

July, 2023

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

EDITORIAL



EMPOWER THE VIBRANT DIASPORA NOW TO SAFEGUARD THE WORLD

By Melwyn Williams

Dear readers, Greetings!

As we approach the release of our July edition, I would like to take a moment to reflect on the significant developments in the realm of international affairs, particularly the recently concluded state visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the United States. This visit marks a pivotal moment in global diplomacy, as both India and the United States seek to elevate their strategic cooperation to unprecedented levels while maintaining their distinct identities.

The visit showcased a new approach by both nations, where the emphasis was on bolstering defence ties without committing to a formal alliance. The announcement of potential joint manufacturing of General Electric (GE) Aerospace's F414 engines in India by GE and Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, along with the procurement of advanced unmanned aerial vehicles, exemplifies the growing defence collaboration between the two countries. India's acquisition of various cutting-edge defence assets from the U.S. has further deepened their military partnership.

One of the key concerns driving this enhanced cooperation is China's expanding influence in the Indo-Pacific region. The United States, recognising the need to counterbalance China's assertiveness, aims to foster a long-term defence partnership with India, gradually shifting its focus away from its historical ties with Russia. This strategic realignment opens up

avenues for India to develop its own defence industry, particularly in areas such as jet engine production, semiconductors, and space technology. Such technological advancements not only bolster India's defence capabilities but also position it as a key player on the global stage.

It is crucial to note that while India's engagement with the United States grows stronger, India remains steadfast in maintaining its strategic autonomy. India's desire to protect its borders and sovereignty aligns with the interests of the United States, but it is cautious about getting entangled in power rivalries that do not serve its national interests. The mutual trust between the two countries forms the foundation of this evolving relationship, and it is imperative that this trust be nurtured to ensure stability in the region.

At WFY Magazine, we recognise the significance of these developments and their implications for the international community. It is our commitment to keep you informed and provide insightful analysis of global affairs. Through our July edition, we aim to delve deeper into the intricacies of India-U.S. relations, examining the potential ramifications and the opportunities that lie ahead.

We encourage our readers to explore the various articles and features in this edition, which shed light on the growing defence ties, the shared concerns, and the path towards a more robust and stable Indo-Pacific

region. As always, we remain dedicated to delivering comprehensive and thought-provoking content that informs, educates, and sparks meaningful discussions.

There has never been a more urgent need to protect and repair the environment. Without accelerated efforts to safeguard the health of our planet's atmosphere, biodiversity, and finite resources, there will be no sustainable future. The devastating impacts of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution are felt across the globe, and it is imperative that individuals, governments, businesses, and other stakeholders take collective action to address these pressing issues. The triple planetary crisis requires a concerted effort to drive a transition to a circular economy at scale.

While the importance of individual action cannot be overstated, it is crucial for governments, parliaments, businesses, banks, investors, and other influential entities to step up and play their part in tackling these challenges. By implementing effective policies, investing in sustainable technologies, and fostering innovation, they can contribute to a more sustainable and resilient future. The transition to a circular economy, where resources are used efficiently, waste is minimised, and products are designed for durability and recyclability, is a critical step in mitigating the negative impacts on our planet.

In a recent speech addressing the Tamil diaspora during his overseas tour, the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, M.K. Stalin, reiterated the government's commitment to protecting and supporting the Tamil community. He emphasised that the government's efforts to preserve the Tamil language were integral to safeguarding the interests of the Tamil diaspora, which has spread across the globe in pursuit of education, business, and employment opportunities. The Tamil community holds a significant presence within the Indian diaspora, with substantial populations in countries such as Malaysia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Mauritius, South Africa, and many more.

India, now the world's most populous country, surpassing China, boasts a population of over 1.4 billion people. Furthermore, the Indian diaspora, the largest in the world since 2010, serves as a valuable resource for the Indian government. The diaspora's achievements and contributions in various fields, including academia, business, and technology, are a testament to their success and potential as agents of change and progress.

In the upcoming July edition of WFY Magazine, we delve into the critical importance of environmental protection, sustainable practises, and the role of the diaspora in shaping India's global presence. We explore how governments, businesses, and individuals can collectively work towards building a more sustainable and inclusive future. Through insightful articles and thought-provoking features, we aim to highlight the interconnectedness of global challenges and the opportunities for positive change.

As we navigate these transformative times, let us come together to safeguard our planet, preserve cultural heritage, and foster a sense of unity among diverse communities. The July edition of WFY Magazine serves as a platform to inspire, educate, and empower our readers to take action and be agents of change in creating a better world for future generations. Let's connect and knit the community together.

In closing, I would like to extend my gratitude to our readers for their unwavering support. It is your enthusiasm that drives us to continually raise the bar and provide you with the highest-quality content. Together, let us navigate the complex world of international relations and strive for a more secure and prosperous future.

Wishing you an enlightening read,

-MELWYN WILLIAMS
Editor-in-Chief, The WFY Magazine



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Azim Premji: Billionaire Tech Czar With Love For All

By Melwyn Williams

India's most philanthropic billionaire isn't Ratan Tata, Mukesh Ambani, Gautam Adani, or Shiv Nadar. Instead, it is Azim Premji, whose foundation ensures the universal availability of fundamental education.



Azim Premji and his son Rishad with the President of India, Draupadi Murmu

As per the India Philanthropy Report 2023 published by Dasra and Bain & Co., the net worth of India's ultra-high net worth individuals (UHNIs) with assets exceeding Rs 1,000 crore dropped from Rs 11,811 crore in the previous year to Rs 4,230 crore in FY22.

This is because Azim Premji, the founder and chairman of Wipro, contributed Rs 9,000 crore to philanthropy from the share buyback in 2021. Azim Premji emerged as the most charitable Indian, philanthropically, in both FY20 and FY21. On

average, his contributions amounted to Rs 22 crore per day, totaling Rs 7,904 crore in FY20, and Rs 27 crore per day, totaling Rs 9,713 crore in FY21.



“I strongly believe that those of us who are privileged to have wealth should contribute significantly to try and create a better world for the millions who are far less privileged.”

-Azim Premji

Azim Premji emerged as the most charitable Indian, philanthropically, in both FY20 and FY21. On average, his contributions amounted to Rs 22 crore per day, totaling Rs 7,904 crore in FY20, and Rs 27 crore per day, totaling Rs 9,713 crore in FY21. Even though Azim Premji's annual donation in FY22 amounted to Rs 484 crore,

causing him to slip to the second position, he will continue to hold the title of India's foremost philanthropist in 2023.



In response to the “unprecedented health and humanitarian crisis” brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, Wipro, under Azim Premji's leadership, pledged a total of Rs 1,125 crore. This included Rs 100 crore from Wipro Ltd., Rs 25 crore from Wipro Enterprises Ltd., and Rs 1,000 crore from the Azim Premji Foundation.

Azim Premji's philanthropic contributions surpass those of any other individual in India, with his donations exceeding tenfold the amount given by others, according to the rankings of the world's leading philanthropists by Hurun India and EdelGive Foundation. These rankings position him at No. 12

among the global philanthropic leaders.

Azim Premji etched his name in the annals of history by transferring a stake worth \$7.6 billion from his IT outsourcing enterprise to his non-profit organisation, The Azim Premji Foundation, in 2019.

The Azim Premji Foundation aims to ensure equitable access to fundamental education. To further expand its philanthropic endeavours, the foundation established the Azim Premji Philanthropic Initiatives division in 2014.

Throughout his lifetime, Azim Premji has made remarkable contributions to charity, earning him prestigious accolades such as the Carnegie Medal of Philanthropy and the Padma Bhushan, one of India's highest civilian honours.



The Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh conferring Degree of Doctor of Science (Honoris Causa) to Shri Azim Premji, the Chairman, Wipro Limited, at the Golden Jubilee Convocation of IIT Bombay, in Mumbai on August 18, 2012.

AZIM HASHIM PREMJI

Azim Hashim Premji, born on July 24, 1945, is an eminent Indian businessman and philanthropist. He served as the chairman of Wipro Limited and continues to be a non-executive member of the board and founder chairman. Known as the Czar of the Indian IT Industry, Premji played a pivotal role in guiding Wipro's diversification and growth over four decades, establishing it as a global leader in the software industry.

His remarkable influence earned him recognition as one of the 20 most powerful men in the world and among the 100 most influential people by Asiaweek and Time magazine, respectively. Being an esteemed philanthropist, Premji pledged to donate at least half of his substantial wealth, starting with a generous \$2.2 billion contribution to the Azim Premji Foundation, which focuses on education in India.

His benevolent endeavours propelled him to the top of the EdelGive Hurun India Philanthropy List for 2020. Despite his tremendous charitable contributions, he dropped from the second position in the Forbes India Rich List to the seventeenth position in 2019. He was honoured with the Padma Vibhushan, India's second-highest civilian award, by the Government of India. Azim Premji's net worth, as estimated by Forbes and the Bloomberg Billionaires Index in February 2023, stands at an impressive \$9.3 billion and \$25 billion, respectively.

LIFE & EDUCATION

Let's delve into the early life and educational journey of Azim Premji, which shaped the path of his extraordinary achievements. Hailing from a distinguished Kutchi Indian Muslim Shia Islam family in Gujarat, Premji was born in Bombay, India. His father, known as the Rice King of Burma, was a prominent businessman. Interestingly, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, extended an invitation to Premji's father, Muhammed Hashim Premji, to relocate to Pakistan. However, in a momentous decision, he declined the offer, reaffirming his commitment to his homeland, India.

Having a thirst for knowledge and a drive for excellence, Azim Premji pursued a Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical Engineering from the esteemed Stanford University. All along his academic journey, he honed his skills and expanded his horizons, preparing himself for the remarkable future that lay ahead.

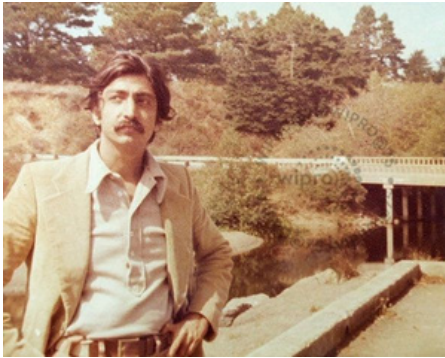
Azim Premji found companionship and love with Yasmeen Premji, his beloved spouse. Together, they have been blessed with two children, Rishad and Tariq, who are a testament to their enduring bond and shared values. Notably, Rishad Premji has emerged as a prominent figure in the IT business realm, currently serving as the chief strategy officer of Wipro, furthering the family legacy.



COVERSTORY

Tracing Azim Premji's Illustrious Career Journey Of Transformative Leadership And Strategic Diversification

It all began in 1945, when Muhammed Hashim Premji, Azim Premji's father, established Western Indian Vegetable Products Ltd. in Amalner, a quaint town in Maharashtra's Jalgaon district. Initially, the company specialised in manufacturing cooking oil, renowned as Sunflower Vanaspati, and a by-product of the oil-making process, a laundry soap named 787.



In 1966, tragedy struck when Azim Premji received the news of his father's passing. Despite being just 21 years old and pursuing engineering studies at Stanford University, he swiftly returned to India, assuming the mantle of leadership at Wipro. At that time, the company, then known as Western Indian Vegetable Products, focused primarily on hydrogenated oil production. However, under Premji's visionary guidance, Wipro underwent a remarkable transformation, expanding its portfolio to include bakery fats, ethnic ingredient-based toiletries, hair care soaps, baby toiletries, lighting products, and hydraulic cylinders.

Recognizing the immense potential of the burgeoning IT industry in the 1980s, the astute entrepreneur seized the opportunity created by IBM's departure from India. With a keen understanding of the evolving technological landscape, Premji rebranded the company as Wipro and ventured into the high-technology sector. Through a strategic collaboration with Sentinel Computer Corporation, an

American firm, Wipro began manufacturing minicomputers, marking its entry into the world of software and IT solutions. This pivotal shift from soap to software laid the foundation for Wipro's remarkable growth and prominence in the global market.

Azim Premji's career is a testament to his boldness, foresight, and ability to adapt to changing times. His strategic decisions and unwavering commitment to innovation have propelled Wipro to unprecedented heights, establishing the company as a global leader in the technology industry.

RECOGNITION & AWARDS

- Business Week recognises Premji as one of the "Greatest Entrepreneurs" for Wipro's remarkable growth.
- He received an honorary doctorate from the Manipal Academy of Higher Education in 2000.
- He was conferred the Lakshya Business Visionary Award by the National Institute of Industrial Engineering, Mumbai, in 2006.
- He was honoured with the Padma Bhushan by the Government of India in 2005 for contributions to trade and commerce.
- He was awarded an honorary doctorate by Wesleyan University in 2009 for his philanthropic work.
- He received an honorary doctorate from Mysore University in 2015.
- He was conferred the Padma Vibhushan, the second-highest civilian award in India, in 2011.
- Ranked 9th in India's 50 Most Powerful People of 2017 list by India Today magazine
- He was conferred the Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur, the highest French civilian distinction, in 2018.
- Cited by Forbes magazine as one of the "Heroes of Philanthropy" in the Asia-Pacific region in 2019,
- He was recognised by Forbes as one of the world's most generous philanthropists outside of the US in 2019.



The President, Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil presenting the Padma Vibhushan Award to Shri Azim Premji, at an Investiture Ceremony II, at Rashtrapati Bhavan, in New Delhi on April 01, 2011.

"I strongly believe that those of us who are privileged to have wealth should contribute significantly to try and create a better world for the millions who are far less privileged."
- Azim Premji.

PHILANTHROPY

Azim Premji Foundation

- Established the Azim Premji Foundation in 2001 as a non-profit organisation.
- Pledged a donation of US\$2 billion in 2010 to improve school education in India through the transfer of equity shares of Wipro Ltd.
- Pledged an additional 34% of Wipro stock in 2019, bringing the total endowment to US\$21 billion.
- Collaborated with the National Centre for Biological Sciences and the Institute for Stem Cell Science and Regenerative Medicine in May 2020 to enhance testing infrastructure for the coronavirus pandemic.
- Issued warnings against scam emails impersonating the foundation for fraudulent donations.

The Giving Pledge

- He became the first Indian to join the Giving Pledge, committing to donate most of his wealth to philanthropic causes.
- Donated over 25% of his personal wealth to charity by 2013.





COVERSTORY

- He donated an additional 18% of his stake in Wipro in 2015, totaling a contribution of 39%.
- His lifetime giving stands at US\$21 billion, making him the top Indian philanthropist.
- Listed in the EdelGive Hurun India Philanthropy List
- Topped the list of India's most generous philanthropists in 2020, donating ₹79.04 billion primarily for education.
- Retained his position in FY21 by donating ₹9,713 crore (US\$1.33 billion).

Azim Premji's remarkable journey as the billionaire IT czar and philanthropist serves as an inspiring example of using wealth for the greater good. With his unwavering commitment to making a positive impact on society, Premji's decision to donate the majority of his wealth to charitable causes has set a new precedent for philanthropy.

His selfless act not only transforms the lives of countless individuals but also sends a powerful message to the world about the importance of giving back. Azim Premji's legacy will forever be remembered as a beacon of hope, reminding us all of the profound difference that one person's generosity can make in shaping a better future for generations to come.

-MELWYN WILLIAMS



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Indo-US Deals: Looks Like A New World Order?

By WFY Bureau, USA

India and the United States have recently reached a series of agreements that signify a deepening partnership between the two nations. These agreements cover various sectors, including technology, defence, visas, student exchanges, and more. The collaboration aims to foster innovation, strengthen economic ties, enhance defence capabilities, and promote people-to-people exchanges. In this article, we will delve into the details of these agreements and explore their significance in shaping the future of India-US relations.

Technology Sector Agreements

- Strengthening semiconductor supply chains:** Micron Technology, Inc., in collaboration with the India Semiconductor Mission, has committed to investing over \$800 million in a state-of-the-art semiconductor assembly and test facility in India. This substantial investment, part of a \$2.75 billion project, will bolster India's semiconductor industry and contribute to the global supply chain.
- Critical minerals partnership:** India has joined the Minerals Security Partnership (MSP), a multinational initiative focused on establishing sustainable critical energy minerals supply chains. Through financial and diplomatic support, the MSP aims to expedite strategic projects along the value chain, ensuring the availability of critical minerals for both India and the United States.
- Advanced telecommunications:** Joint Task Forces between India and the United States have been formed to drive the development and deployment of Open RAN systems and advanced telecoms research. The Bharat 6G initiative in India and the Next G Alliance in the US will collaborate to advance research in telecommunications, paving the way for groundbreaking technologies and improved connectivity.
- New Frontiers in Space:** India has signed the Artemis Accords, a commitment to peaceful exploration and utilisation of space for the benefit of all. By becoming a signatory, India reinforces its dedication to international collaboration in space exploration, propelling scientific discoveries and technological advancements.
- Quantum, Advanced Computing, and Artificial Intelligence:** The establishment of a Joint Indo-US Quantum Coordination Mechanism will foster collaborative research in the fields of quantum computing, advanced computing, and artificial intelligence. This mechanism, involving both the public and private sectors, will facilitate knowledge exchange and drive innovation in these cutting-edge domains.
- Cutting-edge research:** The US National Science Foundation has unveiled 35 joint research collaborations with the Indian Department of Science and Technology. These collaborations will address key scientific challenges and promote knowledge sharing between Indian and American researchers. Additionally, a cooperative arrangement has been established with the Indian Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology to focus on emerging technologies, further enhancing research and development efforts.
- Innovation Handshake:** The US-India Commercial Dialogue has launched the "Innovation Handshake" initiative, fostering connections between start-up ecosystems in both countries. This collaborative platform will support the US-India Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET) and facilitate the exchange of ideas, expertise, and resources, fueling innovation in critical sectors.

WORLD POLITICS

- **Fibre Optics Investments:** Sterlite Technologies Limited from India has made a significant investment of \$100 million to establish an optical fibre cable manufacturing unit in South Carolina, USA. This venture will bolster the production capacity of high-quality optical fibres and promote exports, further strengthening the technological ties between the two nations.

Defence Sector Agreements

- **GE F414 Engine Co-Production:** General Electric (GE) has proposed a pioneering initiative to jointly produce the F414 Jet Engine in India. This collaboration has garnered support from both the United States and India. The co-production of these engines will power the Tejas Mark 2 aircraft, benefiting Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) and Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).
- **General Atomics MQ-9Bs:** India has decided to procure armed MQ-9B SeaGuardian Drones from General Atomics, elevating its intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities. These advanced drones will enhance India's defence capabilities and strengthen its security posture.
- **New Sustainment and Ship Repair:** The United States Navy has entered into a Master Ship Repair Agreement (MSRA) with Larsen and Toubro Shipyard in Chennai, and agreements with Mazagon Dock Limited (Mumbai) and Goa Shipyard (Goa) are being finalised. This collaboration allows Indian shipyards to undertake the repair and maintenance of a significant portion of the US Indo-Pacific fleet. It not only strengthens bilateral defence ties but also boosts the Indian shipbuilding industry.
- **Defence "Innovation Bridge":** The inauguration of the India-US Defence Acceleration Ecosystem (INDUS-X) establishes a network of stakeholders comprising universities, incubators, corporations, think tanks, and private investments. This collaborative platform aims to foster innovation in defence technology by facilitating research, development, and prototyping of future military technologies.
- **Defence Industrial Cooperation Roadmap:** A comprehensive roadmap has been introduced to guide defence industrial cooperation between India and the United States. This roadmap promotes policy guidance for defence industries, enabling the co-production of advanced defence systems and encouraging collaborative research and development. The initiative focuses on strengthening technological capabilities and enhancing defence self-sufficiency.

Visas, Student Exchanges, and More

- **Domestic Visa Renewals:** The US Department of State will initiate a pilot programme for processing domestic renewals of certain petition-based temporary work visas. This programme eliminates the need for Indian nationals to leave the United States for visa renewal in eligible categories, streamlining the process and enhancing convenience for Indian professionals.
- **New Consulates:** The United States plans to open new consulates in Bengaluru and Ahmedabad, which will facilitate increased people-to-people exchanges, promote trade and investment, and strengthen cultural ties between the two countries. Additionally, India aims to announce the opening of two new consulates in the United States, expanding its diplomatic presence and fostering closer engagement.
- **Student Exchanges and Scholarships:** A Joint Task Force has been established between the Association of American Universities and leading Indian educational institutions, including the prestigious Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs). This collaborative effort aims to facilitate student exchanges, research collaborations, and scholarships, promoting academic excellence, cross-cultural understanding, and knowledge sharing.

The recent series of agreements between India and the United States signifies a comprehensive partnership focused on technological advancement, defence collaboration, and people-to-people engagement. These agreements pave the way for innovation, economic growth, and enhanced security cooperation. By strengthening semiconductor supply chains, advancing telecommunications research, and promoting critical mineral partnerships, both nations are poised to drive technological advancements in key sectors. The defence agreements will bolster defence capabilities, promote joint production, and facilitate ship repair, bolstering strategic cooperation. Additionally, initiatives related to visas, consulates, and student exchanges will foster closer ties and promote cultural understanding. As India and the United States embark on this path of collaboration, they are set to shape a brighter and more prosperous future together.

-WFY BUREAU, USA



Politics



China Surging: Revealing

The Geopolitical Implications, Know It All Here

By MP Joseph IAS(R)

The 21st century will have to contend with China's enormous geopolitical power.

The country's rapid economic growth is now a clichéd story of the past. What the world must factor in urgently now is Beijing's growing global influence and the rapid pace of its military modernization. These have implications for India.

The historical Saudi-Iranian geopolitical animosity is famous. Recently, China succeeded in brokering a Saudi-Iranian rapprochement, a signal to the world that China is a power to contend with in the strategic and oil-rich Middle East region.

Beijing has sought to leverage its growing geopolitical clout in terms of striving to replace the US Dollar as the world's reserve currency. China has Russia's support in this endeavour, as Russia has faced the repercussions of crippling U.S. financial sanctions. Moreover, Russia's war in Ukraine is faltering heavily and has led to unrest within Russia itself. If Russia descends further into chaos, China will consolidate its position further as the preeminent geopolitical power of the East.

If more and more countries around the world look upon China as the leading geopolitical power, it could embolden Beijing further in terms of border escalations, as it would be relatively certain that the rest of the world would turn a blind eye to forays into a localised border conflict. For example, India's position on Aksai Chin could come under greater pressure. The Galwan clash of 2020 is still fresh in our memories.

Given this backdrop, a robust U.S.-India partnership is essential to pre-empt the domination of Asia by China. The larger Eurasian peace is also a concern, but more for Washington than Delhi. The threat of border skirmishes with China means Delhi must build strategic defence relationships with America, especially as the Russian state is struggling. The more Russia struggles, the greater the risk of it becoming a client state of China, potentially endangering India's defence contracts with Moscow.

Russia has historically been a time-tested ally for India, right from the Cold War period. The ties span defence, oil and gas, nuclear energy, etc., but the space is getting complicated as Moscow struggles and attempts to build global geopolitical leverage by reaching out to its neighbour, China. India is already balancing its dependency on Russian armaments and diversifying its arms purchases in terms of buying more from America, Israel, etc. This trend will likely accelerate further.

A rising China necessitates a pragmatic and realistic foreign policy approach from India. India's reliance on Russia will perceptibly slow down, and greater dexterity in terms of balancing strategic interests with America and Europe will be key.

Interesting times lie ahead.


This article is jointly written by M P Joseph IAS (R) and J. Sudhakaran

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Simplified: All You Need To Know About Deep Brain Stimulation

By WFY Bureau, USA

Deep brain stimulation (DBS) is a surgical technique in neurology that employs implanted electrodes and electrical impulses to address movement disorders linked to Parkinson's disease (PD), essential tremor, dystonia, and additional neurological ailments.

DBS may be employed in cases where conventional medications for movement disorders or neuropsychiatric conditions have yielded diminished results or their adverse effects hinder an individual's everyday functioning.

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION TO BE AWARE OF

- *During a surgical operation, surgeons insert one or more petite wires (referred to as leads or electrodes) into the brain.*
- *These leads receive gentle electrical stimulation from a compact pulse generator that is surgically implanted in the chest.*
- *For a successful DBS procedure, it is crucial to carefully select suitable patients, accurately position the electrodes, and appropriately calibrate the pulse generator.*
- *DBS does not completely eliminate the symptoms of PD or other ailments, but it can reduce the reliance on medications and enhance the overall quality of life for patients.*

How does deep brain stimulation function?

Disrupted electrical signals in the regions of the brain that govern movement are responsible for the manifestation of movement-related symptoms in Parkinson's disease and other neurological disorders. DBS, when successful, disrupts the irregular signals that trigger tremors and other movement-related symptoms.

Following a series of assessments to determine the ideal placement, neurosurgeons surgically implant one or more wires, referred to as "leads," within the brain. These leads are connected to a small neurostimulator (electrical generator) implanted beneath the collarbone, similar to a cardiac pacemaker, via an insulated wire extension. Continuous pulses of electrical current originating from the

neurostimulator travel through the leads and into the brain.

Several weeks after the neurostimulator has been positioned, the doctor programmes it to emit an electrical signal. This programming procedure may require multiple visits spread across weeks or months to ensure proper adjustment to the current state and achieve optimal outcomes. In the process of fine-tuning the device, the doctor aims to strike a balance between enhancing symptom management and minimising potential side effects.

Who qualifies as a candidate for deep brain stimulation?

DBS encompasses more than a mere surgical procedure. It entails a sequence of assessments, interventions, and consultations both prior to and following the actual surgery, necessitating individuals seeking DBS treatment to allocate a significant amount of time to the process.

For instance, individuals residing far from a medical centre offering DBS surgery may have to invest considerable time in commuting to and from appointments.

The expenses associated with the procedure, as well as the pre-operative evaluation and post-operative follow-up, can vary depending on the individual's insurance coverage. While DBS surgery is an FDA-approved treatment for Parkinson's disease, Medicare and most private insurers cover the procedure; however, the extent of coverage is contingent upon the specifics of each person's insurance policy.

Prospective patients should maintain realistic expectations regarding the outcomes of DBS. Although DBS can ameliorate the movement symptoms associated with Parkinson's disease and substantially enhance the quality of life in appropriately selected patients, it is improbable to restore anyone to a state of perfect health.

Parkinson's Disease

DBS tends to benefit three categories of Parkinson's Disease patients. We can classify them into these categories, find them below;

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1. Individuals with uncontrollable tremors that have proven unresponsive to medications
2. Patients whose symptoms demonstrate favourable responses to medications. However, they encounter severe motor fluctuations and dyskinesias when the effects of the drugs diminish, despite adjustments in medication dosage.
3. Individuals whose movement symptoms could potentially improve with higher or more frequent doses of medication. Nevertheless, they are constrained from doing so due to the presence of undesirable side effects.

Essential Tremor

The most prevalent movement disorder is essential tremor, and DBS can serve as an efficacious treatment, particularly in severe cases where the tremors prove debilitating, hindering daily activities such as dressing, shaving, and eating or drinking. Since tremor constitutes the sole symptom of essential tremor, DBS can enhance the quality of life for individuals with this condition and enable them to function normally.

Dystonia

Dystonia, though relatively uncommon as a movement disorder, manifests as abnormal postures and twisting movements that can potentially respond to DBS when medications fail to provide satisfactory relief. The individual's response to DBS depends on the underlying cause of dystonia, be it genetic, drug-induced, or another factor. In cases where the cause remains unknown, the doctor is likely to conduct additional tests as part of the DBS evaluation.

Psychiatric Conditions

Some recent studies have indicated the potential benefits of DBS surgery for individuals with depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), or Tourette's disorder. However, further research is necessary to ascertain the effectiveness of DBS in treating psychiatric disorders and to evaluate

whether the benefits outweigh the associated risks and side effects.

Selecting or opting for Deep Brain Stimulation Surgery

DBS surgery is not advisable for every individual affected by Parkinson's disease or other movement disorders. Consulting with a movement disorder specialist neurologist can help ascertain whether an individual is a suitable candidate for DBS.

Factors Influencing a Physician's Decision on Deep Brain Stimulation

As per the National Parkinson Foundation, an ideal candidate for DBS surgery to treat Parkinson's disease would exhibit the following criteria:

- Significant interference in daily activities caused by PD symptoms.
- Fluctuations in mobility due to PD medications, including the "on-off" phenomenon, with or without dyskinesia (involuntary jerking movements, particularly in the arms and head).
- A sustained positive response to PD medications, even if the duration of their effectiveness has decreased compared to previous experiences.
- A medical history involving various combinations of PD medications while under the care of a neurologist specialising in movement disorders.

Possible Disqualifying Factors for DBS Surgery

- Certain conditions or circumstances may deem an individual less suitable for DBS surgery:
- Predominant issues with balance, walking, or experiencing freezing as the primary disabling symptom.
- Speech difficulties are the main symptom.
- Persistent confusion, memory impairment, and cognitive challenges.
- Unresolved or unstable psychiatric conditions like depression or anxiety despite previous treatment attempts.
- Presence of other medical conditions that elevate the risks associated with surgery.

**Some of these factors could potentially be addressed through appropriate treatment. Having one or more of these factors does not automatically disqualify an individual from undergoing DBS surgery in the future. However, the doctor may advise pursuing more intensive therapies targeting these concerns before considering surgery.*

Preparatory Tests for Deep Brain Stimulation

Before undergoing deep brain stimulation (DBS), patients with Parkinson's disease undergo several evaluations to ensure optimal outcomes. The process involves the following steps:

1. Assessing Levodopa Responsiveness:

The doctor confirms the patient's responsiveness to levodopa, a medication used to manage Parkinson's symptoms. This evaluation helps identify the symptoms most likely to benefit from DBS, which are then discussed with the patient.

2. Observation of Medication Effects:

The movement disorders neurologist examines the patient both on and off PD medications. By observing the impact of these medications on motor and non-motor symptoms, the physician and patient can pinpoint the most suitable target symptoms for DBS treatment.

3. Cognitive Evaluation:

A cognitive assessment is conducted to determine the patient's cognitive abilities, as they play a crucial role in actively participating in the procedure. This evaluation helps assess the risk of potential cognitive complications following the surgery or during the adjustment phase of the neurostimulator.

4. Additional Assessments:

Some medical centres also conduct occupational therapy reviews or assessments of speech, language, and swallowing functions. Furthermore, a psychiatrist may evaluate the patient to address any existing conditions, such as depression or anxiety, that may require treatment before the DBS procedure.



These comprehensive tests enable the medical team to gather essential information, tailor the treatment approach, and ensure the safety and effectiveness of DBS for each individual.

The Deep Brain Stimulation Procedure

The surgical approach for deep brain stimulation (DBS) can vary depending on the case. In some instances, both the lead and the neurostimulator are inserted during the same surgery. However, in other cases, these surgeries may be performed separately, with the neurostimulator being implanted days or weeks after the lead placement.

Distinction between Stereotactic DBS and Interventional Image-Guided DBS

Stereotactic DBS surgery requires the patient to discontinue their medication. Throughout the procedure, a frame is used to stabilise the head and provide coordinates that help guide the lead to the precise location in the brain. The patient receives local anaesthesia to ensure comfort at each step and a mild sedative to promote relaxation.

On the other hand, during image-guided DBS surgery, such as with interventional MRI (iMRI) or a CT scan, the patient is typically under general anaesthesia and in a state of sleep while the surgeon uses brain images to navigate the lead to its intended target.

Certain specialised centres offer both stereotactic and iMRI-guided options for DBS surgery. In such cases, the doctor and patient engage in a discussion to determine the most suitable procedure based on various factors.

For example, an image-guided procedure might be recommended for children, patients with severe symptoms, individuals who experience heightened anxiety or fear, or cases where the leads are targeting specific areas of the brain. **Typically, the DBS surgery follows the following steps:**

- Lead Implantation
- The individual prepares for the procedure by removing any clothing, jewellery, or other items that could potentially interfere.
- A small area of hair behind the hairline is shaved, and the surgical team administers local anaesthesia to numb the scalp for the placement of the head frame.
- The head frame, also known as the "halo," is secured to the skull using screws and remains in position throughout the entire procedure to maintain the head's proper alignment.
- Using CT or MRI scans, the team precisely identifies the target location in the brain where the lead will be inserted.
- After applying additional numbing medication, the neurosurgeon drills a small hole in the skull to carefully introduce the lead.
- The team meticulously monitors and records the lead's progression through the brain tissue to ensure accurate placement. At specific intervals during the recordings, the individual may be asked to perform movements with their face, arm, or leg.
- Once the lead is correctly positioned, it is connected to an external neurostimulator. By delivering electrical stimulation through the lead for a brief period, the doctors can assess whether symptoms improve or if any side effects, such as muscle contractions or visual phenomena, manifest.
- An extension wire is attached to the lead and discreetly placed under the scalp, establishing the connection between the lead and the neurostimulator.
- Finally, the opening in the skull is closed using a plastic cap and stitches.

Microelectrode Recording

Microelectrode recording (MER) employs a high-frequency electrical current (5–100 uA) to precisely determine the optimal

site for implanting the deep brain stimulator (DBS). This technique, developed at Johns Hopkins and supported by the Task Force on Surgery for Parkinson's Disease of the American Academy of Neurology Therapeutic and Technology Assessment Committee, offers remarkable accuracy.

Given the inherent variability in brain structure among individuals, MER provides crucial information for the precise placement of the DBS. By utilising a microelectrode, the surgical team can observe and analyse neuronal activity from different regions of the brain, identifying specific structures based on distinctive patterns of neuronal behaviour. To obtain high-quality information, the patient must remain awake throughout the procedure, avoiding general anaesthesia.

Placement of the Neurostimulator

This step is performed while the individual is under general anaesthesia, ensuring they are asleep. The surgical team implants the neurostimulator beneath the outer layers of skin, typically positioned just below the collarbone, although sometimes in the chest or abdomen. The extension wire from the lead is then connected to the neurostimulator.

After Deep Brain Stimulation Surgery

During the Hospital Stay

Typically, the duration of hospitalisation following DBS surgery is 24 hours, although it may be extended based on the patient's recovery and readiness to be discharged. The doctor will make regular visits to assess the patient's readiness to leave and provide instructions for home care.

Upon Returning Home

Once at home, it is crucial to maintain cleanliness and dryness around the incisions. The doctor will provide specific guidance on bathing while the surgical site heals. If stitches were used, they will be removed during a follow-up visit to the doctor's office. Adhesive strips,

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if applied, should be kept dry and will generally come off within a few days.

The patient will receive a magnet that can be utilized, as directed by their doctor, to activate or deactivate the neurostimulator.

Programming the Neurostimulator

Once the DBS lead(s) and neurostimulator are in position, the patient will revisit the doctor for the programming of the neurostimulator to achieve optimal electrical stimulation. Programming typically commences a few weeks after the DBS procedure, although some doctors activate the neurostimulator before the patient's discharge from the hospital following surgery.

Programming requires time and may necessitate multiple appointments to fine-tune the neurostimulator settings. Simultaneously, the doctors will address the patient's medications and dosages to ensure effective synergy between the medications and electrical stimulation for symptom control.

Even after the adjustments, regular checkups are necessary. The frequency of follow-up appointments is determined by the doctor based on each patient's individual circumstances.

The neurostimulator operates on a battery that typically lasts between three and five years. When the battery starts to deplete, doctors can replace the neurostimulator through an outpatient procedure. Additionally, there are rechargeable neurostimulators that have a longer battery life but necessitate regular recharging.

Long-Term Effects of Deep Brain Stimulation

DBS surgery can significantly alleviate symptoms of Parkinson's disease such as tremors, stiffness, slowness, and dyskinesias. It can also reduce the medication dosage required to manage the condition. Studies tracking patients after DBS have

revealed that many individuals experience continued improvement in their symptoms for several years following the procedure, enabling them to perform essential activities like eating, using the bathroom, and self-feeding. However, patients undergoing DBS for movement disorders may or may not encounter changes in memory, cognition, or mood.

It is important to note that Parkinson's disease is a progressive disorder that cannot be completely halted. While DBS effectively targets tremors, stiffness, and slowness, other symptoms such as poor posture, speech impairments, gait freezing, balance issues, and dementia may still manifest.

Post-Deep Brain Stimulation Precautions

Generally, individuals who have undergone DBS surgery should:

- Always carry an identification card stating that you have a DBS neurostimulator. Additionally, wearing a medical identification bracelet indicating this information may be beneficial.
- Inform airport security personnel about the neurostimulator before passing through airport detectors. While most airport detectors are safe for pacemakers, the small metal components in the neurostimulator may trigger the alarm. If selected for additional screening using handheld detector devices, patients should politely remind the screeners not to hold the detector wand over the neurostimulator for an extended period as the magnets within the device could potentially impact its function or programming.
- Certain MRI procedures may not be suitable for patients with leads and neurostimulators. It is essential to consult with a physician prior to any MRI, although DBS can be compatible with MRI under specific circumstances.

- Patients should avoid locations with strong magnetic fields, such as power generators and automobile junkyards utilising large magnets.
- Heat should be avoided during physical therapy sessions to treat muscles in patients who have undergone DBS surgery.
- High-voltage or radar machinery, including radio or television transmitters, electric arc welders, high-tension wires, radar installations, or smelting furnaces, should be avoided.
- If a surgical procedure is scheduled, patients must inform the surgeon well in advance about the presence of a neurostimulator. It is important to seek advice regarding special precautions before and during the surgery, as certain equipment, like the electrocautery device used for controlling bleeding, may interfere with the neurostimulator.
- During physical, recreational, or sports activities, patients should take measures to protect the area where the neurostimulator is placed from any potential trauma. A blow to the chest near the neurostimulator can affect its functioning and should prompt a visit to the doctor.

-WFY BUREAU, USA

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By Kulmohan Kaur

Know How To Overcome Mental Illness? Beyond Stigma And Taboo

Mental illnesses have always been considered a topic that needs to either be avoided or silenced, just like taboos. Talking about mental health issues is uncomfortable, and people shy away from this topic. There seems to be a lack of understanding, and people with mental issues refuse or are reluctant to come out with their concerns for fear of being judged and ostracised by society. In the past few years, however, psychological studies and the power of social media have influenced the thought processes of most of mankind, and people have now started talking about it, even if it isn't a boardroom conversation topic yet.

People suffering from mental illnesses do not discuss this due to the stigma associated with it. Society still labels them as "crazy" "unstable" or even "insane". Those who have depression, anxiety, or other such illnesses suffer incredible damage to their self-esteem. They sometimes feel ashamed and might isolate themselves and not seek help on time. This, in turn, leads to an increase in the symptoms of the illness. The common misconceptions regarding mental health can be harmful and prevent people from seeking help, and they need to be resolved.

Many times, people think that mental illness is rare. However, according to the World Health Organisation, one in four people in the world will suffer from mental illness at some point in their lives. That puts the probability at 25%, which is not so rare. Another thought is that mental illness causes people to be violent or dangerous. This confusion has been created and supported by the media, but it is gradually being corrected. In reality, people with mental illness are no more likely to be violent than everyone else.

Another myth is that willpower alone is enough to cure mental illnesses. However, it needs to be understood that they too require treatment, just like any physical disease. Not to say the support of loved ones is a major factor in helping the people suffering from them seek treatment and live a healthy life.

Mental illnesses are not a lifelong sentence either. With the right treatment and support from people who can make them feel safe,

many people with mental illnesses are able to lead happy and long lives. Recovery is possible if help is sought on time.

It is important to support and understand the issue of mental health and to let go of the misconceptions and prejudices surrounding it. We also need to educate ourselves regarding this so that the stigma and shame associated with mental illnesses can be done away with.

We need to understand that mental illnesses are just like any other illness. Just like physical diseases, they can be caused by many factors: genetic, environmental, or psychological. And just like physical diseases, they can affect anyone, regardless of age, gender, race, or socioeconomic status. We should be willing to accept that mental illness is not a sign of failure or weakness. They require treatment just like physical illnesses.

If someone is struggling with a mental illness, there are many resources for help. They can talk to their doctor or a mental health professional, who will provide them with the correct diagnosis and recommend options to manage the illness, such as therapy and/or medication. There are many support groups and online communities where people talk about their experiences and support each other through the illness. In online communities, people can even remain anonymous until they are ready to reveal their identity to others. It takes courage to ask for help, and this is the first step towards healing and recovery. The stigma will break only when we start talking openly about mental illnesses and create a society where people support those with mental diseases instead of criticising or shaming them.

In conclusion, mental health is an important topic that deserves our attention and understanding. We should strive to create a more compassionate and supportive society and break down the stigma and taboo associated with mental illnesses. If you're struggling with a mental illness, remember that you are not alone and that there is help available. Let's continue to speak up and stand up for mental health.

-KULMOHAN KAUR



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UNLOCK THE BEST PLACES IN INDIA TO VISIT DURING MONSOON



By Melwyn Williams

India, with its diverse landscapes and breathtaking natural beauty, offers a plethora of enchanting destinations to explore during the monsoon season. As the raindrops kiss the land, a mystical charm engulfs these places, transforming them into picturesque paradises. In this comprehensive guide, we will take you on a journey to the top nine monsoon destinations in India, each with its own unique attractions, rich history, captivating geography, and best ways to reach them. So, pack your bags and get ready to immerse yourself in the magic of the monsoons.

Munnar, Kerala: Where Nature Paints a Mesmerising Canvas



Special Attractions and Importance:

Nestled amidst the Western Ghats, Munnar is renowned for its lush green tea plantations, misty mountains, and cascading waterfalls. The town's cool climate and tranquil surroundings make it an ideal getaway during the monsoons. Explore the Eravikulam National Park, witness the famous Neelakurinji bloom, and indulge in adventurous activities like trekking and paragliding.

History:

Munnar's history dates back to the colonial era, when it served as a summer retreat for the British. The British planters recognised the region's potential for tea cultivation and transformed it into a major tea-producing centre.

Geography:

Located in the Idukki district of Kerala, Munnar sits at an altitude of 1,600 metres above sea level. The town is surrounded by rolling hills, sprawling tea estates, and picturesque valleys. The convergence of three rivers—Mudhirapuzha, Nallathanni, and Kundala—further adds to its natural charm.

How to Reach Munnar:

- **By Air:** The nearest airport is Cochin International Airport, approximately 110 kilometres away. From there, you can hire a taxi or take a bus to Munnar.
- **By Rail:** The nearest railway station is Aluva, located about 110 kilometres away. From Aluva, you can hire a taxi or take a bus to Munnar.
- **By Road:** Munnar is well connected by road, and you can drive or opt for state-run or private buses from nearby cities.

Languages Spoken: Malayalam is the primary language spoken in Munnar. However, English and Hindi are also widely understood and spoken by the locals.

Valley of Flowers, Uttarakhand: Where Nature Unleashes its Colourful Symphony



Special Attractions and Importance:

The Valley of Flowers is a UNESCO World Heritage Site renowned for its vibrant meadows adorned with countless varieties of alpine flowers. During the monsoons, the valley transforms into a kaleidoscope of colours, offering a sight that is nothing short of magical. Explore rare floral species, go trekking in the Himalayas, and soak in the serene ambiance of this floral wonderland.

History:

The Valley of Flowers remained hidden from the world until 1931, when British mountaineer Frank Smythe stumbled upon it during an expedition. It was later declared a national park to preserve its unique flora and fauna.

Geography:

Situated in the Chamoli district of Uttarakhand, the Valley of Flowers lies within the Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve. It is nestled in the western Himalayas at an altitude ranging from 3,250 to 6,750 metres. The valley is surrounded by towering snow-capped peaks, including Nanda Devi, the second-highest mountain in India.

How to Reach the Valley of Flowers:

- **By Air:** The nearest airport is Jolly Grant Airport in Dehradun, approximately 295 kilometres away. From the airport, you can reach the Valley of Flowers by hiring a taxi or taking a bus to Govindghat, the base camp for the trek. From Govindghat, you need to trek approximately 16 kilometres to reach the valley. It is advisable to hire a local guide for a safe and enjoyable trekking experience.
- **By Rail:** The nearest railway station to the Valley of Flowers is Rishikesh, located approximately 275 kilometres away. From Rishikesh, you can hire a taxi or take a bus to Govindghat and then proceed with the trek to the valley.
- **By Road:** The Valley of Flowers is well connected by road. You can reach Govindghat by taking a bus or driving from Rishikesh or other nearby cities. From Govindghat, you can begin your trek to the valley.

Languages Spoken:

The primary language spoken in the region is Hindi. However, due to its popularity among tourists, English is also understood and spoken by locals involved in the tourism industry.

Coorg, Karnataka: Where Misty Hills and Coffee Plantations Beckon



Special Attractions and Importance:

Coorg, also known as Kodagu, is a picturesque hill station famous for its mist-covered hills, lush coffee plantations, and cascading waterfalls. During the monsoons, Coorg comes alive with glistening greenery and a pleasant climate. Explore the Abbey Falls, visit the enchanting Dubare Elephant Camp, savour the flavours of Coorg's renowned coffee, and indulge in thrilling activities like river rafting and trekking.

History:

Coorg has a rich history dating back to ancient times. It was ruled by various dynasties, including the Kadambas, Gangas, Cholas, and Hoysalas. The region played a significant role in the spice trade and later became a part of the British Raj.

Geography:

Located in the Western Ghats of Karnataka, Coorg is characterised by its rolling hills, dense forests, and meandering rivers. It sits at an average elevation of 900 metres above sea level, offering pleasant weather throughout the year.

How to Reach Coorg:

- **By Air:** The nearest airport is Mangalore International Airport, approximately 160 kilometres away. From the airport, you can hire a taxi or take a bus to Coorg.
- **By Rail:** The nearest railway station to Coorg is Mysore Junction, located around 120 kilometres away. From Mysore, you can hire a taxi or take a bus to Coorg.
- **By Road:** Coorg is well connected by road, and you can reach the hill station by driving or opting for state-run or private buses from nearby cities.

Languages Spoken:

The primary language spoken in Coorg is Kodava, which is a unique language with its own script. However, Kannada and English are widely understood and spoken by the locals.

Kodaikanal, Tamil Nadu: The Princess of Hill Stations



Special Attractions and Importance:

Kodaikanal, often referred to as the Princess of Hill Stations, is a charming destination nestled in the Palani Hills of Tamil Nadu. With misty mountains, serene lakes, and enchanting waterfalls, Kodaikanal offers a refreshing escape during the monsoons. Visit the beautiful Kodaikanal Lake, explore the picturesque Coaker's Walk, admire the lush greenery of Bryant Park, and witness the breathtaking Silver Cascade Falls.

History:

Kodaikanal has a fascinating history that traces back to the early 19th century, when it was discovered by the British during their colonial rule. It served as a summer retreat for British officials and missionaries.

Geography:

Situated at an altitude of around 2,133 metres above sea level, Kodaikanal is characterised by its gentle slopes, wooded valleys, and meandering streams. The town is surrounded by dense forests and is located on the southern crest of the upper Palani Hills.

How to Reach Kodaikanal:

- **By Air:** The nearest airport to Kodaikanal is Madurai International Airport, located approximately 120 kilometres away. From the airport, you can hire a taxi or take a bus to Kodaikanal.
- **By Rail:** The nearest railway station is Kodai Road, situated at a distance of about 80 kilometres from Kodaikanal. From Kodai Road, you can hire a taxi or take a bus to reach the hill station.
- **By Road:** Kodaikanal is well connected by road. Regular bus services operate from nearby cities and towns, including Madurai, Coimbatore, and Chennai. You can also drive to Kodaikanal, enjoying the scenic beauty along the way.

Languages Spoken:

Tamil is the primary language spoken in Kodaikanal. However, due to its popularity among tourists, English is widely understood and spoken by locals involved in the tourism industry.

Shillong, Meghalaya: The Abode of Clouds



Special Attractions and Importance:

Shillong, the capital city of Meghalaya, is a breathtaking destination nestled in the lap of nature. Known for its mist-covered hills, cascading waterfalls, and vibrant culture, Shillong offers a unique experience during the monsoons.

Explore the living root bridges in Cherrapunji, visit the picturesque Ward's Lake, soak in the beauty of Shillong Peak, and immerse yourself in the local Khasi culture.

History:

Shillong has a rich history as the capital of the state of Meghalaya. It was originally the capital of the British-administered Assam Province and served as a hill station during the colonial era. After Meghalaya's formation in 1972, Shillong became the capital of the newly-formed state.

Geography:

Situated in the eastern part of Meghalaya, Shillong is located at an average altitude of 1,491 metres above sea level. It is surrounded by rolling hills, deep valleys, and numerous lakes. The city experiences abundant rainfall during the monsoon season, adding to its natural beauty.

How to Reach Shillong:

- **By Air:** The nearest airport is Shillong Airport, also known as Umroi Airport, located approximately 30 kilometres away from the city centre. From the airport, you can hire a taxi or take a bus to reach Shillong.
- **By Rail:** The nearest major railway station to Shillong is Guwahati Railway Station, situated around 100 kilometres away. From Guwahati, you can hire a taxi or take a bus to reach Shillong.
- **By Road:** Shillong is well connected by road. Regular bus services operate from nearby cities like Guwahati and other parts of Meghalaya. You can also hire a taxi or drive to Shillong, enjoying the scenic beauty of the region.

Languages Spoken:

The primary language spoken in Shillong is Khasi. However, English is widely spoken and understood, making it easier for travellers to communicate.

Lonavala, Maharashtra: Where Hills and Waterfalls Unite



Special Attractions and Importance:

Lonavala, nestled in the Sahyadri mountain range of Maharashtra, is a popular monsoon destination known for its lush greenery, misty hills, and magnificent waterfalls. The region offers a refreshing retreat with its pleasant weather and breathtaking landscapes. Explore the stunning Bhushi Dam, trek to the ancient Karla Caves, enjoy panoramic views from Tiger's Leap, and indulge in local delicacies like chikki (a sweet snack) and vada pav (a popular street food).

History:

Lonavala has a rich historical background dating back to ancient times. It was ruled by various dynasties, including the Satavahanas, Rashtrakutas, and Yadavas. The region played a significant role during the Maratha Empire and later became a popular hill station under British rule.

Geography:

Located in the Sahyadri mountain range of the Western Ghats, Lonavala is surrounded by lush green valleys, dense forests, and cascading waterfalls. The town sits at an elevation of approximately 622 metres above sea level, providing stunning views of the surrounding landscapes.

How to Reach Lonavala:

- **By Air:** The nearest airport to Lonavala is Pune International Airport, situated about 65 kilometres away. From the airport, you can hire a taxi or take a bus to reach Lonavala.
- **By Rail:** Lonavala has its own railway station, which is well connected to major cities like Mumbai and Pune. Regular train services operate to and from Lonavala, making it easily accessible by rail.
- **By Road:** Lonavala is well connected by road and can be reached by car or bus. It is located on the Mumbai-Pune Expressway, making it easily accessible from both cities. State-run buses and private vehicles also operate regular services to Lonavala.

Languages Spoken:

The primary language spoken in Lonavala is Marathi. However, due to its popularity among tourists, Hindi and English are also widely understood and spoken by the locals.

Tawang: Discover the Tranquil Beauty of the Himalayas



Special Attractions and Importance:

Tawang is most famous for its grand Tawang Monastery, also known as Galden Namgyal Lhatse, which is the largest Buddhist monastery in India and the second-largest in the world. The monastery, built in the 17th century, holds immense religious and cultural significance for Buddhists. Its stunning architecture, vibrant prayer halls, and exquisite murals attract pilgrims and tourists alike.

Another significant attraction in Tawang is the majestic Tawang War Memorial, built to commemorate the martyrs of the 1962 Indo-China War. The memorial houses a museum that displays artefacts, photographs, and documents related to the war, offering a glimpse into the region's history.

Geography and Climate:

Tawang is located at an elevation of around 3,048 metres (10,000 feet) above sea level, making it one of the highest inhabited regions in India. Surrounded by snow-capped peaks, lush valleys, and glistening lakes, the town presents a stunning panorama of natural beauty. The monsoon season brings abundant rainfall, which nourishes the verdant landscapes and adds to the region's charm.

How to Reach Tawang:

- Reaching Tawang can be an adventure in itself due to its remote location.
- The nearest airport is Tezpur Airport, located approximately 317 kilometres away. From Tezpur, one can hire a taxi or take a shared jeep to reach Tawang. It is advisable to plan for a two-day journey with an overnight stay in Bomdila.
- Tawang is also accessible by road from Guwahati, the capital city of Assam. The distance between Guwahati and Tawang is approximately 521 kilometres, and the journey takes around 12–15 hours. Regular bus services and private taxis are available for this route.

Languages Spoken:

The local language spoken in Tawang is Monpa, which is also the predominant ethnic group in the region. However, Hindi and English are widely understood and spoken due to the influx of tourists.

Wayanad: Exploring the Green Paradise of Kerala



Special Attractions and Importance:

Wayanad is renowned for its wildlife sanctuaries, spice plantations, and breathtaking viewpoints. One of the must-visit attractions is the Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary, home to a diverse range of flora and fauna, including elephants, tigers, leopards, and various species of birds. Exploring the sanctuary through guided jeep safaris and trekking trails is a thrilling experience for wildlife enthusiasts.

Another popular attraction in Wayanad is the breathtaking Chembra Peak. Trekking to the summit of this peak rewards visitors with panoramic views of the surrounding hills, mist-covered valleys, and a heart-shaped lake known as the Chembra Lake. The trek is a challenging yet rewarding adventure that takes approximately 3–4 hours.

Geography and Climate:

Wayanad is located at an altitude ranging from 700 to 2100 metres above sea level, providing it with a pleasant climate throughout the year. The region is blessed with a tropical



TRAVEL & LEISURE

monsoon climate, making it a perfect retreat during the monsoon season when the hills come alive with lush greenery and cascading waterfalls. The rainfall during this time adds to the region's charm, creating a romantic and serene atmosphere.

How to Reach Wayanad:

- **By Air:** The nearest airport to Wayanad is Calicut International Airport, located approximately 100 kilometres away. From the airport, one can hire a taxi or take a bus to reach Wayanad. The journey offers scenic views as you traverse through the winding roads of the Western Ghats.
- **By Rail:** For those travelling by train, the nearest railway station is Kozhikode (Calicut) Railway Station. From there, you can avail yourself of regular bus services or hire a taxi to reach Wayanad.
- **By Road:** By road, Wayanad is well connected to major cities in Kerala and neighbouring states. Regular bus services operate from cities like Bangalore, Mysore, Kochi, and Ooty, making it easily accessible by road.

Languages Spoken:

The primary language spoken in Wayanad is Malayalam, which is the official language of Kerala. However, due to the popularity of the destination among tourists, English and Hindi are also widely understood and spoken by the locals.

India boasts a myriad of enchanting destinations that come alive during the monsoon season. Whether it's the misty hills of Munnar, the vibrant blooms of the Valley of Flowers, the tranquil beauty of Coorg, the serene lakes of Kodaikanal, the lush landscapes of Shillong, the cascading waterfalls of Lonavala, the spiritual ambiance of Tawang, the green paradise of Wayanad, or the majestic charm of Mahabaleshwar, each place offers a unique experience that leaves a lasting impression.

Embrace the monsoon season and embark on a journey to these mesmerising destinations, where nature's beauty is at its peak. Immerse yourself in the lush greenery, breathe in the fresh air, and witness the captivating landscapes that paint a picture of serenity and tranquility. These best places to visit in India during the monsoon season will undoubtedly create memories to cherish for a lifetime.

So, pack your bags, grab your raincoat, and get ready to explore the hidden gems of India as they come alive with the magic of the monsoon.

Happy travels!

- MELWYN WILLIAMS

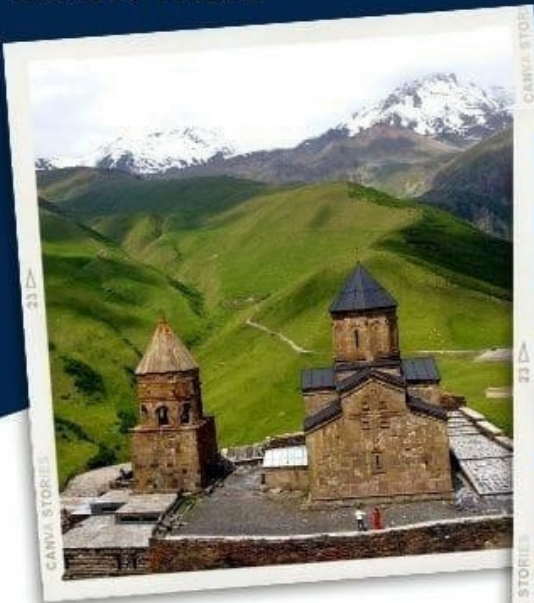


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FROM THE
KITCHENS
OF INDIA



PICKLED ONIONS

Sirke Wale Pyaaz are renowned for their vibrant pink hue and delightfully tangy crunch.

Pickled Onions

Authentic Punjabi Pickled Onions | Sirke Wale Pyaaz Recipe

Sirke Wale Pyaaz are renowned for their vibrant pink hue and delightfully tangy crunch. These pickled onions, often served alongside piping hot Tandoori rotis at the iconic Dhabas (roadside restaurants) in India, bring a burst of flavour to any meal. Prepare them quickly and effortlessly with this easy recipe.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup sliced red onions or whole pearl onions, peeled
- ½ cup white vinegar
- ½ cup water
- 1 teaspoon of salt
- 1 teaspoon of sugar
- 1-2 slit Serrano chilies

Ingredients:

1. In a pan, warm the water and add salt and sugar. Stir until dissolved, then remove from heat.
2. Add the vinegar and mix well.
3. Place the onions and chilies in a glass jar.
4. Pour the warm vinegar water over the onions.
5. Cover the jar and refrigerate.
6. Allow the onions to pickle for at least 24 hours before using.

Notes:

- For the best flavour, consume the pickled onions within 5-7 days.
- You can reuse the vinegar mixture to pickle more onions. Simply add additional onions once the previous batch is finished.

Indulge in the tangy and vibrant Sirke Wale Pyaaz as they enhance the taste of your favourite Indian dishes. These pickled onions are also a perfect addition to sandwiches and salads, infusing them with a burst of pink and pungent flavours.





Coffee Ice Cream

By Sudha Mukhopadhyay



Take your coffee to another level...

Who can say no to ice cream, especially when the weather continues to be hot? And if you are a coffee aficionado, then you must make this ice cream; I guarantee you will love it.

I never had coffee or tea during my school days. It was only after I started college that I had my first cup of coffee or tea. I somehow never took a liking to tea from day one. But I liked the coffee. Being born and brought up in South India, it was filter kaapi, degree coffee, and Kumbakonam coffee that gave me an insight into the coffee world.

A special attraction of a South Indian coffee was the act of lifting the tumbler with the coffee to a considerable height and tactfully pouring it into the dabara container from that height (without spilling). What a wonderful sight to behold!

These coffees were staples in South Indian households long before modern-day cafe chains serving lattes and mochas became fashionable in urban India.

Now, sometimes, not only do I have coffees of different makes, such as pumpkin spice lattes, mochas, cappuccinos, etc., but I also use coffee in ice cream. I think the combination of coffee and ice cream is just divine. It is a perfect marriage between the two, particularly if one is looking for flavour and texture in one combo.

And this coffee ice cream recipe is the perfect answer. It is a very simple one with just three ingredients:

Ingredients:

Whipping cream - 600 ml
Condensed milk - 400 gms
Coffee powder - 1 table spoon, dissolved in a bit of water. I used instant coffee powder.

Method:

1. In a bowl, whip the cream for about 4-5 minutes until semi-stiff peaks are formed.
2. Add the dissolved coffee to the cream and beat again until it is well incorporated.
3. Add the condensed milk and fold it into an even consistency.

You now have a gorgeous, cafe-latte-coloured, airy mixture. You can add a few chocolate chips to this mix if you wish.

4. Pour into an airtight box and freeze for about six hours. Your home-made ice cream is ready.

It's a great way to cool down during the summer. You can top up your scoop with sprinkles, chocolate shavings, butterscotch, caramel, hot fudge, or whatever else you want. You can even add a scoop of this ice cream to your cold coffee. Just get creative.

I make ice creams of different flavours, such as vanilla, chocolate, saffron, mango, and blueberries. But coffee ice cream is my all-time favourite.

"Ice cream contains protein and fat, both of which our bodies need to help level our moods. On top of that, the amino acids you take in when eating ice cream, such as tryptophan, are known to increase serotonin production. That leaves us feeling calm, satisfied, and, well, happy!"...from a Google search.

**I want to have some coffee.
A cold and creamy coffee,
So why not have some ice cream,
That has in it the coffee?**

**I scream,
You scream,
We all scream for ice cream. Don't we?**

Life is like ice cream. So please, enjoy it before it melts.

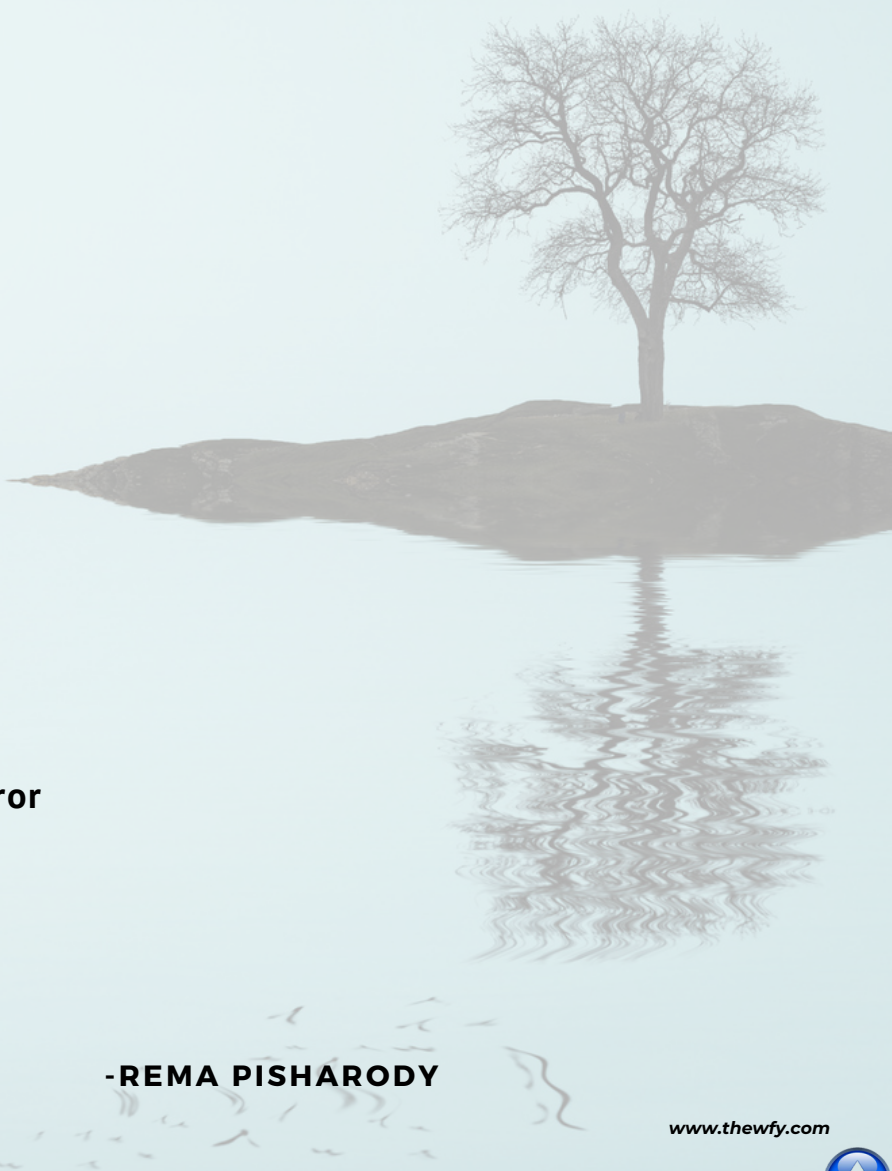
- SUDHA MUKHOPADHYAY



REFLECTIONS

By Rema Pisharody

Mirror in a wall
reflects a portrait,
Of us in a medium,
Which artfully covers
The endless pain
sorrows, summers
And rains for us
In a captivating silken smile..
It is not transformation,
It is a pact our heart
And mind endorse
On our face to hide
The cascading emotions,
Like in magic
To prove a watchful
World that how splendid
our dreams and dawns!
We reflect a self through a mirror
In one smile of spring.
Perhaps in solitude
Deep inside our heart
We cry a river of sorrow
With no mirror around,
To reflect our true self..



-REMA PISHARODY



By Sarmistha Dey

An Invitation to Rain

Distance is a fear
Emptiness is the nightmare in the heart
Though my heart stands amongst the crowded

This is how the days and nights ends every day
Stopped in the pages of memory
A thousand debts of love.

Days and nights that have passed by are not worth to be counted.
My hands still waits for my friend to hold me and drag me down to the
playground
Gone are the sweet afternoons playing with toys , giving marriages to dolls
Gone are the wet dream filled nights

Come down rain
drop down
Let's erase the distance -drought.
Let it come to the heart again and bring colorful
days.
In between some lovely laughs
Forget the pain with satisfaction
May the remaining days be filled with love

- SARMISTHA DEY



EMBRACING VERSATILITY: INTERCHANGEABLE WORK TITLES IN A DYNAMIC PROFESSIONAL WORLD

-By Tushar Unadkat

In today's dynamic and ever-evolving professional landscape, the concept of multiple interchangeable work titles has gained prominence. This phenomenon reflects modern careers' versatile and adaptable nature, where professionals often take on diverse responsibilities and work across different domains. While other job titles may traditionally entail distinct sets of responsibilities and areas of expertise, there is an increasing overlap in skills and duties that makes them somewhat interchangeable in specific contexts.

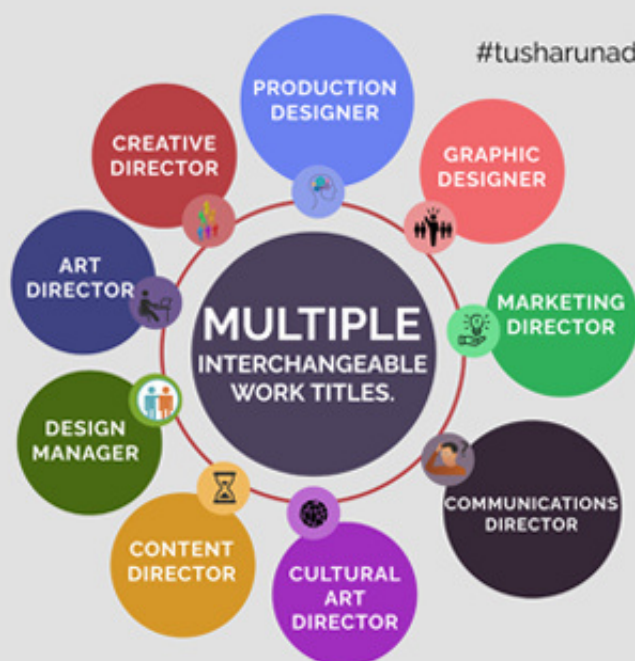
Several factors drive the rise of multiple interchangeable work titles. First and foremost, the rapid technological advancements and the digital transformation of industries have resulted in the convergence of roles and new interdisciplinary fields. Professionals must possess a broader skill set that spans multiple domains as traditional boundaries between disciplines blur.

This necessitates a flexible approach to job titles, as individuals often perform tasks traditionally assigned to different roles.

Moreover, the evolving nature of work contributes to the prevalence of interchangeable titles. Professionals in today's fast-paced and project-based work environments often expect adaptability and versatility. They may be assigned to different projects or teams, requiring them to switch between roles and wear multiple hats. Thanks to this fluidity, organizations maximize the efficiency and productivity of their workforce by deploying individuals to different tasks based on their skill sets and the project's needs.

While the concept of multiple interchangeable work titles can vary across industries and organizations, several common examples illustrate this trend:

1. Creative Director/Art Director/Cultural Art Director: These titles often involve leading and managing the creative vision of a project or organization. While the focus may differ, the core responsibilities revolve around integrating design direction, overseeing artistic elements, and ensuring a cohesive and impactful creative output.
2. Graphic Designer: Graphic designers are responsible for creating visually compelling content, ranging from illustrations to layouts and digital graphics. They collaborate closely with other creative roles, such as art directors and creative directors, to bring their vision to life.
3. Design Manager: Design managers oversee design teams and projects, ensuring the successful execution of design concepts. They handle resources, timelines, and budgets while aligning design strategies with creative objectives. As traditional boundaries between disciplines blur, professionals must acquire a broader skill set that spans multiple domains.
4. Communications Director: Communications directors lead the development and implementation of communication strategies, encompassing branding, public relations, and messaging. They work closely with creative teams to ensure consistent and effective communication across various channels.
5. Content Director: Content directors are responsible for managing and strategizing content creation across various mediums, including written, visual, and multimedia formats. They collaborate with graphic designers, art directors, and other creatives to align content with brand messaging and creative direction.
6. Marketing Director: Marketing directors oversee comprehensive marketing strategies and campaigns, covering market research, branding, advertising, and promotions. They often collaborate with graphic designers, art directors, and other creative professionals to develop visually appealing and engaging marketing materials.



Multiple job titles within the creative industry share transferable skills.

While these titles can be interchangeable, the specific responsibilities and requirements may vary based on the organization and industry. The flexibility in job titles allows professionals to adapt to evolving demands and leverage their skills across different contexts, enhancing their professional growth and opportunities.

However, individuals must strike a balance when navigating multiple interchangeable work titles. While embracing versatility and exploring diverse opportunities can be beneficial, it's equally important to identify core strengths and areas of specialization. Focusing on these strengths while remaining open to learning from others and embracing new perspectives allows professionals to maximize their potential and excel in their chosen career paths.

In summary, multiple interchangeable work titles reflect the evolving nature of today's professional landscape. It signifies the versatility and adaptability required in a dynamic work environment where professionals often take on diverse responsibilities and work across different domains. By embracing this flexibility,

-TUSHAR UNADKAT



DDOS ATTACK

WHAT IS A DDOS ATTACK? KNOW HOW TO OVERCOME ONE

-WFY Bureau, UK.

DDoS Attack Explained

A DDoS Attack, short for Distributed Denial-of-Service Attack, is a cybercrime where an assailant inundates a server with internet traffic to prevent users from accessing connected online services and sites.

Motivations for conducting DDoS attacks vary greatly, as do the types of individuals and organisations eager to engage in this form of cyberattack. Some attacks are carried out by disgruntled individuals and hacktivists aiming to bring down a company's servers merely to make a statement, exploit cyber vulnerabilities for amusement, or express disapproval.

Other distributed denial-of-service attacks have financial motives, such as a competitor disrupting or disabling another business's online operations to gain an advantage. There are also instances of extortion, where perpetrators target a company, install hostage or ransomware on their servers, and demand a substantial sum to undo the damage.

DDoS attacks are increasing, and even the largest global companies are not immune to being targeted. The largest attack in history occurred in February 2020, targeting none other than Amazon Web Services (AWS), surpassing a previous attack on GitHub two years earlier. The repercussions of DDoS attacks include a decrease in legitimate traffic, lost business, and damage to reputation.

As the Internet of Things (IoT) continues to expand and the number of remote employees working from home increases, the number of devices connected to networks will also rise. The security of each IoT device may not always keep pace, leaving the network vulnerable to attacks. Therefore, the significance of DDoS protection and mitigation cannot be overstated.

How do DDoS Attacks Function?

A DDoS attack aims to overwhelm the devices, services, and network of its target by flooding them with fake internet traffic, rendering them inaccessible or useless for legitimate users.

DoS vs. DDoS

A distributed denial-of-service (DoS) attack is a subcategory of the broader denial-of-service (DoS) attack. In a DoS attack, the attacker uses a single internet connection to bombard a target with fake requests or attempts to exploit a cybersecurity vulnerability. DDoS attacks are on a larger scale, employing thousands or even millions of connected devices to achieve their objectives. The sheer volume of devices used makes DDoS attacks significantly more challenging to combat.

Botnets

Botnets are the primary method through which distributed denial-of-service attacks are carried out. The attacker hacks into computers or other devices and installs malicious code, or malware, known as a bot. These infected devices form a network called a botnet. The attacker then commands the botnet to overwhelm the victim's servers and devices with more connection requests than they can handle.

Understanding DDoS Attacks: Attack Indicators and Identification

One of the main challenges in identifying a DDoS attack is that the symptoms often resemble typical service issues. Many symptoms, such as slow upload or download speeds, website unavailability, dropped internet connections, unusual media or content, or excessive spam, are encountered in everyday technology use.

Furthermore, a DDoS attack can persist for hours or even months, and the intensity of the attack can vary.

Types of DDoS Attacks

Different attacks target various components of a network and are classified based on the network connection layers they exploit. An internet connection consists of seven distinct "layers," as defined by the Open Systems Interconnection (OSI) model created by the International Organization for Standardization. This model enables different computer systems to communicate effectively.

Volume-Based or Volumetric Attacks

This type of attack aims to saturate the available bandwidth between the victim and the wider internet. An example of a volume-based attack is DNS amplification. In this scenario, the attacker spoofs the target's address and sends a DNS name lookup request to an open DNS server using the spoofed address.

When the DNS server responds with the DNS record, it is sent to the target instead, resulting in an amplification of the attacker's initial small query.

Protocol Attacks

Protocol attacks consume all the available capacity of web servers or other resources, such as firewalls. They exploit weaknesses in Layers 3 and 4 of the OSI protocol stack to render the target inaccessible.

A SYN flood is an example of a protocol attack where the attacker overwhelms the target with a vast number of Transmission Control Protocol (TCP) handshake requests using spoofed source Internet Protocol (IP) addresses. The targeted servers try to respond to each connection request, but the final handshake never occurs, overwhelming the target in the process.

Application-Layer Attacks

These attacks also aim to exhaust or overwhelm the target's resources but are challenging to identify as malicious. Commonly known as Layer 7 DDoS attacks, they target the layer where web pages are generated in response to Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP) requests.

In this form of attack, the attacker forces the victim's server to handle a higher volume than usual. An HTTP flood is an example of an application-layer attack, similar to refreshing a web browser simultaneously on multiple computers. This inundation of HTTP requests overwhelms the server, resulting in a DDoS.

Preventing DDoS Attacks

While it is challenging to avoid DDoS attacks completely due to their detection complexity, organisations can plan a response when these attacks occur, as prevention is not always possible.

DDoS Mitigation

Once a suspected attack is underway, organisations have several options to mitigate its effects.

Risk Assessment

Regular risk assessments and audits of devices, servers, and networks are essential for organisations. Although it is impossible to entirely prevent a DDoS attack, having a comprehensive understanding of the strengths and vulnerabilities of hardware and software assets is crucial. Identifying the most vulnerable segments of a network helps determine the appropriate strategies to minimise the damage and disruption caused by a DDoS attack.

Traffic Differentiation

If an organisation suspects a DDoS attack, it is crucial to determine the quality or source of the abnormal traffic. Completely shutting off traffic is not feasible, as it would affect legitimate connections along with the malicious ones. Implementing an Anycast network can help disperse the attack traffic across a network of distributed servers, allowing for better absorption and manageability of the traffic.

Black Hole Routing

Black hole routing is another defence strategy where a network administrator or an organisation's internet service provider creates a black hole route and directs traffic into it. This approach routes all traffic, both good and bad, to a null route, effectively dropping it from the network. However, this method can be extreme, as it also stops legitimate traffic, potentially leading to business losses.

Rate Limiting

Mitigating DDoS attacks can involve limiting the number of requests a server can accept within a specific time frame. While this measure alone may not be sufficient against more sophisticated attacks, it can be a component of a multi-faceted approach.

Firewalls

To mitigate the impact of application-layer or Layer 7 attacks, organisations can employ a Web Application Firewall (WAF). A WAF acts as a reverse proxy, sitting between the internet and a company's servers. By creating a set of rules, organisations can filter requests and modify them based on observed

patterns of suspicious activity conducted by the DDoS.

If an organisation suspects a DDoS attack, determining the quality or source of the abnormal traffic becomes one of the initial steps. However, completely blocking all traffic is not a viable solution, as it would disrupt legitimate connections as well. Instead, organisations can opt for an Anycast network approach, dispersing the malicious traffic across a network of distributed servers. This enables the network to absorb the traffic more effectively and handle it in a manageable manner.

Another defensive measure is black hole routing, where a network administrator or internet service provider establishes a black hole route and directs traffic towards it. This effectively drops all traffic, both legitimate and malicious, from the network. It should be noted that this approach can be extreme, as it may result in the loss of legitimate traffic and a potential business impact.

Rate limiting is another technique used to mitigate DDoS attacks by restricting the number of requests a server can accept within a specific time frame. While this method alone may not suffice against more advanced attacks, it can be part of a comprehensive defence strategy.

Implementing a Web Application Firewall (WAF) can help mitigate the impact of application-layer or Layer 7 attacks. By acting as a reverse proxy between the internet and a company's servers, a WAF allows organisations to create rules that filter and manage requests. These rules can be adjusted based on observed patterns of suspicious activity associated with the DDoS.

-WFY BUREAU, UK.

In summary, when facing a suspected DDoS attack, organisations should conduct a risk assessment to understand their vulnerabilities. By implementing traffic and filtering techniques such as Anycast networks, black hole routing, rate limiting and Web Application Firewalls, organisations can enhance their ability to detect and mitigate DDoS attacks effectively.

DDoS ATTACK

THE GIGANTIC SOLAR STORM: IS THE INTERNET ACTUALLY AT RISK?

-By WFY Bureau, Germany.

A possible internet apocalypse due to a solar storm

In an increasingly interconnected world, the internet has become an essential lifeline for communication, commerce, and global connectivity. However, lurking beyond the confines of our planet lies a powerful force capable of disrupting this intricate web of connectivity – the solar storm. With NASA's recent groundbreaking mission, the Parker Solar Probe (PSP), venturing into the treacherous space of solar winds, scientists are uncovering crucial insights about the potential impact of solar storms on Earth's internet infrastructure. This article aims to explore the captivating realm of solar storms, their effects on our digital ecosystem, and the steps being taken to mitigate the looming threat of an "internet apocalypse." Additionally, we will delve into the formation and history of the solar system to better comprehend the intricate dance between the sun and Earth.

Understanding Solar Storms and Their Implications

Solar storms manifest as atmospheric disturbances that emanate from the sun, affecting our planet through the winds generated in its vicinity. These storms are triggered by solar flares and coronal mass ejections (CMEs), which propel electromagnetic fields toward Earth. Essentially, they involve a stream of charged particles beaming from the sun's outermost atmosphere, known as the corona.

NASA's extensive research indicates that solar activity follows an approximate 11-year cycle, with peak periods witnessing multiple solar storms daily. Conversely, during other phases, these storms may occur less frequently, possibly once a week or even less.

However, the consequences of solar storms can be far-reaching. These tempests possess the potential to incite

geomagnetic storms capable of disrupting satellite signals, radio communications, and even electrical power grids. A notable example of the disruptive power of solar storms occurred in 2011, when a powerful event hampered radio communications in southern regions of China. Looking further back into history, the famous "Carrington Event" of 1859 mesmerised the world with awe-inspiring auroras triggered by a solar storm of unprecedented magnitude. The 'Carrington Event' is named after British astronomer Richard Carrington, who witnessed and documented the phenomenon in 1859. During this event, an intense solar storm unleashed a massive coronal mass ejection (CME) towards Earth. The impact was extraordinary, causing brilliant auroras to be visible as far south as the Caribbean and even disrupting telegraph systems worldwide.

The 'Carrington Event' serves as a stark reminder of the destructive power of solar storms and their potential to disrupt communication and electrical systems on a global scale. Scientists study this event extensively to understand the dynamics of solar storms and their potential impacts on modern infrastructure.

Since the 'Carrington Event,' numerous studies and technological advancements have shed light on solar storms and their potential consequences. Scientists have developed sophisticated tools and models to monitor solar activity and predict the likelihood of geomagnetic storms. One notable initiative is the Solar Dynamics Observatory (SDO), launched by NASA in 2010, which provides detailed observations of the sun's magnetic field, solar flares, and coronal mass ejections. These advancements in solar research enable us to better understand the behaviour of solar storms and improve our preparedness for potential disruptions they may cause. By studying past events like the 'Carrington

TECHNOLOGY

Event' and conducting ongoing research, scientists aim to enhance our ability to forecast and mitigate the impact of solar storms on critical infrastructure such as the internet and power grids.

The Threat of the 'Internet Apocalypse'

In light of the potential havoc solar storms can wreak upon our interconnected digital infrastructure, the concept of an "internet apocalypse" has become a concerning topic. Scientists have long warned that a particularly potent solar storm event could transpire within the next decade, posing significant obstacles to the internet providers' infrastructure worldwide.

The implications of such an event are nothing short of catastrophic, potentially leading to a global blackout that hampers communication on a monumental scale. Moreover, critical supply chains for essential goods, including food, water, and medicines, could suffer severe disruptions, further exacerbating the consequences of an "internet apocalypse."

Unveiling the Solar System's Origins and Dynamics

To comprehend the intricacies of solar storms and their relationship with Earth, it is essential to explore the formation and history of our solar system. Approximately 4.6 billion years ago, a swirling cloud of gas and dust underwent gravitational collapse, giving birth to our sun at its core. As the sun ignited, it started to radiate immense energy, causing the surrounding matter to coalesce into a disc known as the protoplanetary disc. Over time, this disc became the cradle for the formation of planets, including our very own Earth.

The sun, a majestic celestial body at the heart of our solar system, is composed primarily of hydrogen and helium. Through the process of nuclear fusion, the sun continuously emits vast amounts of energy, sustaining life on Earth and driving the complex dynamics of our planetary system. However, the sun's unpredictable nature also manifests in the form of solar storms, wherein solar flares and CMEs disrupt the delicate equilibrium of our space environment.

Efforts to Safeguard Against Solar Storms

Recognizing the severity of the threat posed by solar storms, scientists and organizations are actively working to develop strategies and technologies to safeguard our digital infrastructure. NASA's Parker Solar Probe (PSP) mission, launched five years ago, marks a significant milestone in our quest to understand solar storms and their potential impact

on Earth. By embarking on a daring trajectory that takes it close to the sun's surface, the PSP aims to gather invaluable data and insights that can inform future mitigation efforts.

One approach being explored is the development of advanced early warning systems. By closely monitoring the sun's activity and detecting signs of potential solar storms, scientists can provide timely alerts, allowing internet service providers and other critical infrastructure operators to take preventive measures. This proactive approach can help mitigate the damage caused by solar storms and minimize the disruption to our digital ecosystem.

Furthermore, the creation of robust and resilient communication networks is essential in preparing for solar storm events. Implementing redundancy measures, such as backup satellite systems and alternative routing options, can help ensure that internet connectivity remains available even in the face of disruptions. Additionally, the deployment of enhanced shielding technologies for satellites and other critical infrastructure can provide an added layer of protection against the adverse effects of solar storms.

Furthermore, the creation of robust and resilient communication networks is essential in preparing for solar storm events. Implementing redundancy measures, such as backup satellite systems and alternative routing options, can help ensure that internet connectivity remains available even in the face of disruptions. Additionally, the deployment of enhanced shielding technologies for satellites and other critical infrastructure can provide an added layer of protection against the adverse effects of solar storms.

Solar storms represent a formidable force that has the potential to disrupt our interconnected world. With the internet serving as a vital lifeline for communication, commerce, and global connectivity, the looming threat of an "internet apocalypse" cannot be taken lightly. Through pioneering missions like NASA's Parker Solar Probe, we are gaining invaluable insights into the nature of solar storms and their potential impact on Earth. By investing in early warning systems, fortifying critical infrastructure, and fostering collaboration among stakeholders, we can mitigate the risks associated with solar storms and ensure the resilience of our digital ecosystem. As we continue to explore the wonders of our solar system, it is crucial that we remain vigilant and prepared to face the challenges posed by these celestial phenomena.

-WFY BUREAU, Germany.



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The Most Expensive And Pioneering Colleges In The World

By WFY Bureau, UK.

Education is often seen as a priceless investment, but some institutions take the concept of "expensive education" to a whole new level. In this article, we delve into the world of the most expensive colleges, exploring the reasons behind their hefty price tags and uncovering what makes them so sought-after. From the venerable halls of Harvard University to the prestigious campuses of Stanford, Oxford, Cambridge, MIT, Caltech, Duke, and USC, we embark on a journey to understand the history, admission process, fees, and scholarships associated with these renowned institutions. Join us as we explore the fascinating world of these educational powerhouses.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY



Country USA. World Ranking #1.
The average fee for an year is \$47,085

Harvard University stands atop the list as one of the most renowned and expensive colleges globally. Its rich history, exceptional faculty, and extensive resources contribute to its prestigious status. Established in the mid-15th century, Harvard has consistently maintained its position as a world leader in academia. We delve into why Harvard is so sought-after, tracing its beginnings to clergyman John Harvard, and highlight the vast array of financial assistance, extracurricular activities, and diverse community that make it an attractive choice for students.

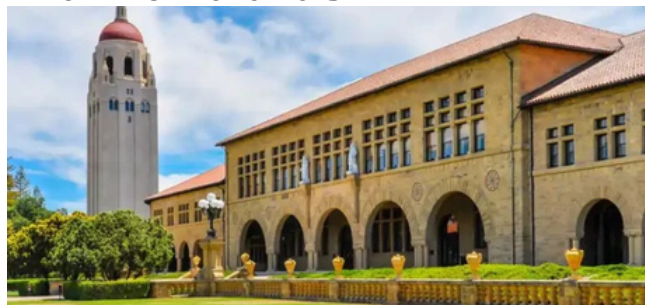
STANFORD UNIVERSITY



Country USA. World Ranking #3.
The average fee for an year is \$51,000

Stanford University, situated in California's vibrant environment, ranks among the world's top universities and is renowned for its innovation and academic excellence. As we delve into Stanford's history and background, we uncover why it holds a prominent position on the list of the most expensive colleges. With its sprawling campus and focus on sports, traditions, entrepreneurship, and social life, Stanford offers students a unique and enriching experience. We also explore the university's commitment to financial aid, ensuring access for students from diverse backgrounds.

THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD



Country UK. World Ranking #5.
The average fee for an year is \$62,000

Steeped in tradition and academic excellence, the University of Oxford boasts a rich history spanning centuries. As the second-most popular continuous-operation college after Harvard, Oxford is renowned for its world-class education and impactful research. We delve into the reasons why Oxford holds a place among the most expensive colleges and explore the research opportunities, inclusive community programmes, diverse clubs and societies, and extensive network system that make it an alluring choice for students. Additionally, we shed light on the scholarships and college funds available to support students during their Oxford journey.

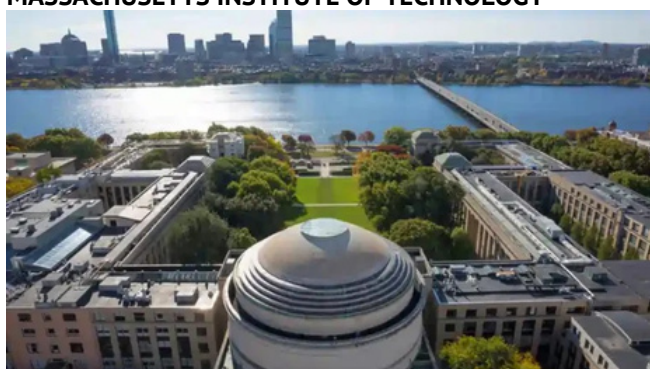
THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE



Country UK. World Ranking #4.
The average fee for a year is \$40,000

Stanford University, situated in California's vibrant environment, ranks among the world's top universities and is renowned for its innovation and academic excellence. As we delve into Stanford's history and background, we uncover why it holds a prominent position on the list of the most expensive colleges. With its sprawling campus and focus on sports, traditions, entrepreneurship, and social life, Stanford offers students a unique and enriching experience. We also explore the university's commitment to financial aid, ensuring access for students from diverse backgrounds.

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

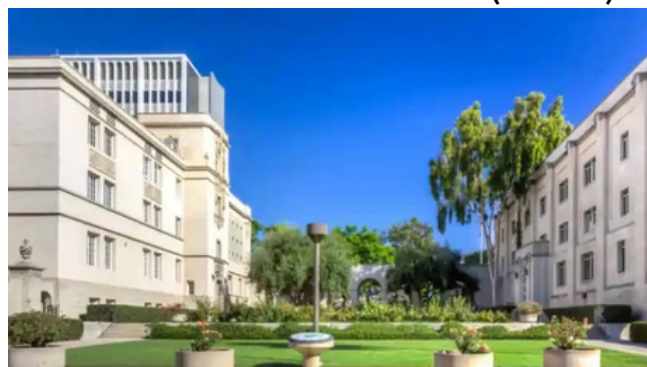


Country USA. World Ranking #2.
The average fee for an year is \$65,500

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) is synonymous with cutting-edge scientific research and technological innovation. Established in the mid-17th century, MIT ranks high among the world's most prestigious universities. We examine why MIT's specialised programmes in industrial science and engineering contribute to its position as one of the most expensive colleges. From its renowned faculty to its demanding curriculum, we uncover the benefits for international students and the exceptional student experience offered at MIT. Additionally, we shed light

on the pleasant campus environment, placement opportunities, and the university's focus on developing entrepreneurs and technical professionals.

CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY (CALTECH)



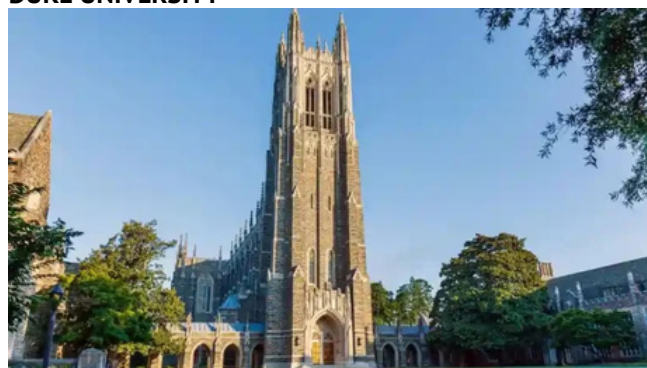
Country USA. World Ranking #9.
The average fee for an year is \$78,000

The California Institute of Technology, commonly known as Caltech, is a private research university located in Pasadena, California. Founded in 1891, Caltech has earned a reputation as one of the world's top universities, particularly in the fields of engineering and science. The institution's rigorous academic programmes, including its emphasis on fundamental scientific principles and problem-solving skills, attract students seeking a challenging educational experience.

Caltech's admissions process is highly selective, with an acceptance rate of around 6%. The university considers various factors when evaluating applicants, including their academic achievements, extracurricular activities, personal qualities, and potential for future success. With a student body passionate about scientific exploration, Caltech provides a stimulating environment that fosters collaboration and innovation.

In terms of cost, attending Caltech comes with a significant price tag, placing it among the most expensive colleges in the world. The annual cost of attendance, which includes tuition, room, board, and other expenses, is estimated to be around \$78,000. However, Caltech offers a range of scholarships, grants, and financial aid options to support students in managing their educational expenses. These opportunities ensure that deserving students can pursue their academic ambitions at Caltech, regardless of their financial background.

DUKE UNIVERSITY



Country USA. World Ranking #25.
The average fee for an year is \$80,000

Duke University, situated in Durham, North Carolina, is a private university known for its strong academic programmes and research initiatives. Founded in 1838, Duke has established itself as a prestigious institution with a focus on medicine, public policy, engineering, and the humanities. With a student body of

ACADEMICS

approximately 16,000 undergraduate and graduate students, Duke offers a vibrant and diverse campus community.

The university provides a wide range of academic programmes, including over 80 majors and minors for undergraduate students as well as over 120 graduate and professional degree programmes. Duke's commitment to excellence in teaching and research has earned it a place among the top universities in the USA.

Attending Duke University comes with a substantial financial commitment. The estimated cost of attendance, including tuition, room, board, and other expenses, is around \$80,000 per year. However, Duke offers financial aid packages and scholarships to assist students in financing their education. These opportunities aim to make a Duke education accessible to talented individuals from various backgrounds.

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA



Country USA. World Ranking #27.

The average fee for an year is \$72,000

The University of Southern California (USC), located in Los Angeles, California, is a renowned private research university. Founded in 1880, USC has a long history of excellence and innovation, with a strong emphasis on research and a commitment to societal impact. The university's dedication to fostering a vibrant intellectual community has contributed to its reputation as one of the oldest and most prestigious institutions in the Western United States.

USC offers over 150 academic programmes across a wide range of fields, including engineering, film, business, law, medicine, and social work. The university's programmes in film and media studies are particularly noteworthy, as are its highly ranked professional schools in law, business, and medicine.

Attending USC requires a significant financial investment. The estimated cost of attendance, including tuition, room, board, and other expenses, is currently around \$80,000 per year. However, USC recognises the importance of financial aid in ensuring access to education. The university provides scholarships, grants, and other financial assistance programmes to support students in pursuing their academic goals.

One reason for the high costs associated with these prestigious institutions is their unwavering commitment to engaging the most skilled and qualified teaching faculty. These colleges understand the critical role that exceptional professors and instructors play in providing a top-notch education. To attract and retain the most accomplished educators, these institutions invest significantly in recruiting and compensating faculty members who are experts in their fields. The calibre of teaching staff directly contributes to the quality of education offered, making it a worthwhile investment for both the colleges and the students. By assembling a

faculty comprised of renowned scholars, researchers, and industry professionals, these colleges ensure that students receive instruction from the forefront of knowledge and expertise. This commitment to excellence further justifies the higher tuition fees charged by these institutions, as students benefit immensely from the guidance and mentorship of exceptional faculty members throughout their academic journey.

The most expensive colleges in the world are not merely institutions of learning; they represent a culmination of history, academic excellence, and a commitment to nurturing the minds of future leaders. From Harvard's prestigious legacy to the technological innovations at MIT, each of these institutions justifies its high cost through the quality of education, resources, and opportunities it offers. Students who aspire to attend these prestigious institutions often seek out the best education, unparalleled faculty, and extensive networks that can shape their future.

The journey to seek admission to these colleges is a highly competitive one. Students must demonstrate exceptional academic achievements, engage in extracurricular activities, and showcase their unique qualities to stand out among a pool of highly qualified applicants. Each college has its own specific admission criteria, including standardised test scores, recommendation letters, personal essays, and interviews. Prospective students should carefully research and understand the requirements and deadlines associated with their desired college to maximise their chances of acceptance.

The cost of attending these prestigious institutions is undoubtedly a significant consideration for students and their families. The high tuition fees, coupled with living expenses, can be a substantial financial burden. However, it is crucial to note that these colleges also provide various scholarship and financial aid options to make education more accessible. Scholarships can be merit-based, need-based, or a combination of both. Students should explore the scholarship opportunities available at each institution and understand the application process to alleviate the financial strain associated with attending these colleges. These colleges offer a wealth of resources, cutting-edge research opportunities, exceptional faculty, and a diverse and vibrant community.

While the cost of attending these institutions may be high, it is essential to recognise the value they provide in terms of education, networking, and future opportunities. The decision to pursue education at one of these prestigious colleges requires careful consideration and planning, taking into account personal goals, financial circumstances, and the potential return on investment.

In conclusion, the most expensive colleges in the world justify their high costs through their longstanding reputations, exceptional educational programmes, and extensive resources. They attract students who seek an enriching and transformative educational experience. While the financial commitment may be daunting, these institutions also offer scholarships and financial aid options to ensure access for deserving students. Aspiring students should thoroughly research these colleges, understand their admission requirements, and explore the available financial assistance to make informed decisions about their educational journey. Ultimately, attending one of these esteemed institutions can provide a solid foundation for a successful and fulfilling career in academia, research, or various other fields.

-WFY BUREAU, UK.



World Economy On The Verge Of Monumental Breakdown?

By WFY Bureau.

The global economy is standing at a critical juncture, facing a myriad of challenges and uncertainties that threaten to reshape the economic and socio-political landscape. The International Monetary Fund's (IMF) latest World Economic Outlook (WEO) report paints a subdued picture, with a projected global growth rate of 2.4% at market exchange rates for 2023, reflecting a decline from the 3% growth recorded in the previous year. Despite the improved forecast compared to earlier projections, the overall trend indicates a significant decrease in global output and trade. In this article, we delve into six major events and trends that are shaping the world economy and generating concerns among experts.

Climate Change Threatens Stability:

The alarming updates on climate change presented in the April 2023 annual report from the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) underscore the escalating threats to our planet. Extreme weather events, shrinking sea ice and glaciers, rising sea levels, and increasing concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere are among the indicators signalling an urgent need for action. The failure of key nations, particularly wealthier ones, to address this pressing issue has overshadowed global well-being, with short-term political interests taking precedence. Unfortunately, the prospects for meaningful mitigation efforts remain dim.

The Unregulated Advancement of AI:

The widespread use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) applications, including the surge in popularity of chatbots like ChatGPT, has raised significant social and political concerns. The emergence of generative language models poses unprecedented challenges due to their unregulated advancement and application. Esteemed AI developers and intellectuals are now calling for sensible and viable regulatory mechanisms to control this "genie" before its

potentially destructive consequences become irreversible. The outcome of ongoing initiatives in Europe and the United States will shape the future of humankind.

Amplified Risks of Nuclear Power:

Recent developments have amplified the risks associated with nuclear power. The precarious situation at Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, operating in a war zone without external backup power, poses a severe threat in the event of a failure. Concerns about the integrity of Pakistan's nuclear command and control system have also arisen amidst the country's persistent state of crisis. Additionally, reports of Iran's imminent attainment of weapons-grade uranium enrichment, coupled with an aggressive stance from the hard-right Israeli government, have heightened the possibility of a pre-emptive strike with unknown consequences.

Debt Ceiling Drama and Global Implications:

The self-imposed debt ceiling issue in the world's most economically and militarily dominant nation has highlighted the high costs associated with deep political divisions. The last-minute agreement to avert a US government default on its debt has provided only temporary relief, deferring the underlying issue until January 2025. However, this leaves little time for future administrations to address the lingering dilemma. Holders of US dollar debt instruments worldwide may seek viable alternatives, potentially inflicting significant costs on the global economy.

Tensions in the Taiwan Strait:

China's escalated aggressive posture and activities concerning Taiwan and the Taiwan Strait pose a serious threat to regional stability. Despite attempts by the US to ease tensions, the likelihood of a tense military incident has increased, leaving a clear resolution elusive. The implications of any escalation in the region could have far-reaching consequences for global trade and geopolitical dynamics.

Uncertainties in the US Presidential Election:

Looking ahead to the US presidential election in November 2024, a scenario involving two elderly statesmen, Joe Biden and Donald Trump, competing for the presidency is increasingly probable. Concerns about Biden's physical stamina and Trump's ongoing legal challenges and questions regarding his mental aptitude raise doubts about the stability of the world's political landscape and economy.

As the global economy stands at a crossroads, it faces a multitude of challenges and uncertainties that demand immediate attention. The projected growth rate of 2.4% in the IMF's latest World Economic Outlook report reflects a decline from the previous year, underscoring the need for comprehensive solutions. Climate change looms as a grave threat, demanding urgent action from nations worldwide. The unregulated advancement of artificial intelligence poses unforeseen risks, requiring sensible regulatory mechanisms. The amplified dangers associated with nuclear power and the self-imposed debt ceiling issue in the United States further exacerbate the global economic landscape. Tensions in the Taiwan Strait add to the complexity, while uncertainties surrounding the US presidential election raise concerns about future leadership.

Addressing climate change is imperative to ensure a sustainable future. The alarming updates from the WMO emphasise the urgent need for comprehensive measures to mitigate the escalating impact of extreme weather events, rising sea levels, and greenhouse gas emissions. Wealthier nations must prioritise the long-term well-being of the planet over short-term political interests, and global collaboration is crucial to driving effective change.

The unregulated advancement of artificial intelligence, particularly generative language models, presents a double-edged sword. While AI applications have the potential to revolutionise various industries, concerns about their ethical and social implications have grown. The urgent call for regulatory frameworks aims to strike a balance between technological advancement and safeguarding human values. Establishing responsible AI practises will shape the trajectory of AI's impact on society and ensure its positive contribution.

The risks associated with nuclear power have reached a critical juncture. The situation at Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, operating in a war zone without external backup power, demands immediate attention to prevent a potential catastrophe.

Similarly, concerns surrounding Pakistan's nuclear command and control system must be addressed to maintain stability and reliability. The potential consequences of Iran's uranium enrichment and the possibility of a pre-emptive strike from Israel introduce further uncertainty, emphasising the need for diplomatic resolutions and de-escalation.

The self-imposed debt ceiling issue in the United States serves as a stark reminder of the costs associated with political divisions. The temporary agreement merely postpones the underlying dilemma, creating uncertainty and raising concerns among global investors. As alternative options to the US dollar gain attention, the potential ripple effects on the global economy loom large. Addressing the structural issues underlying the debt ceiling debate becomes crucial to restoring stability and maintaining confidence in the global financial system.

The tensions in the Taiwan Strait have escalated, posing a significant risk to regional stability and global trade. The international community must actively engage in diplomacy and dialogue to find peaceful resolutions and avoid potential military incidents. The implications of any escalation in the region could disrupt supply chains, impact economies, and exacerbate geopolitical rivalries.

Looking ahead to the US presidential election, the possibility of a competition between two elderly statesmen, Joe Biden and Donald Trump, presents its own set of uncertainties. Concerns about their physical and mental fitness raise questions about effective leadership and the direction of US policies. The outcome of the election will undoubtedly shape the global political landscape and have implications for international relations and the economy.

The global economy is navigating a complex web of challenges and uncertainties. Climate change, unregulated AI advancement, nuclear risks, debt ceiling dramas, geopolitical tensions, and uncertain leadership create a volatile landscape that demands collective action and prudent decision-making. International cooperation, responsible governance, and proactive measures are essential to steering the global economy towards a more stable and sustainable future. The stakes are high, and the time to act is now.

- WFFY BUREAU



**By Manoj K
Sharma**

US Visa Renewal For Indians Becomes Easy, Know It All

Easier Visa Renewal for Indians in the US, Boosting India-US Ties

In a significant move that strengthens India-US ties, the Joe Biden administration in the United States has announced measures to make it easier for Indians to live and work in the country. This development comes in the wake of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's state visit to the US. The State Department has revealed that a small number of Indians and other foreign workers holding H-1B visas will now be able to renew their visas within the US without the need to travel abroad.

The H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa category that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in specialised occupations. Annually, the US government issues 65,000 H-1B visas to corporations, which are valid for three years and can be renewed for an additional three years.

According to a report by India Today's Data Intelligence Unit (DIU), over the past decade, Indians have consistently received over 60 percent of H-1B visa approvals each year. In 2013, out of approximately 2.86 lakh H-1B visas approved, more than 1.87 lakh visas were granted to Indians, representing a significant 65.3 percent approval rate. Since then, the number of Indians with H-1B visas has been steadily increasing.

However, there was a decline in approved visas for Indians in 2018 and 2019, with approximately 2.43 lakh and 2.78 lakh visas approved, respectively. The trend reversed in FY 2020, witnessing a 3.2 percent increase in H-1B visa approvals, with Indians receiving about 3.19 lakh visas out of the total 4.26 lakh visas approved globally. The latest data from the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (FY 2022) indicates that 72.6 percent of H-1B visas were issued to Indians, with over 3.20 lakh out of more than 4.41 lakh petitions approved. Notable companies utilising H-1B workers include Infosys, Tata Consultancy Services, Amazon, Alphabet, and Meta, according to US government data.

In contrast to the H-1B visa, the situation for student visas in the US has been different. Student visas include the F1 visa, the M1 visa, and the J1 visa. Data from the US Department of

State reveals that in 2013, only 43 thousand petitions, accounting for just five percent of student visas, were approved for Indian students, while nearly 8.58 lakh petitions were approved globally. However, there has been a positive shift in recent years. In 2017, 7.1 percent of US student visas were granted to Indians. In FY 2021 and 2022, there was a notable increase in Indian students receiving US visas. In 2021, more than 85,000 Indian students were granted US visas out of almost 5 lakh globally, accounting for a share of over 17.4 percent. The following year saw a further rise, with a total of 1.26 lakh Indian students receiving student visas out of a total of 7 lakh, resulting in an 18 percent share.

Open Work Permit in Canada

Canada has announced a new "Open Work Permit Stream" that allows 10,000 H-1B visa holders from the United States to work in Canada. This initiative could benefit thousands of Indian technical professionals. Canada has been playing a leading role in emerging technologies, and it hopes that professionals affected by significant cutbacks from US companies will be attracted to its program. The Minister of Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship, Sean Fraser, stated that the Canadian government will establish an "Open Work Permit Stream" by July 16, which will enable 10,000 American H-1B visa holders to work in Canada.

Furthermore, the programme will also grant study or work permits to the families of these employees. According to CBC News, Fraser mentioned that the government will develop a stream by the end of this year for some of the world's most talented individuals who can come to Canada to work in technical companies. However, he did not specify the eligibility criteria or the number of individuals who would be admitted through this stream. The easier visa renewal process for Indians in the US, along with Canada's initiative to welcome H-1B visa holders, provides significant benefits to skilled professionals and their families. These measures not only strengthen the bond between India and the US but also open doors for opportunities and growth in the technological sector, ensuring a positive and collaborative relationship between the two nations.

-MANOJ K SHARMA



To Be Or Not To Be Healed: Life Tested

by Dr. Suyash Jha

Healing is seen as an interaction between the healer and the healed, i.e., the physician and the patient. There are times, however, when the healing does take place, but the lines between the healer and the healed are blurred.

I, too, had such an experience. This goes back to the time when I was a resident doctor. The Government decided that all residents must complete a 3-month stint at their District Hospital. As a result of this, I would often find myself bereft of all the gadgetry and fast responsiveness that my home hospital would afford me in a more slowed-down and borderline lackadaisical setting.

On one such uncomfortably humid May morning, I walked in two people who accepted convention would call the patient and the patient attendant. Our patient was a middle-aged lady dressed in a pink salwar, almost rebellious in its brightness, with makeup that seemed to be done in an earnest yet unprofessional manner. Our attendant was dressed in a simple white shirt and black pants, bespectacled, and carrying a bag.

The attendant signalled to me as he guided the patient to my OPD room and said, "Sir, the patient is blind." I helped our patient to a chair, and she sat down looking rather pensive and explained to me how her asthma had been acting up and she was finding it difficult to breathe.

I detected a hint of a Bengali accent. Thanks to a few proselytising Bengali friends from the old days, I picked up a few words here and there and decided to use that as a gateway to get our patient to be more relaxed and open up. What followed was my poorly pronounced 'ki holo?', 'ami jaani, and 'kakhana theke?'. The attendant spoke in a mix of Kannada and English, elaborating on every statement that our patient made. We spoke briefly about the weather and Kolkata, a city I had only visited once, and gradually developed a rapport.

After a brief history, I could not help but be intrigued by the picture that was before me.

I couldn't help but ask, "So has the blindness been since birth, or did it happen later?"

"It happened 10 years ago; almost all of a sudden one night, I just could not see anything", she said in a tone that suggested she had told the same story at least a few times before but wouldn't mind going through it again once more.

"I flew her down to NIMHANS, Bangalore, that very night, and they diagnosed a stroke causing cortical blindness and said that nothing much could be done." The attendant replied, whom I then assumed to be the husband.

A cortical stroke is essentially when that part of the brain gets affected that regulates sight. It is a rare occurrence, especially at a younger age.

"Since then, I have learned to read and write in Braille; I am a PhD in English Literature, you see," our patient said in a tone that seemed to break a familiar sadness, one that had been practised several times before.

"Oh yes, what do you like to read?" I said, as I was more than ready to move the conversation in a different direction.

"Oh, I love Shakespeare and Shaw", she said.

"So what would you say was Gloucester's real blindness in King Lear?", I asked, almost poking

"Of course, the fact that he could not see through Edmund!"

By around this time, the atmosphere felt more informal and conversational, and the attendant started to speak more. I had in front of me a blind, asthmatic, well-read lady with a seeming two states type of story.

Gradually, they told me the story of how they came to meet. He was a young software engineer who had moved to Pune for education, and she was an English graduate in Kolkata. The two met on an online matrimonial site, right when these startups were quite literally just starting up.

"The first few years of our marriage were just the best! Everything was just perfect! But then the blindness

happened," he said as he showed me a picture in his wallet of the two of them from way back in the day. I thought to myself, what if they knew what was coming their way when that picture was taken?

By around this point in the conversation, I realised that the labels of physician, patient, and attendee had melted, and what was happening was that three people, the human beings, were talking. As physicians, we often see pain, death, and trauma that obviously get to us vicariously. Now add to that this was during residency, which is an extremely stressful and "toxic" time when a lot of young physicians tend to slip into depression. I, too, at this point in my life, felt burdened by a lot of these pains. As is the nature of such maladies, they raise their heads almost every day. It was as if the pain that I had carried had met the pain that our dear lady and man had carried, realised how small it was, and decided not to raise its head that day.

Trying to get back to the presenting complaint "When did the breathlessness start ", I asked

"Since the pregnancy." She replied.

"So how many children do you have?" I asked in return.

"None...the one that I had passed away in about 8 months", in a tone that seemed to suggest that the pain was still being processed but would never quite be processed.

My pocket-sized pain had zipped itself into a bag and decided not to show itself for a week by now.

"You know, doctor, he takes such good care of me! He wakes up at 5 every morning and cleans the house and dresses me!" Our lady said it again, breaking the overcast sadness with a ray of redemption.

"A beautiful lady should always be dressed well!" added our man.

"I can't see what kind of crazy make-up this man puts on me! Tell me, doctor, do I look good today?" She asked me in a tone that had almost forgotten all the traumatic events that we had spoken of.

The pocket-sized pain that I spoke of earlier was haranguing on my insides, and all I could muster was a poignant "Khoob bhalo!".

The innocence of her question seemed to be a rebellion against the tragedies that she had seen. Her voice and expression had a genuine inquisitiveness and desire to hold onto what was good in life. Our beloved couple seemed to celebrate each other despite the hand that life had dealt them. They seemed to rebel against each tragedy that they had thus faced and still have a zest for life that only comes out in a genuine, humane conversation.

Asthma is what brought her to me, but by now I didn't know who was healing whom. Asthma is a condition in which the airways narrow and the patient feels breathless. But the catch is that it is reversible, oftentimes with medication, and the breathlessness improves and almost normalises. Perhaps that is how sadness and pain are inflicted on our lives. There are events and times that make it hard for the light to get in, render us breathless, or make it too dark.

"Asthma is more about control and less about cure", I often tell my patients. Perhaps such is life—a series of breaths between bouts of breathlessness.

I adjusted some of our patient's medications, and hopefully the air will reach her lungs better and the light will reach my life a bit better now.

-Dr. SUYASH JHA





By Saji Chacko

Trials To Triumph: The Remarkable Life Of Mohini, The Olympian

In Sanskrit, Mohini means ‘someone who mesmerises.’ True to her name, Mohini Bhardwaj, an American of Indian origin, mesmerised her rivals and fans with her heroic exploits in the gymnastic arena.



Mohini Bhardwaj is one of the greatest gymnasts of Indian origin, if not the greatest. A silver medalist at the 2004 Athens Olympics, backed by a bronze medal at the World Championships, is a top draw.

More importantly, Mohini's saga of hard work and determination shows the champion that she is. One of the biggest struggles of her life came just before she won the silver medal in the Athens Olympics, which will be discussed at length in the latter part of this article. It must be mentioned here that her early life was marred by small incidents that almost cost her career.



In her young days, Mohini took to gymnastics at the tender age of 4. It was her father, Anil, who prompted her to take up the sport. She was living in Cincinnati at that point in time and attending the Seven Hills School. As she showed a lot of promise early on, her parents decided to pack her off to Brown Gymnastics, one of

the most reputed gymnastic institutions in the country. As her coach, Alexander Alexanderov, moved to Houston, Mohini had to move along to the new city in Texas.

As a 16-year-old all by herself in a new city, Mohini could not handle the newfound freedom and started a wayward lifestyle—smoking and drinking—as she lost her zeal and love for the sport. It was here that her father, Anil, played a pivotal role in ensuring that she not only got back on track but emerged as a stronger contender.

Soon, Mohini was making her presence felt at the national level as one of the most promising gymnasts. She was among the top 10 ranked athletes in the US Olympic trials, but she failed to make the cut for the Atlanta Olympics by a hairline margin of 0.075. “I was disappointed, obviously, but then my coach told me to train harder and see the results. His words were like Gospel to me, and I was back to training at my 200 percent,” said Mohini.



Mohini Bhardwaj and Chris Waller

Thereafter, Mohini, under the tutelage of renowned coach Valorie Field, came out with some of the best performances of her life when she outshone everyone and won a record 23 titles at the college level. Representing the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), Mohini won a record 11 titles. “There is no doubt that my stint at UCLA is something that I will always cherish,” said Mohini.

Fresh from her exploits at the college level, Mohini then threw herself into the mean and tough world of professional gymnastics. She soon made her mark and was selected for the US team for the 2001 World Championships in Ghent. She played a pivotal role in the US women’s team winning the bronze medal in the team championships.

“The bronze at the 2001 World Championships was without a doubt one of the highpoints of my career. I was just 23 years old at that point in time and was very happy with my exploits. I think what that bronze medal did was instill in me a sense of self-belief that I could perform at the highest level. The bronze medal

at the Worlds was like a shot in my arm,” opined Mohini.

Mohini also had words of praise for her parents. “My parents were like the Rock of Gibraltar. They stood solidly behind me and backed me to the hilt. At no point in time did they even question my decision to take gymnastics full-time,” she said.



There is an adage in English: The darkest hour is before dawn. In real-life parlance, it signifies that before a highpoint in someone’s life, there is an extreme lowpoint. In Mohini’s case, a similar thing happened before her greatest moment of triumph.



Mohini had been targeting a podium finish at the 2004 Athens Olympics. But then, in preparation for the world’s greatest sporting spectacle, her performances were quite disappointing. She failed to make the cut for the US team as she could only manage a 12th place in the trials. Luck was on her side when a leading gymnast, Ashley Postell, injured herself, and she took her place.

However, Mohini’s tribulation didn’t end here, as he ran short of cash, and without a sponsor, her preparation almost reached a dead end. She tried her hands at odd jobs—working as a waitress, pizza delivery—just about anything that could help her sustain her Olympic dreams. Unfortunately, nothing seemed to work, and she was on the verge of pulling out of the Olympics when she received help from a Godsend quarter.

It so happened that Baywatch star Pamela Anderson came to know about Mohini’s travails and decided to fund her Olympic dream. She donated \$20,000, which was good enough to ensure Mohini’s Olympic participation. “I cannot thank God and Pamela enough

SPORTS

for what they did to me. But for that critical help from Pamela, the Olympics would have been history for me," she said.

Thereafter, Mohini scripted history when she won a silver medal in the team Championships for the US. This epoch-making Olympic silver medal catapulted her as the greatest athlete of Indian origin across the world.

When asked whether she thought about coming to India and starting a gymnastics centre, Mohini said that right now she had no such plans. 'But maybe, who knows? Sometime in the future, I might be doing that,' she said.

-SAJI CHACKO



Women's Gymnastics 1995 - 1998	
2013	
Mohini Bhandwaj Barry	Mohini Bhandwaj Barry
Women's Gymnastics	Women's Gymnastics
1998 - 2001	1998 - 2001
Carlos Bocanegra	Carlos Bocanegra
Men's Soccer	Men's Soccer
1997 - 1999	1997 - 1999
Fred Belling	Fred Belling
Men's Wrestling	Men's Wrestling
1976 - 1979	1976 - 1979
Eric Bynes	Eric Bynes
Baseball	Baseball
1995 - 1998	1995 - 1998
Maylana Martin Douglas	Maylana Martin Douglas
Women's Basketball	Women's Basketball
1997 - 2000	1997 - 2000
Nandi Pryce	Nandi Pryce
Women's Soccer	Women's Soccer
2000 - 2003	2000 - 2003
Wanda Gág	Wanda Gág
Baseball	Baseball
1995 - 1998	1995 - 1998





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Our Mission

To empower the diaspora to be a force for good through a global platform to collaborate, build community engagement and catalyse social change.

Our Vision

Make this world a better place by spreading the spirit of Indianism.

Our Focus

Let's celebrate the spirit of Indianism and rediscover our roots by rekindling the relationships.

To empower the diaspora to be a force for good through a global platform to collaborate, build community engagement and catalyse social change.

We are a group of Indian origin individuals from diverse backgrounds and professions who are committed to inspiring the diaspora to be a force for good by providing a platform to collaborate, build community engagement, and catalyse social change.

Connecting Dots..... Connecting Roots

Let's make this World a better place by spreading the spirit of Indianism. Let the World take note of us as the true Human and lead by our example.

Our Team, our members shall be committed to building stronger communities with a culture of giving and inspiring social change. We endeavor to engage culturally with the help of Indian wisdom passed on to us by our ancestors.

By sharing insight, hosting events and connecting people, Indian Diaspora aims to bring together the professionally, geographically and religiously diverse people of Indian origin toward collective action worldwide.



@globalindiandiaspora



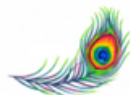
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INDIAN DIASPORA GLOBAL MOVEMENT

OUR PRESENCE



Africa **B**ahrain **C**anada **G**eorgia **G**ermany
India **I**reland **M**alaysia **O**man **Q**atar
Singapore **T**hailand
United Kingdom **U**nited States Of America

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SEEKING 'DUAL CITIZENSHIP' IN INDIA FOR THE
INDIAN DIASPORA SPREAD ACROSS THE GLOBE.

KEEP
THE
DOOR
OPEN



INDIAN DIASPORA GLOBAL

Africa, Australia, Bahrain, Canada, Georgia, Germany, India, Ireland,
Malaysia, New Zealand, Oman, Qatar, Singapore, Thailand, UK, USA.
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