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Judge vacates upcoming Eric Adams corruption trial; Appoints conservative attorney to argue against dropping the case



The embattled New York City Mayor Eric Adams

Eric Adams, but declined to immediately dismiss the charges all together in a case that has roiled the Justice Department.

Judge Dale Ho, instead, is appointing conservative attorney Paul Clement to present arguments challenging the Justice Department's decision to drop charges against Adams and as he explores what his options are and if a dismissal is in the public interest. The DOJ move to end the case against Adams has prompted an exodus of prosecutors who disagreed with the decision. Eight federal prosecutors,

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FEBRUARY 21, 2025

NEW YORK

(TIP): A federal judge has vacated the upcoming trial date for New York City Mayor Eric Adams, but

Trump fires the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff at Pentagon

FEBRUARY 21, 2025

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): President Donald Trump abruptly fired Air Force Gen. CQ Brown Jr. as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on Friday, February 21, sidelining a history-making fighter pilot and respected officer as part of a campaign to rid the military of leaders who support diversity and equity in the ranks.

The ouster of Mr. Brown, only the second Black general to serve as chairman, is sure to send shock waves through the Pentagon. His 16 months in the job had been consumed with the war in Ukraine and the expanded conflict in the West Asia.

"I want to thank General Charles 'CQ' Brown for his over 40 years of service to our country, including as our current Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He is a fine gentleman and an outstanding leader, and I wish a great future for him and his family," Mr. Trump posted on social media.

Mr. Trump said he was nominating



Trump has abruptly fired Air Force Gen. CQ Brown Jr. as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

Air Force Lt. Gen. Dan "Razin" Caine to be the next chairman. Caine is a career F-16 pilot who served on active duty and in the National Guard, and had most recently served as the associate director for military affairs at the CIA, according

official military biography. Caine's military service includes combat roles in Iraq, special operations postings and positions inside some of the Pentagon's

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AP sues 3 Trump administration officials, citing freedom of speech



"The press and all people in the United States have the right to choose their own words and not be retaliated against by the government," the AP said in its lawsuit, which names White House Chief of Staff Susan Wiles, Deputy Chief of Staff Taylor Budowich and Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt.

The AP says its case is about an unconstitutional effort by the White House to control speech - in this case refusing to change its style from the Gulf of Mexico to the "Gulf of America," as President Donald Trump did last month with an executive order. "The press and all people in the United States have the right

CONTD ON PAGE 36

FEBRUARY 21, 2025

WASHINGTON, D.C.

(TIP): The Associated Press sued three Trump administration officials Friday, February 21, over access to presidential events, citing freedom of speech in asking a federal judge to stop the 10-day blocking of its journalists.

The lawsuit was filed Friday afternoon in U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C.

The AP says its case is about an unconstitutional effort by the White House to control speech - in this

India probes alleged \$21 million USAID funding, cites concerns over foreign interference



MEASpokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said relevant departments and authorities are looking into the info put out by the United States administration regarding certain US activities and funding

(DOGE) run by billionaire Elon Musk, in a decision shared in a post on X on Monday. In the Indian government's first reaction to the DOGE post, the Ministry of External Affairs said that different departments are "looking into" the information shared,

CONTD ON PAGE 36

FEBRUARY 21, 2025

NEW DELHI (TIP):

Government of India on Friday, February 21, said it was investigating "very deeply troubling" allegations made by the U.S. government that the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) planned to spend \$21 million on funding "voter turnout" in India. This expenditure has been cancelled by the U.S. Department of Government Efficiency

(DOGE) run by billionaire Elon Musk, in a decision shared in a post on X on Monday. In the Indian government's first reaction to the DOGE post, the Ministry of External Affairs said that different departments are "looking into" the information shared,

Sajjan's sentencing in conviction of twin murders on February 25

FEBRUARY 21, 2025

NEW DELHI (TIP): A Delhi court on Friday, February 21, reserved its order on the quantum of sentence in a 1984 anti-Sikh riots case involving former Congress MP Sajjan Kumar, who was convicted of the murder of Jaswant Singh and Tarundeep Singh in Delhi's Saraswati Vihar on November 1, 1984. The court has scheduled February 25 as the date for sentencing.

The prosecution has sought the death penalty for Kumar, describing the case as one of the "rarest of the rare". The victims' lawyer has also demanded capital punishment for the 79-year-old, who is already serving a life sentence in a separate anti-Sikh riots case. Kumar has been in jail since December 31, 2018, following his conviction and life imprisonment by the Delhi High Court in another 1984 riots case. On February 12, the court convicted Kumar, and on Friday, it sought a psychiatric and psychological evaluation report from

CONTD ON PAGE 36



Sajjan Kumar was convicted of twin murders on Feb 12

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GUEST COMMENT

Akali crisis: Acid test of Akal Takht's resolve to reform SAD

The current ferment in Akali politics reflects a fierce tussle for the control of premier Sikh institutions. Tensions have been simmering since December last year, when the Akal Takht awarded religious punishment to Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) leader Sukhbir Singh Badal and others for the 'mistakes' committed by the party when it was in power in Punjab from 2007 to 2017. The intrigue and one-upmanship have intensified of late, and it seems that things are coming to a head.

Last week, the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) dismissed Giani Harpreet Singh as the Jathedar of Takht Sri Damdama Sahib after accepting the report of a panel that had probed allegations against him in an

old domestic dispute. The controversial decision triggered a sharp response from Akal Takht Jathedar Giani Raghbir Singh, who said the 'highly condemnable' step would undermine the autonomy of the Takhts. Following the scathing criticism, SGPC chief Harjinder Singh Dhami resigned on 'moral grounds' and reaffirmed his allegiance to the Akal Takht, the highest temporal seat of the Sikhs. The rift widened when former SGPC president Kirpal Singh Badungar resigned from a committee set up by the Akal Takht to oversee the SAD's membership drive and the election of office-bearers.

The Badals have controlled the SGPC for decades, but the party's plummeting political fortunes - closely linked to the

lingering anger within the Sikh community over the sacrilege cases of 2015 - has weakened their hold in recent years. Sukhbir and his party colleagues are hoping that their atonement would help them start afresh and regain the trust of the aggrieved Panth. However, their task has become even more difficult with the launch of a political outfit, Akali Dal (Waris Punjab De), by supporters of jailed radical MP Amritpal Singh. The multiplicity of rivals might prompt SAD to revive its alliance with the BJP, which is itself bent on making major inroads into Punjab. The developments will test the Takht's resolve to reform and revitalize the beleaguered SAD.

(Tribune, India)

Surprise choice: BJP snubs top aspirants for Delhi CM's post

In recent years, the BJP has developed a knack for springing a surprise while selecting chief ministers. Delhi is no exception. The party has picked first-time MLA and former councilor Rekha Gupta, dashing the hopes of prominent aspirants like ex-MP Parvesh Verma and three-time MLA Vijendra Gupta. The choice bears the Sangh stamp - Rekha cut her political teeth on the platform of the ABVP, the RSS-affiliated student organization. The BJP is expecting her to go all out to implement the women-centric schemes spelt out in the party manifesto. These schemes, including the monthly aid of Rs 2,500 each for Delhi's women - Rs 400 more than what the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) promised - played a key role in the BJP's remarkable victory. The decision to choose a lesser-known face underscores the party's strategy to sideline heavyweights, who might become too big for their boots if they are given the all-important chair.

Parvesh, son of former Delhi CM Sahib Singh Verma, presumed that he had done enough to bag the top post when he defeated AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal. Vijendra, who has now been elected Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, was also fancying his chances after achieving a hat-trick of wins. Both have no option now but to help the CM run the government smoothly, thanks to the party top brass' ability to nip discord in the bud.

The template of preferring a low-profile, compliant CM has been tried out by the BJP with success in several states, such as Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Haryana. Yogi Adityanath is a rare one who can hold his own before PM Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah, even as party chief JP Nadda himself remains relegated to the shadows. An impression has gained ground that double-engine governments are being run largely from the Capital. The Rekha Gupta-led dispensation is set to take the same route. And there will be no scope for excuses if the new Delhi government fails to meet the people's great expectations.

(Tribune, India)

Judges' dilemma: On the judiciary, its accountability

ACCOUNTABILITY AND INDEPENDENCE OUGHT TO BE EQUALLY IMPORTANT FOR JUDGES

The Lokpal's ruling that High Court judges are amenable to its jurisdiction and the Supreme Court order staying it on its own motion raise more than a mere question of law. The issue concerns both the independence of the judiciary and its accountability. That the Court, government law officers and senior advocates found the Lokpal's decision disturbing is understandable, as many believe that judicial independence will be undermined if judges of constitutional courts are made answerable to the Lokpal, even though they fall under the definition of 'public servant' under the Prevention of Corruption Act. The Lokpal view appears to be prima facie incorrect. There is nothing to suggest that superior court judges were ever considered to be under its remit. Last month, the Lokpal, headed by former Supreme Court judge, A.M. Khanwilkar, rejected a corruption complaint against a former Chief Justice of India (CJI) on the ground that the Lokpal Act, 2013, did not concern apex court judges and that its reference to "persons" who are members of anybody or authority created by an Act of Parliament cannot be applied to the Supreme Court, an institution established by the Constitution. However, in respect of High Court judges, it said High Courts established by statutes creating the respective States were statutory bodies, and their judges were "persons" within the meaning of Section 14 of the Lokpal Act.

The independence of the judiciary was the foremost consideration when the Court held in K. Veeraswami vs Union of India (1991) that no case can be registered against them without consulting the CJI, even though it also said judges were public servants under the Prevention of Corruption Act. Based on this principle, the Lokpal has referred the complaint to the CJI. While the Lokpal ruling is set to be reviewed, the time may have come to address the issue of accountability in the rare event of a credible corruption charge arising against a judge. The matter is now dealt with by the Court through an in-house procedure, initiated only if the Chief Justice of a High Court, or the CJI or the President receives a complaint. If the charges appear true, asking the judges concerned to resign, denying them judicial work or recommending their removal through Parliament are the options available. Some judges are transferred from one High Court to another, but whether a corruption charge is the reason is never disclosed. The Court should see if the present mechanism is enough or it needs to be expanded to include credible follow-up action such as an independent prosecution under its supervision. Both accountability and independence ought to be equally important for the judiciary.

(The Hindu)

Bukhara Grill Reopens at the new location in NY City



Mr. Sushil Tuli, Chairman and CEO, Leader Bank cutting the ribbon to inaugurate the Restaurant



Mr. Sushil Tuli and Bukhara Grill owner Mr. Raja Jhanjee share moments of relaxation

FEBRUARY 20, 2025

NEW YORK CITY (TIP): The famous Bukhara Grill in New York City has a new address: 120 East 39 Street, New York City. The restaurant known since 1999 for the vibrant flavors and the rich aromas of Indian cuisine was formally inaugurated at the new location on Wednesday, February 19. The inaugural ceremony of ribbon cutting was performed by the owner Raja Jhanji's close friend Mr. Sushil Tuli, Chairman and CEO, Leader Bank.

for always standing by him like a true friend. Mr. Jhanjee also thanked the gathered friends and patrons who came from various walks of life.

It was an evening of great culinary experience and bonhomie.

Speaking with The Indian Panorama, Mr. Jhanjee said, "Bukhara Grill specializes in a diverse range of Indian dishes. It offers a personalized catering experience that can transform a gathering, whether it's a corporate event, a wedding, or a family celebration.

authentic flavors and traditions of India, prepared with the freshest ingredients and a passion for culinary perfection. At Bukhara Grill, we understand that every event is unique, and we strive to make it unforgettable with our top-notch catering service. Our team works closely with our patrons to tailor a menu that suits their specific needs and preferences, ensuring a seamless and stress-free experience.

"We take pride in our attention to detail, from the presentation of our food to the professionalism of our



The gathering



In his brief remarks, Mr. Tuli recalled his long association with Mr. Raja Jhanjee, and said he admired Mr. Jhanjee's business acumen. He congratulated Mr. Jhanjee and his team and wished them all success.

Mr. Raja Jhanjee expressed his gratitude to Mr. Tuli

"Our expert chefs are adept at creating a menu that caters to a variety of tastes and dietary preferences, ensuring every guest experiences the true essence of Indian culinary excellence. From aromatic curries to tandoori-grilled delights, each dish is a testament to the

service staff, creating an elegant and sophisticated dining experience for the guests."

For further information, please call 917-403-1299 or email to bukharagrillcatering@gmail.com

Aman Kumar Sharma to Represent India at United Nations Debriefing on Paris 2024 Security



Aman Sharma Member International Council of Traditional Sports and Games (right) with Nitin Gadkari, Minister of Road Transport and Highways Government of India. File photo

FEBRUARY 21, 2025

NEW DELHI /NEW YORK (TIP): New Delhi/New York: Aman Kumar Sharma, Secretary-General of the Association of Traditional Sports and Games, India, has been invited to attend a high-profile United Nations event on sports security, representing India and the International Council of Traditional Sports and Games (ICTSG).

The event, "Securing the Legacy: Debriefing from Paris 2024 for Future Major Sporting Events," will be hosted by the United Nations Office of Counterterrorism (UNOCT) on March 5, 2025, in a hybrid format at Conference Room 1, United Nations Headquarters, New York. It is being organized in collaboration with the Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations as part of UNOCT's Global Programme on the Security of Major Sporting Events and Promotion of Sport as a Tool to Prevent Violent Extremism.

Aman Kumar Sharma, a former member of UNESCO's Ad Hoc Advisory Committee on Traditional Sports & Games (2017-2020), will contribute to discussions on the security challenges faced by major sporting events. With the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games as a case study, the debriefing will focus on best practices, innovative security technologies, human rights protections, and gender inclusion in security management.

The event will also mark the fifth anniversary of UNOCT's Global Sports Programme, which reflects progress made in safeguarding sporting events and using sports as a tool for social cohesion and resilience against violent extremism.

Sharma's participation underscores India's commitment to the preservation of traditional sports while actively engaging in global discussions on sports security and inclusivity. His presence at the UN forum is expected to enhance India's role in shaping future strategies for securing major sporting events worldwide.

Indian Origin Former British PM Rishi Sunak visits Taj Mahal with family: Sunak is on a two-day visit to Agra

FEBRUARY 15, 2025

NEW DELHI (TIP): Former British prime minister Rishi Sunak visited the Taj Mahal on Saturday, February 15, along with his daughters, wife and mother-in-law Sudha Murty.

The family spent around one-and-a-half hour at the iconic monument. Sunak is on a two-day visit to Agra.

The senior conservation assistant from the Archaeological Survey of India at the Taj Mahal confirmed that Rishi Sunak and his family enjoyed their visit.

Both Sunak and his wife left a personal note of appreciation in the visitor's book.

ACP, Taj Security, Areeb Ahmed said, "Rishi Sunak and his family were provided top-tier security throughout their visit. The Taj Mahal was shown to them under strict security measures, in collaboration with the CISF."

(Source: PTI)



Former British prime minister Rishi Sunak with family at the Taj Mahal in Agra, UP, on February 15, 2025. Photo : PTI

Indian origin Simran Preet Panesar, wanted in Canada's largest gold heist, found living quietly around Chandigarh

ON APRIL 17, 2023, A PLANE CARRYING MORE THAN 22 MILLION CANADIAN DOLLARS' WORTH OF GOLD BARS AND FOREIGN CURRENCY WAS STOLEN FROM TORONTO AIRPORT USING FAKE PAPERWORK

FEBRUARY 15, 2025

CHANDIGARH (TIP): Simran Preet Panesar--Indian-origin former Air Canada manager--wanted in connection with Canada's largest gold and cash heist worth CAD 22.5 million, has been found living in outskirts of Chandigarh.

On April 17, 2023, an air cargo container carrying more than 22 million Canadian dollars' worth of gold bars and foreign currency was stolen from a secure storage facility using fake paperwork.

The gold and currency had arrived on an Air Canada flight from Zurich, Switzerland, to Pearson International Airport in Toronto. Shortly after the flight's landing, the cargo was offloaded and transported to a separate location on airport property.

It was reported missing to the police a day later. Police had arrested six people involved in the theft. The arrested included Indian-origin men Archit Grover, Parmpal Sidhu and Amit Jalota, Ammad Chaudhary, Ali Raza, and Prasath Paramalingam.

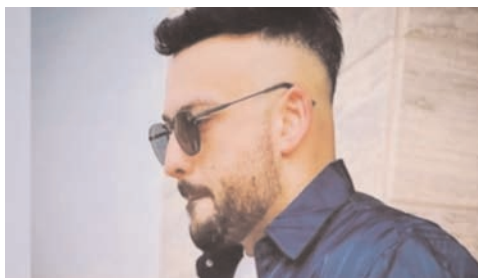
Canada-wide warrants were issued for Simran Preet Panesar from Brampton and Arsalan Chaudhary from Mississauga.

The Indian Express, in collaboration with CBC News: The Fifth Estate, Canada, tracked Panesar living in a rented accommodation with his family, including his wife Preety Panesar, a former Miss India Uganda, singer, and actor.

As per the report, Preet Panesar is living a normal life with his wife and family. When The Indian Express team met Panesar at his residence, he refused to speak "on record," citing legal and safety reasons.

There were reports that he was to surrender to police last year in June but that did not happen.

The stolen cargo contained 6,600 bars of .9999 pure gold, weighing 400 kg, valued at over 20 million dollars and Canadian dollars 2.5 million worth in foreign currency. In an earlier statement, the police said that investigators seized one kg of gold worth approximately Canadian dollars 89,000, believed to be from the theft, smelting equipment, and approximately 434,000 dollars in Canadian currency. (Source: TNS)



Simran Preet Panesar--Indian-origin former Air Canada manager

File photo

Indian-origin Opposition leader in Singapore found guilty of lying in Parliament

FEBRUARY 18, 2025

SINGAPORE (TIP): Singapore's Indian-origin Leader of the Opposition, Pritam Singh, was found guilty on Monday of giving a false testimony to a parliamentary committee, a verdict that could see him disqualified from Parliament and contesting a general election this year.

In the verdict delivered in the State Courts, Deputy Principal District Judge Luke Tan convicted Singh of the two charges against him.

The charges against Singh relate to his handling of Raeesah Khan, a former lawmaker from his party, who lied to Parliament in a separate case.

Singh, 48, was accused of wilfully giving two false answers to the Committee of Privileges (COP) during its inquiry into Khan's case on December 10 and December 15, 2021.

The case stems from Singh's handling of Khan's false claim in Parliament about accompanying a sexual assault victim to the police station.

Singh faces up to three years in jail, a fine of up to SGD7,000 (USD 5,290), or both for each charge.

Singh's trial began four months ago.

Politically, the conviction could disqualify Singh from his parliamentary seat and rule out his standing in the next general election which must be called by November 2025.

"Any claim he made to the COP to the contrary was a lie he wilfully told," said Judge Tan. (Source: PTI)



Photo caption: Pritam Singh was found guilty on Monday, February 17, of giving a false testimony to a parliamentary committee, a verdict that could see him disqualified from Parliament and contesting a general election this year.

File Photo : PTI

Indian origin Trump loyalist Kash Patel is confirmed as FBI director by Senate



Indian-origin Kash Patel will inherit an FBI gripped by turmoil

File photo

FEBRUARY 21, 2025

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): The Senate on Thursday, February 20, narrowly voted to confirm Kash Patel as director of the FBI, moving to place him atop the nation's premier federal law enforcement agency despite doubts from Democrats about his qualifications and concerns he will do Donald Trump's bidding and go after the Republican president's adversaries.

"I cannot imagine a worse choice," Sen Dick Durbin told colleagues before the 51-49 vote by the GOP-controlled Senate. Sens Susan Collins of Maine and Lisa Murkowski of Alaska were the lone

Republican holdouts.

A Trump loyalist who has fiercely criticized the agency, Indian-origin Patel will inherit an FBI gripped by turmoil as the Justice Department over the past month has forced out a group of senior bureau officials and made a highly unusual demand for the names of thousands of agents who participated in investigations related to the January 6, 2021 riot at the US Capitol.

Patel has spoken of his desire to implement major changes at the FBI, including a reduced footprint at headquarters in Washington and a renewed emphasis on the bureau's

traditional crime-fighting duties rather than the intelligence-gathering and national security work that has come to define its mandate over the past two decades. But he also echoed Trump's desire for retribution. Patel raised alarm among Democrats for saying before he was nominated that he would "come after" anti-Trump "conspirators" in the federal government and the media.

Republicans angry over what they see as law enforcement bias against conservatives during the Democratic Biden administration, as well as criminal investigations into Trump, have rallied behind Patel as the right person for the job.

"Mr Patel wants to make the FBI accountable once again - get back the reputation that the FBI has had historically for law enforcement," Sen Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, said before Patel was confirmed.

"He wants to hold the FBI accountable to Congress, to the president and, most importantly, to the people they serve-the American taxpayer."

Democrats complained about Patel's lack of management experience compared with previous FBI directors and they highlighted incendiary past statements that they said called his judgment into question.

"I am absolutely sure of this one thing: this vote will haunt anyone who votes for him. They will rue the day they did it," said Sen Richard Blumenthal, a Connecticut Democrat.

(Source: AP)

INDIAN ORIGIN SALMAN RUSHDIE'S ATTACKER HADAI MATAR FOUND GUILTY OF ATTEMPTED MURDER

FEBRUARY 21, 2025

NEW YORK (TIP): A New Jersey man was convicted Friday of attempted murder and assault for stabbing author Salman Rushdie multiple times on a New York lecture stage in 2022.

A jury found Hadi Matar, 27, guilty after a little less than two hours of deliberations following a trial in Chautauqua County Court.

Matar ran onto the stage at the Chautauqua Institution where Rushdie was about to speak on Aug. 12, 2022, and stabbed him more than a dozen times before a live audience. The attack left the 77-year-old prizewinning novelist blind in one eye. Another man was injured.

'I remember thinking I was dying': Salman Rushdie relives brutal knife attack in 2022

Rushdie was the key witness during seven days of testimony, describing in graphic detail his life-threatening injuries and long and painful recovery.

Matar could be sentenced to up to 25 years in prison.



Indian origin British author Salman Rushdie -File photo

Indian-origin Paul Kapur is Trump's pick for key US diplomat job for South Asian Affairs



Kapur is a professor in the Department of National Security Affairs at the United States Naval Postgraduate School

Photo: Hoover Institution website

FEBRUARY 17, 2025

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): Paul Kapur, an expert on South Asian security, has been nominated by President Donald Trump to be the Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs.

Kapur, if confirmed by the Senate, will replace Donald Lu.

In January, the US State Department confirmed the departure of Lu,

Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs, as his term concluded on January 17.

The Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs deals with US foreign policy and US relations with the countries of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

Indian-origin Kapur is a professor in the Department of National Security Affairs at the United States Naval Postgraduate School.

(Source: PTI)

'Where is Pannun?'; Manjit GK blasts govt, Sikh diaspora for failure to stand with turban-stripped deportees

FEBRUARY 19, 2025

NEW DELHI / NEW YORK (TIP): Delhi-based Sikh leader Manjit Singh GK has called on Sikh leaders and influencers in Canada, the UK, and the US to break their silence over the humiliation of Sikh deportees in the United States, who were forcibly stripped of their turbans before being boarded onto a military plane.

GK, a veteran Akali, questioned the selective activism of Sikh political figures in the diaspora, reminding them that Sikh rights are not bound by geography.

"Where are the Sikh MPs, ministers, and activists who never hesitate to speak on Sikh issues in India? Does their voice falter when Sikh identity is trampled in America?" GK asked.

GK, who has in the past headed the Delhi Sikh Gurudwara Management Committee (DSGMC), questioned, "Where is Gurbatwant Pannun? Has he gone silent because this indignity happened under Trump's administration - the same Trump whose inauguration he attended?"

Drawing a parallel with the collective Sikh response to France's turban ban, GK reminded the community that the fight for adorning the turban has always been a global fight.

"When France banned the turban in schools and official documents, Sikhs stood together, across borders, without bothering for visas before raising their voice. Why the hesitation now? Why the silence when Sikh deportees were dehumanized on American soil?" he said. GK also criticized the Indian



Manjit GK Says 'turbans not cloth, identity', urges global Sikh response to US deportees incident

Photo for Representation only

government for failing to send its own aircraft to bring back the deportees, calling it a national embarrassment.

But he was equally critical of Sikh-American activists and the dozen-plus Sikh MPs in Canada and 11 in the UK, questioning why not one of them has spoken out against this injustice.

"If Sikh leaders in the West remain mute when our own people are shamed, they set a dangerous precedent - that Sikh identity can be violated without consequence. The turban is not just cloth; it is our identity. And if we fail to defend it now, we betray our own principles," GK warned.

He urged diaspora Sikhs to demand accountability, emphasizing that their silence at this moment would be deafening. (Source: TNS)

Tirlok Malik Highlights the Power of Universal Content at SIFFCY Panel on India-Global Cinematic Collaboration

FEBRUARY 15, 2025

NEW DELHI (TIP): Emmy-nominated Indian-American filmmaker Tirlok Malik was among the distinguished panelists at the Smile International Film Festival for Children & Youth (SIFFCY) 2025, an initiative of Smile Foundation, in partnership with the European Union. Malik participated in a high-profile discussion titled "The Cinematic Bridges: Fostering India-Global Collaboration and Opportunities in Cinema", held at Siri Fort Auditorium. Jitendra Mishra, Festival Director of SIFFCY, is committed to forging strong and long-lasting global collaborations.

The panel brought together some of the most influential voices in global cinema and art, including Andrea Anastasio, Director, Italian Embassy Cultural Centre, Stephan Ottenbruch, Festival Director, IndoGerman Film Week; Ketki Parikh, Co-Founder, Chicago South Asian Film Festival (CSFF); and Lichtkoppler Elisabeth, Director, Vienna International Children's Film Festival. The discussion was moderated by Murtaza Ali Khan, a renowned Indian film critic and journalist.

Speaking on the evolving landscape of global cinema and the role of India in fostering cross-border collaborations, Tirlok Malik emphasized the significance of high-quality, universal content in transcending cultural and geographical boundaries. Reflecting on his own journey in cinema, Malik said, "When I started out in the 1990s with 'Lonely in America,' the landscape of cinema was very different. Today, digital platforms and streaming services have democratized the industry, offering



Tirlok Malik at the SIFFCY

immense opportunities for storytellers to connect with audiences worldwide."

He further stressed the importance of content-driven storytelling in an era dominated by digital consumption. "The focus should always be on storytelling that resonates with a global audience. Technology has changed, distribution has changed, but emotions remain the same. A good story, told well, will always find its audience," he remarked.

The panelists discussed the evolving nature of international co-productions, highlighting how India's diverse cinematic heritage and expanding market make it an attractive hub for filmmakers worldwide. Stephan Ottenbruch noted the growing presence of Indian films in European film festivals, stating, "India's storytelling tradition is unique, and there is an increasing appetite for its narratives across international platforms."

Adding to the discourse, Ketki Parikh

spoke about the rising opportunities for Indian filmmakers in global circuits, particularly in the United States. She remarked, "With festivals like CSFF in Chicago, we aim to bring South Asian stories to a wider audience. There is a strong demand for authentic, cross-cultural narratives that represent the Indian diaspora."

Lichtkoppler Elisabeth, Director of the Vienna International Children's Film Festival, emphasized the role of children's cinema in fostering global understanding. She commented, "Children's films have the power to bridge cultures and instill empathy from a young age. Indian cinema, with its rich tradition of storytelling, can play a pivotal role in this space."

The discussion also touched upon the challenges of balancing commercial viability with artistic integrity in global collaborations. Malik addressed this by

saying, "Independent filmmakers often face the challenge of funding, but the key lies in creating content that is both artistically satisfying and commercially viable. Platforms like SIFFCY provide an excellent opportunity for emerging filmmakers to showcase their work and connect with the right audience."

Andrea Anastasio contributed to the conversation by discussing the programming lineup of the Italian Embassy Cultural Centre, including the ongoing Marcello Mastroianni centenary celebrations and the upcoming screening of the restored version of Apu Trilogy at the 2025 Habitat International Film Festival. He also talked about the importance of co-production treaties between countries.

Malik expressed his gratitude towards SIFFCY for organizing such a significant forum, stating, "Platforms like SIFFCY play a crucial role in shaping the future of cinema by bringing together filmmakers, industry experts, and young audiences. It is an honor to be part of such a meaningful conversation."

The panel concluded with an engaging Q&A session, where budding filmmakers and students had the opportunity to interact with the esteemed speakers. The discussion underscored the ever-growing potential of India's film industry in shaping the global cinematic landscape while reinforcing the importance of meaningful storytelling in building cultural bridges.

As cinema continues to evolve, discussions like these at SIFFCY reaffirm the power of storytelling in fostering collaboration and understanding across borders.

Federation of Indo American Seniors Association of North America (FISANA) has a new President in Suresh Patel

BY VIJAY SHAH

FEBRUARY 20, 2025

EDISON, NJ (TIP): Mr. Suryakant Patel has taken over the charge as President of FISANA from the outgoing President Bharat Rana.

Suresh Patel has been actively involved in community services for the last 15 years. Presently, Sureshbhai Patel is also president of Bridgewater Seniors Association.

After coming to New Jersey from India 40 years ago, he had started his own business. Once at the age of retirement, he decided to wind up his business and started working for community services.

FISANA, being an umbrella organization of almost 20 associations, organize various events, like Summer Picnic, Domestic trip for seniors, Diwali celebration, Mother's Day, Father's Day, musical program etc. throughout the year.

Mr. Piyush Patel, the leading businessman and entrepreneur was elected as Chairperson, who will continue to extend his financial and physical support to seniors. As Vice



Suresh Patel addresses a gathering

Chair, Dr Mukund Thakar, Subhash Doshi and Rati Patel will continue their support and services. Suresh Patel welcomes the other seniors associations to join in and make FISANA stronger for Social and political strength.

On March 23rd, FISANA will organize a Gujarati drama by Ketki Dave at Bridgewater Balaji temple.

Suresh Patel can be reached at 908 745 9095 or by email at fisanaorganization@gmail.com



Suresh Patel is receiving a plaque. To his right is FISANA Chairperson Mr. Piyush Patel, a leading businessman and entrepreneur



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Walls, chains & cheap labor: West's hypocrisy on migration



---> By Christine Moliner

While right-wing politicians in destination countries reap the electoral benefits of demonizing 'illegal' immigrants, their economies are in dire need of a cheap and docile foreign workforce.



Needed: The deportees must be treated with dignity and respect.

Photo : Tribune

Since the first US military aircraft carrying 104 deported Indians landed in Amritsar on February 5, a slew of comments has emerged in the Indian media addressing the inhumane condition of the deportees' transportation and the response (or lack of) of the Indian authorities.

Many heart-wrenching stories have been published about the infamous dunki route taken by the deportees, the sacrifice of their families, including selling land, to send them abroad. Their socio-economic profiles and reasons for migration have also been highlighted.

As a scholar who has worked for 25 years on the Sikh diaspora, I found that though interesting, these stories miss a very important point - migration is not per se a criminal activity. It has been projected as a criminal activity recently in the countries of destination of migrants. In the US, it has been done mainly since 9/11. But in Europe, the process had started earlier in the context of the dismantling of EU's internal borders and the fortification of its external ones.

Indeed, because of the seemingly unstoppable wave of populist anti-immigrant discourse and the resultant increasingly restrictive border regimes, illegality, criminality and a sense of threat have become the dominant lens through which the state in the destination countries sees migrants from the Global South.

Let me argue here that we should apply a different lens and try to change the narrative around international migration and humanize it.

To start with, we must change our terminology. Many scholars and activists

promote the use of 'undocumented' migrants, which is a more neutral term, instead of 'illegal' migrants, which stigmatizes and criminalizes mobile people.

The lack of humanity and dignity during the horrendous 40-hour journey of the deportees, turbans removed, handcuffed and even leg-chained like criminals is for all to see, except for the Indian government, which seems to find not much wrong with the criminalization and dehumanization of its own citizens.

In contrast, Colombian President Gustavo Petro strongly protested against the way the deportations were carried out, stressing the need to treat the deportees with dignity and respect. Initially, he even denied entry to two US flights before backing down, when threatened by Trump of a 50 per cent rise in tariffs on Colombian imports.

Among the reasons for the lack of a strong response by Delhi seems to be a bid to placate the US government and protect H-1B visas for skilled Indian migrants. This narrative of skilled (read 'good', 'wanted') vs unskilled (read 'bad', 'disposable') migrants is used in many destination countries to exploit the latter and deprive them of basic human rights.

In her book on the experience of foreign workers in Qatar (*Does Skill Make Us Human? Migrant Workers in 21st Century Qatar and Beyond*, Princeton University Press, 2021), US scholar Natasha Iskander argues that the notion of skill is a political tool, defining the rights foreign workers have access to.

While right-wing politicians in destination countries reap the electoral benefits of demonizing

'illegal' immigrants, their economies - particularly the construction, services and care sectors - are in dire need of a vulnerable foreign workforce. 'Illegal migration' is not a natural category. It is a political construct, an instrument that serves a purpose: of disciplining and coercing a docile and cheap immigrant labor force into accepting what sociologists call 3 Ds (dirty, dangerous, demeaning) jobs, shunned by the national population.

The hypocrisy of anti-immigrant rhetoric is probably best exemplified by none other than Trump himself. As reported by The Washington Post in 2019, his holding company, the Trump Organization, has employed for nearly two decades dozens of undocumented Latin-American construction workers at several properties owned by the company. And, guess why? Because they are cheap, hardworking and too afraid of deportations to complain about a back-breaking, harassing work.

Here, one needs to understand why 'unskilled' men and women from the Global South keep migrating to the Global North despite the increasingly expensive and dangerous journeys they are compelled to take due to the stringent immigration policies enforced by the destination countries.

There are multiple reasons for the life-changing decision that emigration entails. They encompass a combination of push factors (socio-economic or political conditions in the country of origin) and pull factors (what attracts people in the country of destination).

To put it bluntly, one major reason lies with the continuous economic and demographic demand for cheap migrant

labor in the Global North despite the anti-immigration rhetoric. Take my own country, France. Who looks after our elderly, who cleans hotel rooms, collects garbage, builds bridges, schools, housing complexes, delivers our orders? Immigrants, of course. And, many of them irregular. They neither come to live on social benefits nor to steal the jobs of the French, as the far-right would have it.

Mobility is not a crime. It is a natural human urge. Crossing an international border shouldn't mean losing one's basic rights and dignity. Migrants, whether skilled or unskilled, are not criminals.

A hateful narrative dehumanizing immigrants has become all too common in many western countries. In a debate with Democrat candidate Kamala Harris, Trump went as far as to refer to Haitian refugees in Ohio as "eating the pets of the people that live there."

Many people and advocacy groups oppose this rhetoric in the West. They argue that border enforcement policies are devastating for migrants, costly for the country of destination and ultimately ineffective because regardless of the risks, people will continue to move as they have done throughout human history.

In the case of Punjabis, mass migration was triggered and organized by the British rule to its own advantage. This colonial engineering created a deeply embedded culture of migration that no deportation, no border regime and no walls will be able to uproot.

(Christine Moliner is Associate Professor, OP Jindal Global University)

'Foreign hand' is as distracting as ever



----> By Jyoti Malhotra

"This current storm means that the BJP - and the MEA - has moved on from the controversy over the shackled and handcuffed Indians deported on three US military flights in the last fortnight. Two of those flights landed in Amritsar after the PM returned home after meeting Trump, but no one in the government has still answered whether the Indian side raised this issue with Trump."

The much-maligned "foreign hand", a favorite charge of Indira Gandhi against her opponents, is back in vogue. Go back into The Tribune's archives, dear Reader, and you will find several instances of the former Prime Minister alluding to undisclosed forces from abroad bent on wrecking the country. This was more than 40 years ago, of course, and we have surely moved on from those times and become a far more secure and confident nation.

This week, with apologies to Marcel Proust, has seemed a bit like wading into remembrances of things past. US President Donald Trump's fast friend Elon Musk's statement about USAID going to spend \$21 million for "voter turnout in India," has been taken as the gospel truth by the BJP. The ruling party is now targeting the Congress - just deserts, some would say - for receiving this money, after Trump's throwaway comment that these monies could have been sent by the Joe Biden administration to try and "get someone else elected."

Of course, Trump is playing to his gallery. Clearly, the BJP is also playing to its own, with the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) saying this information is "obviously very troubling" and leads to "concerns about foreign interference in India's internal affairs."

You could argue that this is "all politics," which basically means the storm is an attempt at embarrassing Rahul Gandhi - not that he needs help. And even if it's going to be blown away by the weekend, let's examine what damage it has done to the teacup so far.

First, the embarrassment is to the MEA itself, not to the Congress party. The ministry, made up of one of the finest sets of diplomats in the world,



The issue of USAID funding has come handy for the BJP to divert attention from other important issues

has always sought to stay above the murky cesspool of politics - and very often, succeeded. It's not for no reason that India's prime ministers have often also been foreign ministers and when they haven't, have maintained a deep interest in its affairs. (In fact, every ambassadorial appointment of the Republic of India is personally signed off by the PM.)

If that's the role of the MEA, to be the protector of the national interest, it follows that it would not like itself to be used by any party in question. That's why it picks and chooses its words carefully. Words, after all, are the only arrows of a diplomat's armor, and each means what it says and intends to say.

Second, this current storm means that the BJP - and the MEA - has moved on from the controversy over the shackled and handcuffed Indians deported on three US military flights in the last fortnight. Two of those flights landed in Amritsar after the PM returned home after meeting Trump, but no one in the government has still answered whether the Indian side raised this issue with Trump.

But that story is over. Delhi has moved on.

However, the fact remains that many questions remain unanswered, including why the turbans of Sikh deportees were so unceremoniously removed. As for why they were shackled and cuffed, it seems this is what the Americans do - many other nationalities don't, and haven't, while sending unwanted Indians home, but the Americans ain't taking any chances, it seems.

The original question remains. Did

the Indian embassy in the US or the MEA in Delhi summon US diplomats and hand them a demarche asking why Indian nationals were treated so shabbily on those flights home?

Clearly, the Americans seem to have given up flights for the moment - so much cheaper to push them into Panama and Costa Rica. Delhi says it is checking the identities of these men - that may take a while, mark my words, because the procedure is truly lengthy and involves making the judgment whether these people are of some other South Asian nation - Indian or Pakistani or what? - or your own.

Come to think of it, if your illegal immigration agent has kept your passport or thrown it away in the jungle and you no longer have any papers, on what basis is the Indian diplomat in Costa Rica or Panama going to decide whether the man in front of him is Indian or not? His address back home? What he looks like? The language he speaks?

Third, the fact remains that no one really cares about these men and women caught in a Toba Tek Singh-like world which makes no sense - things back home in Punjab are awful in comparison, and the sunshine in Canada-US just so much more alluring. They want to escape, just like the Gujaratis do - the second highest number of deportees are from that state - and just like those of us with the influence to get that US visa.

Fourth, it's time to cut to the chase. The truth is that the current storm has really been drummed up to distract you from analyzing the fast-paced changes in the world around you. After the

Russia-US talks in Riyadh, Trump & Co seem to be fully in the mood to make nice with the Russians. More to the point, Trump has just invited China's Xi Jinping to DC.

Does this mean, then, that a second Yalta-like conference is in the offing? That Trump, Putin and Xi will soon be lordling over their respective continents - Russia to be given Europe and China to be given Asia? Even if that is an exaggeration, dear Reader, you get the point. You can also bet your last rupee that the best spirits are flowing across Moscow and Beijing these days.

And that's the last question of this piece: If Trump is going to embrace Xi in what is obviously looking like a braver new world, what place does India have in it, especially when India and Modi were looking to Trump and America as a hedge against Beijing?

Perhaps, this is a wake-up call for India. Perhaps, it's time to focus inwards and develop your own strength. As for the distraction of the "foreign hand," let's see it for exactly what it is and has always been, a distraction.

(Jyoti Malhotra is Editor-in-Chief of The Tribune group of newspapers.

She has been a journalist for 40 years, working in print, TV and digital, both in English and Hindi media, besides being a regular contributor on BBC Radio. She is also interested in the conflation between politics and foreign policy. Her X handle is @jomalhotra Insta handle @jomalhotra

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The 'Gulf of America' feud is about something bigger: Trump wants to control the media



---> By Margaret Sullivan

The president punished the AP for choosing its own language, but that's just the tip of the iceberg. The press must show unity. It might seem like a small matter, just a disagreement over whether a body of water should be called one name or another.

But it's really about much bigger things: Trump-style intimidation, a clear violation of the first amendment - and the extent to which news organizations will stick together in each other's defense, or will comply with the powerful for the sake of their own access.

Even more broadly, it is about Donald Trump's wide-ranging effort to control the media and be able to spread propaganda and interfere with the flow of accurate information.

The disagreement started soon after the president decided unilaterally that the Gulf of Mexico was to be called the Gulf of America. The executive order was one more display of Trump's capricious and imperious way of doing things; his first month has been a relentless exercise in chaos and norm-destruction.

After the Associated Press, the global news organization, decided to stick with using the long-established name which makes sense to its international readership, the Trump White House determined that punishment was in order.

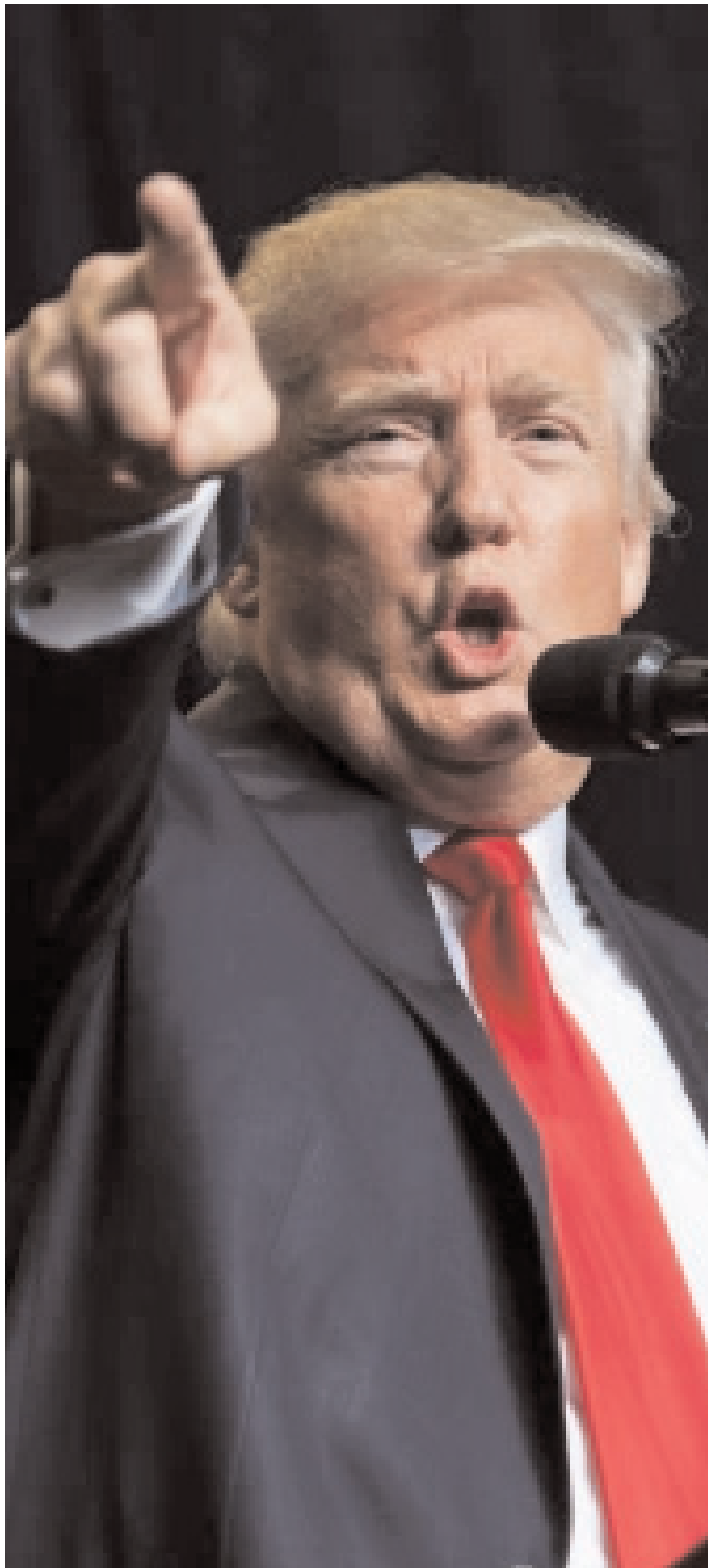
An AP reporter was barred from a White House press event, and since then, things have only escalated. More AP reporters barred from briefings and from the president's plane. Access denied.

What's happening is ugly. In the US, the government doesn't get to dictate the language journalists use in their stories. There's a little thing called the first amendment to the US constitution that prohibits this. But the Trump administration, as usual, has its own - often unconstitutional and sometimes illegal - ideas.

The actions against the AP are "retribution, plain and simple, and a shameful attempt to bully the press into ideological compliance", said Tim Richardson of PEN America.

On Thursday, the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press sent a letter to the White House signed by 30 news organizations, and the White House Correspondents Association is similarly registering its displeasure.

But letters - even signed by many and ever so strongly worded - are easy to ignore. The solution, if there is one, will require more forceful measures: lawsuits and journalistic solidarity that might include a widespread boycotting of White House press briefings.



Trump-style intimidation to control the media

After all, compliance is a slippery slope. What happens, for example, when Trump proclaims that Ukraine is no longer Ukraine, but to be simply called Russia? Do news organizations politely accept the rewriting of history?

"What do the media do then," queried the longtime environmental journalist Andrew Revkin, "agree to those terms so they can stay in the briefing room?"

Why stop there? How about declaring by fiat that the Washington monument is now to be called the Trump monument? Why not chisel another presidential face onto Mount Rushmore and call it Mount Donald?

The great renaming has begun, and George Orwell would understand exactly what's going on.

A few days ago, a media leader I admire - Jim Friedlich, the CEO of the Lenfest Institute, a non-profit organization that owns the Philadelphia Inquirer - proposed a notion that deserves serious consideration. There should be, he wrote, a "NATO for News," in which every legitimate news organization formally pledges to defend the others. This happens now, from time to time, but Friedlich has something more deliberate in mind, he wrote in the Inquirer.

All of this is happening within a larger and quite alarming anti-press context.

Trump's sidekick Elon Musk recently fantasized about a "long prison sentence" for journalists on CBS's 60 Minutes, which has been under fire for its (normal and conventional) editing of a pre-election interview with Kamala Harris.

Trump has sued the Pulitzer prize board for statements in defense of its awards to the Washington Post and the New York Times for their coverage of Trump's relationship with Russia; he's sued the Des Moines Register over a pre-election public opinion poll. And the Pentagon recently tossed eight traditional news organizations from office spaces to make room for pro-Maga outlets.

"The Trump administration has decided that it will actively wield access as a tool to reshape the media landscape in its favor," Oliver Darcy wrote in his media newsletter, Status. It surely will also use more legal threats and actions.

Given that we're only a month into this brave new world, some unity and stiff-spined resolve are very much in order.

That won't be easy. Getting journalists together is like herding pigeons. And no journalist wants to lose access to sources and to being where news is made. But in this era, it couldn't be more important to push back hard.

The free press may be going down, but if so, we should go down swinging.

(Margaret Sullivan is a Guardian US columnist writing on media, politics and culture)



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GOPIO-CT Distributes Funds for Local Charities, New Team Sworn-In



Connecticut State Senator Sujata Gadkar-Wilcox administering Oath of Office to GOPIO-CT team. From L to R: Joe Somin, Jaya Daptardar, Srinivas Akarapu, Sushanth Krishnamurthy, Mahesh Jhangiani, Anita Mathur, Prasad Chintalapudi, and Gopinath Nadella



GOPIO-CT President Mahesh Jhangiani presenting a check to Jim Hoffman of Wheel It Forward. From L to R: Sonali Zullurwar, Srinivas Akarapu, Mahesh Jhangiani, Jim Hoffman, Dr. Thomas Abraham, Prasad Chintalapudi, Joe Simon and Sushanth Krishnamurthy

FEBRUARY 10, 2025

STAMFORD (TIP): Global Organization of People of Indian Origin Connecticut Chapter (GOPIO-CT) organized its launch of 2025 activities on Friday, Feb. 7th in Stamford, CT. On this occasion the newly elected Executive team headed by President Mahesh Jhangiani took the Oath of Office administered by Connecticut State Senator Prof Sujata Gadkar-Wilcox.

The evening also marked the felicitation of CT Senator Sujata Gadkar-Wilcox on her victory at the state elections in November 2024. She is the first Connecticut state senator as well as first woman senator of Asian origin.

The 2024 team has the following as the officials; President - Mahesh Jhanginai, Exe.VP - Sushanth Krishnamurthy, VP - Nandu Kuppuswamy, Secretary - Sonali Zulluwur, Treasurer - Srinivas Akarapu, Associate Secretary - Ashvini Persaud. Trustees - Joe Simon, Shailesh Naik, Thomas Abraham, Totty Narang, Shelly Nichani and Prasad Chintalapudi. Board Members: Meera Banta, Ravi Dhingra, Amit Lakhotia, Manish Maheshwari, Anita Mathur, Sunita Menon, Gopinath Nadella, Ravi Nichani,

Every year, the chapter raises funds for a selected local charity at its holiday party which is usually held in December but was postponed from December 2024



GOPIO-CT officials with Taal Sutra Music Group in a celebrative mood

to February 2025.

Last year, the chapter had raised funds for Wheel It Forward (<https://www.wheelitforwardusa.org/>). Thanks to the contributors, the chapter made a donation of \$5,000 to this charity. A check for the amount was presented by Chapter President Mahesh Jhangiani to Mr. Jim Hoffman of Wheel it Forward.

In 2024, GOPIO-CT and its members contributed \$25,000 to Norwalk Community College Foundation to give away scholarships to needy students, \$25,000 to Future 5 (<https://futurefive.org/>) which provides educational and career coaching to low income and immigrant High School

students in the Stamford area and \$10,000 to Society for Human and Environmental Development (SHED, <https://shedindia.org/>) which runs schools, health clinics and community centers in several locations in Mumbai and tribal areas of Maharashtra. Representatives of other service providers present at the event included Women's Mentoring Network and Building One Community, both based in Stamford, CT.

Among the numerous activities conducted by GOPIO-CT is sponsorship of local soup kitchens. At this event GOPIO received pledges of \$2000 towards hosting eight soup kitchens at

the New Covenant House in Stamford. The sponsorship money goes toward buying food ingredients which the sponsor and/or volunteers cook at the facility and serve lunch for about 100 needy people.

To add cheer to the festive spirit and wind up the program, local band Taal Sutra provided live entertainment.

GOPIO-CT endeavors to continue with its activities to foster good relation between the Indian diaspora in Connecticut with local communities and contribute to the well-being of the state's residents.

Over the last 19 years, GOPIO-CT, a chapter of GOPIO International, has become an active and dynamic organization hosting interactive sessions with policy makers and academicians, community events, youth mentoring and networking workshops, and working with other area organizations to help create a better future. GOPIO-CT - Global Organization of People of Indian Origin - serves as a non-partisan, secular, civic and community service organization - promoting awareness of Indian culture, customs and contributions of people of Indian origin through community programs, forums, events and youth activities. It seeks to strengthen partnerships and create an ongoing dialogue with local communities.

Global Malayalee Festival Planned In Kochi on August 14 & 15

"Bond Beyond Borders: Discover Your Roots"

FEBRUARY 19, 2025

NEW YORK (TIP): Kerala, often referred to as "God's Own Country," boasts a rich and diverse culture. It is a blend of various traditions, arts, and practices, with a strong connection to its history and nature. Kerala's culture is reflected in its cuisine, clothing, art, and dance, and it is known for its intricately carved temples, traditional wooden homes, and unique literary and artistic forms.

Living thousands of miles away from this beautiful land of diverse traditions, yet the center of global ambitions, every Malayalee longs to be connected with and rediscover her/his roots. The first ever Global Malayalee Festival planned to be held from August 15th



to 16th, 2025 in Kochi, the most modern and ancient city of the state of Kerala, promises to offer the millions of Malayalees spread across the globe, a unique opportunity to "Bond Beyond Borders," to experience and relive the rich cultural heritage of Kerala.

Andrew Pappachen, the Director & Chief Organizing Officer of the Global Malayalee Festival urged the Malayalee Diaspora to "be part of the cultural celebrations, celebrating our achievements, transformative discussions, and groundbreaking ideas at the inaugural Global Malayalee Festival in Kochi."

The Festival 2025 brings together Malayalee diaspora leaders, innovators, and visionaries from around the globe to discuss and collaborate on shaping future technologies and their impact on global communities.

According to the organizers, "Malayalees from 47 countries in all five continents have joined the Global Malayalee Festival as advisors, ambassadors, and coordinators. We expect to create a global networking of New Gen, Businesspeople, and Technocrats."

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

Ontario elections: Will the Indo-Canadian community improve its tally in the February 27 polls?



--->By Prabhjot Singh

FEBRUARY 21, 2025

TORONTO (TIP) : Of the two ensuing elections - the new leader of the Liberal Party and next Prime Minister of Canada and the provincial elections of Ontario - the impact of the ongoing tariff war and widening gulf in bilateral trade and people-to-people relations with neighboring United States is apparent. Average Canadians in general and Ontarians in particular have been watching with tremendous interest day-to-day developments as their future is closely hinged on the outcome of this unprecedented war of attrition.

Mounting tensions notwithstanding, battle lines have been drawn for the February 27 Ontario Provincial Assembly elections. Similarly, the fight for the Liberal Party leadership and the next Prime Minister of Canada is also inching towards its climax. All six candidates have stepped up their campaigns to woo the party MPs and delegates who will vote on March 9 to make their final choice.

The results of both elections will be watched with tremendous interest in Canada and the immediate neighborhood. One thing that stands out in the advanced Ontario Provincial elections is a significant drop in the number of candidates and political outfits.

The Indo-Canadian community, too, will await the results of the February 27 polls with bated breath. It looks forward to improving the best tally of 11 legislators.

Compared to 900 candidates who fought in the last provincial polls in 2022, the number has dropped to 768, showing a 14.6 per cent decrease. Similarly, the number of political parties in the run for power this time is 20 against 25 in the last battle of the ballot.

Interestingly, there is no let-up in the political enthusiasm of the candidates of Indian descent vying to grab seats in the next Assembly of the biggest province of



Canada. In all, there are 37 candidates of Indian descent in the run. They include all sitting members of the outgoing Assembly. Foremost of them have been Prabhmeet Singh Sarkaria, Amarjit Singh Sandhu, Hardeep Grewal, Nina Tangri and Deepak Anand who held key positions in the Doug Ford government.

Another redeeming feature for the growing Indo-Canadian community is the growing number of new faces entering the province's political arena. Of many first-timers are Shafoli Kapur, an immigration consultant, and Ranjit Singh Bagga, who owns and runs several golf courses in the Greater Toronto Area.

New Blue Party, one of the recent additions to the political horizon of Ontario, has also fielded some candidates of Indian descent while the Greens have once again put their

confidence in four candidates of Indian descent.

The best performance by the Indo-Canadian community in provincial elections has been 11 wins that were spread to three major political parties. Will the ensuing election see the Indian community get past its previous best? Only the results on the evening of February 27 will tell.

HERE IS THE COMPLETE LIST OF CANDIDATES OF INDIAN DESCENT IN THE FRAY REPRESENTING ALL MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES AND INDEPENDENTS:

PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVES

Deepak Anand - Mississauga-Malton
Hardeep Grewal - Brampton East
Logan Kanapathi - Markham-Thornhill
Prabhmeet Singh Sarkaria - Brampton South

Nina Tangri - Mississauga-Streetsville
Amarjot Sandhu - Brampton West
Vijay Thanigasalan - Scarborough-Rouge Park

NEW DEMOCRATS

Sonali Chakraborty - Scarborough Centre
Raymond Bhushan - Richmond Hill
Thadsa Navaneethan - Scarborough North
Rajni Sharma - Brampton South
Martin Singh - Brampton East
Sukhamrit Singh - Brampton Centre

LIBERALS

Anita Anandrajan - Scarborough North
Ranjit Singh Bagga - Brampton North
Nirmala Armstrong - Markham-Thornhill
Viresh Bansal - Oshawa
Vicky Dhillon - Brampton East
Jagbir Dosanjh - Markham-Unionville
Shafoli Kapur - Niagara Falls
Bhavik Parikh - Brampton South
Vandan Patel - Haldinand-Northfolk
Adil Shamji - Don Valley East
Gurwinder Dosanjh - Sault Ste. Marie

NEW BLUE PARTY

Darryl Brothers - Mississauga-Streetsville
Maria Dsouza - Ottawa Centre
Kamalpreet Kaur - Brampton Centre
Rishab Bhatia - Ottawa-Vernier

GREEN

Mini Batra - Pickering-Uxbridge
Rajinder Boyal - Brampton South
Nira Dookeran - Ottawa South
Sanin Zeco - Durham

COMMUNISTS

Rimmy Riarh - Parkdale-High Park

PROGRESS PARTY ONTARIO

Pit Goyal - Willowdale

INDEPENDENTS

Pushpek Sidhu - Brampton West
Azad Goyat - Brampton East
Rahul Padmini Saumian - Oshawa

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

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Canadian Olympic medalists awarded cash incentives, thanks to the Malaviya Foundation



--->By Prabhjot Singh

FEBRUARY 15, 2025

OTTAWA (TIP): All 50 Canadian athletes, who won medals in the 2024 Paris Olympic Games, have been awarded cash incentives of \$ 5000 each, thanks to a generous donation by the Malaviya Foundation, an organization run by Sanjay Malaviya, a Canadian healthcare tech entrepreneur of Indian descent.

The Canadian Olympic Foundation announced that all Team Canada Olympic medalists from the Paris 2024 Olympic Games have been awarded \$1.75 million through donor support and the Canadian Olympic Committee's Athlete Excellence Fund.

In May last year, the Canadian Olympic Foundation and the Paralympic Foundation of Canada announced the Team Canada Podium Awards to support Canadian medalists at Paris 2024 and Milano-Cortina 2026. The Malaviya Foundation contributed upwards of \$1.4 million.

It was announced that under the Team Canada Podium Awards, the Canadian Olympic Foundation and the Paralympic Foundation would award the Paris 2024 and Milano-Cortina 2026 medalists a \$5,000 grant per medal earned. Additionally, \$100,000 will go to Olympic and Paralympic Next Generation Initiatives, helping to fund the highest priority needs of the Canadian Olympic Foundation and the Paralympic Foundation of Canada.

Jacqueline Ryan, Chief Executive Office of the Canadian Olympic Foundation and Chief Brand and Commercial officer of the Canadian Olympic Committee acknowledged the gesture, saying "The Malaviya Foundation's generous commitment to Team Canada athletes is invaluable. Despite our very best efforts, athletes still don't have all the resources to compete at the highest levels. We are so grateful for the Malaviya Foundation's continued leadership ahead of Paris 2024 and Milano-Cortina 2026, at a time when athletes need it the most. We hope this gift inspires Canadians to support Team Canada this summer and beyond."

"The funding support that the Malaviya Foundation has granted the Paralympic Foundation of Canada over the years has been instrumental in creating opportunities and achieving greater equity for Paralympic athletes to fulfil their full potential," Dean Brokop, Executive Director of the Paralympic Foundation of Canada and Chief Philanthropic Officer of the Canadian Paralympic Committee, had also welcomed the donation. "We are truly thankful."

This gift follows the Malaviya Foundation's \$1.2 million donation to the Canadian Olympic Foundation and the Paralympic Foundation of Canada in 2022, which celebrated Team Canada's medalists at the Tokyo 2020 and Beijing 2022 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

"Canadian sport catalyzes uniting the nation and bringing communities together," Sanjay Malaviya, the Canadian healthcare tech entrepreneur behind the Malaviya Foundation, said in a statement while announcing the donation. "Team Canada athletes are inspirational in many ways and it's an honor to be able to support and celebrate them as they represent our country at the highest level of competition."

The Team Canada Podium Awards are in addition to the funding that Olympians and Paralympians receive for winning a medal from the Canadian Olympic Committee's Athlete's Excellence Fund and the Paralympic Performance Recognition Program, which was established in part by a gift from the Malaviya Foundation in January 2024.

The medalists received a combined \$935,500 through donor support in recognition of their podium performances at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, marking the highest amount ever granted through donor support



Malaviya Foundation, run by Sanjay Malaviya, a Canadian healthcare tech entrepreneur of Indian descent, contributed upwards of \$1.4 million towards the Team Canada Podium Awards to support Canadian medalists at Paris 2024 and Milano-Cortina 2026.

to celebrate medalists' achievements. This funding has been made possible through the Team Canada Podium Awards, funded by the Malaviya Foundation, and the Tania Esakin Fund.

Each Team Canada medalist from Paris 2024 has received \$5,000 per medal earned through the Team Canada Podium Awards, and \$13,210 each from the Tania Esakin Fund.

Malaviya Foundation has been regularly funding the Canadian Olympic Foundation since 2022 as earlier donations were used to celebrate Team Canada medalists at the Tokyo 2020 and Beijing 2022 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Additionally, the Malaviya Foundation donated \$200,000 in 2024 to Olympic and Paralympic Next Generation Initiatives in support of up-and-coming Canadian athletes. The Team Canada Podium Awards will also be granted to Team Canada's medalists from the Milano Cortina 2026 Olympic Winter Games.

The distributed grants also came from the Tania

Esakin Fund, established through an estate gift to the Canadian Olympic Foundation from Cecile Esakin. At his wishes, the fund was divided equally among Canadian medalists from Beijing 2022 and Paris 2024.

In addition to donor funding, \$815,000 was also granted to Team Canada's Paris 2024 medalists from the Canadian Olympic Committee's Athlete Excellence Fund, a support and reward program that provides Canadian athletes with performance awards of \$20,000, \$15,000 and \$10,000 for winning Olympic gold, silver, or bronze medals, respectively.

The Athlete Excellence Fund also provides funding of \$5,000 for performances at World Championships (or equivalent) during non-Olympic years, to support living, training, and competition expenses.

Looking ahead to Milano Cortina 2026 and Los Angeles 2028, the Canadian Olympic Foundation looks to build on the increased momentum of donor support in helping Team Canada athletes reach their Olympic potential and in celebrating their achievements at the Olympic Games.



PM Narendra Modi to be guest of honour at Mauritius' National Day, to visit on March 11-12

Mauritian Prime Minister Navin Ramgoolam announced on Friday that PM Narendra Modi will be the 'Guest of Honour' at Mauritius' 57th National Day celebrations. PM Modi is set to visit Port Louis on March 11-12.

Navin Ramgoolam, addressing the Parliament, also highlighted the honour of hosting such a leader, especially given Modi's packed schedule and recent international engagements in Paris and the United States. "I have great pleasure to inform the House that following my invitation, Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India, has kindly agreed to be the Guest of Honour for our National Day celebrations. It is indeed a singular privilege for our country, to host such a distinguished personality who is doing us this honour, despite his very tight schedule and his recent visits to Paris and the United States," Ramgoolam said.

Punjab minister ran 'non-existent' dept for 20 months, BJP roasts AAP

The Punjab government has scrapped the so-called Department of Administrative Reforms headed by state Minister Kuldeep Singh Dhaliwal, which was "not in existence" for 20 months. The move is part of the Bhagwant Mann-led Aam Aadmi Party government's major administrative shake-up, which also included the transfer of 21 IPS officers. A gazette notification, issued by the Punjab Chief Secretary on Feb 21, said the decision to scrap the department came on the advice of Chief Minister Mann.

"The Department of Administrative Reforms earlier allotted to Kuldeep Singh Dhaliwal, Cabinet Minister, is not in existence as on date," the notification said, adding that Dhaliwal will only retain the NRI Affairs portfolio as of now.

As per sources, the AAP government was left red-faced after they realised that the department did not exist despite the Dhaliwal being allocated to head it. The last cabinet reshuffle in Punjab took place in September 2024 when Mann inducted five new ministers and dropped four.

Jaishankar, Chinese counterpart discuss bilateral ties, managing peace along border

NEW FELHI (TIP)

External affairs minister S Jaishankar and his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi on Friday, Feb 21, discussed ways to further normalise bilateral ties, such as resumption of the Kailash Mansarovar pilgrimage and direct flights between the two countries, following up on an understanding last year to end the face-off on the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

The two foreign ministers met on the sidelines of the G20 foreign ministers' meeting in Johannesburg, South Africa – the latest in a string of meetings between top leaders of India and China since the two sides agreed on October 21 to disengage frontline forces at the two "friction points" of Demchok and Depsang in Ladakh sector of LAC.

Jaishankar and Wang "reviewed developments in our bilateral relationship since their last meeting in November", external affairs ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal told a regular media briefing.

Among the issues that figured during the meeting that lasted about 30 minutes were management of peace and tranquillity in the border areas, the resumption of the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra, trans-border rivers, flight connectivity and travel facilitation, Jaiswal said. The two leaders also exchanged views on the G20 and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).

While China has pushed for the resumption of direct flights, which were



suspended in 2020, and enhancement of trade relations, India has been insisting on the resumption of the Kailash Mansarovar pilgrimage from this spring. New Delhi has also expressed concern about Beijing's plan to build the world's largest hydropower project on Yarlung Tsangpo river in Tibet, which will have significant ramifications for India and Bangladesh, and called for transparency and consultations with downstream countries.

This was also the second meeting between the two foreign ministers since the two countries began the process of normalising their relations, which had plummeted to a six-decade low because of the four-year-long military standoff in Ladakh sector of the LAC. The face-off was triggered by China's massing of troops on the disputed frontier in

violation of existing border management agreements.

The tensions on the LAC were exacerbated by a brutal clash in Galwan Valley in June 2020 that killed 20 Indian soldiers and an unspecified number of Chinese troops - the first casualties on the disputed border in 45 years. Indian banned dozens of Chinese apps and effectively restricted investments by Chinese firms.

The two sides then held dozens of rounds of talks through diplomatic and military channels that led to the withdrawal of frontline forces on both banks of Pangong Lake, Gogra and Hot Springs. However, China's insistence that the border issue should be separated from progress in the overall relationship stymied further progress in the talks till the breakthrough last October.

Unacceptable: India slams Turkish President's Kashmir remarks during Pak visit

NEW DELHI (TIP)

Nearly a week after Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan spoke on the issue of Kashmir during his visit to Pakistan, New Delhi on Friday said such "unwarranted" statements on India's territorial integrity and sovereignty were "unacceptable", adding that it has lodged a "strong protest" on the matter with the Turkish ambassador here.

"We reject such objectionable comments on matters which are internal to India," MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said in response to a query on Erdogan's remarks.

Jaiswal also reiterated India's position that Jammu and Kashmir "is an integral part of India, it always has been, and it will remain so".

There should be no doubt or confusion on this, the MEA spokesperson said.



Recep Tayyip Erdogan

"Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India. No other country has any locus standi to comment on it. Instead of commenting on internal affairs of another country, it would have been appropriate if Pakistan's policy of using

cross-border terrorism against India, which remains the biggest threat for the people of Jammu and Kashmir, had been called out," Jaiswal said.

"We reject such objectionable comments on matters which are internal to India. We have lodged a strong protest with the Turkish ambassador in Delhi. Such unwarranted statements on India's territorial integrity and sovereignty are unacceptable," he added.

During his recent two-day visit to Pakistan last week, Erdogan said, "The Kashmir issue should be addressed according to the UN resolution through dialogue and keeping in mind the aspirations of the people of Kashmir."

"Our state and our nation, as in the past, stands in solidarity with our Kashmiri brothers today," the Turkish president said.

Rekha Gupta takes charge as Delhi CM, keeps finance, revenue, Parvesh Verma gets PWD

NEW DELHI (TIP)

Chief minister Rekha Gupta and her ministers, sworn in on Thursday, Feb 20, at a public function at Ramlila Maidan that was attended by PM Modi, Union ministers and many chief ministers, hit the ground running.

The portfolios were announced at night. Among the key departments, Gupta will handle finance and revenue; Parvesh Verma PWD and water; Ashish Sood home, power, urban development and education; Manjinder Singh Sirsa industries and environment; Kapil Mishra law and justice; Dr Pankaj Kumar Singh health and transport; and Ravinder Indraj Singh social welfare.

A hoarding of the CM and PM, positioned on opposite sides, served as the backdrop of the stage with 'Viksit Dilli Ka Shapath Samaroh' inscribed in the centre as lieutenant governor V K Saxena administered the oath to Gupta and her council of six ministers. She took the oath amid chants of "Jai Shri Ram" from a large crowd of party supporters.

Sood incorporated his parents' names in the oath while Sirsa, a former Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) member, delivered his oath in Punjabi. The audience enthusiastically applauded Kapil Mishra, a Brahmin from Poorvanchal, when he took the oath.

The cabinet composition reflects a careful balance of regional and caste representation, including Pankaj Singh, who is a Thakur from Poorvanchal, Indraj, who is a representative of the Scheduled Castes, and the chief minister, who is a Bania.

Gupta, Sood, Singh and Indraj are first-time MLAs.

The choice of venue was politically significant as it had witnessed the Jan Lokpal protests by anti-corruption activist Anna Hazare which eventually gave birth to AAP. This was the place where Arvind Kejriwal and his cabinet had been sworn in on Feb 14, 2015. Kejriwal had promised to rid the city of corruption and warned his party against "ahankar" (arrogance).

Gupta, who became the fourth woman — and ninth overall — CM of the capital, offered prayers at Marghat Wale Hanuman Temple at Kashmere Gate before reaching the venue. She was followed in the swearing-in ceremony by New Delhi MLA Parvesh Verma who too drew enthusiastic cheers from the audience with some shouting, "Parvesh ji ko Jai Shri Ram". Newly-elected MLAs Ashish Sood



(Janakpuri), Dr Pankaj Singh (Vikaspuri), Manjinder Singh Sirsa (Rajouri Garden), Ravinder Indraj (Bawana) and Kapil Mishra (Karwal Nagar) followed.

People had started gathering at the venue since early morning with many showing their support for Prime Minister Modi by wearing his masks and holding up his cutouts. Many were waving the Tricolour and party flags. A band performed patriotic and devotional melodies like "Ram Aayenge to angna sajaenge" and "Aai watan".

Union home minister Amit Shah was among the first senior leaders to reach the venue, followed by BJP national president JP Nadda and Rajasthan chief minister Bhajan Lal Sharma. The loudest cheers were, of course, for Modi when he entered the stage with ministers, NDA leaders and others on the stage standing up to greet him. The PM and CM exchanged greetings with Gupta wearing a broad smile. Several women who have worked with Gupta in the party's women's wing had turned up in large groups to show their support to the chief minister.

The event was also attended by defence minister Rajnath Singh, Union minister Dharmendra Pradhan and Maharashtra chief minister Devendra Fadnavis. The stage was a showcase of NDA unity with Bihar deputy CM Vijay Kumar Sinha, Rajasthan deputy CM Prem Chand Bairwa, Goa CM Pramod Sawant, Andhra Pradesh CM Chandrababu Naidu, Haryana CM Naib Singh Saini and Madhya Pradesh CM Mohan Lal Yadav also present on the stage.

ED slaps Rs 3.44 cr fine on BBC India for flouting FDI norms

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has imposed a penalty of Rs 3.44 crore on BBC World Service India for alleged contravention of foreign direct investment (FDI) regulations, agency officials said.

Additionally, the agency has fined the company's directors — Giles Anthony Hunt, Indu Shekhar Sinha and Paul Michael — Rs 1.14 crore each for their role in overseeing the operations. The order was issued against the British broadcaster following adjudication under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA).

The ED has also levied a daily penalty of Rs 5,000 on BBC India, applicable from October 15, 2021, until compliance is achieved, for failing to adhere to the government's 26 per cent FDI cap for digital media under the government approval route. Despite the regulations, BBC India, a 100 per cent FDI company engaged in uploading and streaming news and current affairs through digital media, continued to maintain its FDI at 100 per cent in violation of the rules, sources said.

India-Bangla border forces to have hotline

India and Bangladesh have decided to establish a new communication link between the deputy commanders of their respective border-guarding forces and identified about 99 fresh patches for erecting a fence along their shared border. The decisions were finalised during the biannual director general-level talks between the Border Security Force (BSF) and the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) that concluded on Feb 20, sources in the security establishment told PTI.

This was the first time that a high-level meeting between the two forces took place after the fall of the Sheikh Hasina government in Bangladesh on August 5 last year.

The three-day talks, held from February 18 to February 20, went off in a "cordial manner", with the Indian side able to "convince" its neighbour about the importance of fencing on the remaining areas of the 4,096-km-long frontier that spans across five Indian states on the eastern flank, the sources said. A total of 864.48 km of the front remains unfenced, including 174.51 km of "non-feasible" gap, according to official data.

The two sides have decided to open a new "hotline" for effective communication after the latest round of DG-level talks. This link will be between the additional director general (ADG) of the BSF eastern command based in Kolkata and his BGB counterpart posted at the force's headquarters in Dhaka, the sources said.

Uttarakhand forest funds spent on iPhones: CAG

DEHRADUN (TIP)

Funds meant for compensatory afforestation in Uttarakhand were diverted to buying iPhones, kitchen appliances, building renovation, even fighting court cases, the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has said in its report.

The CAG report for the year ended 31 March 2022 covers the period 2019-22 on the "Functioning of Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority" (CAMPA) in Uttarakhand and was submitted in the state assembly on Thursday. CAMPA comes under the Union environment, forest and climate change ministry.

The report pointed out that "at the divisional level, ₹13.86 crore were diverted/ expended on inadmissible

activities. This included renovation of forest department buildings and purchases of iPhones and computers.

The report does not provide a break-up. State forest minister Subodh Uniyal said, "The matter related to the functioning of CAMPA funds concerns the period between 2019-22. CAG report has raised some issues with regard to some issues like the diversion of funds. I have directed the principal secretary forest department to investigate the matter"

The Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority, helps manage funds collected from developers who convert forest land to non-forest uses. The money usually goes toward afforestation and regeneration activities.

The report also expressed its concern at the overall low average survival percentage of plantations, at 33.51%, lower than the 60-65% mandated by Forest Research Institute (FRI), Dehradun.

The report also said that forest land worth over 188.62 hectares was diverted for non-forest purposes (road work) in 52 cases in Uttarakhand without any permission. "Further, the forest divisions did not take any cognizance of unauthorized use of forest land in these cases and did not book these as cases of forest offence", it added.

According to Forest Conservation Act guidelines, no work on forest land can be started unless the order of diversion of forest land is given by the competent authority.

India in history this Week

FEBRUARY 21 TO FEBRUARY 27

21 FEBRUARY



1996 Birth of great poet and writer Suryakant Tripathi Nirala in 1896.

1959 Press Club of India established in 1959 in New Delhi.

1999 Former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and former Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif signed the Lahore Declaration in 1999.

2008 On February 21, 2008, Anil Ambani's Anupam Global Soft was acquired by Reliance Communication.

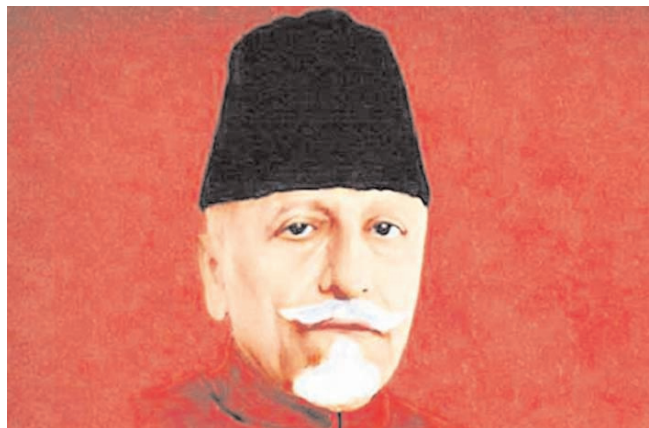
2008 Private Airlines Jet Airways entered into a strategic alliance with Air Canada on 21 February 2008.



2013 A series of bomb blasts took place in Hyderabad on February 21, 2013, in which around 17 people died and 119 were badly injured.

22 FEBRUARY

1944 Mahatma Gandhi's wife Kasturba Gandhi died.



1958 Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the country's first Education Minister, died.

1845 The East India Company bought Serampore and Balasore from the Dutch East India Company in 1845.

1999 India's popular economist Jagdish Bhagwati was appointed as the head of the Center for Indian Politics Economy in Columbia on February 22, 1999.

2006 Japan prohibited imports of all poultry products, including meat and eggs, from India in 2006.

23 FEBRUARY

2006 In 1952, the Employees Provident Fund and Miscellaneous Provisions Act was passed.



2010 India's famous painter MF Hussain was granted citizenship of Qatar in 2010.

24 FEBRUARY

1882 The infectious disease TB was identified to this day.

2001 Pakistan agrees to negotiate nuclear deterrence with India.

2009 Central government announced reduction in service tax and excise duty.



1822 The world's first Swami Narayan Temple was inaugurated in Ahmedabad in 1822.

1924 Mahatma Gandhi released from jail in 1924.

25 FEBRUARY



1894: Meher Baba, Indian mystic, was born. Known for his mystical teachings throughout his life through a spiritual transformation at a very young age, Meher Baba or Merwan Sheriar Irani was an Indian spiritual master. In a remarkable development, he declared himself to be an incarnation ('avataar') of God whose aim was to propagate spirituality. He assumed complete

silence for much of his later life, communicating only through gestures and small written words.



1586 Akbar's court Navratan Birbal was killed in a battle with the rebel Yousafzai.

1988 India's first surface-to-surface missile Prithvi was successfully launched.

1995 There was a bomb attack on a train in Assam, India in which 27 soldiers were killed.

26 FEBRUARY



1972 President V.V. Giri dedicated the Vikram Earth satellite station located in Arvi near Wardha to the country.

1975 The country's first kite museum 'shankar Kendra' was established in Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

2008 India successfully test-fired a ballistic missile capable of carrying nuclear weapons.

27 FEBRUARY



2002 59 people died due to fire in train Sabarmati Express in Godhra. Due to these deaths communal violence spread in Gujarat.

1931 Revolutionary and freedom fighter Chandrashekhar Azad shot himself in 1931 to avoid arrest in an encounter with the British police at Alfred Park, Allahabad.

2009 Former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee handed over the succession of his Lok Sabha seat to senior party leader Lal G. Tandon.

EXPERIENCES OF BLACK WOMEN IN AMERICA REVEAL TAPESTRY OF RESILIENCE WISDOM AND HOPE

BY MABEL PAIS

Join Women@NJ PAC for an extraordinary evening of truth, transformation and dialogue as the film 'Dear America, A Letter from Black Women' makes its exclusive debut at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJ PAC).

The film screening (information below) precedes an exclusive panel. This powerful documentary gives voice to the untold stories and lived experiences of Black women in America, creating an unforgettable tapestry of resilience, wisdom and hope. The film is executive produced by 'Project Ready'; produced by Julia Carias-Linares and Meiling Macias-Toro of Freedom Studios, directed by Dana Offenbach of CinemaStreet Pictures and written by Shennell Barnes-McCloud.

The film pre-screening will be followed by an electrifying panel discussion with Shennell Barnes-McCloud, Founder of the 'Dear America Project' and 'Project Ready' and Trustee of Women@NJ PAC with acclaimed actor, filmmaker and thought leader Dr. Malik Yoba alongside prominent activists and journalists. Together, they'll unpack the film's profound messages and explore crucial conversations about democracy, social justice and our collective future.

This isn't just a film pre-screening - it's a movement-building moment not to miss. Secure your place in this historic conversation today.

REGISTRATION

Registration is required @

njpac.org/event/dear-america-a-letter-from-black-women/#register

PROGRAM

WHEN: Thursday, February 27, 2025

WHAT: Film screening @ 6PM

Panel conversation @ 7:30PM

WHERE: Chase Room, NJ PAC
1 Center Street, Newark, NJ

PANELISTS

Shennell Barnes-McCloud

Credit: Courtesy BofA.com

SHENNEL BARNES - MCCLOUD

Shennell Barnes is the Founder of the 'Dear America Project' and 'Project Ready' - a ground-breaking movement to capture the voices of those who have been historically silenced. She is the Executive Producer and Host of the newly-announced 'Dear America' show on 'iHeart radio' where Shennell is the only Black female host in the network's news lineup. She is also the Executive

Producer of the up-coming documentary, 'Dear America,' which explores the role of Black women in American politics and features interviews with dozens of leaders from around the country. Shennell is an accomplished activist with an impact that reaches through her community and beyond.

DR. MALIK YOBA

Malik Yoba

Credit: Courtesy NJ PAC

ACTOR, DIRECTOR, MUSICIAN, AUTHOR, ENTREPRENEUR, EDUCATOR, PHILANTHROPIST, SOCIAL JUSTICE WARRIOR

Although this 3x NAACP Image Award winning actor offers over three decades of commitment to the arts with over fifty film credits and more than a dozen lead roles in network/cable television series, he considers himself a community and youth advocate first.

Born in the South Bronx and raised in

Harlem, it was his debut in the 1993 Disney classic 'Cool Runnings' and his performance as NYPD Detective J.C. Williams in the groundbreaking nineties police drama, 'New York Undercover,' that catapulted Malik into the fabric of American culture.

A serial entrepreneur, he is the founder and CEO of 'Yoba Development,' a diversified portfolio company specializing in real estate, education, and media. As a mission-driven firm, they are committed to building human capacity through education and media while simultaneously pursuing sustainable, affordable and market rate mixed-use development projects in transitioning neighborhoods. 'Yoba Development' has active real estate projects in New York, Baltimore, Augusta GA, Chicago and Charleston.

In 2022, Malik received an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from Livingstone College. In 2023, he co-founded 'Yoba Global Solutions' a federal contracting business with several of his family members where he serves as Head of Business Development and in 2024 was named to the U.S. EXIM Bank Advisory Board for Sub-Saharan Africa. Learn more at yobadevelopment.com.

The New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJ PAC) & Women@NJ PAC Learn more about NJ PAC at NJPAC.org and njpac.org/the-women-at-njpac.

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

bergenPAC'S PAS TAUGHT BLACK HISTORY TO NJ STUDENTS IN A REMARKABLE WAY

BY MABEL PAIS

bergenPAC's (The Bergen Performing Arts Center) Performing Arts School (PAS) held its inaugural event of the 'School Time Series' for the 2024-2025 season on February 11th. This special event took place at bergenPAC, 30 North Van Brunt St, Englewood, NJ 07631 and welcomed nearly 1,000 students to celebrate Black History Month while acknowledging the significant cultural influence of Hip-Hop through a unique performance. The program was developed in partnership with teaching artist and performer D-Cross, along with renowned Hip-Hop DJs known as The Awesome Two.

bergenPAC Performing Arts School commissioned D-Cross to create a show honoring Black History Month, making this performance its debut. The interactive and educational presentation, titled 'The Live Mix'D Tape,' aims to inspire and engage youth by highlighting the profound history of African American contributions and the cultural evolution of Hip-Hop.

The performance addressed pivotal moments in Black history, showcasing



Students at bergenPAC in a Black History class.

Credit: Courtesy pranamarketingandmediarelations.com

the resilience of historical figures such as Dr. Carter G. Woodson and Frederick Douglass, as well as the creative movements of the Harlem Renaissance and the powerful voices of the Civil Rights Movement. D-Cross expertly uses rap, beatboxing, spoken word, and live music to connect these significant achievements to Hip-Hop's lasting impact as a medium for storytelling, self-expression, and unity.

Students were introduced to essential components of Hip-Hop culture,

including DJing, MCing, and beatboxing, and they actively engaged with D-Cross and The Awesome Two throughout the live performances.

The event also featured the talents of E Boogie, Mike Swift, and Cornbread from the IBM Dancers. This unique experience is designed to educate and empower students, encouraging reflection on themes of resilience, creativity, and community strength. Watch the video - youtube.com/watch?v=QMMLrFpsrY

Becky Serico, Director of Education, stated, "In planning our 'School Time Series' season, we recognized the potential benefits of commissioning one of our current teaching artists to create a show for Black History Month. This presents a wonderful opportunity to highlight a new work by a member of the bergenPAC community. Derick has dedicated considerable effort to this production, drawing upon his diverse talents in Hip-Hop art, music, and performances. He is a versatile artist with a wealth of educational insights to offer our community."

BERGENPAC PERFORMING ARTS SCHOOL (BERGENPACPAS)

Learn more at bergenpac.org/education/; @bergenpacpas

THE BERGEN PERFORMING ARTS CENTER (BERGENPAC):

Learn more at bergenpac.org/; @bergenpac

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

ATHENA FILM FEST NYC CELEBRATES FIFTEEN YEARS

BY MABEL PAIS

Screening

Director/Writer ANU VALIA's 'WE STRANGERS'

Co-Producer JYOTI SARDA's 'LILLY'

Co-Producer TANYA SELVARATNAM's 'PAINT ME A ROAD OUT OF HERE'

And many more

The Athena Film Festival (AFF - athenafilmfestival.com) at the Barnard College campus, New York City, celebrates the 15th anniversary of the festival, a partnership between Barnard's Athena Center for Leadership and the initiative Women and Hollywood, March 6-9, 2025.

Each year, the festival presents narrative and documentary features and short films, in-depth conversations with filmmakers and thought leaders, and a wide variety of events focused on amplifying women's leadership through storytelling.

"Our 2025 festival marks 15 years of championing diverse, authentic narratives through a powerful, women-centered lens," said Melissa Silverstein, artistic director of Athena Film Festival. "The impact of this endeavor is shaped by the creators who bring these stories to life, as well as the audiences who support and amplify their reach."

AFF 2025 FILM & EVENT LINEUP

NARRATIVE FEATURES

Satisfied - OPENING NIGHT

Co-Dirs/Prods: Chris Bolan, Melissa Haizlip;

Against the backdrop of the hit musical 'Hamilton,' actress Renée Elise Goldsberry balances family and career while originating the role of a lifetime.

Home Court - CLOSING NIGHT

Dir/Co-Writ/Co-Prod: Erica Tanamachi; Co-Writ: Jean Kawahara; USA; English, Cambodian;

'Home Court' is the story of basketball phenom Ashley Chea in her pursuit of college-level hoop dreams. In the three years the film follows her, we witness the highs and lows of her Cambodian immigrant family's experiences in America.

Empire Waist

Dir/Writ: Claire Ayoub; USA; English;

Lenore is a teen deeply insecure about her weight. Hiding her passion for fashion design, she tries to make herself invisible in her day-to-day life to avoid being bullied by her classmates and image-conscious mother. Through the support of her father and best friend, along with that of her teacher Ms. Hall, Lenore is encouraged to step outside her comfort zone and embrace her talent.

Gloria!

Dir/Co-Writ: Margherita Vicario; Co-Writ: Anita Rivaroli; Italy; Italian;

Set in a girls' institute in Venice at the end of the 1700s, Gloria! tells the story of Teresa, a young woman with a visionary talent who, together with a small group of extraordinary musicians, crosses centuries and challenges the dusty catafalques of the ancien régime by inventing rebellious, light, and modern music.

Lilly - NYC Premiere



Lilly

Credit for all: athenafilmfestival.com

Dir/Co-Writ/Co-Prod: Rachel Feldman; Co-Writ: Adam Prince; USA; English

Based on a true story, 'Lilly' chronicles the transformation of an aggrieved Alabama tire factory worker into an American hero.

Mexico 86

Dir/Writ: César Díaz; France, Belgium; Spanish;

In 1976, death threats force Maria, a Guatemalan rebel activist fighting against the corrupt military dictatorship, to flee to Mexico, leaving her son behind. Ten years later, when he comes to live with her, she is forced to choose between her duties as a mother and continuing her revolutionary activism.

Power Alley [Levante]

Dir/Co-Writ: Lillah Halla; Co-Writ: María Elena Morán; Brazil; Portuguese;
On the eve of a key championship, 17-year-old volleyball star Sofia faces an unwanted pregnancy, battling a fundamentalist group to reclaim her future.

Samia

Dir/Co-Writ: Yasemin Samdereli; Co-Writs: Nesrin Samdereli, Giuseppe Catozzella; Italy, Germany, Belgium; Arabic, English, Somali;

Samia defies taboos by racing through the streets of Mogadishu, in a society where a woman is not supposed to run. Her passion will one day take her to the Olympic Games.

Somnium

Dir/Writ: Racheal Cain; USA; English;

With hopes of making it big in L.A., small-town transplant Gemma takes the overnight shift at a mysterious sleep clinic, Somnium, but quickly discovers a darkness lurking within.

Tatami

Co-Dir: Zar Amir Ebrahimi; Co-Writ: Elham Erfani; Co-Dir/Co-Writ/Co-Prod: Guy Nattiv; Israel, U.K.; English, Persian;

In the first feature film to have both an Iranian and an Israeli director, Leila, an Iranian judo athlete, is put in political danger when her government tells her to fake an injury and withdraw from the world championships rather than face an Israeli rival in the final, forcing her to make a life-or-death decision.

We Strangers



We Strangers

Credit for all: athenafilmfestival.com

Dir/Writ: Anu Valia; USA; English;

Rayelle Martin, a commercial cleaning woman in Gary, Indiana, stumbles into a new job cleaning the homes of several rich, suburban families. While working, she tells one small lie that spins out of control.

We Were Dangerous

Dir/Co-Writ: Josephine Stewart-Te Whiu; Writ: Maddie Dai; New Zealand; English;

In 1954, M?ori teenagers Nellie and Daisy are sent to the Te Motu School for Incurable and Delinquent Girls after minor offenses. There, they meet Lou, a European teenager from a privileged background. The trio's bond strengthens as the Matron's authoritarian methods intensify. They devise a plan to escape the island facility, culminating in a daring act of rebellion that challenges the oppressive system.

DOCUMENTARY FEATURES

Black Box Diaries

Dir/Co-Prod: Shiori Ito; Japan, USA, U.K.; English, Japanese;

Journalist Shiori Ito embarks on a courageous investigation of her own sexual assault in an improbable attempt to prosecute her high-profile offender. Her quest becomes a landmark case in Japan, exposing the country's outdated judicial and societal systems.

Black Snow

Dir: Alina Simone; USA; Russian;

When the residents of a remote Siberian city discover an old Soviet mine has caught fire beneath their neighborhood, they turn to Natalia Zubkova, a local homemaker-turned-journalist, for help. But after her news videos go viral, she suddenly finds herself the target of a massive government disinformation campaign.

Mrs. Robinson

Dir: Aoife Kelleher; Ireland; English;

Unfolding a story about female leadership, human rights activism, and climate action, 'Mrs. Robinson' tells the inspirational life story of change-maker Mary Robinson: Ireland's first female president, a pioneering U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, the successor of Nelson Mandela as Chair of The Elders, and the co-founder of Project Dandelion, a women-led climate justice movement.

Norita - NYC Premiere

Co-Dirs/Co-Writs: Jayson McNamara, Andrea Tortonese; Co-Writ/ Co-Prod: Melissa Daniels; Argentina, USA; Spanish, English;

'Norita' takes viewers on a gripping journey through Argentina's tumultuous history, in which a personal tragedy becomes a catalyst for change. As a mother seeking justice for her disappeared son during the dark days of Argentina's dictatorship, Norita's unwavering determination and fearless activism led her to co-found the renowned Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, a pivotal human rights organization. The film chronicles her journey to seek justice for the past while inspiring the next generation

CONTD ON PAGE 20

CONTD FROM PAGE 19

of women's rights activists.

Norita has been held up as a symbol by the women's movement, dating back to the 1980s, and is seen as a fundamental fixture in the movement's success during Argentina's 2020 campaign to legalize abortion.

Paint Me a Road Out of Here



Paint Me A Road Out Of Here

Credit for all: athenafilmfestival.com

Dir/Co-Prod: Catherine Gund; USA; English;

In 1971, artist Faith Ringgold created a monumental painting, 'For the Women's House,' for the women incarcerated at Rikers Island jail. Fifty years later, artist Mary Enoch Elizabeth Baxter, who gave birth in prison 15 years ago, finds herself banding together with an eclectic group of activists, politicians, artists, corrections officers, and Faith Ringgold herself to free the artwork with the ultimate goal of freeing the women. 'Paint Me a Road Out of Here' is a wild tale of the painting's whitewashed journey and the two artists who challenged the same powerful and oppressive institutions, a half century apart, with their artwork, their voices, and their shared, persistent goals.

Spacewoman

Dir/Writ: Hannah Berryman; U.K.; English;

Astronaut Eileen Collins was the first woman to pilot and command a spacecraft. Born to a working-class family in upstate New York, she smashed many glass ceilings in the U.S. Air Force and at NASA during her career, culminating in four increasingly dramatic and dangerous space shuttle missions.

Standing Above the Clouds

Dir/Co-Prod: Jalena Keane-Lee; USA; English;

When the massive Thirty Meter Telescope is proposed to be built on Mauna Kea, an uprising of *kia'i* (protectors) in Hawai'i and around the world dedicate their lives to protecting the sacred mountain from destruction. Through the lens of mothers and daughters in three Native Hawaiian families, 'Standing Above the Clouds' explores intergenerational healing and the impacts of safeguarding cultural traditions.

Who in the Hell Is Regina Jones? - New York Premiere

Dirs: Soraya Sélène, Billy Miossi; Writ: Regina Jones; USA; English;

The extraordinary life of Regina Jones is not only one shaped by history but also one that made history. From pregnant and married at 15, through the middle of the Watts Rebellion of 1965, to emerging as a groundbreaking newspaper publisher, Regina is a testament to the American experience. 'Who in the Hell Is Regina Jones?' turns a lens on Regina's remarkable journey: the invisible labor, the turmoil, the struggle, and the joy of a modern-day Black woman.

Witches

Dir/Writ: Elizabeth Sankey; U.K.; English;

'Witches' examines the relationship between cinematic portrayals of witches and postpartum depression, utilizing historical film footage alongside personal testimony.

TICKETS

Passes and tickets can be purchased at aff25.eventive.org/welcome

For updates and information on 2025 honorees, visit AthenaFilmFestival.com

THE ATHENA FILM FESTIVAL

Learn more at athenafilmfestival.com

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Learn more at athenacenter.barnard.edu.

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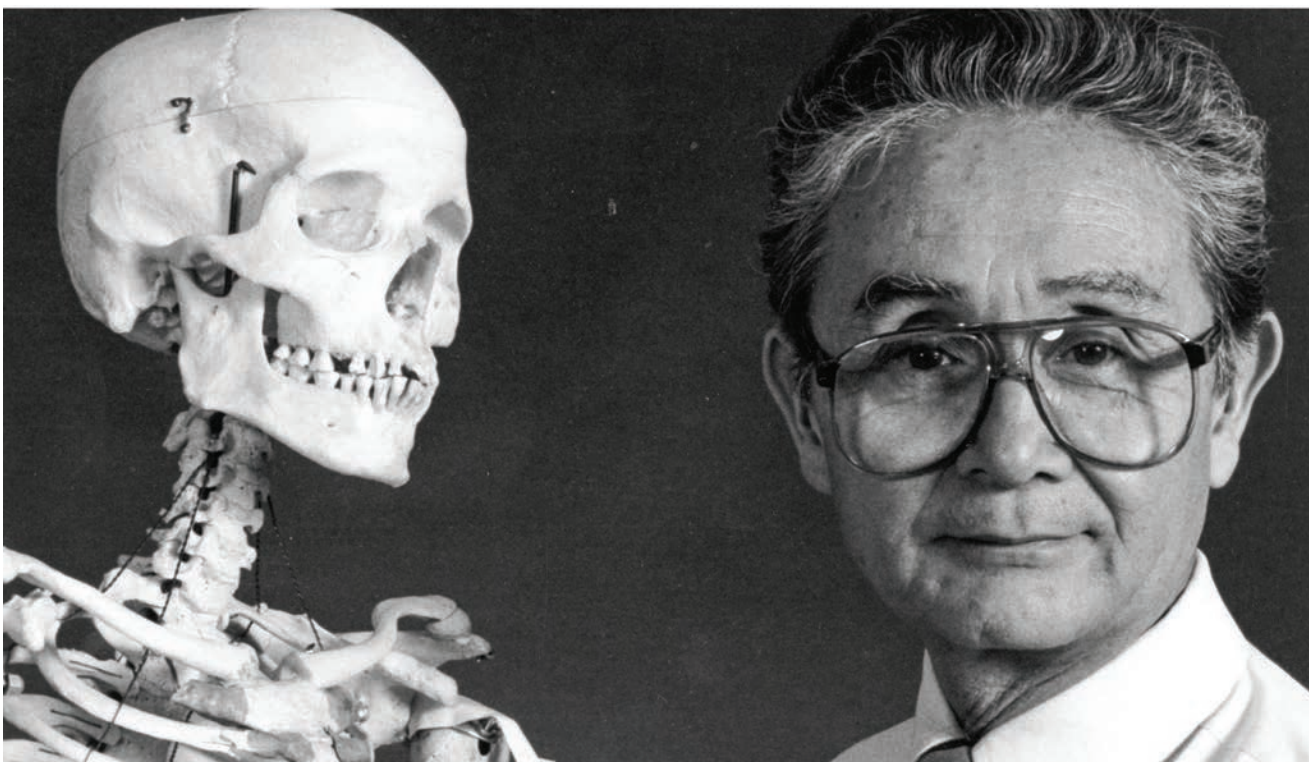
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(Mabel Pais writes on *The Arts and Entertainment, Social Issues, Spirituality, Cuisine, Health & Wellness, Business, and Education*)

UPCOMING FILM



Thomas Noguchi

Credit: slamdance2025.eventive.org/films

BY MABEL PAIS

'CORONER TO THE STARS' - World Premiere

Dirs: Ben Hethcoat & Keita Ideno; Prods: Billy Ray Brewton, Ben Hethcoat, Tommy Andres, John Henry Hinkel; Exec. Prod.: George Takei; USA

'CORONER TO THE STARS' chronicles the extraordinary journey of Dr. Thomas Noguchi, the former Los Angeles County Chief Medical Examiner-Coroner whose groundbreaking autopsies forever shaped American culture. From Marilyn Monroe and Robert Kennedy to Sharon Tate and Natalie Wood, Noguchi's outspoken expertise pushed forensic science into the spotlight-even as Hollywood elites and political adversaries sought to silence him. A Japanese immigrant who unwittingly rose to fame in a city driven by stardom, Noguchi's fearless pursuit of truth often placed him in the crosshairs of controversy.

Screening debut: Feb 23, 2025 - Slamdance 2025 Film Festival, Los Angeles

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

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Salman Khan wraps Sikandar shoot, film gears up for Eid release

Superstar Salman Khan has officially wrapped the shoot of his upcoming action entertainer *Sikandar*. The film, directed by AR Murugadoss, completed its final schedule on Sunday at Yash Raj Films (YRF) Studios. This marked Salman's last day on set, bringing an end to the production phase of the much-anticipated movie.

A source close to the production shared with India Today Digital, "The final leg of shooting was completed smoothly at YRF. Salman wrapped up his portions on Sunday, and the team is now focused on post-production. The film is shaping up to be a grand action spectacle."

With the shoot now complete, the makers are gearing up for an extensive promotional campaign. According to the source, the promotions for *Sikandar* are expected to kick off in full swing by the end of February. "The team has a strategic marketing plan in place. A new poster will be released on producer Sajid Nadiadwala's birthday, followed by a new teaser in the coming weeks, and in the first week of March, the trailer could be unveiled, creating excitement leading up to the Eid release. As of now, the edit on the film is going on in full swing," added the source.

Deepika discovers the reason behind her introverted nature

Actress Deepika Padukone recently made a surprising revelation about her personality, uncovering the reason behind her introverted nature.

The 'Fighter' actress took to her Instagram and reposted a video suggesting that intelligent people tend to enjoy being alone and are naturally inclined towards introversion.

In the clip, an Instagram user is heard saying, "Here's how you know somebody is intelligent. This is a simple theory and observation. The more intelligent someone is, the more they struggle with social interactions. Or, as he put it, the more intelligent someone is, the more at risk they are of becoming antisocial. Intelligent people like to be alone. They tend to be natural introverts. In fact, they have a small, select group of people they trust, and they feel a bit uncomfortable when surrounded by others, especially strangers."

Reposting the video, Deepika wrote, "Aah! I have always wondered why I am such an introvert... Now I know."

Meanwhile, the 'Piku' actress recently shared a delightful moment with her 'Fighter' co-star Anil Kapoor and actor Kartik Aaryan at a public event in Mumbai. Deepika and Anil, known for their friendly chemistry, were spotted engaging in a cheerful conversation and exchanging pleasantries. The event also saw the presence of actor Jackie Shroff. In a video shared by a fan page, Deepika was seen giving Kartik a warm hug.



Sunny Deol starts shooting for Border 2 with Varun Dhawan

Actor Sunny Deol has finally begun shooting 'Border 2'. The 67-year-old on Tuesday shared a picture from the sets of the film in Jhansi. The photo featured him posing alongside actor Varun Dhawan, who is also playing a soldier in the film.

The director of 'Border 2', Anurag Singh, producers Bhushan Kumar, Nidhi Dutta and co-producers Shiv Chanana and Binoy Gandhi were also seen posing with Deol in the photo.

'Border 2' is the sequel to the 1997 hit patriotic war drama, which was directed by JP Dutta. Apart from Dhawan, Deol is also joined by Ahan Shetty and Diljit Dosanjh in what has been touted as the biggest war drama India has ever produced.

While not much about Deol's

character is out yet, it will be interesting to see how he manages to take the Border franchise ahead, much like how he did with the 'Gadar' franchise.

The film's team is currently shooting on an elaborate set created in the rugged cantonment of Jhansi, Madhya Pradesh. While Dhawan and Deol have started to shoot their bit, Dosanjh is yet to join the team.

'Border 2' aims to narrate the stories of the valour and relentless sacrifice by our armed forces. While the makers are being careful about not ruining the legacy that the first film created, they are also trying to make it look grander than ever.

'Border 2' is slated to hit the screens as the big Republic Day release on January 23 next year.

Blake Lively claims 'other women' felt uncomfortable near Justin Baldoni in amended lawsuit

Blake Lively has filed an amended version of her complaint in the ongoing legal battle with Justin Baldoni. The 163-page updated filing was submitted to a New York federal court on Tuesday, February 18, as the actress, revised her lawsuit with new evidence and claim, which was originally filed on December 31.

The amended filing targets Baldoni, her costar from *It Ends With Us*, and other parties involved in the case. According to Lively's attorneys, Esra Hudson and Mike Gottlieb, this version "provides significant additional evidence and corroboration of her original claims" and "includes previously undisclosed communications" involving Lively, Sony, Wayfarer Studios, and "numerous other witnesses."

Hudson and Gottlieb stated that the newly amended complaint "also added a new claim for defamation" which they claimed is "based on the repeated false statements the defendants have made about Ms Lively since she filed her original complaint, and adds Jed Wallace and his company as defendants." Wallace has filed a separate lawsuit against Lively after denying playing any part in the alleged smear campaign against her.

Somewhere in the amended document, the Gossip Girl alum's lawyers stated that Baldoni and the other defendants' "false narrative crumbles under the indisputable truth," and that Lively "was not alone in



complaining about Mr. Baldoni and raised her concerns contemporaneously as they arose in 2023, not in connection with some imagined power play for control of the film in 2024," as reported by People magazine.

Lively's spokesperson shared that the amended lawsuit "details the

corroboration that backs up Blake's original sexual harassment and retaliation concerns." They claimed that it provides evidence that "other women confided in Blake about their discomfort and fear of coming forward, and their concern about the current public vitriol."



Kate Winslet to make directorial debut with family drama *Goodbye June*

Hollywood superstar Kate Winslet will soon be making her directorial debut with *Goodbye June*, a family entertainer, reported Variety. The film is being produced by Netflix.

Winslet will also be starring in it alongside the likes of Toni Collette, Johnny Flynn, Andrea Riseborough, Timothy Spall and Helen Mirren.

Kate Solomon is producing, with Winslet and Working Title are serving as executive producers. Written by Joe Anders, Winslet's son, the film is set in contemporary England and centres on a fractured group of siblings who must come together in the face of unexpected and challenging circumstances.

The movie is expected to go on the floor in the second half of this year. Winslet was last seen in the film *Lee*, which she also co-produced. She has James Cameron's *Avatar: Fire and Ash* in the pipeline.

Kate Winslet is an acclaimed English actress known for her versatile performances across film and television. She gained worldwide fame for her role as Rose in *Titanic* (1997) and has since earned multiple awards, including an Academy Award for *The Reader* (2008).

Jennifer Lopez's 'ego is crushed' after recent movie failures and divorce: Report

Jennifer Lopez may be basking in the success of her Sundance Film Festival hit *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, but she's also facing a tough time in her career. The 55-year-old actress has recently been nominated for a Golden Raspberry Award (Razzie), a nod to the year's worst films. This comes as a blow to her ego, following a string of disappointments, including harsh criticism of her self-produced film *This Is Me... Now* and the cancellation of tour dates due to low ticket sales. J.Lo, however, reassured fans, saying she needed to spend more time with her children during this period.

Talking about the dubious honour, the source told RadarOnline, "Jennifer is taking it very badly," adding that the information has hurt her. "At this point, she feels like she can't catch a break. Last year was by far the toughest of her life." The insider shared that Jennifer Lopez is particularly humiliated by the Razzie nomination, especially given the recent collapse of her marriage to Ben

Affleck. The source shared, "Her ego is crushed."

Despite the personal setbacks, J.Lo has found solace in her work, particularly in *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, where she spoke about the film's love-centered narrative. During promotional interviews, she revealed that, even amid her own struggles, she remains deeply moved by the movie's message about love, resilience, and finding strength in difficult times, showing her ability to connect with the story on a personal level despite the challenges she's faced off-screen. Just weeks after her divorce was finalised her divorce the singer admitted that falling in love is still "important" to her, as reported by RadarOnline.

Previously, the *On The Floor* singer described the project as her lifelong dream. She said, "I've been waiting my whole life to be able to do a real big MGM Hollywood musical, and I finally got to do it." The singer also highlighted the strong message of the movie "that love heals all divides."



POPE FRANCIS MARKS ONE WEEK IN HOSPITAL FIGHTING PNEUMONIA

ROME (TIP): Pope Francis marked the one-week point February 21 in his hospital stay, getting up to eat breakfast as the 88-year-old pontiff continued fighting pneumonia and a complex respiratory infection, the Vatican said.

The Vatican late Thursday reported a "slight improvement" in his overall clinical condition, with his heart working well. But it will still take some time to understand if the various drug therapies are working, and outside doctors have said that regardless, recovery from pneumonia in such a fragile patient could take up to two weeks.

According to the one-line morning bulletin Friday, "The night went well, this morning Pope Francis got up and had breakfast."

Francis was admitted to Rome's Gemelli hospital on Feb. 14 after a case of bronchitis worsened; doctors later diagnosed a complex respiratory infection, involving bacteria, virus and other organisms and the onset of pneumonia in both lungs on top of asthmatic bronchitis. They prescribed "absolute rest."

On Thursday, some of Francis' cardinals began responding to the obvious question circulating: whether Francis might resign if he becomes irreversibly sick and unable to carry on. Francis has said he would consider it, after Pope Benedict XVI "opened the door" to popes retiring.

"Everything is possible," said Cardinal Jean-Marc Aveline, the archbishop of Marseille, France.

Another cardinal, Gianfranco Ravasi, was asked if Francis might decide to follow in the footsteps of Pope Benedict XVI and step down if he becomes too ill. Benedict became the first pope in 600 years to retire when he concluded in 2013 that he didn't have the physical strength to carry on the rigors of the globe-trotting papacy.

"There is no question that if he (Francis) was in a situation where his ability to have direct contact (with people) as he likes to do ... was compromised, then I think he might decide to resign," Ravasi was quoted as telling RTL 102.5 radio.

Francis confirmed in 2022 that shortly after being elected pontiff he wrote a resignation letter in case medical problems impeded him from carrying out his duties. There is no provision in canon law for what to do if a pope becomes incapacitated.

But there is no indication Francis is in anyway incapacitated or is even considering stepping aside. During his hospital stay, he has continued to work, including making bishop appointments. And besides, after Benedict died, Francis made clear that he believed the job of pope is for life.

Francis had an acute case of pneumonia in 2023 and is prone to respiratory infections in winter. (AP)

Netanyahu slams 'cruel and malicious violation' of Gaza ceasefire deal over release of body

21 FEB 2025

JERUSALEM (TIP): Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed revenge on Feb 21 for what he described as a "cruel and malicious violation" of the ceasefire agreement after a body that Hamas released as part of the deal was found to not be that of an Israeli mother of two young boys, as the militants had promised.

The incident has thrown the future of the fragile ceasefire into question. Six more living hostages are scheduled to be released Saturday as part of the tenuous ceasefire that has paused over 15 months of war.

Hamas militants turned over four bodies Thursday as part of the deal. They were supposed to have been those of Shiri Bibas and her two young sons, Kfir and Ariel Bibas, and of Oded Lifshitz, who was 83 when he was abducted during the Hamas attack that started the war on Oct. 7, 2023.

Israeli authorities said that while the remains of the two boys and of Lifshitz were positively identified, the fourth body was found to not be that of Shiri Bibas, or of any other Israeli hostage held in Gaza.

"We will work with determination to bring Shiri home together with all our hostages — both living and dead — and ensure that Hamas pays the full price for this cruel and malicious violation of the agreement," Netanyahu said. "The sacred memory of Oded Lifshitz and Ariel and Kfir Bibas will be forever enshrined in the heart of the nation. May God avenge their blood. And so we will avenge."

Netanyahu said the fourth body was that of a woman from Gaza. Hamas has not responded to Israel's announcement about the identity of the remains.

The revelation of the body's identity



was a shocking twist in the saga surrounding the Bibas family, who have become global symbols of the plight of Israeli hostages held by Hamas.

During the ceasefire, which began in January, Hamas has been releasing living hostages in exchange for hundreds of Palestinian prisoners being held in Israeli jails. Thursday's release marked the first time the group has returned the remains of dead hostages.

The Israeli army said Thursday that the fourth body released by Hamas was an "anonymous, unidentified body." It said the Bibas family had been notified, including Yarden Bibas, Shiri's husband and father of the two boys, who had been taken captive separately from his wife and children and was released early this month as part of the ceasefire deal.

Hamas has claimed Lifshitz, Shiri Bibas and her sons were killed in Israeli airstrikes. But Israel said the testing had found the two boys and Lifshitz were killed by their captors.

U.S. envoy Adam Boehler described the release of the wrong body as "horrific"

and a "clear violation" of the ceasefire.

"If I were them, I'd release everybody or they are going to face total annihilation," Boehler, who serves as the U.S. envoy for hostages, told CNN.

It was unclear how the incident might affect the next scheduled swap of hostages for prisoners, set for Saturday. Hamas has said it will also release four more bodies next week, completing the first phase of the ceasefire. It is also unclear whether the truce will be extended beyond the end of the current phase, which expires in early March.

In another potential blow to the deal, a series of explosions struck three parked, empty buses in central Israel overnight.

There were no injuries and no claim of responsibility. But the Israeli military said in response it was beefing up its forces in the West Bank, raising the likelihood of further escalation in the area. Israel has been carrying out a broad military offensive in the occupied territory since the ceasefire took effect. (AP)

Arab leaders gather in Saudi Arabia to hash out recovery plan for Gaza

21 FEB 2025

RIYADH (TIP): Arab leaders were gathering in Saudi Arabia on Feb 21 to hammer out a recovery plan for Gaza aimed at countering President Donald Trump's proposal for US control of the territory and the expulsion of its people.

Trump's plan has united Arab states in opposition to it, but disagreements remain over who should govern the war-ravaged Palestinian territory and how to fund its reconstruction.

"We're at a very important historic juncture in the Arab-Israeli or Israeli-Palestinian conflict... where potentially the United States under Trump could create new facts on the ground that are irreversible," Andreas Krieg, a King's College London expert said.

Trump triggered global outrage when he proposed the United States "take over the Gaza Strip" and relocate its more than two million residents to Egypt and Jordan. A source close to the Saudi government told AFP that Arab leaders would discuss "a reconstruction plan to counter Trump's plan for Gaza".

The Gaza Strip is largely in ruins after more than 15 months of war between Israel and Hamas, with the United Nations recently estimating that rebuilding would cost more than \$53 billion.

During a meeting with Trump in Washington on February 11, Jordan's King Abdullah II said Egypt would present a plan for a way forward.

The Saudi source said the delegates

would discuss "a version of the Egyptian plan".

The official Saudi Press Agency, citing an official, confirmed on Thursday that Egypt and Jordan were participating in the Riyadh summit along with the six country members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

It also said decisions issued by the "unofficial fraternal meeting" would appear on the agenda of an emergency Arab League summit to be held in Egypt on March 4.

An Arab diplomat told AFP the meeting was supposed to start at 3 pm (1200 GMT).

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi arrived in Saudi Arabia on Thursday, his office said. (AFP)

Zelensky accuses Trump of living in a Russian-made 'disinformation space'

**19 FEB 2025**

KYIV (TIP): Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky accused U.S. President Donald Trump on Feb 19 of living in a Russian-made “disinformation space,” pointed comments that risk further souring relations with Washington as the American leader pushes for an end to the war.

Zelensky said he “would like Trump’s team to be more truthful” in his first response to a series of striking claims the U.S. president made the previous day, including suggesting that Kyiv was to blame for the war, which enters its fourth year next week.

Russia’s army crossed the border on Feb. 24, 2022, in an all-out invasion that Putin sought to justify by saying it was needed to protect civilians in eastern Ukraine and prevent the country from joining NATO. Ukraine and its allies denounced it as an unprovoked act of

aggression.

The comments from Trump and Zelensky were a remarkable back-and-forth between leaders of two countries that have been staunch allies in recent years under Trump’s predecessor, as the U.S. provided crucial military equipment to Kyiv to fend off the invasion and used its political weight to defend Ukraine and isolate Russia on the world stage.

The Trump administration has started charting a new course, reaching out to Russia and pushing for a peace deal. Zelensky spoke shortly before he was expected to meet with Keith Kellogg, the U.S. special envoy for Ukraine and Russia as part of the administration’s recent diplomatic blitz.

Ukraine and its European supporters have expressed concern that they weren’t invited to the talks between top American and Russian diplomats in Saudi Arabia — amid larger worries that the deal taking

shape could be unfavorable to Kyiv.

At a news conference Tuesday, Trump showed little patience for Ukraine’s objections to being excluded from the talks. He also said, without providing the source, that Zelensky’s approval rating stood at 4%, while telling reporters that Ukraine “should have never started” the war and “could have made a deal” to prevent it.

Zelensky replied in his own news conference Wednesday that “we have seen this disinformation. We understand that it is coming from Russia.” He said that Trump “lives in this disinformation space.”

Zelensky said he hoped Kellogg would walk through Kyiv and “ask (Ukrainians) if they trust their president? Do they trust Putin? Let him ask about Trump, what they think after the statements made by their president.”

Russian state TV and other state-controlled media reacted with glee to what they portrayed as Trump’s cold shoulder to Zelensky.

“Trump isn’t even trying to hide his irritation with Zelensky,” the Rossiya channel said at the top of its newscast.

“Trump steamrolled Zelensky for his complaints about the talks with Russia,” the daily Komsomolskaya Pravda said.

Trump also suggested Ukraine ought to hold elections, which have been postponed due to the war and the consequent imposition of martial law, in accordance with the Ukrainian Constitution.

Zelensky also referred to “the story” that 90% of all aid received by Ukraine comes from the United States.

He said that, for instance, about 34% of all weapons in Ukraine are domestically produced and over 30% of support comes from Europe. (AP)



SOUTH SUDAN CLOSES SCHOOLS AFTER STUDENTS COLLAPSE DUE TO EXTREME HEAT

JUBA (TIP): South Sudan on Feb 20 announced the closure of all schools for two weeks due to an ongoing extreme heatwave that has caused some students to collapse.

This is the second time the country — which faces extreme effects from climate change, including flooding during the rainy season — has closed schools during a heatwave in February and March.

Deputy Education Minister Martin Tako Moi said Thursday “an average of 12 students had been collapsing in Juba city every day.”

Most schools in South Sudan have makeshift structures made with iron sheets and do not have electricity that could power cooling systems.

Environment Minister Josephine Napwon Cosmos on Thursday urged residents to stay indoors and drink water as temperatures were expected to rise as high as 42 degrees Celsius (107.6 degrees Fahrenheit).

Napwon proposed that government employees “work in shifts” to avoid heat strokes.

Education workers have urged the government to consider amending the school calendar so that schools close in February and resume in April when the temperatures decline.

Abraham Kuol Nyuon, the dean of the Graduate College at the University of Juba, told The Associated Press that the calendar should be localized based on the weather in the 10 states.

A civil society group, Integrity South Sudan, blamed the government for a lack of proper planning and contingency plans, saying that closing schools during heatwaves shows a “failure to prioritize the education of South Sudan’s children.”

The country’s health system is fragile due to political instability. Nearly 400,000 people were killed between 2013 and 2018 when a peace agreement was signed by President Salva Kiir and his rival-turned-deputy, Riek Machar.

South Sudan’s elections, scheduled for last year, were postponed for two years due to a lack of funds.

The country has been facing an economic crisis due to an interruption of oil exports after a major pipeline was raptured in neighboring war-torn Sudan. The pipeline was later repaired. (AP)

Brazil's top court justice orders X to pay \$1.4 million fine for non-compliance

21 FEB 2025

SAO PAULO (TIP): Brazil’s Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes ordered X to pay 8.1 million Brazilian reais (\$1.4 million) in fines for failing to comply with judicial orders, according to a judicial ruling.

The ruling, signed on Feb 19 and made public by the court on Thursday, said the social media platform refused to provide registration data for a profile attributed to Allan dos Santos, an ally of former President Jair Bolsonaro accused of spreading falsehoods.

In July 2024, De Moraes ordered both X and Meta to block and ban the account and provide the data. X said it had blocked the account but could not deliver the requested information, arguing that its operators didn’t collect it and that the user had “no technical connection point with Brazil.”

De Moraes rejected the argument and, in early August, imposed a daily fine of



100,000 Brazilian reais (\$17,500) if the social media platform failed to provide the data. By October, the total fine for noncompliance had reached 8.1 million Brazilian reais.

X appealed but later notified the court that it would pay the fine. In Wednesday’s ruling, the justice ordered the company to pay the full amount immediately. It is unclear from the decision reviewed by The Associated Press whether X provided the requested registration data.

The company didn’t immediately reply to AP’s request for comment.

Last year, De Moraes ordered X’s nationwide shutdown after the company said it was removing all remaining

Brazil staff in the country, saying de Moraes had threatened its legal representative in the country with arrest. The country’s law requires foreign companies to have a local legal representative to receive notifications of court decisions and swiftly take any requisite action — particularly, in X’s case, the takedown of accounts.

The social media was reinstated a month later, after complying with orders to block certain accounts from the platform, name an official legal representative and pay fines imposed for not complying with earlier court orders.

Elon Musk, the social media owner, and De Moraes, a foe of former president Jair Bolsonaro, sparred for months over free speech, far-right accounts and misinformation. Musk called the judge an enemy of free speech and a criminal. But de Moraes’ decisions have been repeatedly upheld by his peers — including his nationwide block of X. (AP)

Pakistani security forces kill 6 terrorists in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

FEB 22 2025

PESHAWAR (TIP): Pakistan security forces on Feb 21 killed at least six terrorists during an intelligence-based operation in the country's northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, the military's media wing said.

According to a statement issued by Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the operation was conducted on the reported presence of terrorists.

The statement said that troops effectively engaged the militants and six of them were killed in the operation.

The ISPR said that a sanitisation operation was conducted to eliminate any other militant found in the area as the security forces are determined to wipe out the menace of terrorism from the country.

The country witnessed a sharp increase in terror attacks in January 2025, surging by 42 per cent compared to the previous month, according to data released by the Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies, a think-tank. (PTI)

Political clashes at Bangladesh university campus leave over 150 students injured

DHAKA (TIP): More than 150 students have been injured in Bangladesh during clashes at a university campus, a sign of serious discord between groups instrumental in fomenting a national revolution last year. Feb 18 afternoon's clashes began after the youth wing of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) sought to recruit students at the Khulna University of Engineering and Technology in the country's southwest.

That sparked a confrontation with campus members of Students Against Discrimination, a protest group that led the uprising that ousted autocratic ex-premier Sheikh Hasina last August.

At least 50 people were taken for treatment after the skirmish, Khulna police officer Kabir Hossain told AFP.

"The situation is now under control, and an extra contingent of police has been deployed," he added.

Communications student Jahidur Rahman told AFP that those hospitalised had injuries from thrown bricks and "sharp weapons", and that around 100 others had suffered minor injuries. Footage of the violence showing rival groups wielding scythes and machetes, along with injured students being carted to hospital for treatment, was widely shared on Facebook. Both groups blamed the other for starting the violence, with the BNP student wing chief Nasir Uddin Nasir accusing members of Islamist political party Jamaat of agitating the situation to force a confrontation. (AFP)

Reports of attacks on minorities in Bangladesh 'exaggerated': BGB chief

20 FEB 2025

DHAKA (TIP): The Director General of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) on Feb 20 termed the reports of attacks on minorities in his country as 'exaggerated,' while asserting that authorities have taken steps for their protection.

Addressing a joint press conference here after the conclusion of the 55th edition of the border guarding forces' DG-level talks, BGB chief Maj General Mohammad Ashrafuzzaman Siddiqui said, "The news of attacks on minorities in the recent past in Bangladesh is an exaggeration. We provided security to puja pandals within eight kilometres of the international border during Durga Puja, which was held peacefully."

BGB chief's remarks in a way refuted the claims made by Minister of State for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh in a written reply to the Rajya Sabha in November last year in which he had said "several incidents of desecration and damage to Hindu Temples and deities in Bangladesh have been reported in the past few months".

The MoS had gone on record saying that the government of India has "expressed its concerns" about such incidents, including the attack on Puja Mandap in Tantibazar, Dhaka, and the theft at Jeshoreshwari Kali Temple at Shatkhira during Durga Puja 2024. He later also informed that the Bangladeshi authorities were requested to ensure the safety and security of Hindus and all minorities and their places of worship.

On the contentious issue of border fencing between the two countries, Siddiqui said that no side is allowed to construct permanent structures within 150 yards on either side of the IB.



However, he noted that a communication gap takes place when fencing takes place within 150 yards.

Siddiqui further said, "Bangladesh has raised objections that proper consulting and mutual discussion need to be held. We hope to resolve that in the future so that construction can take place in the no-man's land."

The BGB chief maintained that there was no discussion on changing the 1975 clause on border alignment, as this was beyond the scope of this meeting. But the issue of distance from the zero line, where the fence should be, has always been part of the discussion.

"We have requested joint inspection at these locations," he added.

Border Security Force (BSF) Director General Daljit Singh Chaudhary, on his part, said the Bangladeshi delegation had raised objections regarding fencing at some places along the borders and also hoped that the issue would be resolved in the future.

On the issue of infiltration, particularly after former Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina resigned and fled to India, Chaudhary said, "After August 5, 2024, the forces from both the sides have operationally deployed to stop and curb any kind of infiltration across the border." All over, the infiltration has substantially gone down and this is done with the active help of the BGB, he added.

This was the first top-level engagement between the two border guarding forces since the fall of the Sheikh Hasina government in August last year. The last edition of these bi-annual talks was held in Dhaka in March last year.

The BSF guards the 4,096-kilometre-long India-Bangladesh boundary that runs across five states - West Bengal (2,217 kilometres), Tripura (856 kilometres), Meghalaya (443 kilometres), Assam (262 kilometres) and Mizoram (318 kilometres). (Express)

Battered Myanmar scam centre workers wait for deportation to China

19 FEB 2025

SHWE KOKKO (TIP): Battered and bruised Chinese workers from online scam centres in Myanmar faced an anxious wait to return home, as Beijing and Thailand finalised plans on Feb 19 for their repatriation.

Scam compounds have flourished in Myanmar's lawless borderlands, staffed by foreigners, many of whom say they were trafficked and forced to work swindling people around the world.

Many of those involved are Chinese, though people from numerous countries are thought to have been caught up in an industry analysts say is worth billions of dollars a year.

The Karen Border Guard Force (BGF), a militia allied with the Myanmar junta, has said it is preparing to deport 10,000 people linked to the compounds in areas it controls on the border with Thailand.

In a shabby, strip-lit room in a building in Shwe Kokko -- a Myanmar border town known as a hub for scam centres --



dozens of workers, mostly Chinese, sprawled on plastic sheeting, looking exhausted as they awaited their deportation.

An AFP stringer was among a group of journalists taken by the BGF on Tuesday to meet some of the workers.

Some bore shocking bruises -- one man's bottom was completely covered in

livid purple, while several showed painful lesions on their lower legs and other had burn injuries.

"I really want to go home," said one Chinese man, who spoke on condition of anonymity. "I wanted to go home as soon as I arrived. I really miss my parents and family." "I am very nervous," he told AFP. (AFP)



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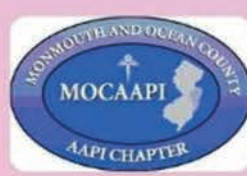


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How your daily routine damages your hair

We all have bad hair habits, most likely because we didn't know any better, but after reading some of the common bad habits many are guilty of below, you won't have an excuse to continue doing these any more.

Using Old Combs & Brushes

Don't let your hair pile up in your hair brush, this can be a breeding ground for germs and bacteria. Make sure to clean the hair out every week, and deep clean your hair brush once a month.

Tip: Clean your hair brush or comb with baking soda and water, this will remove oil and product that builds up over time.

Applying Too Many Chemicals

Artificial chemicals are bad for your body, and your hair is no exception. If you're coloring, getting keratin treatments, or relaxing your hair more often than you should, you are probably doing more damage than good. Make sure to keep any chemical processes or treatments down to a minimum, and your hair will begin to look and feel better and stronger.

Tip: If you have to get chemical treatments, establish a routine that involves preemptive care, like applying a hair mask a couple days before your treatment. You can also use a hair cover up on your roots so you don't have to get your hair colored as often!

Going Too Long Without A Haircut

If you want healthy hair, make sure you're getting regular trims to avoid split ends. Split ends can move up the hair shaft until you not only have split ends but a completely damaged hair shaft, which eventually leads to weakened locks and even hair thinning.

Tip: The right trim is ½ inch each month, or every other month if you are trying to grow your hair longer.



Brushing Wet Hair Incorrectly

This is one that we're sure many people are guilty of, including us! When hair is wet the cuticle scales can lift, causing hair strands to become more delicate and in turn more susceptible to breakage.

Tip: Make sure you always use a wide-tooth comb when brushing through damp or wet hair.

Using Too Many Products

Using too many products on your hair can cause build up and strip your hair of its natural oils. Especially if you have thinning hair, using too many products at once can end up weighing hair down. Even if you have thicker hair, you would be surprised at how little product you actually need.

Tip: If you want to use more product or you're not sure if you're using too much, apply the product to wet hands first to thin the product out before applying to your hair.

Working long hours ups depression risk in women: Study

Women who work more than 55 hours a week are at a higher risk of depression, according to study which found that the same is not true for men.

The study of over 20,000 adults, published in the BMJ's Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health, found that after taking age, income, health and job characteristics into account, women who worked extra-long hours had 7.3 per cent more depressive symptoms than women working a standard 35-40 week.

Weekend working was linked to a higher risk of depression among both sexes, according to the researchers from Queen Mary University of London and University College London in the UK.

Women who worked for all or most weekends had 4.6 per cent more depressive symptoms on average compared to women working only weekdays.



Men who worked all or most weekends had 3.4 per cent more depressive symptoms than men working only weekdays.

"This is an observational study, so although we cannot establish the exact causes, we do know many women face the additional burden of doing a larger share of domestic labour than men, leading to extensive total work hours, added time pressures and overwhelming

responsibilities," said Gill Weston, a PhD candidate at UCL.

"Additionally women who work most weekends tend to be concentrated in low-paid service sector jobs, which have been linked to higher levels of depression," said Weston.

The research showed that men tended to work longer hours in paid work than women, and having children affected men's and women's work patterns in different ways: while mothers tended to work fewer hours than women without children, fathers tended to work more hours than men without children.

Two thirds of men worked weekends, compared with half of women. Those who worked all or most weekends were more likely to be in low skilled work and to be less satisfied with their job and their earnings than those who only worked Monday to Friday or some weekends.

Darbari Kebab



INGREDIENTS

1 cup hung curd, 2 tablespoon ghee, 1 teaspoon salt, 1/2 teaspoon garam masala powder, 1 cup water, 400 gm soaked green moong dal, 1 teaspoon cumin seeds, 1 teaspoon chilli powder, 1 teaspoon garlic paste

METHOD

- To make this yummy kebab recipe, drain the previously soaked green moong dal and keep aside.
- Heat the 2 tablespoon ghee in a kadahi, and add the cumin.
- When they splutter add the dal and the salt and saute over medium heat till tender but whole. Takes about 5 minutes. Remove from heat and let cool.
- Grind the lentils in a food processor or a stone to a fine consistency without adding water. This becomes like a dough. Mix the salt, chilli powder, garam masala and garlic into the ground dal.
- Add the yoghurt and make into a soft pliable dough.
- Divide this into about 12 portions and shape them into round balls, and then flatten them.
- Heat enough ghee in a heavy based frying pan to form a thin layer.
- Fry over low heat, first on one side then the other, till crisp and brown.
- Serve it hot with tomato-garlic sauce and coriander chutney.

Microwave chocolate cake

Ingredients

- Plain Chocolate - 50g, Butter - 50g, Dark Brown Sugar - 50g, Maida - 50g, Egg - 1 (beaten)
- Vanilla Extract - 1/4 tsp
- Cocoa Powder - 1 tsp + extra for sprinkling
- Salt - a small pinch
- Icing Sugar (optional)

Method

- Line a microwaveable glass bowl with greaseproof paper.
- Add the chocolate, butter and sugar into it.
- Place it in the microwave and cook on full power for 30 seconds or until melted.
- Add the remaining ingredients and mix well.
- Pour into the bowl and microwave on full power for 3 to 4 minutes or until just set.
- Allow it to cool.
- Sprinkle cocoa powder (or icing sugar) on top.
- Serve.

Diabetes diet: Low-Gi foods that are a must for good health

Low Glycemic Index (GI) foods are those that cause a slow and gradual rise in blood sugar levels after consumption. The Glycemic Index measures how quickly a carbohydrate-containing food increases blood sugar, with low-GI foods being digested and absorbed more slowly. Diabetics should prioritise low-GI foods because they help manage blood sugar levels, reduce insulin spikes, and lower the risk of complications such as heart disease, nerve damage, and kidney issues. These foods are not only beneficial for diabetics but also promote overall health by supporting weight management, improving digestion, and sustaining energy levels. Including a variety of low-GI foods in the diet ensures better blood sugar control and long-term well-being. Read on as we share some below.

1. Oats

Oats are an excellent low-GI food that provides soluble fibre, specifically beta-glucan, which slows digestion and stabilises blood sugar levels. They also help lower cholesterol and keep you full for longer, preventing unhealthy snacking.

2. Chickpeas

With a GI of around 28, chickpeas are a great source of protein, fibre, and complex carbohydrates, making them ideal for diabetics. They promote better blood sugar control, improve gut health, and reduce the risk of cardiovascular diseases.

3. Quinoa

Quinoa (GI: 53) is a protein-rich grain that contains all nine essential amino acids, fibre, and antioxidants. It provides steady energy, helps control blood sugar, and supports muscle recovery. Quinoa is an excellent substitute for rice in diabetic-friendly meals.

4. Lentils

Lentils have a low GI (around 32) and are packed with fibre and plant-based protein. They help slow the absorption of glucose into the bloodstream, reducing blood sugar spikes. They also aid in digestion and improve heart health when included regularly in the diet.



5. Leafy greens

Leafy greens have an extremely low GI (below 15) and are rich in vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. They support overall metabolic health, reduce inflammation, and provide essential nutrients without causing blood sugar fluctuations.

6. Nuts and seeds

Most nuts and seeds have a low GI (below 20) and are high in healthy fats, protein, and fibre. They help improve insulin sensitivity, reduce cholesterol levels, and keep hunger in check. A small handful of nuts or adding seeds to smoothies and yogurt can be a healthy snack option.

7. Berries

Berries have a GI of around 25–40 and are loaded with antioxidants, vitamins, and fibre. They help regulate blood sugar, reduce oxidative stress, and support brain health.

8. Greek yogurt

Greek yogurt is a protein-rich dairy option that helps regulate blood sugar while providing probiotics for gut health. It has a lower carbohydrate content compared to regular yogurt, making it an ideal choice for diabetics when consumed unsweetened.



Ensure your body is absorbing vitamin B12 effectively

In the realm of essential nutrients, vitamin B12 stands out for its crucial role in keeping the blood and nerve cells healthy, as well as its contribution to DNA synthesis. Yet, many people overlook the importance of ensuring their bodies absorb this vital vitamin effectively. Improving vitamin B12 absorption is a multifaceted process, from dietary choices to lifestyle adjustments.

Deficiency in vitamin B12 can lead to fatigue, irritability, confusion, muscle weakness, tingling sensations, and even anaemia.

According to Kanikka Malhotra, consultant dietician & diabetes educator, vitamin B12 is a water-soluble nutrient necessary for red blood cell formation, neurological function, and DNA production. A lack of sufficient vitamin B12 can impair these processes, leading to both short-term symptoms and long-term complications.

Foods to Include for Better B12 Absorption

Animal-Based Sources

- Organ Meats: Liver and kidneys (especially lamb) are among the richest sources.
- Seafood: Clams, tuna, salmon, sardines, and trout are excellent options.
- Meat: Cuts like poultry provide substantial amounts.
- Dairy: Milk, cheese, and yoghurt contribute significantly.
- Eggs: Especially the yolks, which contain moderate levels of B12.

Plant-Based and Fortified Options

- Fortified Cereals: Many breakfast cereals are enriched with vitamin B12.
- Nutritional Yeast: A favourite among vegans, often fortified with B12.
- Fortified Plant-Based Milks: Varieties like almond, soy, and oat milk commonly contain added B12.

Poor kidney function: Watch out for these signs

1. Fatigue and weakness

When the kidneys don't function properly, waste builds up in the bloodstream, leading to fatigue and low energy levels. Additionally, poor kidney function can cause anaemia, as the kidneys produce a hormone (erythropoietin) that helps create red blood cells. A lack of oxygen-rich blood circulating in the body can make you feel constantly tired and weak.

2. Changes in urination patterns

A change in urine frequency, colour, or consistency can be an early sign of kidney issues. You may urinate more often, especially at night, or notice foamy, dark, or blood-tinged urine.

3. Swelling in feet, ankles, or hands

The kidneys help remove excess fluids from the body. When they start failing, fluid accumulates in tissues, leading to swelling (oedema), particularly in the legs, ankles, feet, and sometimes the hands and face.

4. Persistent itching and dry skin

Poorly functioning kidneys struggle to remove waste from the blood, causing a buildup of toxins that can

lead to persistent itching and dry, irritated skin. Kidney disease can also affect mineral balance, leading to high phosphorus levels that contribute to skin discomfort.

5. Metallic taste and bad breath

When toxins accumulate in the bloodstream due to poor kidney function, it can lead to a condition called uraemia. This often results in a metallic taste in the mouth, bad breath, or even an aversion to certain foods, particularly meats and proteins.

6. Shortness of breath

Kidney dysfunction can lead to fluid buildup in the lungs, causing breathlessness. Additionally, anaemia due to reduced red blood cell production can lead to a lack of oxygen, making even mild physical activities feel exhausting.

7. Nausea and vomiting

A buildup of waste products in the body due to poor kidney function can cause nausea and vomiting, especially in later stages. This can lead to appetite loss and unintended weight loss, worsening overall health.

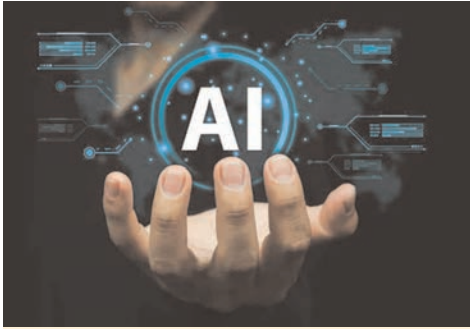
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Is AI making us stupider?

There is only so much thinking most of us can do in our heads. Try dividing 16,951 by 67 without reaching for a pen and paper. Or a calculator. Try doing the weekly shopping without a list on the back of last week's receipt. Or on your phone.

By relying on these devices to help make our lives easier, are we making ourselves smarter or dumber? Have we traded efficiency gains for inching ever closer to idiocy as a species?

This question is especially important to consider with regard to generative artificial intelligence (AI) technology such as ChatGPT, an AI chatbot owned by tech company OpenAI, which at the time of writing is used by 300 million people each week.

According to a recent paper by a team of researchers from Microsoft and Carnegie Mellon University in the United States, the answer might be yes. But there's more to the story.

The researchers assessed how users perceive the effect of generative AI on their own critical thinking.

Generally speaking, critical thinking has to do with thinking well.

One way we do this is by judging our own thinking processes against established norms and methods of good reasoning. These norms include values such as precision, clarity, accuracy, breadth, depth, relevance, significance and cogency of arguments.

Other factors that can affect quality of thinking include the influence of our existing world views, cognitive biases, and reliance on incomplete or inaccurate mental models.

The authors of the recent study adopt a definition of critical thinking developed by American educational psychologist Benjamin Bloom and colleagues in 1956. It's not really a definition at all. Rather it's a hierarchical way to categorise cognitive skills, including recall of information, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

The authors state they prefer this categorisation, also known as a "taxonomy", because it's simple and easy to apply. However, since it was devised it has fallen out of favour and has been discredited by Robert Marzano and indeed by Bloom himself.

In particular, it assumes there is a hierarchy of cognitive skills in which so-called "higher-order" skills are built upon "lower-order" skills.

iPhone 17 Air likely to get this feature that iPhone 17 Pro models may miss out on

iPhone 17 Air has become the most talked about smartphone as people are eagerly waiting to get their hands on the ultra-thin iPhone. Not only slimness, but several design properties may excite buyers during the launch. In a recent leak, we came across the iPhone 17 Air renders which revealed the newly designed camera bar and gave us an overall look at what Apple may announce. Now, a new report suggests that all iPhone 17 models could come with different materials, but only the iPhone 17 Air could feature a titanium frame. Here's what we know about the upcoming iPhone 17 lineup.

Over the past few years, Apple has been experimenting with the smartphone's design, material, weight, and other factors to make the sturdy and look premium. For two generations, Apple has introduced a titanium frame for the Pro models, but this will likely change with the iPhone 17 lineup. According to a MacRumors report, the iPhone 17, iPhone 17 Pro, and iPhone 17 Pro Max will likely feature an aluminium frame. Whereas, the iPhone 17 Air may come with a titanium frame. This move has been made to support Apple's carbon neutrality goal and aluminium has a lower carbon footprint. Therefore, the iPhone 17 series could also become Apple's first carbon-neutral smartphone.

This year, iPhone 17 models have been in the limelight for several design changes. However, with several leaks, it's quite confusing how Apple plans to bring its new flagship models into the market by maintaining the cost, premium quality, lightweight design, and others.

Apart from the iPhone 17 series design, the smartphone is slated for a major fast-charging downgrade according to another MacRumors report. It is suggested that iPhone 17, iPhone 17 Air, iPhone 17 Pro, and iPhone 17 Pro Max will likely support 35W wired charging speeds. For the iPhone 16 series,



the smartphone peaked at 30 to 37W charging speed. However, this may change with the upcoming new generation models.

Therefore, we will have to wait until September 2025 to confirm what the iPhone 17 series has in store for users.

Sunita Williams braces for life on Earth: Even lifting a pencil will be a workout

As astronaut Sunita Williams prepares to return from her extended mission aboard the International Space Station (ISS), she faces the daunting challenge of readjusting to Earth's gravity.

Williams, who has spent over eight months in microgravity, will experience significant physical changes upon her return, as gravity begins to "punish" her body after months of living in weightlessness.

Butch Wilmore, a fellow astronaut, stuck in space with Williams revealed how gravity will be the biggest challenge when the two astronauts return home.

"Gravity is really tough, and that's what we feel when we get back," he explained. "Gravity starts pulling everything to lower extremities; fluids will be pulled down, and even lifting a pencil will feel like a workout," Wilmore said in an interview on CNN.

This sudden shift will lead to discomfort and a feeling of heaviness as the body readjusts to gravitational forces.

Williams echoed these sentiments,



acknowledging that adapting to life on land will be challenging.

"It's gonna be a little bit hard to adapt," she said. "It's a day-for-day process when you get your fast-twitch muscle action back." The astronauts are aware that within 24 hours of returning, they will begin to lose the unique sensations of weightlessness that they have come to enjoy during their time in space.

Extended stays in microgravity lead to various physiological changes, including

muscle atrophy and bone density loss. Astronauts can lose up to 1% of their bone mass per month due to the lack of weight-bearing activities.

As Williams prepares for her return, she is likely to undergo a rigorous rehabilitation program aimed at regaining strength and bone density.

Additionally, fluids in the body redistribute in space, causing what astronauts describe as "puffy faces" and thinner limbs. Upon returning to Earth, these fluids will shift back to their normal distribution, potentially leading to temporary discomfort as the body readjusts.

Despite these challenges, both Williams and Wilmore remain optimistic about their return. They have previously adapted quickly after extended missions and hope for a similar experience this time. "Floating in space is a lot of fun; I like my crazy hair," Wilmore remarked, reflecting on the joys of life aboard the ISS.

The two astronauts will board SpaceX's Dragon spacecraft and undock for ride home on March 19.

Washington and Beijing closer to a 'possible' trade deal

US President Donald Trump hinted towards a "possible" trade deal with one of its key targets for tariff policies, China.

Trump told the Air Force One reporters that during his first tenure in 2020, the country had already agreed on what he described as "a great trade deal with China."

Beijing also urged Washington to handle trade disputes with "mutual respect," with the Chinese foreign ministry responding on Thursday that both sides should resolve their concerns through "dialogue and consultation based on equality and mutual respect."

Ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun warned that "trade and tariff wars have no winners and only serve to damage the interests of people all over the world."

One month since he assumed office, Trump has doubled down on tariffs, targeting not just China but also key trading partners like Canada, Mexico, and the European Union. Earlier this month, he imposed an additional 10 per cent duty on all Chinese imports and is now considering further levies, including a potential 25 per cent tariff on lumber.

Meanwhile, China has also hit back with retaliatory tariffs, slapping 15 per cent duties on US coal and liquefied natural gas, and 10 per cent on oil, agricultural machinery, and vehicles. China's commerce ministry urged Washington to refrain from using tariffs as a "tool for coercion."

However, experts warned that in such a trade war, it is usually the US which has to bear the cost of tariffs.

The US President said, "there's a little bit of competitiveness, but the relationship I have with President Xi (Jinping) is, I would say, a great one." He further revealed that Xi, along with the leaders of France and Britain, could soon visit Washington for talks.

Trump's aggressive tariff strategy has sent shockwaves across global markets. Japan, which has a major auto industry stake in the US, has formally requested relief from the 25 per cent steel and aluminium tariffs set to take effect on 12 March. Japanese



trade minister Yoji Muto is expected to visit Washington to call for an exemption, according to Japanese media reports.

In Europe, the EU has warned of a firm response if Washington imposes tariffs on its goods.

European Commission vice president Maros Sefcovic dismissed Trump's claims of unfair trade ties, calling US-EU relations a "win-win partnership." However, he also signalled the Union's willingness to negotiate, suggesting potential reductions or eliminations of tariffs on industrial products, including automobiles. Within the EU, Germany remains the biggest trade surplus holder with the US, largely due to its thriving automobile and chemical industries, according to Eurostat.

Trump's tariff push is part of his broader plans to reduce the US trade deficit. In 2024, the country's largest trade surplus stood at \$295.4 billion with China, according to the Bureau of Economic Analysis.

However, economic experts warn that tariffs often result in higher costs for American consumers rather than punishing foreign exporters.

As the standoff continues, markets remain on edge, with global leaders bracing for what could be a turbulent period in international trade.

India may let foreign EV makers like Tesla test market before investing

The government is working on final guidelines for its electric vehicle (EV) manufacturing incentive scheme, and it may allow foreign carmakers like Tesla to test the market before committing to local production, The Economic Times reported.

The Scheme to Promote Manufacturing of Electric Passenger Cars in India (SMEC), announced in March 2024, is yet to take effect.

Government officials quoted in the report said the guidelines would be finalised within the next two weeks and announced next month.

The application window could stay open for 120 days or longer, and companies may be allowed to apply multiple times.

This means an EV maker could start selling in India now and apply for incentives later if they decide to invest.

Tesla, which has been exploring an entry into the country, is looking for showroom space and hiring staff, but it hasn't made any firm manufacturing commitments yet.

In fact, a Bloomberg report indicated that Tesla is set for India entry with first EV shipment in coming months.

In a relief for global carmakers already operating in India, the government may also count investments in EV assembly lines within existing factories as eligible for incentives.

US' reciprocal tariffs may have limited impact on Indian exports: Report

The impact of US tariff reciprocity on Indian exports is expected to be minimal, despite concerns over trade restrictions, according to a report by State Bank of India.

The report highlighted that even if the US imposes higher tariffs in the range of 15 to 20 per cent, the overall decline in Indian exports to the US is estimated to be only around 3 to 3.5 per cent.

It said, "Our estimates show overall incremental tariff levels even at 15-20 per cent imposed by USA would still limit the impact on exports to US only in the range of 3-3.5 per cent which again should be negated through higher export goals".

As per the report the experts believe that this impact can be offset by India's strategic export diversification, increased value addition, and exploration of new trade routes. The US remains India's top export destination, accounting for 17.7 per cent of total exports in the financial year 2023-24. However, India's export strategy is



evolving to reduce its dependence on any single market.

With growing trade ties in Europe, the Middle East, and other regions, India is working on strengthening its supply chain networks to ensure stability in exports.

While US tariffs on Indian goods have remained relatively stable over the years, India's tariff policies have been more dynamic.

The report highlighted that US tariff rate on Indian goods increased from 2.72 per cent in 2018 to 3.91 per cent in 2021

before slightly decreasing to 3.83 per cent in 2022. On the other hand, India's tariffs on US imports have risen more significantly, from 11.59 per cent in 2018 to 15.30 per cent in 2022.

This shift in tariff structures reflects a more assertive trade policy by India, aimed at balancing trade relations while protecting domestic industries. India has been focusing on adding value to its exports, shifting from raw materials to finished goods and high-value products.

This strategy not only enhances export earnings but also reduces the potential impact of tariff hikes by ensuring that Indian goods remain competitive in global markets.

Additionally, the report added that India is actively working on alternative trade routes that connect Europe, the Middle East, and the US, reducing logistical costs and improving efficiency. This restructured supply chain approach is expected to strengthen India's position in international trade despite global uncertainties.

Indian economy to grow at 6.3% in Q3: MC Poll

The Indian economy likely grew at a faster clip of 6.3 percent in the third quarter of FY25 from 5.4 percent in the previous quarter, buoyed by rural recovery and a capex push from the Centre, a Moneycontrol poll of 18 economists has said.

"The improvement is led by revival in rural demand and rise in Central government capital expenditure. Urban demand is also showing some signs of improvement but the recovery remains relatively softer than rural demand," said Gaura Sengupta, chief economist, IDFC First Bank.

Fast-moving indicators also pointed to a recovery in the October-December period after a disappointing second quarter when growth slipped to a near two-year low, experts said.

"Several high-frequency indicators, such as passenger vehicle sales, petrol consumption, domestic air passenger traffic and central government capital expenditure have shown improvement in Q3 compared to the previous quarter," Rajani Sinha, chief economist, CareEdge, said.



BEJAN DARUWALLA AND CHIRAG DARUWALLA



ARIES

Ganesha says this week will be full of positive energy for you. You will be able to use your creativity to the fullest, which will give you a chance to pursue new ideas and projects. Your work and workplace confidence will set you apart from others. In mid-week, there may be some complexity in relationships. Be careful in communicating with your loved ones and do not go over the edge. Try to express your feelings openly, this will help in clearing misunderstandings. At the end of the week, it will be important to focus on health. Take some time for your physical and mental health. Yoga or meditation can prove beneficial for you. This week will be full of many new opportunities and experiences for you. Maintain a positive attitude and be ready to face challenges.



TAURUS

Ganesha says this week will be satisfying for the people of Taurus. You will move forward reaping the fruits of your hard work. Some new challenges may arise at work, but due to your patience and determination, you will overcome them. There will be warmth in your relationships as well. Spending time with family and friends will give you peace. You may meet an old friend, which will bring back old memories. This is the right time to show affection towards your loved ones. Financial condition is likely to improve, but it will be important to keep control over expenditure. Be cautious in matters of investment and be cautious in new deals. It is time to pay attention to health issues. If you have been facing any health problem for a long time, consult a doctor this week. With a little regular exercise and a balanced diet, you will be able to maintain your energy. Overall, this week is going to bring positive changes for you. Keep your attitude positive and face the challenges with confidence.



GEMINI

Ganesha says this week, there are a lot of activities and opportunities for Gemini natives. Interaction with your colleagues and relatives will increase, which will lead to the exchange of your ideas and opinions. This is the time to make your social life smooth and enjoyable. Your creativity will be at its peak this week, and it may inspire you to engage in new projects or hobbies. But keep in mind, it is important to keep your excitement balanced so that your thoughts remain clear. In business areas, some new

opportunities may knock at your door. Use your skills and ideas properly, and maintain harmony with colleagues. In terms of health, there is a need to pay attention to your mental health. You can recharge your energy through methods like yoga or meditation. Bring positivity into your relationships as well. Spending time with your loved ones will give you satisfaction and happiness. The essence of this week is that communication and creativity will be the keys to your destiny.



CANCER

Ganesha says this week brings many important opportunities for Cancer natives. This is the time for self-realization and learning. In both personal and professional life, examine your thoughts and feelings deeply. This week, there is a possibility of getting a solution to an old matter, due to which you will get mental peace. The support of your family and friends will be very important this week. With their advice and help, you will be able to face many problems. Mutual understanding will increase in a special relationship, which will bring sweetness to your relationship. This week your health-related problems may be reduced, but keep in mind that it is also important to take care of yourself. Focus on regular exercise and proper diet. In professional matters, if you are considering new plans, this is a good time to implement them. Be ready to take advantage of potential opportunities and embrace new possibilities. Stability will remain in financial matters, but make a careful decision before making big purchases. Control your desires and avoid spending without thinking. This week it will be beneficial for you to be cognizant and understand the emotional aspects within you. Talk to yourself and stay focused on your goal.



LEO

Ganesha says this week is a sign of change in your life. You will get a good opportunity to bring out your personality and abilities. People around you will appreciate your achievements, which will boost your confidence. In the work sphere, your hard work and dedication will pay off. You are likely to succeed in an important project, which will further strengthen your professional image. This time is also favorable for making new contacts and getting involved in collaborative projects. Maintain harmony in personal relationships. Time spent with family and friends will make your mind happy. You may also get an opportunity to resolve an old dispute, so do not hesitate to open the dialogue. This week will be good for your health. But keep in mind to rest from time to time to avoid stress. Yoga and pranayama will prove beneficial for mental and physical health. Overall, this week is one of positivity and progress for you. Keep your outlook open and take full advantage of the opportunities that

come your way.



VIRGO

Ganesha says this week is an opportunity for Virgos to reinvent themselves. You will feel that new energy and inspiration have come to your soul. This is the time for you to trust your abilities. You can bring new plans and ideas to your work, which will prove to be beneficial for you. This is the right time to plan and focus on your goals. You will need to work a little hard to keep everything under control in your personal and professional life. You will find the result of your efforts satisfactory. There may be some positive changes in your relationships this week. Spending time with family and friends will give you mental peace and happiness. Be patient and open while interacting with others. This will strengthen your relationships. It is also important to be health conscious. Regular exercise and adopting a balanced diet will give you freshness and energy. Take some relaxation moments at the end of this week, so that you can maintain your mental balance. Overall, this week has brought a sign of positivity and growth for you. Move forward towards your goals and believe in your strengths.



LIBRA

Ganesha says this week is a balanced and positive time for Libra natives to step on the ground. The creativity and sociability in you will emerge from this time. It is important to maintain harmony between work and personal life. Your relationships will be sweet. Spending some time with friends and sharing your feelings will give you special stability and happiness. Activities done with the family will also prove beneficial for your mental health. In the field of business, your hard work will pay off. New projects or opportunities may come your way, which will give a new direction to your career. Financial condition is also expected to improve, but it will be necessary to control expenses. Pay attention to your health this week. Take adequate rest and try to do yoga or meditation, which will give you mental peace. Overall, this week indicates positivity and growth in your social and personal life. Be happy and believe in yourself!



SCORPIO

Ganesha says this week, a lot of new possibilities can open up for Scorpio natives. This is the time for self-analysis and self-creation. You will be able to understand and uncover your deep emotional aspects. During this period, your sensitivities will be strong and you will be able to feel the energy around you deeply. Your efforts in business and your career will pay off. You may make new plans in your work, which will help you move forward. It will be encouraging to

see the results of your hard work. Your relationships will also see growth. If you are struggling with any issue, it is time to communicate. Share your feelings with your loved ones, this will improve your relationship. It is important to be health conscious. A little physical activity and meditation will help you reduce mental stress. Social life will also see positive changes, there will be opportunities to make new friends or revive old friendships. Overall, this week will be exciting, and you will feel full of new energy.



SAGITTARIUS

Ganesha says this week is a time of introspection and self-development for Sagittarius. You are going to think seriously about the direction of your life. This is the time to focus on your goals and aspirations. Your energies will be high, but keep in mind that it is also important to follow the boundaries. Your hard work will be recognized in the field of work. Your ideas and suggestions will be valued, which will lead to new responsibilities. Cooperation in the team will be important for you, so work together. In your personal life, you will experience a positive environment. Spending time with friends and family will bring happiness. Also, there is a possibility of starting new relationships. Maintain honesty and communication in relationships. This week is good from a health point of view, but there is a need to focus on exercise and diet. Do meditation or yoga for a while for mental relaxation. This week you need to adopt a balanced lifestyle. Overall, this week will connect you with new possibilities. Recognize your inner desires and take steps to fulfill them.



CAPRICORN

Ganesha says some important changes are going to come this week for Capricorn. Your hard work and dedication are now going to be rewarded, which will increase your confidence. There is a possibility of good communication between colleagues and higher officials in the workplace, so your initiative will be appreciated. There may also be some pleasant surprises in your personal life this week. Spending time with family members will give you mental peace. Try to communicate openly with your loved ones and share your thoughts. Financially, this week can open the doors to some new possibilities. If you are considering a new investment, it is a good time, but consider all aspects before making any decision. In terms of health, it is necessary to maintain regular activities. Include yoga or exercise in your routine. Along with this, be aware of mental health as well; doing meditation will give you relief. This week you should maintain a strong and positive attitude toward your goals. Move forward taking full advantage of this time, and your efforts will lead you to success.

BIRTHDAY HOROSCOPE : FEB 24 TO MAR 2 BY VEDIC ASTROLOGER NASTUR BEJAN DARUWALLA

FEBRUARY 24

Ganesha says major job changes are possible due to your planetary position. The future holds many promising prospects for you, as well as rewards and recognition. By participating in social activities, you will meet influential people who will do you good and benefit you. Those wishing to travel abroad for business or pleasure will get a boost. You will be full of energy, making it easier for you to carry out your plans. Still, health will need attention.

FEBRUARY 25

Ganesha says you are a born learner, your intellect is sharp and you have a thirst for knowledge. Your analytical mind and problem-solving skills make you a great candidate for a career in science, research, or technology. You have a curious and adventurous spirit that will take you far in life. This year, the stars are in your favor, and you can expect new opportunities to come your way. Your love of learning will lead to exciting discoveries, and you will find yourself setting out on new adventures and facing new challenges.

FEBRUARY 26

Ganesha says you have a deep sense of compassion and empathy that makes excellent caregivers, healers, or social workers. You have a gift for understanding the feelings of others and can provide comfort and support when needed. This year, your desire to make a positive impact in the world will be especially strong. You may find yourself drawn to humanitarian causes or volunteer your time and resources to help those in need. Remember to take care of yourself, too, and prioritize self-care and rest.

FEBRUARY 27

Ganesha says you are a fiercely independent person and have a strong desire to make your way in life. You have a natural entrepreneurial spirit and may excel in business or creative pursuits. This year, you will have the courage and determination to pursue your dreams and take risks that lead to greater satisfaction. You may find yourself breaking free from the status quo and exploring new horizons. Your willingness to take risks and embrace change will bear fruit in the long run.

FEBRUARY 28

Ganesha says you have a natural charm and charisma that draws others to you. You have a gift for communication and you may excel in public speaking or sales. Your magnetic personality makes you a natural leader, and people look up to you for guidance and inspiration. This year, your confidence and charm will open doors to new opportunities and connections. You may find yourself in a new romantic relationship or form a new professional partnership. Stay true to yourself and trust your intuition.

MARCH 1

Ganesha says you have a strong sense of self and a unique perspective on the world. You are a born leader and can excel in any field that allows you to express your creativity and originality. This year, you will find that your innovative ideas and fresh perspectives are valued by others and lead to success. Your passion and motivation will help you overcome any obstacles that come your way. Remember to stay focused on your goals.

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VEDIC ASTROLOGER NASTUR BEJAN DARUWALLA

and maintain a healthy work-life balance.

MARCH 2

Ganesha says you have a knack for diplomacy and bringing people together. You are a natural momentum builder and can excel in any field that requires teamwork and collaboration. This year, your interpersonal skills will be especially valuable as you pursue new relationships and collaborations. You may find yourself taking on a leadership role in a group project or mediating conflicts between others. Remember to maintain patience and compassion, and have confidence in your ability to bring people together toward a common goal.

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AQUARIUS



Ganesha says this week is a time of new opportunities for Aquarius natives. The ideas and plans you are working on will now start bearing fruit. Your creativity and sense of innovation are enhanced, which can lead you to a new direction in your workplace. Do not be afraid to share your ideas, because your voice will be heard. In personal life, harmony and understanding will increase in relationships. Spending time with family will strengthen mutual relations. Meeting an old friend can give you new energy. This week you will need to communicate openly with your loved ones. In terms of health, focus on a balanced diet and regular exercise. It will be beneficial to resort to meditation and yoga for mental health. From a financial point of view, the situation is likely to improve. Try to manage your expenses in a planned manner. You can think about new investments but do not make hasty decisions. The most important thing for you this week is to listen to your inner voice and emphasize your goals. Maintain a positive attitude and move forward.



PISCES

Ganesha says this week, Pisces natives will try to achieve balance in their personal and professional lives. Your introverted nature and sensitivity will help you understand the feelings of others and show empathy toward them. People will appreciate your gentleness and kindness, which will strengthen your relationships. At this time, there will be an opportunity to focus on your work front as well. Your

efforts are likely to be recognized, so do not miss showing off your skills. However, some challenges will also come your way, but you will be able to overcome them with your creative thinking and intuition. In terms of health, it is important to take care of yourself. Pay special attention to mental health; yoga and meditation will be beneficial for you. Doors of opportunities will open for you this week; try to embrace them and

experience positivity. This is the time to be proactive toward your dreams.

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

|| SHREE GANESHAY NAMA ||



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Sikh History This Week

FEBRUARY 21 TO FEBRUARY 27

21st February

1849 2nd Anglo-Sikh war was fought at Gujrat. This was the last war between the Khalsa forces and the British that resulted in a severe defeat for Khalsa forces and triggered the annexation of the Khalsa Raj.

1915 Marked the revolt within India against British occupation. Sikhs played a major role in this revolt.

1921 Karam Singh of Daulatpur organised a political conference at Mehtapur.

1921 Sri Nankana Sahib's keys and control was handed over to SGPC. The news of Nankana Massacre spread like wild fire. Within hours Sikhs from all everywhere marched on to Nanakana Sahib, despite the road blocks, re-routed trains and deployment of troops to cordon off the area. By the afternoon, 1000 Akalis and some members of the SGPC confronted the Deputy Commissioner and were resolved to advance on the Gurudwara or be shot by the troops. Bhai Kartar Singh Jabbar with a Jatha of 2200 entered the Gurudwara Janam Asthan, Shri Nankana Sahib defying Deputy Commissioner's orders. The show of force at this time retrieved the Sikh prestige.

22nd February

1845 Rani Jindan attempted to cross over to the British with Dalip Singh but her attempt was foiled by Sikh army.

1923 1923: Third meeting took place at Jassowal.

1924 British government accused Akali Singhs of firing upon Nabha rulers.



1956 Master Tara Singh and Nehru held talks on Punjabi Suba. The talks lasted until Feb. 24, 1956.

23rd February



1881 Sardar Ajit Singh was born at Khatkadh kala, Jalandar.

1921 Gurudwara Luliani Sahib was forcibly taken over and brought under the control of SGPC.

24th February

1922: A diwan held at Ghurial on the concluding day of 101 Akhand Paths.



1929: An All Party Conference was organized at Sri Akal Takhat, Amritsar for released of Sardar Sewa Singh Thikriwala. Political activities in PEPSU (Patiala and East Punjab States Union) centered around economic and social but certainly not on religious considerations. The problem of antagonistic relations between the landlords and tenants was so enormous that it almost defied a solution. The biggest issue, absentee land-lordism in PEPSU, made the struggle between "Haves" and "Have nots" more bitter and even violent. All important posts were exclusively reserved for a few families that were near and dear to the Maharaja.

25th February



1710 Baba Banda Singh Bahadur was victorious over Sirhind. Born on KatakSudhi 13 sunmat 1727 to Rajput father Ramdev who was a resident of the Rajori village in Jammu. He was named Lashman Dev by his parents. Since childhood, he exhibited extremely fondness for sanskrit literature and hunting. However, he plunged into deep remorse after killing a pregnant deer. As a result he discarded all his hunting tools and became a disciple of Vaesnav JankiPrasad. He shed all his material wealth, started onto the seekers path for enlightenment, and adopted the new name, Madho Dass.

1921 Gurudwara Hehr Sahib was forcibly taken over and brought under the control of SGPC.



26th February

1630 Seventh Patshash, Guru Har Rai Ji was born at Kirtapur in the house of Baba Gurditta, eldest son of Guru Hargobind, and Mata Nihal Kaur. He was the second grandson of Guru hargobind, the first being Baba Dhir Mal. Today is the actual date of birth, although it is observed on a different date by Guru Khalsa Panth.



1822: General Hari Singh Nalwa reached Hajara with his forces. He was born to father, Sardar Gurdayal Singh Uppal and mother, Mata Dharam Kaur at Gujrawala in 1781. Besides being a valiant soldier, Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa also served as Governor of Kashmir, Hjar, and Peshawar. He joined Maharaja Ranjit Singh's forces in his early youth and established himself to be one of the most popular Khalsa generals. Among the Sirhadhi Pathans, his name brought immediate fear and respect. He is part of their folklore to this day. He won numerous wars for the Khalsa Panth and died, on Vaisakh 19 sunmat 1894, in the battle near Sirhadhi Jamraud. A place is established within Jamraud fort in remembrance of PanthRattan Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa.

1923 Kishan Singh Gargaj was arrested from Pindori Mahal. He was the chief architect of the Babbar Akali Movement, who had steered the Babbar Akalis clear of the murderous assaults. But after his arrest, the Babbars resorted to indiscriminate murders. Their objective was to expel the British rulers by violent means.

27th February

1926: Six Babbar Akalis were hanged to death in Lahore Central Jail, under the First Babbar Akali Conspiracy case, by the orders of Lord Reading and Malcolm Hailey.

1966: Master Akali Dal demanded the formation of Sikh Homeland.

Mahashivratri: The Great Night of Lord Shiva

Mahashivratri, meaning "The Great Night of Shiva," is one of the most significant Hindu festivals celebrated with devotion and fervor across India and many parts of the world. Observed annually on the 14th night of the lunar month of Phalguna or Magha, this festival holds immense spiritual importance for Shiva devotees.

Significance of Mahashivratri

Mahashivratri is dedicated to Lord Shiva, the destroyer and transformer in the Hindu Trinity (Brahma, Vishnu, and Mahesh/Shiva). It is believed that on this night, Lord Shiva performed the Tandava, the cosmic dance of creation, preservation, and destruction. Another popular belief is that this is the night when Shiva and Goddess Parvati were married.

The festival is also considered an auspicious occasion for spiritual seekers, as it is believed that the planetary positions on this night create a natural energy surge, making meditation and devotion particularly effective.

Shivaratri Rituals

Devotees of Lord Shiva observe the Shivaratri Festival by following the prescribed rituals with sincerity and devotion. All through the day, devotees abstain from eating food and break their fast only the next morning, after the nightlong worship. Ritual baths of Shivalinga in the numerous Shiva temples by Shiva worshipper, mainly women, is another significant feature of Shivratri customs and traditions. Devotees strongly believe that ritual worship of Lord Shiva on the auspicious day of Shivaratri absolves them of past sins and they are blessed with Moksha.

As a tradition devotees wake up early in the morning of the Mahashivratri day and take a ritual sunrise bath, preferably in the holy waters of river Ganga. They also offer prayers to the Sun God, Vishnu and Shiva as a part of a purification rite observed on all-important Hindu festivals. After wearing fresh new clothes devotees visit the nearest Shiva Temple to give the customary bath to the Shivalinga.

On a Shivratri day, Shiva temples are thronged by devotees, mainly women, who come to perform the traditional Shivalinga pooja and seek blessings from the god. At times there is so much rush in the temples that devotees have to wait for their turn to observe pooja. At their turn for worship, devotees circumambulate the Shivalinga, three or seven times, and then pour water over it. Some also pour milk. Sounds of bell and shouts of 'Shankarji ki Jai' or (Hail Shiva) reverberate in the temple premises.

Ritual Bath of Shivalinga

Shivratri Rituals Following the rituals prescribed in the Shiva Purana, every three hours, Shivalingam is given a special bath with milk, yoghurt, honey, sandalwood paste and rose water. Puja, meditation and chanting of 'Om Namah Shivaya' accompany the ritual bath. Following the bath, vermilion paste is applied on the linga. Traditionally, leaves



Important information

Maha Shivratri 2025

Wednesday, 26 February 2025

Chaturdashi date starts - 26 February 2025 at 11:08 am

Chaturdashi date ends - 27 February 2025 at 08:54 am

of a forest tree Aegle marmelos (bilwa, maredu, wood apple) are used for Shiva puja. Thereafter, Bilwa leaves, which have to be a stalk with three leaves, is kept on top of the Shivalinga. Ber or jujube fruit is a special offering to the god on this day. Beetle leaves are also offered by some. Some also offer bilwa leaves in the belief that the Goddess Lakshmi resides in them. Others believe it is offered for its cooling effects on the hot-tempered deity. Many devotees also decorate the linga with flowers and garlands and offer incense sticks and fruit.

All-Night Shiva Worship

Worship of Lord Shiva continues all through the night on Shivaratri Festival. Devotees stay awake all night and spend the night in Shiva temples in worship of Lord Shiva. Singing of hymns and verses in praise and devotion of Lord Shiva besides the intense chanting of Om Namah Shivaya, the mantra that is said free people from all their sins, continue through the night on Shivaratri.

Special worship of Shiva by priests continues through the nightlong prayer

vigil. During this ritual worship, Lord Shiva is offered special food made from the fruits of the season, root vegetables and coconuts. Those observing the Shivaratri Fast break their fast the next morning by consuming the prasada offered to Shiva.

Shivaratri Fast

Shivaratri Fast is considered to be the most important fast for the devotees of Lord Shiva. Shiva Purana goes on to say that if a devotee observes Shivaratri Vrata with sincerity, pure devotion and love he is blessed with the divine grace of Lord Shiva. Every year devotees observe Maha Shivaratri fast with devotion and sincerity. Though many go on a diet of fruits and milk, some do not consume even a drop of water all through the day and night of Shivaratri Festival.

Merits of Mahashivratri Vrat

According to Hindu mythology, observance of mahashivratri Vrat with discipline helps a devotee to control the two great natural forces that afflict a man, rajas guna (the quality of passionate activity) and tamas guna (the

quality of inertia). When a devotee spends an entire day in the Feet of Lord and worships with sincerity, his motion is controlled and evils like lust, anger and jealousy, born of Rajas are ignored and subdued. Besides, when a devotee observes vigil throughout the night (jaagran) he manages to conquer the evils of Tamas Guna too. It has also been mentioned that when a devotee observes a round of worship every three hours, the Shivaratri Vrata becomes perfect.

Devotees of Lord Shiva believe consider Shivratri fast to be extremely auspicious and rate it equal or more than performing an Ashwamedha Yagna. Some believe that a devotee who observes a Shivaratri Fast with sincerity and utters the name of Lord Shiva with perfect devotion is absolved from all sins. Such a devotee reaches the abode of Lord Shiva and lives there happily. He is also liberated from the cycle of birth and death.

Customs and Traditions

Shivratri Fast As a tradition, devotees who are on a strict fast on Shivaratri take bath with the water that is boiled with black sesame seeds to wash away bodily impurities. After putting on fresh new clothes, a devotee visit the nearest Lord Shiva temple to perform the ritual Shiva Linga bath with milk, honey etc. While bathing the Lingam a devotee prays, "O Lord ! I will bathe Thee with water, milk, etc. Do Thou kindly bathe me with the milk of wisdom. Do Thou kindly wash me of all my sins, so that the fire of worldliness which is scorching me may be put out once for all, so that I may be one with Thee-the One alone without a second."

Following the sacred bath, devotee applies haldi-kumkum on the lingum and place a garland of white and pink lotus flowers on it. Bel leaves are also placed at the top of the Lingum. Aarthi and bhajans in praise of Lord Shiva are also sung to invoke his blessings. Devotee also light incense stick and ring temple bell to invoke the blessing of the large-hearted Lord Shiva.

It may be noted that unlike most other festivals, where after performing the Puja of the deity a feast follows, a Shivratri fast continues all through the day and night. Devotees observe an all night vigil while chanting the mantra, "Om Namah Shivaya" and singing devotional hymns and songs. Even during the night, Shiva Lings is given the holy bath every three hours. An offering of fruits is also made to the deity. There is also the tradition to listen to the recital of various legends and stories related to Shivaratri and Lord Shiva and to understand its deeper meanings. It is only in the following morning that a devotee breaks the fast by consuming the prasada offered to Lord Shankar.

CONTD FROM PAGE 1

Trump fires the Chairman of the Joint...

most classified special access programs. However, it does not include key assignments that were identified in law as prerequisites for the job, with an exemption for the president to waive them if necessary in times of national interest.

The 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Act states that to be qualified, a chairman must have served previously as either the vice chairman, as a combatant commander or a service chief - but that requirement could be waived if the "president determines such action is necessary in the national interest."

The role of the chairman of the Joint Chiefs was established in 1949 as an adviser to the president and secretary of defense, as a way to filter all of the views of the service chiefs and more readily provide that information to the White House without the president having to reach out to each individual military branch, according to an Atlantic Council briefing written by retired Maj. Gen. Arnold Punaro. The role has no actual command authority.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, in a statement praising both Caine and Brown, announced the firings of two additional senior officers: Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Lisa Franchetti and Vice Chief of Staff of the Air Force Gen. Jim Slife.

Mr. Brown had spent Friday at the U.S.-Mexico border, assessing the military's rapid buildup of forces to meet Trump's executive order on countering illegal immigration.

Mr. Trump acted despite support for Mr. Brown among key members of Congress and a seemingly friendly meeting with him in mid-December, when the two were seated next to each other for a time at the Army-Navy football game. Brown had been meeting regularly with Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, who took over the top Pentagon job just four weeks ago.

But Brown's future was called into question during the Senate Armed Services Committee's confirmation hearing for Hegseth last month. Asked if he would fire Mr. Brown, Mr. Hegseth responded bluntly, "Every single senior officer will be reviewed based on meritocracy, standards, lethality and commitment to lawful orders they will be given."

Mr. Hegseth has embraced Trump's effort to end programs that promote diversity, equity and inclusion in the ranks and fire those who reflect those values.

Mr. Hegseth had previously taken aim at Mr. Brown. "First of all, you gotta fire, you know, you gotta fire the chairman of Joint Chiefs," he said flatly in a podcast in November. And in one of his books, he questioned whether Brown got the job because he was Black.

"Was it because of his skin color? Or his skill? We'll never know, but always doubt - which on its face seems unfair to CQ. But since he has made the race card one of his biggest calling cards, it doesn't really much matter," Hegseth wrote.

As he walked into the Pentagon on his first day as defense chief on Jan. 27, however, Mr. Hegseth was asked directly if he planned to fire Mr. Brown.

"I'm standing with him right now," said Mr. Hegseth, patting Brown on the back as they headed into the building. "Look forward to working with him."

In his second term, Mr. Trump has asserted his executive authority in a much stronger way and removed most carryover officials from President Joe Biden's term, even though in typical transitions, many of those positions are meant to carry over independently from one administration to the next.

Just prior to his Senate confirmation vote in June 2020 to become chief of the Air Force, Mr. Brown gained some attention when he spoke out on the police killing of George Floyd the month before. While he knew it was risky, he said, discussions with his wife and sons about the killing convinced him he needed to say something.

As protests roiled the nation, Mr. Brown posted a video message to the Air Force titled, "Here's What I'm Thinking About." He described the pressures that came with being one of the few Black men in his unit. He recalled pushing himself "to perform error-free" as a pilot and officer his whole life, but still facing bias. He said he'd been questioned about his credentials, even when he wore the same flight suit and wings as every

other pilot.

As chairman, he pushed the same campaign he had when leading the Air Force - that the Pentagon must accelerate its ability to change or it would lose future wars.

Prior to leading the Air Force, Brown had served as the top air power leader in the Indo-Pacific. He had repeatedly warned that U.S. warplanes had to change the way they would fight, by moving them from large, vulnerable bases and shifting to a format where drone swarms and small dispersed units would be able to independently counter threats from the thousands of islands throughout the Pacific.

"I'm thinking about my mentors, and how I rarely had a mentor that looked like me," Brown said in the video. "I'm thinking about how my nomination provides some hope, but also comes with a heavy burden - I can't fix centuries of racism in our country, nor can I fix decades of discrimination that may have impacted members of our Air Force."

Brown was overwhelmingly confirmed by the Senate with a vote of 98-0. Not long afterward, his name began to surface as the likely successor to Gen. Mark Milley, who was set to retire as chairman.

Brown's path to the chairmanship was troubled - he was among the more than 260 senior military officers whose nominations were stalled for months by Republican Sen. Tommy Tuberville of Alabama. Tuberville caused ire in the Senate and organizational juggling in the Pentagon when he blocked the confirmations in protest over a department policy that paid for travel when a service member had to go out of state to get an abortion or other reproductive care.

But when the Senate vote was finally taken in September 2023, Brown easily was confirmed by a vote of 89-8.

It had been 30 years since Colin Powell became the first Black chairman, serving from 1989 to 1993. But while African Americans made up 17.2% of the 1.3 million active-duty service members, only 9% of officers were Black, according to a 2021 Defense Department report.

Brown's service as chairman made history in that this was the first time that both the defense secretary, Lloyd Austin, and the Joint Chiefs chairman were Black. (Agencies)

AP sues 3 Trump administration officials...

to choose their own words and not be retaliated against by the government," the AP said in its lawsuit, which names White House Chief of Staff Susan Wiles, Deputy Chief of Staff Taylor Budowich and Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt.

"This targeted attack on the AP's editorial independence and ability to gather and report the news strikes at the very core of the First Amendment," the news agency said. "This court should remedy it immediately."

In stopping the AP from attending press events at the White House and Mar-a-Lago, or flying on Air Force One in the agency's customary spot, the Trump team directly cited the AP's decision not to fully follow the president's renaming.

"We're going to keep them out until such time as they agree that it's the Gulf of America," Trump said Tuesday, February 18.

This week, about 40 news organizations signed onto a letter organized by the White House Correspondents Association, urging the White House to reverse its policy against the AP.

India probes alleged \$21 million USAID...

but declined to comment on whether India would cancel a number of MoUs and agreements on USAID funding made with various Ministries over the past few years, many of which are still current. "We have seen information that has been put out by the U.S. administration regarding certain USAID activities and funding," MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said. "These are obviously very deeply troubling. This has led to concerns about foreign interference in India's internal affairs," he added. The MEA also would not comment on a media report that suggested the information shared by DOGE was false, as the USAID funding had been sent to Bangladesh, not India. Mr.

Jaiswal said that "relevant departments and agencies are looking into this matter," and their reports were awaited.

In its post, the DOGE said that "U.S. taxpayer dollars were going to be spent on the following items, all of which have been cancelled," including "\$486M to the 'Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening' [CEPPS], including \$22M for 'inclusive and participatory political process' in Moldova and \$21M for voter turnout in India". While the DOGE has not furnished any details of what this "voter turnout" funding was meant for, it named CEPPS, funded by USAID, as the donor agency to India. Both the USAID and CEPPS websites have been taken down since the DOGE ordered a "freeze" on USAID activities. Data still available online, however, indicates that USAID has allocated about \$650 million to India since 2020, about one-fifth of its total funding to India of \$2.86 billion since 2001. The MEA declined to respond to a specific question from The Hindu about whether these partnerships would now be reviewed, saying "it would be premature to make a public comment at this stage." The ruling BJP and the Opposition Congress locked horns over the report on USAID money. The BJP dismissed media reports claiming that the \$21-million USAID fund allocation was for Bangladesh, and accused the Congress party of being involved in "anti-India" activities; the Congress claimed that the BJP's narrative was aimed at diverting attention from its own use of foreign funds to destabilize Congress governments in the past.

Sajjan's sentencing in conviction of twin...

Tihar Jail, in compliance with a Supreme Court directive for cases that may warrant the death penalty.

The prosecution alleged that a large mob, armed with deadly weapons, carried out widespread looting, arson and violence against Sikhs in retaliation for the assassination of then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. The mob reportedly attacked the complainant's house, killed Jaswant and Tarundeep, looted valuables and set the house on fire. The complainant's counsel described the crime as genocide and cold-blooded murder, alleging that Kumar led the mob and incited the violence.

Special Judge Kaveri Baweja of Rouse Avenue Courts, while convicting Kumar, stated, "In light of the evidence on record, considered in its totality, I am of the opinion that the prosecution has been able to prove its case against the accused beyond reasonable doubt."

Kumar has been convicted of multiple charges, including murder, rioting, dacoity, attempting to cause death or grievous hurt and arson as part of an unlawful assembly.

The anti-Sikh riots, which erupted following Indira's assassination, resulted in the deaths of around 3,000 people, mostly Sikhs. (Source: TNS)

Judge vacates upcoming Eric Adams...

including the interim US attorney for the Southern District of New York, have resigned in protest. Four deputy mayors have departed City Hall as well.

Adams, who consented in writing to the deal to drop the charges, has denied any quid pro quo with the Trump administration for dropping the charges of bribery, corruption, wire fraud and soliciting and accepting donations from foreign nationals in exchange for boosting President Donald Trump's immigration agenda.

The Justice Department was represented earlier this week by acting Deputy Attorney General Emil Bove, one of Trump's former personal attorneys, after protests from DOJ prosecutors. Bove defended the motion to drop charges against Adams, stressing that the DOJ headquarters has prosecutorial discretion and a prosecution of Adams interferes with the Trump administration's immigration initiatives in New York City. He also pushed back against claims of a quid pro quo between Adams and the Trump administration.

Bove added at one point, unprompted, "I want to be clear I think the only question is whether there's any basis to believe that I made these representations to the court in bad faith, and the answer to that is absolutely not."

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

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Noted Indian Film Critic and Journalist Murtaza Ali Khan Honored with RIFF 2025 Award for Excellence in Cinema/TV/Media

FEBRUARY 10, 2025

JAIPUR (TIP): Noted Indian film critic and journalist Murtaza Ali Khan has been bestowed with the RIFF 2025 - Award for Excellence for Contribution in Cinema/TV/Media by His Highness Maharaja Shri Gaj Singh II of Jodhpur and the Rajasthan International Film Festival (RIFF). The prestigious honor recognizes Khan's exceptional contributions to cinema and media, celebrating his extensive work across print, digital, radio, and television platforms.

Expressing his gratitude, Murtaza Ali Khan stated, "Rajasthan International Film Festival enjoys a great legacy of blending the regional with the international. The Festival Directors Somendra Harsh and Anshu Harsh have been instrumental in putting Rajasthan on the world cinema map. I am personally grateful to His Highness Maharaja Gaj Singh ji and the festival for bestowing me with such an honor."

With a career spanning over 15 years, Khan has been at the forefront of film criticism and media, writing for leading national and international publications. He has also served on the jury of the National Film Awards as well as various prestigious film festivals in India and abroad. His expertise extends beyond journalism, as he actively curates film festivals and retrospectives for Embassies and Cultural Institutions. His contributions to international cinema include curating and presenting retrospectives of cinematic legends such as Federico Fellini, Luis Buñuel, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Carlos Saura, and João Moreira Salles. Additionally, he has organized numerous thematic film festivals, including Japanese Samurai Classics, Spanish Icons, Ibero-American



Murtaza Ali Khan receiving the RIFF 2025 Award for Excellence in Cinema/TV/Media from His Highness Maharaja Shri Gaj Singh II of Jodhpur and the Rajasthan International Film Festival (RIFF)

Cinema, City of Berlin, Italian Fare Cinema, Austrian Short Films, and Kinoteka Polish Film Festival.

Khan's impact in media is equally profound. He has conducted interviews with leading national and international figures from cinema, entertainment, art, and culture. A regular presence on television, he appears as a film expert and media critic on prominent news channels. Additionally, he has translated the bestselling book on Indian cinema, 'Hindujas and Bollywood,' into English. With a diverse academic background encompassing science and technology, management, and digital media and arts, Murtaza Ali Khan continues to shape film discourse and cultural appreciation both in India and globally.

The 2025 Rajasthan International Film Festival proudly presented a special screening of Chitraanjali, a film that highlights the extraordinary journey of Polish artist Stefan Norblin in India, on the final day of the festival. This unique

presentation forms a vital part of the festival's ongoing commitment to celebrating the confluence of diverse cultural narratives and artistic legacies.

Malgorzata Wejsis-Go??biak, Director of the Polish Institute, shared her enthusiasm for the event, stating: "We are honored to participate in this prestigious festival and to present Chitraanjali, a film that sheds light on the remarkable journey of Polish artist Stefan Norblin in India. His work, deeply embedded in the artistic heritage of Jodhpur, Morvi, and Ramgarh, is a testament to the enduring cultural ties between Poland and India. This screening is not just a tribute to Norblin's legacy but also a celebration of the shared artistic and historical connections between our two nations."

Following the screening, a dynamic discussion took place featuring Malgorzata Wejsis-Go??biak alongside Khan. The dialogue was further enriched by the participation of Sunil

Laghate, Centre Director of the Mehrangarh Art Conservation Centre (MACC), and Rajat Jangid, conservator-restorer at Mehrangarh Art Conservation Centre, who contributed valuable insights on art conservation and cultural heritage.

This special event at the festival not only celebrated the artistic endeavors of Stefan Norblin but also underscored the importance of preserving and promoting the cultural bonds that unite India and Poland. The festival continues to serve as a platform for fostering international dialogue, cross-cultural exchange, and creative collaboration in the world of cinema and the arts.

Speaking about Poland's participation, Somendra Harsh, Festival Director, Rajasthan International Film Festival said, "We are thrilled to have Poland as a participating country at the 2025 Rajasthan International Film Festival and to host Ms. Malgorzata Wejsis-Go??biak, Director of the Polish Institute. Polish cinema has a rich legacy, with visionary filmmakers like Andrzej Wajda, Krzysztof Kie??owski, and Agnieszka Holland leaving an indelible mark on world cinema. We look forward to continuing this collaboration, fostering deeper cultural exchange through the power of storytelling."

At the closing ceremony, the Polish filmmaker Rafael Stemplewski was bestowed with the RIFF 2025 Award for 'Excellence for Contribution to International Cinema' by His Highness Maharaja Shri Gaj Singh II of Jodhpur. Malgorzata Wejsis-Go??biak, Director, Polish Institute, was also recognized for her lifelong commitment towards boosting the cultural ties between India and Poland.

AIR INDIA AND LUFTHANSA GROUP ANNOUNCE SIGNIFICANT EXPANSION OF CODESHARE PARTNERSHIP

60 ADDITIONAL ROUTES ACROSS 12 INDIAN AND 26 EUROPEAN CITIES

- **AIR INDIA AND LUFTHANSA GROUP TO CODESHARE ON 100 ROUTES ACROSS THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT, EUROPE, AUSTRALIA & THE AMERICAS**

- **NEW CODESHARE AGREEMENT BETWEEN AIR INDIA AND AUSTRIAN AIRLINES**

- **EXPANDED AGREEMENTS BETWEEN AIR INDIA, LUFTHANSA AND SWISS**

20 FEBRUARY 2025

NEW DELHI (TIP): Air India and Lufthansa Group have agreed to build on their longstanding codeshare partnership, which sees Air India enter into a new codeshare agreement with Austrian Airlines, as well as expand the existing codeshare agreements between Air India, Lufthansa, and Swiss International Air Lines (SWISS).

The expanded partnership significantly boosts flight options and connectivity for travelers between the Indian Subcontinent and Europe with the addition of close to 60



A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER

codeshare routes operated by the four airlines across 12 Indian and 26 European cities.

The expanded agreements increase the total number of codeshare routes between Air India, Lufthansa and SWISS from 55 to nearly 100. Additionally, the new agreement between Air India and Austrian Airlines adds 26 codeshare routes. This provides greater choice, convenience, and seamless experiences to travelers from both regions.

Air India will now offer its customers a total of 26 destinations across Europe and 3 destinations in the Americas beyond its gateways in Europe (Frankfurt, Vienna,



and Zurich), with the 'AI' designator code placed on the following services operated by airlines in the Lufthansa Group, including Austrian Airlines for the first time:

LUFTHANSA : Between Frankfurt and: Amsterdam, Barcelona, Berlin, Bremen, Brussels, Copenhagen, Dresden, Düsseldorf, Dublin, Geneva, Hamburg, Hannover, Luxembourg, Lyon, Manchester, Marseille, Munich, Nice, Nuremberg, Oslo, Prague, Riga, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Stockholm, Stuttgart, Toulouse, Valencia, - Washington D.C.

SWISS : Between Zurich and: Amsterdam, Barcelona, Berlin, Bremen,

Brussels, Copenhagen, Dresden, Düsseldorf, Dublin, Geneva, Hamburg, Hannover, Luxembourg, Manchester, Marseille, Munich, Nice, Oslo, Prague, Stockholm, Stuttgart, Valencia.

AUSTRIAN AIRLINES : Between Vienna and: Amsterdam, Barcelona, Berlin, Bremen, Brussels, Copenhagen, Düsseldorf, Geneva, Hamburg, Hannover, Lyon, Manchester, Marseille, Munich, Nice, Oslo, Prague, Stockholm, Stuttgart, Valencia.

Reciprocally, customers of Lufthansa Group will now be able to connect to Air India's domestic services to or from 15 points within India, namely Ahmedabad, Amritsar, Bengaluru, Bhubaneswar, Chennai, Delhi, Goa Mopa, Goa Dabolim, Hyderabad, Indore, Kochi, Kolkata, Mumbai, Pune, and Thiruvananthapuram.

(Read full story at
www.theindianpanorama.news)

Bhutan: Land of the Thunder Dragon

The 'Land of the Thunder Dragon' – Bhutan nestles in the mountainous regions of the Eastern Himalayas and is one of the cleanest countries in the South Asian region. A remote kingdom that still clings to its Buddhist culture but embraces modernization, Bhutan is a land of beautiful valleys, snow-clad mountain views, and lush greenery. Bhutan's rich cultural heritage is reflected in its ancient monasteries, intricate temples, and colorful festivals.

Bhutan's main tourist hubs include the capital town of Thimphu and the beautiful city of Paro. Apart from these, Bhutan is known for its iconic Tiger's Nest Monastery, perched dramatically on a cliffside, and the Punakha Dzong, a majestic fortress with stunning architecture and many trekking routes.

Bhutan is a unique country as it's the only country in the world that measures success in terms of Gross National Happiness, prioritizing the well-being of its citizens over material wealth. Because of this, Bhutan has attracted tourists from around the globe due to its warm hospitality and ever-smiling approach to guests. The colorful clothing, festivals, and hearty food is a testament to their way of life in these misty mountains where resources are scarce, but enthusiasm is not.

You can explore the magnificent dzongs (fortresses) that serve as religious and administrative centers throughout the country. The country also offers adventure activities such as trekking, hiking, rafting, and even archery competitions for those who enjoy them. The treks in Bhutan are of varying difficulty, but they all offer a fantastic experience coupled with their untouched vegetation and age-old attractions.

Top Places to Visit in Bhutan

1. Paro

Paro is home to Bhutan's only international airport and is surrounded by scenic valleys and historical sites.

- Tiger's Nest Monastery (Paro Taktsang): One of Bhutan's most iconic landmarks, this monastery is perched on a cliffside and requires a rewarding hike to reach.
- Rinpung Dzong: A beautiful fortress that houses a monastery and provides stunning views of Paro Valley.
- National Museum of Bhutan: Offers insights into Bhutanese culture, history, and art.

2. Thimphu

The capital city of Bhutan, Thimphu, seamlessly blends tradition with modernity.

- Buddha Dordenma Statue: A massive golden statue overlooking Thimphu Valley.
- Tashichho Dzong: The seat of Bhutan's government and a stunning example of traditional Bhutanese architecture.
- National Memorial Chorten: A



revered stupa built in honor of the third King of Bhutan.

- Motithang Takin Preserve: A sanctuary for Bhutan's national animal, the takin.

3. Punakha

Known for its pleasant climate and historical significance, Punakha is a must-visit.

- Punakha Dzong: One of the most beautiful dzongs in Bhutan, located at the confluence of the Pho Chhu and Mo Chhu rivers.
- Suspension Bridge: The longest suspension bridge in Bhutan, offering panoramic views.

- Chimi Lhakhang: Also known as the Temple of Fertility, this monastery is dedicated to the Divine Madman, Lama Drukpa Kunley.

4. Bumthang

Regarded as Bhutan's spiritual heartland, Bumthang is dotted with ancient temples and monasteries.

- Jakar Dzong: A fortress offering spectacular valley views.
- Kurje Lhakhang: A sacred temple where Guru Rinpoche meditated.
- Tamshing Lhakhang: Known for its ancient religious murals.

5. Haa Valley

A hidden gem, Haa Valley is perfect for those looking to escape the usual tourist trail.

- Lhakhang Karpo and Lhakhang Nagpo: Sacred temples with deep spiritual significance.
- Chele La Pass: One of the highest motorable passes in Bhutan, offering breathtaking views of the Himalayas.

6. Phobjikha Valley

A glacial valley famous for its picturesque landscapes and black-necked cranes.

- Gangtey Monastery: A stunning monastery with an active monastic community.
- Black-Necked Crane Center: A conservation center dedicated to protecting the endangered cranes.

Unique Experiences in Bhutan

Attend a Tshechu Festival: Bhutanese festivals are vibrant and filled with masked dances, music, and cultural performances.

Trekking in the Himalayas: Trails such as the Snowman Trek and Druk Path Trek offer breathtaking scenery.

Hot Stone Bath: A traditional Bhutanese healing experience using heated river stones.

Explore Traditional Bhutanese Cuisine: Try Ema Datshi (chili cheese), Phaksha Paa (pork with red chilies), and Ara (local liquor).

Travel Tips for Bhutan

Visa Requirements: Tourists (except those from India, Bangladesh, and the Maldives) require a visa and must book their trip through a registered Bhutanese tour operator.

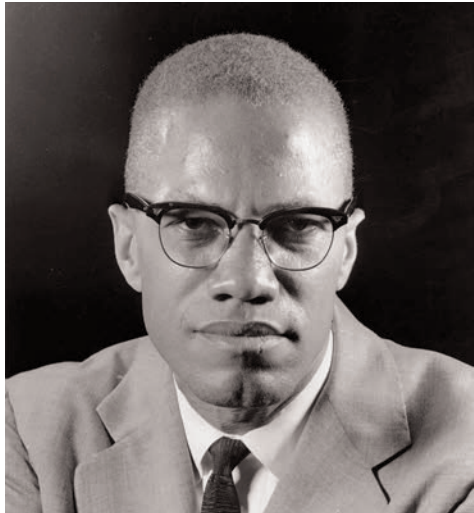
Sustainable Development Fee (SDF): Bhutan charges an SDF to promote sustainable tourism.

Respect Local Customs: Bhutanese culture values respect for traditions, so dress modestly when visiting religious sites.

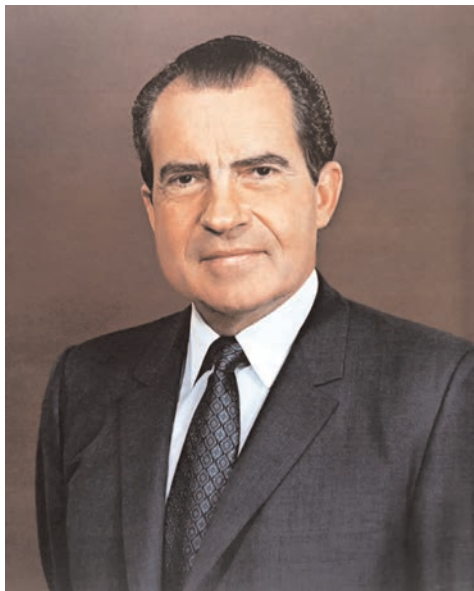
Currency: Bhutanese Ngultrum (BTN) is the official currency, but Indian Rupees are also widely accepted.

History This Week FEB 21- FEB 27

FEBRUARY 21



February 21, 1965 - Former Black Muslim leader Malcolm X (1925-1965) was shot and killed while delivering a speech in a ballroom in New York City.



February 21, 1972 - President Richard Nixon arrived in China for historic meetings with Chairman Mao Tse-tung and Premier Chou En-lai.



February 21, 1994 - CIA agent Aldrich Ames was arrested on charges he spied for the Soviet Union from 1985 to 1991.

FEBRUARY 22

February 22, 1956 - In Montgomery, Alabama, 80 participants in the three-month-old bus boycott voluntarily gave themselves up for arrest after an

ultimatum from white city leaders. Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks were among those arrested. Later in 1956, the U.S. Supreme Court mandated desegregation of the buses.



Birthday - George Washington (1732-1799) was born in Westmoreland County, Virginia. He served as commander of the Continental Army during the American Revolution and became the first U.S. President.

FEBRUARY 23

February 23, 1942 - During World War II, the first attack on the U.S. mainland occurred as a Japanese submarine shelled an oil refinery near Santa Barbara, California, causing minor damage.

February 23, 1991 - In Desert Storm, the Allied ground offensive began after a devastating month-long air campaign targeting Iraqi troops in both Iraq and Kuwait.



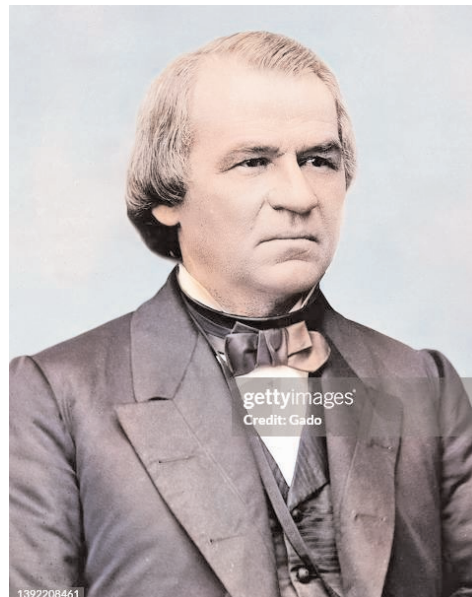
Birthday - African American educator and leader W.E.B. Du Bois (1868-1963) was born in Great Barrington, Massachusetts.

Birthday - Historian William L. Shirer (1904-1993) was born in Chicago, Illinois. As a news reporter stationed in Europe, he witnessed the rise of Adolf Hitler and reported on the surrender of France. Following the war he wrote the first major history of Nazi Germany, The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich.

FEBRUARY 24



February 24, 1582 - Pope Gregory XIII corrected mistakes on the Julian calendar by dropping 10 days and directing that the day after October 4, 1582 would be October 15th. The Gregorian, or New Style calendar, was then adopted by Catholic countries, followed gradually by Protestant and other nations.



February 24, 1867 - The House of Representatives voted to impeach President Andrew Johnson. The vote followed bitter opposition by the Radical Republicans in Congress toward Johnson's reconstruction policies in the South. However, the effort to remove him failed in the Senate by just one vote.

Birthday - Admiral Chester Nimitz (1885-1966) was born in Fredericksburg, Texas. He commanded Allied naval, land and air forces in the South Pacific during World War II, and signed the Japanese surrender document on September 2, 1945.

FEBRUARY 25



Birthday - Millicent Fenwick (1910-1992) was born in New York City. She championed liberal causes, serving as a member of the U.N. General Assembly and as a U.S. Congresswoman.

FEBRUARY 26

February 26, 1848 - The Communist Manifesto pamphlet was published by two young socialists, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. It advocated the abolition of all private property and a system in which workers own all means of production, land, factories and machinery.



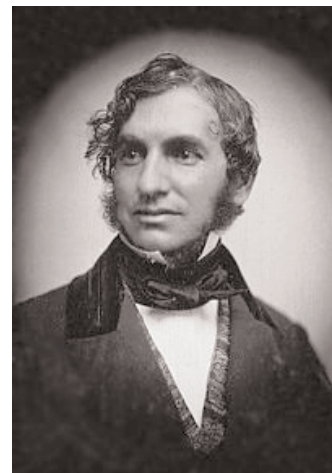
February 26, 1994 - Political foes of Russian President Boris Yeltsin were freed by a general amnesty granted by the new Russian Parliament.

Birthday - American frontiersman "Buffalo Bill" Cody (1846-1917) was born in Scott County, Indiana. He claimed to have killed over 4,000 buffalo within 17 months. He became world famous through his Wild West show which traveled throughout the U.S. and Europe for 30 years.

FEBRUARY 27

February 27, 1950 - The 22nd Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified, limiting the president to two terms or a maximum of ten years in office.

February 27, 1991 - In Desert Storm, the 100-hour ground war ended as Allied troops entered Kuwait just four days after launching their offensive against Saddam Hussein's Iraqi forces.



Birthday - American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882) was born in Portland, Maine. Best known for Paul Revere's Ride, The Song of Paul Revere, The Wreck of the Hesperus.

Gill's ton, Shami's 5-wicket haul power India to victory over Bangladesh

DUBAI (TIP)

India began their Champions Trophy campaign with a six-wicket victory against Bangladesh after opener Shubman Gill anchored their nervy chase with a classy hundred in the Group A contest on Thursday, February 20.

A victory target of 229 looked inadequate to test India's vaunted batting but Rohit Sharma's men faltered in their chase and owed their tense victory, even if it came with 21 balls to spare, largely to Gill's unbeaten 101.

Gill's ton trumped Towhid Hridoy's heroic 100 while battling cramps that helped Bangladesh, who were 35/5 at one stage, reach 228 before being all out with two deliveries left in their innings.

Seamer Mohammed Shami claimed 5/53, signalling he was ready to lead India's pace attack in the absence of the injured Jasprit Bumrah.

"We have been in that kind of situation many a time," India captain Rohit Sharma said of their chase. "There's a lot of experience in that dressing room to handle that... KL (Rahul) and Gill at the end were quite composed."

Najmul Hossain Shanto was left to regret his decision to bat as Bangladesh lost the top half of their batting half inside nine overs.

While India's new ball pair of Shami and Harshit Rana (3/31) struck in their first overs, spinner Axar Patel nearly claimed a hat-trick.

During the chase, Rohit (41) and Gill got India off to a flying start adding 69 runs for the opening stand.

Rohit could not initially middle the ball but boundaries soon started to flow from his bat as he crossed 11,000 runs in ODIs. Taskin Ahmed removed Rohit in the 10th over and suddenly the boundary flow stopped. Virat Kohli (22) could not convert the start while Shreyas Iyer and Axar Patel fell cheaply as Bangladesh fought back with their spinners.

Brief scores: Bangladesh: 228 all out in 48.4 overs (Hridoy 100, Jaker 68; Shami



5/53, Harshit 3/31); India: 231/4 in 46.3 overs (Gill 101*, Rohit 41, Rahul 41*, Hossain 2/38).

Shami makes dream return

Till a few weeks back, Mohammed Shami was not sure of making the Indian team for the Champions Trophy. In fact, there was a period last year when the veteran pacer was not even sure if he would ever return to the field again. But Shami, who recently made a comeback from a long injury layoff, proved his worth by picking up five wickets in India's victory against Bangladesh in their opening game of the tournament.

The 34-year-old speedster, who is leading India's bowling department in the absence of Jasprit Bumrah, made an unforgettable comeback by claiming his sixth five-wicket haul in ODI cricket. It was his first ever five-wicket haul in an ICC tournament.

Shami also became the eighth Indian to complete 200 wickets in ODI cricket. On Thursday, he grabbed three wickets

to reach the milestone in his 104th match. He became the fastest Indian to the milestone, breaking the record of former India pacer Ajit Agarkar (133 matches). He then added two more wickets to his tally to end the day with figures of 5/53.

Shami, who averages less than 24 and has 10 four-wicket hauls, also extended his record of most five-wicket hauls for India in the format. The next best is three five-wicket hauls by Javagal Srinath and Harbhajan Singh.

The road back to the top, though, was filled with hurdles — the latest being his 14-month exile from cricket. After finishing the 2023 World Cup as the leading wicket-taker of the tournament, Shami required surgery for an ankle injury. After a long layoff, his comeback was delayed by issues with his knees during rehabilitation. Shami finally returned to competitive cricket, turning up for the Bengal team in the domestic season. He finally re-joined India's white-ball squad for the home series against England.



Mbappe hat-trick buries Man City

Real Madrid easily beat Manchester City 3-1 with a Kylian Mbappe hat-trick on Feb 19 in their Champions League playoff second leg at a raucous Santiago Bernabeu stadium, earning them a 6-3 aggregate victory and a place in the last-16. Last year's champions will face either Bayer Leverkusen or city rivals Atletico Madrid, depending on Friday's draw, as they seek a record-extending 16th title.

It was the first time in City coach Pep Guardiola's illustrious career that one of his teams in the Champions League had failed to reach the Round of 16. "It was a perfect night," Mbappe said. "It's only logical that Real Madrid advance to the last-16. We are very strong at home and it's great to give joy to our fans."

After a breathtaking first leg packed with goals and individual brilliance from both sides at the Etihad Stadium, the return game was thoroughly one-sided.

Real did not have to work too hard to subdue their sorry rivals who failed to manage a shot on target in the first half, looking a shadow of Guardiola's dominant force from past years. Already 3-2 down from the first game, City's task became even harder an hour before kick-off when they announced a starting 11 without leading striker Erling Haaland, who suffered a knee injury at the weekend. Real took full control of proceedings from the off and never looked under threat with the hapless visitors lucky not to lose by a larger margin.

Rickelton, Rabada shine as South Africa beat Afghanistan by 107 runs

KARACHI (TIP)

South Africa opener Ryan Rickelton scored a maiden ODI century with a fluent 103 as his side eased to a 107-run win over Afghanistan in their opening Champions Trophy Group B fixture at the National Stadium on Friday, February 21.

South Africa won the toss and elected to bat, amassing 315/6 in their 50 overs on a wicket with pace and bounce that was more akin to their home conditions on the Highveld than a sub-continent style pitch.

Afghanistan's Rahmat Shah scored a fighting 90 but South Africa's seamers stifled the run-rate and picked up

regular wickets as their opponents battled to stay in the contest and fell well short as they were bowled out for 208 in 43.3 overs.

"I was a bit edgy, but to contribute to the team and set us up for a winning performance, I am chuffed with that," Rickelton said after being named the Player of the Match.

"The wicket played alright, the bounce was a bit inconsistent and you had to work out how to adapt to score your runs. We could have pushed harder at certain stages of our innings, but everyone chipped in to make sure we had competitive total."

South Africa's innings was anchored

by the left-hander, whose 103 came from 106 deliveries, but there were valuable contributions all the way through.

Captain Temba Bavuma scored 58 as he put on 129 with Rickelton for the second wicket before Rassie van der Dussen pitched in with a useful 52 and Aiden Markram was unbeaten on 52 from 36 deliveries to give the innings a boost at the end.

In contrast to South Africa, Afghanistan battled to find a way to stem the flow of runs, with 40-year-old off-spinner Mohammad Nabi the pick of their bowlers with 2/51 from 10 overs.





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Peter J McDonnell, MD Director Wilmer Eye Institute, Johns Hopkins



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