### Voice of the Indian American Community



# <u>41st AAPI Convention</u> New Leadership And Notable Achievements

### India-West Staff Reporter

PHILADELPHIA, PA - The 41st annual American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI) Convention and Scientific Sessions concluded at the Marriott Downtown in Philadelphia, PA, with Dr. Anjana Samadder assuming charge as the new President of AAPI. The convention, held under the major theme "True and Total Health is the Wellbeing of Mind, Body, and Spirit," witnessed the inauguration of the new AAPI leadership team and showcased remarkable achievements.



In her Presidential Inaugural address on July 8th, 2023, Dr. Anjana Samadder expressed her commitment to the well-being of AAPI members and the advancement of the organization's mission. Alongside Dr. Samadder, Dr. Satheesh Kathula took charge as President-Elect, Dr. Amit Chakrabarthy as Vice President, Dr. Sumul Raval as Secretary, Dr. Sreeni Gangasani as Treasurer, and Dr. Lokesh Edara as Chair of the Board of Trustees.

The convention began with the chanting of Sanskrit Mantras, followed by the ribbon-cutting *Contd. on P6* 

# SF Consul General Named Ambassador To Kazakhstan



Dr. TV Nagendra Prasad.

### India-West News Desk

SAN FRANCISCO, CA – Dr. TV Nagendra Prasad, the Consul General of India, here, has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Ministry of External Affairs said on June 30.

"He is expected to take up the assignment shortly," the release read.

Ambassador Prasad before taking over as the Consul General of India at San Francisco, served at the Ministry of External Affairs as Joint Secretary heading the Gulf Division.

He joined the Indian Foreign Service in the year 1993 and served in various positions at Indian Missions *Contd. on P8* 

# California Caste Bill Passes Assembly Committee

### India-West News Desk

SACRA-MENTO, CA – The California Assembly Judiciary Committee held a hearing of Senate Bill 403, aimed at

> banning caste <u>The bill will finally be voted</u> discrimination and on July 5, with a 9-0 vote, passed it. The bill will now be moved to the Appropriations Committee to judge its fiscal impact. If passed here, it will go to the Assembly floor for a full vote.

Authored by Fremont Senator Aisha



The bill will finally be voted on by the full Assembly.

Photo: @dalitdiva

Wahab, the bill has been a contentious one right from the start, dividing the community. Again, about 200 people from both sides of the argument showed up at the hearing. Those against it say it is wrong and will *Contd. on P18* 



### COMMUNITY -

# **Grateful Marathon Runner Returns To Thank** Cardiologist, Team At Glendale, CA





Phillips returned to Glendale Memorial Hospital and Health Center to thank those who saved his

life with a medal as a token of his appreciation. This thank-you gift is symbolic of the finisher medals

Marathon runner Glen Phillips embraces Cardiologist Dr. Onkarjit Marwah during a ceremony at Dignity Health - Glendale Memorial Hospital and Health Center.

### **By REENA RATHORE**

LOS ANGELES, CA - April 7 started like any day for Glen Phillips but by the time it ended, the marathon runner had a brush with death.

Phillips suffered a cardiac emergency during a run on a trail in Elysian Park in Glendale, CA. Reacting to the situation, a bystander called 9-1-1 while another sprang into action and performed CPR until the paramedics arrived. He was later transported to Dignity Health - Glendale Memorial Hospital and Health Center where doctors helped save his life.

Cardiologist Onkarjit Marwah, who was the lead doctor on the team, told India-West that Phillips had recurrent chest pains in the days leading up to the cardiac arrest.

"Doc, what happened and why did this happen to me?" Marwah recalled Phillips as saying when he woke up. "Being an athlete, he never thought that he would be developing heart problems or chest pains, so he kept on exercising. When he was running that day, he developed ischemia of the heart...it resulted in a very dangerous arrhythmia called ventricle fibrillation, because of which he passed out on the trail while he was running."

He explained that most of the time, because of the pain, patients are alerted to the situation and seek timely medical attention, but at times, "when the heart attack causes a dangerous arrhythmia, like in this case, a person will pass out within seconds, and may pass away within a few minutes if help does not arrive." But Phillips was fortunate to have received timely attention and care.

participants receive when finishing a marathon race.

"We were able to shock his heart out of the dangerous arrhythmia into a normal rhythm and then bring him immediately to the hospital emergency room," Marwah

told India-West. "In the hospital, he was immediately put on a ventilator for breathing, and then taken to the cardiac Cath Lab immediately, and underwent an angioplasty and stenting of a coronary artery that was occluded that was giving him the heart attack that resulted in the dangerous arrhythmia."

He was also placed in a hypothermia-induced coma and spent several days in the ICU.

"Hypothermia involves placing an individual into a medically induced coma which also includes bringing a patient's temperature down to a very low level to save the

heart and the brain from ischemic damage," Marwah elaborated.

Phillips has made an almost full recovery as the damage caused by the heart attack was minimal, Marwah said, adding that saving Phillips was a team effort.

On May 24, during a ceremony organized by the hospital's administration to recognize

the emergency medical personnel who'd helped Phillips, he was able to thank everyone in person who gave him a new lease on life.

"They bring patients with heart attacks and other conditions to the hospital on a daily basis multiple times rescuing patients out in the field in difficult situations. We felt it was imperative for us, and extremely important to recognize the emergency medical services for what they do every day saving lives," Marwah said. "Also, that particular week ended up being EMS week, so it seemed like the most appropriate time to recognize them."

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### INDIA WEST

### **OPINION**

### Indians Happy With Court Stopping Affirmative Action In College Admissions

### **By NAVNEET S. CHUGH**

The Supreme Court's recent ruling on college admissions and affirmative action has made African Americans and Hispanics unhappy, some whites happy and most Indians happy. The lawsuits leading up to the ruling were largely filed by Asian-American students who argued that affirmative action policies disadvantaged them in the college admissions process.

Asian Americans have a diverse range of perspectives on the issue, influenced by generational, cultural, and political differences. Many Asian-American parents and educators who have long felt frustrated by what they perceive as bias against Asians in college admissions were jubilant about the ruling. They believe that hard working immigrant families, predominantly from China, India, and South Korea, face unfair treatment in the admissions process, which undermines

equality. They value diversity but argue that it should not come at the cost of equal opportunities for Asian-American students.

Indian Americans believe that race or ethnicity should not be a factor in college admissions decisions. Most Indians have faced enough discrimination all their life in India from tremendous benefits and advantages given to Dalits and other backward classes. The special treatment to Dalits was supposed to end ten years after the Republic was formed in 1950, but politicians

obviously don't have the courage to let the unconstitutional discrimination end because they will lose their elections.

Even though some South Asians support affirmative action, citing their own educational experiences and recognizing the disparities in education that necessitate such policies, but they largely prefer the importance of grades, standardized test scores, and community service as the main factors in the process. "We came to America because there is meritocracy here and not unconstitutional preferential treatment like there is in India for half of the country," says



The currents justices of the Supreme Court.

Mehma Kaur who recently came to the U.S. for advanced studies.

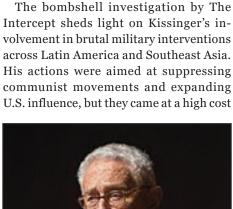
Some Asians who supported the ruling were skeptical that it would have a substantial impact. They expressed concerns that colleges and universities would find alternative ways to enforce systemic discrimination and preferential treatment toward certain groups. They believe that despite the ruling, racial considerations will still be covertly taken into account, such as through surnames or other indirect factors. These individuals, based on their own experiences, suspect that - just because the majority remains silent, the politicians don't have the courage to do right, and the Supreme Court of India allows the unconstitutional laws to continue. One day many moons from today, the Supreme Court will find the Indian laws to support the backward classes unconstitutional and also express that it should have been done sooner. The wheels of justice are excruciatingly slow commonly, and more so in India since someone forgot to put the wheels.

The U.S. Supreme Court's decision marks the end of an era in which colleges and em-

> ployers were allowed to consider race in selection decisions. The majority opinion argues that giving applicants an advantage based on their race violates the guarantee of "equal protection" under the Fourteenth Amendment. However, the dissenting opinion highlights the long history of racial disparities in the United States and argues that ignoring race in law does not make it irrelevant in life.

The Supreme Court's ruling on affirmative action has sparked diverse reactions among south Asians,

reflecting the complex and multifaceted nature of the issue. The ruling is expected to have far-reaching implications for college admissions and the pursuit of diversity in higher education. While proponents of the decision argue for a merit-based system, others raise concerns about the potential consequences for racial equality and the perpetuation of systemic discrimination. The broader impact of the ruling and the subsequent changes in college admissions processes are yet to be fully realized, but the debate on affirmative action and its role in achieving educational equity in the US continues.



Henry Kissinger's

Legacy Of Violence I write to express my deep concern regard-

ing the recent revelation that former U.S.

national security adviser and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger was responsible for

a far greater number of civilian deaths in Cambodia during the U.S. war than previ-

ously acknowledged. As Henry Kissinger

celebrates his 100th birthday, it is imperative

that we do not overlook his violent legacy.

**LETTERS** 



Henry Kissinger.

of innocent lives. The survivors and families affected by these campaigns continue to bear the pain and loss, while Kissinger remains unaccountable.

This revelation adds to an already extensive list of killings and crimes attributed to Henry Kissinger. As Nick Turse, author of the investigation, aptly points out, even at this late stage of his life, Kissinger should be held accountable for his actions. The passage of time should not shield him from answering for the pain and suffering he caused.

It is crucial that we recognize the significance of these revelations and engage in a broader conversation about the role of individuals in positions of power. The actions of our leaders should not be forgotten or glossed over. True justice demands that those responsible for atrocities face consequences, regardless of their age or achievements.

As we mark this milestone in Henry Kissinger's life, let us not allow it to overshadow the victims and their families. Instead, let us remember the innocent lives lost and strive for a world where such violence is not repeated.

Jagjit Singh, Los Altos, CA



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The iconic Supreme Court in Washington D.C.

their Asian-American children have faced discrimination in the admissions process.

The ruling highlights a familiar divide between first-generation immigrant parents and their American-born children. While some parents advocate for a merit-based system, their children often exhibit more sympathy towards the importance of racial diversity. The younger generation, having benefited from their parents' efforts and already being removed from certain struggles, may have a different perspective on the issue. Also, the Indian parents are scarred from 75 years of unconstitutional discrimination back home

### **COMMUNITY** -

# Two Indian Americans At Caltech Recognized With Named Professorships

#### **India-West Staff Reporter**

PASADENA, CA - Caltech has recognized 13 faculty members with named professorships for early career and tenured faculty—the Institute's most distinguished award. Among them are two Indian Americans, Smruthi Karthikeyan and Karthish Manthiram.

Each named professorship brings its own legacy. Many professorships, for instance, have long-standing histories and pass a tradition of discovery and exploration from one academic generation to the next, from one colleague to another. A professorship may also provide a faculty member with an opportunity to forge meaningful connections with the philanthropists who made the award possible, Caltech said in its announcement.

Karthikeyan joined the Caltech faculty in 2022. She is the Gordon and Carol Treweek Assistant Professor of Environmental Science and Engineering William H. Hurt Scholar, Division of Engineering and Applied Science.

Her research interests lie in the interface

of engineering, computational biology, and microbial ecology to study microbial dark matter. Her overarching objectives are to develop integrated wet-lab and multi-omic (DNA-, RNA-, untargeted metabolomics) approaches to provide a systems-level understanding of complex microbial communities and their interactions and how these translate to biomarkers for environmental and human health.

Understanding microbial community behavior at a mechanistic level can have applications ranging from identifying the role of human gut microbiome in health and disease to mitigating the impacts of climate change.

Karthish Manthiram is Professor of Chemical Engineering and Chemistry William H. Hurt Scholar, Division of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering.

Manthiram, Caltech said, strives to make artificial chemical synthesis more like the metabolic processes found in plants, which extract much of what they need from water, air, and sunlight. Manthiram's group devel-



Karthish Manthiram. Photo: Lance Hayashida/Caltech

ops electrochemical catalysts and processes that enable removal of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and the oceans, using only renewable electricity, such as solar. The carbon contained in carbon dioxide can then be converted, along with atmospheric nitrogen, into fuels, fertilizers, pharmaceutical



Photo: Caltech

compounds, and other important materials. Manthiram joined the Caltech faculty in 2021.

Smruthi Karthikevan.

### Ashok Patnaik Elected Chairman Of Cerritos Commission





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**India-West Staff Reporter** 

CERRITOS, CA - The City of Cerritos has appointed Ashok (Pat) Patnaik as the Chairman of the Parks and Recreation Commission. Patnaik brings a wealth of knowledge and a proven track record of service to the city, having previously served as a Commissioner for almost 14 years in various capacities, including Parks and Recreation, Economic Development, and Community Safety.

In addition to his role with the Parks and Recreation Commission, Patnaik holds the position of Vice President for Small Business Lending at Wallis Bank, Cerritos. Previously he was the Global Marketing Manager at Dresser-Halliburton, where he worked with major US corporations and established joint ventures in 36 countries across different continents. This international experience has equipped him with a global perspective that he brings to his role in the local community.

He currently serves as the Vice President of the National Federation of Indo-Americans and has served as the founding president of the UFICA organization in Southern California. As a long-term resident of Cerritos, Patnaik is passionate about contributing to the betterment of the city. He holds a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from the National Institute of Technology in India and an MBA from Pepperdine University.

### **COMMUNITY**

### 41st AAPI Convention: New Leadership And Notable Achievements

Contd. from P1

ceremony and traditional Lamp lighting. Dr. Ravi Kolli, Immediate past President of AAPI, addressed the delegates, highlighting the origins of AAPI 41 years ago and the exceptional contributions of physicians of Indian origin to healthcare in the United States. He expressed gratitude for the support received and welcomed attendees to the historic 41st Annual Convention in Philadelphia.

Venkaiah Naidu, former Vice President of India, delivered a keynote address emphasizing the importance of giving back to one's motherland and nurturing one's physical and mental well-being. He praised AAPI's programs centered around addressing mental health stigmas and promoting practices like meditation and yoga.

The convention provided a platform for AAPI members to learn and practice the significance of meditation in resolving health concerns, as well as the contributions of Ayurveda, Yoga, and Meditations to global health challenges.

Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar addressed the gathering, sharing insights on stress management through yoga, breathing techniques, and meditation. He acknowledged the demanding nature of physicians' work and encouraged them to prioritize their own well-being to lead happier and more fulfilling lives.

During the convention, Congressman Shri Thanedar, a member of the Samosa Caucus in the US House, praised the hard work of Indian American physicians, particularly their dedication during the COVID-19 pandemic. He expressed his commitment to advocating for immigration system reforms in the United States.



venkalah Nalau, jormer V.P. urged all to give back to India. success. spoke passionately about his Several distinguished individ-Presidential ambitions and his uals were honored during the

dedication to combating cultural challenges that hinder the American Dream. He emphasized the importance of hard work, commitment, and character in achieving success.



### EXPERIENCES OF BIAS & DISCRIMINATION TOWARDS THE SOUTH ASIAN COMMUNITY

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### TO BE ABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY:

- 18 years of age
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\*South Asia: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Maldives

### IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY,

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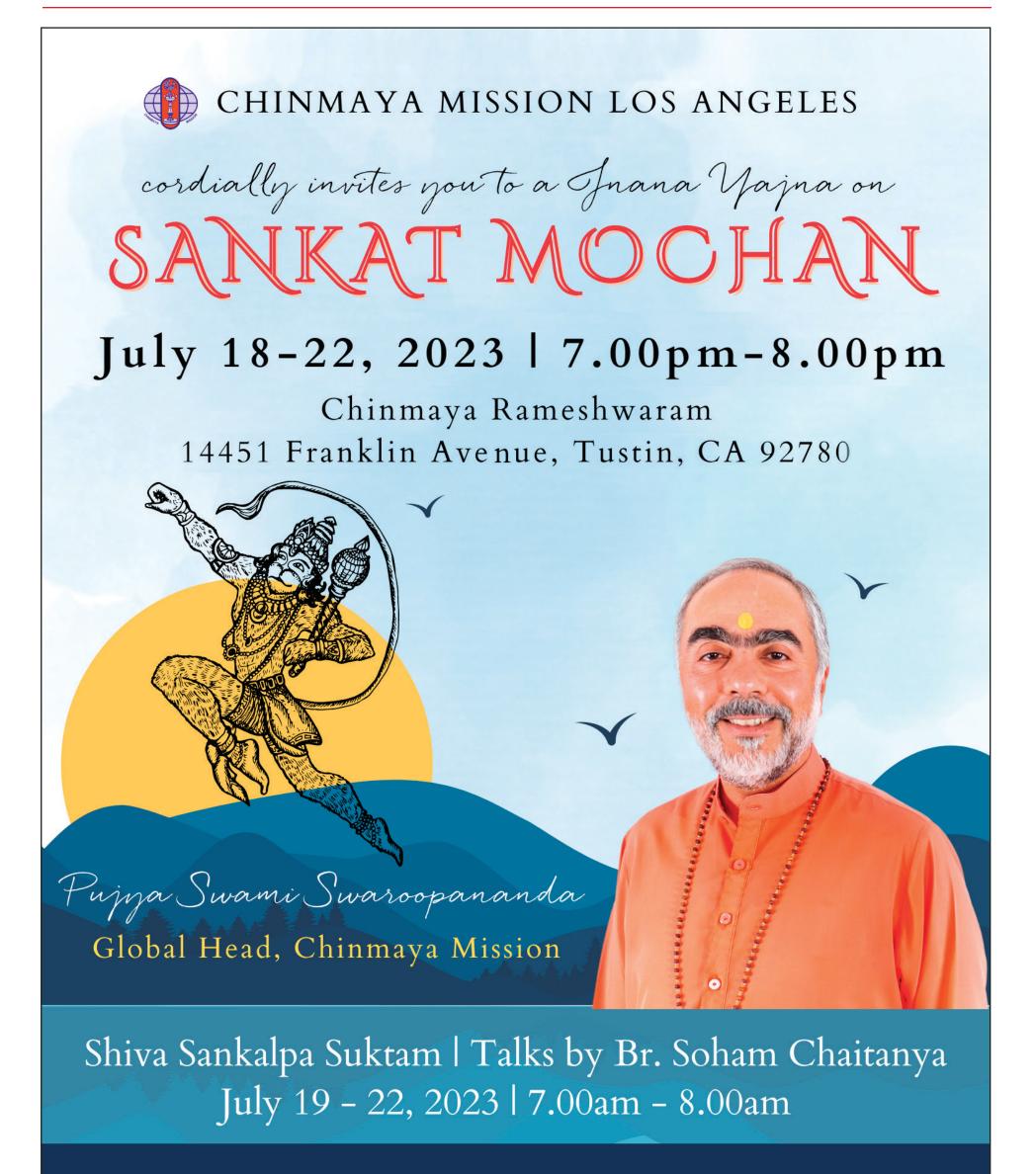
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convention. Dr. Prem Reddy received the Special Presidential Appreciation and Achievement Award for his leadership, entrepreneurship, and philanthropy. Dr. Ranga Reddy, past AAPI President, was conferred with the Lifetime Achievement Award. Dr. Manmeet Ahluwalia received the AAPI 2023 Most Distinguished Physician Award, while Dr. Udaya Shivangi was recognized with the AAPI 2023 Most Distinguished Service Award. Dr. Soumya Reddy Neravetla received the AAPI's 2023 Most Distinguished YPS Award, and Mehul Mehra was presented with the AAPI's 2023 Most Distinguished MSRF Award. Mary Shaya, President of J & B Medical, was honored with the prestigious AAPI Presidential Humanitarian Award 2023, while Stephen Shaya, M.D., Managing Director of Akkad Holdings and Executive Servant Leader at J & B Medical, received the AAPI Presidential Healthcare Leadership Award 2023.

The convention featured accredited CME courses, panel discussions, presentations, and a research and poster competition. It also included forums for AAPI Young Physicians Group and AAPI MSRF for medical students, residents, and fellows. The Exhibitor Hall showcased medical and pharmaceutical products, devices and equipment, insurance and tourism services, art, and medical and dental practice-related services.

The convention's diverse program offered attendees the opportunity to engage with notable speakers, cutting-edge medical and scientific information, and a rich cultural experience encompassing authentic Indian cuisine, fashion, yoga, and entertainment. AAPI's Got Talent, organized by AAPI physicians, provided delegates with a platform to showcase their talents and participate in a talent show.

Dr. Raghu Lolabhattu, Convention Chair, acknowledged the dedicated team that planned and organized the event, making it a truly memorable experience. He expressed gratitude for the hard work that went into creating an attractive program, combining educational activities and family enjoyment.



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### COMMUNITY

# Sandeep Krishnamurthy Named **Dean At Cal Poly Pomona**



Sandeep Krishnamurthy.

#### **India-West Staff Reporter**

POMONA, CA - Sandeep Krishnamurthy has been named the new Singelyn Family Dean of the College of Business Administration and the Singelyn Graduate School of Business at Cal Poly Pomona.

The university is one of the most diverse polytechnic universities in the nation and is part of the California State University system. The business college has more than 5,000 undergraduate and graduate students comprising one of the largest business schools in the nation.

Krishnamurthy, a university statement

said, is committed to supporting first-generation students, mentoring faculty of color, and creating diverse leadership capacity in higher education. He has consistently worked with community colleges, advocated for the affordability of higher education programs and modeled allyship with community partners.

He comes from the University of Washington - Bothell, where he was the founding dean of the School of

Business in 2012. He joined the UW faculty in 1996 and in 2010 was promoted to full professor and named director of the business administration program with the goal of elevating it to a separate school.

Krishnamurthy's research is widely published in internationally recognized iournals.

He holds a B.Tech. in chemical engineering from the Indian Institute of Technology, a post-graduate diploma in business management from Xavier School of Management, and his Ph.D. in marketing from the University of Arizona with a minor in economics.

### **Rekha Sharma-Crawford Becomes** First Ever S.Asian AILA Secretary

### **India-West Staff Reporter**

KANSAS CITY, MO - Rekha Sharma-Crawford, an immigration attorney based here, has become the first South Asian American Secretary of the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) for 2023-2024.

AILA, a national association of immigration lawyers, aims to advocate for fair immigration law and policy, promote justice, enhance the quality of immigration law practice, and support the professional development of its more than 17,000 members worldwide.

Expressing her gratitude, Sharma-Crawford on June 22 emphasized the importance of having diverse representation, stating, "According to the Pew Research Center, Asian Americans have roots in over 20 countries, and it was high time for us to have a seat at the table."

Sharma-Crawford, born in India and

raised in the US, practices law alongside her husband, Michael. As a nationally recognized expert in immigration law, she frequently handles cases involving affirmative immigration benefits before Federal Courts and Courts of Appeals in multiple Circuits.

In 2012, she co-founded a nonprofit law clinic dedicated to providing legal representation to indigent individuals facing removal in the Kansas City Immigration Court. The clinic, known as the Clinic at Sharma Crawford, has assisted thousands of clients, offering much-needed low bono and pro bono services.

Sharma-Crawford is an Adjunct Professor teaching Immigration Law at the University of Kansas School of Law and Washburn University School of Law. She is also the author of the children's book "Aaliyah the Brave, Empowering Children Coping with Immigration Enforcement."

# SF Consul General Named **Ambassador To Kazakhstan**

### Contd. from P1

including Tehran, London, Thimphu, Berne, and Ashgabat. He was India's Ambassador to Turkmenistan from July 2014 to January 2018.

In India, he served as Regional Passport Officer, in Bengaluru (1999-2001) and as Project Director of the Passport Seva Project, one of the Mission Mode Projects under e-Governance (2008-2011).

Dr. Prasad was born in the district of Warangal, Telangana. He graduated from the Andhra Pradesh Agricultural University and received his Doctorate from the prestigious Indian Agricultural Research Institute in New Delhi.

He is married to Padmavathi and has one son.

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# Narika Opens Transitional Home In Alameda County, CA

### India-West Staff Reporter

SAN FRANCISCO, CA - Narika's Transitional Home will provide a culturally responsive, traumainformed housing program for survivors of domestic violence and their children and a crucial space to rebuild their lives with courage and resilience, a statement from the Fremont-based organization said.

"With the support of Narika's wraparound, holistic case management services, survivors staying at

our transitional home will enroll in an individualized program designed to strengthen their healing and self-sufficiency including food, mental health resources, and therapy, job training, and economic resources, as well as support in obtaining and sustaining their own long-term housing," it said.

Narika named several people and organizations for making the transition home a reality including founding donors Indians for Collective Action, Krishnan-Shah Family Foundation, and Stephen D Huahn Memorial Fund Donor Advised Fund of the Asian Pacific Fund.

Others who made contributions include, Profound Archana Chhaya, Dr.Veena Puri, Faiza J Ghafoor, Moina Shaiq, Neelika Chaudhary, Ranjit Chakravorti, Ruhi Alikhan, Saha Jamshed, Shauli Chaudhuri, Siema Zia, Swati Banerjee and Taskeen Fatehdin, Chugh LLP -Attorneys and CPAs, Realty ONE Group Future, The ArtisTree Real Estate, and The Bay Brokerage Inc.

# Six Women Honored At Leadership Summit 2023



(R) Manorama Sharma spearheaded the event.

#### **India-West Staff Reporter**

ORANGE, CA - The Women's Leadership Summit 2023 Awards, organized by the Global Peace Foundation and the Long Beach chapter of the United Nations Associations of USA (UNA-USA), celebrated the achievements of six distinguished women on June 17, at Tandoor Restaurant, here.

The six awardees were remarkable women who had excelled in their respective professional fields and represented diverse cultures. They included Kieu Chinh, a legendary Vietnamese American actress and film producer; Virgelia Villegas, founder of Virgelia Productions, renowned for producing international talent shows; Dr. Jinny Rhee, Dean of the College of Engineering at Calstate Long Beach and an advocate for women in engineering; Maya Vishwakarma, known as the "Pad Woman of India" and the founder of Sukarma Foundation; Juanita Matthews, founder of Springs of Hope Grief Care Center and the 2022 Women of the Year awardee; and Smita Vasant, former Mrs. Asia USA and entrepreneur in the food and fashion industries, who founded LA India Fashion Week.

The awards were presented to them by Dr. Lalith P. Chandradasa, the Consul General of Sri Lanka.

Dr. Manorama S Gupta, President of both the Global Peace Foundation and the UNA-USA Long Beach chapter, addressed the attendees, highlighting the activities of both organizations. She explained the purpose of the event and shared plans for future initiatives, including the packaging and donation of 10,000 meals to children in need worldwide.

The program began with a welcome speech by Harkishan Vasa and was emceed by Giovanna Salas, the Founder of Heart of Hollywood and a film producer.

The cultural program featured performances by Kathak Kala Academy, Laasya Dance Academy, and the Karnataka Cultural Association of Southern California. Dalena Poxsy showcased Lao dance, while Bhadra Bhatt, Anjal Jain, Alan Ford, and Subhash Tolia entertained the audience with their singing.

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### **BUSINESS**

# 4 Indian Americans In Forbes' 2023 **Richest Self-Made Women List**



(Clockwise) Neha Narkhede, Indra Nooyi, Jayshree Ullal and Neerja Sethi.

NEW YORK, NY (IANS) - Indian Americans Jayshree Ullal, Neerja Sethi, Neha Narkhede, and Indra Noovi feature in the ninth Forbes' Richest Self-Made Women list of 2023.

The four have been named to the list of 100 most successful entrepreneurs, executives, and entertainers in the US with a cumulative wealth of record \$124 billion, up nearly 12 percent from a year ago. Silicon Valley engineer and Cisco

veteran Jayshree Ullal, 62, leads the Indian American pack ranking at number 15 on the list with a net worth of \$2.2 billion.

Ullal joined the computer networking company Arista Networks as CEO in 2008 when the business had no sales. The now publicly traded company, which she still runs, recorded \$4.4 billion in revenue in 2022, up 48 percent from the prior year, despite component shortages and

supply chain challenges. Neerja Sethi, 68, ranks at number 25 with a net worth of \$990 million.

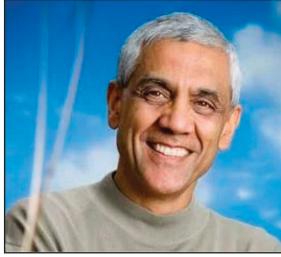
She co-founded IT consulting and outsourcing firm Syntel with husband Bharat Desai in 1980 in their apartment in Troy, Michigan. In 2018, they sold it to French IT firm Atos SE for \$3.4 billion.

Software engineer-turned-entrepreneur Neha Narkhede, 38, announced her new company, fraud detection firm Oscilar, in March. She co-founded the business with her husband in 2021, funding it with \$20 million and positions at number 50 on the list with a wealth of \$520 million.

Ranking at number 77 with a net worth of \$350 million is Indra Nooyi, the first woman of color and immigrant to run PepsiCo, one of America's 50 largest companies.

Noovi retired as PepsiCo's CEO in 2018 and as chair in 2019 after a dozen years in those roles. Now a director of Amazon and health tech firm Philips, Noovi joined scandal-plagued Deutsche Bank's new Global Advisory Board last November.

The overall list is topped by Diane Hendricks, 76, of ABC Supply with a wealth of \$15 billion.



Fight Is Between Threads

& Twitter: Vinod Khosla

Vinod Khosla.

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (IANS) - Venture capitalist Vinod Khosla has said that he has no idea who will win the cage fight between Tesla CEO Elon Musk and Meta Founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg, but according to him, the more important fight will play out between Twitter and Threads.

According to him, whoever wins the showdown between Twitter and Threads will be the real winner of the Musk-Zuck fight. Moreover, when asked about if he had joined Threads or planned to quit Twitter, the

venture capitalist said, "I'm not going to leave Twitter, but I will probably join Threads too".

"They are great learning platforms for me. I learn a lot from those threads," he added.

Vinod Khosla currently has over half

a million followers on Twitter. After Meta launched Twitterrival 'Threads', Zuckerberg and Musk started an online battle before their anticipated cage fight. Meta has launched its 'Threads' application on for Android and iOS users in 100 countries, which aims to challenge Twitter. This release comes at a time when numerous individuals are actively seeking alternatives to Twitter, hoping to escape Musk's raucous control over the platform ever since his acquisition of it for a staggering \$44 billion last year.

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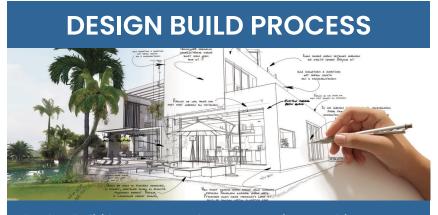
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### **CRIMF** -

# Dharmesh Patel's Lawyers Say He Needs Mental Health Treatment

PASADENA, CA (IANS) - The Indian American doctor, accused of deliberately driving his wife and two kids off a 250-foot California cliff, suffers from a major depressive disorder and needs treatment, his lawyers have said.

Dharmesh Patel, a 42-year-old radiologist, was charged with attempted first-degree murder and child abuse in February to which he pleaded not guilty.

Patel has now received a diagnosis that would allow him to enter a statewide diversion program and avoid jail time in connection with his attempted murder case.

During a July 31 hearing, a judge will lay out the process for Patel to seek entry

into the diversion program -- a process that could take months. Pleading not guilty to the attempted murder, Patel had told investigators that the sensor on his Model Y electric car indicated it had low tire pressure as he was driving on the Pacific Coast Highway on January 2 this year.

His claims were rejected by his wife who said her husband deliberately drove off the cliff. "He's depressed. He's a doctor. He said he was going to drive off the cliff. He purposely drove off," Patel's wife told rescuers. On his mental health, Patel had told inves-

tigators that he was "not really depressed", as accused by his wife. He told them that he "just felt down because times were bad in the world, the war and the drugs", according to an affidavit in support of his arrest.

When investigators specifically asked if he was suicidal, Patel said "you know, not like a plan, not usually". He added that his wife had been "irritated" just before the crash because she didn't want to stop by his brother's house in Montara.

He also told officers he was not on any medication



n Dharmesh Patel with his family.

or under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the time of the crash.

Patel remains in custody without bail. Last month, he was barred from practicing medicine after the Medical Board of California moved a motion in the court.

### Doctor Accused Of Sexually Assaulting Co-Worker



Rachandeep Singh.

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (IANS) - A doctor is facing sexual assault charges for inappropriately touching a co-worker at a medical facility. Rachandeep Singh, a medical director at the River Pointe Post-Acute Care Facility in Carmichael, was arrested on June 17 at the San Francisco International Airport and was booked into custody at the San Mateo County Jail.

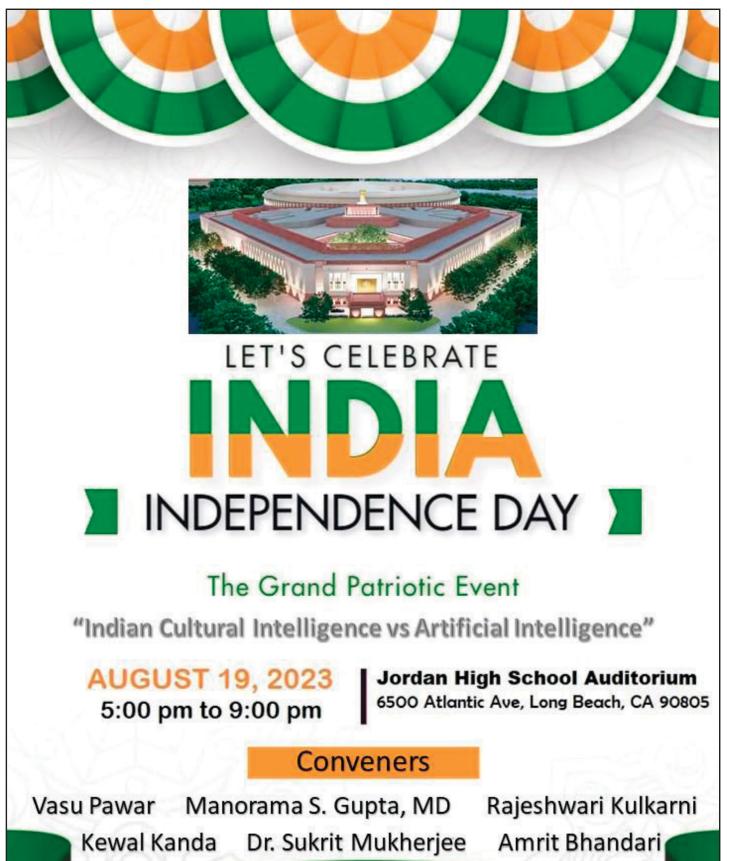
The Ludhiana-educated doctor was released on bail the same day and is scheduled to appear in court in Sacramento on August 17 for his alleged sexual misconduct, the Sacramento County Sheriff Office said.

The office began an investigation after receiving a report of a sexual assault on April 26. The victim, an employee at the medical facility, alleged that her Singh touched her sexually against her will.

Based on the subsequent investigation results, the District Attorney's Office elected to file felony sexual battery charges against Singh. According to the Sheriff's Office, Singh was removed from the River Pointe Post-Acute Care Facility by their administration.

He oversaw at least two other facilities as the medical director in the City of Stockton and the San Joaquin County areas.

Due to Singh's position in several areas throughout the region, detectives are looking for other potential victims, the Sheriff's Office said. A Conan Daily report said that Singh graduated from Dayanand Medical College in Ludhiana in 2001 with a medical degree.



### For Details Contact:

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# Several Indian Americans Charged Of \$53Mln Covid Relief Fraud; Face 30 Years In Slammer

NEW YORK, NY (IANS) -Fourteen people, mostly Indian American, have been charged for

bilking a Covid-era financial pro- million in loan proceeds. gram, and numerous financial

The defendants were arrested institutions out of more than \$53 last week in Texas, California,



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and Oklahoma in one of the largest cases investigated by the Pandemic Response Accountability Committee Fraud Task Force to date, the US Attorney for the Northern District of Texas announced.

Some of those charged in the sixteen count-indictment filed last week include Mihir Patel, Chief Financial Officer of Sunshine Recycling for conspiracy to commit bank fraud, bank fraud and aiding and abetting, and conspiracy to commit money laundering; Kinjal Patel, Controller at Sunshine Recycling for bank fraud, bank fraud and aiding and abetting, and conspiracy to commit money laundering; Prateek Desai, owner of West Texas Scrap; Chirag Gandhi, aka Chris Gandhi, President and owner of 5G Metals and Sunshine Recycling, for bank fraud and bank fraud and aiding and abetting; Dharmesh Patel, aka Danny Patel, Co-President and co-owner of Elephant Recycling for conspiracy to commit bank fraud and bank fraud and aiding and abetting; Bhargav Bhatt, aka Brad Bhatt, NTC Industries employee for conspiracy to commit bank fraud, conspiracy to commit money laundering.

Those charged in separate indictments include Mrunal Desai, Chintak Desai, Ambreen Khan and Usha Sharma for bank/wire fraud and aiding and abetting.

"These defendants conspired to steal tens of millions of dollars from the Paycheck Protection Program -- funds which could have helped legitimate businesses pay their bills and keep their employees afloat," Attorney Leigha Simonton said.

The Paycheck Protection Program provided forgivable loans to small businesses to cover payroll, rent, and other certain business expenses; the program ended in May 2021.

According to a series of indictments unsealed on June 28, several of the charged defendants purportedly operated a group of affiliated recycling companies.

They allegedly submitted at least 29 Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan applications that fraudulently inflated payroll expenses, doctoring bank statements and Internal Revenue Service tax forms to falsely reflect business income.

They then routed PPP loan funds through a series of bank accounts to create a false paper trail of payroll expenses.

At least two of the defendants also allegedly submitted false applications to financial institutions on behalf of their purported recycling companies to fraudulently obtain, in the aggregate, millions of dollars in business loan proceeds.

One defendant, Bhavesh aka Bobby Patel of Chief Business Development Officer for Sunshine Recycling, allegedly lied to the Federal Deposit Insurance Commission by stating that he did not know several of his other alleged coconspirators.

If convicted, the defendants face up to 30 years in federal prison for each count of conspiracy to commit bank fraud, bank fraud and aiding and abetting, bank fraud, and making a false statement to the FDIC, 20 years for wire fraud, and 10 years for conspiracy to commit money laundering.

For more stories, visit our website www.indiawest.com

### CRIME

### Man Sentenced For Stalking Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal



Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal was the victim of aggression.

NEW YORK, NY (IANS) - A 49-year-old man has been sentenced to 364 days in Seattle's King County Jail after he admitted to stalking Indian American Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal last year.

Brett Forsell pleaded guilty last week to misdemeanor stalking rather than the felony stalking charge prosecutors originally filed.

Forsell was arrested on July 9 after yelling obscenities and threats outside Jayapal's Seattle home but was released four days later as police couldn't find evidence to support the charge.

Prosecutors later charged Forsell with harassing and intimidating Jayapal repeatedly, who feared the man wanted to hurt or kill her. During his arraignment last year, he pled "not guilty" to charges of felony stalking.

He has since been ordered to have no contact with Jayapal and prohibited from possessing firearms for eight years.

He was arrested outside Jayapal's house in Arbor Heights with a loaded .40-caliber handgun holstered on his waist.

The neighbors said they heard Forsell verbally abusing Jayapal and saw him try to erect a tent across the street from her house.

While in custody, camera footage recorded Forsell saying he was going to keep coming back to Jayapal's house until, "she goes back to India", according to prosecutors.

### **Former Congressional Candidate Arrested**

NEW YORK, NY (IANS) - An attorney who once ran for a seat in the US House of Representatives has been indicted by a federal jury in Boston for defrauding clients of more than \$5 million in escrow funds.

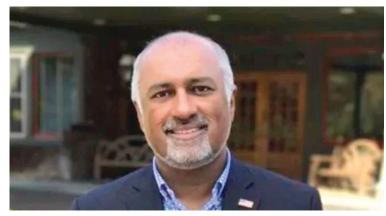
Abhijit "Beej" Das, 50, was arrested in connection with a scheme to defraud a business-to-business supply company based in India of millions of dollars, and using client funds for business and personal expenses, including the purchase of a \$2.7 million home in Florida.

A former candidate for the US House of Representatives in the third Congressional district of Massachusetts, Das was indicted on 10 counts of wire fraud.

He was on pretrial release for charges of federal Campaign Act violations and making false statements in 2021.

According to the Justice Department, Das was the principal manager of a boutique law and advisory firm called Troca Global Advisors with offices in Boston and New York.

Beginning in or about May 2020, Das began providing legal representation and escrow services to two twin brothers and their logistical supply company in India that was coordinating large shipments of Personal Protective Equipment during the pandemic.



Abhijit "Beej" Das has been charged of fraud.

The indictment alleged that Das diverted more than \$5 million in escrow funds from his clients' accounts to other accounts and used the funds for personal expenses.

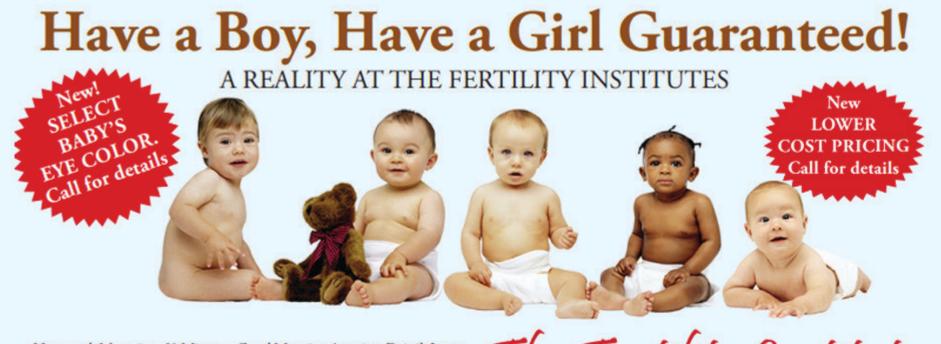
This included expenses for his law firm, a yacht owned by one of his hotels, as well as \$2.7 million for his Boca Raton home in Florida.

He allegedly induced his clients to transfer funds to accounts he controlled in multi-step, layered transactions under the guise of legal advice about the risk of potential litigation and provided clients with fraudulent and forged account statements to conceal the scheme.

The indictment also alleged that Das committed nine of the 10 counts of wire fraud while the court-mandated pretrial release conditions resulting from his June 2021 indictment. That earlier indictment charged Das with campaign finance violations, embezzlement of campaign funds, and making materially false statements to the Federal Election Commission.

The charges of wire fraud each provide for a sentence of up to 20 years in prison, three years of supervised release, and a fine of \$250,000, or twice the gross gain or loss, whichever is greater.





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### **POLITICS**

# Yuba City, Sikh Community Raise Concerns Over Caste Bill

#### **India-West Staff Reporter**

YUBA CITY, CA - Yuba City Mayor Wade Kirchner and the Sikh community have released a letter opposing Senate Bill 403 (SB 403) in the State Assembly. The letter raises concerns about the potential long-term negative consequences of introducing the concept of "caste" into existing California anti-discrimination statutes. In a letter directed to State Rep. James Gallagher, Kirchner conveyed the opposition of the Sikh Community towards the bill.

"At two recent City Council meetings, a group of Sikh community members came forward to express their concern and opposition, he says, adding, "On the surface, it appears that SB 403 is well-intentioned. How-



ever, in listening to the community members, it is going to introduce the concept of caste into California law, which they believe will have harmful long-term effects," it adds.

In his speech to city councilors, Sardar Satnam Singh, a long-time resident said that SB 403 will bring a system that does not exist in the U.S. He highlighted the colonial context of the caste system that perpetuated divisions and continued in India even after independence as caste is embedded in the legal system of India. Singh said it was important to think about what would happen five to ten years from now if SB 403 were to pass.



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# Geeta Rao Gupta Sworn In By Veep Kamala Harris



Geeta Rao Gupta is a first generation immigrant.

WASHINGTON, DC (IANS) -Geeta Rao Gupta has been sworn in as the Ambassador-at-Large for the Office of Global Women's Issues in the US State Department, becoming the first woman of color to hold the position.

Gupta, who was administered the oath of office by Vice-President Kamala Harris on July 10, was confirmed by 51 to 47 votes in the Senate for the position in May.

While announcing her appointment in May, the State Department had said it "looks forward to her efforts to promote women and girls" rights through US foreign policy".

During her confirmation hearing last year before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Gupta had said she was a proud US citizen and a first-generation immigrant, belonging to a family of professional women, each of whom dedicated their lives to serving their communities.

"If you look at the world today, the situation of women, if you look at the gender inequality indicators, they show that the inequality has increased," she had said.

According to Gupta, women are unable to participate fully in the economy as there are many inequalities and indignities holding them back. Mumbai-born Gupta previously served as Senior Fellow at the United Nations Foundation and Senior Advisor to Co-impact, a global collaborative philanthropy for systems change.

While at the UN Foundation, Gupta founded and served as the Executive Director and later as Senior Advisor of the 3D Program for Girls and Women.

With over decades of experience on gender and development, Gupta has also served on an oversight committee for the World Health Organisation's Health Emergencies Programme, and co-chaired the World Banks's Global Genderbased Violence Task Force.

She was the Deputy Executive Director, Programmes at UNICEF, and prior to that as a Senior Fellow at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. She is the recipient of numerous awards, including InterAction's Julia Taft Award for Outstanding Leadership, Harvard University's Anne Roe Award, and Washington Business Journal's "Women Who Mean Business" Award. She is armed with a Ph.D. in Psychology from Bangalore University and an M. Phil and M.A. from the University of Delhi.

### California Caste Bill Passes Assembly Committee

Contd. from P1

affect South Asians in the workplace, at businesses, and overall reinforce a negative image of India and Indians. Assembly Judiciary Chairperson Brian Maienschein, a San Diego Democrat, to remove caste from the bill and instead have it replaced with 'inherited social status' in keeping with how a person's caste is determined.

Wahab's acceptance of a few amendments to categorize caste as originating in ancestry was seen as a victory by some opponents of the bill who vowed to continue to fight it. Samir Kalra, of the Hindu American Foundation, said in a statement that they would continue to try to "educate lawmakers on the issue."

Supporters of the bill hailed it enthusiastically at the site and outside, cheering loudly. Social media was also awash in their celebrations.

Calmatters reported the status of the two South Asians in the Assembly: Jasmeet Bains from Bakersfield is a cosponsor of the bill; Ash Kalra of San Jose and the only Hindu in the chamber, since he is on the committee, was forced to break his silence and, "In sometimes emotional testimony, he spoke about the divisions he had witnessed and said he understood concerns from constituents but concluded that the amendments address those."

There are nearly a million South Asian Californians with Indian Americans being among the fastest-growing groups, currently being the third-largest Asian ethnic group in the state.

If the bill is passed, 'caste' will be added as a protected category to the state's Unruh Civil Rights Act.





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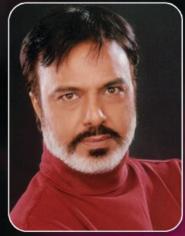
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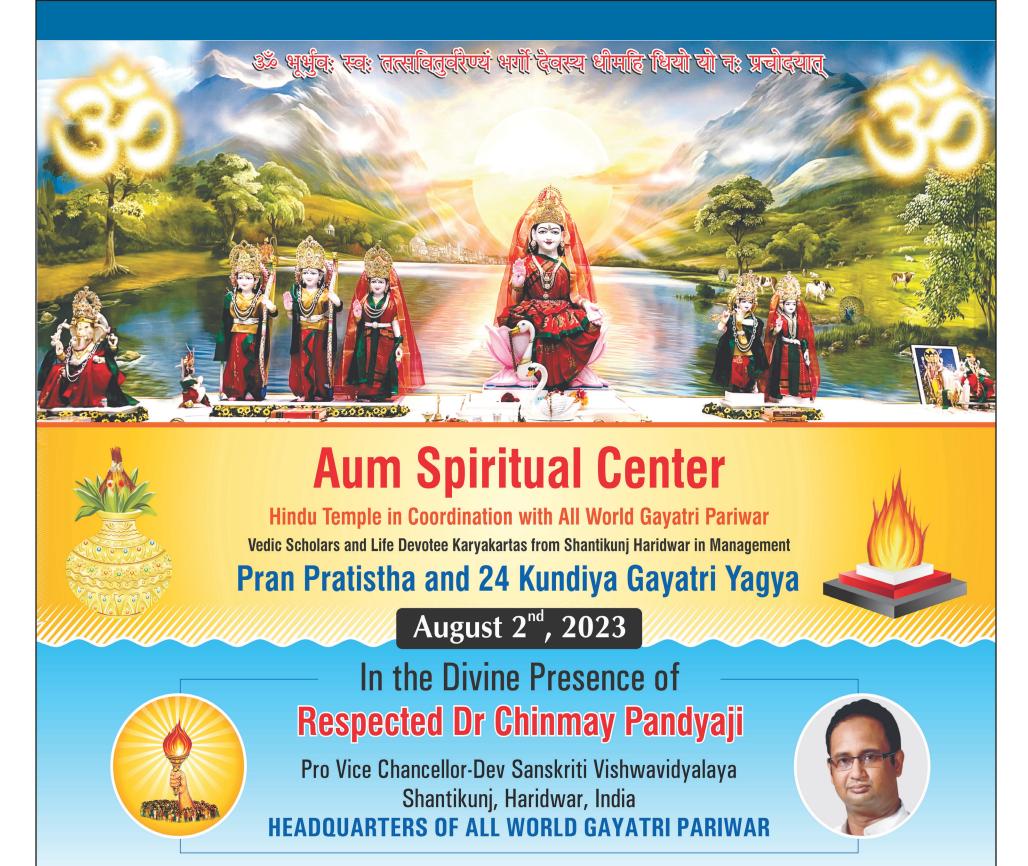
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### **POLITICS**

# Cartoon Backfires: Iowa Paper Apologizes To Indian Americans

NEW YORK, NY (IANS) – An paper on June 23. Iowa newspaper editor has apologized to Indian Americans for publishing an "offensive" cartoon that played on stereotypes of the community while trying to criticize Vivek Ramaswamy who is seeking the Republican Party's presidential nomination.

"Racist and hateful ideas, words or images have no place in our publications, much less our society", Tom Martin, the executive editor of the Quad City Times said in the apology to the community, and Ramaswamy published in his

He said that the cartoonist, Leo Kelly, has been banished from the newspaper.

But Ramaswamy came to the defense of the cartoonist in a letter published in the paper. "Let's not go further or see people get fired over it; the cartoonist should in no way be 'canceled.' We are all human", he wrote. "I'm empathetic to people who make mistakes once in a while", he wrote while accepting the editor's apology.



The cartoon sought to show Republicans as bigots with whom Ramaswamy was aligned, but it backfired as it was someone opposed to that party and the candidate who used the anti-Indian epithet.

The Quad-City Times is a regional newspaper based in Davenport, Iowa, which also covers parts of neighboring Illinois. It is owned by the media company Lee Enterprises which publishes over 70 newspapers across the US, including the Dispatch-Argus, which also published the cartoon.

"We apologize today for letting such an image slip through our editorial process and into our opinion



Vivek Ramaswamy.

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page Wednesday in the form of a political cartoon," Martin wrote. He added: "The cartoon, while intended to criticize racist ideas and epithets, uses a phrase that is racist and insensitive to members of our Indian American community."

The phrase apparently is "Get me a slushie, Apu" and a character in the cartoon is shown shouting at Ramaswamy in an almost empty hall. "Apu Nahasapeemapetilon" runs a store in the popular animated TV cartoon serial, "The Simpsons", and spoke in an exaggerated Indian accent voiced over by comedian Hank Azaria.

"Apu" has been turned into a racist taunt used against Indians, especially for bullying school children. This was highlighted in a documentary, "The Problem with Apu", produced by Indian American comedian Hari Kondabolu. Because of protests over the way Apu was presented and how it became a tool for harassment, the character was taken off the show but has returned occasionally with nonspeaking background appearances.

Azaria has repeatedly apologized for his role in spreading the stereotype of Indians telling an interviewer, "I did not know any better".

After the cartoon was published, Ramaswamy tweeted, "It's sad that this is how the MSM (mainstream media) views Republicans. I've met with grassroots conservatives across America & never \*once\* experienced the kind of bigotry that I regularly see from the Left." "Iowa's @qctimes absolutely has

the right to print this, but it's still shameful", he added.

Ramaswamy and Nikki Haley, the Indian American candidate for the Republican nomination, along with Tim Scott, an African American senator seeking the nomination have come for intense criticism from Democrats and their supporters who believe that non-Whites should be loyal only to their party. The cartoon sought to convey the idea that Ramaswamy was under bigoted attack by Republicans with the other characters shouting "Muslim" and "Show us your birth certificate" while he greets them saying "Hello, my MAGA friends".



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### **POLITICS**

# Nikki Haley Would Have Nothing To Do With China If Elected



Nikki Haley - taking a hard stance against China.

#### India-West News Desk

WASHINGTON, DC - Nikki Haley, running for the Republican presidential nomination, on June 27 said at the American Enterprise Institute, that if elected, she would do "whatever it takes" to correct policy toward China and that might even include "full-on decoupling."

Haley pointed to China's role in the production of fentanyl, said to have propelled the opioid crisis, and said she would push Congress to revoke China's permanent normal trade relations status.

South China Morning Post reported, that while terming China as an enemy, she also "raised concerns over China's military buildup and domestic human rights abuses, as well as its intervention attempts in the US, noting its targeting of critical infrastructure, purchase of US land, presence in university campuses and the political lobbying process, and

"stealing" of US intellectual property."

She also criticized the former and current US President. Once in line with all Donald Trump said and did, Haley criticized his relationship with China's President Xi Jinping, whom the former president is friendly with. "In his zeal to befriend President Xi, Donald Trump congratulated the Communist Party on its 70th anniversary of conquering China. That sent the wrong message to the world. Chinese Communism must be condemned, never congratulated," Haley said.

She also blasted President Joe Biden as being "weak" on China policy.

Haley is currently polling in the single digits in her primary run for office.





Ken Mathew is the first ever Indian American Mayor in Texas.

NEW YORK, NY (IANS) - Kerala native Ken Mathew has become the first Indian American and the first person of color to be sworn in as the Mayor of Stafford, TX.

Mathew, a former Stafford City Council member, won the race defeating incumbent Mayor Cecil Willis by 16 votes in a run-off race this month, crediting his victory to his faith in God, the Fort Bend Star reported.

He was administered the oath of office by Missouri City Mayor Robin Elackatt, also an Indian American, at a special event attended by his family members and top officials.

Indian American Fort Bend County Judge, K.P. George, who was present on the occasion, tweeted: "Congratulations to Stafford Mayor-elect Ken Mathew! It was an absolute pleasure to attend his swearing-in ceremony this evening. Wishing him all the best as he embarks on this important role."

Texas representatives, Ron Reynolds and Suleman Lulani, and former Missouri City Mayor Owen Allen also graced the occasion.

Mathew served on Stafford Council since first being elected in 2006 and served on the city's Planning and Zoning Commission for several years before then.

He immigrated to the US in the 1970s after earning a degree from the University of Bombay. An MBA, Mathew worked as an accountant and financial executive for several corporations, including Toshiba in the Houston area. He has lived in Stafford since 1982.



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### **POLITICS**

# Three South Asians Win VA Dem Primaries



Winning candidates Kannan Srinivasan, Saddam Salim and Suhas Subramanyam.

#### **India-West Staff Reporter**

RICHMOND, VA – Three South Asian candidates won the Democratic primaries for state offices on June 20.

Suhas Subramanyam in State Senate District 32, Saddam Salim in State Senate District 37, and Kannan Srinivasan in the House of Delegates District 26 earned primary victories. Virginia has a split legislature where the GOP narrowly controls the House and the Dems have a narrow majority in the state Senate.

Subramanyam easily beat back the challenge of Ibraheem Samirah in his. Subramanyam was reelected in 2021, defeating Greg Moulthrop of the GOP, whom he will face again.

Srinivasan defeated Sirisha Kompalli in a fight that saw him garner more support from the outset than his fellow Democrat, raising over \$300,000 to Kompalli's \$14,000, insidenova reported. He will face Republican Rafi Khaja in the fall.

Saddam Salim won against incumbent Democratic Senator Chap Petersen who has voted against crucial issues including an assault weapons ban, pro-labor legislation, and the removal of a Confederate monument, The Impact Fund said. It also pointed out that all three winners had been endorsed by it.

# Narendra Pathak Named To County Home Supportive Services Advisory Board



Narendra Pathak says he understands the importance of In-Home Support Services.

#### India-West Staff Reporter

SUNNYVALE, CA - Narendra Pathak has been appointed to the Public Authority for In-Home Supportive Services Advisory Board by the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors. The appointment was confirmed on June 6, with unanimous votes.

In 2019, Pathak suffered a brain stroke, which left him physically disabled and made him realize even more the importance of community services. As a member of the advisory board, Pathak will provide guidance on existing and potential programs and policies, community development, and other relevant issues.

The board, consisting of 11 commissioners, acts as an advisory body to the County Board of Supervisors, conducting studies, reviews, evaluations, and making recommendations to the Public Authority Governing Body and the Public Authority Executive Director. Their focus is on matters concerning individuals receiving In-Home Supportive Services in the county, advocating for county residents who require in-home attendant services to live independently in the community.

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# Tibetans Being Recruited By Chinese Army To Patrol Ladakh, Arunachal Borders

**INDIA & THE WORLD** 

NEW DELHI, (ANI) - The Tibetan troops recruited by the Chinese Army for helping them in high-altitude areas are now visible as part of the People's Liberation Army border defense patrols along the Line of Actual Control in Eastern Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh, according to the sources.

Soon after the aggression along the LAC in 2020, China started recruiting these soldiers to help them sustain themselves in high-altitude areas as part of their long-term deployment plans there. "The Tibetan soldiers are now visible as part of the patrols of their border defense troops, but the majority continue to be the mainland Chinese soldiers," sources in security forces said. The Chinese have faced issues with their regular mainland troops to sustain themselves in high altitude areas and have seen how the Indian Special Frontier Force troops including many Tibetan troops performed during the capture of high peaks in the Kailash ranges by the Indian Army, sources said.

As per reports, China had issued instructions to their senior commanders to induct at least one soldier from each Tibetan family and turn them loyal towards the country as well as keeping a check on their families.

However, sources said the move by China has seen a lot of resentment from the affected families.

India and China have been in a military



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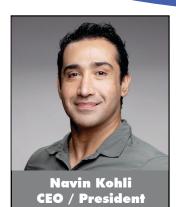
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standoff since April-May 2020 and deployed heavily in the border areas.

India has also deployed an almost equal number of troops along the Eastern Ladakh sector to counter any possible misadventure by the Chinese in the future.

The Army has also reoriented its focus towards the northern borders and deployed new formations along with dual tasking some of them for facing the twofront threat scenario.

# US On Ukraine War: Welcome India, Other Nations Bringing Peace



WASHINGTON, DC (ANI) - The US will welcome the role that India or any other country could play in helping achieve a "just and lasting peace" while recognizing Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty, US Department of State spokesperson Matthew Miller said at a press briefing on July 11.

To a question whether India or Prime Minister Narendra Modi can play a part in putting an end to the protracted conflict between Russia and Ukraine, Miller said, "We welcome a role that India or any other country could play in helping achieve a just and lasting peace that recognizes Ukraine's territorial integrity and Ukraine's sovereignty." Responding to another question on the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict, Miller said, "The war has been a strategic failure for Russia which has seen the enormous loss of both military personnel and military equipment. They have seen their standing in the world affected. They have seen their economy crippled by the sanctions and export controls we have imposed."

Earlier, in June, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Joe Biden expressed concern over the conflict in Ukraine and mourned its "terrible and tragic" humanitarian consequences. The two leaders in a joint statement called for respect for international law, principles of the United Nations charter, and territorial integrity and sovereignty.

### **INDO-AMERICA**

# **US Lawmakers Drop Talk Of NATO Plus Status For India**

WASHINGTON, DC (IANS) - US lawmakers, pushing legislation that seeks to fast-track the sale of arms and weapons to India with the same speed as those meant for close allies, have stopped talking it up as a "NATO Plus" arrangement in a nod to New Delhi's skittishness about being perceived as an ally.

The legislation moved by a bipartisan group of members of the House of Representatives Monday to add India to a list of countries whose military purchase orders in government-togovernment deals enjoy expedited clearance did not mention the phrase "NATO Plus" even once.

A companion legislation moved by a bipartisan group in the US Senate proposed the same benefits for India but, once again, did not mention the phrase NATO Plus.

Asked if it had anything to do with India's problems with the NATO Plus branding, a congressional aide said: "Not as a result of any of those objections, just a more general desire to avoid any confusion with such issues while still emphasizing that this is a US policy to provide India with additional benefits of a deeper relationship with the US..."

Both Bills propose that India should be added to a list of countries whose arms purchase enjoy expedited approval under the US Arms Export Control Act (AECA), as it is done for all members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Treaty and US treaty allies Australia, New Zealand, Japan, South Korea, and Israel, which are also known as NATO Plus 5 countries.

India would welcome, it's understood, the special benefits of expedited clearance of its military purchase orders but not designations that threaten the optics of its strategic autonomy.

"That is not a template that applies to India," External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said at a news conference in May when asked about a recommendation by a US Congress committee on China to include India in the expanded NATO Plus grouping as a part of America's larger strategy to deter China from invading Taiwan.

The External Affairs Minister did not only convey India's opposition to the idea but insisted that the Joe Biden administration understood India's position. He said: "So I must say, a lot of it is outside the administration. The administration understands this very, very well. So, we have a situation where actually in many areas, the administration has been very forthright, very understanding, very cooperative."



US lawmakers have been pushing the extension of these benefits to India. And just ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Senator Mark Warner, the Democratic co-chair of the India Caucus, had announced plans to introduce a legislation along with the Republican co-chair John Cornyn. that will propose "adding India to the so-called NATO Plus arrangement where the United States is able to transfer with as little bureaucratic interference as possible defense equipment in a very strong way".

But the legislation he and Cornyn

introduced in the Senate did not mention the phrase NATO Plus, which is also missing from the companion bill introduced in the House of Representatives by Democrats Raja Krishnamoorthi, Ro Khanna and Marc Veasey and Republicans Any Barr and Mike Waltz.

"Strengthening the US-India strategic partnership is vital to the prosperity and security of not only both nations, but also other democracies around the world," Congressman Krishnamoorthi said.

"That is why I am proud to join my colleagues in introducing this legislation to expand security cooperation between the United States and India by adding India to the list of partners included in the Arms Export Control Act."

India will be watching the progress of the legislation which must now go through the congressional process before it reaches the President, either on its own or part of the National Defense Authorization Act 2024 (which the is annual defense budget) for enactment. The measure has been proposed every year in one form or the other since 2019 but has failed to run the entire process for one reason or the other.





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# **ENTERTAINMENT** Ram Charan, Jr NTR, Mani Ratnam, Siddharth **Roy Kapur Invited To Join Academy**

LOS ANGELES, CA (ANI) - The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences has invited Ram Charan, Mani Ratnam, Karan Johar, Siddharth Roy Kapur, Chandrabose, and MM Keeravani have been invited by the organization to be members. 'RRR' art director Sabu Cyril and cinematographer K.K. Senthil Kumar have also been invited.

"The Academy is proud to welcome these artists and professionals into our membership," Academy CEO Bill



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Yang said in a statement.

"They represent extraordinary global talent across cinematic disciplines and have made a vital impact on the arts and sciences of motion pictures and on movie fans worldwide."

If all this year's invitees accept membership, it will bring the total number of overall Academy members to 10,817 (up from 10,665 last year), with 9,375 eligible to vote (a decrease from 9,665 due to deaths, retirements, and moving to emeritus status) for the 96th Oscars, set to take place on March 10, 2024.

The 2023 class is 40 percent women. 34 percent belong to underrepresented ethnic/ racial communities and 52 percent hail from 51 countries and territories outside the United States.

Other interesting statistics about this invitee class are four branches invited more women than men to join -- casting directors, costume designers, makeup artists and hairstylists, and marketing and public relations. The Actors and Directors branches had most of their candidates hail from underrepresented ethnic and racial communities.

Eight filmmakers have been invited to multiple branches -- Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert ("Everything Everywhere All at Once"), Colm Bairead ("The Quiet Girl"), Edward Berger ("All Quiet on the Western Front"), Antonio Campos ("The Devil All the Time"), Lukas Dhont ("Close"), Ana Katz ("The Dog Who Wouldn't be Quiet") and Santiago Mitre ("Argentina, 1985"); however, they can only select one upon accepting membership.

# Soha Ali Khan, Kunal Kemmu **Enjoy Disneyland**

LOS ANGELES, CA (ANI) - Soha Ali Khan shared glimpses from her summer vacations in Disneyland with her husband Kunal Kemmu and daughter Inaaya Kemmu on July 3.

She posted several pictures where she can be seen posing with Kunal with Disneyland in the background. In another picture, the family can be seen posing in Spiderman style. They all look cool in the summer with their sunglasses on.

Daughter Inaaya is all smiles as she can be seen hugging Minie Mouse and Snowhite. Along with the post, Soha wrote, "Never too old for a good fairytale #summer2023 #disneyland #disney100 @ disneyland @thinkstrawberries.

Kunal will be soon making his directorial debut with the upcoming film 'Madgaon Express'. The film is headlined by Pratik Gandhi, Avinash Tiwari, Nora Fatehi, and Divyendu. The film is said to be a comedydrama. The official release date of the film is still awaited.

Soha, who was last seen in the web series 'Hush Hush' alongside Juhi Chawla, Kritika Kamra and Karishma Tanna, will be seen in 'Chhorii 2'.







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### **ENTERTAINMENT**

# Deepika, Prabhas, Kamal Hasan To Be At San Diego Comic-Con s A N

MUMBAI, (IANS) - Prabhas, Deepika Padukone, Big B and Kamal Haasan's upcoming film 'Project K' will be the first-ever Indian film to debut at San Diego Comic-Con 2023.

Vyjayanthi Movies will host conversations and performances, providing attendees with a glimpse into India's culture and the world of science fiction.

The SDCC celebration will commence with a panel featuring Kamal Haasan, Prabhas and Deepika Padukone alongside the national award-winning director Nag Ashwin, on July 20.

During this panel, the creators of 'Project K' will unveil the film's title, trailer, and release date, treating the audience to a truly immersive experience on Comic-Con's grandest stage.

Expressing his delight about this exclusive event, director Ashwin said, "India is the home of some of the greatest lore and superheroes ever written. We feel that our film is an attempt to bring out and share this with the



PROJECT-

### Mahesh Babu's Daughter Sitara Debuts On Times Square Billboard

MUMBAI (ANI) - Telugu superstar Mahesh Babu is beaming with pride as his daughter, Sitara, made her debut on the iconic Times Square Billboard. Posting pictures, he expressed his pride and admiration for his daughter, referring to her as his "firecracker" and encouraging her to continue dazzling and shining. He tagged Sitara and added the hashtag #PMJSitara, referencing her association with the jewelry brand PMJ Jewels.

Sitara's mother, Namrata Shirodkar, also took to Instagram to celebrate her daughter's Times Square debut. Overflowing with joy, she expressed her pride and emphasized that watching Sitara's dreams come true is an incredible feeling. She encouraged her daughter to keep shining as a superstar.

Sitara, who serves as the brand ambassador for PMJ Jewels, has now become the youngest star kid to feature on the Times Square Billboard. PMJ Jewels introduced a jewelry line named after Sitara, further solidifying her association with the brand and cementing her presence in the world of fashion and glamour.

Despite her young age, Sitara has already made notable appearances in the entertainment industry. She shared the screen with her father, Mahesh Babu,

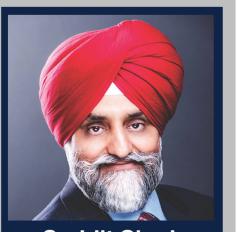


in the dance video for the song "Penny Song." Additionally, Sitara lent her voice to the character of baby Elsa in the Telugu version of the popular animated film 'Frozen 2'.

world. And Comic Con gives us the perfect stage to introduce our story to a global audience."

Producer Aswani Dutt expressed his excitement, stat-

ing, "As one of the oldest production houses in the Indian Film Industry, we are very proud to embark on this extraordinary journey. Joining forces with some of the biggest superstars of our nation, we are breaking new ground and pushing the boundaries of Indian cinema. This is a proud moment for all the Indian audiences who have been wanting to see Indian Cinema on the global map. Comic Con is that world stage for us."



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# SoCal's Raja Kumari Is Going Places

**By REENA RATHORE** 

LOS ANGELES, CA - Blending Indian classical music with American-style hiphop beats is a feat that few have attempted, and far fewer have succeeded in taking it mainstream like Raja Kumari. Known for her authenticity, fearless self-expression, and infusing her dual cultural identity in her music, over the years, the Indian American songwriter, singer, and rapper has built a distinct identity in the U.S., and in India.

Earlier this year, the Grammy-nominated rapper from Claremont, CA, not only performed at Coachella, but also collaborated with John Legend to create a powerful anthem, "Keep Walking," as part of the Walkers & Co. Tour and performed live with him in India.

Although Raja Kumari, aka Svetha Rao, grew up studying Indian classical dance and music, she was also drawn to hip-hop early on.

Her collaboration with artists like Fifth Harmony, Gwen Stefani and Iggy Azalea brought her widespread recognition when she won a BMI Pop Award for co-writing Fall Out Boy's hit, "Centuries."

In 2021, she performed her single, "N.R.I.," at an Asian American inaugural ball for President Biden that also saw participation from pop superstars like Lady Gaga and Jennifer Lopez. Her track, "Goddess," in collaboration with Krewella and NERVO, featured in the recently released superhero series, "Ms. Marvel."

Among her many accolades was a nomi-

nation for the 'Best Indian Act' at the MTV Europe Music Awards 2022 for her single, "Made in India," which featured Bollywood star Madhuri Dixit-Nene.

For a brief period, she moved to India where she joined forces with Indian talents such as rapper Divine to create impactful music.

Raja Kumari is celebrating yet another career milestone: she has launched her own independent label. Godmother Records.

And she is now set to perform at 'BRIC Celebrate Brooklyn!' festival at the Lena Horne Bandshell in Prospect Park, Brooklyn, July 22. The 45th edition of the longestrunning, free performing arts festival in New York City will run through Aug. 24.

India-West spoke to Raja Kumari where she delved into the inspiration behind her new album, her hopes for Godmother Records and South Asian representation and her journey thus far.

Q: Could you talk a little bit about the origins of "The Bridge," and what it means to you?

A: Well, "The Bridge" is primarily a pandemic album. I started working on it in August 2020 in my home with my COVID pod, which was four people. It was my engineer Nacho and his roommate Karan, who would end up being my producers, as well as my childhood best friend Birdie, and we wrote all my original music together. This was a return to my roots in a lot of ways. This album was made without the audience in mind, not thinking, 'Oh, this will turn into this many views.' It was really made for the therapy of it, for the art of it, and for the purpose to just express. "The Bridge" is one version of myself to who I am now, and it follows the journey of my healing and selflove. During the pandemic, I think all of us stayed still for the first time. The journey of selflove brought me to the place where I released my first

love songs on bum. The album culminates with a song called "Fearless," which in all its en-

Job problems

**Career Issues** 

**Court Cases** 

**Health Problems** 

**Business Problems** 

**Financial** Problems

days I would have viewed as a golden opportunity and would have

tried to give to the most popular singer of the time. With this album, I decided that I would keep the song and I would sing it because it meant a lot to me. So, this album is THE BRIDGE from ancient to the future. It's an attempt to bring the ideas that are so dear to me from our ancient culture and that are still present today, and from the West back to the East. For those people that are curious about the East, I hope that they can listen to this album and understand some ideas and perspectives and hear some different sounds. Music is the bridge between us and God, so this album has a lot of spirituality in it, and I think a lot of people are afraid to talk about God. With this album, I decided to be fearless.

Q: What do you consider the turning point in your career and how do you view the journey that you've made so far?

**Relationship issues** 

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# SoCal's Raja Kumari Is Going Places

Contd. from P36

A: I feel like my career is a series of milestones that had I not accomplished, I wouldn't have been where I am today. The first really big milestone was moving to India, taking that risk, and believing in my music and the platform that was available to me at the time that I got signed in the U.S. When I got signed in the U.S., there weren't many South Asian stories being told. There wasn't a lot of space for my music to be synced the way that it is today. I think another turning point for me would be leaving the major label scene after seven years and making my own label, being in control of my own music, owning my masters, and controlling my publishing. This is a very liberated space and a very powerful space that really sets the tone for my music and the future because now I can really take risks on songs that I believe in. There's nobody between me and the music. I think the biggest milestone in my career now is creating Godmother Records.

Q: What kind of music would you be producing under Godmother Records and what would the artist roster look like?

A: Godmother Records was created to make a safe space for women in music because in my experience pushing myself through so many record deals and ultimately going independent, I saw the gamut of issues that women face. Luckily, my American audacity helped me bypass so much of it. But I don't think that everyone is made for war. I hope the things that



I've learned can help me make a safe space where artists can be who they are. I think one of the things that happens in the major label system is comparison, and comparison is the thief of joy. And I feel like artists that are signed on my roster can focus on being a better version of themselves and musicality will be a big focus. A lot of labels are focused on TikTok numbers and making whatever is trending, but I want to create a legacy, and I want to sign artists that are committed to their artistry and their music. It's a spiritual kind of expression. I want to have artists from all types of genres. As a songwriter, I love to make pop music and rock music, and I've been a songwriter on so many incredible songs in America and in India, so I want to make sure that Godmother Records covers all the bases. You won't just see mini-me's, there's going to be a lot of different types of artists.

Q: Are you still based in India?

A: I am between India and Los Angeles, which is how I've lived for the last few years. I love to make a joke that in 30 hours, I can go door to door from one house to the other, so India has become a home for me in many ways.

Q: You made a stunning debut at Cannes this year. How important is your identity to you and how has it shaped you as an artist?

A: Cannes Film Festival is such an iconic red carpet. As someone who truly loves fashion almost equally to my music, wearing a custom Manish Malhotra on that red carpet was one of my childhood dreams coming true. The craziest thing about that dress was I never tried it on before I arrived in Cannes. It came straight from India. So, all the credit to Manish Malhotra and my styling team for making sure that it would fit me like a glove. A lot of times I've felt like couture was not for me because I wasn't 'sample size' and it was such a glorious moment to try that dress on. It just fit perfectly, and it was so heavy. So being the person that could carry that dress, I was proud of myself. I had such an amazing time representing South Asian culture and being there for Indie Wild with Diipa Khosla and Dolly Singh as someone that inspires me. It was really beautiful that she invited me to be a part of that.

Q: In the last few years, the entertainment industry has made many notable strides and the representation of people of color, and women, but much remains to be done. What are your thoughts on the progress that has been made?

A: First off, I want to say thank you so much. I really appreciate your support. You know, from the time of releasing my first single to today, there are so many more South Asian stories being told, and that creates a platform for more South Asian music to be a part of that. Luckily, I have been here for so many incredible moments in representation, whether it's been with "Never Have I Ever" or "Wedding Season" or "Miss Marvel," I have been able to be a part of that. I see so much opportunity coming in the future, and I'm hoping this time period inspires more South Asian creatives to take risk and tell our stories.

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