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JOURNAL

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Majumdar Named Inaugural Dean of \$1.1.Billion Stanford Univ.

India-West Staff Reporter

PALO ALTO, CA - Indian American Arun Majumdar, an internationally recognized expert in advanced energy systems, new materials, electrical grids, and renewable energy, will be the inaugural dean of the Stanford Doerr School of Sustainability which launches on September 1, the university announced. *Contd. on p2*

UKRAINE

Indian Americans Break With India



Indian American Reps.: Ami Bera, Raja Krishnamoorthi, Ro Khanna and Pramila Jayapal have all urged India to side with the West. (Photo: Office of Ami Bera)

By YASHWANT RAJ

WASHINGTON, DC - Indian Americans plan to issue a forceful denouncement of Russia's invasion of Ukraine to shield themselves from the fallout of the Indian government's continued refusal to condemn the war, which has drawn widespread scrutiny and criticism from within and out of US policy circles.

A bipartisan group of well-connected Indian American political operatives are expecting to hold a seminar on Capitol Hill on theme of "Indian Americans Against Genocide in Ukraine", one of the organizers said. June 22 is the tentative date being considered and the event is likely to be headlined by a leading yoga guru and attended by many US lawmakers. *Contd. on p15*



LGBTQ & Social Justice Activist, Urvashi Vaid No More

India-West News Desk

NEW YORK, NY - Urvashi Vaid, LGBTQ activist whose career spanned from the early days of the AIDS pandemic to the continuing battles over equality for the LGBTQ community has died. Vaid, 63, succumbed after a long bout with cancer, here. Warm words of appreciation have poured in from *Contd. on p15*

Stolen in 1967, Exhibited in LACMA, 10th Century Statue Finally Returns to India

India-West Staff Reporter

SAN FRANCISCO, CA - A stolen ancient Indian artefact of a 'Buddha in Dharma Chakra Mudra' was handed over to India's

Consul General here, Dr. T.V. Nagendra Prasad by the U.S. Department of Justice and Department of Homeland Security representatives. At a solemn ceremony held at the historic Gadar Memorial, on April 21,

the U.S. team, led by Supervisory Special Agent Chad Fredrickson, handed over the 10th-century bronze statue back to India. The statue was believed to have been stolen in February 1967 from India's Archeological

Survey of India Museum in Nalanda. The statue was acquired by intermediaries and donated to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) where it was exhibited. *Contd. on p15*

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Arun Majumdar - Stanford School

Contd. from p1

Majumdar is the Jay Precourt Professor, professor of mechanical engineering, senior fellow and former co-director of the Precourt Institute for Energy, and a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution, where he co-chairs the George Shultz Energy and Climate Task Force. He joined Stanford in 2014 after a career that spanned academic research and experience in industry, national laboratories, and government, where he led efforts implementing energy technology initiatives, the university said. Majumdar currently serves as the chair of the advisory board to the U.S. Secretary of Energy. After leaving Washington and before joining Stanford, Majumdar was the Vice President for Energy at Google, where he assembled a team to create technologies and businesses at the intersection of data, computing, and electricity grid. Majumdar attended Mayo College in India, has a bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering from IIT, Bombay and got his Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley in 1989.

"I am deeply honored and humbled by the opportunity to serve as the inaugural dean," Majumdar said. "Building on the extraordinary leadership of Kam Moler and Steve Graham, we will not only harness the intellectual horsepower of our students, faculty, and staff across our campus, but we will also partner with external organizations

around the world to co-develop innovative solutions and identify new insights through research and education. As is often said, we do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children. We must collectively figure out how to create a future where humans and nature thrive together."

Majumdar will assume his new position June 15, Stanford News reported. At that time Kathryn "Kam" Moler, who has been transition dean of the school since December 2021 and has co-led the transition since May 2020, will resume her role as vice provost and dean of research, a role she has held since 2018. Stephan Graham, who has been serving as transition vice dean, will continue his role as the dean of the School of Earth, Energy, and Environmental Sciences (Stanford Earth) until the school stops operating September 1. The people, research, and academic programs of Stanford Earth will become part of the Stanford Doer School of Sustainability.

"I'm thrilled that Arun Majumdar has agreed to take on this critical role," said Stanford Provost Persis Drill, who led an international search to identify an inaugural dean who is an eminent scholar and can advance the school's focus on impact.

"I am delighted that Arun is willing to serve as inaugural dean of the Doer School of Sustainability," said Stanford President Marc Tessier-Lavigne.

Consulate Receives Stolen Statue

Contd. from p1

At the request of ASI, the US Department of Justice acquired the stolen piece and initiated the process of repatriation to India in November 2021.

The Consulate in a statement expressed deep appreciation to DoJ and the Department of Homeland Security led by Fredrickson, Supervisory Special Agent Raffi Guluzian, Special Agent David Keller, Public Affairs Specialist Marie Ferguson, and Assistant Attorney Amanda Bettinelli for their contributions in returning the precious statue to India.



US officials handing over the statue to Consul General Dr. T.V. Nagendra Prasad and Deputy Consul General Rajesh Naik.

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FIRST PERSON | 'India's Padwoman' Making A Difference

By ANJU BIST

Like many aspiring Indian students, I came to America in 1994 to pursue higher studies and find a dream job. I remember always paying auto drivers back in India extra money, thinking they needed it much more than I did. The desire to serve was there, yet as a student in a middle-class family, the need to secure a good career was paramount. After graduating from the University of Maryland at College Park with an MBA, I started work as a management consultant with PricewaterhouseCoopers.

Back then, online shopping was not as ubiquitous as it is today. One of our projects with a major retail outlet entailed putting internet kiosks in stores so that if a customer couldn't find a T-shirt in the size or color they wanted, they could still order it, and the store would not lose that customer. I would sit in meetings and wonder if this was how I would spend the rest of my life. Helping people who already made lots of money make even more money?

Feeling disillusioned, I decided to quit this job. Fortunately for me, my husband supported me. We learned about the wonderful humanitarian projects inspired by Sri Mata Amritanandamayi Devi (Amma) that served those in need. We relocated to India in 2003 and started volunteering with the NGO Amma had founded. In 2013, when the NGO adopted underdeveloped villages nationwide, I saw first-hand the problems faced by rural women and girls and under-

stood the urgent need to provide high-quality and low-cost products for menstrual hygiene.

Most sanitary napkins sold globally are made with cellulose fiber obtained by cutting trees. The amount of waste generated by mainstream sanitary products is astronomical. According to the Menstrual Health Alliance India, one sanitary pad takes 500 to 800 years to decompose. As we sought the ideal solution, we understood that it would be foolish to promote a single-use model in rural India.

I had used cloth pads for nearly a decade, starting while still living in the US. I knew how reusable pads made for a much more wholesome period experience. We set about making the world's

We continued producing through the pandemic. In order to cater to growing demand, we are scaling our production centers this year.

Reusable menstrual pads are better for our seas, trees, bodies, and wallets. They cost, on average, one-tenth the amount one must otherwise spend on disposable sanitary napkins month after month.

This year, on International Women's Day, Niti Aayog, the premier policy think tank of the Government of India, recognized Saukhyam as one of the strong roots for tomorrow's India. I received the prestigious Women Transforming India Award. I am often referred to as "Padwoman of India." Turns out, helping sell reusable menstrual pads made by

rural women artisans has been far more fulfilling than helping sell T-shirts was.

It's been quite a journey from corporate America to rural India, where my team and I primarily work. International Menstrual Hygiene Day (May 28th) is around the corner and it's our vision that reusable prod-

ucts become mainstream. Disposable can never be sustainable and our planet does not have enough resources for us to endlessly take, make, use and discard. Change is imminent, and we are grateful to be playing a small part in making that happen. We have so much more to do. To learn more and support the cause:

www.saukhyampads.org

Anju Bist serves at the Mata Amritanandamayi Math with her husband, Praveen Bist in Delhi. The Math is an NGO with consultative status to the UN's ECOSOC. It runs educational institutions, hospitals and has initiated several charitable initiatives worldwide.



first reusable pad with banana fiber derived from agro-waste as the absorbent. Our goal was to make available high-quality pads at affordable prices in rural areas.

In 2017, we launched Saukhyam Reusable Pads. To date, we have sold and distributed over 500,000 pads, helping prevent the emission of 2000 tons of carbon dioxide equivalent annually. Our work has also helped eliminate 43,750 tons of non-biodegradable waste. The pads are made in rural India and are now also exported to the US, UK, Germany, Spain, Netherlands, Kuwait, and Nepal.

FIRST PERSON

Beyond the Arangetram

By VIJAYALAKSHMI

Regardless of the universal values that Mohiniyattam has to offer, I often like to pose questions like – "Why do you dance?" and "What does Indian classical dance mean to you?" to the Indian audience and Indian American youth here. To be prodded to think about "why" we do what we do, is disconcerting to most and perhaps largely stems from the mechanistic approach of the West that many have been inevitably influenced by. In fact, it is a fundamental question anyone who dances, ought to ask of themselves, and not just from the diaspora.

The "why" actually applies to every aspect of our lives, so it is critical and invaluable to investigate and seek answers. Especially, given that our Indian dance traditions are not just limited to physical movement, but reflect a deep mind-body experience, rooted in the spiritual. Apart from the obvious reason of connecting with our culture, is it the ultimate objective to secure an Arangetram under one's belt, or get extra credits for college admissions, only to relinquish it sooner than later? The Arangetram, has come to become more of a social gathering and is a contrast to its original, modest intentions – that of the young student presenting her/his debut. Isn't the process and experience of learning & imbibing the values that Indian dance epitomizes the most important aspect?

I also urge the community to be open to all forms of dance, so that

their child has adequate exposure to the various Indian forms and is then able to focus on the one that he or she truly enjoys and feels most natural with. Parents, who have grown up in India, lament the fact that their children are part of a society that believes that Indian culture is defined by Pop culture. These are parents who feel grateful and privileged to have experienced the classical and folk arts back home, during their formative years, while their children have little access to that, besides misleading notions of our culture and values. Though one has to concede, that there is a much more concerted effort on the part of the parents outside the country to remain tenaciously connected to their traditions than in India, where society is blindly emulating the west and even embarrassed to own the Indian ethos.

It is imperative, that the Indian American youth understand, that Indian classical dance is a very therapeutic, empowering and spiritual experience, that can impact our lives forever if we so choose. That most of all, Indian dance is about the experience and is not limited to being an event.

Vijayalakshmi is a world-renowned exponent of Mohiniyattam, the classical dance form from South India. She has performed at some of the most prestigious venues in India and around the globe, including the Bolshoi Theatre, the Edinburgh International Festival, and the Lincoln Centre. She was awarded the distinguished Regents' Lectureship program at UCLA in 2020. She is the Founder-Director of The Mohiniyattam Institute, Los Angeles and the Artistic-Director of the Centre for Mohiniyattam, New Delhi.

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Vinod Bhindi Recognized for Outstanding Industry Contributions, Receives Award From President of Fiji

ARTESIA, CA – The Republic of Fiji, at a ceremony held on May 5, at the State House in the capital Suva, recognized Vinod Bhindi for his exceptional contributions.

President Ratu Wiliame Maivalili Katonivere conferred on Bhindi the 50th anniversary of Independence Commemorative Medal which is the nation’s recognition of citizens who over several decades have made a difference in their industry.


President Katonivere pointed to Bhindi’s remarkable contributions in jewelry, land development and real estate industries.

Fiji American Bhindi, who makes his home now in Southern California, is the owner of the well-known Bhindi Jewelers with their flagship store in Artesia, CA. Other locations include Glendale and San Francisco, CA and Atlanta, GA.

The premier jewelers have dressed Hollywood stars on the red carpet and rate high in the South Asian market, for their designs and reliability.

Bhindi’s family was present at the ceremony and witnessed the Fijian President pin the singular honor on him.





HIS EXCELLENCY
RATU WILIAME MAIVALILI KATONIVERE
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President of the Republic of Fiji

**ADDRESS AT THE SPECIAL INVESTITURE CEREMONY
FOR
MR. VINOD .K. BHINDI**

State House
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Tuesday, 10th May, 2022
1530HRS

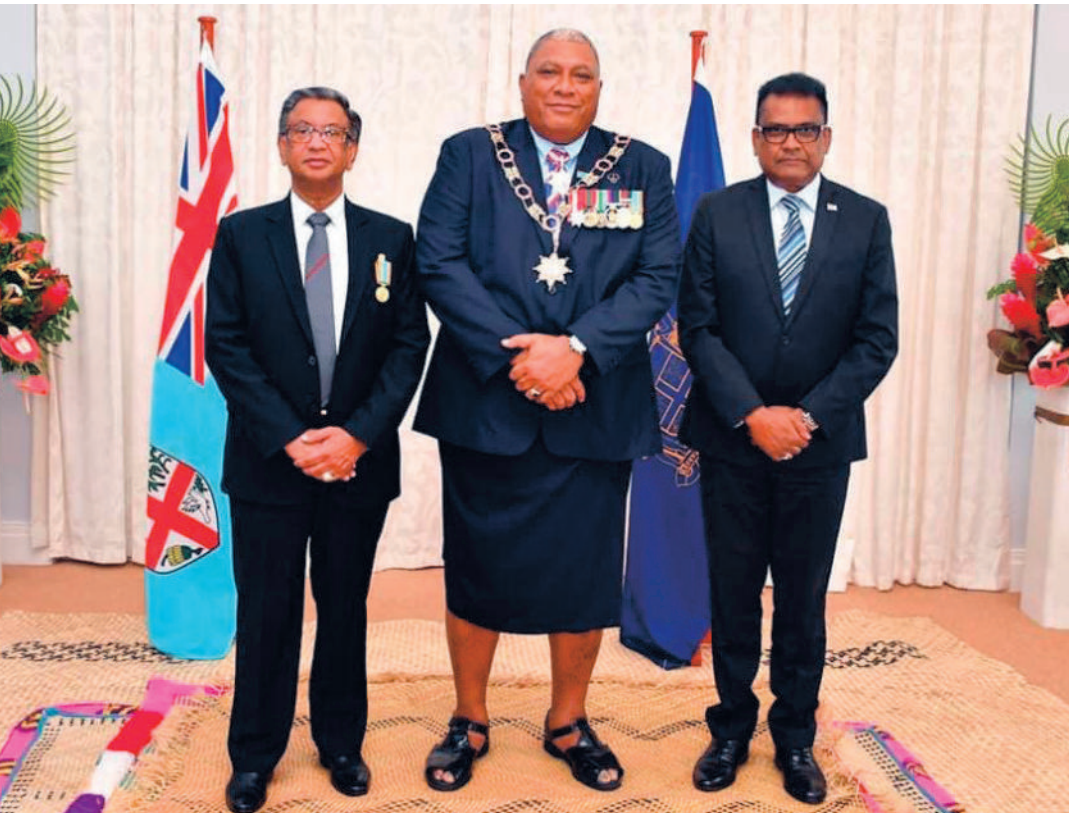
Mr. Vinod Bhindi and family Miau Sa Bula Re and a very good afternoon to you all! Welcome to the State House!

It gives me great pleasure to confer upon Mr. Vinod Bhindi the 50th Anniversary of Independence Commemorative Medal. This Commemorative Medal was our nation’s way of acknowledging, appreciating and paying tribute to her citizens who for over 30 to 50 years contributed exceptionally to their respective industry of contribution. With that said, awarding Mr. Bhindi today with the 50th Anniversary of Independence Commemorative Medal is rather fitting, given Mr. Bhindi’s contributions for over 50 years to the jewellery trade, land development and real estate industries in Fiji. Further to these significant contributions, Mr. Bhindi who now resides in the United States, continues to hold Fiji dear to his heart, and has now added Foreign Services, as Fiji’s Honorary Consul in Los Angeles to his repertoire, as he continues to work on strengthening the reach of Fiji’s businesses in the United States.

Mr. Vinod K. Bhindi, on behalf of all Fijians I wish to convey our *Vinaka vakalevu* to you for your selfless service to Fiji and its economy and its people through your charity work and community service. I also wish to acknowledge your family and their support of your work that has allowed you to accomplish as much as you have. As they say beside every successful man is an equally strong woman, and how fitting that three days after we celebrate Mother’s Day we acknowledge the support of Mrs. Sudha Bhindi, and that of your children and grandchildren for keeping you going.

This afternoon’s special investiture ceremony is to appreciate that sacrifice and contributions of a great man to Fiji for over 50 years, it is also a tribute to those who have gone before us, particularly Mr. Bhindi’s father who instilled the passion and desire to achieve as much from such a young age, and to give back as much as he has to our beloved Fiji.

May the Almighty continue to bless Fiji and each of us. *Vinaka Vakalevu* and Thank you all!



Irvine, CA to be Home of \$30 Million Stadium Backed by Shah Rukh Khan and MLC



India-West Staff Reporter

IRVINE, CA - The Shah Rukh Khan owned Knight Riders Group in partnership with Major League Cricket (MLC), USA's official franchise league and the City of Irvine have announced plans to construct build a world-class cricket venue on a 15-acre parcel at Great Park with a seating capacity of 10,000. The project is expected to be around \$30 million. It is seen as a significant step considering the possibilities of cricket's inclusion at the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

"Our investment in MLC in America is based on our belief in the exciting future of cricket in the USA and is well-aligned to our strategy of establishing Knight Riders as a global brand in T20 cricket. Plans to build a world-class cricket stadium in the greater Los Angeles area is exciting for us and MLC. This will no doubt have a transformational impact on one of the world's most iconic metropolitan areas," said KRG owner and Bollywood actor-

producer Shah Rukh Khan.

The stadium plans include state-of-the-art training facilities, locker rooms, luxury suites, dedicated parking, concessions, field lighting and an international-grade pitch to meet International Cricket Council accreditation and allow the venue to host the highest level of international cricket competitions.

USA Cricket is expected to bid for future men's and women's World Cup tournaments, with the 2024 Men's T20 World Cup already set to be co-hosted by the United States of America and the West Indies. If the ICC is successful in getting cricket to the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics, the stadium at Great Park would be seen as a centerpiece venue for the event in Southern California.

"MLC is committed to building outstanding infrastructure for cricket in key markets accessible to legions of cricket-loving fans. We're grateful to the City of Irvine for agreeing to explore this development in the heart of Orange County. Great Park's position as a hub for community recreation and its array of first-class sports facilities makes it an ideal location for the potential addition of a venue serving the local cricket-loving community and the



broader Greater Los Angeles region with major international cricket events set to take place there," said Sameer Mehta and Vijay Srinivasan, Co-Founders, Major League Cricket.

The development would see a multi-million-dollar investment, with the internationally renowned architects HKS chosen to design the stadium in the Greater Los Angeles metropolitan area.

The Knight Riders Group is a founding investor in MLC and is working closely with MLC on various aspects related to the launch of the league in 2023.

KRG, owners of the Kolkata Knight Riders in the Indian Premier League and Trinbago Knight Riders (TKR) in the Caribbean Premier League, will bring significant experience from one of the most successful brands in global T20 cricket to building MLC.

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Defense Minister Rajnath Singh Meets Community During San Francisco Visit



Above: Consul General T.V. Nagendra Prasad and Mrs. Prasad greet the Minister in the Bay area. All photos: Glimpses from the community event.



India-West Staff Reporter

SAN FRANCISCO, CA – India’s Defense Minister Rajnath Singh was received by Consul General T.V. Nagendra Prasad on his arrival in the Bay Area after concluding his visit in Honolulu, HI where he visited the headquarters of the United States Indo-Pacific Command.

The minister was in the US to attend the high-profile India-US 2+2 ministerial dialogue meetings in Washington, DC.

A well-attended community reception hosted by the Consul General at the University of Silicon Andhra was addressed by the Union Minister Rajnath Singh.

The attendees included elected members, including Mayors of Indian origin, ex-Indian Armed Forces personnel, Silicon Valley entrepreneurs, ethnic media, and community leaders of various organizations in the Bay Area. There were also community and industry leaders from around the West Coast including from San Diego, Fresno, Los

Angeles, Seattle, Arizona.

Singh gave an inspirational speech on ‘Rising India.’ The cultural program hosted by the students at University of Silicon Andhra including Kuchipudi and Indian patriotic song performances by children born and brought up in the U.S. was received well by the community.

The Consul General Prasad was very appreciative of Dr. Anand Kuchibhotla for the support offered by him and his team at Silicon Andhra.

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Suvidha's Fundraising Event 200 People Participate in Sacramento



India-West Staff Reporter

SACRAMENTO, CA - Suvidha International Foundation, a California registered nonprofit, held a run and walkathon here. Over 200 people participated in the 5K run and 10K walkathon.

Bhaskar Vempati of Suvidha said the proceeds would benefit water and organic farming projects in India with special emphasis on Telugu states. He said the aim was to improve the economic wellbe-

ing of rural communities by creating self-sustaining model villages.

Suvidha is on a mission to raise a million dollars to convert 500 plus villages from water poverty into water plenty over the next three years. These water projects are expected to help over 5 million farmers.

A list of works that have already been completed by Suvidha and other works that are in progress can be viewed here:

<http://suvidhainternational.org/progress>.

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San Diego SMAP Opens New Chapter



India-West Staff Reporter

SAN DIEGO, CA – The Shivaji Maharaj Antarrashtriya Parivar (SMAP) on April 16 launched its San Diego chapter, its 27th worldwide. The inaugural event was a celebration of India's 75th year of independence and Shiv Jayanti.

The event began with Pooja Thomre, President of the SMAP San Diego Chapter offering flowers in reverence to Indian freedom fighters and leaders. The new SMAP San Diego leadership team comprises of: Dr. Nivrutti Bharate, Dr. Hari Nair, Saish Priolkar, Gaurang Parikh, Aditya Satsangi, Rohit Bhopatkar, Anup HR, a press release said.

Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh President Dr. Sunil Kumar was the distinguished guest speaker at the event. Dr. Madhu Madhavan and Madhao Saste veterans who have served and led the San Diego Indian American community were felicitated at the event. The event showcased amateur and professional talent from San Diego where through word, verse, dance and music, tributes were paid to leaders of India's freedom movement. The unity and cultural heritage of India was seen in the form of presentations from Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Mewar, Gujarat, and other regions of the nation.

AIF Bay Area: \$2.1Mln Raised for India's Underprivileged

India-West Staff Reporter

SAN FRANCISCO, CA — After a two-year hiatus, American India Foundation's (AIF) Bay Area Chapter, on May 7, hosted a sold-out annual gala that celebrated its accomplishments over the last 20 years. With over 70 percent new attendees, AIF attributes its success to the tireless efforts of co-founder Lata Krishnan, the California Board and its co-chairs Sumir Chadha and Riaz Taplin. Guests included some of the San Francisco Bay Area's most influential corporations, venture capitalists, entrepreneurs, Fortune 500 CEOs, luminaries, and community leaders to raise funds in support of AIF's programs across India.

AIF recognized Jay Chaudhry, CEO, Chairman, and Founder of Zscaler with the Corporate Leadership Award, for supporting AIF's Covid relief efforts. He personally gave \$3M towards the crisis and his employees supported the effort with another \$250K. Global board co-chair, Lata Krishnan said, "It is AIF's privilege to collaborate with a corporate leader who takes the time and effort to understand the plight of the underprivileged and invests in their

future with thoughtfulness and empathy."

After undertaking a monumental life-saving relief effort in India during the COVID-19 crisis, AIF said it is now focused on rebuilding the lives of those suffering from the more medium-term impact of the Covid crisis across all their programmatic verti-

cals - education, health and livelihoods. Nishant Pandey, CEO of AIF said, "We have prioritized children who have suffered the loss of learning, nutrition and emotional well-being due to prolonged closure of schools and anganwadi centers where they used to get mid-day meals. Leveraging our

unique, multi-pronged approach to health, education, and livelihoods we are helping children bounce back from the impacts of Covid."

To help street vendors - India's nano entrepreneurs - whose businesses were destroyed by COVID-induced lockdowns, AIF announced Project Entre-Prerana, that will use an AI-enabled platform that provides loans in real time and removes barriers to capital for street vendors. Reeling off numbers, AIF said the aim is to serve one million street vendors over the next two years by unlocking \$100 million in working capital loans with an investment of just \$4 per street vendor.

The event also highlighted a program that connects rural youth to urban jobs and heard from Shabana Khan, 28. Fully abled at birth, she lost her upper limbs at the age of 8 in an accident. Her story of courage

and resilience through social and economic challenges as she went through high school, touched hearts. AIF's new inclusive jobs initiative bridges the divide for differently abled people and connects rural youth to urban jobs.

For more information: <https://aif.org/>



Jay Chaudhry and wife Jyothi Chaudhry accept AIF Corporate Leadership Award with Lata Krishnan.



AIF Global Board Members and California Board Co-Chairs, Sumir Chadha and Riaz Taplin.



AIF Board members (R to L) Riaz Taplin, Riyad Shahjahan, Lata Krishnan, Jagadha Sivan, Robert Chatwani, Anee Brar, Ash Lilani, Shashin Shah.



Nishant Pandey, CEO American India Foundation.

Quote of the day: "Be ready when opportunity comes. Luck is the time when preparation and opportunities meet." - Roy D Chplin.

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Professor Reena Aggarwal Inspires Alumni Commits \$11Million to Georgetown Univ.

India-West Staff Reporter

WASHINGTON, DC - More than a decade after providing seed capital to establish a financial markets and policy center at the McDonough School of Business at Georgetown University, Michael G and Robin Psaros are committing \$11 million to build the Psaros Center for Financial Markets and Policy.

The gift builds upon years of collaboration between Michael Psaros and his mentor Reena Aggarwal, Robert E. McDonough Professor of Finance, and director of the center.

Aggarwal and Psaros first met as professor and student in the 1980s. Psaros said that the ways in which Aggarwal taught complex concepts, rigorous analysis, and logic had a profound and lasting impact that opened up the interconnectivity of politics and policy on finance and business to him.

"I am very grateful to my mentor, Dr. Reena Aggarwal—one of the great minds in finance globally—for providing me with encouragement and support for nearly 35 years, since I was one of her students," Psaros said. "Dr. Aggarwal believed in me before I believed in myself."

After Psaros graduated and made a distinguished career in finance as co-founder and managing partner of KPS Capital Partners,



Georgetown University Professor Reena Aggarwal specializes in global financial markets.

a leading global private equity firm, he became involved in Georgetown leadership, and he reconnected with Aggarwal over their shared interests.

"Mike was always interested in finance and policy," said Aggarwal. "That goes

back to when he was a student, and it has continued ever since. He understands both sides: why financial markets are important, and how policy can play a significant role."

When Aggarwal became interim dean and then deputy dean of Georgetown

McDonough, she interacted with Psaros frequently through his work on the Board. She regularly invited Psaros to speak with her students about his firm's constructive investing activities to drive transformational change of manufacturing companies.

Then, the financial crisis of 2008 hit, and the epicenter of financial policy decision-making moved from New York City to Washington, D.C. In the immediate aftermath, Aggarwal saw a need for leadership and expertise that Georgetown should meet.

"There was a real leadership void for the financial sector," Aggarwal says. "Regulators were very busy trying to figure out what to do with this financial crisis and executives at financial firms were trying to lay low because they were getting the blame. It seemed to me that it was our responsibility at Georgetown to step up and fill this leadership void."

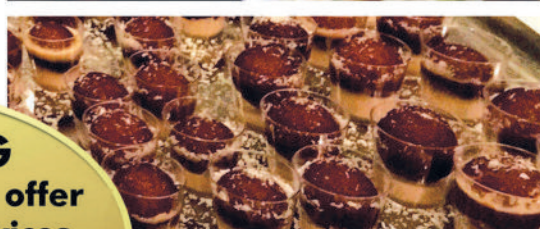
She approached Psaros with her plan to create a center for unbiased expertise in financial markets and policy, and he provided the seed capital to make it possible. Psaros was thrilled to be part of the center's creation. Aggarwal is a longtime professor at Georgetown. After graduating from the Birla Institute of Technology and Science, Pilani, she got her doctorate from the University of Maryland.

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Musk Ignores India Tesla Moves to Other Markets

NEW DELHI, (IANS) - While Union Ministers keep on making a beeline to Tesla CEO Elon Musk to come and manufacture electric cars in India, he is more interested in his \$44 billion Twitter acquisition rather than paying attention to what the Indian government has been reiterating now for months.

His utter disinterest in responding to several requests made by the Indian government, especially by Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari, comes in the wake of reports that the team he hired in India last year has now been diverted to focus on the Middle East and the larger Asia-Pacific markets.

Nishant Prasad, in charge of establishing Tesla's supercharger network in India, has updated his LinkedIn profile to Charging Operations Lead-APAC.

Manoj Khurana, who was Tesla India's first recruit, responsible for public policy and business development, relocated to California last month to take up a product role.



The move by the Musk-led Tesla appears to be a retaliation as the Indian government has not accepted the demand by Musk to reduce import duties on Tesla vehicles. From Telangana Minister for Industries, KT Rama Rao, to Maharashtra Minister and state NCP President Jayant Patil, several Indian leaders have made repeated appeals to Musk to bring Tesla to India but to no avail.

During the 'Raisina Dialogue 2022' last month, Gadkari said that if Musk wants to manufacture in China and sell Tesla cars here, "it cannot be a good proposition for India". "India is a huge market and offers good export opportunities too. Musk can export Tesla cars from India," he told the audience. Asked about Tesla's demand to cut customs duties on electric cars, Gadkari said that the country cannot appease one automobile company. Musk had tweeted that he faced challenges from the government for releasing its products in India. "Tesla isn't in India yet due to 'Challenges with the government'", he posted.

James Murdoch Buys Stake in Indian Education Company for \$600 Mln

NEW DELHI, (IANS) -Bodhi Tree Systems, an investment platform by former 21st Century Fox CEO James Murdoch and ex-Disney executive Uday Shankar, on May 1 announced it would invest \$600 million in Allen Career Institute which has a pan-India footprint with a growing presence in the Middle East.

Founded by Rajesh Maheshwari in 1988, Allen is a premier coaching institute for the preparation of JEE, pre-medical, Classes 6 to 10, NTSE, and Olympiads.

The \$600 million investment will help Allen, which has 138 classroom centers in 46 cities in the country, empower millions of students in test-prep and K12 segments. "Allen's unrivalled success and scale provide the right foundation to build the digital education company of the future. We are excited to work with the Maheshwari family to build an outcomes-focused digital education company that delivers on the aspirations of millions of learners and parents in India and beyond,"



said Murdoch and Shankar in a joint statement.

"Our partnership with Bodhi Tree is an essential ingredient in furthering our mission to significantly increase Allen's reach and impact," he added.

The transaction is expected to close within three months and is subject to requisite approvals.

Bodhi Tree Systems is a newly formed platform between Lupa Systems Founder and CEO Murdoch and Shankar. Qatar Investment Authority (QIA), the sovereign wealth fund of the State of Qatar, is an investor in Bodhi Tree Systems.

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Sitharaman in Silicon Valley Holds Roundtable on Energy



WASHINGTON, DC (ANI)- Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman attended a roundtable with business leaders and investors co-hosted by the US-India Business Council (USIBC) and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) in the Silicon Valley and invited the leading investors to become a part of India's growth story.

Senior executives, business leaders of private sectors, venture

capitalists, the institutional investors, who represented combined assets under management of over \$1 trillion, attended the meeting with Sitharaman. Among the businesses and funds that attended the event were Blackstone, Brevet Capital, Citi, Nova Credit, Western Digital, Palo Alto Networks, The Regents of the University of California, Lightspeed House Ventures, Insight Partners, Morgan

Stanley, Powerhouse Ventures, Blume Ventures, Bow Capital, and Nasdaq. In the meeting, the minister discussed topics pertaining to India's potential for producing sustainable energy, waste-to-energy, and energy alternatives.

President of USIBC, Atul Keshap moderated the meeting and the Chief Economic Advisor, V Ananth Nageswaran attended the roundtable.

Apple Sues IndianAmerican for Stealing Chip Secrets

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (IANS) - Apple has sued the Santa Clara-based "stealth-mode" semiconductor startup Rivos and two former employees, Indian American Bhasi Kaithamana and Ricky Wen, for allegedly stealing trade secrets to build a chip lineup.

In a lawsuit filed in CA, the iPhone maker said that Rivos launched a "coordinated campaign" to attract Apple employees and encourage them to copy confidential documents before quitting. Apple employed Kaithamana for nearly 8 years, from September 2013 until August 2021.

"During his tenure with Apple, Kaithamana was a CPU implementation engineer, responsible for managing CPU design for Apple's SoCs (system on chips)," the lawsuit said.

Osmania and Rutgers University graduate Kaithamana was responsible for, among other things, designing and developing proprietary and trade secret physical structures for carrying out critical functions in Apple's ARM-based SoCs. The lawsuit alleged that before leaving Apple in August 2021, Kaithamana copied a series of spreadsheets, presentations, and text files onto an external USB drive under the name "APPLE_WORK_DOCS".

Wen also allegedly accessed files related to Apple trade secrets, including "files related to Apple's unreleased SoC designs, and then made a copy of his company-issued computer's hard drive just before leaving the company".

"The sheer volume of information taken, the highly sensitive nature of that information, and the fact that these employees are now performing the same duties for a competitor with ongoing access to some of Apple's most valuable trade secrets, leave Apple with few alternatives," the lawsuit read.

The TX based Rivos was founded in May 2021 to design a full stack computing solution based on custom-designed reduced instruction set computer-based SoCs that will compete with Apple's ARM SoCs.

"Since June 2021, over 40 former Apple employees have joined Rivos. Rivos continues to target Apple engineers, with more departures occurring this month. Most of these former Apple employees were design engineers, developing Apple's cutting-edge proprietary and trade secret SoC designs," said Apple in its lawsuit.

The lawsuit alleged that Rivos encouraged employees to copy troves of work-related documents before leaving. "Rivos began a coordinated campaign to target Apple employees with access to Apple proprietary and trade secret information about Apple's SoC designs," the lawsuit claimed.

Many of the employees who left Apple to join Rivos were "trusted by Apple with its most sensitive trade secret SoC designs and technology". "Many have taken Apple's proprietary and trade secret information with them," said the company, which is also asking for monetary damages.

IBM CEO Arvind Krishna Elected to NY Fed Board

India-West News Desk

NEW YORK, NY- The Federal Reserve Bank of New York on May 3 announced that IBM Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Dr. Arvind Krishna has been elected to its board. 60-year-old Krishna has been elected as a Class B Director, "representing the public with due but not exclusive consideration to the interests of agriculture, commerce, industry, services, labor, and consumers."

Krishna has degrees from IIT, Kanpur and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

The New York Fed said in a statement that Arvind Krishna will fill the vacancy in the office for the remaining portion of a three-year term ending December 31, 2023.



"In his current and former roles, Krishna has led the building and expansion of new markets for IBM in cloud, artificial intelligence, blockchain, and quantum computing. He has also played a significant role in the development of innovative IBM products and solutions based on these emerging technologies," the statement added.



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SCHEDULE & TIMINGS

Time	Sunday - 29th May	Monday - 30th May	Tuesday - 31st May
5 AM - 6 AM	Durga Malleswara Suprabhatha seva	Durga Malleswara Suprabhatha seva	Durga Malleswara Suprabhatha seva
6 AM - 7 AM	Ammavari Vastra Seva, Swarnakawachalankruta KanakaDurga Alankaram and Pratahakala Archana	Ammavari Vastra Seva, Saraswathi Alankaram and Pratahakala Archana	Ammavari Vastra Seva, Balatripura Sundari Alankaram and Pratahakala Archana
7:30 AM - 8:30 AM	Samoochika Lalithasahasranama Kumkumarchana (Batch 1)	Samoochika Lalithasahasranama Kumkumarchana (Batch 1)	Samoochika Kumkumarchana (Batch 1)
9 AM - 10:30 AM	Malleswara Swamy and Kameswara Swamy's Panchamruta Abhishekam	Sri Chakra Navavarana Puja	Malleswara Swamy and Kameswara Swamy's Panchamruta Abhishekam
10:30 AM - 12:30 PM	Sri Chakra Navavarana Puja Followed By Lunch Prasad	Veena concert by Vasantha Batchu. Bala Puja (3-10 yrs in LA metro area), Kumkum archana followed by Lunch Prasad	Sri Chakra Navavarana Puja Followed By Lunch Prasad
12:30 PM - 1:30 PM	Samoochika Kumkumarchana (Batch 2)		Samoochika Kumkumarchana (Batch 2)
2:00 PM - 2:30 PM	Bharata Natyam by Smt. Swetha Ashwin & Team (Natyajali), Mahalakshmi balaji & team , Rudralayam dance school, Nrutya Neeranjana - A dance offering by students of The Shakti School of Bharata Natyam Director Viji Prakash		
2:30 PM - 3:00 PM		Nama sankeerthana by Pandit Sri Sivaramakrishnan & Team of Veda Circle	
3:00 PM - 4:00 PM			
4:00 PM - 6:00 PM	Durga Malleswara Swami Kalyanam Bharatanatyam performance by Sudha Gayitri Chivukula from Nataraja School of Fine Arts	Malleswara Swamy and Kameswara Swamy's Ekadasa rudrabhishekam (Rudram chanting by Veda circle)	Samoochika Rahukala, Durga Kumkumarchana, Samoochika Khadgamala Kumkumarchana
5:45PM - 6:15PM			
6:30 PM - 7:00 PM	Sri Lalita Trishati Namarchana	Samoochika Khadgamala Kumkumarchana	Hanuman abhishekam
7:30 PM - 8:30 PM	Samoochika Khadgamala Kumkumarchana to Kanaka Durga	Aarati followed by dinner prasad	Aarati followed by dinner prasad
8:30 PM onwards	Aarati followed by dinner prasad		

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Richard Verma on Biden's Intelligence Advisory Board



WASHINGTON, DC (IANS) - President Joe Biden has named Indian American Richard Verma, a former ambassador to India, to a White House body that advises the president on the effectiveness of the country's sprawling intelligence community.

Biden also named retired Admiral James A. "Sandy" Winnefeld as chair of the body - President's Intelligence Advisory Board, - and Janet Napolitano, a former secretary of the department of homeland security and Gilman G. Louie as members, like Verma.

The White House said the advisory board serves as an independent element within the executive office of the and that it exists exclusively to assist the president by providing him with an "independent source of advice

on the effectiveness with which the intelligence community is meeting the nation's intelligence needs and the vigor and insight with which the community plans for the future".

Verma is currently with Mastercard as its general counsel and head of global public policy. He was sent to India as ambassador by President Barack Obama in 2014 - he was the first Indian American to be named US ambassador to India. He had earlier served in the state department as assistant secretary of state and National Security Advisor to the Senate Majority Leader.

Verma was an active member of Biden's 2020 presidential campaign and led the team's outreach to the Indian American community.

Nand Mulchandani Named Chief Technology Officer of CIA

WASHINGTON, DC (IANS) - Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Director William J. Burns has announced the appointment of Nand Mulchandani to serve as the US spy agency's first-ever Chief Technology Officer (CTO).

With more than 25 years' experience working in Silicon Valley as well as the Department of Defense (DoD), Mulchandani brings substantial private sector, startup, and government expertise the CIA said in a statement.

As the CTO, Mulchandani will ensure the Agency is leveraging cutting-edge innovations and scanning the horizon for tomorrow's innovations to further CIA's mission. "Since my confirmation, I have prioritized focusing on technology and the new CTO position is a very important part of that effort. I am delighted Nand has joined our team and will bring his extensive experience to this crucial new role," said Burns.

Prior to joining CIA, Mulchandani most recently served as the CTO and Acting Director of DoD's Joint Artificial Intelligence Center. He also co-founded and was CEO of several successful startups Oblix (acquired by Oracle), Determina (acquired by VMware), OpenDNS (acquired by Cisco), and



ScaleXtreme (acquired by Citrix).

He has a degree in Computer Science and Math from Cornell University, a Master of Science degree in Management from Stanford University and a Master in Public Administration degree from Harvard University.

"I am honored to join CIA in this role and look forward to

working with the Agency's incredible team of technologists and domain experts who already deliver world-class intelligence and capabilities to help build a comprehensive technology strategy that delivers exciting capabilities working closely with industry and partners," said Mulchandani.

Envoy For Mali Rachna Sachdeva Nominated



India-West News Desk

WASHINGTON, DC - President Joe Biden nominated Indian American diplomat Rachna Sachdeva Korhonen as his envoy to Mali, the White House said.

A career member of the US Foreign Service, Korhonen currently serves as Deputy Assistant Secretary and the Executive Director of the combined Executive Offices of the State Department's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs and the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs.

She has previously had assignments at the US Embassy in Kuwait and the US Consulate General in Mumbai. She was the Consul General and Principal Officer of the US Consulate in Dharan, Saudi Arabia.

She also led the Management

Section of the US Embassy in Colombo, and, in Washington, she served as a Special Assistant to the Under Secretary for Management.

Among her other assignments, Korhonen was the Supervisory General Services Officer and Senior Human Resources Officer at the US Embassy in Riyadh, and the Political Chief of the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Kirkuk, Iraq. A NJ native, Korhonen has a bachelor's in computer science and Mathematics and worked in the corporate sector before joining the State Department.

Korhonen's is the third nomination of an Indian American to the office of Ambassador. Biden has also nominated Puneet Talwar to Morocco and Shefali Razdan Dugal to the Netherlands.

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Indian Americans Break With India on Ukraine

Contd. from p1

Indian American speakers could include the four serving members of the US House of Representatives Ami Bera, Pramila Jayapal, Ro Khanna, and Raja Krishnamoorthi, all of whom have been extremely critical of the Russian invasion and both publicly and privately critical of India's refusal to condemn it.

Politically active Indian Americans have been a key driver of the India-US relationship. They helped soften American backlash against India after the 1998 Pokhran II nuclear tests and, most significantly, rallied US lawmakers to pass a legislation that ended India's nuclear isolation in 2008.

They have stood with the Indian government of the day in a notable display of bipartisan solidarity with their country of origin. And Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been popular with both Republican and Democratic Indian Americans. For the community to break so publicly with his government's position on Ukraine should cause concern at 7 Race Course Road. Like most Americans, Indian Americans have been horrified by Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February and have been appalled by images of death and destruction coming out of the battle-ravaged country.

They have also watched with growing disquiet the Modi government's refusal to condemn

the invasion and bristle at having to "either defend it or face scorn for it". One Indian American said he was asked by a Pennsylvania party official recently, "Why is India supporting the Russians?"

India is not supporting the Russian invasion. While it has refused to condemn it outrightly, it has made clear its opposition to it. New Delhi has called for the immediate cessation of hostilities and that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of nations must be respected. But all of that has been obscured by India abstaining in critical UN votes on the war.

"What the Russian Army has been doing in Ukraine is downright genocide," said Shekhar Tiwari, a Republican operative who is also chairman of the American Hindu Coalition. He has been a close associate of several top BJP leaders. "Being a Hindu and a son of a Gandhian, it is hard for me to stomach," he added.

These Indian Americans are careful not to criticize the Indian government and insist they only want to express their horror over situation in Ukraine, which they described as a "genocide", as has US President Joe Biden.

They have been concerned about the blowback they are getting for India's position on the war and believe a public denouncement of Russia will, one,



make clear the community feels as revolted as the rest of the country. And two, that the community is "not in the pocket of the embassy", as one these Indian Americans put it. Breaking with the Indian government over the Ukraine war will serve the twin purposes of signaling their own independence from the govern-

ment of India and, two, convey their own feelings on the issue.

Some Indian Americans have also argued, since Russia invaded Ukraine in February, India needs to denounce Moscow and finally pick a side that will be strategically more meaningful. Ramesh Kapur, a Democratic strategist who worked closely with the presidential campaign of Biden, says India's refusal to condemn the Russian invasion could be problematic should it need US assistance in a conflict with China. "If India gets

into a situation with China, it can expect support from the US, but if the US thinks it cannot count on India they will have a problem," he said, taking a tactical view of India's position, as has been put forth by many US lawmakers. Congressman Khanna told Fox News in March that he thinks India "ought to be condemning Putin" and "they need to realize, they have to pick sides". He had added: "We, the United States, were with them when China invaded India. Putin wasn't there. And it's time for them to buy weapons from the United States, not Russia. We've got to look at how we can facilitate that and make that easier. We need India as an ally ultimately to contain China."

Urvashi Vaid No More

Contd. from p1

the community she served. In April 2009 Out magazine named her one of the 50 most influential LGBT people in the US.

Vaid was the founder of LPAC, the first lesbian Super PAC, which was launched in July 2012 and as of 2020 has invested millions of dollars in candidates who are committed to legislation promoting social justice. She was founder of The Vaid Group, a social innovation consultancy that advises individuals and organizations working

to advance equity, justice, and inclusion globally and domestically. Vaid had served as Executive Director of the National LGBTQ Task Force from 1989-1992. The current officeholder Kierra Johnson, in a statement summed up the feelings of many in a statement, "We are devastated at the loss of one of the most influential progressive activists of our time," and added, "Urvashi Vaid was a leader, a warrior and a force to be reckoned with. She was also a beloved colleague, friend, partner, and someone we all looked up to - a brilliant, outspoken, and deeply committed activist who wanted full justice and equality for all people."

Another former Executive Director Rea Carey posted, "I am deeply sad that Urvashi Vaid has died. My heart is with Kate and all of Urv's beloveds who have been with her these last years, months,

and days as she dealt with cancer. My activism has been greatly shaped by the fact that Urv took me seriously as a young leader in our movement. She seemed endlessly excited about the ideas and passion for justice that young activists held. She was one of our movement's motivators and north stars."

Kate Clinton, a comedian, was Vaid's longtime partner and specializes in political commentary from a gay and lesbian perspective. Vaid held degrees from Vassar College and Northeastern University School of Law. The Indian American attorney was also an author having published, 'Virtual Equality: The Mainstreaming of Gay and Lesbian Liberation' and 'Irresistible Revolution: Confronting Race, Class and the Assumptions of LGBT Politics.' Vaid was the aunt of activist and performance artist Alok Vaid-Menon.

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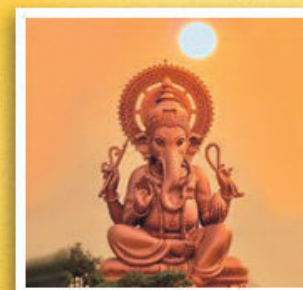


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Indian Americans Furious Racist Upenn Prof Calls India "Sh**Hole"

India-West News Desk

PHILADELPHIA, PA - Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi is among the Indian Americans taking umbrage University of Pennsylvania professor Amy Wax for her comments about the Asian American community, while specifically disparaging Indian Americans.

In an interview to the ultra-conservative talk show host Tucker Carlson on Fox News she made more inflammatory comments, slamming immigrants who are critical of the US. "There is just a tremendous amount of resentment and shame of non-western peoples against western peoples for western peoples' outsized achievements and contributions. It's really unbearable."

Wax singled out Asian and South Asian Indian doctors at Penn Medicine, who she said, "Are on the ramparts for the antiracism initiative for dump in America."

She focused on Brahmin women from India. "Here's the problem," she said. "They are taught that they are better than everybody else because they are Brahmin elites and yet on some level, their country is a s-hole. ... They've realized that we've outgunned and outclassed them in every way. ... They feel anger. They feel envy. They feel shame. ... It creates ingratitude of the most monstrous kind."

"After President Trump left office, I thought the days of calling others 'sh**hole' countries were over," Krishnamoorthi said in a tweet. "As an Indian-American immigrant, I'm disgusted to hear this UPenn Professor define Indian-American immigrants, and all non-white Americans, in such insulting terms," he said. "Comments like these are borne of hatred and fear, and they lead to real harm for my constituents and our minority communities. They fuel hate crimes



University of Pennsylvania professor Amy Wax.



FOX News anchor Tucker Carlson.

against minorities, and they make it much harder to accomplish common-sense immigration reform," Krishnamoorthi said. Indian American Law professor Neil Makhija also slammed Wax for her comments.

"It's irresponsible to use your position to lend credibility to these overtly racist sentiments that don't recognize Indian-Americans for who we are," he told Axios.

Indian American Impact is slated to hold a summit next month in Washington DC, and Makhija told Axios he's planning to adjust programming to discuss the incident and create solutions against anti-Asian and South Asian hate in educational settings.

"The most unfortunate thing is that we have a lot of brilliant and incredible students

at the law school," he told NBC News. "It makes you question whether she can fairly grade or educate," he said.

This is not the first time Wax has made controversial comments about race. Her appearance on Carlson's show is also not the first time Wax has made anti-Asian remarks.

In an interview in December, she said that Indians Americans should be more "grateful" to be in the US and that the country would be "better off with fewer Asians."

Meanwhile a representative at UPenn told the media, "The University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School has previously made clear that Professor Wax's views do not reflect our values or practices," adding actions were being discussed.

South Asian Heart Health Bill Advances in Congress

India-West Staff Reporter

WASHINGTON, DC — A subcommittee of the U.S. House Energy and Commerce Committee on May 11, voted to advance the South Asian Heart Health Awareness and Research Act.

The critical legislation will provide grants of up to \$1 million per year to fund research and prevention of heart disease in South Asian communities.

South Asian Americans are four times more likely to suffer from heart disease than most people and experience heart problems nearly a decade earlier on average.

While South Asians make up only 23% of the global population, they account for 60% of all heart disease cases. And, tragically, the mortality rate for heart disease is a staggering 40% higher among South Asians.

Indian American Impact Executive Director Neil Makhija said it was, "a crucial piece of legislation for addressing the heart health crisis afflicting South Asian communities."

Indian American Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal who has said she is committed to the bipartisan bill to help raise awareness in the South Asian community and ensuring that those living with heart disease have access to treatment, resources and support, was thanked by Makhija. "We are grateful to Representative Jayapal for her leadership and advocacy in addressing this major problem in our communities, and look forward to bipartisan passage in the House, followed by swift adoption in the Senate," he said in a statement.



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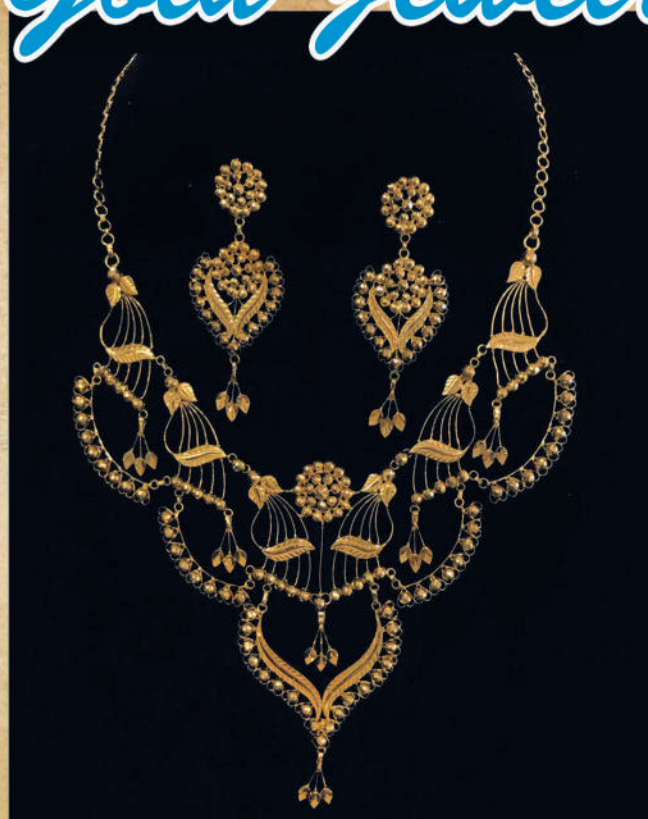
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Meet Usha Chilukuri JD Vance's Indian American Wife



Cambridge Scholar. Before entering law school, she taught American history as a Yale-China Teaching Fellow at Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou, China.

She then returned to Yale to receive her law degree from Yale Law School, where she was executive development editor of the Yale Law Journal and managing editor of the Yale Journal of Law & Technology.

She was admitted to the DC Bar in May 2019, according to the organization's public records show. According to the Supreme Court Of Ohio Attorney Directory, she has been licensed in OH since May 2019.

Chilukuri has clerked for Chief Justice John G. Roberts, Jr. of the U.S. Supreme Court 2017 to 2018. She also clerked in 2014-2015 for Judge Brett Kavanaugh, then of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. She also clerked in 2013-2014 for Judge Amul Thapar, then of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Kentucky.

Chilukuri has served on the board of the Gates Cambridge Alumni Association and as secretary of the board of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra.

She held several speaking engagements as well including being a panellist at U.S. Supreme Court Update, Minnesota Chapter of the Federal Bar Association's 46th Annual Federal Practice Seminar, 2021. JD Vance is set to face Democrat Tim Ryan. Vance was best known for his memoir, "Hillbilly Elegy," with the movie version on Netflix making him a star. At the time his hard scrabble life was held up as something to aspire to. He was also openly critical of Trump. Now, his politics have shifted, probably in keeping with political needs where he has the full endorsement of the former President and his policies.

since 2014 making their home with three children in Cincinnati. Their first son, Ewan Blaine, was born in 2017. Chilukuri and Vance welcomed their third child in December 2021. Vance shared on social media, "We were blessed with an early Christmas present this year. Everyone, please meet Mirabel Rose Vance, our first girl. Mama and baby both doing great, and we're feeling very grateful this Christmas season."

Chilukuri is from San Diego, CA where she attended Mt. Carmel High School. She received her BA degree in history from Yale University in 2007 and an MPhil from the University of Cambridge in 2009, where she was a Gates

INDIA WEST NEWS DESK

COLUMBUS, OH - JD Vance, the Donald Trump-backed candidate who won the Republican OH primary elections for US Senate on May 3, has an Indian connect.

His wife is Usha Chilukuri. Currently a litigator in the San Francisco and Washington DC offices of Munger, Tolles & Olson, a law firm, her practice focuses on complex civil litigation and appeals in a wide variety of sectors, including higher education, local government, entertainment, and technology.

The couple met while they were both law students at Yale University and have been married

'Sikh Independence' CT Statement Condemned

By ARUL LOUIS

NEW YORK, NY - The Indian Consulate General in New York has condemned a statement by the Connecticut State General

will meet the legislators behind the statement and explain the situation. He deplored the statement calling it "terrible".

Abraham, who is based in Connecticut, said that a "fringe group



Assembly purporting to show support for what it called the "Declaration of Sikh Independence".

Calling it an attempt to use the name of the Assembly to "promote bigotry and hatred", the consulate said in a statement: "We condemn the so-called citation of the General Assembly of the State of Connecticut in the USA regarding an illegal act".

It said that the Consulate and the Embassy in Washington "will take up this issue appropriately with the concerned US lawmakers". The Consulate said that the adoption of the General Assembly's statement "is an attempt by some mischievous elements to use the name of the Assembly for their nefarious purposes. These vested interests seek to divide communities and promote bigotry and hatred".

"Their agenda of violence has no place in democratic societies like the USA and India."

Thomas Abraham, the Chairman of the Global Organization of People of Indian Origin said that the group's Connecticut chapter

got it adopted at the tail-end of the Assembly session without the knowledge of most elected officials". The statement attributed to the Democratic Party-controlled State General Assembly comprising both the House of Representatives and the Senate was read out at a ceremony in front of the Norwich City Hall on April 29, according to a video by TV84, a New York Punjabi online media.

"Connecticut General Assembly offers its sincerest congratulations to the World Sikh Parliament in recognition of the 36th anniversary of the declaration of Sikh Independence", said the statement purportedly signed by Senate President Pro-tem Mark Looney, Speaker Matthew Ridder, and Secretary of State Denise Merrill, according to the video.

The World Sikh Parliament is a Khalistani organization.

As of May 1, the General Assembly statement could not be found in its online records or on the websites of legislators who could have sponsored it.

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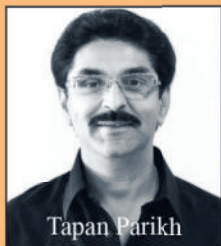
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India Flagged as 'Country of Particular Concern' Over Religious Freedom Violations

WASHINGTON, DC (IANS) - A US watchdog has for the second year running recom-

mended that the State Department should designate India as a "country of particular

concern", a category it uses for countries whose governments engage in "systematic, ongo-

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USCIRF 2022 Annual Report

**Monday, April 25
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ing, and egregious violations" of religious freedoms.

The US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) has recommended this designation for 15 countries in its annual report for 2022 released on April 25.

Ten of them were declared countries of particular concern by the State Department in 2021 -- Myanmar, China, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. The rest were Afghanistan, India, Nigeria, Syria and Vietnam.

The USCIRF report also rec-

pecially religious minorities and those reporting on and advocating for them -- through harassment, investigation, detention, and prosecution under laws such as the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) and the Sedition Law."

The USCIRF is an independent, bipartisan US federal government agency created by the 1998 International Religious Freedom Act. It monitors the state of religious freedom around the world and makes policy recommendations to the president, secretary of state and congress.



ommended in the case of India that the US should impose "targeted sanctions on individuals and entities responsible for severe violations of religious freedom by freezing those individuals' or entities' assets and/or barring their entry into the United States". In 2021, the report said in its key findings, "The Indian government escalated its promotion and enforcement of policies -- including those promoting a Hindu-nationalist agenda -- that negatively affected Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Dalits, and other religious minorities. The government continued to systemize its ideological vision of a Hindu state at both the national and state levels through the use of both existing and new laws and structural changes hostile to the country's religious minorities".

The report added: "In 2021, the Indian government repressed critical voices -- es-

The USCIRF had made the same recommendation for India -- to be declared a country of particular concern -- in 2021 as well, but it was not accepted. The commission's recommendations are not binding on the US government or the Congress. The State Department compiles its own international religious freedom report every year.

"We are disheartened by the deterioration of freedom of religion or belief in some countries, especially Afghanistan under the Taliban's de facto government since August. Religious minorities have faced harassment, detention, and even death due to their faith or beliefs, and years of progress toward more equitable access to education and representation of women and girls have disappeared," USCIRF Chair Nadine Maenza said in a statement announcing the release of the 2022 report.

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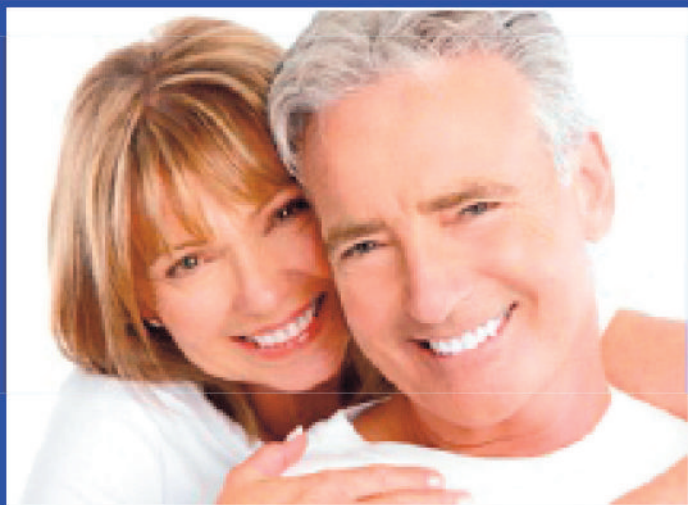
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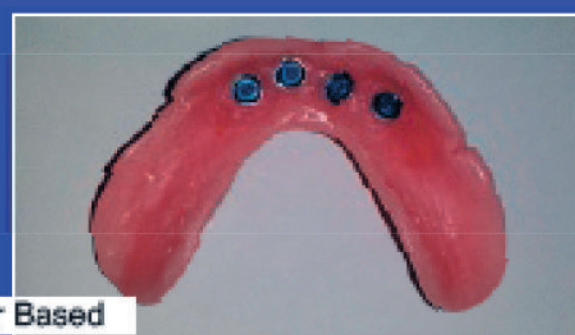
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Poll: Indians Support Taking in Refugees, Want Ties With Russia



NEW DELHI, (IANS) - A survey conducted by Ipsos to capture the response to the war in Ukraine found seven in 10 urban Indians support taking in Ukrainian refugees. Eight in 10 want India to avoid getting militarily involved. Six in 10 want India to continue diplomatic ties with Russia.

Ipsos Public Affairs is a non-partisan survey-based research group. There is a high level of interest in keeping abreast of the news with seven in 10 urban Indians polled saying they have been following the stories emerging on the conflict.

72 percent of urban Indians polled support taking in refugees, while 79 percent reject India's military involvement/ intervention in the conflict. Notably, 62 percent of urban Indians polled

support India continuing its diplomatic ties with Russia.

Interestingly, urban Indians believe the ongoing conflict impacts the world the most (82 percent), it impacts India to a lesser extent (72 percent), it impacts their job/ business (61 percent), is affecting them personally (56 percent), and their family (52 percent) to some extent.

Interestingly, Indian views are in alignment with the global view of giving sanctuary to Ukrainian refugees but desisting from military action. Most respondents, global citizens (61 percent) and urban Indians (74 percent) reject providing financial aid to Ukraine, given the tough economic situation faced by most.

Where they differ is in Russia ties. Though 62 percent of urban Indians want diplomatic ties with

Russia to continue, globally only 38 percent support it.

Indians support sanctions to end the war and reject direct punitive action by India against Russia.

Seven in 10 Indians believe doing nothing in Ukraine will embolden Russia to take the war to the rest of Europe and Asia. However, very few Indians support economic sanctions by India on Russia (only 4 in 10), banning of oil & gas imports from Russia (4 in 10), giving weapons to Ukraine (only 38 percent agree), funding to Ukrainian military (only 4 in 10 support) and less support for sending troops to NATO or Ukraine, among Indians (about 39 percent).

These are the findings of a 27-country Ipsos survey conducted March 25 - April 3 among 19,000 adults aged 18-74.

India Could be Helping Military Equipment Reach Russia

NEW DELHI, (IANS)- Russian friendly countries, including India, could be helping Western manufactured components to make their way into Russian weapons used in Ukraine, British defense and security think tank --Royal United Services Institute --said in a report.

The report, titled "Operation Z: The Death Throes of an Imperial Delusion", published two weeks ago, stated the Russian military equipment found in Ukraine contain foreign-made components prohibited under embargoes.

"Russia's modern military hardware is dependent upon complex



electronics imported from the US, the UK, Germany, the Netherlands, Japan, Israel, China and further afield."

Without an assured supply chain to manufacture more, the Russians are having to retain a large proportion of the stockpile, which would restrict their ability to strike Ukraine in the coming months. But here the Russian military industries face a problem, for Russia's latest weapons are heavily dependent upon critical specialist components manufactured abroad. Technical inspection of Russian weapons and vehicles, conducted by the Central Scientific Research Institute for Armaments of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, reveals that there is a consistent pattern across all major Russian weapons systems recovered from the battlefield.

Examples are the 9M949 guided 300-mm rocket that forms the backbone of Russian precision artillery as a munition for the Tornado-S multiple launch rocket system uses a US-made fiber-optic gyroscope for its inertial navigation.⁵⁴

The Russian TOR-M2 air-defense system, one of the most potent short-ranged air-defense systems in the world, relies on

a British-designed oscillator in the computer controlling the platform's radar. Other critical electronic components are manufactured in Germany, the Netherlands, South Korea and Japan, the report stated.

Although Russian weapons are full of Western manufactured components, it is not clear that the company's manufacturing them knew that the Russian military was the end-user. In some instances, these components are civilian dual-use electronics that can be procured commercially. Restricting access, therefore, likely means preventing export to countries such as India of goods that are in some instances used for civilian purposes. "This would, unfortunately, strengthen the Russian argument that the West is prepared to inflict economic pain around the world for the sake of punishing Russia and, in doing so, reduce compliance with Western sanctions. Russia is also prepared to use blackmail to keep these channels open."

Meanwhile, Russia has established mechanisms for laundering these items through third countries. This channel is now increasingly constrained. But there are many others.

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India's Neighborhood: Anti-China Sentiments Developing

NEW DELHI, (ANI) -Ever since Beijing started implementing its expansionist policies and crushing the voices of dissidents, the feeling of resistance is fast developing in its neighboring countries and occupied territories like Xinjiang and Tibet.

PAKISTAN

Although neighboring Pakistan is China's close ally, the people here are raising their voices against Beijing for its continuous exploitation of resources and violating human rights. The Chinese working in Pakistan are facing resistance and being attacked. On April 24 three Chinese nationals and a local man were killed outside the University of Karachi's Confucius Institute. The suicide attack was carried out by the Baloch Liberation Army, which opposes Chinese investment in their territory. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, one of the six limbs of China's Silk Road Economic Belt has been criticized as a form of colonization, that will doom Islamabad into being a vassal of Beijing. Pakistan Navy must vacate 20 acres of prime land in Gwadar to facilitate China over its own security.

MYANMAR

In Myanmar, the National Unity Government has also warned China that its engagement with the country's military Junta could seriously damage China's international reputation, just days after China's foreign minister pledged Beijing's support for the military. The NUG stated that it was committed to good relations with China, but that this had to be constructed based on the NUG as the legitimate government of Myanmar.

SRI LANKA

Sri Lanka's economic instability is largely caused by China's debt-trap diplomacy. Defaults over China's infrastructure-related loans to Sri Lanka, especially the financing of the Hambantota Port, are being cited as factors contributing to the crisis. The construction of the Hambantota Port was financed by the Chinese Exim Bank. The Port was running into losses, so Sri Lanka leased out the Port for 99 years to the Chinese Merchant's Group, which paid Sri Lanka \$1.12 billion. According to World Bank estimates, five lakh people in Sri Lanka have fallen below the poverty line since the onset of the crisis. As Sri Lanka faces its worst economic crisis in decades and struggles to pay loans, China turns a blind eye after ensnaring the island nation into a debt trap. Total debt to China stands at \$8 billion, almost one-sixth of Sri Lanka's total external debt of \$45 billion.



NEPAL

China's relations with Nepal are also weakening. In January, Nepal Airlines grounded six Chinese-made aircraft, saying that it was proving to be unaffordable to fly them. These sub-standard planes delivered extremely poor serviceability rates and required heavy maintenance. The loan from China for these aircraft has, however, continued to haunt the airlines. Dues worth \$35.1 million, at a steep interest rate along with a service charge and management expenses, are still pending.

BANGLADESH

China's supply of sub-standard military equipment to Bangladesh has also irked the Muslim majority nation. The Bangladesh military imported two submarines of 1970s vintage and frigates from China, with its import dependence on Chinese hardware touching nearing 85 percent. Beijing gifted two 1970s-era submarines to Bangladesh valued at \$100 million each in 2017. However, both the platforms have been lying idle due to technical issues.



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Chef Ranveer Brar: Declare Coriander India's National Herb

NEW DELHI (IANS) - "If you have cooked something today, the highest chances are that you have reached out for this, chopped and tossed it into your dish or used its bright green leaves as garnish. Coriander or the several names' Indians call it lovingly, dhania, kothamali, cilantro is the superstar of your kitchen. This herb is packed with flavors. It can spice up any dish you are making. From Kashmir to Kanyakumari, every Indian loves coriander in almost all dishes," reads a petition which seeks to confer coriander or cilantro as India's national herb.

Spearheading this campaign, Celebrity Chef Ranveer Brar is adamant that the herb which makes every dish flavorful, sparks joy in the hearts of eaters and must get the glory it truly deserves.

Q: What pushed you to create this petition?

Brar: Actually, it started with a light-hearted social media post with me holding a placard saying, 'Petition to make 'Dhaniya' a national herb.' It garnered so much positive engagement that Change.org approached me to take it a step forward and make it an official cause. The signatures stand at 25K plus and counting and I am just happy people are supporting it.

Q: What are the health advantages of coriander?

A: Coriander in all its forms, the leaves, stems, root, and seeds even, are nothing short of superfoods. They aren't just meant to enhance flavors, but they have a natural antioxidant, anti-depressant, anti-microbial, and anti-hypertensive properties as well. They are known to help control diabetes and cholesterol too.

Q: Coriander is widely grown and used all over the world; what are some other easy ways to incorpo-



rate coriander aside from cooking?

A: Coriander is surprisingly popular for its non-culinary uses too. For instance, coriander oil is an excellent pain reliever due to its natural anti-inflammatory properties. It's also used in medicines and cosmetics. Studies show that coriander can help combat Food poisoning too.

Q: While many people enjoy the aroma of the herb, what advice would you give to those who can't stand the fresh, citrusy scent?

A: I have read about that! According to research, some people's olfactory-receptor genes are attuned to perceiving the aroma of coriander in a different way, sometimes akin to soap. As an alternative, one can use coriander seeds instead, they are just as nutritious and lend a woody flavor and nice texture to any dish. You can also cook the coriander leaves or mince them or have them as chutney, which also brings in other spices and herbs, that will help mitigate the strong aroma of coriander.



Tarla Dalal Biopic Huma Qureshi Plays Food Legend

MUMBAI (IANS) - Actress Huma Qureshi will be essaying the role of the best-selling cookbook author and home chef, Tarla Dalal, in the upcoming biopic 'Tarla' directed by Piyush Gupta, who was previously known for writing 'Dangal' and 'Chhichhore'.

Commenting on her character, Huma said: "Tarla Dalal reminds me of my childhood. My mom had a copy of her book in the kitchen and would often try many of her recipes for my school tiffin."

"I also clearly remember the time when I helped mom make Tarla's homemade mango ice-cream. This role has taken me back to those sweet childhood memories," Huma added. The film has been produced jointly by Ronnie Screwvala, Ashwiny Iyer

Tiwari, and Nitesh Tiwari.

Explaining the thought behind the film, which its director promised would be "a treat for all food lovers to gorge on," Ashwiny Iyer Tiwari said: "Tarla's story is about a working mother who single-handedly changed the face of vegetarian cooking in the country and paved the way for home cooks and food startups to achieve their dreams."

Screwvala added: "Tarla Dalal's story is a textbook example of entrepreneurship." Nitesh Tiwari pointed out that a biopic on Tarla Dalal was long-awaited. "Through her story, we want to encourage many such young entrepreneurs who desire to run their own businesses from the comfort of their homes," Tiwari said.



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Indian American Emily Shah Set For Bollywood Debut

MUMBAI, (IANS) – Emily Shah is all set to make her debut in Hindi cinema opposite Bollywood actor Abhay Deol in the upcoming film 'Jungle Cry', slated to release in June.

Chicago-born, NJ-raised Emily, who speaks Hindi and Gujarati fluently, says, "'Jungle Cry' is a heartfelt story that displays the determination and heart of underprivileged tribal children, who rise to the occasion under extreme circumstances. The film will release on Lionsgate Play. It will get a theatrical release overseas on May 20. She has assisted Clint Eastwood on 'Jersey Boys' and later went on to assist in other blockbusters such as 'Captain America: The Winter Soldier,' 'Monster Trucks' and 'Fast & Furious 7'.



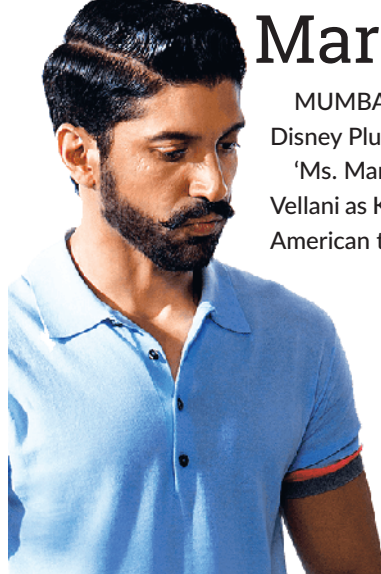
Farhan Akhtar to Star in Marvel Studios Series

MUMBAI, (IANS) - Farhan Akhtar will be part of the cast of Disney Plus's upcoming series 'Ms. Marvel'.

'Ms. Marvel' is set to premiere on June 8 and introduces Iman Vellani as Kamala Khan, aka the titular character, who is a Muslim American teenager growing up in Jersey City.

An avid gamer and a voracious fan-fiction scribe, Kamala is a superhero mega-fan with an oversized imagination - particularly when it comes to Captain Marvel.

Yet, Kamala feels like she doesn't fit in at school and sometimes even at home - that is, until she gets superpowers like the heroes she's always looked up to. 'Ms. Marvel' episodes are directed by Adil El Arbi & Bilall Fallah, Meera Menon and Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy.



NBA Star Dwight Howard Turns Pilgrim in Varanasi



VARANASI (ANI) – "At peace with myself and the world after a visit to Varanasi. A spiritual journey that has rejuvenated the soul." These are the words posted by the 36-year-old NBA star and current Laker player after his visit to the holy city.

Howard tweeted, "Congratulations @narendramodi for the magical reformation of the holy city. Varanasi has inspired so many legends, I am humbled." In one of the pictures he posted, Howard can be seen with sandalwood on his forehead and mingling with other pilgrims.

Demi Moore, Daughters, on Mother's Day Pose With 'Amma' Mata Amritanandamayi

LOS ANGELES, CA (IANS) – Hollywood actress Demi Moore has shared a picture of herself, her daughters and spiritual figure Mata Amritanandamayi. Moore took to Instagram, where the actress's daughters Rumer, Scout, and Tallulah Willis are seen sitting next to Mata Amritanandamayi as they posed for the picture.

Alongside the picture, Moore wrote, "Happy Mother's Day! So grateful to those who show us the way of true unconditional love and nurturing and for my daughters who light my path with their loving!" The 59-year-old actress was last seen in the 2020 film 'Songbird'. Moore will be seen next in 'Please Baby Please.'



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Aditya Vikram Sengupta's 'Once Upon a Time in Calcutta' Wins Best Feature Film at Indian Film Festival of Los Angeles

India-West Staff Reporter

LOS ANGELES, CA - The 2022 Indian Film Festival of Los Angeles (IFFLA) has announced the award winners for its 20th annual edition which featured a celebratory return to in-theater screenings and presentations.

Aditya Vikram Sengupta's 'Once Upon a Time in Calcutta' won the Grand Jury Prize for Best Feature Film, with the jury citing it for "its sprawling, operatic depiction of broken people desperate to connect and its poetic mastery of cinematic craft."

Anmol Sidhu's 'Jaggi' was the recipient of the inaugural Uma



Still from 'Once Upon a Time in Calcutta'

da Cunha Award for Best Feature Film Debut, as well as the Audience Choice Award for Best Feature. An honorable mention went to 'Shankar's Fairies,' Irfana Majumdar's restrained and lyrical portrait of the unconditional bond between a young girl and the gentleman who cares for her family.

IFFLA Executive Director Christina Marouda, said in a statement, "The months and weeks leading to the festival, we weren't sure whether people will show after a three-year break from an in-person festival. We were overwhelmed to see everyone coming back, eager to reconnect with the community and the IFFLA family, watch films and celebrate our 20th anniversary. We walk away from this year's festival energized and

filled with gratitude."

The new award instituted this year was in honor of IFFLA's founding member and advisor in India, the legendary Uma da Cunha, a champion of Indian independent cinema and emerging voices. Of Sidhu's 'Jaggi' which follows a schoolboy in rural Punjab who faces toxic masculinity and sexual abuse when he's assumed to be gay, da Cunha, said, "Few independent films in India are made in the Punjabi language and fewer still find their way into festivals to reach a wider audience. This film needs to be seen in a milieu where sexual matters tend not to be addressed openly."

In the Short Film Category, the Grand Jury Prize went to Amrita Bagchi's 'Succulent.' The jury stated the film "beautifully taps into our deep longing for genuine connection in a world that is increasingly artificial." The Grand Jury Prize for Best Short in the inaugural Spotlight on South Asia section went to Salar Pashtoonar's 'Bad Omen' (Afghanistan/Canada). The jury remarked "honest filmmaking always wins."

Honorable mentions in the Short Film category went to Megha Ramaswamy's 'Lalanna's Song,' and Akanksha Cruczynski's 'Close Ties to Home Country.' The Audience Choice Award for Best Short went to the irresistible '7 Star Dinosaur Entertainment' by Vaishali Naik.

The Feature Films Jury included Lakshmi Iyengar (Executive Vice President, Minor Realm); Smriti Mundhra (Academy Award nominee, Director, St. Louis Superman); and Jonathan Wysocki (Director, Dramarama). The Short Films Jury comprised of Geetika Lizardi (Writer, Bridgerton, Mira, Royal Detective); Sid Mehra (Manager of Development and Production, Endeavor Content); and Carey Williams (Director, Emergency, R#J).

Highlights of this year's landmark 20th Anniversary edition of IFFLA, a press release said, included the Opening Night Gala presentation of Pan Nalin's 'Last Film Show,' the inauguration of the new Spotlight on South Asia section, a virtual 20th Anniversary Shorts special program celebrating the festival's history, a Master Class with Anurag Kashyap, and the film festival's annual One-on-One program where filmmakers were paired with a series of industry executives.

The festival's Closing Night First Look event featured Kahlil Maskati's feature screenplay in development, 'Alim Uncle,' presented as a live table read brought to life by a dozen of top Los Angeles-based actors, including Rizwan Manji and Nabeel Muscatwalla.

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Raveena Aurora at Coachella Performs 'Dum Maro Dum'

India-West News Desk

INDIAN WELLS, CA - "So wild to me that I'm one of the first Indian women to play Coachella," posted Raveena Aurora on Instagram.

The Indian American singer and songwriter was talking about playing at the Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival, 2022.

Aurora, is known for her music blends jazz, R&B, and soul, reflected in her EP 'Shanti' released in 2017. She is also known for her music blends from South-India. She has directed several of her music videos which are often a tribute to her rich Indian heritage.

Aurora, a Sikh, was raised in



Queens, NY and Stamford, CT. She went on to learn at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. On Twitter she wrote, "Only real ones will know the cultural significance of me

singing dum maro dum at Coachella, a song from an iconic Indian movie "Hare Rama Hare Krishna" that was about the westernization of Indian spirituality."

First Look Released Freida in 'Mr. Malcolm's List'



The Regency era romance is based on the book of the same name by Suzanne Allain, who adapted it into a screenplay and directed by first-time feature filmmaker Emma Holly Jones.

Indian American Pinto, a student of literature, and harboring as much love for Jane Austen as the next reader, has said she used

to pore over books of the genre, often imagining herself in the

India-West News Desk

LOS ANGELES, CA - The first images from the Freida Pinto starrer 'Mr. Malcolm's List' have dropped. Vanity Fair said it best - 'Bridgeton Meets Pride & Prejudice,' it said.

roles. She told 'Variety' the film paid homage to her Indian culture with the costuming, weaving in hints of the ubiquitous paisley pattern.

Madhuri Joins Raja Kumari's Upcoming Anthem 'Made in India'

MUMBAI, (IANS) - Twinkle toes Madhuri Dixit has teamed up with Indian American rapper, songwriter, and singer Raja Kumari as she pays tribute to her Indian heritage with her latest song 'Made in India'.

Madhuri says, "Having lived in the USA for a few years, I com-

pletely resonate with the sentiments with which Raja Kumari created Made in India. It is an anthem for every Indian born in and outside of the country. It is truly exciting to have united with such a feisty artist for a song that envelopes the spirit of India."

The upcoming song stars both

Raja Kumari and Madhuri in super glamorous looks that accentuate the narrative of aesthetics curated by homegrown labels.

Sung and written by Raja Kumari as an interpolation of Alisha Chinai's 'Made in India', the upcoming anthem is a homage to the original song that inspired her

as a child. Through the song, the hip hop artiste claims her Indian heritage with pride and encourages Indians worldwide to do the same.surreal that we've collaborated for my dream project 'Made in India'.

'Made In India' dropped on May 6.



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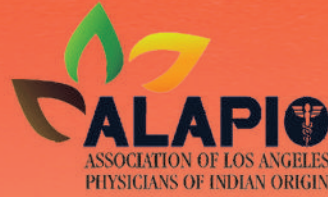
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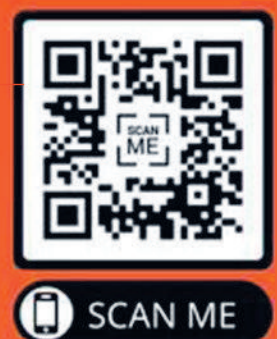
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