shield Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who ordered the journalist's murder according to a report released by the CIA. A current lawsuit against the U.S. intelligence community seeks the release of documents that may provide information on its awareness of threats to Khashoggi's life.

#### Ahmed Hussein-Suale Divela (Ghana)

In 2018, a member of parliament during a TV appearance threatened and encouraged violence against Ahmed Hussein-Suale Divela, and Divela had said he feared for his life.



A member of the investigative journalism outlet *Tiger Eye Private Investigations*, 33-year-old Divela was shot and killed by two men on a motorbike in January 2019. He was driving in the Madina neighborhood of Ghana's capital, Accra, and had been assisting government prosecutors with an investigation into corruption within the country's soccer leagues. A *Tiger Eye* lawyer has called for charges to be brought upon the member of parliament, in addition to the two suspects.

#### Dalia Marko (South Sudan)



Dalia Marko, a reporter for the local radio station *Raja FM*, was among five journalists killed when unidentified gunmen ambushed an official convoy in South Sudan in 2015. There were 11 victims in total. According to reports, the convoy was returning from Sepo to Raja, having visited families of individuals killed in another attack by unidentified gunmen, when it was attacked with gunfire and machetes and set on fire. The motive for the attack remains unclear, and government spokesmen pointed blame at the time at different rebel groups. This is the deadliest attack on journalists in South Sudan since CPJ began collecting data in 1992.

#### Natalia Estemirova (Russia)

Since 2000, at least five journalists from independent Moscow newspaper *Novaya Gazeta* have been killed, including Natalia Estemirova. She also contributed to Caucasus news website *Kavkazsky Uzel*, served as a consultant for Human Rights Watch and was one of few people reporting on human rights abuses in Chechnya. In 2009, four men forced the 50-year-old into a car in Grozny, the capital of Chechnya, as she was leaving her apartment for work. According to press reports, the journalist shouted that she was being kidnapped as the car sped away, and later that day her body was found in the neighboring region of Ingushetia with gunshot wounds in her head and chest. A colleague believes Chechen authorities were behind the murder, condemned by former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev.



#### Larry Que (Philippines)



Publisher of weekly community newspaper *Catanduanes News Now* and owner of a local insurance company, Larry Que was entering an office building in December 2016 when a gunman fatally shot him in the head at close range and escaped on a motorcycle driven by an accomplice. The newspaper had recently published a column by Que alleging "official negligence" over an illegal methamphetamine laboratory and naming Catanduanes Governor Joseph Cua as responsible. Que's wife believes Cua hired a hitman to "silence" Que. She filed a murder complaint, which police said is still under investigation as of August 2020. She also pursued charges of graft and misconduct against Cua; they were dismissed for lack of evidence.

#### Nabil Hasan al-Quaety (Yemen)

Secessionist conflict threatens justice in journalist's murder.



Journalist Nabil Hasan al-Quaety, 34, whose wife was expecting their fourth child, was killed in the southern port city of Aden on June 2, 2020. A group of men in military uniforms attempted to hit al-Quaety with their car as he exited his home and opened fire when he ran, shooting him in the head, chest and hand. The assailants then fled. A freelance reporter, videographer and photographer, al-Quaety had worked with the news outlet *Agence France-Presse* since 2015. The Yemeni government claims sole authority in Aden, but the city is effectively run by the Southern Transitional Council fighting for separation from the country. Both have condemned the killing, but an official investigation could prove difficult due to this makeup. A spokesman for the secessionist group said it recently embedded al-Quaety as a photographer and speculated that forces within the government may be responsible for his death.

#### Danilo López (Guatemala)



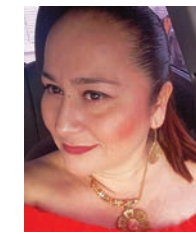
Two gunmen shot Danilo López in March 2015, while the reporter for Guatemala City daily *Prensa Libre* was walking in a park with a fellow journalist. In more than a decade with the newspaper, López had often written about corruption and misuse of public funds and had received threats in connection to his reporting. The case awaits a murder trial against Julio Juárez Ramírez, a former lawmaker who has been charged with orchestrating the attack and sanctioned by the U.S. Treasury Department under the Global Magnitsky Act. Courts sentenced the getaway driver to 30 years in prison, charged but have not arrested the alleged gunman and acquitted two other suspects. Authorities believe the case may be linked to an organized crime network working with a drug cartel and transferred the case in 2015 to a special court in the capital after local prosecutors investigating the crime received threats.

#### Shujaat Bukhari (India)

Four suspects are yet to be charged in the June 2018 killing of Shujaat Bukhari, founding editor of *Rising Kashmir* newspaper. Several unidentified gunmen fired at him as he was leaving his office for an iftar party. He suffered injuries to the head and abdomen and died, as did two police officers who had been assigned to protect him after an attack in 2000. In the days preceding the incident, Bukhari had requested additional security amid the conflict-ridden situation in Kashmir. Police claimed that *Lashkar-e-Taiba*, a Pakistan-based militant group was responsible, but the group has denied involvement. In November 2018, police and the army killed one of the prime suspects in a shootout. There have been no updates in the case since.



#### Norma Sarabia Garduza (Mexico)



In June last year, unknown attackers shot and killed reporter Norma Sarabia, 46, at the front door of her residence in Huimanguillo, in the southern state of Tabasco. She had received frequent death threats as a correspondent for newspapers *Diario Presente* and *Tabasco HOY* and had recently reported on a series of violent crimes, including murders and a kidnapping. Soon after her death, the Tabasco state attorney general's office said in a statement released on Twitter that it had opened an investigation. To date, however, there has still been little movement in the investigation. Sarabia is one of 56 journalists killed in Mexico since 1992.

#### Daphne Caruana Galizia (Malta)

Daphne Caruana Galizia, a prominent journalist who reported on corruption and helped cover the *Panama Papers*, was killed in Malta in October 2017 by a car bomb near her house. Her widely read blog, *Running Commentary*, included investigative reports and commentary on politicians. Former Maltese Prime Minister Joseph Muscat considered Galizia a harsh critic of his but condemned the "barbaric" attack and stepped down in January 2020 over the political crisis sparked after the case. Four men have been in detention—some since December 2017—but no trial date has been set. CPJ and 18 other organizations have called on authorities to prevent political interference in the investigation.



#### Gauri Lankesh (India)

She was an Indian activist and journalist from Bangalore, Karnataka. She worked as an editor in *Lankesh Patrike*, a Kannada weekly started by her father P. Lankesh, and ran her own weekly called *Gauri Lankesh Patrike*. She was murdered outside her home in Rajarajeshwari Nagar on 5 September 2017. At the time of her death, Gauri was known for being a critic of right-wing Hindu extremism. She was honoured with *Anna Politkovskaya Award* for speaking against right-wing Hindu extremism, campaigning for women's rights and opposing caste based discrimination.



# RAJIKA PURI BRINGS BACK HER 'DANCING THE GODS' FESTIVAL TO NYC

BY MABEL PAIS

The World Music Institute in collaboration with Asia Society presents its annual 13th edition of 'Dancing the Gods' Festival featuring leading performers of Indian Dance. Each night begins with a slide presentation by festival curator and acclaimed dance storyteller, Rajika Puri.

## PROGRAM



(left) Kasi Aysola & Archana Raja  
Credit: worldmusicinstitute.org

Night One: Dancing the Gods  
Kasi Aysola and Archana Raja (Kuchipudi with live music)

Friday, May 10, 2024

Doors: 7 PM | Lec Dem by Curator Rajika Puri: 7:15 PM

Performance: 8 PM

Asia Society - 725 Park Avenue, Manhattan

Night Two: Dancing the Gods



Rama Vaidyanathan  
Credit: worldmusicinstitute.org

Rama Vaidyanathan (solo Bharatanatyam with live music)

Sunday, May 12, 2024

Doors: 7 PM | Lec Dem by Curator Rajika Puri: 7:15 PM

Performance: 8 PM

Asia Society - 725 Park Avenue, Manhattan

Watch Kasi & Archana dance -  
[youtu.be/LDzgEcHrzk0](https://youtu.be/LDzgEcHrzk0)

Learn more about Kasi Aysola at [prakritidance.com](https://prakritidance.com) and Archana Raja at [archanaraja.com](https://archanaraja.com)

Watch Rama dance - [youtu.be/g3v7EkmEKt4](https://youtu.be/g3v7EkmEKt4)

Learn more about Rama Vaidyanathan at

[ramavaidyanathan.com](https://ramavaidyanathan.com)

## TICKETS

For tickets to see Kasi and Archana on May 10, visit [asevents.eventive.org/schedule/65d4fc632139390097fca05](https://asevents.eventive.org/schedule/65d4fc632139390097fca05)

For tickets to see Rama on May 12, visit [asevents.eventive.org/schedule/65d4fae436e55f006eb9a964](https://asevents.eventive.org/schedule/65d4fae436e55f006eb9a964)

**RAJIKA PURI** is an internationally acclaimed exponent of two forms of Indian classical dance - Bharata Natyam and Odissi - which she has performed in solo recitals all over Europe, the United States, Latin America, and India. Career highlights include a command performance for the President of Mexico. Learn more at [rajikapuri.com](https://rajikapuri.com)

## INTERVIEW WITH RAJIKA PURI



Rajika Puri  
Credit: worldmusicinstitute.org

Rajika Puri, festival curator and acclaimed dance storyteller, spoke to Mabel Pais.

### TIP: YOU HAVE AN INSPIRING RESUME IN THEATRE, DANCE, AND FILM. ARE YOU STILL ACTIVE IN EACH OF THESE AREAS?

**RAJIKA PURI (RP):** Mira (Nair) got me into 'Mississippi Masala' (1991) and 'Longtime Companion' (1989 - directed by Norman René) and things like that. But film is not really my thing...I did however fly there and then get up really early to go to the set at 6 o'clock the next morning and do something small. Roshan Seth is a friend of mine. I had gone because Roshan Seth was in the film ('Mississippi Masala') and actually I was supposed to be on holiday in New Mexico. I had a scene with Sir Ben Kingsley in 'Learning to Drive' (as Darwan's sister Rasbir) and things like that. But it was fun (2014 - director Isabel Coixet).

Nowadays, I'm doing even less theatre because the auditions and all stopped during the pandemic and then my agent left or retired and I decided not to get another one. Then I decided to get a place in Portugal to spend a lot of time there and winters in India.

### TIP: WHERE WERE YOU BORN? HOW DID YOU GET STARTED IN DANCE?

**RP:** I was born in East Africa.  
Oh! I think as a little child I would always listen to music. My father was in Burma during the war (Second World War) and my mother went home for my birth, and I have photographs of me standing by a His Master's Voice (HMV) turntable records that had that

big megaphone, and there's a picture of me just standing next to it listening to music and trying to move myself to it. Apparently, my mother always said "you know, that from the moment you could walk, you responded to dance." To me, dance is really a response to music. It's not like jumping around like an idiot. It really is a response that comes in my body when I hear music that makes me want to move.

### TIP: AT WHAT AGE DID YOU START PERFORMING?

**RP:** I think my first dance class was at the age of eight. My mother knew that a person's brain is not really beginning to be formed and set until the age of eight. So she didn't want to have me do anything before that age except to jump around to music, or go to dance sessions in kindergarten. But at the age of eight, she found me a guru, and I started. (Of course, in those days it was only Bharatanatyam you could learn). A few Bharatanatyam gurus had come to Delhi, and I remember having classes in the central hall of my aunt's big house (because my Bengali father who was in the army had been posted to a non-family station and we were in Dehradun and we had moved to a very small place that they gave to army wives whose husbands were at the frontier, at non-family stations. So in this big hall of Motilal Nehru Marg, I used to get Bharatanatyam lessons.

Then, my mother got fed up of being an army widow (a grass widow is what I mean) of never seeing her husband who was up in the Front (battle front), so she decided to go to London, and she took my younger 2-year-old brother and myself, and we went off to England. There, she put me into ballet for a little while. But my feet were not ballet feet. I have flat feet as a Bharatanatyam dancer, but there were no Bharatanatyam teachers in London in 1958!

Soon, she even got me into a couple of talent shows and I danced on television and was called back three times, you know. The newspaper used Malini (from Manimalini Parivrajika which is my real name, Rajika is the end of it. There's no such a name as Rajika in India, though it is a Sri Lankan name, I later discovered.

The name Rajika was given to me by Madame Sokhey, Menaka Sokhey. She was one of the first dancers who went abroad at the same time as Uday Shankar. She told my mother when my parents got married in her house, "If you have a daughter, give her the name Rajika," which was one of her favorite roles in her ballet 'Malavika Agnihotram'. A Parivrajika is a wandering Buddhist nun. I remember my masi (mother's sister) said, "No, no, that name means she'll never get married." So I later thought that part of my name has come too since I have traveled a lot during my life, from New Zealand to Peru. So, she said, "Call her also 'Monimalini' to ensure she is not poor! So they added Monimalini to the beginning of my name. But my father used to just call me 'Rajika'. And then I found out that it is a Sri Lankan name.

### TIP: WHY THE TITLE 'DANCING THE GODS'?

**RP:** Well. Have you thought about it? We don't dance for the Gods, we don't dance to the gods, we become the gods on stage. When I dance Shiva, I become Shiva. I'm representing Shiva. We dance for the people; we dance the gods. We dance as Shiva to spread, to give the non-literate people and others in the villages and so on to bring the scriptures to life. And to bring the scriptures to life, we danced and the characters were gods.

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



# SIX HUNDRED DYNAMIC WOMEN FUNDRAISE FOR VITAL ASPECTS OF NJPAC



Robin Roberts, ABC-GMA, co-anchor  
Credit: NJPAC

BY MABEL PAIS

It's time to set our sights on a cherished spring tradition - the Women@NJPAC Annual Spring Luncheon & Auction!

Join us alongside nearly 600 of New Jersey's most dynamic women - from elected and philanthropic leaders to artists, activists, moms and managers -

who return every year for this special event that uplifts and empowers all who attend.

## KEYNOTE SPEAKER

### ROBIN ROBERTS

Co-anchor, Good Morning America  
(Photo W here)

Co-anchor of America's top-rated morning program, Good Morning America, Robin Roberts has more than 30 years of experience as an author, producer, reporter and anchor in radio and television. Her on-air reporting has covered events from Hurricane Katrina to the inauguration of Barack Obama and the Academy Awards. As President of Rock'n Robin Productions, she oversees content and new business partnerships.

The 2024 Ronnie Goldberg Award for "outstanding contributions to women@njpac" will be presented to:

### NANCY CANTOR

Chancellor, Rutgers University-Newark

We are delighted to honor Nancy Cantor, Chancellor of Rutgers University-Newark and a member of the NJPAC Board of Directors, as this year's recipient of The Ronnie Goldberg Award. This esteemed recognition is in appreciation of her unwavering friendship and steadfast support of NJPAC's mission.

### LUNCHEON CO-CHAIRS:

Tammye T. Jones  
community leader, philanthropist

Kerri B. Levine  
vice president, the Fidelco Group

### YOUR IMPACT:

Proceeds from the Spring Luncheon support vital initiatives at NJPAC including Arts Education programs that nurture the whole child, Community Engagement's ArtsXChange in the South Ward and a first-in-the-nation prescription program advancing health and well-being through engagement with the arts.

### QUESTIONS:

For questions, please reach out to Stacey Joseph, Senior Manager, Development and Women@NJPAC Events, at [sjoseph@njpac.org](mailto:sjoseph@njpac.org) or call 973.353.7043.

## GARDEN STATE PREMIER YOUTH ORCHESTRA CELEBRATES 45 YEARS

BY MABEL PAIS

The New Jersey Youth Symphony (NJYS), a program of Wharton Arts, presents its 45th Anniversary Celebration Concert ([njpac.org/event/nj-youth-symphony-45th-anniversary-concert](http://njpac.org/event/nj-youth-symphony-45th-anniversary-concert)) on Sunday, May 5 at 3:00 p.m. at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) in Newark. Experience a grand celebration of the Garden State's premier youth orchestra program as its three full symphony orchestras and Jazz Orchestra come together with alumni for a triumphant concert commemorating the 45th season.

Special guest stars George Marriner Maull of The Discovery Orchestra and jazz legend Rufus Reid join the jubilee led by NJYS conductors Dion Tucker, Mark Gunderman, Simon Lipskar, and Helen H. Cha-Pyo. The celebratory program features works by Holst, Copland, Rufus Reid, Valerie Coleman, James Ra, and Respighi.

Audience members are invited to take a sweeping look at the New Jersey Youth Symphony's 45-year history and the road ahead.



NJYS

WhartonArts.org

Maestro George Marriner Maull said, "As founding Music Director and Conductor of the New Jersey Youth Symphony, nothing could make me happier than the celebration of the youth symphony's 45th Anniversary-an amazing accomplishment in the lifespans of today's nonprofits. The New Jersey Youth Symphony, a vital part of the Wharton Arts family, is now flourishing under the artistic leadership of Helen Cha-Pyo and her staff. It is flourishing beyond the wildest dreams of those of us-and there were so many during those first eighteen years beginning in 1979 - who planted and nourished this seed. Just gaze at and listen to what that seed has blossomed

into...Happy 45th Anniversary indeed!"

"As we commemorate the New Jersey Youth Symphony's remarkable 45-year journey, this concert stands as a tribute to the unwavering dedication, exceptional talent, and boundless passion of our young musicians, their families, our devoted artistic and administrative teams, and our invaluable community partners-including public school music educators, private teachers, and generous supporters," said Helen H. Cha-Pyo, Artistic Director and Principal Conductor. "We are eager to present a concert with our honorees, Rufus Reid and Maestro George Marriner Maull, and NJYS alumni that honors our rich history while

embracing an exciting future. We hope the audience enjoys the world premiere of 'Ring O Bells' by James Ra, commissioned to commemorate the 45th anniversary, and we invite you to join us for this unforgettable musical celebration!"

Throughout the 2023-24 season, NJYS has honored its vibrant history and bright future with premieres of new compositions and beloved music from the inaugural season in 1979. For more information, go to [NJYS.org](http://NJYS.org).

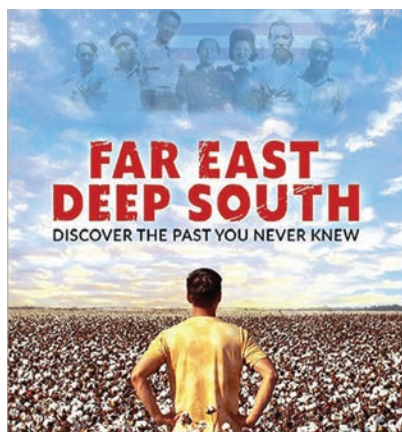
### TICKETS

Tickets are available at [NJPAC.org](http://NJPAC.org). VIP Tickets can be purchased to get you premium seating and admission to the post-concert reception.

Support to NJYS is also accepted at [NJYS45.givesmart.com](http://NJYS45.givesmart.com) ([e.givesmart.com](http://e.givesmart.com))

### WHARTON ARTS

Wharton Arts' mission is to offer accessible, high quality performing arts education that sparks personal growth and builds inclusive communities to be accessible for all. Learn more at [WhartonArts.org](http://WhartonArts.org).



Far East Deep South, film poster Credit: NJPAC

## AAPI HERITAGE MONTH HONORED

BY MABEL PAIS

In honor of Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month, The New Jersey Performing Center's (NJPAC) 'Standing in Solidarity' focuses on the Asian American experience.

The event includes a screening of the award-winning documentary 'Far East Deep South,' the PSEG True Diversity Film selection, about a Chinese American family's search for their roots and the

discovery of an immigrant community in the South in the wake of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. Also revealed in the film is how the Chinese American settlers developed a symbiotic relationship with their Black neighbors during the Jim Crow era and bridged racial and ethnic divides in tumultuous times. This event is a co-production of NJPAC and the New Jersey Chapter of Ascend, the largest global network advancing Pan-Asian professionals in the workplace and corporate boardrooms. Learn more about the moderator and panelists at [njpac.org/event/pseg-true-diversity-film-](http://njpac.org/event/pseg-true-diversity-film-series-presents-chinese-and-black-allyship-in-the-south)

[series-presents-chinese-and-black-allyship-in-the-south](http://series-presents-chinese-and-black-allyship-in-the-south)

### REGISTRATION

Registration is required. To register, visit [njpac.org/event/pseg-true-diversity-film-series-presents-chinese-and-black-allyship-in-the-south/#register](http://njpac.org/event/pseg-true-diversity-film-series-presents-chinese-and-black-allyship-in-the-south/#register)

Learn more about the Moderator and Panelists at [njpac.org/event/pseg-true-diversity-film-series-presents-chinese-and-black-allyship-in-the-south](http://njpac.org/event/pseg-true-diversity-film-series-presents-chinese-and-black-allyship-in-the-south)

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

# BELA FLECK WITH ZAKIR HUSSAIN & COMPANY CELEBRATES RHYTHM, RAGA & RHAPSODY

## BY MABEL PAIS

As part of the 'COLLABORATIONS' series, the World Music Institute of New York City with Absolutely Live Entertainment presents 'Béla Fleck: Rhythm, Raga & Rhapsody' on Saturday, May 4, 2024 at the Perelman Stage, Carnegie Hall, New York. Béla Fleck is joined by Ustad Zakir Hussain, Bruce Hornsby and Anat Cohen and Béla Fleck's company.

This series of cross-cultural musical explorations often explores ways in which the music of artists from one culture have influenced the music of another culture, or the music of seemingly widely varying cultures can be strikingly similar or complementary.

## PROGRAM

Saturday, May 4, 2024  
Doors: 7 PM | Show: 8 PM  
Carnegie Hall - 881 7th Ave. Manhattan  
Stern Auditorium / Perelman Stage  
Co-presented with Absolutely Live Entertainment  
Béla Fleck: Rhythm, Raga & Rhapsody  
Béla Fleck featuring  
Eric Jacobsen & The Fleckharmonic  
My Bluegrass Heart (Michael Cleveland, Sierra Hull,  
Justin Moses, Mark Schatz & Bryan Sutton)  
Zakir Hussain - Honorary WMI Board Member  
Bruce Hornsby  
Anat Cohen

## PERFORMERS

Béla Fleck, Banjo  
Aeolian Philharmonic  
Eric Jacobsen, Conductor  
My Bluegrass Heart  
- Michael Cleveland, Fiddle  
- Sierra Hull, Mandolin  
- Justin Moses, Dobro, Fiddle, and Banjo  
- Mark Schatz, Bass  
- Bryan Sutton, Guitar  
Zakir Hussain, Tabla  
Bruce Hornsby, Piano  
Anat Cohen, Clarinet

## TICKETS

Tickets are available on a tiered basis. To access tickets, visit [carnegiehall.org/Cart/Event-Seating?itemNumber=46811#](https://carnegiehall.org/Cart/Event-Seating?itemNumber=46811#)



(top) Béla Fleck, (bottom - left to right) Zakir Hussain, Bruce Hornsby, Anat Cohen

Credit: worldmusicinstitute.org

## BELA FLECK

Béla Fleck has virtually reinvented the image and sound of the banjo through a remarkable legacy of four decades that has taken him all over the musical map.

His musical journey has earned him 16 Grammy awards in nine different fields, including Country, Pop, Jazz, Instrumental, Classical and World Music. His newest project is no different, and yet, entirely original as Fleck expands and explores George Gershwin's 'Rhapsody in Blue' by paying homage to the legendary composer while redefining an American classic just in time for its centennial.

'Rhythm, Raga & Rhapsody' will celebrate the music of Fleck's career, including his New York premiere of 'Rhapsody in Blue' performed with an orchestra, conducted by Eric Jacobsen. The multi-artist night features 'My Bluegrass Heart,' tabla master Zakir Hussain, pianist Bruce Hornsby, and woodwind player Anat Cohen.

## ZAKIR HUSSAIN

Ustad Zakir Hussain is widely considered to be one of the greatest tabla players of all time and globally recognized not only as a tabla virtuoso but also as a composer, music producer, percussionist, and film actor. He has received the highest awards given by the Indian government such as the Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan, Padma Vibhusha, and the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award, as well as multiple Grammy Awards and the NEA National Heritage Fellowship for his contributions to Indian classical music and percussion. Zakir became the first musician from India to receive 3 Grammys at one time at the 66th Annual Grammy Awards on February 4, 2024, for Best Global Music Album, Best Global Music Performance and Best Contemporary Instrumental Album. Learn more at [zakirhussain.com](https://zakirhussain.com).

He is a WMI Honorary Board member.

## ERIC JACOBSEN

Already well-established as one of classical music's most exciting and innovative young conductors, Eric Jacobsen combines fresh interpretations of the traditional canon with cutting-edge collaborations across musical genres. Learn more at [jacobseneric.com](https://jacobseneric.com)

## BRUCE HORNSBY

Bruce Randall Hornsby is an American singer-songwriter and pianist. Hornsby has won three Grammy Awards: a 1987 Grammy Award for Best New Artist with Bruce Hornsby and the Range, a 1990 Grammy Award for Best Bluegrass Recording, and a 1994 Grammy Award for Best Pop Instrumental Performance. Learn more at [brucehornsby.com](https://brucehornsby.com).

## ANAT COHEN

Ever charismatic, prolific and inspired, Grammy-nominated clarinetist-saxophonist Anat Cohen has won hearts and minds the world over with her expressive virtuosity and delightful stage presence.

Anat has been declared Clarinetist of the Year by the Jazz Journalists Association every year since 2007 and has also been named the top clarinetist in both the readers and critics polls in DownBeat for multiple years running. Learn more at [anatcohen.com](https://anatcohen.com).

## EXPLORE JAPANESE CULTURE WITH FOLK & ANIME SONGS FOR PEACE



Rino Aise Credit: worldmusicinstitute.org

## BY MABEL PAIS

Experience a live performance of sanshin with folk and anime singing by RINO AISE at the beautiful and private Globus Washitsu, an authentic Japanese space in Manhattan on May 2, 2024.

## PROGRAM

WHAT: Sixth Annual Japanese Salon  
WHEN: Thur, May 2, 2024  
WHERE: Globus Washitsu @ 889 Broadway between 19/20th Streets, Manhattan  
6:30 pm - Door open. Arrive on time so as not to disturb the performance.

7:00 pm - Live performance followed by a Q&A session

8:00 pm - Reception with sushi, sake, and refreshments

A live performance of sanshin with folk and anime singing by RINO AISE.

Sushi, sake, and refreshments will also be served in the beautiful and private Globus Washitsu, an authentic Japanese space in Manhattan.

## PLEASE NOTE:

Please bring white socks as visitors are not permitted to wear shoes inside the Globus Washitsu.

## TICKETS

For tickets, visit [ci.ovationtix.com/35721/production/1197150](https://ci.ovationtix.com/35721/production/1197150).

Member benefits apply. Space is limited.

## RINO AISE

Rino Aise, a native of Japan, is a performer of drama and music. Rino initially studied Minyo (folk songs) with Ryushu Kubota, the highest teacher of the Hokkaido Folk Song Federation. Then she started playing sanshin, a traditional Okinawan instrument, to pursue her music career singing folk, anime, and original songs throughout the U.S. and Japan.

Band: Rino Aise Band R. A. B Duo: PinkLagoon

Learn more at [rinoaise.com](https://rinoaise.com)

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

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## Allu Arjun returns with his characteristic swag in 'Pushpa 2: The Rule' poster

Telugu superstar Allu Arjun, who is gearing up for the release of his event film 'Pushpa 2: The Rule', shared a new poster from the film on May 1. The actor took to his Instagram and shared the poster, notifying his 25.6 million followers about the new song from the film.

The poster shows a flamboyant Pushparaj (Allu's titular character) donning a maroon shirt paired with black pants as he stands against his red SUV.

Wearing heavy pieces of jewellery for a male protagonist, Allu's Pushparaj sets his foot forward in style as the wooden logs and the cloud of dust occupy the foreground.

The wooden logs are wired to the character's story and his business of smuggling the sandalwood.

Meanwhile, the first song titled 'Pushpa Pushpa' from the film is set to hit the airwaves at 5:00 pm. The anticipation is naturally high considering that the Pushpa is returning to the silver screen after more than two years.

'Pushpa Pushpa' has been composed by Devi Sri Prasad who was feted with the National Award for his work in the first part of the film.

# In Heeramandi, Richa Chadha shines brightest as the doomed Lajjo

Richa Chadha's performance as the anguished Lajjo burns the brightest in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar. Her arc is inarguably the shortest, yet leaves the impact of a sudden storm that wreaks havoc within the harmonious framework of the narrative. Lajjo is alcoholic, hopelessly romantic, and wildly unpredictable. Her tragedy lashes down on the syntax of the show quite early, and even though the story picks up soon after, her spirit leaves a gaping wound that refuses to heal.

Bhansali also provides Lajjo with two beautiful musical creations- Sakal Ban and Masum Dil Hai Mera. Perhaps Lajjo is akin to the brief incandescence of a song, one whose presence lifts the mundane towards a frantic high. Sakal Ban is where Lajjo is first introduced- we see her arrive with a twinkle in her step, instantly at ease with the other dancers. It is when Mallikajaan (Manisha Koirala) has announced the 'nath utrai' ceremony of her daughter, and the entire Shahi Mahal is awash in yellow, the spirit of spring. The viewer will see Lajjo with all the other women of the community for the first time. The second time that happens- the same space takes on a devastating contrast.

Lajjo is in love with Zorawar (Adhyayan Suman), the resident Nawab of Lahore. Laughing at the thought that Mallikajaan's daughter Alamzeb (Sharmin Segal) wants to be a poetess, she



says how these dreams are the reason for the downfall of women. Yet, who will tell Lajjo that her dream of marrying Zorawar- will be her biggest mistake? She refuses to acknowledge the truth and hopes on, daydreaming of freedom from her life as a courtesan. With an unsteady gait, she stumbles on her way to meet her lover. When she falls just outside her room, she brushes it off with a smile. The smile is so used to enveloping the pain that it has now become a static reaction.

When Zorawar informs her that he is getting married to another woman, Lajjo is again left with nothing but her shattered dreams. She hangs on to the thought that she will be married too and will go on a honeymoon out of the country. Her mention of Paris is quite telling; she's a woman who knows the

world that exists outside the walls of the Shahi Mahal. Yet, the more she tries to step into that dream, the more she is shown the door. When she is finally granted independence to step outside, it is of the ultimate form.

Richa has always been a compelling presence on screen, carving out fierce and unapologetic female characters in the course of her decade-long career. In Heeramandi, the actor is cast against type, and it is a thrill to witness her infuse Lajjo with such intensity and grace. It is her finest hour on screen. Bhansali gives Lajjo the doomed arc of a Nargis in Pakeezah and the imprint of Meena Kumari's spirited elegance. That influence fuses into the stunning kathak performance for Lajjo in what is the standout sequence of the series. *Source: HT*

## Alaya F would do 'Khoon Bhari Maang' remake if not made in a 'gimmicky way'

Actress Alaya F has shown interest in starring in a period drama and spoken about what would it take for her to feature in a remake of Kabir Bedi and Rekha-starrer Khoon Bhari Maang. About the 1988 film, Alaya said, "If people think it's right then sure, and if they don't do it in a gimmicky way. I feel like when these gimmicky things happen, then I am not for it. If I am genuinely correct for the part and they feel like I am able to add value to the project, then, yeah, sure."

Ever since her debut in 2020 with Jawaani Jaaneman, Alaya has featured in several genres of films, including psychological thriller, supernatural thriller and an action thriller. However, she is keen to do a period drama.

"I really want to do a period film, where I can wear all that royal attire and feel all of that. That's something I want to do,"



said Alaya, who is the daughter of actress Pooja Bedi.

She added, "I also think that it will be something new for me to sort of put my feet into and actually in my acting class I have trained for that."

Since her debut in 2020, Alaya F has portrayed diverse characters in several big-budget films.

The actress, who describes herself as a "work in progress," spoke about how there are some films that she chases while others come her way by luck.

With a filmography boasting of myriad genres, is it a conscious choice to not be pigeonholed, Alaya told IANS: "Yeah, it's different, and I do try to do different things, but I think I just get offered all types of films. Then there are some films that I chase, and some films are completely by luck. It's a mixture of everything."



## Harry Potter star Tom Felton boards cast of Hansal Mehta's Gandhi series

Harry Potter movies star Tom Felton has joined the cast of Hansal Mehta's much-anticipated series Gandhi, the filmmaker announced on May 2.

Felton, who became an international star with his performance as Draco Malfoy in eight Harry Potter movies based on author JK Rowling's best-selling book series, joined the show's cast along with seven actors — Libby Mai, Molly Wright, Ralph Adeniyi, James Murray, Lindon Alexander, Jonno Davies and Simon Lennon.

"We're in the thick of our shoot. Thrilled to be directing this stellar international cast — Tom Felton, Libby Mai, Molly Wright, Ralph Adeniyi, James Murray, Lindon Alexander, Jonno Davies, Simon Lennon #Gandhi #GandhiFilmingNow," Mehta posted on Instagram. Actor Pratik Gandhi is essaying the role of Mahatma Gandhi in the show, which is backed by Applause Entertainment.

# Sofia Vergara reveals why she can't be too picky about men

Modern Family star Sofia Vergara, in a recent interview with People, talked about relationship deal-breakers, dating and more. Sofia and Joe Manganiello got divorced in July last year. When asked if she would date someone from the industry again, she replied, "Yes, of course. I mean, it's already hard for a fifty-something-year-old woman to find someone. I'm not going to be now picky about, Oh, he can only be a doctor. Oh, he can only be an astronaut. No, I mean, I'm not that picky." When asked about the qualities she is looking for in a relationship, the actress replied, "Health, money, fun with kids. That's it. That's all I want." When asked, "Any deal-breakers," Sofia replied, "No more kids." In an earlier interview with Spanish newspaper El Pais, she opened up on the reason behind her divorce from Joe and said, "My marriage broke up because my husband was younger, he wanted to have kids and I didn't want to be an old mom."

During her interaction with People, Sofia was asked, "What's the most challenging thing about dating in the public eye?" She replied, "I mean, everything. Because everything gets so exaggerated. Everything sometimes gets not interpreted the right way. So life is already hard. Having relationships is hard. Problems are hard. And then to see it out there and be completely changed, you want to be like, What is going on? But you just get



used to it. It comes with being famous, so you can't complain that much."

Sofia Vergara, best-known for featuring in the popular TV series Modern Family, has also starred in movies like New Year's Eve, Chef,

Bottom Of The 9th, The Female Brain, The Con Is On, Bent, Machete Kills, Wild Card and Madea Goes To Jail to name a few. Sofia Vergara also featured as one of the judges on America's Got Talent.

## THE FALL GUY

# Ryan Gosling, Emily Blunt fun it up in goofy stuntman romance

You might need to get your indulgent smile firmly in place for this colossal action comedy — not unlike the adorable smirks on the faces of its male and female leads, Ryan Gosling and Emily Blunt, who play the daredevil movie stuntman and the stern director with whom he is in love. It's a goofy summer crowd-pleaser (and you can never have too many of those) that is very far from the edgier and more satirical mien of Richard Rush's 1980 movie The Stunt Man, in which a Vietnam draft evader hides out on a movie location, doing dangerous stunts in return for anonymity. Actually, this one is loosely inspired by a 1980s TV show, also called The Fall Guy, about a stuntman with a parallel career as a bounty hunter — starring Lee Majors, a legend who puts in a tongue-in-cheek cameo here along with his co-star, Heather Thomas.

Gosling plays seasoned stunt maestro Colt Seavers, utterly unafraid of any physical challenges, self-effacingly doubling for insufferably conceited star



Tom Ryder (Aaron Taylor-Johnson), who outrageously claims to do all his own stunts. Colt is having a passionate affair with beautiful, talented camera operator Jody Moreno (Blunt), but when he is involved in a catastrophic and career-ending failed stunt, he is overwhelmed

with macho shame, thinking the accident was his fault because his infatuation with Jody made him take his eye off the ball.

Colt self-pityingly disappears from view during physical rehab and cuts off all contact with Jody, who is deeply hurt.

But then hard-faced producer Gail (Hannah Waddingham) persuades him to come back to work on Jody's first film as a director, a sci-fi epic starring Ryder as a space cowboy doing an awful sub-Matthew-McConaughey Texas accent. Gail claims that Jody herself wanted him — but she and the unspeakable Ryder have their own wicked plans in mind.

Once the premise is established in the first quarter of an hour, the rest of the film is devoted to a long and essentially plotless extravaganza of crashes, bangs, jumps, punches and PAEs (Pointless Action Explosions). It's a movie whose own stunts — and the fact that stunt doubles are needed — lend a kind of metatextual frisson to this story, although the script does allude to the brave new AI world in which deepfakes can also be used to make it look as though the star is doing the dangerous stuff for real. Location footage over the final credit roll makes it glancingly clear that a number of actual stuntmen were needed, but falls short of giving these unsung heroes actual named-star status.

## HAMAS TO SEND DELEGATION TO EGYPT FOR GAZA CEASEFIRE TALKS

**BEIRUT (TIP):** Hamas said on May 2 that it was sending a delegation to Egypt for further cease-fire talks, in a new sign of progress in attempts by international mediators to hammer out an agreement between Israel and the militant group to end the war in Gaza. After months of stop-and-start negotiations, the cease-fire efforts appear to have reached a critical stage, with Egyptian and American mediators reporting signs of compromise in recent days. But chances for the deal remain entangled with the key question of whether Israel will accept an end to the war without reaching its stated goal of destroying Hamas. The stakes in the cease-fire negotiations were made clear in a new UN report that said if the Israel-Hamas war stops today, it will still take until 2040 to rebuild all the homes that have been destroyed by nearly seven months of Israeli bombardment and ground offensives in Gaza. It warned that the impact of the damage to the economy will set back development for generations and will only get worse with every month fighting continues.

Hamas is seeking guarantees for a full Israeli withdrawal and complete end to the war. — Reuters

## SEE NO POINT IN PEACE CONFERENCE IN SWITZERLAND

**ZURICH (TIP):** Russia said on May 2 it saw no point in a conference being planned by Switzerland in mid-June to discuss how to end the Ukraine conflict and to which Moscow is not currently invited. The Swiss government said on Thursday that “at this stage” Russia is not among the dozens of countries invited, adding that while it was open to including Russia, Moscow had repeatedly underlined it had no interest. Switzerland in January said it would host the summit at the request of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Moscow did not see it as a credible initiative. “What kind of conference can we talk about, with serious expectations of some kind of results, without the participation of Russia?” he said. — Reuters

## HIGHWAY CAVES IN, 24 DEAD, 30 HURT IN CHINA'S GUANGDONG

**BEIJING, (TIP):** At least 24 people were killed and 30 others were injured when a section of a highway collapsed early May 1, the start of a five-day long Labour Day holiday, in China's rain hit Guangdong province. The cave-in occurred at around 2am in Dabu County of Guangdong's northern Meizhou City. (PTI)

# China's advanced 3rd aircraft carrier begins sea trials amid South China Sea tensions

**BEIJING (TIP):** China's third aircraft carrier, the Fujian, the most advanced homemade warship, began its maiden sea trials on May 1 as Beijing ramped up its naval power amid increasing tensions with the US in the disputed South China Sea and Taiwan Strait.

The ship left Shanghai Jiangnan Shipyard on Wednesday morning for the sea trials, primarily to test the reliability and stability of the aircraft carrier's propulsion and electrical systems, the state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

Since its launch in June 2022, the Fujian has completed its mooring trials, outfitting work and equipment adjustments. It has met the technical requirements for sea trials.

Ahead of the trials, China has imposed maritime traffic controls around the mouth of the Yangtze River where the Jiangnan shipyard ship is located for “military activities”.

The traffic controls would last till May 9, the report said.

According to the previous official media reports, China plans to have five to six aircraft carriers by 2035 for strategic deployment in the disputed South China Sea, where Beijing seeks to assert its claims over most of the vast area, the Taiwan Strait which separates the Chinese mainland and Taiwan and the Indian Ocean where Beijing is increasing its power projection.

Elaborating on China's strategy in acquiring aircraft carriers, Senior Col. (rtd) Zhou Bo, who spent four decades with the People's Liberation Army (PLA), said China sees their importance for possible war far from home.

“I cannot speculate on how many carriers China will need. But I can tell you that aircraft carriers are primarily not for coastal fights. They are for a



possible war far from home,” Bo, who is a senior fellow with the Centre for International Security and Strategy at Tsinghua University, told the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post in a recent interview.

“People may say that one day, when China has to retreat from peaceful means to resolve the Taiwan issue, we could use aircraft carriers,” he said.

“Of course they are useful, but they are more useful in our power projection in the Pacific Ocean, Indian Ocean, or Atlantic Ocean – anywhere far from our waters – because they are platforms for the ships and aircraft that make us powerful,” he said.

Currently, the Chinese navy is involved in a standoff with the US-backed Philippines naval ships in the South China Sea.

The Philippines is trying to assert its claim over the Second Thomas Shoal in the South China Sea which is strongly resisted by China.

China claims most of the South China Sea. The Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan have counterclaims.

China names its aircraft carriers after its provinces. Fujian borders the Taiwan Strait. The other two carriers were named after Liaoning and the Shandong provinces.

China's first aircraft carrier, the Liaoning, was a refit of the Soviet-era ship commissioned in 2012 followed by the indigenously built 2nd aircraft carrier Shandong in 2019.

Chinese official media said Fujian is the “first fully domestically developed and constructed” aircraft carrier with an electromagnetic aircraft launch system (EMALS) similar to that of the American aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford.

Fujian has a full displacement of more than 80,000 tonnes, about 20,000 tonnes more than the other two aircraft carriers.

China's other two aircraft carriers are equipped with ski-jump take-off ramps while the Fujian features a flat-top flight deck.

China operates its indigenously built J-15 aircraft for its carriers.

In a major rejig of its military doctrine, China in 2013 stepped up the development of the navy with a massive budget while cutting down the number of army troops as part of its power projection far from its shores.

The modernisation included building several aircraft carriers besides submarines, frigates and assault ships as part of its efforts to expand its global influence.

According to an estimate, China is building almost a naval ship a month. It is helping Pakistan to modernise its navy by providing its latest naval frigates and submarines. (PTI)

## Man with sword goes on stabbing spree in London, kills teen, injures 4

**LONDON (TIP):** A sword-wielding man on May 1 smashed a vehicle into a home and then went on a stabbing spree in a “serious incident” near an east London Tube station, killing a 13-year-old boy and wounding four people, before being arrested, the Metropolitan Police said.

The police said the incident did not appear to be linked with “any act of terrorism” and that of the five people injured, a boy has died from his injuries and the others, including two police officers, remain in hospital after the attack in Hainault area of the city.

“A 13-year-old boy was taken to hospital after being stabbed and sadly



died a short while after. The child's family are being supported by local officers and are now with some specialist

officers,” said Met Police Chief Superintendent Stuart Bell in a statement. He confirmed the 36-year-old suspect was tasered within 22 minutes of the first call and remains in custody.

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak described it as a “shocking incident”, saying that such violence has no place on the country's streets.

“This is a shocking incident. My thoughts are with those affected and their families. I'd like to thank the emergency services for their response, and pay tribute to the extraordinary bravery shown by police on the scene,” said Sunak. “Such violence has no place on our streets,” he said. (PTI)

# Missile attack by Yemen's Houthi rebels damages ship in Red Sea

**JERUSALEM (TIP):** A missile attack by Yemen's Houthi rebels damaged a ship in the Red Sea on April 29, authorities said, the latest assault in their campaign against shipping in the crucial maritime route.

The attack happened off the coast of Mokha, Yemen, the British military's United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations centre said. The ship was damaged in the attack, the UKMTO said, though its crew was safe and heading to its next port of call. The agency urged vessels to exercise caution in the area.

There was "an explosion in close proximity to a merchant vessel," the UKMTO said. "Vessel and crew are reported safe."

The US military's Central Command identified the ship damaged as the Cyclades, a Malta-flagged, Greece-owned bulk carrier. The military separately shot down a drone on a flight path toward the USS Philippine Sea and USS Laboon, the military said Tuesday.

Houthi military spokesman Brig. Gen. Yahya Saree claimed the attack on the Cyclades and targeting the US warships in a statement early Tuesday.

Meanwhile Monday, the Italian Defence Ministry said its frigate Virgino Fasan shot down a Houthi drone that morning near the Bab el-Mandeb Strait between the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden.



"A missile exploded in the water in the vicinity of the escorted vessel, causing only minor superficial damage," the Italian Defence Ministry said, not identifying the commercial vessel being escorted.

"The frigate Fasan and the protected merchant vessel are continuing their southward route as planned to exit the Red Sea." Saree did not acknowledge that attack, though he claimed the Houthis also targeted a ship in the Indian Ocean. There was no immediate report or

evidence to support that claim.

The Houthis say their attacks on shipping in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden are aimed at pressuring Israel to end its war against Hamas in Gaza, which has killed more than 34,000 Palestinians there. The war began after Hamas-led militants attacked Israel on October 7, killing 1,200 people and taking some 250 others hostage.

The Houthis have launched more than 50 attacks on shipping, seized one vessel and sunk another since November,

according to the US Maritime Administration.

Houthi attacks have dropped in recent weeks as the rebels have been targeted by a US-led airstrike campaign in Yemen. Shipping through the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden has declined because of the threat.

American officials have speculated the rebels may be running out of weapons as a result of the US-led campaign against them and after firing drones and missiles steadily for months. However, the rebels have renewed their attacks in the past week. Early Sunday morning, the US military shot down five drones in the air over the Red Sea, its Central Command said.

The drones "presented an imminent threat to US, coalition, and merchant vessels in the region," Central Command said in a statement.

The Houthis on Saturday claimed they shot down another of the US military's MQ-9 Reaper drones, airing footage of parts that corresponded to known pieces of the unmanned aircraft.

US Air Force Lt. Col. Bryon J. McGarry, a Defence Department spokesperson, acknowledged to The Associated Press on Saturday that "a US Air Force MQ-9 drone crashed in Yemen." He said an investigation was underway, without elaborating. (AP)

## Fighting worst floods in history, Kazakhstan successfully coexists with ethnic groups



**ASTANA (KAZAKHSTAN) (TIP):** At a time when Kazakhstan is undergoing a difficult moment due to the worst-ever floods in 80 years just when it had embarked on political and social reforms, its President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev has stressed that the consequences of the floods will be eliminated, and the path of reforms will continue.

One of the paths is to promote inter-ethnic unity because contrary to superficial impression, Kazakhstan is a mosaic of ethnicities which includes

Germans, Koreans, Russians, Uzbeks and Kyrgyz nationalities besides 70 per cent Kazakhs.

Speaking to a group of visiting journalists, Chair of the capital's Uzbek ethno cultural centre Sherzod Pulatov said it is this emphasis on ethnic unity that the Kazakh people in a difficult situation have demonstrated cohesion, solidarity and sympathy for those in need.

**"All ethnic groups are an integral part of the people of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Our country is multinational, according to some sources, representatives of at least 130 ethnic groups live in it. There are 42 ethno-cultural associations in all cities and districts of the country," he explained.**

There are more than 1,000 different ethno-cultural associations in Kazakhstan, all united by a coordinating body – the Assembly – which held its session party virtually due to the floods and the need to save money. (TNS)

## South Korea's parliament approves independent investigation of the devastating 2022 Halloween crush

**SEOUL (TIP):** South Korea's parliament on May 2 approved legislation mandating a new, independent investigation into the 2022 Halloween crush in Seoul that killed 159 people.

The single-chamber National Assembly passed the bill by a 256-0 vote. It will become law after it is signed by President Yoon Suk Yeol and promulgated by his government agency — steps that are considered formalities because the president and his ruling party already agreed on the legislation.

The bill is meant to delve into the root cause of the crush, details about how authorities handled the disaster and who should be blamed for it. It also envisages the creation of a fact-finding committee with nine members that would independently examine the disaster for up to 15 months. Once the committee determines who is responsible and who should face charges, it would report them to the government's investigation agencies. The agencies would then conclude investigations of the suspects within three months, according to the bill.

The crush, one of the biggest peacetime disasters in South Korea, caused a nationwide outpouring of grief. The victims, who were mostly in their 20s and 30s, had gathered in Seoul's popular

nightlife district of Itaewon for Halloween celebrations. In the aftermath of the tragedy, there was also anger that the government had again ignored safety and regulatory issues despite the lessons learned since the 2014 sinking of the ferry Sewol, which killed 304 people — mostly teenagers on a school trip.

In early 2023, a police special investigation concluded that police and municipal officials failed to formulate effective crowd control steps, despite correctly anticipating a huge number of people in Itaewon. At the time, investigators said police had also ignored hotline calls by pedestrians who warned of swelling crowds before the surge turned deadly.

More than 20 police and other officials have been on trial over the disaster but few top-level officials have been charged or held accountable, prompting bereaved families and opposition lawmakers to call for an independent probe.

President Yoon had previously opposed a new investigation of the disaster. However, during a meeting with liberal opposition leader Lee Jae-myung on Monday, Yoon said he would not oppose it, should some existing disputes be resolved, such as whether the fact-finding committee can request arrest warrants. (AP)

## 20 KILLED IN BUS ACCIDENT IN NORTHWEST PAKISTAN

**PESHAWAR (TIP):** Twenty people were killed when a passenger bus skidded off a mountainous terrain and plunged into a ravine in northwest Pakistan on May 3, authorities said.

The incident occurred on the Karakoram Highway in Diamer district of Gilgit-Baltistan region when the bus was on its way from Rawalpindi to Hunza and the driver lost control of the vehicle, a police official said.

It was not clear as to how many passengers were aboard the bus, the official said.

At least 15 people, who were injured in the incident, have been moved to a hospital in Chilas, the official said.

Rescue efforts are in progress and the dead bodies are being shifted to the hospital, the official said.

A hospital source said three women were among the dead.

The source said the death toll was expected to rise further as many of the injured were in a critical condition.

Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Minister Haji Gulbar Khan expressed condolences over the incident and directed the administration to provide immediate medical aid to the injured.

Gilgit-Baltistan government spokesperson Faizullah Faraq said an emergency was declared at the Chilas Hospital after the accident. (PTI)

## BANGLADESH FACES LONGEST-EVER HEATWAVE

**DHAKA (TIP):** The authorities in Bangladesh have issued another heatwave alert for three more days from April 28 as the South Asian country is facing its longest heatwave in 75 years. Bangladesh reported the season's highest temperature at 42.7°C on Friday in the south-western district of Chuadanga. Dhaka's maximum temperature was 38.2 degrees that day. IANS

## ISHAQ DAR APPOINTED PAKISTAN'S DEPUTY PM

**ISLAMABAD (TIP):** In a surprise move, Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar was on April 29 appointed the country's Deputy Prime Minister.

Dar, 73, a chartered accountant and a veteran politician, belongs to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party.

According to a notification issued by the Cabinet Division, the appointment was made by PM Sharif "with immediate effect and until further orders". (PTI)

# Intense battle in Myanmar town prevents 1,500 Hindus, 20 Rakhines from moving to safer zones

**MYANMAR'S / NEW DELHI (TIP):** The situation in Myanmar's Buthidaung town, a region in the Rakhine state, remains precarious as residents from the Hindu and Rakhine communities have been trapped amidst escalating conflict between the military and the rebel group, the Arakan Army.

The situation has worsened due to a burgeoning communal divide, fuelled by allegations of the military's training and conscription of Rohingyas, compelling their participation in combat. There have been increasing instances of people's houses being gutted based on their ethnic beliefs.

"The battles are intensifying on the ground in Buthidaung. Over 1,500 Hindus and 20 Rakhines are being prevented from leaving as the situation is unsafe there. Rohingyas are being trained as conscripts and they are being made to target people based on their religion and ethnicity," a source tells TNIE.

A curfew has been imposed in Buthidaung and Maungdaw areas of Rakhine state from 7 pm to 6 am. The Arakan Army claims to have taken control over a 16-mile-long road around these areas to make it safe for the civilian population.

However, fighting has intensified around the Thahtay hydropower project in Thandwe town, in the westernmost part of Myanmar.



Reports indicate that medicine shops are being seized and imports of critical medications are being prohibited. Pharmacy owners in Thandwe express dismay, questioning how restricting access to medicines for patients would benefit the military.

"Due to intensified checking, even food packets are not being delivered, and residents are now fearing an existential crisis," said a source.

Meanwhile, two Rohingya youths, reportedly plucked from refugee camps in Bangladesh for military training under Myanmar's junta, were apprehended after fleeing the training grounds.

Numerous reports have emerged

indicating the Myanmar Junta's role in recruiting young Rohingya boys from refugee camps in Bangladesh for military training as part of efforts to combat rebels in the ongoing civil war.

The arrested youth have been identified as Kefayet Ullah (19) from Kutupalong refugee camp in Cox's bazaar and Anwar Mostafa (18) from Bhasan Char refugee camp in Noakhali district.

According to reports, the youths were undergoing training in rifle usage to confront rebel groups.

However, they absconded from training due to intolerable heat and food shortages, fleeing within a week of their recruitment. (AP)

## Pakistan Foreign Office on arrest of 14 people with drugs from Pakistani boat off Gujarat coast

**ISLAMABAD (TIP):** Pakistan said on May 2 that it was waiting for an independent confirmation about an Indian claim regarding the arrest of over a dozen people with 86 kg of drugs from a Pakistani boat off the Gujarat coast.

The Indian Coast Guard said on Sunday that it seized 86 kg of drugs worth Rs 600 crore from a Pakistani boat and arrested 14 persons on board the vessel off the Gujarat coast. The operation in the Arabian Sea was carried out in coordination with the Gujarat Anti-terrorism Squad and the Narcotics Control Bureau.

"We have seen these media reports and we are awaiting independent confirmation of the claims made by the Indian authorities. We will make our comments known once we have details of this incident," Pakistan Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said when asked about the development during her weekly media briefing here.

She alleged that India's "network of



espionage"... over the last several decades, has expanded to several continents and is now "an issue of concern" for the international community.

To a question that Prime Minister Narendra Modi said at a rally that he wanted to tell Pakistan over telephone about the Balakot strikes in February 2019, she said, "there has been a rewriting of history from the Indian side".

"They have made statements which are not based on facts, and which are many

times geared towards political mileage inside India. So, I would not like to comment on this particular statement by the Indian Prime Minister. However, I would like to highlight that as Pakistan demonstrated in 2019, the people of Pakistan and its armed forces are ready to defend the country against all intrusions from any quarters," she said.

When asked about reports that Pakistan was planning to give two air bases to the US, she said, "this speculation is completely unfounded and we reject it". (PTI)



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# Beauty uses of apple cider vinegar

Apples boost your levels of vitamin C, also known as ascorbic acid, which helps your body produce collagen. Apples also contain a slew of other nutrients such as copper, a melanin-containing mineral that arms your skin against UV rays and vitamin A, which plays a role in the overall functioning of your skin.

If you don't feel like chomping down on an apple, a great way to score the beauty benefits of the fruit is by incorporating apple cider vinegar into your skin care regimen. This all-natural, all-purpose staple has been used for all sorts of things--from kitchen solutions to health remedies.

Here are some satisfying ways to incorporate apple cider vinegar into your beauty routine in no time.

## Soothe and exfoliate skin

The anti-inflammatory properties of apple cider vinegar soothe skin and the acetic acid softens skin. It contains alpha hydroxy acids that chemically exfoliate to remove dead skin buildup and reveal healthy new skin cells.

**HOW TO USE:** It's always a wise idea to use apple cider vinegar with water, as concentrated apple cider vinegar may disrupt the skin barrier leading to skin inflammation. So, to reap skin-soothing benefits, an easy solution is to pour some straight into your tub. In a regular-sized bathtub, add one cup of apple cider vinegar to warm water. Soak for anywhere from 15-20 minutes to allow the protective acid to soak into your skin. This will help balance the pH levels of your skin, preventing it from becoming too oily or too dry.

## Get rid of dandruff

You can also use apple cider vinegar on



your hair. In fact, it comes in handy when fighting dandruff. Dandruff is essentially your body's inflammatory response to high levels of yeast that may grow on your scalp. Apple cider vinegar helps lower the amount of yeast growing on your scalp, which, in turn, helps protect against dandruff.

**HOW TO USE:** Mix together an equal-parts solution of apple cider vinegar and water and apply to your hair and scalp before you shampoo. If you'd rather not deal with the intense stench of using it solo, you can also add some to your shampoo bottle, which should mask the smell entirely.

## Fights acne

Apple cider vinegar possesses the

triple threat of being a potent antibacterial, antifungal and antiviral substance, which makes it capable of keeping bacteria at bay and pimples from forming. It works to reduce the levels of acne-causing bacteria and exfoliates the dead skin cells sitting atop your skin's surface.

**HOW TO USE:** Use a cotton swab to apply it to the jawline prior to the cheeks to make sure the skin doesn't feel like it is "burning." "If the jawline reacts (red, burning, itchy after five minutes) then stop using it. If not, apply a thin layer all over the face avoiding anything dripping on or around the eyes.

## Tone oily skin

Apple cider vinegar works as an all-

natural astringent, working to remove dirt, oil and grime with the swipe of a cotton pad. After you apply it to your skin with a washcloth, your skin will feel smoother and it will help reduce fine lines. It also helps absorb excess oils on the skin.

**HOW TO USE:** Dampen a cotton round with a mix of apple cider vinegar and water (aim for one tablespoon of ACV for every two cups of water). Don't worry about rinsing--with proper dilution, the apple cider vinegar won't cause irritation and will leave your skin feeling fresh and revitalized.

## Neutralize odors

The acids in the apple cider vinegar will alter the pH level of your skin, which fights off bacteria and neutralizes odors. Believe it or not, thanks to its antiseptic properties, it can even stave off the stench of smelly feet and has also been known to help with athlete's foot.

**HOW TO USE:** Mix 1/4 the amount of apple cider vinegar in with 3/4 the amount of water and let your feet soak. You can also apply this mixture to stench-heavy areas--for example if Fido pees on the rug again! Let the mixture soak and dry before applying the rest of your cleaning supplies.

## Relieve sunburn

Since apple cider vinegar restores your skin's pH levels, it works quickly to reverse some of the damage caused by overexposure to the sun's harmful rays.

**HOW TO USE:** Don't forget to start with well-diluted ACV. While you can use the bath method we mentioned above to soothe your sunburn, you can also douse a mixture with a washcloth and apply directly onto your sunburned skin.

## FOOD CORNER

### Tandoori pomfret

#### Ingredients

- 8 Pomfret fish
- 1/4 tsp Turmeric powder
- 2 tbsp Red chilli powder
- 1 tsp Garam masala powder
- 1/2 tsp Carom seeds/ ajwain
- 1 tbsp Roasted gram flour/ Besan
- 1/2 cup Hung Curd
- Salt to taste
- 4 tbsp Mustard oil
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 2 tbsp Coriander paste
- 1 tsp Ginger-garlic paste

#### Directions

- Trim tails, fins and other unnecessary things. Then wash it thoroughly.
- Make incisions on a clean fish. Keep it aside.
- In a bowl, add all the ingredients mentioned in the ingredient list. Adjust the amount of besan and yogurt to get a nice thick paste.
- Apply this marinade to the fish on both



sides very well.

- Keep it for at least 30 minutes in the fridge.
- Preheat the oven to 180 Degree Celsius (356 Degree Fahrenheit).
- Grease the pan or rack. Place the fish on grill rack and cook it for 15-20 minutes until golden brown.
- Serve with Onion rings and lemon.

### Egg Salad Sandwich

A delicious dish, Egg Salad Sandwich is a healthy recipe made using tomatoes, onions and mayonnaise with bread slices and eggs! This breakfast recipe is a great sandwich and is a kids favourite! Try out this simple and easy to make recipe.



#### INGREDIENTS

4 bread slices, 4 teaspoon mayonnaise, 1 pinch salt, 2 teaspoon ghee, 1/4 cup finely chopped spring onions, 1 handful chopped lettuce loose-leaf, 2 boiled, finely chopped egg, 1/2 teaspoon chilli flakes, 1 dash spice black pepper, 1 sliced tomato, 1 sliced Red onion.

#### Method

Mix the eggs, mayonnaise, red chilli flakes, salt and pepper powder in a bowl. Spread this on 2 bread slices. Top it up with the tomato, spring onions, red onion and lettuce leaves. Cover with the remaining slices. Heat a tawa over low flame. Place the sandwiches and apply little ghee around the edges. Cook for 30 seconds on each side and remove. Serve with french fries.

# Simple tips to beat office weight gain

In the hustle and bustle of the modern workplace, maintaining a healthy weight can often be a challenge. People spend long hours sitting at office desks working and snacking on convenient but often unhealthy foods. Weight gain can become a significant concern for many individuals. However, with some mindful changes to your daily routine, it's possible to maintain a healthy weight and avoid gaining weight while still being actively productive at work. Here are some easy and effective strategies to help you avoid gaining weight while on the job:

## Healthy Meals and Snacks

One of the easiest ways to avoid unhealthy eating habits at work is to prepare healthy meals and snacks at home. This allows you to control portion sizes and choose nutritious options like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins. By avoiding the temptation of vending machines or fast food, you'll be less likely to consume excess calories and unhealthy fats. Stock up on healthy snacks like nuts, yoghurt, hummus with veggies, or whole-grain crackers. Having these alternatives on hand will satisfy your hunger and provide lasting energy without the added calories and sugar.

## Stay Hydrated

Drinking plenty of water throughout the day not only keeps you hydrated but can also help curb cravings for sugary beverages and snacks. Keep a refillable water bottle at your desk and aim to drink at least eight glasses of water daily. If you struggle with plain water, try infusing it with fruits or herbs for added flavor without the calories.

## Take A Small Break And Walk

Another is walking. Combat the effects of sitting for long periods by incorporating regular movement breaks into your workday. Set reminders to stand up, stretch, and walk around for sometime. Consider taking the stairs instead of the elevator. One can also go for a short walk after the lunch break. These small bursts of activity can boost your metabolism and improve blood circulation.



## Careful Eating

Mindful eating involves paying attention to your food choices and eating habits without distractions. When it's time to eat, step away from your desk, and focus on enjoying your meal or snack. Chew slowly, savour the flavours, and listen to your body's hunger cues. By being more mindful of what and how you eat, you'll be less likely to overindulge or make impulsive food choices.

## Manage Stress Levels

Stress can often lead to a bad mood, being distracted at work or emotional eating. Therefore, finding healthy ways to manage stress at work, such as deep breathing exercises, meditation, or taking short breaks to relax. Engaging in activities you enjoy outside of work, such as hobbies or spending time with loved ones, can also help alleviate stress.

## Prioritise Sleep

Office going individuals often deal with the problem of lack of sleep. Lack of sleep can disrupt the body's hunger hormones. Aim for at least eight hours of quality sleep to support healthy metabolism and weight management. This will keep you fresh and active in the office. Establish a bedtime routine, create a restful sleep environment, and prioritise sleep as an essential component of your overall health.



## Liver diseases in kids up due to junk food, sugar consumption

Medical experts have found that one in three children have non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD), primarily caused by excess sugar consumption.

It has become a significant concern even among children aged 5-16 years. Previously, children were thought to be safe from this liver disease.

The number of children with NAFLD has risen alarmingly from 10-33 per cent in just a decade.

Paediatric hepatologist at Ram Manohar Lohia Institute of Medical Sciences (RMLIMS), Piyush Upadhyay said the consumption of processed meals high in sugar and unhealthy fats is a major contributing factor to NAFLD in children.

Warning against the dangers of sugary drinks and junk food, he explained that triglycerides, a type of fat, accumulate in liver cells when there is an imbalance between the amount of fat the body takes in or produces and the liver's ability to process and eliminate it. The liver normally processes and removes fats from the body.

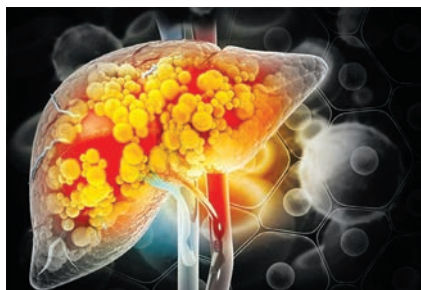
"This imbalance can be caused by several factors, including genetics, a sedentary lifestyle, obesity, insulin resistance and an unhealthy diet. Decades ago, fatty liver disease was primarily caused by alcohol addiction," Upadhyay added.

"However, non-alcoholic fatty liver disease is becoming increasingly common. I see around 60-70 children with NAFLD every month, which is more than double the number I saw a decade ago," he said.

Another gastroenterologist, Punit Mehrotra said, "Many studies have shown that NAFLD can be reversed in children as well as adults by making lifestyle changes, such as reducing sugar and junk food intake and exercising regularly for at least 30 minutes." *Source: IANS*

## Fatty liver alert: Swelling in these body parts can indicate severe disease

Fatty liver disease is a commonly seen problem that can impact one's quality of life. Did you know? Fatty liver can develop into liver cirrhosis and cause irreversible liver damage. Fatty liver disease happens when there is an excessive buildup of fat in your liver. It is a common occurrence in adults due to over-consumption of alcohol (Alcohol-induced fatty liver disease) or non-alcoholic fatty liver disease owing to a sedentary lifestyle, obesity, and diabetes.



with fatty liver disease. This pressure buildup leads to fluid accumulation in the surrounding tissues, resulting in swelling.

### Abdomen (Ascites)

The potent signs of advanced liver disease are ascites (meaning the build-up of fluid within the abdominal cavity). Liver

inflammation and scarring cause high pressure in the blood vessels within the liver which is portal hypertension. This increased pressure can cause fluid to leak from the liver's blood vessels into the abdominal cavity of the person and he/she may get abdominal swelling and discomfort. It is always necessary to check this fluid to rule out other causes of ascites like tuberculosis, and cancer.

### Feet swelling

Apart from swelling in the legs and ankles, there can be Edema in the feet when one has a severe level of fatty liver disease. Facial puffiness and hand swelling can occur in severe disease.

### Swelling in legs and ankles (edema)

This occurs due to increased pressure from portal hypertension caused by liver damage associated

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## WhatsApp's new filter option will let users get list of their favourites from chats tab

Meta-owned WhatsApp is reportedly testing a new feature that will offer users a dedicated "filter" to quickly get a list of their favourites from the chats tab on Android.

According to WABetaInfo, the feature is set for release in a future update of the app.

With this new chat filter, users will get to easily access and prioritise specific conversations with their favourite contacts and groups.

As per the report, this new tool will let users mark specific contacts and groups as favourites, making it easier to prioritise important chats and access those they engage with most often.

This feature is presently under development and it will be available in a future update of the app, the report added.

Meanwhile, WhatsApp is reportedly working on a new feature that will let users react quickly to status updates on Android.

With the 'quick reaction feature for status updates', users will be able to quickly add a reaction to status updates, allowing them to express their appreciation for the posted content with ease.

These reactions will occur on the status screen, rather than within the conversation thread. *Source: IANS*

# AI fuels cloud computing boom for tech giants

Three of the Wall Street's heavyweight technology firms have reported better-than-expected sales at their cloud computing units in recent days, as interest in artificial intelligence drives a rebound in spending by corporate customers.

Growth in the \$270 billion cloud infrastructure market, a cash engine for Amazon.com, Microsoft and Alphabet, gives the clearest sign yet that AI investment is bearing fruit after investors drove those stocks to record highs, thanks to optimism about the emerging technology.

Many big customers have started spending again on cloud computing after pausing last year to cut costs, executives and analysts said.

Amazon, the last of the trio to report on Tuesday, said its cloud computing arm AWS grew 17% in the January-to-March period, above Wall Street's 15% growth estimate, and hit a \$100 billion annual run-rate for the first time.

Performance was consistent at Microsoft's Azure and Google Cloud, which grew above expectations at 31% and 28%, respectively, in the first three months of the year.

"Looking across AWS, Microsoft Azure and Google Cloud, it is clear that two things are happening simultaneously – AI is contributing to growth, but also the rest of cloud spending is accelerating," said D.A. Davidson & Co analyst Gil Luria.

For several years cloud infrastructure providers enjoyed growth rates as high as 60% and demand shot up during the COVID-19 pandemic as more businesses moved online. However, firms had to realign expectations last year as customers pulled back spending in an increasingly challenging business environment.

The industry has been at the forefront of adopting AI and customers have begun to buy the new functionality at a rapid pace, executives said.

"The number of Azure AI customers continues to grow and average spend continues to increase," Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella said on the company earnings call, adding that more than 65% of the Fortune 500 companies were Azure OpenAI Service customers.

AI services contributed 7 percentage-points in growth to



Azure, up from 6 percentage points in the Oct-Dec quarter.

More than 60% of funded generative AI startups and nearly 90% of genAI unicorns were using Google Cloud, Alphabet CEO Sundar Pichai said on his company's earnings call last week.

"There is an inevitable and continuous migration of workloads to the cloud and consolidation of IT spending going towards large platforms, including the hyperscalers," said RBC Capital Markets analyst Rishi Jaluria.

Hyperscalers are cloud providers with a large network of data centres and a wide range of services and are often preferred for end-to-end workload support. *Source: Reuters*

## Google Meet makes it easier to switch calls, lets you transfer calls across devices

Imagine this. You are in the middle of a virtual work meeting, comfortably seated at your desk. Suddenly, your mom walks in and tells you to shift to another room as she needs this one. However, the meeting is in full swing and it is kind of embarrassing to tell your boss that you need to shift to another room. During the pandemic, when remote work was the norm, we have all been in such situations. The only solution we had back then was to ask our boss to excuse us for a couple of seconds while we joined in from another device. And that required us to exit the call and join back in. But with Google Meet's new feature, that won't be the case anymore. The tech giant has finally made it easier to switch devices while you are in a call. The new feature is called, "Switch Here."

Announcing the feature in a blog post, Google wrote, "In today's world, getting our work done can happen from many locations, across many devices. Beginning today, you can smoothly transfer between devices while on a Google Meet call without hanging up and rejoining.

"For example, if you were taking a Meet call on your mobile phone or tablet, you could smoothly



switch to your laptop when you arrived at your desk. You'll notice the new Switch here option when joining a meeting on your laptop, which will switch the call from your mobile devices while maintaining an ongoing conversation and without worrying about missing important information."

With this feature, switching between your computer and smartphone during a virtual group chat is much easier. Whether you're settling into your workstation or on the move, you can seamlessly transfer your active Meet call from one device to another. And that's not all, the feature will also enable you to join a call from two different devices simultaneously.

## ISRO to test Gaganyaan parachutes by dropping module from chopper

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is likely to undertake an important test under the Gaganyaan mission to check the parachute system of the crew module in the next few days, according to officials in know of the matter. The Integrated Air Drop Test (IADT) will see a Chinook helicopter dropping the crew module from a height of around 4-5 km.

"The test is likely to be conducted in the next two or three days. The first IADT will test the parachute system under nominal conditions, meaning it will mimic the process of splashdown of the crew module when both parachutes open in a timely manner," the official said. This will be the first in a series of IADT to test the parachute system under off-nominal conditions such as one parachute not opening, both parachutes not opening, or delayed deployment of the parachutes.

After the splashdown of the crew module—the module that will seat the three Indian astronauts—another helicopter will locate the crew module. The Navy will then recover the crew module and bring it to the Chennai coast, according to officials.





## Nifty hits an all-time high

Equity benchmark indices climbed in early trade on Friday, May 3, with the Nifty reaching its fresh all-time peak, following a rally in shares of Bajaj Finance and positive trends from the US markets.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 470.92 points to 75,082.03 in early trade. The NSE Nifty climbed 139.5 points to hit a record peak of 22,787.70.

From the Sensex basket, Bajaj Finance jumped 6 per cent, while Bajaj Finserv climbed nearly 5 per cent.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has lifted restrictions on Bajaj Finance on sanctioning and disbursement of loans through eCOM and Insta EMI Card, the company said in a regulatory on May 2.

In November last year, the central bank had directed Bajaj Finance to stop sanction and disbursement of loans under its two lending products -- eCOM and Insta EMI Card -- due to the company's non-adherence to the extant provisions of digital lending guidelines.

NTPC, ICICI Bank, Tata Steel and JSW Steel were the other major gainers.

Bharti Airtel, Maruti, Asian Paints and Larsen & Toubro were among the laggards. *Source: PTI*

# Oil prices rebound after closing at seven-week low

Oil prices rose on May 1, rebounding from three days of losses that took prices to their lowest since mid-March.

Brent crude futures for July gained 79 cents, or 0.95%, to \$84.23 a barrel by 0959 GMT. U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude for June climbed 69 cents, or 0.87%, to \$79.69.

Prices fell more than 3% to a seven-week low on May 1 after the U.S. Federal Reserve kept interest rates steady and warned of stubborn inflation, which could curtail economic growth this year and limit oil demand increases.

Crude was also pressured by an unexpected increase in U.S. crude inventories in data from the Energy Information Administration (EIA). Inventories were shown at their highest since June.

"The updated inventory statistics were probably the most salient price driver over the course of yesterday's trading session," said PVM analyst Tamas Varga.

Crude inventories rose by 7.3 million barrels to 460.9 million barrels in the week ended April 26, compared with the 1.1 million barrel draw expected by analysts in a Reuters poll.

Supporting the price recovery were ceasefire talks in the Israel-Hamas war and the potential for low prices to spur U.S. government buying for strategic reserves.

"As the impact of the U.S. crude stock build and the Fed signalling higher-for-longer rates is close to being fully baked in, attention will turn towards the outcome of the Gaza talks," said Vandana



Hari, founder of Vanda Insights.

In the Middle East, expectations grew that a ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas could be in sight after a renewed push led by Egypt, though Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed to go ahead with a long-promised assault on the southern Gaza city of Rafah.

"The geopolitical temperature might have dropped a notch or two, but the climate remains hot," Varga added.

The U.S. has previously said it aims to replenish the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) after a historic sale from the emergency stockpile in 2022 and wants to buy back oil at \$79 a barrel or less.

"The oil market was supported by speculation that if WTI falls below \$79,

the U.S. will move to build up its strategic reserves," said Hiroyuki Kikukawa, president of NS Trading, owned by Nissan Securities.

Shares of oil marketing companies (OMCs) surged by up to 8 per cent during intra-day trades on Thursday as crude oil prices fell to a two-month low on expectations of a ceasefire in West Asia.

Brent crude for July delivery was trading below the \$84 mark at \$83.22 per barrel after falling to a day's low of \$83.05 a barrel. They had hit the \$91 mark last month following tensions between Israel and Iran.

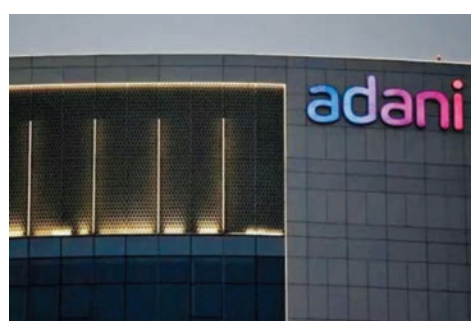
During the day, shares of Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) ended with gains of 2.60 per cent at Rs 173.35 on the BSE after hitting an intra-day peak of Rs 174.50, a rise of 3.28 per cent.

## Adani Enterprises Q4 net profit falls 37% to Rs 450 crore

NEW DELHI (TIP)

Adani Enterprises Ltd, the flagship incubator of billionaire Gautam Adani's conglomerate, on Thursday, May 2, reported a 37 per cent drop in March quarter net profit, bogged down by one-time past airport dues and commercial mining losses.

Its consolidated net profit of Rs 450.58 crore in January-March -- the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2023-24 -- compares to Rs 722.48 crore net profit in the same period last year and Rs 1,888.45 crore earning in the preceding quarter, according to a stock exchange filing by the company. The firm, which incubates business from airports to data centres, reported an 8 per cent decline in EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization) at Rs 3,646 crore in Q4. While incubating businesses like new energy and airports showed strong momentum, the firm suffered a loss of Rs 201.83 crore in commercial mining, while the pre-tax earnings from the road



business plummeted 84 per cent to Rs 222.03 crore.

Also, its unit Mumbai International Airport Ltd (MIAL) recognised a one-time exceptional expense of Rs 627 crore to make up for past payments.

Adani New Industries Limited (ANIL), a unit of the company that holds the new energy business -- including solar module and wind turbine manufacturing, saw a 6.2x growth in EBITDA to Rs 641 crore, while the same at airports business more than doubled to Rs 662 crore. The number of passengers at company-run airports rose 19 per cent to 88.6 million.

## Sanctions notwithstanding, India's Russian oil imports surge

India's Russian oil imports jumped to a nine-month high in April as partly impaired Russian refining capacity due to Ukrainian drone attacks nudged Moscow's oil producers to push more discounted barrels for exports, according to vessel tracking data and industry watchers.

Notably, this surge in India's imports of Russian crude came despite the latest round of sanctions by the United States (US) against Russia's oil shipping syndicate, which had led to speculation that Indian refiners could turn extra cautious in taking deliveries. Trade sources, however, said that the sanctions at the most had a marginal and short-lived impact on Russian oil flows to India.

Indian refiners imported a total of 1.96 million barrels per day (bpd) of Russian crude oil in April, the highest since July of last year, and nearly 19 per cent higher than volumes imported in March, as per provisional ship-tracking data from

commodity market analytics firm Kpler.

Russia accounted for 40.3 per cent of the total 4.86 million bpd of crude oil imported into India in April. This is the first instance in seven months of Moscow having a share of over 40 per cent in New Delhi's oil imports. Russia's share had declined to around 33 per cent in the past four months from the peak level of nearly 46 per cent seen in May 2023, the data shows.

"The first wave of Ukrainian drone strikes (on Russian refining infrastructure) in late January-early February has pushed (Russia's) seaborne oil exports to 3.8 million bpd, so some 300,000 bpd higher than the 3.5 million bpd average of November 2023-February 2024. Not having the ability to refine that much domestically, Russia's oil producers have exported those surpluses and consequently Indian buyers had more to buy from," said Viktor Katona, head of crude analysis at Kpler.

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# Sikh History This Week

MAY 3 TO MAY 9

## 3rd May

1705 Siege of Anadpur was initiated. It lasted seven months and ended on Dec. 4, 1705.

1718 Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was born. Sardar JASSA SINGH AHLUWALIA was born in 1718. He was son of Ahluwalia resident Bader Singh. His close association with Nawab Kapur Singh influenced him in service of GurPanth. Raja Amir Singh of Patiala was introduced to amrit by him. He was a great General of the Khalsa forces during the 18th century and was called Sultan-ul-Quom, king of the nation, his heroic deeds and qualities of leadership. He killed Hakim SalabatKhan of Amritsar, in 1748, and captured the surrounding region. In 1789, he helped Diwan KodhaMal in removing ShahanWadh from Multan. In 1753, he defeated Hakim Adinabaegh and conquered Fataibad. He won the successful release of enslaved Hindu men and women from Ahmad Shah Durani. As a result he came to be popularly known as BandiShoadh (liberator). He bravely fought in Wada Ghulughara (the big holocaust). Even after receiving 22 grave bounds, he kept fighting. He was head as well as the life of the Ahluwalia Misl. In 1774, he captured Kapurthala state, established his capital there, and issues coins under our Gurus name. He was extremely popular among our Panth. He dies in 1783 in Amritsar. A monument in his memory was erected near Baba Atal, in Amritsar.

1914 Morcha launched for Rakab Ganj Gurudwara.

## 4th May



1479 PRAKASH UTSAV, Patshahi Third, Guru Amardas Ji.

The Third Patshah, Guru Amardas Ji, came to this planet. He was born in Baserke, district Amritsar, 13 kilometers from the city of Amritsar, in the house of Baba Tej Bahan and Matta Lakho. He was ten years younger than Guru Nanak. Today is the actual date of prakash, though Guru Khalsa Panth observes it on a different date (See description below for details on Guru Amar Das Ji).

1686 Janam Utsav of Sahibjada Baba Ajit Singh Ji, the eldest son of Guru Gobind Singh Ji, was born to Mata Sundari at Paonta Sahib on Magh 23 sunmat 1743. He fought valiantly and accepted martyrdom in the battle field at Chamkaur on Poh 8th sunmat 1761 (Dec. 22, 1704).

## 5th May

1723 Jassa Singh Ramgarhia was born. Ramgarhia, son of Giani Bhagwan Singh of Saedbaegh village, Lahore. He was an accomplished scholar of weaponry and an effortful individual. He together with Nand Singh Sanghani constructed the "Ram Rahuni" from scratch. When the Adinabaeg general blew up the Ram Rahuni, Jassa Singh re-erected it and named it "Ram Gadh". Henceforth, he came to be known as Jassa Singh Ramgarhia. And his group also was popularly known as Ramgarhias. Just like other Sikh misls, the



Ramgarhia misl established its rule and served the GurSikh Panth.

1739 Sikhs attacked Nadar on his return trip to Persia and rescued a large booty and thousands of captive Hindu women.

1834 Peshawar conquered and Khalsa raj extended Raj upto Jamraud, Afghanistan. Kanwar Nauhial Singh and Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa conquered Peshawar and extended the territory of Khalsa Raj upto Jamraud (Afghanistan). Further this territory was named Sumaergadh.

1948 Patiala and East Punjab States Union (PEPSU) was formed. EAST PUNJAB STATES: Patiala, Nabha, Jind, Faridkot, and Malerkotla were the Sikh states in the East Punjab before the integration of Indian States in 1948. The first four were the Sikh states under the sovereignty of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and were brought under British protection by the 1809 treaty of Amritsar. Patiala, Nabha, and Jind, also known as Phulkian states, share a common ancestor Phul, who was descendent of Baryam. The Emperor, in 1526, had granted Baryam, the office of revenue collection for the waste country south-west of Delhi. Emperor Shah Jahan continued Phul in this office. From his eldest son descended the families of Nabha and Jind while from his second son the Patiala family. The Faridkot family, founded in the middle 16th century sprang from the same stock as the Phulkians chiefs.

## 6th May



1897 First year classes of Khalsa College were held in Amritsar. The first year classes of Khalsa College were held in the newly and partly built building in Amritsar, near the present Guru Nanak Dev University campus.

1930 Firing at the Sees Ganj, Delhi.

The police fired on Gurudwara Sees Ganj, Delhi. Congress workers had entered the Gurdwara premises and were throwing brickbats on police. In retaliation, the police fired, when the bullets hit Guru Granth Sahib. This caused widespread resentment among the Sikhs. The SGPC launched a campaign for boycott and picketing of foreign cloth shops in protest against this



firing. Though Kharak Singh sought to maintain a distinct identity of the Sees Ganj agitation, it certainly gave strength to the Civil Disobedience Movement. Sikhs contributions to this movement was disproportionately large.

## 7th May



1665 Guru Tegh Bahadur visited Kiratpur.

1845 Baba Bir Singh of Naurangabad was assassinated at the hands of the treacherous dogra Raja Hira Singh. He was a great Sikh saint of Khalsa Raj period. BHAIR SINGH was born on Saun Sudhi 3 Sunmat 1825, in village Gugobuha (near Amritsar) to father Sewa Singh and mother Matta Dharam Kaur. During his youth, he served in the forces of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

1923 Maharaja Ripudaman Singh of Nabha deposed by the British.

## 8th May

1705: Battle of Muktsar and Martyrdom of Chaali Muktey.



1839: Khalsa forces captured Kandhar and established Shah Sujaul Mulak as the ruler.

## 9th May

1915 Bhai Sahib Randhir Singh arrested for participation in an unsuccessful attempt to attack Ferozepur Fort.

1988 Indian government killed numerous innocent GurSikhs at Sri Darbar Sahib.

# EMBASSY OF INDIA ORGANIZES MEDICAL CAMPS IN SANTA ROZA LIMA AND SANTA CRUZ, GUATEMALA



Ambassador Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra witnessed signing of an MoU between AAPIUSA and COOITZA for strengthening healthcare support initiatives.

APRIL 29, 2024

**GUATEMALA CITY (TIP):** The Embassy of India, in collaboration with the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin - Charitable Foundation (AAPI-CF), COOITZA, Krishpar Healthcare S.A, the Santa Cruz Naranjo Health Center and Municipalities of Santa Cruz Naranjo and Santa Rosa Lima, jointly organized medical camps in Santa Rosa Lima on Friday, April 26, and Santa Cruz Naranjo on Saturday, April 27, 2024. These medical camps were aimed to serve the local communities by providing specialized and complimentary medical services to those in need, including consultations, diagnoses, and treatments across a range of specialties such as Ophthalmology, Otorhinolaryngology, Gastroenterology, Urology, Gynaecology, and Dermatology. Approximately 1050 patients (400 at Santa Rosa Lima and 650 patients at Santa Cruz Naranjo) visited the camp at both the locations and got free medical consultations from these specialists.

A group of specialists from The AAPI - CF Charitable Foundation, an eminent physician organization of Indian origin in USA, visited Guatemala specifically for the medical camp. Founded by the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI), the AAPI - CF Charitable Foundation embodies the spirit of compassion and service, channelling resources and expertise towards meaningful projects and initiatives. The delegation of AAPI-CF physicians was comprised of Chairman Dr Ajeet Singhvi and Gaurav Singhvi gastroenterologist, Dr Kishan Agarwal internal medicine, Dr Madhu Agarwal Ob-Gyn, Dr Shashi Shah and Dr Ravi Jahagirdar urologist, Dr Raj Bhayani ENT facial plastic surgeon, Dr Shweta Singhvi radiologist, Dr Mamta Singhvi oncologist, Dr Brahma Sharma cardiologist. By leveraging the collective strengths of its members and partners, the foundation strives to make a tangible difference in the lives of underserved communities, both locally and globally. Through its steadfast commitment to philanthropy and healthcare initiatives, the foundation significantly contributes to improving the lives of individuals in Guatemala during the health camps. With a primary focus on promoting health equity and enhancing access to quality care, the foundation signed an MoU with COOITZA on 26 April 2024 in Santa Roza Lima to organize similar health camps in the future. The Foundation provided medications, ultrasound, EKG, Echo, and some laboratory tests. Northwell Health Global Division also provided medical equipment for this camp.

The Health camp also got significant support from COOITZA and, the Santa Cruz Naranjo Health Center and Municipalities of Santa Cruz Naranjo and Santa Rosa Lima. COOITZA, established in 2019 with the



Ambassador Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra, while inspecting the medical camp, praised the dedicated efforts of physicians from AAPIUSA for their voluntary support and unwavering commitment

objective of the social and economic improvement and focused on the development and improvement of life, through health products, was instrumental in providing invaluable logistical support to arrange the health camp. This support likely included coordinating transportation, arranging venues, managing supplies, and facilitating communication between stakeholders. By leveraging its resources and expertise, COOITZA ensured the smooth execution of the health camp, contributing significantly to its success. Their dedication to improving lives aligns seamlessly with the objectives of the health camp, making their involvement indispensable in achieving the goal of providing essential healthcare services to those in need.

Krishpar Healthcare S.A. played a vital role in the medical camp by providing essential medical support in the form of supplying necessary medicines. Their contribution ensured that the camp had the necessary resources to deliver comprehensive healthcare services to the attendees. By supplying medicines, Krishpar Healthcare S.A. helped to enhance the quality of care provided at the camp, enabling medical professionals to diagnose and treat patients effectively.

The support from the municipalities of Santa Rosa



Embassy of India in collaboration with the AAPIUSA, COOITZA, the Santa Cruz Naranjo Health Center and Municipalities of Santa Cruz Naranjo and Santa Rosa Lima, organized the medical camp

Lima and Santa Cruz was invaluable in the successful execution of the medical camp. Their collaboration ensured that the necessary infrastructure and logistical arrangements were in place to facilitate the smooth functioning of the camp. The municipalities likely provided assistance with venue selection, permits, security, and other administrative tasks. Additionally, their engagement helped in mobilizing local resources and community participation, further strengthening the impact of the camp. The partnership between the medical organizers and the municipalities exemplifies the importance of community involvement in addressing healthcare needs and underscores a shared commitment to improving the well-being of residents.

Ambassador Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra while extending his gratitude to all the stakeholders emphasized India's unwavering commitment to healthcare support in Guatemala. He underscores the

significant strides made by India in extending medical assistance globally, including Guatemala, as a testament to India's dedication to fostering health equity and access to quality care. Dr. Mohapatra highlights India's multifaceted approach to healthcare cooperation, encompassing capacity-building initiatives, provision of medical supplies, and collaborative projects aimed at strengthening healthcare infrastructure in Guatemala. He highlights India's recognition as the "pharmacy of the world," symbolizing the nation's pivotal role in supplying affordable and high-quality generic medicines to countless countries. He reaffirms India's steadfast commitment to standing in solidarity with Guatemala in addressing healthcare challenges, thereby embodying the spirit of cooperation and goodwill between the two nations.

The Embassy is committed to realizing the vision of our Hon'ble Prime Minister, who aims to ensure accessible and affordable healthcare not only for our citizens but for the entire world. Collaborative health camps conducted with AAPI-CF, COOITZA, and Krishpar in Guatemala have made positive changes in the lives of the Guatemalan population. These camps have provided crucial healthcare services in specialties like Ophthalmology, Otorhinolaryngology, Gastroenterology, Urology, Gynecology, and Dermatology to those lacking access to proper medical facilities. The successful execution of these camps highlights the Embassy's dedication to making a significant impact on the lives of those in need. By organizing these camps in a carefully planned, phased manner, the Embassy has demonstrated the Government of India's profound commitment to improving the vision and quality of life for underprivileged individuals in Santa Rosa Lima, Santa Cruz, and surrounding areas. Their proactive collaboration with local experts, hospitals, and organizations showcases their unwavering dedication to promoting community well-being and addressing eye diseases.

The Embassy of India remains steadfast in its commitment to partnering with the local community to combat health diseases and expand access to high-quality medical care. The successful completion of two eye camps in



The locals were provided specialized and complimentary medical services, including consultations, diagnoses, and treatments across a range of specialties.

Peten, the donation of lifesaving TB medicines to the Government of Guatemala, the donation of diabetes medicines to the Municipality of Xela, and the recently concluded health camp are all testament to this commitment. These initiatives reflect the Embassy's ongoing efforts to make a tangible difference in the lives of the Guatemalan population and underscore India's dedication to global health equity. Furthermore, the Embassy is actively engaged in discussions with relevant government authorities to facilitate the provision of artificial limbs to individuals in the local Guatemalan community, with plans for an upcoming camp focused on this essential aspect of healthcare. It is anticipated that this initiative will be organized in the near future.



# Malabar Gold & Diamonds Launches its 350th Global Showroom at Naperville, Illinois in the USA

APRIL 30, 2024

**CHICAGO, IL (TIP):** Malabar Gold & Diamonds, the 6th largest jewelry retailer globally with an annual turnover of USD 6.2 billion and retail presence of 350 showrooms across 13 countries, has just unveiled its 4th showroom in the USA at Naperville, Illinois. This brings the global jewelry brand's showroom count globally to 350, with 5 showrooms in North America. Malabar Gold & Diamonds currently has an extensive retail presence across the USA, Canada, the UK, Australia, India, UAE, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain, Kuwait, KSA, Malaysia & Singapore.

The new showroom was inaugurated by HE. Somnath Ghosh, Consul General of India in Chicago in the presence of Mr. Shamlal Ahamed, MD-International Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds, Mr. Rakesh Patel of Patel brothers, Mr. Joseph Eapen, President of North America operations of Malabar Gold & Diamonds, community leaders, representatives from government and other authorities, management team members from Malabar Gold & Diamonds, customers and well-wishers.

"The launch of Malabar Gold & Diamonds' 350th Global showroom in the USA is a proud occasion for us as it signifies the growing footprint of our brand in the international jewelry arena. Located in the city of Naperville, this showroom will undoubtedly bring the best of what we have to offer in terms of



Ribbon cutting ceremony. Consul General of India Somnath Ghosh cuts the ribbon. Others in the picture are Mr. Shamlal Ahamed, MD-International Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds, Mr. Rakesh Patel of Patel brothers, Mr. Joseph Eapen, President of North America operations of Malabar Gold & Diamonds, community leaders, representatives from government and other authorities, management team members from Malabar Gold & Diamonds

both jewelry & experience. Our unwavering commitment to offering every customer complete transparency and an exceptional jewelry shopping experience has propelled us to being one of the most preferred jewelry retailers in the USA and all the other regions in which we operate. On behalf of Malabar Group, I would like to convey my sincere gratitude to all our customers, management team members, shareholders and other stakeholders for their contributions in making this occasion truly significant.", commented

the Chairman of Malabar Group, M.P Ahammed.

Located at Patel Plaza in Naperville and spread across 6,400+ sq. ft, the new outlet houses over 30,000 designs across 25 exclusive brands and collections in gold, diamond & precious gem jewelry. The new store will also showcase an extensive collection of bridal jewelry, alongside a wide range of options for occasional wear, daily wear & office wear. The other 3 showrooms of Malabar Gold & Diamonds are in Chicago, New Jersey & Dallas.

"The USA is one of the largest jewelry markets in the world in terms of both buying power and population, and I am very excited to launch our 4th showroom in the country. The large segment of the Indian subcontinental diaspora in the USA is an opportunity for us to expand our offerings to a base of consumers who truly appreciate the artistry of Indian jewelry. Our future initiatives in North America include expansion into Los Angeles, Atlanta, San Francisco, Seattle, Austin, Tampa & Virginia in the USA and in Canada, we have plans covering British Columbia & Alberta", commented Mr. Shamlal Ahamed, MD-International Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds.

Offering an exclusive jewelry shopping experience to the plethora of jewelry lovers in Illinois, the new showroom is equipped with a customized jewelry designing facility, presenting customers with the option to design their own jewelry with the assistance of Malabar Gold & Diamonds' expert designers and craftsmen.

Mr. Abdul Salam K.P, Vice Chairman of Malabar Group, commented: "With 5 showrooms in the region, Malabar Gold & Diamonds' success in North America speaks volumes about the growing demand for Indian-made jewelry in the western hemisphere.

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

## New rules require airlines to automatically refund consumers for cancelled flights

APRIL 25, 2024

**WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP):** The Joe Biden administration on Wednesday, April 24, issued new rules that require airlines to provide automatic cash refunds to passengers when owed and protect consumers from costly surprise fees.

"Too often, airlines drag their feet on refunds or rip folks off with junk fees. It is time Americans got a better deal. Today, my administration is requiring that airlines provide automatic refunds to passengers when they are owed and protect them from surprise fees," Biden said in a video statement.

"This is about airlines treating passengers better and it will save people more than half-a-billion dollars, avoiding unwanted, expensive, unnecessary surprise airline fees," said Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg.

Biden said his administration is holding airlines accountable and bringing costs down for American families. "This is just one part of my administration's plan to prevent companies from playing the American people for suckers. It matters," he said.

The White House said these rules will significantly expand consumer protections in air travel, provide passengers an easier pathway to refunds when owed and save consumers more than half-a-billion dollars every year in hidden and surprise junk fees. The rules are part of the Biden-Harris administration's work to lower costs for consumers and take on corporate rip-offs, it said.

The new rules require airlines to automatically issue refunds, without passengers having to explicitly request them or jump through hoops. Airlines and ticket agents must promptly issue refunds within seven business days of refunds becoming due for credit card purchases and 20 calendar days for other payment methods.

Further, airlines and ticket agents must provide refunds in cash or whatever original payment method the individual used to make the purchase, such as credit card or airline miles. Airlines may not substitute vouchers, travel credits or other forms of compensation unless the passenger affirmatively chooses to accept

alternative compensation.

Finally, airlines and ticket agents must provide full refunds of the ticket purchase price, minus the value of any portion of transportation already used.

The Department of Transportation is requiring airlines and ticket agents to tell consumers upfront what fees they charge for checked bags, a carry-on bag, for changing a reservation or cancelling a reservation. This ensures that consumers can avoid surprise fees when they purchase tickets from airlines or ticket agents, including both brick-and-mortar travel agencies or online travel agencies, the White House said.

Under the new rules, each fee must be disclosed the first time that fare and schedule information is provided on an airline's online platform -- and cannot be displayed through a hyperlink.

For each type of baggage, airlines and ticket agents must spell out the weight and dimension limitations that they impose. They must also describe any prohibitions or restrictions on changing or cancelling a flight, along with policies related to differences in fare when switching to a



New rules require airlines to provide automatic cash refunds to passengers for cancelled flights

Photo for representation only

more or less expensive flight.

An airline must provide useable, current and accurate information regarding its baggage, change and cancellation fees and policies to any company that is required to disclose them to consumers and receives fare, schedule and availability information from that airline.

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



**BEJAN DARUWALLA AND  
CHIRAG DARUWALLA**

## WEEKLY HOROSCOPE - 6TH TO 12TH MAY 2024

**By Chirag Daruwalla - Son of Astrologer Bejan Daruwalla**

prove to be more beneficial. There will be happiness and peace in family life, and you will be happy, and you can get a new position in the work area as well or with the increase in your work, your rights will also increase. Don't get involved in any kind of conspiracy. Take full care of your health as it can become a cause of worry for you this week.

you may have to face problems later, so do any work after thinking carefully. There will be a possibility of going on a short trip at the end of the week. Take care of the health of your siblings and treat them well. There can be a fight with friends. Family life will be peaceful, and you will get progress in the field of work. You will be listened to, and your work efficiency will be appreciated. If your boss is a woman, then you have to be careful because your relationship with her may deteriorate and arguments are also possible.



### ARIES

Ganesha says that this week you can go on a long journey. There can be a disturbance in family life due to which your mind will also be somewhat unhappy. Father's health may worry you. Although you will remain dominant in the work area, you should not try to get entangled with anyone without any reason. Time is excellent for children and their fame will increase. On the other hand, it is also a great time for the students, if they concentrate even a little bit, then they will pass with good marks in their studies. There will be an increase in income, which you will spend this time well.



### LEO

Ganesha says that whatever you decide this week, you will accept it only after completing it. Confidence and determination will increase in you, but there will also be an increase in some other ego, which can have an impact on your relationship. Family life can be normal and there will be victory in debates. You will get good benefits in the workplace, and you will get full support from your siblings and colleagues. At the same time, they will also help them financially if needed. Time will be a bit challenging for the child side and they will have to take care of their health. On the other hand, students will have to work hard only then the results will come in their favor. Your expenses may increase unexpectedly so take care of your finances as you may face problems later.



### SAGITTARIUS

Ganesha says that due to the excess of expenses this week, you will have to pay attention to your finances, otherwise, the lack of money can bother you. Health will be good, although in between you may get worried or worried about something. Leaving laziness, start another work with energy so that success can be achieved in it. Family life will be pleasant but there will be ups and downs in the work area. You have to be patient and keep doing your work smoothly. It is a better time for children, and she will be full of energy. The routes for the arrival of money will open. Your siblings and colleagues will support you and you will be able to perform well in your work area. Chances are also being made to go on a long journey.



### TAURUS

Ganesha says that this week you can get good benefits from the business partnership and for what reason you can also go on a long journey in connection with work. There will be a situation of ups and downs in luck, due to which your work can get spoiled in the making. Family life will be happy like this. Due to not getting the full results of your hard work, your mind may remain somewhat unhappy. Time is good for the children, and they will be happy, and the students can get the desired success in their studies. Your father's health can become a problem. Take care of them and maintain good relations with them. Your respect will increase, and your level will rise.



### VIRGO

Ganesha says that this week will be good for you, although you will also spend on long-distance travel or other work. Will be happy in your mind and affinity will increase in your speech due to which people will be attracted towards you. There can be a situation of tension in family life due to which the mind will be somewhat upset. Health problems may trouble the child and you may also complain of stomach-ache or indigestion. During this, pregnant women should take care of their health. Time can be challenging for students; they will have to put in more effort to get good results. Prospects will be good in the field and your work will be appreciated.



### CAPRICORN

Ganesha says that your family will be your first priority this week. You will spend more time on family issues. Your status will also increase in the field of work, and it is also possible that you may change your job and join a better new job. There will be a tremendous increase in income, but on the other hand, the expenses will also continue to increase. Time is better for the students, there will be quadruple progress in their education day and night. Your child will be happy and will put his mind to everything. You will also get the support of your siblings in your field of work. You have to control your temper because you can become very angry, due to which the work being done can be disrupted. Therefore, working carefully will be a better option for you.



### GEMINI

Ganesha says that this week you may remain mentally disturbed, and your health may also remain weak. You will be able to get people to work through your speech, but your relationship with your in-laws may deteriorate, so pay full attention to this. Eating more spicy food can cause health problems. Happiness will remain in family life, and you will be happy, on the other hand, time will be good for you in the work sector as well. Time is beneficial for children, although for some reason they can go away from home. On the other hand, the student class will enjoy studies and will enjoy it a lot. There will be an increase in your courage and bravery and there will be an increase in fortune, and you will get respect.



### LIBRA

Ganesha says that this week you will have to try to keep peace in both your work area and family life. Take care of your parents' health and try to maintain good relations with them. There will be a situation of ups and downs in the workplace, although your colleagues will strongly support you. On the other hand, you will also get the cooperation of senior officers. There will be chances of profit for the people engaged in government work. You can get some kind of benefit from the government sector and the possibility of monetary gain will increase due to the completion of a long pending work. Your expenses will also increase, and you will spend more on luxuries.



### AQUARIUS

Ganesha says that this week more work will be required in the workplace. There will be peace and happiness in family life and the mother will get happy. But on the other hand, father's health can become a cause of concern so pay attention to him. Time will give mixed results for children, and they will have to focus on their health. It is time for hard work for the students and if they continue this sequence, then they can get good success in competitive exams as well. Some natives may get the fortune of traveling abroad. There is a significant increase in income, but an equal increase is also seen in your expenses, so invest and spend your money wisely.



### CANCER

Ganesha says that this week many thoughts will come into your mind and due to this you may have difficulty in taking decisions. Therefore, it will be necessary that you postpone any important decision of yours this week. Because the decisions taken this week will not



### SCORPIO

Ganesha says that this week you will be under stress due to unnecessary worries and may take some wrong decisions due to which

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**BIRTHDAY HOROSCOPE : 6TH TO 12TH MAY  
BY VEDIC ASTROLOGER NASTUR BEJAN DARUWALLA**



**VEDIC ASTROLOGER NASTUR  
BEJAN DARUWALLA**

**6TH MAY**

Ganesha says you may find yourself in a scenario today that necessitates rapid thought and immediate action. Don't be discouraged if an unexpected problem arises in your professional life. Your inherent leadership talents will shine through, guiding your team to a solution. Trust your instincts and don't be afraid to take the initiative. Your excitement and energy will inspire people around you, and your activities today may lead to substantial advancement in your work. Remember that every challenge is an opportunity disguised as a challenge.

**7TH MAY**

Ganesha says today, you may have to decide your financial status. Perhaps an unanticipated expense arises, or an investment opportunity arises. In any event, be practical and carefully analyze all of your possibilities. Consult a financial expert if necessary, and don't make a hasty decision. Your perseverance and patience will pay off, resulting in financial security and peace of mind. Keep in mind that wonderful things come to those who wait.

**8TH MAY :** Ganesha says an

unexpected conversation today may lead to a fresh opportunity. This could be a fortuitous encounter with a stranger or a casual conversation with a friend that takes an unexpected route. Keep an open mind and pay close attention. Your versatility will be your most valuable asset, allowing you to seize and capitalize on this chance. This contact has the potential to introduce you to new experiences and extend your horizons. Keep in mind that life is full of surprises.

**9TH MAY**

Ganesha says you may have an emotional connection with someone close to you today. This could be a member of the family, a close friend, or a love partner. Accept this moment and express yourself honestly. Your sensitivity and comprehension will strengthen this relationship, resulting in a stronger bond and mutual trust. In times of need, this emotional connection could bring solace and assistance. Remember that the relationships we form enrich our lives.

**10TH MAY**

Ganesha says today, you may be

allowed to demonstrate your ingenuity. This could be at work, where an original approach is required for a project, or at home, where you opt to pursue a creative interest. Don't be afraid to let your ideas flow. Your charisma and self-assurance will draw positive attention, and your creative production may astound people around you. Remember that creativity is intelligence and having a good time.

**11TH MAY**

Ganesha says you may need to address a problem today that takes close attention to detail. It could be a difficult task at work or a difficult issue in your personal life. Maintain your attention and organization. Your practicality and thoroughness will result in a successful outcome. The answer you find may result in major improvements and recognition. Keep in mind that the devil is in the details.

**12TH MAY**

Ganesha says you may find yourself in a diplomatic predicament today. A disagreement at work or in your social circle could lead to a fight. Maintain equilibrium and fairness in your

interactions. Your capacity to see both sides of an issue will bring harmony to the situation and help to resolve the problem. Your diplomatic abilities could help you establish relationships and advance professionally. Remember that peace is not the absence of conflict; rather, it is the ability to resolve disagreement peacefully.

**Nastur Bejan Daruwalla is available for astrological consultations. He can be reached at [www.bejandaruwalla.com](http://www.bejandaruwalla.com) [info@bejandaruwalla.com](mailto:info@bejandaruwalla.com) +91 81412 34275**

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**PISCES**

Ganesha says that this week you can plan to go on a long journey and after putting in a lot of effort you will get good results. In the workplace, you will have to keep working hard and maintain harmony with your seniors, otherwise, the situation may go against you. Don't have any kind of quarrel with siblings. Family life is likely to be normal but possibly you will feel tired due to overwork, which may cause physical problems.

Your mind will also be engaged in spiritual activities, and you will be ready to worship God. Children may have to face trouble. Time is challenging for the student class, but those who are preparing for the competition for any government job can get good success in it, so keep working hard. You will overpower your opponents and you will win in court disputes.

**About Chirag Daruwalla**

Celebrity Astrologer Chirag Daruwalla is the son of famous astrologer Bejan Daruwalla. He is known for his detailed astrological predictions on career, health, love, finance, and business. You can visit their website [bejandaruwalla.com](http://bejandaruwalla.com) for guidance on problems related to your life and solve your problem with the help of expert astrologer Chirag Daruwalla. For guidance on problems related to your life you can talk to Astrologer Chirag Daruwalla on Call/WhatsApp: +91 9825470377 or also mail at [info@bejandaruwalla.com](mailto:info@bejandaruwalla.com)

|| SHREE GANESHAY NAMAH ||



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**More than 2,000 pro-Palestinian...**

"We are not an authoritarian nation where we silence people or squash dissent," said Joe Biden. "But," he continued, "order must prevail."

"Violent protest is not protected - peaceful protest is," he said. Biden criticized what he called "violent" protests.

"Vandalism, trespassing, breaking windows, shutting down campuses, forcing the cancellation of classes and graduations - none of this is a peaceful protest," Biden said in a brief statement on Thursday morning.

"There's the right to protest, but not the right to cause chaos," the US president said. In response to a reporter's question, he said he did not think it was the right time to call the national guard.

In a Thursday, May 2 report, the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project said that although some clashes have broken out, "the overwhelming majority [of protests] - 99% - have remained peaceful".

The protests are part of a movement to force schools to divest from businesses that support the war in Gaza, and they reflect how the war has become a major flashpoint in US politics. More than 34,000 people have been killed in Gaza since Israel began a campaign to dismantle Hamas, the Gaza health ministry has said. More people in Gaza have been thrust into near starvation, as Israel has limited food aid to the area.

On 7 October, Hamas killed more than 1,200 people and took roughly 250 hostages in an attack on Israel. Since the campaign against Hamas began, the US has provided substantial military support to Israel, including most recently in a \$15bn aid package.

Student protests have grown across the country since an encampment sprang up at Columbia University in New York in mid-April. In many cases, faculty members have joined or supported student protesters, as police and universities have responded with force to demonstrations that threaten to continue into commencement season. Hundreds have been arrested in the weeks since the protests began.

Police cleared out a protest camp at UCLA in the early hours of Thursday, May 2 and arrested at least 200 demonstrators. The police operation followed a brutal hours-long attack on the encampment on Tuesday night by masked "instigators" who came to campus and assaulted students with projectiles and chemical agents, while campus security and police retreated or stood by without intervening.

At least 1,000 people gathered on UCLA's campus late on Wednesday night, before police moved in, tearing down plywood and pallets that protesters had used to reinforce their encampment. Students described again being attacked with projectiles, fireworks and chemical agents. The chaotic operation lasted into the early hours of the morning.

By late Thursday morning, the campus had largely quieted down. The UCLA student newspaper the Daily Bruin posted pictures on social media of a campus building scrawled with graffiti saying, "Free Palestine" and "Fuck Israel".

In New York, legal aid attorneys said they were still fighting to have protesters released more than 24 hours after they were first detained - many of whom were only charged with minor offenses and, attorneys said, should have never been arrested in the first place.

"Many protesters who were arrested earlier this week and arraigned last night were ultimately charged with criminal trespass, a low-level offense, and at that point, they should have been immediately released from custody," said Tina Luongo, Legal Aid Society chief criminal defense practice attorney.

At Dartmouth, where an encampment had only recently sprung up, a professor said the university responded with "full force" and posted a video of a white-haired colleague being grabbed and dragged away by police.

"In the hour or so it was allowed to exist, this was the model of a peaceful, inclusive protest," Jeff Sharlet, a

professor at Dartmouth, told the Washington Post. "They obstructed nothing; disrupted nothing; menaced nobody; and neither used nor displayed hate speech."

chaotic scenes at UCLA came after New York police burst into a building occupied by anti-war protesters at Columbia on Tuesday night, breaking up a demonstration that had paralyzed the school.

By Wednesday, a scrum had also broken out at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, after police with shields removed all but one tent and shoved protesters. Four officers were injured, including a state trooper who was hit in the head with a skateboard, authorities said. Four were charged with battering law enforcement.

In one rare example of authorities de-escalating protests, Brown University in Rhode Island agreed to a divestment vote in October - apparently the first US college to agree to such a demand.

Authorities have also made arrests and cleared protest encampments at City College, Fordham University and Stony Brook College in New York; Portland State in Oregon; Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff; Tulane University in New Orleans; and the University of Texas, Dallas.

Student protests have also sprung up in Canada, the United Kingdom and Australia. (Source: The Guardian)

**May consider granting interim bail to...**

asked the ASG to be considerate and take instructions from the probe agency on the issue of interim bail to the AAP chief.

The Bench asked Raju to suggest the conditions the ED would like to impose on Kejriwal in case he was granted interim bail. It also asked the probe agency to spell out if the Delhi Chief Minister can be allowed to sign files from jail and posted the matter for further hearing on May 7.

The Bench, however, said, "We are not commenting on it either way. We may or may not grant (interim bail)... Don't read anything into it," the Bench said, even as Raju said he would oppose interim bail to Kejriwal.

Drawing the court's attention to statements being made by AAP MP Sanjay Singh after the top court ordered his release on bail, the ASG said, "Look at the kind of statements he is making."

Currently lodged in Tihar Jail in the National Capital under judicial custody after his arrest on March 21, the Delhi Chief Minister has challenged the Delhi High Court's April 9 verdict upholding his arrest in a money-laundering case linked to the Delhi excise policy "scam".

Earlier, the top court had on April 2 granted bail to senior AAP leader Sanjay Singh in connection with a money-laundering case related to the Delhi excise policy scam after the ED said it had no objection to his release on bail. However, it had clarified that the concession given to Singh will not be treated as a precedent.

The ED alleged that an employee of businessman Dinesh Arora delivered Rs 2 crore to Singh's house on two occasions. Singh was arrested by the ED on October 4, 2023 following allegations made by Arora, who has turned approver in both the ED and CBI cases related to Delhi excise scam.

The Bench had, however, noted that no money had been recovered from Singh and there were nine exculpatory statements given in his respect by Arora.

Two other senior AAP leaders - former Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia and former Delhi Health Minister Satyendra Jain - continue to be in jail in separate money-laundering cases.

During the arguments on Friday, Singhvi said Kejriwal was not an accused till 16 March. What changed drastically... that he was arrested on March 21, he wondered as he sought to emphasize that the probe agency had no new material to justify the arrest.

However, the Bench was skeptical about his

argument that a political party can't be covered under the PMLA. "It is a little difficult...a society is also an association of individuals. Can it be said that a society won't come under the provision?" Justice Khanna asked.

The Bench sought to know if the ED was bound to disclose the entire material collected during the probe or only a part of such material.

"If we record everything in writing, it would be voluminous. That is not what is expected. It is not necessary that irrelevant material has to be reflected. Else charge sheet cannot be filed within 60 days at all. Writing will run into thousands of pages even one or two lines is about each material. Investigating officers would be bogged down," the ASG replied.

As Raju said, "This is not a case where there is no material against the accused", the Bench said "He (Kejriwal) was not expecting to get arrested."

"We (ED) called him nine times... Evasive answers cannot be ground for arrest, yes. But cumulatively, we can take that into consideration," the ASG said. (Source: TNS)

**UK's ruling Conservatives suffer big...**

It is an indication that the main opposition Labour Party appears increasingly likely to return to power after 14 years.

Labour won control of councils in England it hasn't held for decades and was successful in a special by-election for Parliament. Its only negative appears to have been in some areas with large Muslim populations where the party's candidates suffered as a result of leader Keir Starmer's strongly pro-Israel stance in the conflict in Gaza.

Labour won Blackpool South, a long-time Labour seat in the northwest of England that went Conservative in the last general election in 2019, when then-Prime Minister Boris Johnson won a big victory.

In the contest, triggered by the resignation of a Conservative lawmaker following a lobbying scandal, Labour's Chris Webb secured 10,825 votes, 7,607 more than his second-placed Conservative opponent.

"This seismic win in Blackpool South is the most important result today," Starmer said. "This is the one contest where voters had the chance to send a message to Rishi Sunak's Conservatives directly, and that message is an overwhelming vote for change."

Thursday's elections were important in themselves, with voters deciding who will run many aspects of their daily lives, such as garbage collection, road maintenance and local crime prevention, in the coming years. But with a general election looming, they will be viewed through a national prism.

The results so far provide more evidence that Labour is likely to form the next government - and by quite a margin - and that Starmer will become prime minister. As of early Friday, with barely a quarter of the 2,661 seats up for grabs counted, the Conservatives were down 115 while Labour was up 60.

The results will roll in through Saturday. Sunak hopes he can point to successes, notably in several key mayoral races, to douse talk that the Conservative Party will change its leader again before the United Kingdom's main election, which could take place as soon as next month.

Key to his survival could be the results of mayoral elections in Tees Valley in the northeast of England and in the West Midlands. The former is due Friday lunchtime and the latter on Saturday. Should Conservative mayors Andy Street and Ben Houchen hold on, he may win some respite from restive lawmakers in his party. Should both lose, he may face trouble. Labour's Sadiq Khan is expected to remain mayor of London when results are announced on Saturday.

Sunak could preempt any challenge by threatening to call a general election that has to take place before January 2025. He has the power to decide on the date and has indicated that it will be in the second half of 2024. (Agencies)

# Varuthini Ekadashi

The Hindu Lunar calendar is divided into two different phases of the Moon. One phase is waxing Moon which is known as 'Shukla Paksha', in which the Moon grows in size (visually) and brightness everyday bit by bit and the other phase is waning Moon, 'Krishna Paksha', when the brightness of Moon diminishes in size everyday post the Full Moon.

Each phase is of 15 days respectively. 'Ekadashi' is the 11th day in each phase of the Moon, which means that there are two Ekadashis in a month. The term Ekadashi means the 11th lunar day in each fortnight of the Shukla Paksha and the Krishna Paksha, respectively.

To further explain the term 'Tithi' (as per the Hindu calendar), it means one Lunar day which means the time it takes for the Moon to travel a certain distance. So Ekadashi is the 11th Lunar day or Tithi. In the Shukla Paksha i.e. the brighter phase of the Moon, on Ekadashi, the Moon looks three fourth (3/4th) and on the Krishna Paksha Ekadashi, the Moon appears three fourth (3/4th) dark. There are 24 Ekadashis in a year, with the exception of Leap year when there are 26 Ekadashis.

Along with Hinduism, Jainism too considers Ekadashis to be holy, which has spiritual connotations. It is said that merely by hearing the names of the various Ekadashis one will be free of all sins. Lord Vishnu is worshipped on Ekadashi. The day is observed by fasting from Sunrise of Ekadashi Tithi to the sunrise of the following day. Fasting on the Ekadashi is an important ritual of this day. The best form of fasting for Ekadashi is to go without water or food. People who do not want to keep a full fast are recommended to have a fruit-based diet (Phalahar) or fruit and Milk or milk product diet. Consumption of Rice, Grains and Beans are prohibited on this day.

According to the ancient texts, both the Ekadashis, whether in Shukla Paksha or Krishna Paksha, are equally holy and auspicious as they have the same tithi.

The Varunithi Ekadasi is on the lith day of the bright fortnight or Shukla Paksha of the month Vaisakha (Hindu calendar) which falls in May-June as per the Gregorian calendar. It is also known as Vaisakha Shukla Ekadasi. It is said that Lord Vishnu took the form of an Apsara, the beautiful and enticing Varunithi, on this tithi, to get the Amrit Kalash, the elixir of life, away from the Asuras, after the Samudra Manthan.

Observing fast on Varunithi Ekadasi absolves sins and all sufferings. Legend has it that Lord Shri Ram had observed Varunithi Ekadasi when He was told about the merits of this Ekadasi by Sage Vasishtha. This Ekadasi also removes the veil from the illusions which attach us to the material existence.

The ancient text has Lord Krishna explaining to Yudhisthira about the importance where the Lord has said it is greater than all sacrifices or charity to the needy or the sacrifice of Horses (Ashvamedha) or even seeing Lord Vishnu Himself. It is said that one who observes fast on this day, adhering to the rules, will be liberated and get a place in Lord Vishnu's abode.

Bhadravati, on the banks of the Saraswati River, was ruled by the capable Chandravanshi King Dyutiman. He was religious, pious and was wise. There was an extremely wealthy merchant called Dhanapala who lived in Bhadravati. He was a devotee of Lord Vishnu, used to contribute by doing charity of food grains etc. to the citizens of Bhadravati. He had 5 sons- Sumana, Sadbuddhi, Medhavi, Sukriti, and Dhrishthabuddhi.

Drishthabuddhi was involved in all sinful activities, starting from being with prostitutes, gambling, illicit sex and other nefarious activities and wasted his father's wealth on all the things to please his senses. An angered Dhanapala expelled Dhrishthabuddhi from the house because of his atrocious behavior.

Within a short time, Drishthabuddhi finished all the money and ornaments inherited by him and was



abandoned by the prostitutes. This led him to start stealing money from the citizens and once the King's constables caught him, whipped him and threw him out of the boundaries of the kingdom.

He wandered around the forest killing and eating animals and was in a miserable state.

Once during the month of Vaisakh, wandering around, he reached the Ashram of Kaundinya Muni. The pious sage had just taken his bath in the Ganges river and his body was still wet when Drishthabuddhi arrived there. Some droplets fell on Drishthabuddhi which miraculously brought the sinner back to awareness and into his good senses. With folded hands, he bowed down to Kaundinya Muni and asked what he should do to relieve him of all the miseries. The Sage asked him to observe fast on Mohini Ekadasi, which was due to come shortly then and told him all the rules and regulations to follow.

Drishthabuddhi observed fast on Mohini Ekadasi as per what Kaundinya Muni had guided and was relieved of all sins. Later he also was rewarded as he got a place in Lord Vishnu's abode. The story ends with Lord Krishna telling Yudhishtira that whoever even listens about the merits of Mohini Ekadasi is blessed with merits.

The rituals of Varuthini Ekadashi are specified in the ancient Hindu texts and is said to have been specified by Lord Sri Krishna while answering Yudhishtira's (one of the Pandava brothers from Mahabharata) query. The rituals are:

- One day before Varunithi Ekadashi, which is the 10th day of the Krishna Paksha, the person should clean his teeth thoroughly in the afternoon and have supper at Sunset hour.
- On the morning of Varunithi Ekadashi, the person should intend on keeping the fast meticulously. The person should have a bath in a river (which is said to be most purifying) or a lake and in both not being available, bathe with pond water.
- While bathing the person should smear mud on his/her body with chanting a prayer to Mother Earth.

**“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**

- Worship Lord Govinda with complete dedication and Offer an excellent 'Bhog' (food to Divine) along with flowers and other things of the offering.
- Light a lamp at home in honour of the Lord.
- Chant or sing praises of Lord Vishnu throughout the day and remain in a most blissful state during the fast.
- Stay awake through the night in full consciousness. If possible play musical instrument throughout the night to please the Lord.
- The next morning the person should give charity to Brahmanas and respectfully ask them for forgiveness for any offence.
- For people who keep a complete fast till the next day, one should say the prayer -'O Pundarikaksha, O lotus-eyed Lord, now I will eat. Please shelter me.
- After the prayer the devotee should offer flowers and water at the lotus feet of Lord Vishnu and request the Lord to eat by chanting the mantra of eight-syllable, thrice. To garner the full merits of the fast, the devotee should have water which has been offered to the Lord.
- Fire sacrifices can be performed if the devotee chooses to do so The day of Ekadashi till the next morning the devotee should involve in taking baths, singing and chanting praises of the Lord and worship Him with complete devotion, involve in activities of devotion and doing charity.

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# Mizoram: Songbird of India

**K**nown as the 'Songbird of India', the northeastern state of Mizoram is one of the smallest states in India. The moderate climate of Mizoram, which is comfortable even in during summer makes it an attractive destination for all the tourists. The vast culture and grand festivals of the state have a unique, irresistible charm which can not be explained or read; it can only be felt once you are in the peaceful, serene land of Mizoram. The dense greenery and the 21 hill ranges that stretch throughout the territory of Mizoram is sure to take you surrounded to a different world. An Inner Line Pass is required to enter Mizoram.

Mizoram offers you a calm, serene atmosphere with exciting outdoor activities in the beautiful lush green surroundings which keeps you close to the peaceful nature. With grand festivals, happy people wearing colourful traditional costumes, Mizoram welcomes you to explore its beauty and richness. Don't forget to stop by the tribal artisans and get amazed by their unique talent and pick a traditional shawl for yourself as a souvenir. For non-vegetarian people, the food of the state will be a real treat while vegetarians will have to choose carefully from the dishes. If you love to be in nature's arms, then Mizoram is the place for you! Indians need an Inner Line Permit (ILP) to enter the state. The cost is INR 170 for a 15-day permit. The process to get an extension is slightly difficult. One can get an ILP documentation done at the Lengpui Airport in Aizawl.

## Aizawl

Lying at a height of 1132 m above sea level, Aizawl is a quaint city and the capital of the state of Mizoram in northeast India. Primarily dominated by the Mizo Tribe, Aizawl and its surrounding areas are lush with rolling hills and abundant greenery. The city, along with the majority of the state is known for its agricultural produce and ethnic handicrafts and apparel. Aizawl is well connected via roads and air connectivity to other major hubs of northeast India such as Silchar and Guwahati in Assam. An important thing to note is that an Inner Line Pass or ILP is required for entry into Mizoram which is available on Guwahati, Silchar, Shillong, New Delhi and Kolkata.

Among one of the oldest cities in the north eastern region of India, Aizawl, pronounced eye-zole, is a perfect place to relax while enjoying the local food and culture. Home to the Mizoram State Museum and few other tourist complexes, tourists have few options to enjoy a sightseeing tour in the city. Apart from these, one can take a tour to the nearby hilly areas of Hmuifang, Tamdil Lake and Chanmari.

## Lunglei

Literally meaning 'the bridge of rock', Lunglei is famous for its scenic beauty



and natural setting. It is a small town, located around 170 km south of Aizawl whose name is derived from a bridge shaped rock found along Nghasih which is a tributary of the river Tlawng. Lunglei is an ideal offbeat destination for those who love natural sightseeing and adventure activities bundled into one. Trekking, bird watching and camping are among the popular activities opted by tourists coming to visit Lunglei.

Lunglei is a biodiverse region, home to Thorangtlang Wildlife Sanctuary and Saza Wildlife Sanctuary. While Saza Wildlife Sanctuary is famous for hosting migratory and endemic bird species, Thorangtlang Wildlife Sanctuary is home to several animal species such as leopards, tigers, porcupines and leaf monkeys among many. Visiting the Lunglei Rock Bridge at the Nghasih stream is another popular activity while here. For those looking to learn about the culture and traditions of the region, the Saikuti Hall is a must-visit.

## Champhai

The town of Champhai on the eastern border of Mizoram close to the Indo-Myanmar border is the administrative headquarters of the Champhai district. It is located at a distance of 188 Kms from the capital of Aizawl and is strategically and commercially important for the state of Mizoram as well as for India. Champhai and its surrounding regions are primarily known for their natural beauty and vast valleys of rice fields. It is known as the 'Rice Bowl of Mizoram' due to being a major region of rice cultivation. Also, its vibrant seasonal orchids lend it a certain romanticism and aesthetic appeal.

Champhai has a number of tourist attractions mostly including natural



settings. These include a cave called the Kungawrhi Puk, a river called Tiau Lui, Lianchhiari Lunglen Tlang and a few more. Rih Dil Lake is another famous natural attraction known to Champhai and the state of Mizoram. Adventure enthusiast can indulge in some trekking at the Thasiama Seno Neihna which is about 83 Kms south of Champhai.

## Mamit

The Mamit district is the fourth largest district of the state of Mizoram. The town of Mamit, the administrative headquarters of the district, is located around 95 kms from Aizawl to the west. Known for its exquisite scenic locales and magnificence, don't miss out to add this place in your itinerary in Mizoram. The Dampa Tiger Reserve, among the famous natural protected regions of India, is a popular tourist attraction

here. Adventure enthusiasts will also love visiting the longest cave network of Mizoram in Pukzing. Oranges are a major produce from this district, earning it the nickname, the 'Orange Garden of Mizoram'.

## Saiha

Saiha is known as the fastest growing town in Mizoram, as the population has significantly risen in the last decade. Saiha is a census town in the Saiha district in Mizoram located at an average height of 729 meters above sea level. This town is considered to be a haven for angling enthusiasts.

Revealing the mystery behind the name of the town, the name of the town was originally Siaha where 'Sia' stands for elephant and 'ha' meaning tooth - An elephant tooth. But the Mizos traditionally call it Saiha.

# History This Week MAY 3 - 9

## MAY 3



Birthday - Italian writer and statesman Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527) was born in Florence, Italy. He offered a blunt, realistic view of human nature and power in his works *The Prince* and *Discourses on Livy*.

Birthday - Golda Meir (1898-1978) was born in Kiev, Russia. She was one of the founders of the modern state of Israel and served as prime minister from 1969 to 1974.

## MAY 4

May 4, 1494 - During his second journey of exploration in the New World, Christopher Columbus discovered Jamaica.

May 4, 1886 - The Haymarket Square Riot occurred in Chicago after 180 police officers advanced on 1,300 persons gathered in the square listening to speeches of labor activists and anarchists. A bomb was thrown. Seven policemen were killed and over 50 wounded. Four anarchists were then charged with conspiracy to kill, convicted and hanged while another committed suicide in jail. Three others were given lengthy jail terms.

May 4, 1970 - At Kent State University, four students - Allison Krause, 19; Sandra Lee Scheuer, 20; Jeffrey Glenn Miller, 20; and William K. Schroeder, 19 - were killed by National Guardsmen who opened fire on a crowd of 1,000 students protesting President Richard Nixon's decision to invade Cambodia. Eleven others were wounded. The shootings set off tumultuous campus demonstrations across America resulting in the temporary closing of over 450 colleges and universities.

## MAY 5

May 5th - Celebrated in Mexico as *Cinco de Mayo*, a national holiday in remembrance of the Battle of Puebla in 1862, in which Mexican troops under General Ignacio Zaragoza, outnumbered three to one, defeated the invading French forces of Napoleon III.

May 5, 1865 - Decoration Day was first observed in the U.S., with the tradition of decorating soldiers' graves from the Civil War with flowers. The observance date was later moved to May 30th and included American graves from World War I and World War II, and became better known as Memorial Day. In 1971, Congress moved Memorial Day to the

last Monday in May, thus creating a three-day holiday weekend.

May 5, 1893 - The Wall Street Crash of 1893 began as stock prices fell dramatically. By the end of the year, 600 banks closed and several big railroads were in receivership. Another 15,000 businesses went bankrupt amid 20 percent unemployment. It was the worst economic crisis in U.S. history up to that time.



May 5, 1961 - Alan Shepard became the first American in space. He piloted the spacecraft *Freedom 7* during a 15-minute 28-second suborbital flight that reached an altitude of 116 miles (186 kilometers) above the earth. Shepard's success occurred 23 days after the Russians had launched the first-ever human in space, cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin, during an era of intense technological competition between the Russians and Americans called the Space Race.

Birthday - Communism founder Karl Marx (1818-1883) was born in Treves, Germany. He co-authored *Das Kapital* and *The Communist Manifesto*, advocating the abolition of all private property and a system in which workers own all the means of production, land, factories and machinery.

Birthday - Pioneering American journalist Nellie Bly (1867-1922) was born in Cochran's Mills, Pennsylvania (as Elizabeth Cochrane). She was a social reformer and human rights advocate who once posed as an inmate in an insane asylum to expose inhumane conditions. She is best known for her 1889-90 tour around the world in 72 days, beating by eight days the time of Phileas Fogg, fictional hero of Jules Verne's novel *Around the World in Eighty Days*.

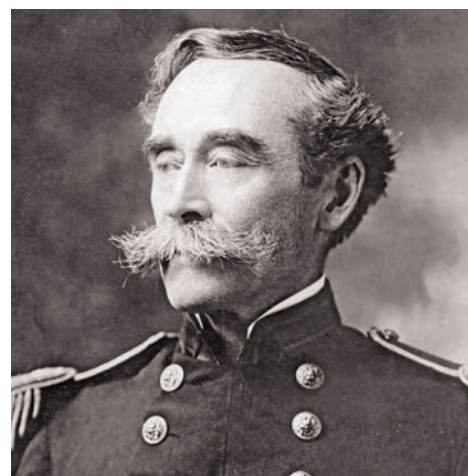
## MAY 6

May 6, 1527 - The Renaissance ended with the Sack of Rome by German troops as part of an ongoing conflict between the Hapsburg Empire and the French Monarchy. German troops killed over 4,000 Romans, imprisoned the Pope, and looted works of art and libraries. An entire year passed before order could be restored in Rome.

May 6, 1937 - The German airship *Hindenburg* burst into flames at 7:20 p.m. as it neared the mooring mast at Lakehurst, New Jersey, following a trans-Atlantic voyage. Thirty six of the 97 passengers and crew were killed. The inferno was caught on film and also

witnessed by a commentator who broke down amid the emotional impact and exclaimed, "Oh, the humanity!" The accident effectively ended commercial airship traffic.

Birthday - Psychoanalysis founder Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) was born in Freiberg, Moravia. His theories became the foundation for treating psychiatric disorders by psychoanalysis and offered some of the first workable cures for mental disorders.

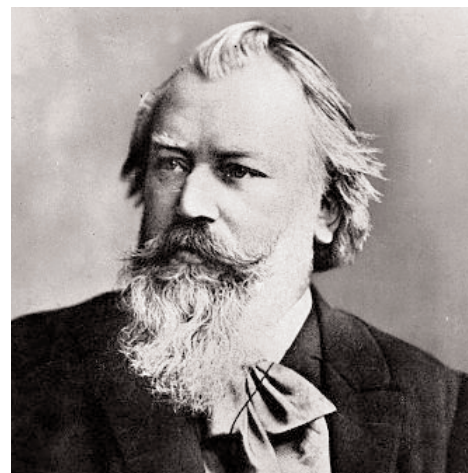


Birthday - Explorer Robert E. Peary (1856-1920) was born in Cresson, Pennsylvania. He organized and led eight Arctic expeditions and reached the North Pole on April 6, 1909. In another expedition, he proved Greenland is an island. He also proved the polar ice cap extends beyond 82° north latitude, and discovered the Melville meteorite.

## MAY 7

May 7, 1954 - The French Indochina War ended with the fall of Dien Bien Phu, in a stunning victory by the Vietnamese over French colonial forces in northern Vietnam. The country was then divided in half at the 17th parallel, with South Vietnam created in 1955.

May 7, 1992 - The 27th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified, prohibiting Congress from giving itself pay raises.



Birthday - Composer Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) was born in Hamburg, Germany. He composed over 300 songs and numerous orchestral, choral, piano, and chamber works, including his German Requiem commemorating the death of his mother.

Birthday - American poet Archibald MacLeish (1892-1982) was born in Glencoe, Illinois. He was awarded three Pulitzer Prizes, and was also a playwright, editor, lawyer, professor, farmer, and served as Librarian of Congress from 1939 to 1944.

## MAY 8

May 8, 1945 - A second German surrender ceremony was held in Berlin. Soviet Russia's leader Josef Stalin had refused to recognize the German surrender document signed a day earlier at Reims. This time, German Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel signed the surrender document which declared, as did the first, that hostilities would end as of 12:01 a.m. on May 9th.



Birthday - Harry S. Truman (1884-1972) the 33rd U.S. President was born in Lamar, Missouri. He became president upon the death of Franklin D. Roosevelt in April 1945. Two weeks after becoming president he was informed of the top secret Atomic bomb project. In the war against Japan, an Allied invasion of Japan was being planned which would cost a minimum of 250,000 American lives. Truman then authorized the dropping of the bomb. On August 6, 1945, the first bomb exploded over Hiroshima, followed by a second bomb dropped on Nagasaki on August 9th. The next day, Japan sued for peace. Truman served as President until January of 1953. He was the last of only nine U.S. Presidents who did not attend college. His straightforward, honest, no-nonsense style earned him the nickname, "Give 'em hell, Harry."

## MAY 9



May 9, 1862 - During the American Civil War, General David Hunter, Union commander of the Department of the South, issued orders freeing the slaves in South Carolina, Florida and Georgia. He did so without congressional or presidential approval. The orders were countermanded by President Abraham Lincoln ten days later.

Birthday - Abolitionist leader John Brown (1800-1859) was born in Torrington, Connecticut. He led an attack on the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry in October of 1859, to secure weapons for his "army of emancipation" to liberate slaves. Inside the arsenal, Brown and his followers held 60 hostages and managed to hold out against the local militia but finally surrendered to U.S. Marines under the command of Colonel Robert E. Lee. Ten of Brown's men, including two of his sons, were killed. Brown was taken prisoner. He was convicted by the Commonwealth of Virginia of treason, murder, and inciting slaves to rebellion, and hanged on December 2, 1859.



## Defending champions India knocked out of Thomas Cup Finals after losing 1-3 to China in quarterfinals

Lakshya Sen was the lone bright spot as the Indian men's team failed to defend its title after going down fighting 1-3 to China in the quarterfinals, while the women's side suffered a 0-3 loss to Japan to also end their campaign in the Thomas and Uber Cup Final here on May 2.

Two years after India claimed their maiden title at the World Men's Team Championships, the country's shuttlers endured a tough day in office as world No. 9 HS Prannoy, world No. 3 Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty and Dhruv Kapila and Sai Pratheek K failed to go the distance in their respective matches.

It was a rematch of the 2023 Asian Games team final which India lost 2-3 to sign off with a maiden silver.

The Indian team had ended their group stage at the second spot after losing 1-4 to Indonesia late on Wednesday, while the Chinese had an off day and the hosts seemed to be in better shape as they ticked all the boxes to come up trumps once again at the big stage.

A roaring start ended with a dampener for Prannoy as his spirited fight concluded with a 21-15 11-21 14-21 loss against world No. 2 Shi Yu Qi in a 66-minute clash which gave China a 1-0 lead.

"I don't know but surely I think China had one day off and they came in (the contest) much more fresher. It makes a big difference in the third game. Unfortunate to kind of play today," said Prannoy after the loss. "I will say that we had a very long night and by the time we slept it was 1.32 (am) and to kind of get back to the energy levels I think is definitely less," he added.

"Everybody was very disappointed last night (after the loss to Indonesia), but to come out and play such a big match against the home crowd in less than 13 to 14 hours is a big task mentally out there because you just lost out with a big opponent like Indonesia," said Prannoy.

IPL 17

## Bhuvi helps SRH end RR's streak with one-run victory

HYDERABAD (TIP)

Bhuvneshwar Kumar did the star turn with a sensational final over as Sunrisers Hyderabad stunned Rajasthan Royals by just one run in a last-ball thriller to keep their IPL playoff hopes alive here on May 2.

Needing two to win off the last delivery, Bhuvneshwar (3/41) trapped Rovman Powell (27) with a full toss to leave RR at 200/7 while chasing a target of 202.

Opting to bat, Nitish Reddy (76 not out) and Travis Head (58) produced explosive fifties, while Heinrich Klaasen made an unbeaten 19-ball 42 to power SRH to 201/3.

Things were looking up when Bhuvneshwar removed Jos Buttler and Sanju Samson for ducks in the opening over to leave RR at 1/2.

However, youngsters Yashasvi Jaiswal (67) and Riyan Parag (77) came up with counterattacking fifties on way to a massive 134-run partnership to lay the foundation of the run chase.

But once the duo was back in the hut, Shimron Hetmyer (13) hit a four and a six as it seemed like a normal chase but T Natarajan got rid off Hetmyer, who perished at long-on and then skipper Pat Cummins removed Dhruv Jurel, who was caught at deep square leg in the 19th over.

The sudden loss of wickets gave SRH hope of a turnaround but Powell produced a six in the last ball of the 19th over to bring the



equation down to 13 off six balls.

The West Indian was calm enough to bring it down to two off the last ball but Bhuvneshwar denied him the glory.

### Brief scores

SRH: 201/3 in 20 overs (Reddy 76\*, Head 58; Avesh 2/39) vs RR: 200/7 in 20 overs (Parag 77, Jaiswal 67; Bhuvneshwar 3/41, Cummins 2/34)  
Source: PTI

## Irreplaceable: India not losing sleep over Pandya's form

MUMBAI (TIP)

India are not losing sleep over all-rounder Hardik Pandya's form or batting stalwart Virat Kohli's strike-rate heading into the T20 World Cup in June, chief selector Ajit Agarkar said on May 2.

Pandya, when fit and in form, is India's preferred seam-bowling all-rounder and has also been retained as vice-captain of the Rohit Sharma-led squad for the T20 showpiece co-hosted by the United States and West Indies.

Returning from an ankle injury suffered during the ODI World Cup last year, the 30-year-old has struggled with bat and ball in the IPL.

Under his captaincy, five-time champions Mumbai Indians (MI) have slipped to ninth place in the 10-team league and will need a miracle to make the playoffs.

"The good part is he's got through all the games for MI and we've got another month and a little bit till we play our first game," Agarkar told reporters here.

"As long as he stays fit, we know what he brings, how much balance he gives the team. I don't think there's a replacement for the things that he can do as



Rohit Sharma and Ajit Agarkar during a press conference. PTI

a cricketer, especially with the ball. He really gives Rohit the option to play different combinations. So his fitness for us is critical and so far, fortunately, he's gone okay in this IPL."

### Consistent Kohli

Unlike Pandya, Kohli has been consistent in the IPL with 500 runs so far this season and only Rituraj Gaikwad (509) has scored more runs than the former India captain.

Many find Kohli's strike-rate of 147.59 not impressive enough but Agarkar and Rohit laughed off that criticism. "He's been in great form in the IPL, no concerns there at all," Agarkar said stressing the need for experience in a World Cup campaign. "You've got to prepare knowing there's a gap (between the IPL and a World Cup). That's where experience does matter a lot." "There's no point overthinking it."

While the IPL provides a glimpse into the form and fitness of the players, Agarkar said performance in the league alone did not influence team selection.

With the ball likely to turn in West Indies, India have picked two specialist spinners — Kuldeep Yadav and Yuzvendra Chahal — along with spin-bowling all-rounders Ravindra Jadeja and Axar Patel.

"I wanted four spinners, three (specialist) seamers and Hardik as the fourth one," Rohit said. "Based on the combination of our opponents, there's a good chance that Kuldeep and Chahal will play together..."

Inaugural champions India will begin their campaign against Ireland in New York on June 5 and also face arch-rivals Pakistan, the United States and Canada in Group A.  
Source: Reuters

# GOPIO PASSES RESOLUTION FOR FULL DUAL NATIONALITY AT THE CONVENTION

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helping to realize this desirable future with a theme, 'Opportunities for Diaspora Indians in India's Big Manifest Future.' The convention ended with General Body passing four resolutions including one demanding full dual nationality for Overseas Indian Citizens (OCI) card holders.

The convention was inaugurated with a lamp lighting ceremony on April 26th followed by a universal prayer song by GOPIO-Edison President Pallavi Belwariar and an invocation dance in Kathak style by Mitali Nirgude-Kaganeb. The chief guest was Guyana Ambassador to the USA, His Excellency Samuel Hinds, who earlier had served as the Prime Minister and President of Guyana. India's Deputy Consul General in New York Dr. Varun Jeph delivered the keynote address.

New York City Mayor Eric Adams issued a citation honoring the Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO) on the occasion of its convention and for its contribution to improve life in New York city. The proclamation was presented by Deputy Commissioner for International Affairs Dilip Chauhan who complimented GOPIO for its outstanding work for the benefit of the Indian Diaspora worldwide.

## for Diaspora Indians in India's Big Manifest Future

www.GOPIO.net



New York City Deputy Commissioner Dilip Chauhan presenting citation from Mayor Eric Adams. From l. to r.: Convener Prakash Shah, Chairman Dr. Thomas Abraham, Chauhan, Ambassador Samuel Hinds and President Lal Motwani

Ambassador Hinds fondly shared Guyana's close relation with India and GOPIO, especially since the late Dr. Cheddi Jagan attended the first GOPIO Convention in New York and later inaugurated Second Global Convention held in New Delhi in 1992 as President of Guyana. Again in 1999, Guyana President Bharrat Jagdeo inaugurated GOPIO Convention in New York.

Ambassador Hinds said, "President Jagan had high regard for GOPIO and was always seeking to support GOPIO." Dr. Jagan played a significant role in Guyana's progress. "With oil discovery, Guyana will prosper rapidly," Ambassador Hinds added.

In his keynote address, Dr. Jeph articulated the tremendous progress India has made in many arenas and currently being the 5th largest economy of the world and will soon become the third largest economy.

Dr. Jeph provided India's growth, success and potentials with amazing statistics and said that India with 65% of youth has bright prospects.

Dr. Jeph said, "Indian Americans are playing pivotal role in the US economy with startups and other business ventures, while being just over 1% of the population, your contribution in the economy of over 6%."

"To the USA, we send brilliance and intelligence of the highest number of foreign students creating formidable future," Dr. Jeph added.

Dr. Jeph complimented GOPIO's initiatives to network and help new students from India and said that the Consulate would continue to cooperate in this

effort.

The inaugural session started with a welcome by Convention Convener Prakash Shah, who also serves as GOPIO's Global Ambassador. GOPIO President Lal Motwani said that since the new team was elected last year, the organization has been brought with more activities and restarting its newsletter GOPIO News.

GOPIO Chairman in his remarks said that since its inception in 1989, GOPIO had taken up issues of civil rights and human rights violations of the Indian Diaspora around the world and that Indian Diaspora communities have achieved political mainstream in many of the countries with significant Diaspora population.



Dignitaries and GOPIO officials at the inauguration, from l. to r.: Indian Deputy Consul General Varun Jeph, Ambassador Samuel Hinds, Dr. Thomas Abraham, Lal Motwani and Prakash Shah

Dr. Abraham said, "The 35 million strong Indian Diaspora community is the fastest growing Diaspora community worldwide spread into 180 countries and we are remitting over \$100 billion dollars every year which has helped India to reach a foreign reserve of over \$650 billion and this flow will continue in the same level or more in the near future."

There were nine conference sessions on Saturday, April 27th at the convention which included how Indian Diaspora can participate in India's big manifest as well as some on the Diaspora life and social segments.

The first session on "GOPIO Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Worldwide Networking of the Diaspora Businesses," was chaired by Convener Prakash Shah, who is also President First Growth Mortgage and Realty LLC. Speakers were Dr. Vithal Dhaduk, who developed and sold Pharma Companies; Braj Aggarwal, President, Braj Aggarwal CPA PC, New York; Sunil Hali, Chairman, Radio Zindagi, Indian Eye, NDTV USA, New Jersey; Hotel & Realty Veteran Bhavik Shah and Falguni Pandya of Namaste Global.



Panel on GOPIO Chamber of Commerce and Networking Worldwide Diaspora Businesses, From l. to r.: Session Chair and Moderator Prakash Shah, Falguni Pandya, Bhavik Shah, Dr. Vithal Dhaduk, Sunil Hali and Braj Aggarwal

During the Women's Panel session titled "Diaspora Women Making A Difference", GOPIO women shared their personal stories of contributions to their adopted homelands. Rooted in Motherland India, five women, namely Soruba Rani Kuusto, Dr. Vimal Goyle, Dr. Rini Johar, Beena Kothari and Suman Kapoor of New

Zealand, represented the diversity in membership across GOPIO. Guided and mentored by the panel Chair and Facilitator J. Nami Kaur who is GOPIO's International Coordinator-at-Large, they presented their vision for Diaspora engagement in India's Manifest Future.



Conference Panel Women - Session Chair Nami Kaur moderating the session. Panelists from l. to r.: Soruba Rani Kuusto, Rini Johar, Beena Kop0thari, Dr. Vimal Goyle, Ritu Chopra and Suman Kapoor

Session on "Medical and Health Issues and how Diaspora Indians can Participate in India's Frontline Role in Pharmaceuticals, Vaccines and other Health Areas" was chaired and moderated by Dr. Asha Samant, GOPIO's International Coordinator-at-Large, Co-Convener GOPIO Convention-2024 and Associate Professor at Rutgers School of Dental Medicine (UMDNJ), Livingston, New Jersey. Speakers were Dr. Anil Diwan, President and Executive Chairman of NanoVirisides, Inc., Shelton, CT, who spoke on "New Frontiers in Drug Development;" Rakesh Grover, President and CEO, Carnegie Pharmaceuticals, LLC, Delran, NJ; Dr. Anurag Pande, Vice President, Scientific Affairs, Sabinsa Corporation, East Windsor, NJ; Dr. Jaya Daptardar, Chief Compliance Officer of Bridges Health Care and CEO of Active Ayurveda and Yoga LLC, as well as President of GOPIO-CT, Fairfield, CT and Harry Singh Panaser, Chairman, Global Indian Trade and Culture USA; VP, Coolsoft LLC and Global Business Consultant, Birla Soft, Monroe, NJ.



Speakers at Medical, Health and Pharma Opportunities with India - From l. to r.: Chair and Moderator Dr. Asha Samant, Dr. Anil Diwan, Dr. J.M. Daptardar, Dr. Rakesh Grover, Hari Singh Panaser and Dr. Anurag Pande

The Panel on the Emergence of India as a Global Powerhouse which was organized by The Indus Entrepreneur - NJ Chapter (tie.org) focused on the growth of the Digital Economy, Supply Chain and Manufacturing. The session moderator, Professor Suresh Kumar, President of TiE NJ made a powerful bull case regaining its spot among the top three global economies by 2047 and even moving up to the top 2 by 2075. He said that political stability, generation of mass employment by growth of manufacturing, and making the right geo-political alliances over the next decade will be key to sustaining the recent Indian success. The other panelist included Anjan Lahari, CEO of Navikenz and ex CEO of Birlasoft who cautioned against overconfidence and complacency; Neha Shah, CEO of GEP - who emphasized the importance of digital supply chains; Naveen Puri, Founder of InnoPharma - who stressed in training the workforce and keeping them

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flexible to develop new skills as needed; and Sanyukta Kulkarni, Manager of Route Development (Indian subcontinent), DB Schenker Inc. who spoke on "Growth of Logistic Operations in India."



Panel on Digital Infrastructure, Supply Chain Logistics and AI - From l. to r.: Navneet Puri, Sanyukta Kulkarni, Chair and Moderator Dr. Suresh Kumar, Neha Shah, GOPIO Chairman Dr. Thomas Abraham and Anjan Lahari

There was a session on Diaspora Youth and Young Achievers and the role they can play in India's Future and how GOPIO can facilitate their participation? It was put together and chaired by Ms Vasu Pawar, CEO/Founder of Step2StepUp Inc. and co-chaired by Bhavya Gupta, Founder and Managing Partner of ACE Consultants, New Jersey. The keynote address was delivered by Kunal Devmane from Mumbai, India, who was a keynote speaker at G20-India and author of Buffering to Streaming; Sutro Founder and CEO Ravi Kurani; Investment Management Expert Monica Arora; Grammy Award Winner and Audience Specialist Falguni Shah; Creative Music Genius Neil Nayyar; and Hotel & Realty Veteran Bhavik Shah.



Young professional achievers recognized after their session. From l. to r.: Session Chair and Moderator Vasu Pawar, Ravi Kurani, Falu Shah, Monica Arora, Neil Nayyar, Kunal Devmane and GOPIO Chairman Dr. Thomas Abraham. Not visible in the photo are Session Co-chair Bhavya Gupta and Bhavik Shah

Session on "Technologies and AI, and other Innovations: How Diaspora Indians are leading Research and Innovations" was chaired by GOPIO Chairman Dr. Thomas Abraham, who is a Nanotechnologist and President of Innovative Research and Products in Stamford, CT. It was moderated by Prof. Rajasekhar Vangapaty who is Academic Advisor to Fashion Institute of Technology. Prof. Siddhartha Dalal, Professor of Professional Practice in Applied Analytics, Columbia University, New York, delivered the keynote address. Other speakers were: Kathirvel Kumararaja, President, Founder and CEO, DevJee, Inc., New York, NY, who spoke on "Bridging Traditional Wisdom and Modern Healthcare: Opportunities for Diaspora Indians in India's Health Innovation Economy;" Abraham Pannikottu, CEO, American Engineering Group, Akron, Ohio, "India's Opportunities and Challenges of AI in Defense Sector on Overseas Small Business Partnerships;" Dr. Kris Mani, President, NSR Technologies, Basking Ridge, NJ who spoke on "Nanotechnology and Other Technologies;" Dr. Jatin V. Mehta, CEO, MetaSense Digital Marketing, Philadelphia, PA, "Mastering SEO & Marketing with AI."



Speakers at the Conference Session on Technologies and AI, from l. to r. Prof Raj Vangapaty, Dr. Jatin Mehta, Convention Convener Prakash Shah, Prof. Siddhartha Dala, Dr. Thomas Abraham, Kathirvel Kumararaja, Abraham Pannikottu and Dr. Kris Mani

There was a GOPIO Academic Council Roundtable coordinated by GOPIO Edison President Pallavi Belwariar and was chaired by the Academic Council Chair Dr. Neerja Arun Gupta who is currently the Vice Chancellor Gujarat University. It was attended by GOPIO Chairman Dr. Thomas Abraham and Guyana Ambassador Samuel Hinds. The Council discussed the role of academics in manifestation of future India, Student Start Ups with GOPIO Chamber of Commerce and future studies abroad programs for NRI and PIO students. It also did brainstorm on showcasing India to Diaspora and starting virtual and offline programs. Lastly, it resolved to create a Global Network for Academics.



left: Participants at the GOPIO Academic Council Roundtable, Right: Ambassador Hinds speaking at the session. Sitting are Session Coordinator Pallavi Belwariar, GOPIO Chairman Dr. Thomas Abraham and GOPIO Academic Council Chair Dr. Neerja Arun Gupta

A non-business session on 'Diaspora Languages and Literature' was put together by GOPIO General Secretary Ram Gadhavi. Scholars including Dr. Babu Suthar (Gujarati), Anoop Bhargav (Hindi), Ashok Vidwans (Marathi), Dr. Vasu Ranganathan (Tamil), Raju Thomas (Malayalam), and Dilip Chakraborty (Bengali) discussed diaspora writers and the status of their respective languages. While summarizing the session, Suthar highlighted three main issues, the debate surrounding the concept of 'diaspora' versus 'transnationalism'; the challenge of preserving Indian languages in the USA due to socio-cultural differences, with differing opinions on whether to prioritize language preservation or adapt to local culture; and the role of language in connecting individuals to their cultural roots and expressing shared experiences, exemplified by Suthar's struggle to express himself in Gujarati following the 2002 violence. The audience also shared concerns about maintaining Indian language and culture abroad.



Panel Discussion on Diaspora Languages and Literature - From L to R.: Ashok Vidwans, Raju Thomas, Anoop Bhargava, Dr. Babu Suthar, Dr. Vasu Ranganathan and Dilip Chakraborty

A second non-business session on "Diaspora Indians Aging Gracefully," was put together by Bharat Rana, President, Federation of Indian Senior Association of North America (FISANA) and President of GOPIO-North Jersey. The speakers were Mukund Mehta,

President, India Home, Inc. and President, Indo-American Senior Citizen Center of New York, Queens, NY; Sudha Acharya, GOPIO Founding Co-Convener and Executive Director, South Asian Council for Social Services (SACSS), Flushing, New York; Anand Patel, Businessman and Philanthropist and Owner of Numerous Dunkin' Donuts Chain franchises, currently serving as Board of Director of FISANA, Past President of FISANA and Currently Member of FIA Trustees; and Suman Kapoor, Hospitality Entrepreneur, GOPIO Waikato, New Zealand.

Convener Prakash Shah said, "We had the most successful Convention at a time that we consider is pivotal for India and for India's 38 million strong Diaspora. We are dealing with an Outbreak but this time it isn't an Outbreak of a Covid like disease but an Outbreak of Optimism!"

"We are very confident that with the infrastructure base having been built, India will rapidly evolve into becoming a net defense exporter and a multifaceted manufacturing hub in pharmaceuticals, automobiles, smartphones, semiconductors and aircraft among many others including continuing the high growth in service sector," Shah continued.



Audience at the Convention

All these conference sessions brought very interesting and useful knowledge as well as mastery of Indians in their specialized fields. The speakers and audience appreciated GOPIO's vision and mission in planning such conference topics. Convention attendees agreed that right now India with its third largest Start-Up-Ecosystem and having already achieved 125 Unicorns is the best investment opportunity in the world and therefore especially attractive to the Diaspora Indians.

At the Finale Awards banquet, four individuals and two organizations were honoured with community service awards: Dr. Neerja A. Gupta who is the first woman Chancellor of Gujarat University, Ahmedabad, India; Dr. V.K. Raju M.D. who has been providing great Service in eradicating childhood blindness; Dharmatma Saran who has been named as the cultural ambassador of India to the world for promoting networking of young women achievers through his annual Miss India Worldwide Pageant and Lion Hina Trivedi of Chicago as a great community builder. Two organizations are also recognized, Heart and Hand for the Handicapped (HHH) for its great service to physically and mentally challenged children and South Asian Council for Social Services (SACSS) for its outstanding services to communities in the New York Area.



Community Service Awardees with Ambassador Samuel Hinds and GOPIO officials. L to R.: Dr. Thomas Abraham, Chitraranj Belwariar, Nami Kaur, Prakash Shah, Kewal Kanda, Gujarat University Vice Chancellor Dr. Neerja Arun Gupta, HHH President Balaji Jilla, Ambassador Hinds, Lal Motwani, Eye Specialist Dr. V.K. Raju, Community Motivator Lion Hina Trivedi, Miss India World Pageant CEO Dharmatma Saran, Rajul Shah, SACSS Executive Director Sudha Acharya and Board Member Dr. Swarna Shah, Dr. Asha Samant and Jay Bhandari

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outstanding services to communities in the New York Area.

Others recognized by GOPIO include Dr Vithal Dhaduk, Pharmaceutical Business in USA. developed and sold pharma companies; Sabinsa Vice President Anurag Pande, Businesswoman Poonam Khubani; AAHOA Past Chairman Bharat Patel; TV Asia Chairman and CEO Dr. H.R. Shah, Parikh Worldwide Media Chairman Dr. Sudhir Parikh, Indian Eye/Radio Zindagi CEO Sunil Hali, New India Abroad Publisher Rajeev Bhambri; Indian Panorama Editor and Publisher Prof. Indrajit Saluja, Emalayalee and India Life Editor George Joseph, Universal News Network editor Ajay Ghosh and Pravasi Channel producer Sunil Tristar. GOPIO Convention Co-Conveners Dr. Asha Samant and businessman Kenny Desai were also recognized at the convention.

Royal Albert Palace, New Jersey, April 26 - 28th  
"Opportunities for Diaspora Indians in India's Big Manifest Future"  
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Media Recognition. L to R: Prakash Shah, Dr. Thomas Abraham, Prof. Indrajit Saluja of Indian Panorama, Dr. Sudhir Parikh of ITV/News India/Desi Talk, Ambassador Hinds, Dr. H.R. Shah of TV Asia and Lal Motwani

New Jersey, April 26 - 28th, 2024  
"Opportunities for Diaspora Indians in India's Big Manifest Future"  
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Recognition to media for their services to community and GOPIO. L to R: Dr. Thomas Abraham, Prakash Shah, Rajeev Bhambri of New India Abroad, Ambassador Samuel Hinds, Deputy Consul General Dr. Varun Jeph, Sunil Tristar of Pravasi Channel and India Life, Lal Motwani, George Joseph of emalayalee, and Sunil Hali of The Indian Eye and Radio Zindagi

The GOPIO General Body meeting on April 28th passed important resolutions, many of which are designed to accomplish and accelerate the Diaspora Participation in India's high growth in its 'Suvarna Kaal'. These resolution to Govt. of India include to grant full dual nationality to OCI card holders, make OCI at par with Indian citizens in doing business in India and provide Aadhar Card to NRIs who are

citizens of India. A fourth resolution urged Biden Administration and US Congress to pass legislation to eliminate the backlog of Indians waiting for permanent residence in the USA.

Edison Town Mayor Sam Joshi, since he was out of town, joined the convention at its concluding GOPIO General Body session and offered all his help for GOPIO to move forward in Edison and nearby areas. GOPIO in turn told Mayor Joshi that it would initiate some programs for needy including supporting soup kitchens in Edison.



GOPIO General Body Meeting Attendees with Edison Mayor Sam Joshi

The General Body also unanimously elected Dr. Thomas Abraham as Chairman of GOPIO International for the remaining of the current term.

The Convention was attended by many from around the World and from various parts of the USA. The entertainment included a Comedy Hour by the Internationally Acclaimed Comedian Dan Nainan on the first day and concluded with a superb performance of Sarangi and Ghazals by Ustad Kamal Sabri, a seventh Generation Maestro who was accompanied by Avinash Mistry on the Tabla. Grammy Award winner Falu Shah and GOPIO-Edison President Pallavi Belwariar rendered some songs as well.



Entertainers at the Convention: From l. to r.: Avinash Mistry, Ustad Kamal Sabri, Dan Nainan, Falu Shah and Pallavi Belwariar

In the afternoon, GOPIO organized a special trip to the recently consecrated Akshardham Temple in Robbinsville, New Jersey for outside delegates. GOPIO, which is 4 Ps, the premier, pioneer, popular and purposeful, organization of Global Indian Diaspora was founded in world's financial center - New York in 1989 as a non-political and secular organization. Since then, GOPIO has blossomed like a banyan tree with Diaspora in all continents with Life Members and chapters in 35 countries. GOPIO is regarded as the most influential and productive organization dealing and taking up issues concerning to global Indian Diaspora to various authorities and governments. Government of India closely follows GOPIO and seriously takes its suggestions.

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# Harmony and Achievement: Highlights from the AAA-DC Eid Milan 2024 Dinner



Children receiving awards

APRIL 29, 2024

**WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP):** The Aligarh Alumni Association of Metropolitan Washington, DC (AAA-DC) whose membership comprises alumni and friends of the Aligarh Muslim University, hosted an Eid Milan Party on April 27, 2024. This gathering displayed the diversity and richness of AMU's heritage and highlighted the achievements and bonds forged over the years through shared experiences of education and camaraderie.

The program started with a recitation from the Holy Qur'an by Maryam Usmani, followed by a speech by Afzal Usmani thanking everyone for their efforts. In his welcoming remarks, President Aslam Azad apprised the audience of the Association's history and role in community building and charitable work, especially the sponsorship of



An enthusiastic section of the audience



Dr. Hashima Hasan accepting her award

association members. Dr. Hashima Hasan and Dr. Renuka Misra were honored with the prestigious Sir Syed Ahmad Khan Award for their impactful contributions to community education and welfare. These accolades were bestowed by esteemed senior figures within the association, Mr. Hasan Kamal, and Dr. Syed Amir; adding a touch of reverence to the occasion. Hasan Kamal, a founding member of the association since its inception in 1975, made a special trip from Atlanta to attend this Eid Milan event. Brief narrations of the achievements of the two award recipients were shared, highlighting their remarkable contributions.

Dr. Hashima Hasan, serving as Deputy Program Scientist and the Education and Public Outreach Lead for

came together in harmony to sing the renowned Aligarh AMU Tarana "Yeh Mera Chaman Hai," passionately led by Masood Farshori. In an electrifying moment, a sea of spectators eagerly rushed to the stage to join in the performance. Masood Farshori, held in high esteem within the association, also displayed his exceptional talent with a medley of songs, captivating and thrilling the audience throughout.

The Montgomery Nawabs, a collective of exceptionally talented young professionals fueled by their profound passion for music, captivated audiences with their unparalleled artistry. Among them stood luminaries such as Khursheed Bilgrami, Karamat Ali, Hamid Qazi, Dilshad Khan, Nadeem Chaudhry, and Mohammed Jaweed. Their



President Aslam Azad



Emcee Harris Usmani



Khursheed Bilgrami



Mohammed Hamid



Maryam Usmani reciting a sura from the Quran



The author alongside Mr. Anup Kumar, Secretary at the Embassy of India



Karamat Ali

its flagship scholarship program at the Aligarh Muslim University, India.

The event took place at Rockville Senior Center in Rockville, Maryland, a facility dedicated to serving senior citizens living within and around Montgomery County. Attendees, especially women and children, were dressed in beautiful attire, symbolizing their heritage, and creating a mosaic of colors and patterns that mirrored the diversity of the alumni. At the heart of the celebration was a sumptuous dinner featuring traditional South Asian dishes such as biryani and kebabs. It provided a platform for meaningful dialogue and the exchange of ideas, reflecting the values of perseverance, unity, and service instilled by their alma mater. The friendly conversations reinforced a sense of purpose and solidarity among attendees.

As the evening unfolded, attention was drawn to the outstanding accomplishments of two distinguished



Dr. Renuka Misra accepting her award



The Tarana team led by Masood Farshori

Astrophysics at NASA, played a pivotal role in the successful launch of the James Webb Space Telescope, marking a significant contribution to space exploration.

Dr. Renuka Misra boasts a distinguished career spanning over thirty years as a research scientist. She has made significant contributions to discoveries in drug development, utilizing natural medicinal plants across various institutes of the NIH. Beyond her professional endeavors, Dr. Misra has been a devoted advocate for community service, demonstrating an unwavering commitment to communal harmony and societal well-being.

Hailing from Lucknow, Drs. Hashima Hasan and Renuka Misra have dedicated their considerable talents and unwavering commitment to excellence, earning them widespread admiration and respect for their services. Furthermore, their tireless dedication extends beyond their professional pursuits, as both have actively participated in AAA-DC's activities for many years, further enhancing their reputation for leadership within the community.

Beyond the festivities and accolades, the Eid Milan dinner fostered lasting connections and collaborations among alumni and friends. Networking opportunities abound as old friends reconnected, and new acquaintances were made. The event catalyzed professional growth and personal development, from business partnerships to mentorship opportunities. Bonds forged during this celebration are likely to extend far beyond the confines of the evening, creating a global network of support and solidarity among alumni scattered across the world.

It was truly heartwarming to witness especially the enthusiastic involvement of children under fourteen in the specially organized games. They displayed their skills and received prizes as winners and runners-up. Mr. Qamar Khan, who traveled from Cleveland with his wife Shahnaz to attend the event, graciously presented the prizes to the children.

The audience was profoundly moved by the genuine outpouring of love and allegiance to their Alma Mater as they



A group shot of attendees

performance was nothing short of enchanting, as they infused timeless melodies with a renewed vitality, stirring the souls of all in attendance with their mesmerizing renditions of ghazals and qawwalis. Their decision to volunteer again for this year's performance further underscored their commitment to sharing their musical gifts with the community. Through their virtuosity, they crafted an unforgettable experience, leaving an indelible mark on all fortunate enough to witness their talent in person.

Mr. Anup Kumar Srivastava, Second Secretary of Consular Services at the Embassy of India in Washington, arrived with his wife. Distinguished guests, including representatives from various community organizations, such as the Association of Indian Muslims, the University of Karachi Alumni Association, and the Global Beat Foundation, also attended the event.

The event emcee, Harris Usmani, did an excellent job. It was reassuring to see the active participation of young members of the association in planning and managing the event.

The Eid Milan Party encapsulated the spirit of unity, celebration, and service that defines the Metro-Washington Aligarh Alumni Association, reaffirming its commitment to fostering bonds of friendship and goodwill within the community.

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## An Eye Institute in Rajahmundry, Andhra Pradesh combatting avoidable blindness in children.

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**Peter J McDonnell, MD Director Wilmer Eye Institute, Johns Hopkins**



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In 2018 Prasanth, Sushanth and Nisanth were diagnosed and treated for Prematurity Retinopathy. An illness in premature babies which can cause blindness.

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