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H-4 Visa Holders, Mostly Indian, Can Work Says Judge

WASHINGTON, DC (IANS) - In an immigration-friendly move, a judge has ruled that spouses of highly-skilled H-1B visa holders in tech sector can now work in the US, thus upholding an Obama-era rule under which partners were issued H-4 visas.

US Judge for the District of Columbia, Tanya Chutkan on March 30 dismissed arguments by Save Jobs USA, who claimed that Congress never granted the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) authority to allow foreign nationals, like H-4 visaholders, to work during their stay in the US.

"That contention runs headlong into the text of the (Immigration and Nationality Act), decades of executive-branch practice, and both explicit and implicit congressional ratification of that practice," Chutkan wrote in her ruling. Contd. on P23



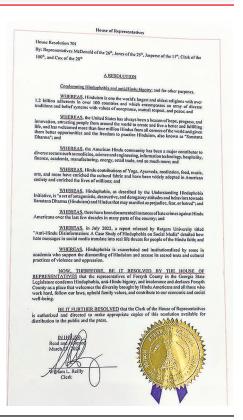
Judge Tanya Chutkan.

Georgia Legislature Condemns Hinduphobia

NEW YORK, NY (IANS) - Georgia's legislature has taken aim at the attacks on Hinduism emanating from academia and condemned "Hinduphobia, anti-Hindu bigotry and intolerance".

The resolution adopted unanimously by the State House of Representatives, said: "Hinduphobia is exacerbated and institutionalized by some in academia who support the dismantling of Hinduism and accuse its sacred texts and cultural practices of violence and oppression."

While bigotry directed against other religions has been condemned by state and city legislatures across the US, they Contd. on P23



'Still processing,' Says Mindy Kaling On **Getting The National Medal of Arts**



Mindy with President Biden.

LOS ANGELES, CA (IANS) - Indian American actress-producer Mindy Kaling said that it was "almost too much to take in" being honored with the National Medal of Arts by President Joe Biden.

Kaling, who is best known for creating the romantic comedy series 'The Mindy Project', was presented with the award by the 80-year-old Commander in Chief Joe Biden on behalf of the National Endowment of the Arts at The White House on March 21.

Mindy shared on Instagram alongside pictures from the special day: "A little while ago, I got a call from Dr. Maria Rosario Jackson that the National Endowment of the Arts and the office of the President wanted to give me the National Medal of Arts for my work in television and as an author.

I'm still processing how to receive the news. "Yesterday, I went with my family to receive the medal at the White House. To hear

Gujarati Family Drowns While Illegally Crossing Into US From Canada



Officials identified the ill-fated family.

India-West News Desk

LOS ANGELES, CA - Four members of an Indian family were among those who drowned while trying to illegally cross a river from Canada to the US, according to authorities.

Reports say the family of four is from Mehsana district of Gujarat. Officials in

India confirmed this, identifying them as Praveenbhai Chaudhary, a farmer, wife Dakshaben Chaudhary, and their children

The eight people, whose bodies were found in a marsh near the St Lawrence River in a Native Canadian reservation in Quebec, "are believed to have been attempting illegal entry into the US from Canada", Lee-Ann O'Brien,

the deputy chief of the local police, said on March 31. Six of the bodies were discovered on March 30 during an air search, she said.

Meet and Vidhi.

The Akwesasne Mohawk Police Service later reported that two more bodies were found the next day. The four others are said to be a Romanian family.

A boat that was found near the bodies Contd. on P24

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Contd. on P23

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Ramesh Bhutada Gifts \$1Million To Hindu University Of America, Grand Gala Held In Houston

India-West Staff Reporter

HOUSTON, TX - The Hindu University of America (HUA) in association with Hindus of Greater Houston (HGH) hosted a Friends of HUA Gala evening on March 26, at VPSS Haveli, here. The gala, which was attended by about 500 community members, honored Kiran and Ramesh Bhutada for their gift of \$ 1 million to HUA.

Bhutada, CEO of Star Pipe Products, is a successful Houston-based businessman and philanthropist. In his speech, he said, despite being born and raised in a traditional Hindu family he had not really understood the essence of Hindu Dharma. While other universities may impart knowledge for students to earn a livelihood, "only an institution like HUA can impart Hindu knowledge that teaches a student how to live their life," he said.

The philanthropist urged the attendees to support HUA so that the youth of today and tomorrow can gain knowledge and understanding of Hinduism much earlier in life, than he himself had, enabling them to live happy, productive lives that would also benefit the entire world.

The gala opened with the auspi-



Audience of over 500 people are mesmerized by Dr Kanniks musical ensemble.



HUA board members.

cious lighting of the lamp followed by a scintillating music performance by HUA faculty Dr Kanniks Kannikeswaran. His ensemble of Hindu classical singers accompanied by western music instrumentalists set the tone for the evening.

He engaged the audience by having them hum along as well as sing some of the lyrics. His performance received a standing ovation.

This was followed by a short video on HUA's courses and programs, as well as the experiences



of students and faculty.

HUA President Kalyan Viswanathan called on all the attendees to "come together to build a Hindu university that lasts a 1000

years just like the Brihadeeswara Temple in Thanjavur which has stood strong for over 1000 years, or like the Nalanda University that was a beacon to the world for 1700 years before it was destroyed." He further shared that "over the

next five years, HUA aspired to become selfsustaining, and establish itself as a shared platform for all Hindu traditions and organizations to offer their teachings."

HUA Chairman Ved Nanda stated that HUA "will seek to be-

come an authoritative voice in the academic domain for all matters pertaining to Hindu Dharma, not only in the United States but also globally." Houston-based faculty members Dr. Raj Vedam and Chandra Raghu, Chairman of HGH Board of Advisors Rasesh Dalal, and physicist and Yoga instructor Robert Boustany shared their thoughts as well, a press release said.

Established in 1989 and authorized by the Govt of Florida in 1993, HUA has been offering online courses since 2019 in various aspects of Hindu Dharma, tradition, and culture. For more information: www.hua.edu

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P4 - APRIL 2023

COMMENTARY

Nonprofits Are The Secret Weapon Of United States

By NAVNEET S.CHUGH

The Economist refers to the United States as "an NGO with nuclear bombs". The US and state governments spend mind-boggling amounts on helping people, with one out of every two people in the United States receiving some form of financial assistance from the federal government. In addition to this large NGO, there is also a super-secret weapon in the form of 1.5 million small, deadly missiles. Here are some enigmas about these powerful and astounding non-profits in the US:

- 1. There are 1.5 million charities/non-profits in the US. There are around 10 million nonprofits worldwide. So, about 15% of the world's nonprofits are based in the United States.
- 2. These charities are as much a marvel of the United States as capitalism, Fortune 500, democracy, and law and order.
- 3. One out of 10 people in the United States work for a nonprofit. It may seem shocking at first, but most hospitals and colleges are nonprofit organizations. The nonprofit sector is the third largest employer in the US. Many nonprofit employers, such as Goodwill, State University of NY, and the California Community College system, employ over 100,000 employees.
- 4. In every relevant city, five out of the ten largest employers are nonprofits. For example, in Boston, 20 of the top 25 employers are nonprofits.
- 5. Americans donated \$500 billion to these 1.5 million charities last year. 70% came from individuals, 5% from corporations, 15% from foundations, and 10% from bequests.
- 6. The \$500 billion given to charity last year was spent on religion (30%), education (14%), helping the needy (12%), healthcare (10%), international giving (6%), art and culture (5%).

7. In addition to donations, these 1.5 million nonprofits charged fees to patients or students, generating \$700 billion in revenue last year. The total revenue of nonprofits in the United States was 2.62 trillion as of 2016, which has doubled over the past decade. A chunk of this revenue comes as grants from the US government and from charging the US government for providing healthcare to seniors and the poor.

8. Collectively, the GDP of these 1.5 million charities is \$1.15 trillion. Just this nonprofit sector GDP of \$1.15 trillion is more than the national GDP of 185 of the 200 countries on the planet.

9. These nonprofits are an economic engine, and like any other business, consume goods and services in their operations. The nonprofits require desks, chairs, computers, offices, and supplies, which generates revenue for the companies that make these goods and services, thereby generating economic stimulation. By hiring employees and giving them a salary, nonprofits indirectly promote perpetual other aspects of the economy. When people have money, they spend it. They pay mortgages, buy furniture and make car payments. When they can, surplus funds go to clothes, jewelry, restaurants, and vacations.



10. The revenue of several charities in the USA is over \$5 billion, for instance, Mayo Clinic at \$19.8 billion, New York Presbyterian \$11.3 billion, Mount Sinai \$9.2 billion, Memorial Sloan Kettering \$7.7 billion, Goodwill \$7.4 billion, YMCA of USA \$7.4 billion, Salvation Army \$5.8 billion, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation \$5.6 billion, and Cedars Sinai \$5.2 billion. As a comparison, the combined revenue of the 3.6 million nonprofits in India is less than \$5 billion.

11. The 1.5 million charities collectively raise \$1.4 billion every day of the year to reach the \$500 billion in giving for the year.

12. To raise this kind of money, everything under the sun is done. Various governments are approached; foundations are chased; HNIs are hounded; corporations are rushed; email and letter campaigns are launched; every ounce of social media is utilized; endless events of all types are held—from cookie sales to walks, runs, lecture series, entertainment events, small get-togethers to big galas. Almost every kid in high school is involved in some charity fundraising, and every adult at work is approached in some way, shape or form. On weekends, the religious institutions

don't leave you alone.

13. Two hundred thousand people in the country have a job that entails fundraising for a nonprofit, and the average salary of these 200,000 fundraising people is \$62,500. Harvard employs 500 people in its fundraising department.

14. Harvard deserves another line as the epitome of what a nonprofit missile can do to a country. Founded in 1636 as Newton College, its name changed to Harvard when John Harvard donated \$1,285 and died soon thereafter. Today, Harvard has \$50 billion in its savings account. One-third of its annual expenses come from the earnings

on this endowment. It has 21,000 students, 31,000 employees, over a million graduates, eight presidents, and an unenviable slice of the Fortune 500's 10,000 CXOs. Seventy percent of the students receive financial aid from the university and do not pay full tuition. Shockingly, the story has just begun, as Harvard is now raking in over \$1 billion in new donations every year, and since inception it has earned

a 11% return on its endowment.

15. There is no better ecosystem than this: One person's money is given to a nonprofit, the government gives a tax deduction to the donor, the nonprofit hires employees to render services, the nonprofit employees get jobs, and a random stranger, a fifth person, receives the benefit. All of this happens without government intervention, bureaucracy, waste, politics, corruption, or favoritism. People are helping each other, thereby increasing the culture of giving, assisting, taking care of each other, taking care of our community, taking care of our country, and inculcating a sense of self-sufficiency, selfreliance, and self-governance while evoking self-realization in every single person involved in the process.

16. These US charities are doing as much work as the federal and state governments in the country. Art, music, hospitals, junior colleges, universities, all religious activities, disaster and emergency aid, and food for the poor are all in the hands of nonprofits. In most other countries, the government must do most of this work which the nonprofit ecosystem in the US is doing.

17. Nonprofits have become essential components of the American society, playing a significant role in strengthening the communities they serve. They bring awareness to important social and political issues, confront problems that the government can't solve, and unite communities in their area with common goals and ideals. Nonprofits are also essential in helping those less fortunate, working with groups or individuals who are unable to help themselves. Faithbased organizations, for example, not only work with people's spiritual needs, but they also provide physical necessities such as housing, food, and clothing. By serving the community directly, nonprofits foster civic engagement and leadership, drive economic growth, and strengthen the fabric of our communities. Most cultural centers, museums, parks, and performing arts centers are also nonprofit organizations that attract businesses, employees, and tourists alike and create vibrant urban centers.

18. The tenth largest charity in the US, Catholic Charities, proudly claims on their website, "Next to the federal government, Catholic Charities is the largest US social-safety-net provider."

19. All of this has created an ethos of giving time in addition to money. Two out of three Americans give dollars to charity, and one out of four people give time to a nonprofit. 65 million Americans volunteered for a nonprofit last year. The average time per volunteer was 128 hours in 2021, and the value of this volunteer time was \$200 billion. Not surprisingly, adults who volunteer and who engage in hours of volunteering report higher levels of well-being.

20. We humans come together politically and form local and national governments to create a society. Afterwards, we have two Kennedy choices. We can either sit on our sofa, watch television, and ask what the country is doing for us. People who are cheerier in life go out with their friends and see what they can do for their neighborhood, and fix it. There is no problem in this world that cannot be fixed. Millions of cheerful hours and billions of dollars later, America's nonprofit sector has created a parallel government that works quietly in an unbelievably remarkable fashion. There is a lot of noise in the world about everything the USA does, but very little noise about the secret weapon of the United States - the nonprofit sector.

(Navneet S. Chugh is managing partner of Chugh, LLP, a law and CPA firm. He may be reached at navneet@chugh.com)



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Celebrate Women's Day



India-West Staff Reporter

SANTA ANA, CA - Orange County Indian Women (OCIW) celebrated International Women's Day on March 10 at the Elk's Lodge, here. The event was attended by more than a hundred women from all walks of life.

The celebration began with an inspiring presentation by the group's president, Dr. Seema Choudhary, in which she discussed the role OCIW has played in the lives of the 2000 strong Indian women members of the group. She spoke about how the group was initially conceptualized as a nurturing friend group and has evolved now into a powerful platform for the Indian women of OC to come together and share their ideas, resources, and experiences.

Keynote speaker Nada Lena Nasserdeen, a bestselling author, spoke on the topic "Rise up for You - Closing the gap between You and Your Potential". She focused on the issues

faced by women, especially with regards to identifying their innate potential and the subsequent quest to use this ability to empower themselves. She shared her personal stories, which resonated with the audience. During the ensuing brief Q&A session with her, the members were able to ask questions to get a better understanding of how to summon their inner warrior and break the invisible barriers, which often hold them back.

The guests participated in an icebreaker and a sumptuous three-course dinner followed by an award ceremony, to present certificates to the volunteers for their contribution to the organization.

The guests also had a chance to shop at the stalls set up at the event, which included beauty products, financial and academic services, apparel, photo, and social services booths. The event concluded with a DJ inviting the guests to dance the night away to the beat of pulsating Indian dance numbers.

Orange County Indian Women | India International Impact Introduces Holi To Opinion Leaders In SoCal

India-West Staff Reporter

LOS ANGELES, CA - On March 21, India International Impact held an event to introduce the festival of Holi and the culture

of India, it said, to "influential people" in the Los Angeles area.

The lineup included live dance and music, along with videos showing Holi celebrations from Bollywood movies and from recent visits to New Delhi by American Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo and Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese.

In the room were representatives of two of the Quad countries: Consul General Kenko Sone and Consul Mayumi Tsubakimoto from Japan as well as Kelly and Kershyn from the Australian Consulate in Los Angeles.

Attorney Navneet Chugh spoke about philanthropist Dr Navin Doshi and presented him with a plaque recognizing his support of India International Impact.

The crowning component occurred when guests and hosts showered one another with large amounts of colorful flower petals in to simulate the bacchanalia of joy that the festival of Holi represents. One of the hosts, Gunjan Bagla, was in mid-speech when Christine Peterson, Director of the International Office of Mayor Karen Bass and Roopa Masten joyously rushed him with flowers.

Guests included David Abel who runs the

Verde Exchange Conference and his wife Brenda Levin, a celebrity architect who has restored the Griffith Observatory, Grand Central Market and Dodger Stadium, all icons of Los Angeles.



Consul General Kenko Sone with Smita and Gunjan Bagla.

Alisssa Bernstein, Associate Director of the American Jewish Committee attended as did two senior representatives from the City of Long Beach, the second largest municipality in LA county. The CEO of the World Affairs Council of Orange County, Richard Downie was present as well.

Held on the campus of Loyola Marymount University, the guests for the March 21 event included the Dean of the Business School, Dayle Smith and the Senior Director of Business Development & Strategy, Nola Wanta.

The program chair and emcee for the event was community leader Smita Bagla. India International Impact promotes a better understanding of India and US-India relations for mainstream Americans and the international community in Southern California.

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GOPIO International Team Sworn-In With Lal Motwani As New President



The newely installed GOPIO team.

India-West Staff Reporter

NEW YORK, NY – The Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO) swore to office, on March 4, its new team in a virtual ceremony.

Veteran community leader from New York, Lal Motwani took office as the organization's new President. Motwani is a founder and life member of GOPIO.

Others sworn in at the ceremony were Umesh Chandra from Brisbane, Australia as Executive Vice President; Los Angeles area community leader Kewal Kanda as Vice President; New Jersey businessman Prakash Shah as Global Ambassador, and community activist Jasbir 'Nami' Kaur as International Coordinator-at-Large.

Five more Regional International Coordinators were also sworn-in: Businessman Roger Latchman from Johannesburg, South Africa as Africa Coordinator; Engineering Entrepreneur Deo Gosine (Trinidad and New York) as Caribbean Coordinator; Real Estate Investor Ashok Madan of Southern California as North America Coordinator; engineer Harmohan Singh Walia of Sydney, Australia as Oceania Coordinator and New Delhi businessman Dhiraj Ahuja as South Asia Coordinator.

Dr. Thomas Abraham, Chairman of GO-PIO welcomed the participants from all continents and highlighted the services provided by GOPIO Chapters during the pandemic.

Step2StepUp Honors 24 Women

India-West Staff Reporter

YORBA LINDA, CA - Step2StepUp Inc held 'A Tribute to 24 Successful, Inspiring Women in the Nation' on March 11 at the Bombay Grill, Bar & Banquet, here. The event organizers found themselves on storm watch, days prior to the event to ensure that the elegance of the red-carpet event would not be compromised but with the cooperation of attendees were able to pull it off well.

The emcee, Chanel Beery, kick started this high impact event with an audience lamp lighting, which was followed thereafter by a prayer and the National Anthems of both USA and India, sung by Priyadarshini Roy.

The 2023 Step Up and Soar challenge, featured 24 youth entrepreneurs from the organization's US, India and Africa Chapters.

Team USA was mentored by Chanel Beery, who assisted 15 young men and women in writing up a business plan that would make a positive impact in their communities with a modest \$50 budget. The Africa chapter had 5 students who were represented and mentored by Susan Seats and Ramesh Thalli and the India chapter had 4 students who were mentored by Shravan Tedla.

Each of the 24 awardees was honored on the red carpet as the crowd listened to each of their inspiring messages. It was interspersed with edgy comedy by Mona Shaikh.

The keynote speaker, Srividya Nagaraju asked the over 150 guests to invest time into better knowing themselves, which, she said, would lead them to understanding how it aligned to their dreams, skills, and actions for the greater good.



The event was a celebration of inspirational women.



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Shriji Mandir Conducts Ceremonies For Its New, Upcoming Temple

India-West Staff Reporter

BELLFLOWER, CA - Shriji Mandir on March 18, held a bhumi pujan celebration here, for its proposed and upcoming 'haveli' or temple.

More than 500 people attended and witnessed the ceremony with joy and reverence. The program began with the recital of the 'Yamunastak' by Jayshree Gohil. This was followed by religious ceremonies including the kalas puja, bhumi puja and a shanti yagna conducted by Praful Joshi.

Shriji Mandir President, Bhargav Patel, welcomed everyone and gave details of the new building in his speech. He emphasized that the new temple site was for all Vaishnavs. Temple leader Rekha Bajaria also appreciated the support from the community.

On the next day, March 19, Shriji Mandir celebrated the sixth Patasov with bhajans by Jayshree Gohil and party. Paulomi Pandit's dance school performed to famous

bhajans including, 'Aja ni Ghadi,' and 'Mara Ghat Ma Birajata Shri-



A model rendering of the proposed new temple.



The devotees participated in the ceremonies.

nathji.' Kavita Teli also danced to 'Muje Charano She Lagado.'

Photos: Kantibhai Mistry

The event concluded with a Nanda Mahatsov.

In Fremont, Odia Community Marks Dola Purnima Melana, Holi

India-West Staff Reporter

FREMONT, CA - Over 800 devotees thronged the event organized by the Jagannath Cultural and Educational Center on March 12 to celebrate Dola Purnima

Melana and Holi at the Asthalakshmi temple, here.

Held outdoors, the intermittent drizzle did nothing to deter the mood of the people who had come in droves. The Melana is the gathering in which palanquins of Radha-Krishna and Madan Mohan are carried by devotees on their shoulders. Volunteers had made the palanquins, decorating them in the unique pattachitra style of art. The decorations and artistic work were

one of the most talked about topics by the devotees and guests.

Devotees did the parikrama of the venue while carrying and singing the name of the Lord. This was followed by sankirtan by the ISKCON group which enhanced the religious atmosphere.

The Holi celebrations where plumes of color filled the grounds, had many guests who graced the occasion, join in. Fremont city

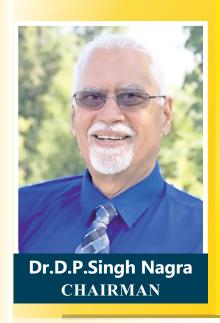




Mayor Lily Mei and Councilmember Desrie Campbell who were present, handed official city proclamations to JCEC in acknowledgment of their work.



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APRIL 2023 – P9

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Arun Subramanian Becomes First Indian American NY District Court Judge

NEW YORK, NY (IANS) - Indian American Arun Subramanian has been confirmed as the District Judge for the Southern District of New York, Senator Charles Schumer announced.

Subramanian, who replaces Alison J. Nathan, now becomes the first South Asian judge to serve on the powerful bench. "Arun Subramanian is the epitome of the American Dream and a history maker: the child of hard-working immigrants from India, he will become the first South Asian on the Southern District bench, in an area with a deep and diverse South Asian community," Schumer said.

Subramanian's name for the top appointment was championed by Senator Schumer.

"Subramanian is a first-rate

legal mind and a steadfast consumer protection expert who has spent his legal career defending consumers and individuals injured by unfair and illegal practices. He has also protected whistleblowers and defended victims of trafficking in child pornography," Schumer added.

"I am confident he will bring remarkable legal talent and experience, integrity and professionalism to the federal court. He will follow the law where it takes him, in the pursuit of fair and impartial justice," Schumer said. Subramanian's nomination was first announced by the White House in September 2022.

Born in Pittsburgh, PA in 1979 to immigrant parents from South India, Subramanian graduated



Judge Arun Subramanian.

summa cum laude from Case Western Reserve University in 2001 with a bachelor's degree in computer science and English. Three years later, he earned his law degree from Columbia Law School as a James Kent & Harlan Fiske Stone Scholar.

He currently serves as a partner

with Susman Godfrey where he's spent his career defending consumers and individuals injured by unfair and illegal practices, including public entities and whistleblowers.

His victories include securing more than \$400 million for state and federal governments through a lawsuit connected to Novartis Pharmaceuticals; gaining \$590 million in settlements from LIBOR in an ongoing price-fixing

class action; and achieving a \$100 million judgment in a federal residential mortgage-backed securities case against Flagstar Bank after the crisis of 2008.

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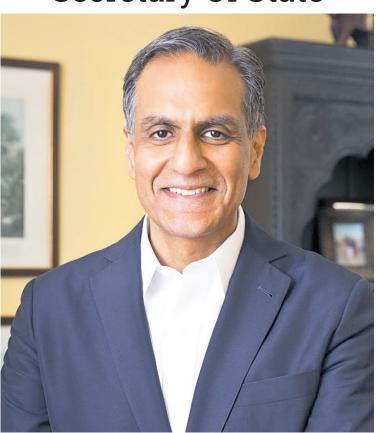


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Richard Verma Confirmed As Deputy Secretary Of State



Former Ambassador to India Richard Verma.

WASHINGTON, DC (IANS) - Indian American Richard Verma has been confirmed as Deputy Secretary of State, Management and Resources by the Senate by a vote of 67-26.

In his new role, Verma will be responsible for directing, coordinating, and supervising State Department operations such as foreign assistance and civilian response programs.

Verma previously served as US Ambassador to India (2015-17) during the Obama administration, becoming the first person of Indian descent to hold that position.

He is presently the Chief Legal Officer and Head of Global Public Policy at Mastercard. He also served as the Assistant Secretary of State for Legislative Affairs, where he led the State Department's efforts on Capitol Hill.

A US Air Force veteran, Verma served on active duty as a Judge Advocate. His military decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal and Air Force Commendation Medal.

Verma is the recipient of the State Department's Distinguished Service Award, the Council on Foreign Relations International Affairs Fellowship, and was ranked by India Abroad as one of the 50 most influential Indian Americans.

He holds laws degrees from Georgetown University and American University. INDIA WEST APRIL 2023 – P11



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A Sound Future for All: High School Junior's Crusade for Deaf Children

Rohan Panchal advocates for government action to ensure affordable access to hearing aids for children.

LOS ALTOS, Calif. – March 28, 2023 – A passionate Los Altos high school junior, Rohan Panchal, is on a mission to address the issues facing deaf children in California by advocating for government action and support to ensure affordable access to hearing aids. Panchal, also an accomplished musician, is using his platform to raise awareness about the challenges deaf children face in communication, education, and social interaction.

Thousands of children in California and across the U.S. are affected by hearing loss, and many face significant barriers due to the high cost of hearing aids. A recent study found that only 30% of children with hearing loss in the United States have access to the devices they need. Medicaid and HACCP cover up to \$1,500 for hearing aids every three years; however, the average cost of hearing aids is \$6,000, leaving parents with a substantial out-of-pocket expense.

Panchal is calling on the government to increase support for deaf children by revising coverage for hearing aids. He recommends increasing the coverage amount to \$5,000 and improving coverage for children aged 1-12 by providing a new hearing aid every two years. These changes would ensure that all children have access to the care they need, regardless of their

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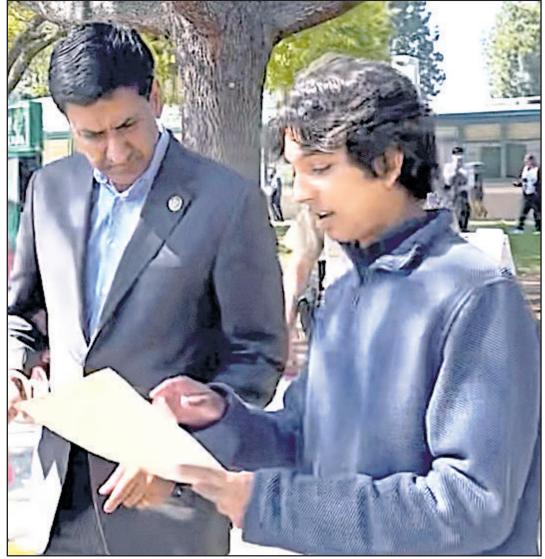
family's financial situation.

The benefits of providing hearing aids to children are clear. Children with hearing loss who receive appropriate treatment, including hearing aids, are more likely to succeed academically, socially, and professionally. By investing in hearing aids for children today, the government can save money in the long run by reducing the need for expensive interventions later in life.

Panchal's advocacy has gained the attention of Congressman Ro Khanna, Representative of California's 17th District, who is now working with him to address this pressing issue. He is also working on Congresswoman Anna Eshoo's student advisory board, Representative of California's 16th District, to bring this social justice issue to light. By working together, they aim to create policies that ensure all children can access the devices they require and that families receive the support necessary to navigate the complex process of obtaining hearing aids.

Contact:

rohanpanchal@gmail.com



Raj Sharma - Owner

Panchal with Congressman Ro Khanna



INDIA WEST APRIL 2023 – P13

Saahas for Cause Celebrates Cultural Diversity at USC's Cultural Artivism Expo

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA - Saahas for Cause, a non-profit organization, participated in the Cultural Artivism Expo at USC on March 24th, 2023. The event was a celebration of the cultural diversity present on the USC campus, featuring various art, dance, music, and food from different cultures. Saahas for Cause, known for its commitment to creating a positive impact in society, put together a great art mural that all students could participate in and make their own.

The event was well-attended by a diverse group of students who enjoyed being a part of the mural activity while also learning about Indian culture and values. The art mural, created by Saahas for Cause, was a stun-

ning display of creativity and inclusivity that allowed participants to express themselves in a collaborative setting. The mural was a testament to the power of art as a means of bringing people from different cultures together.

In addition

to the art mural, Saahas for Cause distributed Anti Hate Educational Material (AHEM) and PPEs to attendees. The organization's commitment to social responsibility and community outreach was evident in the thoughtful distribution of AHEM material and PPEs, which highlighted the importance of public health and safety.

Overall, Saahas for Cause's participation in USC's Cultural Artivism Expo was a resounding success. The event provided an opportunity for students to engage with different cultures and learn more about South Aisan culture and values while also promoting social responsibility and community outreach.













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Neel Moudgal Wins \$250K Regeneron Science Prize

NEW YORK, NY (IANS) An Indian-origin teen has won a prestigious high schoolers' science prize of \$250,000 for developing a computer model to predict the structure of RNA molecules that can aid in quickly diagnosing diseases.

Neel Moudgal, 17, was announced the winner of the Regeneron Science Talent competition on March 14.

Ambika Grover, 17, was ranked sixth for an \$80,000 award and Siddhu Pachipala, 18, placed ninth

for a \$50,000 prize.

About 2,000 high school students competed in the Science Talent Search with 40 selected for the final round.

According to the Society for Science that ran the competition sponsored by Regeneron Pharmaceuticals, Moudgal's computational biology and bioinformatics project "can rapidly and reliably predict the structure of various RNA molecules to facilitate the development of novel diagnostics and therapeutic drugs for diseases such

as cancer, autoimmune diseases and viral infections."

Grover developed an injectable microbubble to break up blood clots and treat stroke victims y restoring the blood flow to the brain.

Pachipala used machine learning to assess a patient's suicide risk. By analyzing a patient's journal entries the semantics in an individual's writing could be correlated with their psychological health and risk of suicide. Pachipala, who



was chosen by the finalists as most exemplifying them, also was given the Seaborg Award.

The winners of the Science Talent Search program originally sponsored by Westinghouse and now associated with the current sponsor Regeneron have gone on to win 11 Nobel Prizes and two Fields Medals for mathematics.

George Yancopoulos, the cofounder and president of the New York State-headquartered Regeneron, was himself the Science Talent Search winner in 1976.

That experience convinced him to work on curing diseases and added: "I can only hope this year's students will be similarly inspired to become the next generation of scientists, engineers and innovators that will develop and advance solutions for the world's greatest challenges' exemplifying them, also was given the Seaborg Award. The winners of the Science Talent Search program originally sponsored by Westinghouse and now associated with the current sponsor Regeneron have gone on to win 11 Nobel Prizes and two Fields Medals for mathematics.

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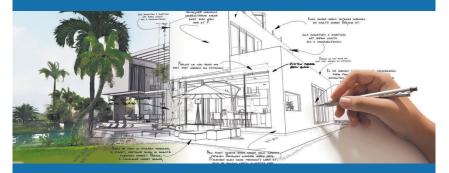
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For Zakir Hussain, The Tabla Is Of His Flesh And Blood,



Bhan Paul Joseph

By NIMMI RAGHUNATHAN

Ustad Zakir Hussain is 72.

Who knew? On stage, the percussion master is the forever youthful one with his dancing curls, high energy, and fingers that flash quicker than a humming bird's wings.

Just as it is hard to pin him down about his physical age, Hussain defies categorization otherwise too: he is gloriously, a bit of everything. In a Bollywood thumping world, a purist who can get the tabla to sing and stun; one who declines performing at social events where music is not the purpose of the

Q: Can you explain your relationship with the tabla? What does it mean to you?

A: It is an inseparable part of me; it is for me of my flesh and blood. It took a long time to cultivate this oneness and have the tabla spirit embrace me as kin. I now can speak with my guru/father in the language that transcends mere words.

Q: What do you think your father would say if he saw you today?

A: He would probably point out my very visible faults that I need to address and correct in my playing. He was a perfectionist, something that is far in the distance for me yet.

Q: Is all music spiritual or is it to be found mainly in the traditions Q: There is a lot of debate on the issue of nepotism in Indian cinema. But hasn't this been the case in Indian classical music and dance too?

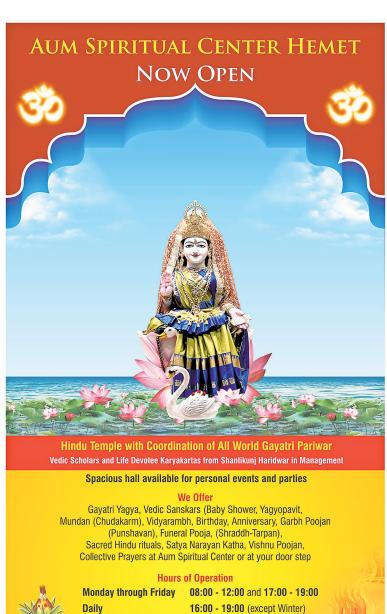
A: (In music) A guru does not go looking for a talented disciple, the student must walk the extra mile to find the right guru.

Q: 'Zakir Hussain and Masters of Percussion.' What has changed in 30 years with audiences?

A: Audiences the world over have become well informed and more discerning. Digital platforms allow the audience to educate themselves with any and every form of art out there. It is very satisfying to get on stage these days and not have to worry about the fans in the theater

The master on stage.

Photo: Jim Bennett



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gathering. In a traditional world, he is the adventurer who daringly ventures into new mediums and new sounds.

But no matter which aspect you encounter him in first, it becomes quickly obvious he is, unarguably, brilliant. To witness him playing the table on stage is to have the mind, intellect, and heart in pleasing synch.

A grateful world has accordingly showered him with every accolade possible - Padma Vibhushan, Grammy, National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship...it is possible he himself can't recall or recount all of them.

Hussain, needs no introduction but the salient fact that he is the son and student of the inimitable Ustad Allahrakha Qureshi bears repeating, for it is rare for an offspring to follow so splendidly the path set by a parent and guru.

On the eve of his upcoming tour "Masters of Percussion" (*see more below) where every two years for several decades now, Hussain gathers up accomplished musicians, mostly percussion, and presents them in America, he answered a few questions for India-West:

espoused by ustads and vidwans of the past?

A: For me all music to a degree, is spiritual. It depends also on what is defined as spiritual. A musician's creativity involves exposing one's spirit to the audience in whatever mood the said spirit might be in. I don't think that vidwans and ustads have a monopoly over this idea.

Q: Since rhythm's language is so universal, does that make it easier for you to collaborate with other musical forms than say a veena or sarangi player?

A: Yes, it is much easier for a rhythm player to collaborate with other rhythm maestros representing different traditions.

Q: What has been the fulfillment for you in your collaborations with other masters like Bela Fleck or John McLaughlin?

A: Relationships between musicians have to be cultivated over time and must go through many layers of understanding to arrive at a comfort level point, only then can joyful and ecstatic music be made. Music should not be created as a 9 am to 5 pm discipline. Music will awake when it wants and the positive energy it entails overcomes any negative feeling.

not following that which is being created for them on stage.

Q: What happens when all the Qureshis are under one roof for a day?

A: There is plenty of food, laughter, and good times when the Qureshis assemble. Love is all around; it is indeed a wonderful place.

* For the past 30 years, Zakir Hussain has served curator, conductor and producer for his series, 'Zakir Hussain and Masters of Percussion,' which brings the cream of Indian music and world percussion to tour America and Europe. It began as a platform for both popular and rarely heard rhythm traditions from India. Over the years, Hussain has sought and unearthed lesser-known folk and classical traditions which feed into the greater stream of Indian music, playing an educational role in affording them greater visibility, as well as introducing them to audiences in the West. This year, it will include Sabir Khan (sarangi), Navin Sharma (dholak), Tupac Mantilla (from Columbia) and Melissa Hie (playing the djembe, from Burkina Faso).

For schedule and details: https://zakirhussain.com/tour/

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Discussion On Harmony And Safety Within The Indian American Community Held

India-West Staff Reporter

SAN FRANCISCO, CA - A roundtable discussion was held with officials from the Department of Justice and members of the Hindu, Sikh, Jain, and Muslim communities to address recent concerns amongst Indian Americans of safety and security, and tensions within.

The March 28 event, a press release said,

aimed to promote understanding. The meeting was held following the attack on the Indian consulate in San Francisco by Khalistani elements, threats aimed at the Indian embassy in Washington and an attack on a journalist there.



Ajay Bhutoria brought together interested parties following the attack on the San Francisco consulate.

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ees engaged in a respectful and productive dialog, sharing their thoughts,

The attend-

ideas, and experiences. The discussion highlighted the importance of respecting and valuing diverse perspectives within the

Department of Justice representatives Harpreet Mokha and Vincent Player were present at the event to listen to the community's concerns and offer support.

After the attack on the Indian consulate here, participants discussed strategies to ensure that those in need of visas, passports, and OCI services can access them without facing protesters or feeling unsafe.

The attendees emphasized the importance of peaceful protests and the need for education and training for community members on how to protest peacefully and within the limits of the law. Violent protestors and abusive behavior have no place in society, and it's essential to prevent these incidents from occurring, they concurred.

"We are here today to come together and have a conversation about how we can promote understanding, build stronger relationships, and ensure safety and security for everyone," said Ajay Bhutoria who hosted the roundtable. "By coming together today, we can begin to develop strategies and solutions to promote peace, harmony, and understanding within our community."

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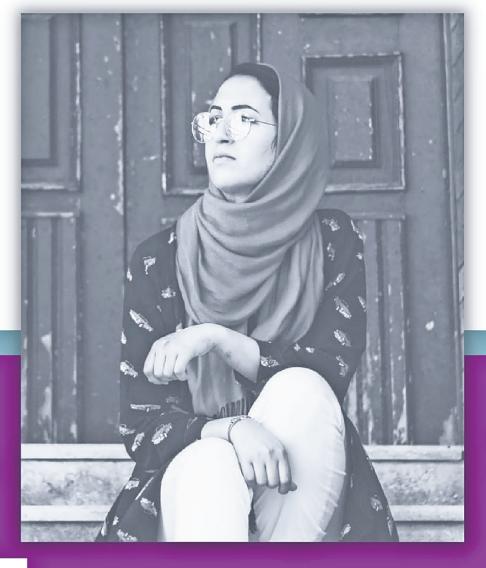
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California Legislator Introduces Bill To Make Caste Discrimination Illegal

SACRAMENTO, CA (IANS) -An Afghan-American lawmaker in California has introduced a bill to make caste discrimination illegal and if passed, it will become the first ever US state to outlaw discrimination based on caste.

The bill was authored and introduced on March 23 by Demo-



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crat Senator Aisha Wahab, who proposed to add caste as a protected category in California's anti-discrimination laws alongside gender, race and disability.

This development comes a month after Seattle became the first US city to ban caste-based discrimination after a vote by the local council.

Speaking to the BBC, Wahab said: "I've had friends tell me that their parents immigrated to this country because they belong to different castes and (their) families weren't accepting of that."

Supporters of the bill have said that caste discrimination needs a legislative solution.

Several educational, corporate,

and political institutions in California have already formulated anti-caste discrimination policies.

Last year, California State University (Cal State), the largest public university system in the US, approved a policy change which added caste as a protected category. Also in 2022, Apple announced that it had updated its employee policy two years earlier to prohibit caste discrimination.

In 2021, the California Democratic Party added caste as a protected category to its code of conduct. The workers' union at Alphabet, Google's parent company, has issued a statement supporting Wahab's bill.







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US Watching Rahul's Case In Indian Courts: State Department

WASHINGTON, DC (IANS) - A US Department of State spokesperson has said that Washington is watching Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's case in Indian courts in the wake of the latter's disqualification as an MP following a defamation case.

During a press briefing on March 27 when asked if Rahul Gandhi's disqualification was consistent with democratic values, the Department's Principal Deputy Spokesperson Vedant Patel said: "Respect for the rule of law and judicial independence is





The State Department's Principal Deputy Spokesperson Vedant Patel said the US was keen on seeing Democratic principles being upheld in the Rahul Gandhi case.

a cornerstone of any democracy, and we're watching Mr. Gandhi's case in Indian courts, and we engage with the government of India on our shared commitment to democratic values -- including, of course, freedom of expression.

"In our engagements with our Indian partners, we continue to highlight the importance of democratic principles and the protection of human rights, including freedom of expression, as a key to strengthening both our democracies." In response to another query if the US was still engaging with Rahul as the opposition leader, Patel said that although he did not have "any specific engagements to read out... it is normal and standard for us to engage with members of opposition parties in any country where we have bilateral relationships".

On March 24, Rahul Gandhi was disqualified as member of the Lok Sabha, a day after his conviction in the 2019 'Modi surname' defamation case. He was on March 23 sentenced to two years in jail by a Surat court in the case filed on a complaint by BJP MLA Purnesh Modi.

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Mindy Kaling Got The National Medal of Arts

Contd. from P1

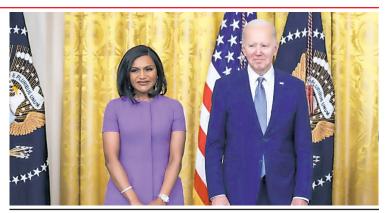
the President, speak about my parents, their journey to the United States, my late mother's dreams for me, and the power of comedy to make people understand each other was almost too much to take in. It didn't feel real!" She said that she doesn't feel worthy of such an

accolade and vowed to spend the "rest of my life earning this medal."

Kaling continued: "I mean, I was sitting next to GLADYS KNIGHT. I guess I just want to express my heartfelt gratitude to @potus, @neaarts and @kamalaharris. And to say I promise to spend the rest of my life earning

this medal because I don't feel like I've earned it yet."

She added: "I wish my mom could have been there, but what are you going to do. Nothing is perfect, but yesterday was close. I love everyone. Thanks @katelinden, Vinay Reddy and @picsschmicks for helping it all happen."



H-4 Visa Holders, Mostly Indian, Can Work Says Judge

Contd. from P1

She further said that the DHS has authorized employment not just for students, but also for their spouses and dependents.

The lawsuit was also opposed by big tech firms like Amazon, Apple, Google, and Microsoft.

H4 visas are issued to dependent spouses and children who accompany H-1B, H-2A, H-2B, and H-3 visa holders to the US.

In 2021, Google filed a legal brief with over 40 companies to protect the work authorization program that allows the spouses of H-1B visa holders to work in the US. As part of his anti-immigration policy, former President Donald Trump had proposed to end the issuing of work authorization (H-4 EAD) for certain spouses of high-skilled talent who came to the US on H-1B visas.

According to a National Foundation for American Policy analysis, 90 percent of the spouses of H-1B visa holders are female, two-thirds are from India, and 6 percent are from China.

"The US can reap significant economic benefits, ease labor shortages, and attract more workers in the global competition for talent if it expanded current rules on work eligibility for the spouses of H-1B visa holders," the 2022 study by NFAP said.

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Resolution Condemning Hinduphobia

Contd. from P1

have refrained from condemning Hinduphobia, making Georgia the first to do so.

The resolution sponsored by five State Representatives acknowledged the contributions of the Hindu religion as well as Hindus to the world and the US while condemning "Hinduphobia, anti-Hindu bigotry, and intolerance".

It declared the state's Forsyth County "as a place that welcomes the diversity brought by Hindu Americans and all those who work hard, follow our laws, upholds family values, and contribute to our economic and social well-being".

More than 40 universities, including elite institutions, cosponsored a conference in 2021 on "Dismantling Global Hindutva", which was seen by many Hindu organizations as a semantically veiled attack on Hinduism.

The universities that were involved included the University of California Berkeley, the University of Chicago, the University of Pennsylvania, Columbia, Harvard, Princeton, and Stanford, according to Berkeley's South Asia Studies Institute.

The resolution said that "there have been documented instances of hate crimes against Hindu Americans over the last few decades in many parts of the country". The FBI's report on bias crimes released last month covering 2021 said there were 16 anti-Hindu crimes with 18 victims, an increase from the 11

reported the previous year.

The Georgia resolution cited a report by Rutger's University's Network Contagion lab that tracks disinformation and hate on the internet, "Anti-Hindu Disinformation: A Case Study of Hinduphobia on Social Media".

According to the university, the report "found evidence of a sharp rise and evolving patterns of hate speech directed toward the Hindu community across numerous social media platforms". The university also is home to academics who are harsh critics of Hinduism.

The resolution extolled the US as "a beacon of hope, progress, and innovation, attracting people from around the world to create and live a better and fulfilling life" which has "welcomed more than four million Hindus from all corners of the world and given them better 8 opportunities and the freedom to practice Hinduism, also known as Sanatana Dharma."

On the contribution of Hinduism, the resolution said, "Yoga, Ayurveda, meditation, food, music, arts, and more have enriched the cultural fabric and have been widely adopted in American society and enriched the lives of millions".

"The American Hindu community has been a major contributor to diverse sectors such as medicine, science and engineering, information technology, hospitality, finance, academia, manufacturing, energy, retail trade, and so much more", the resolution said.

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Gujarati Family Drowns

Contd. from P1

belonged to a Native Canadian, Casey Oakes, who is also missing, she said.

The area of the Akwesasne Mohawk Native Canadian reservation in Quebec abuts New York, which was the likely destination of those who tried to cross over.

Canada is providing a conduit for Indians trying to enter the US illegally.

Last April, six Indians were rescued from the St Regis River by US Border Patrol agents after US authorities were alerted by the AMPS that a boat was sinking close to the US border.

In January last year, a family of four Indians were found frozen to death in Manitoba near the US border along Minnesota.

Before their bodies were found, US authorities caught seven Indians nearby on their side of the border.

Last August, seven people from Gujarat were detained by US authorities when they illegally entered the US from Quebec.

The illegal immigration by Indians to the US from Canada is the opposite of the recent trend of people illegally crossing over in the opposite direction because of more liberal asylum regulations in Canada and better services available there.

More than 39,000 people, many who had come to the US on the southern border with Mexico, crossed into Canada last year leading to an agreement between the two countries to stop the migration.

Under the deal reached last week by US President Joe Biden and Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, both countries agreed to turn back people illegally crossing the border.

Now Indians caught trying to enter the US from Canada will be sent back there.

The US-to-Canada migration was the result of a domino effect: People from Central America and elsewhere cross into the US; the states and cities on the border, both Republican and Democrat-controlled, because of the pressure from the influx send some of them by bus to New York, a liberal Democrat city that is a "sanctuary city" for illegal immigrants, and New York, facing similar pressures in providing for them, in turn, sent them Canada.

(with inputs from IANS)

Air India Introduces Premium Economy For US Routes

NEW DELHI, (IANS) - Air India has introduced a Premium Economy section for passengers. Premium Economy passengers will be able to check in at dedicated counters and have priority tags affixed to their check-in baggage and be amongst the first to be invited to board the aircraft, a press release said.

The class will be initially available to customers traveling on select routes operated by its fleet of Boeing 777-200LR aircraft: Bengaluru-San Francisco, Mumbai-San Francisco, and Mumbai-New York.

Air India CEO and MD Campbell Wilson said. "The popularity of Premium Economy has grown among travelers around the world, as people are increasingly opting for upgraded, yet affordable flying experiences. We are delighted to introduce a distinctive Premium Economy experience for our customers on select flights for now, with a plan to extend it to many more routes soon, as we rapidly expand and modernize our fleet. This is another step forward in our sincere, ongoing effort to transform Air India into a modern, global carrier of world-class products and service standards."

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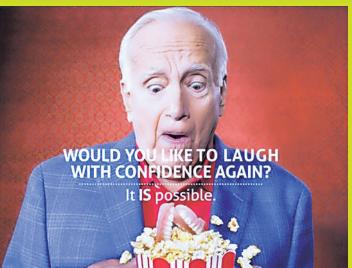


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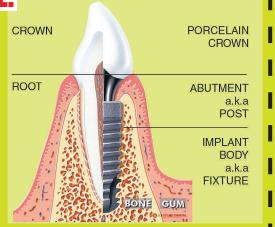
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MUMBAI, (IANS) - The Mumbai Indians, owned by the Amba-

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nis, on March 19, announced the acquisition of the New York fran-

chise in Major League Cricket, the upcoming T20 league in the US.

They now own a cricket franchise in three different continents, four different countries, and five different leagues.

MI New York will be the fifth cricket franchise in the family, joining Mumbai Indians (IPL), MI Cape Town (SA20), MI Emirates





The New York team will be the fifth in the stable for Mukesh Ambani's company.

(ILT20), and Mumbai Indians-Women (WPL). Major League Cricket will be the first professional Twenty20 cricket league in the US which will kick off in the summer of 2023. MI New York will participate in the inaugural edition of Major League Cricket

subject to completion of customary due diligence; negotiation, and execution of definitive binding agreements, and receipt of required corporate, regulatory, and third-party approvals and compliances, Mumbai Indians said in a release.





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APRIL 2023 – P27



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Eric Garcetti Has President Biden's Backing, A Good Sign For India

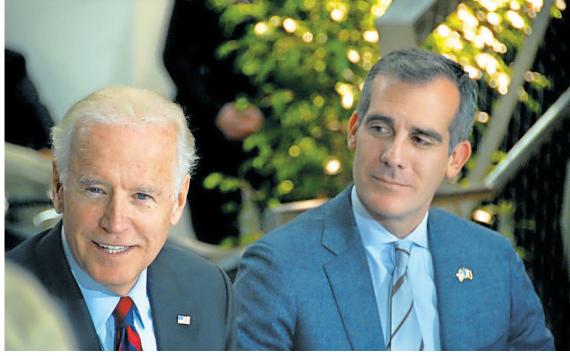
By YASHWANT RAJ

WASHINGTON, DC (IANS) - The bruising confirmation that played out over two years might have left Eric Garcetti, incoming US Ambassador to India, looking like "damaged goods". But it will be helpful to step back a little and note that he has had the unwavering support and backing of President Joe Biden all through this process.

And that's all that will matter to New Delhi.

The Modi government had given its nod to Garcetti's nomination before it was announced through a diplomatic process called "Agreement", by which a country formally agrees to receive a representative from a foreign country. To avoid an unsavory after-the-fact situation, countries tend to get the Agreement from the host country before announcing the nominee.

Garcetti's confirmation was delayed because of his failure to address allegations of sexual harassment against a senior aide when he was Mayor of Los Angeles. Opposition came from senators from both the Democratic and Republican parties - and some of the toughest grilling he got for it during his confirmation hearing came from Democrats.



President Biden had dug his heels in over the Eric Garcetti nomination.

In fact, some Democratic Senators remained opposed to his nomination to the last and three of them voted against confirming him on the Senate floor -- Sherrod Brown, Mazie Hirono, and Mark Kelly.

Presidents are known to withdraw nominations in the face of stubborn opposition from the Senators of their own party and that was chiefly the reason why the Biden White House took back Neera Tanden's nomination to head the powerful Office of Management and Budget, which would have made her the first Indian American ever to hold a federal cabinet position. Though it was made to look like Tanden had herself offered to have her nomination withdrawn.

Tanden's nomination was opposed by Democrat Joe Manchin and Bernie Sanders, an independent Senator who caucuses with Democrats, over, chiefly, her caustic comments on them on social media platforms. Tanden's nomination was pronounced dead-on-arrival and was withdrawn in a few weeks.

But Biden stood with Garcetti for nearly two years. The first nomination, which was announced in July 2021. After a confirmation hearing, the nomination stalled and it was deemed returned to the White House in January 2022, technically giving the President a chance to either re-send it or rescind it and nomi-

nate someone else.

Biden did neither and left one of America's key missions abroad with a regular head for possibly the longest time yet - the last incumbent Keneth Jester, an appointee of President Donald Trump, had returned to the US in January 2021, just a few days after Biden took office.

A year later, in January 2023, Biden renominated Garcetti, which, some congressional observers said, was an odd decision because there had not been any change of hearts in the Senate over Garcetti. "The only reason I can see is that the White House is somehow convinced it has the numbers this time," one observer said then.

The change in Senate math may have contributed to this new confidence in the White House - the Democrats had increased their tally in the Senate by one in the October mid-term elections, giving them somewhat more room for maneuver than in the previous Congress, when they had held the 50-50 Senate with the Vice President's tie-breaker vote. They lost that edge soon after as a Democratic senator switched her affiliation to Independent.

Garcetti scraped by in a 52-42 vote, with 6 Senators not voting.

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Senate Resolution Recognizes Arunachal As Integral Part Of India

WASHINGTON, DC (IANS) - US Senators Bill Hagerty and Jeff Merkley have introduced a bipartisan Senate resolution reaffirming the US' recognition of the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh as an "integral part of the Republic of India".

The resolution comes following a major clash between India and China in the Eastern Sector along the Line of Actual Control in six years.

"At a time when China continues to pose grave and gathering threats to the Free and Open Indo-Pacific, it's critical for the US to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with our strategic partners in the region -- especially India," said Senator Hagerty in a statement.

"This bipartisan resolution expresses the Senate's support for unequivocally recognizing the state of Arunachal Pradesh as an integral part of India, condemning China's military aggression to change the status quo along the Line of Actual Control, and further enhancing the US-India strategic partner-

ship and the Quad in support of the Free and Open Indo-Pacific.

"America's values supporting freedom and a rules-based order must be at the center of all of our actions and relationships around the world -- especially as the Chinese government pushes an alternative vision," said Senator Merkley.

"This resolution makes clear that the US views the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh as part of India -- not China -- and commits the US to deepening support and assistance to the region, alongside like-minded international partners and donors."

The resolution reaffirms that the US recognizes the McMahon Line as the international boundary between China and the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh and pushes back against China's claims that Arunachal Pradesh is its territory, which is a part of China's increasingly aggressive and expansionist policies, the statement said.

The Senators' resolution condemns additional Chinese provocations, including China's



The resolution comes following clashes and tension between India and China on the border.

use of military force to change the status quo along the Line of Actual Control, construction of villages in contested areas, publication of maps with Mandarin-language names for cities and features in the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh, and expansion of Chinese territorial claims in Bhutan.

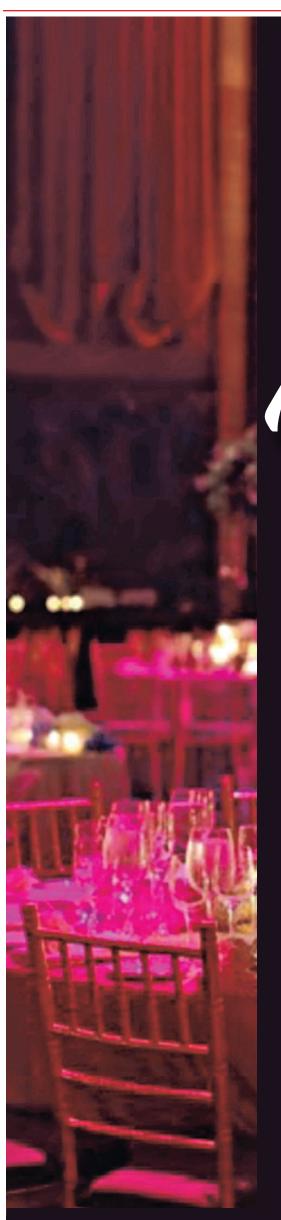
Furthermore, the resolution commends the Indian government for taking steps to defend itself against aggression and security threats from China.

These efforts include secur-

ing India's telecommunications infrastructure; examining its procurement processes and supply chains; implementing investment screening standards; and expanding its cooperation with Taiwan in public health and other sectors, the Senators said.



INDIA WEST APRIL 2023 – P31

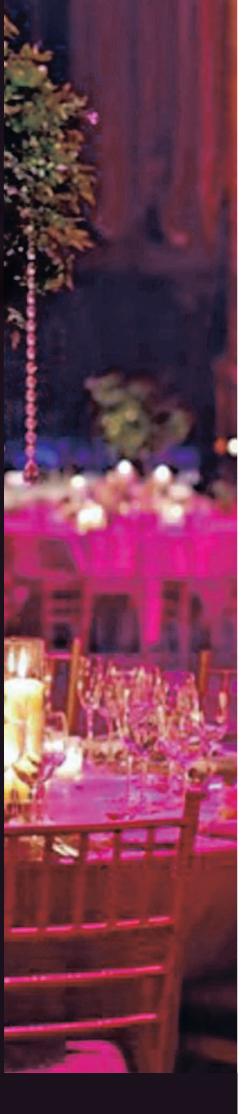




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Designers Shyamal And Bhumika Intertwine Heritage, Modern Elements For Spring Summer 2023 Collection

By REENA RATHORE

ARTESIA, CA - Over the past two decades, their mantra has been very concise: championing Indian craftsmanship

on the world stage. Through their eponymous label, renowned Indian designers Shyamal and Bhumika, have consistently created pieces that can best be described as a dreamy confluence of designs steeped in Indian heritage and culture with modern silhouettes. And this Bollywood-favorite brand made their creations easily accessible to Indian Americans when they launched their flagship store here a few years ago.

Continuing their push toward capturing the grandeur of Indian fashion, the designer duo unveiled their impeccably crafted Spring Summer 2023 Couture Collection during a 3-day event which began March 3 at the Southern California store.

"The whole purpose of opening in Los Angeles is to give our American clients of South Asian origin a place to access the latest in Indian fashion," Shyamal told **India-West** during a preview of the collection. "Taking inspiration from all around us, from the

architectural grandeurs of our ancestral homes, heritage, and culture and with a certain complexity of design and detail, we combine traditional crafts and modern silhouettes. We use traditional craft in a new way that appeals to the modern aesthetic of brides and grooms in America, thus giving them a way to connect to their heritage and stay in-trend."

Shyamal and Bhumika's signature contrasting floral embroidery makes a distinct appearance throughout the collection, which exudes a fun, fresh and feminine aura.

With floral inspirations, freeflowing forms and romantic playful details, the collection is a poetic blend of hand-embroidered masterpieces, designed using age-old craft techniques in a mix of silhouettes and colors.

The collection includes voluminous exaggerated sleeves, floor-sweeping paneled as well as trailing lehengas, dramatic trailing veils and hemlines, bias skirts, sensuous blouses with plunging necklines, open shoulder bodices, fish-tail skirts, ruffled sarees, high collar, oneshoulder and halter neck blouses, pleated bustiers, and head veils.

Using subtle contrasts of vi-



Renowned fashion designers Shyamal and Bhumika unveiled their Spring Summer 2023 Couture Collection March 3 at their store in Artesia, CA.

brant colors and muted Indian pastels, with vintage mid-tones, jewel tones, think rich wine, muted ivory, emerald, intense pink, champagne gold, deep blue, English rose, smoky grey, dusty mint and raspberry red, the collection is as individualistic as it is universal. However, customizing your outfit is always an option while shopping with the brand.

"We do a lot of custom pieces to suit the cultural and special requirements of our clients. Almost every second bride wants some level of customization and we happily accept the challenge," Shyamal explained. "In a period of 60-90 days, we customize exquisite pieces for our valued clients and make their dream look come true. All of the above happens within the aesthetic and theme of the Shyamal and Bhumika collection they choose."

Shyamal shared that they draw inspiration from the architectural grandeurs of their ancestral homes, their personal travels, the tales they have grown up listening to, and from simply observing the natural world around them.

Bollywood celebrities seen Contd. on P33

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Shyamal And Bhumika



Contd. from P32

sporting the brand include Madhuri Dixit-Nene, Katrina Kaif, Sara Ali Khan, Yami Gautam, Kiara Advani, Sonam Kapoor, Kajol and Juhi Chawla.

Considered one of India's leading fashion houses today, the brand is also known for its work reviving age-old crafts and artisan techniques.

Over the years, Shyamal said they have worked with different dyeing, embroidery and even handstitching techniques, adding that in embroidery they use intricate aari, zardosi, resham, marodi and even appliqué, pitta and khaat to make each design unique by paying extreme attention to details and "blending our Indian aesthetic with modern sensibilities.'

Some of those techniques have been employed in this new collection. "In the new collection, one can see ensembles overlaid with

translucent sequinning and beautiful hand embroideries like aari, zardosi, peeta, hand embroidered shimmer, beadwork,

appliqué and handcrafted silk threads embellished with crystals," he elaborated. "The outfits emanate grace in soft muted tones, tropical florals, textural embroidery finished in silk threads and antique finish gold zari." Running a brand as big as theirs surely involves a lot of multitasking at multiple levels. The entrepreneurial couple works in tandem to realize their vision while tapping into their individual strengths.

"Our roles and responsibilities generally overlap and we prefer not to conform to specific roles. However, Bhumika is the fashion designer and technical expert and manages the design execution while I take the role of a creative director as well as spearhead the business and a bit of the operational side. We are always in discussion about varied topics that range from trending colors to business initiatives."



Priyanka Froze Her Eggs In Her Early 30s

LOS ANGELES, CA (IANS) - Actress Priyanka Chopra Jonas revealed that she had frozen her eggs in her early 30s as her mother Madhu Chopra, who is an obstetriciangynecologist, advised her.

"I felt such freedom, I did it in my early thirties and I could continue on an ambitious warpath, I wanted to achieve, and I wanted to get to a certain place in my career," Priyanka, who welcomed her first child Malti Marie via surrogacy in 2022, told Dax Shephard on

the podcast Armchair Expert.

"Also, I had not met the person I wanted to have children with. So, with that anxiety-inducing, and with my

mom who is an ob-gyn going, 'Just do it'," she added.

Priyanka also shared that she did not want to date Nick Jonas at the beginning because she was unsure whether he would want to have kids at 25.

"I always knew I wanted kids and that was one of the reasons I didn't want to date Nick because I was like I don't know if he would want kids at 25. "I love kids, I have worked with kids at UNICEF, I have volunteered at kids' hospitals, I am like a kid whisperer, and I would rather spend time with children than with adults. I love kids, all our parties are kids and dogs friendly, at our house, you can bring them anytime," she added.

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P34 - APRIL 2023 INDIA WEST

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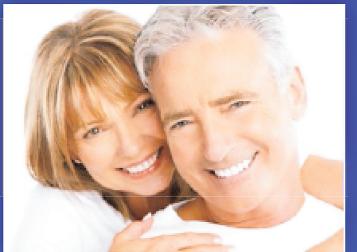
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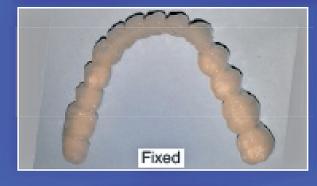






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P36 – APRIL 2023

