

The South Asian Times

excellence in journalism

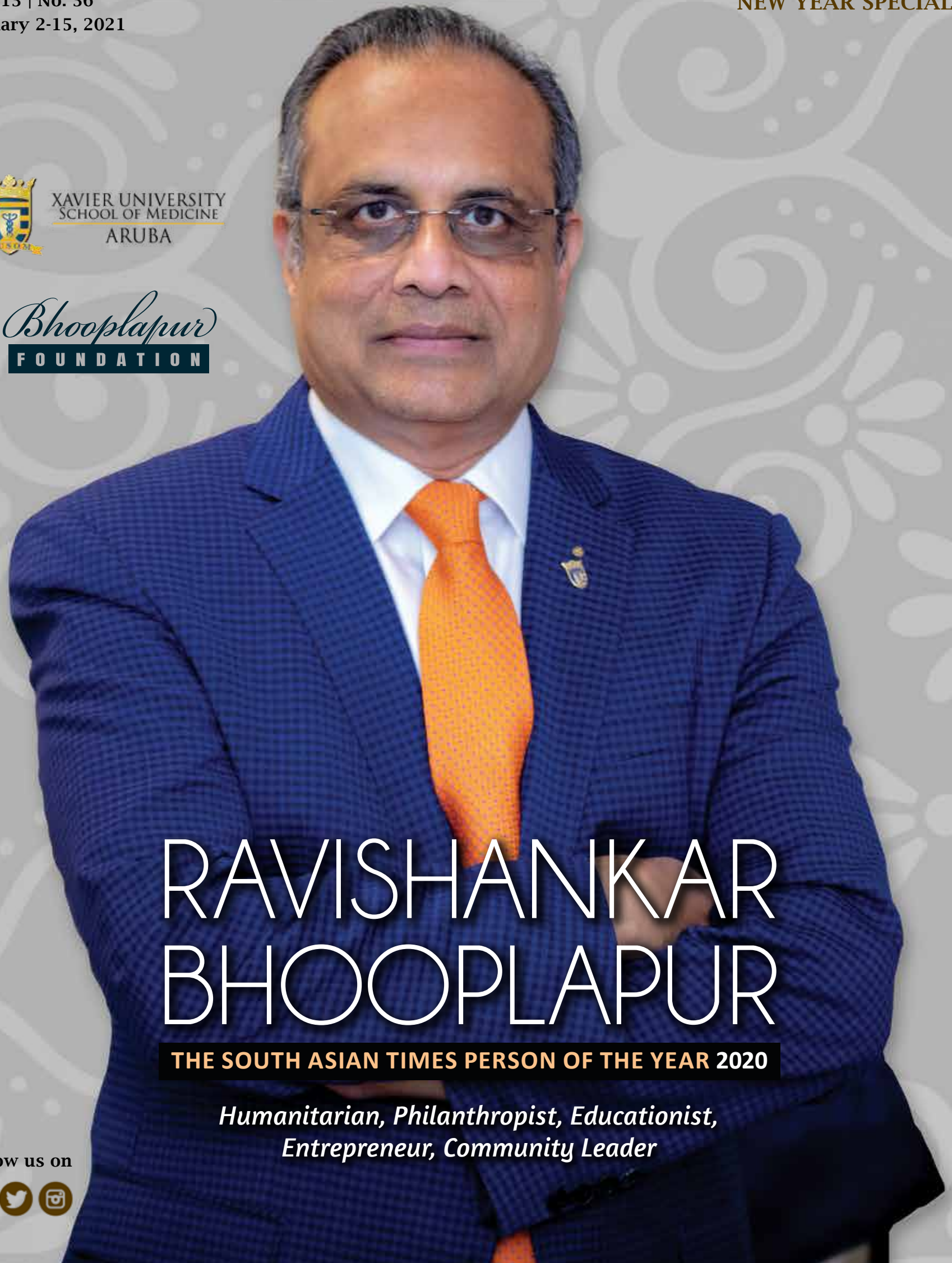
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January 2-15, 2021

NEW YEAR SPECIAL



XAVIER UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
ARUBA

Bhooplapur
FOUNDATION



RAVISHANKAR
BHOOPLAPUR

THE SOUTH ASIAN TIMES PERSON OF THE YEAR 2020

*Humanitarian, Philanthropist, Educationist,
Entrepreneur, Community Leader*

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May God Continue to Bless US



We the People
 insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence,
 and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution

Article I
 Section 1
 Clause 1
 All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall be composed of Members chosen every second Year

All together



Ranju Batra
CHAIR



The South Asian Times

excellence in journalism

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Suriname President, NZ minister among 30 PBD awardees

New Delhi: Suriname President Chandrikapersad Santokhi, Curacao Prime Minister Eugene Rhuggenaath and New Zealand minister Priyanca Radhakrishnan were among 30 NRIs, and Indian-origin people and organizations that were conferred the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award on Saturday.

President Ram Nath Kovind, who delivered the valedictory address on the third and final day of the 16th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas celebrations, presented the awards at a virtual event.

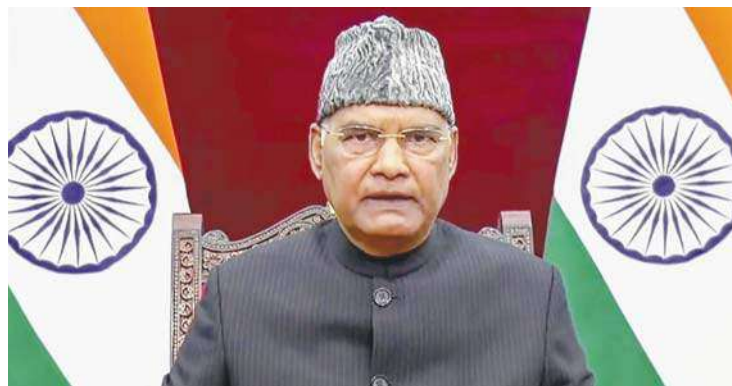
The award is the highest honor conferred by the President of India as part of the PBD Conventions on an NRI, PIO, and organization or institution established and run by NRIs or PIOs.

Rhuggenaath, Santokhi and Radhakrishnan were awarded for their public service.

Mukhesh Aghi, president and CEO of US-India Strategic Partnership Forum, was also among the awardees.

In an acceptance speech on behalf of all awardees, Aghi said this award represented the very best of India from all over the world linking our 'janambhumi'

Continued on page 6



President Ram Nath Kovind presented the awards at a virtual event. (Photo courtesy PTI)



From the US, AAPI President Dr Sudhakar Jonnalagadda and FIA (NY-NJ-CT) were honored, the latter was recognized by The South Asian Times as Organization of the Year in 2016.

Democracy Defies Assault



Pro-Trump rioters stormed the Capitol building when Congress was ratifying Biden's victory. (Photo courtesy PBS)

- ▶▶ Congress ratifies Biden's win after Capitol riot
- ▶▶ Calls to remove Trump even as he plans to skip Biden's inauguration
- ▶▶ After Georgia wins, Dems wrest Senate; Biden promises bigger stimulus checks

Washington: America was thrown into turmoil after the pro-Trump rioters stormed the Capitol building in Washington DC on Wednesday when Congress was counting the Electoral votes to ratify Joe Biden's victory in the 2020 election. Though in a triumph for democracy and the resilience of the system, Congress did finish their constitutionally mandated job the same night. But after effects of the darkest day in US history continue to reverberate in the capital and the country.

President Trump who had addressed (some say incited) the massive crowd of his supporters on Wednesday morning, encouraged them to march to the Capitol

building, took too long to condemn the assault, which put the lives of the Vice President Mike Pence, lawmakers and the staff in danger. A day later he gave a non-concession concession speech, but has since announced that he is not going to attend Biden's inauguration on January 20.

Outrage on the happenings was expressed by Democrat leaders and many Republicans and calls for Trump to quit or be removed. At least 2 of his colleagues and a handful of staffers resigned in protest. Speaker Nancy Pelosi indicated working on another impeachment of the President, but others said needless to go that way

Continued on page 6

Ravi Batra Tweets & OpEd on the turmoil in DC:
[US Affairs pages 49 and 51](#)

India beginning Covid vax drive from Jan 16



Oxford vaccine Covishield and the indigenously developed Covaxin have been approved for emergency use in the country. (Photo courtesy Indian Express)

New Delhi: India is all set to kick off the vaccination drive against Covid-19 on January 16, the central government has said.

The rollout of Covid vaccine will provide priority to the healthcare workers and the frontline workers who are estimated to be around 3 crore, followed by those above 50 years of age and the under-50 population groups with co-morbidities numbering around 27 crore, reports Indian Express.

The government has scheduled to start the drive just after the forthcoming festivals such as Lohri, Makar Sankranti, Pongal among others.

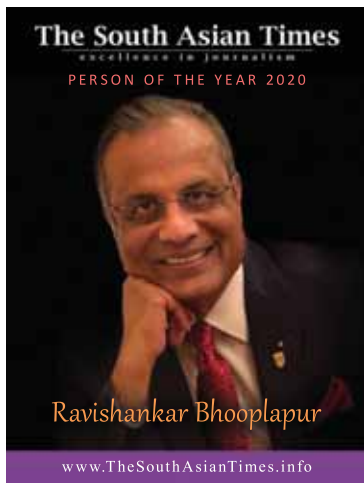
Giving the information, Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted: "On 16th *Continued on page 6*

Person of the Year & New Year Special Issue

The South Asian Times Wishes You and Your Near and Dear Ones
Happy, Healthy and Prosperous New Year



The South Asian Times
excellence in journalism



Presenting Person of the Year 2020

even during the pandemic. We are thankful to our loyal supporters, patrons, and colleagues for their invaluable cooperation during the testing times.

As every year, we start our New Year with an incredibly special edition concluding the year past by featuring The South Asian Times - Person of the Year.

There are always so many people who have contributed to impacting the lives of many thousands. We congratulate and admire all those who keep giving back to the community and helping humanity move forward. In the last 11 years, we have proudly featured amazing persons who have transformed thousands of lives with their Generous help, Guidance and by sharing their Knowledge, Understanding and Wisdom.

This year, we are proud to present a person who is an ocean of humanitarian service, an iconic philanthropist, who has truly made a difference in the lives of needy people in many parts of the world, and continues to do so. So quietly and humbly that

Letter from the Publisher



Kamlesh C. Mehta
Chairman & Publisher

many of us do not even know the sheer volume of his services and contributions. He is a very prominent Indian American based on Long Island, New York, an individual who has become a veritable Institution of Global Humanitarian Services, a dedicated volunteer who amazingly harnesses his conviction of

personal & public, combined & collective contributions to multiply the resources for the benefit of humanity globally. A philanthropist who is a highly accomplished educationist & well-respected community leader as well.

Forsythe Multimedia Group is pleased and honored to announce and feature Mr. Ravishankar Bhooplapur as "The South Asian Times - Person of the Year 2020".

Mr. Bhooplapur is an illustrious and inspirational role model. His extraordinary accomplishments and endeavors as Humanitarian, Philanthropist, Educationist, Entrepreneur, and Community Leader are truly inspirational for many. He is richly decorated, with the Ellis Island Medal of Honor and many more magnificent awards. Recently he became the only South Asian member of the most prestigious & exclusive Legacy Club of Rotary International.

Our New Year & Person of the Year special issues have been read by well over half a million

people all over the world, and they are proudly displayed by many families on their coffee tables and kept in their collectibles. Please contact us if you wish to have a hard copy, we will gladly mail you with our compliments.

Since its inception, The South Asian Times has earned an immaculate reputation for its excellence in journalism, value-based content, clean display, and qualitative advertising. Our unique vision has continuously set new trends and standards in the South Asian media fraternity of America, both in print and online.

We the team @ The South Asian Times sincerely thank all our readers and supporters who have been integral partners in our gracious presence and success. Hope you will enjoy the New Year Special issue. Your comments and suggestions are always welcome,

Kamlesh C. Mehta
Chairman@
TheSouthAsianTimes.Info

Dear Friends,

Warm greetings for a healthy, joyous, and prosperous New Year.

2020 was the year for Prayers, and we hope 2021 will bring Progress in everyone's life.

COVID-19 has affected the lives of the entire humanity. Hopefully the frightening darkness of the pandemic will dissipate this year and coming times will bring back good health, more happiness and better prosperity for all.

The Team @ The South Asian Times is proud to present our New Year Special issue. With your esteemed support, your favorite newspaper has completed 12 years of its glorious publication. We continued to serve the community interrupted

Cover pages of our last 10 New Year & Person of the Year Special Issues

| | | | | |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <p>2020</p> | <p>2019</p> | <p>2018</p> | <p>2017</p> | <p>2016</p> |
| <p>2015</p> | <p>2014</p> | <p>2013</p> | <p>2012</p> | <p>2011</p> |

HABBERSTAD BMW congratulates **Mr. Ravi Bhooplapur** as **The South Asian Times Person of The Year for 2020.**

Ravi is not only the winner of this prestigious award, he's also a profound admirer of BMW automobiles! We are honored to have Ravi as a patron here at HABBERSTAD BMW.



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2020
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India begins mass bird cull after avian flu outbreak

New Delhi: India has begun culling tens of thousands of poultry birds after avian influenza was detected in ducks, crows and wild geese in at least a dozen locations across the country, reports CNN.

The country's Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying issued an alert on Wednesday, urging states to take measures to avoid any further spread of the disease.

The southern state of Kerala ordered the culling of more than 38,000 poultry birds on Tuesday after reports of dead birds infected with the disease emerged in two districts, according to the state's Minister for Animal Husbandry, K. Raju. "Nineteen rapid response teams have been formed for this," Raju said.

About 17,000 birds have been culled in Kerala so far, and eggs have also been destroyed in some districts.

Himachal Pradesh reported the death of more than 3,000 birds from the disease, mostly bar-headed geese at a wildlife sanctuary, according to Archana Sharma, a senior official in the state forest department.

The alert comes as India continues to battle the coronavirus pandemic, which has infected more than 10.3 million people in the country, and is about to embark on one of the most ambitious mass vaccination programs ever undertaken.

Avian influenza, also called avian flu or bird flu, is an illness that usually only affects birds.

There are many different strains, but the most commonly seen and most deadly form of the virus is called Influenza A (H5N1), or the H5N1 virus.

In India, the disease spreads mostly through migratory birds entering the country during the winter season.

Most cases of human bird flu infections are due to contact with infected poultry or surfaces that are contaminated with infected bird excretions: saliva, nasal secretions or feces.

Symptoms of avian flu include fever, cough, sore throat and sometimes severe respiratory diseases and pneumonia.

There have been no reports of avian flu transmitting to people in India so far during this outbreak.

Democracy Defies Assault

Continued from page 3

with just 10 days left of Trump's term. The week has strengthened Democrats' hands. With the party winning both Senate seats in Georgia in the runoffs on Tuesday, the chamber will have a balance of 50-50, enough for their party to secure control there for the first time in six years. Vice President Kamala Harris will become the tie-breaking vote in the Senate. A Democratic majority means that Sen. Chuck Schumer as majority leader will be able to control what legislation is given priority and what proposals are blocked. Still, in the Senate, lawmakers need 60 votes to advance most legislation. This often forces legislators to work together across party lines because supermajorities are rare.

Biden was reportedly laying the groundwork for a bigger virus relief package and bigger stimulus checks.

Suriname President, NZ minister among 30 PBD awardees

Continued from page 3

with our 'karambhumi'. "The Indian diaspora is changing the world in a gentle way. From Sciences to Academia, Arts, Politics, Philanthropy and even Hollywood, the range of contribution for the diaspora community has been immense.

"This community is crucial to building people-to-people ties across the world. They promote a better understanding of India, its rich culture and diversity," he said.

From the US, the awardees included AAPI President Sudhakar Jonnalagadda, Arvind Phukan and Nilu Gupta, as well as Federation of Indian Associations (FIA) of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut, which was awarded for community

service and their work for promoting cultural ties.

India beginning Covid vax drive from Jan 16

Continued from page 3

January, India takes a landmark step forward in fighting COVID-19. Starting that day, India's nationwide vaccination drive begins. Priority will be given to our brave doctors, healthcare workers, front-line workers including Safai Karamcharis." On Saturday, PM Modi chaired a high-level meeting to review status of COVID-19 in the country along with preparedness of the states and UTs for Covid vaccination. The meeting was attended by Cabinet Secretary, Principal Secretary to PM, Health Secretary, and other senior officials.

During his 16th Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas address on Saturday, PM Modi said India is ready with two vaccines for the protection of humanity and the world is not only waiting for them but also watching how the country runs the globe's biggest vaccination program.

India's drugs regulator recently approved Oxford COVID-19 vaccine Covishield, manufactured by the Serum Institute, and the indigenously developed Covaxin of Bharat Biotech for restricted emergency use in the country. Two dry runs of the vaccines have also been conducted across the country to understand the best way to administer them and plug loopholes in logistics and training.

Modi lauded India's fight against COVID-19 and said we are among the countries with the lowest fatality rate and the highest recovery rate. He also said the way the country stood together during the pandemic was unparalleled. "Being the pharmacy of the world, India has supplied important medicines to all those in need in the world and continues to do so", he said.

PM Modi decries DC violence

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said in a tweet that he is distressed to see news about the violence at the US Capitol. He also said that democratic process cannot be allowed to be subverted through unlawful protests.

Hundreds of President Donald Trump's supporters stormed the US Capitol on Wednesday in a bid to overturn his election defeat, occupying the symbol of American democracy and forcing Congress to briefly suspend the session to certify President-elect Joe Biden's victory.

The violence at the US Capitol was the culmination of months of divisive and escalating rhetoric



(Photo courtesy AP)

around the November 3 election, with Trump repeatedly making false claims that the vote was rigged while refusing to concede.

He has also worked over the last two months to convince his supporters to help him overturn his loss.

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are proud to congratulate our colleague and friend

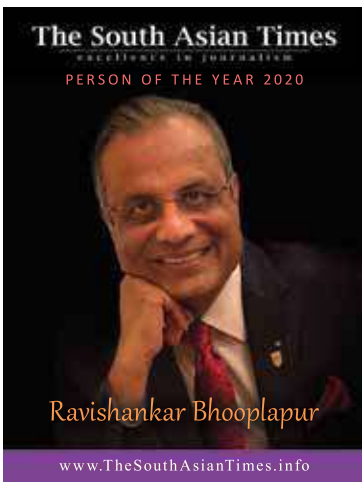


Ravishankar Bhooplapur
2020 South Asian Times Person of the Year

We are appreciative and grateful for his continuous and unconditional support for the SUNY Old Westbury community as a Trustee of the Old Westbury College Foundation and for his leadership and commitment to the communities our Long Island college is proud to serve.



www.oldwestbury.edu



CONGRATULATIONS AND ACCLAMATIONS



MESSAGE

Hearty congratulations to Shri. RavishankarBhooplapur for his being recognized as "Person of the Year" by South Asian Times. He is one my close associates and this goes along way in inspiring the people specially younger generation as his hard work in Medical field is exemplary. Driven by passion in helping the poor his contributions towards public welfare is always remembered. During the recent Covid-19 crises his work in respect of providing ICU wards at Dharwad hospital is highly appreciable. I am proud of his achievements and look forward for his more achieving such milestones.

I wish all the best for his future endeavors on behalf my constituency people.


(Pralhad Joshi)

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Justice M.N. Venkatachaliah

Former Chief Justice of India



I am delighted to learn that The South Asian Times has nominated Mr. Ravi Bhooplapur, The South Asian Times – Person of the year 2020 for meritorious services to the society.

Mr. Ravi is an extraordinary personality, full of a great impersonal love for mankind which has expressed itself in many profound ways and ideas. I particularly recall his pioneering Gift Of Life (India) initiative of the Rotary International, providing pediatric cardiac surgical support to hundreds of ailing children in India.

I congratulate Mr. Ravi and his gracious lady Ms. Jaya Bhooplapur on this well-deserved recognition. Indeed, the Indian community in the USA may justly be proud of the achievements of Mr. Ravi, who, indeed, personifies the very spirit of humanitarian service.

Hon. Evelyn Wever-Croes

Prime Minister of Aruba

I would like to congratulate Mr. Ravi Bhooplapur for this wonderful achievement as Person of the Year 2020. We are grateful for his work as a community leader and we hope Xavier University School of Medicine's role as an education institution in our community will continue to make an impact for years to come. The Government of Aruba wishes Mr. Ravi Bhooplapur much success in his endeavors going forward. May he continue to inspire communities.



K.R. Ravindran

Chair – The Rotary Foundation 2020-21

It seems so appropriate that The South Asian Times picked Ravi Bhooplapur as its 'Person of the Year'. Here is a person who has by dint of sheer hard work, sharp acumen and great tenacity built himself a successful enterprise in his adopted land and stands as a beacon to so many.

It is so very fitting that a leading journal

has recognized Ravi for his outstanding vocational achievements, but it was not that alone that brought him this honor. I can see that he is being recognized for the many acts of remarkable generosity that he shows, with an appetite that continues unabated. Perhaps Ravi symbolizes the content to the words of poet Edwin Markham, "all that we send into the lives of others comes back into our own".

I am personally aware that because of his largesse of heart many a child who was otherwise doomed in India has found the gift of life, many a student who otherwise had to make do with an imitation of a class found a regular school. Even last week he participated in a project to build a blood bank.

In all these achievements both in business and his philanthropy standing side by side with him is Jaya. Vanathy and I have been so impressed with the sincerity and simplicity with which she moves with everyone, and the fulsome manner in which she supports Ravi in all his endeavors. Truly she is the wind beneath his wings.

I wish this couple more success and pray to Him above to strengthen his arms even further for it is His work on earth that is done by people like Ravi. I wish them more success and more glories in the years to come.

Dr Dattatreyyudu Nori

Padma Shri honored oncologist

I am grateful to Ravi who worked with me and the late Dr Tulsi Polavarapu a decade ago in obtaining a Mobile Diagnostic Cancer Screening Van as a donation through Rotary International for our not-for-profit Indo American Cancer Hospital in

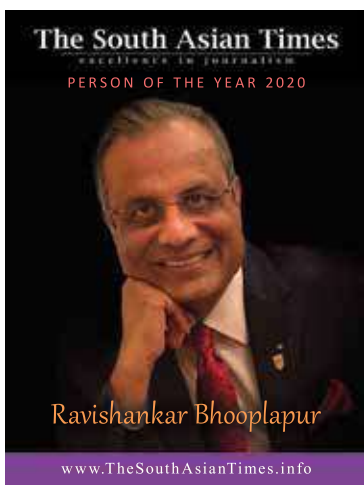


Hyderabad. That van had everything we need for cancer screening: mammogram, X-ray unit, diagnostics, etc. Working with the underprivileged, that van has screened more than one lakh people and detected innumerable cancers. I have known Ravi over a decade in different capacities -- as a financial consultant, as a top Rotarian, as a philanthropist, a community leader, and now as one of the founders of a medical school. He has excelled in all of the above.

He has been a supporter of our Sai mandir, and we had the opportunity to honor him at a mandir celebration. As an oncologist I admire him for his leadership role in developing an excellent medical school in Aruba, which has progressed to be a major teaching center with expanded facilities. In spite of all his distinguished accomplishments, he has an unassuming personality. I consider him most deserving for this honor - Person of the Year.

OVERWHELMING RESPONSE

The South Asian Times is overwhelmed by the sheer volume of congratulatory messages we have received after we made the announcement that Ravishankar Bhooplapur is our Person of the Year 2020. Looking at the names of those sending the messages also revealed to us the wide and worldwide circle of friends, admirers and associates as well as those in positions of power he has in his life and the high regard they hold him in.



besides many other epithets for you, can one add, 'Institution Builder' after the success of Xavier medical school?

Ravishankar Bhooplapur: After I reached the top in insurance business, I started looking around for enterprises, the whole gamut from real estate to brick and mortar businesses to IT, even delved in some, and even lost some money. This was around the year 2000. From my young adulthood, I always did something new every 7-8 years - new and different. Actually, I have a focus group of friends who come from different walks of life, like finance, academics, some are wealthy. I learn from them what they do, how they do it and what are the trends. One of the friends asked me what I was doing. I sell insurance, life insurance, I said, and I set up pension plans. When asked

invited me to it. There we met Neil Simon, President of Antigua medical school. He enlightened me about the supply and demand in healthcare, especially doctors. He said there's a need for a few medical schools if they're properly set up. I traveled with him many times, discussed all this in detail. I thank him for giving me much insight into medical schools and even today I discuss with him and take his advice. I spent 5 years before I jumped in to Xavier at Aruba.

One good thing about me is, if I like something, I dig deep into it and what I found confirmed my abilities and the need of setting up a good medical school. But institution building is a six lane highway - you have to keep to the speed. What I mean is, you can have a beautiful building, but without good quality academicians, and a good curriculum, or a good island

in the last 13 years, getting all the required accreditations. Ours is the only school in the Caribbean which has right now three accreditations approved by WHO as well as accepted by the NCFMEA & Department of Education in Washington. I was also fortunate to have good board members, mentors and I can give a lot of credit to Dr Bhat, Dr Prahalad, and Dr Kota as well as Chairman Edwin Casey who were not only with me on this journey but also guiding and helping me in academic matters and clinical matters. Later we set up a team of trustees, who are influential as well as of our kind of mentality. Now we are building a new campus though Covid has delayed it a bit. We are proud that the 1100 doctors graduated from our school are already practicing in the US and around the world, some in very prominent positions. We have currently about

600 students and a staff of about 100. We have pre med programs in Hyderabad and Coimbatore in India. We also started in Ghana.

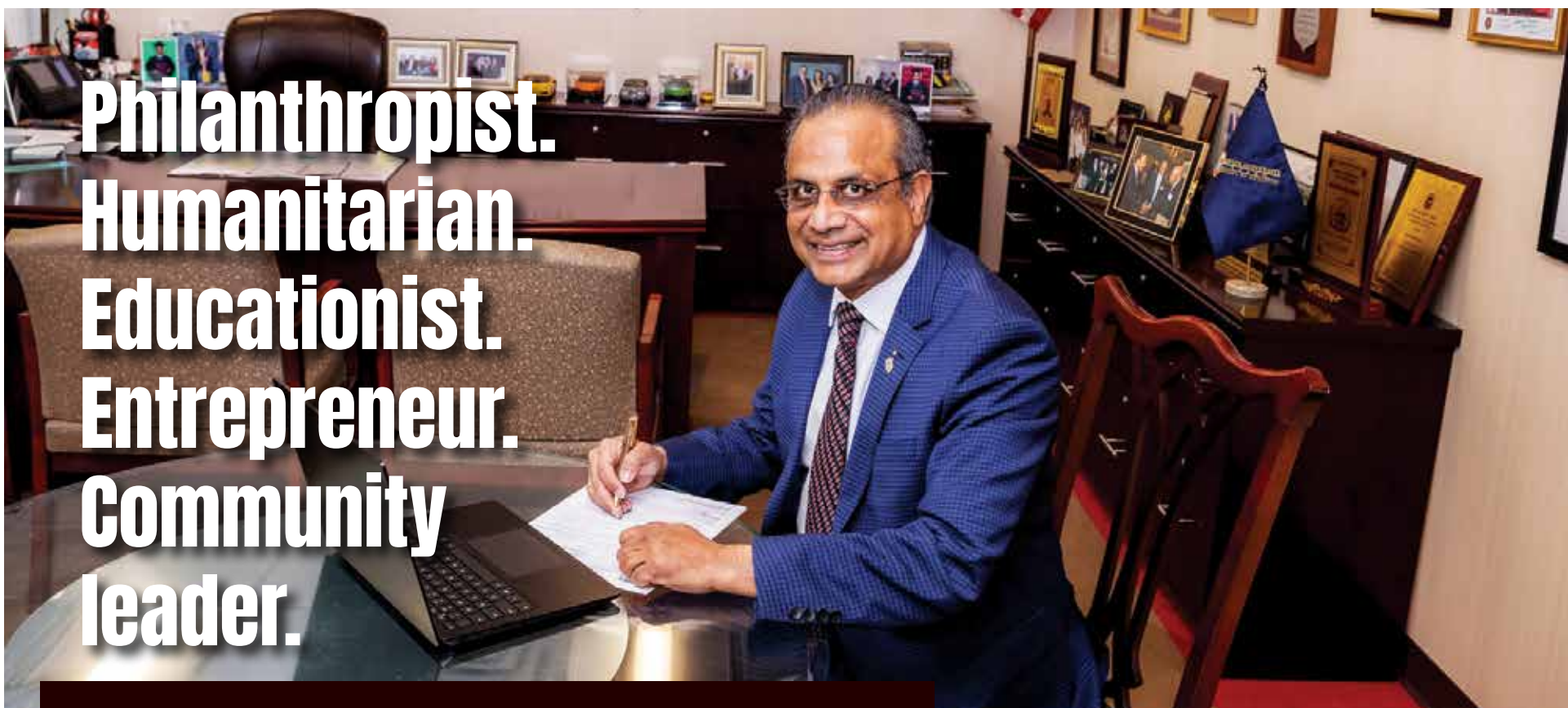
Q: Why medical colleges come up in Caribbean islands?

Ravi: It is the proximity to the US. Kids and parents feel safe sending them to Caribbean countries compared to Mexico for example. There is a shortage of doctors and medical schools in America. As per the American Medical Association that controls the number of residencies required for America, 26,500 new doctors are needed every year but US medical schools produce only 21,000 doctors. Opening a medical school takes a long time and huge amount of investment.

Continues on Page 10

By Parveen Chopra

The former Chief Justice of India, M.N. Venkatachaliah, has a succinct insight into Ravishankar Bhooplapur. "He is an extraordinary personality, full of a great impersonal love for mankind which has expressed itself in many profound ways and ideas," he wrote in a message to The South Asian Times. Many other key people associ-



**Philanthropist.
Humanitarian.
Educationist.
Entrepreneur.
Community leader.**

A versatile and energetic man, Ravishankar Bhooplapur has managed to scale the pinnacle in every field he has chosen to pursue. With exceptional success in Insurance and wealth management consulting, he has now turned a top educationist by creating one of the top 10 medical universities in the Caribbean where students with lesser means too can have their dream fulfilled of becoming a doctor. Yet he finds time for the humanitarian projects, 100s of which he has led globally. Founded by him, Gift of Life (India) has already saved over 6,000 young lives, and recently he became the only South Asian inducted into Rotary's exclusive \$1 Million Legacy Donor Club.

ated with the multifaceted, multi-tasking Ravi also sent us messages of congratulations and acclamations on his recognition as The South Asian Times Person of the Year 2020. They have touched on the magnitude and value of his humanitarian and philanthropic work, and other aspects of his life and personal qualities.

The South Asian Times interviewed the man himself to learn the secret of his success in everything he takes on and his motivations. Some excerpts:

The South Asian Times: So now

about my audience, I said, a majority of them are doctors. He told me then that in America healthcare is a big industry and anything you do with healthcare you'll never go wrong. I considered supplies business but dropped the idea. By that time, I had already launched my online travel insurance website, Easy Medical Insurance, which is doing good till today.

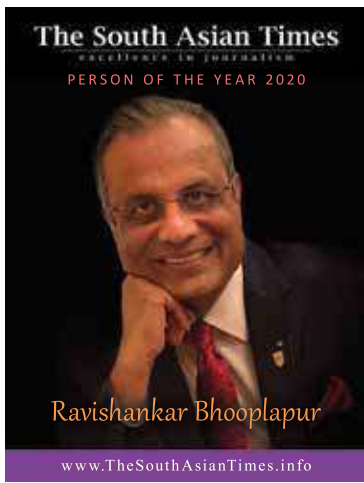
Then an opportunity came that took hold of my mind. At Wyckoff Hospital the CEO and Dr Bhat and his friends were meeting to discuss setting up a medical school integrated with hospital and they

or the location close to the mainland, you cannot have a successful institution in the Caribbean.

But along the way, as we clocked many air miles, there were many false starts and red herrings. But all that gave me valuable experience, building my resolve and confidence. Our search ended with Xavier in Aruba. I decided when devising the detailed business plan that good education also should be affordable. Accreditations are very important. Although people give me credit, it is also teamwork. I'm very proud and happy with what we have accomplished so far



Ellis Island Medal of Honor is made for a multi-faceted, service-oriented man like Ravi Bhooplapur.



of patience and perseverance and I don't give up. In this business when I entered, I realized that everything is accountable, measurable. Everything we do at Xavier is by the book and transparent and reviewed regularly by 3rd party to correct our mistakes if any.

Q: What keeps you motivated to do more and more?

Ravi: I like to give back. This motivation charges me every day that I am doing good and I am successful at it. At Xavier kids initially are not sure whether they will become doctors. Parents reach out to me and I am accessible to all. I guide parents and motivate students. Initially, it was building an institution but of late I think about giving a good product at a reasonable price, making students work to becoming a doctor and it is gratifying and extremely difficult to express the happiness to see the students graduating.

Q: You are multitasking, doing so much and travelling a lot at the same time...

Ravi: Mind is conditioned now for me as to how I recharge my-



Ravi at an event with not one but two Congressmen, Joe Crowley and Tom Suozzi.

achievements as Rotary governor in 2009-10?

Ravi: All the 535 governors in the world are given an agenda by the Rotary International President every year on what areas should we be focusing on. In my year as Governor, one area was increasing membership. I managed to enlist 25% new members and I was recognized as one of the top 10 districts at the Montreal convention. We also kept the activities in a high gear, people participation was good in all clubs in my district. We groomed many young people aspiring to be leaders, giving them opportunity to become assistant governors.

We established 4 new clubs, two of which are doing extremely well even today: Jericho Sunrise and Hicksville South. I thought at the time that there is so much of our community around here after demographic changes. Rotary is not just meant for white or black people or any color people. Also, a majority of Indians are involved with some kind of charity and Rotary is aware of our generation in India and when we migrated here. To Kamlesh Mehta one day I said, "There's a need and we should start a Rotary club (with South Asian members)" Kamlesh was the charter president (of Hicksville South). We have members from a cross-section; Rotary is not a chamber of commerce only for business people. The ladies club (Jericho Sunrise) started because many promising ladies too wanted to be part of voluntary work, philanthropy work. I'm proud the two clubs have done a million dollars worth of projects. Also, our people have learnt how to work with the mainstream, having the Rotary platform. Plus, leadership qualities are built -- Kamlesh went on to become District Governor a few years after me.

Q: Are you one of the biggest donors to Rotary?

Ravi: No, let me put it this way,

I was the fourth from the Indian subcontinent to become a Hall of Fame in Rotary in 2004-5, which is the recognition they give to those who have contributed over \$250,000. At the time there were only 40 Hall of Famers in the entire world; now there are 400 plus. I was also made a charter member of the Arch Klumph Society of high donors.

Q: Can we expect to see you becoming the Rotary International President one day?

Ravi: The way it works in Rotary

is you apply to become a director first, only as director you are eligible to become President. I have a desire to become a director first, after that I will see how things go. Being President of Xavier demands a lot of time. For Rotary it requires 3-4 years of complete dedication.

But yes, I was for three years till recently on Rotary's Investment Committee managing funds of \$1.2 billion.

Q: What does Gift of Life India do?

Continues on Page 12

Continued from Page 9

Besides, it is not a money making or profitable venture and there are many legislative headaches.

Q: What is your secret of success?

Ravi: First is work ethics, also time management. And I go deep into the entire process of the business model. I think ahead what needs to be done today, tomorrow and three months later for a project or institution building. And how do we cultivate good people, how do you groom them and delegate to get the results? Incentives also work. People at Xavier are given incentives for the hard work they do, and they are recognized adequately. I also read a lot of books on the industry



Ravi Bhooplapur catching up with Indian Health Minister Harsh Vardhan in Kolkata 2020.

and take advice from experts and learn every day new things.

Q: Are you influenced by any particular motivational speaker or writer?

Ravi: Dale Carnegie's 'How to Win Friends and Influence People' - a friend of mine, advocate Sam Karanth, presented me this book in 1980. I also attend many of the events like on time management, and by Anthony Robbins and Brian Tracy. I am very detail oriented. Everything I do is written down and very seldom I do anything on ad hoc basis. I read regularly the Harvard Review. I also reach out to the people if I don't know something to get advice and I have multiple people who guide me and advise me to reach an informed decision. I have a lot

self. Everyone does one business: come home and the next day back to the grind. Most people's mind works on one side: business, business and business. I break the pattern. When I have free time, I read about motivational and successful people. I also allocate my time for the priorities. I enjoy doing what I want to do. I give Fridays, for example, to do Rotary work, allocating grants. Since I do so much of charity work, almost every week I have a new request, which I analyze and evaluate. I take up ones that are going to help on a large scale, like for Covid, childcare, tsunami, healthcare, education. Something comes up and I immediately jump in - how can I help? I'm very disciplined in my own thoughts and actions.

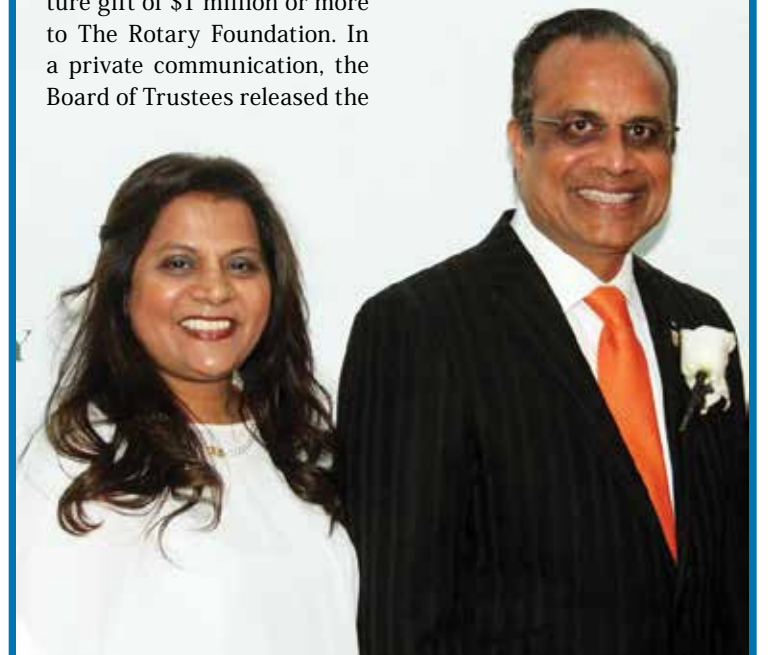
Q: What were your major

Ravi in the \$1 Million Rotary Legacy donor club

Ravishankar Bhooplapur is the only Indian origin person included in the inaugural list of Rotary Foundation's Legacy Society members, who have made a minimum commitment of \$1,000,000.

The Rotary Foundation Board of Trustees unanimously approved last month the formation of the Legacy Society to recognize the dedication and foresight of Rotarians and friends of Rotary who have committed to make a future gift of \$1 million or more to The Rotary Foundation. In a private communication, the Board of Trustees released the

inaugural list of about 50 Legacy Society members, who are predominantly from the United States and Canada. In the list seen by The South Asian Times, Ravishankar-Jayasheela Bhooplapur is the only one donor of Indian origin.



A Very Warm, and Heartiest Congratulations to

MR. RAVI BHOOPLAPUR

THE PROFOUNDLY DESERVING PERSON OF THE YEAR 2020 OF

The South Asian Times

excellence in journalism

You are:

A Motivation for Mankind in continued Motion,

A Magnificent Galaxy, Full of Humanitarian

Services, A Friend INDEED



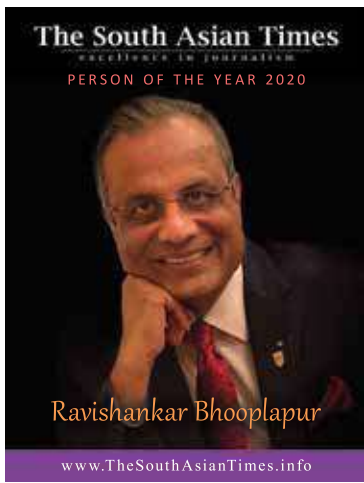
JAYASHEELA & RAVISHANKAR BHOOPLAPUR

CONNOISSEURS-COUPLE OF AFFECTIONATE FELLOWSHIP

We are proud of your significant accomplishments in all your noble Endeavors.

With best Compliments & Best wishes for an amazing 2021

Nimmi & Kamlesh C. Mehta



hometown, Dharwad, where I set up a Rs 45 lakh ICU unit for poor people. I donated about \$10,000 here and we secured CSR (corporate social responsibility) funds through my contacts in India – Grameena Bank in Dharwad and Tata Motors. Now we are expanding, we have received a grant approved to set up an ICU unit with ventilators and all in Kerala for \$378,000. Our Covid related blood bank in Guntur, Andhra Pradesh, was inaugurated last month; it is a \$120,000 project in which other Rotary districts also participated.

Q: You have also been involved with many Indian community organizations here.

Ravi: Yes, I am a life member of the major organizations. I got involved with AIA (Association of Indians in America) when Dr Manvar was its president. We took a lead in raising funds (Rotary gave matching grants) for tsunami and sent to Indonesia and Sri Lanka and India. In Chennai, opposite the rail station we built a public toilets complex and a community center for fishermen. Also raised funds for distribution of AIA's book 'Ananya' on India to Indian missions.

For 9 years I served as trea-



Ravi, accompanied by Rotarian Director Sushil Kumar Gupta, called on the then Indian President APJ Abdul Kalam Azad in 2005 at Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi to invite him for a Gift of Life event.

Continued from Page 10

Ravi: My biggest success or legacy is Gift of Life India. Gift of Life is a project started by Rotary people from Long Island in 1981, to arrange for heart surgeries for children. As its board member I convinced them to start a Gift of Life India separately. I am its founding chair since 2002. We have done no-cost surgeries and saved the lives of over 6,000 poor kids. The beneficiary kids have been mostly Indian but also from countries in the subcontinent as well as Afghanistan, Iraq. Not only surgeries are free, Gift of Life India also provides for lodging and boarding of each kid and accompanying guardian. We raise money for here and Rotary Foundation gives matching



When working for AXA insurance company over a decade ago, he swept all the top awards, like Best Agent, and Hall of Fame.

grants. A normal heart surgery in case of congenital defect costs about \$1000 in India, in America it cost 10 times more.

Q: What is the biggest achievement of the Rotary movement?

Ravi: Rotary is over a century old premier nonprofit organization in the world, which is a signatory to the United Nations Charter. Rotary's biggest achievement is ending polio around the world, including in Africa now -- it is still there in pockets of Pakistan. In a recent interview about Covid vaccine, Bill Gates mentioned how Rotary harnessed volunteers to administer polio drops.

Q: Now what are you doing for Covid?

Ravi: When Covid started, I knew things were going to get out of control. So, I started with my

sure for Center for India Studies at Stony Brook after it was founded, and donated about \$35000. I am on the board of a Kannada organization called NAVIKA with 2,500 members and served as its chairman for two years. At Navika, we have established scholarships for students.

For AAPI, when they established the Queens-Long Island Chapter, I was the first one to host a dinner for the young doctors. I was heavily involved with AAPI for their fundraising activities and attended many of their conventions. Actually, most of my clients in the insurance business were Indian American doctors.

Q: You were very successful in insurance and wealth management...

Ravi: Actually, insurance shaped my life. To flourish in that profession, you have to be very dis-

ciplined. I worked for AXA for many years and become one of the most successful insurance agents. I set a record selling one single policy to one individual for \$127 million. I also become

a Hall of Fame. Then I quit and started my own brokerage firm Vision Financial Services in 1997 and ran it full steam till about 2012. I still have brokerage but only do existing clients.

Q: How did your association with SUNY help in setting up the Gandhi Peace Garden.

Continues on Page 14



Shekhar Mehta
President, 2021-22
RotaryInternational

M +91-9831012901
ridshekhar@gmail.com
shekhar.mehta@rotary.org

Dear PDG Ravishankar,

I would like to extend my congratulations to Past District Governor Ravishankar & Jayasheela Bhooplapur for "The South Asian Times Person of the year 2020" both are an amazing couple.

My wife and I have known Ravi & Jaya for many years and both are a fantastic, down-to-earth couple. We consider them a true friend to us and the Rotary family. Ravi is a dependable guide and believes in equal access to all communities. He leads by example by raising and donating funds to many worthy causes. Ravi & Jaya are Rotary's **Charter Member of Arch Klump Society member since 2005 and a newly created Legacy Club member by committing 1 million dollars.** We are proud to work and know both dedicated Rotarians as they exemplify Rotary's motto "**Service Above Self.**"

I have seen him in the last 20 years always rising to the occasion and helping when needed whether it is a relief effort, Medical Missions, grants, or in need of a partner or additional funds. Even though Ravi is known to be a globetrotter he is always one phone call away. He is an asset to the Rotary Foundation and many other organizations that he is passionately involved.

My wife, Rashi and I are happy to know Ravi & Jaya. We wish the couple more success and hope god continues to give them strength and good health to continue their journey to help the disadvantaged in the coming years.

I also congratulate The South Asian Times – for nominating Past District Governor Ravishankar Bhooplapur.

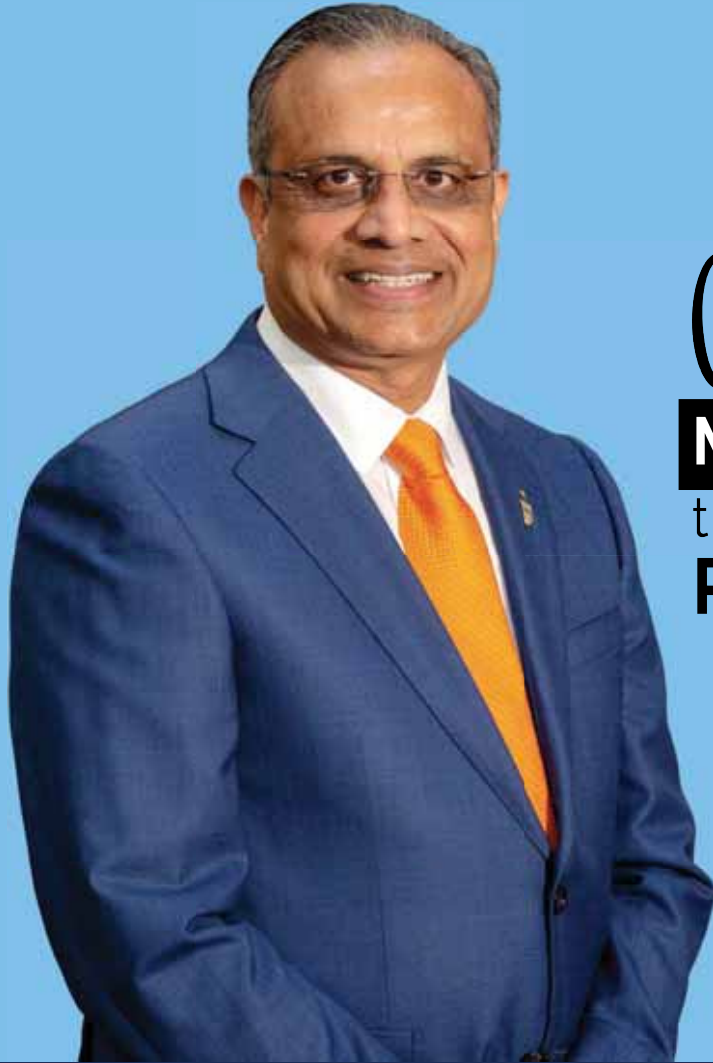
Warm Regards,

Shekhar Mehta

Rotary International President 2021-22

“LEADERSHIP is not DOMINATION, but the art of persuading people to work toward a Common Goal”

-Daniel Goleman



Congratulations to

Mr. Ravishankar Bhooplapur

the recipient of this well deserved
Person of the Year-2020
Award!

“The South Asian Times-Person of the Year-2020”

**RAVISHANKAR
BHOOPLAPUR**

The eminent Humanitarian, Philanthropist, Educationist & an inspiring Community Leader, and the President & CEO of Xavier University School of Medicine, Aruba

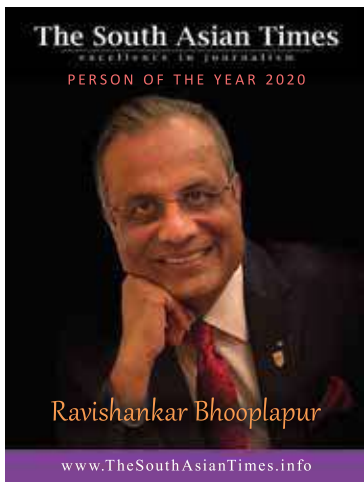
Best Wishes, Mohamad M. Faroqui


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Ravishankar Bhooplapur

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Continued from Page 12

Ravi: I am one of the 13 trustees in SUNY Old Westbury since 2011. Every year we participate in raising money for scholarships for its low income students, many of them from minorities. I've been donating

personally also. In 2018, Mr Arvind Vora of Shanti Fund approached me as they needed help to establish a Gandhi Peace Garden to celebrate the Mahatma's 150 years. I took the lead in getting approval for almost 50 acres on the campus to establish the garden. It was inaugurated by the Prime Minister Modi from the United Nations.

Q: How do you feel getting the Ellis Island Medal of Honor?

Ravi: It is a prestigious award and I feel honored to have received it for the work I have done and to be among recipients who are all very high caliber people. Your immigrant heritage is a requirement for this medal.



SUNY Old Westbury University Leadership Award presented to Ravi by Dr Calvin Butts Jr, President of the University, and Dr Bhupi Patel, Trustee.

Q: How is the support from your family for your work?

Ravi: Initially, they would caution me why I do so much traveling. Now they know I do what I do. My kids Manali and Amogh help, support in their way. But the big support comes from my wife, Jaya. We discuss what projects we should be doing and we both are aligned in what we do.

Amogh is doing masters in law at Touro law college on Long Island. Manali finished her medical studies and will be joining residency this year.

Q: How are you inculcating your good qualities in your children?

Ravi: Some qualities they learn by observing us and working with us. They learn that every-



Ravi was presented a special recognition for 25 years of service and commitment to the Masonic Lodge in India.

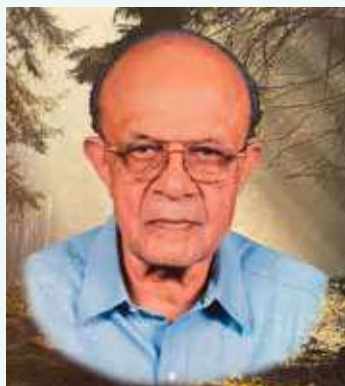
thing you have to do correctly, diligently, sincerely and honestly, not half-heartedly. Also, be compassionate with other people who are in need. My son Amogh actually went to South Africa for three weeks to volunteer in an

orphanage there. Manali we took to Nicaragua some years ago to work in a burn center for underprivileged kids. Hopefully they'll continue doing the right thing—we have the Bhooplapur foundation set up in USA & India.



Ravi with eminent attorney, Mr Dervinder Singh, Esq

Messages of acclamation



B.M. Bhooplapur
(Ravi's father)

Karnataka State awardee for Senior Citizen Service

Ravishankar Bhooplapur has been an entrepreneur right from his college days. He was been awarded by the President of India as a Boy Scout. His joining Rotary has groomed him to be a social entrepreneur. While pur-

suage business, he embarked on service through Rotary. 'Service Above Self' is the doctrine he learnt at Rotary. Success comes to those who sacrifice.

Kiran & Gouri Hiremath Dharwad

True Leaders always practice the three R's: Respect for self, Respect for others, Responsibility for all their actions. Ravi has all those three R's. Congratulations for his nomination by the paper in New York. Growing up, I have seen he is a role model for all our young people in town and even after migrating to USA he never forgot his roots to help his hometown. We are very proud of him and his wife Jaya's contributions to our town.

Yoyer A. Reyes

First Xavier employee, Student Finance Representative

I have known Ravi since 2007 when he interviewed me and gave me the opportunity to belong to this great institution

called Xavier where I have grown professionally. Ravi taught me that how with effort and dedication goals can be reached.

Dr Buddhadev Manvar Past President of AIA

There is nobody among people I know more deserving of this honor than him by The South Asian Times. Ravi is truly a multidimensional man, the work he has done for the community and Rotary club reaching the pinnacle. Also, making Xavier a premier medical school, where dreams to become doctors of young people from our community and community at large can be realized at an affordable price.

Congratulatory Messages Received

Due to space constraints, we could not publish quite a few messages congratulating Ravi Bhooplapur for The South Asian Times - Person of the Year

2020 recognition. Some of those names are listed here:

Friends & Media

Mohan Wanchoo
Dr Buddhadev N. Manvar
Dr Lakshmi Doda
Varinder Bhalla
Jay Jasbir Singh
Mark Zafrin
Sammy Hsiao
Mukesh Modi
Dr A. Aboud
Roopam Maini
Dr Ihsan Shanti
Jagdish Sewhani

A role model for Xavier staff

Prof Richard Pestell
Vice President of Academic Affairs and Clinical Dean

Daniel Moses
Vice President, Finance

Richard M. Pomerantz, MD
Regional Chairman of Medicine

Barry Cohen Adunmo
Director of IT Systems

Dr. Jeremy L. Rae
Assistant Professor of Biochemistry

Dr. Joseph Jillwin, PhD
Lecturer - Immunology & Microbiology,

Dr. Patricia Brumley
Medical Librarian

Dr Jupjeet Kaur
Chief Compliance officer

Jeane-Betsy Irausquin - Mackintosh
New Student and Immigration Coordinator

Yvette Aal
Registrar

Dr Kevin Pawlak
Dean of Pre Med

Dr Prasad



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Heartiest Congratulations to
Ravishankar Bhooplapur

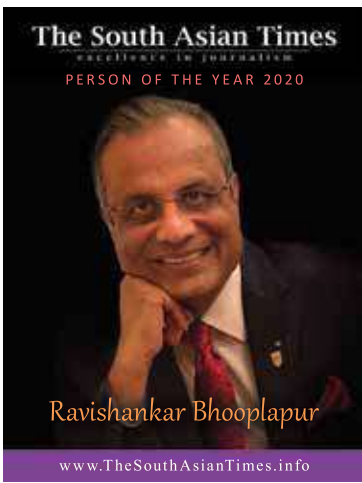
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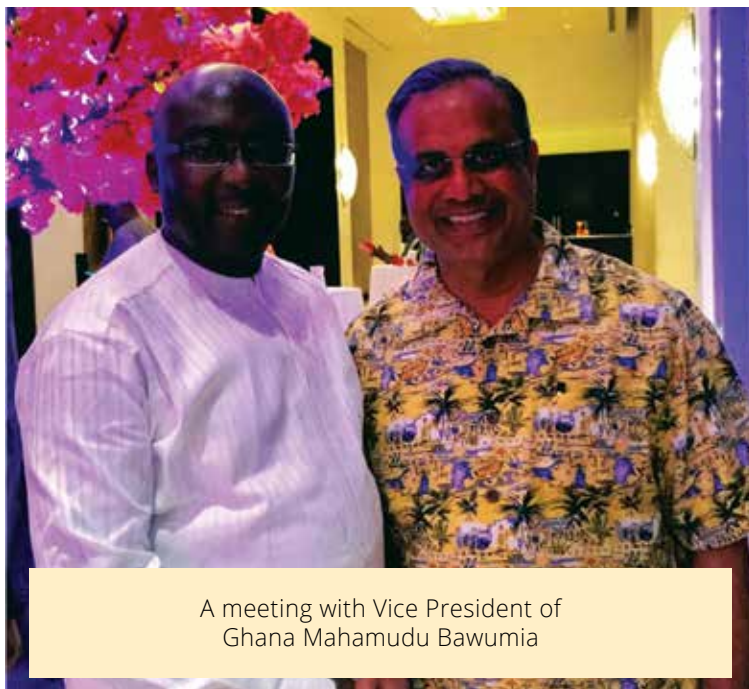
J. GANESH BHAT, MD *founder*
NIRMAL K MATTOO, MD *founder*



POWER MOVES

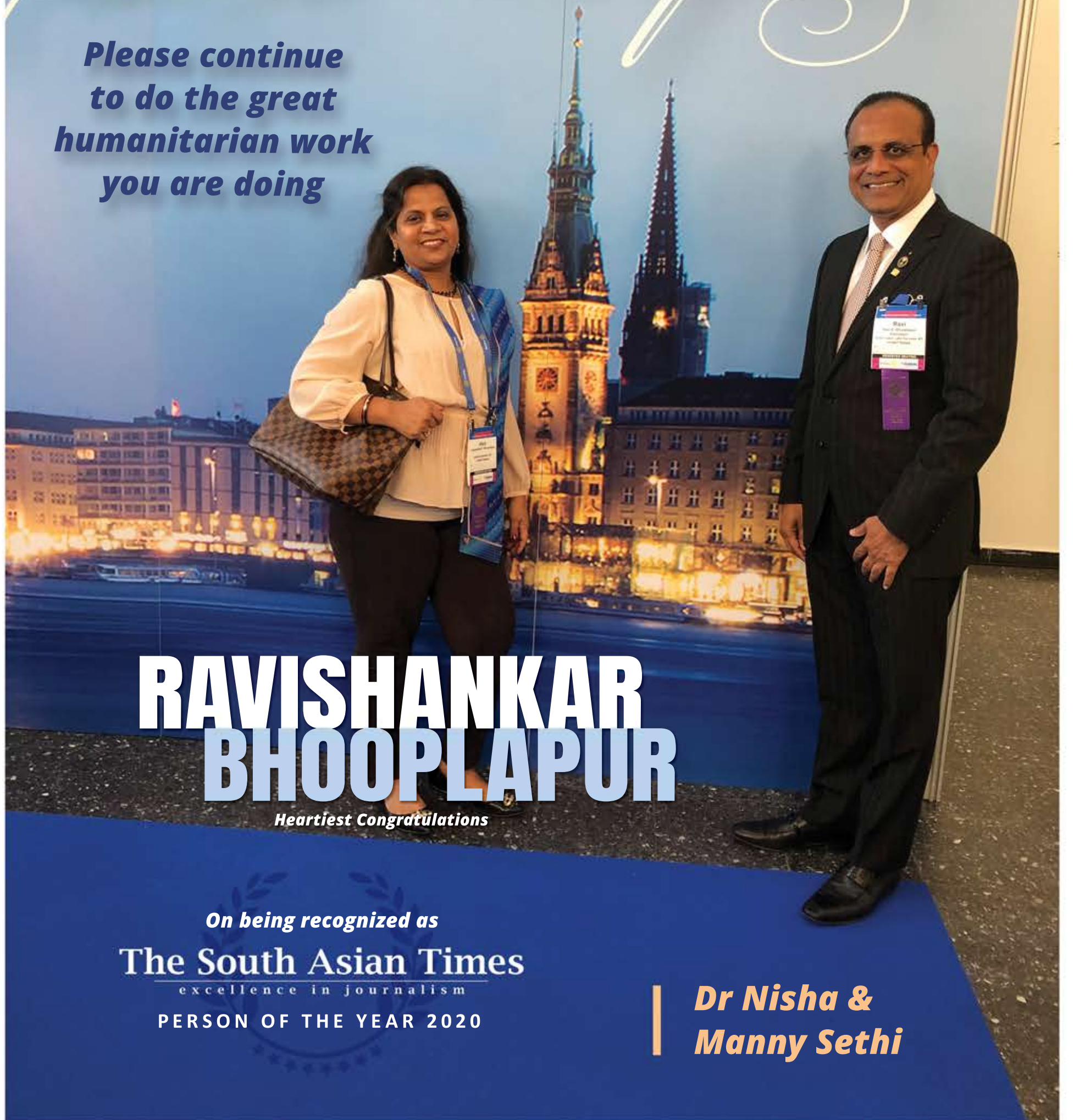
In connection with his work as philanthropist, senior Rotarian and educationist, New York based Ravishankar Bhooplapur regularly girds the globe and has had the privilege of meeting many heads of state and lawmakers over the years. As President of Xavier University School of Medicine (Aruba), he has been responsible for Pre Medical programs in Jordan, Palestine, Ghana, India, and in Turkey.

A few vignettes:



ARCH KLUMPH ociety

***Please continue
to do the great
humanitarian work
you are doing***



**RAVISHANKAR
BHOOPALPUR**

Heartiest Congratulations

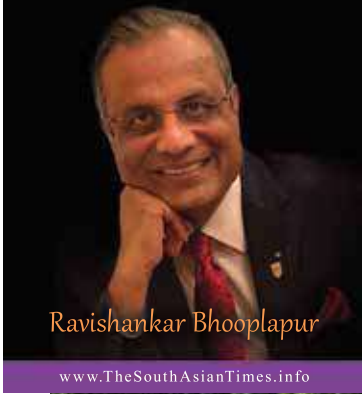
On being recognized as

The South Asian Times

excellence in journalism

PERSON OF THE YEAR 2020

***Dr Nisha &
Manny Sethi***



Ravishankar Bhooplapur

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Serving humanity and the community

The indefatigable Ravishankar Bhooplapur is always ready to help at a time of natural calamity or any other crisis. It goes to his credit to secure \$700,000 grants for Covid-19 related activities for India from Rotary International.



Ravishankar Bhooplapur played a key role in making the Gandhi Peace Garden in Long Island a reality.

mography Bus for detection of breast cancer in Bangalore, a project executed in association with Poornasuda Foundation.

Padma Shri awardee and celebrated oncologist Dr Dattatreya Nori says about Ravi, "I am grateful to Ravi who worked with me and the late Dr Tulsi Polavarapu some 10 years ago in obtaining a Mobile Diagnostic Cancer Screening Van as a donation through Rotary International for our not-for-profit Indo American Cancer Hospital in Hyderabad. That van had everything we needed for cancer screening: mammogram, X-ray unit, etc. Working with the underprivileged, that van has screened more than one lakh people and detected innumerable cancers."

Ravi is also the Founder & Honorary Chairman of "Gift of Life India", which has been instrumental in saving 6,000 lives by providing heart surgeries to children suffering from congenital heart disease.

In India, he also set up a 100-bed Naturopathy and Yoga Hospital in 2002 in Chataprabha named after his mother,



On behalf of Nargis Dutt Memorial Foundation, actor Dharmendra honored Ravi for 'Outstanding Contributions to Eradicate Cancer' in 2009.

Ravishankar "Ravi" Bhooplapur is a tireless philanthropist and humanitarian who has travelled to close to one hundred countries to set up various health and educational projects, necessitated often by natural disasters and other calamities.

Ravi has done numerous worldwide humanitarian grants and medical missions. He was able to secure millions of dollars in grants for his charitable works, initiated first by donating money from his own Bhooplapur Foundation.

Among Ravi's recent initiatives was raising \$195,000 in funding to provide 25 low cost housing in the Kottayam and Pathanamthitta districts of Kerala for the people affected by the floods there in 2018. In the second phase of this initiative, another 25 houses are being provided for. Kamlesh Mehta, a past Rotary District Governor like Ravi, said, "It has been an excellent humanitarian service arranged by Ravi as he took the lead in securing such a big Rotary Grant. We should take inspiration from him."

Ravi also received close to \$700,000 grants for Covid related activities for India from Rotary International.

Ravi is known for his penchant to rise to the occasion and take leadership roles to help when disasters strike like the Gujarat earthquake, and tsunami in south India in the past.

In 2016 he donated money for the MOM Express Mobile Mam-



Founder Chairman of Gift of Life India, Ravi invited Rotary International President Sakuji Tanaka to its event in 2012.

Parwathi Bhooplapur.

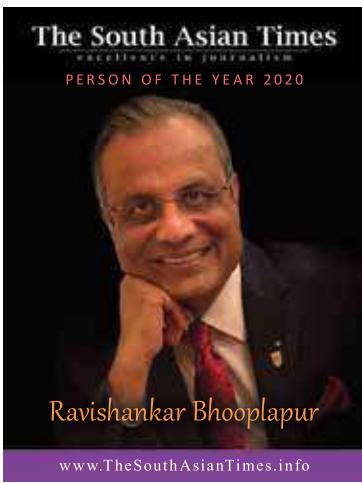
Even before migrating to New York in 1992, while in Dharwad, Karnataka, when his means were limited, Ravi had started taking on big humanitarian projects. His inspiration: Rotary's 'service above self' motto. Joining Rotary at the age of 18 was a turning point in life. The Rotary message and ideal was reinforced by his own Lingayat heritage - a reformist movement in Karnataka, whose main saying is 'work is worship'.



Ravi as Gala Chair seen at the AIA's Golden Jubilee event with actor Anupam Kher and AIA team: Dr Kukar, Dr Arya, Dr Bhat, and Smiti and Ram Khanna.



Ravi at the AIA gala with Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi, Consul General Sandeep Chakravorty and honoree Dr Narinder Kukar.



Community work

him to play a key role in making Gandhi Peace Garden in Long Island a reality. The garden was set up at SUNY campus to commemorate the 150th Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi by Shanti Fund in association with the Indian Consulate. It was inaugurated remotely by PM Modi in September 2019. In attendance were Consul General Sandeep Chakravorty and SUNY Old Westbury President Calvin O. Butts. Ravi recalls, "When the thought was floated to set up the Gandhi Peace Garden, I immediately volunteered to work with SUNY trustees to get the land granted and helped this project get off the ground."

Earlier the same year, Ravi was presented the Leadership Award by SUNY Old Westbury. The award recognizes a select few individuals who have committed themselves to leadership work and helping others.

Since 1993 Ravi has also been associated with the Association of Indians in America (AIA) - National, the oldest community organization with a stellar record of achievements for creating the environment where Indian immigrants to the US can feel secure and thrive. Being resourceful and known as a good organizer, he was chosen to be the Gala Chair for AIA's 40th anniversary as well

as the Golden Jubilee celebration in 2018. When AIA published the heavyweight book 'Ananya' on India to celebrate 50 years of India's independence in 1997, they needed additional funds to make it available to Indian missions around the world. He promptly opened his purse strings. Around the same time, he served as Treasurer for the Center for India Studies at Stony Brook University. Ravi has not forgotten his roots, he has been actively involved with New Jersey based Veerashaiva Samaja of North America (VSNA) since long, and served as its President in 2003 and 2004.

For his humanitarian work and community leadership roles, Ravi has received numerous awards. To list a few:

- In 2012 he was awarded the prestigious "Ellis Island Medal of Honor", which celebrates medalists' professional contributions to the United States of America and their immigrant heritage.
- Proclamation from the United States Congress by Hon Gary Ackerman in 2009.
- All the top awards from Rotary International.
- Nargis Dutt Memorial Foundation (NDMF) honored him in 2009 with the Outstanding Humanitarian Award. He gave financial support to NDMF for their funding to the Indore Cancer Foundation Charitable Trust in India.

Having lived in New York for almost three decades, Ravishankar has taken leadership roles in the Indian community and the community at large. He has also served on the boards of many charities and institutions, contributing in whichever way he can.

To give one instance, he is on the Board of Trustees of SUNY Old Westbury. And that prompted



Special Recognition for Ravi from actress Sharmila Tagore for supporting education programs in India.



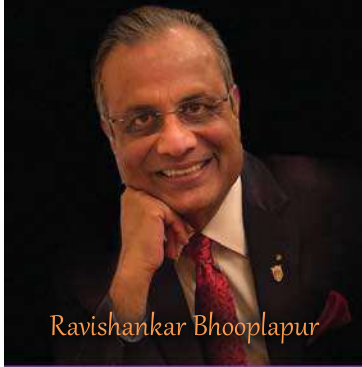
Ravishankar being honored for his humanitarian work by his namesake (also from Karnataka), with a Sri Sri prefix.



Ravi was President of Veerashaiva Samaja of North America (VSNA) in 2003 & 2004.



Congressman Gary Ackerman presented Ravi a special recognition from US Congress in 2004 for his outstanding achievements and contributions to society.



Ravishankar Bhooplapur

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Date :

I would like to congratulate Mr. Ravishankar Bhooplapur on being recognized as 'Person of the Year' by South Asian Times. It has been an honor to know Mr. Bhooplapur through his work in our area. Especially setting up Rajarshi Shahu Blood Bank at Kolhapur and vocation training center for poor and other humanitarian works this part of India. He is an amazing person always ready to lend his hands and great role model to our generation who continues to inspire people of all ages. He is one of a kind with many accomplishments under his belt. Mr. Ravishankar also contributes to the medical field by producing doctors in his medical school in Aruba.

Providing education and accessible healthcare are one of Mr. Bhooplapur's main goals for the good of society. Driven by passion in helping the poor and sick he has contributed immensely towards public welfare. I am immensely proud of his achievements and look forward to seeing him accomplish further greater things. I wish all the best for his endeavors.

Yours Sincerely,

Satej (Bunty) D. Patil
Guardian Minister

CONGRATULATIONS AND ACCLAMATIONS

Hon. Minister Armando Lampe, PhD



Minister of Education, Science,
and Sustainable Development,
Aruba

2020 will remain in the historical records as the year of COVID-19. The year also of innovation, in the sense that new terms were invented, like social distancing and the new normal. In this year during the lockdown we learned about the distinction between essential and non-essential professions. Among the essential ones are the health professionals. And in that group we can point to those who made an essential contribution, and

that is the case of Ravishankar Bhooplapur. Declaring him The South Asian Times-Person of the Year 2020 is most appropriate.

As the Minister of Education, Science and Sustainable Development of Aruba I met on several occasions the President and CEO of Xavier University School of Medicine, Aruba. I was struck by his modesty and humility and you can expect an immediate yes-response to projects serving mankind. His call for service made him a man that was not paralyzed by doubts when action was required.

Rajendra K. Saboo

President (1991-92) Rotary International

I am pleased to know about the new honor for Ravi Bhooplapur. I have known Ravi since the late 70s when he was in India. He was involved in printing machinery and the technology. I encouraged him to join Rotary and he did. Later he went to the USA. for getting advanced knowledge about the printing machinery. He has been an entrepreneur and self-inspired person, so went into insurance where he developed the skill specially for the medical fraternity. By God's grace, he moved from success to success.

People like Ravi contribute tremendously in international understanding and friendship. He joined Rotary in the New York area extending himself to both the South Asians and the community at large and became District Governor..

Ravi and his wife Jaya were embodiments of the Rotary motto 'Service Above Self'. While he was a very ardent family man, both of them brought the culture in their children. I and my wife Usha had the privilege of visiting them many times.

To me Ravi is an example of philanthropy, entrepreneurship, goodwill ambassador internationally and promoter of Indian culture.



Edwin F Casey

Chairman, Xavier University School of Medicine

Congratulations to The South Asian Times for selecting Ravi Bhooplapur as the 2020 Person of the Year. Your selection is a timely choice. I can personally attest to his character and his life as a person of honor and peace.

Ravi is deeply involved in community service and a businessman committed to social needs and most importantly, a devoted husband to Jaya and his children Manali and Amogh. In the local, national and worldwide community, Ravi has engineered programs which have benefitted literally millions of adults and children. From tens of thousands of heart surgeries for kids to water treatment, advanced sanitation, complex health care and feeding the hungry, Mr Bhooplapur has inspired and enabled volunteers for decades providing programs for alleviating these life threatening issues.

In addition, as President of Xavier University School of Medicine in Aruba, Ravi has developed an affordable model for the education of desperately needed Primary Care Physicians. His team has brought together exceptional teaching professionals who have provided a place for students of all backgrounds to challenge their abilities regardless of their personal circumstances. Their outstanding academic success speaks to the reality that one's focus, insight and perseverance can overcome societal barriers.

Ravi Bhooplapur is a brave and persistent man of indelible humanity. I am very proud to call him my friend and colleague.



Jagadeesan V. Poola

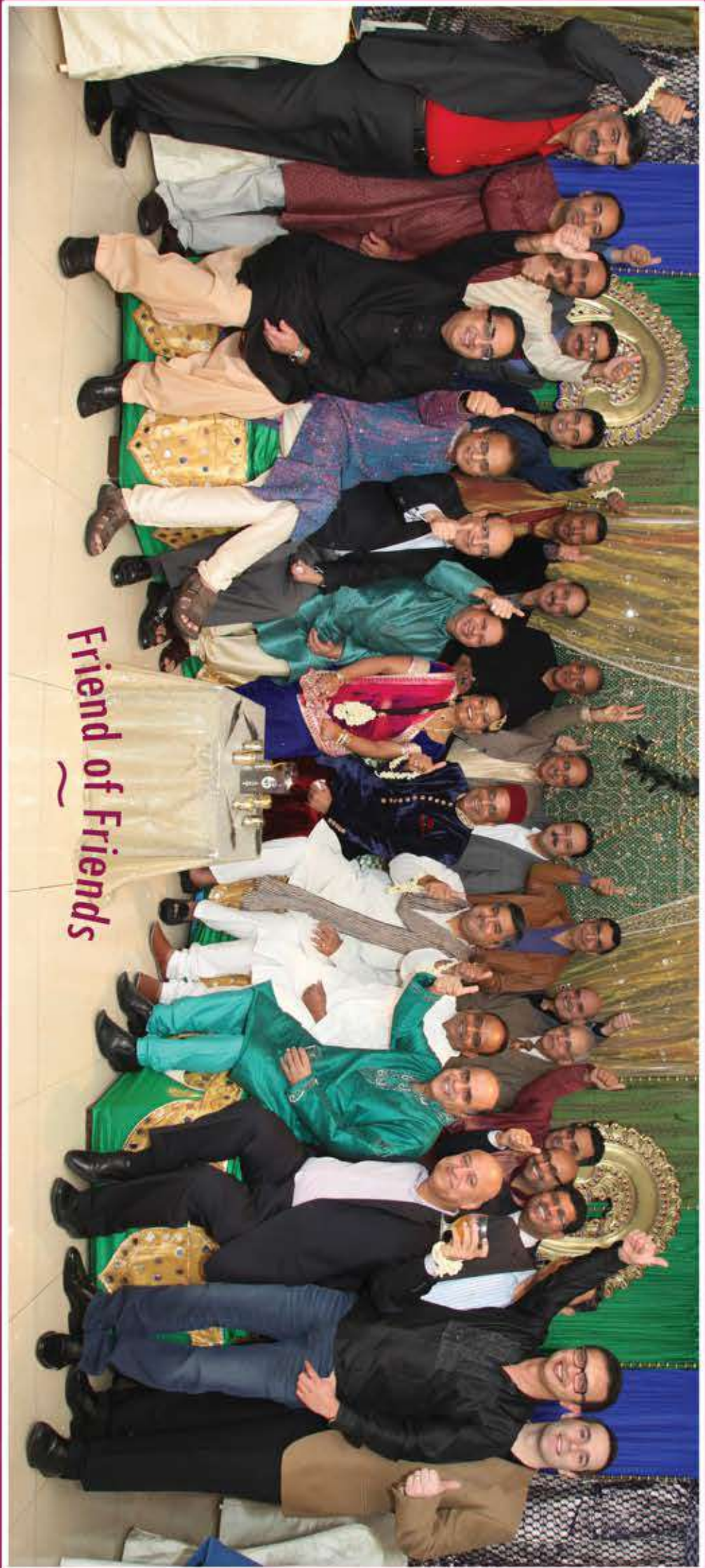
Entrepreneur

Heartiest Congratulations to Ravi Bhooplapur for being nominated as The South Asian Times-Person of the year 2020. Kanchana and I have known Ravi for more than 15 years and seen him accomplishing great success in his endeavors with Xavier University and humanitarian projects with Rotary and Gift of Life Foundation. Ravi, the President and CEO of Xavier University School of Medicine, Aruba is also an impressive community leader and philanthropist.

The South Asian Times-Person of the Year title is very well deserved by Ravi and it truly dignifies his remarkable achievements in the field of insurance, education, entrepreneurship, and philanthropic-humanitarian services. Recipient of the Ellis Island Medal of Honor and inducted at Hall of Fame in Rotary International's world headquarters, Ravi has impressed us with his enduring humanitarian commitments beside successfully developing Xavier University as a top school of medicine in a Caribbean Island. Ravi is energetic, progressive, cheerful and a true friend. He is blessed with the attitude of gratitude and giving back to the society.

Kanchana and I wish Jaya and Ravi Bhooplapur the absolute best, and we are sure that they will be decorated with more accolades in coming times.





Friend of Friends

We would like to congratulate


The South Asian Times
 excellence in journalism
PERSON OF THE YEAR 2020

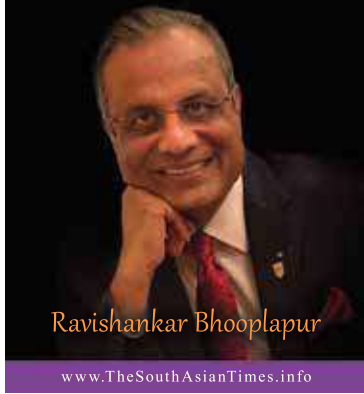


RAVISHANKAR BHOOPALPUR

A well-deserved honor for an extraordinary Humanitarian, Philanthropist, and Educationist: and our dear friend we are all so proud of.

With best compliments from

- MIR DERVINDER SINGH, ESQ
- | DR GUNWANT SINGH
- | MR MUKESH ABBI
- | MR PAUL MALHOTRA
- | MR GS NARULA



Ravishankar Bhooplapur

www.TheSouthAsianTimes.info

A medical school growing in international repute



Starting from scratch in 2008, Ravishankar Bhooplapur has turned Xavier University School of Medicine into a Top 10 Medical School in the Caribbean. The school is committed to providing affordable quality medical education to students and addressing the acute physician shortage in the US, Canada and other countries.



People who know Ravishankar Bhooplapur will tell you that once he puts his mind to something, he makes it a success. That is precisely what he did with Xavier University School of Medicine (XUSOM) after taking it over as President in 2008. Here is his own take, "From the very beginning, our main objective was quality over quantity. We have always strived to provide quality education to our students at an affordable price. We have always focused on academic excellence, which brought us accreditation by international bodies such as ACCM and CAM-HP. The approval from New York State last year is a landmark achievement. These accreditations facilitate our graduates to compete well in residency matching. With the recent pandemic, the demand for doctors is more than ever, and acquiring all the essential accreditations will further benefit medical students, hospitals and the well-being of our society."

We are Lingayats. This Shaivite Hindu sect was founded in the 12th century by a saint-statesman named Basaveswara (or Basava) in Karnataka. No caste system and women's equality are the hallmarks of this reformist movement. Also, work is worship is our main motto.

Under his leadership, Xavier is one of the few Caribbean medical schools offering a curricula comparable to US and Europeans Medical Schools, which will help prepare future physicians for the

sciences are receiving increased emphasis and the medical humanities module is being offered to all first semester students.

ACCM-Ireland & CAAM-HP Accreditation

Xavier has received full accreditation from two prestigious international accrediting bodies: CAAM-HP (Caribbean Accreditation Authority for Education in Medicine and other Health Professions), and ACCM -Ireland (Accreditation Commission on Colleges of Medicine). The purpose of the accreditation process is to assure that medical schools follow the best practices in teaching and learning and provide adequate support to students.

Significantly, both ACCM-Ireland and CAAM-HP are accepted by the US Department of Education's National Committee on Foreign Medical Education and Accreditation (NCFMEA).

XUSOM has also been recognized by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Jordan for the undergraduate medical (MD) course as a non-Jordanian University, outside Jordan. The Deputy Prime Minister of Jordan, Dr Amin Mahmoud visited the Xavier campus in Aruba and the clinical facilities in New York in 2015.

President Bhooplapur and Xavier's committed board of trust-

the first of 3 exams you need to take in order to receive your MD degree.

The student to teacher ratio at Xavier is 10:1, which provides students with an individualized learning environment. All labs and classrooms have state-of-

Heights Medical Center, Brooklyn, NY. All the clinical rotations are accredited green book rotations.

With eminent doctors on board, like Chancellor Dr. J.G. Bhat, XUSOM is able to attract top class faculty and frequent high

Barry Smith, President & CEO of the Rogosin Institute; Dr. Ram Raju, Senior Vice President and Community Health Investment Officer at Northwell Health; Dr. Moro Salifu, Chairman of the Department of Medicine at SUNY



Ensconced in the admission office of Xavier in Woodbury, NY, Ravi Bhooplapur ascribes its success to putting together an excellent curriculum and top qualified faculty. Not just producing excellent doctors, Xavier motto is 'Cultivating Great Minds For Generations To Come'.

the-art equipment, including LCD projectors, Smart boards, charts and anatomy museums. Plasticized human cadavers are used for teaching and dissection. Anatomical dissections are performed at the Dr. Horacio E. Oduber Hospital, the local hospital in Aruba. The campus itself is a newly renovated, modern facility comprising over 125,000 square feet. The entire facility has central air conditioning and is equipped with wireless technology throughout.

The school has a diverse student population from 27 different nationalities, and under the current leadership has expanded to open pre-med campuses in Ghana, Jordan, and India. In addition to this Xavier has also worked hard to develop new post-graduate courses covering a number of fields including, Anatomy, Biochemistry, Pharmacology, Physiology and Radiology.

profile special guests visiting and offering instruction and guidance to students. At a recent panel discussion by Xavier, for example, the special guests included Dr.

Downstate; and Dr. Ravi Gupta, Chief Medical Information Office and Internal Medicine Residency Program Director at Long Island Community Hospital.



Ravi Bhooplapur explaining the Xavier campus plan to Aruba Prime Minister Evelyn Wever-Croes. She also graced the medical school's White Coat Ceremony in 2018.

21st century.

Ravi told The South Asian Times that XUSOM is following a fully integrated model with early clinical exposure during the basic science years. Introduction to clinical medicine is also learned in concert with the organ systems. The social and behavioral

ees are proud to have achieved accreditations and international standards and are working hard to continue to provide an excellent education for the school's students.

Xavier currently holds a 96% first time pass rate on the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) Step1 exam. This is

Excellent Clinical Rotation Opportunities

To offer quality clinical training, Xavier University has affiliation with more than 31 hospitals in the US including Wyckoff

Xavier medical school is now approved by New York State

New York: The New York Board of Regents approved Xavier University School of Medicine, Aruba last July to place students in long-term clinical clerkship in New York State for 7 years. This is the longest term of approval that can be given to an international medical school, XUSOM President Ravi Bhooplapur said proudly.

New York State Education Department approval allows:

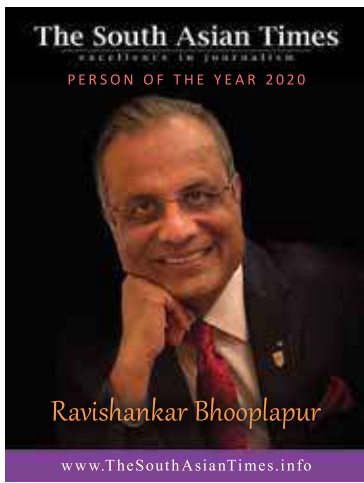
- Xavier graduates to enter residency training in NY
- Xavier students to complete all 72 weeks of clinical training in New York teaching hospitals

This landmark achievement makes Xavier as only

one of seven Caribbean medical schools to be approved by the New York State Education Department.

Under the leadership of Chancellor Dr. J.G. Bhat and Chairman of the Board Mr. Edwin Casey and Chief Academic Officer Dr. Arun Dubey, XUSOM, with its admissions office in Long Island, is committed to providing high quality affordable medical education to everyone.





Xavier ranked among top 10 Caribbean medical schools by Money Inc

Xavier University School of Medicine was ranked among top 10 medical schools in the Caribbean by Money Inc. magazine in 2019.

The magazine wrote that Xavier is one of the few universities in the Caribbean that is accredited by both

CAAM-HP and ACCM, adding, "They have a 96 percent USMLE first-time passing rate and offer clinical rotations in the United States. The university website says that students can enjoy an environment like no other for their studies because the uni-

versity is located on the hot and beautiful island of Aruba. In addition to the medical degrees on offer, this university offers international pre-med programs and post-graduate programs."

International Campuses

With a worldwide growing demand for high quality medication education, Xavier University has opened pre med campuses abroad. After completing pre med, students come to Aruba for their basic science and then to the US for their clinical rotations. Xavier opened 4 pre-med campuses in 2016 with additional ones planned in the future.

- St. Francis College, Hyderabad
- TIPs Global Institute, Coimbatore
- German Jordan University, Amman, Jordan
- Baldwin College, Accra, Ghana

New Campus Expansion

In 2014, Xavier added more land to the originally acquired 20 acres for the campus in Oranjestad, Aruba's capital. Its new campus is a multiphase project that will see an investment of over \$60 million and is expected to be completed by 2022. Phase 1 will open this year, comprising a 3 story student housing complex, dining facilities, sport courts, and site infrastructure.

Phase 2 will consist of a full state of the art academic block including lecture halls, labs, modern auditorium, computer labs and conference rooms and research facilities and clinic. Additional housing will be added in future years.

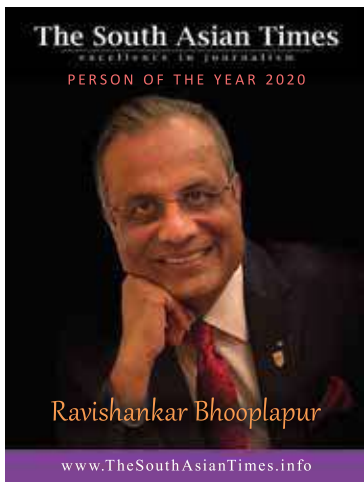
Tim Sini
DISTRICT ATTORNEY



Congratulations, Mr. Ravishankar Bhooplapur and thank you for being a Humanitarian, Philanthropist, Educationist, inspiring Community Leader and friend.



Xavier held its 12th Graduation Ceremony in 2019 at St. John's University. Their students have a 96% first time passing rate on the USMLE Step 1 and a 70% residency rate.



Ravishankar Bhooplapur

www.TheSouthAsianTimes.info

Student Loan Program

Xavier is offering affordable student loans to qualified students through an international educational loan program. Students are able to borrow the full cost of education including living expenses. They can borrow up to \$60,000 per year. Loans are for 20 years and repayment does not begin until after completion of residency. Currently these programs are offered to US citizens and Green Card holders.

Health fairs

To strengthen clinical exposure and create strong links with the Aruban community, the school conducts periodic health fairs. Health fairs have been conducted

in the school premises, at local banks, Aruba Customs and the International School of Aruba.

With a dynamic and inspired leadership, committed faculty and other human resources and state of the art infrastructure, Xavier University will confidently march ahead in its mission of producing leaders in primary health care and will continue to produce physicians with sound technical knowledge and good human and emotional skills!

Scholarship Opportunities

Xavier University offers financial assistance to the students in the form of academic scholarships. Scholarships are offered based on semester GPA, Dean's list for academic achievement, research publications and CARICOM countries' resident students.

Always ready to go an extra mile to help students, Ravi has established the Xavier Foundation, which received 501C approval as a public charity from the IRS in 2019. He has announced a goal of raising \$5 million by 2023, out of which 500k had already been pledged from Trustees and other donors.

The Aruba factor

Aruba is one of the most beautiful and developed Caribbean islands. It is also well connected with the US and Europe by air. The weather is temperate throughout the year and its location is below the hurricane belt. All these factors make Aruba a great destination to come and stay for a few years for higher education. Ravi considers Xavier as a "feather in the cap" of Aruba, in that it has a special place on the island.



Ravi Bhooplapur is thankful to his Board of Trustees for their support in making Xavier successful (from left): Dr. Obi Nwasokwa, Dr. P.K. Prahalad, Dr. Ravindra Kota, Chancellor Dr. J.G. Bhat, Chairman Mr. Edwin Casey, Mr. Frank Croes, and Dr. Anthony Shallash.



Ravi welcomed His Excellency Dr Amin Mahmoud, Deputy Prime Minister of Jordan, to the campus, introducing him to Chancellor Dr JG Bhat, Wyckoff Heights Medical Center CEO Mr. Rodriguez, Chief Medical Officer Dr Del Toro and other dignitaries.



XAVIER UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
ARUBA

Contact for Xavier
admission office in the US:

1000 Woodbury Road, Suite 109,
Woodbury NY 11797.
Ph: 416-222-2224.
Website: xusom.com



HEREBY CONGRATULATES

Mr. Ravi Bhooplapur

On being honored as

The South Asian Times

excellence in journalism

PERSON OF THE YEAR 2020

MR. ANTHONY G. CROES RA, FOUNDER AND OWNER OF PLUSACCOUNTANTS, HAS BEEN DOING BUSINESS WITH MR. BHOOP LAPUR FOR MANY YEARS AND HAS LEARNT THE GREAT WORK HE HAS BEEN DOING FOR HUMANITY.

PLEASE CONTINUE WITH THE INVALUABLE EFFORTS AS WELL AS ACHIEVEMENTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR MANY YEARS TO COME.

DEAR RAVI: YOU MAKE US PROUD AGAIN

*Heartiest Congratulations on being recognized as
Person of the Year 2020 of The South Asian Times*



At its Centenary Celebrations in November 2019, Karnataka High School, Dharwad, felicitated its alumnus Ravishankar Bhooplapur for his outstanding achievements and contributions to the school.

***Keep shining
With best compliments***

ANDRAD VELENTINE
BEVUR PRAMOD
BHUSARADDI SHIVAYOGI
DESHKULKARNI SHRIDHAR
DESHPANDE PRASAD
DEVDHAR ANIL
DR. JOSHI RAVINDRA
GAONKAR DEVIDAS
GARAG BHARAT

HIEMATH PRADEEP
JAMAKHANDI ANANDTEERTH
JOSHI VILAS
KALLIGUDDI MOHAN
KAMAT UDAY
KULKARNI SANJEEV
KURAKUNDI GOPINATH
METGUD RAJSHEKAR
MISHRIKOTI SHREEKANT

MOKASHI NAGARAJ
PAI RAGHAVENDRA
PRABHU NANJANNAVAR
RADDER SURESH
RAIKAR RAMDAS
SAGAR ARAVIND
SALAGATTI MOHAN
SHETTY SANTOSH
SINGAMSHETTY RAVINDRA



XAVIER UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

NEW CAMPUS AT ARUBA - OPENS 2021



Dream coming true, Xavier's upcoming state-of-art Campus in Aruba to be inaugurated in a couple of months.



XAVIER UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
 Santa Helenastraat #23
 Oranjestad, Aruba
 Tel: +1 516 333 2224 (USA) / (297) 588 7766 (Aruba)
 President: Mr. Ravishankar Bhooplapur
 Website: www.xusom.com
 Email: info@xusom.com

| RESIDENTIAL CAMPUS LEGEND | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 | RESIDENTIAL NORTH GATE ENTRANCE |
| 2 | VILLAS |
| 3 | RESIDENTIAL PARKING |
| 4 | RESIDENTIAL BLOCK B |
| 5 | DINING BLOCK |
| 6 | RESIDENTIAL BLOCK A |
| 7 | RESIDENTIAL BLOCK C |
| 8 | CLUBHOUSE |



| ACADEMIC CAMPUS LEGEND | |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 9 | SPORTS COURT FACILITIES |
| 10 | ACADEMIC NORTH GATE ENTRANCE 01 |
| 11 | ACADEMIC WEST GATE ENTRANCE 02 |
| 12 | ACADEMIC / AUDITORIUM PARKING |
| 13 | MAIN ACADEMIC BLOCK |
| 14 | CLINIC ENTRANCE |
| 15 | AUDITORIUM |



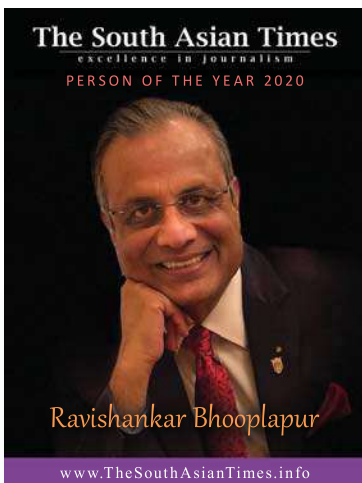
Architectural Design
GAYATHRI & NAMITH ARCHITECTS
 14 Temple Trees Row, Cauvery Colony
 Bengaluru . India
 Tel: (091 80) 25535449

Structural Design
HJC ENGINEERING N. V.
 Schotlandstraat # 79
 Oranjestad, Aruba
 Tel: (297) 588 5151

Mechanical Electrical Plumbing & Fire Safety Design
TIME LINE SERVICES N. V.
 Paramira 45
 Oranjestad, Aruba
 Tel. (297) 586 9799

Project Management
MER-CANN.
 Piedra Plat 103-B
 Oranjestad, Aruba
 Tel: (297) 592 1953

CONGRATULATIONS AND ACCLAMATIONS



Ravishankar Bhooplapur

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2203 4439
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C.C. PATIL

Minister for Mines & Geology,
and Gadag District
Incharge Minister

Date: 31-12-2020

NO. MGM/1392/2020

Dear Sri Chopra ji,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for choosing Dr. Ravishankar Bhooplapur as "The South Asian Times- Person of the Year-2020" by recognizing his achievements.

Dr. Ravishankar Bhooplapur has been an all-rounder since childhood. He was very studious and he was also an excellent Philanthropist who always volunteered to be a participant in all types of extra-curricular activities. He has shown that with the talent you possess, grit and determination an individual can achieve greater heights. He won many hearts by his work, helping the poor and the needy both in his birth place and in abroad.

I also take this opportunity to congratulate Dr Ravishankar on being conferred with this award and I feel proud of being his friend. I wish him all the success in his future endeavors and pray the almighty to bless him with good health and long life to serve more and more people.

Thanking you,

With regards,

(C. C. Patil)



Sri. Praveen Chopra

Managing Editor
The South Asian Times
Forsythe Media Group LLC
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Hicksville, NY 11801.
United States of America.

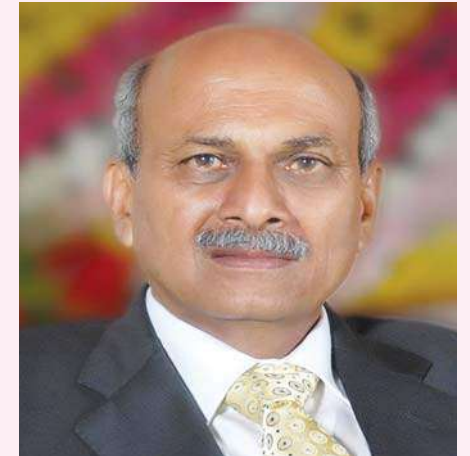
Prabhakar Kore

Former MP Rajya Sabha,
Educationist, Chairman KLE Society

"The South Asian Times-Person of the Year-2020" sounds like a perfect accomplishment to cherish for a lifetime but to the Ravi Bhooplapur that I have known over the ages, this would just be another pit stop as he gears up to greater deeds in context of his humanitarian causes. Congratulations Ravi! Way to go!

I have the pleasure of knowing Ravi since his Hubli-Dharwad days back in India when he had just started out on his little efforts, which would eventually take him places. His ability to ingrain the true spirit of Rotary, "Service above Self", is the defining philosophy that has stood out through his journey to the little pinnacle that he sees himself perched upon now.

While it is common for people to be lost in the grind as might be typical in running a successful business like the Vision Financial Services of which he is the CEO, it is heartening and inspirational to see that his core interests lie in the greater good. Ravi has utilized his position, reach and network to undertake a series of humanitarian initiatives, especially back in India, in order to give back to his motherland in full measure. His services, especially through the "Gift of Life" India proje, have dramatically altered the lives of over 6000 such children and their families. We at the KLE Society take great pride in partnering this initiative and several children have benefitted under the Gift of Life project through critical surgeries conducted at the KLE Hospital at Belagavi.



His contribution to health sciences education especially as the President, Xavier University School of Medicine Aruba is commendable and so is his commitment to high quality medical sciences education that has led to the establishment of Pre Medical programs in Jordan, Palestine, Ghana, India, and in Turkey.

Ravi's contributions extend beyond health-care to include more comprehensive humanitarian efforts. He spends a considerable amount of time in the rehabilitation of families affected by natural calamities like Hurricane Katrina, Tsunami in India, Indonesia and Sri Lanka on an ongoing basis. A true savior in times of great challenge!

Men of his kind never cease to inspire. They stop not for laurels because for them, what matters is the ability and resolve to go on and on in pursuit of greater dreams that translate into better realities for those around them. The honor as done by The South Asian Times often goes on to inspire others to walk that extra mile. Hats off Ravi Bhooplapur! May your tribe increase!

Dr JG Bhat

Chancellor, Xavier University School
of Medicine
Founder, Atlantic Dialysis
Management Services

My friend Ravi has earned the honor, recognized as "Man of the Year" by The South Asian Times.

I met Ravi in 1993 when he was working for Equitable Life, which later became AXA, a giant in the insurance industry. During the first encounter, something about this young man made me believe that he will be very successful in whatever endeavor he undertook in his life. Ravi excelled in the insurance business to earn the prestigious Hall of Fame recognition by AXA in 2004. He achieved this honor through honesty and integrity, essential to the services he was offering.

Humanitarian work for charitable causes is ingrained into the DNA of Ravi. As the honorary Chairman of Gift of Life India, he has been instrumental in arranging life-saving surgery for children born with heart defects. His humanitarian efforts have raised millions of dollars for worthy causes in 17 countries across the world.

Ravi joined the Rotary Club while in India and after coming to the United States, he rose through the ranks and became one of the very few Indian Americans to be the District Governor. Ravi served as a member of Rotary's Investment Committee, which manages Rotary Foundation's \$1.2 Billion fund. He managed to raise millions of dollars in matching grants for worthy humanitarian causes in the United States and other poorer nations providing food, clothes, medical supplies, and edu-



cation. In 2012, he received the prestigious "Ellis Island Medal," an honor reserved for immigrants who have contributed immensely toward humanitarian causes.

In 2008, Ravi left his lucrative insurance business to get involved in medical education. As the founding member and President of Xavier University School of Medicine in Oranjestad, Aruba, Ravi has championed quality education at an affordable cost. With his perseverance and persistent efforts, Xavier has been recognized by various accrediting bodies in the United States and elsewhere globally. Recently, Xavier University School of Medicine was named one of the top ten schools in the Caribbean, providing excellent quality education.

Ravi is actively engaged in the Indian community of Long Island. He has served as Treasurer of the Center for Indian Studies at Stony Brook. He is a trustee at the State University of New York at Westbury. He is an active member and supporter of several civic and cultural organizations such as AIA, AAPI, Indian Chamber of commerce, to name a few.

Aziz Memon

Trustee, The Rotary Foundation 2020-2024

I congratulate Ravi on this honor and wish him and Jaya the best in their life. This remarkable achievement reflects his commitment in making the world more peaceful, healthier and literate, more so in underdeveloped parts of the world.

I believe that his promising interest and supreme capabilities in philanthropic activities have saved many lives through Gift of Life (India) initiative, which is also benefiting India's neighboring countries. He has much to be proud, and we are proud of him that he can inspire others.

Raju Subramanian

Past Rotary District Governor

Ravi is a devoted family man and an ideal friend. He has always been kind and considerate to fellow human beings and communities, never forgetting his roots.

From humble beginnings to where he is today, he has always remained a kind and large hearted human being, who goes out of the way to help people.

He supports all good causes and his philanthropy and charity has helped build communities and brought succor to many.

The words of Ralph Waldo Emerson epitomizes Ravi's thinking and life:

The purpose of life is not to be happy, it is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate, to make some difference that you have lived and lived well.

God bless him and his ilk

SURINDER RAMETRA
Heartily Congratulates



RAVISHANKAR
BHOOPLAPUR

PHILANTHROPIST, EDUCATIONIST,
FAMILY MAN AND FRIEND

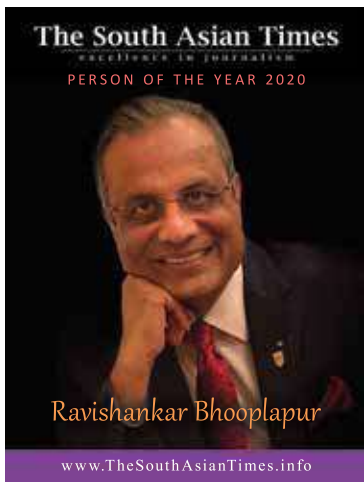
FOR BEING RECOGNIZED AS

The South Asian Times
excellence in journalism

PERSON OF THE YEAR 2020

With best compliments

Surinder Rametra
Chairman and Founder
Shanti Foundation
India & USA



Ravishankar Bhooplapur

www.TheSouthAsianTimes.info

As a young college union leader in India, Ravishankar Bhooplapur demonstrated strong leadership skills and great enthusiasm for anything he put his mind to. His

Serving his way to the Rotary Hall of Fame



tract was not established in his town, so he joined the Rotary club in Dharwad, in Karnataka state. He joined in 1980 at the young age of 18 in a club with an average age of 50+. Nevertheless, his fellow club members were a successful cross-section of the town. Ravi's association with these members had a pro-

meetings and conventions outside his town, and got to know people who did things differently than he did. This changed his way of thinking and doing good for humanity. Belonging to a lower-middle class family, son of a college principal, he began to dream big and do bigger things in different

ity. They established the Bhooplapur Foundation back in 1999.

In 2002, Ravi took the lead to establish Gift of Life, India. He saw the Gift of Life program in New York, and was drawn to the cause to create low cost and free heart surgeries for poor children. Ravi worked to solidify the program in India. He restructured and shaped the organization into what it is today, and continues to work on this ambitious project. So far, one small thought and act of starting this project has been instrumental in obtaining over \$2.5 million in grants from Rotary, and approximately 6,000 children were given the gift of life and made many like-minded people to come forward to donate year after year for this cause. He serves as Hon. Chairman of Gift of Life, India.

Aside from Gift of Life, Ravi has helped many humanitarian initiatives and projects in India for the last 20+ years, from north to south and east to west. He is an undisputed philanthropist, contagiously helping everyone, no matter where they come from or their political or religious affiliations. He is a man who will never say no to a good projects, and will go the extra mile to find the resources and the people necessary. He is also always there to provide advice on whether a project is feasible. Ravi is

To be able to give, you have to first have. For somebody born in a small Indian town, Rotary widened Ravi Bhooplapur's horizons, inspiring him to scale new heights of personal success as well as go on to serve one of the largest humanitarian service organizations in leading positions. Today he has been included in Rotary's Legacy Society - a club of \$1 million donors.

(2009-10), the first one of Indian origin to do so. Frank Devlyn, Rotary International President (2000-01) from Mexico, said at the time: "Ravi is an outstanding Rotarian that is why the district elected him."

As District Governor, Ravi chartered four new Rotary clubs



Ravi and Jaya Bhooplapur were inducted in 2005 into Rotary's Hall of Fame for their contributions to the Rotary Foundation. The New York couple with their children Manali and Amogh posed at the Hall of Fame aisle in the 115-year-old organization's Chicago headquarters.

neighbor, a Rotarian and architect by profession, noticed these qualities in Ravi and approached his mother to encourage him to join an international reputable club such as the Rotary. However, Ro-

found impact on him.

At the time Ravi joined, the Rotary's global reach was limited to print media, or visiting fellow members in other cities and countries. Slowly and steadily, Ravi began to attend

avenues of service. Although he did not have personal financial resources then, he never hesitated to take on big roles in projects and find the right people to donate money and services. Soon it became a way of life for Ravi. He held offices in his club from Sergeant-at-Arms to President-elect.

In 1992, Ravi relocated in the United States. His regard for Rotary in his heart was so strong that he rejoined the international organization when the Group Study Exchange team headed by Dr. Rajan Deshpande visited New York and encouraged him to become a member again in New York. This made it easy for him to assimilate with his American friends in Rotary society. It was effortless for him because he was a well-educated, well-groomed Rotarian thanks to the foundation he developed in Rotary in India. He was the Centennial President of Rotary Club of Great Neck, NY and later with the Gold Coast Lake Success Club, NY, became Assistant District Governor in 2005-06 and Governor in 2009-10.

Ravi started to fulfill his big dreams to help undertake major projects around the world and become a major donor. He spoke seriously with his wife Jayasheela Bhooplapur, now also a Rotarian, and the two decided to donate part of their income every year to char-



Rotary Foundation instituted a Trophy in 2005 for South Asia Zone V & VI in Ravi & Jaya Bhooplapur's name to be given every year to the highest contributing District of Rotary Zone V & VI to the permanent fund to the Foundation.

grateful to the Rotary of India and all the great things he has learned from them. He has helped his home country numerous times, coming to quick rescue at the times of natural disasters and human tragedies like the recent floods in Kerala.

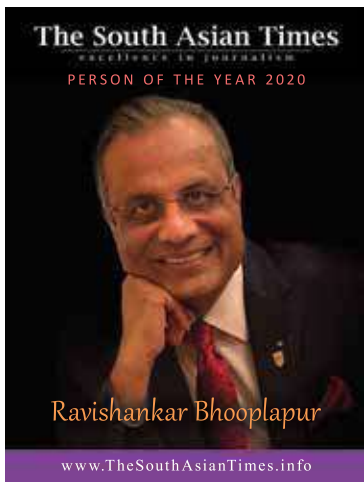
Meanwhile, at Rotary, Ravi kept moving up to accept bigger roles because even with his busy schedule as president of the Xavier University School of Medicine, he is able to find time to make things happen. He became Governor of New York Rotary District 7255

in 2009: Hicksville South, Jericho Sunrise (for ladies), Jackson Heights and Richmond Hills. Their members are mainly South Asians. Then RI President Elect Kalyan Banerjee administered the oath of office to over 100 new members of Hicksville South and Jericho Sunrise, where he said of Ravi, "When Ravi Bhooplapur wants to do something, he gets it done."

Over the years, Ravi has been instrumental in shepherding numerous worldwide humanitarian grants and medical missions.

Rotary Foundation
HUMANITARIAN SERVICE PROJECT

Ravi & Jaya Bhooplapur gave their home town, Dharwad, a gift by donating to set up Rotary ICU unit at the civil hospital, which is need of the hour due to Covid 19.



He has also secured millions of dollars in grants for his charitable initiatives. His multifarious association with the Rotary movement, his generous donations and legendary fundraising efforts as well as record of successfully executing projects has brought him top awards and honors from the organization he owes so much to. Even before he became RI District Governor, he was bestowed the awards of Distinguished Service, Meritorious Service, and Service Above Self, becoming the youngest to receive such acclamations.

Moreover, Ravi and his wife Jayasheela Bhooplapur were made Charter members of the Arch Klump Society back in 2005, which recognizes The Rotary Foundation's highest tier of donors — those who have contributed \$250,000 or more during their lifetime. The same year, the couple were inducted into Rota-



ROTARY INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

Because of his experience in the finance industry, Ravi was made a member of Rotary's Investment Committee from 2016-19 to disburse funds of \$1.2 Billion.

ry's Hall of Fame, for their contributions to the Rotary Foundation. Their photograph is displayed at the 115-year-old organization's Chicago headquarters.

Rotary International has trust-

ed Ravi with big responsibilities. He served as Member, Bangkok Convention Promotion Committee 2012 and Polio Plus Subcommittee: District Chair 2012-13.

Then, from 2016 to 2019 he

was on Rotary's Investment Committee (2016-2019) that manages \$1.2 billion funds to be distributed over 3 years. He also served on Rotary Global Rewards committee and Rotaract committee.

As he continues to be a dedicated Rotarian and philanthropist, Ravishankar Bhooplapur may end up taking bigger responsibilities like trustee or some committee chair.



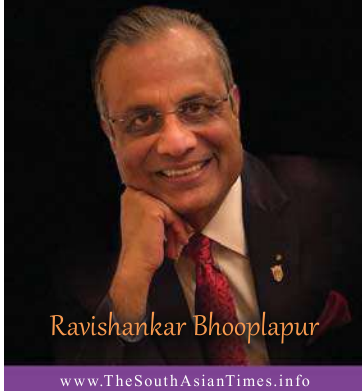
Gift of Life, India established by Ravi has saved the lives of over 6,000 poor children needing heart surgeries. He was heartened to meet many of them last February in Kolkata @ Rotary India Centennial Summit attended by Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan & Rotary International President Elect Shekhar Mehta.



As Rotary District Governor in New York, Ravi Bhooplapur chartered 4 clubs in 2009. Along with then RI President-elect Kalyan Banerjee, he graced the inauguration of Hicksville South and Jericho Sunrise. Charter Presidents respectively of the two clubs Kamlesh Mehta and Vimi Sikka are on the left.



Ravishankar Bhooplapur asserts that polio eradication is Rotary's biggest contribution to humanity in our time. He has supported the campaign and travelled to India to take part in the Polio Drop drives.



Ravishankar Bhooplapur

www.TheSouthAsianTimes.info

Dr CN Manjunath

Padma Shri Cardiologist and director,
Sri Jayadeva Institute of Cardiovascular Science & Research, Bangalore



My hearty congratulations to Rtn Ravishankar Bhooplapur, Past District Governor on being nominated as Person of the Year 2021 by The South Asian Times in New York. He has been a constant source of motivation and support to all Rotary ac-

tivities which is doing yeoman service to the community. He richly deserves this distinction for his outstanding to mankind. I wish him all the best in his future endeavors.

Arvind Vora

Founder of Shanti Fund, Chairman of Long Island Multi Faith Forum



As the saying goes, "The habit of going to the bottom of things usually lands a man on top" Ravi shines brilliantly with his relentless hard work, due diligence, and perseverance; be it charity work, education, or finance, befitting his name Ravi, meaning sun.

Ravi played a catalytic role as a trustee of SUNY Old Westbury to have a permanent memory of Mahatma

Gandhi on his 150th birth anniversary in 2019 in the form of a peace garden. The Government of India through the Consulate wanted to have a lasting tribute to the Mahatma, and why not in New York, the world capital. Shanti Fund, having worked on spreading Gandhi's messages on Long Island since 1998, joined hands with the Consulate. The project came through and now we have in the Gandhi Peace Garden on Long Island symbolically one tree from each of the 50 states of America.

Personally, I know that not only Ravi shines like a sun but equally well he provides warmth like a sunlight to many deserving and unfortunate people in just about every corner of the world through his personal charity and Rotary Club.

Gayathri Murali Rajan

President (2019-20)
Rotary Club of Jericho Sunrise

Mr. Ravi Bhooplapur is a true Karma Yogi selflessly striving to help our society and communities. Many have benefitted from his contributions and



generosity like the Gift of Life Program providing heart surgeries to children in need, hospitals where he has helped in setting up ICU wards and donating ambulances, communities affected by hurricanes & cyclones, our local shelters, food pantries to name a few. As President of the Rotary Club of Jericho Sunrise, a Women's Club which he along with his wife Jaya were instrumental in starting a decade ago, I have had the privilege to serve and see firsthand his focus and dynamism in working for the higher cause.

Surinder Rametra

Founder, Shanti Foundation,
Entrepreneur

Ravi is a great husband and fa-



ther of two wonderful children, his lifelong commitment to his community and family is an inspiration to us all. President of Xavier medical school, Ravi has always fought to support his global community, beyond his official role as an educator and mentor.

Most notably, Ravi is the founder of the Gift of Life in India foundation, which brings lifesaving heart surgeries to children younger than 15. He has also visited nearly 100 nations around the world to oversee Rotary projects.

He continues to inspire his students, community, and peers, through his undying commitment to help. Today we all celebrate this prodigious man and his many achievements.

Congratulations

Coburg Construction & Consulting N.V. would like to extend our heartfelt congratulations to Xavier University School of Medicine Aruba's President **Ravishankar Bhooplapur** for receiving the prestigious award:

The South Asian Times - Person of the Year 2020

Mr. Bhooplapur is not only a valued "Educationist" but also "Serving the Mankind" through his philanthropic contributions in the areas of education, healthcare and world peace.

Together with his wife and children, they work together to fulfill his noble humanitarian causes.

Xavier University School of Medicine Aruba is an accredited superior school of medicine by Aruba's Ministry of Education. Xavier University is serving Aruba since 2004.

Currently, Xavier University is further expanding in Aruba, thus showing its trust in Aruba by investing in the construction of a brand-new campus in Hato. Coburg Construction & Consulting N.V. is proud to be the principal contractor in the realization of this beautiful building.



Mr. Ravishankar Bhooplapur



XAVIER UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
ARUBA





Heartiest Congratulations to
Ravishankar Bhooplapur

The South Asian Times

excellence in journalism

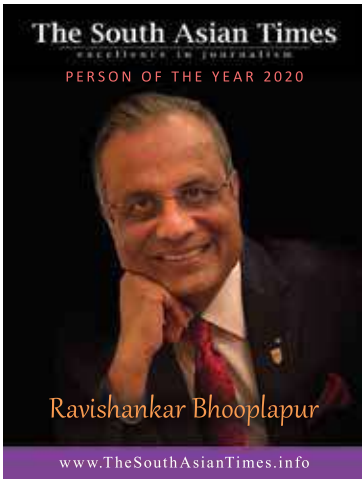
PERSON OF THE YEAR 2020

2021

Happy New Year

DON'T LET THE SHADOWS OF YESTERDAY SPOIL
THE SUNSHINE OF TOMORROW. LIVE FOR TODAY

Kanchana & Jagadeesan Poola



Ravishankar Bhooplapur

Discipline is the key

Jayasheela Bhooplapur

People know about his success here in America. But he was number one in his printing business in Dharwad too. Knowing his capability some people told him that he will be more successful in America. The secret to his success is he is very disciplined and motivated. And he does everything by the book, no short cuts. I have changed a lot under his influence – become more positive thinking person.

I am always supportive – more so in Ravi's philanthropic projects. My attorney father was a Rotarian, so I have seen how Rotary works. I married Ravi because he was a Rotarian. Here in New York, after Ravi as District Governor chartered Jericho Sunrise club, I too got involved and served as its President for a year.

We are Lingayats. This Shaivite Hindu sect was founded in the 12th century by a saint-statesman named Basaveswara (or Basava) in Karnataka. No caste system and women's equality are the hallmarks of this reformist movement. Also, work is worship is our main motto.

Me and Ravi got married as per Lingayat customs with big mukut on the head for the groom and smaller one for the bride (like what you see at Bengali weddings). In our wedding pictures you can see both of us holding shivalingas; we do not go around fire as in other Hindu traditions.

Even at home, Ravi will do puja after morning shower, putting on the vibhuti on the forehead. As a family we celebrate all the festivals together. Starting from our New Year called Ugadi, that

Behind every successful man is a ...

Jayasheela Bhooplapur reveals the secret to Ravi's success and some lesser known aspects about him. Daughter Manali dwells on the values he inculcated in her. And Amogh writes about what drives Dad.



comes in March-April to the most important one, Ganesh Chaturthi, also Dasehra and Deepavali.

Ravi loves to give surprises. About eight years ago when we were living in the Syosset house (now we are in Dix Hills), he told me to "go see there is something in

Another time, when I was still in India and he had gone to America, the doorbell rang and I opened the door thinking it was the milkman, but it was Ravi standing there smiling. I had not seen him for three years, and that was a big surprise.

Ravi is able to manage work-life

Dad may look strict and scary, but he's not. He's actually pretty soft person inside. I have seen him get involved with so many things, which just shows that everyone has potential. There's no excuse (for not succeeding). We shouldn't be scared and always try different things. That's what he shows. And like my Mom said, Dad is very disciplined. Since we were very young, we were told to make our bed. And till today it's just been there to always keep your room tidy and clean.

As in our Lingayat community, Dad firmly believes that work is worship. He is religious but not overly so. For him, work is his way of giving back, respecting everything. He believes that no matter what your financial situation is, it's always important to help peo-

ple no matter who they are.

He encouraged me and I went to volunteer at the pediatric burn unit of a hospital in Nicaragua. I was in high school then, and it was really an eye-opener, seeing firsthand what exactly is the medical field and what to expect. I saw both sides -- how patients suffer and how doctors ease their pain. I eventually studied to become a doctor at a medical school in Belgaum in Karnataka and am ready to do my residency here in New York.

Since my dad was heavily into Rotary, in school I was inspired to join Interact club. We did much work through Rotary projects. I was in Interact for four years all through high school. We raised a lot of money, including for Gift of Life projects. We also volunteered at the kitchen of Ronald McDonald House in Queens where kids stay after being brought for surgeries. Dad has helped build a room there.

At one Gift of Life hospital in India, I volunteered, consoling the kids. In medical school I was part of the Student Council. I was the overseas secretary, coordinating be-



Ravi and Jaya holding Shivalinga in their hands while performing wedding rituals as per their Lingayat tradition.



Ravishankar and Jayasheela 'remarried' in style at Oheka Castle on Long Island to celebrate their 25th anniversary.

the garage". I went and found two new cars parked there - one was a Lamborghini, the other a Bentley.

balance because his time management is excellent. Besides, he is able to multitask all the time. We go on vacations at least once a year. And he loves movies, action movies, both Bolly and Hollywood kind.

One thing Ravi is grateful to me for is bringing yoga to his life. He goes to the gym too, but now we have a yoga teacher coming home every alternate day.

He has great taste, and always picks great saris for me.

Everyone has potential

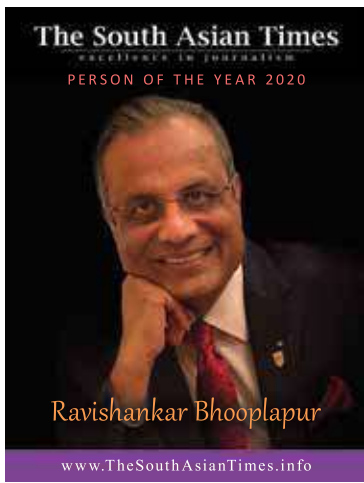
Daughter Manali's take



Work hard play hard or work-life balance!



Inspired by their father, Manali and Amogh volunteered at a hospital in Karnataka that was doing Gift of Life surgeries.



Ravi and extended family at his parents' 60th marriage anniversary in 2014 back home. Father Basav Raj Bhooplapur retired as a college principal.



Jaya Bhooplapur says that the family takes at least one vacation in a year. Ravi is globe-trotter by nature.



Ravi's Rotary journey began in Dharwad, Karnataka. Rotarians and the community in the area felicitated him in 2009. Dr Prabhakar Kore, Chairman of a chain of educational institutions greeted Ravi and Jaya.



Ravi built a naturopathy and yoga hospital named after his mother, Parwati Bhooplapur, in their native place, Ghataprabha in Karnataka.



He may be from South India, but Ravi is a Bollywood fan.

What drives Dad...

By Amogh Bhooplapur

My father has been able to achieve what many immigrants in the United States have been able to achieve: the American Dream. Like many reading this, he came from humble beginnings, but achieved success with hard work, persistence, and perseverance.

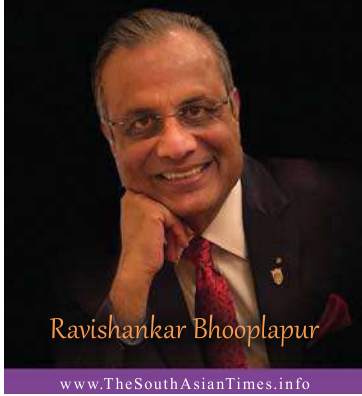
While many see the commanding exterior that Ravi presents when in a room, it will only take a few minutes to realize that he does not have a bad bone in his body. I believe success comes easy for him as he loves doing what he enjoys. He takes pride in his entrepreneurial work, be

it helping create more doctors, which is a dire need, or helping protect friends and loved ones by ensuring that they are insured properly. My father loves to make others smile - be it a typical dad joke in the car or helping set up a medical center for the underprivileged. What truly drives him is the smile he can put on others' faces. I am lucky to have a dad who always takes the time to educate those around him to provide proper guidance. He has provided valuable skills and taught numerous lessons to both myself and my friends.

It can be hard to balance work, philanthropy, and family life. However, Dad has always found a way and I sincerely thank him for that. He is the epitome of "Work hard play hard" and I look forward to following in his footsteps.



No, it is not his love of exotic cars. What truly drives Ravi is the smile he can put on others' faces.



Ravishankar Bhooplapur

www.TheSouthAsianTimes.info

Ferdinand Ruplin

Senior VP, Equitable
Insurance Company
Ravi's mentor in insurance

Ravi is certainly a very worthy nominee for this honor by The South Asian Times.

In the early '90s we sponsored Ravi for his H1B work visa. He was new to the US, and he had no contacts to help him start in the insurance business. What he did have, was an amazing work ethic and tremendous empathy, which allowed him to connect with many great people. People automatically gravitate to Ravi because of his genuine heart.

I worked very closely with Ravi to help him build his insurance and business skills. Ravi quickly became quite successful because of his hard work and dedication, helping pool protect their assets and families. Ravi was not fully happy, however, because his beautiful wife Jaya and wonderful daughter Manali were not with him (Amogh wasn't even born yet!). We applied for visas for the family, and after many letters and call to the Secretary of State, we were able to bring the family together.

With the support of his young family, Ravi began to become even more successful. This was when he began to turn his heart toward others in the community. Ravi raised money to buy an ambulance for a hospital in Brooklyn as one of his early projects. We all know that Ravi got involved with the Rotary as a way to maximize his efforts to help his fellow citizens of the world. Ravi has risen through the ranks of philanthropy and business.

It was inevitable that he would eventually move on from our company to do even greater things for the world. Ravi has now been instrumental in the education of thousands of aspiring medical professionals by founding the Xavier medical college.

I am proud to have played a small part in Ravi's great success and the good works he has done.

CONGRATULATIONS AND ACCLAMATIONS



Amin Mahmoud, PhD

Former Deputy Prime
Minister & Minister of Higher
Education, Jordan

I consider meeting Ravi Bhooplapur one of the most fortunate encounters in my life. Not only did I gain a great friend but an also amazing role model for the outstanding humanitarian contributions to the needy and poor everywhere and he does so with an indefatigable energy rarely matched by oth-

ers. My personal experience with him, which was largely focused on a non-profit university that he founded in 2004 and named Xavier University School of Medicine at the Caribbean Island of Aruba, showed his uncompromising dedication to academic quality and excellence. However, he is also recognized for other qualities such as his distinguished expertise in finance and investment. I look forward to learn more from him and wish him the best of health and continued achievements.

B.L. Stalnaker, MD

Professor Emeritus
Dept of Obstetrics and
Gynecology
University of Florida
College of Medicine

I congratulate your selection of this gentleman as Man of the Year 2020.

Not often can you identify one individual with so very many outstanding qualities. Ravi is blessed with the ability to evaluate complex situations, identify potential obstructive issues, see the path around them and then to implement the appropriate directives to achieve his desired goal.

The true sign of excellence is to fully understand what you do not know and then to fill that gap with quality consultation. Ravi's management style is "hands on" which has proven effective in his various



business and professional ventures. In medicine we have a dictum.... "if it isn't broken, DON'T FIX IT." Ravi exemplifies the application of this principle.

I have had the opportunity to spend quality time with President Bhooplapur and can state that it was one of the very best learning experiences of my career.

Again, congratulations to your Selection Committee.

O P Khanna

Chairman,
Needy Heart Foundation

I am extremely happy to know that my friend Ravishankar Bhooplapur is being recognized as "The South Asian Times-Person of the Year-2020".

I have known him since 2002 not only as a Rotarian but also as a co-fellow associated with Heart Surgery of needy poor heart patients.

I have had the opportunity to work with him on two social service Projects and I must say, I am proud to be associated with him.

Raj (SB) Rajur, PhD

President CEO of CreaGen Inc.
Woburn, MA

I know Ravi Bhooplapur since my college days. If you are a student in Dharwad, one place that you go for all your school and college supplies is Bhooplapur's Book Store. When we were undergraduate students at Karnataka College in Dharwad our first choice for all our school supplies and text books used to be Ravi's book store. Ravi always welcomed us with a big smile and helped with all our school supply needs from his store. Our favorite item in the store used



to be Likhak Notebook. 20 years later I did meet Ravi at one of the community conferences here in the US and it was the same big smile and affection that I noticed from him. He told me his story of how he came to the US and ride the waves to survive the early days of his stay. Like many immigrants, Ravi came to the US with a few dollars in his pocket. He started, among his many small jobs, selling donuts and later working as insurance agent selling insurance to community small business and individuals. Utilizing his insurance agency experience he created a network of physicians that led to the foundation of Xavier school of medicine in Aruba. Ravi is managing the medical school as its pres-

From book store to donut sale and insurance agency to presidency of a prestigious medical college: A true American entrepreneurial story of Mr. Ravi Bhooplapur.

ident since 2008, giving opportunity to many minority and lower income aspiring students to become doctors. During this journey, Ravi has done significant community work and held a number of leadership positions in organizations such as VSNA, KKNY, NAVIKA, and rotary clubs. Through these leadership positions, he brought together the community and promoted our heritage and culture. In 2013 when I was the president of NAVIKA, a non-profit community organization, I was looking for a leader who can take its chairmanship. I requested Ravi to take that role. Despite his busy schedules and commitments, he happily agreed to accept the position and help raise funds for the organization and grow its membership. He has naturally won many accolades including Ellis Island Medal.

Ravi Bhooplapur is a talented and outstanding community leader, a businessman, loyal friend, sage advisor, and a gentleman. I am personally a huge fan of Ravi's tenacity, drive, hard work, and keen insights. I shall always be proud and delighted to call him a friend. Uncommon modesty and humility are extremely common virtues with him. Many Kannadigas and others in the community have been beneficiaries of his grace, generosity, and wisdom. I congratulate him on the award.

A. K. Dubey M.D.

Chief Academic Officer
Xavier University School of
Medicine, Aruba

I have known Mr. Ravishankar Bhooplapur as President of Xavier University School of Medicine, Aruba since 2008. He exemplifies the essential tenets of a successful leader: ability, motivation and knowledge. Under his leadership, Xavier University achieved significant laurels - full unconditional accreditation by renowned accreditation bodies including accreditation from New York State Education Department. Today, Xavier is amongst the best



medical schools in the Caribbean. Mr. Ravi's boundless energy to help the needy by his humanitarian and philanthropist activities add to the personal attributes of a leader who truly deserves this "Person of the Year 2020" recognition.

AN EXTRAORDINARY HUMANITARIAN,
PHILANTHROPIST, EDUCATIONIST
AND A VERY DEAR FRIEND

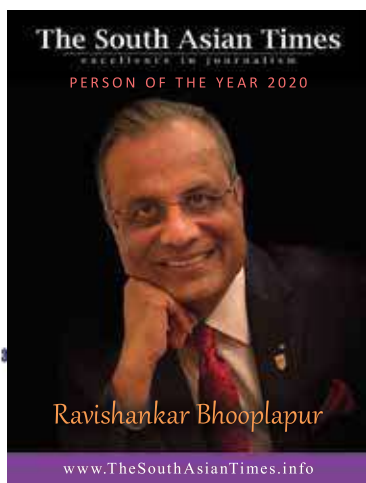
Heartiest Congratulations to
The South Asian Times
excellence in journalism
PERSON OF THE YEAR 2020



RAVISHANKAR |
BHOOPLAPUR |

*Wishing the community
a Happy, Healthy and
Joyous New Year*

With Best Compliments From:
KAMAL & BINA GUPTA



CONGRATULATIONS AND ACCLAMATIONS

CONSUL GENERAL OF INDIA
NEW YORK

December 28, 2020

The South Asian Times is a leading Diaspora newspaper which has served the Indian-American community and others in the United States very well. Each year, it celebrates the South Asian Times Person of the Year. This prestigious award has given a lot of encouragement to people from the community to work for the welfare of others. I am happy that this year, the esteemed newspaper has named Mr. Ravi Bhooplapur as the South Asian Times Person of the Year 2020. I warmly congratulate Mr. Bhooplapur on this achievement. He is an important member of the Indian-American community and we continue to count on his support in our endeavors to serve the community.



Randhir Jaiswal
Randhir Jaiswal
Consul General

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Website: www.indiannewyork.gov.in

person who is a gentleman par excellence. I would not hesitate to state that INTEGRITY and High ETHICAL VALUES IN LIFE are his middle name.

Dr Bharat Pandya

*Rotary International
Director, 2019-21,
Rotary International
Treasurer, 2020-21*

In my association of over a dozen years with Rotarian Ravi Bhooplapur, I have known him to be an unassuming, warm, frank & forthright but fair man who looks beyond himself. Some people catch one's eye and the rare person touches one's heart. Ravi is such a rare person who has not just caught my eye but touched my heart by his many service activities and his generosity in sharing his mite with others.

As a Rotary Leader he has been a motivational and guiding force to many Rotarians. He has fine-tuned the balance of his professional life, family and Rotary in a way that is an example to us all. And doing all this he has not forgotten his roots. He has over the years done yeoman service in many parts of India especially in his home state of Karnataka.

Indira & Bhupi Patel

Our congratulations to Ravishankar Bhooplapur on being honored as the Man of the Year 2020 by the prestigious publication, The South Asian Times.

Ravi, you have achieved great success in your business by your hard work and dedication. What we admire about you and Jayaji is your unconditional willingness to share your wealth and time for worthy causes.

1. Your exemplary work on behalf of the Rotary club, providing much needed heart surgeries to thousands of children in India. You provided a lifeline to these children and put a big smile on their parents' faces.

2. Your work on providing and supervising polio vaccine drive in Chennai was truly remarkable.

3. Your vision to build a world class Xavier University School of Medicine in Aruba is laudable, so that students dreaming to become doctors could fulfill their dreams.

4. Your appointment as a trustee to the prestigious State University Of New York (SUNY) college at Old Westbury, has given a voice to

our community in expressing their needs for education programs closer to home in Long Island.

Our special note of thanks to Jayaji for steadfast support in your every worthwhile charitable cause. Indira and I are blessed to have you and Jayaji in our Lives.



Padma Shri Dr Sudhir Parikh

*Chairman, ITVGold and
Parikh Worldwide Media*

I have always admired warmth, entrepreneurship and vision as well as Ravi Bhooplapur's ability to realize his dream. His success makes me proud as his friend as well as an Indian American. Ravi has added value to our community in several ways, his persistence and initiative is a great asset for us. He is helpful and philanthropic as well as one who doesn't believe in sweating for small stuff. I applaud 'The South Asian Times' for choosing a remarkable human being as "Person of the Year 2020". I have enjoyed his interaction with political representatives in a few discussions moderated by Ashok Vyas on ITVGold. We need such driven and dedicated community leaders for the growth of our community.



P.K. Prahalad M.D., MBA

*Cardiac Anesthesiologist,
Geisinger CMC.
Trustee, Xavier University
School of Medicine*

Two and half decades ago I met Ravi for insurance advice. We sowed the seed of a relationship then. A decade and a half ago we stumbled into a committed relationship by venturing into a magnificent endeavor viz. a medical school. A huge but rewarding endeavor. It needed at its head a man with genuine leadership qualities--Empathy, humility, accountability, confidence, integrity, passion, courage to take bold steps, creativity, social skills, honesty, and charisma. I have to say we find these qualities in Ravi and as a consequence we now have Xavier University School of Medicine built with a shoestring budget into an operation that has grown and continues to grow and is a beacon light for decades more to come. It has allowed us all to leave behind a legacy that posterity will cherish.



Ankur Vaidya

Chairman, FIA-Tristate

My experience receiving The South Asian Times - Person of the Year in 2016 on behalf of the Federation of Indian Associations of NY NJ CT has been very motivating. This very distinguished and vetted accolade that newspaper has been bestowing on highly distinguished and outstanding community leaders is a commendable gesture for which I applaud its Chairman Mr. Kamlesh Mehta, editor Mr. Parveen Chopra and their entire team for a fabulous selfless and exhaustive process they put into this.

In these challenging times when support local and support our community slogans have been louder than ever, our community should take note of this and pull out all stops and place extensive efforts in every way to see to it that selfless and community nourishing and motivating efforts of recognition such as the South Asian Times Person of the Year continue to move forward and have the support it needs to be sustainable.

Heartiest congratulations to Ravi Bhooplapur, the distinguished achiever this year. May Almighty empower him to continue his service and contributions to our community and society.



Ashok Mahajan

*Director, Rotary
International (2007-09)
Trustee, The Rotary
Foundation (2009-13)*

I am more than delighted to learn that our good friend Ravishankar Bhooplapur, popularly known as Ravi has been named as a Person of the Year by the South Asian Times's newspaper.

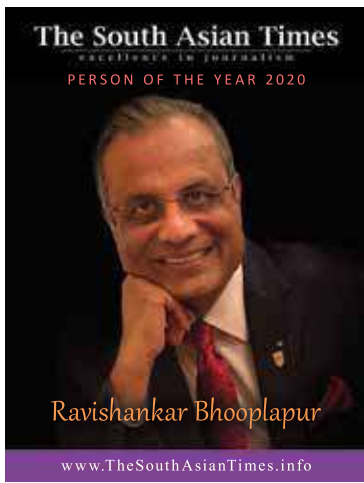
My association with this great Rotarian is pretty old. I have seen in him a person who seeks to promote the welfare of others, especially by his generous donation of money to good causes.

His work for the children's

health issues is just remarkable and all well known. His involvement in polio eradication program is appreciated by the Rotarians across the Rotary world. He not only contributed financially but he was equally involved in raising Funds through his personal connections and in administrating polio drops to the children. He visited India on a number of occasions only to see polio eradication program and take part in the National Immunization Days. He traveled the length and breadth of the country to support the cause.

Ravi's noble endeavor is GIFT OF LIFE, under which pediatric heart surgeries are performed. Children's Heart Surgery is a desperate need for children suffering from congenital heart defects. A timely surgery could go a long way to give a life full of health and longevity to these unfortunate children, who otherwise are destined to have a short life full of disease and despair.

Ravi is a strong supporter of The Rotary Foundation, the service arm of Rotary. He has contributed over \$250,000 towards the Foundation and he became Arch Klumph Society member long ago, which of course is a rare honor. Apart from his philanthropic nature he believes in very high ethical standards in his work life. He is a trustworthy



Ravishankar Bhooplapur

www.TheSouthAsianTimes.info

Saleem Iqbal

President & CEO
HAB Bank, New York

On Behalf of HAB Bank, I would like to extend my sincerest congratulation to Ravi Bhooplapur on being named Person of the Year 2020.

This is a much deserved recognition for all his services to our community. Ravi has been an integral part of our community for decades and through his untiring work, he has made our community strong. Although he has achieved tremen-



dous amount of success from founding a medical college to philanthropy through various organizations including Rotary, Ravi remains humble and eager to help anyone who reaches out to him. We are honored to be part of the community that has talented individuals like Ravi. We are so proud to call him a friend and colleague and know that this is just the start of his good work.

Gregory W. Meeks

Member of Congress, Committee on Foreign Affairs

I am fortunate to call Xavier University School of Medicine President Ravi Bhooplapur a personal friend of mine.

Ravi is one of the people who make New York the Empire State. His leadership at Xavier, his success in the financial services industry helping people realize dreams, and his deep commitment to bettering the human condition through his visionary philanthropy at home and abroad are an in-

spiration.

Ravi is both a devoted Rotarian who exemplifies the credo of "Service Above Self" and a most worthy recipient of the prestigious Ellis Island Medal of Honor celebrating immigrant achievement.

I send my wholehearted congratulations for this most recent honor from The South Asian Times and to his wonderful wife Jayasheela and beloved Amogh and Manali.



Sandeep Chakravorty

Consul General of India in New York (2018-20)

I whole-heartedly commend 'The South Asian Times' for their choice of "Person of the Year-2020" in Ravi Bhooplapur. During my tenure as Consul General of India in New York, I had the good fortune of interacting with him on several occasions. Raviji is not only a successful educational entrepreneur but also extremely community oriented, in terms of giving back to the society, both in the US, his karmabhoomi and India his mathrubhumi. He is as comfortable in corporate boardrooms in New York negotiating business deals as he is in rural Karnataka where he belongs.

He has indeed worked out an innovative model of bringing affordable medical education to the people of the United States, the Caribbean and India by opening the Xavier medical school in Aruba. This has allowed students who are interested in a career in medicine but cannot afford the high costs in the US to study abroad and thereby reduce costs and yet obtain training and internships in the US making them as equipped and trained as US medical graduates.

He has further made the model sustainable and affordable by imparting education in Hyderabad to Indian students. I was touched by his gesture of offering scholarships to Sikh students in his medical college during the commemoration of the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Devji.

I was first-hand witness to his amazing skills in negotiating complex issues when he was able to convince SUNY Westbury to partner with the Consulate and Shanti Fund for establishing the Gandhi Peace Garden for celebrating 150 years of the Mahatma. The Gandhi Peace Garden is a remarkable and enduring tribute to Gandhiji made possible due the efforts of the Shanti Fund of which Raviji is a valuable member.



"I was first-hand witness to Ravi's amazing skills in negotiating complex issues when he was able to convince SUNY Westbury to partner with the Consulate and Shanti Fund for establishing the Gandhi Peace Garden."



To:
Mr. Ravi Bhooplapur
Humanitarian, Philanthropist, Educationist & an inspiring Community Leader
President & CEO
Xavier University School of Medicine, Aruba
1000 Woodbury Road,
Woodbury, NY 11797

By: **Mail & Email**

Dear Mr. Bhooplapur:

Warm greetings from the Team@TheSouthAsianTimes.

The South Asian Times recognizes and admires the value-based philosophy behind your stupendous personal success as an eminent educationist and the extraordinary philanthropic activities you have undertaken and continued for decades.

The fundamentals of your successful principles and practices are a model for not just the Indian American community, but for all, everywhere at all times. You are an impeccable custodian of public trust. The philosophy of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' stands out in your actions.

With your growing footprint as an Educationist, you are also doing society a great service by allocating your resources to spread the kindness through four decades of association with Rotary International, serving globally while bringing honor to your Indian ancestry.

Serving the Mankind - as a core value of your approach - is also inspiring. You have saved and transformed many young lives by touching them through your Gift of Life (India) initiative. Your personal philanthropic contributions along with the support from your family, friends, and The Rotary Foundation in the vast areas of Education, Healthcare and World Peace have served thousands and will keep serving generations to come.

Your deep knowledge, wisdom and understanding of international norms, foresight and ethics in public life and humanitarian engagement in geopolitics is admirable and inspiring.

The entire Indian American Community and hundreds of thousands of people outside America, especially in India, at large, are proud of your leadership and efforts in making the world Literate, Healthier & more Peaceful, and applaud your leadership role in this regard.

Dear Ravi, in recognition of your global vision, extraordinary success, esteemed leadership and outstanding services, The South Asian Times is delighted and proud to nominate and declare you as the "The South Asian Times - Person of the Year - 2020."

We very warmly congratulate you for this great and prestigious honor, and wish you continued success in all your noble endeavors. The support and contributions of Mrs. Jaya Bhooplapur and your daughter Manali as well as your son Amogh in the success journey are also exemplary. Heartiest Congratulations to Mrs. Jaya and everyone in Bhooplapur family.

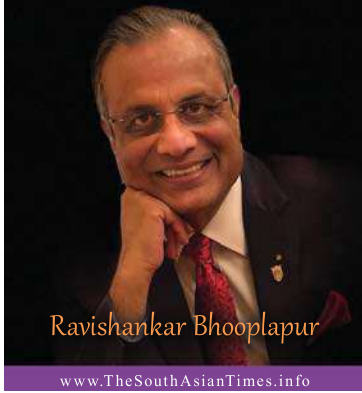
Our editorial team shall be in touch with you and your team for the preparation of exclusive presentation in our upcoming New Year special edition of The South Asian Times, welcoming the new era after the pandemic of the century and New Year 2021.

Thank you for your esteemed cooperation,
With best wishes and warm regards,

Kamlesh Mehta
Kamlesh C. Mehta
Chairman & Publisher
December 7, 2020

The South Asian Times
Excellence in Journalism

95 Broadway, Suite 2, Hicksville, NY 11801, USA Phone: +1 516 390 7847
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Ravishankar Bhooplapur

www.TheSouthAsianTimes.info

Damini Singh

Founder and Managing Partner,
Hrim Consulting
New Delhi, India



Mr. Ravi Bhooplapur has been an incredible source of support and guidance as I pursued my Masters in International Development from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy and Harvard Kennedy School of Government from 2018 to 2020. His generous financial support through the Rotary Global Grant Initiative towards my education made it possible for me to access these premier global universities. Mr. Bhooplapur has been a constant inspiration and a personal role model because of his incredible work in the philanthropic sector through his support for various educational grants and medical missions. The South Asian Times-Person of the Year-2020 is a fitting title for Mr. Bhooplapur, for his substantial global footprint as a philanthropist and a humanitarian.

CONGRATULATIONS AND ACCLAMATIONS

Dr Rajan Deshpande

Medical Director
Vithal Institute of Child Health
& Specialty Centre
Governor 1998-99
Rotary District 3170
Dharwad, Karnataka



If someone wants to be successful in life and be an achiever, then he has to be a dreamer. Dreaming big is not enough but to follow up the dream with passion, hard work and perseverance with a long term vision makes it happen. This is the story of a young man from the town Dharwad in south India. A simple guy managing a printing press and a shop dreamed big. The confidence and "I can do spirit" came to him, when an astrologer predicted that he will move to another country and be a very successful person. It is said "Difficult roads often lead to beautiful destination".

This young man landed in the beautiful country of USA, wherein opportunities to prosper are immense with no reservations of any kind. Ravishankar fondly called as "Ravi" had come with firm determination, positive attitude, excellent communication skills, charming personality, which could fetch him success in the financial services in USA.

He had bigger dreams and thus with great forethought started a medical school at Aruba. Swami Vivekananda said, "Life is short, the vanities of this world are tran-

sient, those alone live who live for others, rest of them are more dead than alive". This is what Ravi has practiced in his life. Rotary has made a big impact on him right from being a Rotarian at the age of 18 in the Dharwad. The turning point for both of us was a visit to "President's Good Will Conference" in Sri Lanka, where we saw the global picture of Rotary.

The philanthropic work he has rendered is phenomenal. As a global coordinator of "Gift of life" project, he has been a link to give lease of life for thousands of poor children with congenital heart problems, where surgeries are performed free of cost.

He is a family man and loves his family so much that the affection and the warmth he offers is to be seen to be believed. As a family friend, I can say Jaya and Ravi are made for each other. Success has not gone to his head. His feet are grounded. A self-made man I admire the most.

**He is a dreamer and an achiever
May his tribe increase.**

Kamal & Bina Gupta

A true leader represents success in a multitude of situations.

Leaders are not afraid to pave new paths and aid those around them without hesitation. They excel in providing solutions even to the most insurmountable challenges. Ravi is the epitome of these qualities. He is a patient and disciplined leader who has a clear vision of his goals and is willing to help oth-

ers. With these incredible qualities, he has accomplished many amazing things professionally and personally.

My wife Bina and I have known Ravi and Jaya for over 20 years and they are the most fantastic and giving people we know. They are our all-weather friends, dependable, and supporters of many community related activities. We are thankful and grateful to have these two pillars in our lives, and we know we have created a lifelong friendship with Ravi and Jaya.



Richard Derman, MD, MPH
Associate Provost, Global Affairs
Director, Global Health Research
Professor, Obstetrics & Gynecology

1020 Walnut St, Suite 518
Philadelphia, PA 19107
T 215-955-2153
F 215-503-4026

Re: Letter of commendation for Mr. Ravi Bhooplapur

January 6, 2020

Dear Parveen,

It is my pleasure to add my name to the distinguished list of professionals, all of whom have commented on the significant accomplishment of Mr. Ravi Bhooplapur.

As the global leader of Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia, I have interacted with Ravi many times over the past 15 years. I have observed with admiration both the manpower and resources that he was able to muster in combatting polio through his long association with the Rotary club. I have also noted Ravi's passion and ongoing commitment to India directed at the educational needs within Karnataka State -- never forgetting his roots or the needs of his colleagues. Perhaps most significantly, I have been fortunate to personally visit Xavier Medical School in Aruba and to witness the evolution of this College into one that is recognized as being among the best in the region. Mr. Bhooplapur's vision, oversight, and commitment to detail have helped assure that all graduates are able and well-equipped to practice medicine in the specialty of their choosing and within their geographic preference.

The combination of all these skillsets along with an overriding zeal to "do good" is truly a distinctive quality of Mr. Bhooplapur.

I am pleased to consider him a friend.

Best wishes,

Richard Derman, MD, MPH, FACOG
Associate Provost, Global Affairs,
Director, Global Health Research
Professor, Obstetrics and Gynecology
Thomas Jefferson University
215-955-2153

Dr Narinder Kukar

Chair Board of Trustees AIA
(1996-2001)



During a coincidental community dinner get together in late 1997, I mentioned to Ravi that the Association of Indians in America (AIA) has published a highly acclaimed commemorative book "ANANYA" as part of India's 50th Independence celebrations. We wanted to present it to all the Indian embassies around the world, and we needed to raise about \$10,000. Ravi said to me, "Doctor, I will pay for it". And he did.

Next, I observed, at a fund-raising dinner in early 2000s at Akbar Restaurant, another organization was falling short by \$30,000 and Ravi volunteered and contributed the amount. He prefers to say, "Contributions, instead of donations". He has established a free naturopathy hospital in his hometown, Ghataprabha, Karnataka. He is a very humble man, and a behind-the-scenes philanthropist. Ravi for years has been the face of the Indian

community in Rotary International and in 2009-10 served as District Governor in New York. He devoted his time and resources to serve as the chairman of the Golden Jubilee celebrations of AIA in 2018. Once Ravi takes on an assignment, he delivers and delivers in style.

Ravi is equally comfortable when dealing with a common man, international organizations, elected officials or royalty. Rarely does one come across such an accomplished and caring individual with a penchant for public service. For me and my wife Manju, it has been a privilege to have been associated with Ravi and his wife Jaya.

Ravindra Kota, M.D.

I have known Mr. Ravi Bhooplapur for over 15 years as a very good personal friend and colleague. He has been a very dedicated and hardworking person. He had a successful career in the insurance industry for over 25 years and was entered into "Hall of Fame" of insurance for his outstanding commitment and service

to the industry. He was District Governor of Rotary International in 2009 and has made several charitable contributions and held successful events.

Ravi became the President and CEO of Xavier medical school in Aruba and was instrumental in its success. For all his success, Ravi remains a very humble and down to earth person, who is always available for a noble and charitable cause.



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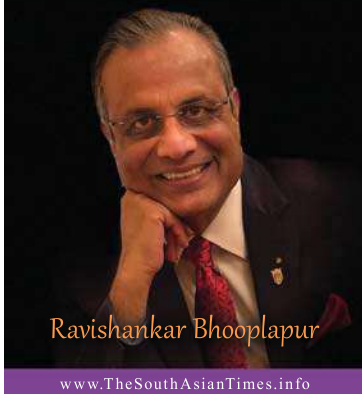
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Ravishankar Bhooplapur

www.TheSouthAsianTimes.info

Prof Richard Pestell

Vice President of Academic Affairs and Clinical Dean



On behalf of the Clinical administrative team, Associate Dean Abazid and the Clinical Department Chairs, I warmly congratulate Mr. Ravishankar Bhooplapur as The South Asian Times-Person of the Year-2020! I have come to know Mr. Bhooplapur as a passionate leader in his role as President & CEO of Xavier and as an inspirational Humanitarian, Philanthropist, and Community Leader. His efforts to build a new accredited Medical School reflects his passion for education. His philosophy of caring for the whole person is reflected in the curriculum and the values of the graduates. His patience is reflected in the long road to the success of the current school with a new campus reflecting the future of medical education.

Daniel Moses

Vice President, Finance



I have had the great pleasure of working side by side with Mr. Ravishankar Bhooplapur for the last 6 1/2 years at Xavier. Ravi is an inspirational leader who is always teaching and motivating. Under his guidance and vision, a brand new state of the art campus has become a reality for Xavier. It has been a pleasure to work with him and see this amazing accomplishment happen. Congratulations to Ravi for this well-deserved, tremendous honor.

Richard M. Pomerantz, MD, CPE, FACC

Maryland Regional Chairman of Medicine

I have enjoyed working with Mr.

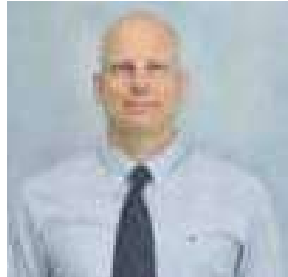
CONGRATULATIONS AND ACCLAMATIONS

Heartfelt messages from faculty and staff at Xavier University School of Medicine.



Dr. Jeremy L. Rae

Assistant Professor of Biochemistry



Ravishankar Bhooplapur in his capacity as President and founder of the Xavier University School of Medicine. As a regional US clinical department chair for the school, I have witnessed first-hand his dedication to the school and the students. It is an extremely difficult endeavor to start a new medical school and his dedication to the task has been most impressive. His many outstanding organizational, financial and leadership talents make the school ever more successful in its mission of training new physicians. Ravi is well deserving of this award and I would like to congratulate him on being South Asian Times Person of the Year for 2020.

Barry Cohen Adunmo

Director of Information Technology Systems



First of all, I want to congratulate Mr. Ravishankar Bhooplapur for being nominated as "The South Asian Times-Person of the Year-2020"

I was employed by Mr. Ravi in 2010 to join the IT Department at Xavier. When I met him in Aruba for the first time, he told me: "A dream does not become reality through shortcuts. It takes sweat, determination, and most importantly hard work." From that day going forward, I knew that Mr. Ravi is a decisive, proactive, and result driven professional.

Mr. Ravi provided me with a unique blend of his personal and practical experience, his outstanding organizational and personal motivational skills, creativity, resourcefulness, and most importantly the versatility for change. My sincere appreciation and gratitude go to Mr. Ravi for his leadership and power of positive thinking that contributed to my energies to be consistently devoted to being a good steward of available resources.

Dr. Joseph Jillwin, PhD

Lecturer - Immunology & Microbiology



Dear Sir, you are not just a leader but rather an inspirational figure for me and it gives me great pleasure to see you come out victorious at every stage of life. So many congratulations on the meritorious achievement.

Dr. Patricia Brumley

Medical Librarian



Two roads diverged in the woods and I chose the one less traveled which has led me to working at the Xavier University School of Medicine and interacting with a wonderful administration under Mr. Ravi

Bhooplapur, one of the most innovative individuals in the educational system, to work with.

Mr. Ravi has innovative, creative ideas and futuristic plans for the University that he has allowed me to become an integral participant and become instrumental in the success of the university. I am honored to be a member of such an institution, and I salute Mr. Ravi in all his pursuits.

Dr Jupjeet Kaur

Chief Compliance officer



Ravi is outstanding! A man that is driven by a powerful sense of purpose both in his individual life and in relation to the world at large. He holds tight to his vision with every ounce of his focus. His motto: "If we aren't fully committed, we cannot fully live our dreams".

Jeane-Betsy Irausquin - Mackintosh

New Student and Immigration Coordinator



It's a very diligent work and I really admire Mr. Bhooplapur's contribution to the world! Congratulation for the huge recognition as "The South Asian Times-Person of the Year 2020".

I have been working for over 4 years with Mr. Bhooplapur, and I can definitely say that he is a remarkable dedicated, hardworking, encouraging and inspiring person that is making the world a better place by helping others.

Going far beyond the call of duty, doing more than what others expect, and this is what excellence is about.

Being part of his team at Xavier has and still is teaching me a lot and I am proud to be part of it.

Yvette Aal

Registrar

I would like to take this opportuni-



ty to congratulate Mr. Ravi Bhooplapur on this great achievement. Being part of Xavier since 2016, I witnessed him achieve many important and impressive accomplishments. I am proud to be part of the Xavier team and with the great leadership of Mr. Ravi Bhooplapur, Xavier University will definitely keep on growing, improving and achieving many more milestones.

Dr. Prasad VN

Assistant Dean of Student Affairs



I was lucky to interact with and get an opportunity to work under Mr. Ravi Bhooplapur's leadership, at a very early stage of my career. He is a dynamic leader who has navigated Xavier University School of Medicine (XUSOM) to become the successful medical school in Aruba. Under his flamboyant leadership, XUSOM has grown leaps and bounds and has achieved full unconditional accreditations from CAAM-HP, ACCM, and NYSED reassuring the quality of the medical education that is being delivered here. His aura of positivity is awe inspiring. Mr. Bhooplapur's contribution to the field of medical education and in shaping the future of healthcare is immense.

Prof. J. Odryzyski

Assistant Professor of Chemistry



Mr. Ravi Bhooplapur took the school from no accreditation to multi accreditation since he acquired it in 2008. I am honored to be a member of such an institution.



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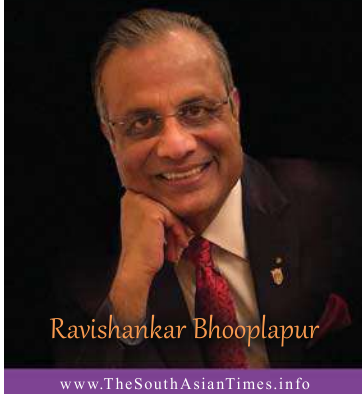
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Ravishankar Bhooplapur

www.TheSouthAsianTimes.info

Mark H. Zafrin

Attorney



I have been involved with Ravi for over 15 years since the beginning of his embarking on running the Xavier medical school. I was the attorney who set up all the America companies for setting up the school and used to raise the initial seed capital and the secondary offering when Ravi had the opportunity to buy the land parcel to build on.

Watching Ravi take this school from its extremely humble beginnings to what it is now including his ability to maintain excellent investor relations throughout the process has been an inspiration for me. Ravi is truly a visionary. However, this is tempered by his grounded and humble approach to reach his vision of success in a measured, careful fashion. He is like a shepherd husbanding his flock for the coming winter or a farmer making sure he doesn't waste his seed corn. Moreover, I can't remember how many times Ravi will ask people to do a favor for someone else without any gain to himself. This is a man who is worthy of being honored by any publication, a true leader trying to make the world a better place.

Mohan Wanchoo

Founder & CEO
EC Infosystems, Inc.



I have known Ravi Bhooplapur for the past many years as a great philanthropist, community leader, President of Xavier University

CONGRATULATIONS AND ACCLAMATIONS

School of Medicine and above all as a true friend. This is an honor richly deserved by him and is a testament to his valuable contributions in the field of insurance, health care, education and philanthropy.

Ravi has received Rotary Foundation's most befitting and highest awards for his commitment to humanitarian work worldwide. He is Rotary's Hall of Famer and his portrait is installed at the world headquarters in Evanston, Chicago.

I am sure he will receive many more accolades in his illustrious career.

Rajendra Rao

Past District Governor
Rotary International District 3190



I am happy to learn that Past District Governor Rtn. Ravishankar Bhooplapur has been named the "Person of the year 2020" by "The South Asian Times". Ravi truly deserves this recognition. He has been one of our major benefactors for various humanitarian projects and for conducting heart surgeries on poor children suffering from congenital heart diseases and "Mobile Mammography Bus" for detection of Breast Cancer in Rotary District 3190 In Bangalore.

Though he lives in the USA, his heart beats for the poor and deprived section of our society in India and we wish him many more years of service to the humanity world over.

Varinder K. Bhalla

Publisher, Bollywood Insider



I have always been impressed by the accomplishments of Ravi

Bhooplapur in various fields of his professional endeavors. What is striking, however, is that he never lost sight of his innermost desire to help the less fortunate and the downtrodden. His founding of Gift of Life India which saved the lives of 6,000 children with their free heart surgeries is one of most notables, and perhaps unmatched by any other Indian across the United States. Whenever natural disasters struck in India, whether Tsunami or earthquake, he showed leadership in raising funds for the affected people. A more recent example of his leadership is his initiative to raise funds and build low cost homes for people struck by floods in Kerala in 2019. Ravi is a pioneer in his professional fields, a leader and a philanthropist. I salute him for his qualities of head and heart!

Sammy Hsiao

Dist Governor 2007-2008



Person of the year 2020 is a well deserved recognition for my dear friend of more than 20 years. Through our work together in the Rotary, I have seen first hand his many good works and heart for service. We have worked side by side for local and international causes, including "Gift of Life". His work in the community and commitment to his family faithfully typifies the Rotary motto of "Service Above Self". I offer sincere congratulations to my friend Ravi and his wonderful wife Jaya for this extraordinary honor.

Jasbir Jay Singh

Editor-Publisher, Hum Hindustani



Congratulations, South Asian Times for choosing Ravi Bhoopla-

pur as your Person of the Year 2020. He is a honored, humble and eminent personality who has earned the respect from the community: for his success in the Insurance Industry, his accomplishment in the education field, his inspiring achievement in the community at large, and serving humanity beyond borders.

Jagdish Sewhani

President
The American India Public Affairs Committee



I have known Ravi for over two decades. He is truly patriotic. Whenever I have called upon him to do something for Bharat or for our community, he is always there. Ravi is benevolent and a great philanthropist. He always thinks about the welfare of others and donates generously to good causes.

Mukesh Modi

Past President,
Rotary Club of Hicksville South



No one needs a second look at Ravi to realize what a great achiever he is. He can accomplish anything he desires. I congratulate him and wonder if he ever feels tired of doing amazing work. God bless you!

Ravi, you are doing just perfect on your way to becoming a legend.

Roopam Maini

Assistant Vice President,
BCB Indus American Bank

My deep admiration is for Ravi Bhooplapur's achievements as an entrepreneur and as a humanitari-



an serving Rotary's mission of making the world a better place. For many of us you are an example and a source of inspiration for doing good in the world by promoting human dignity and promoting world peace. May you be blessed in all your future endeavors.

Dr A Aboud, MD



It has been an honor and the greatest pleasure getting to know and work with Mr. Bhooplapur. He is one of the hardest working individuals I have ever met. I have personally witnessed the impact of his work through the success of Xavier University School of Medicine. Mr. Bhooplapur's limitless charity contributions have touched the lives of many people across the world. His will to help out those in need is nothing short of extraordinary.

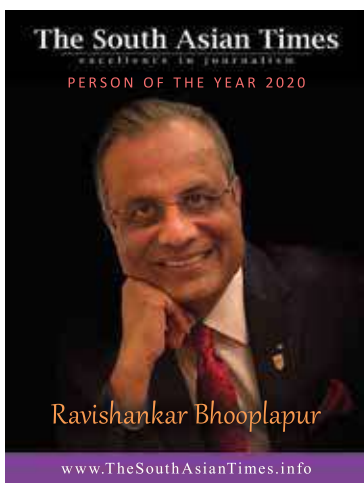
Dr. Ajith Prasad

Principal, JSS Shri Manjunatheshwara Institute of UG & PG Studies, Dharwad

I and my entire staff are very proud of our past student, Mr. Ravishankar Bhooplapur. We would also like to thank The South Asian Times for recognizing, admiring and awarding him with The Person of the Year 2020 for his work.

Dr Lakshmi Dodda, M.D.

Ravi is passionate and affable. Well-deserved honor for his contributions to the society.



CONGRATULATIONS AND ACCLAMATIONS

Joe Crowley

Former Congressman

Congratulations to my dear friend Ravi on this incredible honor. Ravi is a true visionary who has devoted himself to advancing education and improving healthcare. His passion for service is evident in his tireless work to help local and international humanitarian efforts. The Person of the Year 2020 is a well-deserved recognition of Ravi's impressive record of accomplishments and his dedication to serving those in need.



Laura Curran

Nassau County Executive

Congratulations to Ravi Bhooplapur for being named The South Asian Times' Person of the Year. In addition to your work in the insurance industry for over 25 years as founder and CEO of Vision Financial Services, you have made an incredible impact as a community leader, humanitarian and philanthropist. You have touched so many lives in so many ways from service as a trustee of SUNY Old Westbury to your role as president of Xavier University School of Medicine, Aruba, and work with Rotary International. Through "Gift of Life India," you have helped save lives, providing heart surgeries to children suffering from congenital heart disease. From your entrepreneurial spirit and accomplishments in businesses to your passion for helping those in need receive education and healthcare, you are truly an inspiration. Thank you for your sustained commitment to community and charity, and your work as a leader with a lasting commitment to making others' lives better.



Frank H. Croes

Former Commissioner of Education and Health, Aruba

We, in Aruba, rejoice at the great choice of your prestigious daily to proclaim Mr. Ravi Bhooplapur "Man-of-the-Year 2020". We know Mr. Bhooplapur since he took over the stewardship and established Xavier University - School of Medicine in Aruba, and admire how he succeeded, by selecting the



best of available Staff & Faculty members, and by procuring for excellent training facilities for students, in making this high learning institute, with US/Canadian Med Program, a top quality one accredited by no less than three world renowned Accrediting Authorities, all three recognized by the U.S./Canadian Education Departments, and ranking in the best 10 of Caribbean Schools of Medicine.

G. Doddamani

Past VSNA President Michigan

I have known Mr. Ravi Bhooplapur and his family for decades. I have great respect, appreciation and affection for him. His dedication and contributions to the society are countless.

We both worked together very closely in the organization called Veerashiva Samaja of North America (VSNA). Ravi was its President in 2003-2004. He has been a pillar of our community. His warm personality, generosity and loyalty have enriched the lives of his many friends in the Indian community.

Mr. Bhooplapur is an intelligent, smart and enthusiastic entrepreneur. In view of his dedicated service to the community in the field of education he commands our respect.

A few years ago, I attended a Rotary club function in Chicago where Ravi Bhooplapur was honored for his dedication and contributions for Rotary International.

Dr Sampat Shivangi

Member National Advisory Council SAMHSA, Center for National Mental Health Services, Washington DC

I have known Ravi for over 40 years as we come from the same part of Karnataka in India. We even went to the same high school in my hometown. I am amazed to see the great humanitarian work he has continued to do through Rotary and dozens of key projects in India including in health and educational sectors. He is a pioneer in setting up international projects that include hospitals, clinics and dialysis units which are a dire need in developing countries like India.

Only a progressive thinker with an enterprising spirit like Ravi could have ventured into Medical Education, making it a successful venture. With Xavier Medical School in Aruba he is filling the vacuum in medical education.

Dervinder Singh

Attorney

I have had the privilege of knowing Mr. Ravishankar Bhooplapur since 1992. He is a dedicated family man with deep roots in the Indian American community in particular and the mainstream American community in general. He is an honest, decent human being and a man of faith. As any other first generation immigrant Mr. Bhooplapur had his share of challenges in an effort to settle in this country and

make it worthwhile for his family to have a head start and good future for his children. He is a smart intelligent man who knows how to prioritize his goals and objectives, he is the hardest working most organized individual I have come across over the years.

Mr. Bhooplapur established himself in the early years in the financial services and helped his friends and clients secure their assets and financial future. He performed at the highest level in the industry amongst his peers and was on various occasions invited as a special guest to guide and motivate his colleagues and juniors to succeed in the industry.

Over a decade ago he transitioned from financial services to medical education and became President of a medical school in Aruba and since then with his vision and foresight he transformed a below average medical school to one of the best schools in the Caribbean Islands.

Besides the professional life Mr. Bhooplapur has involved himself in various charitable projects by organizing through Rotary international. He has always been the first one to provide aid and organize massive aid drives be it the devastation by floods in Kerala, earthquakes in Pakistan or Haiti. The leadership, dedication, commitment and service over self has always been the outstanding quality of Mr. Bhooplapur's life.



Dr. Jayashree Shivamoggi

Rollins College, FL

I first met Ravi when he enrolled in our college and I was his senior by two years. He had a reputation of being very mischievous and precocious and was known for his many antics. However, there was another side to this unique kid. I valued his traits of creativity, entrepreneurship, and supremely friendly personality. Who starts a business in eighth grade (in India)

- because he has extra time on his hands and he really wants to interact with people!

Our friendship grew stronger even after I left college and I was keeping track of his progress as he kept adding more ventures to his business even before he graduated from college. My father, who was an engineer, also appreciated Ravi's talents and ordered brochures from Ravi's printing press. His work was so amazing that it garnered attention from engineers statewide in Karnataka and Ravi never looked back. He always recognized the best and worked hard to make any dream a reality. Jaya was the best in our college and he won her over. The rest as they say is history. I have followed Ravi's progress in the United States with awe and admiration.

Ravi has an uncanny ability to turn grass into gold. Whatever Ravi touches becomes a success. Nevertheless, there is more to the success story than the proverbial Midas touch. Ravi approaches everything and everyone with a huge heart. Helping others is a very big part of his vision, both personally and

professionally. When Ravi moved to the United States, he gifted his business to his assistant rather than sell it for a profit. Millions have benefited from his generosity. Ravi continues to excel, lead and serve. I am so lucky and proud to call this amazing person my friend.

KV Kumar

President & CEO, Indian American International Chamber of Commerce, Washington, D.C. 20036

It has been an honor to know Mr. Ravishankar Bhooplapur for the past 20 years through his charity work. His leadership skills, time management & to motivate and connect many young entrepreneurs are his great qualities. He is good at networking among cross-sections of society and always ready to lend his hand, and a great role model for many aspiring entrepreneurs. Despite his many accomplishments, he is very humble and down to earth.

A celebration of another year of life.

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Let's be Part of it.

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Manju & Raja Amar wish you all the best in 2020



Dr Sanjay Gupta

As the host of the CNN show "Sanjay Gupta MD" and co-host with Anderson Cooper of global town halls throughout the pandemic he came into our homes and gave us wisdom and truth.



(Image courtesy: cnn.com)

As CNN's celebrity chief medical correspondent, the Atlanta-based neurosurgeon has covered everything from the war in Iraq to the rising popularity of medicinal cannabis but in 2020 he was preoccupied by the novel coronavirus from tweeting the latest on the vaccines to receiving it live on-air to inspire confidence in the public.

Pramila Jayapal

Indian American House member Pramila Jayapal hogged headlines throughout the year for a number of reasons.



(Image courtesy: Twitter)

From writing along with seven other influential lawmakers to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo against the farm laws introduced by the Indian government to tabling legislation condemning India's Citizenship Amendment Act this Chennai-born firebrand left liberal Democrat was also recently elected Chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus (CPC).

A group of progressive lawmakers led by Jayapal also wants the incoming Biden-Harris administration to reverse Trump's "xenophobic policies" and transform US immigration system into a just and humane one. She got re-elected to the US House of Representatives for the third consecutive term. She won the 2020 election by defeating Republican Craig Keller by a massive 70 percentage points.

Sara Gideon

Indian American Sara Gideon, who came up short in the US Senate race in Maine against



(Image courtesy: Twitter)

Susan Collins, made news when she received nearly \$75 M for her campaign.

Earlier as Speaker of the Maine State Assembly she won the

Democratic primary for the US Senate seat to challenge incumbent Republican Senator Susan Collins in the November elections.

After entrepreneur Rik Mehta, she was the second Indian-American to have won a Senate primary race in the 2020 election season. Daughter of Indian-American father and Armenian mother, Gideon attracted the attention of the entire Democratic Party from across the nation for raising a massive \$75 M which is a Maine record.

And few weeks back she again hit headlines for announcing her intention to donate \$350,000 of \$15 M left in campaign funds to two charities Full Plates, Full Potential and Keep ME Warm.

Priyanka Chopra Jonas

Quarantined and all yet Priyanka along with husband Nick Jonas kept us entertained



(Image courtesy: financialexpress.com)

through the year with their loved up Instagram feeds. The couple enjoyed date nights, exercised together, while PeeCee also hosted her mini-MET Gala with her niece. While they kept themselves busy with all kinds of activities, including work, Priyanka and Nick also adopted a Husky Australian Shepherd mix rescue who they named Panda. Later with some relaxations in place the couple took their favorite pets for drives around LA and kept us glued to social media. On the work front too Priyanka created a lot of buzz with her Netflix productions and Hollywood 'Matrix 4' runs.

Gitanjali Rao

15-year-old Gitanjali Rao was chosen as the first-ever 'Kid of the Year' by Time magazine



(Image courtesy: time.com)

and recognized for her astonishing and ground-breaking work as a scientist and innovator who used technology to tackle issues from contaminated drinking water to opioid addiction and cyberbullying. Gitanjali was selected from more than 5,000 nominees as she "stood out for creating a global community of young innovators and inspiring them to pursue their goals."

Neera Tanden

President-elect Joe Biden's pick as budget chief ran into controversy from day one with her critics digging up her social media accounts for her past comments. If the senate

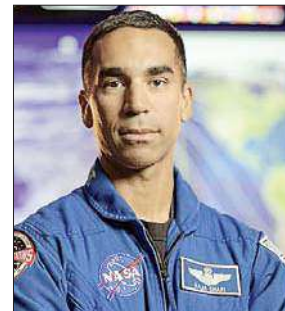


(Image courtesy: american-progress.org)

confirms her nomination she will be the first Indian-American and the first woman of color to serve as director of the US Office of Management and Budget.

Raja Chari

Indian-American US Air Force Colonel Raja Chari was selected as the Commander of the SpaceX Crew-3 mission to the International Space Station (ISS) by NASA and the European Space Agency.

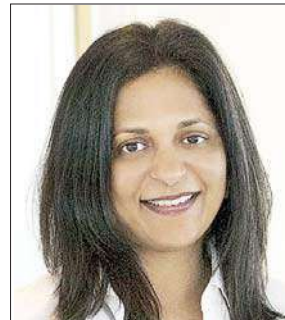


(Image courtesy: nasa.com)

Raja Chari, 43, will serve as the commander for the SpaceX Crew-3 mission to the ISS, which is expected to be launched this year. This will be the first spaceflight for Raja Chari, who became a NASA astronaut in 2017.

Sonia Syngal

Sonia Syngal is an Indian -American businesswoman. In March 2020 she was appointed as the CEO of retail giant GAP Inc. With this appointment she became the highest ranked Indian American female CEO of a Fortune 500 company after India Nooyi. Earlier, Syngal had headed the old navy unit of the company since 2016. She is responsible for taking the sales of Old Navy from \$7 Billion to \$8 Billion in just three years. As Gap Inc CEO she is tasked with strengthening the retailer's portfolio during a time when it was forced to temporarily close stores due to quarantine orders.



(Image courtesy: businesswire.com)

Arvind Krishna

The IBM board of directors elected Arvind Krishna chairman of the board, effective January 1, 2021. Krishna, who is IBM's chief



(Image courtesy: crn.com)

executive officer and a member of the board, succeeded IBM executive chairman Virginia M. Rometty, who retired on December 31, 2020. His appointment as CEO placed him in the league of other prominent Indian American tech CEOs who are leading some of the largest corporations such as Google, Adobe and Microsoft.

Recently, he announced the spin-off of IBM's \$19 billion Managed Infrastructure Services business, to be completed in 2021, which will create two industry-leading companies and enable IBM to focus on its leading open Hybrid Cloud and Artificial Intelligence Platform.

Suyash Mehta

Suyash Mehta became the first-ever Indian-origin official to officiate in the National Basketball Association (NBA) league.



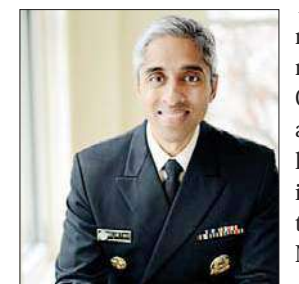
(Image courtesy: timesofindia.com)

Mehta, who has been part of G League and Summer League Games' officiating teams, was named in the officiating staff for the 2020-21 season of the league. He has previously refereed in 13 games but worked under the tag of 'non-staff officials'. He was one of the six to be part of the staff for this season.

The Baltimore resident also has coaching experience at various collegiate levels including the Atlantic 10, Big South, Colonial Athletic Association, Conference USA, NCAA Division III.

Dr Vivek Murthy

President-elect Joe Biden selected Dr Vivek Murthy for a senior role to help fight COVID-



(Image courtesy: Twitter)

19. Murthy returned to his role as Surgeon General but with a broader portfolio as the pandemic rages through the country, Murthy previously served as surgeon general from 2014 to 2017, after being nominated by President Barack Obama. He is currently co-chair of the COVID-19 Transition Advisory Board created by Biden.

NUTANVARSH ABHINANDAN

**Wishing Everybody a Happy,
Healthy, Peaceful and Prosperous 2021**



**Heartiest Congratulations to
Ravi Bhooplapur**

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PERSON OF THE YEAR 2020



With Best Compliments From
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A topsy turvy year for Indians on H1B and H4 visas

Along with suspension of H1B and H4 visas after the onset of the pandemic the Trump administration succeeded in putting up some sweeping limits on legal immigration even while Joe Biden will be sworn in. These visas are largely used by the Indians for working at client locations in the US.

Through a proclamation issued 20 days before Inauguration Day, President Donald Trump ordered a three-month extension of the visa restrictions, which were first enacted in April as a ban on some prospective immigrants and expanded in June to also halt several temporary work programs as the entry of foreigners deemed to be "detrimental to the interests" of the US. While he has pledged to overturn some of the centerpieces of Trump's immigration agenda, Joe Biden has yet to say whether he intends to rescind the visa restrictions.

Cultural exchange J-1 visas for au pairs and other short-term workers; visas for spouses of H-1B and H-2B holders; and L visas for companies to relocate employees to the U.S. will continue to be suspended as well.

Kamala Harris shatters all ceilings

Kamala Harris became America's first female, first Black and first Indian American vice president-elect, representing a new face of political power.

The California senator's history-making win also represents the millions of women in the demographics -- often overlooked, historically underrepresented and systematically ignored -- who are now the recipients of that new power for the first time in the country's 200-plus-year history.

Harris has a track record of shattering glass ceilings. She served as

San Francisco's first female district attorney and was California's first woman of color to be elected attorney general.

Her background in criminal justice could help a Biden administration tackle the issues of racial equality and policing after the country was swept by protests this year. She is expected to be a top adviser on judicial nominations.

Harris, whose mother and father emigrated from India and Jamaica, respectively, had her sights set on becoming the first woman US president when she competed against

Biden and others for their party's 2020 nomination.

She dropped out of the race in December 2019 after a campaign hurt by her wavering views on health-care and indecision about embracing her past as a prosecutor.

As the Senate's only Black woman, Harris emerged in 2020 as a leading voice on racial justice and police reform after Minneapolis police killed African-American man George Floyd in May. She marched with protesters on the streets of Washington and won over some liberal skeptics.



(Image courtesy: nbcnews.com)

Desis made it to the forefront of the Biden administration

Indians make up almost 1.5% of the total population in the US but when it comes to US President-Elect Joe Biden's administration, Indians seem to be at the forefront. Starting off with his running mate Kamala Harris we saw a host of Indian Americans being appointed to crucial roles.

Dr. Celine Gounder, an infectious disease specialist who traces her roots to a village in Tamil Nadu was named to the coronavirus task force which has been co-chaired by also an Indian-American, surgeon general Vivek Murthy. Apart from the Cabinet & Whitehouse, positions in Joe Biden's Agency Review Teams or The ARTs are held by Indian-Americans. ARTs are responsible for understanding the operations of each agency, ensuring a smooth transfer of power. ARTs are preparing for President-elect Biden and Vice President-elect Harris and their Cabinet to hit the ground running on day one.

Former Google Executive & Stanford graduate, Arun Majumdar is the team lead for the Department of Energy ART. A former state health officer for West Virginia Dr Rahul Gupta is

leading the transition over the Office of National Drug Control Policy.

Kiran Arjandas Ahuja, an American lawyer and activist who served as the Chief of Staff to the Director of the US Office of Personnel Management from 2015 to 2017 has been named Team Lead for Office of Personnel Management. Former Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs in 2014-15, Puneet Talwar has served as top Middle East advisor to President Barack Obama. He played a central role in the backchannel diplomacy that produced the Iran nuclear deal. He is focused on the Department of State. Pavneet Singh who is a non-resident fellow in the John L. Thornton China Center at Brookings Institution has been named to two ARTs, the National Security Council and Office of Science and Technology.

Arun Venkatraman who is a machine learning computer expert and graduate of Carnegie Mellon University has also been named to two ARTs, Department of Commerce and US Trade Representative Office.

And these are just some names from the long list of appointments.

The community lost several prominent members to COVID-19

In June the Foundation of India and Indian Diaspora Studies (FIIDS) released the results of an extensive survey conducted in a three-week period to measure the impact that COVID-19 had on the Indian-American community. The survey revealed that 1 in 6 knew someone from the community who had tested positive with Covid-19.

This public health crisis also claimed the lives of several prominent community members whose contribution has been notable in establishing the roots of Indians in America. Ramesh Patel, chairman of the FIA-NY, NJ, CT, and former president of the National Federation of Indian American Association, passed away June 6, 2020.

Fondly known as 'Kaka' within the community, Patel held various positions in the FIA executive committee including president of the organization from 1988 to 1990. He had been instrumental in establishing a number of events that promote the culture and heritage of India in the US, including FIA's flagship event - the India Day Parade organized every year

to mark India's Independence Day in August.

Along with his community service, Patel worked in the forensic investigation division of the New York Police Department and was honored with the prestigious Ellis Island Medal of Honour in 2013.

Dr. Ajay Lodha, past president of the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin, passed away peacefully on Nov. 21 after fighting COVID valiantly for eight months.

Lodha was well known in the community and among his fellow physicians as a leader with a powerhouse of entrepreneurial skills. He had an extensive background of overseeing quality assurance and quality improvement. He was a past president of RANA and RAJMAAI (Rajasthan Medical Alumni Association Inc.), a police surgeon with Nassau County PBA and director of Research Department at Flushing Hospital in New York.

Several members from the medical fraternity were lost to the deadly scourge while working dedicatedly as frontline warriors.

Reacting to events in India

Time and again Indian Americans have voiced their support or dissent towards policy decisions taken by the Indian government. From Indian origin lawmakers tabling legislations against India exercising its rights over Kashmir to holding demonstrations for and against the Citizen Amendment Act, the vigilant community has got itself heard through a variety of mediums. Car rallies, peaceful protests outside Indian Embassy in Washington, DC or Indian Consulates and High Commissions in other cities, people showed up in large numbers to draw the attention of media and also the US government towards Indian government's policies.



Indian Americans conduct peaceful rallies across US in support of CAA
(Image courtesy: theprint.in)



Protesting against Citizenship Amendment Act
(Image courtesy: deccanherald)



A well-deserved honor for an extraordinary Humanitarian, Philanthropist, and Educationist: and my dear friend I am so proud of.



also wishing everybody a

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2021

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**RAVISHANKAR
BHOOPALPUR**

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Gurdev D.P. Singh



- Gurdev 'DP' Singh -

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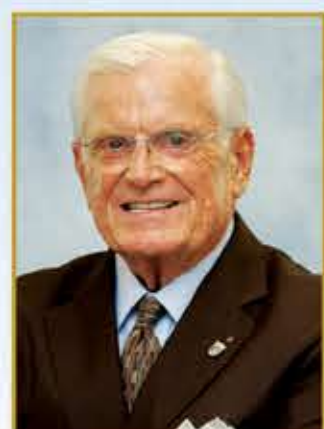
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Donald Trump signs into law Gandhi-King Scholarly Exchange Initiative

Washington, DC: President Donald Trump has signed into law the Gandhi-King Scholarly Exchange Initiative that among other things paves the way for establishing an educational forum between America and India to study the work and legacies of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr.

Written by civil rights icon John Lewis, who died early this year, and co-sponsored by Indian-American Congressman Ami Bera, the new law authorizes \$ 1M a year through fiscal 2025 for the Gandhi-King Scholarly Exchange Initiative.

It also authorizes \$2 M for just FY 2021 for the Gandhi-King Global

Academy, and \$30 M for 2021 for the US-India Gandhi-King Development Foundation.

The new law also authorizes the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to establish a US-India development foundation that would leverage the Indian private sector to address development prior-

ities in India.

The development foundation would receive \$15 M per year from 2022 through 2025 but only if India's private sector commits to match US government contributions. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates that the bill would cost \$51 M over five years.

Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh felicitates Young Kim

California: Prominent Indian American Hindu, Sikh and Jains, and the Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh, felicitated the win of Congresswoman-elect Young Kim to Congress representing California's 39th district.

They celebrated the victory of the Republican candidate who managed to wrest control of a tightly contested Orange County seat.

Amit Desai, outreach director of HSS for Pacific South West division, kicked off the felicitation. Vijay Sinha, national vice president of HSS, highlighted the immense volunteering work being done by HSS to mitigate food insecurity during the COVID crisis such as serving 244,000 meals and donating 294,000 pounds to food pantries across the United States.

In her acceptance speech, Kim thanked HSS and the Indian American community



Rep Young Kim
(Image courtesy: elect535.org)

for their support. She recalled the long association and friendship the Indian American community has with her and the former representative Ed Royce.

Kim accepted the Indian American community's request for her to join the Congressional India Caucus. She also expressed her desire to join the Foreign Affairs Committee and work towards building stronger relationship between the US and India and how both the countries can stand up to terrorism and China.

Multiple Indian American elected officials of Southern California attended the event and congratulated Kim. Among them were Anaheim Mayor Harry Sidhu, La Palma Mayor Nitesh Patel, Cerritos Mayor Naresh Solanki and former Irvine Mayor Christina Shea.

Yuvacharya Sadhvi Shubhamji passes away on Jan 2

Born as Shobha, Yuvacharya Sadhvi Shubhamji became a disciple of Acharya Chandanaji at a very early age. After spending her initial years gaining an in-depth knowledge of multiple religious scriptures, she dedicated her life to Seva (Service), Siksha (Education) and Sadhna (Spirituality).

In her early youth she led multiple humanitarian projects at Veerayatan. Not only was she blessed with a sound understanding of religious principles, her strong mindfulness enabled her to perform multiple long 'Avdhaans' (remembering and responding to 100+ questions) at a very young age.

As Veerayatan expanded globally she traveled to many countries around the world preaching Jain Values to all ages. She developed one on one life transformation relationships with many around the world.

She was loving, kind, calm, simple and jovial.



Sadhvi Shubhamji

She was an embodiment of non-attachment, completely free of all aversions. She was a true saint who not only attracted humans but birds and animals as well. Free birds including parrots used to fly up to her, sit on her shoulders, eat from her hands, spend time with her and fly away only to return back. She was anointed Yuvacharya of Veerayatan by Acharya Chandnaji a few years back which was celebrated by the Jain community all around the world.

She had recently developed some lever related ailment and was being treated at a reputed hospital in Pune. She was given Santhara by Acharya Chandnaji at 12:30 am on January 2 and left for her heavenly abode at 6 am. As she left for her heavenly abode she wished the world well before she left and continues to shower her blessings from her new abode.

We would like to congratulate

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PERSON OF THE YEAR 2020



Ravi Bhooplapur



On his much deserved honor and recognition for all the work he has done and will continue to do. We are so proud to call him a friend and colleague and know that this is just the beginning!

Congratulations to him, his wife Jaya and children.

We would also like to thank The South Asian Times and Mr. Kamlesh Mehta for his dedication and commitment in serving our community.

Lovingly,

John & Monica Gupta





Washington, DC: President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris announced members of the White House Office of Digital Strategy, among them an Indian-American, Aisha Shah.

"A reflection of the critical role digital strategy plays in reaching the American people, the Biden-Harris White House will feature a robust digital team," the Biden Transition Team said on its website buildbackbetter.gov.

In addition to amplifying and engaging users online through traditional measures, the White House Office of Digital Strategy has the mandate to develop partnerships that are focused on extending the president-elect's reach beyond his own social platforms, the press release said.

Shah, who is one of twelve names announced Dec. 28, 2020, joins the Office of Digital Strategie

Biden team names Aisha Shah to Office of Digital Strategy



Aisha Shah (Image courtesy: indianlink.com)

gy as a 'Partnerships Manager, a role she has played on the Biden-Harris Campaign.

Shah currently serves as an Advancement Specialist for the Smithsonian Institution.

Prior to this role, Shah worked as an Assistant Manager on the Corporate Fund of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, supporting the first-ever expansion of a presidential me-

morial.

Shah also served as a Strategic Communications Specialist at Buoy, an integrated marketing firm that specializes in social impact communications, as well as Spitfire Strategies, where she enabled nonprofits to use pop culture as a tool for social change.

Born in Kashmir and raised in Louisiana, Shah is a graduate of Davidson College.

Anil Bansal to continue as FIA President in '21

New Jersey: The Federation of Indian Associations (FIA) - Tristate held its virtual AGM on December 27 that was attended by representatives of many member organizations, community leaders and board of directors and trustees.

Parveen Bansal, General Secretary, presented his annual report which included a tribute to FIA's Emeritus Chairman late Ramesh Patel. Ankur Vaidya took over as new Chairman.

While its flagship India Day Parade was called off due to the pandemic, FIA held a flag hoisting at Times Square on India's Independence Day.

FIA also provided assistance to first responders, held a Diwali Soup Kitchen Drive as well as OCI & Visa Town Hall, and started the Biweekly Diaspora newsletter.

President Anil Bansal and others in his executive will continue to serve in 2021.

Air India to start new services to US from Jan 2021

New Delhi: National carrier Air India is all set to expand its services to the United States from January 2021.

Accordingly, the airline will commence its first-ever non-stop services between Bengaluru and San Francisco as well as between Hyderabad and Chicago from January 9, 2021 and January 13, 2021, respectively.

"Passengers from Bengaluru

and Hyderabad - both gateways to South India - will enjoy huge benefits travelling to San Francisco and Chicago as this will enable faster and easier connections," the airline said in a statement.

At present, Air India operates non-stop flights from Delhi to New York, Newark, Washington, San Francisco and Chicago and from Mumbai to Newark.

Congratulations

RAVI
NATURAL
MAN OF
THE YEAR



JAYA
FORCE
BEHIND
HIM

Drs Nutan &



Azad Anand

Wishing the community
a Happy, Healthy and
Joyous New Year

RAVI IS AN EXTRAORDINARY
HUMANITARIAN, PHILAN-
THROPIST AND EDUCATIONIST.
FULL OF LIFE, HE IS AMONG THE
MOST ACCOMPLISHED AND NICEST
PERSONS I HAVE KNOWN.

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SHUDH PARKASH SINGH





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By Neera Kuckreja
Sohoni

In the annals of human health history, the 14th century remains unbeaten as the most devastating and impactful on human mortality. In four years (1347 – 1351 A.D.), an estimated 25 million deaths accounting for a third

Corona also showed the uncertainty underlying the prognoses or coping strategies recommended by scientists like Dr Fauci: Mask or no mask, shutdown or no shutdown, the safety of 6 feet versus 10 feet or of 8-10 persons versus 12-20 persons required for social distancing.



of Europe's population, occurred due to the deadly plague. Known as Black Death, the disease came when a dozen ships arrived in Sicily, with mostly dead sailors. Those gravely ill were found covered in blood- and pus-oozing boils. Vomiting, diarrhea, fever, chills, acute aches and pains accompanied these eruptions leading quickly to death. The similarity with Corona is stunning where too, the virus was transported by visitors from Wuhan, China who while banned from travelling to other provinces within China, were allowed to travel overseas (whether intentionally or not is yet to be determined), thereby infecting the majority of the world's countries.

Like the Corona pandemic that engulfs us today, Black Death was

instantly contagious. According to a contemporary account (Giovanni Boccaccio), the mere touching of the clothes "appeared to communicate the malady to the toucher". The disease was also terrifyingly lethal. "People who were perfectly healthy when they went to bed at night could be dead by morning", as cited at www.history.com/topics/middle-ages/black-death.

Even with much less knowledge of epidemiology, our ancestors had enough sense to put into effect basic precautions against a deadly contagion. Infected persons were isolated, and social distancing as we call it today was enforced. The healthy did their best to avoid the sick. Shopkeepers closed their stores. Doctors refused to see patients; priests declined to administer last rites. Those who could afford to do so fled the cities (similar to residents of major US cities such as New York, Chicago, San Francisco) for the countryside but even there, the disease was ubiquitous infecting cattle, poultry and people alike. Desperate to save themselves, many felt compelled to even abandon their sick and dying loved ones. "Thus doing," Boccaccio wrote, "each thought to secure immunity for himself."

To stem the contagious tide, those in charge of the ports tried to prevent the infected from coming in. Sailors initially were held by Venetian authorities on their ships for 30 days, a period later increased to 40 days (quarantino)—the origin of the term "quarantine".

Despite the immense epidemiological expertise gained over the past several centuries, it seems surprising and disturbing as well as sobering that in 2020, we were at a loss to know how best to confront let alone defeat the latest pandemic to hit the world. If someone had told us on January 1, 2020 that the world as we know it is about to be shaken to its core and our daily life and routine brutally shut down, we would have heartily laughed at the suggestion. And yet, what has hap-

pened is far more devastating than foretold or feared. The changes the pandemic has wrought are drastic and unimaginable.

In every single part of the world, the rapidly spreading pandemic has battered human life and humans' confidence in their ability to cope with life and overcome its challenges. Shops and schools are closed, businesses are bankrupt, travel, churches, congregations and social intercourse are banned or restricted and minimized, and families are precluded from being with each other. Afflicted souls have struggled to get well in isolation wards and beds. Deprived of family support and visits, many have faced Death singularly and alone.

Births like deaths have become solitary. We no longer can get together to celebrate or mourn, or even to fight and make up. Anniversaries and religious festivals have come and gone without the joyous participation of friends and family, or the sense of communion imparted from strangers. For Diwali or Id, Hanukkah or Christmas, we put up lights, but our hearts are dim and saddened by the curfews and embargoes on free interface. Even football games are observed and cheered not by fans seated in the stadium but with the device of artificial sound effects.

The impact of the pandemic is all pervasive: it has savaged the world's economy, food supply chain, nutritional intake, employment, education, longevity, mental, emotional and physical health, mobility, recreation, socialization and interpersonal communication. It has crippled the poor's capacity to feed themselves, with millions facing starvation and long-term adverse impact of malnutrition and undernourishment.

No global body such as the United Nations could ever have demonstrated the interdependence of nations and the interwoven destiny of humanity than Corona. No American or other constitution could come close to demonstrating the universal vulnerability of all. The non-discriminating contagiousness and lethality of the Corona virus has in some crooked but compelling way established that rich or poor, belonging to developed or less developed nations, we are all at par. It is our shared vulnerability, which the virus has so successfully and ruthlessly demonstrated, that hereon will and should unite us all. It is as though God or some other power above us has determined that the earth's residents need to re-connect and re-discover their linked realities.

Even so, underneath the pan-

dem's message of global and universal vulnerability, there are sad chasms that now lie exposed. More than ever, the world is aware that

well-off and technologically savvy kids have raced ahead leaving the underprivileged kids to lag behind on the education curve. Jobs like-



while every population and nation is impacted, the burden of deprivation, disruption, disease, and death expectedly has fallen more on some than on others. Corona's lethality and its impact's intensity vary by age, gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, location, socioeconomic level, nature of employment, public health services and delivery infrastructure, and many other unsuspected and undefined variables. Even access to the internet which due to Corona's social distancing has become the lifeline of a lifeless socio-economy has demonstrated and accentuated the adverse effects of a digital divide. When offices and schools close down, the ones who are able to function and learn are those who have high-speed connectivity, money to buy and space to set up the computer along with the technological knowhow to operate the system. Numerous studies across the globe have shown how

In every part of the world, the pandemic has battered human life and humans' confidence in their ability to cope with life and overcome its challenges. Deprived of family support and visits, many have faced Death singularly and alone.

wise have shown the advantage that digital skills bring to white collar workers. Those who need to show up in person or depend on their brawn to earn their daily keep have fallen way behind the income and employment curves, just like their children.

(Photos courtesy Reuters)



Ever grateful for the scientific genius and material ability to discover antidotes in record time (thanks to President Trump) to a deadly pandemic, as we enter the New Year, we have got to appreciate our puniness in the unknown Universe's larger power to overwhelm humans.



The one silver lining is the new class of heroes that Corona has thrown up. Rather than valor shown in killing the enemy on the battlefield, these are heroes who are battling the virus. Ignoring the risk to their own lives, they are conscientiously engaged in the critical tasks of healthcare.

There are other heroes who are daily risking their safety to ensure uninterrupted supply of societal necessities including food, groceries, medicines, and yet more who are protecting our lives in our neighborhoods and on the borders. These are indispensable warriors who put out their all to protect, feed, heal, save, and even bury us.

On the emotional downside, amidst the stunning isolation of societal shutdowns, people have lost not just their nerve but also their optimism. The radiance of communality and fraternization is no longer visible on people's faces. Instead, you see the dark cloud of sadness and loneliness. Depression and suicide rates have dramatically risen in 2020. And symptoms of emotional disconnect cut across all classes of people. Even Christmas seems to have lost its magical power to bring hope and cheer.

Above all, it has weakened our faith in ourselves, and cut down to size our self-view as the all-powerful omnipotent humans who are able to conquer anything or anyone. If there are good things that have come out of this year, they include a new humility, an awe of Nature's unknown frontiers – both silent pointers to the power of the divine to shake us out of our self-indulgent narcissism.

In abnormal times, and during crises, we tend to turn to God or to some mysterious power that governs us inexplicably determining who gets the virus, who recovers, and who dies. In the midst of a game of Russian roulette, prayer cannot hurt. Perhaps that is why people are increasingly demanding access to churches, synagogues, temples and mosques. Even atheists must search for some explanation of a world turned upside down by the destructive power of a microscopic virus!

Even as the masses appealing to God for mercy have fought in courts for their right to pray together, the reliance on science has never weakened. If anything, Corona reinforced the need for accelerated medical efforts in search of a vaccine. With incredible resources put into developing an antidote to the disease by the Trump administration through the vaccine development project known as Operation Warp Speed, beating all odds, and as promised by President Trump to have a vaccine out by the year end, two vaccines are already being administered to health care personnel and adult residents of long-term care facilities. Taking extraordinary steps, FDA granted emergency use authorization to the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, and shortly thereafter to the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine, both of which have shown an efficacy

rate of about 95% implying that about 95% of people who get the vaccine are likely protected from becoming seriously ill with the virus. Because the vaccines require two doses to be administered several weeks apart (21 days for Pfizer and 28 days for Moderna) has added to the complexity of their delivery and tracking. There are always skeptics and naysayers who oppose vaccination, and some others who worry about or have actually experienced side effects.

It is left to each of us to resolve our doubts and do our bit to make the vaccination process successful.

Ever grateful for the scientific genius and material ability to discover antidotes in record time to a

deadly pandemic, as we enter the New Year, we have got to appreciate our puniness in the unknown Universe's larger power to overwhelm humans. Dr. Anthony Fauci may be hailed by many as the Oracle, and by some even as the Saint of the Scientific Age, what Corona has demonstrated is the uncertainty underlying his or other scientists' prognoses. The coping strategies recommended have also shown they are open to debate. Between mask and no mask, shutdown or no shutdown, the safety of 6 feet versus 10 feet or of 8-10 persons versus 12-20 persons required for social distancing, scientists keep jumping over and between several loops, causing the

governments and regulators to negotiate various conflicting strategies of mitigation, leaving behind a trail of deaths and destroyed lives and businesses through shutdowns. Relative to Corona, if anything is clear, it is that nothing scientists have said is 'certain beyond a reasonable doubt'.

Perhaps that is where history seems to repeat itself. During the Black Death epidemic, lacking understanding of the biology of the disease, many viewed the disease as some sort of divine punishment—retribution for sins against God such as greed, blasphemy, heresy, fornication and worldliness. The only way to overcome the plague therefore was to win God's forgive-

ness. To our post scientific minds, perhaps that seems a far cry. But surely, is it not a remedy we all may have pondered some time or another during this dreary Corona year?



Ms Sohoni is a freelance writer and published author.



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The world rings in 2021 with caution, gratitude



London, UK

The UK saw off 2020 and celebrated the dawn of 2021 with a fireworks and light display over London that included tributes to NHS staff. Revelers were not able to ring in the New Year in the usual way because of the coronavirus pandemic, with people instead told to stay at home. Police had to break up various parties and events across England overnight.

Forces have handed out hundreds of fines, with several issuing the maximum £10,000 to event organizers. Much of the UK saw in the new year while under lockdown rules, with about 44 million people in England - or 78% of the population - in tier four, the top level of Covid restrictions.

Mainland Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales are also under lockdown.

Although people were warned not to attend any parties outside their own homes, there were many around the country who ignored the rules. (Source: *bbc.com*)

(Image courtesy: *mylondon.news*)

Dubai

Emaar, the master developer of the Burj Khalifa, celebrated New Year's Eve with spectacular fireworks, animation, laser and light to ring in 2021. The dazzling display celebrated the theme of 'togetherness', the UAE's success and achievements, and paid tribute to the frontline heroes of 2020.

(Image courtesy: *prnewswire.com*)



New York

A relatively barren Times Square was the surreal setting for New Year's Eve celebrations Thursday into Friday. With the public prohibited from celebrating in the "Crossroads of the World" due to the pandemic, the festivities were focused on making sure the broadcasts—for television, the Internet, and a new app—brought "Auld Lang Syne" to people's homes, with performances from Jennifer Lopez and Gloria Gaynor, and plenty of confetti.

The only people allowed within 41st to 49th streets, between 6th and 8th avenues, were a combination of police officers; performers and production crew; Times Square New Year's Eve organizers; 40 "Everyday Heroes"—essential workers—and their guests (they were tested and got to watch from socially distanced pens); and journalists. There were also many of those "tube men" inflatable figures from sponsor Planet Fitness.

(source: *gothamist.com*)

(Image courtesy: *Reuters*)



Wuhan, China

Large crowds took to the streets at midnight on Friday in the central Chinese city of Wuhan, celebrating the arrival of 2021 after a year marred by the deadly COVID-19 pandemic that killed thousands there and spread to the rest of the world. As per tradition, hundreds gathered in front of the old Hankow Customs House building, one of the city's more popular New Year's Eve spots. When the building's old clock reached midnight, people released balloons, cheered and called out "happy new year."

(Image courtesy: *EPA*)



New Year Message



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212-545-1993

RAVI@RAVIBATRALAW.COM
FAX: 212-545-0967

December 30, 2020

Kamlesh Mehta and Parveen Chopra

The South Asian Times

Dear Kamlesh and Parveen,

Ranju joins me in extending our best wishes to you, your family and readers of The South Asian Times for a safe, happy, light-hearted, healthy and Blessed 2021!

2020 was a year of reckoning. Our nation, and world, faced a collective tsunami – whether you call it SARS-Cov2, Coronavirus, Covid-19, Wuhan Virus, China Virus, or, taking into account the creative and expansive actions of our dear Friend in the South China Sea over the last decade, a biowarfare agent that has Pearl Harbored us over 100 times.

Having been infested with this Trojan Horse of a Virus, which has the Bats' unique "Spike Glycoprotein (S)" transplanted on to it, and survived it with God's Grace and support of dear friends, only to then have to face its secondary internal attacks, which may be perpetual as they are ever-changing as to their targeted body system or organ, we are conscious, as never before, just how precious life is. Indeed, every moment is truly precious as it may be our last. From this new reality comes a desire to spend time only with people and things that matter: family & friends, and to whom we owe high fiduciaries duties, including, as citizens protecting the United States from enemies foreign and domestic.

We thank President Donald J. Trump for his service as POTUS, even as we welcome Joseph R. Biden Jr as our 46th POTUS. Both were the choice of our fellow Americans. May God continue to find us worthy of His Blessings. Indeed, 2021 is pregnant with Hope - as on Noah's Ark.

Sincerely,

Ravi Batra

Auckland, New Zealand



Sydney, Australia



New Zealand and Australia had spectacular fireworks display and light show in Auckland and Sydney. The South Pacific island nation Samoa was the first to mark the new year, followed by New Zealand and Australia.

New Zealand, which has won plaudits for its handling of the coronavirus, kicked off its new year's celebrations with Skycity fireworks and Vector Lights on the Auckland Harbour Bridge.

Despite the international border closures, months of zero recorded Covid-19 cases in the community has let life in New Zealand return to relative normality.

Fireworks explode over the Sydney Opera House and Harbour Bridge as New Year celebrations began in Sydney, Australia.

(Photo Credit: *NZ Herald/AP*)



Resign, President Trump!

Or Remove by Article 25 or Senate Invites House To Send Impeachment Article.

The catastrophic story of January 6 and its aftermath in tweets by eminent attorney RAVI BATRA, including one that received a response from the Russia government account.



12:06

Thread

Ravi Batra @RaviBatra

@realDonaldTrump I voted for you to be @POTUS - to revive the #AmericanDream - as right foundation of #MAGA. I even accepted "#fine_people_on_both_sides" in #Charlottesville, as we are all #Americans. Today, I delete #MAGA, as storming #Congress is #domestic_terrorism

4:06 PM · 1/6/21 · Twitter for iPhone

1 Retweet 2 Quote Tweets 7 Likes

12:00

Tweet

Ravi Batra @RaviBatra

#Remove @realDonaldTrump as @POTUS ASAP: by #25A or our #Senate @senatemajldr & @SenSchumer invite #House to send #ArticleOfImpeachment today. We Mutually Pledge To Each Other Our Lives, Our Fortunes, And Our Sacred Honor

Aides weigh resignations, removal options as Trump rag... apple.news

10:22 AM · 1/7/21 · Twitter for iPhone

12:02

Tweet

Ravi Batra @RaviBatra

Neo-Nazis among protesters who stormed US Capitol nypost.com/2021/01/06/neo...@nypost - They are our fellow Americans - who were "played" - by political opportunists. It's the politicians we must shame and force them out of Senate & House: @senatemajldr @SenSchumer @SpeakerPelosi

10:13 AM · 1/7/21 · Twitter for iPhone

12:02

Tweet

Ravi Batra @RaviBatra

Pence's chief of staff accuses Trump of locking him out of White House nypost.com/2021/01/07/pen... via @nypost - America discovers our new Heroes! Biggest: @VP #MikePence

Pence's chief of staff accuses Trump of locking him out of White House

12:01

Tweet

Ravi Batra @RaviBatra

'Be There. Will Be Wild!': Trump All but Circed the Date - The New York Times - @realDonaldTrump is the man responsible for attacking our #Temple_of_Democracy. He destroyed his own legacy, ended his 2024 run, and freed America & the world of him

10:13 AM · 1/7/21 · Twitter for iPhone

12:00

Tweet

Ravi Batra @RaviBatra

Our #Hero @VP #MikePence - did principled & heroic @senatemajldr & @SenSchumer inform you that they are inviting @SpeakerPelosi & @GOPLeader to impeach @POTUS? Yesterday, our #TempleOfDemocracy was attacked by @realDonaldTrump making @POTUS enemy of our Constitution!

10:13 AM · 1/7/21 · Twitter for iPhone

12:00

Tweet

Ravi Batra @RaviBatra

Dear @SecPompeo - you are a former @CIA director & a patriot. Trigger 25th, or resign after the motivated attack on our #TempleOfDemocracy yesterday. The world is watching. Anyone with Honor must rebuke it; or join in history's ignominy. Q. Who are our #BenedictArnolds today?

10:03 AM · 1/7/21 · Twitter for iPhone

12:02

Tweet

Ravi Batra @RaviBatra

President Trump commits to 'orderly transition' of power after Biden win certified nypost.com/2021/01/07/pre...@nypost - We don't need your consent @realDonaldTrump, @vp #MikePence & @senatemajldr are our #Heroes who honored their Oath. You violated it. You became the enemy of

10:03 AM · 1/7/21 · Twitter for iPhone

12:05

Tweet

Ravi Batra @RaviBatra

@realDonaldTrump abdicated his legacy & right to seek re-election in 2024, as he, as @POTUS, caused the Failed-Insurrection of January 6, 2021 and violated his Oath to defend the Constitution from enemies foreign & domestic by being one.

Trump loyalty cracks on a day that will define his presidency apple.news

9:43 PM · 1/6/21 · Twitter for iPhone

4:29

Tweet

Dmitry Polyanskiy @DpoLun

Russia government account

I share your feelings, dear Ravi, and condemn violence of any kind, just one question: why do you call storming by protestors of US #Capitol "domestic terrorism" and similar and much more bloody events in Kiev in 2014 "revolution of dignity"? #WashingtonDC #DoubleStandards

Ravi Batra @RaviBatra · 1d

@realDonaldTrump I voted for you to be @POTUS - to revive the #AmericanDream - as right foundation of #MAGA.

4:31

Tweet

Ravi Batra @RaviBatra

Dear Dmitry, My heart is broken. I appreciate and accept your comforting words for my grief. Let my heart and soul calm down, before I focus on Kyiv - a whole other story - and respond. Today in US, even Sir Edmund Burke would cry...

Dmitry Polyanskiy @DpoLun · 1d

Russia government account

I share your feelings, dear Ravi, and condemn violence of any kind, just one question: why do you call storming by protestors of US #Capitol "domestic

4:34

Tweet

Ravi Batra @RaviBatra

Mr. Trump: be the patriot that you claim to be. Resign now as @POTUS: penance for causing hardworking Americans to be part of your #political #insurrection attack on our #TempleOfDemocracy, #Honor your #Oath to defend the #Constitution from enemies foreign & domestic: you are

1:11 PM · 1/7/21 · Twitter for iPhone

"Tweets, shared by Mr. Ravi Batra", Not necessarily the views of The South Asian Times.



By Shivaji Sengupta

I am writing this on January 3, the date marking the 43rd anniversary of my becoming a professional in America when, at age 29, I began my tenure in a small liberal arts college in New York City. January 3rd is also when I retired from that college after 42 years of continued service. That was last year.

2020. The year will be etched in everybody's mind as the year of the pandemic. The Coronavirus crept in on us with devastating effect, deadlier than a stealth bomber. To date, 350,000 Americans are dead. Many more will by the time the vaccines take effect nationwide. In this milieu, we Americans have tried to make it in whatever way we could.

Let me begin with the personal. As a senior citizen well into my seventies, I realized that my wife and I fall in the "high risk" group. Quarantine, self-imposed lock-down, masks, social isolation (social distancing not being enough) -- everything applied to us. So, there I was, at the mercy of a poisonous wind. I had to be home, often all alone. I decided I would read and write, try on a new career as a freelance journalist. I also decided I would offer my services to the local Democratic groups. 2020 being the presidential election year, I was anxious to volunteer my time to elect Joe Biden.

As the days went by, I saw from my window the sharply reduced flow of people on the streets. Saw framed on my television empty shopping malls and deserted stadiums.

As January evanesced into February, two events began to preoccupy the American people. One is, of



In Harlem, NY, two girls grieving the loss of their father who died of complications related to COVID-19. Health is not under federal control in America, and that marred the response to the pandemic.

(Photos courtesy AP)

course, Coronavirus, which lasted through the year and into 2021. The other was the impeachment of President Trump. On February 19, the House of Representatives, with a Democratic majority, formally brought the charge against Donald Trump of jeopardizing American interests (and security) by trying to "bribe" the newly elected Ukraine president to declare that Joe Biden, his rival in the 2020 election, had used his vice presidency in the Obama administration as a leverage in Ukraine for financial gain for his son, Hunter Biden. The bribe was some four-hundred-thousand dollars that Congress had allotted to that country which Trump was holding back unless the Ukrainian president complied. He didn't. As it became public knowledge, Trump denied the charge, thereby committing perjury, a further impeachable offence.

Impeachment deeply divided an already divided country. I don't think back then people, especially Democrats, quite realized the depth of support the president enjoyed among Republicans and ultra conservatives. Sixty million had voted for him in 2016. But because Trump lost the popular vote to Hillary Clinton, there was an untested assumption that the support was soft. There were many journalists of Democratic persuasion (myself included) who were against the impeachment effort. Impeachments have never removed a president from office in the United States. Rather, they have increased his popularity -- witness the last case of presidential impeachment: Bill Clinton. But the House went ahead with its agenda. The presi-

dent was formally impeached without a single Republican vote. Predictably, the Senate acquitted him with all but one Republican voting in his favor. That one vote was Mitt Romney's, the 2012 presidential candidate and new Senator from Utah.

March and April were the months the pandemic took roots. Concurrent with the rest of the world, America was in the throes of suffering its worst epidemic since the Spanish Flu of 1918. Stock Market started falling, interest rates sank to near zero. Panic spread among many; but many did not react to the disease, openly denying it, and defying all precautionary measures. There wasn't a cure yet, nor any way of stopping the spread.

Coronavirus unleashed on Americans a serious breakdown in health



"Personal becomes public -- To contribute toward the election of my favorite candidate, I took an active role in the Democratic party."

policy. As I sat alone in my house, ruminating about what was happening, the likes of which I had never seen before, watching the chaos and confusion the disease was creating, and the federal government's absolute helplessness, I began to reflect about my days in India. I slowly realized the stark difference between the attitudes of Indians to the pandemic and my American fellow-citizens. Two aspects stood out that, I believe, had a serious effect on policymaking in the two countries.

As a person born in India, having spent my young adulthood there, I understood that in a major public crisis, the government takes over. Government means the central government in India. The public does not question its methods for protecting the people, in fact, expect it.



Impeachments have never removed a president from office in the United States. Trump's impeachment further divided an already divided country.

And not just in India. Even in Western Europe the government has more power over individuals during times like this.

Not so here. Here, people are brought up with far more freedom than anywhere else in the world. Moreover, as a federal state, the U.S. gives almost complete autonomy to the states (except in defense and foreign policy). The federal government does not get involved in its internal matters like health and education. Yet, Coronavirus has shown that in each state the level of readiness to tackle a pandemic of this proportion varied widely. Those who were severely handicapped couldn't -- even wouldn't -- ask for federal assistance or acquiesce to Washington D.C.'s take-over. Consequently, the federal government was ill prepared, had no plan, and even refused to take the type and proportion of action that countries in Asia temporarily. No state would, or Western Europe do. In America, freedom is individualistic. In Europe or in South Asia these days, freedom is public.

Which brings me back to the title of this column: how the personal becomes public through a panorama of events.

My purpose of beginning with a personal story is to impress upon my readers how personal events in one's life begin to take public significance. The process begins with the individual -- in this case, me -- experiencing momentous events like a war or a pandemic. Soon, through a process of self-reflection, he or she begins to ask, "Where do I situate myself in this environmental, social, and ultimately, political milieu?" It is another way of asking, what can I do, old that I am, to

help?

Personally, I started to "read" the situation (both literally and metaphorically), reflecting on my experiences of watching the impeachment procedures, protecting myself from COVID-19, writing and talking to others, eventually creating for myself a plethora of generalizations and theories that help me understand. I share my understanding by writing. Let me illustrate this through one more personal-public example: the presidential elections.

Those who have followed me through my columns in this and other newspapers know that I have a definite political bias regarding who should be our next president starting January 2021: Joe Biden. But voting for him was not enough (that was the bare minimum). In retirement, I began to see that I could make a contribution toward Biden's election by joining the Democratic party, and helping by doing whatever the party asks me to do. And, yes, also by writing.

Thus, the pandemic, the impeachment and the presidential elections (and many more public events of 2020) form the panorama for me -- a huge wide-angle perspective of what is happening in America. How do I fit in, joining others in a meaningful way?

The answer is this essay.



Shivaji Sengupta is a retired Professor of English at Boricua College, New York City. He has a Ph.D. in English and Comparative Literature from

Columbia University. He has been a regular contributor to The South Asian Times and to other newspapers. He is a member of the Brookhaven Town Democratic Committee.



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2021 - Year of Hope - As If on Noah's Ark

Will President Biden prove worthy of being an 'American Knight in shining armor', more so after what happened on January 6.

(Photo courtesy kezi.com)



By Ravi Batra

The ever-likeable Joseph R. Biden Jr. is our Noah, starting at Noon January 20, 2021, as we Americans have only One President at a time. 2021 is a year pregnant with Hope itself, and why I call it: the Year of Hope. Meanwhile, the world is buffeted with existential tsunamis: man-made, as in SARS-CoV2, climate crisis and micro-plastic ingestion; and Mother nature's response to wipe-out the human-threat to all other animals, by rising sea levels, fires and earth's axis-shift to move North

and South Poles elsewhere.

President Trump's main promise - above all else - was to shake things up; for he ran as a rebel to the status quo, and rebellious he was to the very last moment, harnessing even presidential pardon power. Yet, to his historic credit, he caused peace agreements in the Middle East with Israel, and lately, between Qatar and four Arab nations, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, UAE and Bahrain thanks to Jared Kushner - let alone stand up taller to CCP's China than any president before him. His disruption of friend and foe alike was unique, and made friends un-easy and foes un-certain. He did this to

secure a better deal for us. He won some; he lost some. But his failure to walk quietly into the night, after the election, is no surprise; but, rather, a poignant reminder that "disruption" does not come with a "shut-off" switch. Indeed, his 88.5 million global Twitter followers (while 75 million voted for his re-election) help him to remain a durable force in domestic politics, as well as geo-politically, as no foreign leader or nation can rule out his running and winning in 2024. Indeed, the GOP, and hence, DNC, suffer that same anxiety.

Much is always expected of any POTUS, but of POTUS Joe Biden,

much more is expected. He is expected to return us all to our nostalgic "normal," which we then-wanted improved, but now longingly yearn for. Joe's most difficult challenge is that he must be a satisfying President for Trumpers, and anti-Trumpers alike; maybe, even more for the former, if he is to earn any "space" from POTUS45 for his Biden-Agenda. Already, two well-worn and honored principles of American Presidency lay feebly on the ground: the "First 100 days of a new POTUS' Honeymoon" with Congress, and "One POTUS at a time." The former, taken away from Trump, and the latter, a gift from Trump. Yin and Yang. Perfect balance. Cosmic equilibrium.

But luckily, Joe has qualities unique to Jesuits and Irish Catholics: Always compassionate and always forgiving, as Faith demands of the humble Faithful; but as any Irishman worth his salt, nev-

that he knows that on January 20, 2021 - we ought be at July 4, 1776, even with many a Benedict Arnold in our midst - and he must ask us all to: **mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor, so that we may yet again nourish the ideal of America, and turn the useless Noun of "United" into a loving, compassionate and forgiving Verb of "united."**

It is all of the above unique qualities of love-able Joe, that Joe will need in spades, to govern well, let alone heal our divide, assist our fellow Americans in need with necessary support to stand up and reject the false seduction of Socialism, the anti-Christ of Meritocracy, aka the American Dream, and restore Law & Order at home. Joe's new NSA-Designee 44-year old Jake S. Sullivan, like 45 year old Bob McNamara during JFK times, is the new Boy Wonder, along with Mayor Pete Buttigieg, as Transportation Secretary, to render unto us, that which our tax dollars deserve, and ignore lobbyists that serve special masters and disunity. Jake and Pete must do better than Bob did.

If Joe can stay true to his founding roots as the world's Number 1 Fiduciary, ignore all the politics he mastered, as he is now no longer #2 - but POTUS himself - and be one with God, do the right thing by every American, the American Dream, our cherished Constitution-based American Exceptionalism, and stand tall, especially to those who wish to dominate us, after first Pearl Harboring us with biowarfare, he will have embraced his glorious destiny - which first required him to survive doses of mortal pain, on a repeat personal basis - as every would-be Knight had to endure - so that he may be worthy of being an American Knight in shining armor. May God continue to Bless these United States of America.

Updated: January 6, 2021 - After the Storming of Capitol Hill

Dear President Donald J. Trump,

I tweeted this: "@realDonaldTrump I voted for you to be @POTUS - to revive the #AmericanDream - as right foundation of #MAGA of United States. I even accepted "#fine_people_on_both_sides" in #Charlottesville, as we are all #Americans. Today, I delete #MAGA, as storming #Congress is #domestic_terrorism."

I am grateful that after I emailed to NSC, at 8:30 pm on April 14, 2020, my Open Letter to POTUS, that the very next day, you, as POTUS, launched a preliminary investigation of CCP's China for their lab-created SARSCoV2, transplanting a Bat's Spike Glycoprotein(S) - a Master Key to get past the autoimmune system without causing it to identify an intruder and defend the body - on to a HIV Virus and then deliberately export it to us - knowing - that it would cause death and destruction.

Still, after being impaled with horror at witnessing an American version of the French "Storming of the Bastille" on July 14, 1789 and the start of their French Revolution, on the day - January 6, 2021 - our cherished Constitution requires both houses of Congress, in a bipartisan and bicameral manner, to accept and certify the Electoral College votes cast by the Electors in each state, as authenticated and certified by each state, and hence declare the winner of our presidential election, and trigger - what has been to-date our pride globally through the centuries - the peaceful transfer of power. This is Domestic Terrorism. That you, and you alone, have caused this to occur is beyond the pale. That you were aided and abetted by others, seeking opportunistic advantage, is of no moment right now; as, their time will come. So, today, I removed "#MAGA" from my profile on Twitter. Indeed, I tweeted my outpouring of incomprehensible pain, as above noted.

Surprisingly, Russia's Political DPR to the UN, Amb. Dmitry Polyanskiy offered his warm public support for my pain by tweeting: "I share your feelings, dear Ravi, and condemn violence of any kind, just one question: why do you call storming by protestors of



(Photo courtesy EPA)

US #Capitol "domestic terrorism" and similar and much more bloody events in Kiev in 2014 "revolution of dignity"? #WashingtonDC #DoubleStandards." Michael Benjamin, of NY Post Editorial Board replied to my above-Tweet: "It shouldn't have come to this."; and I re-tweeted him. As for Amb. Polyanskiy, I tweet-replied: "'Dear Dmitry, My heart is broken. I appreciate and accept your comforting words for my grief. Let my heart and soul calm down, before I focus on Kiev - a whole other story - and respond. Today in the US, even Sir Edmund Burke would cry...'"

Today, more than yesterday, President-Elect Joe Biden has a job to rebuild that "shining city on the hill," and make all Americans happy to live in it - including enough Americans who will "mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor" - so Americans can again reject false political prophets, and sentence the aiders & abettors to ignominy! Those without Honor, need to answer charges leveled in law, and history - as Major General Benedict Arnold did - for their treason and betrayal."

er to serve on bent-knee. And Joe is both a proud American, as he is a proud Irishman. Indeed, just as all of us are Irish on St. Patty's Day, and I, O'Batra, this 46th Term of POTUS is going to require all of us to be good Americans, worthy of our Founders, and as Thomas Jefferson penned: **"We mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor."** Imagine the joy of 1776 society, when Honor exceeded the value of life and fortunes. **Sadly, today, there is such a dearth of personal Honor, let alone one that can be pledged. So long as HONOR is MIA in America, Reagan's Shining City on the Hill remains dimmed.**

JFK in his inaugural speech started Camelot, because he challenged us with: **"ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country."** Joe Biden in his inaugural remarks must confirm



Ravi Batra is an eminent attorney and Chair of National Advisory Council on South Asian Affairs.



Happy
New year
2020



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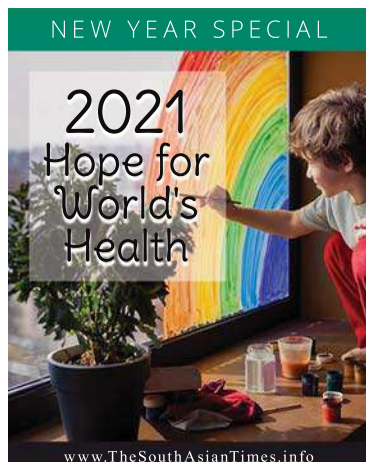
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Top 10 events that made headlines in India

Apart from Covid-19 that dominated the news, in India, the foundation

stone was laid for the Ayodhya Ram Temple, key state elections were conducted and several mass protests were held amid deadly Delhi riots.

CAA protests shook the nation



Delhi's Shaheen Bagh became the epicentre in the CAA protests. (File photo)

Protests continued in 2020 over the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) which grants citizenship to Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, Parsis, Buddhists and Christians fleeing religious persecution from Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh if they entered India on or before December 31, 2014. People protested against the CAA in Delhi's Shaheen Bagh area for over a month that ended on March 24 as pandemic lockdowns began in India.

Riots broke out at many places in north-east Delhi in February, in protest against the Citizenship Amendment Act. The violence erupted on February 22 but the riots continued for 4 days, claiming 53 lives and around 600 people were injured. Several dead bodies were retrieved from a nullah, where mutilated bodies were dumped.

The Delhi riots were triggered through social media, and this medium was used as a weapon to execute the conspiracy as per the chargesheet filed by Delhi Police.

Farmers' protest refuses to die



The agitating farmers have announced to take out a tractor rally towards Delhi on Republic Day. (File photo)

Thousands of farmers from Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh have been protesting at the borders of the national capital demanding the repeal of the three key farm laws, among other issues. The Singhu border, ground zero of the snowballing protests, saw thousands of farmers blocking highways from Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan leading to

Delhi. The farmers agitation continued after the ministerial level talks between the farmers leaders and the Central government failed to reach a consensus. The agitating farmers have announced they will take out a tractor rally towards Delhi on Republic Day, besides a series of programmes in a bid to intensify their protest.

Work begins on Ram Temple in Ayodhya



Prime Minister Narendra Modi performing the 'Bhoomi Pujan'. (File photo)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi performed the 'Bhoomi Pujan' and laid the foundation stone for the Ram Temple in Ayodhya on August 5. Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra trust had announced in September that Ram Temple will have 1,200 pillars which will go 200 feet deep. It is expected that the Ram Mandir would be 161 feet tall.

In a related development, nearly 28 years after the Babri Masjid was demolished, the Special CBI court on September 30, 2020, acquitted all 32 accused in the case, including former deputy prime minister LK Advani, Murli Manohar Joshi, Kalyan Singh and Uma Bharti.

Arvind Kejriwal back as Delhi CM

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief Arvind Kejriwal took oath as the chief minister of Delhi on February 16, for the third time at the Ramlila Maidan Ground. The Aam Aadmi Party swept the Delhi Assembly election 2020, bagging 62 out of 70 seats and decimating its rivals BJP and Congress. The BJP bagged eight seats, while the Congress failed to open its account and the party's 62 candidates lost their deposit.

Kejriwal's oath-taking ceremony at the Ramlila Maidan also assumed significance as it was from this ground that he along with noted anti-corruption crusader Anna Hazare led a massive anti-corruption agitation.

Nitish Kumar back as Bihar CM too

The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) registered a victory in the Bihar assembly election and JD(U) chief Nitish Kumar once again sat on the chair of the Chief Minister. This was the seventh time Nitish Kumar became the Chief Minister of the state. After the ruling alliance's victory, Nitish Kumar took to Twitter to thank the people of the state and he also expressed his gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his co-operation.

The JD(U) chief got the full backing of all constituents of the NDA, including the BJP, which has outperformed his party in the assembly elections. The BJP secured 74 seats while the JD (U) managed only 143.

Covid-19 spreads in India

The first case of the coronavirus in India was found in Kerala on January 30 through a medical student who had returned from Wuhan. This was followed by the second and third cases in February.

Mass gatherings such as the Tablighi Jamaat event at Delhi's Nizamuddin, held between March 1-21, became super spreaders. As cases increased, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced one of the world's most stringent lockdowns on March 24, halting most economic and social activities, closing borders and allowing only essential services to continue.

Over 10 months later, India has crossed 1 crore cases, while the death toll touched over 1.5 lakh.

Migrant exodus got international attention



Several migrants died of hunger, heatstroke and exhaustion. (Photo: Courtesy, PTI)

As the coronavirus spread, India saw a humanitarian crisis, with the lockdown impacting nearly 40 million migrants.

What started as groups of migrants walking from Mumbai and neighbouring districts to their hometowns in Gujarat and Rajasthan slowly grew into the largest mass exodus since the Partition, in March. Many traveled thousands of miles on foot to reach their villages in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, while others traveled by the special Shramik trains that were launched by the government. Not all reached their destinations, though.

According to data compiled by road safety NGO, 198 migrants lost their lives in road accidents during this lockdown period, while many more have died of hunger, heatstroke and exhaustion.

India-China clashes at border

On May 5, a scuffle broke out between Indian and Chinese forces, who had encroached into the Indian border at the Pangong Tso lake in Ladakh. Soldiers from both sides engaged in stone-pelting and fistfights and around 11 soldiers were injured. On June 14, Indian army soldiers were attacked with iron rods and barbed wires, unprovoked. In the resultant hand to hand combat, during the interluding night between June 15 and 16, 20 Indian army personnel and nearly 43 Chinese soldiers were killed.

The Indian government reacted by banning over 200 mobile apps developed in China, along with several infrastructural projects for which Chinese companies had won contracts.

GDP shrinks a record 23.9 percent

India recorded a GDP drop of 23.9 per cent, in the period April-June 2020. This was the worst contraction since India started reporting GDP data in 1996. The stringent lockdown measures, which put a huge dent on the economy, caused all sectors, apart from agriculture to suffer huge losses. The gross value added growth (GVA) in the manufacturing sector shrank by 39.3 per cent, while industries such as construction, trade, travel and hospitality, were all badly affected.

India finally elected to UNSC



The country began its term on January 1, 2021. (File photo)

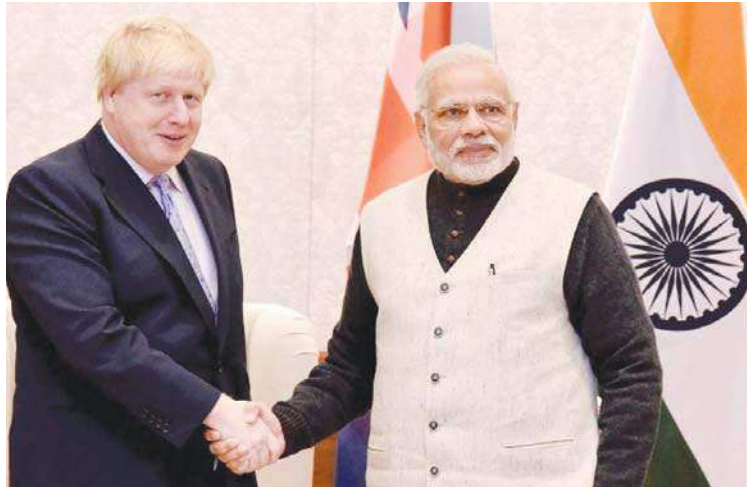
India was formally elected as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for a period of two years on June 18, 2020, after winning with an overwhelming majority. This is the 8th term for the country, the previous one being in 2011-12. India was the sole candidate from the Asia-Pacific region for the 2021-22 term. Since long, India has been pushing to get a permanent seat at UNSC. The country began its term on January 1, 2021, joining 15 other members – five permanent and 10 non-permanent at the Council.



London/New Delhi: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has canceled his visit to India, hours after he announced a fresh lockdown in the United Kingdom over the new strain of coronavirus that has affected thousands of people in the UK. Johnson was to be the chief guest at this year's Republic Day parade in New Delhi, which was also to be his first bilateral visit after the UK's departure from the European Union in December. He had accepted the invitation last month.

"The prime minister spoke to Prime Minister (Narendra) Modi this morning, to express his regret

Boris Johnson cancels India visit amid fresh Covid scare



Boris Johnson was to be the chief guest at this year's Republic Day parade in New Delhi. (File photo)

that he will be unable to visit India later this month as planned," read a statement from his Downing Street office.

"In light of the national lockdown announced last night, and the speed at which the new coronavirus vari-

ant is spreading, the Prime Minister said that it was important for him to remain in the UK so he can focus on the domestic response to the virus," the statement read.

"The leaders underlined their shared commitment to the bilateral

Republic Day parade curtailed

New Delhi: The Republic Day parade of 2021 will be shorter, involve fewer participants and only a fourth of the usual number of spectators will be allowed at Rajpath to witness the country's military might and cultural diversity, with India's grandest ceremonial event being curtailed because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

This year's Independence Day celebrations were also muted because of the coronavirus disease outbreak and measures imposed to check the spread of the disease.

Fewer people will be allowed to

witness the parade on January 26, with the government following strict social distancing protocols, and the parade itself will be shorter and with smaller marching contingents compared to previous years, the officials cited above said on condition of anonymity.

Not more than 25,000 spectators will be allowed at Rajpath this year, compared to over 100,000 people who usually turn up for the parade.

The size of the marching contingents from the armed forces and the paramilitary will be smaller.

relationship, and to continuing to build on the close collaboration between our countries -- including in response to the pandemic," it added.

Johnson's government has announced a complete lockdown for

England's 56 million people, which could last until mid-February.

Johnson would have been the second British Prime Minister to attend the Republic Day parade as the Chief Guest after his predecessor John Major in 1993.

Modi dials Merkel, promises to use vaccine capabilities

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has assured German Chancellor Angela Merkel of India's commitment to deploy its vaccine development and manufacturing capacities for the benefit of the world.

The matter figured in a video-teleconference between the two leaders, who discussed key issues such as the response to the Covid-19 pandemic, bilateral relations, and regional and global issues, particularly India-European Union (EU) ties.

Modi appreciated Merkel's long-standing role in providing stable and strong leadership on the European and global stages, and thanked her for guiding the growth of the India-Germany strategic partnership, according to readout from the external affairs ministry.

"The Prime Minister briefed Chancellor Merkel on the developments in India with regard to vaccine development and assured Chancellor Merkel of India's commitment to deploy its capacities for the benefit of



PM Narendra Modi with German Chancellor Angela Merkel. (File photo)

the world," the readout said.

Modi also conveyed his best wishes for the early containment of a new wave of infections in Germany and other European countries.

He also welcomed Germany's decision to join the International Solar Alliance (ISA), and expressed his desire to strengthen cooperation on the platform of the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI).

Farmers leaders prepare for 'Tractor March'

New Delhi: The protest by farmers camping at the borders of the national capital continued for the 42nd day on Wednesday. The leaders of the farmers unions demanded the repeal of the three new farm laws and the procurement of crops at the Minimum Support Price (MSP) readied for a 'Tractor March' announced by the Samyukta Kisan Morcha on the Eastern and Western Peripheral Expressways.

Farmers leaders said the 'Tractor March' would be a trailer of the 'Republic Day Parade' scheduled on January 26.

After the seventh round of talks with the Central government on Monday remained inconclusive, the farmers decided to take out a 'Tractor March' on January 7. Earlier the Samyukta Kisan Morcha had scheduled the rally for January 6 but due to the bad weather forecast the march was postponed



Farmers leaders said the 'Tractor March' would be a trailer of the 'Republic Day Parade' scheduled on January 26. (File photo)

to January 7.

The Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) has also announced a public awareness campaign as well as several other programmes from January 6 to January 20.

After the seventh round of talks between the farmers-Central government failed to arrive at a consensus on Monday, the next round of talks was fixed for January 8.

Bird flu: India on high alert

New Delhi: The Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare said on Wednesday that it has deployed multi-disciplinary teams to Avian Influenza affected Alappuzha and Kottayam districts in Kerala and Panchkula district in Haryana.

The Department of Animal Husbandry on January 4 had notified the detection of Avian Influenza (H5N8) in samples of dead ducks from Alappuzha and Kottayam districts in Kerala. A similar report of Avian Influenza has also



So far, no human case of Avian Influenza has been reported. (Photo, courtesy, IANS)

been received from the poultry samples from Panchkula. So far,

no human case of Avian Influenza has been reported.

Avian Influenza (AI) viruses have been circulating worldwide for centuries with four known major outbreaks recorded in the last century. India notified the first outbreak of Avian Influenza in 2006.

In India, the disease spreads mainly through migratory birds coming into the country during the winter months, i.e., from September-October to February-March.

73 detected to have new UK Covid mutant strain

New Delhi: The Central government said that a total of 73 persons have been detected with the new "more transmissible" UK coronavirus mutant strain, and they are being kept in physical isolation in health facilities. Out of these total cases, eight have been detected by the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) in Delhi, 20 at the CSIR Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology (IGIB) in Delhi, and 11 at the National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro-Sciences (NIMHANS) in Ben-

galuru.

Three such cases have been detected at the Cellular and Molecular Biology in Hyderabad, one at the National Institute of Biomedical Genomics in West Bengal and 30 in the National Institute of Virology, Pune.

According to the Health Ministry, all these persons have been kept in single room isolation in designated Health Care facilities by respective state governments. Their close contacts have also been put under quarantine.



By Rajdeep Sardesai

After a traumatic and turbulent 2020, it's time to ring in a New Year with hope. And since Rabindranath Tagore is being rediscovered by our netas ahead of the Bengal elections, this is a prayer for India in 2021 that draws inspiration from the great poet-laureate.

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high. Where an Indian identity is determined by citizenship, and not divided by the narrow domestic walls of caste, region or religion. Where true secularism demands that no State authority promote or discriminate against any religion, where equal respect for all faiths must be the basis of our constitutional secularism.

Where an interfaith marriage won't be demonised as "love jihad". Where a consenting adult couple will not have to prove their love to a

district magistrate or a local police officer in India's most populous state or else be locked up. Where eating beef isn't a crime in one state while it is part of an essential diet in a neighbouring one. Where agitating farmers aren't water-cannoned or barricaded in the winter freeze.

Where a farmer isn't looked at with suspicion because he wants to be heard, where a turbaned Sikh isn't a Khalistani but a kisan putra. Where crucial laws are passed by consultation and not by diktat, where key stakeholders are part of pre-legislative discussion. Where dissent isn't criminalized, where protesting students, academics and human rights activists are not thrown into jail as anti-nationals and charged under non-bailable anti-terror laws.

Where a coronavirus vaccine is made available first to those most at risk and not those who wear their VVIP badges on their sleeve. Where no one labels a community as corona-carriers simply to cater to rank prejudice. Where public health systems are designed to ensure quality treatment for all.

Where it shouldn't take a pandemic to remind us of the plight of the

The views expressed in Op Eds are not necessarily those of The South Asian Times.

How a 'new' India can be built, starting 2021



A "new" India can't be built by abandoning the core values of our founding fathers. (File photo)

urban poor. Where no one has to ever walk hundreds of kilometres from urban shanties to their villages because of a national lockdown.

Where a PM Cares Fund cannot be a body "owned" and "controlled" by the Government of India, but then also not come under Right to Information laws because it receives private funds. That, as taxpayers, we have the right to know where and how our monies are being spent. Where election funding too is made more transparent.

Where before we spend public

money on refurbishing Parliament, we first restore the spirit of parliamentary democracy. Where democracy encourages a decentralisation in the power structure. Where political parties aren't a family inheritance, but are built on merit. Where a robust democracy isn't just about winning elections but ensuring a level-playing field for all those contesting elections.

Where the promise of free markets doesn't end up in market monopolies, where the licence-permit raj doesn't become a patron-crony rule.

Where the vast informal sector is boosted and job-creating industries incentivised. Where growth figures aren't fudged and headline management matters less than hard facts.

Where judges recognise that notions of personal liberty cannot be selective: An octogenarian activist must not struggle for weeks to get a straw sipper in jail while influential individuals are granted instant immunity from prosecution and arrest.

Where judges eschew all post-retirement benefits, where criticising the judiciary isn't seen as criminal contempt. Where habeas corpus petitions are heard with urgency.

Where an actor's suicide doesn't become a national soap opera, while a farmer's suicide is a mere statistic. Where the news media is a watchdog. Where the duty of TV networks is to inform not incite, where news matters more than noise, where sense scores over sensation.

Where TRPs must stand for Television Respect Points and not a crude attempt to get eyeballs at all costs. Where a "new" India can't be built by abandoning the core values of our founding fathers.

(The op-ed appeared in The Hindustan Times)

2021

Happy New Year

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PERSON OF THE YEAR 2020

Mr. Ravi Bhooplapur

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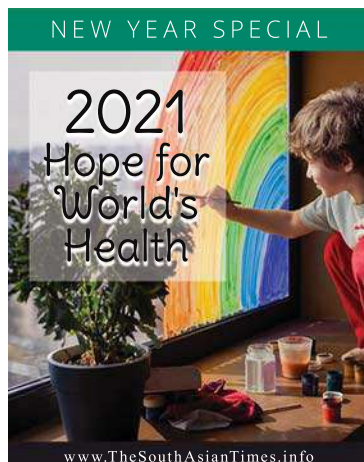


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With no thaw in the frosty bilateral relations, the year saw periodic war of words over the issue of Pakistan-sponsored cross-border terrorism.

New Delhi/Islamabad: The relations between Pakistan and India plumbed new depths in 2020, a year marred by periodic verbal duels, summoning of diplomats and rhetorics by Prime Minister Imran Khan, who is facing mounting pressure from the Opposition to step down in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic that has battered the country's fragile economy.

With no thaw in the frosty bilateral relations, the year 2020 saw periodic war of words over the issue of Pakistan-sponsored cross-border terrorism. In June, India asked Pak-

Pakistan-India ties touch new lows in 2020

istan to reduce the staff in its mission in New Delhi by half and announced a reciprocal trimming of staff strength in its high commission in Islamabad.

India said its decision to downgrade the diplomatic ties was based on instances of involvement of Pakistani officials in "acts of espionage" and "dealings with terrorist organisations".

Over the past 12 months, Pakistan made several futile attempts to raise the Kashmir issue at the international forums and drum up support against India. New Delhi has categorically told the international community that the scrapping of Article 370 was its internal matter. It also advised Pakistan to accept the reality and stop all anti-India propaganda.

Pakistan, however, adopted escalatory measures by intensifying ceasefire violations along the Line of Control, where the armies of the two sides regularly targeted each other, resulting in casualties.

Pakistan's Foreign Office tried to keep up pressure on India by regularly summoning its diplomats in Islamabad and issuing press statements about the alleged ceasefire violations by the Indian Army.

Islamabad also accused New Delhi of "politicising" the deliberations



Prime Minister Imran Khan is facing mounting pressure from the Opposition to step down. (File photos)



at the meetings of the Paris-based Financial Action task Force, a global money-laundering watchdog. The FATF decided to retain Pakistan on its "grey list" till February 2021 as it failed to fulfill six key obligations, including failure to take action against two of India's most wanted terrorists – Jamaat ud-Dawah chief Hafiz Saeed and JeM head Masood Azhar.

In 2020, Saeed was sentenced for a collective imprisonment of 21 years on terror financing charges in four cases, a move experts described as an attempt by Pakistan to improve its global standing and to

wriggle out of the FATF's grey list.

During the year, both sides also failed to agree how Kulbhushan Jadhav, on death row in Pakistan, should be represented in his review appeal in the Islamabad High Court against his conviction by a Pakistani military court for alleged spying. India says that Pakistan has failed to respond on core issues pertaining to the case.

The chances for any change for broader cooperation between the two sides are slim in 2021.

On the domestic front, Prime Minister Khan faces a serious challenge as the Pakistan Democratic Move-

ment (PDM) - an alliance of 11 Opposition parties - set a January 31 deadline for him to step down or face a "Long March" to Islamabad.

The PDM held massive rallies in major cities to seek Khan's ouster and press the powerful military to stop interfering in politics. The Pakistan Army has denied meddling in politics. Khan also denies that the Army helped him win the election in 2018. Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz supremo Nawaz Sharif has repeatedly blamed Army chief Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa and ISI chief Lt Gen Faiz Hameed for Pakistan's current situation.

How India needs to better engage with neighbours

1. India-China border clash



Since May, Chinese troops have altered the status quo along the border with India. (File photo)

The tumultuous year saw the first deadly clash between Indian and Chinese armies in the last 45 years in the mountainous Ladakh region in June. The ties between Pakistan India also remained at odds amid frequent clashes along with the disputed Jammu and Kashmir border.

The military standoff followed New Delhi's unilateral decision to separate Ladakh from disputed Jammu and Kashmir and revoke the Himalayan region's semi-autonomous status in August last year, a move vehemently opposed by Beijing and Islamabad.

Ladakh region which borders China and Pakistan serves as the world's only "nuclear trijunction."

Since May, Chinese troops have altered the status quo along the border with India, claimed the lives of 20 Indian soldiers, and violated every agreement to maintain peace.

2. Chinese incursion in Nepal

KP Sharma Oli's government in Nepal is facing increasing heat and is under pressure from several quarters to speak up against the boundary encroachment by China.

Reports suggested that China has encroached upon Nepali territory in Humla district and one boundary pillar no 12 has been constructed by the Chinese without notice of the Nepalese side. Without a bilateral agreement, no boundary pillar can be repaired by either side.

The local elected representatives have also accused China of encroaching upon Nepali territory and asked with the government to send a fact-finding team to find out the truth.

3: Acceptance for Taliban

Having invaded Afghanistan 19 years ago trying to root out the Taliban, the US finally made peace with them in February as it looked to exit. For India, this meant a beginning of the process of re-engaging with the Taliban, and New Delhi reached out with External Affairs minister S Jaishankar's attendance through virtual mode and a senior Indian diplomat in Doha.

Signalling long-term commitment to Afghanistan's future — under Taliban or other political forces — India has committed \$80 million, over and above its \$3 billion commitment in the last two decades. This means New Delhi too is finally looking at the Taliban as a political actor, although it is controlled by the Pakistan military.

4. Assertive neighbors



Narendra Modi and Sheikh Hasina during the India-Bangladesh virtual bilateral summit, in New Delhi in December. (Photo: courtesy, PTI)

The year began with Bangladesh asserting itself on CAA-NRC, and then Nepal claiming territory and issuing a new map. It brought home the reality that neighbors are no pushovers.

By the end of the year, New Delhi had moved to build bridges with both, wary of an active Beijing. Bangladesh pushed back, and India did not notify the CAA rules. Nepal reached out at the highest level.

India also watched closely the US and Chinese forays with Maldives and Sri Lanka. India appears to have made peace with the involvement of the US in Maldives, and that of Japan in Sri Lanka and Maldives.

As the world emerges from the pandemic, New Delhi has a lot to gain from what could be "vaccine diplomacy" with neighbors in 2021 — supplying vaccines either free or at affordable cost.

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"THE SECRET OF SUCCESSFUL, HAPPY & PEACEFUL LIFE FOR HUMANITY
IS TO KNOW YOUR VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE SELF"

SWAMI PARAM ANAND

Heartiest Congratulations to
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PERSON OF THE YEAR 2020





The Covid-19 pandemic rattles industries after industries as it surged across the world. Here's a look at the biggest losers in 2020 and a preview of what 2021 may bring

1. Travel and hospitality

Going on vacation wasn't an option for most during the pandemic. The cruise industry was battered as Carnival (CCL), Royal Caribbean (RCL) and Norwegian (NCLH) were forced to suspend voyages for much of 2020 and into 2021. The news wasn't much better for hotel chains, which were hammered by a decline in demand for both leisure and business travel.

What's next: The industry is hop-



ing for a rebound as would-be travelers look to hit the road in 2021 once vaccines are widely available, but it's not clear whether business travel will approach pre-pandemic levels at a time when video conference calls are the way.

Adding insult to injury for the big hotels, Airbnb soared when it went public in December.

2. The oil industry

The oil industry had a miserable 2020. Plenty of industries grappled with plunging prices in 2020, but oil is the only major commodity that went negative. The unprecedented trip below zero in the spring was caused by an epic collapse in demand during the pandemic and a price war between Saudi Arabia and Russia.

The S&P 500's energy sector is down by more than 30% this year, making it easily the worst performer in the stock market.

What's next: The oil industry certainly will benefit as the US economy reopens in 2021 and people start flying and driving more. But coronavirus vaccines won't fix oil's bigger threat: a climate crisis that is causing investors to dump fossil fuels.

3. Banks

This was easily the worst year for America's banks since the Great Recession. Lenders suffered tens of billions of dollars in losses as they braced for loan defaults and share prices spiraled lower. Even big banks such as Citigroup (C) and Bank of America (BAC) are finishing the year sharply lower, and Wells Fargo (CBEAX) remains a hot mess.

What's next: The silver lining is that the US banking system just endured a real-world stress test -- and it passed. If Wall Street's V-shaped recovery spreads to Main Street, banks stand to be winners in



(File photos)

2021.

4. Airlines and Automakers

The airline industry had awful years in the past, but none were as devastatingly horrendous as 2020. US air travel came to a virtual halt in April. Traffic rebounded modestly late in the year, despite climbing Covid-19 cases, but the number of passengers screened by TSA at US airports was still down 63% compared to a year ago during the holiday travel season.

Similarly, the auto industry suffered a body blow from the pandemic in its early months, as factories shut down and demand for cars fell sharply.

Job losses soared and car companies reduced shifts for millions of autoworkers.

What's next: More losses are expected in the fourth quarter and into 2021. Air travel isn't expected to recover for several years, even as

the vaccine raises hopes for the end of the pandemic.

Many commuters are concerned about using public transit or ride-hailing services such as Uber. That could boost the auto industry recovery in 2021.

5. Movie industry

The coronavirus pandemic forced theaters shut around the world, leading US box office sales to plummet nearly 80%, according to Comscore. It also pushed more people stuck at home to streaming. Netflix and Disney+ thrived while the \$43 billion global theater global business was ravaged.

What's next: With traditional studios including Disney and Warner Bros. going all-in on their streaming ventures, theaters find themselves in a perilous position. But the biggest question in Hollywood is will consumers return to the cineplex once vaccines hit critical mass?

Despite a growing antitrust scrutiny that poses a big existential threat to technology companies, Big Tech helped millions of workers and children navigate the pandemic with digital tools, virtual meetings, video games and content streaming in 2020

1. Big Tech

Technology emerged a winner during the pandemic as cloud and connectivity services thrived in a stay-at-home world. Netflix revenue jumped 73% in the most recent three quarters. Video conferencing service Zoom's sales soared 307%. And Amazon was among the biggest winners, with sales leaping \$67 billion, or 35%, in the first three quarters of the year.

The five most valuable companies -- Microsoft, Apple, Amazon, Google owner Alphabet and

How Big Tech helped millions traverse the year



(File photos)

Facebook are now worth more than \$7.5 trillion combined.

What's next: Although the disputes aren't likely to get resolved anytime soon, legal and regulatory action to rein in Big Tech has become a rare bipartisan issue in Washington.

2. Bitcoin

Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies plunged alongside the stock market shortly after Covid-19 ground the US economy to a standstill in March. But bitcoin (ARSC) has come roaring back to hit new all-time highs near \$30,000 since then. Prices have more than tripled this year.

What's next: Bitcoin may

become a more acceptable form of digital payments in 2021 now that fintech powerhouses Square (SQ) and PayPal (PYPL) are both letting users buy, sell and hold bitcoin.

3. Video games

Consumers were stuck at home this year, and video games gave players an opportunity to pass the time alone while still interacting with their friends. That helped the video games industry boom this year, from sold out Nintendo Switch consoles, to record growth on streaming platforms, including Facebook Gaming and Amazon's Twitch. Google's video platform YouTube logged its best year ever in 2020 with more than 100 bil-

lion hours in gaming content viewed.

What's next: With PlayStation 5 and Xbox Series S and X, experts predict the gaming industry is set to keep growing in 2021.

4. Online and big retailers

Amazon and other online retailers were among the biggest winners of the pandemic, as people grew cautious about leaving their homes. But big-box stores, such as Walmart, Target and Costco, also won big, as shoppers flocked to stores where they could get all their shopping done in one go.

What's next: Big retailers aren't expected to lose any ground once the pandemic ends, even if the pace of sales growth slows down.

They ramped up their digital operations in 2020 and are well-positioned to succeed in the future.

5. Creators

Creators have been finding ways to keep their content fresh and innovative throughout 2020, especially during the pandemic. The platforms that support these creators have benefited significantly.

Twitch downloads jumped 61% worldwide from January to November. Patreon, a social and membership platform for content creators, grew 43%.

What's next: Social giants like Facebook and Snapchat have taken note, launching their own versions of popular creator platforms like TikTok.

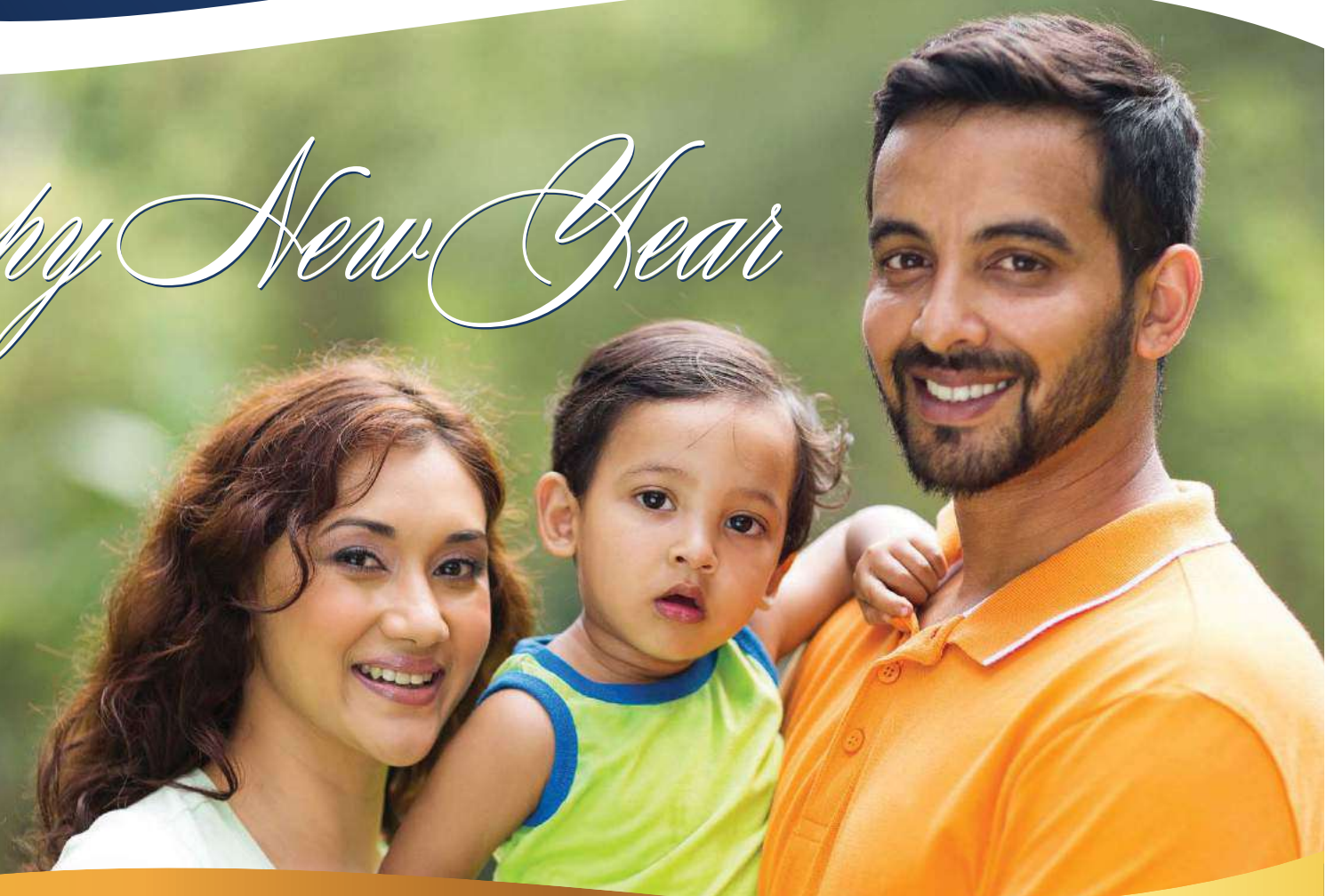


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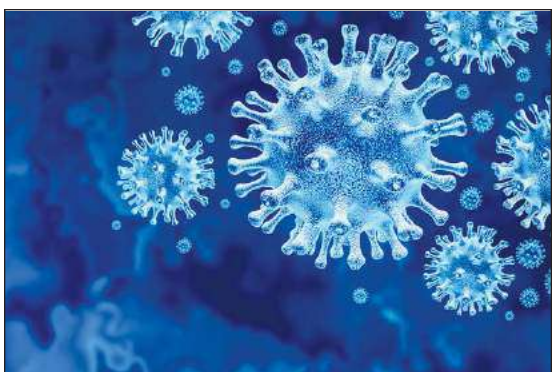


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Here are 10 moments that made global headlines in 2020, with Covid-19 eclipsing all other major events.

World in the grip of Covid-19



The WHO referred to COVID-19 as a pandemic on March 11, 2020
(credit: paho.org)

1. Days after the World Health Organization (WHO) declared novel coronavirus as a disease that was a Public Health Emergency of International Concern in January, the organization formally identified and named it as Covid-19 on February 11. A month later, the health agency declared the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak a global pandemic on March 11.

After 11 months, the overall number of global coronavirus cases topped 84.5 million, while the deaths surged to more than 1.83 million, according to Johns Hopkins University.

The US is the worst-hit country with the world's highest number of cases and deaths at 20,396,243 and 349,933. India comes in second place in terms of cases at 10,305,788, while the country's death toll soared to 149,218.

West Asia crises worsens

2. Western Asia started off the year witnessing tumult in several countries in the region, with the US-led killing of Iran's top general Qassem Soleimani and an intensification of the Persian Gulf crisis. The US administration justified the killing of Soleimani saying he was responsible for the deaths of hundreds of US personnel and was plotting to kill many more.

Tensions between Washington and Tehran escalated when the US withdrew from the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran on May 18, 2018 and reimposed sanctions. The killing



Iran's top general Qassem Soleimani was killed in a US drone strike at Baghdad airport. (Credit: Wikipedia)

of Soleimani further added to escalations. The Yemeni civil war continued and Sultan Qaboos of Oman, Arab world's longest-serving ruler, died aged 79, setting off concerns regarding stability in the region.

UK formally bids adieu to EU



Britain is the first member state to leave the EU, which was set up to forge unity after the horrors of World War II.
(credit: sharecast.com)

3. In January, the UK withdrew from the European Union after the European Parliament approved 'Brexit' and an 11-month transition period.

As the year ended, UK lawmakers approved the post-Brexit trade deal between the country and the European Union (EU) by a large majority, paving the way for an orderly Brexit when the transition period ended on December 31. The trade deal will need to be scrutinized by the European Parliament early next year before it is formally ratified by the Council of the EU.

HK's controversial security law

4. The Hong Kong national security legislation was enacted in May by Beijing to promulgate a national security law in Hong Kong. According to this law, Beijing has attempted to limit what it deems "external interference" in Hong Kong's affairs, and

has criminalized acts that it deems a threat to national security; for instance, subversion and secession. The act also allowed China to set up a national security agency in Hong Kong. Following this, the US had stated that Hong Kong was no longer an autonomous territory.

Protests in Belarus over poll fraud

5. Presidential elections in Belarus in August sparked widespread protests after Alexander Lukashenko unilaterally declared himself president. The elections were contentious, with reports of election fraud and opposition candidates and protestors calling for the votes to be invalidated. Researchers had said these protests were the largest in Belarus' political history. Activists and international observers had also reported widespread violence, intimidation and suppression being meted out to protestors. Several countries including the European Union did not accept the election results.

Israel-Arab peace deal

6. The Israel-Arab peace deal saw countries like the UAE, Bahrain, Morocco and Sudan normalize relations with Israel, in a process facilitated by the US under the Trump administration. The UAE was the first country to engage in this process in August.

Armenia-Azerbaijan clash

7. The long-disputed, semi-autonomous enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh stole global headlines after a long-simmering conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan erupted into a hot war in September. Azerbaijan, backed by drones from Turkey, launched a military assault on Nagorno-Karabakh, a predominantly ethnic Armenian region on its territory, leaving several thousand dead.

A Russia-brokered peace agreement in November ended the fighting, with Armenia required to withdraw from three areas of the breakaway region along with seven neighboring areas. In the town of Kalbajar people burned their homes before fleeing ahead of arriving Azerbaijani troops.

Teacher beheaded in France over cartoons

8. The murder of Samuel Paty, a French middle-school teacher, took place on October 16, 2020 in a suburb of Paris for showing Charlie Hebdo cartoons of Prophet Mohammad to his students in a civics class. He was beheaded by an Islamist terrorist.

The attacker had said he wanted to punish Paty for his blasphemous act.

Days after the beheading incident, a knife-wielding assailant, said to be shouting Allahu Akbar, killed a woman and two others at a church in the French city of Nice on October 31, 2020. Reports suggested that both the incidents were linked to each other.

French President Emmanuel Macron denounced radical Islam and said the incident was a typical Islamist terrorist attack. The response of the French government has been criticized by many Muslims, including Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Some countries also called for a boycott of French goods.

Covid-19 vaccines roll out



The Pfizer ended COVID-19 vaccine trial with 95% efficacy.
(credit: sciencemag.org)

9. Approximately a year after coronavirus first surfaced in China and rapidly spread around the world killing at least 1.7 million people, Moderna, Pfizer and BioNTech announced an Emergency Use Authorization of a Covid-19 vaccine. On December 8, the United Kingdom became the first country to begin a mass inoculation campaign using a tested vaccine.

New Covid-19 strain

10. The emergence of the new and deadly mutated variant of the "pandemic coronavirus" in the UK in December put the world once again on high alert. The scientists have scrambled to figure out whether the UK variant titled 'B.1.1.7' is really more adept at human-to-human transmission. They're also wondering how it evolved so fast.

According to the prestigious journal Science, the 'B.1.1.7' variant has acquired 17 mutations all at once -- a feat never seen before. The worry is: Scientists say that 'B.1.1.7' may already be much more widespread. Other than the UK, it has been detected in the Netherlands, Denmark, India, Italy and Australia.

WHO has said it is working closely with the UK medical authorities to understand how the new mutant coronavirus variant is likely to affect the course of the pandemic.

Wishing You and Your Family
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London: A court in London has blocked the extradition request of Wikileaks founder Julian Assange to the US, citing concerns over his "mental health and "risk of suicide".

The 49-year-old is wanted over the publication of thousands of classified documents in 2010 and 2011.

The US claims the leaks broke the law

and endangered lives. Assange had fought the extradition and says the case is politically motivated, the BBC reported.

The US authorities have 14 days to lodge an appeal and are expected to do so.

Assange will now be taken back to Belmarsh Prison, where he is being held and a full application for his bail will be made soon.

His lawyer Ed Fitzgerald told the court there will be evidence to show Assange will not abscond.



Wikileaks founder Julian Assange faces an 18-count indictment from the US government. (credit: wsws.org)

District Judge Vanessa Baraitser ruled that the Australian publisher faced "oppressive" conditions in maximum-security isolation if detained in the US.

Assange faces an 18-count indictment from the US government, accusing him of conspiring to hack into US military databases to acquire sensitive information relating to the Afghanistan and Iraq wars, which was then published on the Wikileaks website.

England goes into new lockdown as Covid-19 cases surge



UK PM Boris Johnson said the new coronavirus variant was spreading at great speed. (credit: Wikimedia)

London: With UK grappling with a major surge in Covid-19 cases due to the new virus strain, Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced that England will enter another national lockdown, the third of its kind since the pandemic began in the country early last year.

In a televised address, he urged people across the country to "stay at home" except for permitted reasons, echoing the message back in March 2020.

Under the new lockdown, people are only allowed to go to work if it's impossible to work

from home, such as construction workers.

Some 44 million people or three-quarters of the population of England are already living under the toughest restrictions

Nearly 56 million people in England will return to a full coronavirus lockdown, possibly until mid-February, to try to cut spiraling infection rates, Johnson said.

The latest development came as another 58,784 people in the UK have tested positive for the novel coronavirus, marking the highest daily spike since the onset of the pandemic, according to official figures.

The country now has a total of 2,721,622 cases and 75,547 deaths.

Alibaba's Jack Ma 'disappears' after conflict with China

Beijing: Alibaba founder and Chinese billionaire Jack Ma has reportedly gone missing for over two months now following his controversial speech in October in which he severely criticized the regulation system of China and called the banks 'pawnshops'.

The Financial Times reported that Ma was recently replaced as a judge in the final of TV show 'Africa's Business Heroes'.

It is being speculated that Jack Ma's wrangle with China's authoritarian regime has led to a crackdown on his business in the country and his disappearance from public space.

Jack Ma's trouble with the Chinese government first began when he gave a speech criticizing China's regulators and state-owned banks for their 'backwardness'.

His remarks are said to have infuriated Beijing's party brass,

leading to Chinese President Xi Jinping to personally order a halt to the offering by Alibaba's financial affiliate company, Ant Financial, which was set to raise USD 37 billion in the biggest stock-market debut in history, reported Hollywood Reporter.

According to a report in TechCrunch, the People's Bank of China, the country's central bank, "summoned Ant Group for regulatory talks on December 26th, announcing a sweeping plan for the fintech firm to 'rectify' its regulatory violations".

The banking authority laid out that Ant Group should return to its roots in payments and bring more transparency to transactions. The Wall Street Journal reported that Beijing is seeking to shrink Jack Ma's technology and financial empire and potentially take a larger stake in his businesses.

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Kabul: The negotiating team of the Afghan government left for Qatar on Jan 5 where they will resume the second round of the peace talks with the Taliban. The second round, which will begin after a three-week break, will focus on a ceasefire and reduction in violence in the war-torn country, TOLO News reported.

Taking to Twitter, Abdullah Abdullah, Chairman of the High Council for National Reconciliation, said: "The Republic's Negotiation Team will depart

tomorrow (Jan 5) as it was planned, to Doha to begin the second round of peace talks with Taliban. The team enjoys the full support of the republic and has the mandate to discuss the peace agenda.

"We are committed to achieving a lasting peace and ask the Taliban to do so. We are looking for a successful second round."

The peace negotiations, which formally kick-off in September 2020, witnessed a breakthrough last month after the two sides agreed on procedural rules for the talks.

According to TOLO News, in its draft of demands, the Afghan government's team has added ceasefire, preservation of national sovereignty, media freedom and the prohibition of



The talks will focus on a ceasefire and reduction in violence in Afghanistan. (credit: Wikimedia)

activity by foreign fighters in the war-torn country.

Meanwhile, the Taliban's demands include an Islamic government structure, establishment of an Islamic council, and ensuring women's rights and the rights of all citizens based on Islamic principles.

Trump turns heat on China, signs Tibet policy

Dharamsala: US President Donald Trump signed into law a bill that calls for establishing a US consulate in Tibet and building an international coalition to ensure that the next Dalai Lama is appointed solely by the Tibetan Buddhist community without China's interference.

The Tibetan Policy and Support Act of 2020 (TPSA) modifies and re-authorizes various programs and provisions related to Tibet.

Trump signed the act as part of the massive USD 2.3 trillion package for the year-end bill to provide long-delayed coronavirus relief and fund the federal government.

Built on the historic Tibet Policy Act of 2002, the TPSA makes it official the US policy that decisions regarding the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama are exclusively within the authority of the current Dalai Lama, Tibetan Buddhist leaders and the Tibetan people.

Any interference by Chinese government officials will be met with serious sanctions and be deemed inadmissible into the US.

The bill not only enumerates the



Tibetan spiritual leader The Dalai Lama has lived in India since 1959.

evolution of Tibetan democracy under the guidance of the Dalai Lama but also commends him for his decision to implement democratic governance and also commends the Tibetan exile community for successfully adopting a system of self-governance with democratic institutions to choose their leaders.

In a significant achievement for the Tibetan movement, the bill formally acknowledged the CTA (Central Tibetan Administration) as the legitimate institution reflecting the aspirations of the Tibetan diaspora around the world and the Sikyong as the President of the CTA.

The TPSA recognizes the importance of traditional Tibetan grassland stewardship in mitigating the negative effects of climate change in the region as opposed to the Chinese government's forced resettlement of the Tibetan nomads.

In addition, it calls for greater international cooperation to monitor the environment on the Tibetan plateau.

The Tibetan exile administration is based in Dharamsala, India.

PDM poses no threat to govt: Imran Khan

Islamabad: Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan has said that the 11-party PDM opposition alliance poses no threat to his government.

Addressing the meeting of his spokespersons, Khan said: "The PDM has almost lost and died its own death, so it is no more a threat to the government."

The Prime Minister also directed his spokespersons to give a "tough time" to the opposition in the media, Dawn news reported.

Khan said that the Pakistan Democratic Movement's (PDM) main agenda was to seek National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO)-like concessions for its leaders.

"PDM's entire movement is aimed at getting an NRO, but I will not give them any relief," he added.

Talking about the opposition alliance holding rallies despite warnings amid the coronavirus pandemic, the premier said that the PDM tried to play with the lives of the people, The Express Tribune reported.

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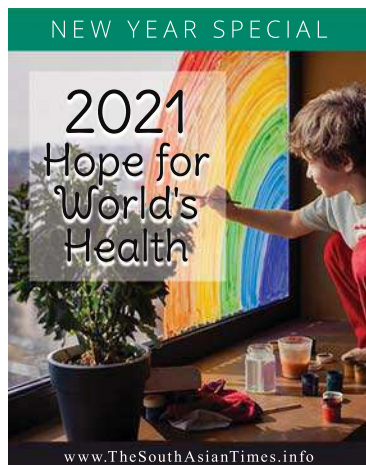
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The year 2020 witnessed a paucity of live sport like we hadn't seen in decades. For fans, it meant staying away from stadiums for a large part of the year.

New Delhi: On March 8, the world witnessed an important chapter in professional sports. It was the day the Women's T20 World Cup final was played between Australia and India at the iconic Melbourne Cricket Ground, which set a new record for crowd attendance in a stadium for a women's cricket match.

Things went silent afterwards as the Covid-19 pandemic struck.

At the US Open, for instance, which boasts of the biggest tennis stadium in the world, it has always been thoroughly enjoyable to see the rapturous New York crowd dive into each match. But this year, the Arthur Ashe Stadium was devoid of fans and that too provided a fascinating look at professional tennis.

Take the case of Liverpool fans. Their team ended a 30-year-long, agonising wait for the Premier League title. For many, it was a first in their lifetime. But none could be there at Anfield to witness that piece of history when Jordan Henderson lifted the trophy. So many of those fans would have rehearsed that moment in their minds for years, but the pandemic robbed them of it.

Indian hockey teams aim for Olympic podium in 2021

New Delhi: The Indian men's and women's hockey teams had started the year with an aim to finish on the podium at 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games that would end the country's 40-year medal drought at the world's biggest sports extravaganza, but the Olympics were postponed to 2021 due to Covid-19.

India last won a hockey gold medal in hockey at 1980 Olympics in Moscow. Since

then, the men's team has participated in eight Olympic Games without making it to the podium. In Rio, the men's team finished a dismal eighth.

The men's team, which rose to fourth spot in the International Hockey Federation's (FIH) world rankings this year, maintained that position with 2,063.78 points in the year-end list and would enter 2021 as the fourth-ranked team.



Dominic Thiem became US Open champion, defeating Alexander Zverev, but in an empty stadium.

The Tokyo Olympics, which were slated to be held in July-August this year, had to be postponed to summer of 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. When one looks at 2020, which would go down in history as the 'Year of Covid-19', one finds that the performance of both Indian men's and women's cricket teams did not meet the expectations of millions of followers in cricket crazy India -- and perhaps, their own, too. And the recent debacle of Virat Kohli's boys against the Aussies at the Adelaide Oval rubbed salt into the wounds of Indian cricket fans who have already been busy tackling the pandemic.

The men's team played a total of 23 international matches -- three Tests, 11 T20Is, nine ODIs, and 11 T20Is. It lost all three Tests this year (but won the Boxing Day Test in style against Australia in Melbourne), though it registered wins in 10 T20s and three ODIs, all against Australia. Losing just one of the 11 T20 matches is appreciable. Had the T20 World Cup taken place this October, as originally scheduled, this performance would have been considered as good preparation. The World Cup has been postponed to the next year because of the pandemic.

However, it's the other two formats -- Tests and ODIs -- that Kohli talks about and pays



Virat Kohli went home after a disastrous first Test, but new skipper Ajinkya Rahane led India to level the series 1-1 against Australia.

more importance to, where the team's performance has been poor. While India lost six of the nine ODIs they played, they failed to register a single win in Test matches and even lost the number one spots both on the ICC rankings and the ICC Test Championship.

On the other hand, the Test team did not perform well. Towards the end of the year, India began the defence of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy on an abysmal note as they slumped to their lowest innings score in 88 years of Test cricket when they were dismissed for 36 runs in the second innings of the day-night first Test against Tim Paine's Australia.

The scores of the Indian players read: 4, 9, 2, 0, 4, 0, 8, 4, 0, 4, 1, which newspapers used as their headlines to describe what turned out to be the most dismal batting performance by an Indian Test team ever. On an individual note, Kohli, 32, the linchpin of Indian batting, finished the year without an international hundred -- a first since his debut in international cricket in 2011. Also, star players like Chetesh-

war Pujara, Ajinkya Rahane, and Jasprit Bumrah were not able to win matches for their team.

On the women front, the Indian team played 11 international matches -- all T20 internationals. Out of these they registered wins in eight matches. Going by the numbers, the performance of the Indian team looks highly impressive.

Indian players could be fined if found guilty

Melbourne: The five Indian cricketers who have been facing probe into the alleged breach of Cricket Australia's (CA) bio-security protocols and were put in isolation could face fines if investigations find them guilty going by the past instances of the cricketers.

Rohit Sharma, Rishabh Pant, Shubman Gill, Navdeep Saini and Prithvi Shaw have been put in isolation as both the Australian and Indian cricket boards launched an investigation into a video in which they were seen sitting indoors in a restaurant and suspected to be in breach of Cricket Australia's biosecurity protocols.

The breach at the restaurant assumes significance especially after a recent rise of Covid-19 cases in Victoria, where Melbourne is located, and around Sydney in New South Wales where the third Test will be played from January 7.

Sourav Ganguly now stable, undergoes angioplasty

Kolkata: Former Indian skipper and the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) president Sourav Ganguly on Saturday has undergone angioplasty and is stable now, experts in the medical team said. Ganguly was admitted to a Kolkata hospital this afternoon after complaints of chest pain.

"Sourav Ganguly is stable after undergoing angioplasty. He is conscious and stable now. He has a minor cardiac issue while doing some workout in his home gymnasium," said Saroj Mondal, the head of the medical



Sourav Ganguly.
(File photo)

team treating the BCCI chief.

Sources said that there are two more blockages in his heart for which he will be treated. A stent insertion has been done as 90 per cent blockage was found in one of his arteries. He will be monitored for the next 48 hours.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee tweeted: "Sad to hear that Sourav Ganguly suffered a mild cardiac arrest and has been admitted to hospital."

Union Home Minister Amit Shah called up Dona Ganguly to know about the well-being of her husband.



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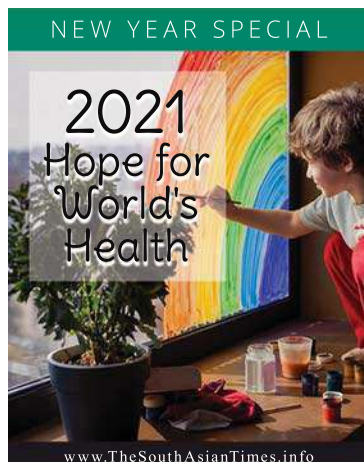
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Despite the wins, we all lost last year. Despite the losses, we all won last year. Rather than making new year's resolutions in 2021, we may find greater power in self-reflection about our attitudes about loss. Most of us lost something in 2020, a relative, friend or colleague, property, a job, hard-earned money, investments, a booked vacation or travel plans, health, our favorite candidate for an election, or the sense of peace amidst a pandemic.

Loss is a painful emotion. The earliest need to survive latches us to mother, who can feed and protect us from the elements until we can walk and talk. If we remain desperately attached to our initial caregivers, we restrict great life lessons and perhaps constrict our ideas of love. If we instead remain connected to them in harmony but not for every need, we grow. We are less wounded when time takes them away from us.

Loss is also a powerful metaphor. We can choose to see loss as depriva-

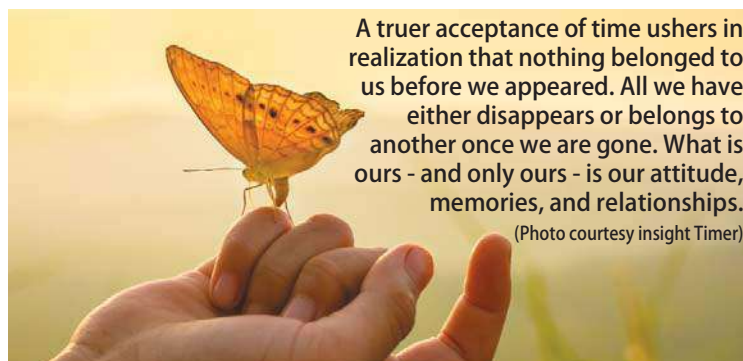
tion. If we choose instead to see loss as a clearing, making space for something new, every loss is a gift for learning something about ourselves, to evolve.

If we are devastated from each loss, we are stuck in time. The end of a year, the last day in a home we are leaving, or departure from a job can make us sentimental, but hanging on with sadness creates a sense of loss. While it is culturally accepted, it is not the way of the evolved mind.

A truer acceptance of time ushers in realization that nothing belonged to us before we appeared. All we have either disappears or belongs to another once we are gone. What is ours - and only ours - is our attitude, memories, and relationships. If we remain stuck in material things we have lost, we lose more by not being in the present.

The west teaches us that wealth is about having more. The east teaches that wealth is about having enough to give away. True wealth requires that we attain enough to give, perpetuating the ecocycle of giving and receiving. The truly wealthy are the biggest sustainers of loss because they accumulate and lose in regular cycles. Those hoarding without giving appear on lists of the uber-wealthy but indeed, they are often among the loneliest. Those who give wisely, knowing it

THE POWER OF LOSING



A truer acceptance of time ushers in realization that nothing belonged to us before we appeared. All we have either disappears or belongs to another once we are gone. What is ours - and only ours - is our attitude, memories, and relationships.

(Photo courtesy insight Timer)

could all be taken away by one sudden catastrophe, keep enough for emergencies but live fully in the joy in giving and watching others receive. As loss is replaced by abundance of kindness and fulfillment of others' needs, true wealth transforms the hearts of a community. These simple truths are taught repeatedly in the books of wisdom around the world.

After great loss, it is common to begin accumulating items as a defensive reaction against the pain of depletion, humiliation, or death. Hoarding items has become a common disease and is commonly associated with unresolved family losses, trauma, war, and childhood deprivation of proper loving care and guidance. If we choose to release what we accumulated in our homes as donation and willful letting go, it is not uncommon to see great loss of physical body weight, new jobs

and relationships, and shifts in life.

Loss is a great teacher. If we see ourselves as a being who came into the world as a part of it, we can feel the value of our presence as a part of others' lives. When we see ourselves among other beings, spinning on a globe that hurls through space, we get a wider context of our vast but small physical place in our body.

If we choose never to think of 'mine,' we can never lose. We can remove the burden of loss and watch our life come alive. We can allow time to carry us forward, seeing the same spaces and people and allowing them to be new, rather than restricting them to our vision of them in the past. Releasing the old and allowing memories to remain quietly in our heart opens the space for new chapters to begin, again and again. This is one key to a good life, a life well-lived.



Everyday Ayurveda



By Bhaswati Bhattacharya

MPH MD (Family Medicine)
PhD (Ayurveda - BHU)

The South Asian Times Columnist Dr. Bhaswati Bhattacharya is a Fulbright Specialist 2018-2022 in Public Health and Clinical Asst Professor of Medicine, Weill Cornell Medical College, New York. Her bestselling book *Everyday Ayurveda* is published by Penguin Random House. www.drhaswati.com

Acharya Lokeshji addressed Crime Free Bharat campaign through webinar



Acharya Lokesh Muni said that value education is essential for a crime free society. (Photo: Ahimsa Vishwa Bharti)

New Delhi: Acharya Dr Lokeshji, founder of Ahimsa Vishwa Bharti, addressed the Crime Free Bharat Campaign through a webinar. To spread awareness through online for an important topic like Crime Free Bharat, Acharya Shri congratulated Mr. Maithili Sharan Gupta, former DGP of Madhya Pradesh Police, and had a detailed discussion on the subject.

The eminent Jainacharya said that poverty, intoxication, anger, extreme greed, population explosion etc. are also responsible for crime. He said that value education is essential for a Crime Free Bharat. In the present times, when the world public and especially the youths are getting connected with digital devices, it is necessary to change the education system and make Peace Education a part

of it. He said that many countries of the world pay attention to good governance, India will also have to adopt the path of good governance to speed up the pace of development. Public participation is essential in good governance. A regime in which the people of the country are happy, their development is balanced, they participate in the decisions of the country.

Maithili Sharan Gupta said that it is a privilege of Crime Free Bharat Mission that world renowned Acharya Lokeshji addressed this webinar. He said that Crime Free Bharat and spirituality are two sides of the same coin. Spirituality is a journey from the inside to the outside while the Crime Free India Mission is a journey from the outside to the inside.

Unending Bliss is ours when we look inward through meditation.

- Sant Rajinder Singh Ji Maharaj

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WISDOM COOKIE

By **Rachna Chopra**

Hanuman, one of the central characters of the epic Ramayana, is also called Vayuputra and Pavan Tanay, meaning son of the God of Wind. True to his name, he is able to fly. He's seen flying in many depictions, but have you ever wondered how? He doesn't have wings. Being half monkey and half man, he only has a tail! While flying is said to be symbolic of the subtle body, the breath and intelligence; what really makes Hanuman fly is his devotion to Lord Rama. Devotion gives a bird-like buoyancy. It gives you so much energy, and such lightness of being, as though you have air in your bones like birds. Well, that's how birds can fly; they have air in their bones. Yogis are known to elevate defying gravity as well, because of the buoyancy borne

of devotion. What does devotion have to do with buoyancy, you may ask. Well, when your body, your veins, down to the very tissues and cells are steeped in devotion, it's become devoid of ego. Devoid of ego and a sense of 'I', your body only takes what is needed for sustenance. Devotion to Rama (or your higher Self) also imparts the discrimination to choose right, a dispassion to taste, and an indifference to culinary indulgences. It gives you the sense of what to absorb into your body (house of your deity), and what to reject. It is hyper sensitized (almost territorial) as to what it makes a part of itself, and allows entry to only those substances that assist in the ascent of the spirit, and not hinder.

of devotion.

So, devotion makes you effortlessly reject everything and anything that is heavy (carbs/pasta/breads/cookies or eating too much); that which stinks or has too much odor (dead meats/garlic/onion); and even foods that have too strong of a taste (hot/pungent/salty). It also rejects anything and everything that makes you perspire (strong spices), makes you way too thirsty (grease/starch) or drowsy (sugars/carbs).

When you reject foods that make you dull or drowsy, you conquer sleep. That's half the battle won. Once your body is no more drowned in slumber, your mind follows, and quite naturally ascends to finer thoughts. It rejects from a distance what weighs you down; it even shuns company that keeps you chained or actions that arise from greed and covetousness.



Beginning with devotion is a winning strategy. Devotion to Rama (or your higher Self) imparts the discrimination to choose right, a dispassion to taste, and an indifference to culinary indulgences.

The flight of Hanuman is symbolic of such a mind that has gained escape velocity, and ascends to higher realms. "Chootehi Bandha Maha Sukh Hoi", a verse from Hanuman Chalisa, exemplifies this flight of devotion, when nothing is holding you

down to gravity anymore; when all bondage has been lifted, all that had held you has released you.

When the playfulness of the monkey mind is tamed by human intellect, then the monkey is buoyant, with strategy. Nothing is wasted, not a single movement, all energy is funneled; and with such dexterous channeling of energy, joy arises. Your whole existence becomes a cause for celebration. And in that celebration, movement happens, dance happens, and ascension of consciousness becomes possible.

But it all starts with devotion. The dietary disciplines and controls that are usually a challenge become easy.

There is no struggle, there is no fight. On the contrary, subjugating the body without taming the mind is like trying to make an ornament without melting the metal. Meaningless and futile. You have to start from the highest point of your heart, and let it infiltrate down to your mind and body, in that order. You cannot begin from the body. You can, but it will be a steep climb, a struggle, and mostly fruitless. Beginning with devotion is a winning strategy. It is sustainable and joyful. Devotion for anything is exhilarating, but if for the highest ideal, its lightness lends you wings.

The author of this holistic wellness blog is a modern mystic, fire worshipper and spiritual travel guide. She guides self-discovery journeys to places of power and pilgrimage in American Southwest and South Asia.



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WORK FROM HOME: The new normal since March 2020

After millions of Americans moved to work from the office to working remotely, working from home has undergone the largest test trial to date. Even though many employers are set to reopen offices in 2021, it has been proven that telework is plausible, and many companies will allow for a hybrid model of home and office work moving forward. The future of the workplace could be changed permanently, molded by trends of the grand remote work experiment amid the pandemic.

A recent Pew survey found that most employees who are working from home had rarely or never teleworked prior to the pandemic. In fact, only one-in-five worked from home all or most of the time. While 71% of those employees have reported doing their job from home now, over half say that they would want to keep doing their job from home even as office life resumes.

The transition from office attire,

in-person meetings and lengthy commutes to pajamas and Zoom conferences has been relatively seamless for most employed adults. According to the Pew survey, of those working from home all or most of the time, nearly three-quarters have been equipped with the adequate technology and resources to do their jobs, meet project deadlines and feel motivated.

Despite the cited perks of having flexibility, a majority of respondents say that they feel uncomfortable returning to the office once employers start rolling out vaccination plans. Sixty-four percent of those working from home now report that they would feel uncomfortable returning to the office, with 31% of respondents saying they would feel very uncomfortable. As most companies moved online, teleworkers have relied heavily on video conferencing and instant messaging to stay in touch with co-workers.

A forever poster child for 2020, Zoom quickly turned into not only the most downloaded Apple app of



(image courtesy: dezeen.com)

the year but also a verb. In fact, 81% of employed adults working from home all or most of the time say that they use video calling or platforms like Zoom at least some of the time, while over half, or 59%, say that they use these often. An-

other 57% of respondents use messaging platforms like Slack or Google Chat.

The frequency of virtual meetings has even dubbed the new term "resting Zoom face." However, more than half of those using video con-

ferencing services, or 63%, often are not experiencing "Zoom fatigue." Overall, the Pew Research data reveals that communication services like Zoom and Slack are a sufficient replacement for in-person contact. (foxbusiness.com)

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When it comes to vices during the pandemic, simply put, it's been difficult to say "no." Drinking an extra glass of wine here, eating half a birthday cake in one sitting there — whatever it takes to escape the constant strain of life under lockdown. That seemed reasonable in March 2020, anyway.

But nine months on, when experience has demonstrated that chain-smoking a pack of cigarettes doesn't compensate for human interaction, why do bad habits continue to compel us?

The prolonged traumatic, or "chronic toxic," stress that most people have been experiencing throughout the pandemic makes it more difficult to keep desires in check, and it in turn promotes illogical pleasure-seeking, said Dr. Robert Lustig, a professor emeritus of pediatric endocrinology at the University of California, San

Francisco, and author of "Metabolic." In scientific terms: When brains are flooded with the stress hormone cortisol on a long-term basis, it inhibits the function of the prefrontal cortex, leading to excessive activation of the "reward center" of the brain — triggering the excessive baking, drinking, smoking and shopping that filled the idle hours of 2020.

"Dopamine is the reward neurotransmitter. It is held in check by the prefrontal cortex. When that inhibition is released, the reward center looks for hedonic stimuli," Lustig said. "Those can be chemical — cocaine, heroin, nicotine, alcohol, sugar — or behavioral — shopping, gambling, internet gaming, social media, pornography."

Take the beloved carbohydrate sugar. Early in the pandemic, a baking frenzy swept the country, offering both a relatively accessible quarantine hobby and a constant supply of carbs. Like hand sanitizer and toilet paper, flour and yeast went from lowly super-

market staples to hot-ticket items quickly nabbed from store shelves.

But what exactly about baking makes it so suited for quarantine? Was it the diversion of dough-kneading or something more hedonistic?

While total cookbook sales in the U.S. grew by 15 percent in the first nine months of the year, sales of bread-specific books grew by 145 percent according to NPD Group data. That's 200,000 more bread cookbooks than were sold in 2019. IL

One thing that was widely wanted during the pandemic: alcohol.

Women, in particular, were more susceptible to stress drinking in quarantine. As a group, they experienced decreased job security and increased social

isolation — factors that historically have driven alcohol consumption. In

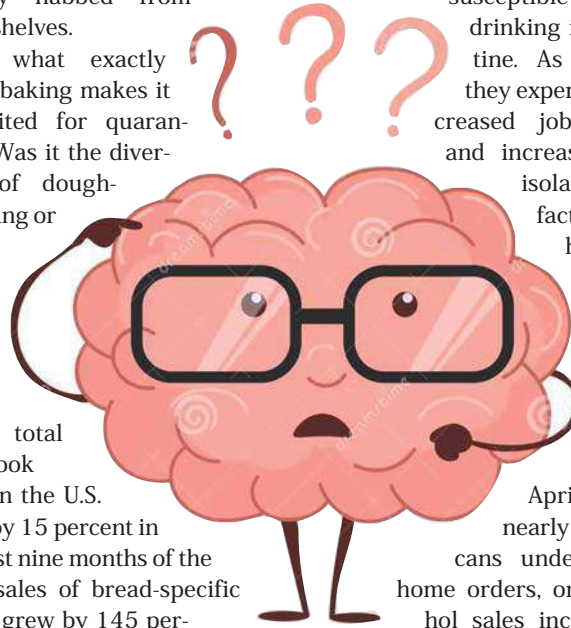
April, with nearly all Americans under stay-at-home orders, online alcohol sales increased by more than 500 percent over the previous year. . 22, 2

A more counterintuitive habit that made a comeback was smoking. Given the coronavirus's effects on the respiratory system,

lighting up a cigarette this year may have seemed unfathomable to some, but sales indicate that the chemical incentive of nicotine remained a draw for many. Overall declining U.S. tobacco sales were curbed slightly in March through October. And it's not just stress that's fueling consumption. Companies attribute higher sales to a hike in disposable income for Americans who got a boost from stimulus payments and spent less money on social activities like dining out.

As Americans coped with pandemic-fueled discretionary spending, it wasn't just Big Tobacco that benefited: Cyber Monday, Nov. 30, the first Monday after Thanksgiving, became the biggest online shopping day in U.S. history, with a grand total of \$10.7 billion in purchases — a number as indicative of the collective brain's search for gratification as any other. And one category that surged notably was self-care.

(Source: nbcnews.com)



(Image source: dreamstime.com)

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US hospitals have had more than 100K coronavirus patients each day over the month

Hospitals around the United States are racing to keep up with surges of Covid-19 patients at numbers they have not seen at any other time in the pandemic.

At least 123,639 people nationwide were in the hospital with coronavirus on last Saturday, marking 32 consecutive days that the number of hospitalizations has exceeded 100,000, according to the Covid Tracking Project.

Cases skyrocketed after the Thanksgiving holiday, and impacts from Christmas and New Year's celebrations are still unfolding. As of Saturday, more than 20.4 million people have been infected with the virus in the US and at least 350,186 people have died, according to data from Johns Hopkins University. And health experts worry what will happen to those numbers if infections continue to spread.

"This is about total collapse of the health care system if we have another spike," said Dr. Brad Spellberg, chief medical officer at the Los Angeles County-University of Southern California Medical Center.

As Americans rang in the new year, almost 11,000 families grieved the new loss of a loved one to Covid-19.

At least 10,901 Covid-19 deaths were reported in the last three days of 2020, according to Johns Hopkins University. That's about 3,633 deaths a day -- more than the number of lives lost in the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the US.

In less than 11 months, Covid-19 has killed more than 349,000 people in the US and another 115,000 Americans could die from the disease over the next month, according to projections by the University of Washington's Institute of Health Metrics and Evaluation

(source: cnn.com)

Coronavirus vaccine has arrived but Americans struggle to sign up

After months of anticipation, millions of doses of the two authorized coronavirus vaccines — made by Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna — are flowing into hospitals and health departments across the nation, putting the end of the pandemic in sight. But Americans trying to access shots are encountering systems that vary widely county to county and that, in many places, are overwhelmed.

Some counties and hospital systems launched reservation websites, only for them to quickly become booked or crash. Others announced appointments only through Facebook, with

slots filling before some residents knew to look. And many have not revealed how the vaccine will be made available to anyone beyond health-care workers and long-term care residents and employees, the focus of the first round of vaccinations.

In one striking image, Florida health departments offering doses on a first-come, first-served basis saw scores of older residents bring lawn chairs and blankets and camp out overnight.

On Sunday, Moncef Slaoui, chief science adviser to Operation Warp Speed, the Trump administration's effort to

expedite development and delivery of vaccines, mostly deflected questions about the lag in administering shots, saying on CBS's "Face the Nation" that his team is available for requests from states for assistance.

We need to improve," he acknowledged. Surgeon General Jerome Adams said vaccine administration was accelerating, with 1.5 million doses given in two days. Speaking on CNN's "State of the Union," Adams said Sunday he's "still optimistic" about the national outlook for defeating the virus, even as only 4 million of the 14 million doses delivered to states have been administered, according to

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention figures.

Federal officials had estimated 20 million doses of the coveted vaccine would be delivered and administered by the end of 2020. Adams pointed to a strain on resources brought on by the nationwide surge in covid-19 cases and by the holidays as possible causes of the slower-than-expected rollout, while President Trump has blamed states.

"I'm telling you that things are changing," Adams said, adding that the administration's coronavirus task force is "working every single day to figure out how we can help the states." (Source: washingtonpost.com)

Covid-19 vaccine's slow rollout could mean more problems

Three weeks into the most ambitious vaccination campaign in modern US history, far fewer people than expected are being immunized against Covid-19, as the process moves slower than officials had projected and has been beset by confusion and disorganization in many states. As a result, the federal government came nowhere close to vaccinating 20 M people by the end of 2020 as it had promised. Of the more than 12 million doses of vaccines from Moderna Inc. and

Pfizer Inc. with BioNTech SE that have been shipped, only 2.8 million have been administered, according to federal figures.

The reported shortfall is due in part to a lag in reporting data using new tools, government officials and health experts said. But as the federal government has left it to states to determine what to do with the vaccines it ships to them, and with some states pushing decision-making to local health departments and hospitals, the process has gone far from smoothly.

Nassau Coronavirus: Daily positivity rate tops 10 percent

Nassau County's daily positivity rate of the coronavirus topped 10 percent on Wednesday — the first time that has happened since the county reopened. It also had one of the largest daily increases in positive cases. According to Nassau County Executive Laura Curran, 1,273 people tested positive for the coronavirus on Wednesday, out of 12,161 tested. That puts the county's positivity rate at 10.5 percent.

It is also one of the largest daily increases in infections since April. Since the pandemic began, there have only been seven days that have seen a larger increase than Dec. 29.

"Nassau County is seeing daily spikes in our COVID-19 hospitalizations and our positivity rates are double what they were only a month ago," Curran said. "Our numbers

continue to move in the wrong direction and the last thing we want is to have our businesses and schools close when we are so close to having large-scale vaccine distribution."

Since the first recorded case of the coronavirus in Nassau County on March 5, there have been 86,306 confirmed cases of the virus in the county. In December alone, there were 25,134 cases confirmed — 29 percent of the total infections. There have been 121 deaths from the virus this month.

According to Curran, there are 664 people in Nassau hospitals with the coronavirus, 66 of which are in the ICU, and 40 on ventilators. "We need to all stick to our commonsense guidance to avoid welcoming the new year with new restrictions," said Curran.

Larry King admitted with COVID-19

Legendary talk show host and former CNN interviewer Larry King has Covid-19, according to a source close to the family.

King, 87, has been hospitalized at Cedars Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles for more than a week, the source said. Due to protocols at the hospital, King's three sons have been unable to visit him, according to the source. King, who has Type 2 diabetes, has confronted a series of medical issues over the years, including several heart attacks and quintuple bypass surgery in 1987. In 2017, King revealed he had been diagnosed with lung cancer and successfully underwent surgery to treat it. He also underwent a procedure in 2019 to address angina. His own medical issues inspired him to start the Larry King Cardiac Foundation, a non-profit aimed at helping those without health insurance afford medical care.

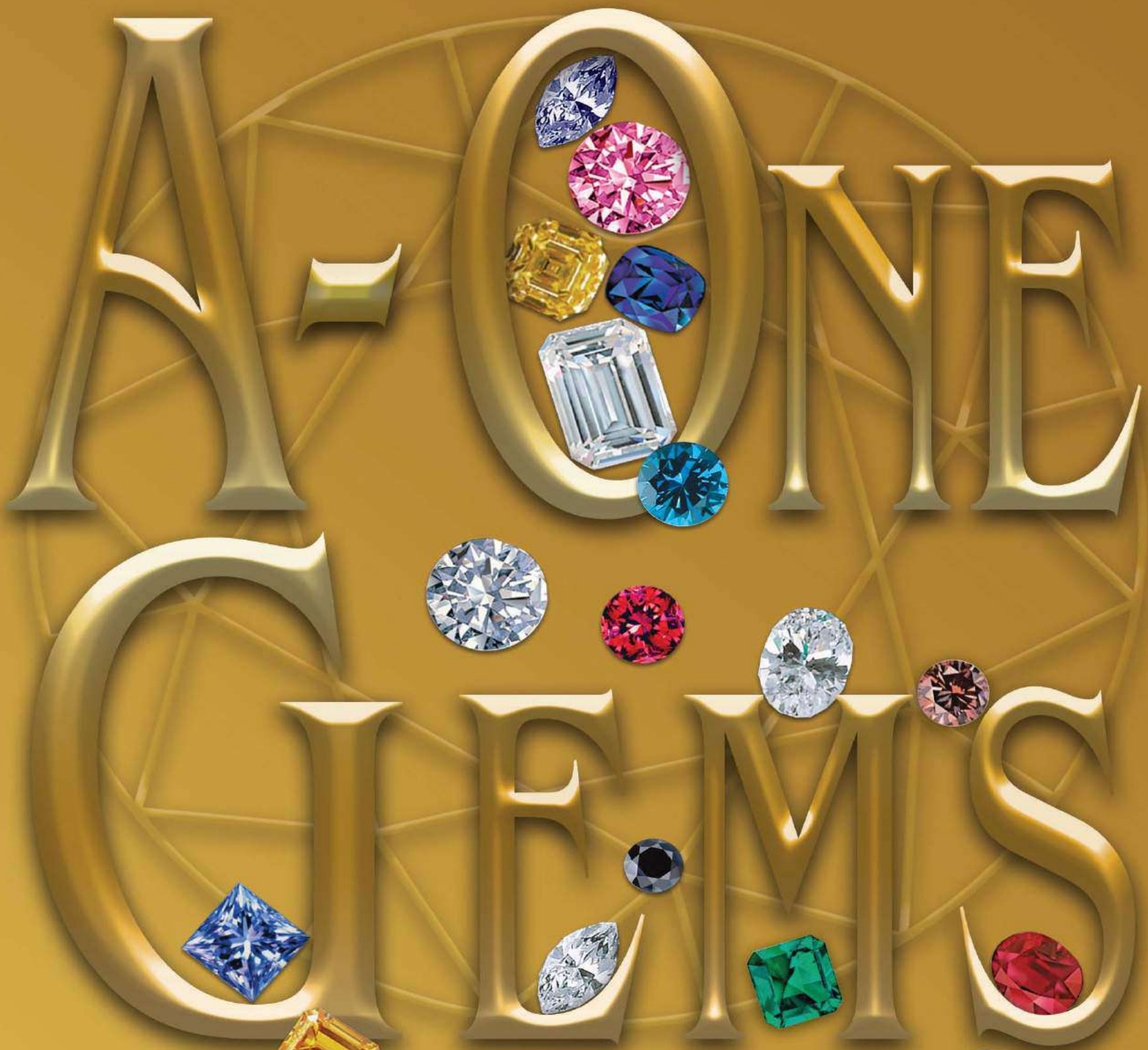
(IMAGE COURTESY: startribune.com)



US vice president-elect Kamala Harris received her first dose of the Covid-19 vaccine on live television on Dec 29 as the incoming Biden administration seeks to boost confidence in the shots. She received her first dose of the Moderna vaccine at the United Medical Center (UMC) in Washington DC. "That was easy!" Harris exclaimed after receiving the shot and thanked the nurse saying that "she barely felt it." She also thanked UMC for serving the community which she called was "often overlooked." "I have now been vaccinated. As Joe [Biden] likes to say there is a big difference between the vaccine and the vaccinations. I want to encourage everyone to get the vaccine. It is relatively painless. It happens really quickly. It is safe," Harris said while addressing reporters after receiving the jab.

(Image courtesy: gulfnews.com)

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Here is the list of the year's biggest social media celebrities.

SUSHANT SINGH RAJPUT



His death played out like loud drama on news TV, and the fallout was direct on social media. Fan clubs took over, venting ire on everyone from his girlfriend Rhea Chakraborty, to her mentor Mahesh Bhatt to Bollywood's nepotism brigade. No one was spared. Sushant must be a rare celebrity who became a bigger social media celebrity after death than he was while he lived.

Biggest celeb sensations on social media in 2020

BTS



(File photos)

With a strong "ARMY" of fans constantly backing them, the South Korean boy band is generally among the biggest topics of discussion on social media. This year was more special as they created history.

The band, comprising RM, Jin, Jimin, V, Suga and Jungkook, topped the Billboard Hot 100 chart with "Dynamite". It is their first single sung entirely in English:

Their new single "Life goes on" also bagged the top spot of the Billboard Hot 100.

CHRIS EVANS

In September, the "Captain America" star posted an explicit photo by mistake. Even though it was quickly deleted, it got many reactions on social media. He didn't immediately address it, but days later he tweeted: "Now that I

have your attention.VOTE Nov 3rd!" That again, became a popular tweet. It got about 1.2 million likes.

LETITIA WRIGHT

Earlier this month, the "Black Panther" star shared a post on Covid-19 vaccine. The video tweeted by her featured host Tomi Arayomi expressing scepticism about vaccines in general and specifically the one for the coronavirus. Netizens soon criticised her for sharing the video. She went on to respond to many fan messages. But soon, she deleted her Instagram and Twitter accounts.

ELLIOT PAGE

The "Juno" star, formerly known as Ellen Page, recently came out as transgender and introduced himself as Elliot Page. The tweet got 1.8 million likes, and the news was received warmly by many. Some

heaped praise on him for being an "inspiration to countless trans and non-binary people

CHADWICK BOSEMAN

The "Black Panther" star died in August after silently fighting colon cancer. The final tweet, posted on his verified account, announcing his demise got as many as 7.5 million likes. Many left RIP messages including his "Avengers" co-star Mark Ruffalo, who commented: "It was the highest honor getting to work with you and getting to know you. What a generous and sincere human being.



Pandemic led people explore OTT content like never before



(File photos)

With cinema halls facing closure owing to lockdown, OTT platforms became the primary source of entertainment. While the big screen will not go away, streaming services have sure come of age and redefined for good how we perceive entertainment from now on.

Take a look at top trends that created ripples in the OTT space.

Anthologies

The year started with the spooky anthology Ghost Stories, and the trend of stringing several stories together continued all through the year. Some of the noteworthy anthologies include, Ludo, Unpaused and Paava Kadhaigal.

Direct to service releases

With the cinemas shutting down due to the coronavirus pandemic, movies ditched the traditional release route for the digital world. The Amitabh Bachchan and Ayushmann Khurrana-starrer Gulabo Sitabo started the trend, which continues to gain steam.

Female-driven stories

Aarya, Gunjan Saxena: The Kargil Girl, Bulbbul, Bhaag Beanie Bhaag, Guilty, Four More Shots Please!, Hundred, Choked, Raat Akeli Hai -- the list only keeps growing. Female-led narratives are the trend all over in the world of entertainment, and the OTT

space has been particularly susceptible to the trend.

Docu-dramas

There was a dose of reality in the diverse fiction world of the streaming services, thanks to documentary films and series. The topics were varied -- from kabaddi to sneak peek into the lives of Bollywood wives.

Regional films and shows

Amid lockdown, regional content found a new and wide audience on the OTT platforms in India, from Telugu, Tamil, Kannada to Malayalam. Regional cinema from the South, especially saw good response in the digital space.



Top shows and movies in 2020

Scam 1992: The Harshad Mehta Story

Filmmaker Hansal Mehta captured the story of one of the biggest financial scams in the Indian stock market. The financial thriller emerged as a winner, making Gujarati actor Pratik Gandhi, who essayed the role of Harshad Mehta, an overnight star.

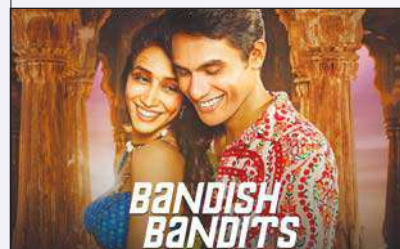
Fabulous Lives Of Bollywood Wives

The web series chronicles the lives of popular star wives such as Maheep Kapoor, Neelam Kothari, Seema Khan and Bhavana Pandey. It is backed by Johar's Dharmatic Entertainment, the digital arm of Dharma Production.

Bad Boy Billionaires: India

The docuseries explores the greed, fraud and corruption that built, and ultimately brought down, the most infamous tycoons in India. It is available on Netflix.

Bandish Bandits



The musical show, which launched Ritwik Bhowmik and Shreya Chaudhry, was a hit. It follows the story of two lovers from different musical backgrounds. The show, streaming on Amazon Prime Video, also features Naseeruddin Shah, Atul Kulkarni, Sheeba Chaddha, Rajesh Tailang and Kunaal Roy Kapur.

Dil Bechara

Sushant Singh Rajput's last film premiered on the Disney+ Hotstar in July, and got a lot of attention. It was the official remake of 2014 Hollywood romantic drama "The Fault in our Stars". Dil Bechara emerged as the top movie in the first week of release on an OTT platform, when it comes to the content viewed on smartphones.

Extraction

The film may have drawn plenty of criticism as an entertainer, but it was truly a lavish crossover effort, between talents of Hollywood and Bollywood. Chris Hemsworth had a blockbuster digital debut as an actor with "Extraction". The film was majorly shot in India.

Paatal Lok

Actress Anushka Sharma's debut web production Paatal Lok opened to rave reviews. The show is about a police officer Hathiram who is on the lookout for four criminals -- serial killer Vishal "Hathoda" Tyagi (Abhishek Banerjee), Tope "Chaaku" Singh (Jagjeet Sandhu), Kabir M. (Asif Khan), and Mary "Cheeni" Lyngdoh (Mairembam Ronaldo Singh).



(File photos)



Incredible ancient mandirs of India

These magnificent Hindu religious shrines have withstood vagaries of nature and attacks by foreign rulers over the centuries. Today they stand as testament to ingenuity of Indian temple architecture as much as the faith of millions.



The very fascinating 7th century temple complex of Bhutanatha in Badami (Karnataka) is a cluster of sandstone shrines dedicated to Lord Shiv. The various shrines and mandapas reflect architectural forms from different periods.

(Image courtesy: Vedic Temples/Facebook)

Vettuvan Koil in Kalugumalai, a panchayat town in Thoothukudi district in the South Indian state of Tamil Nadu, is dedicated to God Shiv. Constructed in the Pandyan style of architecture and rock cut, the unfinished temple is believed to have been built during the 8th century. (Image courtesy: Vedic Temples/Facebook)



Meenakshi Amman Mandir is a historic Hindu mandir located in the temple city of Madurai Tamil Nadu. It is dedicated to Meenakshi, a form of Goddess Parvati, and her consort, Sundareshwar, a form of Lord Shiv. [The temple finds its mention in 6th century CE texts.

(Image courtesy: oyorooms.com)



The 1000 pillar hall of Meenakshi Amman Temple in Madurai, Tamil Nadu. (Image courtesy: pinterest)



Group of Monuments at Mahabalipuram were built during the rule of the Pallava dynasty during the late sixth century. The Mahishasuramardini cave is found at the southern end of the site (known locally as Yamapuri). Excavated on the eastern scarp of a boulder on the main Mamallapuram hill, above it are the ruins of the Olakkannesvara temple. (Image courtesy: Vedic Temples/Facebook)



The UNESCO World Heritage site of Modhera Sun Temple in Gujarat was made by King Bhima I of the Chalukya dynasty in the early 11th century. The temple is designed in such a way that during every equinox, the first ray of the rising sun would fall on a diamond placed on the head of the Sun God. This would also light up the shrine with a golden glow. (Image courtesy: outlookindia.com)



One of the 24 ornately carved monolithic wheels which also acts as Sun dial at the 13th century CE, Konark Surya Mandir, Orissa. (Image courtesy: Vedic Temples/Facebook)

The stone chariot at Vittala temple in Hampi, Karnataka. It is among 1600 surviving remains of the last great Hindu kingdoms in South India. Referred to as the Group of Monuments at Hampi, UNESCO World Heritage Site, it continues to be an important religious center. (Image courtesy: Wikimedia Commons).





By Parveen Chopra

Even Covid could not stop the Shirdi Sai temple from coming up in Hicksville, NY. Dr Dattatreya Nori, who has already established two Sai temples in Baldwin and in New Jersey, told The South Asian Times, "We acquired the property on Old Country Road in late 2019. In the six Covid months, March to August, we did not stop even one day--we were renovating, constructing and the mandir is open for devotees now."

The Sai Baba murti and all the deities were consecrated as per the Vedic traditions by five Vedic scholars. The priests are highly educated, conversant in Veda chanting and devoted to Baba. The darbar hall and its extension into the backyard under the awning can accommodate 200 people. Right now, the corona safety rules are followed.

"The devotees who are visiting this mandir feel so much vibration and Baba's presence. My understanding is that without his bless-

Shirdi Sai mandir open for worship in Hicksville



Devotees have already started visiting the Hicksville temple and follow the corona safety rules.

a beautiful tree like in Shirdi," says Dr Nori.

The Hicksville temple is actually the fulfilment of entreaties from devotees from Suffolk and parts of Nassau county to Dr Nori, "Look, reaching Baldwin is taking us more



The Sai Baba murti, other deities and Nava Graha (pictured) were consecrated as per the highest Vedic traditions by five Vedic scholars.

Highlights of Hicksville Mandir

Shirdi Baba Sannidhi
Carved by the same family that carved the idol in Shirdi in India

Dwarakamai sannidhi

Gurusthan sannidhi

Nava Graha sannidhi

Radha Krishna sannidhi and Ganesh, Shiva, Durga ma, Ram parivar, Hanuman, Dattatreya sannidhis

2 resident priests: brothers Srinath Sarma and Mahadev Sarma, both Vedic scholars

Location: 57-59 West Old Country Road, Hicksville, NY

Timing during Covid: 10-12 am and 5-8 pm daily

Phone 914 320 5925 or 516 727 0339

Website: SaiMandirusa.org

than an hour. We come for shopping to Hicksville in any case, so please look for something here."

Meanwhile, the Baldwin mandir has also been completely renovated after 20 years.

ing nothing moves.

Baba gave me a vision of how

this should be. We now also have

Dwarka Mai and Gurusthan under



Dr Dattatreya Nori is a role model for practicing and promoting Shirdi Sai Baba's teachings. He does not take credit for raising 3 Sai temples in New York and New Jersey -- "it is all Baba's vision and blessing". (Photos: Provided)

Dr Dattatreya Nori recalls that in the mid-1960s when he was a medical student in Kurnool, Andhra Pradesh, the very first temple in South India for Baba came up there on the banks of the river Tungbhadra. "Whenever I found time, I used to go there and pray and would get much peace of mind. Whatever you wished would also happen, a big thing for a medical student like me. Thus, I got attached to Baba. The more I read about his life story (he left his mortal coil in 1918), the more attached I became."

Dr Nori explains Baba's teachings are a summary of our religious scriptures, are simple and apply to everyone of every religion, caste, and creed. Sai Baba did not preach or prescribe elaborate rituals. He says just have shraddha (faith in God/devotion) and suburi

How Dr Nori came to do Baba's bidding

(patience) and you can lead a peaceful life. He would celebrate Indian festivals as well as Muslim festivals. Universal love and universal peace make Baba's teaching all-inclusive.

"And people get attracted to him and his philosophy," says Dr Nori. "Baba led a simple life," Dr Nori continues. "He possessed only one tin utensil, with which he would go for bhiksha before returning to the dilapidated mosque which he renovated with his own hands. First he would offer the food to animals. He did not wear a crown or garlands. We now see him decorated, that makes us feel good." "I tell my devotee friends," continues Dr Nori, "have you seen any church, where Hindus go and pray? No. Any mosque where Hindus or Christians go and pray? No. Sai mandir is where Christians come, Muslims come, Hindus come. Religions should not be an issue. It is bhakti, devotion -- this was promoted by Baba without even preaching. Just being in his presence makes you feel tranquil."

So, when Dr Nori came to America, he wanted to build a mandir to him, but it took him a long time because of zoning/parking, etc rules. The story of how he finally opened America's very first Sai mandir in 2001 is no less than a miracle.

Recalls Dr Nori, "I looked for a place for 10 years in New Jersey and New York without luck because the requirements were not met.

So, one Thursday, I challenged Baba in my morning prayer, 'I am giving up. Maybe I am not the right person to build your mandir, choose someone else. I am resigning from this project.'" When the celebrated and world renowned oncologist went to work that day, a cancer patient he had cured came for a follow up. She turned out to be the owner of a real estate company. Remembers Dr Nori, "I told her I was looking for a place -- that should have a big hall for prayers, and some rooms to do other things like cook and serve prasadam, and municipal parking. An hour later, she called me and suggested this place in Baldwin -- Knights of Columbus had put it on sale. I rushed there, looked at it, and signed the contract, all on the same Thursday, Baba's day. After that everything fell into place -- the design, construction, finding photos. So many miracles happened in that mandir, all because baba wanted to be there." As it was the first Sai mandir in America, devotees started coming from New Jersey, Delaware, Connecticut, Boston and even Washington DC. Around 2007, many devotees started asking Dr Nori, "It takes us three hours plus to come to Baldwin. Could you consider building another mandir in New Jersey." That led Dr Nori to find another Knights of Columbus building in Iselin -- on Oak Tree Road, hub of Indian shopping. The Shirdi Sai Cultural & Community Center there was

opened in 2008. "It is a huge project and has become like a pilgrimage place," asserts Dr Nori. The temple undertakes many community welfare activities and promotes Baba's primary principle of inter-religious harmony and universal brotherhood.

Dr Nori says that his three temples have only an informal association with the Shirdi Sai Sansthan, which runs in Shirdi, Maharashtra, what has become one of the world's most visited pilgrimage places. He adds, "I am also the chief scientific adviser for all Shirdi hospitals including the 1,000 bed hospitals in Ahmednagar and Loni. The Shirdi Board of Trustees are always supportive of our mandirs."

Dr Nori insists that he takes no pride in the three temples raised by the Nori Foundation USA Inc, started by him and his wife -- "because without Baba's vision and blessing I could not have done it."

As an ardent devotee of Shirdi Sai Baba, Dr Nori stands as a role model for practicing Sai Baba's teachings and principles. For his professional excellence in oncology, Dr Nori was awarded the Padma Shri by the Indian government in 2015. He also received Ellis Island Medal of Honor in 2014 for his exemplary and outstanding qualities in both personal and professional life. In 2018, the Indian Cancer Congress presented him with the 'Living Legend of Oncology' Award.



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By Melvin Durai

The coronavirus pandemic has forced many of us to wear masks — mostly in public but sometimes even at home. While some people are wearing masks reluctantly, like they are accommodating an annoying uncle temporarily in their homes, others have accepted and embraced masks, making that uncle feel so welcome and comfortable, he's beginning to wonder if he should ever leave.

Masks have become a fashion accessory for many people, just like ties, belts, scarves and handbags. Many women have an assortment of masks in their wardrobes, and some even have a mask drawer. Whether they have just a few masks or a few dozen, they try to match their masks with the rest of their ensemble. And they enjoy giving and receiving compliments on masks.

Roger: "Lovely mask, Rani. Same pattern as your dress!"

Rani: "I love your mask too, Roger. Same pattern as your freckles!"

Whether you've embraced masks or reluctantly wear them, the important thing is that you're doing your part to protect yourself and others, at least until we all get vaccinated. Unfortunately, there are still many people who refuse to wear masks or cover their faces in other ways. Some do this because they believe that face coverings are ineffective against the virus. Others just want to assert their freedom to do whatever they want. "If I die, I die," they say, forgetting that they are not only putting other people at risk, they're also neglecting to do something every mask-averse person should do: arrange their own funerals.

Scientific studies indicate that wearing a mask reduces your risk of getting or spreading the virus by about 70 percent. To put that in perspective, wearing a seat belt reduces your risk of getting killed in a car accident by 45 percent, and wearing an argyle sweater reduces your risk of getting picked up at a party by 65 percent.

But if the health benefits of wearing a mask aren't convincing

enough, you may want to consider all the other positives. One of the biggest benefits is the anonymity a mask gives you, as Alyson Krueger explained in a recent New York Times article entitled "Cases of Mask-taken Identity."

Krueger shared the story of a 20-

year-old Los Angeles woman who spotted her ex-boyfriend in a grocery store and started to panic. But the man walked right past her, failing to recognize her because of her mask. What could have been an awkward moment turned into a mo-

ment of relief. Thanks to the masks, this young woman—and many others—won't complain when burkas become a fashion craze in the West.

Let's face it: there's a long list of people we'd like to avoid in public places, not just ex-boyfriends or ex-girlfriends, but also ex-spouses and

us much, but pulling away from some people is like walking out of church while the minister is speaking, right in the middle of our own wedding. This is where the mask is vital: it saves you from long conversations in the supermarket that don't involve your cellphone and your wife. Even if an acquaintance recognizes you, you can alter your voice and say, "Sorry, I think you have mask-taken me for someone else."

For people who suffer from social anxiety, the masks are a godsend. They're also a welcome accessory for people who don't like to smile at everyone. People with straight teeth may miss the opportunity to flash their perfect smiles, but many others are relieved that they can hide the fact that they didn't help pay for their dentist's children to go to college. The masks are a great equalizer: they make homely people less homely and attractive people less attractive. A typical supermarket is now full of average-looking people, although some have great taste in masks.

Melvin Durai is an India-born, North America-based writer and humorist, author of the humorous novel "Bala Takes the Plunge."



ex-bosses, in-laws and ex-in-laws, people to whom we owe money, and people who may try to borrow from us. There's also a list of people we don't mind running into, as long as they don't talk our ears off. A one-minute encounter won't delay

ex-bosses, in-laws and ex-in-laws, people to whom we owe money, and people who may try to borrow from us. There's also a list of people we don't mind running into, as long as they don't talk our ears off. A one-minute encounter won't delay

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PERSON OF THE YEAR 2020



HEARTIEST CONGRATULATIONS TO

Mr. Ravi Bhooplapur



With best Compliments from

Heeta, Anita and Harish Thakkar



By **Dev Banad Viswanath, Esq.**

The world lost a tremendous soul in the last weekend of 2020: Mr Michael Chanrai Phulwani, Attorney-At-Law. He was a very well respected and knowledgeable US Immigration and Consular attorney as well as an extremely successful and savvy businessman. Most importantly, he was a great mentor and dear friend. In many ways, he was my professional father and certainly taught me all I know related to Consulates and Visa Processing.

I met Mr Phulwani around 1980. I a first, he had started 'Immigration & You' on Vision of Asia, the Indian TV program started by my parents. In India, was a practicing attorney working for the National Rail Company of India. After coming to the US and shortly after working in a few other areas of law, he settled

down and thrived in US immigration. When I met him, I knew his as "Phulwani Uncle" or "Mr. Phulwani". The latter moniker I came to use for him throughout the 40+ years I have had the privilege of knowing him.

To be around Mr. Phulwani was to be around the presence of a mind that was constantly working, continuously thinking of something of importance and always willing to share his knowledge. He may not have always agreed with you, but he was always willing to hear your thoughts. He would always say that no one knows every thing and everyone can learn something.

Mr Phulwani knew Bollywood, and the Bombay film industry knew Phulwaniji! Any time they had a film shoot, or scouting to be done, or a Bollywood show tour in America, it was him they would reach out to for assistance. The Kapoor family, Yash Chopra, Karan Johar all knew the attorney to call. His record and reputation for getting famous people visas was well known and well documented. He used his decades of experience, un-



derstanding of Immigration laws and deeply rooted connections that he developed over the years to make sure the job would get done!

He was an advocate for Immigration issues in the United States. It was not uncommon for him to write letters to US Senators and Congress people who were involved with committees related to Immigration and to communicate his thoughts on positions to our national and local chapters of the American Immigration Lawyers Association). He

was also a mentor, guiding hundreds of practitioners on consular practice issues. He was also a co-author of the Chapters on the US consulate and embassies in Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh for many years, bringing useful information to thousands of attorneys and legal staff on how the consular posts functioned and best practices.

He also was the reason for thousands of South Asians and Indo-Caribbeans to be able to come to America and establish it as their home. He utilized his vast knowledge of Immigration laws to help people even in the most complex cases.

But, most importantly, he was my dear friend, as he was for so many. I am not special in finding a bond with Michael Phulwani, but I would like to believe that what we shared was special nonetheless. We talked almost every day and texted each other even more. I had dinners with him regularly and discuss the immigration issues and political matters of the day. He was a great friend, guide, mentor and father figure to me. He always had wisdom and advice to offer and I was grateful for it and I still am. For all his fame, renown and success in life, I will always be grateful for his smile and his blessings.

Dev Banad Viswanath is the Principal Attorney of The Banad Law Offices PC in the United States, and Banad Immigration in India for which Attorney Michael Phulwani had been affiliated as Of Counsel. With Offices in Manhattan, Queens, Bangalore, and Mumbai, the firm is able to assist clients with all facets of the immigration process, including Employment Visas, Consular Visa Assistance, Student Visas, Removal & Deportation, US Citizenship and Green Card Applications based on Family or Employment.



**HEARTIEST CONGRATULATIONS TO
Mr. Ravi Bhooplapur**

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Best of Mahendra Shah

Mahendra Shah has been drawing cartoons every week for years for The South Asian Times. His resource is events here in America or back home in India. But the bitter-sweet life of Indian Americans is a favorite subject matter of the Pennsylvania based Mr Shah. Here is a selection of his best cartoons from the year corona-marred 2020.



15 yr Income
Teacher 25Lac
Doctor 50Lac
Engineer 45Lac
IAS Officer 70Lac
Baba Ramdev 1177Cr
Satya SaiBaba 4000Cr

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These are the world's best facial masks, which not only keep coronavirus at bay, but also save you from evil intentioned ones from 20 yards away!

Nowadays everyone uses paperless bookkeeping and accounting books and worship on the computer screens. Unfortunately, the screen is left with unerasable watermarks of red colors!

Election was rigged!

The cartoonist has to be prepared. As soon the result of the election is out, he just has to fill in the losing candidate's face to complete the cartoon!

I need real, real deep cleaning before moving to White House.

It's not going to be an overnight job for sure sir, you talking about four years of mess!

Joe तुम को हो पसंद वोही बात कहेंगे तुम दिज को अगर रात कठो, रात कठेंगे!

Mahendra Shah is an architect by education, entrepreneur by profession, artist and humorist, cartoonist and writer by hobby. Hailing from Gujarat, he lives in Pittsburgh, PN.

Glad I had white hair...
In Kamala's Asian black hair,
fly would have not been visible!

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THAT A FLY LANDS ON YOUR HEAD DURING THE DEBATE.

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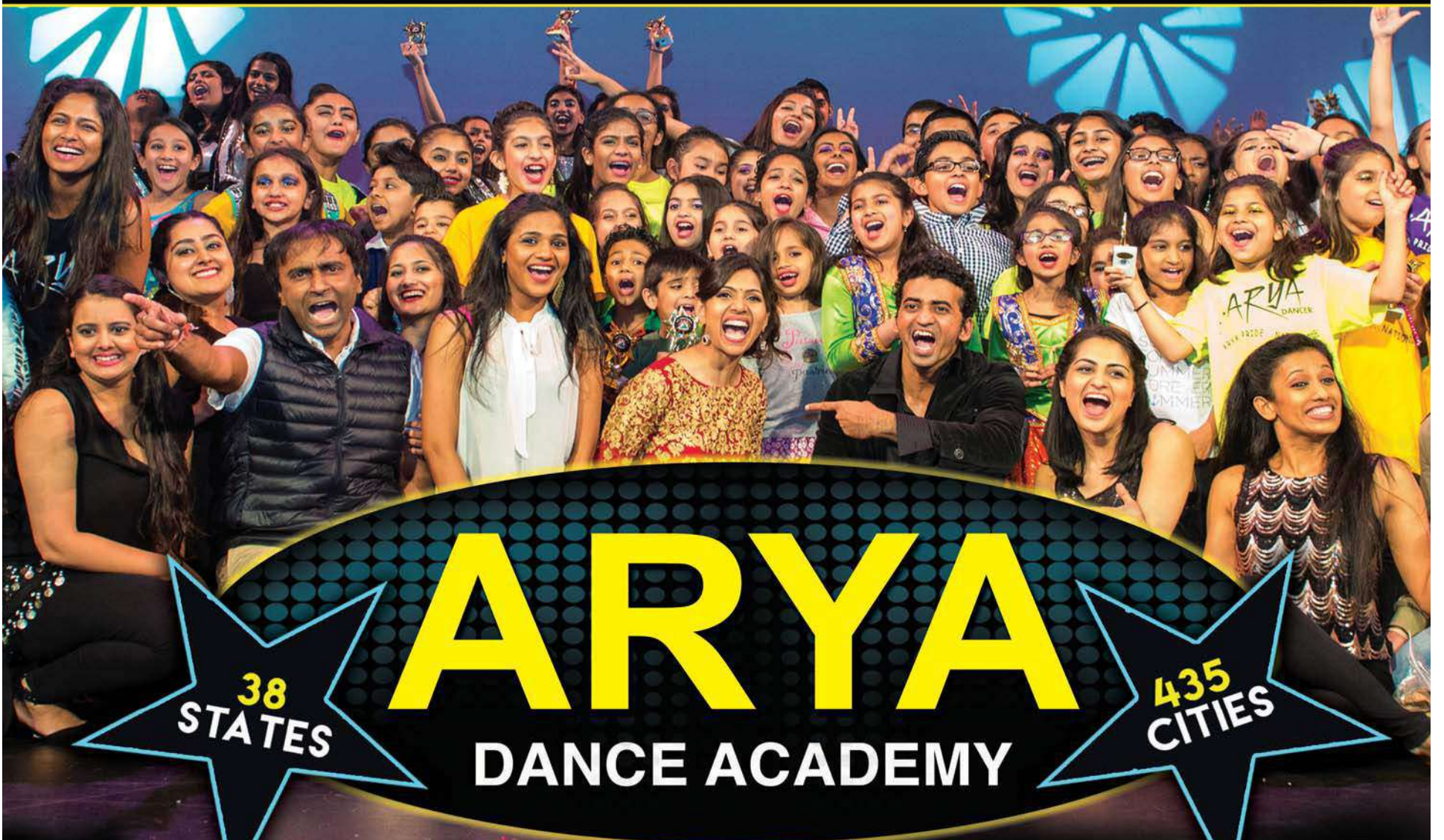
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**January 9, 2021**

Ruled by number 9 and the planet Mars, you are active, courageous, dashing, enthusiastic and highly diplomatic person. You are very cheerful and pleasant person and possess an excellent sense of humour. You dislike office politics, arguments and confrontation, but you need to check your tendency to behave jealous, introvert and selfish at times. Taking part in debates and interesting conversations will help improve your intellectual mind. Matrimonial alliances for some, while others will find romance to keep them going. This year the stars will shine brightly bringing success and prosperity on every venture you undertake. Wonderful period to seek favors and establish new contacts. Your imaginative powers will stretch beyond what they generally do and bring you addition gains and rewards. Children will bring happy news later in the year. The month of October, December, February and May will be eventful months.

January 10, 2021

Ruled by number 1 and the planet Sun, you are independent, intelligent, sensitive, honest, imaginative and highly simple person. You are highly diplomatic and your strong



By Dr PremKumar Sharma

asset is your speech, which put to proper use brings you immense gains. You are hardworking, talented, but you need to check your tendencies to behave extravagant and jealous at times.

You will also improve your relationship with important people during this period. Children will win laurels at school and overachieve the expectations of their parents. Family members will gather around you providing you with love and affection. This year your energy will be high and you will feel strong enough to face any challenge. Middle of the year seems exceptionally good for those who are looking for a change in their career, as they will receive an excellent job offer. Frequent and fruitful journeys will be undertaken. The months of November, April, July and October will be highly eventful.

January 11, 2021

Ruled by number 2 and the Moon, you are highly imaginative, warm-hearted, friendly and hard-working person. You are helpful and sincere to your friends and enjoy enormous respect in your group, but you need to check your tendency to behave rigid, extravagant and jealous at times.

New romance for some as others get involved in a matrimonial wedlock. Distant pilgrimage is certain later in the year. Don't be too friendly with strangers and avoid disclosing your plans, as chances of deceit are very strong. Be extra

careful while lending money and take extra care of your jewelry, precious gifts and items. This year new plans and projects will be alluring but instant gains might not be possible. Great period for consultants and brokers. Investment is definitely recommended but sudden losses due to thoughtless decisions cannot be ruled out. The months of October, February and August will be important.

January 12, 2021

Ruled by number 3, and the planet Jupiter, you are practical, dignified, philosophical, methodical and systematic person. You are a very social person who likes to make new friends and visit new and interesting places. You are a born leader and you love to stay ahead of others, but you lose out on many good opportunities due to your tendency to behave stubborn and moody at times.

An infatuation within the group will keep you in high spirits for some time but it will not be long lasting. The months of October, December, March and August will prove to be highly significant. This year you will slowly but gradually climb the ladder of success. Businessmen will invest in more profitable ventures. Promising contacts will build through social get-togethers and traveling. Your spouse will be quite cooperative and shower her full love and affection upon you despite your erratic behavior at times.

January 13, 2021

Influenced by number 4 and the planet Uranus, you are smart, confident, energetic, systematic, reliable and a studious person. Your efficiency and determination makes you achieve the maximum and stay ahead of others. You always hold position of immense importance and responsibility, but you need to control your tendency to behave stubborn, jealous and vindictive at times. Your health will be normal but health of a family member may become reason for stress and anxiety. A distant journey preferably overseas brings financial benefits and opportunity to meet eminent and influential people. This is the perfect time to put in maximum efforts to reap long-term rewards. Your family members will be supportive and assist you in making important decisions. Pending jobs and projects will get completed to your satisfaction. The month of November, March, May and July will prove to be eventful.

January 14, 2021

Ruled by number 5 and the planet Mercury, you are active, intelligent, sensible, systematic and highly courageous person. You enjoy each and every day of your life to its best and possess talents to become a thinker, a philosopher or a writer, but you need to control your tendency to behave restless and stubborn at times.

A sudden influence of a person from the opposite sex will give a

new and interesting twist to your life. Do not share your business secrets with colleagues or casual associates. Avoid lending and borrowing money. The coming year brings wonderful business opportunities for you. Finances improve through gains from investments and ancestral property. Long pending legal disputes will finally be sorted out. Religious ceremonies and functions will be performed quite frequently. The months of December, February, June and August will prove to be highly productive.

January 15, 2021

Ruled by number 6 and the planet Venus, you are energetic, smart, attractive, accommodating, diplomatic & highly practical person. You are smart and talented, but you need to control your tendency to behave stubborn, arrogant and extravagant at times. Benefits in cash and kind will accrue later in the year. New romance will develop through social activities. Relationship with your spouse will be healthy and highly cordial. Some tension and anxiety due to health of your parents cannot be ruled out. This year try to stay away from business partnerships or any new joint ventures. Partnerships will be very alluring but definitely not recommended for the first six months. You need to be extra cautious before making any financial commitments or signing new contracts. The months of January, March and September will be significant.

STARS FORETELL: JANUARY 9-15, 2021

ARIES: You are likely to add to your reputation on the professional front by volunteering for something challenging. Getting into a better salary grade is possible for some. You will be successful in getting something you wanted on the academic front. Your active lifestyle will ensure that you remain fit and energetic. A trip is in the offing, so pack your bags and enjoy.



TAURUS: Getting deeply involved with someone on the romantic front cannot be ruled out for some. Shifting to a better accommodation is indicated for some. Office politics threaten to get the better of you, so remain guarded. Things may go on a downswing on the academic front and get you all tensed up. Keep your financial position under wraps.



GEMINI: You will be able to impress all and sundry on the professional front. Performing well on the academic front is a foregone conclusion. Your cost cutting measures are likely to benefit you a lot. Maintaining a balanced diet may begin to show on your body earlier than expected. Disagreements and arguments threaten to spoil the domestic atmosphere.



CANCER: Professional excellence is likely to keep you on the forefront at work. You are likely to get the better of someone who is envious of your success. Financially, you will remain comfortable and even take a chance to splurge. An active lifestyle adopted by you will suit you perfectly in remaining fit. Hectic activities on the social front may upset your personal schedule.



LEO : The only way to remain financially sound is by being judicious in your spending. Adopting a diet that suits your lifestyle promises to keep you fit. Backlog may need to be cleared at work quickly in order to catch up with the current issues on the professional front. Patience will be required on the academic front to choose the best options.



VIRGO: You will manage to remain financially sound by being judicious in your spending. Adopting a diet that suits your lifestyle promises to keep you fit as a fiddle. Backlog may need to be cleared at work quickly in order to catch up with the current issues on the professional front. Patience will be required on the academic front to choose the best options.



LIBRA: Lagging behind in something that is important may make you burn the midnight oil. You may get your chance to enjoy the revelry in a social event. Lover may have reservations regarding spending time in seclusion, but your will is likely to prevail! An interesting individual is likely to keep you entertained.



SCORPIO: You will get a chance to tap your potential on the professional front and impress those who matter. A social event may find you in your element and promises to make you ever so popular! Money can be expected as gift. A better pay package is assured for those switching jobs. You are certain to attract someone on the romantic front.



SAGITTARIUS: You are likely to make your mark on the academic front. Developing better understanding with someone who is now associated with you will be most beneficial. Someone from the opposite camp is likely to get enamored by your personality and charisma. Inculcate more activity in your life to remain fit.



CAPRICORN: Efforts to keep a step ahead of rivals on the professional front will be successful. Impressing those who matter at work will not be difficult. Judicious spending will help you save much on the financial front. You may be much sought after in a marriage or social function. Keeping all ailments at bay may become your mantra and ensure total fitness.



AQUARIUS : Practical knowledge gained by hands on experience at work will come in handy. Good grades can be expected by those awaiting result on the academic front. Home remedy or alternate medicine will help you in getting rid of an ailment. Getting to spend less time with family may frustrate you, but you will manage to cope with it.



PISCES: Your fertile mind is likely to throw up some excellent ideas that promise to put you in a special category on the professional front. You may be exempted from spending money on something you were dreading. Much hustle and bustle can be expected on the social front to your delight! A relationship that you are terming as romance may only be infatuation.





By Dr Prem Kumar Sharma

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2021- HIGH HOPES FOR A GOOD YEAR FOR ALL



ARIES: You can look forward to a successful year in career and finance. You will make steady progress in matters of interpersonal relationships and health.

You can explore new areas of operation and slowly capture large share in an untapped area. Laurels and accolades received by you for good work on professional front will motivate and encourage you to work harder. Colleagues and subordinates will be supportive of your news plans and ventures in the second quarter. You will need to be careful about your new associations as they may not bode well for the future. If you are fancy free you may get to meet an interesting person in a family gathering. Home and family life begins to settle down after a phase of turbulence and discord in the first quarter. Living together in a joint family will prove heartening, more so when go on vacations together. A trip to the mountains with friends, after much delay, may materialize in the last quarter. You find yourself in the spotlight when your help and contributions are publicly acknowledged every relationship.

Lucky Number: 5 Lucky Colour: Turquoise



TAURUS: The next twelve months are most favorable for students and they make remarkable progress in their career. Your work and dedication is likely to bring you rewards and recognition this year. It's high time to understand your body and at the same time avoid the food that does not go well with to keep ailments at bay. Taking up yoga and meditation would help in keeping in shape and will improve mental agility. There are strong chances of an old friendship turning into a life-long bond in the third quarter; it will fill your life with happiness. Your charm and wit will make you the centre of attraction in social gathering, bringing many suitors for the fancy-free. Home and family life will be peaceful. Travelling overseas with your friends would be an experience full of spark that will enlighten your imagination. Family will be opposed to your solo trip, but you will be able to convince the after a compromise. Make sure you don't miss the opportunities coming your way to associate yourself with religious functions.

Lucky Number: 2 Lucky Color: Indigo



Gemini: You will have successful financial run in the year 2021 and you will begin your new career on a strong note. Interpersonal ties will also strengthen during this period. Investments made in past will start to yield handsome returns from the third quarter, strengthening your financial position. The employed will feel settled in their job and can look forward to further growth in the current organization. Positive thinking will give the strength to handle any pressurized situation without any difficulty on the professional front. Young married couples will embark on a golden period of un-

derstanding and care of their marital life. You may organize a religious ceremony or function at home for your kin, bringing the entire family together in the second quarter. You will need to take parents into confidence regarding your career ambitions as they may have apprehensions over it. Minor preparations made before you travel overseas will make your trip a lot smoother. Personal efforts would not improve relationships but would also lay a strong foundation for future.

Lucky Number: 1 Lucky Color: Red



Cancer: You will enjoy a favorable period on both family and financial front and part efforts start yielding positive returns in the year 2021. Youngsters will look to up their up fitness game and they enjoy peak physical fitness. Business people will be able to expand their reach with new partnerships. Your efforts and dedications is likely to be rewarded with a promotion to higher office, with more responsibilities and freedom. Romance may take a beating as minor difference crop up in romantic ties; a little understanding and compromise will the key to resolve them. The younger ones in the family will bring honor and pride for family with their remarkable achievements. Travelling on short notice will bring pleasure much more than your expectations. Avoid investment in real estate.

Lucky Number: 8 Lucky Color: Light Grey



Leo: You can look forward to a progressive year with substantial growth in your business and enterprise. Career-wise also the year promises to fulfill a lot of your aspirations. Your commitment and dedication to regular exercise and balanced diet will help you get closer to your dream physique. Business people will succeed in amalgamating innovation and cutting edge technology into their existing enterprise. Promotion is likely to make you vulnerable, as people are watching you closely, but you will come out with flying colors. You will need to spend more time at home with the family to maintain cordiality and harmony. A long-pending trip to a religious place may materialize. A change of house is foreseen and the move will bring much peace and prosperity into your household. Investing abroad may bring some hassles on legal ground, but you will emerge successful.

Lucky Number: 9 Lucky Color: Light Brown



Virgo: You will enjoy a favorable period ahead with family and financial front stabilizing after a period of upheaval. The new entrepreneurs will consolidate their positions and expand their horizons. Youngsters will be in particular in regards to their physique and will take up newer challenges to test their endurance and fitness. The employed can look for new opportunities to improve their prospects. You will have to be understanding towards the fears and insecurities of your romantic partner and you have to allay them with love and care. There will be pressure on the unmarried to finalize an alliance; they will make the right choice. Family youngster will need your guidance. Your dream to go on an exotic cruise

with friends may materialize. Before investing in real estate, take advice of your family members. Those looking to buy their dream home will get very good deals.

Lucky number: 3 Lucky Color: Beige



Libra: You will enjoy a period of prosperity and good-fortune in the year 2021. You will find stability in your career and enjoy harmony in your family relationships. Those neglecting their health for a long time will find the will power to lead a healthier life. You are certain to do well if you have recently joined a new organization. Love takes a new turn as you brace yourself for wedding bells. A short but sweet romantic encounter may come your way. Matters at home are likely to be a little turbulent; you will need to give patient ear to all for peace to prevail at home. Enjoying a holiday with your romantic partner to a secluded place is indicated Fun-filled family vacation to a hill-station can be planned Any legal dispute regarding business or property will get decided in your favor. Buying cheap property in the right location can provide you triple gains annually. You will be full of good ideas and your choice of activities brings positive results far beyond expectations.

Lucky Number: 4 Lucky Color: Sky Blue



Scorpio: You will enjoy a successful run in your business which will pick up pace after a brief lull. Those new in the professional field will find a plethora of opportunities knocking at their door. A cheerful state of mind would allow enjoying you the perks of sound health. Indulging in excesses will take a toll on your overall health, so be ready to lead an active and fit lifestyle. If you have been considering working independently as a counselor or commission agent then take the plunge for you will be successful and achieve financial stability soon. The married will enjoy domestic felicity sharing good rapport and understanding with the elders and children. Office romance can become a possibility for some. Your whole family needs a holiday, so it will be prudent to plan one soon. A long-standing property dispute in the family will get settled and you will receive a large share of the assets. You will feel on top of the world as several good things start happening simultaneously around you.

Lucky Number: 18 Lucky Color: Dark Red



Sagittarius: The year brings success and recognition for those with boundless creativity and enthusiasm. You will be able to achieve much on the career front and will enter a period of domestic bliss. Those dealing in export/import products will make rapid progress after a tie up with a large international organization. You will get the opportunity to head the ambitious project that your company is undertaking; you will discharge your duties exceptionally well. The positivity of peace and tranquility of the household will reflect positively on the children. A Family trip to an amusement or theme park can become a possibility. Some of you will buy additional property as an investment, while some will move into a large house.

Lucky Number: 7 Lucky Color: Grey



Capricorn: Success in learning to walk with time will start yielding dividends in the New Year as you recoup your losses. You will find yourself on a solid footing on career-front as you get prestigious opportunities. With your single-minded devotion and fitness regimen you will succeed in attaining your dream physique. Professionals and entrepreneurs seeking capital will get necessary funds on easy terms, facilitating their enterprise in the first half. Youngsters in love and eligible will consider settling down in matrimony, more so under pressure from family elders who have grown fond of your sweet-heart. A trip to snow clad mountains is a possibility A good deal in commercial property may come your way A good deal in commercial property may come your way.

Lucky Number: 9 Lucky Color: Dark Blue



Aquarius: A The year is very promising for all round growth and development. It will be very profitable for those in business or those starting a new venture. Your desire to join to a very competitive sport will become a reality given your robust health. Some of you may set-up a branch office in another city in an endeavor to capture new markets as per your planned expansion programme. Newly-married couples facing compatibility issues will be able to resolve their differences and will embark upon a blissful and joyous phase of their marriage. You may organize a grand event or function, bringing even the distant family together.

You are likely to enjoy a pleasure trip with romantic partner that will rejuvenate your passions. Those looking to dispose off their property may get good buys. A desire to do things on your own will make you successful.

Lucky Number: 18 Lucky Color: Magenta



Pisces: The year will bring several positives things in your life. Even as the fast-changing events on professional front will bring out the best in you. The swiftly changing interpersonal relationships will take a turn for the better. Your health is likely to remain fine despite your busy schedule, but refrain from taking it for granted. Strict control on diet and traditional methods of fitness will help in keeping lifestyle ailments at bay. Business people will expand their enterprise and may have to move to a larger accommodation due to setting up of additional division. Hard work of previous year brings good fortunes, thus keeping your coffers brimming. Those looking to settling down this year will get favorable matrimonial match. The recognition of family youngster's work will add to the prestige of your family. Going a long vacation will be a big expenditure, plan everything in advance for a smooth holiday. . You need to access your budget before showing interest in a commercial property.

If you are looking for a good long-term investment, then go in for a property which is under constructions.

Lucky Number: 6 Lucky Color: Rosy Brown



2021
Hope for
World's
Health

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Pranab Mukherjee

Veteran Congress leader and former President Pranab Mukherjee passed away on August 31 at the age of 84. He died due to post Covid complications. In his long career as a minister, he handled everything from finance to commerce, defence, and external affairs, and was also deputy chairman of the Planning Commission.

He became the 13th President of India in 2012.

Mukherjee, a Congressman all his political life, was not just an astute politician, he also earned respect for his encyclopedic knowledge of history and the Constitution.

Pandit Jasraj

Music legend and the doyen of Indian classical vocal music Pandit Jasraj passed away at the age of 90 due to cardiac arrest in New Jersey in August.

Born in Haryana, Pandit Jasraj was recipient of various prestigious awards including Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan and Padma Vibhushan.

His musical career spanned more than 80 years.

John Lewis

The great civil rights leader and Georgia congressman, died of pancreatic cancer on July 17. One of the "Big Six" leaders of the civil rights movement in the 1960s, John Lewis continued to fight for people's rights since joining Congress in 1987.

He grew up in an era of racial segregation. Inspired by Martin Luther King Jr. he joined the burgeoning civil rights movement. Lewis was a Freedom Rider, spoke at 1963's March on Washington and led the demonstration that became known as "Bloody Sunday."

He was elected to Congress in 1986 and received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2011.

Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Ginsburg was a women's rights champion who became the US Supreme Court's second female justice.

She was a rockstar to her admirers as she spent her final years on the bench as the leader of the court's liberal wing. She was often called the 'Notorious RBG' for her defense of the rights of women and minorities, and the strength and resilience she displayed in the face of personal loss and health crisis.

She died September 18, 2020 due to complications from metastatic pancreas cancer.

Jack Welch

Son of a railroad conductor who rose to chairman and CEO of General Electric, Jack Francis Welch Jr. transformed GE into a highly profitable multinational conglomerate and parlayed his legendary business acumen into a retirement career as a corporate leadership guru. During the 20 years he led the conglomerate, its market value grew from \$12 billion to \$410 billion. Fortune magazine once called him "manager of the century," but he also was known as "Neutron Jack" for slashing tens of thousands of jobs. He died on March 1 at 84 due to renal failure.

Pierre Cardin

Iconic French fashion designer Pierre Cardin, hailed for his visionary creations but also for bringing stylish clothes to the masses, died December 29th at age 98. Pierre Cardin, who was born to a low-income family in northern Italy but became a France-based fashion superstar.

A licensing maverick, Cardin's name embossed myriad products from wristwatches to bedsheets, making his label among the worlds most famous. In the brand's heyday in the 1970s and 80s, his products were sold at some 100,000 outlets

worldwide. A savvy businessman, Cardin used his fabulous wealth to snap up top-notch properties in Paris, including the Belle Epoque restaurant Maxims. He was inducted into the Fine Arts Academy in 1992..

Swami Agnivesh

Social activist, scholar, politician and Arya Samaj leader Swami Agnivesh passed away at the Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences (ILBS) in New Delhi, in September, after he was hospitalized due to liver cirrhosis. He stayed on the ventilator and was monitored by a multi-disciplinary team.

Agnivesh, a former MLA from Haryana, is known for his work against bonded labor through the Bonded Labor Liberation Front, which he founded in 1981. Agnivesh became president (2004-2014) of the World Council of Arya Samaj, which is the highest international body of the Arya Samaj. He was also an advocate for dialogue between religions and remained involved in various areas of social activism including campaigns against female feticide and the emancipation of women.

S P Balasubrahmanyam

Legendary playback singer SP Balasubrahmanyam breathed his last on September 25 in Chennai at the age of 74. Balasubrahmanyam, fondly called as SPB, was known for his prowess of singing in 16 Indian languages, especially in all four southern languages besides Hindi. The six-time National Award-winning singer's contribution to Indian music is nonpareil. In his career spanning over five decades, SPB recorded more than 40,000 songs for which he held a Guinness World record.

Irrfan Khan

Actor Irrfan Khan breathed his last after he lost his battle with a rare form of cancer on April 29 in Mumbai. He was 54.

Irrfan Khan made his mark in

both international and Indian cinema. Khan won the best actor National Award for his performance in 2012's biographical drama 'Paan Singh Tomar.' Irrfan was also globally recognized for his performance in films like 'Slumdog Millionaire', 'Inferno' and 'Life of Pi'.

Sushant Singh Rajput

Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput was found dead at his Bandra apartment on June 14. He was 34.

Before making his debut on the big screen in 2013 with 'Kai Po Che', Shushant was already a household name. His performance as Manav Deshmukh in the TV show Pavitra Rishta won millions of hearts.

He earned accolades for his performance in 'MS Dhoni: The Untold Story', 'Sonchirya', and 'Chhichhore', among others.

Rishi Kapoor

Ace Bollywood actor Rishi Kapoor passed away in Mumbai on April 30 following a two-year-long battle with leukemia. He was 67. A third-generation actor, Rishi Kapoor, was the second son of actor Raj Kapoor and grandson of Prithviraj Kapoor. His first on-screen appearance was in 'Shri 420'. This was followed by 'Mera Naam Joker' in 1970, for which he received the National Award. Rishi made his debut as an adult actor in Bobby which became a blockbuster. In his career spanning over four decades, Kapoor acted in over 90 films.

Diego Maradona

Football legend Diego Maradona died of a cardiac arrest on November 25 at the age of 60.

He became a global icon after he dragged Argentina to glory in the 1986 World Cup where he scored the 'Goal of the Century' against England -- as well as the infamous 'Hand of God' goal. Maradona is considered the greatest footballer of all time alongside Brazil's Pele.

Kobe Bryant

Basketball icon Kobe Bryant died on January 26 in a fiery helicopter crash in Southern California. He was 41. The crash also claimed the life of his 13-year-old daughter Gianna and seven others. Bryant was a five-time NBA champion with the Los Angeles Lakers and two-time Olympic gold medalist.

Sean Connery

Legendary actor Sean Connery, best known for essaying the iconic character of James Bond, passed away at the age of 90 on October 31.

Connery made Ian Fleming's dashing secret agent alive in seven Bond films. Six-foot-tall Connery, with an element of rugged masculinity became a popular culture icon.

The Scottish actor, who was knighted in 2000, won numerous awards during his decades-spanning career, including an Oscar, three Golden Globes and two Bafta awards.

Chadwick Boseman

He played Black American icons Jackie Robinson and James Brown with searing intensity before inspiring audiences worldwide as the regal Black Panther in Marvel's blockbuster movie franchise. He died of colon cancer at 43 on Aug.28.

Bejan Daruwalla

Renowned astrologer Bejan Daruwalla passed away in May at a private hospital in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. He was 89. Daruwalla was a well-known astrologer who combined various methods of predictions like Vedic astrology, Numerology, Palmistry, Tarot. Born in July 1931, he was known to offer advice to Prince Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar of City Palace Udaipur and former Maharashtra Chief Minister Sushilkumar Shinde. Bejan Daruwalla was a practicing Zoroastrian. He had predicted election victories of Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Narendra Modi, among others.



(Image courtesy: timesofindia.com)



(Image courtesy: scientificamerican.com)



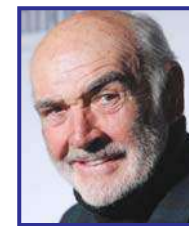
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(Image courtesy: timesnow.com)



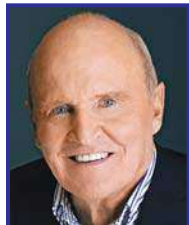
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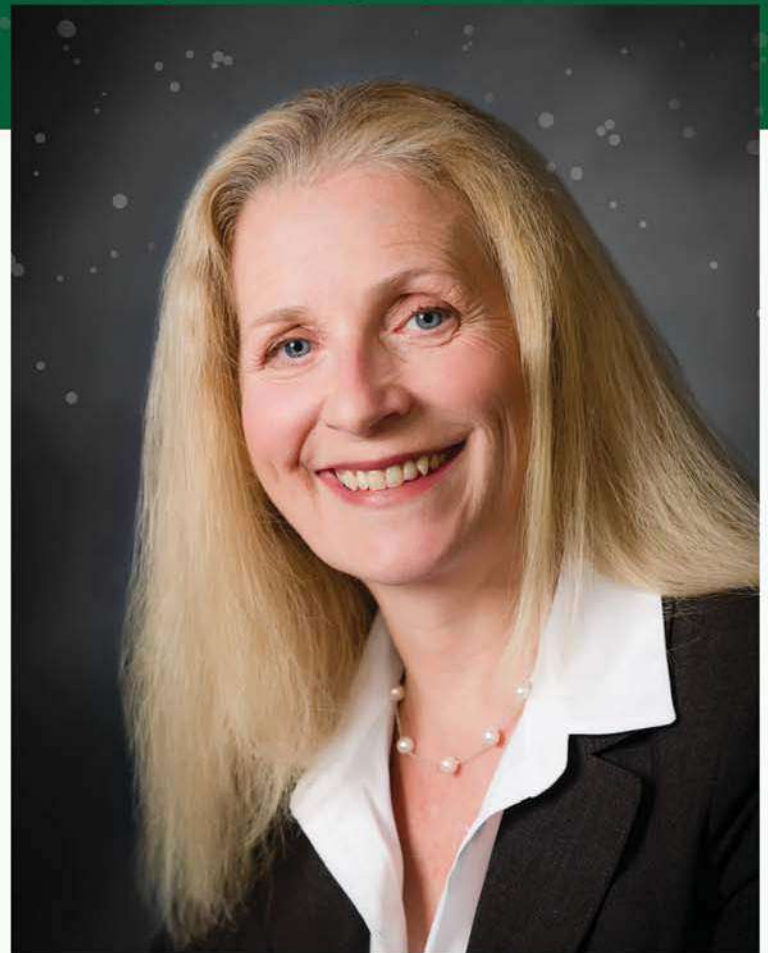
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FAMILIES OF OUR COMMUNITY.
I WILL CONTINUE THE TRADITION
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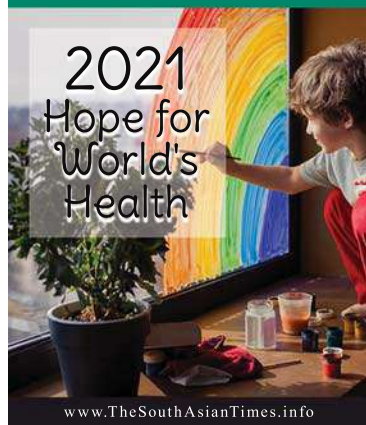
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No matter how dark life is outside, through meditation we can tap into the inner Light that fills us with lasting peace and happiness.



By Sant Rajinder Singh Ji Maharaj

Dear Brothers and Sisters in God,

I send all of you my warmest wishes for a Happy New Year. It is my deepest prayer that the new year, 2021, is one that takes us out of darkness into the Light.

The year 2020 that we have just passed through has been a difficult and challenging time with this



(Image courtesy: pinterest)

historic global pandemic affecting people all over the world. I offer

my deep gratitude to all of you for your noble service to humanity. You have made great sacrifices whether as frontline essential workers or by quarantining at home so as to save countless lives by not spreading the virus to others. As difficult as it has been, God's blessings and love are smiling upon each of you for your love and service to all of God's children around the world.

My heart goes out to each of you and your families during this difficult time, whether you are dealing with illness, financial struggles, or the loss of a loved one. Many ask how we can best deal with life's struggles. The good news is that we are not alone. When we look within, we would discover that God is always with us, guiding and protecting us. God loves each of us tremendously. We can experience God for ourselves through meditation. By sitting in silence and focusing our attention within, we come in contact with the divine Light and Sound of God. Through absorption into this current, we witness spiritual vistas of beauty, Light, inner Music, and godly love, and attain union of our soul with God.

No matter how dark life is outside, through meditation we can tap into the inner Light that fills us with lasting peace and happiness.

For this reason, I have chosen

the slogan for the new year to be:

Bask in the inner sun in 2021.

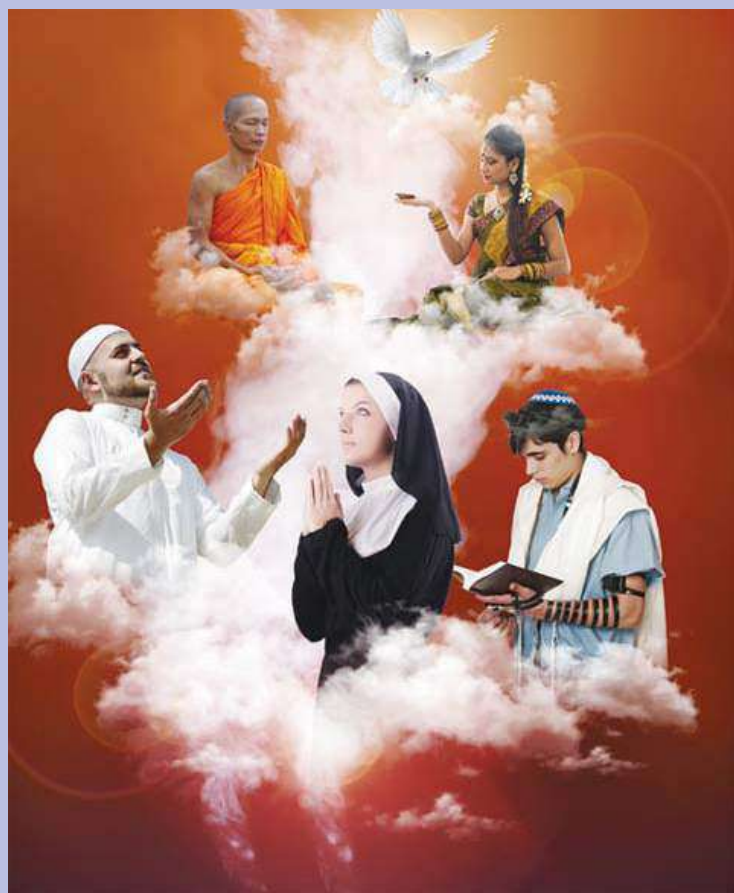
Within each of us shines an inner sun. This sun is the Light of God glowing in every soul. When we meditate, we experience the inner sun radiating eternally. While the outer sun sends waves of light to our outer eyes, the inner sun brings wave of the Light of God to illumine our inner eyes. The godly Light touches our heart and soul, filling it with divine love, peace, and joy. By basking in God's Light, our soul dances in ecstasy. Through meditation we can bathe in the inner sun anytime we wish.

When the darkness of life overwhelms us, meditation on the inner Light fills us with happiness and peace. We gain renewed strength to face life's challenges. We also discover that the same sun within us shines in all other human beings. When we recognize our unity, outer differences melt away and we want to serve others as one family of God. Then, we not only enjoy the inner sun but radiate that sunlight wherever we go. We become an instrument of Light to illuminate the darkness. As each of our individual Lights shine brighter, we form one large Light to brighten the entire world.

I pray that 2021 fills each of you with Light, spiritual love, peace, and lasting happiness.

PRAYER

Pray for World Healing and Peace



(pic credit <https://scarboromissions.ca/>)

Almighty God, you are the only source of health and healing. In you there is calm, and the only true peace in the universe. Grant to each one of us your children an awareness of your presence, and give us perfect confidence in you. In all pain and weariness and anxiety teach us to yield ourselves to your never-failing care, knowing that your love and power surround us, trusting in your wisdom and providence to give us health and strength and peace when your time is best; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Nazarene, Vols. 7-9, 1922

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But our service to our neighbors
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With appreciation for your business and with warmest wishes for a happy Holiday Season and a prosperous New Year



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