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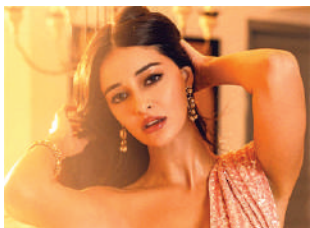


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HINDU CAUCUS ANNOUNCED

Congressional Hindu Caucus in 118th Congress announced

WASHINGTON: US lawmakers Pete Sessions and Elise Stefanik have announced the inauguration of the Congressional Hindu Caucus in the 118th Congress.

The Caucus, under the chairmanship of Congressman Sessions and Chairwoman Stefanik, is dedicated to representing the values that are significant to the Hindu-American community.

"The inauguration of the Congressional Hindu Caucus marks a significant step towards recognizing and amplifying the voice of the Hindu-American community

in our nation's capitol," Congressman Sessions said in a statement.

"We are committed to addressing their concerns, celebrating their contributions, and ensuring their perspectives are heard at the highest levels of government," he added.

Originally established during the 115th Congress, the caucus continues its pivotal role in forging a vital connection between the Hindu-American community and policymakers in Washington, D.C.

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Congressman Shri Thanedar

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Ananya Panday's glimpse of Xmas



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The Caucus, under chairmanship of Congressman Sessions and Chairwoman Stefanik, is dedicated to representing the values that are significant to the Hindu-American community

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American community.

"The inauguration of the Congressional Hindu Caucus marks a significant step towards recognizing and amplifying the voice of the Hindu-American community in our nation's capitol," Congressman Sessions said in a statement.



Lawmakers Pete Sessions and Elise Stefanik

"We are committed to addressing their concerns, celebrating their contributions, and ensuring their perspectives are heard at the highest levels of government," he added.

Originally established during the 115th Congress, the caucus continues its pivotal role in forging a vital connection between the Hindu-American community and policymakers in Washington, D.C.

It advocates for free enterprise, limited government, fiscal discipline, strong family values, and a robust foreign policy stance against authoritarian regimes, according to the lawmakers.

"This proactive approach not only strengthens the Hindu-American presence in Washington but also enhances its influence in shaping a more representative and diverse nation," a release from Sessions' office stated.

Embodying a diverse coalition, the Caucus represents Hindus from various countries including India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Pakistan, Afghanistan, the UK and the Netherlands.

It also includes members of other faiths with Indian origins, such as Sikhs, Jains, and Buddhists.

In addition to Congressman Sessions and Chairwoman Stefanik, the Caucus includes members like Congressman Andy Biggs, among others, who are dedicated to advancing the Caucus's mission. *IANS*

Declassified report reveals Russia, China meddling in 2022 US midterm elections

WASHINGTON, DC: A recently declassified intelligence report has exposed increased efforts by China, Russia, and Iran to interfere in the 2022 US midterm elections compared to what they did in the 2018 midterms, The Hill reported.

The report, produced in December 2022 and declassified last week, outlines the US intelligence community's (IC) assessments of foreign threats during the elections.

While there was no evidence of "a directive from any foreign leader to undertake a comprehensive, whole-of-government influence campaign," similar to Russia's actions in the 2016 election, however, the report notes a higher level of foreign activity than in 2018, according to The Hill.

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MEET TULSI EATERY'S SUPERSTAR CATERING MANAGER



Chaitali Antonio, Tulsi's Catering Manager

When Tulsi Indian Eatery—the upscale fast-casual Indian restaurant known for its regional specialties crafted by master chefs—first opened its doors in the financial district of Los Angeles amidst the pandemic, the Executive Team saw an opportunity to further highlight and extend its culinary prowess with its community. From this, Tulsi expanded its capabilities to cater to an array of events including weddings, corporate meetings and more, and brought on Catering Manager, Chaitali Antonio, in 2021 to jump-start this journey. Today, Tulsi offers curated packages that are sure to create a memorable experience by showcasing the heritage of Indian cuisine and rich, authentic flavors.

Prior to joining the team at Tulsi Indian Eatery, Chaitali garnered a decade's worth of restaurant and catering experience back home in Bengaluru. Her journey began with helping out her mother-in-law in the kitchen of their family-owned business before moving on to corporate catering from 2005 through 2015. At first, Chaitali never imagined her career path would lead her down the service industry route, but eventually, it grew on her and she



Chaitali Antonio, Tulsi's Team of Regional Specialty Chefs: from L to R- Gitaben Chodavadiya (Head Gujarati Chef), Catering Manager Chaitali Antonio, Paneer Natrajan (Head South Indian Chef), and Harpreet "Saabi" Singh (Head North Indian Chef)

fell more in love with it day by day.

"When it comes to catering, whether it's 20 people, 100 people or even thousands it is crucial to thoroughly listen to your client's needs and craft a curated menu that ultimately fits the demand of all attendees," said Chaitali. "At the end of the day, it's not just the music, outfits or activities that are most remembered, it's the food that brings everyone together."

In Bengaluru, Chaitali was tasked with feeding crowds as large as 3,000 individuals. Whether it entailed packed lunches for the local university or weddings for large families, the amount of attendees did not scare Chaitali away. Instead, she saw these as opportunities to pay extra attention to details surrounding menus and logistics while carefully considering the varying needs of her clients. One way Chaitali provides these services is by understanding her clients' backgrounds. She is familiar with many dialects and regions of food which allows her to easily curate menus. Since 2021, Chaitali has established strong and lasting relationships with her clients who have come to Tulsi for their catering needs. Chaitali recognizes that these relationships allow Tulsi to continuously provide unforgettable dining experiences.

"Tulsi caters to an array of events to ensure we provide service to every vertical and meet our clients where they are at," said Chaitali Antonio. "From corporate events such as office lunches, birthdays or small gatherings; celebrations such as baby or bridal showers; or weddings—we do it all."

Tulsi offers three packages (silver, gold and platinum) priced at different tiers which include appetizers,

curries, daal, rice, bread from their in-house bread makers, dessert and an array of condiments including their homemade pickles. Within these packages, guests have the option to pick formats between live stations, party trays, onsite catering, custom menus and even event space which can be rented out at Tulsi's flagship location in Northridge, California. While Tulsi is known for its vegetarian, plant-based, vegan and gluten-free options, Tulsi's catering further meets the needs of its clients by including non-vegetarian options that are prepared by an affiliate caterer, with Chaitali's oversight, in a separate kitchen.

As Tulsi Indian Eatery's catering services continue to surpass the limits of traditional dining experiences, Tulsi's commitment to authenticity,

personalized services and culinary artistry will continue to provide enchanting moments while highlighting the world of Indian gastronomy.



Has Dawood Ibrahim been poisoned in Pakistan? Why the speculated rumors do not fit?

HAMZAAMEER

ISLAMABAD: Speculated reports and rumors about a suspected poisoning of underworld don and absconder terrorist Dawood Ibrahim Kaskar have taken the social media platforms by storm, making headlines on almost every mainstream media. While the news is still unconfirmed, there were many loopholes in the rumored development that do not fit right.

This week started with the major news development, referring to a rumor that the underworld Dawood, allegedly residing in Karachi, has been poisoned by an "unknown man" and was shifted to a hospital in critical condition.

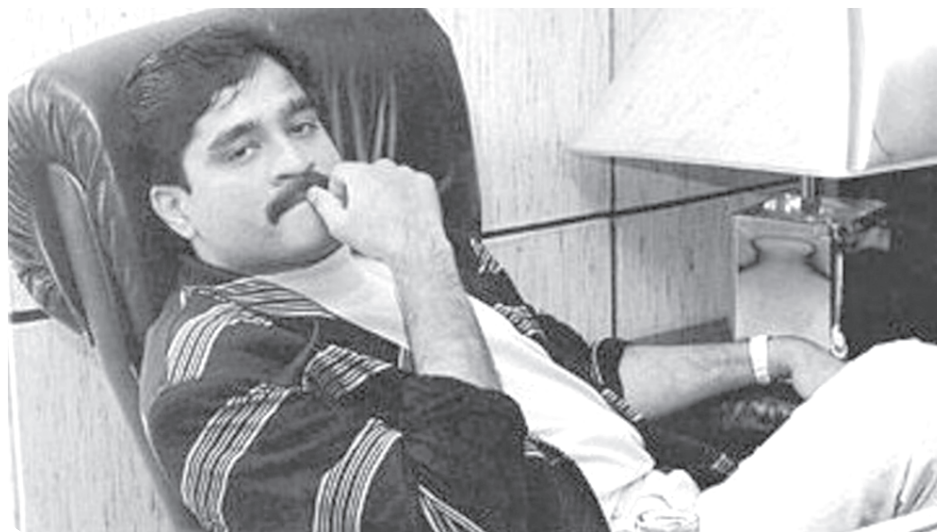
The news, banked on a rumor and unknown source, further claims that the 67-year-old has been living in Karachi with his second wife along with his three daughters and a son under tight security and away from the public glare.

It also claimed that the hospital where Dawood has been taken is also put under tight security.

While all the rumored claims are yet to be confirmed by a reliable source in Pakistan, the news itself does not seem to

have been thoughtfully drafted.

Firstly, Pakistan has officially denies Indian claims that Dawood resides in Karachi or any other part of the country



Dawood Ibrahim Kaskar

and therefore, would not confirm the rumor if it may be considered to be true.

And even if the rumor is to be seen on its face value, the claim that Dawood

has been poisoned by an unknown man seems to be far from the actual position on ground, especially in reference to the fact that he is an underworld don and

India's most wanted man.

Reliable sources have said that it is almost impossible for any unknown person to have an access to Dawood as he

is surrounded by his most trusted people, family members, close aids and security, who ensure that he is kept safe.

"It is almost impossible for any person to have such kind of an access to Dawood Ibrahim. As I understand, he would be surrounded by his trusted security and aids. And even if he may be in Karachi or anywhere else, keeping him safe would remain as the top most priority of his people. So reports about him being poisoned by an unknown man do not fit at all," said one of the sources.

Dawood Ibrahim is an elderly man now. At the age of 67, it has been reported that he has medical issues and maintains his health through various medications. It is highly likely that he may have gotten sick due to the some medial issues, if only any part of the rumor is to be believed to be true.

The claim about presence of Dawood in Karachi is what India claims, referring to confirmations by his family members and their statements to the National Investigation Agency (NIA).

In January 2023, it was reported that Dawood's nephew confirmed to NIA that he had remarried in Pakistan and was living with his family in Karachi.

"Dawood Ibrahim has a second wife. Her name is Maizabin. He has three daughters Marukh, Mehrin and Mariya, and one son Mohin Nawaz, "Alishah Parkar, son of Dawood's sister Haseena Parkar, had said in a statement given to NIA during November last year.

India claims that Dawood has been living in Pakistan for decades now, adding that Pakistani authorities have provided proper protection and hidden shelter to Dawood, while officially denying his presence in the country.

Considered the most wanted terrorist here, India wants to lay its hands on Kaskar for involvement in multiple crimes, terror acts, narcotics, etc. in Mumbai and elsewhere, plus, also as 'a political trophy'.

The prime cases for which India wants him include the March 12, 1993 Mumbai serial blasts -- ranked the worst-ever terror strike in India -- which claimed 267 people, much higher than the 166 who were killed in the terror attacks of November 26, 2008, that hit the country's commercial capital. IANS

Declassified report reveals Russia, China meddling in 2022 US midterm elections

Cont'd from page 8

The IC still detected a "diverse and growing group of foreign actors ... engaging in such operations, including China's greater willingness to conduct election influence activities than in past cycles."

"The involvement of more foreign actors probably reflects shifting geopolitical

bly no continuous efforts to gain access to election infrastructure or to change votes, which the report noted is "technically challenging." Instead, the foreign meddlers now seem mostly focused on "amplifying authentic US public narratives to try to influence electoral outcomes, increase mistrust in US election processes, and stoke sociopolitical divisions."

"The involvement of more foreign actors probably reflects shifting geopolitical risk calculus, perceptions that election influence activity has been normalized, the low cost but potentially high reward of such activities, and a greater emphasis on election security in IC collection and analysis"

risk calculus, perceptions that election influence activity has been normalized, the low cost but potentially high reward of such activities, and a greater emphasis on election security in IC collection and analysis," the report revealed.

The IC also found that there were nota-

"This approach provides deniability as foreign actors propagate US content to try to exploit existing fissures," the report said.

With "high confidence," the intelligence community concluded that the Russian government and its proxies "sought to denigrate the Democratic Party before

the midterm elections and undermine confidence in the election, most likely to undermine US support for Ukraine," as reported by The Hill.

The report notes that Kremlin intelligence services conducted "extensive research and analysis of US audiences" to aid in their election meddling efforts, identifying target demographics, narratives, and platforms.

The intelligence community also assessed with "high confidence" that China "tacitly approved efforts to try to influence a handful of midterm races" against politicians perceived as anti-China. The report suggests that China's growing efforts to magnify US societal divisions may be a response to perceived US attempts to promote democracy at China's expense.

"(People's Republic of China) leaders most likely to see their growing efforts to magnify US Societal divisions as a response to what the believe is an intensified US effort to promote democracy at China's expense," the report added. ANI

India needs to openly work with New Zealand in agriculture sector: Amitabh Kant

NEW DELHI: Former NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant said India and New Zealand need to openly work in agriculture sector. He stressed that New Zealand has great expertise in the agriculture productivities sector.

While speaking at the event on "Partnership Pathway: New Zealand India Economic Relations alongside New Zealand's Minister for Trade Todd McClay, he said, "I'm



Amitabh Kant

a great believer that it will greatly benefit India if you were to use New Zealand's great expertise in the field of agriculture productivities. It's a phenomenal destination as far as agriculture product productivity is concerned."

"It does a lot of high-value production and India is an agrarian country. Almost 40 percent of Indians are in agriculture, but we need to increase earnings from the agriculture sector in a very big way and to my mind the real linkage movement between production to the end consumer through value-added production really holds just a key to that and there's no better destination than learning the art from New Zealand. We need to openly work with New Zealand in this area," he added.

Amitabh Kant noted that the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) should work with New Zealand in dairy sector. He said, "You know we feel very protective about our farmers as far as the dairy sector is concerned and I am very clear about this that Fonterra etc. are top class company giving massive amount of value added in milk. Now, we should not feel very threatened about it.

"We should get NDDB [National Dairy Development Board] to work with them. As you know it could be a strategic partnership so that Indian companies should gain from that and that will help us to get into a range of value of production in dairy sector. Their dairy sector is the most advanced in the world and I think there's plenty to put India to get on that," he added.

He said India can greatly benefit from New Zealand's technological expertise and knowledge of kiwis. He

spoke about eating fine kiwis in Arunachal Pradesh, which he said were there due to a New Zealand working in partnership with Arunachal to produce kiwis.

"I'm a great believer that you know I went to Arunachal and some the really fine kiwis that I had were in Arunachal which was thanks to a New Zealand working in partnership with the state of Arunachal to produce kiwis that were climatically very well suited and I think my personal view is Minister that don't restrict to just one state spread across the Northeast and India, I can assure you will greatly benefit from your technical expertise and knowledge of kiwis. We are a very large country. We are bigger than 24 countries of Europe +30 thousand kilometers. So one region of India will be able to benefit radically in terms of productivity," he said.

Hailing India's growth in the digital sector, he said every Indian has a digital identity. He stated that all Indians have bank accounts have been linked with digital identity and mobile number.

He said, "The other area which is to my mind very important is that India is very digitally advanced. Every Indian has a digital identity. All Indians have bank accounts and we have linked it up with the digital identity and the mobile number. We do 48 percent of the fast payments in the world. We do 11x of what USA and Europe do. We do four x more fast savings than what China does."

Amitabh Kant said that people in India do paperless and cashless lending. He said that India and New Zealand must collaborate in digital sector. He said India is more advanced in digital sector than any other country

in the world.

Speaking India doing cashless transactions, he said, "We now do paperless, cashless lending. We do paperless, cashless insurance on the go in one minute. Now these are things on which India and New Zealand must collaborate. I think that can be a Winwin. I think we are more advanced than any country in the world, and yet the digital we built up a techno economic solution where the power of data remains with the citizen."

"It gives access to it technologically on the go, and therefore it's a very different model from the Big Tech, a model of Google and Facebook and Meta and Apple and Amazon in US and Tencent and Alibaba in China. And that's some model from which I think New Zealand can greatly benefit as far as technological rerun in that area is concerned," he added. ANI

"It does a lot of high-value production and India is an agrarian country. Almost 40 percent of Indians are in agriculture, but we need to increase earnings from the agriculture sector in a very big way and to my mind the real linkage movement between production to the end consumer through value-added production"

Haley top Republican alternative to Trump in New Hampshire: Poll

WASHINGTON: Indian-American presidential aspirant Nikki Haley has emerged as the top alternative to former US President Donald Trump among Republican voters in the state of New Hampshire, according to a new poll.

While Trump still leads in the 'Granite State', the former South Carolina Governor has consolidated much of the non-Trump vote, the latest CBS News/YouGov poll found.

Twenty-nine percent of the likely Republican primary voters said they would vote for Haley, 15 percent behind Trump.

Eleven percent said they would vote for Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, and 10 percent said they would vote for former New Jersey Governor Chris Christie.

No other candidate received more than 10 percent.

"Haley gets the best marks on being seen as 'likable' and 'reasonable', and she runs nearly even with Trump on being 'prepared' -- notable, considering he held the presidency," the poll said.



Nikki Haley

A little more than half of the voters said Trump would "definitely" beat President Joe Biden, while for Haley it was 32 percent.

The poll -- conducted between December 8 -15 on a representative sample of 855 registered voters in New Hampshire -- also gauged how the Republican voters in the state felt toward each candidate.

Haley is overwhelmingly seen as the most likable, receiving 55 percent of the vote, and DeSantis falls in second, holding 37 percent of the vote.

Trump and Indian-American entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy are on the third position, holding 36 percent of the vote.

A majority of voters also said Haley is the most reasonable of the candidates -- 51 percent voted for her, while 37 percent said DeSantis was the most reasonable.

Trump was next in line with 36 percent votes.

According to the poll, 54 percent felt that Trump is the most prepared, and Haley just fell one percent short.

While Haley doesn't think her former boss is the right person to be president at the moment, nearly 70 percent saw Trump as a strong leader, while for Haley it was 41 percent.

Trump has also consolidated his already commanding lead in Iowa with nearly all the Republican voters in the state saying that things were better when he was President.

Trump's backers in Iowa were also the most firm in their choice as most described their support as "very strong - I've decided", the CBS poll said. IANS

Anti-Israel protesters scream 'silence is violence' outside Indian-American Congressman's home

WASHINGTON: Pro-Palestinian supporters gathered outside the home of Indian-American Congressman Shri Thanedar in the middle of the night, slamming his support for Israel in its war with Hamas that has left thousands dead.

"This is my home at 3 AM Sunday night," Thanedar wrote on X, and shared a video showing a protestor waving keffiyeh, a checkered black and white scarf worn by Palestinians.

Amidst blaring car horns, a protester can be heard

"This is my home at 3 AM Sunday night," Thanedar wrote on X, and shared a video showing a protestor waving keffiyeh, a checkered black and white scarf worn by Palestinians

shouting, "You are complicit in the bombing of Gaza... Your silence is violence. Your silence is abhorrent, and we will not let you sleep! There will be a price to pay".

Another protester in the video is seen holding a placard that read: "20,000 Gazans dead! Wake the f**k up Shri!!"

The video shared by Thanedar was posted on X platform by Huwaida Arraf, a Palestinian-American human/civil rights attorney and activist, according to her X bio.

Along with the video, Arraf wrote the message: "Detroit constituents of Rep Shri Thanedar visited his house in the middle of the night to get him to #WakeTheFUp about the ongoing genocide in Palestine that he's supporting."

"If Gaza's children can't sleep from the US-supplied bombs Israel is dropping and babies are being blown to bits, no enabler should be allowed to sleep," she wrote.

A staunch supporter of Israel, Thanedar had called for the elimination of Palestinian militant group Hamas "from the face of the earth", saying that they are just "barbaric terrorists".

"I condemn these violent attacks against the Jewish people and the state of Israel. The calculated aggression targeting innocent civilians is heartbreaking and cannot be tolerated. America stands firmly with Israel," Thanedar had said as Hamas launched the massive attack on southern Israel on October 7.

He also urged the Congress to rally behind Israel until the threat is addressed and security is restored.

Nearly 20,000 Palestinians have been killed, with 70



Congressman Shri Thanedar

per cent of them women and children, according to the territory's health officials.

According to human rights advocates and aid groups, a vast majority of Gaza's 2.2 million people are displaced, and an estimated half face starvation. Israeli military officials say, 118 soldiers have been killed during the country's ground invasion in Gaza, which came after 1,200 people were killed and about 240 hostages were captured by Hamas on October 7. IANS

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Israeli PM Netanyahu briefs PM Modi on recent developments in Israel-Hamas conflict

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently had a telephonic conversation with Israeli counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu. Israeli PM briefed PM Modi on the recent developments in the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict.

The two leaders shared concerns regarding the safety of maritime traffic. PM Modi reiterated the need for continued humanitarian aid for the impacted people. He stressed for an early and peaceful resolution of the conflict, including the release of all hostages, through dialogue and diplomacy.

In the press release, Prime Minister's Office said, "Prime Minister reiterated the need for continued humanitarian aid for the affected population and emphasized an early and peaceful resolution of the conflict, including the release of all hostages, through dialogue and diplomacy. The two leaders agreed to remain in touch."

In a post shared on X, PM Modi stated, "Had a productive exchange of views with PM @netanyahu on the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict, including shared concerns on the safety of maritime traffic. Highlighted India's consistent stand in favor of early restoration of peace & stability in the region with continued humanitarian assistance for the affected."

"Prime Minister reiterated the need for continued humanitarian aid for the affected population and emphasized an early and peaceful resolution of the conflict"

PM Modi and Netanyahu also discussed the importance of securing freedom of navigation in the Bab-el-Mandeb, according to statement released by Israel. The two leaders discussed the global interest in preventing attacks on the global economy, trade as well as the Indian and Israeli

economies.

In a post on X, Israel Prime Minister's Office stated, "Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu spoke today with Indian Prime Minister @NarendraModi. The two leaders discussed the importance of securing freedom of navigation in the Bab-el-Mandeb, which is threatened by the aggression of the Houthis, instigated by Iran."



Narendra Modi with Benjamin Netanyahu

It further stated, "They also discussed the global interest in preventing attacks on the global economy and trade, as well as the Indian and Israeli economies. Indian Prime Minister Modi noted that freedom of navigation is an essential global necessity that must be ensured."

According to statement released by Israel Prime Minister's Office on X, PM Modi and Netanyahu discussed advancing the arrival of foreign workers from India to Israel.

In a post on X, Israel Prime Minister's Office stated, "The two leaders also discussed advancing the arrival of foreign workers from India to the State of Israel. Prime Minister Netanyahu thanked Indian Prime Minister Modi for India's support of Israel's just war to eliminate the Hamas terrorist organization."

Notably, the war between Israel and Hamas started after the terror group invaded southern Israel, killing more than 1,200 people, most of them civilians, and taking over 200 hostages. Israel has vowed to destroy Hamas.

Meanwhile, the Hamas-run health ministry in Gaza said that at least 19,667 Palestinians have been killed in the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza since Hamas launched an attack on Israel on October 7, The Times of Israel reported.

The health ministry said 52,586 people in Gaza have been injured in more than two months of fighting, according to The Times of Israel report. The figures cannot be verified as Hamas does not differentiate between civilians and combatants. ANI

Indian-American Ashwin Ramaswami announces run for Georgia State Senate

WASHINGTON: Indian-American software engineer Ashwin Ramaswami has announced his run as a Democrat from the US state of Georgia, seeking to represent Senate District 48.

If elected, Ramaswami will become the first Indian-American in the Georgia state Senate, first Gen Z member, and the only state senator with a computer science and a law degree.

"I'm excited to announce my campaign for GA State Senate District 48! I am committed to bringing inclusive, informed, and forward-thinking leadership to our State Senate," Ramaswami posted on X announcing his run.

"I have worked to make positive change in my community through nonprofits, religious communities, technology startups, and law and policy... It's time for me to pay it forward and help advocate for the futures of young people -- and everyone -- in our community," his campaign statement read.



Ashwin Ramaswami

Ramaswami will be fighting to lower costs for all families, increase economic and business opportunity, expand healthcare access, and preserve, protect, and defend democratic institutions for Georgians.

His announcement follows the indictment of the incumbent Republican State Senator, Shawn Still, for attempting to overturn the 2020 election results.

"I am running in the Democratic party, against an incumbent who got indicted for trying to overturn the 2020 election results. It is important to have people in public office with integrity and who serve the community first," the second-generation immigrant said on X.

According to his campaign website, Ramaswami has over seven years of experience working to build tech startups, and has worked in the federal government on cybersecurity for three years.

He established and managed a cybersecurity program for state and local election officials while at the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), supporting election security efforts for both the 2020 and 2022 elections.

He worked with states across the country, including Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger's office, to flag and fix election security problems.

A devout Hindu, Ramaswami began teaching classes at Chinmaya Mission for middle and high schoolers about Hindu philosophy and culture, including the Bhagavad Gita.

At Georgetown, he founded the Dharmic Law Student Organization (programs for Buddhist, Hindu, Sikh, and Jain students) and helped raise \$100,000 to establish an endowment. IANS

Indian-American pleads guilty to threatening Jewish organization in NY

NEW YORK: A 21-year-old Indian-origin man has pleaded guilty to leaving a threatening voicemail targeting a Jewish organization in New York.

Deep Alpesh Kumar Patel, a resident of Sarasota city in Florida, faces a maximum penalty of five years in prison if convicted, US Attorney Roger B. Handberg announced last week.

He was arrested and charged last month for transmitting an interstate threat to injure.

According to the plea agreement, on October 21 Patel had left a threatening voicemail at the World Jewish Congress in New York City in which he identified himself by name.

Screaming numerous expletives, he said: "If I had a chance, I would kill every single one of you Israelis. Every single one of you! Cause mass genocide of every single Israeli." IANS



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Diwali celebrations by ICAAV with music, joy and cuisine

RIYAZ KHAN
India Post News Service

The India Cultural Association of Antelope Valley (ICAAV) celebrated Diwali, the Indian festival of lights, with an evening brimming with music, joy, and delectable cuisine on Saturday, December 2, 2023. The festivities unfolded at the Solomon Aghai Banquet Hall & Event Center in Lancaster, CA, drawing an attendance of approximately 200 people. Beyond marking one of India's major festivals, often considered a new year in certain regions, the event served as a recognition of the significant positive impact the Indian community has had on all facets of life in the Antelope Valley.

Details on page 18

FIA & Indian Consulate host VISA Passport Camp

India Post News Service

CHICAGO: The Federation of Indian Associations of Chicago (FIA Est. 1980) and Consulate General of India office, Chicago, organized an OCI / Passport Camp at Manav Seva Mandir, Bensenville, a Chicago suburb. The camp was attended by more than 500 people of Indian descent families.

Details on page 18

Combating Auto Retail Scams (CARS) Rule

VIDYA SETHURAMAN
India Post News Service

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has announced new rules meant to prevent sellers from perpetrating scams against car shoppers. The new CARS Rule-which stands for Combating Auto Retail Scams-takes on two items car buyers have long complained about: bait-and-switch tactics and junk fees. Specifically, the CARS Rule stands on four main legs: (1) Dealers cannot misrepresent a vehicle's price;

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COMMUNITY ACROSS AMERICA

16 India Post

www.indiapost.com

December 22, 2023



Dr. Japra speaking with Kamal Nair to his left and FOG youth volunteers

FOG Toy and Blanket Drive brings in generous donations for the needy

Picture courtesy: India Post News Service (Vidya and Lakshmi Iyer) and Manali Brahmabh



(Left to right) Rajesh Verma, FIA President, Dr. Romesh Japra, Sandhya Patel, and Kamal Nair



(Left to right) Dhaval Brahmabh, Manali Brahmabh, Sandhya Patel, and Councilmember Teresa Cox

LAKSHMI IYER
India Post News Service

FREMONT, CA: Festival of Globe (FOG), the organization that is under the umbrella of Federation of Indo Americans of Northern California (FIA), held its annual Toy and Blanket Drive at the Fremont Hindu Temple on Sunday 17 December.

Many elected officials and prominent people from the local juvenile justice system graced the occasion along with FOG and temple volunteers. There were representatives from five counties - Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco, Marin, and Santa Clara. Many charities such as Martha's Soup Kitchen in San Jose also benefit from this initiative.

The event is made possible year after year, thanks to the tireless efforts of volunteers headed by Manali Brahmabh, and the guidance of Kamal Nair, who started it years ago.

Inaugurating the occasion, Dr. Romesh Japra, Founder and Convener of FOG, spoke about how many years ago,

they had started helping local shelters and the initiative grew into a toy and blanket drive, including educational materials.

He stressed the importance of developing oneself as an individual first, before being able to empower one's family, and ultimately giving back to society. "When you give, it's not just your name that gets known out there but also your family name that gets known out there. So, it's not just our community that is our Indian community or Hindu community that

gets the credit or gets known out there, also society at large which nurtures us, fosters us, supports us, gives us education, feeds us, we have this - not only a duty but it becomes an honor for us to support them, help them and, give back."

He mentioned the tradition of giving the FOG community follows during other occasions as well, and cited the free Health Fair that is part of the FOG India Day and other fairs, where doctors and other health

professionals volunteer to provide free checkups and consultations.

Drawing attention to the critical issue of mental health, he cited it as the root cause of everything - homelessness, drugs, or crime, and which the assembled honorable judges and probation officers could relate to very much.

He also stressed the importance of collaboration among different groups, "By getting together, socializing, creating these bonds, creating these bridges with other communities is as important as giving these toys or blankets. So that also is part of the whole thing, becomes part of the giving."

Dr. Japra invoked the core Hindu concept of dharma and the inner happiness that comes from fulfilling it, saying that dharma was more than just duty, something that could not be translated.

He called upon one of the temple priests, Chandrashekhar ji, to make an invocation for the gathering.



Volunteers Poonam Arora, Anuradha, Neena Kapoor, Veena Birla, Fremont Mayor Lily Mei, Alka Bhatnagar, Milpitas Councilmember Hon Lien, Madhu Gupta, and Manali Brahmabh

Cont'd on page 22

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Diwali celebrations by Indian Cultural Association of Antelope Valley (ICAAV)



Certificate of recognition to ICAAV and community members from Palmdale City Mayor Pro Tem, Ms. Andrea Alarcon



Members of the ICAAV community

RIYAZ KHAN

India Post News Service

The India Cultural Association of Antelope Valley (ICAAV) celebrated Diwali, the Indian festival of lights, with an evening brimming with music, joy, and delectable cuisine on Saturday, December 2, 2023. The festivities unfolded at the Solomon Aghai Banquet Hall & Event Center in Lancaster, CA, drawing an attendance of approximately 200 people. Beyond marking one of India's major festivals, often con-

sidered a new year in certain regions, the event served as a recognition of the significant positive impact the Indian community has had on all facets of life in the Antelope Valley.

Commencing at 6:30 pm, the event began with an introduction of Mayor Pro Tem, Ms. Andrea Alarcón of Palmdale, by Maj. Gurjeet Singh. Ms. Alarcón conveyed complimentary thoughts and presented certificates of recognition to the ICAAV and community members for their noteworthy contributions to com-

mercial and social life in the Antelope Valley.

Dr. Pradeep Damle, past president of ICAAV, and Mr. Raj Nangia, the current president, provided brief introductory remarks on ongoing activities and upcoming plans. This was followed by invocatory prayers led by members of the Antelope Valley chapter of Balavihar, an organization associated with the Chinmaya Mission, dedicated to providing cultural education to children through engaging weekly

activities.

The highlight of the evening was an enchanting musical performance by Mr. Charenjeet Singh (CJ) and his troupe of artists. They captivated the audience with lively and danceable numbers, earning applause and appreciation. Sanjay Sayal of DJ Scorpio kept the guests entertained, while Sunny of AudioTech Event Technologies mesmerized the audience with his unique equipment. Mayor Pro Tem enthusiastically joined in,

dancing to several of the songs.

Appetizers and dinner were catered by "Taj of India" from Canoga Park, with desserts provided by "Sugary Delights." An onsite bar added to the festivities, and a raffle draw featured exciting prizes from local businesses. The celebration extended well into the night, with happy smiles adorning adults and children alike, dressed in bright and colorful costumes. The last few revelers bid farewell to the hall after 11:30 pm.

FIA & Indian Consulate host VISA Passport Camp

India Post News Service

CHICAGO: The Federation of Indian Associations of Chicago (FIA Est. 1980) and Consulate General of India office, Chicago, organized an OCI / Passport Camp at Manav Seva Mandir, Bensenville, a Chicago suburb. The camp was attended by more than 500 people of Indian descent families.

The camp focused mainly on two issues faced by the Indian diaspora - OCI Card and Passport. CG Somnath extended all support from his office and, more than six consulate staff members manned the inquiry and processing

desk to answer and, process the paperwork for OCI Cards.

The event, aimed at providing comprehensive assistance to the Indian diaspora and OCI cardholders, witnessed enthusiastic participation from the community. The collaborative highlighted the commitment to fostering strong ties and enhancing support for the Indian community abroad.

The overwhelming response from the community, as evidenced by more than 1000 telephonic phone inquiries, showcases the high demand for OCI assistance. More than 550 individuals registered for the OCI camp, demonstrating the

community's eagerness to avail themselves of the essential services provided by the Consulate General Office.

The camp witnessed the active participation of 590 individuals who took advantage of

lined process for various OCI services, including new applications, re-issuance, and addressing queries related to OCI cards.

Attendees had the opportunity to engage with consular officials, seeking guidance and

Expert-led informational sessions were conducted, covering topics such as legal rights, cultural exchange programs, and updates on the latest developments related to OCI regulations.

The event also featured queries and assistance filling out forms and form attestation.

Participants had the chance to apply for an Indian Visa and submit the applications for the same.

The Consul General and VSF Representative expressed gratitude for the FIA initiative and the community's active participation.

The camp focused mainly on two issues faced by the Indian diaspora - OCI Card and Passport. CG Somnath extended all support from his office and, more than six consulate staff members manned the inquiry and processing desk

the services offered, including new applications.

The camp offered a stream-

support on various consular matters, ensuring a seamless experience for all.

Cont'd on page 21

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Sankara Eye Foundation's annual banquet held at Signia by Hilton

VIDYA SETHURAMAN
India Post News Service

On Saturday December 9, Sankara Eye Foundation (SEF) hosted its signature annual banquet at Signia By Hilton, San Jose, California. These banquets are meant to honor its donors and provide them updates on its current as well as upcoming projects. This year, the goal was to raise \$1,000,000 and courtesy the generosity of its donors, SEF was able to reach, in fact surpass that target.

Murali Krishnamurthy, Executive chairman of SEF USA updated the guests on the progress of various projects, funds to be raised, and the vision for the future. He talked about SEF USA's efforts to scale up to one million free eye surgeries a year

by the year 2030 through partnerships with other organizations and arresting the growth of blindness. In the last 25 years we have come a long way together. From supporting one eye hospital in



Combating Auto Retail Scams (CARS) Rule

VIDYA SETHURAMAN
India Post News Service

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has announced new rules meant to prevent sellers from perpetrating scams against car shoppers. The new CARS Rule—which stands for Combating Auto Retail Scams—takes on two items car buyers have long complained about: bait-and-switch tactics and junk fees. Specifically, the CARS Rule stands on four main legs: (1) Dealers cannot misrepresent a vehicle's price; (2) Dealers must "clearly disclose" the actual price someone can pay for the car; (3) Dealers cannot charge consumers for add-ons that don't provide a benefit; and (4) Dealers must get a buyer's "express, informed consent before charging them for anything."

Malini Mithal, Deputy Director of the FTC Financial Department, said that cars are an important expense for American families and are usually very costly. At the same time, people cannot live without cars, so the Federal Trade Commission has launched a special campaign to crack down on car sales. All kinds of

people can fall victim to unscrupulous car dealers suggesting those kinds of scams. The CARS rules are designed to combat illegal practices that use lengthy and opaque sales processes to deceive consumers. Dealers will not be able to misrepresent "the availability of vehicles at an advertised price," for example, or "any costs, limitations, benefit, or any other aspect of an add-on product or service." The CARS Rule also makes it illegal to "charge consumers for add-ons that don't provide a benefit."

The CARS rules are designed to combat illegal practices that use lengthy and opaque sales processes to deceive consumers

Jamie D. Brooks, an attorney with the FTS Financial Department, said the CARS rules will further protect the rights and interests of military car buyers. Young military personnel are often targets of dealer scams. According to statistics, the car debt of military personnel is twice that of civilians. The FTC said, around 20 percent of service members have at least \$20,000 in auto debt by the time they're 24. That's twice as much as in the general population.

FTC said it should save car shoppers in the U.S. more than \$3.4 billion each year, along with an estimated 72 million hours spent shopping for vehicles.

Coimbatore Sankara Eye Foundation, USA has become the world's largest free eye-care and eye-surgery initiative, said Murali.

As a non-profit, SEF volunteers have been working tirelessly for two decades to eradicate curable blindness in India. Working on a model of 80:20 free to paid-patients ratio, the funds raised through these events are used to further the cause. SEF India has a success rate of 98.8 percent and 96 percent of patients have been able to get back to their basic chores. The organization is not just treat-

ing people but also training future doctors through Sankara Academy of Vision.

Each of Sankara's state of the art hospitals offers comprehensive eye care services including treatment for cataract, glaucoma, cornea and refractive surgery, diabetic retinopathy, ocular oncology and pediatric ophthalmology. Founded in 1998, SEF, USA is a volunteer-run 501(c)(3) non-profit. It boasts the highest rating from Charity Navigator for many years in a row. For more information, or to donate, call 1 (866) SANKARA (726-5272) or visit www.giftofvision.org.

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Know the abundant health benefits of Ginger

MADHUMATI TYAGI

Ginger/Ayurvedic "Shunthi" or "ardrakam" is a perennial plant growing up to 1.5 m, mainly in Bharat, China, Nepal and now in different countries as well. The most used part is the aboveground rhizome, and incorrectly referred to as the root. In Ayurveda as "universal medicine", ginger is used as a medicine and Satvik spice in both fresh (Adrak) and dried (Shunthi) form. It is suitable for all three doshic constitutions of vata, pitta and kapha. In terms of the Ayurvedic properties of food, which in the normal diet affect the balance of our dosha constitution, ginger is hot, sweet, dry, spicy (pungent), oily and heavy. It therefore reduces vata and kapha and increases pitta if taken in larger amount. Dried ginger certainly has a greater dryness, but also greater bitterness than fresh that is it heats up the body more significantly, and is therefore more suitable for the constitution of kapha, when it alleviates cold and moist nature. And fresh is more suitable for vata and pitta. It is the perfect antidote for chill and damp. It is diaphoretic-induces sweating. Due to its warming effects, it is not recommended for inflammatory diseases, ulcers and high fever.

Ginger is considered one of the "sweet spices" like cardamom, cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, and anise. Ginger is used in recipes all over the world, in many unique

and versatile ways. In the West, ginger is often made into candy, gingerbread and cookies. However, in the East, its use appears frequently in savory dishes as well. In Bharatiya cuisine, ginger, garlic, and onion form tri-root, a common spice combination, usually ginger is ground with garlic into a paste and then sautéed because it is aromatic-uplifting scent.

Not only does ginger stir up the digestive fire (agni), but it also whets the appetite, improves assimilation and transpor-



tation of nutrients to targeted body tissues, and clears the microcirculatory channels of the body. Just avoid using ginger in case of hyperacidity, during any form of hemorrhage (including menstruation), vertigo, and chronic skin disease. Other than in these situations, ginger is an excellent spice that can be used daily.

What are the Ayurvedic benefits of ginger?

In addition to great taste and flavor to your food, ginger provides a range of health benefits and, supports your well-

being. It is an entire medicine chest in itself. If you can eat raw ginger, a good way to take it is to dip two or three thin slices of ginger in a little salt and lime juice and have them before a main meal. If not, because of its pungent taste, you can add some thin slices or paste, to your carrot or lentil salads.

Boosts Digestion: First, it is sialagogue-increases the secretion of saliva, harmonizes the digestive system for indigestion, nausea and then significantly in-

creases the digestive fire (Agni) to help break down and assimilate nutrients with more ease and thus stimulates the appetite. Secondly, it supports the process of digestion (, detoxification, and thus reduces bloating by clearing the microcirculatory channels to facilitate better absorption of nutrients and better elimination of wastes. It benefits gastrointestinal motility ? the rate at which food exits the stomach and the food does not linger long in the gut. It works as a stimulant-gets circulation flowing. An Ayurvedic sutra (verse) that says that everyone should eat fresh ginger just before lunch and dinner to enhance digestion. You can also use ginger capsules.

Nausea Relief: Ginger is antiemetic-helps with nausea. By encouraging stomach emptying ginger can relieve the discomforts of nausea due to: 1) Post-treatment nausea or seasickness with patients receiving chemo for cancer. 2) Eases "morning sickness," airsickness, and other nausea associated with pregnancy. 3) Eating ginger can cut down on fermentation, constipation and other causes of bloating and intestinal gas. It is carminative-relieves flatulence. 4) Ginger contains antioxidants that help manage free radicals, which damage cells when their numbers grow too high.

Fights Germs: Fresh ginger help your body ward off germs that are good for the growth of bacteria like E.coli and shigella, and viruses like RSV.

Keeps Your Mouth Healthy: Ginger's antibacterial power destroy oral bacteria from growing that can cause periodontal disease, a serious gum infection. It is an expectorant-helps clear mucus.

Soothes Sore Muscles: Ginger paci-

fies soreness over time. It is a nerve-soothes fragile nerves

Eases Arthritis Symptoms: Ginger's anti-inflammatory property reduces swelling in case of rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis. You get relief from pain and swelling by taking ginger by mouth or by using a ginger bandage or patch on your skin. Ginger certainly promotes joint health.

Curbs Cancer Growth: The bioactive molecules in ginger slow down the growth of some cancers like colorectal, gastric,

ovarian, liver, skin, breast, and prostate cancer.

Lowers Blood Sugar: A recent study suggested that ginger help your body use insulin better.

Eases Period Pains: Ginger powder help in menstrual cramps. Take 1,500 milligrams of ginger powder once a day for 3 days during their cycle to feel less pain. It is an analgesic-reduces the sensation of pain.

Lowers Cholesterol: A daily dose of ginger helps you battle your "bad" or LDL cholesterol levels. In a recent study, taking 5 grams of ginger a day for 3 months lowered people's LDL cholesterol an average of 30 points.

Protects Against Disease: Ginger is loaded with antioxidants, and compounds that prevent stress and damage to your body's DNA. They help your body fight off chronic diseases like high blood pressure, heart disease, purifies the blood, circulatory system, jaundice, hives, stimulates the nervous system, increases the transmission of nerve impulses and relieves pain, and diseases of the lungs, plus promotes healthy aging. Due to its bitterness (tikta) and oiliness (Snigdha), it helps with asthma and respiratory problems. It also acts as an aphrodisiac (stimulates sexual desire).

It is an excellent remedy for diseases caused by an excess of vata dosha.

Ginger whether fresh, dry grounded, or candied, is loaded with healthy goodness and acts as an anti-inflammatory. When are feeling a bit under the weather, try ginger tea, carrot ginger soup and any spicy ginger sautéed recipes as your sick day meals and drinks, they will get you back in working order in no time.

FIA & Indian Consulate host VISA Passport Camp

Cont'd from page 18

They stated, "The OCI Camp reflects our ongoing commitment to providing essential services and support to the Indian diaspora. We are grateful for the partnership with the Federation of Indian Associations, which has contributed to the success of this event."

Dr. Rashmi Patel President of the Federation of Indian Associations Chicago remarked, "Collaborating with the [Embassy/Consulate General] for this OCI Camp has been a significant step towards strengthening our community bonds. We look forward to more such initiatives that benefit the Indian diaspora."

He also thanked all the participants for their active involvement including appreciating the volunteering work done by the Women Empowering Group. He also

thanked the youth empowering group for their excellent services.

Dr. Bhart Bhai Barai praised the super success of the camp and said that our community needs this type of camp at least twice a year.

He appreciated the presence of the EC committee members Mr. Nitin Patel (Ex. VP), Vijendra Doma, and Dr. Hament Patel, who worked hard for the success of this event.

Dr. Patel thanked the Media representatives from TV Asia - Ms. Vandna Jhingan; India Post - Mr. Soparawala; Hi India - Mr. Ajai Agnihotri; Desi Talk - Mr., Bhailal and Suresh Bodiwala of Asian Media.

FIA provided 7 laptops 3 printers/scanners. Manish Jain and Aalap Patel provided Notary services throughout the day pro bono and FIA provided snacks.

FOG Toy and Blanket Drive...

Cont'd from page 16

Teresa Cox, Fremont Councilmember, who incidentally also represents Irvington district where the temple is located, commended FOG and the community for the fine work they were doing under the leadership of Dr. Japra for so many years. "All of you here have been giving and giving", she said. "It's about one toy at a time makes a difference in a child's life. And that's what is meaning here with all the love and all the blankets. And all this is what makes a difference in our community."

She expressed her joy at being present there and being joined by her colleagues from the other cities, who were "...fighting the same things together as a unified community because we want to make a big difference for all people."

Murali Srinivasan, Sunnyvale Councilmember spoke, "Imagine a child receiving this... how happy that child will be! And as Dr. Japra said, this is the part of Hinduism. As I see, we always believe in 'Nara seva is Narayana seva' (service to man is service to God). Seva (service) is part of dharma. Dharma is one of the four goals a human being should have."

Kathy Watanabe, Santa Clara Councilmember, mentioned the Firemen's 5K-walk/run fundraiser they had done earlier that morning in her city of Santa Clara, joined by a FOG member, Satish Chandra Vale. She pointed to the need in the communities across borders.

Expressing gratitude for her own blessings, she said that it was important to have the opportunity to give back to charities in need, to be able to bring a smile to a child's face or to the parent who could not afford to have Christmas for their child.

"They are important memories for every child to have, every parent to be able to experience."

She thanked everyone for making the holidays special for everyone across the Bay Area.

Sandhya Patel, a meteorologist with ABC Channel 7 News, was one of the attendees. Ms. Patel, whose parents immigrated to the US in 1969-70, got emotional as she recalled a family trip to India and its impact, "I was nine, with my siblings, my parents and I saw kids begging on the streets, kids not having food, not having anything! My heart broke and I said, 'Wow, there is a lot of injustice in the world!'"

She credited her parents for teaching her and her siblings to give. In closing, Ms. Patel acknowledged the



Manali Brahmbhatt with her volunteers who received certificates of appreciation

privilege that she and her children enjoyed and commended everyone for their generosity, saying that it showed that each and every one of them could make a difference.

She introduced Kamal Nair, Commissioner Emeritus of Alameda County, who started the event.

Ms. Nair, who considers Dr. Japra to be a younger brother, credited his children for inspiring her. In 2004, she saw a Christmas tree with a wish list for children at an event, one of many she used to attend as the Commissioner. The Japra children, Deepa and Jay, put together the money that they had saved to buy gifts for the underprivileged. They and their mother, Mrs. Sunita Japra, bought toys from 'Toys R Us' and wrapped them. That was the beginning of her annual toy and blanket drive journey for juvenile detainees and other less fortunate children.

She added, "He (Dr. Japra) has gone to probation and delivered the goodie bags that I give to children every year on Christmas Eve."

She acknowledged all the assembled dignitaries - honorable judges, probation and police officers for their daily work. "It is not easy. We are dealing with a lot of mental health (issues) and these are the people, night and day, who help them (troubled adolescents and youth). We are so, so blessed to have all these people taking care of our children."

Mayor Lily Mei of Fremont addressed the gathering, "Aside from the virus of Covid, the virus I fear more is the virus of hate." She recognized the Hindu temple for its outreach. "When we show others love and kindness, and the blessings you have and are willing to share with others, I think that's how we build a more hopeful future", she said.

Cont'd on page 23



Santa Clara Councilmember Kathy Watanabe speaking, with Fremont Councilmember Teresa Cox to her left



Manali Brahmbhatt (front) and other FOG/temple volunteers



(Standing left to right): Volunteers - Anuradha, Sujata Shrivastava, Manali Brahmbhatt, Pallavi, Maheshwari Vyas, Nikita, and Charu Vaidya

FOG Toy and Blanket Drive...

Cont'd from page 23

Ms. Mei acknowledged her fellow Councilmembers for their teamwork across all the Bay Area counties and made a reference to the environment and reducing waste. "I just came back from COP 28. We talk about the environment and building a better and greener future. We have so many blessings and so often, we have things that go to waste and that's why it is so important to share them with others who are in need of that at the moment."

In conclusion, Ms. Mei thanked everyone and emphasized the importance of unity to provide love, comfort, peace, and hope, in a time of divisiveness and hate.

Hon Lien, Milpitas Councilmember, said, "What a wonderful way to share the sympathy, the love, the peace, and the understanding that there are the neediest out there that one little toy will bring a smile to their faces!" She said that while the recipient would be happy receiving the gift, "the happiness really comes from the person who gives that gift."

Fremont Councilmember Raj Salwan expressed special thanks to Commissioner Nair or "Aunty Nair", as he calls her. "What I love about her is that she is like a cheer-



Sandhya Patel of ABC Channel 7 News (third from left) with FIA President Rajesh Verma (first from left), Dr. Romesh Japra (second), and Kamal Nair



Kamal Nair addresses the gathering with Manali Brahmhatt to her right and candidate Vin Kruttiventi in the background

leader, always encouraging, always sending positive messages." He expressed gratitude for her and Dr. Japra's leadership, "We stand on your shoulders, Dr. Japra's, many of our leaders' here, and we are so lucky to have great leaders like yourselves."

His colleague, Councilmember and vice Mayor of Fremont, Yang Shao, gave special thanks to the community, "Without all of you, the community members, we cannot achieve so much. So, I would like to have a heartfelt congratulations to all of you for your participation, for your continuous love, selflessness, and contribution."

Manali Brahmhatt, the Chair of FOG Toy Drive, expressed her happiness at the response, saying that this year, it was the highest number of toys and blankets collected. She acknowledged all the major donors: Dr. Veena Puri, Dr. Bhandari, FISA (Fremont Indian Senior Association), Mr. Chugh, Mr. Rakesh Kapoor, Scholar Academy, San Jose - Mrs. Anima Desai and Mr. Himanshu Desai, Early Learning Preschool - Mrs. Charuben Vaidya, Keen Learners Montessori School in Fremont - Mrs. Madhu Gupta and Mr. Rajesh Gupta, Young Champions of Fremont - Mrs. Ratna, Kaiser Permanente Group, the Stanford Group, the Zizo Group of Los Angeles, PayPal, Google, Cisco Systems, Oakland Clinic Pharmacy, Mr. Ghanshyambhai and Mrs. Hansaben Patel, Mr. Suresh and Mrs. Urvashi Patel - Residence Inn, Palo Alto, Bharat Bazar - Mrs. Veena Birla and Mr. Hirabhai Birla, Nilgiri Cash and Carry from Mission - Mr. Jayant and Mr. Kamlesh Patel, Mrs. Jayshree Patel - IWE, Silver Creek Group. She said there were many others, but she had to keep it

short due to the time crunch.

Ms. Brahmhatt gave a shout out to her dedicated vol-



Fremont Mayor Lily Mei (second from left), and Milpitas Councilmember Hon Lien with volunteers Anuradha (far left) and Madhu Gupta (far right)

unteers who had been helping her for the previous two months, "They have been working day and night, even in the cold and rainy weather. Without them, I cannot do all this work."

The event was followed by PritiBhoj at the temple.



Toy and Blanket Drive volunteers Pallavi, Charu Vaidya, and Devyani (far right) with Sandhya Patel (third from left)



(left to right): Maheshwari Vyas, Nikita, Pallavi, Anuradha, Soni Singh, Sunita Japra, Veena Birla, and Poonam Arora



Emcee Kimi Verma, Parimat Shah, Yogi Patel with Police Department.



Artesia City Council



Artesia Chamber of Commerce

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FIA Health Fair held In Chicago



India Post News Service

CHICAGO: At the medical Health Fair held in Chicago, there were more than 40 volunteers from the FIA- the Federation of Indian Associations team and Doctors from different specialties provided their services free on a Sunday morning. Senior citizens who did not know English were very welcome. The key question that was never ever asked during the six hours was 'Do you have insurance?'

Apart from doctors, people from Medicare, Medicaid, and Home Care Solutions. Dr. Raj Dhingra, renowned Chiropractic and Acupuncture consultant, brought his entire team to support the event. During the doctor speak session, Dr Parag Doshi, a cardiologist, went into details about how we should take care of a diet and lifestyle to ensure we have a healthy heart for a very long time. Dr Alamdar Badar and Ashima spoke about

the care of the teeth and how it impacts the overall well-being and why it is important to have preventive care.

The highlight of the event was the use of innovative technology in detecting foot problems. Krishna Chitluri brought his entire computerized equipment, which was based on artificial intelligence to analyze and diagnose for foot problems. He also provided solutions after identifying the issues in the feet. Anu Malhotra, the Vedic and Yoga Guru, conducted a session on stress relief and exercises for the seniors.

Dr. Usha Karthan conducted a session on the need for identifying psychological issues in the current population and provided an overview on the resources available to take guidance and help in resolving psychiatric problems.

Phase two of the program began by the FIA Chairman Sunil Shah informing everyone that this was the 13th event conducted by FIA, this year in the service of the community and the society. He also emphasized the importance of healthcare and how the idea came up when the FIA Executive Board realized that there were many underinsured or uninsured people in our community who could not see a doctor when required.

This was followed by the President of FIA, Vinita Gulabani, talking about the different events organized over the year successfully, for the community, and how we have more events coming up in December of 2023. President-Elect, Miss Pratibha Jairath spoke about the upcoming event next week, which now focused more on the children and young

adults, 'Toy donations and Coat drive'. She also spoke about the close collaboration that FIA has with various government agencies, such as State reps, Mayors, City Councils of different parts, the Chicago area, and how FIA works in supporting the communities at all levels. As a part of this Health Fair, coat drives and blanket donations were included. More than 300 items were collected within six hours, which will be donated to the needy this winter and help them keep warm.

Part of Phase Three of the program was the speech by the Chief Guest of the day, Ms. Michelle Mussman, State Representative of Illinois. Congresswoman Ms. Michelle, President Vinita Gulabani, President-elect Pratibha Jairath, and Founder-Chairman, Sunil Shah, distributed awards for people who contributed to the growth of FIA under their leadership in 2023. These volunteers contributed hundreds of hours over the year to ensure the success of these events. Awards were presented to Jitendra Bulsara, Richa Chand, Jenish Bulsara, Dr Bhupinder Beri, Kamlesh Kapoor, Anu Malhotra and Harry Sidhu. Vandana Jhingam from

A special award was given to Jayantibhai Thakkar for his contribution to his 40th health fair in the Chicagoland area. Past President Neil Khot spoke about more such events in the upcoming year, which will include Visa Services, Tax services, and General Counseling for people in the Chicagoland region. This program was also supported by the Indian Consulate.

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Grand Celebration of Annual event by Indian Seniors of Chicago

JAYANTI OZA

CHICAGO: A group of seniors from the Indian community called 'Indian Seniors of Chicago' held a meet at Manav Seva Mandir in Bensenville Chicago On December 9, 2023 to celebrate the annual event.

Leaders of Gujarati society Chhotalal Patel, Dr. Bharat Barai, Dahyabhai Prajapati, Rajubhai Chauhan, Bhailal Patel, Dr. BhagvanjiMeghpara, Ramanbhai Patel along with more than four hundred members were present at the meet.

Hirabhai Patel, Secretary of the group welcomed the guests and members in the opening of ceremony and gave detailed information about the 'Indian Seniors of Chicago' group. Emcees of the program Bhupendra Suthar and Panna Shah came on stage and requested special guest dignitaries to come on stage for Deep Pragatya which was complemented with chants sung by Rohitbhai Joshi.



ISC members with President Dr. Narsinh Patel

ence. In the intermission, the sponsors of the program were requested by Dilip Patel to come on stage and felicitated them with gifts and roses. Jayanti Oza and Jagurti Patel were also felicitated with

gifts and roses for distinguished services. After this the Executive Committee members of Indian Seniors of Chicago and Chief Guest Chhotalal Patel were called on stage for a photo. Chhotalal addressed the guests. Prof. Navinbhai Patel, an

active member of the Executive Committee, thanked everyone. Chittaranjan Desai and Hasumati Patel felicitated the members of the musical group with gifts and roses and thanked them.

During the second part of the program, singers and musicians put on a colorful show. The members danced to the rhythm of the music wearing crowns of

LED lights on their heads. At the end there was a lot of cheer with patriotic songs and flag of India.

The Group President Narsinhbhai Patel thanked all the members for mak-

ing the annual program a success. Music entertainments provided by 'Saregam and Nupur Sound group presented a combination of new and old Bollywood melodies.



Singers and committee members


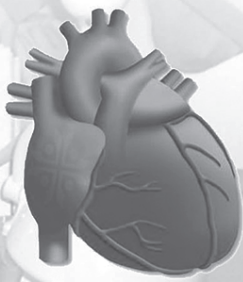
Executive members of the group and president of the group Narsinhbhai Patel honored the guests with flowers. Dr. Bharat Barai presented his ideas for public awareness in his speech.

Bhupendra Suthar and Panna Shah requested Saregam Musical Group to start today's musical feast. A feast of solo and duet songs delighted the entire audi-





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Simple Diet and Lifestyle Tips for Your Healthy Life

Foods to reduce heart blockages

DR. INDRAJEET TYAGI AND DR. IRANNAHIRAPUR

Heat disease kills one person every 36 seconds in the United States and it is the number 1 disease in the world. According to CDC, one in every four deaths is due to cardiac disorders. About 805,000 Americans have a heart attack each year and 1 in 5 attacks happen without the victim being aware of it. Heart conditions can be caused by the formation of plaque inside the coronary arteries in the heart. This plaque is made of fat, calcium, cholesterol, and other sub-

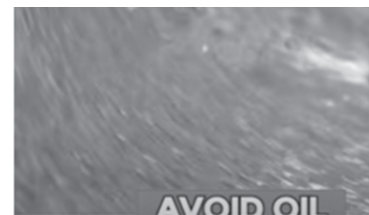
stances, and can block the flow of blood inside the arteries, and may even lead to blood clots on several occasions. Plaque buildup can be risky and lead to strokes. This tells us that our overburdened hearts require more care, nourishment, antioxidants, good exercise and love, and less stress, anxiety, high blood pressure, sugar levels, and cholesterol.

medications to avoid complications. These routines will keep the factors responsible for heart diseases under control. These routines will reverse heart blockages but very slowly. However, some best foods and herbs definitely help the reversal process of heart blockage faster.

Living a heart-friendly lifestyle can prevent the onset of cardiovascular diseases among people, especially those who are genetically predisposed to heart diseases. A lifestyle like that will also keep

beneficial effect on heart function and cardiovascular health. Scientific studies have proven that Arjun Ki Chaal powder reduces the adverse impact on heart health that is caused by hypertension, diabetes, hyperlipidemia, coronary artery disease (CAD), and other cardiovascular disorders. It enhances cardiac function and reduces arterial blood pressure by as much as 25 percent. It is beneficial in treating high cholesterol levels. Its antioxidant and anti-inflammatory activities explain its

with health benefits - from curing a cold to lowering blood pressure and cholesterol levels. Garlic contains vitamins C and B6, manganese and selenium, but it has a chemical called allicin, a type of antioxidant, which is thought to be responsible for its positive effects. Some studies have shown that garlic and garlic supplements may have positive effects on heart health by preventing cell damage, regulating cholesterol and lowering blood pressure. Other research shows that garlic supple-



stances, and can block the flow of blood inside the arteries, and may even lead to blood clots on several occasions. Plaque buildup can be risky and lead to strokes. This tells us that our overburdened hearts require more care, nourishment, antioxidants, good exercise and love, and less stress, anxiety, high blood pressure, sugar levels, and cholesterol.

If heart blockages keep on increasing then one day that leads to heart attack,

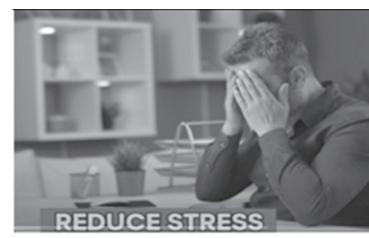
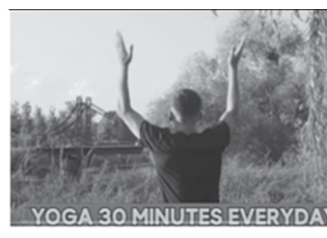
risks to heart health at bay including high blood pressure, blood sugar, and obesity. Here are the best five foods that will nourish your heart and keep you healthy, active, and full of Prana or life force.

1) Pomegranates are high in dietary fiber and antioxidants. Pomegranate juice reduced systolic and diastolic blood pressure. Pomegranate offers abundant benefits for the cardiovascular system by preventing damage to arterial

ability to lower total blood cholesterol, bad cholesterol (LDL), and triglycerides. It also aids in the increase of good cholesterol. Due to its Kashaya (astringent) and Kapha reducing properties, it prevents the accumulation of excessive cholesterol. It assists in healthy weight loss for obese people. It has antioxidant properties, which increase the immunity power of the body, and prevents from falling ill frequently. Soak a piece of Arjun chaal in

ments may also reduce plaque buildup in the arteries. It is found that a high dose of garlic, say around four cloves a day had the same effect on lowering the blood pressure as medicines. Consumption of garlic in your regular diet can really have a good impact on your heart's health.

5) Many studies suggest that curcumin may help protect against many steps in the heart disease process. Specifically, it helps improve the function of



bypass surgery, angioplasty (stent) and many other medications. Through natural bypass and detox therapy, you can prevent and reverse heart blockages. One should remember to avoid five things - avoid non-veg food items, whole milk, nuts, too much oil use, void too much salt and sugars in your diet, and ice-creams but at the same time the simple lifestyle improvements help you avoid or even slow down the progression of heart diseases. Doing these simple things can go a long way in supporting a healthy heart - eating fresh fruits and vegetable, losing weight/maintaining a healthy weight by doing 35 minutes' walk every day and 30 minutes Yoga, managing blood pressure, reducing blood sugar, controlling cholesterol, quitting smoking, reducing your stress and taking your recommended

walls, promoting healthy blood pressure levels, improving blood flow to the heart, and preventing or reversing atherosclerosis. Pomegranate may benefit people with diabetes and those at risk for the disease. Many studies have shown that prolonged pomegranate juice intake improves cardiovascular risk factors, slowing the progression of plaque build up on the arteries and enhancing immunity. The fruit's red color comes from plant pigments called polyphenols found in many plant-based foods that work as antioxidants in the body and help fight inflammation and aging.

2) Arjun Chaal is most widely known as heart tonic because of its cardio protective properties. Arjun Ki Chaal powder has been used in Ayurvedic medicine for centuries for its

a glass of water in the night and drink the water in the morning with empty stomach after removing that Arjun chaal.

3) Cinnamon is rich in antioxidants, fiber, calcium, and other beneficial compounds. Some research suggests that it may help you manage blood sugars, protect against heart disease, and reduce inflammation. Cinnamon could lower your triglycerides and your total cholesterol levels, which could help prevent heart disease. If you take supplements with at least 1.5 grams of cinnamon a day, or cinnamon tea it may lower your total cholesterol, LDL (or bad) cholesterol, triglycerides, and blood sugar if you have metabolic disease. It may also lower blood pressure if you consistently take it for 7 weeks.

4) Garlic has long been associated

the endothelium or the lining of your blood vessels. Endothelial dysfunction is a major driver of heart disease. This is when your endothelium is unable to regulate blood pressure, blood clotting, and various other factors. Several other studies also suggest that curcumin can lead to improvements in heart health. In addition, curcumin can help reduce inflammation and oxidation (as discussed above), which can play a role in heart disease. Curcumin has anti-inflammatory and antioxidant effects and thereby, it may reduce cardiovascular complications.

(Authors: Dr. Indrajeet Tyagi, M. R. Medical College, Kalaburagi, Karnataka and Dr Iranna S. Hirapur, MD, DM (Cardiology), Interventional Cardiologist at Heart Foundation, Kalaburagi, Karnataka.)

PM's 'GDP Plus Welfare Model' driving India on accelerated growth path

NEW DELHI: Whether it is about building a road for connectivity or restoring an individual's dignity through toilets, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government has pursued a diverse blend of welfare and GDP spending.

Each government initiative focuses on building sustainable assets that not only result in extensive connectivity, robust infrastructure, rural and urban renewal but also generate jobs and aid human capital development. These programs constitute the foundation for the 21st-century India, molding the vision of a New India, rapidly progressing towards the realization of the goal of becoming a 'Viksit Bharat' (Developed India).

All of this transcends the concept of transactional welfarism. It is about creating a virtuous cycle of economic demand via empowerment of individuals cutting across lines of caste, class, community, religion and gender, according to a blog on Modi's website which explains his economic policy.

It is about establishing conditions for growth that are both sustainable and egalitarian, embodying the principle of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas aur Sabka Prayas' as stated by the Prime Minister.

PM Modi's inclusive developmental paradigm stands vindicated today. Along with the growth in our GDP, the government has been able to lift 13.5 crore people out of poverty -- an unprecedented achievement. Globally, the model has ensured that India maintains its developmental streak even as countries like China show vulnerability, the blog said.

PM Modi's GDP plus Welfare Model is a formidable recipe for a formidable India -- an India which is Atmanirbhar and Viksit.

Exceeding all expectations and predictions, India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has demonstrated a remarkable annual growth of 7.6% in the second quarter of FY2024. Building on a strong first-quarter growth of 7.8%, the second quarter has outperformed projections with a growth rate of 7.6%.

A significant contributor to this growth has been the government's capital expenditure, reaching Rs. 4.91 trillion (or \$58.98 billion) in the first half of the fiscal year, surpassing the previous year's figure of Rs 3.43 trillion. India has emerged as an outstanding performer among major economies, showcasing resilience in the

face of a globally uncertain environment characterized by risks related to geopolitical conflicts, fluctuating energy prices, and concerns about a potential recession.

This impressive milestone further substantiates the country's unique development paradigm. A paradigm, that has been a hallmark of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government in the last 9

All of this transcends the concept of transactional welfarism. It is about creating a virtuous cycle of economic demand via empowerment of individuals cutting across lines of caste, class, community, religion and gender, according to a blog on Modi's website which explains his economic policy

years, set to leave an inspiring trail for other developing nations to follow, it said.

The GDP, in itself, has been an incomplete measure of development as it overlooks inequality amid growth.

However, once PM Modi took office in 2014, growth intertwined with welfare to revolutionize the Indian economic experience. The fruits of the shift are visible today as India continues to be the fastest growing major economy even as the global headwinds don't show much promise, it said.

PM Modi's GDP Plus Welfare model has worked wonders for a country that had been long deprived of even the basic amenities of life. This success can be at-

However, once PM Modi took office in 2014, growth intertwined with welfare to revolutionize the Indian economic experience. The fruits of the shift are visible today as India continues to be the fastest growing major economy even as the global headwinds don't show much promise, it said

tributed to a departure from the previous governments' approach to welfare, which primarily involved handouts, loan write-offs, or the distribution of consumer goods.

Taking a leaf out of his development initiatives in Gujarat, PM Modi focused on building fundamental public infrastructure first, empowering individuals to act as agents of change, the blog said.

"We have seen this approach in gov-

ernment schemes like SAUBHAGYA, Jal Jeevan Mission, PM Awas Yojana, and PM Gram Sadak Yojana, among others. Today we have achieved 100% electrification of villages while over 13.7 crore tap water connections make water available to 70% of our families from only 17% about a decade ago.

"In addition, PM Modi's government has sanctioned over 4 crore houses to-

wards its guarantee of Housing for All. The Swachh Bharat Mission has successfully constructed over 11.7 crore toilets, contributing to improved sanitation nationwide. In 2014, barely half of the villages had all-weather road connectivity, but today, the number has surged to over 99%," the blog said.

Going beyond the fundamental needs, the government since 2014 has taken transformative measures to augment economic activity in every possible way. In manufacturing, for example, initiatives like Make in India, Production-Linked Incentive schemes, along with labor reforms have greatly energized overall industrial sentiment.

Today, as the data suggests, manufacturing has achieved a real GVA growth of 13.9% in Q2 of FY2024 against 4.7% in Q1. PMI Manufacturing continues to expand, reaching 55.5 in October 2023.

The services sector has also performed well registering a jump of 5.8%, driven by robust financial, public administration and professional services. The construction sector, in particular, is performing exceptionally well, jumping from

7.9% in Q1 to 13.3% in Q2 as the government increased its capex by over 40%.

In addition, schemes like PM Fasal Bima Yojana, PM KISAN, Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana, PM Krishi Sinchayee Yojana, and e-NAM are actively supporting, modernizing and changing the face of Indian agriculture, the blog said. PM Modi has been heavily committed to charting the trajectory for Bharat to become a developed country by 2047.

His further push towards building long-term infrastructure finds momentum via AMRUT, Smart Cities, Vande Bharat trains, industrial and freight corridors along with Sagarmala and Bharatmala.

These bona fide interventions are powered by PM Gati Shakti and National Infrastructure Pipeline that aim to simplify and, integrate planning and funding, of infrastructural activity in the country respectively, the blog said.

In a report on India's transformation in less than a decade, foreign brokerage Morgan Stanley noted, "This India is different from what it was in 2013. In a short span of 10 years, India has gained positions in the world order with significant positive consequences for the macro and market outlook".

Morgan Stanley listed the 10 big changes including supply-side policy reforms, formalization of the economy, Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, digitalizing social transfers, Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, flexible inflation targeting, focus on FDI, India's 401(k) moment, government support for corporate profits and MNC sentiment at a multiyear high.

As India's per capita income increases from US\$2,200 currently to about US\$5,200 by F2032, this will have major implications for change in the consumption basket, with an impetus to discretionary consumption, Morgan Stanley said.

The share of profits in GDP has doubled from all-time lows hit in 2020 and are set to rise further - maybe even double from here - leading to strong absolute and relative earnings.

This explains India's apparently rich headline equity valuations. Triggered by supply-side reforms by the government, we expect a major rise in investments, a moderation in the CAD and an increase in credit to GDP to support the coming profit growth, it added. *IANS*

Ramaswamy vows to 'withdraw' from Colorado ballot over Trump removal, urges GOP unity

COLORADO: Republican Presidential candidate Vivek Ramaswamy has vowed to withdraw from the GOP primary ballot in Colorado. This decision comes in response to a recent ruling by the state's Supreme Court, which removed former President Donald Trump from the ballot due to his involvement in the January 6, 2021 Capitol attack.

In a narrow 4-3 decision, Colorado's highest court invoked the 14th Amendment's 'insurrection clause' to kick off Trump.



Vivek Ramaswamy

The court concluded that Trump's actions, including spreading false claims of election fraud and directing supporters to the Capitol, amounted to engaging in insurrection. Colorado has thus become the first state to prevent Trump from seeking the presidency based on his role in the Capitol attack, The Hill reported.

The insurrection clause bars the holding of "any office...under the United States" if a person engaged in insurrection after swearing to "support" the Constitution as an "officer of the United States." The Colorado Supreme Court determined that this clause applies to the office of the president, the report added.

"I pledge to withdraw from the Colorado GOP primary unless Trump is also allowed to be on the state's ballot, and I demand that Ron DeSantis, Chris Christie, and Nikki Haley to do the same immediately - or else they are tacitly endorsing this illegal maneuver,

which will have disastrous consequences for our country," Ramaswamy posted on X, calling out his fellow candidates in the GOP presidential primary.

"This is what an actual attack on democracy looks like: in an un-American, unconstitutional, and unprecedented decision, a cabal of Democrat judges are barring Trump from the ballot in Colorado. Having tried every trick in the book to eliminate President Trump from running in this election, the bipartisan Establishment is now deploying a new tactic to bar him from ever holding office again: the 14th Amendment," his post also read.

Another key GOP presidential candidate, Chris Christie, also weighed in on the Colorado Supreme Court's decision, arguing that it is voters and not the courts that should decide if Trump should be "prevented" from being re-elected to the White House, according to The Hill.

"What I will say is I do not believe Donald Trump should be prevented from being President of the United States, by any court," Christie said, adding, "I think he should be prevented from being the President of the United States by the voters of this country."

In a statement on 19 December, Christie said he doesn't believe "it's good" for the US if Trump is kept off the ballot by a court.

"I think it's bad for the country if that happens," Christie said, adding, "Now, the other reason I believe that is because, you know, he will have had to incite insurrection, be a part of an insurrection for him to be excluded. There's been no trial of him on that", The Hill reported.

The Colorado Supreme Court has removed former US President Donald Trump from the state's 2024 ballot, ruling that he isn't an eligible presidential candidate because of the 14th Amendment's "insurrectionist ban," CNN reported.

As per CNN, the ruling will be placed on hold until January 4, pending Trump's appeal to the US Supreme Court, which could settle the matter for the nation.

The state Supreme Court decision only applies to Colorado but the historic ruling will roil the 2024 presidential campaign. Colorado election officials have said the matter needs to be settled by January 5, which is the statutory deadline to set the list of candidates for the GOP primary scheduled for March 5.

The majority wrote in its unsigned opinion, "President Trump did not merely incite the insurrection. Even when the siege on the Capitol was fully underway, he continued to support it by repeatedly demanding that Vice President (Mike) Pence refuse to perform his constitutional duty and by calling Senators to persuade them to

"I pledge to withdraw from the Colorado GOP primary unless Trump is also allowed to be on the state's ballot, and I demand that Ron DeSantis, Chris Christie, and Nikki Haley to do the same immediately - or else they are tacitly endorsing this illegal maneuver, which will have disastrous consequences for our country,"

stop the counting of electoral votes. These actions constituted overt, voluntary, and direct participation in the insurrection."

"We conclude that the foregoing evidence, the great bulk of which was undisputed at trial, established that President Trump engaged in insurrection. President Trump's direct and express efforts over several months, exhorting his supporters to march to the Capitol to prevent what he falsely characterized as an alleged fraud on the people of this country, were indisputably overt and voluntary," the opinion added, as per CNN. ANI

Pilot for domestic renewal of H-1B visa clears White House review

NEW YORK: In a move likely to benefit Indian professionals, a pilot program allowing H-1B holders to renew visas without leaving the US, has cleared a review by the White House Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs.

To begin with, 20,000 H-1B specialty occupation workers will be able to renew their visas in the US beginning from January next year.

However, the full details of eligibility and operation of the pilot will emerge when a notice is published in the Federal Register, Bloomberg Law reported.

The pilot cleared the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs review on December 15, the final regulatory hurdle before publication.

This development comes months after the White House announced a pilot programme for domestic renewal of certain categories of H-1B visas during the state visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in June this year.

It would allow H-1B holders to renew their visas by mailing them to the State Department rather than travel outside the US and face uncertain wait times to secure an appointment at an American consular office before returning.

In countries like India, the largest source of H-1B workers, high visa wait times have added uncertainty to travel plans for those workers and their employers.

An estimated 75 percent of the H-1B visa granted in a year are known to go to workers from India, hired by some of the largest US tech giant such as Amazon, Microsoft, Google and Facebook.

Due to heavy visa backlogs, some H-1B workers have pursued work-arounds such as traveling to nearby countries with fewer backlogs to secure appointments. IANS

Mexican president to challenge US new anti-immigrant law

MEXICO CITY: Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador has said that his government plans to challenge a law recently approved by the US state of Texas that allows authorities to arrest migrants suspected of illegally crossing the border.

"We are always going to be against these measures," Lopez Obrador said on 19 December at a press conference, noting that the Foreign Affairs Ministry was in the process of legally challenging the law.

According to the President, Texas Governor Greg Abbott aims to rouse support with his anti-immigrant stance as he pursues the vice-presidential nomination of the Republican Party, Xinhua news agency reported.

Lopez Obrador described the Governor as "inhuman" and "cruel" for enacting the new law, known as Senate Bill 4, which criminalizes illegal entry or re-entry into the state by classifying it as a state crime, with penalties ranging from 180 days to 20 years in prison.

The Mexican government estimates that more than 40 million Mexicans reside in the US. IANS

Russia has free hand in Ukraine conflict now: Putin

MOSCOW: Russia now has the initiative in the Ukraine conflict and is at liberty to conduct military action as it sees fit, President Vladimir Putin said this week.

Participating in a Defense Ministry meeting on 19 December, the President analyzed the frontline situation as part of a report on Russian military achievements in 2023, RT reported.

In his speech, Putin stressed that the country had no intention to change the objectives that it set for itself when

it decided to deploy troops against Ukraine in early 2022.

Describing the current advantage of Russian troops, Putin said: "In essence, we are doing what we consider necessary, what we want. Wherever... commanders decide active defense is best, it takes place. And where it is needed, we improve our positions."

Meanwhile, Ukraine has suffered significant casualties and is running out of reserves, he added. He claimed that Kiev's military strategy was motivated by a wish "to show to their true masters at least some results of their much-hyped so-called counteroffensive", RT reported.

Describing the current advantage of Russian troops, Putin said: "In essence, we are doing what we consider necessary, what we want. Wherever... commanders decide active defense is best, it takes place. And where it is needed, we improve our positions."

Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu previously estimated that Ukrainian casualties between early June and late November had surpassed 125,000. During the event, the ministry estimated Kiev's losses since the start of the hostilities to be over 383,000, the report said.

Putin declared that Western attempts to inflict a "strategic defeat" on Russia in the Ukraine conflict were thwarted by the bravery and resolve of Russian soldiers. The country's military has become more powerful and its defense industry more capable, he said. *IANS*



Vladimir Putin

US economy ends on high as Democrats go into festive season

TNASHOK

WASHINGTON: The US economy ends on a high note with inflation down, job market up, consumer buying spirited, expectations of good news on housing, and Feds dropping interest rates in the new year, as the democrats end 2023 on a cheerful note.

They enter the election year with high hopes of retaining power for another term for President Joe Biden in the White House.

The merrymaking for the economy started early on Wall Street. Will it continue this week?

"As 2023 comes to an end, it is increasingly clear that not only did the economy avoid a widely anticipated recession, but it was also a great year for the economy," Moody's Analytics Chief Economist Mark Zandi posted on social media.

After the Federal Reserve indicated it was effectively finished raising interest rates last week, the markets got off to an early start to holiday merrymaking.

The economy was troubled by a 9.1 percent high inflation last year marking it the largest in 41 years to hit Americans and the feds aggressively went on a interest rate hike with successive tranches over a 52 week period to rein in inflation to its desired level of 2 percent but instead managed to stabilize it at 2.7 percent.

The Federal Reserve has now literally ruled out any more cuts keeping it stable and raising hopes of interest rate cut in the New Year basing it on a projected optimism on a cache of reports to come from the US government, media reports said.

Expectations of inflation fell sharply from 4.5 percent a month ago to 2.7 percent now. It is the lowest level since March 2021. Gasoline prices have fallen in recent weeks, nearing or below the \$3 a gallon (3.03 liters to a gallon) mark in many states, while incomes are holding up as wages grow at rates above inflation.

That is likely to provide consumers with enough firepower to make it a decent holiday shopping season, media reports said.

"As 2023 comes to an end, it is increasingly clear that not only did the economy avoid a widely anticipated recession, but it was also a great year for the economy. Real GDP is on track to grow a heady 2.5 percent, unemployment has remained below 4 percent, and inflation has quickly receded," Moody's Analytics Chief Economist Mark Zandi posted on social media. *IANS*

"As 2023 comes to an end, it is increasingly clear that not only did the economy avoid a widely anticipated recession, but it was also a great year for the economy"

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Sun Pharma clinches \$30 mn deal for 16.7% stake in US firm

MUMBAI: India's Sun Pharmaceuticals Ltd said it has entered into agreement to acquire a 16.7 percent stake in US company Lyndra Therapeutics Inc for \$30 million.

Lyndra Therapeutics, based in Massachusetts, is engaged in the business of developing novel delivery technology for long-acting oral (LAO) therapies.



SUN PHARMA

Sun Pharma stated in a regulatory filing that it is making the strategic investment to support development of innovative pharmaceutical delivery technologies and get access to the technology for certain molecules and territories.

The transaction is expected to be completed by end of December 2023, subject to certain conditions, it added.

Lyndra was founded in 2015 with technology that emerged from the Langer Lab at MIT. The company clocked a turnover of \$10.7 million in 2022. IANS

TechBiz POST

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Apple to stop selling Watch Series 9, Ultra 2 in US over patent dispute

SAN FRANCISCO: Apple will stop selling its Watch Series 9 and Ultra 2 smartwatches in the US this week over a patent dispute.

Both the newly-launched Apple Watches will no longer be available to purchase online from December 21, reports 9to5Mac.

In-store inventory will no longer be available at retail stores after December 24. IANS



India's growth rate to stay strong, current account deficit to dip: IMF report

NEW DELHI: India's economic growth rate is expected to remain strong, supported by macroeconomic and financial stability, according to an International Monetary Fund (IMF) assessment report released 19 December.

"Going forward, the country's foundational digital public infrastructure and a strong government infrastructure program will continue to sustain growth. India has potential for even higher growth, with greater contributions from labor and human capital, if comprehensive reforms are implemented," the report stated.

The country's current account deficit is expected to improve to 1.8 percent of GDP in FY2023/24 as a result of resilient services exports and, to a lesser extent, lower oil import costs, the report adds.

It projects a real GDP growth rate of 6.3 percent in FY2023/24 and FY2024/25 and states, "headline inflation is expected to

gradually decline to the target although it remains volatile due to food price shocks".

India's economy showed robust growth over the past year. Headline inflation has, on aver-



age, moderated although it remains volatile. Employment has surpassed the pre pandemic level and, while the informal sector continues to dominate, formalization has progressed.

The financial sector has been

resilient -- strongest in several years -- and largely unaffected by global financial stress in early 2023, the report points out.

While the budget deficit has eased, public debt remains el-

Risks to the outlook are balanced. A sharp global growth slowdown in the near term would affect India through trade and financial channels. Further global supply disruptions could cause recurrent commodity price volatility, increasing fiscal pressures for India.

Domestically, weather shocks could reignite inflationary pressures and prompt further food export restrictions, according to the IMF report.

On the upside, stronger than expected consumer demand and, private investment would raise growth. Further liberalization of foreign investment could increase India's role in global value chains, boosting exports, it adds.

The IMF Executive Directors broadly agreed with the thrust of the staff appraisal. They commended the Indian authorities for their prudent macroeconomic policies and reforms that resulted in the economy's strong economic performance, resilience, and financial stability, while also facing continued global headwinds.

Noting that India is one of the fastest growing economies globally, Directors called for continued appropriate policies to sustain economic stability and for further progress in key structural reforms to unleash India's significant potential.

The directors welcomed the authorities' near-term fiscal policy, which focuses on accelerating capital spending while tightening the fiscal stance.

The IMF Directors also commended the "RBI's proactive monetary policy actions and strong commitment to price stability". IANS

India tops global remittances list for 2023 with \$125 bn inflow

NEW DELHI: The inward remittances to India in 2023 increased by 12.3 percent to \$125 billion from 111.22 billion in 2022, according to the latest data released by the World Bank.

India's inward remittances now account for 3.4 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP).

The World Bank's "Migration and Development Brief", released recently, states that India continues to be the highest recipient of remittances globally, followed by Mexico (\$67 billion) and China (\$50 billion). India

currently accounts for 66 percent of all remittances to South Asia, higher than 63 percent in 2022.

According to the data, the growth rate of remittances was

According to the data, the growth rate of remittances was highest in Latin America and the Caribbean (8 percent), followed by South Asia (7.2 percent) and East Asia and the Pacific (3 percent)

highest in Latin America and the Caribbean (8 percent), followed by South Asia (7.2 percent) and East Asia and the Pacific (3 percent).

The main factor behind rising

remittances to India was declining inflation and strong labor markets in high-income source countries, which boosted remittances from skilled Indians in the

US, UK and Singapore.

These three countries account for as much as 36 percent of total remittance flows to India.

Higher inflows from the Gulf

Cooperation Council (GCC) also contributed to the increase, especially the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which accounts for 18 percent of India's total remittances, the second largest after the US.

"Remittance flows to India benefited particularly from its February 2023 agreement with the UAE for establishing a framework to promote the use of local currencies for cross-border transactions and cooperation for interlinking payment and messaging systems," the report said. IANS

Blue Planet receives \$35 mn IFU funding to boost key operations in India

NEW DELHI: Blue Planet Environmental Solutions, a sustainable waste management company with operations in India, South-East Asia and the UK, said it has received \$35 million investment from The Investment Fund for Developing Countries (IFU), a leader in impact investments.

The funds from IFU will boost Blue Planet's capabilities in two key areas in India - landfill reclamation and e-waste recycling. Blue Planet has successfully reclaimed over 500 acres from legacy landfills and processed more than 12 million tons of legacy waste, displacing the need

The funds from IFU will boost Blue Planet's capabilities in two key areas in India - landfill reclamation and e-waste recycling. Blue Planet has successfully reclaimed over 500 acres from legacy landfills and processed more than 12 million tons of legacy waste, displacing the need for new materials and thus reducing carbon footprint

for new materials and thus reducing carbon footprint.

The strategic partnership between Blue Planet and IFU represents a major milestone in the journey towards global sustainability, reinforcing their shared commitment to pioneering innovative solutions for waste management, the company said in a statement.

"Our commitment extends beyond financial investment; it's about creating a just, inclusive, and sustainable future and transforming the landscape of waste management," said Jonas Lau Kristensen, Investment Director at IFU.

IFU's investments are instrumental in driving environmental sustainability and advancing economic growth in the countries they invest in, aligning closely with the ob-

jectives of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Currently, India generates around 62 million tons (MT) of waste annually, of which only 12 MT are being treated before disposal.

"With waste volumes estimated to more than double towards 2030, investments into innovative technologies and operations are needed. The waste sector has evolved over the last years, supported by better regulation, and now provides opportunities to deliver on IFU's impact investor mandate towards both investors and local communities," said Thomas Hougaard, Senior Vice President at IFU.

IFU will invest on behalf of the SDG Fund, which is partly funded by public funding, providing catalytic risk mitigations to mobilize private capital. This gives access to Danish Pension

Funds to invest in sustainable investments in developing countries.

Blue Planet also plans to operate one of the largest e-waste recycling centers in India.

"IFU's investment will drive substantial impact in our pursuit of a sustainable and comprehensive waste management platform. This will fortify our efforts in the two key areas of landfill bio-mining and e-waste recycling in India, said Blue Planet's Founder and Chairman, Madhujeeet Chimni.

Prashant Singh, Blue Planet's Co-Founder and CEO, added that IFU's experience and depth of knowledge will be very valuable as "we address new challenges of providing sustainable waste management solutions." IANS

Panasonic selects 12 Indian startups for its Corporate Accelerator program

NEW DELHI: Panasonic Life Solutions India and Panasonic Corporation in collaboration with a leading seed stage venture capital (VC) '100X.VC' announced it has selected 12 startups from over 140 entries received for the 'Panasonic Ignition' Corporate Innovation accelerator program.

These startups will participate in the program over the next three months. They will receive comprehensive support from both Panasonic and the 100X.VC teams, in the form of mentorship sessions, guidance, and financial resources to complete their project.

"This initiative underscores our commitment to fostering groundbreaking technologies and solutions that address the evolving needs of commercial spaces while contributing to a sustainable future," Manish Misra, the Chief Innovation Officer, at Panasonic Life Solutions India, said in a statement.



As part of this engagement, Panasonic will also roll out challenges for the startups and based on regular reviews the winner will be announced in March 2024.

The accelerator program has been designed by Panasonic India Innovation Centre (IIC), as part of Panasonic Life Solutions India, to create a platform in collaboration with 100X.VC, where selected founders of startups will receive investment, access to various master classes, expert mentorship, and support around product strategy, the company said.

"Due to joint efforts by both the teams, in a very short span of time, we were able to attract many applications from high-quality startups. We look forward to working with the shortlisted startups and contribute to their journey over the next 12-14 weeks" said Yagnesh Sanghrajka, Founder and CFO at 100X.VC. IANS

EV truck firm Nikola founder sentenced to 4 yrs for securities fraud

NEW YORK: Trevor Milton, former founder and CEO of electric truck startup Nikola, has been sentenced to four years in prison over securities fraud.

In the ruling, Judge Edgardo Ramos in the US District Court in Manhattan said he would impose a sentence of 48 months on each count, served concurrently, and a fine of \$1 million.

Milton is expected to appeal the sentence, which Ramos acknowledged, reports TechCrunch.

"I stepped down because my wife was suffering live threatening sickness," Milton said in his statement.

"She suffered medical malpractice, someone else's plasma. So I stepped down for that - not because I was a fraud. The truth matters. I chose my wife over money or power," he was quoted as saying.

Milton, 41, was convicted by a jury in October 2022 of one count of securities fraud and, two counts of wire fraud.

He was found guilty of lying to investors about the development of Nikola's electric trucks in order to inflate the company's stock price, according to reports.

Prosecutors in the have accused Milton of deceiving investors since 2019 by making improper statements, including that Nikola had built a truck from the "ground up". IANS

Bose invests in Indian wearable brand Noise

NEW DELHI: Consumer electronics brand Noise announced it has received strategic investment from Bose, a global pioneer in consumer electronics and audio.

This marks Noise's first-ever funding - and as a part of the Series A round - which is a significant milestone for India's largest profitable D2C business.

Amit Khatri, Co-Founder, Noise, said that the strategic alliance with Bose will be a pivotal juncture in their journey towards revolutionizing the future of smart wearables' realm.

"We are excited to partner with a company like Bose whose technical expertise and global experience will help us augment our capabilities and elevate our offerings," he added.

In just less than five years of its inception, Noise has opened doors to myriad opportunities that smart wearables bring, helping unlock the potential of human excellence.

"As we looked at the opportunity to reach more people with the benefits of our technology in India, investing in Noise became an obvious choice," said Nicholas Smith, senior vice president, strategy and business development at Bose. IANS



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December 22, 2023

Hong Kong's largest-ever NEW YEAR countdown Firework Musical to WELCOME 2024

NEW DELHI: As the world eagerly anticipates the arrival of 2024, all eyes will turn to Hong Kong for the city's largest New Year's Eve firework display to date on December 31, 2023 (Sunday). Set against the iconic Hong Kong skyline, spectators will be treated to a 12-minute firework musical, surpassing any previous New Year's Eve displays in the city in both coverage and duration.

As the clock inches closer to midnight, the façade of the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (HKCEC) will be adorned with a large-scale countdown clock. At the stroke of midnight, the numerals 2024 will light up the harbor front building, setting off a synchronized extravaganza featuring a breathtaking display of fireworks, a harmonious blend of artistic fusion music

and a vibrant light show. This spectacle will fill audiences around the world with hope and joy as Hong Kong sets the stage for a remarkable beginning to 2024.

The fireworks will take audiences on a captivating journey through the four seasons, symbolizing the cyclical nature of life and the promise of new beginnings. From the serene beauty of winter to the vibrant colors of summer, the pyrotechnics will embody the essence of each season. The accompanying music thoughtfully curated to enhance the immersive experience, will evoke the mood of each season and further enhance the spectacle.

The grand countdown will ignite a mesmerizing audiovisual experience, blending energetic electronic beats, enchanting classical melodies, and the rich timbres of traditional Chinese instruments. This artistic fusion of music represents Hong Kong's unique blend of old and new, bridging Eastern and Western cultures in a captivating display.

To enhance the atmosphere to its peak at midnight, a pre-show wish-making session will occur every 15 minutes from 11:00 PM. Pyrotechnics will shoot from the rooftops of three prominent harbor front high-rises on Hong Kong Island, illuminating the sky in four different colors symbolizing love, health, happiness, and wealth for the year 2024.

The New Year countdown spectacle will be shared with viewers worldwide, extending the celebration's global reach through satellite broadcast. *IANSLife*

DAZZLING OUTFIT IDEAS FOR YOUR CHRISTMAS PARTY

NEW DELHI: As the holiday season approaches, it's time to start planning your show-stopping looks for the upcoming Christmas party. Whether you're celebrating with family, friends, or colleagues, dressing up in festive attire adds an extra layer of joy to the festivities. To help you shine bright this Christmas, we've curated five outfit ideas that strike the perfect balance between comfort and style.

Glamorous Red

Embrace the festive spirit with a glamorous red cord set. Keep accessories minimal to let the dress take center stage, opting for classic stilettos and a sleek clutch. This dazzling outfit is sure to make you the star of the Christmas party.

Classic Elegance

For a timeless and sophisticated look, opt for a classic red saree of Navyasa by Liva. This luxurious fabric exudes elegance and warmth, making it a perfect choice for the holiday season. To add a modern twist, consider a blouse with subtle

embellishments like sequins or lace detailing. Pair it with black or gold accessories, such as a statement clutch and heels, to complete the ensemble.

Casual Chic Look

For a more laid-back Christmas gathering, opt for a casual yet chic ensemble. Pair festive-themed sweaters with denim skirt of Lee Cooper. You can choose a sweater with a cute holiday pattern or red color tank top. Complete the look with ankle boots or flats, and add a touch of glam with subtle jewelry.

Desi Glam Look

If you aim to enhance your office attire with a touch of glamour without going overboard, consider opting for a red ethnic kurta set crafted from comfortable fabric. Pair it gracefully with sophisticated accessories that strike a balance between beauty and elegance. *IANSLife*



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FREE AND AFFORDABLE THINGS TO DO IN NYC THIS holiday season

NEW DELHI: New York City Tourism + Conventions, the City's official destination marketing organization and convention and visitors bureau, is spotlighting a selection of free and affordable things to do in the five boroughs this holiday season.

"New York City feels extra special during the holiday season, and there are so many ways to celebrate across the five boroughs," said Fred Dixon, President and CEO of New York City Tourism + Conventions. "We expect to welcome roughly 7 million visitors between Thanksgiving and New Year's, and the City offers something for the whole family to enjoy—no matter your interests or budget."

Suggested activities include:

Free Annual Celebrations:

The iconic Rockefeller Center Christmas Tree is on view through January 13. The 80-foot Norway spruce is covered in 50,000 multicolored LED lights. The lighting of the world's largest menorahs takes place at sundown on each night of Hanukkah at Grand Army Plaza in Brooklyn and Grand Army Plaza in Midtown. The cel-

ebrations also feature live music, latkes and children's gifts. Enjoy free New Year's Eve festivities in city parks, including spectacular fireworks in Brooklyn's Prospect Park. Join thousands of revelers from around the world to ring in 2024 at the New Year's Eve Ball Drop in Times



Square. Arrive early to save your spot at this once-in-a-lifetime event.

Festive Lights:

Each year, residents of Brooklyn's Dyker Heights neighborhood light up their homes with over-the-top Christmas decor. Bring a thermos of hot chocolate and take in the decorations with festive music in the background. The Dumbo Improvement District is presenting a series of holiday events and activities, including animations projected on the Manhattan

Bridge and Brooklyn-Queens Expressway (BQE). The projections are on view through December 31, from 4-10pm daily. Shine Bright illuminates Hudson Yards with 2 million twinkling lights in this free celebration. The display includes 725 evergreen trees and 16-foot-tall lights in the shape of hot air balloons. Wander through The Shops at Columbus Circle and enjoy Holiday Under the Stars, which features twelve 14-foot stars hanging from the ceiling.

Get Outdoors:

The Rink at Winter Village at Bryant Park offers free ice-skating in the heart of Midtown Manhattan (skates are available to rent). Sitting among the open-air holiday market and dining offerings, the rink is open through March 3, 2024. NYC's Open Streets program returns this year, creating a pedestrian-only zone around Rockefeller Center and on Fifth Avenue from 48th Street to 59th Street. Enjoy festive scents along Fifth Avenue between 46th and 61st Streets: the Fifth Avenue Association is partnering with NEST New York to pump the brand's signature Holiday fragrance into the air. Join hundreds of brave swimmers on January 1 for an icy dip in the Atlantic Ocean during the Coney Island Polar Bear Club New Year's Day Plunge. Participation is free; individuals are encouraged to donate to community organizations.

Family Entertainment:

NYC is the backdrop of many beloved holiday films. Whether you want to stop by the Empire State Building to celebrate the 20th anniversary of Elf, play on the large-

scale FAO Schwarz piano as in Big or visit The Plaza Hotel in honor of Home Alone 2 - Fun in New York, there's something for the whole family to enjoy. Meet Santa Claus at Macy's Herald Square. Reservations are free and can be made up to five days before your visit, with photos available for purchase. Santaland will host sensory-friendly early mornings on select days throughout the holiday season—email Macy's for more information. The Children's Museum of Manhattan is offering a series of public holiday programs throughout December, including a singer-songwriter series, cultural celebrations, New Year's Eve programming and more. Wave Hill in the Bronx is celebrating the holidays with a variety of programming. On December 14, make winter-inspired crafts during the free Family Art-Palooza. The National Park Service will hold free Kwanzaa events at the African Burial Ground National Monument from December 26-30. Family-friendly activities include doll making, quilting, face painting and more. Visit Battery Park City Public Library on December 18 for a free Holiday and Christmas Carols Sing Along for all ages.

Holiday Shopping:

Every year, holiday markets pop up across the City, offering artisanal products, crafts, food and more, ideal for sourcing uniquely NYC gifts. The famous Union Square Holiday Market is open every day through December 24, with more than 150 festive vendors and food stalls. Thrifting fans can visit Brooklyn Flea in Dumbo for housewares, vintage clothing, antiques, jewelry, crafts and more.

EACH YEAR, RESIDENTS OF BROOKLYN'S DYKER HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD LIGHT UP THEIR HOMES WITH OVER-THE-TOP CHRISTMAS DECOR. BRING A THERMOS OF HOT CHOCOLATE AND TAKE IN THE DECORATIONS WITH FESTIVE MUSIC IN THE BACKGROUND

Traversing through Grand Central Terminal this holiday season? Be sure to check out the Holiday Fair in Vanderbilt Hall—and note that a visit to the New York Transit Museum's Holiday Train Show in Grand Central is free this year! The Long Island City Partnership is presenting a Pop-Up Holiday Art Market on Thursdays-Sundays through December 17, offering handcrafted art pieces, complimentary pantone and hot drinks. *IANSI*life

'HRERA Gurugram's core objective is redressing allottees' grievances'

GURUGRAM: Arun Kumar, the newly appointed Chairman of the Haryana Real Estate Regulatory Authority (HRERA), Gurugram, said last week, the core objective of the authority is to redress the grievances of allottees.

Chairing his first meeting with the officials and staff of the authority, Kumar said, "We need to reach out to the people by launching awareness campaigns and through all the other means to make HRERA's functioning more efficient and transparent."

"The authority should create a reconciliation bench to resolve the complainants at the very initial stages which will help both the parties," he said.

Arun Kumar, a 1989 batch IAS officer who retired earlier this year, joined the HRERA Gurugram as its second Chairman on December 12.

The HRERA Gurugram came into existence on February 5, 2018.

"The authority will put all efforts for the relief for Gurugram house allottees for faster and speedy justice. At the same time, a strong message should be sent to defaulter projects," he said. *IANS*

Real Estate POST

Dharavi project was awarded to Adani Group through fair, open, internationally competitive bidding process

MUMBAI: The Dharavi project was awarded to the Adani Group through a fair, open and internationally competitive bidding process, the spokesperson of Dharavi Redevelopment Project Pvt Ltd (DRPPL) said in a statement.

"It is important to note that the tender conditions were finalized during the tenure of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government, which demitted office at the end of June 2022. *IANS*

India jumps 18 spots in annual house price movement in Q3-2023: Report

NEW DELHI: India climbed 18 spots up to 14th rank in the global house price index in the third quarter of 2023, data compiled by real estate consultant Knight Frank India showed.

The price increase of 5.9 percent year-on-year during the said quarter made a significant statement about the country's real estate sector.

House prices remained robust in the face of higher debt costs, with average prices across the 56 markets covered by the Knight Frank's Global House Price Index, growing at an average of 3.5 percent on a yearly basis in September 2023, up from 2.2 percent in the previous quarter.

The Global House Price Index tracks nominal and real price growth across 56 countries in terms of their local currencies.

"Annual global house prices



continue to rise despite rising interest rates which have been the central banks' primary weapon to combat elevated inflation levels globally," the real estate consultant said.

"Average annual price growth stands at 3.5 percent, closely approaching the pre-pandemic

ten-year average of 3.7 percent. Among the 56 markets monitored, 35 experienced annual price growth, while 21 witnessed price decline."

Turkey has held the top spot in the rankings since Q1 2020 and once again sees the strongest growth.

The southeastern corner of Europe dominates the top five spots of the rankings, with Greece (14.0 percent), Croatia (13.7 percent) and North Macedonia (11.0 percent) all showing robust annual growth.

Japan is the standout performer in the Asia-Pacific region, with 6.3 percent annual growth, followed by India with 5.9 percent annual growth.

The remarkable growth in India's residential market, despite the challenges of higher home loan rates as well as threats of inflation, has largely been the result of stable economic growth, which has lent itself to providing greater financial security to end-users, the consultant said.

"In light of an increased interest cost environment stemming from heightened inflation levels, the robust domestic economic fundamentals, and the escalating aspirational attributes of residential real estate, are driving heightened demand among homebuyers in prominent residential markets within the country," said Shishir Bajjal, Chairman and Managing Director, Knight Frank India. *ANI*

IT, real estate stocks lead market rally

SANJEEV SHARMA

NEW DELHI: IT stocks are the biggest gainers in last week Thursday's monster rally of more than 800 points after the US Fed gave a dovish message on interest rates.

IT indices are up more than 2 percent. Mphasis is up 6 percent, Coforge is up 5 percent, LTIM is up 3 percent, Tech Mahindra is up 3 percent, and HCL Tech is up 3 percent.

Real estate index is up more than 3 percent with Brigade up 4 percent, Phoenix up 4 percent, Godrej Properties is up 4 percent.

The clear dovish message of last week from the Fed has set the stage for a smart Santa Claus rally in the coming days, and this can even trigger a pre-election rally that can take the markets to a series of new

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highs, says V.K. Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services.

The takeaway from the Fed message is, the tightening cycle is over and three rate cuts are possible in 2024. The market expects four. The record-breaking rally in the Dow will send many indices to

new records, he added.

The crash in the US 10-year yield to 4 percent will trigger

large capital flows to India. The main beneficiaries will be the large caps, particularly the fairly valued large caps in banking. IT too is likely to attract buying.

Retail exuberance can lift the mid and small caps, too; but there is no valuation comfort in this segment, he said.

Triggering a massive rally by the US Fed message, BSE Sensex is up 847 points at 70431 points on 14 December. IT stocks are leading the rally with Infosys and HCL Tech up by more than 3 percent. *IANS*

Janu Tokyo to open in March 2024

NEW DELHI: Janu - meaning 'soul' in Sanskrit - marks an energizing new era for hospitality with the opening of Janu Tokyo in March 2024. The highly anticipated sibling to the renowned Aman, Janu's unveiling is the first in a 12-strong global pipeline of projects across city, country, and coastal destinations. Reservations can now be made for first access to Janu Tokyo in March.

Combining Aman's 35-year legacy with Chairman and CEO Vlad Doronin's extensive expertise in global real estate development and hospitality, Janu brings to life a trinity of inspiration, connection, and exploration. Vlad Doronin said: "The arrival of Janu Tokyo signifies a pivotal moment in Aman Group's progression - not only introducing the energetic spirit of Janu for the very first time - but also representing the evolution and enduring strength of Aman. As we unveil this new concept in one of the world's greatest cities, my vision is for the Janu brand to trail blaze a new direction in hospitality whilst preserving, upholding and following in the illustrious footsteps of its legendary sibling Aman."

A fitting flagship, Janu Tokyo is connected to the vibrant heart of Azabudai Hills - a city within a city, abundant in nature, culture and art - created and managed by Japan's leading developer Mori Building Co. Ltd. A progressive new neighborhood by architectural visionaries, Azabudai Hills features Japan's tallest skyscraper and 24,000 sqm of lush green space designed by Thomas Heatherwick, alongside offices, residences, educational institutions, galleries and over 150 luxury retail and dining outlets including a world-class Japanese specialty food market.

The only hotel within the development - located in the Residence a Tower designed by esteemed architects, Pelli Clarke & Partners - Janu Tokyo introduces 122 light-filled rooms and suites, eight dining venues, two boutiques and a 4,000 sqm state-of-the-art Wellness Centre.

Janu Tokyo reveals itself with a lofty gallery and reception, where a sense of space is fostered through considered use of glass and textured moldings that reflect soft, glowing light. Above, a ceiling embellished with intricate lattice woodwork and rows of woven rope arches (a modern interpretation of the traditional Japanese technique of shimenawa), connects guests from street level into the soul of Janu with comfort and ease. "Janu Tokyo's DNA exudes a youthful energy,

brimming with liveliness and playfulness that sets it apart from the poised and composed character of Aman," comments Jean-Michel Gathy, the award-winning international architect responsible for the hotel's interior design. "The space is a thrilling exploration of textures, colors,

There are nine treatment rooms as well as a recovery studio with hyperbaric oxygen therapy chamber. For those not staying at the hotel, Janu Tokyo will also offer Wellness Collective memberships enabling access to its facilities, programming and an exclusive members-only

an exquisite collection of the finest baked delights and parfaits available to enjoy in the café or to take away.

The hotel is also home to two Japanese restaurants. The first, ligura, reinterprets the centuries old tradition of Edomae sushi in an intimate setting, of-



and design elements that awakes the senses and ignites imagination."

Designed to enhance individual wellbeing through the concept of connectedness and the notion of the shared social experience, the paramount 4,000 sqm Wellness Centre features one of Tokyo's largest gyms (340 sqm), as well as five movement studios for group exercise including the only boxing ring located within a hotel in Tokyo, alongside spinning, world-class training, recovery and

lounge.

Janu Tokyo offers a diverse range of dining destinations, spanning from comfort and familiarity to the excitement of the unknown. Elevating the neighborhood's dining scene, Janu Mercato is a lively, all-day emporium celebrating Italian culinary culture. Here, dishes are served from three open kitchen counters; one serving homemade pasta; another presenting a vast display of fresh fish and seafood prepared to order; and one offering Euro-

Janu Tokyo offers a diverse range of dining destinations, spanning from comfort and familiarity to the excitement of the unknown. Elevating the neighborhood's dining scene, Janu Mercato is a lively, all-day emporium celebrating Italian culinary culture

relaxation facilities. An extensive hydrotherapy and thermal area is centered around a 25-meter heated lap pool and features a separate lounge pool - traditionally a place for socializing in Japan - as well as two signature private Spa Houses, introducing an entirely new spa concept to Japan, with cold and hot plunge pools, Banya and Hammam.

pean charcuterie and cheeses. Janu Mercato dishes can be enjoyed in the double-height, glass-walled dining area or outdoors on the Parisian-inspired terrace, both of which overlook the neighborhood's manicured gardens and abundant green space. The adjoining marble-walled Janu Patisserie pays homage to European pastry traditions through

fering a choice of exquisite à la Carte sashimi and small plates, or omakase dining at the Hinoki wood counter. The second, Sumi, serves as a modern interpretation of the traditional sumibiyaki grill, with organic seasonal ingredients cooked over charcoal and paired with premium wine and sake. Completing the restaurant repertoire are the Janu Grill, with its spectacular show kitchen, two large wine cellars, bar and counter-style seating, and Hu Jing, where guests can savor Cantonese signatures such as roast duck, contemporary dim sum and seafood specialties. Finally, in the Janu Lounge and on the Garden Terrace, afternoon tea and light snacks are served in a serene setting, while the Janu Bar presents an exclusive destination for inspired craft cocktails prepared by top tier mixologists.

On floors six to 13, Janu Tokyo's rooms and suites start at 55 sqm, presenting timeless Asian-inspired interiors with contemporary European accents. A strong focus on minimalism and symmetry encourages comfort, creating a harmonic balance of energy. *IANS/life*

Messi's Inter Miami to meet Newell's in friendly

WASHINGTON: Inter Miami and Newell's Old Boys will meet in a pre-season soccer friendly in Fort Lauderdale in February, a match that will pit Lionel Messi and Gerardo Martino against their former club.

The game will be played at Inter Miami's DRV PNK Stadium in Fort Lauderdale on February 15, both clubs announced this week, reports Xinhua.

"I'm delighted to be able to welcome my beloved Newell's to our home in Miami," said Inter Miami manager Martino, who made a club record 505 first-team appearances with the Argentine outfit in the 1980s and 90s.

He added: "It will be a special game because of everything that Newell's Old Boys means to me.



It will also be a good opportunity to prepare for what is sure to be an exciting season."

Inter Miami said tickets for the match would go on sale starting 19 December.

In a separate statement, Newell's described the fixture as "unique" and "full of history", adding that it would connect to the football roots of Messi and Martino.

Messi joined Inter Miami on a free transfer in July after parting ways with Paris Saint-Germain.

He scored 11 goals in 14 games during his first season with the Herons, helping them win the 2023 Leagues Cup, the club's first ever trophy. *IANS*

Sports POST

40 India Post www.indiapost.com December 22, 2023

"We've had succession plans for MS for about 10 years": Stephen Fleming on succession plans for MS Dhoni



DUBAI: Chennai Super Kings coach Stephen Fleming reacted to succession plans for MS Dhoni as the captain of 5-time IPL champions, saying that they had succession plans for former India skipper for about 10 years.

So far in the IPL 2024 auction, CSK has bought Rachin Ravindra, Daryl Mitchell, and Shardul Thakur. *added. ANI*

Khelo India Para Games: Why nothing is impossible for cerebral palsy quadriplegic Jeetu Kanwar

NEW DELHI: Every athlete in the just-concluded Khelo India Para Games in Delhi was unique. Their ability to rise above physical and mental challenges exposed their God-gifted special qualities that able-bodied sportspersons can never fathom. Jeetu Kanwar is perhaps extra special. Her life story is simply surreal and just unbelievable.

"She has seen a very difficult phase early in life and that has made her a very strong woman today. She has faced all the challenges all by herself and today, she is a self-made woman and an inspiration to society," said Kavita Suresh, the general secretary of the Cerebral Palsy Sports Federation of India (CPSFI) as quoted by a KIPG press release.

A spastic quadriplegic cerebral palsy patient, Jeetu Kanwar, now 29, has been facing life's odds ever since she was in her mother's womb. Her form of spastic CP is the severest and it affects the movement of all four limbs, the trunk and the face.

Jeetu's grit and determination were seen at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium last week when she sprinted to the 100m bronze medal in the T-35 class. Now she wants to win a medal at the 2024 Paris Paralympics.

Jeetu Kanwar was born on June 26, 1994 in a humble family in Khudiyala Dhani under Shergarh block of Jodhpur district. The first signs of cerebral palsy were discovered within three hours of Jeetu's birth after she didn't cry even once in the entire period.

Her father Ladu Singh, a se-



Jeetu Kanwar

nior nursing officer at Primary Health Centre, Nathrau, was as clueless as her mother Rukam Kanwar. Lack of adequate oxygen in Jeetu's developing brain during her mother's pregnancy

resulted in problems with all her limb and muscle movements.

"My parents were not well educated. Moneywise also we were not very strong. My parents and grandparents visited hospi-

tals in Jodhpur but there were not facilities to treat cerebral palsy. They also went to all sacred places in and around Rajasthan to seek divine intervention but nothing helped," Jeetu said.

Being the first among five siblings, Jeetu took three years to start walking. When her younger sister Nenu walked in a year's time, neighbors and the larger family started to look down upon her. The Kanwars were also discriminated against because their first kids were both daughters!

Stunted growth and problems with all body part movements made her life miserable. However, Jeetu was not the one to become depressed but resolved to fight back. When she was put in the local government school, kids tormented Jeetu. Life was a nightmare.

To be able to focus on her studies, Jeetu changed many primary schools before she was sent to a school meant for persons with physical disabilities 20 kilometers outside Jodhpur. Jeetu excelled by emerging topper in each class from 6 to 12 at the Sucheta Kripalani Shiksha Niketan, established by then Rajya Sabha MP Narayan Singh Manaklao.

"It was a different world altogether. What is easy for a normal person, it was a huge struggle for me. Tying shoe laces, brushing one's teeth, taking a bath, changing clothes and holding a pen or even writing down class notes or exams used to be very difficult. But the challenge only made me stronger. I resolved not to give up," she explained. *ANI*

Jeetu Kanwar was born on June 26, 1994 in a humble family in Khudiyala Dhani under Shergarh block of Jodhpur district. The first signs of cerebral palsy were discovered within three hours of Jeetu's birth after she didn't cry even once in the entire period

IPL Auction 2024:

Starc, Cummins break records as bowlers rule the roost; uncapped Rizvi bags Rs 8.40 cr

DUBAI: Australian pacers Mitchell Starc, Pat Cummins and Spencer Johnson attracted massive bids as did Indian uncapped player Sameer Rizvi as the top 10 buys went for nearly 50 percent of the total INR 230.43 crore spent in the Mini-Auction ahead of the 2024 edition of the Indian Premier League held here on 19 December. In all, 72 players were sold in the auction, 30 overseas, as six of the 10 franchises completed their full quota of 25 players.

The Kolkata Knight Riders bought Starc for a record INR 24.75 crore, the highest price garnered by any player in the history of IPL auctions while Pat Cummins was close behind with a massive winning bid of 20.50 crore at the Coca-Cola Arena in Dubai.

New Zealand all-rounder Daryl Mitchell was the next costliest buy of this mini auction with defending champions Chennai Super Kings splurging Rs 14 crore for him.

Harshal Patel turned out to be the costliest Indian buy of the day with Punjab Kings breaking the bank to claim his services at Rs 11.75 crore while West Indies pacer Alzari Joseph made it to the top five when Royal Challengers Bangalore picked him for Rs 11.50 crore.

Australia's little-known uncapped pacer Spencer Johnson had his time in the limelight when Gujarat Titans bought him for a whopping Rs 10 crore. In all, six players received bids above Rs 10 crore in the auction and all but one of them were overseas players.

Interestingly, the top five buys in this auction, except Daryl Mitchell are all pacer-bowling all-rounder, which indicates that the franchise are bolstering their pace bowling as they expect the IPL to be played abroad considering the clash with general elections in India next year.



Sameer Rizvi

Sameer Rizvi, a young batter from Uttar Pradesh, became the instant crorepati that the IPL is known to throw up every year, when he was bought by Chennai Super Kings for Rs 8.40 crore. Starting from a base

price of Rs 20 Lakh, Rizvi Chennai Super Kings (CSK) and Gujarat Titans engaged in a spirited back-and-forth, propelling the bid to a remarkable 8.40 crore. In the end, CSK emerged victorious, securing



Pat Cummins and Mitchell Starc

the promising youngster for a hefty sum.

The young Uttar Pradesh batter has been making waves in the domestic circuit of late due to his batting exploits. In the UP T20 League, Rizvi scored 455 runs in nine innings for Kanpur Superstars, including hitting two incredible centuries and the most sixes by any batter in the competition.

Starc became the most expensive player in the Indian Premier League (IPL) history, as he was bought by Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR), for a record-breaking Rs 24.75 crore in the third round of the auction.

The left-arm pacer from Australia is returning to the IPL after eight years and attracted huge attention. The auction room buzzed with excitement as the bidding war escalated, and the price tag soared over Rs. 7.00 crore in the blink of an eye.

The Mumbai Indians seized control of the bidding frenzy, establishing a clear lead at Rs. 9.60 Cr. Just when it seemed like they were in the driver's seat, the Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) made a dramatic entry into the fray, throwing their hat into the ring with a bid of Rs. 9.80 Cr. The Gujarat Titans, not to be left behind, entered the intense competition after the bid crossed the Rs. 10.00 Cr mark.

The Kolkata Knight Riders, displaying unwavering determination, made a bold move, holding their ground at Rs. 18.75 Cr. However, the Gujarat Titans responded with an audacious bid of Rs. 20.50 Cr, breaking new ground and setting the stage for the player to potentially become the league's priciest asset. *IANS*



"My life's honor to play for India over 3 decades:" Leander Paes

NEW DELHI: Former doubles world No. 1 Leander Paes was recently elected to receive the Ultimate Honor in Tennis - induction into the International Tennis Hall of Fame - as the Class of 2024.

Paes, an 18-time Grand Slam champion in doubles and mixed doubles, has been selected in the Player Category to receive tennis' Ultimate Honor.

The Class of 2024 will be officially inducted into the Hall of Fame on July 20, 2024 in Newport, Rhode Island. Paes will join an elite group of 264 inductees from 27 nations - with India set to become the 28th nation represented in the Hall of Fame.

Speaking of the induction into the International Tennis Hall, Leander Paes said it was his life's honor to represent India for over 3 decades in a sport and added this Ultimate Honor in Tennis induction belongs to every Indian.

"It has been my life's honor to play for my country for over 3 decades in a sport that has given me and taught me everything and this acknowledgement is indeed the ultimate accolade for every tennis player. The International Tennis Hall of Fame induction belongs not just to me but to our billion plus Indians and to every young kid who nurtures a dream in their heart and fire in their belly to follow their passions," Leander Paes was quoted as saying by International the Hall of Fame in an official statement.

"Being born into a sporting family legacy was a daunting realization inspired by my parents, I've always been motivated to stand and hear the national anthem which has spurred me on ever since I picked up a wooden tennis racket as a five-year-old," he added.

"The challenges that I encountered from playing gully cricket and street football in the by-lanes of Calcutta dreaming of representing my country to getting mugged as a teenager at Grand Central Station to hitchhiking rides through European tournaments and sleeping in cold locker rooms when one couldn't afford a hotel room to then going on to lift several Wimbledon trophies in the presence of royalty, standing on an Olympic podium with a singles medal emulating my father, achieving the all-time doubles win record in Davis Cup for India and completing career Grand Slams in both men's doubles and mixed doubles has been nothing short of a dream," said the Former doubles world No. 1. *ANI*

US reaches H-1B visa cap for FY24

WASHINGTON: The US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) said it has received a sufficient number of petitions to reach the congressionally mandated cap for the most-coveted H-1B visa for the fiscal year 2024.

This includes the 65,000 H-1B visa regular cap as well as the 20,000 H-1B visa US advanced degree exemption, commonly referred to as the master's cap.

The non-immigrant work visa allows US employers to hire foreign workers with specialized skills to work in the country for a specific period of time.

In a statement last week, the USCIS said it will send notices to registrants who were not selected for the visa program, through their online accounts over the next few days.

However, the federal agency said will continue to accept and process petitions exempt from the cap.

"Petitions filed for current H-1B workers who have been counted previously against the cap, and who still retain their cap number, are exempt from the FY 2024 H-1B cap," the USCIS said.

An estimated 75 percent of the H-1B visa granted in a year are known to go to workers from India, hired by some of the largest US tech giant such as Amazon, Microsoft, Google and Facebook as well as IT services behemoths like Infosys, TCS and Wipro. *IANs*

Immigration

POST

He informed that entry points have been increased by 113 per cent. In December last year, there were 31 entry points, which have been increased to 66

More immigration desks, entry gates added at Delhi airport: Jyotiraditya Scindia

NEW DELHI: Entry gates, immigration desks, security personnel and other facilities have been improved at the Delhi Airport for smooth flow of passengers, said Minister of Civil Aviation Jyotiraditya Scindia.

He was addressing media persons at the national media center on the matter related to congestion at airports.

"In the last one-year when I personally visited the Delhi airport over complaints of congestion in passenger movement. Thereafter I held several meetings with all the stakeholders to improve passenger flow at airports. They have made many changes and passenger movement has been put on priority," he said.



Jyotiraditya Scindia

He informed that entry points have been increased by 113 per cent. In December last year, there were 31 entry points, which have been increased to 66.

Similarly, X-BIS machines have been increased from 50 to 66.

"There is around 29 percent increase in deployment of CISF security personnel at Delhi air-

port. At present there are 6,140 personnel deployed. Immigration desks have been increased to 174 from 153 in last year. Lots of passengers are opting from Digi Yatra for hassle free entry to the airport," the minister asserted.

The minister further apprised that a 'Zone 0' was created at the Delhi airport by dismantling the reserve lounges. The departure hall has been cleared of commercial space to create more space for passengers.

"Space allocations for commercial activities are planned on the principle of to be 'on the way', and 'not in the way' to ensure smooth and natural flow of passengers," he said. *ANI*

Migration threatens to 'overwhelm' European nations: Rishi Sunak

LONDON: UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has said "enemies" want to use migration as a "weapon" to deliberately drive people to their shores to 'destabilize the society'.

In one of his strongest attacks on illegal immigration, Sunak warned that the growing number of migrants could "overwhelm" European countries if swift action is not taken to address the issue, The Evening Standard reported.

"Criminal gangs find the ugliest ways to exploit our humanity and don't have a problem with putting people's lives at risk by putting them on boats," Sunak said, addressing a gathering of Italian Conservatives and Right-wingers in Italy.

"If we do not tackle this problem, the numbers will only grow. It will overwhelm our countries and our capacity to help those who actually need our help the most."

The Prime Minister also said changes to global refugee rules

could be needed to tackle illegal migration.

"Because if we don't fix this



Rishi Sunak

problem now, the boats will keep coming and more lives will be lost at sea," Sunak added.

Sunak's remarks come after

he narrowly escaped a rebellion by his MPs over the Rwanda Bill last week.

For the moment, they refrained from pulling the rug on Sunak on the basis that he had indicated to them that he was willing to accept amendments that would tighten the Bill, IANS reported earlier.

The Rwanda Bill forms the core of Sunak's policy to stop the boats -- one of five key priorities, which he set out at the start of the year.

Once the bill -- one of the toughest immigration legislation ever introduced to the UK Parliament -- receives Royal Assent, it will pave the way for the UK to begin next steps in processing people for relocation and starting removal flights to Rwanda. *IANs*

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Beyond its intransigence, Israel will have to face realities once bombing ends

VIKAS DATTA

NEW DELHI: After 70-odd days of indiscriminate bombing that has left nearly 19,000 Palestinians dead, almost thrice the number injured, and large sections of Gaza a wasteland, Israel is in no mood to stop its military operation, despite growing global opposition and even veiled US admonitions, raising questions on what it actually intends to do.

If its aim is "eradicating" Hamas by the wanton mass killings of Palestinian civilians and widespread destruction of the area, then it may be on course -- though the actual goal of peace and security for it will remain as far elusive as ever.

And there is no guarantee that Israel will succeed in accomplishing the end of the Islamist group, for the idea of resistance is unlikely to perish - and only getting augmented in those who have suffered and lost all they had,

Despite its noble intentions but the tardy and half-hearted implementation, or lack thereof, the Oslo Peace Process seems dead - in the eyes of most Israelis, coupled with the inefficiency, or the deliberate enfeeblement, of the Palestinian Authority

especially their kin, and are engulfed in a humanitarian crisis.

However, if Israel's actions are taken as a whole, then the picture changes.

The extensive repression and land grabs in the West Bank, the open espousal of plans for a wholesale expulsion of Palestinians, the angry repudiation of any two-state solution, even as most of the world is embracing the idea, the most far-right government in the country -- as per US President Joe Biden in an uncharacteristic critical comment -- seems set to create chaos in the region in pursuit of its maximalist, fundamentalist goal.

However, it is not only the toxic combination of a deviant leader, in Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his extremist coalition allies Religious Zionism and Otzma Yehudit that are the issue, as Biden belatedly flagged. Beyond Netanyahu's own political calculations

and effort to forestall his legal problems - his corruption trial has resumed, there is a growing disinclination among Israel, right-wing or centrist, to accord any space for Palestinian political aspirations.

Despite its noble intentions but the tardy and half-hearted implementation, or lack thereof, the Oslo Peace Process seems dead - in the eyes of most Israelis, coupled with the inefficiency, or the deliberate enfeeblement, of the Palestinian Authority.

And if Mahmoud Abbas' Fateh-led PLO is kept out of Gaza, as the Israelis seem determined despite the US' wishes, it will only go on to give space to Hamas - or a Hamas-like organization, to become the symbol of the Palestinians' political configuration.

The key actor in the whole intractable issue is the US - but it also seems unable or very inclined to rein in Israel, despite some pro-forma criticism or call for restraint, given how cavalierly it has used its veto at least twice in the Security Council since October 7 in favor of Israel, funneled in more arms and aid, and

even dispatched a carrier group to the area.

It is this US shield that fuels the Israeli bravado, in announcing peremptorily it would do what it wants, despite global opinion, no matter how overwhelming. This explains why Israel cockily brushed off the most recent UN General Assembly resolution calling for a ceasefire, despite it garnering considerably more votes in favor (153) than the previous attempt (120-121), with most of the previous holdouts in Europe now choosing to abstain (23), while even Australia, Canada, India, and France were in favor.

The 10 that opposed this time around included the likes of Guatemala, Liberia, Micronesia, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, apart from the US, Austria, Czech Republic, and Israel itself, of course.

The US support is bipartisan - it was the previous Donald Trump Republican regime that accepted Jerusa-

lem as the Israeli capital and recognized the annexation of the Golan Heights. But for the Democrats of Biden, it can lead to collateral damage, as its bending backward in support of Israel since October 7 may hang heavy over it in the elections next year as core support groups of Arab-Americans and progressives are livid and even the probable return of Trump if they sit out may not deter them.

Then, the maneuvers in the Congress over aid packages to Ukraine and Israel are tied with Republicans determined to wring major concessions on border security and immigration, which will further alienate the Democratic support base. Biden and the Democrats may have cause to rue their stand in November 2024.

Coming back to Israel, it would do well to remember that wars do end sometime, and then there is stocktaking. Wars cost money and in the Israeli case, the calling of reservists, who span the entire population, will impact the economy. And once the external threat is quelled - though that is still a moot point, political wrangling will resume.

Above all, even if by some miracle, Israel manages to get rid of its Palestinians, it will still be in the same neighborhood where it is not making - or keeping - many friends. IANS

Cambodia to launch e-Arrival Card next year for all travelers

PHNOM PENH: Cambodia set to launch a trial "e-Arrival Card" scheme for all travelers to the Southeast Asian country, starting from January 1, 2024, the Ministry of Interior announced.

The e-Arrival Card will replace the plethora of paper forms that are currently required on arrival, reports Xinhua news agency.

The announcement said the e-Arrival Card will make it easier for foreign travelers and Cambodian citizens who enter the country through international airports to complete the immigration formalities and health procedures in one form.

"During the trial period from January 1 to June 30, 2024, passengers have an option to fill in an electronic form or fill in an immigration, customs and health information form in a paper form," the announcement said.

All passengers will be required to fill in an electronic form when the e-Arrival Card scheme is officially launched from July 1, 2024, it added.

Tourism is one of the four pillars supporting Cambodia's economy, in addition to garment, footwear and travel goods export, agriculture, and construction and real estate.

The kingdom recorded 4.4 million international tourists in the 10 months of 2023, a significant rise of around 180 percent from 1.57 million over the same period last year, according to the Ministry of Tourism. IANS

PIO accused of receiving sexual favors from men in return for stay in Singapore

SINGAPORE: An Indian-origin Immigration and Checkpoints Authority (ICA) inspector is facing six charges of corruption in Singapore for obtaining sexual favors from six men in exchange for helping them with their short-term visit pass applications.

Kannan Morice Rajagopal Jayaram, 53, allegedly obtained favors from the men between 2022 and February 2023, The Straits Times reported last week.

District Judge Brenda Tan said during the hearing that the prosecution is ready to take the accused's plea of guilt if he wishes to take that course.

Defense lawyer Tan Wei Chieh said he has to take instructions from his client on how to proceed.

Kannan is out on SG\$30,000 bail, and his case will be heard again on January 11, 2024.

The ICA told The Straits Times that after it came to know about Kannan's activities, he was immediately reported to the relevant authorities for follow-up investigation.

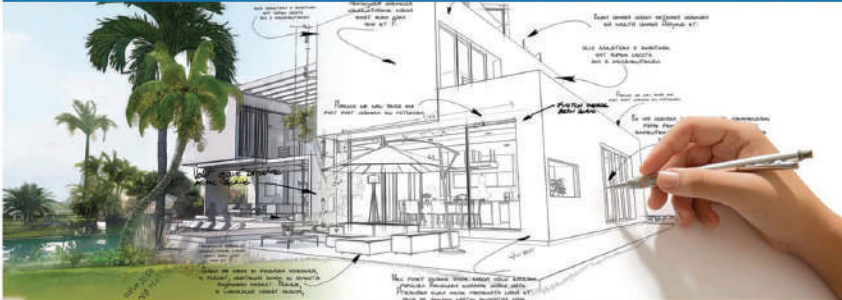
"We take a serious view of errant officers. Our officers are expected to maintain a high standard of integrity and remain professional at all times. Officers who break the law will be dealt with, in accordance with the law," the ICA said. If convicted, Kannan can be fined up to SG\$100,000 and jailed for up to five years for each offence. IANS

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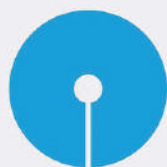
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LinkedIn use can trigger imposter syndrome: Study

LONDON: The use of professional social networking sites such as LinkedIn, with more than 930 million users worldwide, can stir up feelings of self-doubt, suggests new research.

Imposter syndrome -- and the accompanying fear of being "found out" -- can be associated with feeling anxious and having depressive thoughts, said researchers from the University of Edinburgh.

The research based on a survey of LinkedIn users, and published in the journal *Psychology and Marketing*, showed that interacting with the popular site was linked with experiences of imposter syndrome -- a feeling of inadequacy despite evidence of success.

People felt a lack of professional confidence both when they browsed other people's posts and when they posted about their personal achievements.

"Just browsing the newsfeed or even posting an achievement on LinkedIn can trigger a reflection on your professional identity that can ignite imposter thoughts, which is associated with a fear of being found out as an imposter," said Dr. Ben Marder, from the varsity's Business School. *IANS*

One can be said to be perfectly healthy in body and mind only if no part of the body or mind makes itself felt. A part makes itself felt only when there is something wrong with it. You know that you have a head only when it aches.

Sri Atmananda (1883 - 1959)

48 India Post

www.indiapost.com

December 22, 2023

GenAI will help robotic surgery transform healthcare in India: Top tech evangelist

NEW DELHI: Generative artificial intelligence (AI) and emerging technologies will help robotic surgery become a standard of care in healthcare facilities in dozens of Indian cities in the near future, offering relief to those in need of improved quality of life after successful proce-

soft tissues and joint replacement each year, Raj Vattikuti, who founded the Vattikuti Foundation in the state of Michigan in the US, told IANS.

"Furthermore, we anticipate increased involvement from government institutions in enhancing access to robotic surgery for

ing prestigious clients.

In 2007, he sold Covansys to Computer Sciences Corporation for \$1.2 billion.

In 1997, the entrepreneur, along with his wife Padma, established the Vattikuti Foundation with a \$20 million contribution to improve the quality of human life.

They set up the Vattikuti Urology Institute (VUI) at the Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit, Michigan, making it a flagship institution for robotic surgery in the US.

Today, the robotic surgery procedures for Urology developed at VUI are considered the gold standard and have been adopted worldwide.

Over the past 25 years, the Foundation has established a network of academic robotic surgery institutes globally, partnering with renowned hospi-

tal systems in the US, Europe, the UK, and India.

"Since 2010, the Foundation has engaged with several hospitals in India, trained over 500 surgeons to become accom-

The use of AI and new-age technologies will help see a robust growth in the number of robot-assisted surgeries for both soft tissues and joint replacement each year, Raj Vattikuti, who founded the Vattikuti Foundation

dures, Indian-origin technology visionary and business leader said recently.

The use of AI and new-age technologies will help see a robust growth in the number of robot-assisted surgeries for both

disadvantaged sections of the population," he added.

He founded Covansys Corp in the US in 1985; Covansys was among the early US firms to establish a large offshore development facility in Chennai, serv-



Raj Vattikuti

plished robotic surgeons and offered full year paid fellowships to over 50 surgeons to grow this pool of accomplished surgeons," Vattikuti told IANS.

According to him, the success of the Vattikuti Foundation can be attributed to their pioneering work in India, which ignited a robotic surgery revolution.

"The Foundation played a pivotal role in evangelizing robotic surgery, which is now operational in over 100 hospitals across India. Patients with comorbidities have benefited immensely by getting superior outcomes. Reduction in the number of days of hospital stay has enabled the healthcare system to offer scarce hospital beds to more patients," he added.

The Foundation's recent focus on AI and Metaverse sessions at the "Humans at the Cutting Edge of Technology" symposium in Ghent, Belgium, provided insight into how human ingenuity will continue to advance patient outcomes. *IANS*

1 in 5 girls, 1 in 6 boys still married as children in India: Lancet

NEW YORK: Child marriage in continue to be prevalent with one in five girls and nearly one in six boys still being married as children, according to study published in *The Lancet Global Health* that showed stalled progress.

The study led by researchers at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health showed that child marriage has declined in India -- but in recent years the practice has become more prevalent in some states/union territories.

Child marriage is a human rights violation and a recog-

nized form of gender and sexual-based violence. India's success in reaching zero child marriage is critical to achieving UN' Sus-



tainable Development Goal (SDG) target 5.3.

"This study is among the first

to estimate how rates of girl and boy child marriage have changed over time at a state/union territory level. Boy child

marriage in particular is often overlooked; to date, there's been almost no research esti-

mating its prevalence," said lead author S. V. Subramanian, professor of population health and geography.

"Our findings offer a big step forward in understanding the burden of child marriage in India -- one that will be critical to effective policymaking," Subramanian said.

Though India legally defines child marriage as marriage before age 18 for girls and before age 21 for boys, for the purposes of the study the researchers defined it as marriage before age 18 for both sexes. *IANS*

30 min. less social media use daily can make you happier, productive at work

LONDON: Just 30 minutes less social media use per day can help improve mental health, job satisfaction and commitment, according to a study.

While social media have become an integral part of many people's lives, it also has a negative impact on mental health and causes users to fear missing out on something important happening in their network when they aren't online -- a phenomenon referred to as FoMO (Fear of Missing Out).

"We suspect that people tend to use social networks to generate positive emotions that they're missing in their everyday working lives, especially when they are feeling overworked," explains Julia Brailovskaia, Asso-

ciate Professor at from the Mental Health Research and Treatment Center at Ruhr University Bochum in Germany.

"In addition, some platforms such as LinkedIn also offer the opportunity to look for new jobs

term, it can lead to addictive behavior that has the opposite effect.

In a study, published in the journal Behavior and Information Technology, the team launched an experiment to explore these correlations.

A total of 166 people took part, all of whom worked either part-time or full-time in a range of sectors and spent at least 35 minutes a day on non-work-related social media use.

Participants were randomly assigned to one

if you're unhappy with your current role," she added.

In the short-term, escaping from reality into the world of social networks may indeed improve your mood; but in the long-

of two groups. One group didn't change their social media habits.

The other group reduced the time spent on social networks by 30 minutes a day for seven days. IANS



CAN ANXIETY BE TREATED BY MEDICATION?

Anxiety disorders can be a debilitating condition for people, many who struggle to cope with symptoms for several years on end. First line of treatment may include psychotherapy (talk therapy), but when this modality does not treat symptoms adequately, medications are regarded as the next step in conjunction treatment.

Medication management of anxiety has proven to be an effective treatment for the past several decades, as the pharmacologic treatments alleviate anxiety symptoms such as restlessness, irritability, concentration issues, feeling on edge and insomnia.

First line of pharmacologic treatments for anxiety is generally selective serotonin reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs). SSRIs exert action by inhibiting the reuptake of serotonin, which is a neurotransmitter involved in the modulation of anxiety symptoms. These treatments generally take up to 6 weeks for a patient to feel an improvement in their anxiety symptoms.

It is important that the decision to include medications in the treatment plan be consulted with a psychiatrist. While medication treatments are relatively safe, patients should discuss with their Psychiatrist potential side effects they may experience when taking the medication. By utilizing multimodal treatment of combining psychotherapy with medications, this optimizes a patient's chance in achieving full remission of anxiety symptoms.

This article is written by **Dr. Rohit Aiyer, MD**, who is a MD in Psychiatry in Sunny Hills Medical Center in Fullerton, North Orange County of Southern California specializing in all types of depressions, including treatment resistant depressions, OCD and Anxiety disorders.

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Diabetes medicine may lower risk for colorectal cancer: Study

WASHINGTON DC: A revolutionary study by Case Western Reserve University researchers reveals that a class of medications used to treat type 2 diabetes may also lower the risk of colorectal cancer (CRC).

The findings, published in the journal *JAMA Oncology*, support the need for clinical trials to determine whether these medications could prevent one of the deadliest types of cancers. Eventually, the medications may also show promise in warding off other types of cancer associated with obesity and diabetes.

"Our results clearly demonstrate that GLP-1 RAs are significantly more effective than popular anti-diabetic drugs, such as Metformin or insulin, at preventing the development of CRC," said Nathan Berger, the Hanna-Payne Professor of Experimental Medicine at the Case Western Reserve School of Medicine and the study's co-lead researcher.

Glucagon-like peptide-1 receptor agonists, or GLP-1 RAs, are medications to treat type 2 diabetes. Usually given by injection, they can lower blood-sugar levels, improve insulin sensitivity and help manage weight. They've also been shown to reduce the rates of major cardiovascular



ailments.

Importantly the protective effect of GLP-1 RAs are noted in patients with or without overweight/obesity.

"To our knowledge," said co-lead researcher Rong Xu, a professor at the School of Medicine, "this is the first indication this popular weight-loss and anti-diabetic class of drugs reduces incidence of CRC, relative to other anti-diabetic agents."

Berger and Xu are members of the

Case Comprehensive Cancer Center.

National health problem

Being overweight or obese, or having diabetes, are risk factors for increasing incidence of CRC and for making its prognosis worse.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) defines being overweight and obese as an increase in size and amount of fat cells in the body above certain levels. These conditions are common nationally and are caused by several factors -- among them

diet, lack of sleep or physical activity, genetics and family history.

Healthcare providers use body mass index to measure body fat based on height and weight. Nearly 75% of adults ages 20 or older in the United States are either overweight or obese, and nearly 20% of children and teens ages 2 to 19 have obesity, according to the NIH.

Obesity is a chronic health condition that raises the risk for heart disease -- the leading cause of death in the United States -- and is linked to many other health problems, including Type 2 diabetes and cancer.

The American Cancer Society estimates CRC is the third-leading type of cancer in both sexes, with 153,000 new cases per year. It is also the second-leading cause of cancer mortality with 52,550 deaths per year.

The study

Since GLP-1 RAs have been shown to be effective anti-diabetic and weight-loss agents, the researchers hypothesized they might reduce incidence of CRC.

Using a national database of more than 100 million electronic health records, the researchers conducted a population-based study of more than 1.2 million patients. These individuals had been treated with anti-diabetic agents from 2005-19; the CWRU team examined the effects of GLP-1 RAs on their incidence of CRC, as compared to those prescribed other anti-diabetic drugs.

Population-based research means matching as many people as possible with the same characteristics -- sex, race, age, socio-economic determinants of health and other medical conditions -- to accurately compare the drug's effects.

Among 22,572 patients with diabetes treated with insulin, there were 167 cases of CRC. Another 22,572 matched patients treated with GLP-1 RAs saw 94 cases of CRC. Those treated with GLP-1 RAs had a 44% reduction in incidence of CRC.

In a similar comparison of 18,518 patients with diabetes treated with Metformin, compared to 18,518 patients with diabetes treated with GLP-1 RAs, had a 25% reduction in CRC.

"The research is critically important for reducing incidence of CRC in patients with diabetes, with or without overweight and obesity," Berger said. *ANI*

Study finds how body reacts to high or low oxygen levels

CALIFORNIA: It only takes a few seconds of holding your breath to know that not obtaining adequate oxygen is detrimental to your health. Is it possible, however, to have too much? Indeed, breathing air that contains more oxygen than your body requires can lead to health problems or even death.

But with scant research on the topic, scientists have known little about how the body senses too much oxygen. Now, a new study from Gladstone Institutes has greatly expanded the scientific body of knowledge about the mechanisms at play, and why it matters for health.

Their findings, reported in the journal *Science Advances*, explain how breathing air with different levels of oxygen--from too little, to just right, or too much--affects the creation and degradation of different proteins in the lungs, heart, and

brain of mice. Notably, the study also highlights a particular protein that may play a central role in regulating how cells respond to hyperoxia.



"These results have implications for many different diseases," says Gladstone Assistant Investigator Isha Jain, PhD, senior author of the new study. "More than 1

million people in the US breathe supplemental oxygen every day for medical reasons, and studies suggest it could be making things worse in some cases. That's just one setting where our work is starting to explain what's happening and how the body responds."

Understanding Oxygen's Effects

Most prior research on oxygen levels has examined the molecular effects of too little oxygen. And even in that realm, most of the focus has been on how low oxygen affects which genes are turned on or off.

"Our study enters uncharted territory by using mice and looking downstream of gene expression at which proteins abnormally accumulate or degrade in response to different oxygen concentrations," says Kirsten Xuewen Chen, first author of the new paper and a graduate student at UC San Francisco. *ANI*

Your Weekly Future

by **VANEET SHARMA** ● DEC 22ND to DEC 28TH 2023



ARIES

MAR 21 to APRIL 20

The initial three days of the week are indicating decent financial gains.

On 26th and 27th you might remain slightly disturbed however you shall feel better if you happen to go out on a journey. The day of 28th and 29th are good for the restoration of your confidence and happiness. You shall look after your health and this is also a great time to seek the blessings of your mother. Finally the last two days of the week are excellent for the happiness of the family.



CANCER

JUN 21 to JULY 22

The planetary transit indicates that health problems shall get aggravated. In the mid of the week that

is after 26th December you shall start getting favorable results in all areas. Health shall get recovered fully. You might go on journey and social reputation and work position shall also improve suddenly as the good news of your progress shall pour in. The financial problems shall get rectified. The week shall be too good for you.



LIBRA

SEP 23 to OCT 22

This shall also be one of the brightest and luckiest weeks for you as your work and education

shall be admired and appreciated for sure. In the beginning of the week some good news about work progress and children's result shall pour in. Speculative activities shall prove fruitful. Love life shall be at its best. You shall enjoy great conjugal compatibility with your partner.



CAPRICORN

DEC 22 to JAN 19

In the beginning of the week you shall be spending good time with your family and the support

of your spouse shall help you improve the family atmosphere. The financial issues shall also get addressed properly. In spite of busy schedule because of some problems related to health and finance you shall not fail in maintaining the pace of progress at work. The social life and children related plans shall be successful.



TAURUS

APRIL 21 to MAY 20

The planetary transit indicates that from the beginning of this week you shall be putting in lot of ef-

forts to do well at work place so that you succeed in getting a solution for the problems that are following you from a long time. You shall succeed in doing so the only hitch is lack of focus therefore if you shall work with a focused approach the success shall come easily as your adversaries and competitors are already not as competent as you are.



LEO

JULY 23 to AUG 22

This shall prove to be excellent for all areas of life specifically with the support of spouse, friends, relatives, part-

ners and your intelligence in handling administrative activities shall be appreciated and you would be pleased with the beneficial results that you shall be getting for the tasks undertaken. The only issue can remain there that of health and happiness on 26th and 27th of the week. You are advised not to take any important decisions on these two days.



SCORPIO

OCT 23 to NOV 22

In the beginning of the week you shouldn't be taking any important decision however after 25th of

December you can specifically make some plans regarding education, love relationship, children and speculative activities. After the mid of the week you shall do better in the field of competition. Health conditions shall remain average in this week and there shall be betterment in marital bliss on the last two days of the week.



ACQUARIUS

JAN 20 to FEB 19

The planetary transit indicates that this is going to be one of the best weeks of the year for you.

There shall be an atmosphere of celebration everywhere you shall be going. The family atmosphere shall be full of love, laughter, peace and happiness. Friends and relatives shall appreciate you for your achievements. You are going to get complete favor of destiny and you can take any important decision regarding arrangement of funds.



GEMINI

MAY 21 to JUN 20

This week shall be one of the brightest weeks of this month for you as you shall be getting suc-

cess at every step in the beginning of the week. In the mid of the week your work situation shall improve and you shall be earning more gains with increase in income. Although there shall remain ups and downs in financial matters but you shall remain satisfied with the inflow of money. Last two days are good for going on journeys.



VIRGO

AUG 23 to SEP 22

This week shall prove highly auspicious for all areas of life specifically your financial position

shall remain perfect. If you wish to get rid of your mental tensions then don't keep anything pending. Accomplish all tasks at right time and do not postpone any work but you are advised not to take any important decision on 28th and 29th of December as these two days are not auspicious for your health and happiness.



SAGITTARIUS

NOV 23 to DEC 21

You shall not be getting good results in terms of health of family mem-

bers and even there shall be lack of harmony among them in the starting of the week however you shall be putting lot of your energies to settle the issues. Up to a great extent you shall be able to do justice in addressing these matters. You shall be doing lot of planning to consolidate your resources of financial arrangement and your main focus shall be to create a strong source of income.



PISCES

FEB 20 to MAR 20

The beginning of the week is not good for your state of mind therefore skip taking important deci-

sions on initial three days of the week. From the late evening of 25th you shall feel better and then you can think of starting any important task. You shall be focused for your activities like education, love life, children's future. Stay away from speculative activities. The last four days of the week are comparatively better for your family.

Kindly read the predictions from your ascendant sign. If you do not know your ascendant sign then read the same from Moon sign. If Moon sign is also not known then read it from the Zodiac sign. The ascendant sign which is calculated from the birth details viz. date, month, year, time & place of birth gives 85 % accurate predictions. The accuracy of predictions from Moon sign get limited to only 50 %. The predictions from Zodiac sign are only 25 % accurate. In nutshell the predictions from ascendant sign are most accurate. In getting personality analysis the traits given by ascendant sign are 100 % accurate and that is the essence of Vedic Astrology.

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Ananya Panday shares glimpse of Xmas in her new home

Bollywood diva Ananya Panday, who recently purchased her new "dream home", has now shared a sneak peek into her Christmas preparation.

Ananya, who enjoys a fan-base of 24.6 million followers on Instagram, shared a picture of a decorated Christmas tree. She gave the music of the song 'Jingle Bell Rock' sung by Bobby Helms.

The photo was captioned: "First Christmas in my new home."

The house of the 'Gehraiyaan' actress is designed by superstar Shah Rukh Khan's wife and designer Gauri Khan.

Earlier, Ananya had thanked Gauri for designing her new house, and shared some pictures with the latter.

For the unversed, Ananya and Gauri already have a special bond, as Ananya is besties with Gauri's daughter Suhana Khan.

Meanwhile, on the work front, Ananya is currently gearing up for the release of 'Kho Gaye Hum Kahan', which is set to premiere on Netflix from December 26. The coming of age drama is directed by Arjun Varain Singh, and also stars Siddhant Chaturvedi and Adarsh Gourav. *IANS*



ARSHAD WARSI RECALLS WHEN HE DIDN'T HAVE WORK FOR 3 YEARS

Actor and judge of celebrity dance reality show, 'Jhalak Dikhhla Jaa'- Arshad Warsi went down the memory lane and recalled the times when he did not have work for three years, and how life changed for him after 'Munna Bhai MBBS'.

Arshad, who started his career in 1987 as an assistant director to Mahesh Bhatt in the movie 'Kaash', had choreographed the title song of 'Roop Ki Rani Choron Ka Raja'.

He made his acting debut in 1996 with the Amitabh Bachchan-produced romantic drama 'Tere Mere Sapne'. It also stars Chandrachur Singh, Priya Gill and Simran. The actor is best known for his role as Circuit in the 2003 satirical comedy drama 'Munna Bhai M.B.B.S.', directed by Rajkumar Hirani. It stars Sanjay Dutt in the lead, with Sunil Dutt, Gracy Singh, Boman Irani, and Jimmy Shergill in pivotal roles. *IANS*

TOP TEN HINDI FILM SONGS

- 1 Fanaa Kar Lo: *Starfish*
- 2 Leke Prabhu Ka Naam: *Tiger 3*
- 3 Chaleya : *Jawan*
- 4 Tu hai kahan: *Tu hai kahan*
- 5 Satranga: *ANIMAL*
- 6 Ruaan: *Tiger 3*
- 7 Dil Jhoom: *Gadar 2*
- 8 Kalaastar: *Honey 3.0*
- 9 Chal Tere Ishq Mein: *Gadar 2*
- 10 Meri Ho Ja: *Meri Ho Ja*

Varun Dhawan injures leg while shooting



Varun Dhawan, who is gearing up for his upcoming project 'VD 18', revealed he has suffered a leg injury.

Taking time out from his busy schedule, Varun always keeps his fans and followers updated with his personal and professional life.

Varun took to his Instagram stories and posted a picture of his swollen leg.

The actor captioned the picture, "Swollen shin banged it into an iron."

The yet-to-be-titled film is directed by Kalees and produced by Atlee and Murad Khetani.

The film also stars Keerthy Suresh and Wamiqa Gabbi.

Excited about the project, Wamiqa said in a statement: "Being a part of 'VD18' is a thrilling experience for me. Collaborating with exceptional talents like Varun Dhawan and Keerthy Suresh under Atlee sir's visionary direction is a creative journey I'm eager to explore. I have been and will always be eternally grateful to 2023, the year that plunged things to new beginnings. And to end the year by being on sets now for my next is truly the perfect curtain call for the year. *ANI*



**It's never
easy leaving
Raha, says
Alia Bhatt**

Bollywood actress Alia Bhatt has opened up on the separation anxiety for her daughter Raha, and shared how it is never easy for her to leave her bundle of joy.

Alia and actor Ranbir Kapoor got married on April 14, 2022 in a traditional Hindu ceremony at their residence in Mumbai. In November 2022, she gave birth to their daughter Raha.

Last Sunday, the 'Brahmastra' actress, who enjoys a massive fan base of 81.5 million followers on Instagram, hosted an "Ask Me Anything" session with her fans.

A user asked the 'Gully Boy' star: "Do you still feel separation anxiety for Raha?"

Alia replied to the fan, saying, "It's never easy leaving her. But I guess that'll take a while to change. Knowing she's with family even when I'm away makes me feel less guilty somehow."

The 30-year-old actress also shared a few nicknames of her baby girl. "Rahu Rara Lollipop (to name a few)," replied Alia to a fan.

Further, a fan asked her: "How do you deal with anxiety?"

The 'Gangubai Kathiawadi' actress said: "We all have certain things that might trigger our anxiety - for example I find myself getting very worked up with any sudden change or a situation I have no control over. But it took me a long while to understand that. So prior to any of these moments I just try and be aware of it and if it's too much I allow myself to check out and feel the way I feel."

"Trying to control how you feel sometimes does more harm than good. Also speak to someone who you can trust! It helps," she added.

Alia ended the 'AMA' session, saying, "Okay yoga time.. that was fun.. happy Sunday everyone.. bye bye See you soon."

On the professional front, she was last seen as Keya in 'Heart of Stone'. She next has 'Jigra' in the pipeline. *IANS*

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'Bigg Boss 17': Aishwarya calls Ankita 'badtameez aurat'



Aishwarya Sharma Bhatt and Ankita Lokhande ended up in a really ugly fight and used derogatory words to describe each other after getting into an ugly fight.

The fight started right after Sohail and Arbaaz Khan asked Ankita who she felt wasn't playing their individual game in the show. Ankita replied by taking Aishwarya's name.

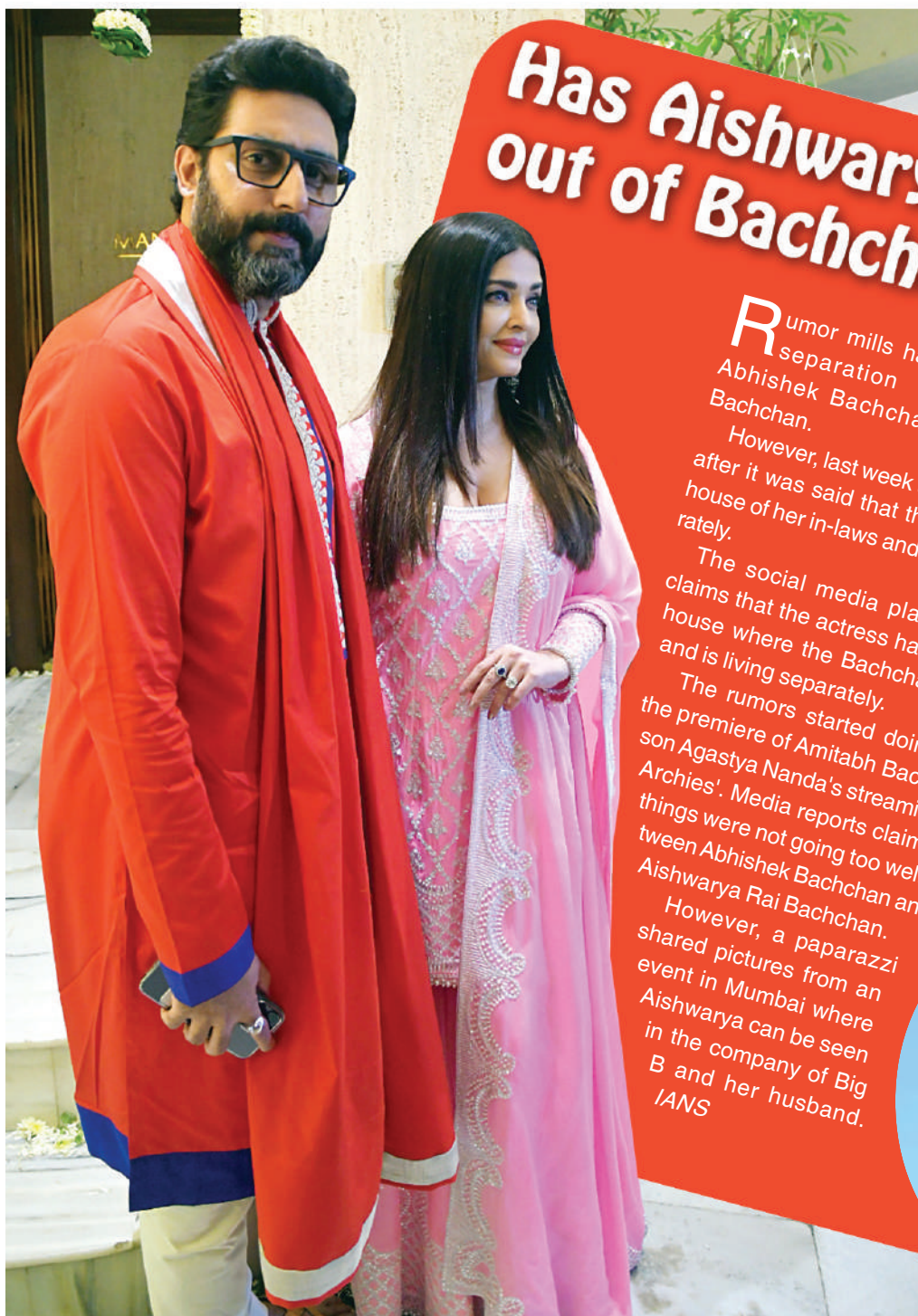
She said that Aishwarya should play the game in front foot. However, this did not go down well with Aishwarya, which led to the fight.

Responding to Ankita, Aishwarya said: "Khudke pati ke dimag pe game khelne wali aurat, mujhe Ankita ka game koi dikhao please, she doesn't have an individual game of her own. Don't ask me to play an individual game and first learn the spelling of individual."

The fight then turns ugly as their husbands Vicky Jain and Neil Bhatt get involved.

Aishwarya comes charging towards Ankita and starts calling her names. Ankita then says that she and her husband have been after her since they've entered the show.

Aishwarya replies saying that her husband is not interested in a woman like her. *IANS*



Has Aishwarya moved out of Bachchan house?

Rumor mills have been abuzz with the separation of Bollywood couple Abhishek Bachchan and Aishwarya Rai Bachchan.

However, last week the rumors got stronger, after it was said that the actress has left the house of her in-laws and has been living separately.

The social media platform is filled with claims that the actress has moved out of the house where the Bachchan family resides, and is living separately.

The rumors started doing rounds since the premiere of Amitabh Bachchan's grandson Agastya Nanda's streaming film 'The Archies'. Media reports claimed that things were not going too well between Abhishek Bachchan and Aishwarya Rai Bachchan.

However, a paparazzi shared pictures from an event in Mumbai where Aishwarya can be seen in the company of Big B and her husband. *IANS*

Neha Dhupia's International film debut in Ali El Arabi's 'Blue 52'

Actress Neha Dhupia is set make her International film debut with 'Blue 52', directed by renowned Egyptian filmmaker Ali El Arabi.

Ali El Arabi, celebrated for his award-winning documentary feature 'Captains of Za'atari'.

'Blue 52' unfolds against the stunning backdrops of Kochi, India, and Qatar.

Speaking of her international debut, Neha said: "Embarking on the journey of 'Blue 52' has been nothing short of magical. The fusion of diverse cultures in this international venture allowed me to delve deep into a character that is both challenging and emotionally resonant."

The actress said: "It's a transformative experience that I believe will leave a lasting impact and I'm glad that Ali chose me to essay the lead in what is my international first." Director Ali El Arabi said: "Creating 'Blue 52' was a labor of love, blending the cinematic languages of Egypt, America, and India. Neha brought an unparalleled dedication to her role, infusing the character with a nuanced emotional depth."

"The picturesque locales of Kochi and the vibrant energy of Qatar served as the perfect canvas for our storytelling. This film is a testament to the collaborative spirit of international cinema, and I am excited for audiences to experience the richness we've crafted together."

The film is the story of Ashish, who at the age of nine is isolated by his father when he loses his oldest son and using this fear he isolates Ashish on an island by the backwaters of Kochi, India. *IANS*





Kiara on Sidharth Malhotra's 'Indian Police Force' teaser

Actress Kiara Advani has reacted to the teaser of her husband Sidharth Malhotra's upcoming series 'Indian Police Force'.

Kiara took to Instagram stories and shared the teaser. She captioned the clip with three fire emojis and then tagged her husband Sidharth.

She added: @itsrohitshetty sir can't wait."

The teaser of the series, which also stars Vivek Oberoi and Shilpa Shetty, released last weekend.

The over-a-minute teaser shows different parts of the city, with each frame intensifying the suspense of a ticking bomb clock that eventually results in explosive blasts. It ends with "Jai Hind", which in every sense feels like a heartfelt tribute to the service.

The series marks the debut of Rohit Shetty in the OTT world.

Created by Rohit Shetty and directed by Rohit Shetty and Sushwath Prakash, this seven-episode action-packed series is a heartfelt tribute to the selfless service, unconditional commitment and fierce patriotism of the Indian police officers across the country who put everything on the line in their call of duty to keep people safe. *IANS*



IVANKA DAS: 'GHOOMER' IS TURNING POINT IN MY CAREER

Known to be part of projects like 'Bombay Begums', 'Haddi', actor and choreographer Ivanka Das has called Abhishek Bachchan and Saiyami Kher-starrer 'Ghoomer'-the turning point of her career, and feels grateful to have great screen time in it.

Ivanka said that while all her projects have been close to her heart, 'Ghoomer' has been the one she treasures.

She says that it changed a lot of things for her.

"My first project was a Facebook ad. I auditioned and I got finalized and I agreed on doing it and that's how my journey started. Later, I did a show for Netflix called Bombay Begums. That also happened through auditions only," said Ivanka. *IANS*

Rashmika is 'grateful beyond words'

As her film 'Pushpa-The Rise' completed two years of its release last week Sunday, actress Rashmika Mandanna, who gained the spotlight with her performance as Srivalli in the Allu Arjun-starrer, said that she is grateful beyond words.

Srivalli, a cherished character of hers, originated from another hit film, 'Pushpa - The Rise'. The film showcased Rashmika in a whole different avatar, which also got her the title of 'National Crush'.

Rashmika said: "Grateful beyond words as we mark two incredible years since the release of 'Pushpa-The Rise'. Thank you for all the love and support, I have always received from you, my loves.. It really feels so so surreal."

The actress, who is also a part of the blockbuster 'Animal', mentioned about her character Gitanjali and said these two roles are really special to her.

"Right from Srivalli to Gitanjali ; characters closest to my heart," she said.

On the work front, Rashmika is currently shooting for 'Pushpa 2 - The Rule', apart from which she also has D-51, The Girlfriend, Rainbow and Chaava. *IANS*



Philosophy

MOTHER MEERA

Q *uestion: Is formal meditation important?*

Mother Meera: Yes, to meditate a half an hour or an hour is good. But if one becomes fanatical, wants to leave one's job, live alone and meditate twenty-four hours a day, that is not good.

Q: What kind of meditation should we do?

M: Close your eyes and sit in silence and do japa on any divine name.

Q: What is japa? Why is it so important?

M: Japa is the repetition of the name of that in which we believe. Japa is essential. Japa is not simple words - each divine name is full of divine vibrations. These surround us and protect us and penetrate both our bodies and our whole inner being. Remembrance of the divine name gives immediate peace and happiness and

diately but results will come. One can feel the differences in the vibrations of words. Using the word, one can make things change.

Q: Is it necessary to wait for a guru to give a mantra or may one find a mantra on one's own?

M: Whichever mantra comes to you easily and spontaneously is the one you should do. It should give a strong feeling and be like music flowing from the heart.

Q: I don't have a fixed japa. At different times different forms of the Divine - such as Shiva or Krishna - come into my mind, and I sing the appropriate mantra. Is doing this all right?

M: Yes, whatever appeals at the moment is all right. One doesn't have to have a fixed mantra.

Q: When I repeat your name is it necessary to say the mantra as given in The Mother, or can I just repeat Mother Meera or simply



Mother Meera

*Japa of divine name gives peace and happiness
Remembrance of the divine name gives immediate peace and happiness and turns us from the worldly to the Divine*

turns us from the worldly to the Divine. There is no special and limited time for japa. It is very good to do japa all day. If this is not possible then remember whenever it is possible.

We can practice japa during all activities. It is easier to remember when we do physical work without mental work. This japa helps us to purify our consciousness and make our sadhana easy.

Q: How should we say japa?

M: Simply. Just say it. In doing japa, one should not strain or try to achieve something specific. One should try to be sincere and to have love of God. The power immediately follows, whether you are aware of it or not.

Q: Would you explain the power of the name?

M: Each syllable of a divine name - such as Krishna or Jesus - has vibrations which change the atmosphere. Any object that we think about repeatedly generates its own vibration. Even though mantras are strong and powerful, we may not feel the effects imme-

Meera?

M: Either is sufficient.

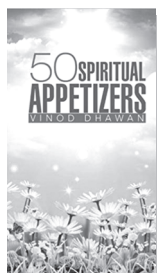
Q: In meditation on a form of the Divine, is it enough to just have the feeling of the Divine, or must one say the mantra as well?

M: It is enough to have the feeling. But it is good to mentally repeat the name of the Divine as well, because doing this trains the mind and heart.

The 63rd birth anniversary of Mother Meera will be celebrated on December 26

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From Information Age to the Age of Intelligence

D.C. PATHAK

It is not too distant in the past that the world witnessed a great transformation resulting from a combination of epoch-making developments - all occurring around the same time at the beginning of the 1990s. These literally created a 'new world order' impacting not only the economy and business but national security and international cooperation as well.

An unprecedented level of 'globalization' was reached in terms of both economic expansion and a universally shared threat to security when the Cold War ended due to the dismemberment of the USSR and the demise of International Communism, the advent of Information Technology revolution created border fewer markets and faith-based new global terror rooted in Islamic 'radicalization' represented by Taliban, Al Qaeda and ISIS registered a rising graph.

their mutual economic advancement but they also had to join hands, as the two largest democracies, in leading the democratic world against the peril of the faith-based terrorism that was sustained by the fundamentalist notions of supremacism and exclusivism of Islam as a faith.

The driving force behind economic globalization - which became the prime characteristic of the post-Cold War world, was the arrival of Information Technology (IT) that enabled instant communication across geographical boundaries to set new norms of entrepreneurship and competition - permitting a 'smart' player to take on its much larger and more resourceful rivals from any part of the globe.

'Smartness' lay in producing more per unit of resource that IT helped in and businesses were compelled to study both market trends as well as use of technology to stay in competition. Intelligence by definition is the information that enables you to see what lies ahead and since this could be gleaned out of an analysis of the enormous

The upswing of Terrorism can be traced to the turbulent post-Soviet Afghanistan when Pakistan sent in the Taliban to control that country and facilitated the installation of the Kabul Emirate of Taliban in 1996

The upswing of Terrorism can be traced to the turbulent post-Soviet Afghanistan when Pakistan sent in the Taliban to control that country and facilitated the installation of the Kabul Emirate of Taliban in 1996.

Since Islamic radicals considered the US-led West as their first enemy - this was rooted in historical legacy, the Emirate ran into problems with the US making the latter work for its ouster. This laid the turf for 9/11 that in turn resulted in the US-sponsored 'war on terror' in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The 'war on terror' was utilized by Islamic radical forces to spread their hold in the Muslim world somewhat at the cost of the allies of the US like Saudi Arabia, UAE and Bahrain.

The overriding impact of the new world order was in giving a boost to economic globalization where the agenda was largely set by the US but the strategy of countering the terror of Islamic radicals also became equally important for the US.

India and the US had to be together for

amount of data that was being put in the public domain regularly, corporates willingly invested in a set-up that would produce Business Intelligence for them.

Intelligence is a word normally used in the context of national security but the applied version of it is now not only a part of the business world but 'being well informed' - which was the mandate of the Age of Information - has also become a means of running personal and family life on a note of success. Ignorance cannot be defended any more and an awareness of what the socio-economic scene and even the crime situation was like, would be a factor in keeping one safe and secure.

Terrorism, Narcotics and Illicit arms have brought issues of national security closer to the citizens because they came into operation where people lived and that is another reason why citizens should keep themselves broadly informed of the social security environment around them.

IANS

For detailed story visit www.indiapost.com

Disclaimer: Views expressed are personal to the author

Bangladesh's elections will impact regional security and connectivity

IMRAN AMIR

Three major states in South Asia are currently poll-bound. Sequentially, Bangladesh, Pakistan and India are heading towards their next general elections. Other South Asian countries are also either approaching their election or like Maldives and Sri Lanka recently completed them. While elections are generally perceived as domestic political affairs, they often have implications for regional politics and security.

South Asian states and societies share a close affinity owing to cultural and religious connections. As Hinduism and Islam are two predominant religions in South Asia, often these religions become important tools in the practice of electoral democracy. For instance, religious identity

South Asian states and societies share a close affinity owing to cultural and religious connections. As Hinduism and Islam are two predominant religions in South Asia, often these religions become important tools in the practice of electoral democracy

provides right-wing parties with a support base and often has safety concerns for minorities.

Many internal political events in a country can have a ripple effect on other neighboring countries. Owing to strong cultural and religious similarities, South Asian countries share several regional security complexes that are important aspects of their national security. Regional Security Complex is a theory espoused by Barry Buzan and Ole Waever, which identifies a regional security complex as a group of states whose primary national security concerns are so closely intertwined that they cannot be addressed independently. The theory views security interdependence as a critical

factor in the creation of regionally based clusters.

In the case of South Asia, preserving communal harmony, protecting minority groups, curbing transnational terrorism, and keeping stability in bilateral trade are some of the regional security complexes intertwined with other neighbors. As Bangladesh is heading toward its most anticipated election next month, it is worth exploring this often-neglected issue - the impact of Bangladesh's upcoming general election on South Asian politics.

Pre-election implications

Broadly, the implications can be identified in two stages: the pre-election stage and the post-election stage. During the pre-election stage that spans through election day, vote-bank

politics increases security risks for minority groups. Locally, minority groups are traditionally perceived as a 'vote bank' for a specific political party, and hence, right-wing parties and their allies try to intimidate them. The intimidation most often escalates to violence. The Hindu population in rural Bangladesh becomes insecure during this pre-election phase.

Money laundering is another concern that arises in the pre-election phase. Candidates and lobby groups spend large amounts of money, exceeding the legal limit in most cases, to win the election. As a large amount of money is spent mainly through cash, money laundering occurs to and from

Bangladesh. The illegal transaction comes to meet the election expenses, while many smuggle wealth to foreign countries to protect their illegal wealth, fearing the uncertain future after the election.

Before the last election in 2018, The Policy Research Institute (PRI) study found that money laundering increased in Bangladesh and ultimately surged the dollar price. Money laundering can take place for terror financing that may go undetected amid such high transactions both in legal and illegal mediums. Illegal transactions also take place to lure voters, a notorious malpractice prevailing in South Asian election culture.

Post-election implications

Often after the election, minority repression through violent attacks and arson takes place in Bangladesh locally as a retaliation for their perceived bloc voting. Immediately after the 2001 election result, Bangladesh witnessed months-long attacks against the minority population in Bangladesh perpetrated by the cadres of BNP and Jamaat, the victors of that election who launched retaliatory attacks on Awami League voters. Such minority repressions can invoke Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) and illegal migration to neighboring countries.

As Hindu and Muslim are two majority religions in the Indian subcontinent, Hindu minority repression in Bangladesh can have a ripple effect on India's minority Muslims.

Besides minority repression, poll-related violence can destabilize the country. The months-long arson attacks and the use of improvised explosives in the aftermath of the 2014 election are prime examples of how political violence can affect the general people. *South Asia Monitor*

For detailed story visit www.indiapost.com



INDIA POST

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WHEN CAN INDIA BE A DEVELOPED COUNTRY?

Prime Minister Narendra Modi along with Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, last Sunday, took a pledge to make the country "a developed nation" by 2047, when it celebrates 100 years of Independence, at a Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra program in Varanasi.

About the pledge, Modi said, "Once India becomes a developed nation in the next 25 years, then there will be no sign of troubles." Asking people to take the pledge of "Viksit Bharat" by 2047, the PM said: I would continue to work as your sewak, and with the blessing of Mahadev, I would never shy away from the responsibility of the country that you have given to me."

Prime Minister Modi, who reached his parliamentary constituency for a two-day visit, was accorded a grand welcome with showering of flower petals and beating of drums on his way from the airport to the venue.

Citing the example of the freedom movement and how people took a resolve for Independence, the Prime Minister said if 149 crore countrymen will resolve to make the country developed, then Bharat would become a developed nation by 2047" He said every citizen of the country should feel that be it banks, railways or government offices, everything belongs to them, then only they could work for the country and feel it is their own.

"Every person of the country should feel the railways is theirs, the hospital is theirs, the officers are theirs, the country is theirs," said the PM.

Would this alone make India a developed country? I doubt. Very soon India will be inching close to be a \$5 trillion economy. The question remains, with the rural population mostly below poverty and more than 60% youth, largely unemployed can it? Barely 4 percent of 1.4 billion citizens pay income tax.

It took China 20 years to reach where India is now. Under dictatorial leadership things are fairly easier but how long will that last, remains to be seen, as things are not all well there too. India with a liberal democracy is in an altogether different scenario. With low literacy among such a large population, coupled with poverty and massive corruption at all levels, it is an uphill task for any political leader to solve.

Even though many of the above mentioned factors are improving under Modi's leadership, he alone cannot solve all the problems. To become a fully developed country, one generation will have to sacrifice and work relentlessly to achieve that goal. Government must ensure that newfound wealth reaches the poorest of poor. Delivery of education and health has to be implemented on war footing. Simultaneously, law and order, social education and youth employment, need to be given top priority.

For India to become fully developed and progressive, it needs to be accompanied by a strong state at center, and the rule of law must prevail in the land. Guilty must be punished to send strong message to people who tend to bypass the law. Besides, citizens must be sensitized and be educated on climate change and avoid wasteful living.

Disclaimer: Views expressed are personal to the author

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Offbeat International destinations for a unique New Year's Celebration

NEW DELHI: As we welcome 2024, embark on a journey to offbeat international destinations that not only offer unique cultural experiences but also promise to etch unforgettable memories in your heart. Immerse yourself in the excitement of the New Year with ongoing offers and special fares on domestic flights, allowing you to craft an exceptional journey that perfectly aligns with your desired budget range.

Checkout these 5 offbeat international destinations for a unique New Year's celebration:

Reykjavik, Iceland: Dancing Northern Lights and Midnight Sun

Experience the celestial dance of the Northern Lights and the enchanting glow of the midnight sun in Reykjavik. Dive into Iceland's unique landscapes, from geysers to hot springs, while immersing yourself in the vibrant local culture for an unforgettable New Year's celebration. Reykjavik offers a blend of natural wonders, cultural richness, and unique experiences, making it an ideal destination for travellers seeking both adventure and tranquility.

Hoi An, Vietnam: Lantern-Lit Tranquility

Transport yourself to the tranquil town of Hoi An, where lantern-lit streets and traditional performances create a serene atmosphere. Explore the historic Old Town with its well-preserved architecture and vibrant markets, making for a peaceful yet culturally rich start to the New Year. Hoi An is a tailor's paradise, and travellers can indulge in the unique experience of having custom-made clothing. From traditional ao dai to modern dresses, skilled tailors can craft outfits to suit individual preferences.

Chefchaouen, Morocco: Blue-Hued Bliss

Discover the "Blue Pearl" of Morocco,

Chefchaouen, where blue-hued architecture meets the Rif Mountains. Stroll through narrow, winding streets lined with vibrant blue buildings and immerse yourself in the local arts and crafts for a quiet and culturally rich New Year's celebration. Explore the bustling medina and indulge in a shopping spree. Chefchaouen is known for its artisanal products, including handmade crafts, textiles, and locally produced goods. One can also bargain with local vendors for authentic souvenirs.

Queenstown, New Zealand: Adventure and Festivities

Seek adventure and vibrant celebrations in Queenstown, New Zealand. From bungee jumping to lakeside fireworks, the city promises a thrilling start to the new year. Explore the stunning landscapes of the South Island and indulge in outdoor activities amidst natural beauty. Embark on a scenic journey to Fiordland National Park, known for its majestic fiords, waterfalls, and dense rainforests. Take a cruise on Milford Sound or Doubtful Sound to witness the breathtaking landscapes.

Salvador, Brazil: Carnival Extravaganza

Immerse yourself in the lively Carnival atmosphere of Salvador, Brazil. The city hosts a massive street party with music, dancing, and vibrant costumes for an energetic start to the New Year. Explore the rich cultural heritage, visit historic landmarks, and enjoy the vibrant street art scene. Visit Mercado Modelo, a bustling market where you can shop for local crafts, souvenirs, and traditional Bahian products. The market reflects the vibrant culture and arts of Salvador.

For those seeking an extra layer of value and exclusivity in their travels, can also consider exploring Yatra Prime. This is designed to elevate travel experiences, boasting unmatched convenience with the elimination of convenience fees, access to exclusive fares on domestic air tickets, and priority access to VIP customer support. *IANSLife*

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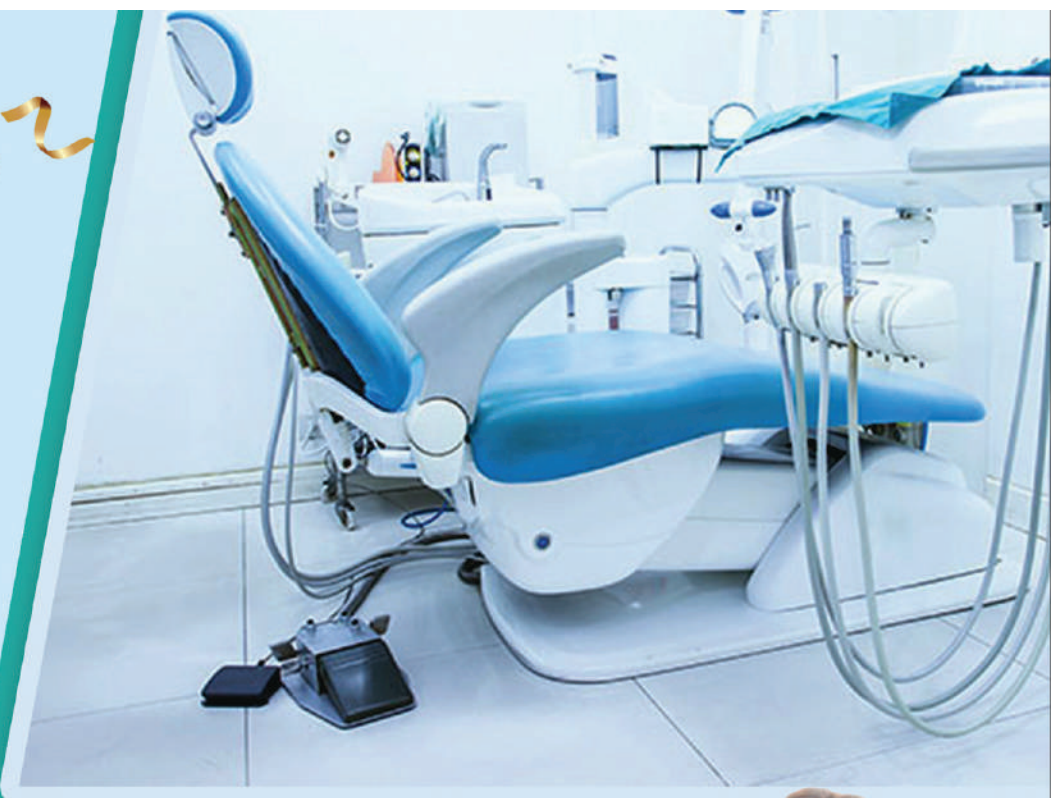
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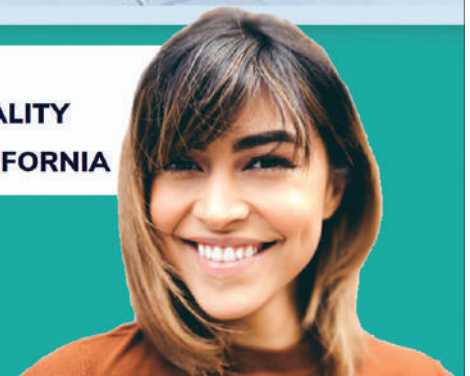
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