

# GANDHI STATUE UNVEILED

*NYC Mayor unveils Gandhi statue outside Hindu temple after 2022 vandalism incidents*

Picture courtesy-IANS



Celebration of 75th R-Day at Chicago Consulate

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'China started destroying monasteries'

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'12th Fail' is 'Best Film' at Filmfare Awards 2024

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FOG R-Day attended by thousands

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spirit to rebuild was not. Today, we stood with the community to say in one voice: Hate has no place in our city," Mayor Adams said, unveiling the statue last week.

We embody the values of justice for which Gandhi gave his life," Mayor Adams said at the event attended by members of the Indian-American community.

Rajkumar, who was at the forefront, calling for an investigation into the incident as a hate crime against Hindus and Indians, posted a video of the ceremony on X and said it was "exciting" to unveil the statue along with Mayor Adams.

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12th Fail 'is 'Best Film'



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Rajkumar, who was at the forefront, calling for an investigation into the incident as a hate crime against Hindus and Indians, posted a video of the ceremony on X and said it was "exciting" to unveil the statue along with Mayor Adams.

"EXCITING! Watch myself and @NYCMayor unveil the new Mahatma



Picture courtesy-IANS

Gandhi Statue at Tulsi Mandir at the site of last year's hateful vandalism. It was a historic moment for our Richmond Hill community as we came together to show that our love will conquer all hate," she wrote on X.

After the first attack, Rajkumar brought together several elected officials, including House of Representatives Foreign

Affairs Committee Gregory Meeks, to condemn the attack and demand police action.

As the first Hindu elected to the New York State legislature, Rajkumar said, "When the Gandhi statue was vandalized, that really flew in the face of all of our beliefs and it's very disturbing for the community".

Assembly Member David Weprin, Council Member Lynn Schulman, and Pandit Lakhram Maharaj, founder of Shri Tulsi Mandir, were also present in the ceremony.

"In 2022, a hate crime was committed not once, but twice, against the Hindu community in #RichmondHill, with the destruction of the Gandhi statue in front of the Shri Tulsi Mandir. Many, including @JeniferRajkumar, @DavidWeprin and myself stood in solidarity against this hatred. Yesterday, I was proud to join with the community to unveil a new Gandhi statue," Council Member Schulman wrote on X.

According to the New York Police Department (NYPD), six unidentified men -- between 25 and 30 years -- were spotted on surveillance video vandalizing the statue, following which they fled after getting into two separate cars, a white Mercedes Benz and a dark Toyota Camry.

A month after the attack, 27-year-old Sukhpal Singh, who was part of a group, was arrested and charged with hate crimes.

Lakhram Maharaj had then said: "To see them coming after us like this is very painful... "I want to know why they did it". As per NYPD data, in 2022, there were over 330 confirmed hate incidents -- a 127 percent increase when compared to the same period in 2020. IANS

## *China started destroying monasteries after occupying Tibet: Former Tibetan PM-in-exile*

NEW DELHI: Former Tibetan Prime Minister-in-exile Lobsang Sangay has accused China of exploiting Tibetan identity, language and culture since the Chinese troops entered the Tibet region on October 7, 1950.

The incident marked the beginning of a dark period in the history of the Tibetan people's homeland, said Lobsang Sangay in an exclusive interview with ANI.

"China occupied our country, brutalized our people, around million Tibetans died because of killing, starvation and suicides. Monasteries were destroyed, treasures were looted, burnt and sold. Thousands years of civilizations, brought from Nalanda to Tibet, were reduced to ashes." Lobsang Sangay said.

In an effort to revitalize Tibetan culture into mainstream Chinese culture, Beijing has implemented several policies over the years that have resulted in the disappearance of regional culture elements.

Officially an atheist state, China has long persecuted Buddhism, which is re-

uprising of 1959.

"Monks wanted to defend their faith as the Communist Party of China started destroying the monasteries after occupying Tibet," said Lobsang Sangay during the interview.

The Chinese government has also

*"China occupied our country, brutalized our people, around million Tibetans died because of killing, starvation and suicides. Monasteries were destroyed, treasures were looted, burnt and sold"*

vered as a force that binds all Tibetans. In fact, the attack on the faith was the main reason why several monks joined the guerrilla group during the Tibetan

meddled in the succession of the 14th Dalai Lama. Beijing's interference is being seen as violations of religious freedom of the Tibetan people. ANI

# British-Indian couple jailed for 33 years after GBP57 mn cocaine haul

LONDON: An Indian-origin couple has been sentenced to 33 years in prison each after exporting more than half a ton of cocaine to Australia.

Arti Dhir, 59, and Kavaljitsinh Rajjada, 35, whose extradition was sought by India on charges of the murder of their adopted son in Gujarat, were convicted of 12 counts of exportation and 18 counts of money laundering on 29

January. "It was the fact that they operated in the world of international organized crime," he was quoted as saying by Sky News.

Dhir and Rajjada, were identified by National Crime Agency (NCA) investigators, after the Australian Border Force intercepted the cocaine upon its arrival in Sydney in May 2021.

The drugs had been shipped via a commercial flight from the UK and consisted of six metal toolboxes which, when opened, were found to contain 514 kilos of cocaine.

Officers traced the consignment back to Dhir and Rajjada, who had set up a front company called Viefly Freight Services with the sole purpose of smuggling drugs.

Both defendants had been directors of the company at different points since its incorporation in June 2015, the NCA said in a statement released 29 January.

Rajjada's fingerprints were found on the plastic wrappings of the metal toolboxes containing the seized drugs, while receipts for the order of the toolboxes, worth 2855 pounds, were discovered at the couple's home.

The NCA claimed that there had been 37 consignments sent to Australia since June 2019, of which 22 were dummy runs and 15 contained cocaine.

According to the crime agency, their knowledge of the airport freight procedures -- with both of them having worked for a flight services company at Heathrow -- was used to cover their criminal activities. *IANS*



Arti Dhir and Kavaljitsinh Rajjada

January.

During a trial at the Southwark Crown Court, Prosecutor Hugh French likened the modus operandi of the couple to crime dramas 'Ozark' and 'Breaking Bad'.

"It's like something out of Breaking Bad or Ozark," French said, describing the "ruthless and greedy" pair as "very different from the average married couple".

"It was not the 25-year age gap that was different -- it

## Diplomats from across globe hosted for special tour of BAPS Hindu Mandir, Abu Dhabi

ABU DHABI: Indian Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Sunjay Sudhir, hosted diplomats from across the globe for a special tour of the BAPS Hindu Mandir in Abu Dhabi.

The envoys were impressed by the temple's unique architecture, intricate motifs and its message of unity, peace and harmony.

"Less than a month to go for the inauguration of the @AbuDhabiMandir @BAPS, Amb @sunjaysudhir hosted diplomatic corps from across the globe for a special tour of the temple. Envoys were awed by its unique

Mandir in Abu Dhabi, as per a release issued by the BAPS Hindu Mandir, Abu Dhabi.

The temple visit served to foster intercultural understanding, goodwill and respect while providing the guests an opportunity to witness the ongoing progress of the Middle East's inaugural traditional Hindu temple, symbolizing the universal principles of tolerance and harmony.

Among those who visited the site were ambassadors and senior diplomats from Argentina, Armenia, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Chad, Chile, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, the Dominican Republic, Egypt, the European Union, Fiji, Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Moldova, Montenegro, Nepal, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Nigeria, Panama, Philippines, Po-

land, Seychelles, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Syria, Thailand, the UAE, the UK, the US, Zimbabwe and Zambia, as per the official release.

Over 60 dignitaries were welcomed with garlands and greeted with the traditional tying of a sacred thread, marking the significance of their presence. *ANI*

architecture, intricate motifs and its message of unity, peace & harmony," as per the Indian Embassy in Abu Dhabi's official handle on 'X'.

At the invitation of the Indian Ambassador to the UAE, Sunjay Sudhir, representatives from 42 nations convened at the 27-acre construction site of the BAPS Hindu

## IMF projects India as fastest growing economy in 2024, raises concerns over property crisis in China

WASHINGTON DC: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) in its growth forecast for 2024, has predicted that India will emerge as the fastest-growing economy yet again with a robust growth of 6.5 percent.

On the other hand, other major economies will be showing modest growth. As per the report, the US will grow at 2.1 percent, Germany will grow at 0.5 percent, France at 1 percent, Japan at 0.9 percent and China at 4.6 percent.

The IMF said that with disinflation and steady growth, the risks to global growth are broadly balanced and there is a possibility of a 'soft landing'.

"Global growth is projected at 3.1 percent in 2024 and 3.2 percent in 2025, with the 2024 forecast 0.2 percentage point higher than that in the October 2023 World Economic Outlook (WEO) on account of greater-than-expected resilience in the United States and several large emerging market and developing economies, as well as fiscal support in China," the IMF statement read.

It said that faster disinflation could lead to further easing of financial conditions and stronger structural reform momentum could bolster productivity with positive cross-border spillovers

However, it also highlighted that a spike in new commodity price spikes from geo-

political shocks -- including continued attacks in the Red Sea -- and deepening property sector woes in China could also cause growth disappointments.

According to the global monetary organization, the near-term challenge for policymakers is to successfully manage the final descent of inflation to target and calibrate monetary policy in response to underlying inflation dynamics.

It also said that there is a need for a renewed focus on fiscal consolidation to rebuild budgetary capacity to deal with future shocks, raise revenue for new spending priorities, and curb the rise of public debt

IMF also said that more efficient multilateral coordination is needed for debt resolution, for avoiding debt distress and creating space for necessary investments, as well as to mitigate the effects of climate change.

Meanwhile, the Indian economy is projected to grow close to 7 percent in the financial year 2024-25 which starts this April, said the Ministry of Finance in its monthly review report. *ANI*

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# India advocates stability development in Afghanistan

KABUL: The Indian representative engaged in a meeting with Afghanistan's Taliban-appointed Foreign Minister, Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi, and expressed India's active participation in both international and regional initiatives concerning Afghanistan.

The representative also emphasized India's unwavering support for all efforts aimed at fostering stability and development in the war-torn nation.

"India actively takes part in international and regional initiatives regarding Afghanistan and supports every effort leading to the stability and the development of Afghanistan," posted Hafiz Zia Ahmed, Deputy Spokesman and Assistant Director of Public Relations, Taliban-controlled Afghanistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Notably, Muttaqi met with the ambassadors and heads of diplomatic missions

of the regional countries in the region, including India.

Other diplomats and ambassadors were from Russia, China, Iran, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Turkey, and Indonesia, the Taliban-controlled Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a press release.

"Calling the current diplomatic relations of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan with the countries of the region remarkable, FM Muttaqi stressed that regional countries should hold regional peace talks to increase and continue positive interaction with Afghanistan, adding that Muttaqi asked the participants to take advantage of the emerging opportunities in Afghanistan based on a region-oriented tradition so as to coordinate in managing the potential threats," the release added. ANI

*"India actively takes part in international and regional initiatives regarding Afghanistan and supports every effort leading to the stability and the development of Afghanistan"*

# Imran Khan, Bushra Bibi sentenced to 14-year imprisonment in Toshakhana case

RAWALPINDI: An accountability court sentenced former Pakistan premier Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi to 14 years imprisonment in the Toshakhana case, local media reported.

The verdict comes a day after the PTI founder was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment in the cipher case by a special court established under the Official Secrets Act.

Accountability court judge M o h a m m a d Bashir presided over the hearing at Rawalpindi's Adiala jail, where the former Khan is incarcerated, The Express Tribune reported.

Imran and Bushra were also barred from holding any public office for the next 10 years and were fined around Rs1,574 million, The Express Tribune reported.

The judge also asked the two to record their statements under Section 342 of the

Code of Criminal Procedure and closed the right of cross-examination of the prosecution witnesses.

The couple were indicted in the reference on January 9.

Reacting strongly to the verdict, the PTI



termed it as "complete destruction of every law" and claimed the former premier and first lady have faced "yet another kangaroo trial".

The party further said no right of defense was given to either Imran or Bushra and the case has "no basis" to stand on in any higher court, similar to the cipher trial. IANS



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**Bay Area Kala Utsavam 2024 on Feb 24-25**

India Post News Service

Shruthi Swara Laya School of Music proudly presents Bay Area Kala Utsavam (BAKU), a two-day South Indian classical (Carnatic) music competition and concert series on the weekend of Feb 24-25.

Anuradha Suresh, founder of Shruthi Swara Laya and board member of the Fremont Cultural Arts Council, shares, "Our festival spotlights the exceptional talents of Bay Area musicians. With local artists as competitors, judges, and performers, it serves as a platform to showcase our local talent. By nurturing these musical talents, our festival fosters a sense of community and bolsters support for the arts, creating enduring connections among students and artists alike."

Details on page 10

**Celebration of 75<sup>th</sup> R-Day at Chicago Consulate**

India Post News Service

The Consulate General of India in Chicago celebrated the 75th Republic Day of India on Friday, 26 January 2024.

The event started with Consul General Somnath Ghosh, unfurling the National Flag, followed by the singing of the National Anthem of India.

Details on page 11

**Rishi Kumar stands with Israel**

India Post News Service

At the Jewish Community Relations Council in Palo Alto's Candidate Forum on Wednesday, January 17, 2024, Democrat Rishi Kumar, along with four other congressional candidates, engaged in a discussion on various foreign policy issues, notably on Israel.

Rishi Kumar has taken a firm stance on this important topic on the global stage speaking passionately and emotionally at recent rallies at Stanford University, Mountain View, and Palo Alto.

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# COMMUNITY ACROSS AMERICA

8 India Post

www.indiapost.com

February 2, 2024



Kaavya and Team win first place

## FOG Republic Day attended by thousands of Bay Area residents



**VIDYA SETHURAMAN**  
India Post News Service

The Federation of Indo-Americans (FIA) of Northern California aka FOG celebrated India's 75th Republic Day with daylong cultural activities on Jan 27 at the Bishop Elementary School, Sunnyvale. FIA has been celebrating the Republic Day of India for over 41 years now, meticulously promoting the opulent culture and various dance and music styles of India.

In all, 130 dance schools participated with over 1000 Indian origin children in this year's

competition and performances. The audience enjoyed the enthralling and captivating performances of the children in 20 different groups. The dance competitions were coordinated and meticulously executed by Jyotsna B Sharma, FOG Cultural chair and her team of 40 volunteers. Desh Rangeela segment was curated by Ryan Nathan, Shanmukha Theaters and had over 120 participants representing dance forms from Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and other parts of India.

Cont'd on page 24





# Consulate General of India, San Francisco's 75th Republic Day reception at Iconic Green room



**VIDYA SETHURAMAN**  
India Post News Service

Consul General of India, San Francisco hosted an elegant celebration of 75th Indian Republic Day on Jan 27,

event was attended by community leaders, businessmen, other Consulate officials, and elected officials from various parts of California. Event started by rendition of US and Indian national anthems and patriotic songs.

The event culminated in a rousing cultural presentation by "TaalSutra", sponsored by the FOG, and performances by Arundhati Parmar (Manipuri), Mousumi Bose (Odissi), Portia Banerjee

(Bharatanatyam), and Urmi Chakraborty (Kathak), which earned enthusiastic applause. The celebrations ended with a sumptuous dinner graciously hosted by the Consulate General of India.



CG Dr Reddy congratulated the gathered Indian American community on the 75th Republic Day of India and thanked them for the great contribution that they were making to India's growth story and to the strengthening of relationship between India and the US. He then read out the President's Address to the Nation. He drew attention to India's successful host of G20 summits, advancements in space exploration with the Chandrayaan and Aditya missions, as well as the nation's leadership in affordable data connectivity and digital infrastructure, like the Unified Payments Interface (UPI). Maryam

2024. Organized at the famous war memorial hall in San Francisco, the venue was in the backdrop of beautiful City Hall, bathed in the Indian national colors. The



Muduroglu, Chief of Protocol, San Francisco addressed the gathering. Various elected officials participated at the event and issued a commendation to Dr Reddy, CGISF.



**Bay Area**

## Kala Utsavam - 2024

Shruthi Swara Laya is conducting their annual 2-day Carnatic music festival honoring two esteemed women - Smt. Rajam Swaminathan, an ardent patron of Carnatic music, and Smt. Rukmini Rajagopalan, a revered violin teacher and supporter of the arts.

Saturday, February 24th  
All Day Carnatic music competitions (Vocal/Violin)  
Venue: University of Silicon Andhra  
1521 California Circle, Milpitas CA 95035

For Registration : <https://tinyurl.com/56wnyc53>



Sunday, February 25  
All Day Concerts and Prize Distribution  
Venue: University of Silicon Andhra  
1521 California Circle, Milpitas CA 95035

Please contact:  
[Bayareakalautsavam@gmail.com](mailto:Bayareakalautsavam@gmail.com)

# Bay Area Kala Utsavam 2024



India Post News Service

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Anuradha Suresh, founder of Shruthi Swara Laya and board member of the Fremont Cultural Arts Council, shares, "Our festival spotlights the exceptional talents of Bay Area musicians. With local artists as competitors, judges, and performers, it serves as a platform to showcase our local talent. By nurturing these

musical talents, our festival fosters a sense of community and bolsters support for the arts, creating enduring connections among students and artists alike."

This festival pays homage to the late Rajam Swaminathan, a Bay Area musician and patron, who supported the preservation and propagation of this cherished art form. Rajam Swaminathan's legacy lives on through her exquisite compositions. This year, the festival will also be honoring the memory of Rukmani Rajagopalan, a beloved violin teacher in the Bay Area.

Manasa Suresh, Director of SSL, says, "For those of us born and raised in the Bay Area, pursuing Carnatic music has provided a unique perspective into what it means to be bicultural, and how an amalgamation of both those cultures helps us create and shape the most authentic version of ourselves."

The festival commences on February 24 with a competition for young Carnatic music enthusiasts. A panel of distinguished musicians, serving as both judges and role models, will evaluate contestants based on technique, musicality, and stage presence. The grand fi-

nale on February 25 promises captivating performances by esteemed judges and local talents alike. Both of these events will be held at the University of Silicon Andhra in Milpitas, CA.

Bay Area Kala Utsavam celebrates the rich musical heritage of South India. Events like this festival play a pivotal role in passing on this musical legacy to future generations, fostering cultural appreciation for our local audiences.

For more information, please visit [www.shruthiswaralaya.com](http://www.shruthiswaralaya.com). The festival warmly welcomes music enthusiasts of all ages and backgrounds.

## Shri Ram Mandir, Ayodhya, inauguration celebrations at BAPS Mandirs, North America



India Post News Service

The inauguration of the new mandir at Bhagwan Shri Ramchandrajji's sacred birthplace in Ayodhya was a momentous occasion celebrated by over a billion Hindus worldwide. On January 21, 2024, BAPS Swaminarayan Mandirs across North America joined this global celebration, which included more than 100 BAPS mandirs in North America. This event marked the end of a 500-year journey and served as a tribute to the sacrifices and steadfast faith of count-

less swamis, acharyas, and devotees. The mandir stands as a beacon of faith and pride for Hindus worldwide.

Under the inspiring guidance of His Holiness Mahant Swami Maharaj, BAPS masterfully organized an array of devotional programs at 1,500 mandirs and 21,000 Satsang assemblies globally, each event pulsating with vibrant enthusiasm. The mandirs were beautifully transformed into stunning displays of devotion, each one adorned with sparkling lights, glowing diyas, and intricate rangolis that

depicted Shri Ram and the new mandir, creating a captivating and spiritual ambiance. Heightening the excitement, a meticulously prepared, elaborate Annakut was a feast for the eyes. Delightful treats, including cookies and mandir-shaped cakes, each artfully inscribed with 'Shri Ram', added a special touch to the festivities.

The air was charged with devotion as vibrant processions, brimming with energy and fervor, were meticulously organized, weaving through the crowds and

creating an atmosphere of divine celebration that was nothing short of magical. In a heartwarming and grand welcome, Shri Ram was reverently welcomed into the assembly in a beautifully decorated palkhi, amidst the joyful chants of the devotees and showering of flower petals. The event was also graced with profound and enlightening speeches by revered swamis and esteemed guests, who shared insights and reflections on the life and teachings of Shri Ram.

# Celebration of 75th Republic Day a Chicago Consulate



Consul General Unfurling Indian flag



Artists performing



Gathering at Indian Day celebration

India Post News Service

The Consulate General of India in Chicago celebrated the 75th Republic Day of India on Friday, 26 January 2024.

The event started with Consul General Somnath Ghosh, unfurling the National

Flag, followed by the singing of the National Anthem of India. The Consul General read out the Address of the President of India Smt. Droupadi Murmu and spoke on the India-US strategic partnership and the valuable contributions of the Indian diaspora.

A cultural program was organized. This included Hindustani classical instrumental by Souryadeep Bhattacharya on Sarod accompanied by Tabla player Arun Sabapathy; Odissi dance performance by Colin Mascarenhas and Ms. Neeti Sabarwal from Aikyam Odissi Dance

Collective Chicago; and rendition of patriotic songs by Ishaan Ahmed and Ms. Nalini Parikh.

The program was attended by State Senator Ram Villivalam; Cook County Treasurer Ms. Maria Pappas, and prominent members of the Indian diaspora.

## Chicago INDO US Lions Club and MIBG Foundation serve prasad

India Post News Service

CHICAGO: The INDO US Lions Club and MIBG Foundation Collaborate to Serve Prasad to Over 14,000 People in India during Ram Mandir Pran Prathista Mahotsav at Ayodhya in India

The successful distribution of sacred Prasad to over 14,000 individuals at Ahmedabad, India, marking a profoundly significant contribution during the auspicious Ram Mandir Pran Prathista Mahotsav in Ayodhya. The synergistic efforts of the Chicago INDO US Lions Club



and MIBG Foundation came to fruition in a massive Prasad distribution drive, aiming to spread joy, unity, and spiritual fulfillment among the community members gathered for the grand celebrations at Ayodhya.

This event unfolded in conjunction with the momentous Ram Mandir Pran Prathista Mahotsav, a historic occasion that resonates with deep cultural and spiritual significance. The Club, renowned for its commitment to humanitarian service and community development, joined hands with the MIBG Foundation, an organization dedicated to fostering social wel-

fare. Together, they orchestrated the seamless distribution of Prasad to thousands of individuals, creating an atmosphere of joy, harmony, and cultural celebration.


"This collaboration between the Chicago INDO US Lions Club and the MIBG Foundation epitomizes the spirit of service and community engagement. We are honored to have had the opportunity to contribute to the joyous occasion of the Ram Mandir Pran Prathista Mahotsav and to share the divine blessings through the distribution of Prasad," said Lion Kishan Trivedi, President of the Club. Lion Hina, Founder President Club, expressed her gratitude, stating, "Being part of such a significant event in Ayodhya, especially during the sacred Ram Mandir Pran Prathista Mahotsav, is a moment of immense pride for our club. Our commitment to humanitarian service aligns with the values of this auspicious occasion, and we are thrilled to have been a part of this meaningful celebration."

Deepak Nayak Chairman of the MIBG Foundation added, "Collaborating with the Chicago INDO US Lions Club for this initiative has been a transformative experience. It's heartening to see two organizations come together to contribute to the well-being and joy of a community during the momentous Ram Mahotsav. The distribution of Prasad symbolizes our shared commitment to social welfare and cultural harmony."

The event not only showcased the dedication of the participating organizations but also highlighted the paramount impor-

tance of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya as a symbol of cultural and spiritual unity. The presence of the Chicago INDO US Lions Club and MIBG Foundation during this his-

toric occasion exemplifies their shared dedication to making a positive impact on society, upholding the values of compassion, service, and cultural.



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# Rishi Kumar stands with Israel

India Post News Service

At the Jewish Community Relations Council in Palo Alto's Candidate Forum on Wednesday, January 17, 2024, Democrat Rishi Kumar, along with four other congressional candidates, engaged in a discussion on various foreign policy issues, notably on Israel.

Rishi Kumar has taken a firm stance on this important topic on the global stage speaking passionately and emotionally at recent rallies at Stanford University, Mountain View, and Palo Alto.

Kumar, distinguishing himself from the rest of the field, stated, "I'm the only can-

On the topic of rising anti-Semitism in educational institutions, Kumar highlighted the influence of foreign funding, particularly from Qatar, on American education and its negative portrayal of Israel. He proposed that Congress could enact laws to prevent such foreign interference in educational institutions.

In his closing remarks, Kumar critiqued career politicians for their role in California's fiscal challenges and the increase in crime. He highlighted his own record in reducing burglaries and called for a shift towards integrity and ethics in politics, positioning himself as a problem-solver in contrast to his opponents.



didate in this race who has taken an explicit pro-Israel stance on the Israel/Hamas conflict." He highlighted his background in technology, his education in mechanical engineering, and emphasized his status as "not a career politician." He expressed strong opposition to a ceasefire with Hamas, citing the organization's ongoing threat and asserting Israel's right to exist and to peace. Kumar emphasized his support for Israel's military superiority in the Middle East as a countermeasure against terrorism.

Addressing U.S. involvement in the Israel-Hamas conflict, Kumar underscored the necessity for Israel to enjoy peace and security within its borders, while advocating for the creation of an economically stable and peaceful state for the Palestinians. He supported continued U.S. aid to assist the Israeli military and emphasized the need to counter Iran and its proxies in the region.

Kumar further set himself apart as the sole Silicon Valley tech executive among the candidates, possessing unique insights and connections within the innovation economy as a C-suite executive in the software industry.

Kumar successfully differentiated himself during the Candidate Forum, standing out with his realistic and nuanced perspectives on complex international issues. His articulate discussion on foreign policy, particularly regarding the Israel-Hamas conflict, showcased his capacity to dissect world affairs comprehensively. Kumar's explicit stance on various aspects of this intricate geopolitical situation, combined with his proposals for legislative measures against foreign interference in education, highlighted his ability to analyze and take decisive positions on critical global matters.

For detailed story visit [www.indiapost.com](http://www.indiapost.com)

## Ask NAPCA Column

In this month's column, we want to share what is new in social benefits in 2024. If you have additional questions about Medicare, Medicaid, Affordable Care Act Health Insurance Marketplace, Social Security Retirement Benefit, Supplemental Security Income, or COVID/Flu vaccination, there are 3 ways you can reach us today:

Call: (English) 1-800-336-2722, (Chinese Mandarin) 1-800-683-742, (Chinese Cantonese) 1-800-582-4218, (Korean) 1-800-582-4259, (Vietnamese) 1-800-582-4336, Email: [askNAPCA@napca.org](mailto:askNAPCA@napca.org)

Mail: NAPCA Senior Assistance Center, 1511 3rd Avenue, Suite 914, Seattle, WA 98101

**Q1. How much income do I need to earn to get Social Security work credit in 2024? Do I have to work all year to earn credits?**

Credits are based on your income for the year. Each year the amount of earnings needed to earn one credit goes up slightly as average wages increase. In 2024, you earn 1 Social Security and Medicare credit for every \$1,730 in covered earnings. You must earn \$6,920 to

maximum payment would be \$1,182 for an individual, or \$2,022 for a couple. If your income has been increased, it would reduce your SSI amount. Note that the SSA has a special rule to calculate income. The most accurate way to find out whether you are eligible or not is to submit the application and receive the eligibility result through Social Security Administration. Please contact us if you have any questions.

**Q3. How much can I earn and still get benefits in 2024?**

You can get Social Security retirement or survivors' benefits and work at the same time. However, there is a limit to how much you can earn and still receive full benefits.

If you are under full retirement age for the entire year, SSA deducts \$1 from your benefit payments for every \$2 you earn above the annual limit (\$22,320 for 2024).

In the year you reach full retirement age:

Up to the month before you reach your full retirement age, SSA deducts \$1 in benefits for every \$3 you earn above a different limit (\$59,520 for 2024).

Beginning with the month you reach



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get the maximum 4 credits for the year. You might work all year to earn 4 credits, or you might earn enough for all 4 in much less time. You must earn a certain number of credits to qualify for Social Security benefits. No one needs more than 40 credits for any Social Security benefits.

**Q2. I have retired and am receiving Social Security Retirement. Can I still apply for Medicaid and SSI? I heard there is an income and asset limit. I own a house and a car. I also have life insurance.**

You can get SSI or Medicaid if you are qualified based on income and assets threshold by each state. One house and one car are exempt, but some life insurance is counted as an asset. The monthly maximum federal amounts for SSI in 2024 are \$943 for an individual, or \$1,415 for a couple. Some states may provide SSP (State Supplementary Payment) on top of the federal standard. For example, if you live in California and have no income, the monthly

full retirement age, your earnings no longer reduce your benefits, no matter how much you earn.

SSA will recalculate your benefit amount to give you credit for the months SSA reduced or withheld benefits due to your excess earnings.

**Q4. I read in the news that COVID-19 cases are on the rise recently. Is the latest vaccine still effective in protecting us?**

COVID-19 activity is currently high. JN.1 is now the most widely circulating variant in the US and globally and may be intensifying the spread of COVID-19 this winter. COVID-19 infections, hospitalizations, and deaths have increased in recent weeks. Hospitalizations reached 32,861 in the week ending January 13, 2024. In that same period, deaths went up by 10.3%, with COVID-19 deaths accounting for 4.3% of total deaths in the US.

For detailed story visit [www.indiapost.com](http://www.indiapost.com)

# Rishi Kumar felicitates retiring Indian Ambassador Taranjit Singh Sandhu

India Post News Service

**R**ishi Kumar, a high-tech executive and political figure from Silicon Valley, California, spoke at a January 22nd Indiaspora event, bidding farewell to India's Ambassador Taranjit Sandhu. Kumar has been a political fixture in Silicon Valley, serving as a councilmember, an Executive Board member of the California Democratic Party, and is currently

high praise and commendation for Ambassador Sandhu's impactful tenure in Washington.

"It's challenging to say goodbye to Ambassador Sandhu, a diplomat par excellence and a true ally of America," he remarked. Kumar underscored the significant role played by leaders like Ambassador Sandhu in India's post-colonial resurgence. "I also want to congratulate

Ambassador Sandhu on a great day yesterday for India - as India puts behind 500 years of subjugation by the Mughals and the British. India has clearly blossomed in the recent decades thanks to leaders like Ambassador Sandhu at the helm. Just like America has since 1776"



a candidate for the US Congress. Kumar expressed deep admiration for the Ambassador's tenure. The virtual event brought together prominent members of the Indian American community from across the nation, who collectively offered

Praising Ambassador Sandhu's exceptional service in Washington, he noted how the Ambassador exemplified the essence of diplomacy and democracy, bolstering US-India relations. "Ambassador Sandhu's efforts have been instrumental

in deepening political, economic, and cultural ties, enhancing education, and fostering people-to-people connections between the two nations," he added.

The speaker also highlighted Ambassador Sandhu's commitment to expanding trade, security, and strategic partnerships, which have greatly contributed to the prosperity of both India and the United States.

Reflecting on personal interactions, he

recalled a memorable lunch with the Ambassador, where Sandhu's interest in meeting Indian American leaders of Silicon Valley was evident. "Your tenure may be ending, Ambassador Sandhu, but the bonds of friendship and partnership we've built will persist," he concluded, wishing the Ambassador continued success and happiness in his future endeavors and celebrating the enduring warmth of their friendship.

## PCS to host Rangla Punjab

RAJINDER SINGH MAGO

**CHICAGO:**The Punjabi Cultural Society of Chicago (PCS) www.PCSChicago.org flagship annual event "Rangla Punjab" to celebrate Vaisakhi festival is on Saturday, April 20, 2024, at Copernicus Center, Chicago.

Vaisakhi festival is the celebration of the ending of harvest season in Punjab, and beginning of a new growth cycle. It is a symbol of renewal.

"Rangla Punjab" helps Punjabi youth come closer to Punjabi language, culture, their community and make long term friends. This indeed is a community building effort.

"Rangla Punjab" is the single largest annual Punjabi cultural event in the Chicago area that promotes the local community talent and showcases the Punjabi performing arts to a family audience since the mid-eighties.

PCS needs your support for this common cause.

Sponsors/Donors are requested to donate towards this non-profit

organization's community service event. Vendors are encouraged to showcase their products or businesses. Please contact PCS. <http://www.pcschicago.org/>

More information regarding admission donation will be posted on PCS website [www.pcschicago.org](http://www.pcschicago.org) and also advertised with flyers.

VIP seating in front rows will include delicious dinner. Children under 10 years of age will have free entrance but seating depending on availability or they sit in their guardian's laps. A limited number of merchandise vendors are welcome. Program sponsors are always welcome.

For more information click [www.pcschicago.org](http://www.pcschicago.org), e-mail [info@pcschicago.org](mailto:info@pcschicago.org) or call PCS hotline at (847) 359-5PCS or any PCS Official: (630) 822-5490, Parvinder S. Nanua (260) 312-1485, Rajinder Singh Mago 630-440-7730.

To donate to PCS Chicago click here: [https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted\\_button\\_id=Z2HHDBYBR9ZTS](https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted_button_id=Z2HHDBYBR9ZTS)

## Border Crisis: What are the Policy Options?

VIDYA SETHURAMAN  
India Post News Service

**T**he United States is facing an uptick and change in the border flows of people seeking a better life, and instead of addressing it with comprehensive and long-term solutions, there's yet another series of proposals meant to "harden" policies and "close" the borders. EMS panelists on Jan 26 delved into the current proposals, the political consequences of another anti-immigrant cycle, the local response to the arrival of high numbers of asylum seekers, and some of the long-term problems with the immigration system.

Angela Kelley, Chief Advisor, Policy and Partnerships for the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) and the American Immigration Council (AIC) said immigration has changed a lot in the past 30 years, especially in terms of numbers. She pointed out that for people from Afghanistan, Ukraine, Cuba, Haiti, Nica-

ragua, Venezuela and other countries, they can enter the United States but will not receive a green card, only a work authorization, and they will not be prioritized for deportation unless they commit a crime. In the past, 4,000 people was a very unimaginable number, but now, more than 10,000 people are eager to enter the United States every day. In the face of such rapidly growing numbers, it is difficult for the government to deal with various issues such as resources, infrastructure, and management personnel.

Vanessa Cardenas, Executive Director of America's Voice, a Washington DC-based non-profit advocating for immigrant rights mentioned that the Biden administration's "humanitarian parole" is a transformative policy that creates legal pathways and capabilities for 90% of people. She said that if they had to choose between obtaining a visa or, entering the country illegally, they would choose a legal visa.

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## Zed conferred "Global Hindu Statesman Award"

India Post News Service

CHICAGO: Rajan Zed, a Hindu leader in USA, has been bestowed with "Global Hindu Statesman Award" by Jyoti B.Ed. College, a premier teacher-training institute in southwestern Punjab (India).

Zed, President of Universal Society of Hinduism, was given this award during his visit to this College in Fazilka. The citation

Washington DC, and 292 other legislative bodies all over USA.

For efforts at providing worldwide Hindu identity & enhancing understanding of Hinduism; citation added.

This citation was signed by President Surinder Kumar Thakral, Secretary Roshan Lal Thakkar, and Principal Anita Arora of Jyoti B.Ed. College; whose Mis-



Rajan Zed being welcomed at Jyoti B. Ed. College, Fazilka

on the Award said: for being the voice of Hindus worldwide, and bravely taking up many Hindu issues in various countries.

Citation further noted: for reading Hindu prayers in the United States Senate and US House-of-Representatives in

sion includes: "To train the students as socially sensitive, responsible & professionally skilled person."

Hinduism, oldest and third largest religion of the world, has about 1.2 billion adherents and moksh (liberation) is its ultimate goal.

## Zed receives Pluralism Award of Excellence

India Post News Service

CHICAGO: Rajan Zed has received "Pluralism Award of Excellence" from Community of Rohtak, in a ceremony held at Rohtak (Haryana, India) last week.

Handed over by Raj Kamal Sehgal, Senior Deputy Mayor of Rohtak Municipal Corporation; it was signed by Haryana Institute of Performing Art Chairman

excellence To Religious Statesman Rajan Zed-Who promoted freedom of religion worldwide, advocated interfaith understanding and unity, work fostered pluralistic societies and harmonious co-existence, nurtured unity, cooperation and enhanced understanding between seriously different faith traditions.

Various community leaders spoke on



Vishav Deepak Trikha, Pathania World Campus Chairman Anshul Pathania, and Maharshi Dayanand University Dr. Mangal Sen Chair Advisor Somnath Sharma.

Award citation read: Community of Rohtak Presents Pluralism Award of Ex-

the occasion and talked about Zed's work around the globe. Zed thanked the community of Rohtak for the honor and love it bestowed upon him.

Rajan Zed, who is settled in USA, has taken-up interfaith, Hinduism, European Roma (Gypsies), other causes all over the world. He has read opening prayers in United States Senate and US House-of-Representatives in Washington DC; various State Senates, State Houses-of-Representatives, County Commissions, City Councils all-over USA; covering 299 legislative bodies in 44 states.

Rohtak, which forms a part of the National Capital Region, found mention in 9th century CE.

## Ayodhya Ram temple puja items made by Sukra Jewellery

PRAKASH M SWAMY

CHENNAI: Sukra Jewellery in Mylapore, Chennai had the rare privilege of making significant silver vessels and puja items for the prana prathishta of Lord Ram temple at Ayodhya

The Hamsa (annapakshi) haarthi used by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Lord Rama at the sanctum sanctorum on the day of prana prathishtawas also made by Sukra Jewellery.

The silver items shop established in 1979, received the orders through a jeweler to manufacture all temple needs at Ayodhya such as Sadosha upachara set consisting of flag, mini Umbrella mirror, vensamaram etc.

The firm also supplied assortedhaarthi such as five layers with 108 wicks, Nakshatra haarthi with 27 wicks signifying 27 stars and other silver vessels and puja articles required for daily use at the temple

The firm also made Siruk Sruvam at 1-½ feet in silver to pour ghee at the havanat the temple, sangu (conch) miniature bow

and arrow and dozens of other silver ware for use daily during the pujas at the temple.

Sukra Jewellery supplied a total of 14 kilos of silver ware worth Rs 12 lakhs which were processed and delivered to



the temple through MM Jewellery in Virugambakkam in Chennai.

These items were specially hand crated under the supervision of Founder-Chairman of Sukra Jewellery A Kalkiraju and CEO Nithin Kalkiraju - in about 45 days in pure 92.5 pure highest quality Sil-

ver.

"We were blessed abundantly to do the puja items to Lord Rama. What else we need in life than this great blessing of Lord Ram. We ensured that highest quality silver was used and engaged special craftsmen to make the temple wares," Raju says.

Nithin Kalkiraju says that he was happy to make and present the items to the temple on behalf of 140 crore Indians. "It's a proud day for Mylapore and we are truly blessed."

Sukra Jewellery manufactures unique silver items from pin to plane and is a much sought after firm for temple jewelry by dancers all over the world. It has silver chairs, silver living room set, silver clocks as master pieces besides all silver items and temple jewelry.

Sukra Jewellery entered the Guinness Book of World Records for making largest six feet silver sculpture in silver in 2009 and also World Record Academy of the US certificate and honor for making 7-foot tall silver grandfather clock.

Sukra Jewellery has manufactured and supplied temple needs in silver such as



idols, vimanas, and chariots to puja items and vessels to over 100 temples around the world in the US, the UK, Australia, Singapore and Malaysia.

# Skillful empowered youth is a guarantee through spirituality

C.L. GULATI

## Need for Youth Empowerment

Human life is considered a unique blessing being the crown creation of universe. This uniqueness, however, lies not merely in the birth as a human being but in the achievement of purpose for which it is meant, and that is awareness about self. The one who is not aware about self cannot be at peace, and the one who is not at peace cannot foster peaceful co-existence. Self-awareness means self-realization through God realization. In absence of Self-awareness, the power to be resilient and ability to take over failures reduces drastically. While education and skill development is the need of the hour to contribute to growth of economy, spirituality gives the power to steer through failures and fears through faith and spirit of teaming.

## Empowering Skilled Youth with Leadership quality

Awareness provides list of opportunities and possibilities where we as youth can contribute and participate. It is extremely happy situation when a country gets into hands of government that has vision to expand economy through new

initiatives and start-ups. Key thing is to have skills in young people to take-up and execute the initiatives. With efforts to grow skill-learning, the expansion is inevitable. However, there is one key obstacle in starting new initiatives, which is to win over the fear of failure.

*It is extremely happy situation when a country gets into hands of government that has vision to expand economy through new initiatives and start-ups*

This fear of failure may not allow a person to kick-off an entrepreneur or may cause inertia in re-starting the activity if there are initial failures. Religion has a very important role to provide resilience and drive to move forward with full motivation. If the individual does not have belief in his own strengths and lacks ability to team-up, he is likely to not succeed even if he/she is highly skillful.

Empowering youth is crucial. Their number in the world is 1.2 billion between the ages 15 and 24. ECOSOC-UN, to

bring their potential as problem-solvers, innovators and actors for development. Youth is cut off from noble values and rich cultures. Sant Nirankari Mission is hyper focused to channelize youth energy to positivity and creativity, ensuring that SKILLS manifest in success and growth.

## How does Spirituality work in growing Leaders?

Youth needs to apply all his ability and passion to logically explore, scientifically argue, intelligently brainstorm and come to conclusions and decisions. No decisions are wrong till the time they are made with full awareness. Youth just needs to keep one thing in mind that they better be wise and not just clever. Just being clever can win us arguments but will not bring us the joy. Wisdom is where the cleverness needs to grow into, to ensure that youth

takes his / her charge of life in most optimal manner.

Youth empowerment examines dimensions of psychology, community, organizational, economic, social and cultural. There could be numerous programs, ways and methods to promote empowerment in these areas; but the root lies in understanding of self. If I don't know myself, how would I use myself in the best manner. If I don't know how to handle knife, I would cause more harm than using it appropriately. The immense source of power that lies inside needs to be well understood to ensure the optimal application of the strength and passion that young people have. If we call that self-control, then it appears to be taking away the freedom. So, it better be taken as self-understanding, self-awareness and self-consciousness. If we do things unconsciously, all our actions - whether good or bad, would result in accidents.

*The Author is President of Sant Nirankari Mission, Delhi*

For detailed story visit [www.indiapost.com](http://www.indiapost.com)



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**Vikrant Massey's '12th Fail' IS 'BEST FILM' AT FILMFARE AWARDS 2024**

It's a special moment for the team of '12th Fail' as the film bagged the Best Film Award at the 69th edition of the Filmfare Awards. The 'Black Lady' trophy was received by the members of the film including actors Vikrant Massey and Medha Shankar.

Helmed by Vidhu Vinod Chopra, '12th Fail' revolves around UPSC aspirants and is based on the real-life experiences of IPS officer Manoj Kumar. It draws from the gritty struggles of millions of students who attempt the UPSC entrance exam.

Vikrant also won big at the gala. He took home the Best Actor (Critics) award for his performance in the film '12th Fail' at the 69th Filmfare Awards, which was held in Gujarat.

On working on the film, Vikrant earlier told ANI, "The movie is very typical Vidhu Vinod Chopra movie, which is based on hard reality and is a very hard-hitting film. The role was very challenging. I had to lose weight and darken my skin."

The film received worldwide appreciation. Stars from the industry including Kamal Haasan, Alia Bhatt, Deepika Padukone, Vicky Kaushal, Rishabh Shetty, Sanjay Dutt, Farhan Akhtar and Anil Kapoor also hailed the film. '12th Fail' was released in theatres on October 27. ANI

## Vicky Kaushal Best Supporting Actor award for 'Dunki'

Actor Vicky Kaushal won the Best Supporting Actor (Male) award for his performance in the film 'Dunki' at the 69th Filmfare Awards.

Filmmaker Karan Johar received the award on behalf of Vicky as he didn't attend the event.

Helmed by Rajkumar Hirani 'Dunki' starred Shah Rukh Khan, Taapsee Pannu and Boman Irani in the lead roles and received mixed reviews from the fans.

However, Vicky garnered a lot of praise from the audience for his short appearance in the film.

'Dunki' is a heartwarming tale of four friends and their quest to reach foreign shores. ANI



## Akshay Kumar's 'OMG 2', Manoj Bajpayee's 'Joram' share Best Story award

Actor Akshay Kumar starrer drama film 'OMG 2' and Manoj Bajpayee's film 'Joram' won the Best Story award at the 69th Filmfare Awards 2024.

This year's grand award function was held in Gandhinagar, Gujarat.

Both the films shared the Best Story award beating other films like 'Bheed', 'Jawan' and 'Rocky aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani'.

Talking about 'OMG 2', helmed by Amit Rai, the film was based on sex-education and starred Akshay Kumar and Pankaj Tripathi in the lead roles. The film was released in the theatres in August 2023 and faced a big Bollywood clash with Sunny Deol's 'Gadar 2'.

'Joram' on the other hand, the film was directed, written and crafted by Devashish Makhija and, produced by Shariq Patel, Ashima Avasthi Chaudhuri, Anupama Bose and Devashish Makhija.

The film stars Manoj Bajpayee and Mohammed Zeeshan Ayyub in the lead roles.

The story of the 'Joram' revolves around a character Dasru played by Bajpayee.

Manoj, portrays a father on the run, navigating through life's challenges with a baby strapped to him. ANI

# TOP TEN HINDI FILM SONGS

- 1 Fanaa Kar Lo: *Starfish*
- 2 Leke Prabhu Ka Naam: *Tiger 3*
- 3 Chaleya : *Jawan*
- 4 Tu hai kahan: *Tu hai kahan*
- 5 Satranga: *ANIMAL*
- 6 Ruaan: *Tiger 3*
- 7 Dil Jhoom: *Gadar 2*
- 8 Kalaastar: *Honey 3.0*
- 9 Chal Tere Ishq Mein: *Gadar 2*
- 10 Meri Ho Ja: *Meri Ho Ja*

## 69th Filmfare Awards: Double celebration for Ranbir and Alia

Time for double celebration!!! Actors and popular B-town couple Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt won the Best Actor award at the 69th Filmfare Awards.

Ranbir bagged the Best Actor in a Leading Role (Male) for his performance in the action thriller film 'Animal'.

Alia, on the other hand, bagged the Best Actor in a Leading Role (Female) for her performance in the romantic drama film 'Rocky aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani'.

The couple was seen posing with their black ladies on the stage.

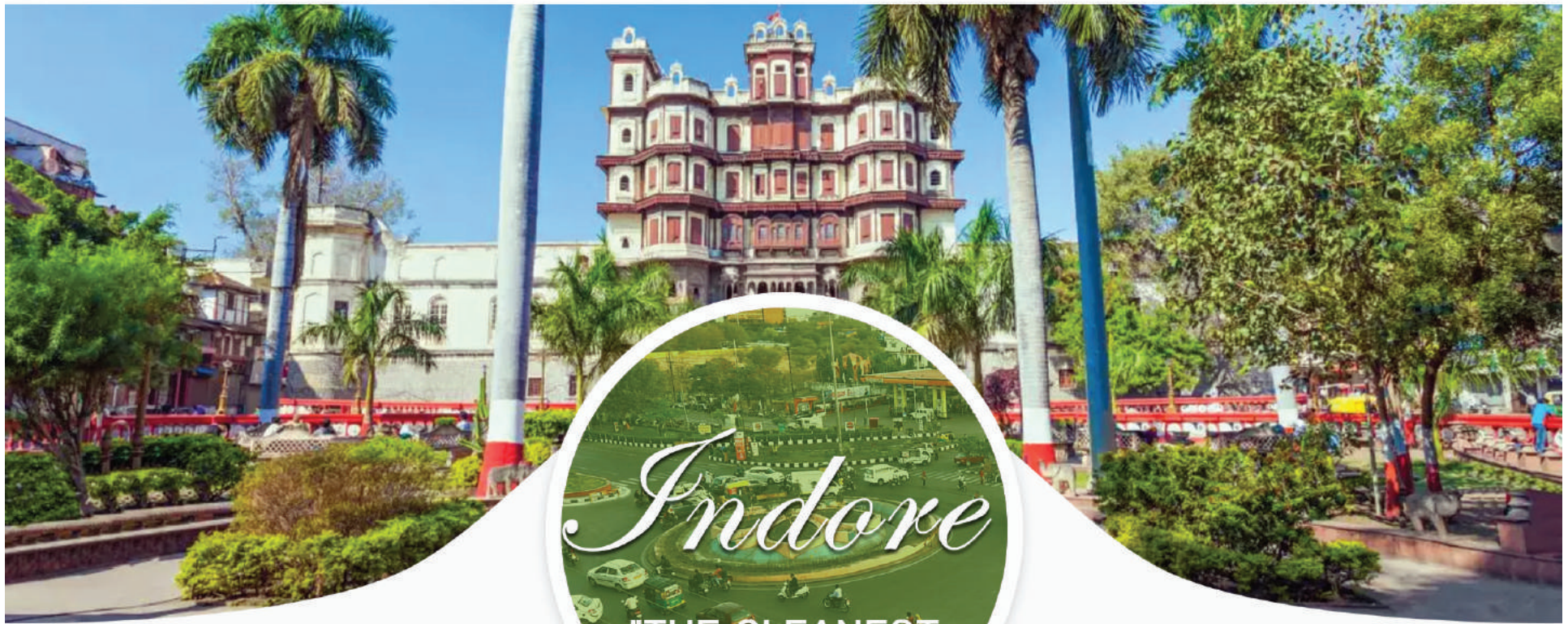
Talking about 'Animal', The film was nominated in 19 categories tonight including Best Film, Best Director and Best Actor categories.

Helmed by Sandeep Reddy Vanga 'Animal' was one of the biggest blockbusters of 2023. However, it was also criticized for its alleged depiction of misogyny.

The film starred Ranbir Kapoor, Anil Kapoor, Rashmika Mandanna, Anil Kapoor and Bobby Deol, in the lead roles. ANI







Indore is the largest and the most populous city of Madhya Pradesh. Located on the Malwa Plateau, the charm of this city lies in its rich cultural heritage, which has been preserved over centuries and along with the hints of urbanization.

The city is ranked as "the cleanest city in India" for the sixth consecutive year and has reserved its place among the first 20 cities to be developed as smart cities in India. The big city image yet mixed culture vibe of Indore makes it a fabulous place to visit that offers fantastic food to taste.

Indore has been one of the forerunners in the development of the country in the era of modernization. One of the educational hubs in the country, Indore has both an IIT and an IIM. Indore is also the cleanest city of India. Indore has over the years established itself as the hub of trading and industrial practices in the state. The city of Indore gets its name from Indreshwar Mahadev temple. It is believed that Lord Indra meditated on this land and led Swami Indrapuri to establish this temple. Try out some

local delicacies like Indori Poha at Sarafa Bazaar while you are in Indore.

#### PLACES TO VISIT IN INDORE

**Rajwada:** Located near the famous Kajuri Market in Indore, Rajwada is a magnificent and historical palace that is located in the city; was constructed by the Holkars more than 200 years ago. It is a seven-storied structure located near the Chhatris and serves as an excellent example of royal grandeur and architectural craft skills.

**Lal Bagh Palace:** Resided by the rulers of the Holkar dynasty, the Lal Bagh Palace is class and grandeur per-

sonified. The palace is spread on a sprawling area of 28 acres and reflects the taste of the rulers of the Holkar dynasty.

**Khajrana Temple:** The Khajrana Ganesh temple is one of the most powerful shrines of Lord Ganesha. It was built by Rani Ahilyabai Holkar to safeguard the idol of Lord Ganesha from Aurangzeb. The temple has since grown from being housed in a small hut to a big temple with large inner and outer sanctums. Vinayak Chaturthi is celebrated in a big way in the temple.

**Sarafa Bazaar:** The lip-smacking flavors of the food stalls in Sarafa Bazaar are a testimony to Indore's legendary love affair with food. Entertaining over 3000 visitors every day, the Sarafa Bazaar houses stalls that sell vividly colored artificial jewelry, brass ornaments and mouth-watering dishes of the diverse cuisine of Indore. There are more than 50 dishes available here at extremely low rates.. [www.holidify.com](http://www.holidify.com)

For detailed story visit [www.indiapost.com](http://www.indiapost.com)



PayPal laying off about 2,500 employees

NEW DELHI: Online payment gateway PayPal has kicked off layoffs that will affect at least 9 percent of its workforce -- about 2,500 employees.

According to verified PayPal professionals on anonymous online discussion forum Blind, the job cuts have begun, and by the end of the week, will impact around 2,500 jobs (about 9 percent of the company's workforce).

The decision is to "right-size" the company via direct job cuts and the elimination of open roles.

"Please support your fellow PayPal workers. Google luck to PayPal employees," read a post on Blind.

PayPal CEO Alex Chriss said in an internal memo that staff who are affected will be notified by the end of the week.

PayPal faces rising competition from rivals such as Apple, Zelle and Block.

Last year around the same time, PayPal announced to cut around 2,000 jobs, or 7 percent of its workforce. The online payments company said it was forced to make the decision as it faces "the challenging macro-economic environment."

"We must continue to change as our world, our customers, and our competitive landscape evolve," PayPal had said in a statement. *IANS*

# TechBiz POST

18 India Post www.indiapost.com February 2, 2024

TCS bags 15-yr deal from UK insurance provider Aviva

NEW DELHI: Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) has announced a 15-year expansion of its partnership with Aviva, the UK's leading insurance, wealth and retirement provider.

As part of this, the end-to-end policy administration and servicing will expand to cover over 5.5 million policies, to be managed by Diligenta, TCS' FCA regulated subsidiary in the UK, on behalf of Aviva. Aviva has now engaged TCS to extend this enhanced customer experience using the same future-proof TCS 'BaNCSTM' based digital platform to administer other Aviva books of business, the companies said in a statement. *IANS*

## IMF forecasts 'soft landing' for global economy, upgrades India

YASHWANT RAJ

WASHINGTON: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Tuesday forecast a "soft landing" for the global economy hammered in recent years by a deadly pandemic, skyrocketing inflation and high interest rates, and protracted wars.

bal recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and the cost-of-living crisis is "proving surprisingly resilient".

Inflation is declining more rapidly than expected from its 2022 peak. At the same time, it

to global growth are broadly balanced," it said in the report titled "Moderating Inflation and Steady Growth Open Path to Soft Landing".

"The clouds are beginning to part. The global economy begins the final descent toward a soft landing, with inflation declining steadily and growth holding up," said the fund's Chief Economist Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas in an accompanying blog.

"But the pace of expansion remains slow, and turbulence may lie ahead.

"Global activity proved resilient in the second half of last year, as demand and supply factors supported major economies. On the demand side, stronger private and government spending sustained activity, despite tight monetary conditions. On the supply side, increased labor force participation, mended supply chains and cheaper energy and commodity prices helped, despite renewed geopolitical uncertainties."

The fund attributed the upbeat forecast to "greater-than-expected resilience in the United States and several large emerging market and developing economies, as well as fiscal support in China".

One of these emerging markets is India.

"Growth in India is projected to remain strong at 6.5 percent in both 2024 and 2025, with an upgrade from October of 0.2 percentage point for both years, reflecting resilience in domestic demand."

China's growth prospects have also been upgraded from the previous forecast by 0.4 percentage points to 4.6 percent in 2024 but then, it dips to 4.1 percent in 2025. *IANS*



It also upgraded the growth forecast for the India economy by 0.2 percentage points to 6.5 percent for both 2024 and 2025, citing resilient domestic demand.

The IMF, in a World Economic Outlook report, said that the glo-

added, high interest rates aimed at fighting inflation and a withdrawal of fiscal support amid high debt are expected to weigh on growth in 2024.

"With disinflation and steady growth, the likelihood of a hard landing has receded, and risks

Zoom airline returns to Indian skies, launches services to Ayodhya

NEW DELHI: Reviving its operations, the domestic carrier Zoom airline started its operations with flight services from Delhi to Ayodhya on 31st January.

The airline deployed its fleet of Bombardier CRJ200ER aircraft for services on the Delhi-Ayodhya route, which has already emerged as one of India's most sought-after spiritual tourism hotspots.

In August last year, the aviation watchdog, Directorate General of Civil Aviation



(DGCA), gave its nod to Zoom airlines to commence commercial passenger operations in India.

Zoom airlines or Zexus Air, initially established in April 2013, acquired its first aircraft, a Bombardier CRJ200. However, it only commenced operations in February 2017. Despite its efforts, the airline struggled to draw significant air passenger traffic.

Due to safety concerns, DGCA suspended its air operator certificate in July 2018 for a period exceeding a year.

"We are delighted to announce the relaunch of Zoom, with services connecting Ayodhya and Delhi. Zoom is dedicated to enhancing regional connectivity in India". *IANS*

## Jack Dorsey's fintech firm Block lays off nearly 1,000 employees

SAN FRANCISCO: Jack Dorsey's financial services company Block is laying off close to 1,000 employees, which will affect staff in the Cash App, Afterpay and Square subsidiaries of the company.

About 1,000 people -- or 10 percent of Block's headcount -- were impacted by the decision, according to a report from Insider.

"We decided it would be better to do at once rather than arbitrarily space them out, which

didn't seem fair to the individuals or to the company. When we know we need to take an action, we want to take it immediately, rather than let things linger on forever," Dorsey wrote in an internal



memo to employees.

In an earnings call last year, Block had said it would reduce its headcount from 13,000 in Q3 2023 to an "absolute cap" of 12,000 by the end of this year. Revenues from Cash App, the peer-to-peer payments service, have declined significantly, reports TechCrunch.

Meanwhile, its buy now, pay later (BNPL) service Afterpay, which Block acquired in 2021 for \$29 billion, has posted serious losses. *IANS*



## REVIVING LUCKNOW'S CHOWK BAZAAR

NEW DELHI: Radisson Blu MBD Hotel, Noida immerses guests in Lucknow's vibrant Chowk Bazaar with a special event at Made In India restau-

overwhelming demand for the exquisite cuisine, the event was extended till Sunday, January 28th.

At Made In India, the event

*Known for its rich heritage and authentic Awadhi cuisine, Chowk Bazaar holds a special place in the culinary landscape, offering an array of nostalgic flavors and memories*

rant. Known for its rich heritage and authentic Awadhi cuisine, Chowk Bazaar holds a special place in the culinary landscape, offering an array of nostalgic flavors and memories. Due to

features a Bara Imambara cut-out at the entrance, honoring Lucknow's iconic landmark. The restaurant's ambiance mirrors the charm of Chowk with narrow streets and shops. With a live

basket chaat counter and a unique presentation of box-style Khasta Kachori served from an old-style Luna scooty, guests can experience a memorable culinary adventure.

Chef Sachin Malik, the Executive Chef at Radisson Blu MBD Hotel Noida, shares culinary vision: "We aim not just to serve but to celebrate the charm of Lucknow's Chowk Bazaar, embracing its cultural richness and savoring its delectable flavors. Chef Nurul Bashar, our Corporate Master Chef at Made In India, has meticulously crafted an authentic Awadhi experience in every dish. Guests entering



through the Made In India doorway, reminiscent of Bara Imambara, embark on a sensory journey, where elements of Lucknow's lively streets and delightful cuisine come together to create a symphony of culinary delight."

A mouthwatering selection of foods can be found on the menu, including Kathal ki Galouti, a Jackfruit patty with mashed potato marinated with species, and Tunday Kebab, finely minced

lamb patties served with roomali roti. For the main course, signature dishes like Dum Sabz Handi, Chowk ki Dal, Nalli Nihari, and Nargisi Kebab promise to delight the senses. The culinary journey continues with Nawabi Ghost Biryani and Awadh Subz Biryani, showcasing the house specialty mutton and mixed vegetables respectively, both cooked with a blend of aromatic spices and basmati rice. *IANSlife*

## The rich tradition of hospitality in Jaisalmer

NEW DELHI: For centuries, Rajasthan tourism has been synonymous with imperial luxury, cultural heritage, and warm hospitality, making it a jewel in India's tourism landscape. In this vibrant tapestry, Jaisalmer has beckoned travelers for centuries, its wind-swept sand dunes and majestic forts weaving tales that endure through time. Vinay Khosla, MD,

Fort Rajwada speaks with IANSlife about rich tradition of hospitality in Jaisalmer.

**In what ways has Fort**



**Rajwada honored and sustained the rich tradition of hospitality in Jaisalmer?**

**Vinay:** The renowned slogans 'Padharo Mhare Desh' and 'Atithi Devo Bhava' have originated from the vibrant state of Rajasthan, and are reflective of the ingrained hospitality that still permeates the region. *IANSlife*

For detailed story visit [www.indiapost.com](http://www.indiapost.com)

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*One can be said to be perfectly healthy in body and mind only if no part of the body or mind makes itself felt. A part makes itself felt only when there is something wrong with it. You know that you have a head only when it aches.*  
Sri Atmananda (1883 - 1959)

**US CDC warns of rising measles cases**

LOS ANGELES: The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has warned that measles cases are rising in the country, urging health providers to watch for the outbreaks.

Between December 1 last year and January 23 this year, the CDC was notified of 23 confirmed cases of measles, including seven direct importations of measles by international travelers and two outbreaks with more than five cases each,



Xinhua news agency reported, citing a report of the agency.

Most of these cases were among children and adolescents who had not received a measles-containing vaccine.

Measles cases often originate from unvaccinated or under-vaccinated US residents who travel internationally and then transmit the disease to people who are not vaccinated against measles, according to the CDC.

The increased number of measles importations seen in recent weeks is reflective of a rise in global measles cases and a growing global threat from the disease, said the CDC. IANS

**Covid deaths may be linked to a fatal lung disease: Scientists**

RACHEL V. THOMAS

NEW DELHI: A fatal lung disease that begins with dry cough, causes breathing difficulty, and worsens over years may have played a significant role in the deaths caused by Covid-19 infections, according to a scientist duo.

Much like cancer, the disease called interstitial lung disease (ILD), goes undetected for years.

As the disease progresses, the lung shrinks, making it difficult for the patient to breathe.

India has an incidence rate of 10 to 20 cases per 100,000 in the population related to industries and lung diseases.

"The interstitium is the connective tissue between two sacs or the region that links alveoli together in the lungs. When this interstitium thickens, it constricts the air sacs, reducing lung size. This constriction leads to a decrease in airway size, resulting in a significant reduction in the overall oxygen intake. This con-

dition, known as restriction, involves compression due to the shrinking of connective tissue between the lung alveoli," Dr Asmita Mehta, Professor and HoD of Respiratory Medicine at Amrita Hospital Kochi, told IANS.



What makes the disease fatal is the late diagnosis, said the distinguished pulmonologist.

"By the time the patient will come to us, it will be too late be-

cause the diagnosis of ILD happens very late. ILD starts with a very, very minor symptom, dry cough and breathing difficulty, which progresses over years. Just like cancer, the diagnosis of ILD is also delayed," she

said.

Professor Athol Wells, associated with Royal Brompton Hospital in London and Imperial College London, said that the average survival is three to four

years after diagnosis. It is because of the tremendous delay between the time of starting symptoms and the diagnosis made.

"It is a fatal disease with a very bad quality of life and significant morbidity," the Professor told IANS.

Covid-19 infection is known to cause fibrosis (scarring) in the lungs. While the condition reversed in some people and they returned to their pre-Covid status, however, in some there was no reversal and the infection turned fatal.

This could have been due to pre-existing ILD, the scientists said.

"There is a fibrosis which causes scarring that will be irreversible. So those people who developed severe Covid, developed almost respiratory failure to the extent that they were on ventilator support for 15-20 days," Mehta said.

"I strongly doubt that they were already having some co-existing ILD before they developed Covid and then went on ventilator. They could not go back to that normal level.

"I always had a doubt that they might have an already co-existing disease, which was not diagnosed before Covid. In another set of people, we saw total reversal of lung fibrosis," she said.

The experts noted that people who already had diseased lungs due to ILD and if they developed Covid, they had more chances for need of ventilation, ICU care and a worse prognosis. They also had a prolonged recovery time and long Covid syndrome. IANS

*Writing by hand may be good for your brain than typing on a keyboard: Study*

LONDON: Want to boost brain connectivity? Then write by hand instead of typing on a keyboard, suggests a study.

Using a keyboard is recommended because it's often faster than writing by hand. However, the latter has been found to improve spelling accuracy and memory recall.

To find out if the process of forming letters by hand resulted in greater brain connec-

tivity, researchers in Norway now investigated the underlying neural networks involved in both modes of writing.

"We show that when writing by hand, brain connectivity patterns are far more elaborate than when type-writing on a keyboard," said Prof Audrey van der Meer,



a brain researcher at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology.

"Such widespread brain connectivity is known to be crucial for memory formation and for encoding new information and, therefore, is beneficial for learning," van der Meer said. In the study, pub-

lished in the journal *Frontiers in Psychology*, the team collected EEG data from 36 university students who were repeatedly prompted to either write or type a word that appeared on a screen.

When writing, they used a digital pen to write in cursive directly on a touchscreen. When typing they used a single finger to press keys on a keyboard. IANS

# Engaging in music linked to better brain health in older age: Study

LONDON: Researchers have discovered that engaging in music throughout your life is linked with better brain health in older adults, a new study has said.

In the study published in the journal International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry, the researchers examined data from over a thousand adults above 40 to see the effect of playing a musical instrument -- or singing in a choir -- on brain health.

More than 25,000 people have signed up for the study called 'PROTECT', which has been running for 10 years.

The findings revealed that playing a musical instrument, such as the piano, can improve memory and executive function -- a skill that helps you solve complex problems.

Continuing to play into later life provides even greater benefits. The study also suggested that singing was also connected to better brain health, although this may also be due to the social factors of being part of a choir or group.



"Our PROTECT study has given us a unique opportunity to explore the relationship between cognitive performance and music in a large cohort of older adults. Overall, we think that being musical could be a way of harnessing the brain's agility and resilience, known as cognitive reserve," said Anne Corbett, Professor of Dementia Research at the UK-based University of Exeter.

"Although more research is needed to investigate this relationship, our findings indicate that promoting musical education would be a valuable part of public health initiatives to promote a protective lifestyle for brain health, as would encouraging older adults to return to music in later life," she added.

In addition, Corbett noted that music group activities are proven to be beneficial for individuals with dementia, and this approach can be incorporated into a healthy ageing package for older adults to help them proactively reduce their risk and promote their brain health. *IANS*

## Can self-compassion help people reach their weight-loss goals?

WASHINGTON DC: Losing weight is exceedingly tough because high-calorie, delectable foods are easily accessible. Despite our best intentions, it is usual to overeat. These setbacks can be frustrating and demoralizing, prompting people to forsake their aspirations.

A new study from the Center for Weight, Eating and Lifestyle Sciences (WELL Center) in Drexel University's College of Arts and Sciences explored whether practicing self-compassion - or treating oneself with the same care and kindness that people typically offer to their loved ones - helps people become more resilient to these overeating setbacks.

Recently published in *Appetite*, researchers found that when study participants had more self-compassionate responses to their lapse, they reported better mood and self-control over their eating and exercise behavior in the hours following the lapse. The findings suggest that self-compassion can help people engage in healthier weight loss behavior by helping them become less demoralized by setbacks. *ANI*





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## In Brief

### France hopes to say 'bienvenue' to 30K Indian students

NEW DELHI: French President Emmanuel Macron reiterated that the country hopes to welcome 30,000 Indian students in its universities by 2030 and that he is "determined to make it happen".

Calling it an "ambitious" target, Macron, who is the chief guest at India's 75th Republic Day celebrations, said that the two countries have "so much to do together, now and in the future".

"We will achieve this with you, our young people, in exchange and cooperation, in trust, in friendship," Macron wrote on X, adding that France will facilitate the visa process for any former Indian students who studied in the country.

Further, the president said that they are launching new pathways to learn the French language in public schools with the initiative "French for All, French for a Better Future".

"We are developing the network of Alliance Francaise, with new centers to learn French. We are creating international classes which will allow students, who do not necessarily speak French, to join our universities," he said.

Stating that "coming to France means looking for excellence", Macron informed that the country now has 35 universities in the QS ranking, and about 15 in the Times higher education ranking. *IANS*

# Immigration

## POST

22 India Post

www.indiapost.com

February 2, 2024

According to police, when Ibrahim refused to pay the money, Asif took out a knife and stabbed him repeatedly

## Myanmar refugee stabbed to death in Hyderabad

HYDERABAD: A refugee from Myanmar, was stabbed to death by a habitual offender in Hyderabad last week.

Mohammed Ibrahim (22), a refugee registered with the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), was waylaid by one Asif, who allegedly demanded money from him.

The offence took place under the limits of Pahadi Shareef police station of Rachakonda commissionerate.



According to police, when Ibrahim refused to pay the money, Asif took out a knife and stabbed him repeatedly.

The refugee on his way home at Wadi-e-Salaheen, died of multiple stab injuries. On receiving information, the police rushed to the spot and shifted the body for autopsy.

The police registered a case and launched a hunt for Asif, who has several criminal cases registered against him. *IANS*

## Indian-American couple convicted for forced labor in Virginia

VIRGINIA: A federal jury in Virginia has convicted an Indian American couple, Harmanpreet Singh, 30 and Kulbir Kaur, 43 of conspiracy to commit forced labor at a gas station and convenience store in the state, a US attorney has said.

The convicted couple forced Singh's cousin to provide labor and services at Singh's store,

including working as the cashier, preparing food, cleaning, and managing store records.

The Attorney's office in the Eastern District of Virginia said Singh and Kaur used various coercive means, including confiscating the victim's immigration documents, subjecting the victim to physical abuse, threats of force and other serious harm and, at times, degrading living conditions, to compel him to work extensive hours for minimal pay.

"These defendants engaged in an egregious bait-and-switch, luring the victim with false promises of an education in the United States and instead subjecting him to grueling hours, degrading living conditions, and a litany of mental and physical abuse," said U.S. Attorney Jessica D. Aber for the Eastern District of Virginia. "Forced labor and human trafficking are abhorrent crimes that have no place in our society, and I am grateful to our team of prosecutors, agents,

and support staff for ensuring that justice was done in this case," attorney said.

"The defendants exploited the victim's trust and his desire to attend school in the United States, and then inflicted physical and mental abuse against him, all so they could keep him

should send the very clear message that the Justice Department will investigate and vigorously prosecute these cases to hold human traffickers accountable and bring justice to their victims."

"These convictions demonstrate the FBI's commitment to



Harmanpreet Singh and Kulbir Kaur

working for their profit," said Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division.

He added, "Human trafficking is a disgraceful and unacceptable crime, and this verdict

seeking justice for victims of human trafficking and should also serve as a reminder to those who seek to engage in this illegal activity," said Special Agent in Charge Stanley M. Meador of the FBI Richmond Field Office. *ANI*

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'Tier-II cities emerge as new ground for flex office operators'

NEW DELHI: Tier-II cities in India emerged as new ground for flex-office operators, real estate consulting firm CBRE South Asia said in a report. The report highlighted that nearly 26 major flex office operators recorded presence across 10 Tier II cities in 2023.

Flex space can generally be defined as any building or commercial property that has a mixture of warehouse space, office space, and/or retail space.

These 10 cities include Chandigarh, Jaipur, Lucknow, Coimbatore, Kochi, Thiruvananthapuram, Vishakhapatnam, Ahmedabad, Indore and Bhubaneswar. As per the report, flexible workspace operators are recognizing the potential of these markets and are rapidly expanding their presence, providing options for start-ups as well as established firms.

The report noted that Ahmedabad has the highest flex stock, with more than 0.5 M. sq. ft. as of September. Other cities, including Chandigarh, Jaipur, Coimbatore, Kochi and Indore, have flex stock between 0.3 and 0.5 MN. Sq. ft.

According to the report, Lucknow, Thiruvananthapuram, Visakhapatnam and Bhubaneswar have flex office stock lower than 0.3 million sq. ft.

Prominent flex operators such as Awfis and Incuspaze recorded presence in more than five cities, including Jaipur, Kochi, Lucknow, Thiruvananthapuram, Ahmedabad, Indore and Bhubaneswar. Other players who forayed into these cities include IWG, IndiQube and Smartworks, among others.

According to the report, overall office absorption across the 10 cities stood at ~1.6 MN sq. ft. in January-September 2023 period, led by Ahmedabad, Jaipur, and Thiruvananthapuram. The total office stock in these 10 tier-II cities stood at ~68 MN. Sq. ft. as of September, with Ahmedabad, Kochi and Thiruvananthapuram, each boasting office stock higher than 7.5 MN. Sq. ft. ANI

# Real Estate POST

February 2, 2024

www.indiapost.com

India Post 23

Union Budget 2024 - What is Real Estate Sector Expecting and its impact

NEW DELHI: The Indian real estate market witnessed unprecedented growth in 2023, surpassing all expectations and setting new records. As the market gears up for 2024, all indicators point to a sustained and robust growth phase, bolstering the nation's economy and investor confidence alike. The upcoming Union Budget 2024 sets the expectations high for the real estate sector. The developer community expresses its wish list for the government to look into it. NewsVoir/ANI

## Over 230 home developers filed for bankruptcy in China last year: Report

BEIJING: Amid the economic crisis in China, an estimated 233 home developers filed for bankruptcy last year, Taiwan News reported quoting the China Real Estate Association.

According to the report, the highest number of applications was received from the Zhejiang province with 36 cases, accounting for 15.45 percent of the nation's total. Hunan and Guangdong provinces were second and third, respectively.

The report stated that the number of bankruptcies for 2023 was the lowest since 2020. As many as 408 home developers filed for bankruptcy in 2020, the first year of the Covid-19 pandemic, 343 in 2021, and 308 in 2022.

The economic downturn caused home developers in

third- and fourth-tier cities to suffer the most. Even so, the overall impact of bankruptcies is expected to be limited, according to the report.

China-based CRIC Securi-

ties' research department indicated that home sales in China continued to dwindle in 2023 and challenges would persist in

2024 despite favorable policies. Low consumer confidence and inventory overhang means China's housing market could remain sluggish for a long while. Earlier last year, a US-based

news daily reported that the construction sites around China appear visibly less busy and construction of apartment towers

has faltered because of falling apartment prices. Quoting data released for prices of new apartments in 70 large and medium-sized cities across China, Goldman Sachs calculated that prices fell in August at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 2.9 percent, compared with 2.6 percent in July.

Moreover, the data shows that new apartments considerably understate the speed and extent of price declines. However, local governments have put heavy pressure on developers not to cut prices.

Prices of existing homes in 100 cities across China fell an average of 14 percent by early August from their peak two years earlier, according to the Beike Research Institute, a Tianjin research firm. Rents have fallen 5 percent.

Apart from this, China's banking sector is also struggling with the repayment of debt payments from defaulters as loans that banks have made to property developers have been defaulted.

According to The New York Times, the main barrier behind the immediate repayment of loans from defaulters is the involvement of loans to the local governments and their financial affiliates.

Earlier, the central bank, the People's Bank of China, announced that it was freeing banks to set aside smaller reserves and start extending more credit. The move was widely seen as intended to accommodate a large batch of bonds that local and provincial governments will issue to pay for their infrastructure projects, reported The New York Times. ANI



ties' research department indicated that home sales in China continued to dwindle in 2023 and challenges would persist in

news daily reported that the construction sites around China appear visibly less busy and construction of apartment towers

## US firm signs agreement to build resort in Ayodhya

LUCKNOW: The Uttar Pradesh Tourism Department has signed an agreement with the American firm M/s Anjali Investment LLC for the construction of a 100-room resort in Ayodhya.

State Tourism and Culture Minister Jaiveer Singh said after the consecration ceremony of Ram Lalla, Ayodhya is witnessing an unexpected increase in the number of devotees and tourists.

The state government is working to facilitate the visit of tourists, and to provide them lodging in the temple town, he said.

The owner of the American

real estate company, Ramesh Nanguranuri, who is originally from Hyderabad but into real estate business in America, has signed an agreement with UP Tourism department to construct a resort in Ayodhya.

He said land has also been identified for establishing the resort, adding that the investment policy of the tourism department

is favorable for investors.

Singh said constant efforts are being made to achieve this feat with the increased flow of foreign tourists too.

After the inauguration of Ram Temple, the state government is encouraging investment in hotels and resorts, so that the tourists coming in get better facilities, he said. IANS



# FOG Republic Day...

Cont'd from page 8

Shuvra Ray and team performed a medley of dance numbers under Jalsa.

The ceremonies began with the American National Anthem sung by Sameena Japra Paul followed by the Indian National anthem sung by Alka Bhatnagar. The dignitaries were led by Dr Srikar Reddy, Consul General of India SFO, Tom Pyke, Congressman Ro Khanna office, Supervisor Cindy Chavez, representative from Supervisor Otto Lee's office, representative from Assemblymen Alex Lee office, Sunnyvale mayor Larry Klein, Councilmember Murali Srinivasan, Fremont elected officials Yang Shao, Raj Salwan, Teresa Cox, Santa Clara council member Raj Chahal, Milpitas elected officials Carman Mantano and Hon Lien, Sararago councilmember Tina Walia to



name a few. The dignitaries in their brief speeches extolled and praised the development India has seen since independence and the India USA collaboration in various fields and the friendship between the leaders of both the democracies.

Various organization heads such as BATS, KKNC, BAPS, Shiv Durga Temple, O2B2, Rang Munch, Konkani association, Silicon Andhra, RANA, MMBA, FOG Odisha, FOG Bengal, NACHA, UMA, MANCS, NSS, Bay area

Kerala Sangham were present at the occasion.

Air India, MTR Foods, GRB Dairy, CEFCU, Astro Vastu, Spare The Air, LT Foods, ICICI Bank, Young Champion, Keen learners were the sponsors of this event.





# FOG Republic Day...



# FOG Republic Day...



## Philosophy

G.I. GURDJIEFF

The development of the power of my thoughts had been brought to such a level that by only a few hours of self-preparation I could from a distance of tens of miles kill a yak; or, in twenty-four hours, could accumulate life forces of such compactness that I could in five minutes put to sleep an elephant.

At the same time, in spite of all my desires and endeavors, I could not succeed in "remembering myself in the process of my general common life with others so as to be able to manifest myself, not according to my nature but according to my "collected consciousness."

I could not attain the state of "remembering myself even sufficiently to hinder the associations flowing in me automatically from certain undesirable hereditary.

As soon as the accumulation of energy which enabled me to be in an active state was exhausted, at once asso-

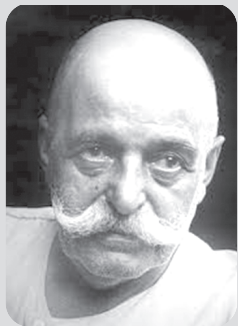
of all the presences in the universe! It follows that I also have to be God of some kind, of presence on my scale.

At the same time why should He, being as He is, send away from Himself one of His nearest, by Him animated, beloved sons, only for the "way of pride" proper to any young and still incompletely formed individual, and bestow upon him a force equal but opposite to His own? . . . I refer to the "Devil."

This idea illuminated the condition of my inner world like the sun, and rendered it obvious that in the great world for the possibility of harmonious construction there was inevitably required some kind of continuous perpetuation of the reminding factor.

For this reason our Maker Himself, in the name of all that He had created, was compelled to place one of His beloved sons in such an invidious situation.

I came to the conclusion that if I should intentionally stop utilizing the exceptional power in my possession



G.I. Gurdjieff

### Suffering aim to force us into remembering Him

*The difference between Him and my self must lie only in scale*

ciations of both thoughts and feelings began to flow in the direction of objects diametrically opposite to the ideals of my consciousness.

From one side it is clear that it is necessary to "remember myself" during the process of ordinary life also, and from the other side that there is a necessity for the presence of attentiveness which is able to merge, in case of contact, with others.

There is one exit only-to have outside myself, so to say, a "never-sleeping-regulating-factor." Namely, a factor which would remind me always, in my every common state, to "remember myself."

Why could I not, in this instance also, look to a "universal analogy"? God is everywhere and with Him everything is connected.

I am a man, and as such I am, in contrast to all other outer forms of animal life, created by Him in His image!!! For He is God and therefore I also have within myself all the possibilities and impossibilities that He has.

The difference between Him and my self must lie only in scale. For He is God

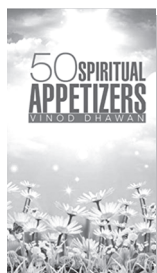
which had been developed by me consciously, then there must be forced out of me such a reminding source.

And so, if consciously I would deprive myself of this grace of my inherency, then undoubtedly always and in everything its absence would be felt. I take an oath to remember never to make use of this inherency of mine and thereby to deprive myself from satisfying most of my vices.

*Excerpted from "Life Is Real Only Then, When "I Am". The 158th birth anniversary of Gurdjieff was observed on January 13*

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## Home is where your heart is - A different perspective of an Indian immigrant

SAMEER BHIDE

In 2020 due to the pandemic my visit to the motherland lasted 14 months. I had come to Mumbai, India just before the pandemic hit. I was not able to return to the US earlier as planned due to the pandemic, which was creating havoc in the US with an increased number of cases and deaths. In India, too, cases were rising. International flights in India had not resumed then and didn't for a while and also, I was in the high-risk category, so I had to keep postponing my return plans. Before this trip, like with many Indian immigrants my visits normally were for two or three weeks typically for vacation and meeting friends and family. But this time I had to spend 14 months in India. This was the first time I had spent so much time in India after having moved to the United States 30 years ago. A friend of mine joked - 'If you add up all the time you spent visiting India over these years it still wouldn't add up to 14 months'.

same time proud to be an American and to call these United States home. To me, being different in how you look, talk, or dress doesn't make you any less of an American. You don't have to speak with an American accent or eat apple pie or a hamburger or do American things just to prove your American-ness. In the US, the best part is everyone is considered to have something about them that makes them stand out. The important thing is that for the most part everyone in the US is judged as an individual who has value and something to contribute to their society. My definition of home changed! My home was not India but my adopted country, the United States which had welcomed me with open arms even though I was ethnically and culturally different.

Then last year I moved permanently back to India after 32+ years in the US for health reasons. Now after being here for a year, I thought I would test if that definition has changed back. It has not. So

*Even though most Indian immigrants like me or, other immigrants, have been in America for very long, I guess, most of them have not lost their ethnic identity. Most are proud of their identity and at the same time proud to be an American and to call these United States home*

even though I am physically now in India forever, my heart is still in the US. India will always be my motherland and my home always will be the US even though I don't live there

Although I was with my loving family, friends and in the country, I grew up in, and was familiar with the culture and language, I terribly missed home - which was the United States. I was homesick. A few years before that I had also spent some more months in India. Till that point I used to call India home. But after spending considerable time in India this time around, I fully realized what home is - It was not India but the United States. Home is where your heart is - mine was in the US. I was missing the US - my home of 30 years, friends, family and my life there. Before I always used to say about the Washington DC area where I lived, "The DC area is like home away from home." The DC area was now indeed my home - not "home away from home but my home!"

Even though most Indian immigrants like me or, other immigrants, have been in America for very long, I guess, most of them have not lost their ethnic identity. Most are proud of their identity and at the

anymore. I will continue to follow the news, follow sports (NFL for sure), send in my absentee ballot etc. and at the same time enjoy my new life here and now have an opportunity to give back to my motherland in whatever way I can and also continue to give back to my homeland in some form. Over the past three decades I was the unofficial lobbyist/ambassador of India in the US making sure Americans understand India better and clear any misconceptions and misbeliefs.

*(About the author - Sameer Bhide lived in the US for 32+ years before moving back to his native India in September 2022 for health reasons. At the age of 47, he suffered a massive and extremely rare hemorrhagic brain stroke. He would require two different brain surgeries and spend the next month in a medically induced coma before he could even begin the years-long hard path to recovery, which is still ongoing.)*

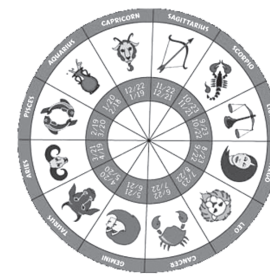
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**Disclaimer: Views expressed are personal to the author**

# Your Weekly Future

by **VANEET SHARMA**

FEB 2<sup>ND</sup> to FEB 8<sup>TH</sup> 2024



**ARIES**

**MAR 21 to APRIL 20**

In the beginning of the week you might remain slightly disturbed about certain developments which shall create some sort of peevishness in your mind however you shall succeed in channelizing your energies for attaining desired betterment in work area. Good news shall pour in from children. This is best time for those who are planning to start a new venture.



**CANCER**

**JUN 21 to JULY 22**

You shall be happy with your sweet bonding with family members in the beginning of the week. The confidence and focus shall increase with the support of partners and spouse. The support of everybody in the family shall be available. You would be able to defeat your adversaries. In the mid of the week you shall be busy in settling the matters related to your family and social circle.



**LIBRA**

**SEP 23 to OCT 22**

The work condition might improve in some way but there are chances of some ups and downs too. In the mid of the week there are chances of betterment in source of income. There shall be lots of activities on domestic front. Deliberations regarding property related matters are also indicated. The last two days of the week aren't good for your happiness and peace of mind. In this week you shall be having some tensions.



**CAPRICORN**

**DEC 22 to JAN 19**

In the beginning of the week you shall be focused about your personality development and you shall be keen to study occult. The marital bliss shall get enhanced. The second and 3rd February is average for health. Do not take any important decision during these days. This time can be utilized for refining planning activities. 4th and 5th February are excellent for travelling. The last days of the week are best to win appreciation for your work.



**TAURUS**

**APRIL 21 to MAY 20**

This week is bringing good luck to you from the very beginning of it. The social life shall also be active. You shall be developing strategies for becoming successful in competitive examination. Your confidence level shall be good and you shall work with focused approach. You shall be sure about your goals and the focused approach shall help you attain better results. The last three days of the work shall be excellent for displaying your artistic skills.



**LEO**

**JULY 23 to AUG 22**

The beginning of the week shall enhance your confidence and working efficiency. You would be spending good time with family and friends in the mid of the week. This week is not only excellent for social activities but your all energies shall also get channelized in attaining success in competitive examinations. You would be working as a strategist and your opponents shall get defeated. Energy level shall remain high in this week.



**SCORPIO**

**OCT 23 to NOV 22**

The beginning of the week indicates some ups and downs in social life and destiny. The social activities shall increase. By the mid of the week you shall try very hard to bring some betterment in work area. On 5th and 6th February you shall get compelled to control your source of income. The last day of the week indicates big drainage of energies, finance and peace of mind. Although this week indicates ups and downs however you won't lose your confidence.



**ACQUARIUS**

**JAN 20 to FEB 19**

You shall be getting good results in all areas of life including attaining favor of destiny, excellence in professional life with tremendous increase in income. This whole week shall be fulfilling in all aspects but there can be some disturbance on the last day of the week. You are advised not to take any important decision on the last day of the week. You should also pay proper attention to your health.



**GEMINI**

**MAY 21 to JUN 20**

Your confidence level shall be weak in the beginning of the week. Your health shall also get affected. You would be losing your focus but you might remain occupied in some project thereby gaining some sudden financial gains too. From children point of view this week shall be better especially in the latter half of it. You can also plan to go on a journey with family members.



**VIRGO**

**AUG 23 to SEP 22**

The beginning of the week is not good for your happiness however there shall be some relief from 3rd of February. The last two days of the week are better for your family life and inflow of money and you shall find yourself focused in making efforts and systematic planning for enhancing the saving potential. Your potential of working as a consultant shall get appreciation. Although there might remain stress on mind however your mind shall be fully focused in activities.



**SAGITTARIUS**

**NOV 23 to DEC 21**

There might remain some ups and downs in financial matters in the beginning of the week. By the mid of the week you shall gear up yourself to control work conditions. In spite of difficult conditions you shall keep moving and finally might succeed in earning some financial relief. The last day of the week indicates pouring in of some soothing news regarding the overcoming of financial uncertainty. For strengthening financial front you shall concentrate on the consolidation.



**PISCES**

**FEB 20 to MAR 20**

From the beginning of the week there can be some stress which might result into stomach related disorder and apart from that the expenses shall go uncontrolled however inflow of money shall remain intact. On 2nd & 3rd the cooperation and support can be expected from spouse. The 4th & 5th are bad for health, happiness and decision making. The last days of the week shall be good for the development of fate.

*Kindly read the predictions from your ascendant sign. If you do not know your ascendant sign then read the same from Moon sign. If Moon sign is also not known then read it from the Zodiac sign. The ascendant sign which is calculated from the birth details viz. date, month, year, time & place of birth gives 85 % accurate predictions. The accuracy of predictions from Moon sign get limited to only 50 %. The predictions from Zodiac sign are only 25 % accurate. In nutshell the predictions from ascendant sign are most accurate. In getting personality analysis the traits given by ascendant sign are 100 % accurate and that is the essence of Vedic Astrology.*

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# Muslim nations must call out terrorists and withdraw clandestine support

COL KL VISWANATHAN (RETD.)

**N**on-state actors who while not affiliated with, directed by, or funded through any sovereign government, often exercising significant political influence and territorial control, are increasingly calling the shots in world affairs much to the detriment of peace, progress, and development.

Terror is creating extreme fear in the face of violence. Terror is also an instrument of the weak to fight, in an unorganized manner in the face of profound grievance perceived or real. Using terror to instill fear is an age-old tactic. However, only in recent times has terrorism been recognized as the unlawful use or threatened use of force or violence directed primarily at civilian targets, or which produces primarily civilian casualties or causes property damage, to co-

Palestinian militant group HAMAS on Israel on 7 October 2023, poses a new challenge with the conflict spreading to other areas of the Middle East (ME) and possibly beyond. The immediate focus of the World today is on the instability in the shipping lanes of the Red Sea passing through the Strait of Bab al-Mandab and the Gulf of Aden, through which more than 12% of world trade passes, caused by the attacks by the Houthis militia from Yemen, in support of HAMAS. Most shipping companies have been forced to divert their merchant ships on a longer route via the Cape of Good Hope, in southern Africa, to avoid being hijacked or attacked by the Houthis. This adds more than 10 days of travel, delaying deliveries and increasing costs of goods and raw materi-

Islamic militant and terrorist groups in the Middle East and also in some other parts of the world. Prominent active militant/terrorist groups in the ME area are HAMAS in Gaza, Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Houthis of Yemen. In addition, there are the primary terrorist threats in Iraq, from ISIS remnants and various Iran-aligned militia groups (IAMGs), including U.S.-designated Kata'ib Hizballah, also, Harakat al-Nujaba, and Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq, as well as smaller militias claiming to be a part of Iraq's "Islamic Resistance." There is an active presence of terrorist threats in Syria too. The Syrian government repeatedly claimed that the actions of security forces against the Syrian civil war were a response to armed attacks by "terrorist gangs", a claim strangely rejected by Western human rights groups, Western governments, and other observers.

Afghanistan-Pakistan border Since the Afghan Taliban reclaimed power in Kabul, there has been a gradual increase in terrorist acts in the region. The Afghanistan-Pakistan border has been the main theater of vulnerability. There has been rising insecurity in Pakistan being posed by banned outfits such as Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), Baloch Nationalist Army (BNA), Sindhudesh People's Army (SPA), and Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP). Terrorism trends over the two years indicate that militant activities will continue to target security forces, particularly the army and police. KP and Balochistan would continue to be under the target of banned terror outfits, which may become a looming threat for the major metropolitan cities of Pakistan.

(The author is an Indian Army veteran and a contemporary affairs commentator.)  
*South Asia Monitor*

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*Terror is creating extreme fear in the face of violence. Terror is also an instrument of the weak to fight, in an unorganized manner in the face of profound grievance perceived or real. Using terror to instill fear is an age-old tactic*

erce or intimidate governments or societies to achieve political, religious, or ideological objectives. Militancy refers to extremist groups that seek to achieve everything through war or violence. There is a debate about true militancy. Because, for some, it is a struggle for survival, for others it is a struggle for independence, for some it is a struggle for establishing ideals and for others it is a terrorist act. All said and done militancy operates in an informal sector and is often termed a non-state action, meaning it has no legitimate backing.

### Active terrorist groups

The Middle East: The ongoing war in Gaza, prompted by a deadly terrorist attack by the

als such as gas and oil, which in the past passed through the Red Sea and entered the Mediterranean through the Suez Canal. The attacks on commercial shipping by militia have even reached the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean. The main fear is another rise in the price of oil. According to the IMF, a 10% increase in crude oil prices would reduce global gross domestic product by about 0.2% and would increase inflation between 0.2 and 0.4%. A widespread disruption in world trade is imminent. This illustrates that these militant groups can cause chaos to peace and economy across the world through their illegal actions.

This conflict has also brought to the fore the dangers posed by



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## MODI'S JAGANAUGHT

**T**he political situation this week in the State of Bihar has proven that Modinomics succeeded in toppling a key member of I.N.D.I.A., the new alliance of opposition parties to unseat BJP's government at the center. It seems Modi has already won the coming Lok Sabha election scheduled for this year. The grand ceremony of the inauguration of the Ram Temple at Ayodhya on January 22, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi performing the religious duties pertaining to the installation of the deity of Ram, has not only electrified the majority Hindu population but also become a national event in the hearts and minds of people across India and many living overseas.

The Chief Minister of Bihar Nitish Kumar is the first victim of this event and there will be several in the time to come. Modi has not only strategized the opening of the Ram Temple for Hindus living across the world but has also to further his party's victory in the forthcoming elections. The address of Prime Minister Modi was free of any suggestion of religious 'exclusivism' and, it effectively countered the narrative of 'majoritarianism' and allegations of any other form of bias and, largely focused on the importance of socio-cultural unity as a powerful instrument of national advancement. That the temple construction began only after the Supreme Court gave judgment in its favor, through a constitutional Bench, was also highlighted by the Prime Minister, which frees it from any communal projections. If the inauguration of Ram Temple at Ayodhya enhances the political status of Prime Minister Modi in the eyes of the people, nobody can grudge it.

The voter, it should be remembered, is an astute judge of the merit of the rulers. In his address on the occasion, Prime Minister Modi declared that Lord Ram was the 'spirit of the Constitution' and Ram Temple a 'symbol of national consciousness' that liberated the people from 'slavery' and a 'colonial mindset'. The latter was a reference to the historical subjugation of the Hindu religion as also to the British game of dividing India into communities and creating a minority-majority issue in politics. He further validated that the place of glory Hinduism enjoyed in India's nationalism by affirming that "Ram is the faith of India, the foundation of India and the idea of India" and went on to add that "Ram was also the law of India, the leader of India, as well as, the policy of India". He put a stamp of eternity on it by saying that Ram was not only the present but also the future of India.

The credit goes to Modi that he has been able to legitimize the concept of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' within India and at the global level. First he promoted Yoga for health and now "Ram Rashtra" as his idol for governance.

He has not only sealed victory for BJP party with removal of Article 370 in the State of Jammu & Kashmir, and now with the building of Ram Temple has re-energized the consciousness of the nation. His recent journey that began from South of India, prior to the temple inauguration, symbolizing Ram's return to Ayodhya will also bring in political dividend.

**Disclaimer: Views expressed are personal to the author**

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BY CHANDRU & SAJNI BHAMBHRA**

\*\*\*\*\*

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LARGEST  
COLOR PARTY

**SATURDAY, MARCH 23, 2024**

**11 am - 6pm**

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