

INDIA WEST

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JOURNAL

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6% Of Indian Americans Live In Poverty

India-West News Desk

NEW YORK, NY – A recent Pew survey has highlighted the socioeconomic disparities within the Asian American community, with Indian Americans and Filipino Americans emerging with the lowest poverty rates among Asian groups.

Contrary to the common portrayal of Asian Americans as educationally and financially successful, about 10% of Asian Americans overall live below the poverty line, as per a Pew Research Center analysis and US Census Bureau data. The study, conducted in 2022, revealed that more than 2.3 million Asian Americans, approximately one in ten, were living in poverty.

The poverty rates vary significantly across different origin groups. Burmese Americans (19%) and Hmong Americans



Indian American poverty levels are the least among Asians.

(17%) were identified among the Asian-origin groups with the highest poverty rates in 2022, according to Pew.

Education & Language

An intriguing finding is that a considerable proportion of Asian Americans living in poverty, specifically one-third of those aged 25 and older, possess a bachelor's degree. In comparison, only 14% of non-Asians in poverty hold a similar degree. Moreover, Asian Americans with at least a bachelor's degree are notably less likely to live in poverty (5%) than those with lesser formal education (13%).

Immigrants constitute a significant portion of Asian Americans living below the poverty line, with nearly six in ten falling into this category. The survey indicates that a relatively small number of these

Contd. on P33

Dr Barjatya Leads NASA Study Of Ionosphere During Eclipse



Dr. Aroh Barjatya is doing cutting edge work.

India-West News Desk

WASHINGTON, DC – On April 8, the US experienced a remarkable total solar eclipse that captivated millions of spectators across the country. However, beyond its awe-inspiring visual spectacle, the celestial event provided a unique opportunity for scientific exploration, particularly for researchers aiming to delve into the Earth's upper atmosphere, known as the ionosphere.

Leading the charge in this crucial research endeavor was Dr. Aroh Barjatya, a Professor of Engineering Physics at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University

Contd. on P12

Reps Ask DoJ For Briefing On Status Of Anti-Hindu Crimes



Samosa Caucus: Indian American Representatives have spoken with an united voice.

India-West Staff Reporter

WASHINGTON, DC – Led by Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi, Indian American

congressional reps Ro Khanna (CA-17), Shri Thanedar (MI-13), Pramila Jayapal (WA-07), and Ami Bera (CA-06) on March 29, in

Contd. on P26



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Voice of the Indian American Community

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Huge Response Shows Community Need For Consular Services



visa applications were processed by officials while House of India volunteers did the pre-checks on documents and offered attendees complimentary photocopying and printing services.

The consulate also provided walk-in services to address queries from community members. It was heartening to see many senior citi-

By Rajshree Mudaliar

SAN DIEGO, CA – On March 23, the House of India hosted a Consular Camp in collaboration with the Indian consulate in San Francisco and the visa services company, VFS.

The event, dubbed ‘Consulate@yourdoorstep,’ was a resounding success, attracting approximately 300 members of the community. Although the camp officially opened at 9 AM, attendees began arriving nearly an hour prior. Interestingly, individuals from as

far as Orange County, Temecula, El Centro, and other Southern California cities attended the camp, although it was primarily planned for the San Diego community.

House of India Co-Presidents Vijay Navani and Ajay Kumar officially welcomed the Consul General Dr. Srikar Reddy, to formally inaugurate the camp. In his address, The Consul General assured attendees that efforts were underway to streamline processes, aiming to make various services more accessible to everyone.

Throughout the day, over 180

citizens, some as old as 90 years, taking advantage of the camp to resolve their issues.

House of India recognized the importance of facilitating the camp, having understood the huge need within the community for the services. Encouraged by the camp’s success, the Consul General suggested the possibility of hosting similar camps every quarter in San Diego, given the sizable Indian community in the area. The owner of Royal India Restaurant, Sam Kambo generously provided his banquet room as the venue for the camp.

Hamid Daudani’s New Theater Production Plays On May 3



India-West Staff Reporter

SAN DIEGO, CA – Hamid Daudani & Group’s 29th theater production set to premiere on May 3 at the Joan Kroc Theatre here, delves deep into the complexities of tradition, progress, and the universal quest for respect and love.

Titled “Manzil Pyaar Ki”, this play in Hindi promises to be a thought-provoking journey through the life of a courageous woman striving to carve out her place in a community steeped in age-old customs. The narrative centers around the protagonist,

Sheena, who arrives in the town with her daughter, determined to establish here. She is looking for love and respect. However, as she immerses herself in the fabric of the community, Sheena finds herself trapped in a web of conflicting ideologies. Her progressive views clash with the deeply ingrained traditions of the village.

Manzil Pyaar ki promises to be a powerful drama that will keep the audience involved with well-knit story and its climax. Beautiful dances will add to its presentation, a press release said.

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COMMENTARY

This Election Cycle, What's Leading Women To The Polls?

By SELEN OZTURK

As women voters head to the polls this fall, domestic workers' rights, reproductive rights, gun control and violence against officeholder and election official women are forefront concerns.

Abuse in office

This violence is a pervasive threat for those on the ballots — and a national Brennan Center for Justice report found that abuse of local elected officials and election workers disproportionately impacts women.

Among over 350 state legislators surveyed, over 40% had experienced threats or attacks in the past several years, while nearly 20% of local officeholders had. Furthermore, 8% of state legislators said they were explicitly intimidated by a member of the public carrying a weapon — which is allowed in legislative chambers in many states.

“When you take into account less severe forms of abuse, like harassment, assaults, and stalking, almost 90% of state legislators and over half of local officeholders had experienced some form of abuse,” said Maya Kornberg, research fellow on the Elections and Government Program at the Brennan Center at a March 8 briefing on issues guiding women at the polls.

Women and people of color not only experienced more abuse than their male and white counterparts, but different kinds.

“They were likely to tell us that they were subjected to identity-based abusive language about their children and their families, romantic life, appearance, age, race or gender,” continued Kornberg. “Women serving in state legislatures were nearly four times as likely as men to experience abuse of a sexual nature.”

“This is not only a threat to the safety of our officeholders, but also to our democracy,” she said. 40% of local and 20% of state officeholders said this abuse made them “more reluctant to engage with their constituents, either online or in public ... Half of women in local office said it was deterring them from running for reelection.”

The threat extends behind the



polls, as a previous Brennan Center report found that one in three U.S. election officials — of which over 80% are women — were being harassed, threatened, or abused because of their job.

To curb this abuse, Kornberg recommended extending to the state level already-existent federal measures like campaign security, officeholder training and mental health support, gun regulations where officeholders and officials interact with the public, and systematically collected abuse data.

Reproductive rights

Another issue ever-more urgent to women's concerns is reproductive rights, especially since the 2022 Dobbs v. Jackson decision to overturn Roe v. Wade and eliminate the constitutional right to abortion.

“Reproductive justice includes the human right to have the children that we want; raise our children in safe communities; to be able to prevent or have pregnancies without shame and with dignity; and our human right to make our own decisions about our bodies, our families and our futures,” said Monica Simpson, executive director at Sister Song.

Increasing U.S. abortion bans after the Dobbs decision have worsened “a maternal health crisis in this country,” she continued. “Even having the legal right to

something does not grant access. Before Dobbs, we had areas or states like Mississippi that only had one abortion clinic, and the Hyde Amendment” banning federal funding through Medicaid to cover almost all abortions.

In the first half of 2023, nearly one in five patients were traveling out of state for abortion care, compared with one in 10 in 2020.

“This is a crisis worsened by additional barriers like contraception deserts, inequitable access to sex education, law enforcement brutality, and preventing Medicaid expansion in states with abortion bans,” said Simpson.

To chart a way forward is to reduce the stigma around abortion, and to do so “we have to be willing to say the word abortion,” she continued. At last week's State of the Union, “the President could not even say it — though he said the fight would continue in his leadership. We must not think that this is a bad word. Abortion care is health care, and all that's on the table for us across our reproductive lives.”

Domestic work

“In the U.S. every day, 10,000 children are born and approximately 10,000 people turn 65. We're living longer than ever before, and so we need more care than ever,” said Ai-Jen Poo, president of the National Domestic Workers Alliance. “Yet, we don't

have a national affordable childcare program, a federal paid family and medical leave program or a long-term care benefit.”

“What we have is 53 million overstretched family caregivers who are mostly women, and over 7 million care workers who are underpaid and are overwhelmingly women — about 90% women, and mostly women of color,” she continued. The median annual income for a U.S. homecare worker is \$23,000 per year.

“It's hard to picture supporting yourself and raising a family in this country on poverty wages without benefits, health insurance, childcare and paid time off, which is why expanded care access is so urgent,” Poo said. “The 11 million women in the U.S. who are in the generation sandwiched between caring for young children and caring for aging parents are especially feeling the brunt of this.”

“These are jobs that can't be automated or outsourced, at least anytime soon; they'll be a large share of jobs in the future,” she added. “The pandemic exposed our epidemic of low-wage work — how women struggling to make ends meet are essential workers for our health and society. Now, we need to value them as essential.”

Gun control

The national epidemic of gun violence, too, is motivating women

to vote for a safer future.

“In America, there's a gun for every man, woman, child, and dog. There are more guns than people and more gun dealers than all Starbucks and McDonald's combined,” said Shikha Hamilton, Vice President of Organizing at Brady. “It's not a mental health or domestic violence issue. The problem is easy access.”

In California in the past 30 years, for example, legislation restricting this access has reduced gun death by 50%. If the rest of the country would follow, 19,000 lives would be saved.

In 2000, Brady first held a Million Mom March — the largest gun protest at the National Mall in U.S. history at the time, with over 750,000 people there and thousands more nationwide in 78 cities calling for an end to gun violence.

The impact was nearly immediate, said Hamilton: “stalled gun safety legislation sailed through state houses that November including a referendum to close the gun show loophole, organizers led thousands on another march to the polls, and NRA stalwarts were voted out of Congress in 2000 in two states.” “Our calls for change more recently have led to the passage of the bipartisan Safer Communities Act and the creation of the nation's first-ever White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention — which was led by a woman, Vice President Kamala Harris,” she continued. Despite partisan rhetoric, this issue “unites women across the aisle.”

90% of all Americans in 2019, for instance, supported background checks on all gun sales.

A historical record 48,830-gun deaths in 2021 reflected a 23% rise since then, while gun deaths among children and teens rose 50% in those two years — from 1,732 in 2019 to 2,590 in 2021.

“Women continue to lead this movement because we're horrified to see what this epidemic is doing to us and our children,” Hamilton added. “Women from all walks of life will continue to fight this epidemic until we have created a safer future for the next generation by freeing America from gun violence.” (Ethnic Media Services)

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Rajnish Dhunna Named President Of Rajput Association



– Vice President, Baljinder Tahim – Secretary, and Amit Sedha – Treasurer. Manjit Dasaur, the outgoing president automatically assumed the position of Chairman as per the bylaws of the association.

India-West Staff Reporter

ORANGE, CA – The Rajput Association of America, held its general body meeting here at Tandoor restaurant on March 29 to elect new officers for the 2024-2025 term.

After some discussion and a brainstorming session, the following members were nominated and elected unanimously: Rajnish Dhunna – President, Ravinder Verma

The newly elected officers then appointed the following members for additional responsibilities: Board of Trustees – Kewal Kanda, Anil Verma, Rajinder Dhunna, and Yash Singh. Board of Directors – Vijay Kanwar, Satish Kanda, Rishu Rana, Ashok Madan, Satinder Verma, and Roshan Gupta.

Yash Singh, a former president, administered the oath of office to all elected officers.

Sikhs Celebrate 556th Year At Khalsa Care Foundation



Renowned Ragis, or religious singers, performed hymns and delivered talks on the significance of the day. Attendees continuously filed into the Darbar Hall to pay their respects to the Sri Guru Granth Sahib, while outside, volunteers served langar and

By GURBUX SINGH

PACOIMA, CA – Sikhs celebrated the 556th year of the Sikh religion at Khalsa Care Foundation here, on March 13.

Hundreds of Sikhs from the local area and beyond gathered to partake in the festivities, which included religious observances and a bountiful array of food and drink.

sweetmeats to a steady stream of devotees.

The celebration commenced at 6 pm and continued uninterrupted until midnight, when attendees eagerly showered rose petals upon the Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

As the event drew to a close, Ardas was recited to offer gratitude to the Almighty for the abundance bestowed upon the congregation.

SF Consul General Attends Ramadan Event In Fremont

India-West Staff Reporter

FREMONT, CA – Consul General Dr. K. Srikar Reddy visited the Masjid e Mohammed here to mark the sacred occasion of Ramadan alongside the Dawoodi Bohra community. His presence at the mosque coincided with the auspicious night of Lalit-ul-Qadr, also known as the Night of Power, symbolizing the values of unity, compassion, and introspection. During his visit, Dr. Reddy immersed himself in the rich cultural and spiritual traditions of the

Dawoodi Bohra community, emphasizing the importance of fostering mutual understanding and respect among diverse faiths.

Reddy also graced the Indian Community Interfaith Iftar celebration at Masjid Zakaria in Fremont. The event brought together over 800 attendees. Organized by Muslim organizations representing Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Maharashtra, and beyond, the celebration epitomized the shared values of inclusivity and harmony cherished by communities across India.



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Akshaya Patra Lauded In United Nations For Serving A Landmark 4 Billion Meals

India-West News Desk

NEW YORK, NY – In an event titled “Achievements in Food Security: India’s Strides Towards Sustainable Development Goals” at the United Nations headquarters here, the Akshaya Patra Foundation

celebrated its landmark achievement of serving four billion meals.

In attendance were Nobel Laureate Kailash Satyarthi, N. R. Narayana Murthy the Chairman Emeritus of Infosys, and Madhu Pandit Dasa, Founder-Chairman of the Akshaya Patra Foundation. Together,

they stressed the power of collaborative efforts to eradicate hunger and enhance education through nutritional support. Satyarthi said, “Akshaya Patra has successfully kept millions of children from dropping out of schools who would otherwise be pushed into labor due to their socio-economic status.”

Narayana Murthy appreciated their efforts and said, “Akshaya Patra’s grand and noble battle to ensure that no child is denied education because of hunger is a crucial piece in this complex jigsaw puzzle.”

Madhu Pandit Dasa explained that in the past 24 years, Akshaya



Kailash Satyarthi speaks at the event.



Madhu Pandit Dasa.



Narayana Murthy.

Patra has demonstrated a model for large-scale feeding in partnership with the government to meet the UN Sustainable Development Goal of Zero Hunger. Reiterating the commitment to serve “hot, nutritious, safe, and tasty meals” to children every school day, he thanked the stakeholders including the Government of India, the Ministry of Education, state governments, corporate partners, individual donors, and the community at large for their support.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi sent a message read by India’s Permanent Representative to the UN, Ruchira Kamboj in

which he congratulated the Akshaya Patra Foundation for its consistent initiatives to make into reality the global aspiration of Zero Hunger.

The Akshaya Patra Foundation was established in 2000. Going a step ahead with the ISKCON temple’s tradition of feeding the hungry, it all began with feeding 1,500 children of five schools in Bengaluru. This initiative grew to become the world’s largest (not-for-profit run) mid-day meal program, serving wholesome food to over two million children from 24,082 schools in 72 locations across 16 states and 2 Union Territories in India.



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COMMUNITY

San Diego Millionaire Drops Pants, Over Parking Row

India-West News Desk

SAN DIEGO, CA – Ajay Thakore, the owner of a \$4.5 million Lamborghini yacht refused parking by a dock worker, dropped his pants and exposed his genitals and then proceeded with threats to kill him.

Thakore wanted to park at the Seaforth Boat Rental to pick someone up, the Daily Mail reported, when he was refused parking by a 21-year-old dock worker.

Video footage showed the CEO of Doctor Multimedia abusing the worker and he was heard saying, "I'll kill you! I will kill you! You know I'll kill you! I will kill you! I will kill you!" Thakore then pulled down his pants and exposed himself, making inappropriate gestures towards the worker, the video showed.

In response to media reports and social media trolling, Ajay Thakore posted a video on his Instagram page, saying defiantly that there are "two sides to every story". He said he was defending his employee, claiming he was being restricted, restrained, and threatened while attempting to board the yacht. "As a leader, I defend my own fiercely with everything I have, and I will never apologize for that," he claimed.

A video of his employee saying



he had been invited to his boss' yacht when two workers from the rental company physically got in his way and "the situation became tense" when his boss stepped in as "he is very protective of his employees" was also posted.

Thakore addressed perceptions attached to the wealthy and famous, stating, "Successful people become so for a reason. I will always defend my own, it doesn't matter how many cameras are out. If you want to f*ck around, you are going to find out." This is not the first altercation of Thakore. In 2021 he made news when he quarreled with American Pizza Manufacturing – again related to parking.

SF Consul General Inaugurates Cricket Pitch At University Of The Pacific

India-West News Desk

SAN FRANCISCO, CA – Consul General Dr. K. Srikar Reddy inaugurated a cricket pitch at the University of the Pacific's Stockton campus in Stockton, CA.

Christopher Callahan, president of the University of the Pacific, and Niraj Chaudhary, the university's dean of libraries, were among the 100 people who attended the event.

Reddy highlighted the significance of the pitch for the 450 Indian students, who account for about 50 percent of total international students at the University.

"This certainly will make more students from India consider the University of the Pacific. I could not be more pleased with this event today. We appreciate how the university has embraced our culture. We will have a great friendship with Pacific," he said.

Pacific President Christopher Callahan was traveling with a university contingent near Ahmedabad, India last fall when Chaudhary told him, "We need a cricket pitch at Pacific." Less than six months later, the new cricket pitch has become a reality.

The atmosphere was festive with an exhibition cricket match, Indian



food, Bollywood performances, and much more in a celebration of sport and culture.

"Cricket is like a religion to us, and we appreciate the university putting in this cricket pitch," said Yusuf Ejaz '24, a native of New Delhi. "This is special to international students. It makes us feel like we are home."

Callahan said a big part of the process was simply listening to students. "Long before we built the cricket pitch, the students were playing on makeshift fields, and they wanted more," Callahan said. "Niraj knows I am an easy sell. We wrote the plan for the facility on the way back from India, and he is the one who made it happen."

Cricket had begun to take hold

at Pacific even before the facility was dedicated. There are 93 active members on Pacific's cricket club team—a number sure to grow with the university continuing to enroll record numbers of international students (now at 13%). Cricket also is popular in Pakistan, England, and other countries with students at Pacific. Club members had been playing indoors at Main Gym—a functional but hardly ideal venue.

"It means a lot to us that the university would consider and build a cricket pitch. This shows how much Pacific cares about students," said Devkumar Patel '24, president of the Pacific Cricket Club. "Back home in India, we would play the sport every day. This will allow us to do the same thing here at Pacific."



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Akshay Bhatia Wins Valero Texas Open, Secures Masters Berth

SAN ANTONIO, TX (IANS) – Indian American Akshay Bhatia held his nerve in a tense finish and held off a brilliant late run by Denny McCarthy to win the Valero Texas Open in a sudden-death playoff. It also earned him a place in the Masters.

Bhatia will join another Indian American Sahith Theegala at the Masters.

Bhatia made news at a young age when he turned pro at 17 after an illustrious junior golf career. Instead of going to the college route, Bhatia went through the struggles of professional life, missing seven straight cuts in 2020 and losing his tour card in 2021. He then earned back his card in 2022 and went on to win the 2023 Barracuda Championship, an opposite-field PGA Tour

event that earned him no points.

Bhatia turned a corner entering in 2024. He was in the Top 15 at The Sentry, the Sony Open, and the Farmers Insurance Open. He missed the next three cuts but is now on a run of T17 (Valspar), T12 (Houston), and a dominant win this week in San Antonio against a solid field. He will also play the US Open.

It was Bhatia's second PGA Tour victory in his 54th start at the age of 22 years. Both wins have come in playoffs. He moves up to No. 12 in the FedEx Cup standings and is now fully exempt through the 2026 PGA Tour season.

He also earns entry into the four remaining Signature Events this season.



Dr Aroh Barjatya Leads NASA Study Of Ionosphere During Eclipse

Contd. from P1 in Florida.

Originally from Jaipur, Barjatya spearheaded a pioneering project in collaboration with NASA. The mission involved launching three rockets into the ionosphere, a layer of charged particles situated between 90 and 500 kilometers above the Earth's surface.

Solar eclipses are known to disrupt radio signals transmitted through the ionosphere, affecting communication and power systems worldwide, including mobile phones and televisions. Barjatya's mission aimed to quantify this disruption

and gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon, with the ultimate goal of mitigating communication breakdowns during future eclipses.

Each rocket was strategically launched: the first 45 minutes before the eclipse, the second during totality, and the third 45 minutes after. Equipped with specialized instruments, no larger than a two-liter soda bottle, these rockets meticulously recorded changes in charged and neutral particles, as well as the electromagnetic field, at altitudes of up to 420 kilometers.

The data collected during this mission will be instrumental in unraveling the

intricate interaction between the Sun's radiation and the Earth's upper atmosphere during a solar eclipse.

Barjatya's expertise extends beyond mission leadership. He is the founding director of the Space-Atmospheric Instrument Lab at Embry-Riddle University, where he has been instrumental in advancing research in space systems and atmospheric science.

With a prolific track record in securing funding for space exploration projects, Barjatya has written or co-written eleven successful proposals totaling over \$74M. He has overseen numerous space flight

projects from inception to launch, demonstrating his comprehensive understanding of spacecraft instrumentation and systems engineering.

As a tenured Full Professor and Program Coordinator for the Engineering Physics program at Embry-Riddle, Barjatya has played a pivotal role in shaping the department's strategic direction and fostering academic excellence. He is an active member of various academic societies and serves on prestigious committees such as the NASA Heliophysics Advisory Committee and the NASA Space Environment Technical Definition Team.

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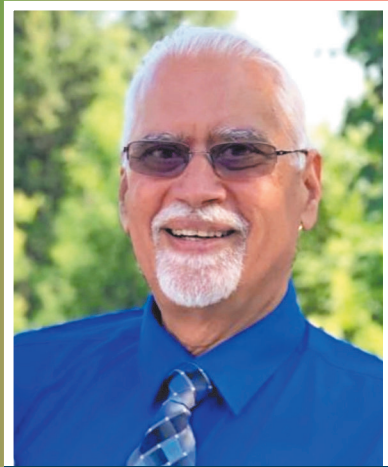
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PEOPLE

Neal Katyal On America's Top 200 Lawyers List

India-West News Desk

WASHINGTON, DC – Neal Katyal has been named in Forbes' America's Top 200 Lawyers list

for 2024. Forbes cited the reason Katyal had made the list:

Katyal has argued 50 cases before the Supreme Court. He serves as the Special Prosecutor

for Minnesota in the murder of George Floyd. While Acting Solicitor General of the US, he won a case upholding the constitutionality of the 1965 Voting Rights Act. Katyal

won another landmark voting rights-related case in 2023 when the Court rejected the "independent state legislature theory" in a North Carolina gerrymandering case.

Katyal, a partner at the law firm Hogan Lovells has appeared on virtually every major American news program and is an easily recognizable face as one commenting on national developments. Raised in Illinois, he has degrees from Dartmouth and Yale Law College. He has taught at Georgetown Law to much acclaim. He has also performed on Netflix's House of Cards and Showtime's Billions (where he played himself in both series). Katyal is married to Joanna Rosen, a physician.



Neal Katyal.



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Netherlands Names Tulip After Ambassador



Shefali Razdan Duggal.

Maveridge International's breeding program in St. Maarten and grew out of a years-long project for strong and healthy tulips.

"It is a genuine and surreal honor to be included amongst such a remarkable

India-West News Desk

WASHINGTON, DC – A tulip in the Netherlands has been named after Indian American diplomat Shefali Razdan Duggal, the US Ambassador to the country, for advocating for gender equity, as it celebrated International Women's Day.

Tulipa Shefali comes from

group of individuals who have received this recognition. The tulip is a beautiful flower which has been cherished and loved for centuries and so positively represents the Kingdom of the Netherlands," Razdan Duggal, 52, said.

Tulip breeding is a long-term endeavor. Accordingly, the origin of the Shefali tulip dates to 2009.

99-Year-Old Becomes An American Citizen



India-West News Desk

ORLANDO, FL – 99-year-old Daibai is now an American citizen. The US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced this milestone, praising Daibai for her liveliness.

In a post on X (formerly Twitter), USCIS shared the heartwarming news, stating, "They say age is just a number. That seems

true for this lively 99-year-old who became a #NewUSCitizen in our Orlando office. Daibai is from India and was excited to take the Oath of Allegiance."

The USCIS captured the sweet moment when the nonagenarian, seated in a wheelchair, proudly posing with her citizenship certificate alongside her daughter and the officer who administered the oath.

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PEOPLE

Jeopardy Champ Yogesh Raut Reflects On Journey

India-West News Desk

NEW YORK, NY – Blogger, freelance writer, and podcaster Yogesh Raut has won the 2024 Jeopardy! Tournament of Champions. Raut took home the \$250,000 grand prize and punched his ticket to the upcoming Jeopardy Masters competition, where he will face off against some of the top-performing players in Jeopardy history.

Raut, from Vancouver, Washington, defeated Ben Chan, a philosophy professor from Green Bay, Wisconsin, and Troy Meyer, a music executive from Tampa, Florida.

Raut has been on the show before – in January 2023 – when he won \$98,000 after being on air for four days. He was not a popular contestant drawing ire online for what was dubbed as his bad sportsmanship.

Raut's reflections on this and his win were posted on jeopardy.com:

As I sat on my flight back from LAX to PDX in November 2022, reflecting on my time on J!, I thought I had maybe proven myself to be pretty smart. I had won over \$98,000, been part of J!'s only "Perfect Game" since the 20th century, and capped it all off with a fun night at O'Brien's, the so-called "hardest pub quiz in the country."

Waiting for the plane to take off, I started playing the find-the-hidden-object game on the monitor in front of me. The woman next to me saw what I was doing and began playing too. It didn't take long for her to completely outpace me. Eventually, her boyfriend commenced as well, and he zoomed past me in no time at all.

Oh, right, I reminded myself. There's

many different flavors of "smart." And so I got over myself and went back to my life.

Once my episodes were finished airing, I wrote an article for American Kahani and gave an extensive interview on How to Win Game Shows but otherwise put J! In the rearview mirror. That changed in December 2023, when local ABC affiliate surprised me on with the news that I had been invited to the Tournament of Champions.

My head spun. Chuck Forrest. Dan Melia. Colby Burnett. Brad Rutter. My fellow Indian American Vijay Balse. Was there a chance I could join these legends and all the other hallowed winners of the J! Tournament of Champions?

Yes. But only a 1/27 chance.

In the back of my head echoed the most famous verse from the Bhagavad Gita not quoted by J. Robert Oppenheimer: "You have a right to perform your prescribed duties, but you are not entitled to the fruits of your actions. Never consider yourself to be the cause of the results of your activities, nor be attached to inaction." So, I carried out my usual routine – updating my blog daily, hosting and editing my podcast, writing "friendlies" for Online Quiz League, playing Sporcle quizzes – and, not wanting to be attached to inaction, bought a copy of former ToC winner



and support formed a protective cocoon that blocked out the rest of the world and allowed me to focus on the game at hand.

It took decades of hard work and dedication to put myself in a position to win the ToC, and it took a great deal of luck for me to triumph over equally skilled competitors. But at the end of the day, I'm still the guy who – based on how bad I was at that airplane game – can easily be outperformed on a mildly complex visual search task.

There's a common misconception that high-level quizzers are basically robots, spitting back dry, context-less facts from their "photographic" memories. This is not only false – as a trained cognitive and behavioral scientist, I can tell you with certainty that "photographic" memory is a myth – but it does a great disservice to the personality traits actually correlated with quizzing success: boundless curiosity, pride in one's own passion, a desire to connect with others over their passions, and creativity.

Yes, creativity. As the psychologist Scott Barry Kaufman once said, memory is designed not for recall, but to make meaning. Success at quizzing isn't about having a superior innate memory; it's about making the world memorable by investing it with meaning. So it's not surprising that many great quizzers are lovers of wordplay, comedy, and storytelling. Memorizing facts by rote is hard. It's much easier to absorb them when you repeatedly process them while drawing unexpected and original connections.

Fritz Holznagel's book Secrets of the Buzzer.

What I did NOT do was find out anything about my fellow ToC contestants. With a few exceptions, they were all strangers to me when I met them in the lobby of the Culver Hotel. Indeed, Emmett Stanton and I checked in at the same time, but based on the way he was dressed I simply assumed he was an exceptionally nice itinerant Irish folk musician. (I'm still not convinced he isn't.) My first taste of what I was in for came when Juveria Zaheer's husband Mike shook my hand and said, "It's an honor."

I scanned for signs of irony but found none. It was then that it dawned on me that I was among people who valued and respected me – not just as a buzzer-presser, but as a human being. This continued to be the case throughout the entire week. All 27 other contestants (including the alternate) and every single member of J!'s staff went out of their way to be complimentary, encouraging, and kind to me. Our mutual web of love

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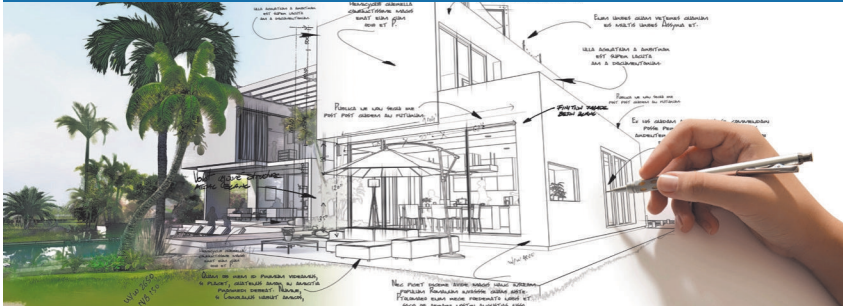
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\$48 Million: 5-Hour Energy Drink's Manoj Bhargava Sued By Sports Illustrated Owners

India-West News Desk

NEW YORK, NY – In a recent turn of events, the owner of Sports Illustrated has taken legal action against the magazine's former publisher, alleging a breach of contract worth a staggering \$48 million. According to the New York Post, the lawsuit filed by Authentic Brands Group accuses the former publisher of halting payments as a ploy to renegotiate licensing terms.

At the heart of the dispute is Manoj Bhargava, the founder of 5-Hour Energy drink and Arena's largest shareholder. The lawsuit portrays Bhargava as having adopted a confrontational approach, with Authentic Brands Group alleging that he acted more like a "gangster" than a reliable business partner.

The lawsuit claims that Bhargava reneged on a significant quarterly license fee payment to Authentic Brands, prompting threats to sabotage Sports Illustrated and hold it hostage. This allegedly led Authentic Brands to demand a \$45 million termination fee from Bhargava's company, NY Post reported.

Despite the turmoil, Authen-



Manoj Bhargava.

tic Brands managed to sell the licensing rights to Minute Media, known for its ownership of the Derek Jeter-founded Players' Tribune. However, Bhargava's alleged obstinance continued, with Authentic Brands accusing him of attempting to force unreasonable demands.

Jamie Salter, CEO of Authentic Brands, reportedly rebuffed Bhargava's attempts to negotiate a lower licensing fee, as per reports in the Washington Post.

In response to the lawsuit, Bhargava's Arena Group is accused of unlawfully retaining Sports

Illustrated-related assets and trademarks, despite no longer holding the license.

Minute Media has expressed its commitment to maintaining Sports Illustrated's print edition and expanding its global reach.

The tumultuous journey of Sports Illustrated, once a weekly publication, has seen numerous challenges under various ownerships. From AI-generated stories controversies to changes in publishing frequency, the magazine's legacy continues to evolve amidst legal disputes and industry transformations.

Tesla Scouting EV Plant Sites In Maha, TN, Guj



AUSTIN, TX – After India approved a new electric vehicle policy to attract investments in the EV space by global manufacturers, Tesla is reportedly sending a team this month to search for locations in the country for a \$2-3 billion plant.

According to a report in The Financial Times on March 3, citing sources, the Elon Musk-run company will "send a team from the US by late April to study sites for the plant."

The team will reportedly focus on Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Tamil Nadu which have EV infrastructure in place as well as ports which makes it easier for the

company "to export cars."

Tesla did not comment on the report.

In the new EV policy, the government has reduced the customs duty to 15 percent, with certain riders paving the way for Musk to enter the Indian market.

In the new EV scheme, the government mentioned that a minimum investment of Rs 4,150 crore (about \$500 million) will be needed to set up manufacturing facilities and production started within three years and reach 25 percent DVA (domestic value addition) by three years and 50 percent DVA within 5 years at the maximum.

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Nithya Raman Wins LA City Council Seat

India-West News Desk

LOS ANGELES, CA – Challenger Ethan Weaver on March 14 conceded the race for the Los Angeles’ 4th District seat as incumbent Nithya Raman continued to hold her lead over 50% of the votes required to avoid a runoff election.

CBS News reported that Weaver called Raman to concede. It said Raman had received 32,430 votes, 50.64%, to Weaver’s 24,730 votes, 38.62%. The L.A. County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk is expected to provide more updates until the election results are certified on March 29.

“I am incredibly thankful to all of our volunteers, supporters and residents of our district for the opportunity to keep working alongside them in pursuit of a thriving Los Angeles,” Raman said in a statement.



After a close race Nithya Raman emerged victorious.

“One thing was clear to me in the conversations I had in backyards, in living rooms, and at doors during this campaign: this city is so full of hope and possibility, and there are so many people who believe very deeply in its future,” Raman added. “I really look forward to carrying that sense of optimism and insistence on a better L.A. with me over the next four years,” Raman said.

Professors File Appeal, Say Cal State Caste Policy Targets Hindus



India-West Staff Reporter

LOS ANGELES, CA – Two Indian American professors at California State University (CSU) have alleged that CSU’s non-discrimination policy, amended to single out ‘caste’ as a protected category, unconstitutionally singled out Indian origin and Hindu students and employees.

Professors Sunil Kumar and Praveen Sinha have made the allegation in an appeal filed in federal court a press release from Hindu American Foundation said.

The appeal seeks to reverse the district court’s 2023 order.

The appeal argues that the district court improperly dismissed their due process claims for lack of standing as the evidence showed that they suffered and continue to suffer “the constitutionally sufficient harm of self-censorship due to CSU’s refusal to define caste, and the district court’s legal analysis on this issue is contrary to well-established case law.”

The district court, it says erred in dismissing their Establishment Clause claims by ignoring critical facts and misapplying the law to hold that “no reasonable reader would conclude that the Policy defines Hinduism to include a caste system.”

The district court, the appeal says, improperly dismissed their Free Exercise claims following CSU’s Motion for Judgment on the Pleadings.

The plaintiffs have alleged in their Amended Complaint that the Policy interferes with their participation in their religion and impermissibly defines religious doctrine. Accepting those allegations as true, as the law requires, the district court’s dismissal cannot be sustained.

“The record is clear: ‘caste’ was added to CSU’s non-discrimination policy for no other plausible reason than to intentionally target Hindus and define Hinduism in a constitutionally impermissible manner,” said Samir Kalra, HAF Managing Director adding, “This appeal is therefore necessary to protect the basic constitutional rights of not only professors Sunil Kumar and Praveen Sinha, but all Hindu faculty, staff, and students at CSU campuses throughout California.”



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Tuesday April 16th, 2024

11:00 AM to 12:00 PM Sri Ramajanmotsava puja

04:30 PM Kalyanam Registrations Start

05:00 PM Sri Bhadrachala Ramadasu Navaratna

keerthana Kalyanotsavam by Vikas Munukutla (Vocal),

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08:00 PM Arati followed by (Dinner Prasad)

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DATE	POOJA/EVENT & DESCRIPTION	CATEGORY	TIME	AMOUNT
April 14th, 2024	Satsang on the occasion of Tamil New Year	Satsang	10:30 AM	-
April 28th, 2024	Monthly Seniors Day	-	10:30 AM	-
Every Monday	Lord Shiva Abhishekam	Abhishekam	7:00 PM	\$54
Every Tuesday	Lord Hanuman Abhishekam	Abhishekam	7:00 PM	\$54
Every Thursday	Shiridi Sai Baba Abhishekam	Abhishekam	7:00 PM	\$54
Every Thursday	Guru Gajanan Maharaj abhishekam	Abhishekam	7:00 PM	\$54
Every Friday	Goddess Siva Kameswari Abhishekam	Abhishekam	7:00 PM	\$54
Every Saturday	Lord Venkateswara Abhishekam	Abhishekam	10:30 AM	\$54
Every Saturday	Navagraha Abhishekam	Abhishekam	11:45 AM	\$54
Every Sunday	Satsang Bhajan Keertan	Satsang	10:30 AM	-
Every Sunday	Rahu Kala Nagaabhishekam	Abhishekam	6:00 PM	\$54

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POLITICS

Beras Hold Fundraiser For David Min Running For Congress

By **BALWEEN KAUR**

IRVINE, CA – Rimal and Tina Bera on March 23 held a fundraiser for David Min who is running for Congress from the 47th district.

California's 47th is an open Congressional District in Orange County that includes the cities of Costa Mesa, Huntington Beach, Irvine, Newport Beach, and Seal Beach, and portions of Laguna Beach, Laguna Hills, and Laguna Woods. Incumbent Katie Porter is vacating the seat to run for U.S. Senate.

In his speech, Min pointed out that Orange County voters trust him to fight for Democratic values

in Congress because that's precisely what he's been doing right here at home. Elected in 2020, David Min, a California State Senator, has emerged as a relentless advocate, shepherding 28 bills into law that reflect the core principles of progressivism and equality.

Among his notable achievements are laws enshrining abortion rights in the California Constitution, expanding protections for survivors of domestic violence, and implement-



ing measures to address the urgent challenges posed by our climate crisis. Additionally, he has championed initiatives banning gun sales on state property, demonstrating a

commitment to public safety.

A first-generation Korean American and a product of California's public education system, David is deeply rooted in the values of diversity and opportunity, said host Rimal Bera to India West, "Min's decision to run for Congress stems from his desire to uphold the American Dream that inspired his parents to immigrate to this country. He believes in creating an inclusive society where everyone has a fair chance to succeed, prioritizing environmental sustainability, education, and the safety of our communities."

David's journey is emblematic of the American Dream he seeks to protect. Born to Korean American parents who immigrated to the United States in pursuit of education, David was raised in Palo Alto before attending the University

of Pennsylvania and Harvard Law School. Prior to his tenure in the California State Senate, David served as an assistant law professor at the University of California, Irvine, focusing on banking, capital markets, and real estate finance.

Host Rimal Bera's brother who is Congressman Ami Bera spoke at the fundraiser via video and said that "David's dedication to public service is evident throughout his career and that Min would make a great Congressman". From his time as a staff attorney at the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission to his role as economic policy director at the Center for American Progress, he has consistently advocated for policies that benefit working families and promote economic opportunity.

Beyond his legislative accomplishments, David's personal life reflects his commitment to making a difference. He met his wife, Jane, while attending Harvard Law School, and together they are raising their three children in Irvine.

Min has received endorsements from key figures like Katie Porter, and the LA Times.



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POLITICS

Biden Campaign Woos Nikki Haley Voters As Poll Shows Trump Ignores Them

India-West News Desk

WASHINGTON, DC – The Biden-Harris 2024 has released a new ad making a direct appeal to Nikki Haley voters to join the Biden-Harris coalition.

The 30-second spot, “Save America. Join Us,” highlights Donald Trump’s repeated insults of Nikki Haley and her supporters — and underscores his active refusal of their support. In the ad, Trump tells a reporter asking how he plans to bring Haley voters into his column, “I’m not sure we need too many.”

“Donald Trump has made it crystal clear he doesn’t want support from voters who cast their ballot for Nikki Haley so let us



be equally clear: there is a home for everyone on this campaign who knows Donald Trump cannot be back in the White House,” said Communications Director

Michael Tyler. Using the recent Republican primary results to determine the ad’s placement, this seven-figure, video-centric ad flight will run for

three weeks in eight key battleground states, targeting Nikki Haley voters in predominantly suburban ZIP codes where she performed well against Trump. The ad will run across a wide array of digital platforms including Meta, YouTube, connected TV, and online video.

ABC News has reported that two in ten to as many as three in ten Republican primary voters in Ohio continued to resist former President Donald Trump’s 2024 candidacy — and among those supporting Nikki Haley, nearly half in its exit poll of Ohio’s GOP primary said they’d back Joe Biden in November.

Despite Trump having sewn up his party’s nomination, ABC News said, 20% of Ohio GOP primary voters would be dissatisfied with Trump as the nominee, while 22% said he lacks the temperament to serve effectively and 28% said he wouldn’t be fit for office if convicted of a crime.

At the end of the day, 18% said they

wouldn’t support Trump in November, with 10% of that number preferring Biden and 8% saying they wouldn’t vote for either. Nationally, 6% of Republicans voted for Biden in 2020. ABC pointed out that nonparticipation by some Republicans would be a further risk for Trump.

Much of the criticism of Trump comes from Haley voters, who turned out for Ohio’s primary despite her departure from the race.

Among her supporters, 88% would be dissatisfied with Trump as the nominee, 91% said he lacks the temperament for office and 88% said he’d be unfit if convicted. Eight in 10 said they wouldn’t vote for him in the general election, with 47% preferring Biden and 32% saying they wouldn’t vote for either candidate. Just 18% of Haley voters in Ohio said they’d vote for Trump in the fall, per the exit poll.

Sixty percent of Haley voters also called the Republican Party “too conservative,” as did 19% of GOP primary voters overall. Additionally, as in previous races this year, a minority of Republican voters — 42% — considered themselves “part of the MAGA movement.”

Tulsi Gabbard’s New Theory: It’s Not Biden Running The Country



India-West News Desk

NEW YORK, NY – Former Democratic Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard, now on the list of Donald Trump favorites, has a theory. A conspiratorial one: President Joe Biden is not running the country.

In an interview with fired and controversial former Fox channel newsman Tucker Carlson, she posited her theory.

Asked by him who, if not Biden, was running the government, Gabbard opined, “It’s not a leap of imagination to know that that’s true. When you look at the people who are in Joe Biden’s administration, they are the people who were the right hands for the Obama administration, for President Obama and Hillary Clinton.”

She went on to say, “So, it’s no shock or surprise who the influences are behind the policies that are coming out of this White House that many people say is the most radical and woken White House that our country has ever seen.”

Gabbard once sued former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton for defamation after Clinton all but called her a “Russian asset” but dropped the case when she was accused of a publicity stunt. Rumors have recently swirled that she is on the shortlist for Trump’s campaign, for vice president.



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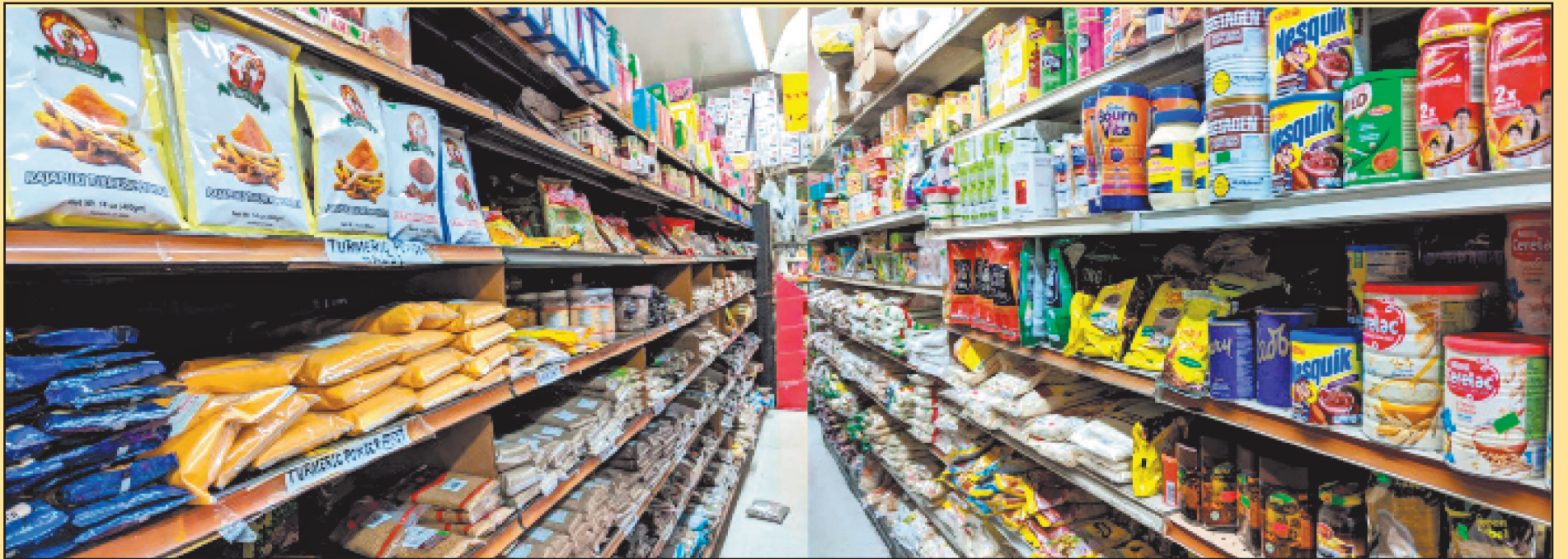
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Niraj Antani Loses Badly In GOP Congressional Primary

India-West News Desk

CLEVELAND, OH – Businessman David Taylor emerged victorious in the Republican primary on March 19, capturing a notable 25% of the votes and beating back 10 other contenders, including state legislator Niraj Antani, who were vying for the 2nd congressional district seat left vacant by retiring Congressman Brad Wenstrup.

Antani secured 1.8% of the vote landing him in the 10th spot.

The contest for Ohio's 2nd Congressional District proved to be



the costliest among the state's congressional races this election cycle. Taylor led the fundraising efforts, amassing a staggering \$1.7 million in campaign contributions,

surpassing several rivals who also amassed over a million dollars, media reports said.

Antani after his loss, reaffirmed his commitment to his Senate du-

ties until his term concludes on December 21.

He currently represents District 6 in the State Senate and has been in office since January

2021. District 6 encompasses a substantial Indian American population, with over 87,000 residents in southern, eastern, and northern Montgomery County.

Reps Ask DoJ For Briefing On Status Of Anti-Hindu Crimes

Contd. from P1

a letter, have requested a briefing from the Department of Justice on the status of investigations into recent vandalism and attacks on temples.

They have also asked the DoJ about its broader strategy against hate crimes targeting Hindus in the country.

"Attacks at mandirs from New York to California have contributed to increased collective anxiety among Hindu Americans," the members wrote. "Leaders from these impacted communities have expressed there are unfortunately 'no leads' on suspects, leaving many to continue to live in fear and intimidation. Our communities remain concerned about law enforcement coordination regarding these bias-motivated crimes, and they are left wondering if there

is appropriate federal oversight to ensure equal protection under the law."

"The number of incidents and the closeness of the timing of incidents raise troubling questions about linkages and the intent behind them," the letter continued. "It takes relatively few coordinated acts of hate to create fear within a community that has often been marginalized or neglected, and we must work collaboratively to combat hate against all religious, ethnic, racial, and cultural minorities in America. We therefore request that you provide us with an understanding of what the Department's strategy is specifically concerning hate crimes targeting Hindus in the United States."

The five members of Congress have requested the DoJ provide the requested by April 18.

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Two Indian American Chefs Named As James Beard Award Finalists



Sujan Sarkar.



Arvinder 'Dickey' Vilku and family.

India-West News Desk

NEW YORK, NY – Two Indian American chefs have made it to the list of finalists for the coveted James Beard Foundation Award for 2024.

Sujan Sarkar, the creative force behind Chicago's Indienne, has been recognized as one of the top chefs in the Great Lakes region. With a culinary journey spanning continents, Sarkar's expertise and innovative flair have garnered widespread acclaim.

His first foray into the US culinary scene came with the launch of Rooh in San Francisco in early 2017, a venture that swiftly gained recognition and acclaim on the West Coast. Building on this success, Sarkar ventured into the vibrant culinary landscape of New York,

opening his first Indian gastro bar, Baarr. His arrival in Chicago in 2019 marked a pivotal moment, with the launch of Good Times Restaurants and subsequently, the acclaimed Indienne. Within a remarkably short span, Indienne secured a coveted Michelin star in 2023, a testament to Sarkar's culinary vision and commitment to excellence.

Born and raised in a small town near Kolkata, Sarkar's culinary journey began with a deep-rooted appreciation for the ingredients and techniques that define Indian cuisine.

Arvinder 'Dickey' Vilku, the president and executive chef of Saffron Nola in New Orleans, has likewise left an indelible mark on the culinary landscape. With over 40 years of dedication to the food and beverage

industry, his culinary journey traces back to his formative years in India, where he was exposed to the rich tapestry of flavors and traditions that define Indian cuisine.

After relocating to the United States in 1984, Vilku assumed leadership roles in esteemed establishments such as the InterContinental Hotel in New Orleans and the elite Pickwick Club. However, it was his innate talent for cooking and a burgeoning demand for his culinary creations that led Vilku to transition from hospitality

management to culinary entrepreneurship. Alongside his wife, Pardeep, Vilku founded Saffron Caterers, a venture that quickly gained acclaim for its fusion of South Asian and Louisiana influences.

After gaining widespread praise for food that combined South Asian and Louisiana influences, Saffron became a brick-and-mortar location in 2017. It is run by Arvinder and Pardeep and their children Ashwin and Pranita.

The final winners will be revealed in Chicago on June 10.

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NFL: Ex Jaguars Employee Amit Patel Sent To Jail



India-West News Desk

JACKSONVILLE, FL – Former Jaguars employee Amit Patel, who admitted to embezzling \$22 million from the team, received a 6½-year prison sentence. U.S. District Judge Henry Lee Adams Jr. also ordered Patel, 31, to pay \$21.1 million in restitution to the NFL team and attend Gamblers Anonymous meetings.

During the hearing, Patel expressed remorse, stating, “I stand before you embarrassed, shamed, and disappointed by my actions.” He disclosed his year-long sobriety and efforts to address his gambling addiction, saying, “I can never truly convey how sorry I am to everyone affected by my actions.”

Megha Parekh, the Jaguars’ senior vice president and chief legal officer, delivered a statement on behalf of the team, expressing

betrayal by Patel, whom they had entrusted with his “dream job.” Parekh emphasized the emotional impact of Patel’s actions, stating, “We take no joy in his punishment. Make no mistake, Amit broke our hearts.”

Patel’s attorney, Alex King, advocated for punishments ranging from probation to one year in prison, ESPN reported.

King attributed Patel’s actions to a gambling addiction, noting that “99% of the misappropriated funds” were used to cover gambling losses. Patel’s history of gambling dates back to high school, with instances of using his mother’s credit card for gambling.

The NFL prohibits club and league employees from gambling on sports, including daily fantasy sports. Patel’s termination from the Jaguars in 2023 coincided with his diagnosis of a gambling disorder and subsequent participation in treatment programs.

Man Pleads Not Guilty To Smuggling Gujarati Family That Froze To Death

India-West News Desk

DULUTH, MN – Harshkumar Ramanlal Patel, 28, who has been accused of smuggling people across the U.S.-Canada border into Minnesota, including the Gujarati family that froze to



death on the border in 2022, has entered a plea of ‘not guilty.’

Dubbed as “Dirty Harry,” Patel entered his plea via teleconference with U.S. Magistrate Judge Leo Brisbois, here. The driver,

hired by Patel, Steven Shand, has also pled not guilty. AP reported that an agent with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security said Patel has been refused a U.S. visa at least five times, including four at U.S. consulates in India and once at the U.S. consulate in Ottawa, Canada. He is in the U.S. illegally, the agent said.

Unsealed court papers connect Patel with a human trafficking group based in the northwest Indian state of Gujarat. The group allegedly would get Indian nationals into Canada on student visas, then move them on to the Chicago area, AP said.

The migrants would work for standard wages at Indian restaurants while they paid off debt to the smugglers, according to the court documents.



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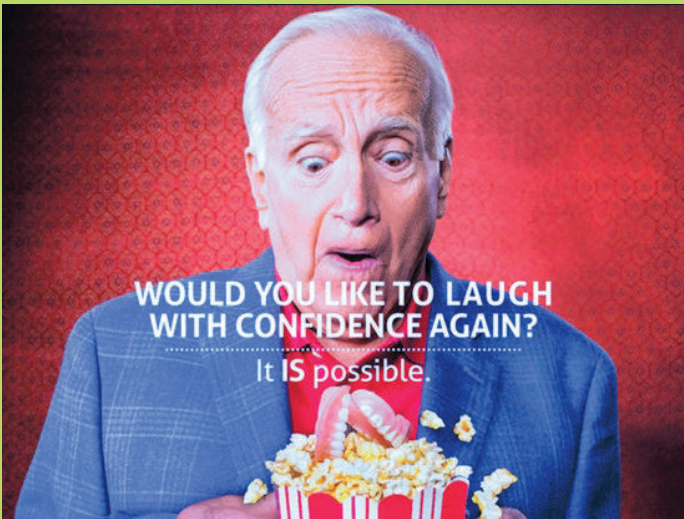
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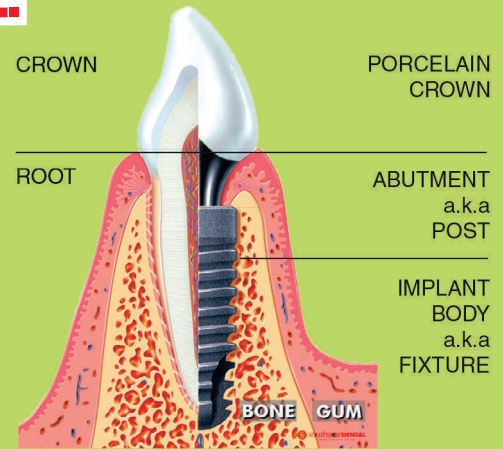
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US Probing Adani Group Over Bribery: Bloomberg

India-West News Desk

NEW YORK, NY – The Adani Group, the major conglomerate in India, faces heightened scrutiny as US prosecutors delve into potential bribery allegations involving billionaire founder Gautam Adani, sources familiar with the matter revealed said Bloomberg and subsequently reported in several Indian media outlets.

Led by the US Attorney’s Office for the Eastern District of New York and the Justice Department’s fraud unit in Washington, the investigation focuses on whether Adani Group entities or individuals associated with the company engaged in bribery to secure favorable treatment for an energy project in India. The inquiry also extends to Indian renewable energy firm Azure Power Global Ltd.

In response to the allegations, the Adani Group issued a statement affirming its adherence to the highest governance standards and compliance with anti-corruption laws in India and other countries.

The investigation stems from allegations raised by short-seller Hindenburg Research last year, accusing the Adani conglomerate of stock price manipulation and



accounting fraud. Although Adani vehemently denied these claims, its shares initially suffered a decline before recovering. Despite the ongoing investigation, the US government has maintained collaborations with Adani Group entities. Notably, the US International Development Finance Corp. provided significant financing to an Adani unit for a port terminal project in Sri Lanka, aiming to counterbalance China’s influence in the region.

The probe into Adani Group’s activities has reached an advanced stage, with the Justice Department empowered to continue investigations without formal notification to the involved parties. As of now,

neither Gautam Adani, his company, nor Azure Power have been charged with any wrongdoing, and investigations do not necessarily result in prosecutions.

Under the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA), US prosecutors can pursue foreign corruption allegations if they involve American investors or markets. Although Adani Group doesn’t trade in the US, it does have American investors.

The unfolding investigation underscores the geopolitical significance of the Adani Group, deeply embedded in the Indian economy and closely monitored by the White House as a potential ally in countering China’s influence.

US Has Not Asked India To Reduce Russian Oil Imports



India-West News Desk

WASHINGTON, DC – Eric Van Nostrand, the US Treasury Assistant Secretary for Economic Policy, who was in New Delhi, dispelled notions that the United States is pressuring India to curb its oil imports from Russia. The Indian media, in an election year, has been drumming the idea that the US is imposing its views and India has stood up to it.

Speaking at an event organized by the Ananta Centre in New Delhi, Nostrand emphasized that the US neither expects nor has it requested India to reduce its oil purchases from Russia.

Since Moscow invaded Ukraine in February 2022, Indian refiners have escalated their purchases of Russian oil. With the West reducing its dependency on Russian energy supplies, Russia began of-

fering substantial discounts on its crude oil, a move eagerly embraced by Indian refiners. Consequently, Russia has now become New Delhi’s largest source of crude, surpassing traditional heavyweights Iraq and Saudi Arabia.

Accompanied by Assistant Secretary for Terrorist Financing and Financial Crime Anna Morris, he said, “The price cap is designed to leave Russia with only bad options... We want him (Putin) to choose between three bad things: selling with coalition services under the price cap, selling outside the price cap, or shutting his oil in and not putting it to market,” Nostrand elaborated.

Both Nostrand and Morris said that the price cap has proven successful thus far, achieving its objective of limiting Russia’s oil revenue without causing a global supply shock or a spike in oil prices.

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6% Of Indian Americans Live In Poverty, Least Among Asians In US

Contd. from P1

immigrants are proficient in English, posing additional challenges in accessing resources and opportunities.

Among Asian immigrants living below the poverty line, 44% are proficient in English, whereas

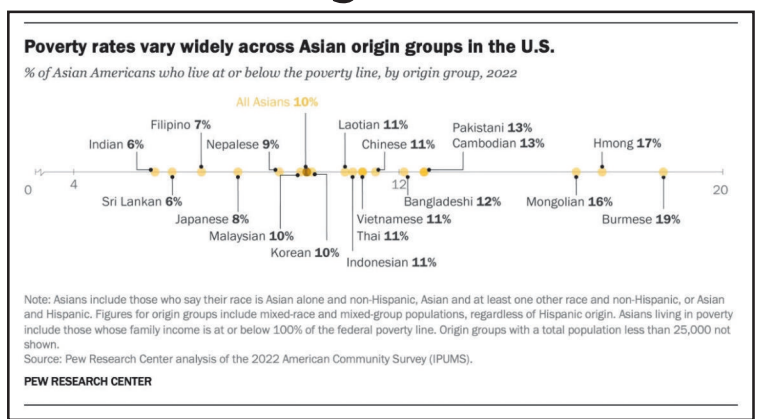
61% of those above the poverty line exhibit proficiency in the language.

Where They Live

The geographical distribution of poverty among Asian Americans is also notable, with about one million residing in 10 US metropolitan areas. Particu-

larly, New York City, Los Angeles, and San Francisco harbor over 500,000 Asians living in poverty collectively, accounting for 26% of all Asian Americans in poverty.

Fresno, California; Buffalo, New York; and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania are among the metro





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areas with the highest poverty rates among Asian Americans.

Financial Support Source

A significant proportion of those in poverty (61%) have sought assistance from family or friends, while nearly half (49%) have turned to local, state, or federal governments for help. Additionally, some have sought support from religious institutions (21%) or Asian community groups (13%).

Interestingly, the reasons for immigrating to the US seem to influence the likelihood of receiving government assistance. For instance, a third of Asian immigrants who came due to conflict or persecution in their home country have received governmental support, compared to smaller shares of those who migrated for educational or economic opportunities or to be

with family.

American Dream

Despite the challenges, there remains a sense of hope among Asian Americans living in poverty. Roughly 47% believe the American dream is out of reach, while others express optimism, with 15% stating they have achieved it and 36% believing they are on their way to achieving it.

Both Asian Americans living above and below the poverty line share similar views on what constitutes the American dream, with elements like freedom of choice, family life, children's opportunities, and retirement being deemed important. Homeownership is also key, with 81% of Asian adults living in poverty and 87% of those living above the poverty line say owning a home is important to their view of the American dream.

India Killings In Pak – US Says It Wants To Stay Out Of It



State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller.

WASHINGTON, DC (ANI) – The United States has said that it “will not get into the middle of the situation” between India and Pakistan.

The response by US Department of State spokesperson Matthew Miller came after he was asked about Washington's stance on the recent report by The Guardian citing Pakistani and Indian officials alleging that India carried killings of individuals associated with terrorism and extremism on Pakistani soil.

“We have been following the media reports about this issue. We don't have any comment on the underlying allegations, but of course, while we're not going to get in the middle of this situation, we encourage both sides to avoid escalation and find a resolution through dialogue,” Matthew Miller said.

The Ministry of External Affairs official spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal had earlier dismissed the charges

and added, “As the world knows, Pakistan has long been the epicenter of terrorism, organized crime, and illegal transnational activities.”

Jaiswal made the remarks after Pakistan Foreign Secretary Muhammad Syrus Sajjad Qazi claimed Islamabad had “credible evidence” of links between Indian agents and the assassination of two Pakistani nationals in Sialkot and Rawalkot—Shahid Latif and Muhammad Riaz.

Latif, who was gunned down in a mosque in Sialkot, has been designated as a terrorist in India, Dawn reported. Riaz, formerly associated with the terrorist organization Jamaatud Dawa, was killed in Rawalkot, The Express Tribune reported.

This is in stark contrast to Defence Minister Rajnath Singh stating that India cannot tolerate terrorism and will do what it takes including whatever the UK media outlet has reported.

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Harvard Names Avantika Vandanapu 'South Asian Person Of The Year'



MUMBAI, (IANS) – Indian American actress Avantika Vandanapu, who is known for her role in 'Mean Girls', has been honored with the "South Asian Person of the Year" award by Harvard University.

The actress was recognized for her outstanding achievements and significant impact in both

the international and Indian entertainment industries.

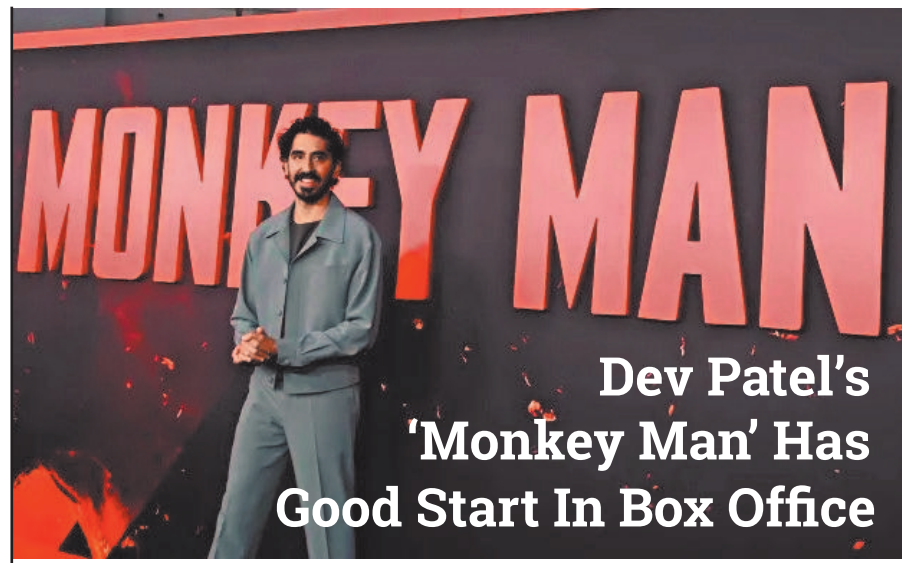
Vandanapu said: "Being honored by such a prestigious institution as Harvard University is truly humbling and incredibly motivating. This award not only acknowledges my efforts but also underscores the significance of narratives transcending borders and the crucial role of Indian representation in global media."

She was one of the key leads in the new adaptation of 'Mean Girls'. She then made her debut in the Indian OTT series 'Big Girls Don't Cry'.

The actress, who was born to a Telugu-speaking family and made her mark in several Hollywood projects, including "Spin", and 'Senior Years', among others, is thankful for the unwavering support and affection she has received from audiences, both at home and abroad.

The actress added: "It propels me to delve into stories that challenge stereotypes, embrace diversity, and forge deep connections with people. My journey is just beginning, and this recognition ignites my determination to continue contributing positively through my work."

"I am eager for the future and aspire to pave the way for more Indian voices to resonate and thrive on the global platform."



Dev Patel's 'Monkey Man' Has Good Start In Box Office

India-West News Desk

LOS ANGELES, CA – Dev Patel's debut directorial venture, the action thriller "Monkey Man," started its journey well, securing the second spot at the box office, earning \$10.1 million trailing only behind 'Godzilla X Kong' which continues to dominate. In contrast, Disney and 20th Century's supernatural prequel "The First Omen" has lagged behind at the fourth position with a subdued \$8.4 million.

"Monkey Man" has also received positive reception from both audiences and critics, boasting a "B+" CinemaScore and an 86% average on Rotten Tomatoes.

Both "Monkey Man" and "The First Omen" were originally intended for streaming platforms rather than theatrical releases, Variety reported. However, Universal Pictures acquired the rights to "Monkey Man" for \$10 million after filmmaker Jordan Peele, whose production company has a distribution deal with Universal, recognized its potential for a theatrical run.

The film, starring Dev Patel as Kid, an enigmatic figure seeking vengeance against corrupt leaders responsible for his mother's death, has the potential to benefit from positive word-of-mouth in the coming weeks, said Variety.





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Mindy Kaling's New Show Lands In Hulu

India-West News Desk

LOS ANGELES, CA – Mindy Kaling is returning to Hulu, according to Deadline, six and a half years after the conclusion of The Mindy Project, with a new single-camera comedy titled Murray Hill.

The project, produced by Warner Bros. TV under Kaling's overall deal, was presented to buyers at the beginning of the year and generated significant interest in the competitive market, ultimately landing at Hulu with a script-to-series commitment, Deadline said.

Murray Hill, written by Kaling, follows the lives of five ambitious twenty-somethings who prioritize professional success and, if time permits, personal fulfillment in Manhattan's upscale neighborhood of Murray Hill.

Kaling serves as executive producer through her company, Kaling International, in association with Warner Bros. TV, alongside Howard Klein from 3 Arts Entertainment. Jessica Kumai Scott from Kaling International acts as

co-executive producer.

This collaboration marks a reunion between Kaling and Hulu, which previously rescued The Mindy Project in 2015 after its cancellation by Fox. The series, a workplace/romantic comedy, continued for three more seasons on Hulu, becoming one of the platform's early original hits.

Craig Erwich, then Hulu's SVP and Head of Content, spearheaded the initiative into original programming and currently oversees Hulu's original slate as president of Disney Television Group, Deadline reported.

Erwich expressed enthusiasm about the partnership, stating, "Mindy has been a beloved member of the Hulu family, so this deal is a natural extension of our relationship," upon the pickup of The Mindy Project in 2015.

Since The Mindy Project, Kaling has co-created and developed successful series like Never Have I Ever for Netflix, and The Sex Lives of College Girls and Velma for HBO Max. Murray Hill marks her return to solo creatorship for the first time since The Mindy Project.





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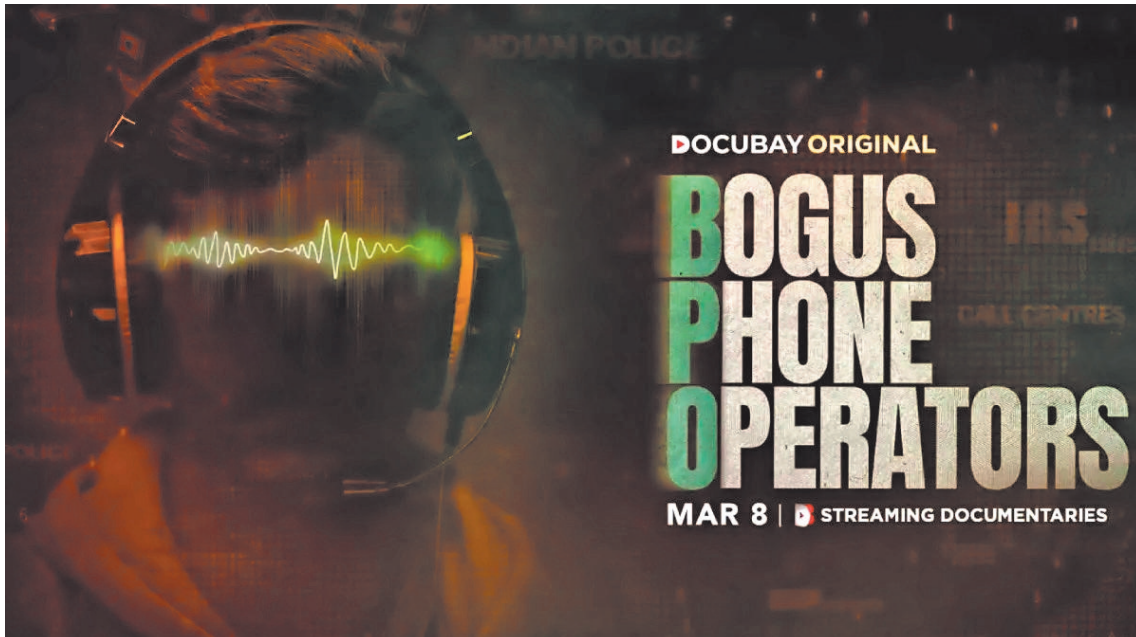
Film Shows How Americans Are Scammed By Indian Call Centers

MUMBAI, (IANS) – The streaming documentary ‘Bogus Phone Operators’ unravels one of the biggest call center scams in India. The documentary exposes the ‘Thane Call Center Scam’ and goes behind the criminal networks operating from India that swindled the American citizens while sitting in India.

A group of 600 deceptive call center employees in Maharashtra’s Thane, allegedly collaborated to pull off a fraud involving over 15,000 Americans, resulting in estimated losses exceeding \$50 million.

The documentary provides an in-depth exploration of this scam, which prompted collaboration between the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Indian Police to uncover the ‘Thane Call Centre Scam’. The investigative crime documentary is on IN10 Media Network’s global premium membership-based OTT platform, DocuBay.

Girish Dwibhashyam, COO of DocuBay, explained the motive behind producing the documentary, as he said: “The shocking ‘Thane Call Centre Scam’ compelled us to act. The story of hundreds of employees in a seemingly legitimate call center in Mumbai



suburbs allegedly swindling thousands of Americans needed to be shared with global audiences.”

“Bogus Phone Operators’ aims to uncover the masterminds behind these crimes. The filmmakers have investigated and explored the complexities of this scam industry, which appears to be just the tip of the iceberg,” he added.

Despite law enforcement efforts, the documentary showcases how these criminal networks persist with impunity, highlighting the necessity for international cooperation and heightened awareness.

The documentary is helmed by National Award-winning filmmaker Satya Prakash Upadhyaya.

Satya said: “As someone who has fallen victim to scam calls, this documentary serves as my urgent plea to safeguard our digital world. We must educate citizens before these scams pose an insurmountable threat to society.”

During the research and filming process, the team collaborated with experts, media, lawyers, and call center employees to navigate challenges. Months of research and collaboration with Indian

Police and the FBI were crucial in establishing communication with victims, who shared first-hand accounts of the scam’s impact on their lives. “The documentary serves as a reminder of the pervasive threat of cybercrime and the importance of remaining vigilant in an increasingly connected world,” said Yule Kurup, producer at Nirvaan Entertainment.

“Through our examination of the ‘Thane Call Center Scam’, we aim to raise awareness and empower viewers to protect themselves from similar fraudulent schemes.”

Dhanush, Aishwarya File For Divorce

CHENNAI, (IANS) – Actor-filmmaker Dhanush and director Aishwarya Rajinikanth have filed for divorce. According to media reports, the couple filed a petition seeking divorce by mutual consent at a Chennai family court recently.

In January 2022, Dhanush and Aishwarya had announced that they are moving their separate ways.

Taking to social media, Dhanush had written: “Eighteen years of togetherness as friends, couple, as parents and well-wishers to each other... The journey has been of growth, understanding, adjusting, and adapting.

“Today we stand at a place where our paths separate. Aishwaryaa and I have decided to part ways as a couple and take time to understand us as individuals for the better.” Dhanush and Aishwarya, who got married in 2004, are parents to two sons – Yatra and Linga. On the work front, Aishwarya made a comeback as a director with ‘Lal Salaam’, which had her father Rajinikanth playing an extended cameo.

Dhanush’s latest release is ‘Captain Miller’, an action-adventure film directed by Arun Matheswaran and produced by Sathya Jyothi Films.

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