

# INDIA WEST

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JOURNAL

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## Wife Wants Dharmesh Patel Back Home, Admitted To Mental Health Program

### India-West News Desk

REDWOOD CITY, CA – Neha Patel, the wife of Dharmesh Patel of Pasadena, CA who is accused of deliberately driving a Tesla off a cliff with his family inside, pleaded with prosecutors to drop his attempted murder charges during her courtroom testimony on May 2.

In an emotional statement delivered in a court here, Neha Patel said, the San Francisco Chronicle reported, “We need him in our lives, and it has been over a year and a half since my children, or I have seen or spoken to Dharmesh.” She emphasized, “We are not a family without him.”

Dharmesh Patel, a radiologist, faces three



counts of attempted murder for allegedly steering the family’s Tesla off a 250-foot cliff in what appeared to be a murder-suicide attempt on January 2, 2023.

Quoting her now-5-year-old son, Neha Patel recalled, “He’s taking so long, and I miss him,” highlighting the child’s longing for his father and the “emotional pain” of her children. She said her son, “Wished daddy would magically appear on St. Patrick’s Day when he saw a rainbow.”

A psychologist testified last week that Dharmesh Patel suffered from psychosis and had delusions about his children being kidnapped and molested before the crash. Neha Patel asserted during her testimony,

Contd. on P12

## OFBJP In LA Has Largest Diaspora Car Rally In Support Of Modi Re-Election



### India-West Staff Reporter

IRVINE, CA – The streets of the city of Irvine were brought to life on April 28 as the Overseas Friends of BJP-USA, Los Angeles, orchestrated a monumental event: the

“Hum Hain Modi Ka Parivar” car rally. This dynamic showcase of unity and support from the Indian community resonated with the resolute backing of NRIs for Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s potential third term in the

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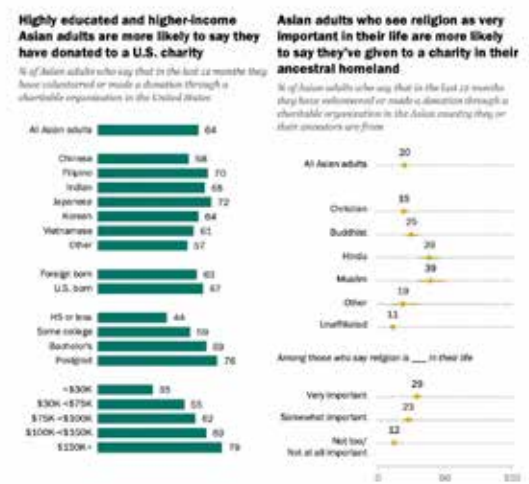
## Indian American Philanthropic Influencers: Religion, Education

### India-West Staff Reporter

In a survey conducted between July 2022 and January 2023, the Pew Research Center found that two-thirds of Asian American adults actively engage in charitable giving, either in the United States, their Asian ancestral homeland, or both.

Breakdowns by origin showed that majorities across the six largest Asian origin groups in the U.S. expressed involvement in charitable giving within the country. Japanese, Filipino and Indian adults exhibited particularly high levels of participation, with approximately seven in ten indicating charitable contributions.

Among those born in the U.S., 74% of third- or higher-generation and 65% of second-generation Asian adults told the Pew



they had given to a U.S. charity in the year before the survey. Education and income levels were also influential factors, with individuals holding postgraduate degrees and higher incomes more likely to engage in

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PEOPLE

# 6 Indian American Students Win \$90,000 Paul & Daisy Soros Fellowship

India-West Staff Reporter

NEW YORK, NY – Six Indian Americans are among the 30 winners of the 2024 Paul & Daisy Soros Fellowships for New Americans, a merit-based graduate school program for immigrants and children of immigrants. Selected from 2,323 applicants, the 30 Paul and Daisy Soros Fellows are chosen for their achievements and their potential to make meaningful contributions to the United States across fields of study. They will each receive up to \$90,000 in funding to support their graduate studies at institutions across the country.

Since the Fellowship’s founding 26 years ago, the program has provided more than \$80 million in funding, and recipients have studied a range of fields from medicine and the arts to law and business.

“As we welcome these impressive new Fellows to our community, I am filled with pride and hope for the bright futures they will have professionally and as they give back to our country. Their stories demonstrate the strength and vitality inherent in the immigrant identity—they aren’t afraid to take risks and think big,” Daisy Soros, co-founder of the program, said.

The alumni network includes US Surgeon General Vivek Murthy, who is the first surgeon general of Indian descent and helped lead the national response to Ebola, Zika, and the coronavirus.

The six Indian Americans who are on the list are:



**Aayush Karan:** Fellowship awarded to support work towards a PhD in quantum science and engineering at Harvard University.

**Akshay Swaminathan:** Fellowship awarded to support an MD/PhD in biomedical data science at Stanford University.

**Keerthana Hogirala:** Fellowship awarded to support an MBA/MPP at the University of Chicago.



**Ananya Agustin Malhotra:** Fellowship awarded to support a JD at Yale.

**Malavika Kannan:** Fellowship awarded to support an MFA in fiction.

**Shubhayu Bhattacharyay:** Fellowship awarded to pursue an MD at Harvard University.

# Sunny Bhathela Makes Watch With Hindi Numerals

NEW YORK, NY – Sunny Bhathela, a second-generation South Asian and Raleigh native, earned degrees in biochemistry and genetics from NC State in 2014. He then set his sights on New York City to pursue a doctorate degree in optometry and is currently treating the underserved community of the South Bronx. But optometry is not the only venture Sunny is extremely passionate about.

Sunny Bhathela recently launched VIANI, a watch company that boasts Hindi numerals, instead of the traditional Roman Numerals, as an ode to the South Asian mathematicians of the 6th and 7th century. This design choice was intentional to highlight the historical impact of the Hindi Numeral System; a numeral system that is credited for introducing decimal-based numbers, and significantly influencing the global landscapes of mathematics and science.

Bhathela aims to advance South Asian representation in a historically non-diverse watch market. Currently, VIANI is conducting international sales, designing new products and establishing research on IP-sensitive features that Sunny says, “have never been done before in the world of watches.” The iterative design process of innovation that Sunny acquired during his time at NC State has been instrumental in expanding his business.

Sunny’s advice to current students is to explore and utilize the resources at NC State. “A dream without action is just a hallucination,” Sunny said. “When the moment of boiling inspiration strikes, follow it up immediately with action.”



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## COMMENTARY

## World Polarizing, India-US Relations Critical

By D. C. PATHAK

The Middle East is in a situation of flux because of the recent exchange of drone and missile attacks between Iran and Israel, an important visit to Pakistan made by the Iranian President following these events, and the fallout of Israel-Hamas conflict that produced pro-Palestinian demonstrations in the US and elsewhere in the Muslim world.

This is opening up the question as to what impact are the religious divides in the region making on the ideologically delineated Cold War that was already on the horizon involving the US-led West on one hand and the China-Russia axis, on the other.

The old political rivalry between the two strong players in the region, Israel and Iran, took a violent turn when Israel -- opposed to the rule of Bashar Al Assad, the Alawite President of Syria -- made a missile attack on Damascus on April 1 in which Iran's diplomatic mission was hit and seven officers of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corp were killed.

Iran retaliated on April 13 by firing missiles at Israel that were mostly shot down by the Iron Dome Defense system of the latter and a few days later on April 18 Israel responded by making a drone attack on Isfahan that reportedly did not cause any significant casualties.

There was an element of restraint on both sides which stemmed from a combination of factors -- Iran weighing in the US support for Israel and Israel sensing the limitations on American backing put by the international criticism of the loss of civilian lives in Gaza at the hands of Israeli Defense Forces.

In fact, in the Joe Biden administration, the White House was contemplating measures to balance its support to Israel with an effort to counter any Islamophobic trends that the Israel-Hamas conflict could produce following the October 7 'terror' attack of Hamas on Israel. The US is also at the same time, having to deal with pro-Palestinian demonstrations held in the country.

Iran and Pakistan, the neigh-

boring Islamic countries -- though inherently prone to the repercussions of the historical Shia-Sunni divide, have maintained a cautious line of peaceful relationship that could even overcome the incidents of exchange of missile attacks between them in January this year.

The Sunni Islamic radical outfit Jaish Al Adl based in Baluchistan intruded into the adjoining Sistan area of Iran whereupon Iran fired missiles on the outfit's base in Baluchistan -- inviting in return, a retaliatory military strike from Pakistan that seemed somewhat symbolic.

In the background of the Israel-Hamas conflict, Iran was getting politically drawn to the China-Russia combine -- it had already extended military help to Russia by way of supply of drones to the latter during the Ukraine-Russia 'war'.

Pakistan on its part, has historically been opposed to the creation of a Zionist state and maintains no diplomatic relations with Israel even today.

Pakistan has a strong strategic alliance with China but has managed to be on the right side of the US after playing the role of a mediator in the talks between the Taliban and the US at Doha that resulted in the withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan and the reinstatement of the Taliban Emirate at Kabul in 2021.

Pakistan is also a key member of the Organisation of Islamic Conference and has been extremely close to Saudi Arabia, the Chairman of this block of 57 Islamic countries.

Sunni radicals consider the US and the Shiites as their enemies and would abhor the idea of Pakistan getting close to the US. Pakistan, however, has struck an equation with radical outfits like the Taliban, Al Qaeda, and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria which are inimical to the US, Saudi Arabia, and the Ayatollah regime of Iran, alike.

For Iran, friendship with Pakistan is strategically gainful for maintaining its hold in the Middle East against its main rival Israel -- it is aware that left to itself Paki-



stan did not harbor any faith-based antipathy towards Iran.

The three-day visit of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi to Islamabad in the context of the Israel-Hamas conflict -- particularly after the exchange of missile attacks between Iran and Israel -- was of great significance not only for the Middle East but also for the wider geopolitics that is marked by a clear drift towards a new Cold War between the US-led West and the China-Russia axis.

It is interesting how this political polarization at the global level is getting bolstered by the religion-based alignments within the Muslim world in general and the Middle East in particular.

The Iranian President clearly wanted Pakistan's support in its confrontation with Israel even as both Iran and Pakistan were aware of the US opposition to any trade pacts between them. The anti-US character of Shia fundamentalism and the pro-Assad stand of Iran in Syria have pushed Iran closer to Russia and China.

It is interesting, however, that radicalization in the Islamic world is a cause for concern for both the US and Russia.

The US had tried to distinguish between Islamic radical outfits that considered it as their prime enemy and the terrorist groups reared and directed by Pak ISI for use in cross-border terrorism against India but it perhaps realized in the course of time that Pakistan was also giving shelter to Taliban, Al Qaeda and ISIS on its soil.

The US has to understand that multi-prong measures were needed to isolate the 'radicalized' forces by convincing the Islamic world that recourse to Jihad was not needed for solving any political issues. This is a

challenge requiring the US and India to closely work together.

The injection of religion into international politics and the advent of faith-based violence in many theatres are posing a great danger to the democratic world order.

The identification of Israel with the US has accentuated the hostility of radical Sunni forces and the Shiite fundamentalists both, against the former. The position of pro-US Arab countries like Saudi Arabia and Egypt could get weakened if the military action of Israel in Gaza was further escalated leading to the destruction of civilian lives there.

India has taken an independent stand both in the Ukraine-Russia military confrontation and the Israel-Hamas conflict, favoring peaceful negotiations that would show an understanding of the security concerns of both Ukraine and Russia and in the case of Palestine uphold a two-state solution.

In the Middle East, advocates of Jihad pushed 'revivalism' to the point of stirring up the historical memory of Kharijites and have carried Shia-Sunni strife to a new level. They should be shunned and those who convincingly worked to establish Islam as a peaceful religion in the region, given discreet support.

While India would stand for all of that, its concern is that Pakistan would independently promote a narrative in the name of peace that there should be a resumption of Indo-Pak talks.

India has to take due notice of the fact that during the visit of Pak Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to meet Saudi ruler Prince Mohammad bin Salman, their joint statement issued at Mecca on April 7 last, stressed the importance of dialogue between Pakistan and India to resolve their outstanding issues especially the J&K dispute 'to ensure peace and stability in the region'.

Also, on the recent visit of Iran's President to Islamabad, a more elaborate joint statement issued on the occasion expressed that there

was a need to resolve the issue of Kashmir through dialogue and peaceful means "based on the will of the people of that region and in accordance with international law".

India should have no difficulty in reminding the world that Pakistan continued to harbor terrorists who attacked India, on its soil and reiterating that 'talks and terrorism could not go together'.

It can be seen, however, that Pakistan always tried to get traction in the Islamic world by projecting Kashmir as a Muslim issue.

India's foreign policy of opting for bilateral or even multilateral friendships that were mutually beneficial for both security and economic development and that served the cause of world peace fits in well in the current geopolitics where ideological and religion-based divisions were producing new alignments and uncertainties.

The natural friendship between the US and India -- the two largest democracies, has to be kept on a strong footing particularly because of the complete convergence the two countries had on the threat from China.

The US proclivity to uphold the cause of Pakistan as a potential ally makes it incumbent for India to reach a deep understanding with Russia and the Central Asian Republics on the danger of 'radicalization' that was getting a fillip because of the duplicitous role of Pakistan in sustaining the Islamic radical outfits on its soil.

India has to independently counter the threat of minority separatism encouraged by anti-India lobbies and safeguard its internal security.

India is doing well in pursuing technological advancement for economic development as well as defense and this should continue to be the *raison d'être* of its bilateral friendships. All this goes with an assertive role that India as a world power must play on issues of global peace and human advancement. It should also be upfront about countering any outside interference in the domestic matters of democratic India.

*(Pathak is a former Director of India's Intelligence Bureau.)*

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## Biden Admin's AI Safety Board Includes Indian American Tech Leaders



which includes representatives from various sectors such as software and hardware companies, critical infrastructure operators, public officials, civil rights organizations, and academia.

Notable inaugural members include Indian American leaders Satya Nadella of Microsoft, Sundar Pichai of Alphabet, Arvind Krishna of IBM, Shantanu Narayen of Adobe and Arati Prabhakar,

Assistant to the President for Science and Technology. Others include Sam Altman

### India-West News Desk

WASHINGTON, DC – The Department of Homeland Security has established the Artificial Intelligence Safety and Security Board. This board comprises over 20 executives from technology and critical infrastructure sectors, civil rights leaders, academics, and policy-makers. The Board will advise the Secretary of Homeland Security, critical infrastructure stakeholders, private sector entities, and the broader public on ensuring the safe and secure integration of AI technology into the nation's critical infrastructure. Its recommendations will help stakeholders leverage AI technologies more responsibly and prepare for potential disruptions that could impact national security, public health, or safety.

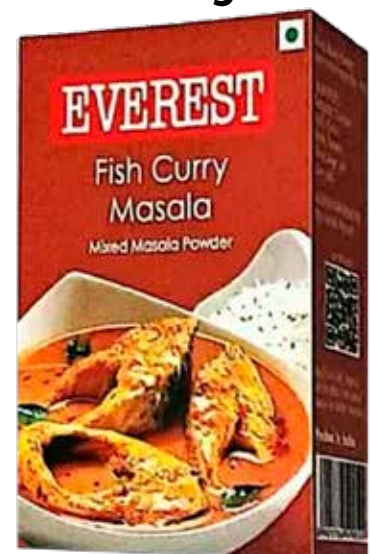
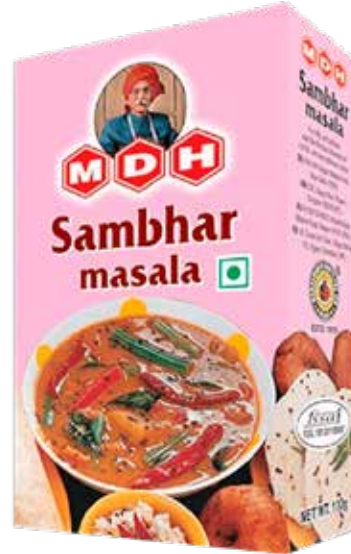
President Biden directed Secretary Alejandro N. Mayorkas to form the Board,



of AI, Maryland Governor Wes Moore and Maya Wiley of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights.

The Board's establishment aligns with the DHS Homeland Threat Assessment of 2024, which underscores the threat AI-assisted tools pose to economic security and critical infrastructure. It warns of potential cyber-attacks on vital systems like pipelines and railways, with hostile nation-states like China actively developing AI technologies to undermine U.S. cyber defenses.

## FDA Investigating Everest, MDH Masalas For Cancer-Causing Pesticide



### India-West News Desk

WASHINGTON, DC – The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has initiated an investigation into the composition of spice blends produced by two Indian companies amid claims of high levels of cancer-causing pesticides. Earlier this month, Hong Kong took action by suspending the sale of three spice mixes from MDH and one from Everest due to alleged contamination with ethylene oxide, a hazardous substance, the BBC said.

According to Reuters, the FDA is actively reviewing the reports of potential health risks associated with these spice mixes. A spokesperson for the agency stated that they are currently gathering additional information about the situation.

Hindustan Times reported that Everest, one of the companies involved, has asserted the safety of its products for consumption.

In response to the allegations, the company Everest has stated that its spices are exported only after undergoing necessary clearances and approvals from Indian Spice Board laboratories.

On the other hand, MDH has refuted the allegations, describing them as baseless and lacking substantiating evidence. This is not the first time MDH has faced scrutiny. In 2019, batches of its sambar powder were recalled due to salmonella contamination.

The Indian Spice Board, responsible for overseeing spice exports, has also intervened in the matter. It has requested export data from authorities in Hong Kong and Singapore and is collaborating with the companies to investigate the root cause of the alleged quality issues. Inspections have commenced at the respective plants to ensure compliance with regulatory standards.



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# India's Cipla, Glenmark Recall Drugs In US



NEW DELHI, (IANS) – Drug makers Cipla and Glenmark are recalling their products from the US market due to manufacturing issues.

Following the latest Enforcement Report from the US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA), Cipla's subsidiary in New Jersey is recalling 59,244 packs of Ipratropium Bromide and Albuterol Sulfate Inhalation Solution.

The reason for recalling the affected lot of Cipla products is "short fill." FDA said, "Complaints received of less fill volume in repulse and few drops of liquid observed in the intact pouch." This product is manu-

factured at the Indore SEZ plant of the company in India.

The recalled drug is used to help control the symptoms of lung diseases, including asthma, chronic bronchitis, and emphysema.

As mentioned by the USFDA, Glenmark is recalling 3,264 bottles of Diltiazem Hydrochloride extended-release capsules, which are used to treat high blood pressure.

The US-based arm of the company, Glenmark Pharmaceuticals initiated the nationwide recall of the drug due to "failed dissolution specifications."

# SBA-LA Recognizes Minal Mondkar Of Aura Seating



The awardees (L) Anita Ron of BriteWorks as Los Angeles Small Business Person of the Year and Minal Mondkar of Aura Seating as Entrepreneurial Success.

## India-West Staff Reporter

LOS ANGELES, CA – As part of the National Small Business Week festivities, the U.S. Small Business Administration's Los Angeles District Office (LADO) recognized the achievements of local small business owners at the Los Angeles Regional Small Business Summit. Among the recipients of this year's top awards was Indian American Minal Mondkar who was given the Small Business Person of the Year and the Entrepreneurial Success Award.

SBA Los Angeles Director, Julie Clowes, in a statement, expressed gratitude for the dedication and resilience of small business

owners, emphasizing their vital role in fostering vibrant communities.

Minal Mondkar, founder of Murti, LLC (dba Aura Seating), received the award for her innovative approach to designing sustainable and ergonomic office furniture. With a background in architecture, Mondkar identified a need for comfortable yet functional seating solutions that promote physical well-being. Since its inception in 2010, Aura Seating has expanded its product line and workforce, guided by Mondkar's vision and supported by various SBA programs and resources.

"Minal's journey is a testament to her resilience and determination," remarked SBA Los Angeles Director, Julie Clowes. "Despite facing personal challenges, she has pursued her entrepreneurial dreams with unwavering dedication, making a lasting impact on the industry and inspiring others along the way."

Born with scoliosis, Minal discovered the transformative power of yoga in managing her physical limitations. Upon immigrating to the United States in 1990, she pursued higher education in architecture and eventually founded her consulting firm. Recognizing the shortcomings of traditional office furniture, Mondkar established Aura Seating in 2010 with a mission to prioritize both aesthetics and ergonomic design, revolutionizing the workplace environment.

Aura Seating's innovative products have garnered national recognition, including being featured in an SBA National ad campaign in 2023. With a dedicated team of approximately 15 individuals, Mondkar continues to lead the company toward new heights of success, driven by her commitment to excellence and the well-being of her customers. Also recognized was Anita Ron, BriteWorks Inc, with the Small Business Person of the Year Award.



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COMMUNITY

# BAPS San Jose Walkathon Draws Huge Response

India-West Staff Reporter

SAN JOSE, CA – On April 27, the San Jose chapter of BAPS Charities hosted its annual “In the Joy of Others: Walk-Run” to support El Camino Health’s South Asian Heart Center and the CityServe of Tri-Valley.

The annual BAPS Charities Walk-Run, occurring in 72 cities across North America, champions a diverse range of causes, including education, health and wellness, environmental stewardship, humanitarian relief, and support for local police and fire departments. It celebrates the transformative power of community engagement in fostering healthier societies and symbolizes unity and a commitment to impactful change beyond physical participation, a press release said.

This year, nearly 1,050 community members, including Alameda County Supervisor David Haubert, Milpitas Mayor Carmen Montano, and Fremont Councilmember Dr. Raj Salwan, joined the effort to support BAPS Charities, South Asian Heart Center, and the CityServe of Tri-Valley. The event showcased a broad spectrum of participation, from youth to seniors, united for a common cause.

Reflecting on the event’s significance, Christine Beitsch-Bahmani, CEO of CityServe of the Tri-Valley, said, “We are so excited to receive these funds today. We like to serve people who are in need, whether they are housed,



and with fixed income or no income. This walkathon is awesome because we are going to use these funds for our preventative work. We like to work upstream where we help people before they are in a crisis.”

Speaking on the occasion, Councilmember Dr. Raj Salwan remarked, “This event represents the best of our community. It represents the spirit of philanthropy and uniting our community. I appreciate the dedication of BAPS Charities in serving the community and making sure that we unite our community around a common purpose – a purpose of giving back and spreading joy through the spirit of giving.”

The event lead, Anvi Brahmabhatt, provided insights into the success of Walk/Run 2024 and expressed gratitude towards participants and fundraisers, saying, “I am deeply touched by the overwhelming response we have received for this event. We had a record number of participants this year, and I am thankful for their efforts to raise funds for BAPS Charities.”

# Four Santa Clara University Students Win Inaugural X Developer Challenge



lyze the topic of a post and uncover related perspectives from various authors. This innovative functionality promises to revolutionize how users engage with on-line content, offering them the opportunity to explore diverse viewpoints effortlessly.

Their dedication and innova-

India-West Staff Reporter

SANTA CLARA, CA – A team of four young men, three of whom hail from the Bay Area, emerged triumphant at the first-ever X Developer Challenge hosted this past weekend. Competing against a myriad of teams from across the nation on April 20-21, these students, all attending Santa Clara University, showcased their talent by crafting a cutting-edge Chrome extension dubbed InsightX.

During the intense two-day event, the team poured their collective efforts into developing InsightX, which boasts an impressive array of features. Notably, they pioneered the creation of an “All-Angle” view within the extension, a tool designed to ana-

tion did not go unnoticed. As part of the competition, the team had the honor of presenting their solution directly to Elon Musk, who bought X. Their presentation not only highlighted their technical prowess but also underscored the potential impact of their creation on the digital landscape. The winning team comprises Neel Valeti ’25 from Oakland, pursuing a double major in economics and computer science with a minor in math; Naveen Govindaraju ’24, specializing in computer science; Karan Parikh ’25 from San Jose, navigating a double major in computer science and finance with a minor in math; and Tushar Shrivastav ’24 from Saratoga, also focusing on computer science.







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COMMUNITY

# Annual Solanki Lecture Focuses On 'Inclusive Innovation'

India-West Staff Reporter

LONG BEACH, CA – On the evening of April 18, the Yadunandan Center for India Studies at California State University, Long Beach, hosted the twenty-first annual Solanki Lecture, the longest-running endowed lecture series focusing on the history and culture of South Asia and the South Asian diaspora in the US.

This year's distinguished speaker was Shobita Parthasarathy, Professor of Public Policy and Women's and Gender Studies at the University of Michigan. Dr. Parthasarathy is renowned for her contributions to the field, particularly as the author of two seminal books: "Building Genetic Medicine" and "Patent Politics." These works delve into the ways in which experts shape public discourse and how social forces influence the trajectory of science and technology.

Addressing an audience comprising students, faculty, and community members, Professor Parthasarathy provided a captivat-



ing glimpse into her latest research project on "inclusive innovation" efforts in India.

The term "inclusive innovation," prevalent in government, NGO, and corporate spheres, denotes initiatives aimed at leveraging tech-

nology to combat poverty and inequality. India serves as a focal point for such endeavors due to its robust science and technology workforce, as well as its innovative approaches to utilizing traditional knowledge for grassroots entrepreneurship. However, despite these efforts, India continues to grapple with significant levels of poverty and discrimination.

Professor Parthasarathy contended that what distinguishes inclusive innovation from previous initiatives is its emphasis on circumventing large-scale infrastructure projects in favor of easily replicable and distributable devices. However, she cautioned that, based on her research into innovation efforts in sanitation and women's health in India, these endeavors often fall short of their intended goals. Through a series of compelling examples, Professor Parthasarathy illustrated how these projects frequently overlook the socio-cultural contexts in which they are implemented, thereby failing to address the underlying inequalities that persist in Indian society.

# Wife Wants Dharmesh Patel Back Home



Contd. from P1  
the SF Chronicle said, "Now that we understand and know he has a treatable condition, things will be different." She stressed, "I want members of the court to know the health and safety of my family is of paramount importance."

Lawyers have asked that Dharmesh Patel be allowed to enter into a mental health diversion program, consisting of two-year treatment, which if completed, would lead to his charges being dropped.



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# San Diego Classical Music And Dance Fest Is A Big Draw

## India-West Staff Reporter

LA JOLLA, CA – The Indian Fine Arts Academy of San Diego's 17th annual Music and Dance Festival from March 19 through March 24, at the Jewish Community Center here was a great success with over 6000 attendees streaming through and enjoying the festival.

The festival was attended by San Diego Mayor Tood Gloria, City Council Member Kent Lee, Indian Consul General Dr. Sikar Reddy, San Diego Arts and Culture commissioners Fritz Friedman, and Lee Ann Kim and school board President Dr. Darshana Patel. Mayor Gloria declared March 19-March 24 as Indian Music and Dance Days while Councilman Lee

declared March 20 as Maestro VV Subrahmanyam day.

The line-up this year featured world-renowned vocal and instrumental artists of both the Hindustani and the Carnatic genres. Among the many highlights of the program were fascinating concerts that showcased the virtuosity of artists performing on instruments such as veena, flute, harmonium, and violin, a vocal Hindustani concert, and melodious vocal concerts by several popular artists including Sudha Raghunathan, Vijay Siva, T.M. Krishna, Tiruvarur Girish, Hemmige Srivatsan, Ramakrishnan Murthy and Vishnudev Namboothri. Also on stage were masters



like Sangeetha Kalanidhi Dr. T. Bakthavatsalam, and Guru Man-nargudi Easwaran.

The festival presented some of India's most talented and engaging percussionists who played on such diverse instruments as the mridan-gam, the kanjira, the tabla, and the ghatam. IFAASD also presented Indian classical dance productions



that were marvelous aural and visual treats. These classical dance productions were choreographed by India's most talented and experienced dancers in Bharatanatyam, Odissi and Kathak. The festival also featured two music and dance concerts performed by over a 100 children from all over Southern California.

The festival celebrated the 100th birth centenaries of vocalists,

Padma Vibhushan Kumar Gandharva and K.V. Narayanaswamy, and the 104th birthday of Bharat Rathna Ravi Shankar. IFAASD also honored the prolific contributions of Mannargudi Easwaran, Dr. T. Bakthavatsalam, Dr. Gowri Ramnarayan, Vijay Siva, RK Shriramkumar, and K. Harishankar for their lifetime contributions to the classical arts.

## LACMA Announces Acquisition Of Work By Manjunath Kamath



### India-West Staff Reporter

LOS ANGELES, CA – The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) made 10 new acquisitions for its permanent collection during the museum's 38th Collectors Committee fundraiser, including a key piece by Manjunath Kamath.

Since 1986, Collectors Committee weekend has been one of the museum's most important fundrais-

ing events and continues to enable major acquisitions for every area of its encyclopedic collection. This year, 154 voting members raised nearly \$3 million for art acquisitions, the museum said.

Kamath is a contemporary Indian artist known for his vibrant and imaginative works that often blend traditional Indian iconography with modern themes and techniques. His artworks span various mediums in-

cluding painting, sculpture, drawing, and installations.

The Delhi based artist's work often reflects a deep engagement with Indian folklore, mythology, and cultural traditions, while also addressing universal themes such as migration, identity, and the human condition.

LACMA's acquisition is a 12-foot-tall terracotta sculpture, 'Vikatonarva' that assembles iconography from cultures across time and place.

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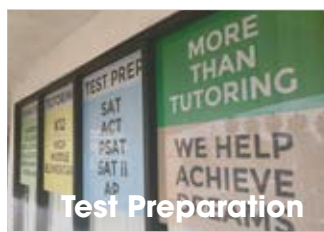


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# Youth Segment Is A Highlight At GOPIO Convention

**India-West Staff Reporter**

FORDS, NJ – The recently concluded GOPIO International Convention 2024 witnessed an interesting Youth Segment, held at the Royal Palace from April 26 to 28, here. Led by the Chair of the Youth Council, Vasu Pawar, the segment showcased an array of speakers and panelists hailing from diverse industries and recognized for their exceptional achievements.

Addressing a gathering of approximately 250 attendees, including GOPIO delegates from Southern California, Pawar emphasized

YOUTH COUNCIL PANELIST



<b>Vasundhara Pawar</b> Chair Youth Council & Philanthropist	<b>Bhavya Gupta</b> Co-Chair Youth Council, GOPIO	<b>Ravi Kurani</b> Founder & CEO, Sutro	<b>Monica Arora</b> Partner, Proskauer	<b>Bhavik Shah</b> Principal, Ari Investments	<b>Falguni Shah</b> Singer, Grammy Winner	<b>Kunaall Devmane</b> Keynote & Author
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the exciting growth potential witnessed in India across various sectors. With projections indicating India's trajectory towards becoming a \$5 trillion economy within the next 12 months and a \$10 trillion economy by 2030, she underscored the significant role the Indian diaspora can play in contributing to India's development.

Highlighting strategic investments as a key avenue for diaspora engagement, Pawar emphasized the importance of leveraging the diaspora's wealth of knowledge and expertise to fuel innovation and drive sectoral growth in India. Furthermore, she noted the opportunity for diaspora members to utilize their marketing acumen to

promote Indian industries globally, attract investments, and facilitate business collaborations, particularly in India's burgeoning young market.

The segment featured panelists including Ravi Kurani, CEO/Co-Founder of Sutro and recognized Forbes 30 under 30, Monica Arora, Partner & Co-head Funds Group at Proskauer, Bhavik Shah, Principal at Ari Investment, and Kunaall Devmane, the keynote speaker renowned for his perspectives on India and recognized as 'The Face of Creativity' by Forbes. Additionally, Falu Shah, the first Asian woman to receive a Grammy, and Neil Nayyar, renowned for his mastery of 120 musical instruments, graced the stage with their insights.

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# KCF Baisakhi Celebrations A Big Attraction For Hundreds

By GURBUX SINGH

PACOIMA, CA - Every year, local Sikhs and those from surrounding areas eagerly anticipate the celebration of Baisakhi. On this auspicious day, the Tenth Guru of the Sikhs, Guru Gobind Singh, established the Khalsa and declared Sri Guru Granth Sahib as the Eternal Guru. It's a grand celebration, and on April 13, all roads led to the Khalsa Care Foundation here.

KCF, as it is fondly known to most, lived up to expectations again, despite the challenging weather that kept volunteers on their toes as intermittent rain threatened to dampen the festivities. Nevertheless, they were well-prepared for such eventualities. The number of devotees in attendance was hard to quantify, but one thing was clear: the queue to pay homage to Sri Guru Granth Sahib extended from



the Sanctum, where devotees were seated, all the way outside, with people patiently awaiting their turn.

Ragis such as Bhai Surjeet Singh and Party, Sant Anoop Singh and Party, and resident Bhai Varinder Singh and Party enchanted

the Sangat with melodious renditions from Sri Guru Granth Sahib. Bhai Baldev Singh, an adept MC, ensured smooth proceedings inside the

Darbar Hall.

Finding a seat was almost a challenge, yet attendees gladly squeezed in to accommodate others.

Outside, a similar scene unfolded, with long queues forming for the delectable breakfast snacks, followed by Guru Ka Langar. The array of offerings

was extensive and irresistible, prompting attendees to forget any dietary restrictions as they piled their plates high. Kitchen volunteers ensured a steady supply of food and drinks, continuously replenishing the trays. Hot tea, or Chai, flowed freely, alongside sodas and fruit juices. For those with a sweet tooth, the selection of pastries and cakes was vast and tantalizing."








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## State Dept. Officials Visit Jain Temple In Buena Park, CA



India-West Staff Reporter

BUENA PARK, CA – Assistant Secretary of South and Central Asia Donald Lu along with State department, Senior Advisor for Domestic Outreach Jennifer Miller and Marissa Morales, Administrative Support Specialist to the Assistant Secretary recently engaged with members of the Jain community at the community's temple here.

For the State Department, it was in continuation of its commitment to fostering stronger relations through cultural exchanges. Lu expressed gratitude for the opportunity to connect with the local Jain community, recognizing their substantial contributions to the diverse fabric of Los Angeles. "Indian Americans are integral to the robust ties between the US and India," Lu remarked. "I'm privileged to engage with the Jain community in Southern California and gain insights into their impactful work across Los Angeles."

Democratic Party activist from Northern California, Ajay Bhutoria emphasized that US India relationship is strongest under President Joe Biden and Secretary Antony Blinken. Present were the Jain temple's leadership team, including JAINA past president Mahesh Wadher, temple president Sameer Shah, and executive team members who spent time speaking of their faith.



**POLITICS**

# Indian American Doctor Richest Political Candidate In India

**India-West News Desk**

DALLAS, TX – With family assets of more than Rs 5,705 crore, Indian American doctor Pemmasani Chandra Sekhar may be the richest candidate in the Lok Sabha elections.

The Telugu Desam Party (TDP) candidate from Andhra Pradesh's Guntur constituency on April 22

declared his family assets in the affidavit submitted to the Election Commission while filing his nomination for the May 13 election.

The founder and CEO of 'UWorld' has left behind Konda Vishweshwar Reddy, the BJP candidate from Chevella Lok Sabha constituency in Telangana, who, earlier in the day, declared family

assets of Rs 4,568 crore.

As per the affidavit, Chandra Sekhar and his wife Koneru Sri-ratna are both in business. In 2001, during his medical residency, he began writing case-based learning questions for the US Medical Licensing Exam due to the poor quality and high cost of available study resources at the time.



Originally intending to publish the 250 questions he had written as a book, he instead posted them in online forums. The response was overwhelming, with a high demand for more. With the assistance of his brother, Ravi Shankar Pemmasani, and his wife, Sriratna Koneru, who were both at Virginia Tech University, UWorld (formerly USMLE World) was born.

The 48-year-old did his M.D. in internal medicine at Geisinger Medical Centre in Danville, Pennsylvania, in 2005. Chandra Sekhar's immovable assets are valued at Rs 2,316.54 crore while that of his wife are Rs 2,289.35 crore. Dependent son Abhinav Pemmasani owns movable assets of Rs 496.27 crore while dependent daughter Sahasra Pemmasani has movable assets of Rs 496.47 crore.


The couple jointly have an investment of Rs.2,402.36 crore in publicly listed companies in

the US. Chandra Sekhar owns five vehicles worth Rs 6.11 crore including two Mercedes Benz, a Tesla Model X, and a Rolls Royce Ghost. He has movable assets of Rs 72 crore while those of his wife are valued at Rs 34.82 crore. They have liabilities of Rs 519 crore each.

In the calendar year 2022, the couple had a joint income of Rs 605.57 crore. The same was Rs 643.42 crore during 2021.

The TDP decided to field Chandra Sekhar from Guntur after sitting MP and business tycoon Galla Jayadev decided not to contest as he wanted to stay away from politics.

Hailing from Burrupalem village of Guntur district, Chandra Sekhar did his MBBS from the Osmania Medical College in Hyderabad in 1999. Later, he moved to the US and completed post-graduation. He served as faculty at Johns Hopkins University and practices as a physician. (with IANS inputs)



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## Gaza: Rep.Thanedar Blasts Vandalism Of Community Center



**India-West News Desk**

DETROIT, MI – “As a member of Congress, I am always open to dialogue and debate. Unfortunately, this vandalism of the community center is not an isolated incident, nor is it a productive form of communication. These acts create nothing but fear and division during a time that depends on open conversation and discourse,” Rep. Shri Thanedar, said in a statement on May 7, after a community center here, owned and operated by him, was vandalized.

The congressman's face was painted over and the word “racist” was spray-painted on the building. The word “ceasefire” relating to the war in Gaza and a Palestinian flag was also sprayed on the side of the building. “In the past, I have dealt with other unproductive forms of protest. One that turned violent at a holiday party last December and another consisting of individuals demonstrating at my home at 3

in the morning. These incidents ended with people in the hospital and my loved ones feeling unsafe in their own bedrooms. In this case, a place designed to bring our community together was vandalized in a way that seeks to drive it apart,” Thanedar said. Thanedar has been a target after he came out in support of Israel in the aftermath of Hamas' brutal attacks last October. Since then he has called for all hostages on both sides to be released and a cease-fire to be called.

“War never solves any problems,” Thanedar told the Detroit Free Press, and believes Hamas needs to be dismantled to a point where it is incapable of repeating such violence. “I have never shied away from talking about it,” he added. “(But) such vandalism, creating such fear among my supporters ... isn't going to bring sympathy to their cause.” The vandalized building is used for community events, seminars, and roundtable discussions.





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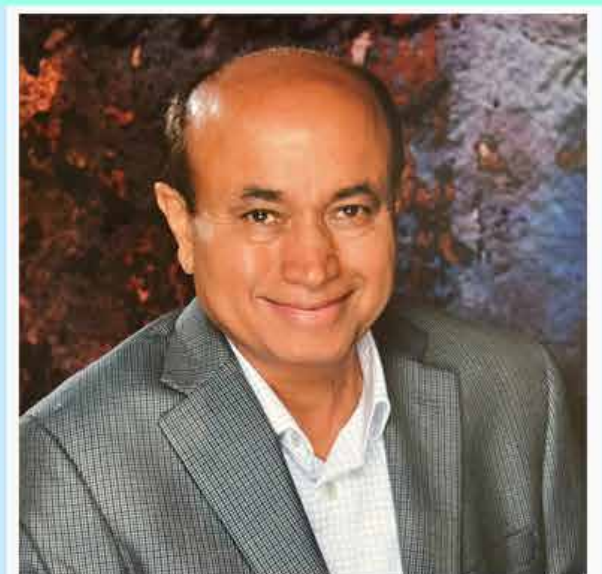


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**POLITICS**

# Car Rally In Support Of Modi Re-Election

Contd. from P1

ongoing Indian election.

A convoy of 168 cars, bedecked with Indian and American flags, embarked on a spirited 16-mile journey from the City of Irvine Civic Center, painting the cityscape with vibrant colors and patriotic fervor. Over 500 Indian Americans, adorned in traditional attire, eagerly participated in this procession, radiating pride for their cultural heritage.



“This rally proudly claims the title of the largest ‘Hum Hain Modi ka Parivar’ car rally outside India, eclipsing all previous gatherings of the Indian diaspora across the globe,” organizers stated proudly.

Amidst the march, the rally served as a celebration of India’s advancements, showcasing the nation’s remarkable progress in eco-

nommic development and positioning itself as a global leader under Modi’s leadership in recent years.

The rallying cry of the day was ‘Abki baar 400 paar,’ symbolizing the collective aspiration for a developed India, with hopes for the BJP to secure over 400 seats in the elections. Representatives from various walks of life across Southern California united in the rally,

epitomizing unity, camaraderie, and optimism for a brighter future, both for India and its diaspora worldwide, OFBJP said.

The OFBJP Los Angeles Car Rally was made possible by a dedicated team, including Shalabh Goel, Dr. Surinder Sharma, PK Nayak, Anil Mahajan, Latesh Bhambani, Manmohan Chopra, Arun Dutt, and Sunil Agrawal.

# Indian Americans Caution Rutgers Against Display Of ‘Flag Of Kashmir’



WASHINGTON, DC (IANS) – Indian Americans are calling upon a US university not to implement a portion of one

of the demands it conceded to protesting students to display on campus the flags of “occupied people”, which listed Kashmiris along with Palestinians and the Kurds.

“This is a dangerous territory for Rutgers to get involved (sic),” Thomas Abraham, chairman of the Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO), wrote in a letter to Jonathan Holloway President, Rutgers University-New Brunswick in New Jersey state.

“By even considering this demand, you are questioning the integrity of India. Kashmir is very much a part of India. There is no separate flag for Kashmir. Kashmir residents are not displaced people. In fact, the displaced people are the Hindu minorities who had to leave Kashmir because of violence

against them. If Rutgers displays such a flag of Kashmir, that will be the beginning of more sit-ins by students who are opposed to such flags,” Abraham wrote.

The university has not implemented this demand.

“The Office of the Chancellor will take stock of flags that are displayed across Rutgers- New Brunswick campus and ensure appropriate representation of students enrolled in academic and other spaces,” Chancellor Francine Conway wrote in a three-page letter responding to the protesting students.

The students had demanded, as specified in her letter, “display the flags of occupied peoples – including but not limited to Palestinians, Kurds, and Kashmiris – in all areas displaying international flags across the Rutgers campuses”.

Students were protesting the Israeli war in Gaza as students at many universities across the country had put forth 10 demands.

The top demand, which has been common to protesters in all other universities, was divestment from companies doing business with Israel or supporting its war effort and cutting links with Israel.

The chancellor said the university is reviewing these links and will discuss the findings with the students.

Indian Americans are focused on the one allowing the display of the flag of the “occupied people” of Kashmir. “So, @RutgersU has caved,” Suhag Shukla of the Hindu American Foundation wrote in a post on X.




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# South Asians For Biden Mobilizes To Get Out Vote For Dem Ticket

**India-West Staff Reporter**

WASHINGTON, DC – Senior Biden-Harris campaign officials, South Asian Congressional Representatives, political and advocacy experts, and other elected leaders highlighted the issues at stake for the South Asian community this presidential election during its relaunch event on April 25.

“What’s at stake in 2024? Even though it has been said in the past, the 2024 presidential election will be the most consequential election in our nation’s history,” said Neha Dewan, Founder and Co-National Director of South Asians for Biden, during the relaunch event.

The 2024 launch included live and virtual components, with participation from Biden-Harris Administration officials, Con-

gressional members, Democratic National Committee members, State Democratic Party chairs, and advocacy leaders.

“As the first South Asian American woman elected to the House of Representatives, and one of only two dozen naturalized citizens to serve in Congress, and one of less than a hundred women of color to ever serve in Congress, it is my distinct honor to join you today as we come together to build our power,” said Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal (WA-7), Chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus.

In addition, national advocacy experts highlighted issues of importance to the South Asian community, including reproductive rights and gun violence prevention.

“Kamala Harris is the first South Asian to be elected Vice President,

and she is a fierce champion for abortion rights,” said Mini Timmaraju, President and CEO, Reproductive Freedom for All. She studies revealed that 55 percent of Muslim Americans and 68 percent of Hindu Americans believe abortion should be legal in all or most cases.”

Shikha Hamilton, Vice President of Organizing at Brady: United



Against Gun Violence, Wisconsin’s Attorney General Josh Kaul, Georgia State Senator Saira Draper, and

Speakers at the relaunch highlighted several accomplishments during President Biden and Vice President Harris’ historic first term in office, including The CHIPS and Science Act, The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, and The Inflation Reduction Act. “We need to mobilize again. The President has delivered,” said Congressman Ro Khanna (CA-17).

Gen Z candidate for Georgia State Senate Ashwin Ramaswami also spoke on voting rights as an issue in the 2024 elections and for the future of the nation.

## In A Contentious Race, Bhavini Patel Loses Primary In PA



**India-West News Desk**

PITTSBURGH, PA – In a contentious battle for the Pittsburgh-area seat, Edgewood Councilwoman Bhavini Patel, a moderate challenger, fell short against progressive Democrat Representative Summer Lee.

Despite her efforts to paint Lee as too far left for the district and overly critical of President Joe Biden, Patel was unable to sway enough voters in her favor. The Associated Press called the race for Lee early on April 23 evening, setting the stage for a showdown with Republican business executive James Hayes in November.

Patel, who aimed to present herself as a more centrist alternative and a staunch supporter of Biden, faced an uphill battle against Lee’s established progressive credentials.

While expressing appreciation for her supporters, Patel looked beyond the immediate defeat, emphasizing the broader issues at stake in the November election. “This race was about so much more than my opponent,” Patel remarked. “It was about passing common sense laws that put money in working families’ pockets. It was about standing up to hate and stopping antisemitism. And it was about making sure President Biden gets re-elected in November.”



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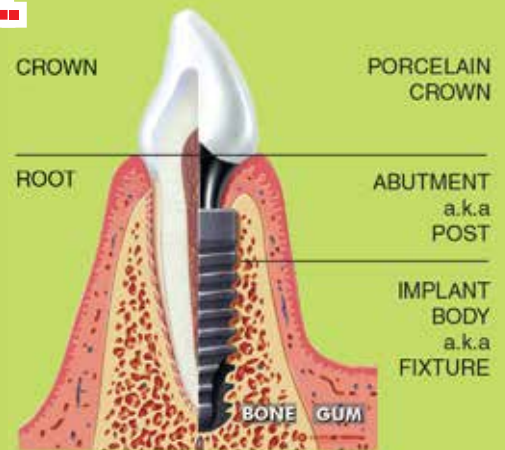
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POLITICS

# Rep. Swalwell Concerned About India Targeting Sikhs In The US

India-West Staff Reporter

WASHINGTON, D.C. – In what he called “transnational repression,” Representative Eric Swalwell of California’s 14th District has voiced concerns over what he perceives as targeted attacks against the Sikh community in the United States, allegedly orchestrated by the Indian government.

In a statement, Swalwell said the Indian government was launching a campaign aimed at

intimidating and suppressing members of the Sikh community residing in the United States and Canada. His statement comes in the wake of more revelations in the media on the alleged plot to kill a Khalistani terrorist on US soil by the Indian government.

Swalwell’s assertions are grounded in what he describes as “credible evidence,” which prompted the FBI to issue alerts to individuals believed to be at risk. The Congressman emphasized the gravity of the situation, stressing that such actions not only contravene American law but also strain the longstanding relationship between the world’s oldest and largest democracies.



The Congressman, who represents one of the largest Sikh communities in the nation, expressed gratitude towards law enforcement, particularly the FBI, for their swift response in alerting constituents to potential threats. He also commended the Biden Administration for prioritizing the safety of vulnerable communities and urged continued vigilance in monitoring and addressing the alleged threats.

However, Swalwell asserted that more comprehensive measures are necessary to safeguard against foreign governments targeting political opponents within the United States. He called for proactive engagement between law enforcement agencies and Sikh communities to protect their safety and ensure their freedom to practice their religion without fear of intimidation.

The Congressman concluded his statement by reaffirming his commitment, and that of elected officials, to combat political repression and hate in all its forms, underscoring the imperative of standing up for democratic principles and protecting the rights of marginalized communities.

# Nikki Haley Lands New Job At Conservative Thinktank



India-West Staff Reporter

WASHINGTON, DC – Nikki Haley, who was beaten back by Donald Trump for the Republican presidential nomination has landed a new job at the Hudson Institute.

It’s a Washington DC based, ultra-conservative think tank specializing in foreign policy affairs. She will become the institute’s Walter P Stern chairperson, a post named for Hudson’s former chairperson who died in 2022, The Guardian reported. Haley is the fourth member of the Trump administration to join the Institute.

Others there are former attorney general William Barr, secretary of state Mike Pompeo and transportation secretary Elaine Chao, the paper pointed out. “When our policymakers fail to call out our enemies or acknowledge the importance of our alliances, the world

is less safe,” Haley said in a statement from Hudson announcing her appointment. “That is why Hudson’s work is so critical. “They believe the American people should have the facts and policymakers should have the solutions to support a secure, free, and prosperous future. I look forward to partnering with them to defend the principles that make America the greatest country in the world.” The statement did not say what Haley’s responsibilities will be, whether the position is paid, or if she will work from Washington.

“It is fitting that Nikki has taken on this title. She is a courageous and insightful policymaker, and these qualities are vital in making Hudson the powerhouse policy organization it is today,” said Sarah May Stern, chairperson of the board of trustees.

Haley, unlike others who dropped out before her, has not Trump.

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## Gaza Protests:

# India Tells Its Students In America To Obey Local Laws

NEW YORK, NY (IANS) – India's Ministry of External Affairs urged Indian students enrolled in US colleges and universities to abide by local laws and regulations with regard to the ongoing protests that have swept across American institutions for higher education against Israel's ongoing war in Gaza.

There have been no reports yet of the involvement of Indian students in these protests and the ministry has also said no student or their family has contacted Indian missions for help.

"We expect all our citizens at home and abroad to respect local laws and

regulations," MEA Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said at a news briefing in New Delhi in response to a



Photo: Voice of America



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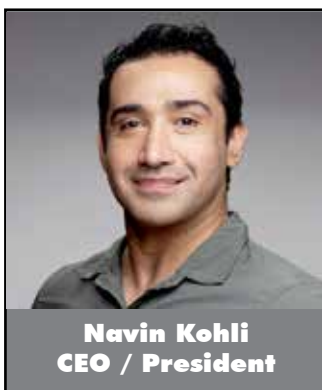
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question about protests at Columbia University, on May 2.

"So far no Indian students or their families have contacted us for any assistance in regard to disciplinary action which has been taken for their participation in the protest," he added.

Hundreds of thousands of Indian students are enrolled in US colleges. Many of them desire to work after college and settle down here. They are unlikely to participate in protests or take part in an action that pits them against the law, which could jeopardize their future.

Protests have spread across US colleges and universities against Israel's ongoing war in Gaza, with students demanding an end to US support for Israel and, as in the case of Columbia University, cutting with businesses and other entities with investments in Israel.

These protests have turned violent in many instances with students taking over parts of the

university building as they did in Columbia. Police have arrested scores of students and are breaking up their encampments, as their tents pitched around the campuses are being called.

College authorities and law enforcement agencies have blamed some of the violence on outsiders joining student protestors. New York police found "professional agitators" among protestors at Columbia. President Joe Biden addressed the violence in a speech from the White House saying that the freedom to protest must be accompanied by respect for the law. "Violent protest is not protected, peaceful protest is," he said.

"It's against the law if violence occurs. Vandalism, trespassing, breaking windows, shutting down campuses, forcing the cancellation of classes and graduations. None of this is a peaceful protest. Threatening people, intimidating people, instilling fear in people is not peaceful protest. It's against the law. Dissent is essential to democracy. But dissent must never lead to disorder, or to denying the rights of others so students can finish the semester and their college education," the President said.

The US President also appealed for an end to anti-semitism and Islamophobia or discrimination against supporters of Palestine.

"There should be no place on any campus, no place in America, for anti-Semitism, or threats of violence against Jewish students. There is no place for hate speech or violence of any kind, whether it's anti-semitism, Islamophobia, or discrimination against Arab-Americans or Palestinian Americans. It's simply wrong. There's no place for racism in America. It's all wrong," he said.

## Philanthropic Influencers

*Contd. from P1*  
charitable giving within the U.S.

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Additionally, the Pew survey shed light on charitable giving in Asian "ancestral homelands," with one in five Asian adults in the U.S. reporting involvement in charitable activities in their country of origin.

About a third of Indian American adults (31%) and about a quarter of Vietnamese American adults (24%) say they have given to a charity in their Asian origin country. One in ten Chinese adults and 6% of Japanese adults say the same.

Individuals' perceptions of their ancestral homeland influenced their likelihood of engaging in charitable giving. Those with a favorable view of their ancestral homeland were more inclined to donate to charitable organizations there compared to those with neutral or unfavorable opinions.

Religion also played a role in charitable giving behaviors, with Asian Hindus and Muslims exhibiting higher rates of engagement in charitable activities in their Asian ancestral homelands compared to the religiously unaffiliated Asian Americans' charitable giving in their Asian country of origin also varies by how important religion is in their lives. The Pew Survey showed:

29% of those who say religion is very important have given to a charity in their Asian origin country in the 12 months before the survey.

12% of those who say religion is not too or not at all important in their life have done the same.



# Indian Sailors Remain On Ship That Brought Down Baltimore Bridge

BALTIMORE, MD (IANS) – They would have been in Colombo in Sri Lanka, their destination, a couple of days ago, and would have been on their way home. But they remain on a cargo ship off the coast of the port city of Baltimore.

The 20 Indian members of the crew of Dali remain on board the vessel 35 days after the container ship brought down a bridge in Baltimore on March 26 in an early morning maritime accident that claimed the lives of six men who were working on the bridge at the time. A member of the crew who was injured received treatment on shore and returned to the ship the day after.

Fluent Cargo, a company that says it plans freight routes for clients across land, air, and sea, says a container ship would take about 33 days and 21 hours to reach Colombo from Baltimore. If everything goes according to schedule, they might have added.

Dali hit a pillar of the Key Scott Bridge, a 50-year-old structure that serves thousands of motorists every day, in circumstances that are being investigated by multiple US agencies.

The collision brought the bridge and blocked the passage of all cargo ships waiting to be on their way after Dali.

The crew are on the ship which is the scene of investigation by the US authorities.

The FBI has launched a criminal inquiry into the incident apart from separate probes underway by the National Transportation Safety Board and the Coast Guard's Marine Board of Investigation.

The bridge collapse received nationwide attention and US President Joe Biden has promised all possible help in the construction of the bridge and visited the site.

Jim Lawrence, a spokesperson for the Dali owner Grace Ocean Private Ltd., said the Indian crew members confirmed their presence on board now for 33 days.



“Still on board, in good spirits,” he added.

They are frequently represented by representatives of the company and the Indian embassy and by the Seamen's Church Institute, which serves mariners in education, legal advocacy, and pastoral guidance.

The crew “routinely have catered meals and desserts delivered to the ship”, Lawrence said, adding, “In addition to performing normal duties on board the ship, they are also assisting with the investigations and with the ongoing salvage work.”

A request to interview the crew or get a written statement from

any of them was turned down “out of respect for the investigation”.

The Indian embassy in Washington D.C. declined a request for the names of the stranded sailors and had not responded till the filing of this report

to a request for information about the well-being of the Indian sailors: if they could go off the ship, whether they have US permission to go on the mainland, and, finally, how often was the embassy or the relevant consulate checking on the crew.

Experts have said the sailors could remain on the ship for a few more weeks and or months. And when they are allowed to leave, the junior sailors will be prioritized. The senior members were in for a long stay on the ship which is standing still in the waters

as engineers cut away parts of the collapsed bridge lying across its bow, the front part.

Authorities expect to get the ship afloat again by May 10 and dock it.

It will remain there for the duration of the investigations.

The owners have said the crew has received counseling from workplace mental health specialists with experience in the maritime industry.

A dedicated team that included clinical psychologists had worked round-the-clock in support of the crew in the immediate aftermath of the incident “in the form of regular, individual, and confidential counseling”. These resources were also on offer to the families of the crew.

The company had allowed the crew members unlimited use of the ship's satellite communications system to stay in contact with their families.

Dali was constructed by South Korea's Hyundai Heavy Industries and was launched in late 2014. It's owned by Grace Ocean Private Ltd, flies a Singapore flag, and runs on diesel.

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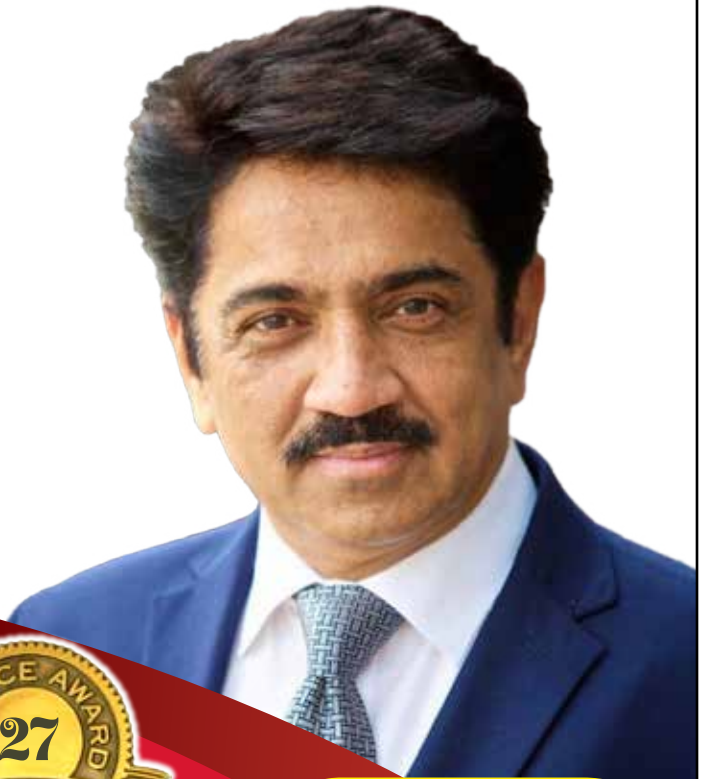




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## Probe Ongoing: Trudeau After Nijjar Killing Arrests

TORONTO, (ANI) – Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said on May 5 that the investigation into the killing of India-designated terrorist Hardeep Singh Nijjar is “not limited” to the arrest of three Indian nationals and is ongoing. Trudeau said that it is important because “Canada is a rule-of-law country.”

The Canada PM’s remarks came days after three Indian nationals were arrested for their involvement in the killing of Nijjar. Police on May 4 released photographs of all three persons amid an ongoing probe into the alleged connections of the Indian government.

Speaking at the Sikh Foundation of Canada’s Centennial Gala event held at the Royal Ontario Museum on May 5, Trudeau highlighted Canada’s status as a rule-of-law country with a robust and independent justice system. “This is important because Canada is a rule-of-law country with a strong and independent justice system, as well as a fundamental commitment to protecting all its citizens. I know that many Canadians, particularly members of the Sikh community, are feeling uneasy and perhaps even frightened right now.”



India, still bristling at the public statements of Trudeau, had External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar respond. He said Canada has been issuing visas to people with links to organized crime despite warnings from New Delhi. Jaishankar said some people in Canada, with ‘pro-Pakistan leanings’, have organized themselves politically and taken the shape of an influential political lobby. He said he saw reports that three people have been arrested, and the Canadian police have conducted “some investigation.”

Along with photographs of the three accused, the Canadian police have also released the photographs of the car believed to have been used by the suspects in the time

leading up to the homicide, in and around the Surrey area.

Addressing reporters at a news conference, RCMP Assistant Commissioner David Teboul, who leads the Federal Policing Program in the Pacific Region, said, “Three suspects have been arrested and charged for their alleged involvement in the killing of Nijjar.... We are not able to make any comments on the nature of evidence... Nor can we speak behind the motive of murder of Nijjar... However, I will say this matter is very much under active investigation,” he said.

Hardeep Singh Nijjar was designated a terrorist by India’s National Investigation Agency in 2020.

## CA Police Confirm Goldy Brar Not Killed In Fresno Shootout

FRESNO, CA (IANS) – Fresno police on May 1 denied reports that one of the two persons attacked in a shooting incident was Canada-based gangster Goldy Brar. “If you are inquiring because of the online chatter claiming that the shooting victim is ‘Goldy Brar’, we can confirm that this is not true,” Lieutenant William J. Dooley said.

“We have received inquiries from around the world this morning because of misinformation being spread on social media and online news agencies. We are not sure who started this rumor, but it caught on and spread like wildfire. But again, it isn’t true. The victim is not Goldy.”

The police have not yet identified the two persons who were attacked, one of whom died at a hospital later. The other person was released from the hospital after treatment.

They two were attacked at Fairmont and Holt Avenue in the northwestern part of Fresno after a fight in the evening of May 1, the police said earlier.

The younger of the two, said to be in his 30s, was shot in the upper body. He was taken to the hospital



in critical condition where he died later. The other man was hit in the lower part of the body and was released from the hospital after treatment.

But reports of the shooting spread like wildfire in India, claiming the deceased was gangster Goldy Brar.

The US media was cited as a source, but the details were either sketchy or wrong.

One report said the man was shot outside the Fairmont Hotel. Some reports even claimed that rival gang leaders had claimed responsibility for the killing.

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DATE	POOJA/EVENT & DESCRIPTION	CATEGORY	TIME	AMOUNT
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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
Every Sunday	Vallabha Ganapati Abhishekam	Abhishekam	-	\$54
May 11th - Saturday	Ayyappa Padi Puja	Puja	6:00 PM	\$54
May 12th - Sunday	Adi Shankaracharya Jayanti Celebrations	-	4:00 PM	\$54
May 17th - Friday	Vasavi Jayanthi Celebrations - Laksha Kumkumarchana	-	6:30 PM	\$21-\$251
May 19th - Sunday	Parasurama Dwadasi - Samoohika Satyanarayana Puja	Puja	10:00 AM	\$54
May 21st - Tuesday	Nrusimha Jayanti - Special Abhishekam to Lord Narasimha	Puja	6:00 PM	\$151
May 25th - Saturday	Vasavi Kanyaka Parameswari Abhishekam	Abhishekam	5:30 PM	\$54
March 26th - Sunday	Monthly Seniors Day	-	10:30 AM	-

### JUNE 2024 - UPCOMING PROGRAMS

June 1st - Saturday	Hanuman Jayanti Celebrations	-	10:30 AM	\$108
June 5th - Wednesday	Shani Jayanthi - Lord Bhagavan Shani & Navagraha Homam	Abhishekam	6:30 PM	-
June 11th - Tuesday	Skanda Sashti - Lord Murugan Abhishekam	Abhishekam	6:30 PM	\$54

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# H-1B Hires Change Jobs, Are Not Indentured: Cato Institute

India-West News Desk



WASHINGTON, DC – H-1B workers are not only paid—they receive wages in the top 10 percent of wage earners in the United States. As importantly, although they face more obstacles to changing jobs, H-1B workers are not tied to a single employer and they change jobs regularly, a Cato Institute report said.

In fact, H-1B workers are leaving their initial H-1B employers more than ever, it said. The government has made it easier to switch H-1B jobs by giving them a sixty-day grace period to find a new job after losing a job.

Some of the salient points in the report:

- From fiscal year 2005 to 2023, H-1B workers changed jobs over 1 million times.
- H-1B job shifting is more common than H-1B workers starting H-1B employment for

the first time. This means that US employers are more likely to hire an H-1B worker already in the United States in H-1B status, the report pointed out.

– There are more H-1B workers employed in the United States now for other employers to poach, and because the H-1B cap has been so quickly met every year since 2014, there is more reason to poach.

The Cato Institute said H-1B workers are,

however, still not treated equally in the labor market. “New H-1B employers must pay hefty fees to poach them, and the shortage of green cards for Indian workers can wrongly make those workers feel that they have to stick with their existing employer to complete that process. The best solution would be to make the conversion to a green card automatic rather than requiring a renewal after three years. The sixty-day grace period to find a new job is still not long enough to give many workers the confidence to simply quit a problematic job without a new one already lined up,” it said.

Citing the Pew Research Center, the report said that the “existence of widespread H-1B job shifting further refutes the idea that H-1B workers are “indentured” servants.”

# Vinay Kwatra, In The Running To Become Envoy, Meets Officials In Washington



WASHINGTON, DC (IANS) – Indian Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra on April 12 concluded a two-day visit to Washington D.C. during which he held discussions with his counterparts at the US State Department and the National Security Council.

The Indian embassy said Kwatra’s meetings were in “keeping with the tradition of regular high-level exchanges between the two countries and provided an opportunity to further advance our growing and future-oriented partnership”.

Among officials he met were Richard Verma, the US Deputy Secretary of State,

which is the highest position held by an Indian-American at the State Department; and Kurt Campbell, recently appointed the US Deputy Secretary of State, who is also the Biden administration’s czar on the Indo-Pacific and the Quad — a group of Indo-Pacific countries, India, the US, Japan and Australia.

Though not related to the visit, according to reports Kwatra is also one of the two front-runners in the race for the ambassadorship to the US, which is currently vacant.

The other contender is Vikram Misri, India’s Deputy National Security Adviser.

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# Documentaries Featuring Ravish Kumar, Black Kites Protection Earn Peabody Noms



## India-West News Desk

LOS ANGELES, CA – Two Indian documentaries, Vinay Shukla’s “While We Watched” and Shaunak Sen’s “All That Breathes,” have been nominated for the prestigious Peabody Awards.

On April 23, jurors unveiled a list of 41 contenders spanning Documentary, News,

Public Service, and Radio/Podcast categories. Among them are Shukla’s film, which delves into the life of former NDTV anchor Ravish Kumar, and Sen’s work, an Oscar-nominated exploration of two Muslim brothers dedicated to safeguarding black kites.

Shukla’s documentary has received worldwide acclaim even while it has not generated support in India. It offers a portrayal of In-

dia’s bleak media landscape and has drawn accolades at prestigious film festivals like Busan and Toronto. Peabody said it was a “timely depiction of a newsroom in crisis.” The film follows Kumar as he navigates a deluge of fake news, plummeting ratings, and ensuing cutbacks while striving to uphold fact-based reporting.

Sen’s “All That Breathes,” hailed for its portrayal of two brothers safeguarding black kites in New Delhi amid environmental and

social upheaval, is also vying for a Peabody Award. The film, which has scooped over 17 international accolades, including the top documentary award at Cannes, has been acquired by HBO and is accessible on various online platforms.

The ceremony is slated for June 9 in Los Angeles. These nominations follows Rintu Thomas and Sushmit Ghosh’s 2023 Peabody win for “Writing With Fire,” marking a historic achievement as the first Indian filmmakers to clinch the award.

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Haresh Shah is not connected with the Federal Medicare program.



ENTERTAINMENT

# In LA, Bhansali Screens 'Heeramandi'

LOS ANGELES, CA (IANS) – Indian auteur Sanjay Leela Bhansali was hosted by Netflix's co-CEO Ted Sarandos in Los Angeles to celebrate the release of Net-

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Bela Bajaria, CEO, Netflix during the screening at The Egyptian Theatre Hollywood on April 29, 2024 in Los Angeles, California. (Photo by Charley Gallay/Getty Images for Netflix)



SLB chills with Netflix's co-CEO Ted Sarandos at a dinner in LA

flix's highly anticipated title 'Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar', which also marks the streaming debut of Bhansali.

The two were joined by 'SNL' star Bill Hader, Golden Globe-winning actress Ali Wong, filmmaker J. J. Abrams, Katie McGrath (Co-CEO of Bad Robot Productions) and Dan Lin, Chairman Netflix films. For the occasion, SLB wore his signature black kurta which he paired with a white pyjama. Ted was dressed

in a black shirt which he paired with denims and a pair of suede leather shoes.

'Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar' is one of the biggest bets on Netflix in recent times. The streaming show, which features an ensemble star cast tells the story of two rival courtesans and how they vow to destroy each other to seek revenge.

Earlier a special screening of 'Heeramandi' was held in Los Angeles. YouTuber Lilly Singh moderated a fun q&a session.

Last year, Ted flew to India for a conversation with SLB on 'Heeramandi' and other important aspects of films. Ted shared that India is the fastest-growing market for OTT in the world. He also went on to compare Bhansali to the Australian filmmaker Baz Luhrmann, who is known for 'The Great Gatsby' and 'Elvis'.

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# Jai Khanna Is Pioneering The Future Of Sports Programming

## India-West Staff Reporter

LOS ANGELES, CA – After years as one of the industry's top talent managers, Jai Khanna is building a timely new production company — with a vision for bringing sports stories to the forefront.

In the ever-evolving landscape of entertainment, sports programming is rapidly increasing and Indian American Jai Khanna's Victory Sports Media production company is at the forefront of the surge in global sports programming. With a focus on premium content, Victory specializes in film, television, and digital media that tell the stories of the journey to victory.

With only a few producers in the sports programming landscape, Khanna alongside Co-Founder Parag Parikh, Victory Sports Media is leading the conversation and actively setting the messages for a segment of entertainment that is rapidly growing.

"It is an exciting time to be a part of the entertainment industry surrounding sports," said Khanna. "There is a massive move towards unscripted and live sports programming — there is an opportunity for platforms to create a vibrant ecosystem that includes shoulder content to retain audiences. We are creating compelling stories that do just that."



Since founding Victory in 2021, Khanna has produced the Emmy-nominated documentary "The Great Debate with Charles Barkley," on TNT, the upcoming Michelle Wie West documentary set to premiere on NBC and Peacock in May as well as a robust slate of high-profile projects in development.

Born and raised in San Francisco, Khanna graduated from the University of California Davis where he was a student-athlete. He went on to work as an entertainment talent manager at the preeminent Brillstein Entertainment where he repped the biggest names in Hollywood for 22 years. His clients over the years included talent such as Eva Mendes, Sarah

Silverman, Irrfan Khan, Tiffani Thiessen, Hirthik Roshan, Ike Barinholtz, Larenz Tate among others. His credits include over 25 films, where he served as Producer or Executive Producer.

Now, he's leveraging his expertise to create content that engages consumers and drives business for the company's platform partners. Through strategic partnerships and innovative marketing strategies, Khanna and his team have successfully positioned Victory as a trusted partner for brands looking to make a meaningful impact in the sports world. Most recently, Victory announced a first-of-its-kind partnership with Ellevest, the investing and wealth management company built by



ing. Their vision is proving to be spot on with the increased global interest around women's sports.

"Brands are recognizing the growing market potential of women's sports and the unique opportunity to connect with audiences through inspiring stories," he shared "it's inspiring to see the impact female athletes are having on the industry we are committed to being a part of continuing to drive those stories to

the forefront."

Looking ahead, Khanna envisions Victory Sports Media as a catalyst for change in the sports entertainment landscape. With a steadfast commitment to creating best-in-class programming and a passion for creating diverse gripping emotional portraits of perseverance and the human spirit of sports, Khanna and Victory are set to captivate audiences for a long time to come.

"We have a pipeline of projects that are going to be real cultural conversations. First-ever glimpses into some of the world's biggest athletes, franchises and iconic moments. There are a lot of inspirational stories to tell. We're just getting started."

women for women. Ellevest has over \$1.9 billion in assets under management. The strategic alliance is Ellevest's first-ever direct investment offering in film and women's sports. Together, Victory and Ellevest are aiming to increase women-centric sports content.

"Using capital alongside mission-driven brands to advance audiences through storytelling are exactly the types of opportunities we're forging," said Khanna "We are creating strategic partnerships and reinvesting into the communities whose stories we are telling."

The partnership also highlights Victory's concerted focus to establish a library that includes a large offering of female-hero storytell-

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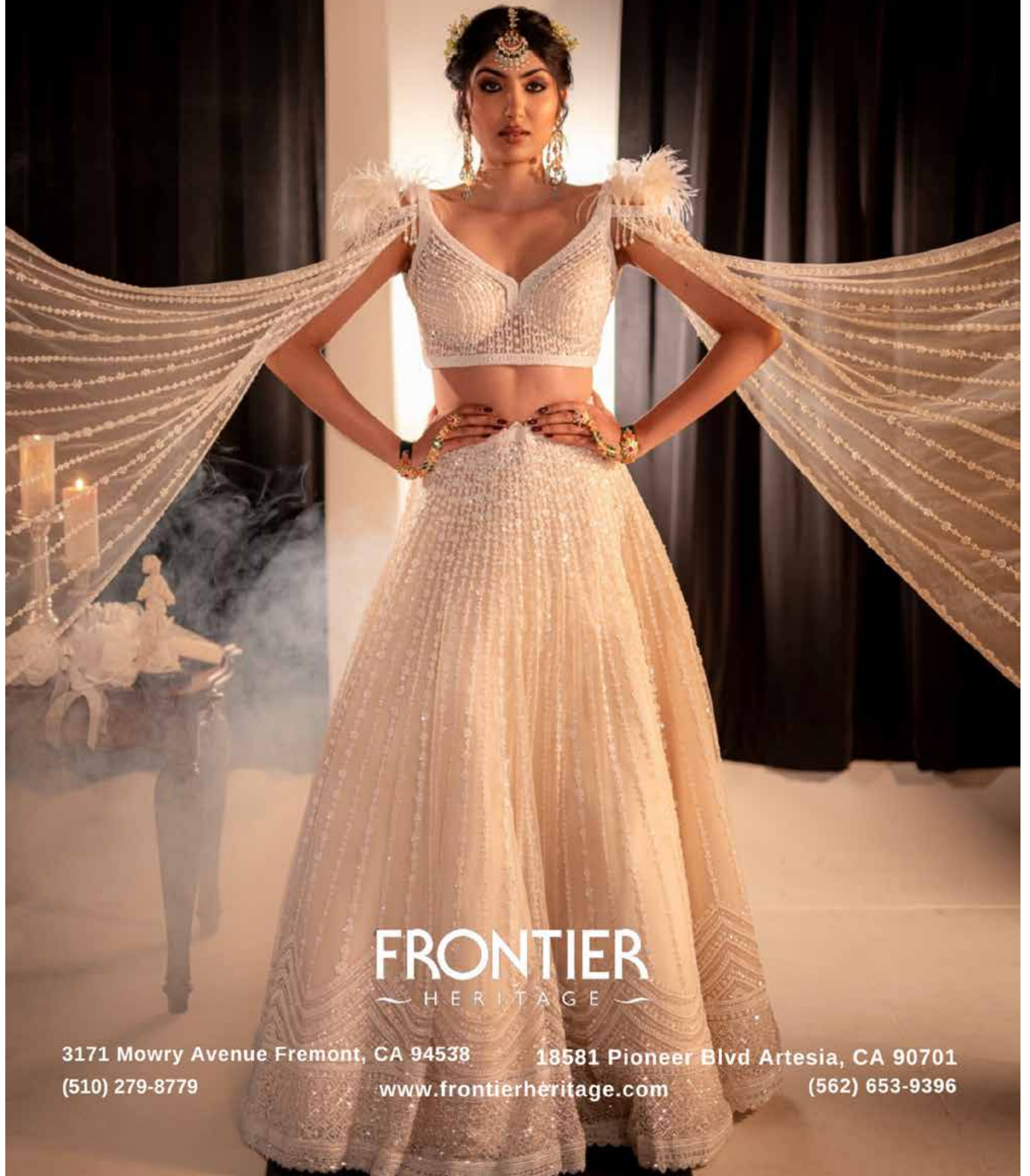
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