



The INDIAN PANORAMA

Will bring out a profusely illustrated New Year edition to bid GOODBYE to 2024 and to WELCOME 2025.

Articles and advertisements may please be emailed to salujaindra@gmail.com by December 18, 2024. Please email your queries, if any to salujaindra@gmail.com or call The Indian Panorama at 646-247-9458.

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The INDIAN PANORAMA

Will bring out on January 4, 2025 a special edition to mark the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) which witnesses a large gathering of the worldwide Indian Diaspora, at Bhubaneswar in Odisha, India from January 8 to January 10, 2025.

The event offers a rare opportunity for international recognition of people, products and services.

The Indian Panorama invites you to advertise in the PBD special edition. For prices and further information, please email to salujaindra@gmail.com or call + 1-646-247-9458.

The last date for ordering advertisement insertion is Dec 22, 2024.

For any questions, please email to salujaindra@gmail.com or call 1+646-247-9458.

Supreme Court of India stays surveys, final orders on suits over religious structures

Asks Centre to file reply on petitions against Places of Worship Act



The Gyanvapi mosque case is among many such disputes in court.

-File photo

DECEMBER 13, 2024

NEW DELHI (TIP): The Supreme Court of India, on Thursday, December 12, restrained trial courts across India from registering fresh suits and ordering surveys or passing any effective and final orders with regard to the religious character of existing structures in pending suits.

"As the matter is sub judice before this court, we deem it fit to direct that no fresh suits shall be registered or proceedings be ordered. In the pending suits, courts will not pass any effective interim or final orders (till the next hearing of the case in the Supreme Court)," a three-judge Special Bench led by Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna said. The next hearing is on February 17, 2025.

22 SUITS INVOLVING 10 SHRINES PENDING

A total of 22 suits pertaining to 10 places of worship are pending in various courts across the country.

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Meta donates \$1 million to Trump's inaugural fund



Donald Trump hosted a dinner with Mark Zuckerberg at his Mar-a-Lago estate in November

Photo Credit: Donald Trump / X

DECEMBER 12, 2024

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): Meta, the parent company of Facebook and Instagram, has donated \$1 million to President-elect Donald Trump's

inaugural fund, a spokesperson for the social media giant confirmed Wednesday, December 11 night. The news was first reported by the Wall Street Journal.

CONTD ON PAGE 36

At 18, Gukesh conquers chess world: Dethrones China's Ding to become youngest world champion



D Gukesh after beating Ding Liren of China in the FIDE World Chess Championship in Singapore. -Photo credit: PTI

grandmaster Gukesh Dammaraju became the youngest world chess champion defeating reigning champion Ding Liren of China in game 14 of the world title match in Singapore on Thursday, December 12.

He will be crowned the chess champion at a ceremony on Friday.

For Gukesh, dethroning Ding in the last game of the hard-fought 14-round classical format matchup by 7.5 points against his rival's 6.5, was the culmination of a childhood dream of bringing back the coveted title to India. As a seven-year-old chess enthusiast in 2013, Gukesh had seen first Indian world chess champion Viswanathan Anand lose his title to Norwegian Magnus

DECEMBER 13, 2024

SINGAPORE (TIP): At 18 years, six months and two weeks, Indian

CONTD ON PAGE 36



FBI director Christopher Wray testifies before the Senate Judiciary Committee in Washington on Dec. 5, 2023.

Christopher Wray, FBI Director since 2017, to Resign

SEPTEMBER 11, 2024

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): FBI Director Christopher Wray is going to resign soon, the bureau said on Dec. 11, paving the way for President-elect Donald Trump's next nominee for the position. Wray, 57, told FBI employees during a town hall that he will step down when the current administration ends in January 2025, an FBI spokesperson told The Epoch Times in an email.

CONTD ON PAGE 36



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GUEST COMMENT

Dishonorable: Allahabad HC judge has done a big disservice

Only a strong institutional response will serve the cause of justice following the communally charged remarks by a judge of the Allahabad High Court. Demands have been put forth for an inquiry against Justice Shekhar Kumar Yadav, suspension of his judicial work and even impeachment. The Supreme Court has sought details of the controversial speech amid protests that this brazen violation of the code of conduct casts doubts on the judiciary's independence and neutrality. Addressing an event organized by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad on the Uniform Civil Code, Justice Yadav said the country would function as per

the wishes of the majority. Replete with communal slurs, his speech also alluded to the media attention it would generate. A line has been crossed, and what's worse, all too knowingly.

Impartiality is the cornerstone of the Constitution and the rule of law. An individual who has taken oath to uphold these principles making an exhibition of his prejudices does a huge disservice to both his constitutional role and the judicial system. The impact is not confined to communal unrest; it erodes public faith in the judiciary's integrity. A denial or a rebuttable will not suffice. There must be consequences. The top court, the expectation is, will send a firm

message on what is not acceptable.

A Supreme Court Bench's observations after its suo motu cognizance of objectionable remarks by a Karnataka High Court judge need reiteration. The perception of justice to every segment of society, it said, was as important as the rendition of justice. It was intrinsic for judges to be aware of their own predispositions, it noted, because it was only on the basis of such awareness that they could remain truly faithful to deliver objective and fair justice. Hear, hear, Justice Yadav.

(Tribune, India)

A legend, made: On D. Gukesh, the world's youngest chess champion

Gukesh is first among a cohort of young Indian chess geniuses to reach the pinnacle

Eighteen-year-old D. Gukesh has made history by becoming the 18th world chess champion, which will make him the youngest to do so and emulating the doyen of Indian chess, Viswanathan Anand, the only other Indian to achieve the honor. Gukesh managed his feat after a blunder made by the reigning world champion, Ding Liren of China, on the 55th move, Rf2, in the 14th and final classical game of the match. The game was headed towards a draw, but with Gukesh pressing for any advantage in a rook-bishop-pawn endgame and having an extra pawn, it took just one misstep for Ding to lose his crown. Ding was in poor form prior to the match but the Chinese GM proved his mettle by winning the first game, setting up a strong contest. Gukesh won Game 4 to tie the match and after a series of draws, Gukesh played an enterprising

Game 11 to take the lead; Ding fought back brilliantly to tie the match again with a strong win in Game 12. The strategies of both players were evident. Gukesh played strong openings and exhibited tenacity in trying to gain advantages in near equal positions as the games progressed. Ding's plan seemed to be to secure a stalemate in the classical games and to drag the match into the shorter rapid and if need be, blitz formats, and to use his strength in terms of experience. Sticking to his strategy of pushing through equal positions, Gukesh had the last laugh.

The Chennai-born Grandmaster's mental toughness and wisdom beyond his age have been his calling card. His steady rise was due to his dedication and his accelerated path to glory was helped by the work done by his seconds - Gukesh revealed their names only after the match - besides the mentoring by GM Anand's WestBridge Anand Chess Academy. His versatile game, built on an innate ability

to calculate moves deeply on the board, kept him in good stead against his more experienced opponent. The surge of young Indian talent to the top echelons of world chess in recent years - compatriot GMs Arjun Erigaisi and R. Praggnanandhaa are in the top 15 along with Gukesh - raised expectations of another Indian world champion in chess. The youngsters have pushed each other to do their best. Gukesh won a strong Candidates tournament to emerge as Ding's challenger and his prowess was evident following his individual gold winning performances in the Chennai and Budapest Chess Olympiads, the latter being India's first gold in the team event. His next frontier would be to reach the heights scaled by the world's strongest chess player, Magnus Carlsen. Gukesh becoming the world champion would also motivate his Indian compatriots and will add a fillip to the growth of modern chess as a sport and vocation in the country of its birth. (The Hindu)

New RBI Governor : Inflation-growth balance key task

Revenue Secretary Sanjay Malhotra's surprise appointment as the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor comes amid worries over a decline in economic growth, a weaker currency and an upturn in inflation. As he embarks on his three-year term, Malhotra has huge expectations to deliver, particularly concerning the monetary policy. Despite the several high points during his six years in office, the second longest for any chief of the central bank, Shaktikanta Das ends his tenure on a somber note. His parting

message about restoring inflation-growth balance being the most important task ahead is acknowledgement of the unfinished agenda. Political overtones have been dominating the clamor for a cut in interest rates, with both the Finance Minister and Commerce Minister flagging high bank interest rates as a growth dampener.

Das leaves behind a legacy marked by steady policymaking and deft crisis management. He steered the economy through the Covid pandemic which prevented any economic activity for well over a year, and also oversaw its recovery, especially in the financial sector. Another achievement was to mend the difficult relationship between North Block and Mint Street that he had

inherited from Urjit Patel. The generous out-of-record dividend to the Centre remains a contentious issue, raising concerns about weakening of the RBI's financial strength and independence.

While strengthening the banking system, Das prevented a build-up of risk, asking lenders to avoid all forms of exuberance. The Governor-headed Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) kept the repo rate unchanged at 6.5 per cent for the 11th consecutive time last week. It signaled the RBI's cautious approach amid inflation and slowing growth. A review of the rate cut is likely by the Malhotra-headed MPC in its February meeting. It will be a tough call.

(Tribune, India)

AAPI-QLI Celebrates a Year of Growth, Innovation, and Community Bonding

RECOGNIZES EXCELLENCE: DR. LOUI KAVOUSSI, DR. KRISHNA GUJAVARTI, DR. DIPAK NANDI, DR. SUNIL MEHRA HONORED

DECEMBER 8, 2024

MELVILLE, NY (TIP): The American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin of Queens and Long Island (AAPIQLI) concluded another remarkable year, celebrating its members' contributions to medicine and the community at its 28th annual convention. Representing 1,000 physicians, AAPIQLI serves as a hub for professional networking, academic excellence, and cultural preservation.



AAPIQLI President Dr. Inderpal Chhabra outlined a forward-looking vision focused on academic excellence, supporting young professionals, and building a thriving community

The event was attended by close to 500 guests, including several prominent special guests: Representative Tom Suozzi, State Senator John Liu, and Assemblywoman Jennifer Rajkumar. In their addresses, these dignitaries praised the Indian physician community for their unwavering commitment and dedication to improving the health and well-being of New Yorkers.



Dr. Raj Bhayani, Chairman of Board of Trust congratulated Dr. Inderpal Chhabra and his team for the leaps forward with the 2024 Gala

A highlight of the evening was the announcement of special endowment funds sponsored by the Bagla family and the Katyal family, totaling over \$200,000. These generous contributions will support AAPIQLI's initiatives to foster



Congressman Tom Suozzi has for long been a darling of the Indian American Community. If the community has showered its love on him and ensured his victory as a Congressman, the Congressman has ensured to participate in as many community events as possible.

academic excellence, community engagement, and professional development among its members.

A YEAR OF ACHIEVEMENTS

In 2024, AAPIQLI hosted many events that enriched the professional lives of its members while fostering camaraderie within the Indian American Physician community. Among the highlights:

- o Monthly Educational Meetings: These sessions provided a platform for discussing advancements in medical fields such as Oncology, Orthopedics, and Diabetes care.

- o Cultural Celebrations: Vibrant Holi and Baisakhi festivals brought families together, while the Diwali/Bandi Chhor Diwas celebration featured memorable performances, delicious cuisine, and community honors.

- o Research Day: The annual event highlighted groundbreaking research by young scientists, reflecting the community's commitment to innovation in medicine.

RECOGNIZING EXCELLENCE

During the Diwali celebration, AAPIQLI honored exemplary leaders for their contributions:

- o Dr. Loui Kavoussi - Urologist at the forefront of innovation.

- o Dr. Krishna Gujavarti - Behavioral health expert and philanthropist.

- o Dr. Dipak Nandi - Neuro-psychiatrist and entrepreneur in healthcare management.

- o Dr. Sunil Mehra - Renowned pulmonologist and community leader.

VISION FOR THE FUTURE

AAPIQLI President Dr. Inderpal Chhabra outlined a forward-looking vision focused on academic excellence,



Dr. Loui Kavoussi, a Urologist at the forefront of innovation, holds his award



Dr. Dipak Nandi, Neuro-psychiatrist and entrepreneur in healthcare management received his award in the presence of Congressman Tom Suozzi, State Senator John Liu, NY Assemblymember Jenifer Rajkumar and AAPI President Dr. Satheesh Kathula



Renowned pulmonologist and community leader Dr. Sunil Mehra is honored. L to R: Dr. Sunil Mehra, Dr. Dalbir Chhabra, New York State Senator John Liu and Dr. Inderpal Chhabra, President AAPI-QLI



Dr. Krishna R.S. Gujarvarty is being honored. L to R: Dr. Devendra Shrivastava, President-Elect, AAPI-QLI, Assemblywoman Jenifer Rajkumar, Congressman Tom Suozzi, Dr. Tarun Wasil, Dr. Smita Lodha, Mrs. Gujarvarty, Dr. Krishna R.S. Gujarvarty, Dr. Raj Bhayani, New York State Senator John Liu, Dr. Inderpal Chhabra, Gagan Gulai, Convention Co-chair (partially visible)

supporting young professionals, and building a thriving community. "We aim to create opportunities for learning and growth that inspire the next generation of Indian American physicians," said Dr. Chhabra.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Dr. Chhabra expressed gratitude to the organization's trustees, committee members, and volunteers for their tireless efforts. Special thanks were extended to Dr. Raj Bhayani for his leadership and to Dr. Dalbir Chhabra for her unwavering support.

ABOUT AAPIQLI

AAPIQLI is dedicated to supporting physicians of Indian origin through networking, education, and cultural engagement. The organization aims to foster professional excellence and strengthen bonds within the community.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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INDIANS ABROAD RALLY TO SUPPORT FARMERS' PROTEST



Farm leader Sharwan Singh Pandher said the rallies were being organized by immigrants to bring the attention of people living in the West towards the protest in India.

DECEMBER 12, 2024

SURREY, BC (TIP): The support from the Indian diaspora all around the world is rising in favor of the farmers' protest. After a rally was held in California on Wednesday, another car rally has been organized in Surrey, Canada, on December 13 to mark the 10 months of the agitation.

Confirming the same, farm leader Sharwan Singh Pandher said the rallies were being organized by immigrants to bring the attention of people living in the West towards the protest in India.

"Car rallies are being held to show the conditions of unarmed farmers, who were injured after tear gas shells were lobbed at them, as they were marching on foot towards Delhi from the Shambhu border and were denied entry into Haryana by police and paramilitary personnel," said Pandher.

The immigrants in California have also decided to observe a day-long fast to express solidarity with farm leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal whose fast unto death reached Day 17 on Thursday.

While farmers are busy garnering support from singers and spiritual leader ahead of their December 14 protest march on foot towards Delhi, Union Minister of State for Railways Ravneet Singh Bittu said farm leaders should not send Merjeevda Jatha towards Delhi and engage in dialogue instead.

The SKM (Non-Political) and Kisan Mazdoor Morcha appealed to the people of the country to skip dinner to express solidarity with both outfits and SKM (Non-Political) convener Jagjit Singh Dallewal.

He has been observing an indefinite fast at the Khanauri border since November 26.

The protesters have been camping at the Shambhu and Khanauri borders since February 13 after their march to Delhi was stopped by the security forces.

The farmers have been demanding a legal guarantee on the minimum support price (MSP), debt waiver, pension for farmers and farm laborers, no hike in electricity tariff, withdrawal of police cases (against farmers) and 'justice' for victims of the 2021 Lakhimpur Kheri violence.

Indo-British Student Anoushka Kale Elected President of Historic Cambridge Union

DECEMBER 9, 2024

LONDON (TIP): A British Indian student has been elected president of the University of Cambridge's historic Cambridge Union Society, among the world's oldest debating societies which prides itself as a defender of free speech since 1815.

Anoushka Kale won 126 votes to be elected uncontested for the next Easter 2025 term in an election held recently. As the serving debate officer of the society, Ms. Kale ran on a platform of strengthening ties with cultural societies of the university such as the India Society.

"I am absolutely delighted and honored to have been elected as President of the Cambridge Union Society for Easter 2025 and grateful for the membership's support," said Ms. Kale.

"For my term, I will seek to expand diversity and access at the Union through greater collaboration with cultural groups, like the university's India Society. I am also especially passionate about continuing to host international speakers and global debate



Anoushka Kale has been elected president of the University of Cambridge's historic Cambridge Union Society

motions, as I did as Debates Officer of the society," she said.

Former presidents and officers of the Cambridge Union Society have included celebrated English economist and philosopher John Maynard Keynes, novelist Robert Harris and, in recent years, British Indian peer and founder of

Cobra Beer Karan Bilimoria.

Like the Oxford University's Oxford Union Society, the Cambridge Union has a long tradition of hosting prominent figures from all areas of public life in its chamber, from US presidents Theodore Roosevelt and Ronald Reagan and UK Prime Ministers Winston Churchill, Margaret Thatcher and John Major to Stephen Hawking, Bill Gates and the Dalai Lama.

Anoushka Kale, a 20-year-old student who is reading English Literature at Sidney Sussex College at Cambridge University, is among the few South Asian heritage female members to take on the prestigious role.

"I'm looking forward to delivering on my manifesto promises, particularly on expanding diversity through society collaborations and reduced access tickets for the summer garden party," she added.

It follows the Cambridge Union's decision to increase prices amid financial pressures and increasing "upkeep costs" of its Grade-II listed heritage building.

Indian-origin PhD student at MIT suspended over pro-Palestinian activism, appeals decision

Prahlad Iyengar, also a National Science Foundation fellow, has been "suspended until January 2026," according to a post on X by a group called 'MIT Coalition Against Apartheid'



Prahlad Iyengar has been suspended until January 2026 following his pro-Palestinian activism and is currently appealing the university's decision.

DECEMBER 11, 2024

NEW YORK (TIP): An Indian-origin student pursuing PhD at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) has been suspended until January 2026 following his pro-Palestinian activism and is currently appealing the university's decision.

Prahlad Iyengar, also a National Science Foundation fellow, has been "suspended until January 2026," according to a post on X by a group called 'MIT Coalition Against Apartheid'.

This suspension effectively terminates Iyengar's five-year NSF fellowship and severely disrupts his academic career, the organization said in the post.

It added that Iyengar, a PhD student in the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, is "now appealing the decision" to the Chancellor at MIT on Wednesday, the "last opportunity to end this persecution and restore academic dignity".

READ FULL STORY AT WWW.THEINDIANPANORAMA.NEWS

Indian-origin Punjabi student working as security guard shot dead in Canada's Edmonton

DECEMBER 9, 2024

EDMONTON (TIP): The Consulate General of India in Vancouver has expressed condolences over the killing of Indian national Harshandeep Singh, who was fatally shot in Edmonton on December 6.

In a statement on Sunday, the Consulate confirmed that two individuals have been arrested and charged with first-degree murder in connection with the incident.

The Consulate assured us that it would stay in close contact with local authorities and provide necessary assistance to the 20-year-old's grieving family.

Sharing a post on X, the Consulate General of India in Vancouver wrote, "We are deeply saddened by the tragic death of Indian national Shri Harshandeep Singh who was shot dead in Edmonton on 6 December."

"2 arrested and charged with first-degree murder. We will remain in close contact with authorities & provide required assistance to the bereaved family," the post added.

Notably, two individuals, Evan Rain and Judith Saulteaux, both aged 30, were arrested and charged with first-degree murder in connection Singh's killing on Friday at an apartment complex in central Edmonton, according to a report by Toronto Sun.

The Punjabi student--working as a security guard--was rushed to the hospital by paramedics but later succumbed to his injuries. Authorities stated a weapon was also recovered from the accused during the arrest.

"The Edmonton Police Service (EPS) doesn't typically release the name of a deceased individual unless the death has been confirmed to be a homicide. However, in this instance, we are releasing his name for an investigative purpose and in an effort to alleviate public safety concerns in relation to Mr. Singh's unfortunate death," said EPS homicide Staff Sgt. Rob Bilawey in a Saturday news release, Toronto Sun reported.



Harshandeep Singh was fatally shot in Edmonton on December 6.

Four Indian Americans among 1500 granted Clemency by Biden



US President Joe Biden has granted clemency to Meera Sachdeva, Babubhai Patel, Krishna Mote and Vikram Dutta

DECEMBER 13, 2024

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): Four Indian-Americans are among nearly 1,500 people granted clemency by President Joe Biden.

These four Indian-Americans are Meera Sachdeva, Babubhai Patel, Krishna Mote and Vikram Dutta.

"America was built on the promise of possibility and second chances. As President, I have the great privilege of

extending mercy to people who have demonstrated remorse and rehabilitation, restoring opportunity for Americans to participate in daily life and contribute to their communities, and taking steps to remove sentencing disparities for non-violent offenders, especially those convicted of drug offences," Biden said in a statement on Thursday.

"That is why, today, I am pardoning 39 people who have shown successful

rehabilitation and have shown commitment to making their communities stronger and safer. I am also commuting the sentences of nearly 1,500 people who are serving long prison sentences - many of whom would receive lower sentences if charged under today's laws, policies, and practices," he said.

This was the largest single-day act of clemency in recent times.

In December 2012, Dr Meera Sachdeva was sentenced to 20 years in prison and ordered to repay nearly USD 8.2 million for fraud at a former Mississippi cancer centre she ran. She is now 63.

Babubhai Patel was sentenced to 17 years on 26 convictions for a healthcare fraud conspiracy, a drug conspiracy, and related fraud and drug violations in 2013.

Also in 2013, Krishna Mote, 54, was sentenced to serve life in prison after he was convicted of conspiracy to distribute more than 280 grams of crack cocaine and more than 500 grams of cocaine, and distribution of crack cocaine as an aider and abettor.

Vikram Dutta, 63, was in January 2012 sentenced in a Manhattan federal court to 235 months in prison after he was found guilty of conspiracy charges stemming from his use of his perfume distribution business to launder millions of dollars for a Mexican narcotics organisation.

(Source: PTI)

INDIAN AMERICAN HARMEET DHILLON NOMINATED FOR ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR CIVIL RIGHTS



Donald Trump has announced the nomination of Indian American Republican Harmeet K. Dhillon as the Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ).

DECEMBER 10, 2024

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): President-elect Donald Trump has announced the nomination of Indian American Republican Harmeet K. Dhillon as the Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ). The announcement, made via Trump's social media platform, Truth Social, is part of his ongoing efforts to assemble his administration for his second term in 2025.

Dhillon, 54, is a prominent attorney known for her legal battles on issues such as free speech, religious liberties, and election integrity. Born in Chandigarh, India, she moved to the U.S. as a child and has established herself as a key figure in conservative legal circles.

In his statement, Trump praised Dhillon's record, highlighting her lawsuits against major technology firms over censorship allegations, her representation of Christian groups during COVID-related restrictions, and her challenges to corporate policies she views as discriminatory.

"Harmeet is one of the top election lawyers in the country, fighting to ensure that all, and ONLY, legal votes are counted," Trump stated. He also emphasized Dhillon's academic credentials, which include degrees from Dartmouth College and the University of Virginia Law School, and her clerkship at the U.S. Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals.

Trump also underscored Dhillon's religious heritage as a respected member of the Sikh community and described her as a steadfast advocate for constitutional rights.

This nomination follows Trump's recent high-profile selections, including Indian American entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy and tech billionaire Elon Musk, as well as Kash Patel, another Indian American, to head the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

READ FULL STORY AT
WWW.THEINDIANPANORAMA.NEWS

Indian American executive Kris Kolluri to head NJ Transit through 2025



Kris Kolluri will serve as interim president and CEO of NJ Transit

DECEMBER 11, 2024

NEW YORK (TIP): Former New Jersey Transportation Commissioner Kris Kolluri will serve as interim president and CEO of NJ Transit, succeeding Kevin Corbett, who previously announced he is stepping down from the position on Jan

15, 2025. The Indian American executive is reported to have agreed to run the transportation agency until Gov Phil Murphy's administration ends in January 2026.

Kolluri most recently headed the Gateway Development Commission, an agency overseeing the construction of a new tunnel under the Hudson River between New Jersey and New York. He resigned in July after securing a \$6.9 billion grant from the Federal Transit Administration for the \$16 billion tunnel project.

Kolluri served as transportation commissioner during the first three years of Gov. Jon Corzine's administration. He was the president and CEO of the Camden Community Partnership and a former CEO of the Rowan University-Rutgers Camden Board of Governors.

In 2006 and 2007, he served brief stints as acting governor of New Jersey while Corzine was out of state, becoming the first Asian American to serve in the role.

Kolluri served as the Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Transportation (DOT), where he served as chairman of NJ Transit, the New Jersey Turnpike Authority, and the South Jersey Transportation Authority.

READ FULL STORY AT
WWW.THEINDIANPANORAMA.NEWS

Indian American founder Reggie Aggarwal named 2025 Hospitality Executive of the Year

DECEMBER 11, 2024
PHILADELPHIA, PA (TIP): Reggie Aggarwal, Indian American founder and CEO of Cvent, has been named as the 2025 Hospitality Executive of the Year by the Penn State School of Hospitality Management in the College of Health and Human Development and the Penn State Hotel and Restaurant Society (PSHRS).

Aggarwal will be honored at the 2025 PSHRS Industry Awards and Reception on

April 8, 2025, at the Nittany Lion Inn among alumni, faculty, industry partners and students, according to a media release.

"This recognition is a tremendous honor," Aggarwal said. "The hospitality industry is the backbone of creating memorable experiences and successful events, and Penn State's esteemed program has consistently been a cornerstone in nurturing new talent and fresh perspectives. Bringing people together is at the heart of what we do at Cvent, and we're proud to contribute to an industry rooted in service and genuine human connection. Thank you to the Penn State School of Hospitality Management and PSHRS for recognizing our incredible team and the impact they've made over the last 25 years."



Reggie Aggarwal has been named as the 2025 Hospitality Executive of the Year by the Penn State School of Hospitality Management in the College of Health and Human Development and the Penn State Hotel and Restaurant Society (PSHRS).

READ FULL STORY AT
WWW.THEINDIANPANORAMA.NEWS

Recipients of Hofstra University's 2024 Guru Nanak Interfaith Prize Announced

DECEMBER 11, 2024

NEW YORK (TIP): Dr. Thea Gomelaury and the Oxford Interfaith Forum and the United Religions Initiative and its founder Rt. Rev. William Swing have been awarded the 2024 Guru Nanak Interfaith Prize, awarded by Hofstra University in collaboration with the Sardarni Kuljit Kaur Bindra Charitable Foundation.

The \$50,000 Guru Nanak Interfaith Prize, divided between the two organizations, is bestowed biannually upon an individual or organization for their significant work in promoting interfaith understanding. The awards ceremony is scheduled to take place April 22, 2025, at the Crest Hollow Country Club in Woodbury, NY.

"The Guru Nanak Prize embodies Hofstra University's mission to foster global understanding while preparing students to thrive in the complexity of our interconnected world," said Dr. Eva Badowska, dean of Hofstra College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. "At a time when peaceful collaboration, civil discourse, and cultural awareness are essential to addressing profound global challenges, this prize honors the principles of peace, interfaith dialogue, and selfless service that resonate deeply with the University's values. It reminds us that education is not just about knowledge - it's about inspiring action and shaping a better future for all."

Dr. Julie Byrne, Hofstra University's Monsignor Thomas Hartman Chair in Catholic Studies and chair of the Department of Religion, said of this year's honorees, "The committee was deeply impressed by the complementary work done by these two stellar interfaith organizations: the United Religions Initiative that concentrates on grassroots networks of communities, and the Oxford Interfaith Forum that brings together scholars for the sharing and production of new knowledge about religions and their interactions. Community-based and scholarly approaches are both needed to advance understanding and acknowledgment of difference in today's global world."

Dr. Thea Gomelaury and the Oxford Interfaith Forum

Oxford Interfaith Forum is a global



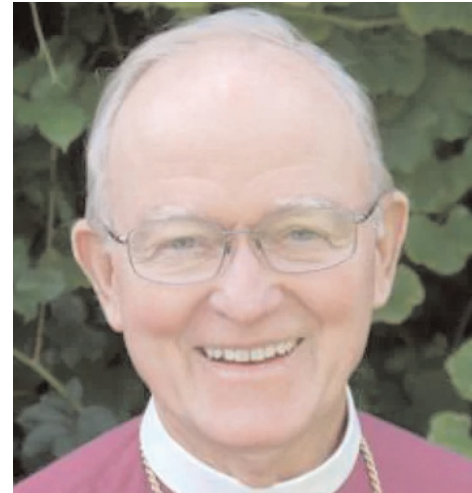
Dr. Thea Gomelaury and Rt. Rev. William Swing have been awarded the 2024 Guru Nanak Interfaith Prize, awarded by Hofstra University in collaboration with the Sardarni Kuljit Kaur Bindra Charitable Foundation.

interfaith, intercultural, and interdisciplinary organization that enhances, and enriches understanding of diverse traditions and cultures through its signature Thematic International Interfaith Reading Groups and its inclusive approach to research and education with an interfaith lens.

Oxford Interfaith Forum is committed to raising awareness of the critical role of religious dialogue in the pursuit of peace. The organization's founder and director, Dr. Thea Gomelaury, a biblical scholar, codicologist, and public historian, serves as an associate faculty member in Asian and Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Oxford.

Her special interests are in neglected literary and cultural treasures of marginal communities. Her research topics include biblical exegesis, reception history of the Bible, and biblical manuscripts. Dr. Gomelaury is a member of the Jewish-Muslim Research Network, the Bible and Religions of the Ancient Near East Collective, and the British and Irish Association of Jewish Studies.

Her current research is focused on Georgian Jewry - the world's oldest living Jewish diaspora - and its forgotten contribution to the Jewish scribal traditions. She is the author of *The Lailashi Codex: The Crown of Georgian Jewry* (Oxford, 2023). She is currently



interreligious education," Dr. Gomelaury said. "We are delighted to be joining the esteemed laureates of the Guru Nanak Prize. Sharing the honor with The Rt. Rev. William Swing is a very special privilege. We also want to thank Dr. Eboo Patel [the award's 2012 recipient], who influenced our work in more ways than he knows. This prestigious award in the name of Guru Nanak Dev Ji inspires us to continue the promotion of universal peace through interreligious education at this critical time in our history."

Rt. Rev. William Swing and the United Religions Initiative

The formation of the URI, currently the largest interfaith grassroots organization, was first inspired in 1993, when Bishop William E. Swing was invited to host an interfaith service commemorating the 50th anniversary of the signing of the United Nations charter.

Convinced that the world's religions have a "vocation to be a force for good in the world," Bishop Swing shaped URI's mission to promote enduring, daily interfaith cooperation; to end religiously motivated violence; and to create cultures of peace, justice, and healing for the earth and all living beings. Bishop Swing currently serves as URI's president emeritus. From 1980 to 2006 he was the 7th Episcopal Bishop of California. He has authored *A Bishop's Quest: Founding a United Religions and The Sacred and the Silly: A Bishop's Playful and Eventful Life*.

Bishop Swing currently serves as URI's president emeritus. From 1980 to 2006 he was the 7th Episcopal Bishop of California. He has authored *A Bishop's Quest: Founding a United Religions and The Sacred and the Silly: A Bishop's Playful and Eventful Life*.

Of being awarded the Guru Nanak Interfaith Prize, Bishop Swing said, "The generous heart of Guru Nanak was powerful in his time, and through this award the spiritual power only increases. For the United Religions Initiative and me to be honored by association with this great man is an inward blessing, indeed."

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)



"As telemedicine only continues to become more and more popular, we must strive to make sure that its logistical structures are built out smartly and fairly and remain affordable across New Jersey", says Senator Vin Gopal

Gopal Bill Requiring Pay Parity for Telehealth Providers for One More Year Clears Budget Committee

DECEMBER 9, 2024

TRENTON, NJ (TIP): The Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee advanced legislation sponsored by Senator Vin Gopal that would extend pay parity for telehealth and telemedicine providers until July 1, 2026.

The bill would require that reimbursement rates for providers using telemedicine and telehealth will be equal to the same applicable services and treatments delivered through in-person contact and consultation.

The practical benefits of telemedicine were made clear during the COVID-19 pandemic, enabling healthcare providers to continue to treat patients when actual in-person visits and services were limited and often unavailable.

"Since the days of the pandemic, the use of telehealth services has become an integral part of our health care landscape," said Senator Gopal (D-Monmouth). "As telemedicine only continues to become more and more popular, we must strive to make sure that

its logistical structures are built out smartly and fairly and remain affordable across New Jersey."

The bill stipulates that providers of telehealth will continue to be reimbursed equal to in-person visits, because outside of the public health emergency, the provision of health care, especially mental healthcare, through telehealth has proven highly beneficial.

The bill, S-2988, advanced in 13-0 vote.

Jenifer Rajkumar Welcomes Mark Levine Joining the Race for City Comptroller

DECEMBER 12, 2024

NEW YORK (TIP): Jenifer Rajkumar, in a statement released to The Indian Panorama, has welcomed Mark Levine to the race for New York City Comptroller and said, "I look forward to a robust campaign season filled with ideas for how to save our City. It is my mission to love, care for, and empower New Yorkers by making government work for working people. Government inefficiency costs lives and we must act now to save New York".

As the first generation of her family born in the United States, Jenifer is first and foremost a proud American. Jenifer's mom was born in a mud hut in India. Her parents immigrated to the United States with just \$300 and a suitcase. To honor the promise of a country that gave her family so much opportunity, Jenifer decided to dedicate her life to public service. An Ivy League educated attorney, she graduated from Stanford Law School and the University of Pennsylvania.

GROUNDBREAKING STATE LEGISLATOR-WINNING AGAINST ALL ODDS

Every win Jenifer has ever had has been against all odds. She made history when she became the first South Asian-American woman ever elected to New York State Office, defeating an 11-year incumbent by the largest vote margin of any challenger in the State. As a groundbreaking State Assemblywoman, she passed nationally recognized legislation securing full human rights protections for domestic workers, making Diwali a school holiday in New York after a 30-year fight, and



allowing for the closure of over 36,000 illegal smoke shops across the State through the passage of her originally authored SMOKEOUT Act.

Jenifer is a champion in fighting hate crimes citywide. She has organized communities to stand up against hate crimes targeting the Jewish, Sikh, and Hindu communities. Her leadership in combating hate crimes garnered national support, including the backing of the White House.

As a civil rights lawyer, she won landmark cases nationally for women's equality and workers, combatted corporate fraud saving millions in taxpayer dollars, and securing justice for thousands of women and workers. She collaborated with the U.S. Department of Justice on several qui tam cases combatting corporate fraud and excess. The resulting settlements saved millions in taxpayer dollars. Rajkumar has spoken on public interest law and policy at Stanford Law School, CUNY Law School and Harvard Law School. In 2015 and 2016, she was selected to Super Lawyers' New York-Metro Rising Stars List, a recognition given to no more than 2.5% of the lawyers in New York.

She passed a groundbreaking bill to modernize the procurement process in New York City, by speeding up contracting so that building affordable housing and critical infrastructure happens faster and cheaper in New York City. As Comptroller, she will build upon her work in procurement and contracting ensuring your hard earned tax dollars are used efficiently.

A champion of public safety and justice, she passed legislation expanding compensation for crime victims. In a landmark win for diversity and inclusion, she drove through her historic bill establishing the first ever AAPI Commission in State Government.

DIRECTOR OF IMMIGRATION AFFAIRS FOR NEW YORK STATE

The Governor of New York appointed Jenifer as the Director of Immigration Affairs & Special Counsel for New York State. Working out of New York's Department of State and the Governor's executive chamber, Jenifer built and led the Liberty Defense Project, a first-in-the-nation \$31 million dollar state-led public-private project to assist immigrants in obtaining legal services.

Jenifer also represented New York State in litigation before administrative law judges. She served as an ethics officer, handling ethics matters for the state. She was a statewide surrogate for the Governor on signature policy items, traveling from the farms of Upstate New York to her home in Queens to help New York's communities. Inspired by the people of New York, she is more motivated than ever to dedicate herself to service.

**READ FULL STORY AT
WWW.THEINDIANPANORAMA.NEWS**

Rising Rajasthan: A New Dawn for Investment

BY PREM BHANDARI
DECEMBER 7, 2024

NEW YORK (TIP): Prem Bhandari, President of the largest and most influential Rajasthani organization outside Rajasthan, based in New York, expressed his excitement about the Rajasthan government's bold move to host an investment summit in its first year. "This is a remarkable initiative, and Rajasthan may well be the first state in India to take such a visionary step," he remarked.



third term not only signifies enduring popularity but also ensures stability, which is a critical factor for attracting global investments.

Bhandari also highlighted Rajasthan's potential to emerge as a leader in tourism, solar energy, and mining, industries where the state already holds a strong foothold. He further pointed out an opportunity in the textile sector, particularly in light of shifting dynamics in Bangladesh. "With established textile hubs like Bhilwara, Pali, and Jodhpur, Rajasthan is well-positioned to seize the moment and become a national leader in textiles," he said.

Bhandari underscored the importance of Rajasthan's role in realizing Modi's vision of making India a developed nation by 2047. "For this dream to come true, states like Rajasthan must harness their full potential," he stated.

Reflecting on similar events in the past, Bhandari noted that while summits in Rajasthan and other states showcased ambitious goals with multi-billion-rupee MoUs, only 10-15% of these commitments materialized. These efforts often incurred substantial costs, yielding limited tangible outcomes. However, this time, Bhandari voiced strong confidence in the summit's potential success, largely due to the direct involvement of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "With PM Modi's unparalleled global stature and personal interest, there's no doubt this summit will be a resounding success. His leadership inspires global trust, and international investors see his vision as a foundation for stability and growth," Bhandari asserted. He emphasized that Modi's

He also urged the Rajasthan government to align its efforts with Modi's vision by appointing capable and dynamic officials to engage with investors and cultivate a pro-business atmosphere. "This summit has the potential to set a new benchmark for Rajasthan's development," Bhandari concluded, expressing hope that it would pave the way for a brighter future for the state.

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A Syrian bet...secular 'autocracy' or a royal mess



BY PRITI PRAKASH

A rebel/militia takeover, a fleeing leader, Palace loot, jubilation on streets, prisoners set free and the world watching silently. Sounds a familiar plot. This time it was Syria, on December 8, 2024

Syria just had its moment of purge with President Bashar Al Assad fleeing after rebels took over Damascus following the Israel Hamas crisis that spilled over and engulfed the region.

In a matter of a fortnight as Aleppo and Homes, the biggest cities of Syria, were taken over by Islamist-groups including Hayat Tahrir al Sham (HTS), the Syrian Armed Forces withdrew without any resistance facilitating an easy advance by the rebel militia and other groups including the Opposition. It was an end of the 50-year rule of Assad family. The future of Syria is as good as anybody's guess.

Assad's Syria was a secular 'Autocracy' inherited by his father. An eye surgeon by profession, turn of circumstances after his father's death put him on the throne. Assad tactfully handled the 2011 peoples uprising by crushing it with the support of Iran and Russia. Since then Syria is in a state of civil unrest which had continued. In 2023 he was blamed by the West for using chemical & biological weapons on his people to quell unrest in 2018.

Like Afghanistan and lately Bangladesh, it will be seen if Syria heads towards chaos with militia taking over or that the new system will rise to the expectation of its people. On what led to Syria's fall and what made Assad flee his country, former Ambassador to Libya and Jordan, Anil Trigunayat says, 'Assad's fall has been achieved after 13 years of the Arab Spring when the West finally succeeded in getting him ousted. Assad made the same mistakes which most dictators do ..distance from the people. He did not mend fences with the opposition whom he dismissed as terrorists and did not care of his 90% below poverty line population. Seeds of discontent at the grass roots level were ripe and HTS and other groups, preparing for years, took advantage of Russian and Iranian weakness and distraction.'

With the world powers directly as well as indirectly involved West Asia dynamics has exploded. Syria has been traditionally supported by Russia and Iran and as Israel Hamas fight intensified, the US kept supplying Tel Aviv with deadliest of arms. With the elimination of Hamas and Hezbollah leadership Israel managed to create a comfortable space for itself, as the proxies of Iran were no longer active. Syria was to be next. The timing mattered. Iran, with its attention



Jubilation and gunfire as Syrians celebrate the end of the Assad family's half-century rule.

Credit: The Guardian

towards Israel and Russia occupied with Ukraine, the fuelling of anti-Assad forces was ideal for a regime change that was anti West.

A Syrian Journalist Dr Wael Awwad, although not so optimistic, would like to see his country move in the right direction. Talking about the larger play involved against his country, said, 'The unfortunate part and the real politics is that Israel is continuing bombarding of Syrian cities, different infrastructure, military installations, occupied territories extension to Golan Heights where they had Jaber-e-Sheikh and connected provinces that are rich in oil on the pretext that no military zone can be left & the truce of 1947 is being violated saying that radicals are a threat to Israeli territory.'

Ruing about the vested interests around Syria, Dr Awwad says, 'Israel bombarding Syrian cities is a sign that they want to disintegrate Syria & weaken Syria further, breaking it up is on their cards. On the other hand, US is playing the Kurd card supporting Kurd Democratic Forces who are aspiring for a Kurdistan enclave inside Syria. They have been eyeing Syrian territories from day one. When Aleppo fell, Turkish flag was placed over the castle of Aleppo as if Aleppo is the city of Turkey not Syria. Disintegration of Syria by Western countries remains high on their card. On Russia's presence in the Mediterranean Sea & its naval base, will be facing trouble specially after the takeover. All this shows that Israeli's are driving the nose. But the concern for us is that the rise of extremist forces and violence amongst groups could lead to more tensions in the region, the spillover will be devastating for the neighbouring countries specially Jordan, even Turkey, Egypt, Iraq & Iran.'

A large number of US forces are stationed in Syria. As of February 2021, there are around 900 US soldiers operating in Syria, according to the US Department of Defense. According to Reuters, Turkey, Iran, Russia and the

United States have all deployed troops in Syria since 2011. Russia has 2 bases in Syria, Naval and Air Force at Khmeimim and Tartus. Iran deployed its Revolutionary Guards to Syria as early as 2012 to help Assad. Lebanon's Hezbollah, which is backed by Iran, played a big part. As for US even though the President election Donald Trump in his social media post writes that US will keep out of it and that it's not their battle, President Biden is neck deep in the region's arithmetic.

India's concern would be its citizens in Syria and their safety. There are about 92 Indians in Syria including 14 who are working in various UN organisations and NGOs in Syria. The majority of Indians there are skilled workers in private companies and self-employed, according to Ministry of External Affairs. MEA had also issued a Travel Advisory when reports of Aleppo falling poured in, saying, 'In view of the situation prevailing in Syria, Indian nationals are advised to avoid all travel to Syria. Those who can, are advised to leave by the earliest available commercial flights and others are requested to restrict their movements to the minimum.'

On December 11 India in an evacuation mission, evacuated 75 Indian nationals from the country. The evacuees included 44 'zaireen' from Jammu & Kashmir who were stranded at Saida Zainab. As per MEA release all Indian nationals have safely crossed over to Lebanon and returned by available commercial flights to India.

The evacuation, coordinated by the embassies of India in Damascus and Beirut, was put into effect following our assessment of the security situation and requests from Indian nationals in Syria.

Syria India relations under Assad were cordial and friendly. Bilateral relations extended to assistance as grants and LoC and mutual visits. India's stand was nuanced. MEA issued a statement saying, 'We are monitoring the situation in Syria in the light of the ongoing developments. We underline

the need for all parties to work towards preserving the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria. We advocate a peaceful and inclusive Syrian-led political process, respecting the interests and aspirations of all sections of Syrian society. Our Embassy in Damascus is in contact with the Indian community, for their safety and security,' the MEA said. Sources in Delhi said its embassy remained operational in Damascus.

Commenting on the situation in Syria and how do the coming days look like, India based Syrian Journalist Dr Wael Awwad said, 'There is jubilation in the streets of Syria at the ouster of Assad. People are celebrating and are also getting released from different jails. But we don't know if it is a short-lived celebration depending on the next move. There is formation of a transitional government. People are being asked by the military commanders not to blaze the cities, not to attack minorities, public properties or carry guns. If these things are followed and Syria remains intact then we may see a happy ending for the Syrian people, opening a new chapter in their future planning.'

As Assad takes refuge in Russia and Russia being a major stakeholder in Syria's security scenario, Russia's MoFA came out with a statement saying, 'We are monitoring the dramatic developments in Syria with extreme concern. In this regard, the Russian Federation maintains contact with all Syrian opposition groups. Russian military bases in Syria are on high alert. There is no serious threat to their security at the moment.'

Russia's take amplifies Russian stand. Earlier speaking at the 22nd Doha Forum session, Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov had said, 'We are absolutely convinced of inadmissibility to use terrorists like Hayat Tahrir al-Sham to achieve geopolitical purposes. We are trying to do everything not to allow terrorists to prevail, even if they say that they are no longer terrorists.'

What's important is what lies ahead for Syrian's, Trigunayat says, 'Real test of HTS and other groups begin now as to how they and their benefactors will distribute the spoils and bring about stability. Credentials of groups like HTS and Kurds will cause concerns for the US, Israel and Turkey who are the new players. If some viable modus vivendi is secured among various actors the Syrians might see good days ahead otherwise they will be heading for a more vicious civil war.'

(The author is a New Delhi based Senior Independent Journalist. She is a political analyst and blogs on Diplomacy)

United States on the Way to Becoming an Oligarchic State



BY
PROF. INDRAJIT S SALUJA

"The United States stands at a crossroads. The concentration of economic and political power in the hands of a wealthy few threatens to undermine the democratic principles upon which the nation was founded. While the challenges are formidable, history offers hope that meaningful reform is possible. By addressing the root causes of oligarchic influence, the United States can reaffirm its commitment to democracy and ensure that power truly resides with the people."

Over the past several decades, there has been growing concern among political analysts, economists, and the public at large about the shifting dynamics of governance in the United States. The country, long heralded as the bastion of democracy, appears to be transitioning into an oligarchic state - nation where power is concentrated in the hands of a wealthy few. This transformation is being driven by the intertwining of economic and political power, with billionaire businessmen exercising unprecedented control over both spheres.

The United States has witnessed a dramatic rise in economic inequality. According to a 2023 report by Oxfam, the top 1% of Americans now control approximately 34% of the nation's wealth, while the bottom 50% collectively own just 2.5%. Billionaires like Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, and Warren Buffett not only dominate the economy but also exert considerable influence over public policy. Their vast financial resources enable them to lobby for legislation that protects their interests, often at the expense of the broader public.

One illustrative example is the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, which significantly reduced corporate tax rates from 35% to 21%. While proponents argued that these cuts would stimulate economic growth, the primary beneficiaries were large corporations and the ultra-wealthy. An analysis by the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy found that the richest 5% of Americans reaped the bulk of the benefits, while middle- and low-income households saw minimal relief.

Moreover, the wealth of billionaires has skyrocketed during times of crisis.



The recent actions of the president-elect have amplified concerns about the United States' drift toward oligarchy.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, U.S. billionaires saw their collective wealth increase by over \$1 trillion between March 2020 and March 2021, even as millions of Americans lost their jobs and struggled to make ends meet. This stark contrast underscores the growing chasm between the economic elite and the rest of the population.

The influence of billionaires is not limited to the economic realm; it has increasingly permeated the political landscape. Billionaire-backed super PACs (political action committees) and dark money groups have become critical players in elections, effectively allowing the ultra-wealthy to shape political outcomes. The 2010 Citizens United v. FEC Supreme Court decision, which allowed unlimited corporate and individual spending in elections, has further entrenched this power dynamic.

For instance, in the 2020 election cycle, billionaire Sheldon Adelson and his wife Miriam contributed over \$218 million to Republican candidates and causes. On the Democratic side, Michael Bloomberg spent nearly \$1 billion of his own fortune on his presidential campaign and to support Democratic candidates. This trend raises questions about whether elected officials are accountable to their constituents or to the deep-pocketed donors who fund their campaigns.

The revolving door between business and government further blurs the line between public service and private interests. High-ranking officials often transition seamlessly between corporate boardrooms and government offices, ensuring that policies remain favorable to the business elite. The appointment of former Goldman Sachs executives to key positions in government during multiple administrations exemplifies this phenomenon.

The recent actions of the president-elect have amplified concerns about the United States' drift toward oligarchy. By signaling a

preference for appointing family members, friends, and loyalists to high-ranking government positions, the president-elect appears to prioritize personal loyalty over merit and public service.

One controversial example is the nomination of a relative as an ambassador, raising questions about the qualifications and motivations behind such appointments. Similarly, the nomination of the president-elect's son's girlfriend to another ambassadorship has drawn widespread criticism. These actions are reminiscent of oligarchic governance, where power is concentrated within a small, interconnected group, rather than being distributed based on democratic principles.

The potential consequences of such appointments are far-reaching. They risk undermining public trust in institutions, fostering cronyism, and diminishing the effectiveness of governance. When key positions are filled based on loyalty rather than expertise, the government's ability to address complex challenges and serve the public interest is compromised.

The United States' trajectory toward oligarchy is not without precedent. The Gilded Age of the late 19th and early 20th centuries was characterized by extreme wealth concentration and the outsized influence of industrial magnates like John D. Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie, and J.P. Morgan. These "robber barons" wielded immense economic and political power, often at the expense of workers and consumers.

However, the Progressive Era that followed brought significant reforms, including antitrust laws, labor protections, and campaign finance regulations, aimed at curbing the excesses of oligarchy. These measures helped restore a degree of balance to the American political and economic systems.

Today, many of these safeguards have been eroded or rendered ineffective. The

weakening of campaign finance laws, the rollback of antitrust enforcement, and the decline of labor unions have all contributed to the resurgence of oligarchic tendencies. As a result, the United States risks repeating the mistakes of the past.

The United States is not alone in grappling with the challenges of oligarchic influence. Countries like Russia and China are often cited as modern examples of oligarchies, where economic elites wield significant control over political decision-making. In Russia, for instance, a small group of oligarchs has benefited from close ties to the Kremlin, while in China, the Communist Party maintains tight control over both the economy and political apparatus.

However, what sets the United States apart is its historical commitment to democratic ideals and its reputation as a global leader in promoting democracy. The erosion of these principles risks undermining the country's moral authority and standing on the world stage.

To prevent the United States from becoming a full-fledged oligarchy, urgent action is needed to restore the balance of power. Several key reforms could help address the underlying issues:

Campaign Finance Reform: Reversing the Citizens United decision and implementing stricter limits on campaign contributions would reduce the influence of money in politics.

Antitrust Enforcement: Strengthening antitrust laws and breaking up monopolies would curb the economic power of large corporations and promote competition.

Tax Reform: Implementing a more progressive tax system and closing loopholes that benefit the ultra-wealthy would help reduce economic inequality.

Strengthening Labor Protections: Reinvigorating labor unions and ensuring fair wages and working conditions would empower workers and reduce disparities.

Ethics and Transparency: Enforcing stricter ethics rules and increasing transparency in government appointments would help rebuild public trust in institutions.

The United States stands at a crossroads. The concentration of economic and political power in the hands of a wealthy few threatens to undermine the democratic principles upon which the nation was founded. While the challenges are formidable, history offers hope that meaningful reform is possible. By addressing the root causes of oligarchic influence, the United States can reaffirm its commitment to democracy and ensure that power truly resides with the people.

(Prof. Indrajit S Saluja is editor, The Indian Panorama)

Under Trump 2.0, the world and the India outlook



BY M K NARAYANAN

THERE IS EVERY REASON TO BELIEVE THAT U.S. PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP WOULD BE INCLINED TO VIEW INDIA MORE FAVORABLY THAN OTHERS

Confirming the adage that the victor takes all, the stunning victory achieved by Donald Trump in the 2024 United States presidential election has transformed perceptions of him across the globe. There is many a reference to him being the most consequential American President since Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and of defining a new political era for America and the world. Similar hyperbolic statements have been made to the effect that following his latest victory, 'the world lies at Trump's feet'.

President-elect Trump is an enigma, and may remain so even after he takes office. Whether he would fit the description of being an iconoclast remains to be seen, but he is known to challenge 'cherished beliefs or venerated institutions on grounds that they are erroneous or pernicious'. Having also taken control of both the House of Representatives and the Senate, the incoming President seems unstoppable.

With few restraints remaining, speculation is rife about what he may do, including whether he could strike a deal with Russian President Vladimir Putin, over Ukraine, impose still greater burdens on Iran to bring down the temperature in West Asia, and find ways and means to rein in Israel.

It appears almost certain that Mr. Trump's foreign policy priorities would be Europe, West Asia and China. Mr. Trump has been openly critical of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and even more so of Europe's pusillanimous attitude to defense issues, but this does not mean that he will be ready to sacrifice Ukraine to ensure peace in Europe. His approach is also unlikely to be transactional in nature and, hence, giving up on Ukraine for ensuring peace in Europe appears highly unlikely. Mr. Trump would, however, expect Europe to contribute far more towards its defense, but is again unlikely to raise the stakes still higher, to avoid Ukraine turning into a conflict that implicitly takes on the character of a third world war.

The incoming President's approach to the West Asia crisis is likely to be still more circumspect, notwithstanding speculation to the contrary. While both Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu have sought to ingratiate themselves with him, Mr. Trump is unlikely to be taken in by such maneuvers. Anyone who is familiar with Mr. Trump's thinking and his family business dealings, would know what his priorities are likely to be and where they lie. On what specific terms Mr. Trump would agree to a modus vivendi in West Asia is still in the realm of speculation, but prolongation of the conflict on Israel's terms appears highly unlikely.

There is much greater certainty in what Mr. Trump's approach and attitude towards China would be. China heads the list of Mr. Trump's 'enemies', followed by North Korea and Iran, with Russia bringing up the rear. It is certain that as President, Mr. Trump would raise the stakes as far as China is concerned on economic and trade issues, including tighter export controls, and raising tariffs on Chinese exports to unprecedented heights. He is, however, likely to avoid any rash actions, conscious of the fact that China's Peoples' Liberation Army has been steadily preparing to confront the U.S. for quite some time and cannot be easily trifled with. The U.S. is also aware that China is known to possess the world's largest hypersonic arsenal, having missiles that can fly and maneuver at more than five times the speed of sound. China may be Mr. Trump's enemy number one, but this is no reason to think that he would resort to any rash moves, that may well lead to a wider



In the case of U.S.-India relations, technology is certain to be a cementing rather than a divisive factor'

conflagration.

Taiwan would remain a potential flash point. Nevertheless, like Sumo wrestlers, the U.S. under Mr. Trump and China under President Xi Jinping are more likely to test the ground reality, before embarking on a conflict that will not stop with Taiwan, the Pacific region or East Asia. Existing U.S. alliances with nations in Asia and Australasia are certain to be strengthened, and already established links with Australia, Japan and South Korea would be further intensified. Yet, as President, Mr. Trump is unlikely to act as a guarantor of peace across the region, and one to be paid for by the U.S. exchequer. Notwithstanding the impatience that he displays at present, there will be certain limits as far as his actions as President are concerned.

Among the more important countries across the world, there is every reason to believe that Mr. Trump would be inclined to view India more favorably than others. There are several reasons for this. The personality of Mr. Trump and Prime Minister Narendra Modi are in many ways not dissimilar; both demonstrate a 'no nonsense' approach to issues and problems and also appear to see them through a common prism. Both are powerful leaders who do not allow their political aides and others to change or alter the trajectory of their beliefs under any circumstances. Their dislike for China is visceral, and people in India are not likely to forget that in the wake of the Galwan incident in June 2020 (in which India lost 20 soldiers), Mr. Trump as U.S. President at the time appeared to support India.

Capping the relationship between Mr. Trump, then President, and Mr. Modi was the 'Namaste Trump' event (in February 2020) in Ahmedabad. The event which attracted over a lakh of people was, perhaps, the largest gathering for a foreign leader visiting India. On this occasion, Mr. Modi had hailed Mr. Trump as a 'true friend of India' and a leader who was reshaping geopolitics.

During Mr. Trump's previous tenure, both he and Mr. Modi seemed to arrive at a common understanding on issues and concerns affecting the Asia-Pacific region.

Little has changed since. If anything, the emphasis on cooperation between the two countries in defense, trade and counter-terrorism has only increased. On his previous visit to India as President, Mr. Trump had made a specific mention of the \$3 billion military deal that existed between the two countries.

As incoming President, Mr. Trump is certain to be gratified that one of his first acts would be to sign a \$1.17 billion deal for equipping MH-60R helicopters. He would also be happy that India has firming up its relationship with the Quad (comprising Australia, Japan, the U.S. and India), which is perceived as an anti-China alliance, even though India does not per se share the view that it is a security alliance.

Mr. Trump has also endeared himself to many Indians and the Indian establishment by making common cause with India over the plight of the Hindu minority in Bangladesh, who are facing a great deal of hostility from sectarian Islamic entities in that country, and who had forced former Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to flee the country. This has further helped build an atmosphere of cordiality and friendship which will stand the two countries in good stead.

On the economic plane, India enjoys a slight advantage in terms of balance of payments, but this is nothing compared with what exists today between China and the U.S. In the case of U.S.-India relations, technology is certain to be a cementing rather than a divisive factor. Silicon Valley, which has a sizeable contingent of Indian tech entrepreneurs, could well serve as a vanguard to cement the relationship, quite contrary to the case of China. If innovation and dynamism is expected to be the hallmark of the new Trump Administration - with Elon Musk and others driving it - then the U.S.-India technological relationship is well set to approach the take-off point. India-U.S. relations will follow suit.

(M.K. Narayanan is a former Director, Intelligence Bureau, a former National Security Adviser, and a former Governor of West Bengal)

Ayurveda Day Celebrated in Trinidad and Tobago with Bhajan Sandhya

AYURVEDA IS A PROFOUND GIFT FROM INDIA TO THE WORLD: PREM BHANDARI



High Commissioner Dr. Pradeep Singh Rajpurohit emphasized Ayurveda's timeless relevance as a science of holistic well-being and its growing global acceptance

DECEMBER 8, 2024

PORT OF SPAIN / NEW YORK (TIP): The High Commission of India in Trinidad and Tobago celebrated Ayurveda Day on Saturday, December 7, with Senator The Honorable Rohan Sinanan, Minister of Works and Transport, as the Chief Guest. The event witnessed active participation from Ayurveda practitioners, medical professionals, spiritual organizations, and the Indian diaspora.

High Commissioner Dr. Pradeep Singh Rajpurohit emphasized Ayurveda's timeless relevance as a science of holistic well-being and its growing global acceptance. He urged the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to revive the Ayurveda Chair at the University of the West Indies (UWI), enabling further collaboration and research in this ancient field.



Prem Bhandari, Chairman of Jaipur Foot USA, New York, delivered a special address. He said, "Ayurveda is a profound gift from India to the world, promoting health, harmony, and balance".

Prem Bhandari, Chairman of Jaipur Foot USA, New York, delivered a special address, stating:

"On this auspicious Ayurveda Diwas, we honor Maharishi Dhanvantari, the 'Father of Ayurveda,' who blessed humanity with the Charak Samhita, a timeless guide to natural healing and holistic wellness. Ayurveda is a profound gift from India to the world, promoting health, harmony, and balance."

Bhandari also highlighted the humanitarian efforts of Bhagwan Mahaveer Viklang Sahayata Samiti (BMVSS), the parent organization of Jaipur Foot USA, which has transformed the lives of over 2.2 million differently-abled individuals in 42 countries through 114 international camps since its inception in 1975 by Padma Bhushan D.R. Mehta.



Swami Brahmaswarupananda Ji (Brahma Vidya Peetham International, Trinidad) and Swami Sarvalokananda Ji (Ramakrishna Mission, New Delhi), Mr. Ramesh Persad Maharaj, Dr. Shri Pradeep Singh Rajpurohit, Mr. Prem Bhandari at the Ayurveda day celebrations in Port Of Spain

The event featured insights from spiritual leaders Swami Brahmaswarupananda Ji (Brahma Vidya Peetham International, Trinidad) and Swami Sarvalokananda Ji (Ramakrishna Mission, New Delhi), who spoke on Ayurveda's benefits for physical and mental health. An Ayurveda exhibition organized by Bryden Pi Limited showcased herbal products, including samples from renowned brands such as Himalaya.

Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, was quoted as saying: "India is a treasure trove of herbal plants; it is, in a way, our Green Gold."

Bhajan Sandhya at Dattatreya Yoga Centre -

A spiritually uplifting Bhajan Sandhya was held at the Dattatreya Yoga Centre in Carapachima. The event took place in the divine presence of the world's third-largest Hanuman Murti (85 feet), consecrated by His Holiness Sri Sri Sri Ganapathi Sachidananda Ji.



A group photo with High Commissioner Dr. Pradeep Singh Rajpurohit, Prem Bhandari, Swami Brahmaswarupananda Ji, Swami Sarvalokananda and others

The gathering was attended by High Commissioner Dr. Pradeep Singh Rajpurohit, Prem Bhandari (Founder, Overseas Friends of Ram Mandir, New York), Hon. Rudranath Indarsingh (MP, Couva North), Hon. Ravi Ratiram (MP, Couva South), and esteemed spiritual leaders such as Swami Brahmaswarupananda Ji, Swami Sarvalokananda Ji, and Swami Brahmadev Ji.

Dr. Rajpurohit announced plans for an upcoming Jaipur Foot Camp in Trinidad, expressing its significance for the differently-abled. He also commended the Hindu community for its vibrant cultural contributions, particularly the grand Ayodhya Ram Mandir celebrations.

During his address, Prem Bhandari shared his heartfelt admiration for the spiritual atmosphere in Trinidad, saying:

"Everywhere I go, I see temples dedicated to Sita Ram and Hanuman, making Trinidad feel like Ramayana City. I recall witnessing over 5,000 devotees celebrate the Ram Mandir Pran Pratishtha, and another gathering of 15,000 people chanting Hanuman Chalisa together, showcasing the deep-rooted devotion of this land."

A historic moment unfolded when Amit Alagh, President of the Ram Janmabhoomi Sthapana Committee, presented a Ram Lalla Murti memento from Ayodhya to Prem Bhandari. He described it as a once-in-a-lifetime blessing and extended an invitation to everyone for the grand Murti consecration ceremony in April 2025.

The evening concluded with soulful and mesmerizing devotional music by the Datta Kirtan Mandali and the Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Cultural Relations, leaving a profound spiritual impact on all attendees.



Amit Alagh, President of the Ram Janmabhoomi Sthapana Committee, presented a Ram Lalla Murti memento from Ayodhya to Prem Bhandari

Xi Jinping Declines Donald Trump's Inauguration Invitation: Report

DECEMBER 13, 2024

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP):

Chinese President Xi Jinping is not expected to attend President-elect Donald Trump's inauguration next month, despite receiving a personal invitation from Trump shortly after Election Day, two sources familiar with the planning told CBS News.

According to the CBS report, China's ambassador to the U.S. and his spouse are expected to represent Beijing at the Jan. 20 event, following standard diplomatic protocol.



Donald Trump and Xi Jinping -File photo

Sources also indicated that additional Chinese officials may join the delegation.

Inauguration organizers have assigned staff to manage diplomatic protocol during the ceremony. Both the Chinese embassy in Washington and the Trump transition team declined to comment on the matter.

This is a developing story and will be updated as more information becomes available.

Indian American Tulsi Gabbard's historic nomination as intel chief sparks mixed reactions



Tulsi Gabbard

DECEMBER 10, 2024

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): Tulsi Gabbard, President-elect Donald Trump's pick to be director of national intelligence, has met key Senators at Capitol Hill and supported the Republican leader's view on Syria amid the sudden fall of the country's Assad rule.

Hindu-American Gabbard, 43, who represented Hawaii in the House for eight years as a Democrat, met with Senators on Monday, December 9.

"I stand in full support and wholeheartedly agree with the statements that President Trump has made over these last few days regarding the developments in Syria," Gabbard, 43, told reporters at Capitol Hill where she met top US Senators on her nomination.

Gabbard has faced skepticism from national security experts and lawmakers about her views on the Syrian regime, and she is likely to encounter questions during the confirmation process about her 2017 trip to Syria, where she met with then-President Bashar Assad who was ousted by rebel factions over the weekend, ending his nearly quarter-century rule, the Washington Post reported.

President-elect Trump picked Gabbard, who left the Democratic Party in 2022, to be his director of national intelligence, a position with access to highly classified intelligence who oversees 18 spy agencies.

She met with Republican Sens. Mike

Rounds (South Dakota), James Lankford (Oklahoma) and Lindsey Graham (South Carolina).

She also met with Sen. Joni Ernst (R-Iowa), according to a post on X in which she described Gabbard as a "strong and proven leader." Ernst told reporters she anticipates meeting with her again.

"Wonderful catching up with Tulsi Gabbard, a strong and proven leader!" Senator Ernst said after the meeting.

"It was great to see you, my friend. Thank you for your support!" Gabbard said.

She confirmed by the US Senate, Gabbard would be the first-ever Hindu American to head the powerful body in charge of US' all intelligence agencies, including the CIA and FBI.

"Good to sit down with Tulsi Gabbard, President Trump's nominee to be the Director of National Intelligence. As a member of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, I am looking forward to working with her as she continues to move through the confirmation process. Excellent first meeting," said Senator Rounds.

"It was great to see you, Senator Rounds. Thank you for your time and the conversation today," Gabbard said.

In recent days, Gabbard has been praised by several other Senators.

to Tulsi Gabbard on her nomination as Director of National Intelligence. Her military service and dedication to our constitutional rights make her a strong choice for this critical role. Wishing her success in leading our intelligence community," Senator Rand Paul said.

"LTC Tulsi Gabbard, a 20-year veteran of the US Army, is a true patriot. Tulsi has my complete support to be the next Director of National Intelligence. I'm proud to call her my friend," said Senator Markwayne Mullin.

Senator Lindsey Graham said he has known Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard for many years, serving in the same Capitol Hill reserve unit. **READ FULL STORY AT WWW.THEINDIANPANORAMA.NEWS**

What Americans think about Hegseth, Gabbard and key Trump Cabinet picks: AP-NORC poll



Few Americans overall approve of Pete Hegseth, Trump's choice to lead the Department of Defense, or Tulsi Gabbard, his pick for intelligence chief

DECEMBER 12, 2024

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): As several of President-elect Donald Trump's choices for high-level positions in his incoming administration face scrutiny on Capitol Hill, a poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research shows that Americans have their own doubts.

Relatively few Americans overall approve of Pete Hegseth, Trump's choice to lead the Department of Defense, or Tulsi Gabbard, his pick for intelligence chief, although a substantial share doesn't know who those figures are. The other selections who were included in the poll, Robert F. Kennedy Jr. for health secretary and Marco Rubio for secretary of state, are more well-known but not much more popular among Americans overall.

Trump and his allies are pushing Republican senators to confirm his picks, who are meeting with lawmakers before Trump returns to the White House next month. Given the Republicans' slim majority in the Senate, the stakes are high for each Trump pick.

ONLY ABOUT 2 IN 10 AMERICANS APPROVE OF HEGSETH'S NOMINATION

An Army veteran and former Fox News commentator, Hegseth has been trying to make his case amid allegations of excessive drinking and the revelation that he made a settlement payment after being accused of a sexual assault that he denies. Trump has reiterated his support

for Hegseth, who appears to have won over some of the senators who were once critical of his selection.

Hegseth is still an unknown quantity for many Americans. About 4 in 10 don't know enough about him to give an opinion, according to the poll. But his selection is viewed more negatively than positively among Americans who do know who he is. About 2 in 10 U.S. adults approve of Hegseth being picked for Trump's Cabinet, while 36% disapprove and about 1 in 10 don't know enough to have an opinion.

He has higher support among Republicans, but it's not overwhelming. Many Republicans do not have an opinion of Hegseth: About 4 in 10 say they don't know enough about him. About one-third of Republicans approve of him as a pick, and 16% disapprove. Another 1 in 10 Republicans, roughly, are neutral and say they neither approve nor disapprove.

Those approval numbers among Republicans are at least slightly lower for Hegseth than any of the other names included in the poll.

APPROVAL OF GABBARD'S NOMINATION IS ALSO LOW

Gabbard, who represented Hawaii in the House for four terms as a Democrat, sought the 2020 presidential nomination before leaving her party. She was one of Trump's most sought-after surrogates in the 2024 campaign. **READ FULL STORY AT WWW.THEINDIANPANORAMA.NEWS**

AAPI Initiates Stem Cell/Bone Marrow Donation Drive

DECEMBER 12, 2024

DAYTON, OH (TIP): "I am grateful to the dozens of local AAPI Chapter leaders, members and volunteers across the nation who have initiated and organized Bone Marrow and Stem Cell Registration across the nation, joining hands with the national AAPI in our efforts in creating awareness and enrolling more youth and adults to be part of this noble initiative," said Dr. Satheesh Kathula, an Oncologist based in Dayton, OH and the President of American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI), the largest ethnic organization in the United States.

The Stem Cell/Bone Marrow initiative has been a major focus under the leadership of Dr. Kathula-led AAPI's Executive Committee. AAPI has partnered with National Marrow Donor Program (NMDP) to increase the Indian donor pool. One can join the NMDP Registry if you're between the ages of 18-40, a resident of the United States, and don't have major medical illnesses.

Giving the background and the urgent need to this new initiative, Dr. Sashi Kuppala, Chairman of the AAPI Stem Cell Drive, said, "Thousands of patients with blood cancers like leukemia or lymphoma need blood stem cell transplant to survive. Matching the stem cell or bone marrow donors to patients is based on Human leukocyte antigen (HLA) typing. HLA are Proteins or markers found on most cells in our body and they are inherited from our biological parents and are largely dependent on ethnicity."

Stressing the importance of registering for the Bone Marrow donation, Dr. Suni Kaza, Chair of AAPI BOT said, "You could be a patient's only match-their only hope for a cure. When you register, you're committing to donating to any patient in the world. But because a decision not to donate can be life-threatening to the patient, please think seriously about your commitment before joining the registry. And, be aware that there are absolutely no complications to the donor from this donation procedure."

According to Dr. Amit Chakrabarty, President-Elect of AAPI, "In general, 70% of parents needing a stem cell transplant don't have a fully matched donor in their family and approximately 12,000 patients per year

AAPI
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF
PHYSICIANS OF INDIAN ORIGIN

DONATE STEM CELLS/BONE MARROW
SAVE A LIFE
HIGH NEED - SIMPLE PROCESS

ELIGIBILITY TO REGISTER
Age: 18-40 years
Health: Generally healthy with no chronic illnesses

Scan the QR code to join the NMDP Registry today or text AAPI to 61474

SATHEESH KATHULA, MD
President, AAPI

SASHI KUPPALA, MD
Chair, AAPI Bone Marrow Drive

Contact: Dr. Sashi Kuppala
Email: sashikuppala@yahoo.com | Cell: 502-475-1371

depend on transplant from an unrelated donor to survive. These numbers are even dire for cancer patients of Indian ethnicity as the donor pool of Indian ethnicity is very limited."

Regarding the process to be part of this noble effort, Dr. Meher Medavaram, Vice President of AAPI said, "Registration is easy. You just need to log in with the QR code provided and register with your details at the NMDP website. They will send you a cheek swab kit which you need to return to them. They will perform the HLA typing of your DNA and store the information in their data base."

Dr. Raj Bhayani, Secretary of AAPI said, "If you're a match to a patient, who needs stem cells, you'll be asked to provide blood samples for further testing. Blood work is typically done locally. Travel will likely be required

for donation. It costs you nothing to donate. NMDP pays for all donation-related expenses. The donation process takes an average of 20-30 hours spread over 4-6 weeks."

"It is very difficult to find a matched stem cell donor for South Asians should they need a bone marrow or stem cell transplant and this drive will help increase the number of potential donors." Dr. Shirish Patel, Treasurer of AAPI said, "Bone Marrow donation helps save lives."

Dr. Sashi Kuppala said, he and the AAPI leadership will be happy to educate about the donation process and answer any questions. "We strongly believe that it's a very a noble and much needed initiative by AAPI to help save lives. While we thank those who are leading the efforts in your own state/towns, I urge others to take the lead in your towns and help AAPI in our efforts to save lives. Thank you and truly appreciate your support in helping the patients who are in need of Bone Marrow."

The growing influence of physicians of Indian heritage is evident, as increasingly physicians of Indian origin hold critical positions in healthcare, academic, research, and administrative positions across the nation. We the physicians of Indian origin are proud of our great achievements and contributions to our motherland, India, our adopted land, the US, and in a very significant way to the transformation of Indo-US relations.

Serving 1 in every 7 patients in the US, AAPI members care for millions of patients every day, while several of them have risen to hold high-flying jobs, shaping the policies and programs, and inventions that shape the landscape of healthcare in the US and around the world.

Since its inception in 1982, AAPI has been at the forefront, representing a conglomeration of more than 125,000 practicing physicians in the United States, seeking to be the united voice for physicians of Indian origin.

For more details about organizing a Bone Marrow Donation Drive in your city/town/region, please contact: Sashikuppala@yahoo.com.

For more details on AAPI, please visit: www.aapiusa.org

The Indian American Medical Association, Illinois Commemorates 44th Anniversary with a Vibrant Gala

DECEMBER 9, 2024

CHICAGO, IL (TIP) : The Indian American Medical Association, Illinois (IAMA-IL) marked 44 years with a fundraising gala that featured a cocktail reception, a vendor expo, an awards presentation, a dinner, and musical performances on December 07, 2024 at the Matrix Club in Naperville. The event was a grand success, bringing together leaders, influencers, and community members.

IAMA-IL President Radhika Chimata, MD, organized a splendid gala that included speeches from Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi, U.S. Representative for Illinois's 8th Congressional District, and Indian Consul General Somnath Ghosh. She also shared her vision for the upcoming year as the Board of Directors chair. Her objectives include continuing



Honorees during the awards presentation included Ashok Fulambarker, MD, recipient of the Distinguished Physician Award; Samir Shah, MD, who received the Lifetime Achievement Award; and Archana Chatterjee, MD, honored with the Dr. Usha Rani Nimmagadda Woman Physician Leadership Award. Rajeev Kumar, MD, Terence Chiramel, MD, and Utpal Parekh, MD, were acknowledged for their contributions to IAMA-IL and our communities.

significant fundraising initiatives, establishing a comprehensive database of physician mentors for medical trainees, and boosting IAMA-IL membership among second- and third-generation Americans.

Honorees during the awards presentation included Ashok Fulambarker, MD, recipient of the Distinguished Physician Award; Samir Shah, MD, who received the Lifetime Achievement Award; and Archana Chatterjee, MD, honored with the Dr. Usha Rani Nimmagadda Woman Physician Leadership Award. Rajeev Kumar, MD, Terence Chiramel, MD, and Utpal Parekh, MD, were acknowledged for their contributions to IAMA-IL and our communities.

**READ FULL STORY AT
WWW.THEINDIANPANORAMA.NEWS**

Lok Sabha gives nod to Disaster Management Amendment Bill

Amid disruptions in both Houses of Parliament over issues ranging from Adani bribery indictment to George Soros, the Disaster Management (Amendment) Bill was passed in the Lok Sabha on Thursday, December 12. The Bill aims to strengthen the efficient working of the national and state disaster management authorities, with the government emphasising that the legislation will help states in handling all disasters in a better way.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah in a post on X said, "The Lok Sabha today passed the Disaster Management (Amendment) Bill, 2024. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to PM Modi for this landmark move. The game-changing provisions of the law will serve as a fresh impetus to build a disaster-resilient Bharat by empowering our response forces to shield our citizens from any kind of calamity."

The Bill makes way for the security of every citizen by prioritising a proactive approach to disaster management over a reactive one. The House cleared the Disaster Management (Amendment) Bill, 2024, to amend the Disaster Management Act by a voice vote. Several amendments moved by opposition members were negated by the House.

The government said states faced difficulties in implementing the Disaster Management Act of 2005. The proposed amendment is based on overcoming the difficulties flagged by states.

Responding to a debate on the Bill, Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai said it is a strong legislation to strengthen the disaster management system in the country.

Earlier in the day, the face-off between BJP MPs and Opposition MPs continued in Parliament with the Rajya Sabha being adjourned for the day amid uproar over the alleged nexus between US hedge fund tycoon Soros and Sonia Gandhi and Adani row among other issues.

RS Chairman suppressing Opposition's freedom of speech, says Kharge

There has been no let-up in the Opposition's attack against Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar who found himself at the receiving end of a fresh salvo fired by the Leader of the Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge who accused the Chairman of "sycophancy".

In the Rajya Sabha, Dhankhar briefly turned emotional and told Congress chief whip Jairam Ramesh, "You people forget relationships very soon, you do not remember relationships. You must appreciate the importance of relationships. Relationship should not be allowed to get vitiated, it should be taken care of and nurtured. If you want to hurt someone, aim for the person's head, not heart," Dhankhar said. Though Dhankhar did not make any mention about the no-trust notice given against him by the Opposition, it was obvious that he was referring to the Opposition charge against him of being partisan and seeking his removal from the post of Vice-President.

Cabinet nod to one nation, one poll Bills; next stop Parliament

NEW DELHI (TIP)

The Union Cabinet, chaired by PM Narendra Modi, on Thursday, December 12, approved two Bills to enable simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and state Assemblies.

The draft legislations, which Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal piloted in the Cabinet today and Home Minister Amit Shah elaborated, will be introduced in Parliament during the ongoing session. Plans are afoot to send these Bills to a joint committee of both Houses for comprehensive stakeholder consultations.

As recommended by the former President Ram Nath Kovind-led panel whose report was accepted by the Cabinet on September 18, the government will move amendments to enable simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and state Assemblies in the first phase. The synchronisation of municipal and panchayat elections with the Lok Sabha and state polls will be left for the second and a later stage. The Kovind panel had said, "As the first step, simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and state Assemblies should be held and in the second step, elections to the municipalities and panchayats should be held within 100 days of the parliamentary and state polls." To achieve this, the government will introduce a Bill for amending Article 83 (which deals with duration of Houses of Parliament) and Article 172 (which deals with the duration of state legislatures) of the Constitution. This amendment will not need ratification by states. Asked how the synchronisation would be achieved, an official source quoted the Kovind report which said for simultaneous elections to happen, the President would need to notify the date of the first sitting of the Lok Sabha after a General Election as the "appointed date".

"The tenure of all state Assemblies constituted by elections held after the appointed date and before the



expiry of the full term of the Lok Sabha will be only for the period ending up to the subsequent General Election. Once that is done, all elections to the Lok Sabha and states will be held together," the source said.

The amendment Bill is also likely to insert a new Article 82 A to the Constitution to provide that the President may notify the date of the first sitting of the House of the People after a General Election as the appointed date.

The second Bill will be ordinary and will amend provisions to laws dealing with UTs and the legislative Assemblies of J&K, Delhi and Puducherry to align the terms of these Assemblies with the Lok Sabha and other legislative Assemblies.

Asked what was envisaged in case of a hung House or a no-confidence motion, the source said, "In such a case, fresh elections may be held to constitute a new House. Where fresh elections are held for the House of the People, its tenure will only be for the unexpired term, which is left until the full term of the Lok Sabha expires. Where fresh elections are held for the state Assemblies, such new Assembly unless sooner dissolved, will continue up to the end of the full term of the House of the People." *Source: TNS*

Supreme Court halts all mandir-masjid cases until 1991 Act verdict

NEW DELHI (TIP)

The Supreme Court on Thursday, December 12, issued a nationwide directive restraining all courts from entertaining fresh suits or passing orders to survey mosques to determine whether temple structures lie beneath them. This interim order serves as a sweeping pause on the growing litigation initiated by Hindu groups seeking to reclaim places of worship, effectively stalling proceedings in trial and high courts, and marking a significant intervention by the judiciary in a matter fraught with religious sensitivities and legal complexities.

The directive came from a special bench, headed by Chief Justice of India (CJI) Sanjiv Khanna, which clarified that trial courts cannot "overreach" the Supreme Court while it adjudicates on challenges to the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991.

"As the matter is sub judice before this Court, we deem it appropriate to direct that, though fresh suits may be filed, no suits would be registered and no proceedings shall be undertaken therein till further orders of this



Court. Further, in the pending suits, no Court will pass any effective interim orders or final orders, including orders directing surveys, etc., till the next date of hearing/further orders of this Court," ordered the bench, which also included justices PV Sanjay Kumar and KV Viswanathan. The court has scheduled the next hearing for February 17, 2025".

The directive comes amid a surge in litigation initiated by Hindu groups seeking the reclamation of alleged historical temple sites, prompting a host of legal proceedings in district and high courts. These disputes have sparked significant controversy and conflicting orders, amplifying political

and communal tensions across the country. From Gyanvapi Masjid in Varanasi to Shahi Eidgah in Mathura, from Shahi Jama Masjid in Sambhal to the Taj Mahal in Agra, from the Dargah Sharif in Ajmer to the Bhojshala in Madhya Pradesh, a host of petitions seeking the redetermination of the character of different structures have sprung up across the country.

Despite the significance of the issue, the matter had seen little progress in the Supreme Court over the last two years.

Justice Khanna took over as CJI from justice Dhananjaya Y Chandrachud on November 11. He then formed a three-judge bench on December 7, paving the way for Thursday's intervention.

The Places of Worship Act, enacted in 1991, is central to this issue. The Act, which the court is deliberating on at the instance of the two sides – one challenging it and another seeking its strict enforcement -- was enacted to preserve the religious character of all places of worship as they stood on August 15, 1947.

MoD, HAL ink Rs 13.5K-cr deal for 12 Sukhoi-30 jets

The Ministry of Defence on December 12 signed a Rs 13,500-crore deal with Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) to buy 12 additional Sukhoi-30 MKI fighter jets.

The Indian Air Force (IAF) has some 260 Russian-origin Sukhoi-30MKI jets in its fleet. Over the years, the HAL has produced a large part of the fleet of the jets. The MoD said the aircraft would have an indigenous content of 62.6 per cent, enhanced due to indigenisation of many components to be manufactured by the local defence industry. Several parts of the plane would be sourced from Russia.

The 12 aircraft would be manufactured at the HAL's Nashik division. "The supply of the aircraft will enhance operational capability of the IAF and strengthen defence preparedness of the country," the MoD said. The IAF is facing a threat of dwindling number of fighter jet squadrons.

In October, Air Chief Marshal AP Singh had said, "Our aim is not to let aircraft strength remain below 30 (squadrons)."

Each squadron has 16-18 jets. The Cabinet Committee of Security lays down the need for 42 fighter jet squadrons to tackle a two-front threat from China and Pakistan. At present, the IAF has 31 squadrons. The IAF had also placed an order with the HAL to manufacture 83 Tejas Mark-1A jets. Though the deliveries were to start in March, not a single plane has been delivered so far.

Cong fields Sheila Dikshit's son in New Delhi seat held by Kejriwal

In a high-stakes political battle, Congress has fielded Sandeep Dikshit, son of the late Sheila Dikshit, as its candidate for the New Delhi Assembly constituency in the upcoming Delhi elections.

This move is set to reignite a historic rivalry in a constituency that witnessed Sheila Dikshit, the three-time Chief Minister of Delhi, losing to Arvind Kejriwal in 2013 and 2015. For Sandeep, this election is more than just a political contest; it is a chance to reclaim his family's legacy and settle old scores.

Sandeep Dikshit, a former MP known for his vocal criticism of Arvind Kejriwal and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), is expected to wage a fierce campaign. The New Delhi seat, held by Kejriwal since 2013, is set to be the epicentre of the battle, promising high-voltage drama and intense competition. Adding another layer of intrigue to this contest is the possibility of a BJP heavyweight joining the fray.

Speculation is rife that former West Delhi MP Parvesh Sahib Singh Verma, son of former Chief Minister Sahib Singh Verma, could be fielded from the seat.

4 Delhi schools receive bomb threat emails, 2nd time this week

CHANDIGARH (TIP)

Bomb threats were emailed to four schools in Delhi early on Friday December 13, leading to a multi-agency search of the premises. This follows a similar incident on December 9, when at least 44 schools received bomb threat emails, which police later deemed hoaxes.

Former Delhi chief minister and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convenor Arvind Kejriwal expressed concern over the second instance of bomb threats to schools within a week, questioning the potential impact on children and their studies.

A Delhi Fire Services official said that call regarding the threat emails were received from Bhatnagar International School, Paschim Vihar (4.21 am), Cambridge School, Shri Niwas Puri (6.23 am), DPS Amar Colony, East of Kailash (6:35 am), South Delhi Public School, Defence Colony (7.57 am), Delhi Police Public School, Safdarjung (8.02 am), Venkateshwar Global School, Rohini (8.30 am).

The fire department, police, bomb detection teams, and dog squads reached the schools to conduct thorough searches. Authorities also alerted parents, advising them to keep children at home or collect them if they had already arrived at school. The emails were sent at 12.54 am, mentioning "parent-teachers' meeting" and "sports day" activities, followed by a warning that the schools would face bomb blasts on Friday and Saturday, PTI reported quoting sources.

Cambridge School principal Madhavi Goswami found the email during her routine check and immediately informed the police. She assured parents that the situation was under control and announced online classes for the day.

AAP leader Kejriwal, who had criticised Delhi Police and Union Home Minister Amit Shah over the earlier threats, raised the issue again on social media. He stressed the seriousness of repeated threats, saying in Hindi, "If this continues, how badly will it affect the children? What will happen to their studies?"

Delhi Police confirmed that checks and investigations were underway to ensure the safety of students and staff.

A guard at South Delhi Public School shared that parents



were asked to return with their children after the school administration decided to send all students home.

On Monday, December 9, at least 44 schools across Delhi received an email warning about explosives being placed at their premises, causing panic and confusion.

The schools quickly evacuated thousands of worried students during their classes, while security forces conducted extensive checks at multiple campuses.

Delhi Police confirmed that the emails were declared a hoax by Monday afternoon after no incendiary devices were found during the search operations. Nevertheless, security was heightened across the capital, with cordons set up and emergency response vans stationed outside major schools.

Bomb threats at Guwahati rail station, Gauhati University

Bomb threats were received at the Guwahati railway station and seven locations on the Gauhati University campus on Thursday, December 12, police said.

Guwahati Police Commissioner Diganta Barah said the Meghalaya Police Control Room in Shillong received a call stating that a bomb might be planted at the Guwahati railway station. "Accordingly, we started the investigation with Meghalaya Police and also carried out precautionary measures at the station. We have so far not found any such object," he told PTI.

86 Indians attacked or killed abroad in 2023; most assaults in US, UK and Canada: Centre

NEW DELHI (TIP)

Minister of state for external affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh on Thursday, December 12, informed Parliament that eighty-six Indian nationals were attacked or killed in various countries in 2023.

In his written response to a query, the minister shared country-wise data, with figures showing 29 cases in 2021, 57 in 2022, and 86 in 2023.

Of the 86 Indian nationals attacked or murdered in 2023, 12 were in the United States, and 10 each were in Canada, the United Kingdom and Saudi Arabia, according to the shared data.

"The safety and security of Indians abroad is one of the foremost priorities for the government of India. Our missions and posts remain vigilant and closely monitor any untoward incident. Such incidents are immediately taken up with the concerned authorities of the host country to ensure that the cases are properly investigated and the perpetrators are punished," said Kirti Vardhan Singh.

These issues are also raised during meetings with the government officials of the countries concerned, "including at the highest levels as appropriate," the minister said.

In a separate query, he was asked about the number of Indian citizens who voluntarily surrendered their citizenships over the last five years, along with state-wise and year-wise data, and the reasons for surrender.

"As per the information available with the Ministry, the number of Indians who gave up their Indian citizenship was 1,44,017 (in 2019); 85,256 (in 2020); 1,63,370 (in 2021); 2,25,620 (in 2022); and 2,16,219 (in 2023). For reference purpose, data was 1,22,819 (in 2011); 1,20,923 (in 2012); 1,31,405 (in 2013); 1,29,328 (in 2014); 1,31,489 (in 2015); 1,41,603 (in 2016); 1,33,049 (in 2017); 1,34,561 (in 2018)," he said in his response.

State-wise distribution of people who renounced Indian citizenship for foreign citizenships is not available, he added. In his response, he also shared

the names of several countries whose citizenships were acquired by Indians.

These include 135 countries, such as Algeria, Australia, Austria, Greece, Iran, Iraq, China, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, the US, the UK, and Ukraine, as per the list of countries shared in his response.

In response to a separate query, he shared the number of Indian fishermen arrested and assets seized by both Pakistan and Sri Lankan authorities in the last five years.

In 2023, the number of Indian fishermen detained by Sri Lankan authorities was 240, while the figure for 2024 was 535.

In 2023, the number of Indian fishing boats detained by Sri Lankan authorities was 35, while the figure for 2024 was 71, according to the data shared.

Last year, the number of Indian fishermen detained by Pakistan authorities was nine, while the figure for this year stood at 19 (till July 1, 2024), according to the data.

India in history this Week

DECEMBER 13 TO DECEMBER 19

13 DECEMBER

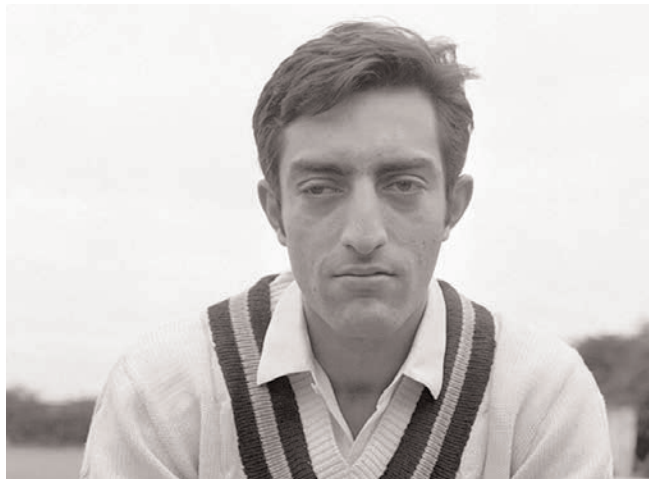
1232 Iltutmish, the ruler of the Ghulam dynasty, captured Gwalior.

1996 Kofi Annan was elected Secretary General of the United Nations.

2001 The Indian Parliament was attacked by terrorists.

1921 The Banaras Hindu University was inaugurated by the 'Prince of Wales'.

1955 India and the Soviet Union accepted the Panchsheel agreement.



1961 Mansoor Ali Khan Pataudi started his Test match career against England in Delhi.

1998 Mahatma Ramchandra Veer was awarded the "Bhai Hanuman Prasad Poddar Rashtra Seva" award from the Bada Bazaar Library in Kolkata.

2008 For the fifth phase of Jammu and Kashmir, 57% polling was held in 11 assembly constituencies.

2012 In the final match of the blind Twenty20 World Cup, the Indian cricket team defeated Pakistan by 30 runs to take the title of world winner.

1955 Former Defense Minister of India and former Chief Minister of Goa Manohar Parrikar was born.

2000 Former captain of the Indian cricket team, Vijay Samuel Hazare became the first person to receive the 'Castrol Lifetime Achievement Award'.

14 DECEMBER



1924 Director, producer, showman Raj Kapoor was born.

1901 Mahatma Gandhi reached Rajkot via Porbandar.

1960 The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) was established.

2005 11 Hindus are condemned with life imprisonment for their involvement in the killing of Muslims in the 2002 Gujarat violence.

2011 Poisonous liquor banned in India kills 166

people in West Bengal.

15 DECEMBER

1950 The iron man Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel died.

1749 Chhatrapati Shivaji's grandson Shahu died.

1953 India's S. Vijayalakshmi Pandit was elected the first woman president of the eighth session of the United Nations General Assembly.



1991 Filmmaker Satyajit Ray was awarded a Special Oscar for his achievements in the cinema world.

16 DECEMBER

1985 The country's first fast breeder nuclear reactor started functioning in Kalpakkam.

1971 Bangladesh separated from Pakistan and became an independent nation after agreeing to a ceasefire between India and Pakistan.

1993 'Education for all' conference starts in New Delhi.

2004 Doordarshan's free to air DTH service 'DD Direct +; Was launched by the Prime Minister.



1903 The Taj Mahal Palace Hotel in Mumbai was opened for guests.

2012 In New Delhi, a woman was gang-raped in a bus, leading to public protests against the Government of India and the Government of Delhi.

1937 Hawa Singh, one of the best boxers in India, was born.

17 DECEMBER

1645 Nur Jahan Begum, wife of the Mughal emperor Jahangir, died.



2002 Turkey supported India on Kashmir issue.

1715 Banda Bahadur Bairagi, the chief of the Sikhs, surrendered to the Mughals at Gurdaspur.

1929 The great revolutionaries Bhagat Singh and Rajguru shot English police officer John Saunders.

1933 India's legendary cricketer Lala Amarnath played an excellent innings of 118 runs in his debut Test match.

1940 Mahatma Gandhi postponed the individual Satyagraha movement.

1971 The third war between India and Pakistan ended after Bangladesh came into existence as a result of the partition of Pakistan.

1996 National Football League was launched.

18 DECEMBER

1897 Bhojpuri artist, musician and social worker Bikhari Thakur was born.

1271 The Mongol emperor Kublai Khan named his empire as Yuan. With this began the Yuan dynasty.

1960 The National Museum was inaugurated in the capital Delhi.

1398 Timur captured Delhi by defeating Sultan Nusrat Shah.



1989 Sachin played his first ODI against Pakistan.

1995 Unidentified aircraft dropped weapons in Purulia, West Bengal.

1997 The Washington Treaty concluded for cooperation in space research between India and the United States.

2008 The BrahMos supersonic cruise missile was successfully tested.

2017 India won 29 gold out of 30 at Commonwealth Wrestling Championships.

2017 The heaviest rocket GSLV Mark-3 was successfully launched.

19 DECEMBER

1927 The great freedom fighters Ram Prasad Bismil, Ashfaq Ulla Khan and Roshan Singh were hanged by the British.

1961 Goa got independence from Portugal's slavery. Indian troops entered the border of Goa under Operation Vijay.

1945 The institute in Mumbai was relocated to the Kenilworth bungalow on Pedder Marg. It was inaugurated by the then Governor of Mumbai, Sir John Colville.

1998 Amartya Sen was awarded honorary citizenship by Bangladesh, Sheel Kumar (India) as the best player in world disabled skiing held in Denver (USA).

1860 Lord Dalhousie, who was the Governor General of India from 1848 to 1856, died in Britain.

1937 India's 12th President Pratibha Patil was born in Jalgaon, Maharashtra.

1927 India's famous freedom fighter Ashfaq Ulla Khan died.

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KWANZAA FAMILY FESTIVAL AND MARKETPLACE RETURNS TO NJPAC

BY MABEL PAIS

Thousands are expected to gather at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) for the return of the annual Kwanzaa Family Festival on Saturday, December 21, 12-7PM at 1 Center Street in downtown Newark, New Jersey.

The festival, a tradition lasting more than 25 years, includes family-friendly activities that embody the seven principles of Kwanzaa. Activities include dance classes for all abilities, arts and crafts, interactive storytelling and exquisite face painting.

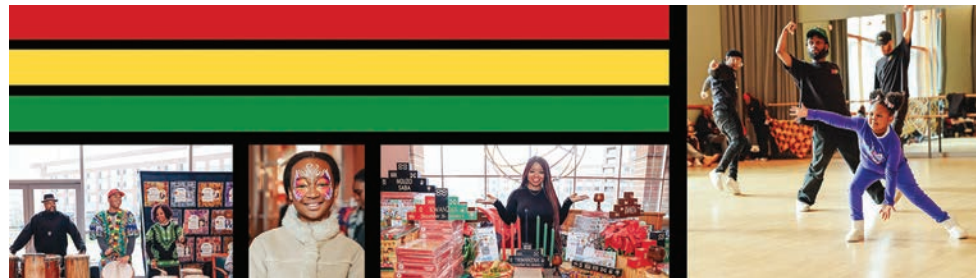
REGISTRATION

Registration is required to attend the Kwanzaa Family Festival. Visit njpac.org/about/community-engagement/kwanzaa-festival-and-marketplace

ACTIVITIES

In addition to hands-on activities, local dancers, artists and musicians perform every hour in the Prudential Hall Lobby; performers include Ancient African Formula Fashions, New Jersey Kids Fashion Week, Premiere Dance Theatre, Smiling David's Dance School, Umoja Dance Company and Zawadi African Dance & Drum, Inc.

"Community Engagement's Kwanzaa celebration is an enduring holiday tradition that uses creativity and artistry to bring people together," says Eyesha Marable, Assistant Vice President, Community Engagement. "The halls of NJPAC become infused with happiness and joy, and much credit goes to the amazing efforts of our partner organizations. Together we create a village built on positivity and holiday cheer." Watch the video -



Kwanzaa Performances & Marketplace

Credit: njpac.org

youtu.be/kMsa6JyPZZs

KWANZAA MARKETPLACE

The Festival coincides with the Kwanzaa Marketplace, covering multiple floors of the Arts Center, on Saturday, December 21, from 12 - 7PM.

The Kwanzaa Marketplace - one of the most diverse holiday markets in the region - is a destination for purchasing one-of-a-kind gifts from more than 20 vendors.

Sellers include Aya Paper Co. (njpac.org/about/community-engagement/kwanzaa-festival-and-marketplace) and Sweeti's Creations, both Black and women-owned businesses based in Newark. Aya Paper Co. sells one-of-a-kind greeting cards and stationery that reflect the diversity of the Black experience. The owner of Sweeti's Creations, Marie Thompson, hand crochets intricate sweaters, scarves and other accessories.

Other wearable art vendors include Ashanti Fields (ashantifields.com), the creator of clothing sewn from colorful West African fabrics and designer of conversation piece jewelry. Philadelphia milliner Suzette Art Couture (suzetteartcouture.com) brings handcrafted hats and accessories.

Marketplace vendors also sell natural

beauty products, candles, crystals, African mud cloth, artwork, pet products and much more!

The weekend of the Kwanzaa Family Festival & Marketplace also includes:

Holiday ceremonies such as a Kwanzaa candle-lighting and vibunzi (a tradition of honoring young people with an ear of corn, or fresh fruits and vegetables, to represent hope for the future).

Free Afrobeat, capoeira, salsa, Jersey



Kwanzaa dancers

Credit: njpac.org

club and West African dance and drumming classes. New for 2024: Participants in Jersey club and West African dance will have the opportunity to perform in a showcase led by Anthony "Solo" Harris's dance team Team E.V.O., Dance Mogul Magazine and SharkLyfe Nation.

Storytelling led by Alpha Kappa Alpha

Sorority and the Newark Public Library.

Arts and crafts workshops with GlassRoots, The Newark Museum of Art and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., North Jersey Alumnae Chapter.

A panel discussion on loss, grief and mourning facilitated by Imagine, A Center for Coping with Loss (imaginenj.org). Plus, create a memorial heart in memory of a departed loved one to add to a special Kwanzaa Memory Wall.

Ticketed performances of GRAMMY-winning gospel star CeCe Winans (njpac.org/event/cece-winans) on Friday, December 20, and Saturday, December 21, at 8PM. Ticket holders will have exclusive access to that day's Kwanzaa Marketplace from 7 - 11PM.

A free liturgical dance prelude, exclusive for ticket buyers, on Friday, December 20, at 7PM before the CeCe Winans (njpac.org/event/cece-winans) show. Dancers from 7 to 85 years old, representing local churches and some from other states, celebrate the season with choreography infused with praise and joy.

KWANZAA

Kwanzaa was created in 1966 by activist and author Maulana Karenga to offer people of African heritage a holiday that would celebrate their culture. Kwanzaa encompasses seven days dedicated to seven principles, also known as the Nguzo Saba. The Kwanzaa principles are Umoja (Unity), Kujichagulia (Self-Determination), Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility), Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics), Nia (Purpose), Kuumba (Creativity) and Imani (Faith). Each activity or event at NJPAC's Kwanzaa Family Festival embodies one of the seven principles.

WELCOME CHRISTMAS WITH CECE WINANS' MESMERIZING PERFORMANCE

BY MABEL PAIS

Get ready to experience the mesmerizing performance of CeCe Winans, the renowned and record-breaking female gospel artist. With two shows scheduled at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) on Friday, December 20, 2024, at 8:00 p.m., and an additional show on Saturday, December 21, at 8 p.m., you have the opportunity to witness her unmatched talent live on stage.

As an influential figure in the gospel music industry, CeCe Winans has garnered numerous accolades and is celebrated as one of the most accomplished women in music history. Prepare to be enthralled by her captivating performance as she brings the spirit of the holiday season to life through her soul-stirring music. Don't miss this chance to be part of an unforgettable musical experience in Newark!

The 12-time GRAMMY® winner is the shining star atop the glittering tree of gospel. It's impossible to count all the songs she's gifted to us over the years: 'Count on Me' from Waiting to Exhale, 'Alabaster Box,'



CeCe Winans

Credit: njpac.org

and 'Goodness of God' are just a few. And there's nothing like her renditions of favorite Christmas songs. Rejoice and feel the glory of this time of year.

TICKETS

Tickets for Christmas with CeCe Winans Live In Concert on Friday, Dec. 20th and Saturday, Dec. 21st are available at NJPAC.org or the NJPAC Box Office at 1

Center Street, Newark, New Jersey or by calling 888.GO.NJPAC (888.466.5722).

THE NEW JERSEY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER (NJPAC)

Follow NJPAC Online:
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Twitter: @NJPAC
Instagram: @NJPAC
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Facebook: facebook.com/NJPAC
YouTube: NJPACtv

FOLLOW NJPAC'S STANDING IN SOLIDARITY SERIES ONLINE:

Website: njpac.org/takeastand
Hashtag: #NJPACTakeAStand
Youtube: Standing in Solidarity playlist

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

'NUTCRACKER' BRINGS TOGETHER THREE NJ'S CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

BY MABEL PAIS



The Nutcracker dance

Credit: mayoarts.org

'THE NUTCRACKER', New Jersey's longest running original professional production, will be presented at the Mayo (Morristown) Performing Arts Center (MPAC) by New Jersey Ballet with New Jersey Symphony players, December 13-26 (see schedule below).

New Jersey Ballet's presentation of the holiday favorite 'The Nutcracker' comes to the Mayo Performing Arts Center for 14 performances beginning Friday, December 13 at 7:30 pm. New Jersey Symphony under the direction of Constantine Kitsopoulos will provide live orchestral accompaniment (schedule listed below).

The Nutcracker brings together three of the state's leading cultural institutions - New Jersey Ballet, New Jersey Symphony and MPAC - to present a Nutcracker that is firmly established as New Jersey's favorite holiday tradition.

When the curtain rises, audiences in Morristown can expect the eye-popping special effects, brilliant dancing, glorious costumes, and the magic and pantomime that have inspired critics to call it, "A spectacle that never seems to age...magic that should go on and on," and "One of the best...as good as it gets."

HISTORY

New Jersey Ballet's 'Nutcracker' is the longest

running original professional production in the state. The production debuted in Millburn in 1971 with international star of New York City Ballet Edward Villella as the Cavalier. Since then, the company has given approximately 800 performances in theatres throughout New Jersey, with more than 5,000 dancers and children, and over a million viewers. Many in the audience who saw the production as children now bring their own children and grandchildren to see this cherished holiday tradition.

PROGRAM

NEW JERSEY BALLET'S 'NUTCRACKER' WITH NEW JERSEY SYMPHONY

Friday, December 13 to Thursday, December 26

THE NUTCRACKER PERFORMANCES AT MPAC:

Friday, Dec. 13 at 7:30 pm

Saturday, Dec. 14 at 1 pm (limited tickets)

Saturday, Dec. 14 at 6 pm

Sunday, Dec. 15 at 1 pm (limited tickets)

Sunday, Dec. 15 at 6 pm

Friday, Dec. 20 at 7:30 pm

Saturday, Dec. 21 at 1 pm (limited tickets)

Saturday, Dec. 21 at 6 pm

Sunday, Dec. 22 at 1 pm (limited tickets)

Sunday, Dec. 22 at 6 pm

Monday, Dec. 23 at 1 pm

Tuesday, Dec. 24 at 1 pm

Thursday, Dec. 26 at 1 pm

Thursday, Dec. 26 at 6 pm

Constantine Kitsopoulos conductor

New Jersey Ballet

New Jersey Symphony

Pytor Ilyich Tchaikovsky 'The Nutcracker'

Based on 'The Nutcracker and the Mouse King' by

E.T.A. Hoffman

'THE NUTCRACKER' WILL FEATURE SPECIAL GUEST DANCER BENJAMIN FREEMANTLE FOR THE DECEMBER 14 AND 15, 6 PM PERFORMANCES.

A livestream of the Friday, December 20 performance

will also be available for a price.

Estimated Concert Duration: 2 hours

TICKETS

Tickets can be purchased online at mayoarts.org or at the Mayo Performing Arts Center box office at 973.539.8008.

THE MAYO PERFORMING ARTS CENTER (MPAC)

MPAC presents a wide range of programs that entertain, enrich, and educate the diverse population of the region and enhance the economic vitality of Northern New Jersey. Mayo Performing Arts Center was named 2016 Outstanding Historic Theatre by the League of Historic American Theatres, and is ranked in the top 50 mid-sized performing arts centers by Pollstar Magazine.

Box office (973) 539-8008

Online: www.mayoarts.org

Facebook:

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

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

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

THE NEW JERSEY BALLET (NJB)

NJB is a charitable performing arts organization that presents world-class dance programming throughout New Jersey. Founded in 1958, NJB embarked on a remarkable journey with a clear mission at its core: to provide New Jersey with a premier professional dance company dedicated to upholding the highest standards of quality and artistry. Learn more at njballet.org.

THE NEW JERSEY SYMPHONY

Connect with NJ Symphony

Follow NJ Symphony on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, X and YouTube



Broadway Kids

Credit: mayoarts.org

MAYO'S SPRING ARTS SCHOOL DOORS OPEN FOR REGISTRATION

BY MABEL PAIS

INFORMATION

Registration for MPAC's SPRING PERFORMING ARTS CLASSES opened on Wednesday, December 4 at 12 pm. Classes begin the week of January 21 and run through May.

REGISTRATION & FEES

Register at mayoarts.org/education/performing-arts-school-registration

school-registration

Registration will be processed on a first come, first served basis. All classes must be paid for in full at the time of registration unless other arrangements have been made. All tuition is non-refundable one week prior to the first day of the session. All tuition payments include a non-refundable processing and registration fee. Limited scholarships available based on need. Email pas@mayoarts.org for more information. Sessions will be held for children as young as three years old to adult. Sessions will be held in musical theatre, acting and vocal technique. Private lessons are available. MPAC's Miracle Project classes for children on the autism spectrum will continue to be held. The Spring session will feature the return of Adult Cabaret Workshop for individuals 18 and older that instructs adults on song performance, stage presence and more, leading to a performance in MPAC's Starlight Room.

NJYC PRESENTS WINTER CONCERT

BY MABEL PAIS

Over two hundred choristers in five choruses of the NEW JERSEY YOUTH CHORUS will present 'A Holiday Journey' on December 15 at 4:00 p.m. at Ridge Performing Arts Center located at 268 South Finlay Avenue in Basking Ridge. Trish Joyce, NJYC Founder and Director said, "'A Holiday Journey' will feature all five choirs of the New Jersey Youth Chorus in a diverse selection of holiday and seasonal repertoire for all ages. We are delighted to welcome the audience to experience the beauty and artistry of our ensembles and share in the magic and warmth of the holiday season."

CHORUS SELECTIONS : Joyful selections performed by NJYC's choristers include arrangements of 'Ding Dong Merrily on High,' 'Deck the Hall with Jingle Bells,' 'An Irving Berlin Christmas,' and 'Carol of the Bells,' as well as 'Sing For Hanukkah' by Lois Brownsey and Marti Lunn Lantz, 'Lunar Lullaby' by Jacob Narverud, 'We Toast the Days' by Linda Kachelmeier, 'The Shepherd's Spiritual' by Donald Moore, and Michael John Trotta's 'Veni, Veni Emmanuel.' The audience is invited to sing with the choir for selections including 'O Come All Ye Faithful,' 'Santa Claus is Coming to Town,' 'Winter Wonderland' and 'Zol Zain Sholem,' a traditional Eastern European Jewish Song arranged by Joshua Jacobson. Zol Zain Sholem's joyous call and response features various words for peace as suggested by NJYC choristers: Sholem, Pace, Shanti, and Heiwa. The concert concludes with a singalong to the holiday favorite, 'We Wish You a Merry Christmas.'

TICKETS : Tickets are available at NJYC.org. Students and Seniors get discounts.

WHARTON ARTS : Learn more at WhartonArts.org.



NJYC choir -Credit: whartonarts.org

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

ROCK BAND PARTNERS WITH TEXAS BASED NGO FOR HURRICANE HELENE'S SEVERELY DEVASTATED AREAS

BY MABEL PAIS

JET BLACK ROSES, the country rock band, releases their new song, 'Carolina Blue,' which was written and recorded within the first two weeks following Hurricane Helene's devastation of the North Carolina mountains. This project is in partnership with OPERATION AIRDROP.

This song aims to raise awareness and encourage support for ongoing relief efforts and the rebuilding process in the region. To help, consider purchasing a Carolina Blue T-shirt, 100% will go to Operation Air Drop or donate directly to Operation Airdrop at operationairdrop.betterworld.org.

All proceeds from 'Carolina Blue' song sales and related merchandise will be donated to Operation Airdrop, an organization that provides relief in areas affected by natural disasters. The band's hearts are with the people of Western North Carolina, and they want to ensure that these communities are not forgotten.

'Jet Black Roses' has partnered with 'Operation AirDrop' for relief efforts to help those affected by Hurricane Helene in western North Carolina. The country rock band, which features North Carolina native Tyler Cates on lead guitar, is running a donation drive in cooperation with 'Operation AirDrop,' a non-profit that organizes aviation and ground transportation assets after a natural disaster.

DONATION SUPPORT : 'Jet Black Roses' is asking the public to visit their website and purchase a Carolina Blue T-shirt where 100% of the funds go to 'Operation Air Drop' or for those in Georgia to donate essential supplies. The requested items are non-perishable food, baby needs, flashlights, batteries, paper towels, first aid kits, new socks and underwear, cleaning supplies, buckets, cooling towels, granola bars, and energy bars. The donations will significantly help the battered areas of North Carolina, which Hurricane Helene hardest



JET BLACK ROSES band -Credit: jetblackroses.com

hit.

Goods can be dropped off at area businesses in Atlanta and Calhoun, GA. The immediate mission is to fill a semi-truck that 'Operation Airdrop' will deliver to on-the-ground organizations in North Carolina as soon as possible.

Drop-off locations include Bellwood Coffee (Riverside location and East Atlanta Village (EAV) locations) Frazie's Meat & Market in Atlanta, and the Voluntary Action Center in Calhoun, GA. In addition there will be ongoing missions. Follow @jetblackrosesofficial for dates.

Band member Tyler Cates is from North Carolina and spent the better part of the 2000s in the mountains while in college. Western NC holds an extraordinary place in his heart: he met my wife there, along with many dear friends, and had many experiences that helped form who he is and set him on the path of music.

He's devastated by what transpired with Helene and its aftermath; for this reason, his bandmates Trey and Andrew Bentley decided to figure out a unique way to contribute to the relief effort.

Tyler Cates explains, "I am excited that we partnered with Operation AirDrop to provide support and much-needed supplies for the hardest hit areas in western North Carolina and eastern Tennessee. Our donation drive launches this week, and we will gather goods in Atlanta and Calhoun, GA, to send directly to Operation AirDrop's NC base in Spruce Pine via transfer truck. We're also personally loading planes with generators, first aid kits, and other things that will help the people in affected communities."

'Jet Black Roses' hearts and minds are with everyone affected. 'Jet Black Roses' are deeply grateful for the support. Those who are unable to drop off items can still make a significant difference by making a monetary donation at operationairdrop.betterworld.org.

OPERATION AIR DROP: Operation Airdrop is a Texas-based non-profit that organizes general aviation assets in the aftermath of a natural disaster. Founded in the wake of Hurricane Harvey in 2017, they specialize in post-Atlantic hurricane flooding recovery. Visit operationairdrop.betterworld.org.

JET BLACK ROSES: 'Jet Black Roses' is gaining attention in the music industry with their distinct blend of rock and roll with country soul. Known for their dynamic live performances and strong work ethic, they have shared the stage with renowned acts such as Styx, Cheap Trick, and Sammy Hagar. Audiences across the country are captivated by the band's impressive vocal harmonies, electrifying guitars, and authentic Southern rock style. Jet Black Roses' tight-knit camaraderie and musical synergy infuse their music with palpable energy. Their skillful musicianship and thoughtful songwriting set them apart from many contemporary bands. Their latest single, 'King of Fools,' is now available on all major streaming platforms. Learn more at jetblackroses.com @jetblackrosesofficial

INTERFAITH ALLYSHIP

BY MABEL PAIS



Interfaith Allyship -Credit: njpac.org

December's 'Standing in Solidarity' on December 17, 2024 illustrates the possibility of weaving a fabric of humanity from tattered and broken threads. The series has a powerful story to share about how kindness foiled one person's violent scheme.

PROGRAM

The PSEG True Diversity film is 'Stranger at the Gate,' an Academy Award-nominated film executive produced by Nobel Peace Prize winner Malala Yousafzai. The short documentary is about Richard "Mac" McKinney, a retired U.S. Marine who planned to bomb the Muncie Islamic Center in Indiana. But something changes when he enters the Center and is greeted by love and kindness.

The film screening is followed by a panel conversation featuring McKinney, a member of the Muncie Islamic Center and the film's director. The panelists will discuss the importance of interfaith allyship and the unifying power of discovering shared humanity with people who are different from us.

PANELISTS & MODERATOR

BIBI BAHRAMI, member of the Muncie Islamic Center and founder of AWAKEN, an organization aiding women and families in Afghanistan.

RICHARD "MAC" MCKINNEY, retired U.S. Marine, president of the Muncie Islamic Center and founder of "From Hate to Understanding"

JOSHUA SEFTTEL, an Oscar®-nominated and Emmy-winning film director who tells underdog stories to create social impact

DR. LAURA QUIROS, associate professor at Montclair State University and author of 'Incorporating Diversity and Inclusion into Trauma-Informed Social Work' will moderate the panel.

REGISTRATION

Registration is required at njpac.org/event/jazz-in-the-stacks

JAZZ IN THE STACKS

BY MABEL PAIS

Enjoy a performance by TD Jazz for Teens at local Newark Public Libraries! The ensemble will perform at various locations where you can peruse the books while enjoying these talented young artists. Schedule is below:

December 14, 2024 - 3pm -4pm - Main Library Branch (5 Washington Street)
January 22, 2025 - 5pm - 6pm - Van Buren Library Branch (140 Van Buren Street)
February 19, 2025 - 5pm - 6pm - Branch Brook Library Branch (235 Clinton Street)
March 19, 2025 - 5pm - 6pm - Vailsburg Library Branch (75 Alexander Street)
April 30, 2025 - 5pm - 6pm - North End Library Branch (722 Summer Avenue)

JAZZ SESSIONS

MABEL PAIS

Join NJPAC's monthly Jazz Jam Sessions, featuring top-flight NJ musicians directed by pianist and bandleader, James Austin, Jr. This series is co-presented by NJPAC's Jazz Advisory Committee and Rutgers Institute for Jazz Studies. Immerse yourself in the relaxing sounds of jazz music that stimulate the player's and listeners' minds. All novice and seasoned jazz musicians and singers are welcome to jam and improv with the professional band throughout the night.

Co-Producers: Wayne Winborne, Executive Director, IFJS and Eyesha Marable, AVP, Comm Engagement, NJPAC.

PROGRAM

WHEN: Thursday, December 19 @ 7:30PM

WHERE: Clement's Place

REGISTRATION

Registration is required at njpac.org/event/jazz-jams-12-24/#register

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

Trump's mocking of Justin Trudeau spurs an animated debate about the future of US-Canada relations



BY PRABHJOT SINGH

(Prabhjot Singh is a Toronto based award-winning senior journalist.)

He can be reached at prabhjot416@gmail.com

DECEMBER 10, 2024

TORONTO (TIP): Continuous mocking by US President-Elect Donald Trump of Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has set in motion an animated debate over the future of US-Canada relations.

Since the last week of November when Donald Trump joked for the first time to suggest in a lighter vein at a dinner meeting he held with Justin Trudeau that why not Canada become the 51st State, he has repeated his joke several times, the last of which was revealed through his December 10 on his Truth Social Platform.

Politicians and social scientists are wondering at the intent of his continuous "mocking".

"It was a pleasure to have dinner the other night with Governor Justin Trudeau of the Great State of Canada," said Donald Trump in his December 10 post on his Truth Social platform. He went on to add that "he is looking forward to seeing the 'Governor' again to continue their in-depth discussion about tariffs and trade. "The results of which will be truly spectacular for all!" added the U.S. President-elect.

Donald Trump had in a subsequent Meet the Press programme organized by a major media channel on December 8 said, "If we're going to subsidize them, let them become a state [of the U.S.]," while jokingly threatening that the U.S. should stop "subsidizing" Canada.

His repeated comments have evoked mixed reactions from Canadian politicians and social scientists.

The latest post describing Justin Trudeau as a "governor" went public hours after Justin Trudeau spoke at a Halifax Chamber of Commerce event. Justin Trudeau was quoted as saying that Canada would retaliate against the 25 per cent tariffs threatened by Trump.



Canadian PM Justin Trudeau with US President-elect Donald Trump in Mar-a-Lago, Florida
Photo : (@JustinTrudeau/X)

It was Donald Trump who set the ball rolling with his Truth Social post on November 25 declaring his intent to impose tariffs on Canada and Mexico if they refuse to tighten their border security. Donald Trump was referring to large-scale infiltration into the US of "illegal aliens" from both Canada and Mexico besides the smuggling of drugs, including Fentanyl. Though the Canadian Prime Minister maintained that smuggling of both illegal immigrants and Fentanyl from Canada was inconsequential compared to the figures of Mexico and promised to strengthen the borders to effectively control the smuggling, the US President-elect mocked him.

After his November 25 announcement threatening to impose a 25 per cent duty on all imports from Canada and Mexico, Justin Trudeau accompanied by a delegation, including a member of his Cabinet, flew to Florida to meet him at his private Mar-a-Lago club to discuss trade and border security. This is when Trump reportedly joked for the first time about Trudeau becoming the governor of a 51st U.S. state if the Canadian economy cannot survive despite its trade

surplus with the United States.

"Let us not kid ourselves in any way, shape or form: 25% tariffs on everything going to the United States would be devastating for the Canadian economy," Trudeau said. He added that Canada will "respond to unfair tariffs in several ways, and we're still looking at the right ways to respond, but our responses to the unfair steel and aluminum tariffs were what ended up lifting those tariffs last time."

After the recent post, some members of the Liberal caucus, including Cabinet ministers, were questioned by the media about the continuous tirade, though jokingly, launched by Donald Trump.

"I am so proud of our country. I am so proud of the true north, strong and free," said Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland during a press conference in Ottawa. "I also want to say to Canadians that our government is determined to defend the national interest."

Freeland would not comment on whether she takes Trump seriously on comments of making Canada a U.S. state. "That is a question really for the president-elect," she said. Another Cabinet Minister to comment on the recent developments was Transport Minister and President of the Treasury Board, Anita Anand.

While talking to media persons, she said "We have to continue to remember that Canada is a sovereign country."

Truth Social should not be used as a source for public policy, remarked Immigration Minister, Marc Miller.

Health Minister Mark Holland said, "We cannot react to everything, we need to focus on being mature as a country and taking responsibility for the things for which we have control."

(Prabhjot Singh is a Toronto, Canada-based senior journalist. He can be reached at prabhjot416@gmail.com)

South Asian community in the news for the wrong reasons

BY PRABHJOT SINGH

The vibrant South Asian Community of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) has sometimes been hawking media headlines for the wrong reasons.

Recent disclosures by the Peel Regional Police Extortion Investigative Task Force (EITF) generally relate to members of the South Asian Community, both as victims and suspects in the growing incidence of violent crime, including extortion.

The Peel Regional Police Extortion Investigative Task Force (EITF) claimed that it has made multiple arrests and seized four firearms in connection with recent extortion-related incidents occurring in Brampton and Mississauga, targeting the South Asian business community.

Bandhuman Sekhon (27) from British Columbia, Harmanjiit Singh from Brampton, Tajinder Tatla from Brampton, Dinesh Kumar from Hamilton, and Rukhsar Achakzai from Brampton were among the recent arrests made by the EITF.

They have been arrested in connection with the incidents that include damage to property, threats of violence, and firearm-related offences. Victims of these incidents are often contacted through social media platforms, such as WhatsApp and Facebook, which allow online chat groups. In the majority of the cases, the victims, too, come from the South Asian Community.

EITF says it continues to work closely with law enforcement partners across Canada to investigate these incidents. It further says that if anyone receives a demand for money under the threat of violence, they should call the police rather than make



Bandhuman Sekhon (27) from British Columbia, Harmanjiit Singh from Brampton, Tajinder Tatla from Brampton, Dinesh Kumar from Hamilton, and Rukhsar Achakzai from Brampton were among the recent arrests made by the EITF.

Photo for representation only

Watch <https://x.com/l/status/1866931377100243039>

any form of payment.

Most recently, the EITF has arrested five additional suspects, seized four firearms, and laid multiple charges. These threats have all included demands for large sums of money under the threat of violence. EITF said it arrested Bandhumaan Sekhon, a 27-year-old from British Columbia, for an incident reported in January of 2024. He was charged with the Conspiracy to Commit an Indictable Offence, Unauthorized Possession of a Prohibited Device or Ammunition, Knowledge of Unauthorized Possession of a Firearm, Careless Use of a Firearm, Weapon, Prohibited Device or Ammunition, Possession of Property Obtained by Crime, and Possess Firearm with altered Serial Number

He was held in custody for a bail hearing at the Ontario Court of Justice in Brampton and has since been released with court-imposed conditions.

EITF also revealed the arrest of Harmanjit Singh, a 25-year-old from Brampton, for an incident that

occurred in May of 2024. He was charged with Extortion, Utter Threat to Cause Bodily Harm or Death, Point Firearm, Assault with a Weapon, and Obstruct Peace Officer. He was held in custody for a bail hearing at the Ontario Court of Justice in Brampton and has since been released with court-imposed conditions.

The third arrest made by EITF was of Tejinder Tatla, a 44-year-old from Brampton. He was arrested for threats that were made toward a business owner and his family members in June. A search warrant led to the seizure of 3 firearms during this investigation. He has been charged with Extortion and Unsafe Storage. He was held in custody for a bail hearing at the Ontario Court of Justice in Brampton and has since been released with court-imposed conditions.

EITF also arrested Rukhsar Achakzai, a 21-year-old from Brampton, for incidents dating back to September 2023. She was charged with Extortion and Mischief under \$5000.00. She was held in custody for a bail hearing at the Ontario Court of Justice in Brampton and has since been released with court-imposed conditions.

Dinesh Kumar, a 24-year-old from Hamilton, was arrested for an incident in July. He was charged with Extortion, EITF said. Dinesh Kumar was released from custody with a future court date and conditions to abide by.

The EITF claimed it investigated over 60 incidents, made 21 arrests, and laid 154 criminal charges. These investigations have also led to the seizure of 20 firearms, over 11kg of methamphetamines, over \$10,000 in proceeds of crime, and the recovery of 6 stolen vehicles.



Churning in Hindi cinema forcing filmmakers to think differently: Manoj Bajpayee

Hindi cinema is going through a lull phase but this churning will, hopefully, lead to something better as creative people always find a way, says actor Manoj Bajpayee.

In a year where the box office once again appears to be dominated by blockbusters from the South like "Kalki 2898 AD" and "Pushpa 2: The Rule", the successful business of "Stree 2", "Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3", and "Singham Again" has given some hope to Bollywood.

Asked whether Hindi cinema was in "trouble", Bajpayee said that isn't the case.

"... But it is definitely forcing filmmakers to think differently. And there is nothing wrong with it. I think it is a churning, it's a lull period. I'm hopeful that it will go back to its natural self very soon.

"I don't see it as a problem because creative people always find a way. It is a jolt, a shock. And, now they are thinking hard and trying to come together to find a solution to it. And they will find a solution," the actor told PTI in an interview during a visit to the news agency's headquarters.

Bajpayee said horror comedy "Stree 2", which earned over ₹800 crore at the box office, did "remarkable" business.

"That means people are somewhere willing to go to theatres but they want something else. And that 'something else', a filmmaker has to really innovate and think hard about... My films these days come onto OTT and they have an even bigger audience.

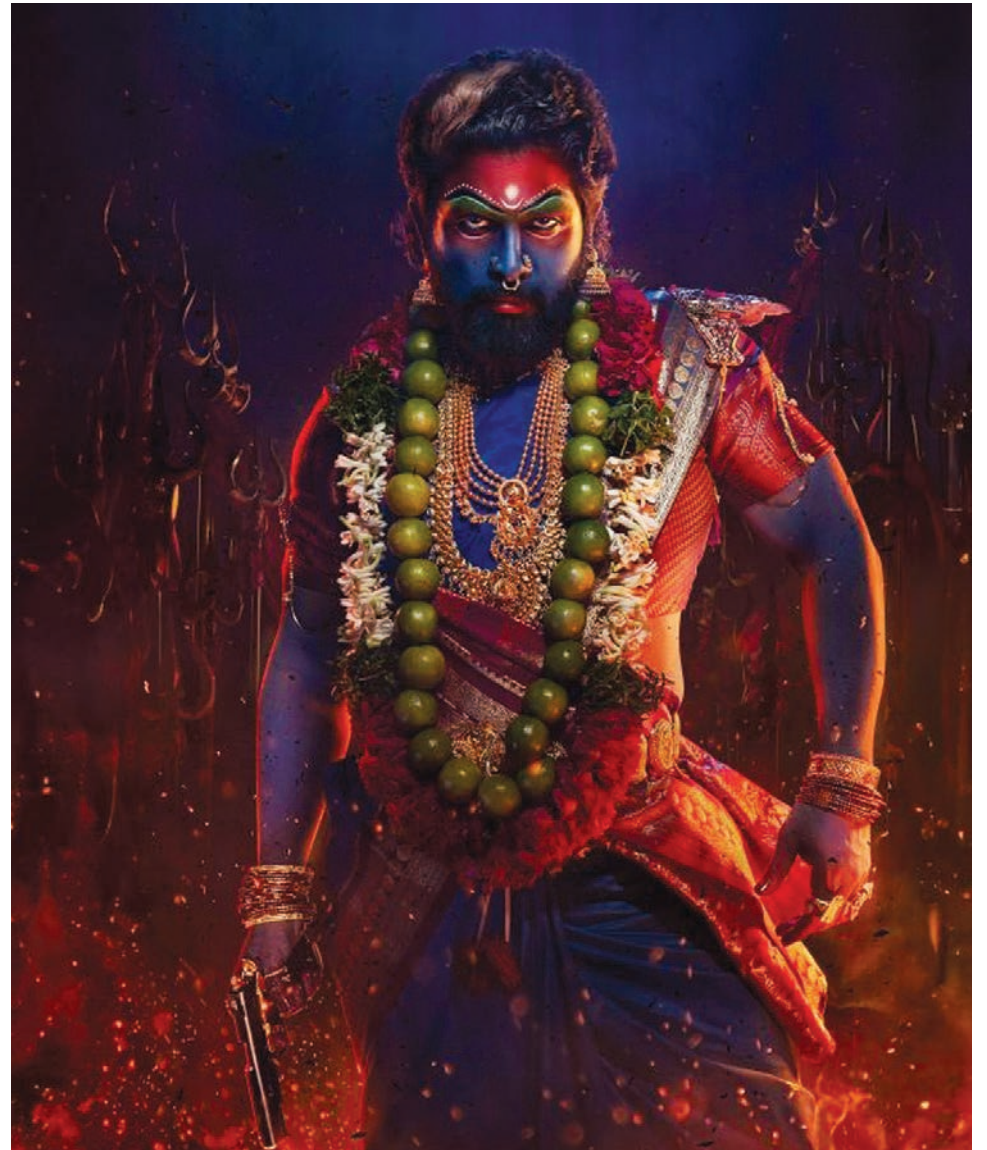
Allu Arjun's blockbuster Pushpa 2 becomes biggest hit of 2024, chases RRR's record

After becoming the fastest film to enter the Rs 1000 crore club worldwide, Allu Arjun and Rashmika Mandanna's Pushpa 2: The Rule has maintained its phenomenal performance at the box office. Now in the middle of its first week of release, the film added an impressive Rs 42 crore to its collection on Wednesday, according to industry tracker Sacnilk. While there was an 18 percent drop in earnings, it didn't deter the film from amassing Rs 687 crore in the domestic market.

Released in multiple languages, the Hindi version of the film has consistently outperformed its Telugu counterpart. On Wednesday, the Hindi version brought in a remarkable Rs 30 crore, compared to Rs 9 crore from the Telugu version. Other language versions also contributed, with the Tamil version earning Rs 2 crore, the Kannada version Rs 0.6 crore, and the Malayalam version Rs 0.4 crore.

Pushpa 2 has demonstrated an impressive box office trajectory, even as it experienced a steady decline in weekday collections. After an extraordinary opening weekend, which included a massive Rs 141.05 crore haul on its first Sunday, the film witnessed a sharp 54.31 percent drop on Monday. This was followed by another 20.02 percent decline on Tuesday and an 18.53 percent dip on Wednesday (Day 7).

Despite these weekday fluctuations, Pushpa 2 has achieved a staggering worldwide collection of Rs 1,062 crore. The film entered the elite Rs 1000 crore club within just six days of its release, becoming the highest-grossing film of 2024. It has surpassed the lifetime worldwide collection of Prabhas' Kalki 2898 AD, which stood at Rs 1,042.25 crore.



Now that Pushpa 2 has overtaken Kalki 2898 AD, all eyes are on whether the film can become the highest-earning Indian film of all time. Currently, Nitesh Tiwari and Aamir Khan's Dangal holds the top spot with a lifetime worldwide collection of Rs 2,070.3 crore. Other films in the prestigious Rs 1000

crore club include Baahubali 2: The Conclusion (Rs 1,788.06 crore), RRR (Rs 1,230 crore), KGF: Chapter 2 (Rs 1,215 crore), Jawan (Rs 1,160 crore) and Pathaan (Rs 1,055 crore). The Allu Arjun-starrer has left both the Shah Rukh Khan-starrers – Jawan and Pathaan – behind in the box office race.

Priyanka Chopra confirms Bollywood comeback



After making her mark in the Hindi film industry, and a permanent place in our hearts, Indian actor Priyanka Chopra Jonas shifted her focus to the West. She appeared in American TV series and Hollywood films, eventually emerging as a global icon. Well, the last Hindi film that fans saw her in was The White Tiger (2021), alongside Adarsh Gourav and Rajkummar Rao. It's been three years now and audiences really miss Priyanka in Bollywood. Much to the delight of movie-buffs, the actor has now confirmed that she hopes to return to the Indian silver screen with a Hindi film in 2025.

Priyanka recently graced the Red Sea Film Festival 2024 held in Jeddah. During the same, the actor talked about signing an Indian film soon. In a viral video from the event, PeeCee shared, "I take my roots

wherever I go. It's a part of my family, it's a part of my upbringing. India has always been in my heart, Indian films will always be a part of my heart. I am very close to deciding on doing one next year, so keep your fingers crossed. Send good vibes that it works out and that I actually end up doing one next year. I really miss the dancing more than anything."

We are sure fans will be over the moon with joy after hearing this! Well, this Indian film that Priyanka has hinted at will be a perfect addition to her already glorious line up of upcoming releases. This year, the actor wrapped up two exciting Hollywood films— Ilya Naishuller's American action comedy Heads of State co-starring Idris Elba and John Cena, and action drama film The Bluff where Priyanka will be seen as a pirate fighting to protect her family.



Megan Fox buys \$8 million house before split with Machine Gun Kelly

Megan Fox reportedly bought herself a house worth \$8 million before breaking up with Machine Gun Kelly. On Wednesday, sources told TMZ that the actor booked a place in one of the famous celebrity neighbourhoods in Los Angeles for her stay. Moreover, it is reported that the actor already had plans to move in alone in the new place long before the breakup happened. Fox is currently pregnant with her and Kelly's first child together.

An insider revealed to the news outlet that the former couple had not lived together for a year and alleged that Jennifer's Body actor was "concerned for her safety" as the musician frequently had people over. Fox had been shuffling between rentals before she settled for her new home.

The news of Fox's home came on the heels of the couple's breakup. Fox and Kelly reportedly split during their trip to Vail for Thanksgiving, just two weeks after the actor publicly announced her pregnancy. As a source told Page Six, Fox decided to part ways with the musician after she saw some unsettling interactions with other women on Kelly's phone.

Chris Evans to return as Captain America in Avengers Doomsday: Report

Chris Evans is set to reprise his role in the Marvel Cinematic Universe, according to an exclusive report from The Wrap.

The actor will apparently feature in the upcoming film Avengers: Doomsday, directed by the Russo Brothers. Robert Downey Jr is also confirmed to join the cast, taking on the role of Victor von Doom, also known as Doctor Doom.

Neither Marvel Studios, Evans, nor his representatives have provided official statements regarding the news.

The Russo Brothers, who have previously worked with Evans and Downey Jr on Captain America: Civil War, Avengers: Infinity War, and Avengers: Endgame, will return to direct Avengers: Doomsday as well as its direct sequel, Avengers: Secret Wars.

Avengers: Doomsday is scheduled for release on May 1, 2026.

The new Marvel feature project deals with multiple timelines and universes and is expected to reunite many actors from previous and current films. Joe and Anthony Russo are directing Doomsday and 2027's Avengers: Secret Wars, which will conclude the MCU's Multiverse Saga.

They have dropped hints that the films will be connected to the two-part story of 2018's Avengers: Infinity War and Endgame. That sets the stage for more reunions which might include Tom Holland as Spider-Man, Scarlett Johansson as Black Widow, Mark Ruffalo as the Hulk, Brie Larson as Captain Marvel, Chris Hemsworth as Thor, Jeremy Renner as Hawkeye and Paul Rudd as Ant-Man. Avengers: Doomsday is scheduled to premiere on



May 1, 2026, with Secret Wars expected to land on May 7, 2027.

Chris retired from MCU in 2019's Avengers: Endgame which showed

Captain America had aged into an old man and passed the character's patriotic shield to Anthony Mackie's Sam Wilson.

Selena Gomez opens up about 'isolating' Hollywood



On December 9, Selena Gomez, the breakout star of The Emilia Perez Star, received a prestigious Golden Globe nomination for Best Supporting Actress, a recognition that marks a significant milestone in her career. Just a day later, she attended the Academy Women's Luncheon Presented by Chanel alongside Ariana Grande. The singer told People Magazine, "I'm overwhelmed, very, very honoured and grateful."

During her keynote speech, Gomez highlighted, "I know firsthand how isolating this industry will feel at times, but moments like this and rooms like this, and talking to all these amazing women just reminds me that I'm not alone, and we aren't alone." She then gestured towards her table of supporters which included Grande, Amy Adams, Pamela Anderson, Awkwafina, Gal Gadot, Rita Wilson, Mila Kunis and Olivia Wilde.

Gomez shared on the red carpet that she focuses on small positive things amid the

chaos of negativity. She told People Magazine, "It's humour for me. I know people say it's a defence mechanism, however, I think it's a great distraction from all of the noise sometimes. And just to have a laugh with your friends or do something that can bring you a little bit of light."

For others who might feel lonely in Hollywood, the Same Old Love singer offered her help. She said, "To the young women watching us, I just want you to know that you are heard and you are seen, and your perspective matters deeply. And if you ever feel lonely at any event, I'm usually on my phone, playing some sort of weird game. Just come up to me, and I'll be happy to chat."

She added, "When we share and we stand together, we create a ripple effect that stretches far beyond our own lives. That's why events like [this] are so important, they're a celebration of our collective achievements, but they're also a reminder of the work we still have to do."

IRANIAN SINGER GIVES ONLINE CONCERT WITHOUT HIJAB, FACES PROSECUTION FROM JUDICIARY

12 DEC 2024

PARIS (TIP): An Iranian singer was December 12 hailed as a hero by supporters but faced prosecution from the judiciary after giving an online concert not wearing the hijab in defiance of the dress code.

Parastoo Ahmadi streamed the online concert on her YouTube channel late on Wednesday. She wears no headscarf and is bare-shouldered in a long, flowing black dress.

The concert, whose date of filming was not immediately clear with no audience present, appears to have been shot inside Iran with Ahmadi and her three-person band, all men, playing outside on a stage in the grounds of a traditional caravanserai complex.

Under rules imposed after the 1979 Islamic revolution, women must cover their hair in public and are also not allowed to sing alone in public.

Ahmadi had built a wide following among Iranians for songs posted on her Instagram page, including audio clips and videos of ballads sung indoors without a headscarf supporting the 2022-2023 mass protests against the authorities.

This appears to be the first time however that she has recorded a full concert outside as opposed to the more intimate recitals filmed indoors.

A written message on the YouTube video before the concert starts says: "I am Parastoo, the girl who cannot remain silent and refuses to stop singing for the country she loves."

She tells viewers to "listen to my voice in this imaginary concert and dream of a free and beautiful nation".

Without naming Ahmadi, the Mizan news agency of the Iranian judiciary said Thursday "a group led by a female singer" had performed "music without observing legal and religious standards".

The judiciary has "intervened and taken appropriate action, with a legal case filed against the singer and the production staff," it added.

US-based dissident campaigner Masih Alinejad hailed the concert as "historic", saying on social media that "her voice is a weapon against tyranny, her courage a song of defiance".

Prominent commentator Karim Sadjadpour, a fellow with the Carnegie Endowment, described the concert as an "act of extraordinary courage" that marked "another crack in the foundations of Iran's rotting theocracy".

The streaming of the concert took place ahead of a new law expected to come into force on Friday that rights groups have warned will drastically increase the penalties on women deemed to have flouted the dress code.

Amnesty International said in a report Tuesday that women could even face the death penalty if convicted under the "Promotion of the Culture of Chastity and Hijab" law. (AFP)

Brazil's 2026 elections may be without Lula or Bolsonaro

13 DEC 2024

BRASILIA (TIP): Brazil's 2026 presidential election may offer a field of candidates featuring neither incumbent Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva nor far-right rival Jair Bolsonaro.

That scenario -- possible, given Lula's state of health and a ban on Bolsonaro holding public office -- would present a novel situation and open the door to possible successors.

Lula, 79, is currently in hospital, recovering from emergency surgery on December 11 to relieve pressure from bleeding under his skull related to a bad fall he had in October.

Previously, Lula had treatment in 2011 for throat cancer, and last year a hip replacement operation.

The health woes undermine the robust image that the raspy-voiced leftist icon has long projected, and which galvanized voters to have him as their president between 2003 and 2010, and again since 2023.

In a CNN interview last month Lula declared himself willing to run again if no other viable left-wing candidate emerged.

"I hope it won't be necessary," he said. An ally, Uruguay's ex-president Jose Mujica, recently told AFP: "Lula's nearly 80 and he has no replacement. That is Brazil's misfortune."

Bolsonaro's legal woes

Bolsonaro, 69, faces challenges of a legal nature to try to regain the presidency he lost to Lula in 2022 elections.

The former army captain, who relishes being compared to his hero Donald Trump, has been barred from holding public office, or leaving Brazil, because of what police say was a failed 2022 coup plot against Lula.



Bolsonaro got his ban on public office by making unsubstantiated claims of fraud in Brazil's electronic voting system in that year's election.

Police say he also incited a January 8, 2023 insurrection in which thousands of supporters stormed the presidential palace, the Congress and the Supreme Court, and allege he had a decree written to invoke emergency powers to stay in charge.

Bolsonaro denies the accusations -- which the attorney general is currently weighing to decide if formal charges will be laid -- and has vowed to have the ban set aside so he can run again.

"I am Plan A, Plan B and also Plan C" for 2026, he told a radio program last week.

"Bolsonaro seeks inspiration from Trump... but has before him a long battle in the courts," said Roberto Goulart, an international relations professor at Brasilia University.

Brazil's political and justice system has thrown up surprises before.

Lula himself was barred from running for president in 2018, when he was

convicted of corruption, propelling his running mate, former Sao Paulo mayor and current economy minister Fernando Haddad, to the top of the ticket.

Haddad lost to Bolsonaro. And Lula's conviction was later overturned when the judge in charge of the case against him was found to be biased.

Heirs apparent

Lula's ministers voice optimism about the state of the president's health, despite his recent emergency.

"President Lula is very well... He will certainly be our candidate in 2026," Communication Minister Paulo Pimenta told CNN on Thursday.

"The person who won't be able to run in that election is Bolsonaro, who is ineligible and will probably be in prison before the vote happens," Pimenta said.

According to a survey by MDA Pesquisa last month, six out of 10 leftwing voters would prefer to see Lula run in 2026. If that does not happen, analysts and surveys point to Haddad, 61, as his most likely successor.

Lula's last choice to succeed him did not end well. (AFP)

Iran imposes strict hijab laws; approves death penalty for offenders

11 DEC 2024

TEHRAN (TIP): Iran introduces stricter penalties for persons defying compulsory morality laws. The 74-article law titled 'Protection of the Family through the Promotion of the Culture of Chastity and Hijab' imposes severe penalties including fines up to \$2,380, flogging, prison sentences of up to 15 years or even death.

The law was drafted by the judiciary in May 2023 following the 'Woman Life Freedom' uprising in September 2022. The Guardian Council approved the bill earlier this year and was passed by the Iranian parliament on December 1. The law will be implemented from December 13 onwards with a trial period of 3 years.

Amnesty International issued a

statement on December 11 noting that the new law has been adopted to crush the ongoing resistance to compulsory veiling, further diminishing the rights of women.

"The authorities are seeking to entrench the already suffocating system of repression against women and girls while making their daily lives even more intolerable," said Diana Eltahawy, Amnesty International's Deputy Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa Regional Office.

Human Rights Watch published an article in October 2024 stating that the law consolidates existing measures to enforce compulsory hijab by putting in place restrictions on employment and educational opportunities for violators.

"Rather than responding to the

Woman, Life, Freedom movement with fundamental reforms, the autocratic government is trying to silence women with even more repressive dress laws," said Nahid Naghshbandi, acting Iran researcher at Human Rights Watch. "This law will only breed fierce resistance and defiance among women in and outside Iran."

The new law defines different degrees of 'improper dressing' with varying penalties. Immodest clothing for women is defined as tight clothing that exposes parts of the body below the neck, above the ankles or above the forearms. Immodest clothing for men refers to tight clothing that exposes any part of the body below the chest and above the knees or sleeveless shirts that expose the shoulders. (AFP)

Syria government pledges 'rule of law' after Assad's overthrow

12 DEC 2024

DAMASCUS (TIP): Syria's interim government vowed on December 12 to institute the "rule of law" after years of abuses under ousted president Bashar al-Assad, as G7 powers pushed for an inclusive transition.

Assad fled Syria after a lightning offensive spearheaded by the Islamist Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) group and its allies, which brought a sudden end to five decades of iron-fisted rule by his clan.

Syrians across the country and around the world erupted in celebration after enduring an era during which suspected dissidents were jailed or killed, and nearly 14 years of war that killed 500,000 people and displaced millions.

"We were living in oppression, we were unable to speak," Ibtissam Kaab, a resident of Assad's hometown Qardaha, told AFP.

"Whenever we wanted to speak, they threatened to harm us and our children."

The new government's spokesman told AFP on Thursday the country's constitution and parliament would be suspended for the duration of a three-month transition.

"A judicial and human rights committee will be established to examine the constitution and then introduce amendments," Obaida Arnaout told AFP.

Speaking at the state television headquarters, seized by the new rebel authorities, Arnaout said they would institute the "rule of law".

"All those who committed crimes against the Syrian people will be judged in accordance with the law," he added.

Cultural diversity

Asked about religious and personal freedoms, he said "we respect religious and cultural diversity in Syria," adding that they would remain unchanged.

Leaders of the Group of Seven (G7)



powers said Thursday they were ready to support the transition to an "inclusive and non-sectarian" government in Syria.

In a statement, they called for the protection of human rights, including those of women and minorities, while emphasising "the importance of holding the Assad regime accountable for its crimes."

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken was in Jordan on Thursday to kick off a crisis tour to address the aftermath of Assad's overthrow.

He has called for an "inclusive" process to form Syria's next government that includes protections for minorities.

The State Department said he would call for a Syria that is not "a base of terrorism or posing a threat to its neighbours."

The joy sparked by Assad's overthrow has been accompanied by uncertainty about the future of the multi-ethnic, multi-confessional country.

Sunni Muslim HTS is rooted in Syria's branch of Al-Qaeda and is proscribed as a terrorist organisation by many Western governments, though it has sought to moderate its rhetoric.

Assad is a member of the Alawite

community, an offshoot of Shiite Islam, and long sought to present himself as the sole protector of the country's minorities.

"Precisely because we are Islamic, we will guarantee the rights of all people and all sects in Syria," Mohammad al-Bashir, the transitional head of government, told Italian daily Corriere della Sera in an interview published Wednesday.

The Kurdish administration that holds swathes of Syria's northeast said Thursday it will adopt the three-starred independence flag used by the rebels.

In a statement, it described the flag as a "symbol of this new stage, as it expresses the aspirations of the Syrian people towards freedom, dignity and national unity."

The new rulers have also pledged justice for the victims of Assad's rule, with HTS leader Abu Mohammed al-Jolani vowing that officials involved in torturing detainees will not be pardoned.

Jolani, now using his real name Ahmed al-Sharaa, also urged "countries to hand over any of those criminals who may have fled so they can be brought to justice." (AFP)

SOUTH KOREA'S YOON DEFENDS MARTIAL LAW AS AN ACT OF GOVERNANCE, VOWS TO 'FIGHT TO THE END'

12 DEC 2024

SEOUL (TIP): South Korea's president defended his martial law decree as an act of governance and denied rebellion charges, vowing December 12 to "fight to the end" in the face of attempts to impeach him and intensifying investigations into last week's dramatic move.

Yoon Suk Yeol's televised statement came hours before the main liberal opposition Democratic Party submits a new impeachment motion against Yoon to put it on a floor vote this weekend.

Yoon's Dec. 3 martial law declaration, the first of its kind in more than 40 years in South Korea, has generated political chaos and large protests calling for his ouster. The decree brought hundreds of armed troops attempting to encircle parliament and raiding the election commission, though no major violence or injuries occurred. Martial law lasted only six hours as Yoon was forced to lift it after the National Assembly unanimously voted it down.

Yoon, a conservative, said he enacted martial law as a warning to the main liberal opposition Democratic Party, which controls parliament. He called the party "a monster" and "anti-state forces" that he said tried to use its legislative muscle to impeach top officials, undermined the government's budget bill for next year and sympathized with North Korea.

"I will fight to the end to prevent the forces and criminal groups that have been responsible for paralyzing the country's government and disrupting the nation's constitutional order from threatening the future of the Republic of Korea," Yoon said.

"The opposition is now doing a sword dance of chaos, claiming that the declaration of martial law constitutes to an act of rebellion. But was it really?" he said.

Yoon said martial law was an act of governance that cannot be the subject of investigations and doesn't amount to rebellion. He said the deployment of nearly 300 soldiers to the National Assembly was designed to maintain order, not dissolve or paralyze it.

The Democratic Party quickly dismissed Yoon's statement as "an expression of extreme delusion" and "a declaration of war against the people." Kim Min-seok, head of a party task force, accused the president of attempting to incite pro-Yoon riots by far-right forces. He said the Democratic Party will focus on getting the motion impeaching Yoon passed on Saturday. If Yoon is impeached, his presidential powers would be suspended until the Constitutional Court decides whether to remove him from office or restore his powers. (AP)

Gaza rescuers say at least 22 killed in overnight Israel strike

11 DEC 2024

KHAN YOUNIS (TIP): Gaza's civil defence agency said December 11 that an overnight Israeli air strike in the northern part of the Palestinian territory killed at least 22 people, including women and children.

"At least 22 people were martyred in the massacre committed by the occupation military after it bombed a house belonging to the Abu al-Tarabish family near Kamal Adwan hospital in northern Gaza," agency spokesman Mahmud Bassal told AFP.

Bassal said that an Israeli jet had fired three missiles at the house around midnight, adding the strike completely

destroyed the three-storey structure.

More than 50 people were residing in the house, he said, with many still under the rubble. "Rescuers were unable to evacuate the martyrs or the wounded until this morning," said Jaber Alian, 30, who witnessed the strike from a house near the hospital. He told AFP there were several other bombings across the northern parts of the territory during the night. The Israeli military did not immediately respond to questions about the strike on the Tarabish home.

For several weeks, the Israeli military has been engaged in a sweeping operation in northern Gaza, which it says is aimed at preventing the

regrouping of Hamas militants in the area.

In another strike in central Gaza on Wednesday morning, at least seven people were killed when an Israeli warplane struck the house of the Al-Bayoumi family in Nuseirat refugee camp, Bassal said. The military, meanwhile, said two projectiles crossed from central Gaza into Israel on Wednesday, but were intercepted by the air force. The war in Gaza broke out after Hamas attacked southern Israel on October 7 last year, resulting in the deaths of 1,208 people, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally based on official figures. (AFP)

JALALUDDIN HAQQANI'S BROTHER KILLED IN KABUL SUICIDE BLAST

DEC 12, 2024

KABUL (TIP): The Afghan Taliban's acting minister for refugees, Khalil Rahman Haqqani — the brother of Jalaluddin Haqqani, the founder of insurgent group Haqqani network — and six other people were killed in an explosion in the capital Kabul on December 11, his nephew said.

A Taliban spokesperson said that Khalil Haqqani had been killed by the Islamic State militant group, who did not immediately claim responsibility for the attack.

The suicide bombing occurred inside the ministry, killing Khalil Haqqani, officials said. His last official photo showed him at a meeting chaired by the deputy prime minister, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, earlier Wednesday. Khalil Haqqani is the uncle of Sirajuddin Haqqani, the acting interior minister who leads a powerful network within the Taliban. Haqqani was the most high-profile casualty of a bombing in Afghanistan since the Taliban returned to power and the first Cabinet member to be killed since the takeover. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the blast.

The government's chief spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid, said in a post on X that Haqqani's death was a great loss and described him as a tireless holy warrior who spent his life defending Islam.

Haqqani's killing may be the biggest blow to the Taliban since their return to power given his stature and influence, according to Michael Kugelman, director of the Wilson Centre's South Asia Institute. It also comes at a time when the Taliban have staked their legitimacy on restoring peace after decades of war, he added.

"The killing of a top Haqqani leader inside one of its own ministries undercuts that core narrative," he said.

Former President Hamid Karzai and Haqqani's nephew, Anas, also paid tribute to the minister. Taliban security personnel blocked the road leading to the blast site and barred filming and photography.

Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar condemned the killing as a "terrorist attack."

"Pakistan unequivocally condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations," Dar said, adding his government was in touch with Kabul. Daesh's affiliate, a major rival of the ruling Taliban, has carried out previous attacks across Afghanistan. In early September, one of its suicide bombers in a southwestern Kabul neighbourhood killed at least six people, wounding 13 others. (Agencies)

Pak court indicts Imran, wife Bushra in 2nd Toshakhana case

DEC 13, 2024

ISLAMABAD (TIP): A Pakistani court indicted imprisoned former Prime Minister Imran Khan and his wife on fresh charges of illegally selling state gifts on December 12, local broadcaster Geo reported.

The indictment was the latest in dozens of cases against the 72-year-old former cricket star, who has been in jail since late last year. Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi have already been granted bail in the case, which is one of a series of state treasury charges known as Toshakhana.

These charges revolve around allegations that Khan and his wife illegally procured and then sold gifts worth more than 140 million rupees (\$5,01,000) in state possession, which he received during his 2018-22 premiership. They have denied committing an offence.

Khan and Bibi were both handed a 14-year sentence on those charges days before a national election earlier this



year, following a three-year sentence handed to him in late 2023 in another version of the same case.

However, their sentences have been suspended in appeals at the high court.

The gifts included diamond jewellery and seven watches, six of them Rolexes - the most expensive being valued at 85 million rupees. (Reuters)

BANGLADESH SUMMONS KOLKATA MISSION HEAD FOR CONSULTATIONS



DEC 06, 2024

KOLKATA (TIP): Bangladesh has summoned Shikder Mohammad Ashrafur Rahman, the Acting Deputy High Commissioner in Kolkata, for urgent consultations following protests over attacks on Hindu minorities.

Rahman, who is also Minister - Political Affairs, stationed in Kolkata, has returned to Dhaka.

"Ashrafur Rahman was called for urgent consultations following ongoing protests outside our mission in Kolkata. Additionally, he will be part of the delegation during the foreign secretary-level talks between the two countries slated for next week. He will be back by the middle of this month," a senior official of the Bangladesh Deputy High Commission in Kolkata told PTI on condition of anonymity.

The mission in Kolkata has witnessed multiple protests over the past week by political parties and religious groups condemning the reported atrocities against Hindus minorities in Bangladesh.

In a related development, the Bangladesh Assistant High Commission in Agartala, Tripura, suspended all visa

and consular services on Tuesday, citing "security reasons".

The decision followed an incident where protesters breached the mission's premises on Monday to protest the arrest of Hindu spiritual leader Chinmoy Krishna Das in Dhaka.

Amid rising tensions, the Bangladesh foreign ministry summoned the Indian High Commissioner in Dhaka to register its protest over the vandalism at the mission in Agartala.

Indian Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri is expected to visit Bangladesh next week for the foreign secretary-level meeting, marking the first high-level interaction between the two nations since the interim government led by Muhammad Yunus assumed office on August 8, following the ouster of Sheikh Hasina as prime minister.

Relations between the two neighbours have been strained since Hasina fled to India on August 5.

The recent arrest of Das has further intensified the situation, with India expressing concerns over continued attacks on minorities, particularly Hindus, in Bangladesh. (PTI)



Yunus regime fascist: Hasina vows justice for atrocities

DEC 10, 2024

DHAKA (TIP): Bangladesh's deposed premier Sheikh Hasina has launched a fierce attack on the interim administration, accusing its Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus of running a "fascist regime" that allows terrorists and fundamentalists to act without restraint.

In a virtual address to a gathering of overseas Awami League supporters in London on Sunday, Hasina accused Yunus of being the "mastermind" behind the July-August turmoil that ousted her government and vowed to bring him and his allies to justice under Bangladeshi law.

She criticised Yunus and his interim government for their alleged persecution of religious minorities. "Since August 5, the attacks on minorities, places of worship of Hindus, Christians and Buddhists have been rampant. We condemn it. The Jamaat and terrorists are having a free run under the new regime," she said. (PTI)

Sikh History This Week

DECEMBER 13 TO DECEMBER 19

13th December

1845 Lord Hardinge, the Governor General of British forces, issued the proclamation of War against the Sikhs.



1923 Maharaja Ripudaman Singh Nabha passed away.
1924 Sardar Sundar Singh Babbar of Hayatpur dies during trial.

14th December

1705 Imperial forces give solemn assurances of safe conduct at Anandpur. Subsequent events proved these promises to be hollow.



1920 Shiromani Akali Dal was established to assist the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee and launch Gurudwara Sudhar (Restitution) Movement.

15th December

1887 Maharani Bamba, wife of Dalip Singh, passed away in London.



1923 Bhai Pheru Morcha.
1924 14th Shaheedhi Jatha of 500 Akalis marched from Amritsar to Jaito.
1941 Independent Hind Forces were established.



1983 Jarnail Singh Bhindrawalae moved his resident into the building neighboring Sri Akal Takhat.
1990 International Conference on Sikh Studies held in New York.

16th December

1634 Battle of Lahara Gaga between Moghals and Sikhs.



1665 Guru Tegh Bahadur released from Aurangzeb's detention.



1705 Guru Gobind Singh reached Rai Kot.
1971 Pakistani solidiers surrendered to General Jagjit Singh Arora.
1987 Isreal Condemns Atrocities against Sikhs in the UNO.

17th December

1846 Treaty of Bhairawal signed between the British and Maharaja Dalip Singh.

18th December

1661 Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji left for Delhi to saefguard the rights of Brahmins.
1845 Battle of Mudki between Sikhs and British Forces.
1960 Fateh Singh started fast unto death for Punjabi Suba.

19th December

1924 Babbar Sada Singh PinDori accepted shahadat in Jail.



1967 Punjabi Bill passed by the Punjab Assembly.

Home remedies to get rid of blackheads

Blackheads are small bumps that appear due to pores becoming clogged with oil and dead skin but cinnamon and honey can help in combating this because of anti-bacterial qualities, says an expert.

- **Baking soda:** Baking soda isn't just for baking or keeping your refrigerator smelling fresh. The antiseptic quality of it makes it a wonderful product for your skin. It works as an exfoliant to scrub away dead skin cells leaving skin soft and smooth. Baking soda also helps to neutralize the skin's pH, it encourages the skin to produce less oil which means that after regular use, you may be able to say goodbye to those blackheads for good.
- **Cinnamon:** Cinnamon is an anti-bacterial spice that can be used to make an aromatic face mask that offers all sorts of benefits to the skin, including the removal of blackheads. It also helps to eliminate flaky skin as well as acne, and it can be used as a body scrub for a smoother, more glowing complexion.
- **Honey:** Honey is both antibacterial and antiseptic, properties that help remove blackheads by destroying germs or impurities that clog pores, making it another great choice for those with acne related blackheads. Honey also acts as a natural antibiotic, helping to pull dirt from the pores of the skin to clear blackheads as well as tightening and hydrating the pores for a clearer complexion.
- **Epsom salts:** Epsom salts are not only great for easing sore muscles, they can also help to remove blackheads. While most of the treatments on this list dissolve the dead skin and oil, the Epsom salt mixture actually pulls the plug out of each clogged pore so they simply wash away.
- **Egg whites:** Egg whites offer numerous benefits to the skin. They're rich in protein which offers skin toning properties and helps to promote wrinkle free skin. Due to their ability to tighten skin and



minimize pores, using egg whites is especially good for oily skin and reduces the chances of future blackheads while removing current blackheads at the same time. This method draws out sebum and pulls out any deep within the pores.

- **Green tea:** Instead of spending endless hours attempting to pop, rub or concentrate clogged pores from your face, have a go at utilising an all common cure, green tea, which is high on antioxidants. It not only diminishes oil and irritation on the skin, but serves to secure it from future harm. So next time you discover small dark obstructed pores covering your face, just brew up green tea to help ostracize the zits for good.

Women More Likely to Hate Their Exes

Staying friends with an ex tends to be a touchy subject. To some, the ability to let the love that you shared carry over into a platonic relationship is a sign of emotional maturity. To others, it's a red flag that suggests the fire hasn't died out, and a threat to any current relationship. A study has found that there may be a gender divide when it comes to views on exes: Men seem to view their former partners more favorably than women do. But the reasons behind this gender divide may surprise you.

The researchers posed a few interesting theories regarding the source of this disparity. Firstly, they said that "women are more likely to hold 'pragmatic' love attitudes, including stronger preference for long-term, more exclusive relationships," whereas men are more likely to "endorse a 'game-playing' attitude to love" and "value sex more strongly as a physical act that gives pleasure."

Simply put, this evolutionary theory would mean women are more likely to view their investment in a relationship as a waste of time if it doesn't result in a lifelong commitment, whereas men are more inclined to view the relationship as a sexually gratifying experience that met their needs and expectations.

The researchers also noted that women were more likely than men to blame their breakup on their exes, and were more likely to report "problematic partner behaviors" such as infidelity or emotional and physical abuse as the reasons for the split. Men, on the other hand, "are more likely to claim that they do not know what caused their past breakups."

Finally, the research showed that women engage in more "constructive coping than men do," seeking support from friends who give them closure and assure them that their ex was not a good partner. Men, on the other hand, "usually experience greater ambivalence," "often remain emotionally attached longer," and "are less likely to believe that their ex-partner was not right for them."

Signs your relationship won't last

They're selfish

If your partner doesn't seem to care about anyone but themselves, take a moment to assess your relationship. German psychoanalyst Erich Fromm proposed that selfish people, rather than having too much self-love, in fact have none at all. Their self-hatred is the reason they relentlessly take from others; they simply have nothing to give. If your partner displays selfish behaviour, deeper issues may need to be addressed before your relationship can go any further.

They latch onto all your interests

While it's great to have things in common with your partner, if you find that they are suddenly adopting all of your interests, you could be heading for splitsville. As dating coach Erika Ettin tells Business Insider, "In any relationship . . . it's important to both bond with your partner but also maintain your own life. You don't want to become so dependent on someone else that you lose who you are, or that essence that makes you unique. When you're doing things on your own, you become a more interesting, well-rounded person, thereby a better partner to anyone."

All you feel is passion

While it's natural to get swept up in feelings of lust at the beginning of a relationship, psychologists say that if those are the only feelings you have for your partner, chances are the relationship will fizzle out over time as you get to know who they really are.

FOOD CORNER

Chilli Paneer

INGREDIENTS

- 250 gm cubed paneer
- 2 chopped, de seeded Capsicum (Green Pepper)
- 4 cloves chopped garlic
- 1 tablespoon tomato ketchup
- 1 teaspoon white vinegar
- 1 cup Veg stock
- 2 chopped into cubes Onion
- 8 chopped Green Chilli
- 2 tablespoon light soya sauce
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 cup Refined oil
- 3 tablespoon Corn starch

Method

- Cut paneer into 1 inch cubes and sprinkle 2 tablespoon cornstarch over it. Toss the paneer lightly to coat the corn starch. Take care not to break the paneer.
- Heat sufficient oil in a kadai, when oil is medium hot, add the paneer pieces and deep fry on medium heat until the edges start to turn brown. Take care to fry in batches. Drain on absorbent paper and set aside.
- Cut the onion into 8 pieces and remove the



smaller inner pieces from it. Then cut each capsicum into 8 pieces and deseed them. And cut the green chillies into slices. Set them all aside.

- Blend remaining corn starch (nearly a tablespoon) along with tomato ketchup and white vinegar in the vegetable stock. Let it rest and keep aside.
- Heat two tablespoons of oil in a sauce pan, add crushed garlic to fairly hot oil and saute for about 10 seconds or till light golden in colour. Stir-fry for a minute.
- Add sliced green chillies, onions and green capsicum to the wok and fry on high flame for 30 seconds. Add the remaining capsicum and toss well for another minute. The vegetables should be cooked but crisp. Saute for a couple of minutes.

Eating dark, but not milk, chocolate may cut diabetes risk: Study

Eating five servings of dark chocolate, and not the milk one, a week may help reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes, according to a long-term US study.

Published in the BMJ, the researchers also found that increased consumption of milk, but not dark, chocolate was associated with long-term weight gain.

Chocolate contains high levels of flavanols (a natural compound found in fruits and vegetables) which have been shown to promote heart health and reduce the risk of diabetes.

But the link between chocolate consumption and the risk of type 2 diabetes remains controversial due to inconsistent results.

In addition, most previous studies have not looked at whether eating dark and milk chocolate – which have different cocoa, milk and sugar content – might have different impacts on the risk of type 2 diabetes.

To explore this further, researchers combined data from three long-term US observational studies of female nurses and male healthcare professionals with no history of diabetes, heart disease or cancer when they were recruited.

They analysed associations between type 2 diabetes and total chocolate consumption for 1,92,208 participants, and chocolate subtype (dark and milk) consumption for 1,11,654 participants over an average monitoring period of 25 years.

In the analyses for total chocolate, 18,862 people developed type 2 diabetes.

After adjusting for personal, lifestyle, and dietary risk factors, the authors found that people who ate at least five servings a week of any type of chocolate showed a significant 10 percent lower rate of type 2 diabetes compared to those who rarely or never ate



chocolate.

In analyses by chocolate subtypes, 4,771 people developed type 2 diabetes.

After adjusting for the same risk factors, people who ate at least five servings of dark chocolate a week showed a significant 21 per cent lower risk of type 2 diabetes, but no significant associations were found for milk chocolate intake.

The researchers also found a 3 per cent reduced risk of type 2 diabetes for each additional weekly serving of dark chocolate.

“Clinical trials needed to confirm findings and help identify reasons for dark chocolate’s protective effect,” said researchers.

Source: IANS



Healthy diet reduces chronic pain, finds Australian study

Adopting a healthy diet can reduce the severity of chronic pain, an Australian research has found.

In a new study, researchers from the University of South Australia found a direct link between greater consumption of food within the federal government’s Australian Dietary Guidelines and lower levels of body pain, particularly among women, reports Xinhua news agency.

“It’s common knowledge that eating well is good for your health and well-being. But knowing that simple changes to your diet could offset chronic pain could be life-changing,” Sue Ward, a co-author of the study, said.

Previous research has found that over 30 per cent of people globally suffer from chronic pain, with women and people who are overweight or obese more likely to be affected.

The new study found that higher consumption of core foods—vegetables, fruits, grains, lean meats, dairy and alternatives—reduces chronic pain regardless of a person’s weight.

“Knowing that food choices and the overall quality of a person’s diet will not only make a person healthier but also help reduce their pain levels is extremely valuable,” Ward said.

The study found that the effect of healthy diets reducing chronic pain was more prominent for women than for men.

Ward said it is possible that the anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties of core food groups are what reduce pain, but the team cannot say with certainty whether poorer quality diets lead to more pain or if pain leads to a poorer diet.

Source: IANS

Study claims keto diet can boost treatment for blood cancer

A new study suggests that a common dietary supplement could make a type of cancer treatment called CAR-T cell therapy more effective.

The research, conducted by the University of Pennsylvania and Penn Medicine’s Abramson Cancer Centre, was shared at a major medical conference, the 66th American Society of Hematology (ASH) Annual Meeting and Exposition (Abstract 4).

CAR-T cell therapy is a cancer treatment that uses a patient’s own immune cells to fight cancer. These immune cells are taken from the patient, reprogrammed to attack cancer, and then put back into the body.

Currently, this type of cancer treatment is being extensively used in people with specific blood cancers only.

Researchers tested how different diets affected CAR-T cell therapy in



mice with a type of blood cancer.

They discovered that a ketogenic diet, popularly known as keto diet, which is very low in carbohydrates and high in fats, improved the ability of CAR-T cells to fight tumors.

Why? The keto diet causes the body to produce a substance called beta-hydroxybutyrate (BHB). BHB is a chemical made by the liver

when the body burns fat for energy instead of sugar.

The researchers found that CAR-T cells use BHB as a better energy source than sugar, giving them more strength to kill cancer cells.

The ketogenic diet, or keto diet, is a way of eating that limits carbohydrates (like bread, rice, and sugar) and focusses on fats (like ghee, butter, and nuts).

Normally, the body uses glucose (sugar) from carbohydrates for energy. However, when carbs are drastically reduced, the body enters a state called ketosis, where it starts burning fat for energy instead.

This process produces molecules called ketones, including beta-hydroxybutyrate (BHB), which act as an alternative fuel. Popular for weight loss, the keto diet typically includes foods like meats, fish, eggs, nuts, dairy, and healthy fats while avoiding bread, rice, sugar, and starchy vegetables.

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OpenAI releases video generator Sora

OpenAI has publicly released its new Artificial Intelligence video generator Sora but the company won't let most users depict people as it monitors for patterns of misuse.

Users of a premium version of OpenAI's flagship product ChatGPT can now use Sora to instantly create AI-generated videos based on written commands. Among the highlighted examples are high-quality video clips of sumo-wrestling bears and a cat sipping coffee.

But only a small set of invited testers can use Sora to make videos of humans as OpenAI works to "address concerns around misappropriation of likeness and deepfakes," the company said in a blog post.

Text-to-video AI tools like Sora have been pitched as a way to save costs in making new entertainment and marketing videos but have also raised concerns about the ease with which they could impersonate real people in politics and otherwise.

OpenAI says it is blocking content with nudity and that a top priority is preventing the most harmful uses, including child sexual abuse material and sexual deepfakes.

The makers said they were encountering high demands and had suspended account creation for some time. "We're currently experiencing heavy traffic and have temporarily disabled Sora account creation," according to its webpage.

OpenAI first unveiled Sora earlier this year but said it wanted to first engage with artists, policymakers and others before releasing the new tool to the public.

The company, which has been sued by some authors and The New York Times over its use of copyrighted works of writing to train ChatGPT, hasn't disclosed what imagery and video sources were used to train Sora.

Source: AP

Google unveils Gemini 2.0, its new AI model developed for agentic experiences

Google has introduced Gemini 2.0, its new AI model for the agentic era. The tech giant, on Wednesday, unveiled the first model in the Gemini 2.0 family of models – Gemini 2.0 Flash, a workhorse model with low latency and enhanced performance. The company also shared the frontier of its agentic research through prototypes enabled by Gemini 2.0's native multimodal capabilities.

What is Gemini 2.0?

In their article, Demis Hassabis, CEO of Google DeepMind and Koray Kavukcuoglu, CTO of Google DeepMind, said that Gemini 2.0 Flash builds on the success of 1.5 Flash – the company's most popular model yet for developers. The 2.0 Flash outperforms 1.5 Pro on some key benchmarks at twice the speed. The new model also comes with some unique capabilities.

Along with support for multimodal inputs such as images, video, and audio, 2.0 Flash also supports multimodal outputs such as natively generated images along with text and steerable text-to-speech (TTS) multilingual audio. The company said that 2.0 Flash can also natively call tools like Google Search, code execution as well as third-party user-defined functions.

Gemini 2.0 Flash performance

When it comes to performance, the 2.0 Flash shows significant advancement across most benchmarks when compared to the Gemini 1.5 Flash and Gemini 1.5 Pro. The new model excels in code generation tasks as it secured 92.9 per cent on Natural2Code, and this is a significant improvement over Gemini 1.5 Pro's 85.4 per cent. When it comes to mathematical reasoning, the



2.0 Flash scored 89.7 per cent on MATH and 63 per cent on HiddenMath, also a considerable improvement over past iterations.

On factuality, 2.0 Flash scored 83.6 per cent, showing enhanced ability to offer accurate responses. The model scored 62.1 per cent on GQPA indicating better reasoning capabilities. The model saw a slight dip in long-context understanding (MRCR IM) with 69.2 per cent while Gemini 1.5 Pro obtained 82.6 per cent. The new model improves significantly on multimodal tasks with 70.7 per cent on MMMU, however, audio recognition remains low at 9.8 per cent.

Overall, the new Gemini 2.0 Flash outdoes its predecessors, especially in areas like coding, math, and multimodal understanding. The benchmark scores, as shared by Google, position 2.0 Flash as a robust model for complex tasks.

Gemini 2.0 flash: Availability

The new Gemini 2.0 Flash is available as an experimental model to developers via the Gemini API in Google AI Studio and Vertex AI with multimodal input and text output for all developers, and text-to-speech and native image generation available to early-access partners. The company said that the general availability will follow in January along with more model sizes. To help developers build dynamic and interactive applications, Google is also releasing a new Multimodal Live API that has real-time audio, video-streaming input and the ability to use multiple and combined tools.

Gemini users around the world will be able to access a chat optimised version of 2.0 Flash experimental by selecting it in the model drop-down on desktop, and mobile web and it will be available in the Gemini mobile app soon. Google has said that the Gemini 2.0 will be integrated into more Google products early next year.

Source: The Indian Express

Isro fires LVM3 cryogenic engine that will power Gaganyaan Mission



The Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) has achieved a key milestone in its space program with the successful sea-level hot test of the CE20 Cryogenic Engine on November 29, 2024.

Conducted at the Isro Propulsion Complex, the test is a critical step in enhancing the engine's performance and reliability.

The CE20 engine powers the upper stage of Isro's LVM3 launch vehicle, which has played a pivotal role in missions like Chandrayaan-2, Chandrayaan-3, and the upcoming Gaganyaan human spaceflight project.

The engine has already proven its capability in six successful LVM3 missions and is designed to operate at thrust levels ranging from 19 tonnes to an upgraded 22 tonnes for future missions.

One of the test's highlights was the demonstration of a multi-element igniter, essential for the engine's restart capability in space. This innovation ensures

greater flexibility for complex missions.

Additionally, Isro introduced a Nozzle Protection System to address challenges such as vibrations and thermal stress during sea-level testing. The system simplifies testing and reduces costs while maintaining safety and efficiency.

The engine and testing facility performed flawlessly, meeting all expected performance parameters. With this success, the CE20 engine is now further prepared to support India's ambitious Gaganyaan mission, which will send three astronauts into orbit.

This achievement shows Isro's ongoing efforts to develop advanced space technology, enhance payload capacities, and strengthen India's position in global space exploration.

As Isro continues to refine its capabilities, the CE20 engine remains central to future missions, paving the way for greater achievements in space.

India's retail inflation eases to 5.48% in November

Retail inflation slowed to 5.48 per cent in November compared to 6.21 per cent in October, mainly due to easing food prices, especially vegetables, according to government data released on Thursday, December 12.

According to Consumer Price Index (CPI) data released by the National Statistics Office (NSO), the inflation in the food basket reduced to 9.04 per cent in November. It was 10.87 per cent in October and 8.7 per cent in November 2023.

"During the month of November 2024, a significant decline in inflation is observed in vegetables, pulses and products, sugar and confectionary, fruits, eggs, milk and products, spices, transport and communication and personal care and effects subgroups," the NSO said.

The CPI-based headline inflation increased from an average of 3.6 per cent during July-August to 5.5 per cent in September and further to 6.2 per cent in October 2024, the highest in more than a year since September 2023.

Last week, the Reserve Bank raised the inflation projection for the current fiscal to 4.8 per cent from 4.5 per cent. It also said that the lingering food price pressures are likely to keep headline inflation elevated in the December quarter.

Consumer price index (CPI)-based headline inflation increased from an average of 3.6 per cent during July-August to 5.5 per cent in September and further to 6.2 per cent in October 2024.

Nasdaq surges above 20,000 for first time

The Nasdaq Composite Index achieved a historic milestone on Wednesday, reaching 20,000 for the first time, driven by enthusiasm surrounding artificial intelligence and anticipated interest rate reductions that propelled technology stocks to remarkable heights.

The technology-focused index has risen over 33% this year, led by major tech firms including Apple, Nvidia, Alphabet, and recently Tesla. The gains on Wednesday followed a US inflation report that strengthened expectations for a Federal Reserve rate reduction next week.

The index concluded Wednesday's trading at 20,034.89, representing a 1.8% daily increase.

The current rally has benefited investors focused on growth and technology sectors, whilst raising concerns about elevated valuations and the increasing influence of large-capitalisation stocks within the index.

US core inflation stays firm with fourth-straight 0.3% increase

NEW YORK (TIP)

US consumer prices continued to rise in November at a pace that is fueling concerns the progress toward taming inflation is stalling.

The so-called core consumer price index — which excludes food and energy costs — increased 0.3% for a fourth straight month, Bureau of Labor Statistics figures showed Wednesday. From a year ago, it rose 3.3%.

Traders continued to bet on a Federal Reserve interest-rate cut next week after the figures came in largely as expected.

Economists see the core gauge as a better indicator of the underlying inflation trend than the overall CPI that includes often-volatile food and energy costs. The headline measure rose 0.3% from the prior month and 2.7% from a year before. Shelter costs accounted for nearly 40% of the overall advance.

While price pressures have subsided from a peak seen during the pandemic recovery, progress has leveled off more recently. That, along with receding concerns over the labor market, helps explain why several US central bankers have argued for a more gradual pace of interest-rate cuts.

The CPI report showed goods costs excluding food and energy climbed 0.3%, the most since May 2023 and fueled by higher prices for new and used vehicles as well as apparel. That category had been a large driver of disinflation over the past year and a half.

Grocery prices jumped 0.5%, the biggest advance since the start of last year.

Economists have paid close attention to shelter prices, the largest category within services and one of the most persistent sources of inflation in recent years. That metric advanced 0.3% in November after a 0.4% gain in the prior month. Owners' equivalent rent as well as rent of primary residence — subsets of shelter — both edged up 0.2%, the smallest gains since 2021.

Excluding housing and energy, service prices rose 0.3% for a second month, according to Bloomberg calculations. While central bankers have stressed the importance of looking at such a metric when assessing the overall inflation trajectory, they compute it based on a separate index.

That measure — known as the personal consumption expenditures price index — doesn't put as much weight on shelter as the CPI, which is one reason why it's trending closer to the Fed's



2% target.

A government report on producer prices due Thursday will offer insights into categories that feed directly into PCE, including health-care services, airfares and portfolio management.

Policymakers also pay close attention to wage growth, as it can help inform expectations for consumer spending — the main engine of the economy. A separate report Wednesday that combines the inflation figures with recent wage data showed real hourly earnings grew 1.3% from a year ago.

Part of the reason why Fed officials have indicated they're in no rush to lower borrowing costs is because they no longer believe the labor market to be a source of inflation.

Looking ahead, it remains to be seen to what extent President-elect Donald Trump's agenda will weigh on the trajectory of inflation. While consumers' views of the economy and their finances have improved since he sealed his return to the White House, many economists say some of his campaign promises could put additional pressure on inflation. Some businesses, for example, are considering raising prices in anticipation of higher tariffs.

Source: Bloomberg

ADB lowers India's GDP forecast to 6.5%, cites low private investment

NEW DELHI (TIP)

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) on Wednesday lowered India's economic growth forecast to 6.5 per cent for the current financial year from its earlier estimate of 7 per cent due to lower-than-expected growth in private investment and housing demand.

The multilateral development bank has also lowered India's growth forecast for 2025-26 financial year.

Changes in US trade, fiscal and immigration policies could dent growth and add to inflation in developing Asia and the Pacific, according to the latest edition of Asian Development Outlook (ADO).

The report also said Asia and the Pacific's economies are projected to grow 4.9 per cent in 2024, slightly below ADB's September forecast of 5 per cent.

"India's outlook is adjusted downward from 7 per cent to 6.5 per cent for this year, and from 7.2 per cent to 7 per cent next year, due to lower-than-expected growth in private investment and housing demand," ADB said.

Last week, the Reserve Bank also significantly lowered the growth projection for current fiscal year to 6.6 per cent from 7.2 per cent earlier and hiked the inflation forecast to 4.8 per cent in view of slowdown in economic activity as well as stubborn food prices.

India's GDP growth fell to a 7-quarter low of 5.4 per cent in



July-September period of current financial year 2024-25 as against RBI's own projection of 7 per cent.

India's growth will remain robust, with the economy supported by higher agriculture output resulting from the kharif crop season (which will also put downward pressure on food prices); continued resilience of the services sector; and lower-than-expected Brent crude prices in 2024 and 2025, ADB added. It further said strong forward-looking and labour market indicators suggest that economic momentum will recover in the coming quarters.

WEEKLY HOROSCOPE - DEC 16 TO DEC 22, 2024

By Chirag Daruwalla - Son of Astrologer Bejan Daruwalla



BEJAN DARUWALLA AND CHIRAG DARUWALLA



Aries

ARIES : Ganesha says this week, you will face some new experiences in your life. Your sensitivity and deep thinking will prove to be important for you at this time. At the workplace, the importance of teamwork will increase. Collaboration with colleagues will give you many new possibilities. In your personal life, you will deepen your close relationships. This time is suitable for sharing ideas with them and clarifying feelings. Pay attention to your health this week, regular exercise and following a proper diet will be beneficial for you. Experience more positive energy and keep your intentions strong. Be mentally prepared to face challenges and remember that every problem has a solution. Your insight and unique perspective will become a source of strength for you now.



Taurus

TAURUS : Ganesha says this week symbolizes prosperity and balance for Taurus. During this time, positive changes will be seen in your personal and professional life. Your efforts made with patience and dedication will bear fruit. This week you should pay special attention to your health. Resting and meditating for a while will be beneficial to overcome mental exhaustion. Your emotional state will remain strong, but it is important for you to take some time for yourself. Personal relationships will become sweeter; time spent with family will improve your close bonds. If you think of sharing your feelings with someone special, this is the right time. It will be beneficial to be alert to new opportunities in business. Strengthen relationships with colleagues, and working together as partners can give positive results. Maintain politeness and respect towards close individuals, so that cooperation increases in organizations and relationships. Overall, this week is a time of growth and development for you. Have faith in yourself and be ready to face every situation.



Gemini

GEMINI : Ganesha says this week will be full of variety for Gemini natives. The brilliance of your ideas and communication skills will pave the way for new opportunities. Your partners and friends will be ready to listen to your ideas now, so do not be afraid to share your feelings. Your creativity will be at its peak, which will encourage you to start new projects. This is a perfect time for career progress; Focus on building good relationships

with your colleagues. Pay special attention to health this week. Regular exercise and a balanced diet will keep your energy up. The role of communication will also be important in relationships. Talking about family and personal issues will strengthen your position. Meeting or talking to an old friend can inspire you. At the end of this week, take some time for yourself. Meditation and spiritual activities will give you mental peace. Your emotions will be deep inside you, so it will be necessary to identify and balance them. Try to be happy and keep positivity around you.



Cancer

CANCER : Ganesha says this week many positive changes will come in your life. Family relationships will be strong and the atmosphere at home will be pleasant. You will get an opportunity to spend more time with your loved ones, which will make your relationships even deeper. Your emotional state will also be strong during this time. You will recognize the possibilities within you and try to take your creativity to new horizons. Morale will also be high in the workplace, due to which you will move fast towards your goal. However, sometimes you may feel a little sensitive. Therefore, take care not to let negative emotions overwhelm you. Practicing meditation or yoga will be beneficial for you. This week you are likely to find a solution to an old problem, which will restore your mental peace. The time will also be appropriate to work on a new project or idea. Keep in mind that it is important to have faith in yourself from a personal point of view. Listen to your intuition and move in the direction your heart says.



Leo

LEO : Ganesha says many opportunities can be expected for you this week. Your self-confidence and positive energy will attract people around you. In the work sphere, your relationship with the team will be strong and you will focus on an important project. You will be able to present your point effectively, so attend a meeting and share your thoughts. In personal life, this is a great time to spend time with your loved ones. An old conversation can strengthen your relationships. Do not be afraid to express your feelings openly. In terms of health, a little physical activity and meditation will improve your mental health. Try to include it in your daily routine. Some unexpected events may also happen this week, so be tolerant and face the situation with full patience. Take special care that you keep your thoughts positive. Keep moving forward, as this week is going to bring a new turn for you.



Virgo

VIRGO : Ganesha says this week, many opportunities and

challenges will come up for Virgo natives. You will feel yourself full of new energy and inspiration. At work, your hard work will pay off and your plans will achieve success beyond expectations. It is time to increase harmony with colleagues, and teamwork can get you the expected results. In personal relationships, it is time to spend more time with your family and friends. Establishing communication will strengthen relationships. Love life will also bring excitement and novelty, which will help you increase mutual understanding. On the health front, try to adopt a balanced and healthy lifestyle. Consider yoga and meditation for mental peace. Do not forget to enjoy small joys. This week your hard work and positive attitude will show you new possibilities, just keep faith in yourself and keep moving forward.



Libra

LIBRA : Ganesha says this week, many important changes are indicated for Libra people. In work life, you need to establish better coordination with colleagues. Your harmony and communication skills will prove to be especially useful this week. In personal relationships, do not hesitate to express your feelings. Your loved ones will understand your sensitivities and this is an important time to strengthen relationships. In terms of health, this week it is advisable to focus on regular exercise and proper diet. Yoga and meditation will be beneficial for you to maintain mental health. Social life will also increase; you will get an opportunity to spend time with friends and family, which will increase your positive energy. This week, your positive thinking and cooperation will help you face many difficulties. Keep your focus and keep moving forward.



Scorpio

SCORPIO : Ganesha says this week, there are possibilities of positive changes in various areas for the people of the Scorpio zodiac. Your confidence and determination will increase, which will enable you to move faster towards your goals. Some new opportunities may knock at your door in professional life. Try to express your thoughts clearly, so that your hard work gets results quickly. Personal relationships will also improve. Try to spend time with your family and friends; this will make you mentally strong. In matters of love, you will be able to establish better communication with your partner, which will further increase your intimacy. Keep trying in terms of health. Regular exercise and a balanced diet will help maintain your energy. Control your emotions and try to stay away from negativity. Use your time wisely and focus on your goals. Your hard work is likely to yield positive results this week.



Sagittarius

SAGITTARIUS : Ganesha says this time of the week is going to open the doors of new possibilities for you, Sagittarius. You will be more willing to share your ideas and plans. This week is favorable for social interaction. Spending time with friends and family will make you happy. New opportunities in personal and professional spheres will attract you at this time. Express your ideas clearly, as there will be a special charm in your style. You will be appreciated for the work you do, which will increase your confidence. In terms of health, focus on regular exercise and a balanced diet. Doing meditation or yoga can be beneficial to maintain mental peace. Your creativity will be at its peak this week, so do not miss working on new projects. Be patient while making plans and take care of the little things. This week will be especially fruitful for you.



Capricorn

CAPRICORN : Ganesha says this week marks a new beginning for Capricorn people. Some positive changes may be seen in your workplace. You will get the fruits of your hard work soon and experience rapid progress towards your goal. In personal life, harmony and understanding will increase in relationships. Time spent with family will give you mental peace. Your thoughts and feelings will be clear this week, which will enable you to communicate better with your loved ones. In terms of health, it is advisable to take care of regular exercise and a balanced diet this week. A little caution will help in maintaining your health better. Participating in social activities will allow you to make new contacts and strengthen your social status. Be full of confidence, and welcome new opportunities. This week your organized approach and discipline will help you reach new heights. At the same time, wishes are likely to be fulfilled. Make good use of this time and focus on your goals.



Aquarius

AQUARIUS : Ganesha says this week many new opportunities will come to you. Your creativity and ideology will get a new direction, which will enable you to bring newness to your work. Relationships will be stable and you will enjoy spending time with your loved ones. This week also looks favorable from the economic point of view. Your investments may improve, so make decisions wisely. Your efforts will be appreciated in the work field and you may get a chance to work on an important project. From a health point of view, keep in mind that you should resort to yoga or meditation to reduce stress. This will strengthen your mental health. Spending time with family will give you

BIRTHDAY HOROSCOPE : DECEMBER 16 TO DECEMBER 22 BY VEDIC ASTROLOGER NASTUR BEJAN DARUWALLA



**VEDIC ASTROLOGER NASTUR
BEJAN DARUWALLA**

DECEMBER 16 : Ganesha says you are natural communicators. You have a gift for words and can articulate your thoughts and feelings with ease. You are also highly social and enjoy being around others. However, you can sometimes be superficial in your relationships and may need to work on developing deeper connections. Your assertiveness and confidence will be at an all-time high, making it an excellent day to make decisions and take action. Use your gift of gab to negotiate a deal or express your feelings to someone you care about.

DECEMBER 17 : Ganesha says you have a strong sense of family and community. You are highly empathetic and compassionate, which makes you a natural caretaker. You also have a deep love of tradition and may value stability and routine in your life. However, you may sometimes struggle with change and need to work on being more adaptable. Your determination will be rewarded with success but be mindful of others' feelings along the way. Take advantage of this energy and focus on your goals.

DECEMBER 18 : Ganesha says you

are adventurous and free-spirited. You have a natural curiosity and thirst for exploration, which can lead you to new and exciting experiences. You also have a gift for adapting to new situations and can quickly make friends wherever you go. However, you may sometimes struggle with commitment and may need to work on developing deeper, more meaningful relationships. Your enthusiasm is contagious, and you'll attract others who share your zest for life. Just be careful not to let your impulsive nature get the best of you.

DECEMBER 19 : Ganesha says you have a natural talent for nurturing others. You are highly empathetic and caring, which makes you a natural caregiver. You also have a strong sense of justice and may feel called to fight for the underdog. However, you may sometimes struggle with setting boundaries and need to work on taking care of your own needs as well. Trust your gut and don't be afraid to speak up if something doesn't feel right. Your honesty and sincerity will be appreciated by those around you.

DECEMBER 20 : Ganesha says you have a natural talent for intuition and

spirituality. You are highly perceptive and can sense things that others may miss. You also have a gift for introspection and may enjoy spending time alone in contemplation. However, you may sometimes struggle with connecting with others on a deeper level and need to work on being more open and vulnerable. Your ability to connect with others on an emotional level will be heightened, so don't be afraid to share your ideas and feelings with those you trust.

DECEMBER 21 : Ganesha says you have a natural talent for business and finance. You understand how money works and have a knack for making wise investments. You may also be highly ambitious and driven to succeed. However, you may sometimes struggle with balancing your work life with your personal life and need to work on cultivating fulfilling relationships outside of work. Just be sure to balance your assertiveness with compassion and understanding for those around you.

DECEMBER 22 : Ganesha says you naturally can lift the spirits of others who are down and depressed, but you

need to learn to curb your tendency to seem shy, and spendthrift at times. Your personality and self-assurance will grow, and your career will advance significantly. Your talents and knowledge will be valued by your employer. The selling of a piece of property, the collection of rent, dividends, or interest will all result in extra financial gains for you. A wonderful time to purchase pricey artwork and decorations is now.

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mental peace. Trust your intuitions this week and try to adopt new things. This is the time to move forward with positivity and self-confidence.



PISCES : Ganesha says this week is a sign of a new beginning for the people of Pisces. Your creativity and sensitivity will be of special importance to you this week. You may have to face some new responsibilities in the workplace, but your hard work and patience will bring you success. There may be a lack of communication in personal relationships, so spending time with your loved ones will be important. Focus on yoga and meditation this week, it will be extremely beneficial for your mental health. Take steps thoughtfully in financial matters and think well before taking any major financial decision. In terms of health, light exercise and a balanced diet will be beneficial for you. Overall, this week is going to bring positive changes for you, just make sure that you listen to your conscience and move forward accordingly.

AUTHOR BIO : Chirag Daruwalla is the best astrologer and one of the most famous names in the astrology world. He has more than 18 years of experience. Readers may seek his advice related to career, health, finance, business, money, love and marriage. He has complete knowledge, solutions, and guidance to all the problems related to life. Visit his website chiragdaruwalla.com. He is available for consultations on WhatsApp number +91 8141566266 or by email: info@chiragdaruwalla.com

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Dattatreya Jayanti

Dattatreya Jayanti is celebrated on the tenth day of Margashirsha Krishna Paksha. Lord Dattatreya was the son of Maharishi Atri and mother Anusuya. Maharishi Atri is one of the Saptarishis, and Mother Anusuya is cited as the epitome of chastity. Lord Dattatreya is believed to be an incarnation of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh. It is said that they are considered to be part of the Tridevas. According to the Puranas, Dattatreya had three heads and six arms. Dattatreya is famous in mythological history due to his pluralism. The story of his birth is very strange.

The worship of Maharaj Dattatreya, which is comprised of all the three divine powers, is very successful and gives quick results. Maharaj Dattatreya was a Brahmachari, Avadhoot and Digambara. He is omnipresent and is very quick to take care of the devotee in any kind of crisis, if the worship of Maharaj Dattatreya is done by mental, or by deeds or by speech, then the devotee gets away from any difficulty quickly.

Dattatreya Katha

Once Narada Muni went to heaven to meet Lord Shankar, Vishnu and Brahma. But he could not meet any of the trinity. He met Parvati, Lakshmi and Saraswati, the wives of the trinity. To break the pride of all three, Naradji said that I keep traveling around the world. But I have not seen a virtuous wife, a woman of modesty and virtue like Anusuiya, the wife of Atri Rishi. All three of you goddesses are also behind them in following the holy religion. Hearing this, her ego got hurt because she understood that there is no pious woman like us in the world.

After the departure of Naradji, the three goddesses urged their respective gods to destroy the sacred religion of Sati Anusuiya. Coincidentally, Tridev reached the hermitage of Atri Muni at the same time. All the three gods had the same purpose. Destroy the husband religion of Anusuya. Together they made a plan. The three gods dressed as sages and asked for alms from Anusuiya. In alms he expressed his desire to eat. Anusuiya, who considers hospitality as her religion, said that you come after retiring from bath etc., till then I prepare the kitchen for you.

When the three gods came after taking a bath, Anusuiya asked them to take a seat. On this, the three Daves said that we can take the seat only when you feed us in a natural state without clothes.

Anusuiya's body then caught fire, but due to her husband's dharma, she understood the tricks of the trinity. Anusuiya sprinkled the feet of the sage Atri on the trinity and said that if my virtuous religion is pure, then these three should turn into small children. Then, according to the condition of the three gods, Anusuiya offered food and on the cradle started swinging them separately.

When Tridev did not return even after a long time, Tridevis started getting worried. Tridevis reached the hermitage of Atri Rishi in search of Tridevs and Sati started inquiring about Tridevs from Anusuiya. Anusuiya pointed to the rears and said that your gods are resting in the rears. Take the identity of your own deity, but they could not recognize all the three being the same face. When Lakshmi ji very cleverly picked up Vishnu from the cradle, he turned out to be Shankar, on which he had to face a lot of ridicule.

On requesting the three goddesses, Anusuiya said that these three have drunk my milk. So they have to be with me in some form or the other.

On this a special child of the part of the Tridevas was born, who had three heads and six arms. This child grew up to be called Dattateya Rishi.

Anusuiya again undone the trinity with the help of Pit Charnodak.

Lord Dattatreya is a Hindu god who is considered to be an incarnation of the three gods Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva, also known as the Trimurti:

Incarnation

Dattatreya is the combined form of the three gods, and is said to have incarnated on Earth to free people



Important information

Dattatreya Jayanti 2024

Sunday, 15 December 2024

Purnima Tithi Begins : 14 December 2024 at 04:59 pm

Purnima Tithi ends : 15 December 2024 at 02:31 pm

from ignorance and fill their hearts with wisdom and spiritual joy.

Name

The word Datta means "given", and Dattatreya is named as such because the divine trinity "gave" themselves to the sage couple Guru Atri and Mata Anusuya as a son.

Worship

Dattatreya is worshiped by millions of Hindus, and is approached as a benevolent God.

Texts

Dattatreya is mentioned in texts such as the Bhagavata Purana, the Markandeya Purana, and the Brahmanda Purana. Several Upanishads and texts of the Vedanta-Yoga tradition are also dedicated to him.

Dattatreya is typically shown with three heads and six hands, one head each for Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva who represent the Trimurti, the 3 main gods in Hinduism, and one pair of hands holding the symbolic

"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 humanRs "

-- Arish K Sahani

items associated with each of these gods: Japamala and Kamandalu of Brahma, Shakha and Sudarshana Chakra of Vishnu, Trishula and Damaru of Shiva. He is typically dressed as a simple monk, situated in a forest or wilderness suggestive of his renunciation of worldly goods and pursuit of a meditative yogic lifestyle. In paintings and some large carvings, he is surrounded by four dogs and a cow, which symbolise the four Vedas and mother earth who nourishes all living beings.

In very few older medieval temples of Dattatreya show him with just one head, such as the one in Mahur, one at Narayanpur on Pune Satara Road, Near Pune, and another in Pandharpur, both in southern Maharashtra. Very few texts such as Agni Purana describe the architectural features for building murti, and for Dattatreya, it recommends him with one head and two hands. In Varanasi, Nepal, north Himalayan foothill states of India, 15th-century Nath temples of Dattatreya show him with just one face. In most parts of India and world, the syncretic six armed and three faced iconography is more common.

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Supreme Court of India stays surveys...

The top court's order means that in pending suits such as those pertaining to the Kashi Vishwanath-Gyanvapi mosque and Krishna Janmabhoomi-Idgah disputes, courts can't pass any effective or final orders, including those for survey.

"When a matter is pending before us, is it fair for any other court to examine it," asked the Bench, which also included Justice PV Sanjay Kumar and Justice KV Viswanathan.

The Bench, however, refused to stay the proceedings in 22 suits pending with regard to 10 places of worship.

Amid repeated interjections by senior lawyers representing various parties for and against the Act, the Bench clarified that it was examining validity as well as the ambit of the 1991 law.

"The matter is sub judice. No further suits can be registered till we hear and dispose of the case," the top court emphasized. "When the Supreme Court has laid down the law in a five-judge Bench composition, then lower courts can't wrestle it out with the apex court. That is why proceedings need to be stayed," it said.

The top court's order means that in pending suits such as those pertaining to the Kashi Vishwanath-Gyanvapi mosque, Krishna Janmabhoomi-Shahi Idgah, Sambhal Jama Masjid and Ajmer Sharif dargah disputes, courts cannot pass any effective or final orders, including those for survey.

The Bench asked the Centre and other respondents to file their replies in four weeks. It also appointed three nodal counsels - Ejaz Maqbool for parties seeking enforcement of the Act and Kanu Agrawal for the Centre and Vishnu Jain for petitioners against the 1991 law.

Enacted by Parliament during the PV Narasimha Rao government, the Act prohibits conversion of any place of worship, except the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid at Ayodhya, and freezes the religious character of any place of worship as it existed on August 15, 1947.

There are six petitions, including those filed by advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay and former Rajya Sabha MP Subramanian Swamy, against certain provisions of the law. Some of the petitions have been pending since 2020.

The petitioners against the 1991 Act alleged that it created an "arbitrary and irrational retrospective cut-off date" of August 15, 1947, for maintaining the character of the places of worship or pilgrimage against encroachments done by "fundamentalist-barbaric invaders and law breakers".

The top court had on January 9, 2023, sought responses from the Centre on pending pleas challenging certain provisions of the 1991 Act which took away the right of judicial remedy to reclaim a place of worship of any person or a religious group.

The hearing assumes significance in view of the fact that there are several mosques and dargahs, which Hindu groups have sought to reclaim on the ground that they were built on pre-existing temples.

Several politicians, including CPM leader Prakash Karat and RJD MP Manoj Jha, have moved the Supreme Court in support of the Act. On Thursday, the top court allowed the impleadment applications.

"Tinkering with the Act would harm India's communal harmony and secular fabric," Karat submitted while Jha said the Act highlighted the obligations of a secular state and that there was no need for the top court to declare it unconstitutional.

NCP (Sharad Pawar) MLA Jitendra Satish Awhad and Indian Union Muslim League leaders PK Kunhalikutty and ET Muhammed Basheer too have urged the top court to hear the parties before taking a call on the validity of the Act.

In June 2022, the Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind moved the Supreme Court seeking dismissal of petitions challenging the validity of the Act, saying it would open floodgates of litigation against countless mosques across India.

The Gyanvapi Mosque management committee too

has moved the top court to oppose petitions challenging the validity of the Act, saying historical wrongs or perceived injustices of the past should not undermine the principles of secularism and non-retrogression upheld by the Act. (Source: TNS)

Meta donates \$1 million to Trump's...

The move comes two weeks after Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg traveled to Florida and dined with Trump at his Mar-a-Lago estate.

At the time, Trump adviser Stephen Miller told Fox News that Zuckerberg had "made clear that he wants to support the national renewal of America under Trump's leadership."

Trump was removed from Facebook following the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol when it determined that his posts had potentially encouraged the violence that occurred that day.

The company restored his account in early 2023, but with certain "guardrails." In July, those restrictions were lifted by Meta.

Trump has a combined 65 million followers on Facebook and Instagram.

In August, Zuckerberg submitted a letter to Congress claiming that the Biden administration in 2021 "repeatedly pressured our teams for months to censor certain COVID-19 content, including humor and satire." He called "the government pressure wrong" and said he would push back against any similar efforts in the future.

Silicon Valley has been uneasy about the kind of the treatment it may get from a second Trump administration, and the donation may signal an attempt by Zuckerberg to thaw those tensions.

Trump's choice of Brendan Carr, a prominent critic of big tech, to lead the Federal Communications Commission has potentially heightened those concerns.

At 18, Gukesh conquers chess world...

Carlsen in the match played in the customary sound-proof glass box room at Chennai.

Ever since, the son of an ENT doctor and a microbiologist mother nurtured the dream of competing in that glass box - also called the fishtank by the chess grandmasters where outsiders can see you but you can't see them. He finally did so and came up trumps. "In 2013... I watched Vishy sir lose. I was young but that vision has stayed in my memory. The title was taken away from India. I wanted to be in the same glass box and bring back the title. That has been my dream for the past 10 years or so to be in the glass box. And my best moment, before this, was when I entered the glass box for the first game," he shared after winning the title.

It was a befitting birthday gift for Anand, who turned 55 yesterday.

Gukesh replaces Russian grandmaster Garry Kasparov as the youngest world champion. Kasparov was 22 when he won the title. Gukesh is also the 18th world champion - Wilhelm Steinitz was the first to win the crown in 1886.

This is Gukesh's record third world tournament victory in a calendar year. He won the Candidates tournaments, making him eligible to challenge Ding, and later was part of the Indian team that won the gold at the Chess Olympiad. This is also perhaps India's biggest win against China at the world stage where both countries compete on an equal footing - unlike athletics that is dominated by China and hockey that is balanced towards India.

Gukesh showed a remarkable display of aggression and novelty throughout the championship. He kept pressing for a win in a rook-bishop pawn endgame theoretically drawn at the grandmaster level.

Playing with white, Ding had opened with reverse Grunfeld opening - where his light-coloured bishop is fianchettoed to control the h1-a8 diagonal. This control had proved decisive in game 12 when he beat Gukesh. But not today. Gukesh produced a surprise sixth move by placing his kingside knight on e7 to support the queenside which was left weak in game 12.

Caught off guard, Ding began exchanging pieces in

an attempt to force a draw and go for the rapid and blitz tiebreaks. However, Gukesh continued putting pressure, avoiding the draw moves and exchange of pieces wherever he saw the advantage. In the endgame, Ding blinked under pressure and committed a blunder on move 55 when he went for a rook trade. Gukesh had three pawns against two of his opponents with both having a rook and a bishop each.

Gukesh could not believe what he saw on the board. His eyes widened in surprise, but he didn't play his move immediately. He took his time, reflecting on the position, had a sip of water, and then took Ding's rook. Ding held his head in disbelief and resigned after three moves.

Gukesh, whose meditative pose on the chair next to the board has become as famous as his rival's 'Dingchilling' smile, could not hold back any longer. He had not shown any emotion in the last 13 games. Today, the floodgates opened. He sobbed and cried as he set up the board again, settling the black pieces back on the board - a gentleman chess tradition - as has been his habit. He accepted congratulations on the chair and then got up, throwing his hands up in the air to finally exalt in the moment.

At the post-match conference, Ding was asked about losing the theoretical endgame. "It was a blunder... a shock. So, there will be no games tomorrow," he said, referring to the redundancy of tiebreak games now. He remained desolate and heartbroken but wore his famous smile again and said: "I played my best tournament. It could be better. It seems a fair result to lose in the end. No regrets. I will continue to play. I will..."

"It seemed like a draw, but the position was tricky. We had rook and bishop but I had three pawns against his two. So, there were a lot of possibilities," said Gukesh, whose accuracy was 99 per cent against Ding's 95.2. Gukesh saluted his formidable opponent, saying: "We all know who Ding is. How much pressure he has to face to be the world champion and try to defend it. And how much fight he gave in this match. He is a true champion. He is a real world champion. In such matches, the champions step up the momentum. He came here. He was struggling with form and health for the past two years. For me, he is a true champion. I would like to thank him. This couldn't have been the same for me if he weren't my opponent."

On his chat over the phone with his mother after the game, he said: "We didn't say anything. We were crying. I think I said congratulations." Gukesh's father was seen at the venue crying with joy when he hugged his world champion son. Gukesh earned a rich applause when he remarked on what it means to be the world champion. "My career has just started. I want to have a very long career and to stay at the top. Winning a world champion does not mean I am the best. There is Magnus Carlsen. I want to achieve the greatness which he had," the champion signed off. (Source: PTI)

Christopher Wray, FBI Director...

"After weeks of careful thought, I've decided the right thing for the Bureau is for me to serve until the end of the current administration in January and then step down," Wray told the employees.

"My goal is to keep the focus on our mission-the indispensable work you're doing on behalf of the American people every day. In my view, this is the best way to avoid dragging the Bureau deeper into the fray, while reinforcing the values and principles that are so important to how we do our work."

Wray is currently serving a 10-year term that started in 2017. Trump nominated Wray during his first term in office. President Joe Biden opted to keep Wray in place during his term.

Trump celebrated Wray's decision to resign, saying it will end what he described as the weaponization of the Justice Department.

"We want our FBI back, and that will now happen," Trump said in a post on his Truth Social platform, while calling for Patel's confirmation.

(READ FULL STORY AT WWW.THEINDIANPANORAMA.NEWS)

Jim Corbett National Park

Jim Corbett National Park is the oldest national park set amidst the foothills of the Himalayas in the Nainital district of Uttarakhand. Known for housing the endangered Bengal tiger, Corbett National Park is part of the larger Corbett Tiger Reserve.

Famous for its wildlife safaris, Jim Corbett National Park has multiple resorts set on the riverside. Home to more than 650 species of rare and migratory birds, it is a haven for bird watchers. The most popular attraction at Corbett National Park is Dhikala, a forest lodge located on the border of Patil Dun Valley, which is known for the stunning location and rich wildlife.

Only 180 vehicles are allowed to enter the national park in a day. Jim Corbett National Park remains closed from July to October during the monsoons. However, Jhirna, Dhela and Sitabani tourism zones remain open for tourists throughout the year. Safaris are organised in all the zones by two shifts by the forest officials in all the zones.

The Jim Corbett National Park was established in 1936 as Hailey National Park and is named after Jim Corbett who is a famous hunter and naturalist. It was the first place where Project Tiger was launched in 1973. The park is spread over an area of more than 500 sq km and is divided into 5 zones: Bijrani, Dhikala, Jhirna, Domunda and Sonanandi to promote tourism.

Jungle Safari

The jungle safaris at Jim Corbett are organised once in the morning and in the evening. Divided into five tourism zones, each zone has a restriction on the number of vehicles allowed within at a given point in time. There are two types of safaris at Jim Corbett National Park - Jeep Safari and Canter Safari.

The Canter Safari is only available for the Dhikala zone, the core area of the park. The likelihood of spotting the famed Bengal tiger is highest in this region. Apart from the canter safari, only those visitors staying at the forest lodge in the Dhikala zone are permitted to explore the area through a jeep safari. The Jeep Safari is the most popular safari choice at the park and is an available option to explore four out of the five zones at the reserve, with the exception being the Dhikala zone. There is a maximum of 6 people allowed per jeep, and the number of jeeps in each zone cannot cross a certain limit at any given point in time. This limit varies from region to region.

River Rafting

River rafting in the Kosi River at Corbett National Park is one of the most beautiful ways to enjoy its speedy waters, taking you through Class II & III rapids. This activity is meant for all - beginners or professionals. River rafting in Jim Corbett can be done only during the monsoons.

The best time for river rafting in Kosi



river is from July to September. Other adventure water sports like fishing, angling and rappelling are also organized on the river.

Dhikala

The Dhikala Forest Lodge is the most popular tourist attraction at Jim Corbett National Park. It is famous for spotting the Bengal tiger, spotted deers, Dhikala Chaur and the rare Hog deer. Dhikala is located 30 km inside the Dhangari gate and is open to tourists from 15 November to 15 June. Dhikala is the only tourism zone where canter safari is available.

The rooms at Dhikala Forest Lodge is divided into six different wings offering 32 rooms and 12 bunk beds in two dormitories. There is also a restaurant at Dhikala which serves buffet meals and a canteen run by KMVN. Alcohol and non-vegetarian food is prohibited inside Jim Corbett.

Bijrani Zone

Bijrani is one of the important zones of the Jim Corbett National Park. It is the best zone after Dhikala to spot the royal Bengal Tiger. Characterised by Sal trees, animals like Chital, Sambar and rare Hog deer can also be spotted here. Bijrani zone is also popular among birdwatchers as it houses almost 600 species of rare and migratory birds.

There are two forest rest houses in this zone which are available for stay to tourists. An entry permit for the safari needs to be obtained to enter the Bijrani zone. A safari jeep and a guide are also mandatory to enter the zone.

Jhirna

Jhirna safari zone in Corbett National Park is one of the five tourism zones open to the public. It is popular for tiger and sloth bear sightings. Characterised by dry deciduous forest, animals like deer,



nilgai, chital and elephants can also be spotted here. It is popular amongst bird watchers for housing some migratory and rare birds.

An entry permit for the safari needs to be obtained to enter the Jhirna zone. A

safari jeep and a guide are also mandatory to enter the zone. During the monsoon, from July to September, advance booking of safari cannot be done because safari can get cancelled if there is heavy rain or bad weather on any day.

History This Week DEC 13- DEC 19

DECEMBER 13

December 13, 1937 - The beginning of one of the worst atrocities of World War II as the Chinese city of Nanking (Nanjing) was captured by the Japanese. Over the next six weeks, the Rape of Nanking occurred in which Japanese soldiers randomly attacked, raped and indiscriminately killed an estimated 200,000 Chinese persons.

December 13, 1981 - In its struggle to maintain Communism, the Polish government imposed martial law and took steps to stifle the growing power of the pro-democratic trade union Solidarity.

December 13, 1991 - North and South Korea signed a treaty of reconciliation and nonaggression which also formally ended the Korean War, although actual fighting had ceased in 1953.



Birthdays - German writer Heinrich Heine (1797-1856) was born in Dusseldorf. Best known for his statement made a hundred years before the advent of book-burning Nazis in Germany - "Where books are burned, human beings are destined to be burned too."

Birthdays - Mary Todd (1818-1882) was born in Lexington, Kentucky. She became the wife of Abraham Lincoln, the 16th U.S. President.

Birthdays - American clergyman and composer Phillips Brooks (1835-1893) was born in Boston, Massachusetts. He wrote the lyrics for the popular Christmas Carol, O Little Town of Bethlehem.

DECEMBER 14



December 14, 1911 - Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen became the first person to reach the South Pole.

December 14, 1918 - British women voted for the first time in a general election and were allowed to run for office.

December 14, 1927 - Britain recognized independent Iraq and supported Iraqi admission to the League of Nations.

December 14, 1935 - Thomas Masaryk, founder and first president of the Czechoslovak Republic, resigned and was succeeded by Edvard Benes.

December 14, 1939 - The League of Nations expelled Soviet Russia for its

aggression against Finland.

December 14, 1962 - The Mariner II space probe sent back information from the planet Venus, the first information ever received from another planet.

December 14, 1995 - A Bosnian peace treaty was signed in Paris by leaders from the former Yugoslavia. The treaty ended Europe's worst conflict since World War II.

Birthdays - World War II General James Doolittle (1896-1993) was born in Alameda, California. On April 18, 1942, he led a squadron of B-25 bombers launched from the aircraft carrier Hornet to conduct the first American air raid of the war against mainland Japan. He also headed the Eighth Air Force during the Normandy invasion and was awarded the Medal of Honor.

DECEMBER 15



December 15, 1939 - Gone with the Wind had its world premiere in Atlanta, introduced by producer David O. Selznick and featuring appearances by Vivien Leigh and Clark Gable.

December 15, 1943 - The Battle of San Pietro took place during World War II as a German panzer battalion devastated American forces trying to take the 700-year-old Italian village. Hollywood director John Huston, serving as an army lieutenant, filmed the battle and left behind a graphic account.

December 15, 1961 - Nazi SS-Colonel Adolf Eichmann was sentenced to death in Jerusalem for his role in the Holocaust. Eichmann had organized the deportation of Jews from all over occupied Europe to Nazi death camps.

December 15, 1964 - Canada adopted a new national flag featuring a red maple leaf on a white background.

December 15, 1989 - The dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet ended in Chile. Pinochet had come to power in 1973 after a military overthrow of the democratically elected government.

December 15, 1993 - The GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) Treaty was approved by delegations from 117 countries. The treaty was designed to reduce international tariffs, eliminate trade quotas, and protect intellectual property.

December 15, 1995 - European Union leaders announced their new currency would be known as the Euro.

DECEMBER 16

December 16, 1944 - American big-band leader Glenn Miller disappeared in a small plane over the English Channel and was presumably killed. Best remembered for Moonlight Serenade and In the Mood.

December 16, 1944 - During World War II in Europe, the Battle of the Bulge began as the Germans launched a big counter-offensive in the Ardennes Forest along a 75-mile front, taking American troops by surprise. Aided by foggy, snowy weather, the Germans penetrated 65 miles into Allied lines by the end of December. The German advance was eventually halted by Montgomery on the Meuse and Patton at Bastogne. As the weather cleared, Allied aircraft attacked German ground forces and supply lines and the counter-offensive failed. There were an estimated 77,000 Allied and 130,000 German casualties.

December 16, 1969 - The British House of Commons voted 343-185 to abolish the death penalty in England.

December 16, 1991 - The United Nations voted to revoke Resolution 3379, originally approved on November 10, 1975, which had equated Zionism (a movement supporting the Jewish national state of Israel) with racism.



Birthdays - Anthropologist Margaret Mead (1901-1978) was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She studied primitive peoples in the Southwest Pacific and was known for her outspoken manner regarding social issues such as women's rights, child rearing, population control and world hunger.

DECEMBER 17



December 17, 1971 - The war between India and Pakistan over East Pakistan (later Bangladesh) ended as 90,000 Pakistani troops surrendered.

December 17, 1903 - After three years of experimentation, Orville and Wilbur Wright achieved the first powered, controlled airplane flights. They made four flights near Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, the longest lasting about a minute.

Birthdays - Deborah Sampson (1760-1827) was born in Plympton, Massachusetts. During the American Revolutionary War, she disguised herself as a man and enlisted in the Continental Army under the name Robert Shurtleff. Although she was wounded in battle, she was not discovered until a severe fever unmasked her identity. She was dismissed from the army in 1783. In later life, she lectured professionally on her wartime experiences.

Birthdays - Poet and abolitionist John Greenleaf Whittier (1807-1892) was born in Haverhill, Massachusetts. His books of poetry include Legends of New England and Snowbound.

DECEMBER 18



December 18, 1916 - During World War I, the Battle of Verdun concluded after ten months of fighting in which 543,000 French and 434,000 German soldiers were killed.

December 18, 1940 - Adolf Hitler ordered the German General Staff to begin planning Operation Barbarossa, the invasion of Soviet Russia.

December 18, 1956 - Japan was admitted to the United Nations.

December 18, 2019 - Donald Trump, the 45th U.S. President, was impeached by the House of Representatives on charges of Abuse of Power and Obstruction of Congress. The charges alleged that Trump sought help from Ukraine to investigate Democratic rival Joe Biden and his son Hunter Biden, to interfere with the 2020 presidential election, and that Trump attempted to obstruct the House's impeachment inquiry by directing his aides to ignore subpoenas for documents and testimony. Trump was acquitted on February 5, 2020 when the U.S. Senate failed to reach the two-thirds majority needed for conviction.

Birthdays - West German Chancellor Willy Brandt (1913-1992) was born in Lubeck, Germany (as Herbert Ernst Karl Frahm). During Hitler's regime, he was an anti-Nazi exile. He returned to Germany after World War II, entered politics and was elected chancellor in 1969. He won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1971 for his efforts to improve East-West relations during the Cold War.

DECEMBER 19



December 19, 1946 - War broke out in French Indochina as Ho Chi Minh attacked the French seeking to oust them from Vietnam. This marked the beginning of a thirty-year conflict which eventually led to heavy U.S. involvement and ended with a Communist victory in April 1975 after U.S. withdrawal from South Vietnam.

December 19, 1998 - The House of Representatives impeached President Bill Clinton, approving two out of four Articles of Impeachment, charging Clinton with lying under oath to a federal grand jury and obstructing justice.

Birthdays - British explorer William Parry (1790-1855) was born in Bath, England. He conducted Arctic expeditions and made three attempts to find a Northwest Passage.

Pat Cummins says Josh Hazlewood will replace Scott Boland at Gabba

Australia captain Pat Cummins has confirmed that fit-again Josh Hazlewood will replace Scott Boland in the playing XI for the third Test, starting on Saturday at Gabba. Hazlewood missed out the pink-ball Test at Adelaide due to side strain.

"Hazlewood will play. Shame for Scotty (Boland), he has missed out often in the past. Big series, he might still get his chances. Josh bowled yesterday (at Allan Border field and not at nets at Gabba)," Cummins told reporters ahead of the third Test.

"Josh didn't bowl at nets here Purely because of the lengths of run up wasn't enough. So we took him to Allan Border field," he added.

The Australian captain also revealed why Hazlewood was underbowed in the second innings of the opening Test at Perth.

"In the second innings at Perth, game was beginning to slip away, we made the call then that it was not worth the risk pushing Josh to bowl more," he said.

Cummins showered praise on Scott Boland, who did a terrific job with the ball at Adelaide.

"Boland is amazing how he is in the group, how he prepares. Showed his standard is still super high," he said.

With the series locked at 1-1, Cummins is hopeful that team's senior pro Steve Smith and Usman Khawaja will get back in form at Gabba.

"Smithy is looking fantastic at nets. Looking sharp. He got caught behind leg, I won't read much on it. He is a leader in the group, been fantastic," said Cummins.

"Khawaja is somewhat like Smithy. Has looked good at nets. He loves batting at Gabba, he knows it really well. Hopefully he scores runs," he said.

The current Australian cricket team has been labelled as an ageing team by the former cricketers and the experts.

At 18, Gukesh conquers chess world, dethrones China's Ding to become youngest world champion

NEW DELHI (TIP)

Nurtured by parents who put their careers on hold for his growth and didn't hesitate to seek crowd-funding for his dreams, D Gukesh manifested his destiny as a seven-year-old and turned it into reality in just over a decade's time.

The 18-year-old defeated Ding Liren of China to become the youngest ever world chess champion capping a fabulous year in which he has hardly put a foot wrong wherever he has shown up to compete.

But the journey to the top hasn't been the easiest ride and has involved sacrifices not only from him but also his parents ENT surgeon Dr Rajinikanth and Padma, a microbiologist.

Rajinikanth had to stop practice in 2017-18 as the father-son duo travelled across the world on a shoe-string budget when Gukesh chased the final GM norm, while his mother became the primary breadwinner, taking care of the household expenses.

"His parents have sacrificed a lot," Gukesh's childhood coach Vishnu Prasanna told PTI in April after he became the youngest challenger to the world title as a 17-year-old.

"While his father has almost surrendered his career. His mother has been supporting the family while his father has been travelling, and they hardly get to see each other," he recalled. Gukesh became the third youngest Grandmaster in the history of chess when he achieved the feat at 12 years 7 months and 17 days. The



Chennai-lad is also the third youngest to enter the elite 2700 Elo rating club and the youngest ever to scale the 2750 rating mark. The year 2024 is without a shred of doubt the best of Gukesh's career. He won the Candidates, was dominant on the top board to take team India to a gold medal in the recent chess Olympiad at Budapest, and the icing on the cake was his world title triumph in Singapore on Thursday, December 12.

His chess journey started with one hour and thrice-a-week lessons in 2013, the year Viswanathan Anand lost his world title to Norwegian maverick Magnus Carlsen.

Multiple-times age group championship winner, Gukesh became an International Master after

a tournament in 2017 after a tournament in Cannes, France.

Early success of the young champion included gold-winning performance in under-9 Asian school championship and the World Youth Chess Championships in 2018 in the Under 12 category. Gukesh's passion for the 64-square chess board prompted his parents to stop him from attending school full-time after Class IV.

It was in 2019 during a tournament in New Delhi that Gukesh became the second youngest Grandmaster in the history, a record that was then surpassed by only Sergey Karjakin of Russia but was later also broken by Abhimanyu Mishra, the Indian origin talent from USA.

Indian team looks to regroup with pep talk from Kohli

BRISBANE (TIP)

He used to be the cynosure of all eyes at training sessions during his captaincy days and Virat Kohli was once again the centre of attention as he addressed his teammates on Thursday, December 12.

After the demoralising 10-wicket defeat in the Adelaide Day/Night game, the visitors needed a bit of inspiration going into the crucial third Test of the series, and the youngsters in the side couldn't have got a better mentor than 'King' Kohli himself to guide them with his words of wisdom.

A team huddle before the start of training sessions has been a constant feature for years now and Kohli used to do a lot of talking during his days in charge.

He did take a back seat once he left captaincy but with skipper Rohit Sharma also under immense pressure after four straight defeats, the senior-most player (in terms of Test debut) had to take the



initiative ahead of the match starting here on Saturday, December 14.

With vice-captain Jasprit Bumrah by his side, Kohli was seen speaking animatedly to the group and everyone, including Rohit, listened to him with rapt attention. Unlike before the pink-ball Test, Rohit looked in far better shape during his

net session at the Gabba but question marks remain over whether he would be back to opening the innings or stay put at No. 6, which isn't his preferred slot.

On the day, while KL Rahul and Yashasvi Jaiswal once again faced the new ball at the nets, Rohit took on a slightly older Kookaburra at the

beginning. Having faced that for some time, he did change nets with Rahul and also played a brand new red cherry for a while. The Gabba pitch has a decent grass cover and has always been one of the most traditional Australian wickets with both seam and bounce on offer. Rohit's susceptibility has been against the moving deliveries more than bounce, and hence, it would be interesting to see if he takes on the challenge head on.

After his session, Rohit and head coach Gautam Gambhir were immersed in a lengthy chat and from a distance, it looked like they were discussing technique. Gambhir was seen shaping up for some shadow drives, with Rohit watching him intently.

Akash Deep is believed to be the most consistent bowler in the Indian net session but that is no indicator that he will replace the young Harshit Rana, who was taken to task by Travis Head during the second Test in Adelaide. Source: PTI

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Suozzi Barrels Toward the End of the Year: House Passes Three Bipartisan Suozzi Bills on Border Security, Combating Chinese Communist Party Threats, and Fiscal Responsibility

DECEMBER 12, 2024

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): This week, the House of Representatives passed three bipartisan pieces of Congressman Tom Suozzi's (D - Long Island, Queens) legislation. These three commonsense bills, the Securing Our Northern Borders Act, the SHIELD Against CCP Act, and the Increasing Baseline Updates Act, were passed in resoundingly bipartisan fashion. These bills will, respectively, address the security of our Northern Border, counter threats to homeland security posed by the Chinese Communist Party, and promote fiscal responsibility.

"This week, we passed three of my bipartisan commonsense bills. When Republicans and Democrats come together, we can deliver real results for the American people. This spirit is precisely what America needs right now," Suozzi said.

The Securing Our Northern Borders Act, co-led by Congresswomen Claudia Tenney (R-NY), was included and passed as part of the National Defense



Authorization Act (NDAA) for 2025. This bill will establish a Department of Homeland Security Northern Border "Mission Center," which would coordinate the implementation of the DHS Northern Border Strategy.

"We must secure both the Northern and Southern Border Strategies to protect our communities," said Suozzi. "This Mission Center would serve as the central hub for coordinating efforts to enforce immigration laws and combat illegal drug trafficking along our northern border. We need to secure our borders, reform the outdated asylum system that hasn't been updated since the 1980s, and modernize the legal

immigration process, all while ensuring that we treat people with dignity and respect."

The SHIELD Against CCP Act, co-led by Congressman Dale Strong (R-AL), would establish a Department of Homeland Security working group to identify, evaluate, and counter threats to homeland security posed by the Chinese Communist Party.

"The Chinese Communist Party is intent on promoting authoritarianism by weakening America from within," Suozzi said. "Add to this theft of our intellectual property, threats to our critical infrastructure, and trying to intimidate US citizens through transnational

repression. We must act."

Suozzi's third bill passed this week, the Increasing Baseline Updates Act, was co-led by Congressman Blake Moore (R-UT). This legislation would require the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) to provide two annual updates to its baseline, and mandate that the President submit specific budget data to Congress to allow for accurate policymaking and oversight.

"I was trained as a CPA; I am concerned about our budget and deficits. I know the importance of accuracy in budget estimates. If Congress and the public can get better data, we will be in a better position to fix our budgets." Suozzi explained. "This bill will help tighten congressional procedures and result in more fiscally responsible policies."

"While these bills may not be glamorous or generate major headlines, their passage this week by the House of Representatives proves that when Republicans and Democrats unite, they can deliver real results for the American people. This is the cooperative spirit that Washington urgently needs," Suozzi concluded.

STATE SENATOR JOHN LIU AND HELMS BROS. INC. DONATE WINTER COATS TO PS20Q FAMILIES



State Senator John Liu, stated, "Winter is just around the corner, and we want to make sure every child has a winter coat to keep warm. Many thanks to Helms Bros., Inc. for their generosity".

DECEMBER 12, 2024

FLUSHING, NY (TIP) : State Senator John Liu and Helms Bros., Inc. on Thursday, December 12, partnered to bring warmth and support to families at PS 20Q John Bowne by donating winter coats to students. The coats were generously provided by Helms Bros., Inc. to help ensure children in the community are well-prepared for the winter season.

The winter coats were selected to meet the needs of boys and girls of various ages at John Bowne School. The act of kindness highlights the importance of community giving during the holiday season, spreading warmth and goodwill to local families.

State Senator John Liu, stated, "Winter is just around the corner, and we want to make sure every child has a winter coat to keep warm. Many thanks to Helms Bros., Inc. for their generosity and not just giving out coats but spreading warmth and care to our PS 20Q school community."

PS 20Q John Bowne Principal Elisa Barresi, stated, "We are fortunate to have community partners like State Senator John Liu and Helms Bros., Inc. who demonstrate such genuine care and generosity toward our school community."

Helms Bros. Managing Partner Kristin Callahan Austin, stated, "Helms Bros., Inc. has been a part of this community for over 80 years and is honored to share its success with the community. We have hosted our annual coat drive for many years, and we are fortunate today to donate over 100 coats to the school community here at PS 20Q John Bowne School."

KEVIN FORRESTAL DAY PROCLAIMED BY MAYOR ADAMS & QBP RICHARDS



Dep Comm Anthony Iuliano presenting NYC Mayoral Proclamation to Jackie Forrestal. Photo : Gavin Ramsaran

DECEMBER 7, 2024

NEW YORK (TIP): NYC Mayor Eric Adams proclaimed December 7, 2024 as KEVIN FORRESTAL DAY by issuing a posthumous proclamation honoring the late civic leader who passed away at age 78 on August 7, 2024. The proclamation highlighted Kevin's outstanding service as a dedicated community leader who served for decades in several capacities in various organizations focusing on critical community issues.

The tribute to the late Kevin Forrestal was organized by the Queens Civic Congress at its annual Legislative Reception held at the Douglaston Club in Douglaston, Queens. The memorable event was attended by a packed audience of civic leaders and elected officials who knew Kevin Forrestal over the years.

The Mayor's Proclamation was presented by Anthony Iuliano, Deputy Commissioner of Operations, Mayor's Community Affairs Unit, to Kevin's surviving spouse Jackie Forrestal and their daughter, Kathy Forrestal. Deputy Commissioner Anthony Iuliano had known Kevin for many years while Mr. Iuliano was assigned to the Queens division of the Department of Buildings.

Kevin Forrestal was a civic leader and active in the Democratic Party. In politics, he was past president of the William Jefferson Clinton and Daniel Patrick Moynihan Democratic Clubs in Queens. He was President of the Hillcrest Estates Civic Association for over twenty years, often working on zoning concerns and seeking to improve local quality of life. During his 14-year tenure on Community Board 8 Queens (1990 to 2024), he served as the Area 3 Chair, leading the Sanitation/DEP committee and working as a member of the Zoning, Transportation, Health, and Budget Committees during his tenure.

READ FULL STORY AT WWW.THEINDIANPANORAMA.NEWS



An Eye Institute in Rajahmundry, Andhra Pradesh combatting avoidable blindness in children.

"On behalf of all my colleagues of the Wilmer Eye Institute in Baltimore, MD. I send my best wishes and congratulations to our friends in Goutami on this extremely important occasion. This beautifully facility will match the wonderful world class work of your doctors, nurses, and staff in preserving and restoring the vision of so many patients. We in the United States are inspired by your dedication and admire your tireless efforts to serve so many who need your skills and compassion. Best wishes, Peter"

Peter J McDonnell, MD Director Wilmer Eye Institute, Johns Hopkins



New Goutami Institute building to be constructed 2024

3.5 + million served
325,000 + vision restoring surgeries
30,000 + surgeries on children

Services Include:

- Treating disease and vision problems
- performing free cataract surgeries
- distributing glasses and visual aids
- conducting community research
- providing education to physicians and the public



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.

Join our Vision.
Give the gift
of sight today.

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