

#HARMONY

Universal Hour of Peace

Every year on December 31st, thirty minutes before midnight, is Universal Hour of Peace.



Set intention and focus by building peaceful relations locally, nationally and internationally. Get the year started off on the right foot by observing and paying heed to the *Universal Hour of Peace*. Beginning just 30 minutes before the clock strikes twelve on New Year's Eve and ending at 12:30 A.M. on January 1, the Universal Hour of Peace is celebrated in each time zone, rendering it a full 24-hour celebration all throughout the world.



History of Universal Hour of Peace

For more than two decades, individuals and groups of people around the globe have been joining together to celebrate peace and, at the same time, calling the people of the world to live at peace. Conceived of by Dr. Barbara Condon from the School of Metaphysics, the first

Universal Hour of Peace was celebrated in 1985. Although the first year's celebration took place on October 24, coinciding with the 50th anniversary of the United Nations, the following year, the day was moved to December 31 and January 1, where it has been celebrated annually ever since.

Significance

Amid wars and conflicts all around the world, wouldn't it be nice if just one hour could be spent peacefully each year? This idea is what propels the Universal Hour of Peace, a global celebration of cooperation and love. The motto of the hour is to spend the hour from 11:30 PM of

December 31 to 12:30 AM of January 1st, without any sort of fighting or conflict. Soldiers will hold their fire and family members will stop their squabbling so that everyone can celebrate the New Year in peace and hope that the tradition will continue on through the year.

How is it observed?

Various organisations around the world hold events supporting an hour of peace. These events include prayer, music, poetry or speeches. The efforts, whether the gatherings are small or large, are focused on spreading

the word of 'peace' in every heart and mind regardless of faith. People, to observe the universal hour of peace, can engage with a peace vigil, read and share about peace, or participate in activities organised to observe the hour.

HERE ARE SOME QUOTES TO CONSIDER FOR THE UNIVERSAL HOUR OF PEACE.

- **Mahatma Gandhi** "Peace will not come out of a clash of arms but out of justice lived and done by unarmed nations in the face of odds."
- **Albert Einstein** "Peace cannot be kept by force. It can only be achieved by understanding."
- **Martin Luther King, Jr.** "Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that."
- **The Dalai Lama** "We can never obtain peace in the outer world until we make peace with ourselves."
- **Eleanor Roosevelt** "It isn't enough to talk about peace. One must believe in it. And it isn't enough to believe in it. One must work at it."
- **Nelson Mandela** "If you want to make peace with your enemy, you have to work with your enemy. Then, he becomes your partner."



Two Old Men Looking For The Dawn

In course of a heated debate in the Lok Sabha, barbs of criticisms from the Opposition were directed at Dr Singh. It had become acerbic and bitter when Dr Singh had taken the opposition attacks somewhat emotionally, and as far as I remember, offered to step down. Fast came the denouement. The hardcore politicians were a little flabbergasted at the turn of events. Strode into this scene, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, then in the Opposition benches. He said Dr Singh should not take any of the fierce criticisms of his government policies from the Opposition members "personally". Nothing is meant. This was part of the whole show. And then came the best part of his advice to Singh: develop a thick skin as a politician. He had grown old listening to insults and abuses, Vajpayee had thrown in. Unfortunately, Dr Singh had not apparently imbibed Vajpayee's advice. Dr Singh had offered to resign on several occasions during his tenure as finance minister and as prime minister.



Atal Bihari Vajpayee greets his successor Manmohan Singh at the National Integration Council meeting in New Delhi on August 31, 2005.



Anjan Roy
A renowned veteran journalist, having worked with *Business Standard* and the *Telegraph*.

Dr Manmohan Singh was not a typical politician. He spent his career as a technocrat who had managed India economic policy as the top bureaucrat and a professional economist. Hardcore politicians could not have appreciated him; nor could he have fathomed the politicians' wiles.

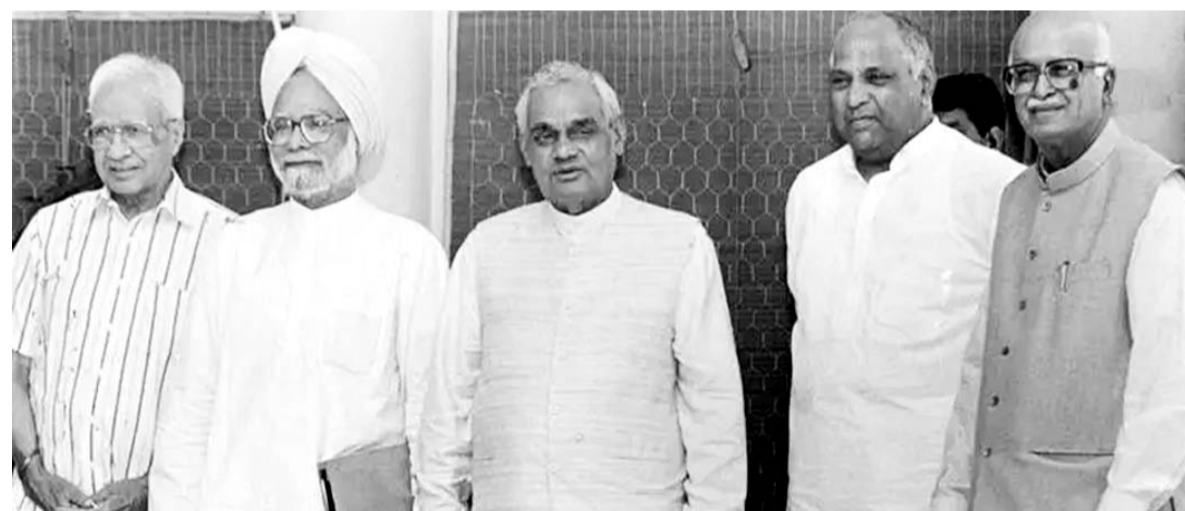
This awkward lack of understanding had manifested itself time and again. This had given rise to politicians often insulting him when he was holding the highest political office in the country. I suppose there was mutual lack of understanding. This is vindicated in Pranab Mukherjee's comments on Manmohan Singh in his memoirs, although these were laced by his personal animosity as well. The differences in their wavelengths had come out in so many ways in course of his interactions in parliament and other fora. In course of a heated debate in the Lok Sabha, barbs of criticisms from the Opposition were

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For members of the Delhi press, covering the finance ministry in those days of India's worst economic crisis and hectic reforms, he was the "daktar sab". This was coined for us, as far as I recall over a gap of thirty years, by Alok Mukherjee of The Hindu Business-line. Alok spent the greater part of his boyhood days in Chandigarh and was fluent in Punjabi. He would pronounce this in typical Punjabi intonation. Alok died untimely and that day the PIB had issued a

#MANMOHAN SINGH



The Prime Minister, Mr. A.B. Vajpayee, is seen with the former Finance Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, Congress leader Mr. Sharad Pawar, and Home Minister Mr. L.K. Advani during a meeting in New Delhi on May 14, 1998.

message condoling his sudden demise, prompted I suppose by the "daktar sab". Handling the deep economic reforms for a large country like India was no child's play. The risks involved were tremendous. I remember meeting "daktar sab" during an interview in his chamber in the North Block. The finance minister's room is a cavernous, somewhat oblong space and the finance minister's table was at one end. A visitor had to traverse the whole length to reach FM's desk.

The interview was at the end of the Narasimha Rao government's tenure when election had already been announced. There was surely an air of uncertainty and Dr Singh looked somewhat detached by then. As I was leaving, it was his usual civility to walk his guest upto the door. There, I was standing outside, and at the threshold, I thought I would take my final shot. I threw in: "What was his greatest worry while launching the various reforms he did?"

Came his answer in a ruminating tone: "Not to disrupt the Indian economy and upset the whole country like it had happened in the last days of Soviet Russia. The Russian reforms had suddenly destroyed the Soviet economic structure and that resulted in immense suffering of the peo-

ple. There had been rampant unemployment and incomes dropped for all Russians. Industries had come to a standstill. My fundamental concern was to sequence the reforms so that none of that kind of disruption happened in India."

I had some personal experience of that disruption in course of several visits to that country. The Russian experience was all too stark in those days when Soviet Union had virtually collapsed and the tumult continued for years. I recalled my own memories of the Soviet Union in its failing days where I happened to visit during the "Perestroika and glasnost" period. Even the bread in the eateries were stale and rock hard. But those inedible bread crumbs were in short supply and people scrambled for these. We were fortunate in India, that the unavoidable reforms were handled with empathy for the general public's discomforts and measures were timed so that we avoided the disruptions that many countries had gone through.

The reason that Manmohan Singh could nudge his reforms to limit disruption was because he was never an effusive man. He was always measured. Even though he was an enthusiastic reformer, he was yet measured in his structuring and introduction of reforms. He was against gung-ho reforms

Kwanzaa

The roots of Kwanzaa have a long history, even tracing as far back as the 'first harvest' celebrations in Africa. Historical records show how these first harvest celebrations have ancient origins. Much evidence suggests that it originated in regions like Nubia and Egypt. Kwanzaa is a week-long celebration. It's more of a marathon of a holiday, not a one-day sprint. The annual holiday is observed in nations with populations of African descendants. This event celebrates the indelible mark left by their rich contributions to culture throughout the entire African diaspora.



PART:2



Finance Minister who changed India.

but only mildly. That evening Governor Venkitaraman admitted to the journalists that they were all worried over the move, fearing if the rupee went on a free fall. What would happen to the economy and its imports, to the prices and the production chain. Exchange rate reform was however a long process of liberalisation of the rupee, spread over several years. At the end of the transition, the rupee became fully convertible on current account.

That is what we saw as journalists from the ringside - a little more than the public but possibly not the full picture. Montek Ahluwalia gives us a backstage view in his eponymous book which is astounding. The recount reveals the probity in Manmohan Singh's life.

Dr Manmohan Singh had served as chairman of the South Commission in Geneva for a couple of years before he came back to India and subsequently happened to be the finance minister. Writes Montek Ahluwalia: "When he (Dr Singh) remitted his savings from his stint with the South Commission in Geneva, he calculated the gain in rupee value of his savings because of the devaluation he had ordered and donated the calculated gain to the Prime Minister's Relief Fund".

Amazing! Isn't it, in the general context of the behaviour of our Hardcore politicians. But in the end, whatever he was in his per-

sonal life, it is also true that Manmohan Singh had turned often enough and turned as the wind blew in diverse directions. Here was the contrast between his steadfast principles in personal life, his personal austerity (as I saw during some visits to his home before he became finance minister) and the ambivalence in political and policy stance.

Here was the Great Liberaliser, who in the 1970s, played his role in bank nationalisation and formulation of the foreign exchange regulation act - he had turned a full 360 degrees by the 1990s.

One had only to remember the days of controlled exchange rate system and the draconian FERA law, despite which a "hawala" market in rupee was flamboyantly operating. The exchange rate reform was a two stage process, involving two devaluations that were introduced and then culminated in full current account convertibility. Montek Ahluwalia's *Backstage* devotes quite some attention to this move, which he also says was the lynchpin of the entire reforms structure. I remember the day the Indian rupee was devalued and put on a float. It was a Monday and the governor of the Reserve Bank of India, S. Venkitaraman, had flown down from Bombay. There was palpable excitement in the air. At the end of the day's trading, the governor met a few journalists when the first day's trading had ended and the anxiety was over. The rupee had depreciated,

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Former Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh being ushered to the 2019 Change Maker Awards by K. Venugopal, founder editor of business line.

#TRENDING

Instagram Captions to Welcome 2025 with a Bang

Funny puns, sweet sentiments and more to pair perfectly with your fun end-of-the-year pics.



If there's one holiday we're prime to take photos for, it's New Year's Eve. Something about celebrating the beginning of a new year makes it easy to dress up in glitzy outfits, grab a glass (or two) of champagne and spend the countdown to midnight, taking endless photos with our friends and family. And the only thing more fun than snapping pics is sharing them on social media along with some well-wishes and cute messages. And our list of punny, sweet and inspirational New Year's captions will make it easier to quickly pick your favourite snapshot and post to Instagram.



Funny New Year's Instagram Captions

- Glitter is the only option.
- New year. Overdue.
- See you next year.
- But first, we toast.
- 2024? I don't know her.
- "Thank U, Next." - Me to 2024
- Expecting a clever caption? That was so last year.
- 365 new days. 365 new excuses.
- May all your troubles last as long as your resolutions.
- I can't believe it's been a year since I didn't become a better person.

- I was going to quit all my bad habits for the New Year, but then I remembered that nobody likes a quitter.
- I would lose weight for my New Year's resolution, but I hate losing.
- "My vibe right now is just living life." - Kourtney Kardashian
- "Come quickly, I am tasting the stars." - Dom Perignon

Inspirational New Year's Instagram Captions



- Let the next adventure begin.
- The first day sets the tone for the entire year. Here's how I'm starting mine.
- New year, new beginnings.
- 2025 will be my year.
- 12 new chapters, 365 new chances.
- What's coming is better than what's going.
- Page 1 of 365.
- New year. New feels. New chances. Same dreams.
- Appreciative of the lessons 2024 brought and the growth 2025 will show.
- "No matter how hard the past is, you can always begin again."
- - Jack Kornfield
- "Cheers to a new year and another chance for us to get it right."
- - Oprah Winfrey
- "For last year's words belong to last year's language. And next year's words await another voice."
- -T.S. Eliot
- "Today is where your book begins. The rest is still unwritten."
- -Natasha Bedingfield, 'Unwritten'
- "There are far, far better things ahead than any we leave behind." -C.S. Lewis
- "Don't go through life, grow through life."
- -Eric Butterworth
- "You're off to great places! Today is your day! Your mountain is waiting. So, get on your way!"
- -Dr. Seuss

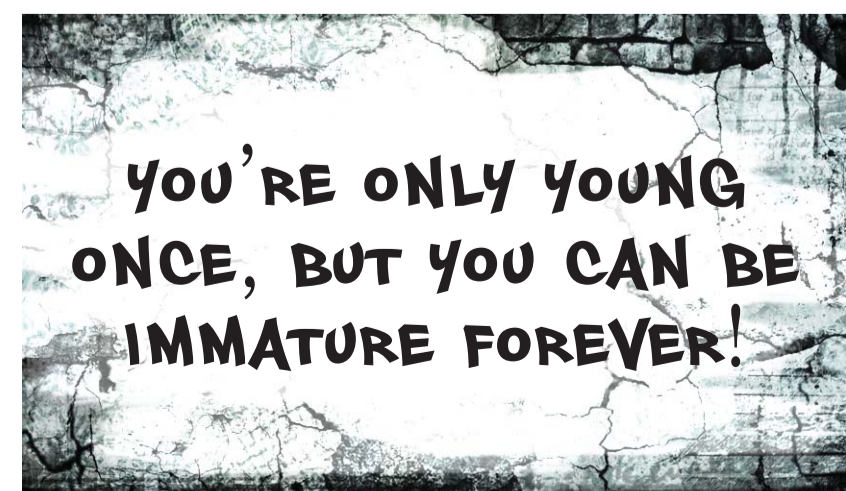
Cute New Year's Instagram Captions

- Raise your glass!
- Tootes 2024!
- I'm ready for you, 2025.
- Walking in a confetti wonderland.
- Any excuse to wear sequins!
- All that glitters is... on my dress.
- The best endings always have confetti.

- Less bitter, more glitter.
- Sparkling into the new year like ...
- Pop, fizz, clink.
- Glitter is my signature color.
- Out with the old, in with the new.
- Bring on the bubbly!
- Walking into 2025 like ...



THE WALL



BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman