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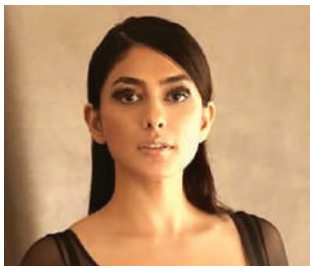


FIA Chicago hosts R-Day celebrations

▶ Details on page 14

Board members aware of Musk's drug use

▶ Details on page 26



Mrunal shares secret ingredient to 'focus'

▶ Details on page 40

## 'INDIA IS PROUD'

PM Modi congratulates Ustad Zakir Hussain Shankar Mahadevan for Grammy win



Singer and Composer Shankar Mahadevan delivers the acceptance speech at the Grammys 2024 on 'Shakti' band winning the Best Global Music Album award for 'This Moment', in Los Angeles. (ANI Photo)

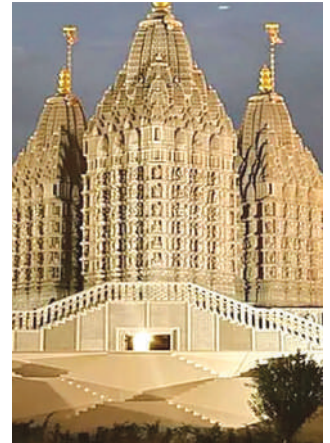
NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated musicians Ustad Zakir Hussain, Shankar Mahadevan, Rakesh Chaurasia, Ganesh Rajagopalan and Selvaganesh V for their Grammy wins.

Taking to X, PM wrote, "Congratulations @ZakirHtabla, @Rakeshflute, @Shankar\_Live, @kanjeeraselva, and @violinganesh on your phenomenal success at the #GRAMMYS! Your exceptional talent and dedication to music have won hearts

worldwide. India is proud! These achievements are a testament to the hardwork you keep putting in. It will also inspire the new generation of artists to dream big and excel in music."

The tabla player and music composer picked up the coveted award in 'Best Global Music Performance' category for 'Pashto'.

Details on page 10



World awaits inauguration of Hindu temple

▶ Details on page 10

Ballot 2024: What do IND-AM voters want

▶ Details on page 12

What Foods boost Collagen Production?

▶ Details on page 30

### CONTENTS

Bollywood	40-44
Classifieds	38
Community Post	14-22
Cover/Top Stories	10-12
Edit Page	39
Horoscope	36
Immigration Post	23
Info/Highlights	4
Life Style	34
OP-ED	37
TechBiz Post	26-27
Real Estate	31
Travel & Hospitality Post	35
Wellness Post	28-30

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To empower the Indian Diaspora and make their voice strong and effective in countries of their adoption. RJ Media conglomerate offers a credible, professional and complete package of news, opinion, entertainment, networking and information.

**HIGHLIGHTS**

**Bollywood:**

**Mrunal Thakur's ingredient to 'focus'**



Actress Mrunal Thakur says her secret ingredient to focus on things is coffee, going by a post she shared on social media

40



**Lifestyle:**

**Breathing in Bliss**

Pranayama allows individuals to connect more deeply with their breath and witness an elevated sense of inner peace and relaxation

34

**Cover Story:**

**'INDIA IS PROUD'**



PM Modi congratulated musicians Ustad Zakir Hussain, Shankar Mahadevan, Rakesh Chaurasia, Ganesh Rajagopalan and Selvaganesh V for their Grammy wins

10



**Techbiz:**

**Board members aware of drug use**

Some board members at Tesla and SpaceX "don't want to risk losing the social capital that comes from being close to Musk..." reports WSJ

34

**Community:**

**FIA Chicago hosts Republic Day**



Celebrations featured a diverse array of events, community service initiatives, and a grand show that unequivocally underscored India's profound unity in diversity

14



**Travel**

**Vrindavan**

One of the oldest cities on the banks of Yamuna, Vrindavan is considered to be one of the most important places of pilgrimage for the devotees of Krishna

35

**Immigration:**

**Speedy immigration process**



Civil Aviation minister chairs advisory committee meeting for possible changes to expedite immigration and security check processes for international travellers

23



**Wellness:**

**'More medical colleges'**

Finance Minister Sitharaman said the new medical colleges will be set up by utilizing the existing hospital infrastructure under various departments

28

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- Emphasis on Soft Skills Development
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# 'INDIA IS PROUD'

## PM Modi congratulates Ustad Zakir Hussain, Shankar Mahadevan for Grammy win

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated musicians Ustad Zakir Hussain, Shankar Mahadevan, Rakesh Chaurasia, Ganesh Rajagopalan and Selvaganesh V for their Grammy wins.

Taking to X, PM wrote, "Congratulations @ZakirHtabla, @Rakeshflute, @Shankar\_Live, @kanjeeraselva, and @violinganesh on your phenomenal success at the #GRAMMYS! Your exceptional talent and dedication to music have won hearts worldwide. India is proud! These achievements are a testament to the hardwork you keep putting in. It will also inspire the new generation of artists to dream big and excel in music."

<https://twitter.com/narendramodi/status/1754417322402750723>

The tabla player and music composer picked up the coveted award in 'Best Global Music Performance' category for 'Pashto'.

In his acceptance speech for 'Pashto' on behalf of Bela Fleck, Edgar Meyer, and

Rakesh Chaurasia- his fellow musicians, the 72-year-old Mumbai-born percussionist said, "Thanks to the Academy, thanks to all these great musicians for giving us beautiful music...our deepest thanks to



Ustad Zakir Hussain

harmony, we are nothing."

'As We Speak', in which the tabla maverick has collaborated with Bela Fleck, Edgar Meyer and Rakesh Chaurasia, won the Grammy for the 'Best Contempo-



Rakesh Chaurasia

group 'Shakti' along with Shankar Mahadevan, won 'The Best Global Music Album Award for its latest album, 'This Moment'.

The album 'This Moment' features eight songs created by John McLaughlin (guitar synth), Zakir Hussain (tabla), Shankar Mahadevan (vocalist), V Selvaganesh (percussionist), and Ganesh Rajagopalan (violinist). They were nominated for the Grammys with other artists like Susana Baca, Bokante, Burna Boy, and Davido.

The group also features guitarist John McLaughlin, percussionist V Selvaganesh and violinist Ganesh Rajagopalan.

At the ceremony, the Shakti band competed with other artists like Susana Baca, Bokante, Burna Boy, and Davido. 'This Moment' album was released on June 30 last year.

The 66th edition of the Grammys was held in Los Angeles. ANI

our families...without them, we are nothing... without love, without music, without

rary Instrumental Album' category. Hussain, who is also part of the Jazz

## World awaits inauguration of Hindu temple in UAE by PM Modi

ABU DHABI: People across the globe await the inauguration of the BAPS Hindu temple in Abu Dhabi by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, which is scheduled for February 14, the Indian Embassy said here.

In a post on social media 'X', the Indian Embassy in the UAE, said that the magnificent visuals, with their spellbinding architecture, show the temple in all its grandeur.

"The world awaits the inauguration of the @AbuDhabiMandir @AbuDhabiMandir by PM @narendramodi. Visuals resplendent with its spellbinding architecture show the Temple in all its grandeur," the Embassy said.

<https://x.com/IndembAbuDhabi/status/1754128107831759167?s=20>

PM Modi recently accepted the invitation extended by Swami Ishwarcharandas and Swami Brahmaviharidas, along with the board

of directors for the inauguration of the BAPS Hindu Mandir in Abu Dhabi on February 14, BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha said in a press statement.

In December, PM Modi and the BAPS Swami Ishwarcharandas met at the Prime



Minister's residential office and PM Modi graciously accepted the invitation, expressing his enthusiastic support for the historic and iconic temple.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, during his upcoming visit to the UAE next month,

will address the Indian diaspora at a community reception titled 'Ahlan Modi' on February 13, a day before the temple inauguration.

The event, whose title roughly translates to 'Hello Modi', will be held at the Sheikh Zayed Sports Stadium in Abu Dhabi.

According to the release, the organisers expect to fill the stadium to its fullest capacity. Various volunteer committees have been set up for the detailed planning and smooth execution of this historic event.

More than 350 Indian community leaders representing different regions and communities who came together at the India Club in Dubai on January 3 at the pre-event briefing in Abu Dhabi--"Ahlan Modi" ("Hello"Modi)--welcomed the news with great enthusiasm. ANI

## Ahead of PM Modi's UAE visit, preparations in full swing for 'Ahlan Modi'

DUBAI: Ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the UAE, preparations for the Indian community event titled 'Ahlan Modi' are in full swing.

During his visit to the UAE, PM Modi will address the Indian diaspora at 'Ahlan Modi' on February 13, a day before the temple inauguration. PM Modi is scheduled to inaugurate the BAPS Hindu temple in Abu Dhabi on February 14.

As per Ahlan Modi 2024's handle on X, the first volunteers teams was briefed by volunteers Management at the venue to set clear roles and responsibilities needed to manage the participants expected at the event.

In a post on X, Ahlan Modi 2024 stated, "1st Volunteers teams Head briefing by Volunteers Management at venue to set clear roles & responsibilities, required to manage huge turnout expected on historic day. Don't forget to join on 13th February at Zayed sports City stadium Abudhabi." ANI

# Donald Trump makes doubtful claims about Middle East, Nikki Haley and Mitch McConnell

WASHINGTON: Former US President Donald Trump apparently slipped again making doubtful claims, described as false by the media, about the Middle East, rival Republican presidential candidate Nikki Haley, Republican Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell and other subjects.



Donald Trump and Nikki Haley

Trump's alleged false claims came in an interview that aired on 4 February morning on Fox News, notably including his claim that he warned the US not to invade Iraq in March 2003, media reports said.

Invasion of Iraq: Trump claimed that he

had publicly spoken against the idea of invading Iraq, a claim he has been making since his 2016 presidential campaign.

Trump told FOX: "Going into Iraq was a stupid thing. Remember I used to say, 'Don't do it, but if you do it, keep the oil.'"

Fact check: Trump's claim is false and was debunked eight years ago. In reality, Trump did not publicly express opposition to the invasion of Iraq before it occurred. In his 2000 book, "The America We Deserve," Trump argued a military strike on Iraq might be necessary; when radio host Howard Stern asked Trump in September 2002 whether he is "for invading Iraq," Trump responded, "Yeah, I guess so. I wish

the first time it was done correctly", CNN said in a report apparently dug out from the past statements of the ex-President.

Trump did not express a firm opinion about the looming war in a Fox interview in January 2003, saying that "either you attack or don't attack" and that then-Presi-

dent George W. Bush "has either got to do something or not do something, perhaps."

Trump criticized the war in 2003, but after the invasion, he claimed that American troops should not be withdrawn from Iraq. He emerged as an explicit opponent of the war in 2004. A CNN search in 2019 turned up no examples of Trump saying

*Trump told FOX: "Going into Iraq was a stupid thing. Remember I used to say, 'Don't do it, but if you do it, keep the oil.'" Fact check: Trump's claim is false and was debunked eight years ago. In reality, Trump did not publicly express opposition to the invasion of Iraq before it occurred*

anything before the war about keeping Iraq's oil. Trump's White House did not respond at the time to the news agency request to provide proof.

Iran's missiles: Trump reiterated an earlier claim that Iran intentionally avoided hitting bases that housed US troops in

Iraq when it launched missiles toward the base in January 2020 in retaliation for the Trump-ordered assassination of top Iranian General Qasem Soleimani.

Trump told Fox News, Iran "called me." He said, "We knew they weren't going to hit inside the fort" even though outside observers were left wondering, "How come they all missed?"

Fact check: Trump's claims that all of Iran's missiles missed the base are false, media reports said. As The Washington Post noted in its own fact check late last year, 11 Iranian missiles hit the al-Asad base Iran targeted in the retaliatory attack. *IANS*

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# Ballot 2024: What do Indian-American voters want

MEENAKSHI IYER

NEW DELHI: A robust economy, safety and security of citizens, fixing the southern border crisis, and thriving relations with India are some of the demands put forth by the nearly four-million-strong Indian-American community as the US rolls up its sleeves for Ballot 2024.

Surprising many political voters, the community emerged as the most coveted bloc in the 2020 election with a record 71 percent rate of voting among Asian Americans and ensuring President Joe Biden's victory.

At least 10 Indian-Americans, mostly Democrats, won local and state-level elections held in several parts of the country last year, reflecting the growing political prowess of the ethnic community.

For the first time in the history of the country, two Indian-American candidates -- Nikki Haley and Vivek Ramaswamy -- locked horns on the Republican presidential debate stage, giving a tough fight to former president and GOP frontrunner Donald Trump.

Yet, as aptly put by a Carnegie Endowment study, despite the rising political profile of Indian Americans, their political attitudes are woefully under-studied.

"Many Indian-Americans support fundraisers and personal affiliations to advance their concerns, yet, when the contestants get elected and take office, most promises fall on the sidelines, especially issues affecting the Indian American community," Nilima Madan, Vice President of The Association of Indians In America, told IANS.

President Joe Biden's major fundraisers included Indian-Americans, who helped raise at least \$100,000 for

his campaign in 2020.

Topping the list of 800 major donors were community leaders like Swadesh Chatterjee, Ramesh Kapoor, Shekar N. Narasimhan, R. Rangaswami, Ajay Jain Bhutoria, Frank Islam, Neil Makhija and Bela Bajaria.

"What hits an American citizen is primarily the economy, their pride and disappointment, and how their life will be run by Republicans or Democrats," Madan said.

Comprising nearly 1 percent of all registered voters in



the US and representing 16 percent of Asian-American voters, Indian-Americans are considered to be key players in battleground states like Florida, Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Nevada.

"In general, Indian-American voters, while supporting candidates for various positions, don't articulate their concerns, they don't candidly put their demands for the consideration of political representatives," Ashok Vyas, a program director with New Jersey-based ITV Gold channel, told IANS.

"But for some time, general Indian-American voters are taking a lot of interest in Indian affairs and there is increased sensitivity towards Bharat," he said, adding that the electorate wants a fair portrayal of Indian culture and dharma for students.

In addition to wanting a "stronger government", the immediate concern of Indian-American voters, according to Vyas, is stability, safety, and law and order.

While the economy and healthcare are largely seen to influence the vote choice of Indian Americans, this time the community also wants the US to develop robust relations with India.

Parveen Chopra, founder of New York-based spirituality website, ALotusInTheMud.com, was at a fundraiser in Hicksville where prominent Indian-Americans mentioned better India-US relations and safety as their top concerns, in addition to "hordes of migrants poring through the southern border".

The crisis at the southern border has become a sore point in the 2024 US Presidential elections with a spike in the number of migrants entering the country through its Mexico border in recent years. IANS

## Fresh trouble for Sunak as Minister accused of giving Infosys 'VIP access': Report

LONDON: Prime Minister Rishi Sunak is facing a fresh conflict of interest row after a Conservative minister on a trade mission to India last April said he would be happy to help IT firm Infosys, owned by his wife's family, grow in the UK.

According to a Daily Mirror investigation, Trade Minister Dominic Johnson said he was "keen to see a bigger Infosys presence in the UK and would be happy to do what he could to facilitate that".

The development comes as the Bengaluru-based firm founded by Akshata Murty's father vies for contracts in the UK worth 750 million pounds and plans to increase its workforce in its second-biggest market by 20 per cent to 6,000.

Valued at more than 500 million pounds, much of the enormous wealth accumulated by Sunak and his wife -- who has a 0.91 per cent stake and reaped dividends of 13 million pounds in the last financial year -- comes from this IT firm.

At a meeting at the company's office, details of which were obtained by The Mirror by using Freedom of Information requests, Johnson steered Infosys on how to obtain UK visas for its staff.

Johnson "outlined the mobility schemes available which Infosys could take advantage of, particularly the High Potential Individual visa scheme," which allows holders to stay in the UK for two years.

The April 2023 meeting also discussed how the India-UK Free Trade Agreement (FTA) would benefit Infosys.

"Reassure that the FTA will further create new opportunities and investor-friendly policies to support business growth," one of the points mentioned in the briefing notes for Johnson read.

Ahead of Sunak's visit to India for the G20 summit in September last year, trade experts and parliamentarians raised concerns alleging that Infosys would financially benefit from the post-Brexit trade deal.

Infosys, which is one of the biggest investors in Johnson's Somerset Capital, was "reassured" by the minister who said: "We value the relationship with Infosys and will continue to engage at a Ministerial level when requested of us."

Calling the uncovered documents "damning", the opposition Labour said the government had serious questions to answer about giving "VIP access" to a business so personally close to Sunak and Liberal Democrats demanded full transparency. IANS

*The development comes as the Bengaluru-based firm founded by Akshata Murty's father vies for contracts in the UK worth 750 million pounds and plans to increase its workforce in its second-biggest market by 20 percent to 6,000*

## "India is going to be front row at the world's transformation": French President Macron

PARIS: President Emmanuel Macron posted a video highlighting a glimpse from his recent visit to India during the Republic Day celebrations and stressed that France wants to have "more and more investments" in India.

Praising India, he stated that India is going to be on the front row in the world's transformation.

"We have got everything to say to a country like India, a democratic power, a demographic, economic and a technological as well, which is going to be front row at the world's transformation," President Macron said in the video posted on X.

Posting the video with the caption "A look back at an exceptional trip in India", Macron further said, "For us, having chai tea is a habit."

Macron said he felt "extremely honored" to be a part of the 75th Republic Day celebrations in the national capital.

"We were extremely honored to be part of such an important and unique day. This is in our memories for ever," he added. ANI

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## Desi News

### Bal Vihar celebrates India's 75th Republic Day

RAJIYER AND SHAILEE BHAT

ST LOUIS: Center for Indian Cultural Education- Bal Vihar of St. Louis celebrated India's 75th Republic Day with great enthusiasm on January 28, 2024 at Hindu temple community Center, St. Louis, Missouri, new facility for Bal Vihar.

This event was in the presence of over 500 participants, guests and dignitaries from diverse backgrounds including the members of Bach Society of St. Louis, MO, leading medical and legal Professionals from the community and the representative from the local news media.

Details on page 16

### BSC of Chicago celebrate 75th Republic Day

JAYANTI OZA

CHICAGO: The Bharatiya Senior Citizens of Chicago presents in collaboration with 'Mandi Theater' organized 75th Republic Day of India, Hindi Play 'The Antidote' and Cultural program involving singing and Dances.

Details on page 17

### Know why Black Stone (Krishna Shila) is used

GEETHA PATIL AND SUNIL KUMAR D.

We all witnessed with utmost devotion the inauguration of Ram Temple in Ayodhya and Pran Pratishtha of a 51-inch tall idol of Ram Lalla, showing the deity as a five-year-old boy, in its Garbha Graha (sanctum sanctorum) on Monday January 22, 2024 by our Prime Minister Narendra Modi. A three billion-year-old rare and ancient rock known for its azure-colored Krishna Shila or black schist found in Gujjegowdanapura village, Mysuru district is adding a timeless majesty and glory to the idol.

Details on page 18

# COMMUNITY ACROSS AMERICA

14 India Post

www.indiapost.com

February 9, 2024



Founder Chairman Sunil Shah, President Vinita Gulabani and President for 2024 Pratibha Jairath

## FIA Chicago hosts Republic Day celebrations

JAYANTI OZA

CHICAGO: The Federation of Indian Associations, Chicago (FIA), celebrated India's Republic Day on January 28 2023, at Matrix Club in Chicago. This momentous occasion transcended expectations through patriotic fervor, and a vibrant tapestry showcasing the rich cultural diversity of the nation.

It featured a diverse array of events, community service initiatives, and a grand show that unequivocally underscored India's profound unity in diversity. A noteworthy highlight of the evening was a breathtaking performance by acclaimed artists from India, led by Shahid Rafi, the son of the legendary Padmashree Mohammad Rafi, revered as the Greatest Voice in Indian Cinema.

The event unfolded in Indian tradition, symbolizing the illumination of knowledge and wisdom through the ceremonial lighting of the lamp. The event was ushered by FIA's General Secretary, Nilabh Dubey. Main MCs were Anu Malhotra and Suchitra Kukreja.

The Founder Chairman Sunil Shah painted a vivid picture of



FIA group and admirers

FIA's pivotal role in uniting the diaspora in and around Chicagoland over the past several years, including expanding into neighboring states. He spoke on the organization's vision and mission, setting the stage for a night of celebration and reflection.

Past President Vinita Gulabani highlighted the remarkable achievements of 2023, emphasizing growth from 58 to over 160 members—a testament to a staggering 300 percent increase in funding, event

sizes, and the number of events hosted. Current President Pratibha Jairath expressed gratitude to the Executive members and outlined her plan for 2024. In a groundbreaking move, she introduced an additional event focusing on Animal Medical Welfare and Care.

The stage then welcomed Chief Guest for the evening, Consulate General Somnath Ghosh, who spoke passionately about the relevance of India's Republic Day to the Indian Diaspora, conveying key mes-

sages from the President of India to the captivated audience.

FIA's Advisory Board members, instrumental in the organization's decade-long growth, came on the stage. They were Syed Hussaini, Manish Gandhi, Asha Oroskar, Pinky Thakkar, Lakhvir Sahota, Dr. Anuja Gupta, Dr. Bhupinder Beri, Dr. Suresh Reddy, Nimish Jani, Shrujal Patel, Sushma Bhanot, Shital Daftari, and Jasbir Suga.

Cont'd on page 22



FIA team

# Dev Darshan Senior Center - India Republic Day celebration

MIKA SHASTRI

CHICAGO. Dev Darshan Senior Center celebrated the 75th Republic Day at Bensenville Park District in a grand way.

Dev Darshan Senior Center stands as a non-profit organization in the heart of Chicago, dedicated to nurturing the emotional well-being of our esteemed seniors. The mission extends beyond mere care; it's a pledge to honor, celebrate, and seamlessly integrate the invaluable members of our senior community into the vibrant tapestry of society.

The momentous celebration of India's 75th Republic Day was an example. This momentous occasion, dedicated to honoring the adoption of the Constitution of India, transcended expectations through a symphony of grand celebrations, patriotic fervor and, a vibrant cultural program for our seniors, attended by 100 plus seniors.

The program commenced with a rendition of the devotional song "Ambe Maa," skillfully led by the Founder and President of Dev Darshan, Mrs. Hema Shastri, accompanied by the youthful voices of Darshan Shastri, Nishika Dubey, Poonam Poddar and Vaishvi Verma and other children. This set the tone for the event, further elevated by rendition of the Indian National Anthem, performed by Poonam Poddar and Founder President Hema Shastri accompanied by

Nishika Dubey and Ojaswi

The atmosphere brimmed with patriotic fervor when Nishika Dubey did the rendition of the American National Anthem.

Ojaswi Verma spoke about India's Re-

plored India's pivotal role as the world's largest democracy, emphasizing its profound impact on nations worldwide. Furthermore, Ms. Ayyad highlighted the audience with invaluable contributions of the Indian diaspora, emphasizing their posi-

This was followed by lunch that everyone enjoyed. Monique and Jason Arthur from Blue Cactus Photography offering his photography services to Dev Darshan Senior Center free of charge.

Hema Shastri, Founder President, con-



public Day. Her insightful remarks left an indelible impression among the senior citizens connected to their roots and heritage.

The distinguished chief guest for the program, Fatieh Ayyad, delivered an address, passionately shedding light on India's global significance. Her words resonated with the audience as she ex-

plorative influence on various countries, including her homeland in the Middle East.

Shailendra Bhatnagar and his team sang an array of patriotic songs that resonated with the spirit of the nation and India's Republic Day 2024 celebrations. The audience's desire for more resonated audibly, echoing their profound connection to the captivating performance.

cluded the program by emphasizing our love for India and profound pride in being part of the world's largest democracy. She said 'Together, we stand united, weaving a legacy of compassion, respect, and patriotism that echoes through the corridors of Dev Darshan Senior Centre, extending far beyond our immediate community and into the heart of the nation we live.

## GOPIO-LA elects new President

India Post News Service

LONG BEACH, CA: Global Organization of People of Indian Origin, Los Angeles Chapter (GOPIO-LA) met at Long Beach to kick start the new year with new executive committee taking over the reins of day-to-day operations of this chapter.

Previously, GOPIO-LA members met in Artesia to elect the new executive committee. The following members were elected unanimously as the new officers for two years term from January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2025. GOPIO-International Vice President Kewal Kanda administered the Oath of Office to the newly elected officers.

Chairperson: Kalika Gupta

President: Charu Shivakumar

Vice President: Baljinder Tahim

Secretary: Yatri Shukla



L to R - Rajinder Dhunna, Kewal Kanda, Ashok Madan, Yatri Shukla, Charu Shivakumar, Kalika Gupta, Navin Gupta, Dr. Asmath Noor, Baljinder Tahim

Treasurer: Ashok Madan

Jt. Secretary: Dr. Asmath Noor

Trustees: Kewal Kanda, Navin Gupta,

Rajinder Dhunna

In the first meeting of the new executive committee the tentative agenda for the year 2024 was discussed and a few programs approved such as American Red Cross Blood Donation Camp for February 11, and an India Festival 2024 for May 19. The blood donation Camp will be held at Buena Park Gurdwara on Orangethorpe Ave. The India festival location will be decided in next meeting as more details become available. More programs will be planned in future meetings. It was also decided to collaborate with other organization to participate or support community projects that fit in our agenda. The executive committee also decided to continuing with our yearly signature event - Diabetes Reversal Summit, in collaboration with our parent organization GOPIO-International.



## Certificate of Appreciation awarded to Payal Sawhney for Indian community leadership

India Post News Service

Chapman University witnessed a significant celebration as the Indian community gathered to honor esteemed business leaders. Among the distinguished figures recognized was Payal Sawhney, the Founding Executive Director of Saahas for Cause, hailed for her exceptional leadership within the South Asian community. The event, organized by Professor PK Shukla, Professor Yatri Shukla, and the Shah family, unfolded on January 16, 2024.

The recognition bestowed upon Payal Sawhney underscores her outstanding contributions and steadfast commitment to grassroots-level work. Saahas, under her leadership, has left a profound impact, extending assistance to 3108 older adults, offering counseling to 467 women,



*“Payal Sawhney shared Saahas’ overarching objective: to create a community where abuse victims no longer face desperate searches for shelter”*

sanctuary to victims and fostering a future where no older adult feels isolated or neglected. Sawhney envisions a tomorrow where the youth emerge as leaders and trailblazers, embodying the cultural richness of both worlds.

For Saahas For Cause, this recognition is profoundly meaningful, serving as a testament to their unwavering dedication to serving the South Asian community.

mentoring 73 youth, and providing community health services to 33,500 individuals over the past year alone.

In an exclusive statement, Founding Executive Director Payal Sawhney

shared Saahas’ overarching objective: to create a community where abuse victims no longer face desperate searches for shelter. The organization aspires to establish a secure interim shelter, offering





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# Bal Vihar celebrates India's 75th Republic Day

RAJ IYER AND SHAILEE BHAT



Bal Vihar artists

ST LOUIS: Center for Indian Cultural Education- Bal Vihar of St. Louis celebrated India's 75th Republic Day with great enthusiasm on January 28, 2024 at Hindu temple community Center, St. Louis, Missouri, new facility for Bal Vihar.

This event was in the presence of over 500 participants, guests and dignitaries from diverse backgrounds includ-

ing the members of Bach Society of St. Louis, MO, leading medical and legal Professionals from the community and the representative from the local news media.

The students from 5 and 15 years of age showcased the themes - "Festivals of India" and Evolution of Science & Technology in India through ages as

part of the celebration. It was an amazing presentation by the students on Indian Festivals including Diwali, Holi, Navaratri and more. It was a splendid display of India's various festivals, how they are celebrated and history behind the festivals, along with science and technology advancements in India.

The special guests interacted with

the students and enjoyed learning about the research that they had done for the extensive illustrations. Post closed door judging by the dignitaries, the students spent time at each booth to learn about India's heritage, festivals, technology advancements among other things.

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



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# BSC of Chicago celebrate 75th Republic Day

JAYANTI OZA

CHICAGO: TheBharatiya Senior Citizens of Chicago presents in collaboration with

programinvolving singing and Dances. The Program began with

mittee members participated in Deep Pragatya ceremony giving a salute to the Indian na-



Deep Pragatya Ceremony performed: from L to R- BSC Managing Trustee Parsottam Pandya, Bachubhai Paghdal, Secretary Rashila Dobariya, Vice President Hirji Ponkia, Treasurer Madarsang Chavda, Joint Secretary Vishnu Patel, Bhupat Ranparia, Joint Treasurer Indu Patel

'Mandi Theater" organized 75th Republic Day of India, Hindi Play 'The Antidote' and Cultural

'Ganesh Vandna' that was sang by BSC Secretary Rasila Dobariya After that all BSC com-

tional flag and singing National Anthem 'Jan Gan Man Adhi Nayak. This was followed with a



BSC members salute Indian flag



BSC Managing Trustee Parsotam Pandya & Mandi Theater (Alka Sharm) with Artist group



BSC Celebrating 'Ayodhya Mandir Pran Pratistha' Mahotsav

short video on screen with the speech of Indian Prime Minister Narendrabhai Modi. He spoke on "Ayodhya Ram Mandir Pratistha Mahotsav' Bhupat Ranpariya family distributed 'Ram Charitra books to members.

The Evening was a fun filled affair with rendering of devotional and patriotic songs. Mandi theater also presented a play THE ANTIDOTE, a profound story about duties, lives, children and parents It also touched upon an exhausted old

man in front of his adult children. It was all to the point, honest and well crafted.

Bharatnatyam and kathak classical dances were also performed by Sonali, Ramya and Swati.

Writer, Paul Chopra did mimicry. Jimmie and Shika Tandon sang nice songs The program was fun filled and enjoyable

The audience enjoyed the program until the very end and this was followed with delicious dinner.



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# Know why Black Stone (Krishna Shila) is used

GEETHA PATIL AND SUNIL KUMAR D.

We all witnessed with utmost devotion the inauguration of Ram Temple in Ayodhya and Pran Pratishtha of a 51-inch tall idol of Ram Lalla, showing the deity as a five-year-old boy, in its Garbha Graha (sanctum sanctorum) on Monday January 22, 2024 by our Prime Minister Narendra Modi. A three billion-year-old rare and ancient rock known for its azure-colored Krishna Shila or black schist found in Gujgegowdanapura village, Mysuru district is adding a timeless majesty and glory to the idol. Mysuru-based sculptor, Arun Yogiraj meticulously chiseled Lord Ram Lalla Murti, now graces the Garbha Griha with great sanctity.

The idol's radiating lotus like eyes, tranquility-emitting face, and the embodiment of child-like innocence blended with divinity, and royalty have captivated the hearts of billions of worshippers and viewers. The brilliant artisanship and the artistic prowess of Arun Yogiraj made Lord Balak Ram Murti a stunning and gorgeous creation. Lord Ram Lalla adorned with Banarasi yellow Dothi and a red angavastram embellished with pure gold zari and threads featuring auspicious Vaishnava symbols -Shankh, Chakra, Padma, and Mayur. HE is ornamented with an array of special magnificent gold jewelries gold studded with diamonds and various precious stones just reflect HIS divine status.

## Is Ram Lalla idol changed after Pran Pratishtha?

Firstly, we need to understand the Pran Pratishtha ritual and how it transforms the Murti and the temple atmosphere, The Sanskrit words Prana (life force, breath, spirit, energy) prati??h? (installing, positioning. consecrating), are used in connection with a Murti. The phrase Prana Pratishtha is a Vedic ritual used for "establishment of an idol in its vital breath" or "bringing life to

the temple". It is also referred to as Murti Sthapana (placement of a Murti inside the temple). Traditionally, this is the step when the eyes of a Murti are opened up to the public from inside the Garbha Griha (Purusha space) of a Hindu temple.

The Pran Pratishtha is a live process ritual that takes place while chanting of Vedic Mantras and conch blowing that makes the Murti, or a Kalash, or even empty space a divine possibility. For such event, temple priests, Jajman, and Jajman's family, and many devotees prepare themselves spiritually by following strict rituals. For this Pran Pratishtha event, our Prime Minister Narendra Modi as the chief Jajman of the 'Pran Pratishtha' ceremony followed with full devotion the strictest rituals for 11 days. He not only slept on the floor, ob-

served strict fasting by consuming only coconut-water twice a day and he even visited several Jagrat Vishnu temples in different parts of Bharat and sought their blessings. When such spiritually oriented people performed Pran Pratishtha of Ram Lalla, mystical magic spread in the surrounding areas, and transmitted through the TV screens and radio rooms globally and made all the devotees emo-

tional and transcendental that we all noticed and experienced on January 22 event. That moment, not only devotees at the temple premise but also devotees across the globe felt the divine presence around them as they saw Ram Lalla whose eyes and enchanting smile captivated everyone. It was a beautiful, divine, and mesmerizing event beyond words! Crores

of devotees along with sculptor Arun Yogiraj noticed fascinating transformation in the face of Ram Lalla soon after Pran Pratishtha.

## Why is Rama Lalla idol in black stone?

This "Krishna Shila" is bluish-grey in

color but when applied coconut and burnt cocoa powder it turns into black color stone. This stone was chosen because it is very durable, does not react to Abhishekam Chaturvimsathi Dhruvayas or acids and resistant to climatic variation and will sustain thousands of years without any blemishes with minimum maintenance. Over the years, it hardens and does not react to anything. There are

5,000-year-old temples where idols have been made using Krishna Shila stones and have till now not reacted to any weather conditions.

In addition, our ancient scriptures portray Lord Rama with Shyamal Roop, signifying a darker skin complexion.

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



## What's at Stake for Ethnic Media?

VIDYA SETHURAMAN  
India Post News Service

Devastating layoffs at the LA Times and many other news outlets, along with growing news deserts, are fueling growing uncertainty about the future of local journalism -- even about the future of news itself. The amount of advertising to local newspapers declined 82% - a \$40 billion drop - since 2000, according to the Pew Research Center. EMS briefing on Feb 2 explored current initiatives to rescue local journalism through various forms of taxpayer support and other public policies. Several ethnic news media publishers shared their views and inquired about how and whether these plans advance equity for the ethnic media sector which is indispensable to the ecosystem for reaching traditionally underserved audiences but is often excluded from discussions about local journalism.

Steven Waldman, Founder and President of Rebuild Local News and Co-Founder and former President of Report for America introduced the organization's mea-

sures to help local journalism revitalize. These include the federal "Community Journalism and Small Business Support" bill (H.R. 4756), which helps local journalism through tax breaks. Specifically, the bill stipulates that small businesses can obtain tax rebates for advertising in local news; the salary of reporters at local news organizations can also be tax deducted, with each reporter being able to deduct up to \$25,000 in the first year, and the

maximum deductible in each of the following four years to be \$15,000. The bill was proposed in 2023 and is currently under review.

Ryan Adam, Vice President of Government and Public Relations for the Toronto Star introduced that the Toronto Star was founded in 1892. The newspaper's revenue has always been mainly divided into two parts, 80% from advertising and 20% from subscription fees. But in recent years, like most news organizations, it has lost almost all of its advertising revenue. In 2022, the Canadian government introduced the "Online News Act", which stipulates that platforms like Google and Meta need to pay certain dividends to news media. Ryan Adam said that in fact,

long before the government introduced the bill, the Toronto Star had signed dividend agreements with these platforms to ensure its own interests. Secondly, Canada has other measures to protect news organizations, including that subscribers can get a 15% tax rebate from the subscription fee, and news organizations can also get a 15% tax rebate from each

reporter's salary. These initiatives have effectively saved local journalism.

Brittney Barsotti, General Counsel, California Newspaper Publishers Association spoke about the California Journalism Protection Act" (AB886), which stipulates the use of the organization's online platform must pay a certain dividend to the news organization, which is settled every quarter. The bill is currently in committee.

*The amount of advertising to local newspapers declined 82% - a \$40 billion drop - since 2000, according to the Pew Research Center. EMS briefing on Feb 2 explored current initiatives*

## Sky River Casino celebrates Lunar New Year with \$300,000 Year of Dragon Giveaway and Red Envelope Table Game Hot Seats this February

Sky River Casino is excited to celebrate the Lunar New Year with big prizes for Sky River Rewards members. We wish everyone good luck and a prosperous Year of the Dragon!

### \$300,000 Year of Dragon Giveaway

Join the \$300,000 Year of the Dragon Giveaway every Friday in February, from 8pm-11:30pm. Earn entries for your chance to win a share of over \$75,000 in prizes each week, including two guaranteed winners of \$18,800 cash!

### Red Envelope Table Game Hot Seats

Play Table Games every Tuesday in February, from 5pm - 10pm for your chance to win up to \$8,000 cash! One lucky winner will be awarded a cash prize every 20 minutes in our Table Game Exclusive Hot Seat promotion!

Enjoy over 2,100 slot machines and more than 80 table games at Sky River Casino, and experience the Height of Hospitality. Don't miss out on the chance to win big and have a great time at Sky River Casino during the Lunar New Year!

Sky River Casino is also proud to announce that Leung's White Crane Dragon and Lion Dance Association will be returning for a special lion dance performance on February 11, 2024 at 11AM in honor of the Lunar New Year. ? Come watch the amazing performance at Sky River Casino and bring home some

good fortune.

Mouth-watering dim sum, wok rice and noodles dishes are available at Sky River Casino inside Dragon Beaux, as well as Koi Palace Express, a fast casual experience inside The Market at Sky River. Dragon Beaux also offers

special hot pot and Lunar New Year delicacies. For more information and to make a reservation, please visit [Skyriver.com/dining-and-drinks/dragonbeaux](http://Skyriver.com/dining-and-drinks/dragonbeaux).

For more details on the Lunar New Year celebrations at Sky River Casino,

please visit us online at [www.SkyRiver.com](http://www.SkyRiver.com).

\*Must be at least 21 years of age or older and a Sky River Rewards member. Visit Sky River Rewards Club for complete details. Management reserves all rights. Gambling problem? Call 1-800-GAMBLER.

### Join Sky River Rewards

Sky River Rewards, is one of the most hi-tech rewards programs among casinos in Northern California, allowing guests cardless play, cashless wallet, and more. The Sky River Rewards card is your key to receiving points for all your activities and those points can be redeemed for Free Play or dining credits. Become a Sky River Rewards member now to receive \$20 Free Play. To activate your Free Play, visit any slot machine and place a bet. Sky River Rewards enrollment can be done online using a computer, tablet, or phone with a camera. ?

### About Sky River Casino

Sky River Casino was built by the Wilton Rancheria, in partnership with Boyd Gaming Corporation, which is building and managing the property for the tribe. The casino opened in August 2022 and includes 100,000 sq ft of gaming, 2,100 slot machines, 80+ table games, and 17 bars and restaurants. To learn more, visit [www.SkyRiver.com](http://www.SkyRiver.com). ?

1. Who had composed the original Ramayana?

- (a) Rishi Valmiki (b) Tulsi Das  
(c) Anhinanda (d) Sant Ek Nath

2. Who is the central character in the Ramayana?

- (a) Ravana (b) Rama (c) Sita  
(d) Lakshmana

3. What is the name of the demon king who kidnapped Sita?

- (a) Surpanakha (b) Maricha  
(c) Ravana (d) Vibhishana

4. Lakshmana is considered the avatar of

- (a) Brahma (b) Shiva (c) Shesha (d) Agni

5. Who was the mother of Bharata?

- (a) Mandodari, (b) Kaikeyi,  
(c) Kaushalya, (d) Sumitra

6. Which divine bow did Rama break during Sita's swayamvara?

- (a) Kodanda (b) Pinaka (c) Gandiva  
(d) Vijaya

7. How many Kandas are there in the Ramayana?

- (a) Six (b) Seven (c) Nine (d) Twelve

8. Lord Hanuman lifted which mountain to get Sanjivani for Laxmana?

- (a) Mahendra (b) Vindhya  
(c) Dronagiri (d) Prasavana

## Ramayana Quiz for Kids

GEETHA PATIL

9. Which yajna was performed by Lord Rama in the Ramayana?

- (a) Sarvamedha yajna (b)  
Purushmedha yajna (c) Ashwamedha  
yajna (d) Rajasuya yajna

10. Who was the ruler of Kishkindha?

- (a) Jamvant (b) Bali (c) Hanuman  
(d) Sugriva

11. Where was Sita held hostage in Lanka?

- (a) Ashoka Vatika, (b) Mithila  
(c) Dandakaranya (d) Chitrakoot

12. After Lakshman falls unconscious in the war he is revived by a certain herb called Sanjivani. Who tells Rama that it can revive Lakshman?

- (a) Jambuvanta (b) Sushen (c)  
Dhanwantari (d) Hanuman

13. What was the name of place where lord Rama visited for Sita's swayambar to marry her?

- (a) Mithila, (b) Ayodhya, (3) Lanka,  
(d) Pindaka

14. Wives of king Dashrath: (select all that apply)

- (a) Manthara (2) Kaushalya (c)  
Madodari (d) Keikei (e) Sumitra

15. Who informs Rama first that Ravana has abducted Sita?

- (a) Jatayu (b) Jambuvan (c) Hanuman  
(d) Sugreev

**Answers:** 1. (a) Rishi Valmiki, 2. (b) Rama, 3. (c) Ravana, 4. (c) Shesha, 5. (b) Kaikeyi, 6. (b) Pinaka, 7. (b) Seven, 8. (c) Dronagiri, 9. (c) Ashwamedha yajna, 10. (c) Sugriva, 11. (a) Ashoka Vatika, 12. (b) Sushen, 13. Mithila, 14. (b) Kaushalya, (d) Keikei, (e) Sumitra, 15. (a) Jatayu

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## Simple Diet and Lifestyle Tips for Healthy Life

# Know winter weight loss tips

DR. INDRAJEET TYAGI AND DR. IRANNA HIRAPUR

Many people often end up gaining more weights during winters. However, you would be surprised to know that it is easier to burn calories in winter than in summer. Winter is the perfect time to lose weight, because fortunately we have a healthy metabolism in the winter, which allows us to burn more calories with less effort. However, we prefer to stay cozy in our warm blankets or sit still while binge watching our favorite shows or reading a book. In addition, with winters craving for sweet and healthy food increases. Thus, we wind up gaining more weight, so we need to eat mindfully.

According to Ayurveda in winters Kapha dosha leads to heaviness and slows our pace of life. The imbalance of the digestive fire (Agni) and poisons (Ama) disrupts the metabolism of fat tissue (Medo Dhatu). Ama obstructs bodily tissue pathways and weakens Vata Dosha, the energy principle that governs the space and air elements. This out-of-balance Vata interferes with digestion and causes you to feel hungry. Obesity (Sthoulyam) is brought on by this, along

with poor fat metabolism. The energy principle of water and earth components, the Kapha Dosha, is impaired by an excessive intake of sweet, fatty, and cold foods, which also promotes the deposition of fat. Cold weather also aggravated joint pain and stiffness in body. This happens due to aggravated Vata Dosha. Ayurveda says we need to keep kapha and Vata dosha in balance in order to lead a healthy life during cold weather.

### What is the Ayurvedic approach to weight loss?

The following are some Ayurvedic methods/tips for managing your weight at home.

1. Prioritize diet to reach an ideal weight: Make your diet a top priority as the first step in losing weight. Consistent, sustainable weight loss is possible only when you are focusing on your health through food and lifestyle adjustments.

2. Cultivate new rituals for eating: stick to your daily and seasonal schedule. Maintain regular mealtimes and refrain from snacking. Moderate your eating habits. Eat your meal in a quiet place by munching your food properly and after

your dinner, go for a quick stroll. Ayurveda's eating rules state that you should generally eat breakfast at 8 am, lunch at noon, and dinner at 5 pm. Try to eat within an hour of these times.

3. Avoid eating cold foods: Cold foods can aggravate Vata and increase Kapha. Kapha dosha is a mix of water and earth, and when you cool these elements, they solidify, causing stagnancy that results in weight gain. This means that you will want to avoid raw foods and salads.

4. Other Tips: Add Hing and desi ghee to avoid flatulence during saag preparation. Eating Gud (jaggery) with saag will ease digestion.

### What to eat during winters?

During the winter/Vata season, it is important to eat wet natured, warm, and

hearty foods. Even when you have excess Kapha, you can eat seasonal Vata balancing foods that will keep you nourished without contributing to excess weight gain. Eat sweet, sour, salty foods instead of bitter, astringent and pungent. Anytime, for eating, moderation is key!

### VATA SEASON FOODS:

#### Cooked Vegetables

Beets, carrots, garlic, green beans, onions, sweet potatoes, radishes, turnips, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, celery, eggplant, leafy green vegetables such as Sarson ka saag, Methi and Palak, Amaranth leaves bhaji, Bathua Raita, mushrooms, peas, peppers, potatoes, sprouts, tomatoes, zucchini.

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

## FIA Chicago hosts Republic Day celebrations

Cont'd from page 14

The children from the Atharv Dance Academy, unleashing a foot-stomping patriotic dance that echoed the spirit of the evening.

The festivities bestowed awards and honors upon individuals who have left an indelible mark on the community across diverse fields. They were Sudhir and Archana Agarwal, Pinky & Dinesh Thakkar, Chintan & Digna Patel, Chirag Patel, Sunny Patel, Arjun Patel, Manish & Shailja Gandhi, Suketu Amin, Kunal Sarangi (ex-MLA), Naresh Shah, Dr. Bhupinder Beri, and Jayanti Oza. The award ceremony was a flawless celebration of community service and contribution.

In a commitment to fostering community development grounded in both financial need and academic excellence, attracted an impressive pool of more than 35 applications this year. Rigorous evaluation led to the shortlisting of 17 exceptional candidates on this occasion, 6 individuals were honored with scholarships. Vice President of FIA and pro-MC Richa Chand, announced the recipients of the scholarships, highlighting their remarkable achievements.

Chandini Duvvuri, Vice President of FIA, conveyed the Vote of Thanks. She expressed gratitude to Consulate General Somnath Ghosh, Linda Davenport, Court Judge, and other esteemed dignitaries

whose presence added prestige to the occasion. Chandini offered a profound thank you to the altruistic individuals whose contributions made the event and scholarships possible. Recognizing the dedication and unwavering commitment of FIA.

The cultural event began with the rendition of 'An Evening in Paris,' Sunil Shah's signature dance moves ignited the crowd, prompting an impromptu dance floor and stage invasion by the audience.

The crowd enjoyed renditions by Neelajan Ray, Priyanka Mittra, Sammy M., Gautami Roy, Prakhar Ghosh, and Mohammad Salamat. Even the Q&A session between Rizwan and Shahid Rafi added a touch of humor.

As the resonant notes of Mohammad Rafi's songs, sung by Shahid Rafi, patriotic melodies filled the air like "Mera Rang De Basanti Chola," "Karo Zindagi Ko Watan Ke Hawaale," and "Nafrat Ki Laathi Todo".

As Consulate General of India, Somnath Ghosh, truly remarked "This FIA, Chicago event was not merely a reflection, but a vivid manifestation of our love for India and profound pride in being part of the world's largest democracy, India. The celebration left an indelible impression, cultivating a heightened sense of patriotism and national pride among the Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) connected to their roots and heritage".

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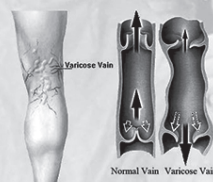


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**Democrats hold first presidential primary in South Carolina**

WASHINGTON: The first Democratic primary of the 2024 US presidential election is underway in South Carolina, with polling places open from 7 a.m. until 7 p.m. local time.

US President Joe Biden is expected to breeze through the South Carolina primary and the other Democratic primaries, as he faces long-shot challenges from US Representative Dean Phillips, and author Marianne Williamson.

Iowa and New Hampshire have long been the first US states to hold presidential contests in election years but the Democratic National Committee restructured the party's primary calendar, making South Carolina the first primary state in 2024.

Biden resurrected his 2020 presidential campaign after a strong primary performance in South Carolina, where African American voters play an outsized role in Democratic politics. That victory sent him on a path to the Democratic nomination and the White House.

"The truth is I wouldn't be here without the Democratic voters of South Carolina, and that's a fact," Biden said recently at a political event in Columbia, South Carolina.

According to a recent Emerson College Polling survey, the economy is the "most important issue" facing South Carolina, at 40 percent, followed by immigration, education, threats to democracy, healthcare, crime, housing affordability, and abortion access. *IANS*

*"A thorough analysis has been undertaken with regard to manpower requirements of CISF and Immigration officers"*

### Scindia holds meeting with CISF, immigration officials on design model for speedy immigration process

NEW DELHI: Civil Aviation minister Jyotiraditya M Scindia recently chaired an advisory committee group meeting with airport operators, CISF and Bureau of Immigration officials to discuss possible changes in airport interior design, as well as new technologies to expedite immigration and security check processes for international travellers

According to officials, the meeting delved into solutions derived from studying international airport models such as those of Singapore and Canada.

Key highlights of the discussions include exploring the possibility of cross-utilizing domestic and international XBIS machines at Delhi airport to ensure greater availability of machines, and hence, lesser wait time.

"Proof of concept trials for use of e-gates and e-biometrics for immigration are already underway. These are set to redefine the standards of efficiency and security in air travel," said a ministry official.

"A thorough analysis has been undertaken with regard to manpower requirements of CISF and Immigration officers.



Jyotiraditya M Scindia

This analysis takes into account the planned expansion of exist-

ing, as well as new airports to come across the country, in-

cluding those in Jewar, Navi Mumbai, and others," said the official.

"Held a productive brainstorming meeting with all major airport operators, @CISFHQs and Bureau of Immigration officials and @MoCA\_GoI to discuss design models to speed up immigration & security for international travellers," Scindia wrote on X.

"New technologies such as e-biometrics are also on the anvil, and are currently being tested. These will be key in our vision for international aviation hubs in India," he further wrote in the tweet. *IANS*

#### Indians, Pakistanis, among 15 arrested in Cyprus sham marriage scam

NEW DELHI: A criminal network facilitating illegal migration into the European Union, via sham marriages, has been busted in Cyprus, leading to the arrest of 15 individuals, including Indians and Pakistanis, European police said.

Investigations by Europol's Operational Task Force (OTF) found that the network was also involved in human trafficking and money laundering activities, as well as forcing victims into bogus marriages for immigration purposes.

"The suspects allegedly recruited Latvian and Portuguese nationals and facilitated their journeys to Cyprus, where the women entered into arranged marriages with third-country nationals," the European police agency said in a statement. *IANS*

#### H-1B visa process begins March 6 amid overhaul of lottery system

NEW YORK: The initial registration for the H-1B visa application for fiscal year 2025 will open from March 6 and run through March 22, the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced.

The announcement came as part of a final rule to strengthen the integrity of and reduce the potential for fraud in the registration process of the non-immigrant visa that allows US employers to hire foreign workers in specialty occupations.

Some of the steps taken by the federal agency include reducing the potential for gaming the registration system and ensuring each beneficiary would have the same chance of being selected, regardless of the number of registrations submitted on their behalf. "The initial registration period

for the FY 2025 H-1B cap will open at noon Eastern on March 6, 2024, and run through noon Eastern on March 22, 2024," USCIS said in a news release.

"During this period, prospective petitioners and their representatives, if applicable, must use a USCIS online account to register each beneficiary elec-

*The announcement came as part of a final rule to strengthen the integrity of and reduce the potential for fraud in the registration process of the non-immigrant visa*

tronically for the selection process and pay the associated registration fee for each beneficiary," it added.

The agency's final rule contains provisions that will create a beneficiary-cent-

tric selection process for registrations by employers, codify start date flexibility for certain petitions subject to the congressionally mandated H-1B cap, and add more integrity measures related to the registration process. *IANS*

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# SAAHAS FOR CAUSE

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2. **Delegate:** This can be a person of authority, like a shopowner, boss, or teacher, or it can be an ordinary person, such as whoever is next to you.



3. **Document:** Take notes or record the incident. (take their consent)

4. **Delay:** Ask the victim if they are okay and how you can support them. If you documented, ask them how they would like to proceed.

5. **Direct:** If you can tell the victim wants someone's assistance, and it is safe for you to do so, then you can directly intervene by calling out the inappropriate behavior.

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## India's first solar-powered village in Gujarat

JANVI SONAIYA

MODHERA: A unique blend of tradition and modernity, the hamlet of Modhera, nestled in the heart of Gujarat, has carved its name in history by becoming India's first solar-powered village.

This initiative, which caught global attention, is a significant stride towards achieving a harmonious balance between progress and environmental conservation.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi highlighted the village's distinction as the first in the nation to enjoy round-the-clock solar power.

Set up with an investment of \$9.7 million, the solar project in Modhera is a testament to the collaborative efforts of the Union Government and the Government of Gujarat.

This ambitious project has equipped the village with excess renewable energy, setting a sustainable template for others to follow.

As UN Secretary-General António Guterres noted, Modhera is a symbol of "reconciliation between humankind and the planet." *IANS*

## India's services sector PMI surges to 6-month high

NEW DELHI: Growth in India's services sector rose to a 6-month high in January on the back of a higher demand and better outlook ahead, according to an HSBC report released 5 February.

The HSBC India Services PMI was recorded at 61.8 in January, up from 59 in December. It is the highest since July 2023 when the PMI was 62.3. This is the 30th consecutive month of expansion in the services sector. *IANS*

## Board members aware of Musk's drug use, friends told him to go to rehab: Report

SAN FRANCISCO: Some board members at Tesla and SpaceX are aware of the "use of illegal drugs" by Elon Musk and regularly do drugs with him, "because they think refraining could upset the billionaire, who has made them a lot of money," the media reported.

They "don't want to risk losing the social capital that comes from being close to Musk, which for some feels akin to having proximity to a king," reports The Wall Street Journal (WSJ).

"Board members have reaped hundreds of millions from stock awards and separate investments, even as some have done drugs with Musk," the report mentioned.

According to the WSJ, friends and others close to Musk were worried that his drug use was getting worse, and "some asked him to go to rehab".



Elon Musk

Musk replied that no one has ever mentioned rehab to him.

"First, no one has ever mentioned rehab to me ever," the billionaire posted on X.

"Second, if they are saying that I was able to lead Tesla to be by far the most valuable carmaker and SpaceX to be by

far the most valuable space company simultaneously, that is the greatest compliment I have ever received," he wrote.

Last week, a Delaware judge in the US struck down Musk's \$56 billion pay package at Tesla, saying it is "unfair" and asked board members to come

up with a new pay proposal.

An angry Musk later announced that Tesla will move immediately to hold a shareholder vote to change its legal home from the US state of Delaware to Texas.

The WSJ report also claimed that multiple other directors of Musk's companies have "deep personal and financial ties to the billionaire- entrepreneur, and have profited enormously from the relationship".

"Several current or former directors at Tesla and SpaceX attend parties with him, go on exotic vacations and hang out at Burning Man, the Nevada arts and music festival," the report alleged.

Musk was yet to respond to these allegations.

"Most members of Tesla's current eight-person board have amassed shares worth hundreds of millions of dollars from their seats over the years, significantly more than what board members at other companies make for their service," the report noted.

Some current and former Tesla and SpaceX directors have knowledge of Musk's illegal drug use but haven't taken public action, it alleged.

"The volume of drug use by Musk and with board members has become concerning," said the report, citing sources.

Reports earlier surfaced that Musk had used drugs, including cocaine, ecstasy, LSD and magic mushrooms.

Leaders at Tesla and SpaceX were concerned about his drug use, "particularly his recreational use of ketamine, for which Musk has said he has a prescription". *IANS*

## 3 indigenously developed tech transferred to 12 industries in India

NEW DELHI: Three indigenously developed technologies -- thermal camera, CMOS camera, and Fleet Management System -- were transferred to 12 industries in India last week.

During the launch of "Digital India FutureLABS Summit 2024" held at IIT-Delhi, the technologies designed and developed by the CDAC (Centre for Development of Advanced Computing), Thiruvananthapuram under InTranSE Program of Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) were trans-

ferred to these industries.

As per the ministry, it is step towards Innovation, Science and Technology theme of Vikshit Bharat @2047 initiative of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The thermal smart camera technology has an inbuilt DPU to run various AI-based analytics. The indigenized technology is targeted for applications across

multiple domains, including smart cities, industries, defense, health & others.

The field implementation, testing and validation of this camera was done for road traffic applications. This technology was transferred to the eight industries simultaneously.

The CMOS camera technology is an Industrial Vision Sen-

sor iVIS 10GigE -- a CMOS based vision-processing system with a powerful on-board computing engine to perform the next generation industrial machine vision applications. This technology was transferred to one industry.

The third technology, Fleet Management System, which includes FlexiFleet, Personalized Transit Route Guidance System, and Operational Strategies for Headway Reliability.

FlexiFleet aims to optimize operations and enhance the efficiency of fleet operators and transit agencies. *IANS*

*As per the ministry, it is step towards Innovation, Science and Technology theme of Vikshit Bharat @2047 initiative of Prime Minister Narendra Modi*

# India can become \$7-T economy by 2030 if states stay small business-friendly

SANJEEV SHARMA

NEW DELHI: The Finance Ministry said that ten years ago, India was the 10th largest economy in the world, with a GDP of USD 1.9 trillion at current market prices.

"Today, it is the 5th largest with a GDP of USD 3.7 trillion, despite the pandemic and despite inheriting an economy with macro imbalances and a broken financial sector," a review report of the ministry said.

It said that in the next three years, India is expected to become the third-largest economy in the world, with a GDP of USD 5 trillion.

"The government has, however, set a higher goal of becoming a 'developed country' by 2047," the review report said.

It added that the journey of reforms will continue to achieve this goal and the reforms will be more purposeful and fruitful with the full participation of the state governments.

"The participation of the states will be fuller when reforms encompass changes in governance at the district, block, and village levels, making them citizen-friendly and small business-friendly and in areas such as health, education, land and labor in which states have a big role to play," the report said.

It said that the strength of the domestic demand has driven the economy to a 7 percent plus growth rate in the last three years.

"The robustness seen in domestic demand, namely, private consumption and investment, traces its origin to the reforms and measures implemented by the government over the last ten years," the report said.

It said that the supply side has also been strengthened with investment in infrastructure - physical and digital - and measures that aim to boost manufacturing.

"These have combined to provide an impetus to economic activity in the country. Accordingly, in FY25, real GDP growth will likely be closer to 7 percent," the report said.

The review report added that it is eminently possible for the Indian economy to grow in the coming years at a rate above 7 percent on the strength of the financial sector and other recent and future structural reforms.

"Only the elevated risk of geopolitical conflicts is an area of concern. Priority areas for future reforms include skilling, learning outcomes, health, energy secu-

urity, reduction in compliance burden for MSMEs, and gender balancing in the labor force," the report added.

It said that under a reasonable set of assumptions with respect to the inflation differentials and the exchange rate, India can aspire to become a USD 7 trillion economy in the next six to seven years (by 2030).

"Some economists argue, with considerable merit, that not all growth is equal. They are right. It is one thing for India to grow at 8-9 percent when the world



economy is growing at 4 percent, but it is another thing to grow at or above 7 percent when the world economy is struggling to grow at 2 percent," the report said.

It said that one unit of growth in the latter circumstance is qualitatively superior to the former and the marginal utility of growth in the second scenario is much higher.

"The global economy is struggling to maintain its recovery post-Covid because successive shocks have buffeted it.

*"The participation of the states will be fuller when reforms encompass changes in governance at the district, block, and village levels, making them citizen-friendly and small business-friendly and in areas such as health, education, land and labor in which states have a big role to play,"*

Some of them, such as supply chain disruptions, have returned in 2024. If they persist, they will impact trade flows, transportation costs, economic output and inflation worldwide. India will not be exempt from it, but having faced and seen off COVID and the energy and commodity price shocks of 2022, India is quietly confident of weathering the emerging disturbances," it added.

On the challenges confronting the economy, the report said the reform-led

growth that was witnessed by the Indian economy over the course of the last nine years is not without its accompanying share of challenges.

"First, in an increasingly integrated global economy, India's growth outlook is not only a function of its domestic performance but also a reflection of the spillover effects of global developments. Increased geo-economics fragmentation and the slowdown of hyper-globalization are likely to result in further friend shoring and onshoring, which are already having re-

percussions on global trade and, subsequently, on global growth," the report said.

Second, the trade-off between energy security and economic growth versus energy transition is a multifaceted issue having various dimensions: geopolitical, technological, fiscal, economic and social, and the policy actions being pursued by individual countries impacting other economies.

Third, the advent of Artificial Intelligence (AI) poses a big challenge to gov-

ernments around the world due to the questions it poses to employment particularly in services sectors. This was recently highlighted in an IMF paper estimating that 40 percent of global employment is exposed to AI, with the benefits of complementarity operating beside the risks of displacement. Further, the paper suggests that developing economies must invest in infrastructure and a digitally skilled labor force to fully harness AI's potential.

## Global banks face mounting losses on lending to troubled US commercial property sector

LONDON: Nearly a year on from a banking crisis that led to the collapse of three US regional lenders and the emergency takeover of Credit Suisse in Europe, a fresh chill is running through banks as far apart as New York, Tokyo and Zurich, a media report said.

Common to all of them -- mounting losses on lending to the troubled commercial property sector, CNN reported.

On 31st January, shares in New York Community Bancorp plunged 38 percent after it reported a loss of \$252 million for the last quarter.

The regional lender set aside \$552 million in the fourth quarter to absorb loan losses, up from \$62 million in the previous quarter. The increase was driven partly by expected losses on a loan used to finance an office building, it said, CNN reported.

The lender helped drag the KBW Regional Banking Index down 6 percent on 31 January, its biggest daily fall since last May -- the same month California-based First Republic became the third US banking casualty last year.

On 1st February, Japan's Aozora Bank said bad loans tied to US offices were partly to blame for its projected annual loss of 28 billion yen (\$190 million) last year. The lender had previously expected to make a net profit of 24 billion yen (\$160 million). The news sent its shares plunging over 21 percent, CNN reported.

The bank said it would take another year or two for the US office market to "stabilize" as more people returned to work in-person, and as the Federal Reserve moves from hiking interest rates to cutting them.

Losses are mounting in Europe, too. Swiss private bank and wealth manager Julius Baer announced on 1st February that its adjusted profit had tanked 55 percent last year because it lost 586 million Swiss francs (\$680 million) on loans made to a single "European conglomerate", CNN reported. IANS

## This oil can be natural treatment for dry eye conditions

AUCKLAND: Following a successful pilot study, researchers at the University of Auckland are conducting a clinical trial of castor oil as a potentially safe and natural treatment for dry eye conditions.

It is estimated that dry-eye illness affects approximately 58 percent of the population aged 50 and up in Australia.

Some risk factors for developing dry eye disease include advanced age, menopause, increased screen time, and contact lens wear.

Blepharitis is the leading cause of dry eye illness, accounting for more than 80 percent of cases. It is a chronic disease with no known cure.

"Currently, patients are left grappling with symptoms of dryness, grittiness and, in some cases, watery eyes that feel uncomfortable impacting on their quality of life and work productivity," says doctoral candidate and lead clinical investigator Catherine Jennings. ANI

*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)

## Finance Minister announces setting up of more medical colleges

NEW DELHI: With focus on Yuva Shakti and marching towards the goal of a Viksit Bharat by 2047, Finance Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman proposed setting up of more medical colleges in India, as she presented the Interim Budget 2024-25 in Parliament last week.

Sitharaman said the new medical colleges will be set up by utilizing the existing hospital infrastructure under various departments.

A committee will be set up for this purpose to examine the issues and make relevant recommendations, the Finance Minister added.



Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman speaks in Lok Sabha during the Interim Budget Session of Parliament, in New Delhi. (ANI Photo/Sansad TV)

She said that this initiative would not only create opportunities for the youth to become doctors but it will also improve

healthcare services to the people.

Sitharaman proposed that ASHA workers, Anganwadi

workers and helpers will also be covered under the Ayushman Bharat Scheme.

She said that in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) stream, girls and women make up 43 percent of the student strength, among the highest in the world.

She also emphasized on the need for research and innovation for catalyzing growth, employment and development.

She said, "A corpus of Rs.1 lakh crore to be established with a 50-year interest-free loan to provide long-term financing or refinancing with long tenors and low or nil interest rates." IANS

## Research suggests up to three meals of kimchi per day may lower men's obesity risk

WASHINGTON DC: According to research published in the open access journal BMJ Open, eating up to three servings of traditional Korean kimchi per day may lower men's overall risk of obesity, while radish kimchi is related with a lower incidence of belly bulge in both sexes.

Kimchi is made by salting and fermenting vegetables with various flavorings and seasonings, such as onion, garlic and fish sauce.

Cabbage and radish are usually the main vegetables used in kimchi, which contains few calories and is rich in dietary fiber, microbiome-enhancing lactic acid bacteria, vitamins, and polyphenols.

Previously published ex-

perimental studies have shown that *Lactobacillus brevis* and *L. plantarum* isolated from kimchi had an anti-obesity effect. And the researchers wanted to know if regular consumption might be associated with a reduction in the risk of overall and/or abdominal obesity, which is considered to be particularly harmful to health.

They drew on data from 115,726 participants (36,756 men; 78,970 women; average age 51) taking part in the Health Examinees (HEXA) study.

HEXA is a large, community-based long-term study of the larger Korean Genome and Epidemiology Study, designed to examine environmental and genetic risk factors for common long-term conditions among Korean adults over the age of 40.

Dietary intake for the previous year was assessed using a validated 106-item food frequency questionnaire for which participants were asked to state

Total kimchi included baechu (cabbage kimchi); kkakdugi (radish kimchi); nabak and dongchimi (watery kimchi); and others, such as mustard greens

kimchi is 95 g.

Height and weight, for BMI, and waist circumference were measured for each participant. A BMI of 18.5 was defined as underweight; normal weight 18.5 to 25; and obesity as above 25.

Abdominal obesity was defined as a waist circumference of at least 90 cm for men and at least 85 cm for women. Some 36% of the men and 25% of the women were obese.

The results indicated a J-shaped curve; possibly because higher consumption is associated with higher intake of total energy, carbohydrates, protein, fat, sodium and cooked rice, say the researchers. ANI



how often they ate a serving of each foodstuff, from never or seldom, up to 3 times a day.

kimchi. A portion of baechu or kkakdugi kimchi is 50 g, while a portion of nabak or dongchimi

# 10 reasons why e-cigarettes and vaping devices can trigger serious health issues

NEW DELHI: Vaping continues to pose irreversible dangers for society with new-age gateway products using innovative marketing techniques to lure children and youngsters. In today's age of information overload and misinformation, it is extremely vital for citizens to have access to credible and accurate information to ensure they do not fall prey to activities promoted by vested interests.

Mothers Against Vaping, a united front of concerned mothers combatting the escalating vaping crisis among our youth, has highlighted 10 major health risks associated with vaping as it seeks to raise awareness about vaping and various health hazards ranging from excessive usage of nicotine to severe lung injury in children.

The first risk it has highlighted is that new-age tobacco devices, unlike typical cigarettes, can result in excessive nicotine intake and these devices enable more prolonged usage sessions.

Secondly, there is a prevalent misconception that the vapors emitted from new-age tobacco devices are harmless, but in

reality, these emissions consist of a range of harmful substances, including nicotine, diacetyl, which are linked to severe lung injury. The aerosol produced by e-cigarettes contains particulate matter smaller than 2.5 microns (PM2.5), notorious for its

detrimental impact on respiratory health.

The 2019 e-cigarette or vaping product use-associated lung injury (EVALI) outbreak in the United States serves as a stark reminder that led to the hospitaliza-

tion of numerous Americans, predominantly teenagers and young adults, resulting in enduring lung damage and pulmonary dysfunction for many survivors.

Thirdly, the dangers of New-Age Gateway Devices go beyond just respiratory

health issues. E-cigarettes, in particular, harm blood vessels, increasing the risk of heart disease. They are also linked to negative effects on the immune system and reproductive organs.

Fourthly, these devices contribute to environmental issues and consequently harm humans. The components of New-Age Tobacco Devices, including a cartridge, an atomizer, and a battery, contain materials such as metals and ceramics.

Improper disposal of these components contributes to e-waste, posing environmental hazards. For example, e-cigarette batteries can lead to environmental pollution with heavy metals, seeping into the soil and contaminating groundwater, rivers and lakes. This contamination not only harms the environment but also poses risks to human health, with children being more vulnerable than adults.

The fifth health hazard pertains to mental well-being. Peer-reviewed studies have revealed troubling connections between vaping, nicotine and the exacerbation of symptoms related to depression and anxiety. The findings suggest higher chances for individuals to be diagnosed with depression due to their vaping habits. *IANSlife*



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# What Foods boost Collagen Production?

GEETHA PATIL & DR. KIRANKUMAR RATHOD

Collagen is a type of structural protein that is naturally found in our body and makes up about 25 to 35 per cent of the whole-body protein content and over 75-80% of our skin. It is the protein in our skin responsible for firmness, plumpness, elasticity, and youthfulness and protects it by impeding the absorption of toxins and pathogens. Collagen is also found throughout the

various natural herbs, therapies, foods, and other ingredients to boost collagen and other proteins in the skin to maintain its long-lasting beauty. Nutrients that aid the process of collagen production include zinc, vitamin C, and copper. Vitamin C helps produce pro-collagen, the body's precursor to collagen. Therefore eat lots of fruits and vegetables that will help tighten the skin and keep you Age-

prevent the breakdown of collagen.

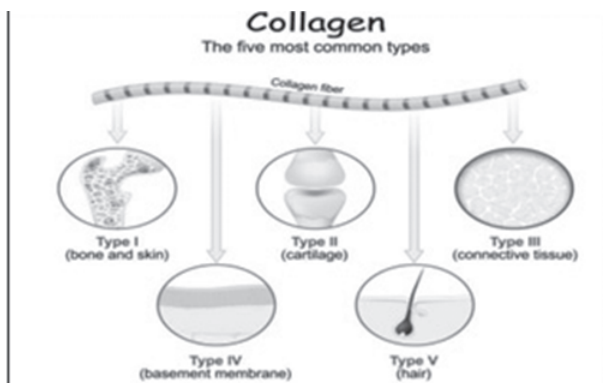
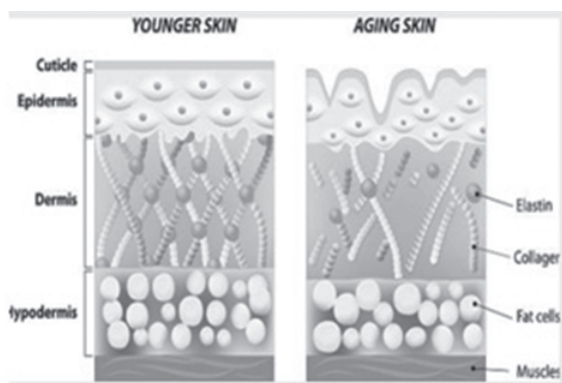
8. Soups made from leafy greens like spinach, kale, swiss chard, and other salad greens have chlorophyll, known for its antioxidant properties. Studies have shown that consuming chlorophyll increases the precursor to collagen in the skin.

9. Beans are high-protein food that often contain the amino acids necessary for

and enhance the complexion.

2. Antioxidants or youth activating herbs: In Ayurveda, a myriad of herbs are categorized as Rasayana or rejuvenators. Gotukola, Ashwagandha and Bala are some potent reparative herbs that work on the skin by boosting collagen production.

3. Eternal youth emulsion: Ayurveda's beauty elixir "ghee" is also known as a



body including in the muscles and bones where it provides necessary strength. The word collagen comes from the Greek word 'kolla' and the French suffix '-gene' that translates to glue producing. It diminishes as we age, making it important to include certain vitamins and minerals that can help boost collagen production in the body.

## What factors destroy collagen?

When you are young and skin is healthy, it repairs and makes new collagen regularly and keeps skin smooth, resilient, and free from fine lines. However, when our skin is exposed to factors like UV rays, smoke, pollution, erratic diet and stress that produce free radicals in the skin. These free radicals are one of the major causes for the breakdown of collagen fibers and loss of skin elasticity, thinning skin and accelerating the skin aging process. As a result, our skin starts to sag, and fine lines and wrinkles appear on the face.

## How to boost collagen naturally?

### What Ayurvedic secrets are there for boosting collagen?

In the present time, numerous artificial techniques work on boosting the collagen in the skin. However these invasive techniques do not get to the root of the issue, they are temporary remedies. Nevertheless, Ayurveda's holistic approach to aging gracefully known as "Rasayan Chiktsha" that rejuvenates skin through

less.

1. Citric fruits like oranges, grapefruit, lemons, and limes are rich sources of Vitamin C.

2. Tomatoes can provide up to 30% of important nutrient for collagen, and has lycopene, a powerful antioxidant for skin support.

3. Bell peppers contains Vitamin C and capsaicin, an anti-inflammatory compound that helps combat signs of ageing.

4. Tropical fruits like mango, kiwi, pineapple and guava also contain Vitamin C.

5. Guava also has a small amount of

collagen synthesis. In addition, many of them are rich in copper, another nutrient necessary for collagen production.

10. Cashews contain zinc and copper, both of which boost the body's ability to create collagen.

*Note: Moreover, ensure to stay away from too much sugar and refined carbohydrates, which can cause inflammation and damage collagen.*

1. In Ayurveda, the Vata pacifying diet is recommended for building the Ojas (the unifying factor of all the vital essence) in the body. Here are the important com-

goldmine of nutrients for skin. And, specifically if it is aged cow's ghee or Purana Ghrita, it becomes a tonic for skin which is extremely nourishing in nature, with age arresting, skin toning and smoothing qualities.

4. Therapies for anti-ageing: According to Ayurveda, regular intensive oil treatments like massage with natural oils is another way to replenish the body. Unrefined organic black sesame, sweet almond oil and cow's milk are very effective for keeping skin supple, soft and toned by restoring firmness, increasing collagen and giving it a sheen.

## What are the Homeopathic remedies that boost collagen production?

- Abrotanum is recommended when skin looks more aged in spite eating well and having lot of wrinkles. This medicine tones skin by building the collagen.

- Aurum muriaticum is given to aged groups with wrinkles on face.

- Cal Carb is used in obese people who lose their fat to get slim and skin sags. This helps in skin toning by collagen building.

- Calcarea Phos - this is useful in thin personality with all over wrinkles. It can be given in low potency.

- Silica given in lower potency to boost collagen naturally

- Cal Flour is a biochemical medicine that helps in strengthening the elastic fibers and bones and vascular walls. This is used as anti-ageing remedy in homeopathy.

zinc, another co-factor for collagen production.

6. Astringent fruits like apples, berries, cherries, strawberries, Indian goose berry, raspberries and blackberries can help tighten the tissue and skin, and reverse the ageing process.

7. Garlic and can boost our collagen production, as it is high in sulfur, which is a trace mineral that helps synthesize and

ponents of the anti-ageing diet: a) Cow's ghee, nuts and seeds like almonds, walnuts, sunflower seeds, and flax seeds are vital in building Ojas. b) Anti-inflammatory foods like turmeric, ginger and cinnamon are powerful cleaners that cleanse the blood, lymph, and liver. c) Leafy greens and rainbow-colored fruits are rich sources of cell renewing antioxidants and literally help flush toxins out of the body

*When you are young and skin is healthy, it repairs and makes new collagen regularly and keeps skin smooth, resilient, and free from fine lines. However, when our skin is exposed to factors like UV rays, smoke, pollution, erratic diet and stress that produce free radicals in the skin*

**Housing scheme in Budget to boost steel, cement, construction**

NEW DELHI: The boost to housing in the Interim Budget is another important proposal from the market perspective since this will benefit industries like cement, steel and all construction related segments, Geojit Financial Services' Chief Investment Strategist V.K. Vijayakumar said recently.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, presenting the Interim Budget announced, the government will launch a scheme to help deserving sections of the middle class "living in rented houses, or slums, or chawls and unauthorized colonies" to buy or build their own houses.

"Despite the challenges due to the Covid, implementation of PM Awas Yojana (Grameen) continued and we are close to achieving the target of three crore houses. Two crore more houses will be taken up in the next five years to meet the requirement arising from increase in the number of families," she said.

Anarock Group Chairman Anuj Puri said that as anticipated, the Interim Budget made no big-bang announcements, but it continued its focus on infrastructure upgrades and building connectivity across the country. *IANS*

# Real Estate POST

February 9, 2024

www.indiapost.com

India Post 31

Savings rate down but healthy at 30%; uptick in housing loans drives credit growth

CHENNAI: India's household savings, a major contributor for the economic growth, is on the decline since FY12 and is currently averaging at about 30 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), said top economists.

"The current savings rate is 30.2 percent of GDP as of FY 22, the latest data available so far. *IANS*

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

## Home is where Ram is - people queue up to buy property in Ayodhya

AYODHYA: Home is where Ram is -- that is what people now believe.

According to official sources, people -- both Indians and NRIs -- are now queuing up to buy property in the holy city that has come to be known as 'Hindu Vatican' after the opening of the Ram temple last month.

Superstar Amitabh Bachchan made headlines last month when he bought a plot of land in Ayodhya.

"Three NRIs from Thailand have approached the Ayodhya Development Authority to buy five acre plots. Earlier, delegations from Mexico, South Korea and Sri Lanka had visited the city to explore the options of buying land in Ayodhya, which has undergone a massive makeover because of infrastructure upgrade in view of Ram temple and state government's commit-

ment to make it a global destination," said an official.

Ayodhya Development Authority (ADA) secretary Satyendra Singh said: "A group

letter to officials of the housing and development board.'

As aggregating a big chunk of land within the city limits is difficult, those looking for large land

"We are keeping a record of requests for land being made by interested companies, parties and individuals and have told them to wait till the time relevant



of three individuals from Thailand came to me seeking a land parcel measuring at least 5-acre. We have forwarded their

parcels are being directed to Navya Ayodhya, a 1407-acre greenfield township being developed by Awas Vikas Parishad.

schemes are floated. Our staff would get in touch with them and allotment would be done as per the rules and guidelines," said PK Singh, superintending engineer, Awas Vikas Parishad, Ayodhya division.

Singh said request letters from the group from Sri Lanka and Thailand were received recently while those looking for limited land are being entertained by the development authority.

"Private companies and real estate agents are also active. However, a maximum number of NRIs are showing interest in the government schemes," added Singh.

Both the officials clarified that formal requests by any country are routed through the Union government and hence those posing as representatives of the countries have been asked to provide formal authorization letters through the embassies. *IANS*

## Interim Budget proposals to boost real-estate sector: Industry operators

KOLKATA: The big operators in the real-estate sector of the country welcomed the proposals of the Interim Budget 2024 presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, saying the focus on housing requirements of the middle class will actually boost the sector.

According to the CEO of Shristi Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited, Sahil Saharia, the primary goal

of this focus on housing for the middle class is to enable these individuals to either buy or construct their own homes.

"This declaration represents a significant stride in promoting affordable housing and realizing the dream of homeownership for the middle class. By specifically targeting individuals in rented dwellings or informal settlements, the government is recognizing the challenges faced by a substan-

tial portion of the population and is implementing concrete measures to provide them with a viable path to owning a home," he said.

The Managing Director of the Jain Group, Rishi Jain, said the move to bolster the PMAY-Grameen program and to accelerate the housing for all mission call for celebration.

"I predict that the higher capital outlay towards long-term infrastructure will also have a positive effect on the real-estate industry," he said.

The Managing Director of Siddha Group, Sanjay Jain, said the focus on housing for the deserving section of the middle class, particularly those residing in rented houses or slums, empowering them to acquire a home of their own, will not only to boost the real-estate sector, but also the ancillary industries such as housing finance, material sourcing, architecture, design etc. *IANS*





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**RAMAN MITTAL**

NEW DELHI: The day-to-day demands of the contemporary world can take a toll on our mental health, causing stress, anxiety, and depression. When left unaddressed, these conditions can lead to a severe impact on our general well-being.

While experts suggest a host of measures to mitigate mental health challenges, Pranayama, or Yogic Breathing, has carved a distinctive reputation for its significant positive effects on mental health. The ancient practice of Pranayama allows individuals to connect more deeply with their breath and witness an elevated sense of inner peace and relaxation.

Let us further delve deeper into the unprecedented advantages of integrating Pranayama into our daily lives.

**Understanding Pranayama**

Pranayama encompasses a range of approaches to help individuals control their breath and enhance their overall well-being. The practice is often paired with

meditation and different yoga postures. Its fundamental principle is that the breath acts as a bridge between the mind and body, harmonizing the two. By controlling their breath, individuals can accomplish a more profound sense of calm and balance in their lives.

**Mental health benefits of Pranayama**

Numerous scientific researches across the globe have validated the significant effect of Pranayama on mental health, including:-

**Lowered stress**

By allowing individuals to focus on their breathing, Pranayama helps in alleviating stress and anxiety. With this, one can nurture a sense of inner calmness and develop resilience to deal with life's chal-

lenges.

**Elevated mood**

Pranayama is also highly recognized for its ability to uplift mood and mitigate the symptoms of depression. It fosters an optimistic environment, re-

placing negative beliefs and emotions with positivity and happiness, improving overall mental well-being.

**Improved focus**

Pranayama can be a vital tool for improving concentration and focus in today's world of endless distractions. Training the mind to

focus on the present moment, it allows practitioners to perform their daily tasks with improved efficiency and precision. Thus, by making it a regular part of their routine, individuals can achieve higher productivity in all areas of their lives.

**Enhanced self-awareness**

Regularly practicing Pranayama can also help in developing an increased sense of self-awareness. This heightened self-awareness enables us to comprehend our thoughts and emotions better, leading to personal growth and self-improvement.

A few techniques of Pranayama that can be easily incorporated into our daily routine:

**Bhramari:** The Bhramari Pranayama method involves producing a humming sound

while inhaling and exhaling through the nose. This popular technique is known to relieve stress and promote a feeling of calmness.

**Nadi Shodhana:** This technique involves breathing rhythmically via alternating nostrils, allowing individuals to accomplish inner balance and lower stress levels. Additionally, the alternating flow of air via the left and right nostrils promotes the alignment of vital energies, cultivating a sense of tranquility.

**Kapalbhati:** Practicing Kapalabhati involves rapid and strong inhales and exhales via the nose. This exercise can boost focus and concentration, making it an ideal tool for individuals aiming to bolster mental clarity and productivity. *ANSLife*

# Breathing in Bliss

## The magic of Indian herbs and spices

**N. LOTHUNGBENI HUMTSOE**

NEW DELHI: The first thing that foreigners will mention when you question them about the country's well-known cuisine is its spices. How a variety of herbs and spices are used in the preparation of the most delightful Indian cuisines.

Indian food is made with a variety of methods, such as frying, roasting, and simmering, but the secret ingredient-taste-is the magic of the herbs and spices. Let's explore some of the leading Indian herbs and spices that every home should have on hand to lend a touch of healing whenever needed.

**Cumin seeds**

Brownish-yellow in color and pungent, cumin seeds are frequently used in Indian cooking for "Tadka". A method of softening cumin seeds in heated ghee or oil to release essential oil and increase their aromatic quality.

Turmeric powder

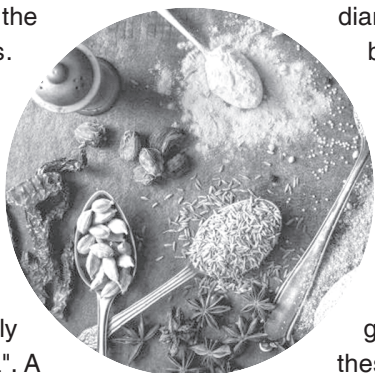
Turmeric powder is one of the most widely used spices in every Indian home. Turmeric can be used in a variety of stir-fries, such as basic potato fries, chef-style mutton curries, and chicken butter masala curries.

**Cloves**

One fascinating thing to know about Indian herbs and spices is that they may be used to make different kinds of tea in addition to being used in cooking. You can make tea and 'Tadka' for dishes at the same time with cloves. It is known for having digestive qualities.

**Ginger & Garlic**

Whether you like your garlic and ginger in a paste or powder form, these spices are essential to Indian-style cooking. In addition to adding flavor, it also contains anti-inflammatory qualities and, if you're preparing meat, can tenderize it. *ANSLife*



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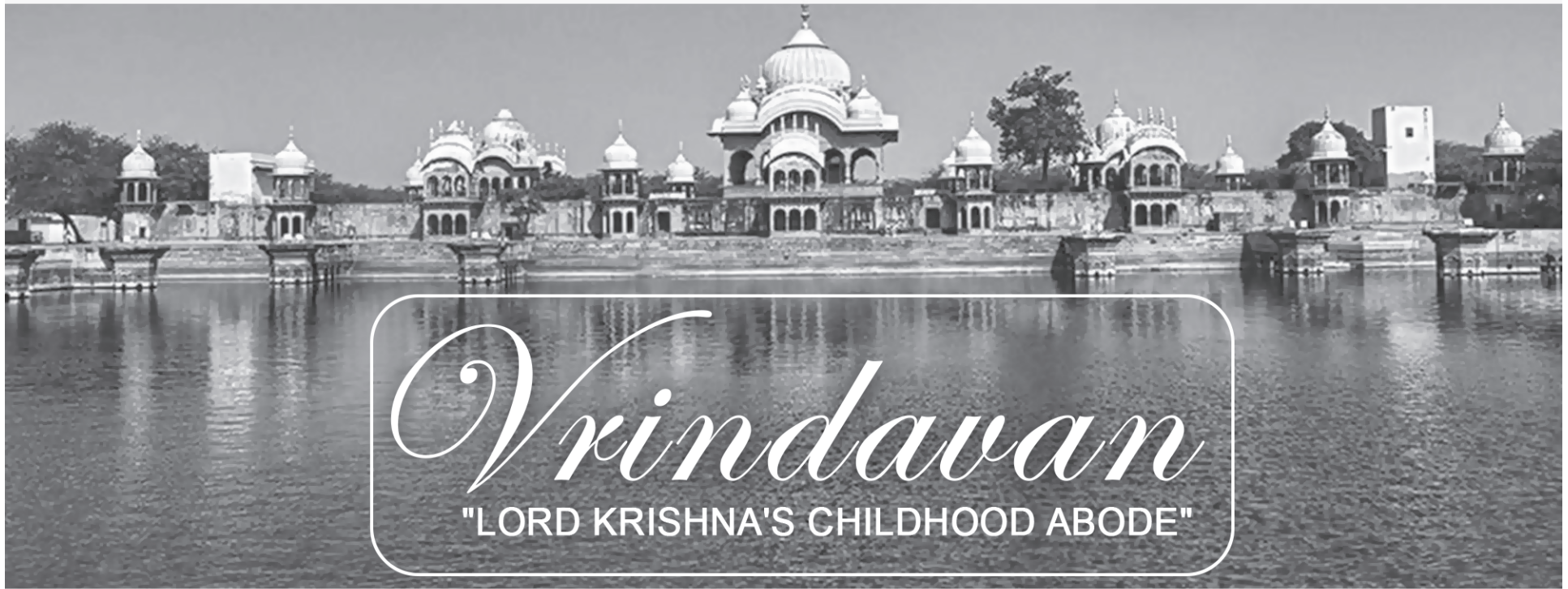
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## Vrindavan

"LORD KRISHNA'S CHILDHOOD ABODE"

One of the oldest cities on the banks of Yamuna, Vrindavan is considered to be one of the most important places of pilgrimage for the devotees of Krishna. It is said that Lord Krishna had spent his childhood in Vrindavan. The name of the city has been derived from Vrinda (meaning basil) and van (meaning grove), which perhaps refer to the two small groves at Nidhivan and Seva Kunj. Since Vrindavan is considered to be a sacred place, a large number of people come here to abandon their worldly life.

The city of Vrindavan hosts hundreds of Lord Krishna and Radha temples scattered throughout, the most famous ones being Banke Bihari temple and the world-famous ISKCON temple. The vibrant

surroundings perfectly depict the playful and benevolent nature of Lord Krishna. Located along the waters of River Yamuna, the numerous temples set amidst the thick woods and lush greenery of Vrindavan are the major attractions here.

### PLACES TO VISIT IN VRINDAVAN

**Banke Bihari Mandir:** Shri Banke Bihari Mandir is a Hindu temple dedicated to Lord Krishna in the holy city of Vrindavan in the Mathura district. One of the most revered shrines in the country, this temple is among the 7 temples of Thakur of Vrindavan which also include Sri Radhavallabh Ji, Shri Govind Dev Ji and four others. As you come in the presence of the Banke Bihari Temple, you are confronted with the stunning Rajasthani-style edi-

fice of the temple, which is adorned with arched windows and meticulous stonework.

**Prem Mandir:** Imbued with elegance and grandeur, the Prem Mandir is a massive temple that was shaped by Jagadguru Shri Kripaluji Maharaj in the year 2001. Known as "Temple of God's love", this grand religious place is dedicated to Radha Krishna as well as Sita Ram. Located in Vrindavan, the holy city in the district of Mathura in Uttar Pradesh, the temple is enveloped with piousness and serenity. This newly constructed temple is the most beautiful in the entire Brij area and is crowded with devotees during the time of the Aarti.

**Radha Raman Temple:** Located about 2 kilometers from the Vrindavan Railway Station is one of the most revered early modern

Hindu temples in Vrindavan, the Radha Raman Temple. It is dedicated to Lord Krishna, who is considered to be Radha Raman, meaning one who gives pleasure to Radha. The temple is known to have the original Shaligram deity of Krishna alongside Radharani, which is the self-manifested deity from Shaligram Shila and has a mystical smile on his face. The Radha Raman temple complex also has the samadhi of Gopal Bhatta, located right next to the appearance place of Radha Raman.

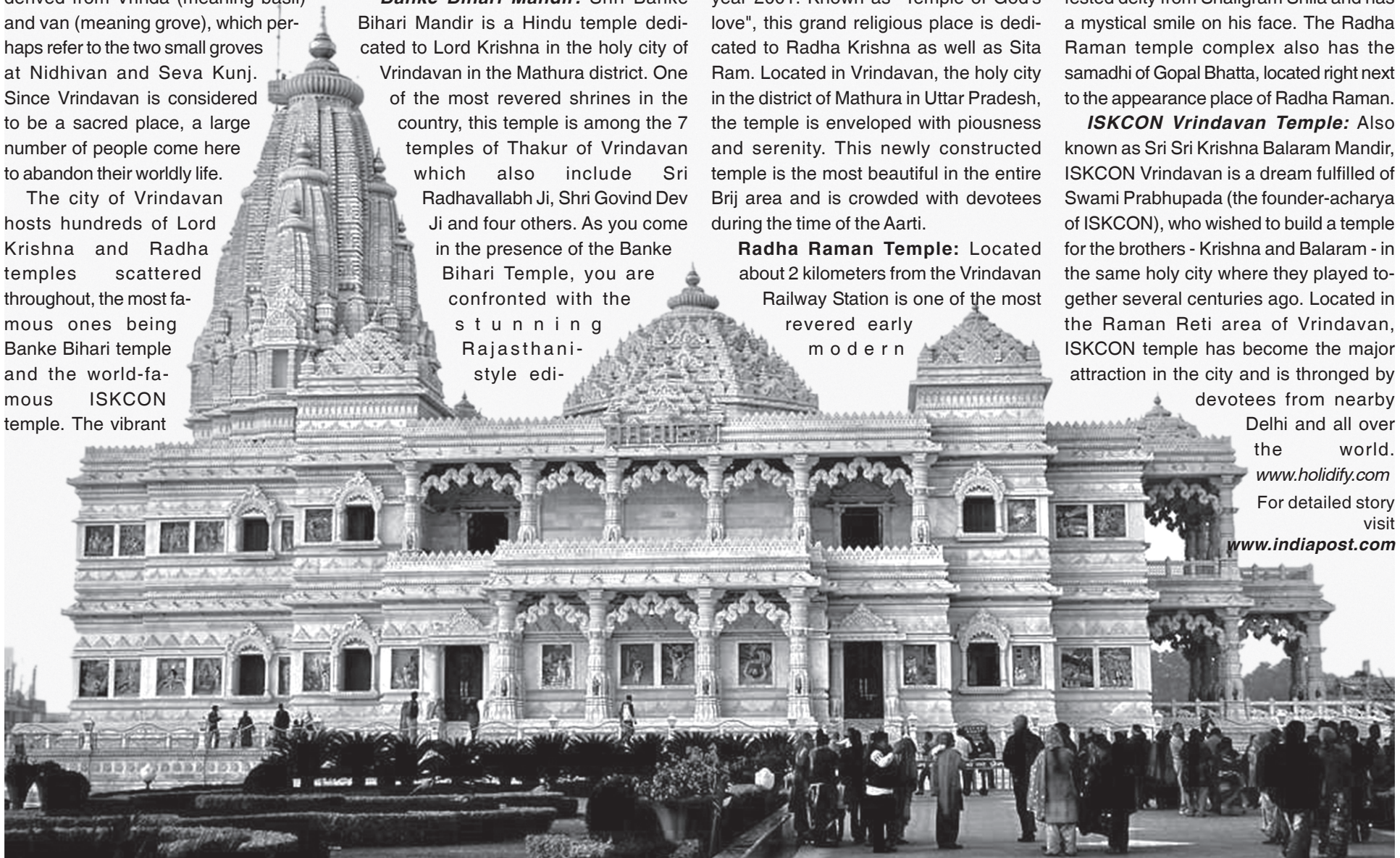
**ISKCON Vrindavan Temple:** Also known as Sri Sri Krishna Balaram Mandir, ISKCON Vrindavan is a dream fulfilled of Swami Prabhupada (the founder-acharya of ISKCON), who wished to build a temple for the brothers - Krishna and Balaram - in the same holy city where they played together several centuries ago. Located in the Raman Reti area of Vrindavan, ISKCON temple has become the major attraction in the city and is thronged by devotees from nearby

Delhi and all over the world.

[www.holidify.com](http://www.holidify.com)

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# Your Weekly Future



by **VANEET SHARMA** ● FEB 9<sup>TH</sup> to FEB 15<sup>TH</sup> 2024



**ARIES**

**MAR 21 to APRIL 20**

The planetary transit is highly favorable in this week but the beginning is not good for health, happiness and decision making. You might have to face some kind of set back or mental tension too but you shall find yourself very lucky to escape from such tensions on 11th and 12th of the week. Your social life, relation with friends and relatives shall help you to get rid of your troubles. The last two days of the week are excellent for work area.



**CANCER**

**JUN 21 to JULY 22**

The beginning of the week shall mark lot of activity in matters related to children. The day of 11th and 12th shall mark travelling but the confidence level might get reduced. This time shall be good for love life and you shall be highly excited with your bonding with the partner but remember it shall be temporary type. The last two days of the week are especially good for married life and conjugal bliss.



**LIBRA**

**SEP 23 to OCT 22**

In the beginning of the week you are likely to spend time with family members. You shall be having enough funds and you shall extend one or other type of help to all who are dependent on you. In your own work you shall keep generating the required gains and your personnel and social influence is likely to increase. In the end of the week you might have to face some mental tensions.



**CAPRICORN**

**DEC 22 to JAN 19**

In the beginning of the week you shall be happy with some relief in financial matters. You shall face the problems of ups and downs in your married life however health shall be good. On 11th and 12th you might go on a long journey or a place of pilgrimage along with your spouse. The week end is indicating progress and achievement in work area but health might get affected.



**TAURUS**

**APRIL 21 to MAY 20**

The beginning of the week is excellent for everything but on 11th and 12th you shall be feeling very low and lethargic. The 13th & 14th of the week shall be better. Overall this week is auspicious for all areas but you are advised to drop important decisions on 11th and 12th. The last two days of the week are best for your work area. Those who are associated with artistic activities shall get great results on professional front.



**LEO**

**JULY 23 to AUG 22**

Beginning of the week indicates financial gains and some mental tensions which are likely to increase by the mid of the week and after that also there won't be a big relief from the stress and tensions till the morning of 13th however, after that this week shall go perfectly alright till its end as the tremendous support of family members shall certainly help you come out of it. Financial issues are not indicated in this week.



**SCORPIO**

**OCT 23 to NOV 22**

In the beginning of the week you shall get relief from your mental tensions. It would be a wonderful week for your progress at work with rise in your position eventually resulting in an increase in the inflow of money but expenses shall remain uncontrolled only. There shall be a considerable increase in your confidence. You might have to go on some work related journey too. The last two days of the week shall be good for your social life.



**ACQUARIUS**

**JAN 20 to FEB 19**

This week shall prove to be excellent for all areas of life and you shall have to travel throughout the week or else you might have to spend lot of money and may be on hospitalization too. The inflow of money shall be good in the mid of the week. You can expect good results in matters related to harmony with spouse, and inflow of money. The last two days of the week are giving stronger indications of journey.



**GEMINI**

**MAY 21 to JUN 20**

You shall find yourself surrounded by all sorts of troubles from the beginning of the week. You shall not be getting any reasonable support from anywhere except from your partner/spouse/beloved. The days of 13th and 14th are especially bad for your health, happiness & decision making. During these days there are chances of facing some disappointment, failure, frustration or problem. The last two days of the week are average for you.



**VIRGO**

**AUG 23 to SEP 22**

You shall become victim of few tensions in the beginning of the week. Your health shall be average. You shall be spending money on yourself, your family and also on journeys in this week. In the first half of the week although you shall be focusing mainly on your family but your mental tensions won't let you find good solutions for some issues. In the latter half of the week you would be concentrating more on your social life and work area.



**SAGITTARIUS**

**NOV 23 to DEC 21**

You shall go on a long journey in the beginning of the week. You shall have to control your anger & aggression in this week. You shall be inclined towards religious activities and would go on journeys too. There shall be sudden increase in your expenses in this week however the source of income shall also get strengthened. Your good planning, systematic approach and micromanagement shall help you earn more recognition and gains in social circles.



**PISCES**

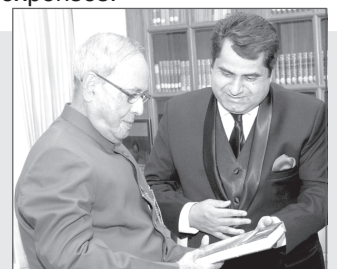
**FEB 20 to MAR 20**

The beginning of the week is best time for getting favor of destiny. The health related troubles or other obstacles shall be less in this week. This is best time for decision making but you are advised to handle love relationship carefully. In professional life there would be happy moments in the mid of the week. The latter half of the week is giving indications of financial gains. The last two days of the week are showing increase in expenses.

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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## Philosophy

MAHATMA GANDHI

Generally speaking, observing the law of Truth is merely understood to mean that we must speak the truth. But we in the Ashram understand the word Satya or Truth in a much wider sense. There should be the Truth in thought, Truth in speech, and Truth in action.

To the man who has realized this Truth in perfection, nothing else remains to be known, because all knowledge is necessarily included in it. What is not included in it is not Truth, and so not true knowledge; and there can be no inward peace without true knowledge.

If once we learn how to apply this never-failing test of Truth, we will at once be able to find out what is worth doing, what is worth seeing, what is worth reading. But how is one to realize this Truth, which may be likened to the philosopher's stone or the cow of plenty?

By single-minded devotion (abhyasa) and indifference to every

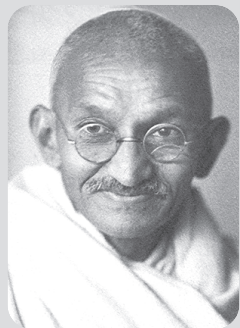
one stumbles, and is thus redirected to the right path. Therefore the pursuit of Truth is true bhakti (devotion). It is the path that leads to God, and therefore there is no place in it for cowardice, no place for defeat. It is the talisman by which death itself becomes the portal of life eternal.

### Non-possession or Poverty

Civilization, in the real sense of the term, consists not in the multiplication, but in the deliberate and voluntary reduction of wants. This alone promotes real happiness and contentment, and increases the capacity for service.

From the standpoint of pure Truth, the body too is a possession. It has been truly said, that desire for enjoyment creates bodies for the soul. When this desire vanishes, there remains no further need for the body, and man is free from the vicious cycle of births and deaths.

The soul is omnipresent; why should she care to be confined within the cage-like body, or do evil and even kill for the



Mahatma Gandhi

*Pursuit of Truth is true bhakti (devotion)*

*It has been truly said that desire for enjoyment creates bodies for the soul*

other interest in life (vairagya) - replies the Bhagavadgita. In spite, however, of such devotion, what may appear as truth to one person will often appear as untruth to another person. But that need not worry the seeker.

Where there is honest effort, it will be realized that what appear to be different truths are like apparently different countless leaves of the same tree. Does not God Himself appear to different individuals in different aspects? Still we know that He is one.

But Truth is the right designation of God. Hence there is nothing wrong in every one following Truth according to one's lights. Indeed it is one's duty to do so. Then if there is a mistake on the part of any one so following Truth, it will be automatically set right.

For the quest of Truth involves tapas - self-suffering, sometimes even unto death. There can be no place in it for even a trace of self-interest. In such selfless search for Truth nobody can lose his bearings for long.

Directly one takes to the wrong path

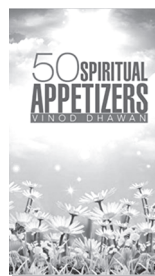
sake of the cage? We thus arrive at the ideal of total renunciation, and learn to use the body for the purposes of service so long as it exists, so much so that service, and not bread, becomes with us the staff of life.

We eat and drink, sleep and awake, for service alone. Such an attitude of mind brings us real happiness, and the beatific vision in the fullness of time.

*Excerpted from 'Selected Writings of Mahatma Gandhi'. The 76th death anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi was observed on January 30*

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## Feminization of agriculture in South Asia: Need to close the gender gap

ANUBHA MISHRA

The agriculture sector has the largest share of women's employment in South Asia at 57 percent. The South Asian region-comprising Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Maldives-has witnessed impressive economic growth in the past few decades. The proportion ranges from 28 percent in Sri Lanka to a far higher 74 percent in Nepal; Maldives is at 2 percent and is the exception.

The Government of India in the Economic Survey (2017-2018) stated that the agricultural sector in India is undergoing feminization. In the face of shrinking employment opportunities in agriculture, men diversified into the rural non-farm sector, and male out-migration emerged as a major livelihood strategy. However, this has not translated to rights over agricultural property or in decision-making. With no viable alternative livelihood opportunities, they are forced to

tion mostly consisted of hunters and gatherers. With the increase in population, the cultural norms also changed and as food scarcity became more rampant, gradually the burden of growing food fell upon the male shoulders due to the kind of physically straining work that agriculture used to be and women limited to duties that were considered 'womanly' and 'homely'. Women and girls in South Asia lag behind their counterparts across the globe in other development indicators. For example, they spend more time on unpaid care and domestic work compared to the men and boys: in Pakistan, girls and women spend 11 times more hours in domestic chores-such as fetching water and fuel-than the males in their families. The consequence of this was that it bereft women with zero economic independence on their own and the social conditioning of man being a 'provider' raised its ugly head. The above

*In India, the proportion of migrant population is 29.9 percent. The proportion of male out-migrants is estimated at 8 percent. Since women did not feature predominantly in either of these trends, most rural women are still engaged in agriculture, mostly as laborers and cultivators*

practice sometimes became a norm worldwide and paved the way for the most dreaded aspect of society; gender inequality. And from here, the inequality got fostered in

take on economic activities that are left behind by men. The authors describe the process of feminization as "feminization out of compulsion" or "feminization of agrarian distress". Further, the authors of Economic Survey argue that the concentration of women in agriculture labor in India could also be reflective of what is described as the 'feminization of poverty'.

In India, the proportion of migrant population is 29.9 percent. The proportion of male out-migrants is estimated at 8 percent. Since women did not feature predominantly in either of these trends, most rural women are still engaged in agriculture, mostly as laborers and cultivators. In Nepal, one in every four households has at least one member who has out-migrated, and 88 percent of this outmigration was by male members of the household.

### Reforms in agriculture required

Several historical accounts bring forth evidence of women being independently involved in agriculture when the popula-

other spheres as well.

As per the stats, that are available on different government websites, the women percentage in the agriculture sector is close to 85 per cent. Women make up about 33 per cent of cultivators and about 48 per cent of agricultural laborers. And if we try to dig deeper, the kinds of crop plantations like tea, cotton, oil etc. that these women engage in, are labor-intensive and highly unskilled. Yes, they do seem like a dominating force in fields but the reality is far from the truth and these women have always enjoyed a disadvantageous position in terms of land rights, wages, representation in decision-making, familial health and if we are still talking about their 'Empowerment' in the 21st century; their scuffle for affordable quality education can be well thought of.

*(The writer, a researcher-writer, is a political science graduate from Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, India) South Asia Monitor*

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

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# With growing radicalization, Manipur remains on the boil

LT GEN PRAKASH KATOCH (RETD)

Two people were killed, five injured and one went missing in fresh incidents of ethnic violence between Meitei and Kuki-Zo in Koutruk village situated in the Imphal West district of the northeastern Indian state of Manipur, according to news reports. The death toll is expected to go up. Such incidents have become routine in troubled Manipur since the outbreak of violence on May 3, 2023.

However, the scenes in Imphal on January 24 were unprecedented with the raw and open display by the Arambai Tenggol (dart-wielding cavalry in Manipuri language), which is viewed as a radical Meitei group ([https://twitter.com/haokip\\_alice/status/1750090779497013743?t=0NSfPqxqCbT9y8emZETQcxQ&s=19](https://twitter.com/haokip_alice/status/1750090779497013743?t=0NSfPqxqCbT9y8emZETQcxQ&s=19)). Notably,

*There is no doubt that the whole show was state-sponsored. Under the Biren Singh regime some 4,000 arms and over 50,000 rounds of ammunition were looted from the India Reserve Battalion and Manipur Police armories in May 2023*

the Arambai Tenggol administered oaths to 37 legislators and two MPs at Kangla Fort "to protect the integrity of Manipur". Former chief minister O Ibobi Singh, Minister of State for External Affairs Rajkumar Ranjan Singh and Rajya Sabha MP Leishemba Sanajaoba can be seen in the video in the inset link.

Interestingly, Korounganba Khuman, the Arambai Tenggol kingpin, seen being felicitated and garlanded in the video ([https://twitter.com/haokip\\_alice/status/1750090779497013743?t=0NSfPqxqCbT9y8emZETQcxQ&s=19](https://twitter.com/haokip_alice/status/1750090779497013743?t=0NSfPqxqCbT9y8emZETQcxQ&s=19)) is a former Personal Security Officer (PSO) of present Chief

Minister Biren Singh. The Arambai Tenggol demands include abrogation of the 2008 SoO (Suspension of Operations) pact with Kuki-Zo, removing Assam Rifles (AR) from Manipur and, delisting Kuki-Zo from the Schedule Tribes list.

There is no doubt that the whole show was state-sponsored. Under the Biren Singh regime some 4,000 arms and over 50,000 rounds of ammunition were looted from the India Reserve Battalion and Manipur Police armories in May 2023, which according to ground sources were "distributed" to Meitei radicals. Only a small portion of these arms has been recovered.

Tribals of Manipur have been demanding the Indian Army should be tasked to recover these arms. But these weapons

are in the Imphal Valley where the Armed Forces Special Power Act (AFSPA) has been conveniently removed, rendering the Army and Assam Rifles ineffective.

### Growth of radicalization

In June last year, Manipur MLA Thaounaojam Shyamkumar Singh, heading a 100-strong mob, mostly women, forced an Indian Army column to hand over 12 armed Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup (KYKL) terrorists who are Meitei and Myanmar-based. These terrorists were possibly invited by the Manipur administration to help ethnically cleanse the Kuki-Zo who are Christians.

In December 2023, New

Delhi brokered a peace agreement with UNLF, which the central committee of UNLF has said is only with a breakaway group, not with UNLF, and the agreement is only for "talks" which is not a 'peace agreement'. These militants were supposed to have surrendered their arms but some of them were subsequently reported killed while attacking Kuki-Zo villages.

The Biren Singh government has been sending armed Meitei radicals to attack the Kuki-Zo. The Arambai Tenggol will only add to the muscle power. At the same time, Biren Singh is worried about Meitei casualties and has publicly gone on record to warn the central forces, saying, "You are not here to observe but to protect" (<https://twitter.com/Bharatvidya1/status/174998729032227664?s=20>). The Assam Rifles is deployed in the tribal areas and Biren Singh perhaps feels they are hindering his operations against the Kuki-Zo.

The campaign to throw out the Assam Rifles has been engineered by the state since May last year. This will likely gain momentum with Biren Singh's private Meitei radical army grown to sizable numbers; armed radicals with the so-called looted weapons, joined by Myanmar-based KYKL terrorists, a breakaway group of the UNLF and now the Arambai Tenggol.

The radical Arambai Tenggol has grown to an incredible 50,000 strong from just 7,000 in March 2023 (<https://theprint.in/india/recruitment-spikes-across-insurgent-outfits-in-manipur-more-than-when-insurgency-was-at-its-peak/1945527/>). Other Meitei radical groups have also grown in numbers and so have the Kuki-Zo groups, though the Kuki are in much smaller numbers. *South Asia Monitor*

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



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## MYANMAR BOILING

Myanmar's military rulers last week extended a state of emergency, in place since a 2021 coup, as the junta battles to contain a bloody, pro-democracy rebellion that has severely tested its ability to govern. Junta Chief Min Aung Hlaing extended emergency rule for a further six months to undertake tasks necessary to bring the nation to a normal state of stability as per state media. The junta has deployed heavy artillery and fighter jets to try to suppress militias allied with a shadow government and ethnic minority armies but the democratic forces which launched a coordinated offensive last October that stunned the military and has dented its battlefield credibility.

About 2.3 million people have been displaced, according to the United Nations, while efforts by Myanmar's Southeast Asian neighbors to initiate dialogue have seen no progress, with the junta refusing to negotiate with what it calls "terrorists". The extension of emergency rule came on the eve of the third anniversary of the military wresting back power in the coup citing unaddressed electoral irregularities, in an abrupt and unpopular end to a decade of tentative democracy and economic reform. Recently, the parallel National Unity Government, which controls militias, issued a statement along with three ethnic minority rebel groups saying they were open to negotiations with the military, contingent on it ceding power and bringing the armed forces under civilian control.

When the People's Defense Forces (PDFs) first coalesced in Myanmar in 2021, many viewed them as hastily organized groups of young vigilantes who would be quickly overrun by the junta's military force, known as the Sit-Tat. Instead, the PDFs have grown in size, organization and capability over the last year and half, and now pose a major threat to the junta's viability. Though they lack heavy equipment, an advanced command structure and international support, the proliferating PDFs have demonstrated remarkable tactical ingenuity and resilience. If they improve their command structure and weaponry, they could help expand territory under resistance control and hasten the junta's demise.

According to Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army, their goal and purpose is, to try and eliminate the military dictatorship. Caught by surprise, by the attack dubbed Operation 1027, the military has lost more than 180 outposts and strongpoints, including four major bases and four economically important border crossings with China. Complicating matters for the military is China's apparent tacit support for the Three Brotherhood Alliance, stemming, at least partially, from Beijing's growing irritation at the burgeoning drug trade along its border and the proliferation of centers in Myanmar from which cybercams are run, frequently by Chinese organized crime cartels, with workers trafficked from China or elsewhere in the region.

The military, known as the Tatmadaw, remains far bigger and better trained than the resistance, and, has armor, airpower and even naval assets, to fight the lightly armed militias, organized by various ethnic minority groups. But with its unexpectedly quick and widespread losses and overstretched forces, morale is sagging with more troops surrendering and defecting, giving rise to a wary optimism among its diverse opponents. This is the biggest battlefield challenge that the Myanmar military has faced for decades. It could very well develop into what Mukti Bahini did in Bangladesh next door. Hope India is watching closely.

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

## Mrunal Thakur shares secret ingredient to 'focus'

Actress Mrunal Thakur says her secret ingredient to focus on things is coffee, going by a post she shared on social media.

Mrunal took to Instagram, where she shared a string of pictures from a photoshoot. In the images, she looks into the camera lens as she gets clicked. Another picture shows the actress dressed in an all-black outfit. She completed her look with smokey eyes and nude lips.

"Hocus Pocus... I need coffee to focus," she wrote as the caption for the image.

Mrunal started her journey in acting with television where she starred in 'Mujhse Kuchh Kehti... Yeh Khamoshiyaan'. She then gained the spotlight for her impeccable work in 'Kumkum Bhagya'.

In 2018, she stepped into the world of cinema with 'Love Sonia'. She then starred in 'Super 30', 'Batla House', 'Sita Ramam' and 'Hi Nanna'.

The 31-year-old star will reportedly next be seen in 'Family Star.'

IANS



## Priyanka Chopra says "learnt a lot since then"

Actor Priyanka Chopra took a stroll down memory lane and shared several pictures of herself from her early 20s.

The first image shows Priyanka smiling. "Let's see you at 21," she captioned the picture.

Another photo features her in an animal print bikini top and brown leather pants.

"Learnt a lot since then," she wrote alongside the image. The last image shows Desi Girl in a short denim skirt and a silver top.

Priyanka captioned the click as, "bronzer."

Priyanka is one of the biggest stars in the country. Over the past few years, she has represented India on the global platform and has carved her place in Hollywood. Many say what Priyanka has done for the representation of Asian actors in Hollywood, only a few could've achieved!

Her journey is truly inspirational. She was just 18 when she won the coveted Miss World crown.

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*

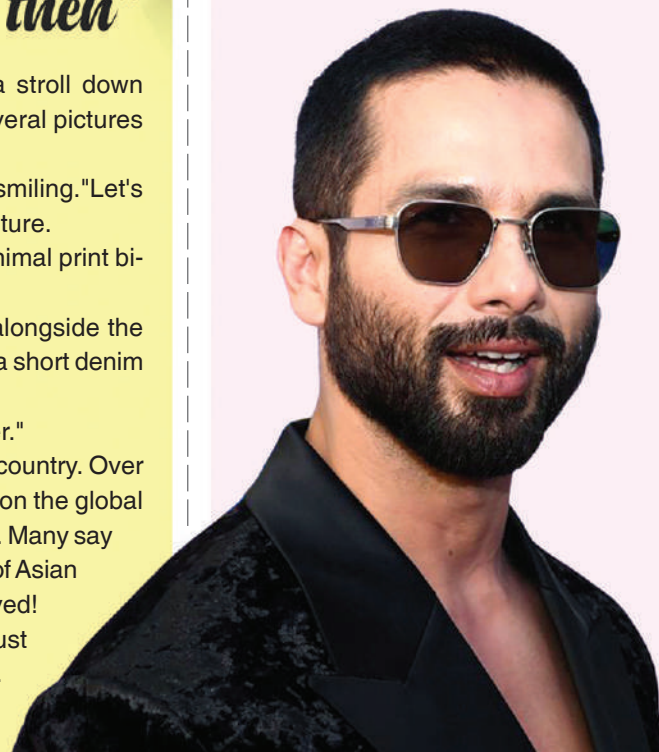
## Shahid Kapoor: Cinema should show things not possible in real life

Bollywood actor Shahid Kapoor, who is gearing up for his upcoming film 'Teri Baaton Mein Aisa Uljha Jiya', has said that cinema should present stories that people in real life might not experience.

The actor said that the subject of his film might be something that hasn't yet happened in real life but that, he confidently said, will connect with the audience.

'Teri Baaton Mein Aisa Uljha Jiya', which also stars Kriti Sanon, follows the story of a computer engineer, played by Shahid, who falls in love with a humanoid robot, played by Kriti.

Talking to the media recently, Shahid said, "When 'Mr. India' was released, nobody in the audience thought of something like that but it did well, it's one of our iconic films. IANS





# Akshay Kumar target of deepfake video; plans legal action

In a concerning turn of events, actor Akshay Kumar finds himself in the crosshairs of a deepfake scandal, as a fabricated video has surfaced online, featuring the superstar promoting a game application.

"The actor has never indulged in promotions of any such activity. The source of this video is being looked into and legal action is underway for misusing the actor's identity for false advertising," said the sources.

"A cyber complaint against the social media handle and the company has been filed for creating and promoting this fake video."

In the AI generated video, Akshay is seen saying, "Do you like to play too? I advice you to download this application and try the aviator game. This is the popular slot all over the world that every-

one plays here. We are not playing against the casino but against other players."

The users wrote in the comment section: "Fake alert". One fan said: "Deep fake".

Sources close to the actor further said: "He is deeply upset at having his identity misused and has instructed his team to deal with

this matter using all legal remedies available."

Earlier, there have been deep fake videos of actors like Rashmika Mandanna, Nora Fatehi, Katrina Kaif, Kajol and cricketer Sachin Tendulkar doing rounds on the internet.

Meanwhile, on the work front, Akshay is gearing up for the release of 'Bade Miyan Chote

Miyan'. He also has 'Sky Force', 'Singham Again', 'Welcome To The Jungle', 'Hera Pheri 3', and 'Vedat Marathe Veer Daudle Saat' in the pipeline. IANS

**"A CYBER COMPLAINT AGAINST THE SOCIAL MEDIA HANDLE AND THE COMPANY HAS BEEN FILED FOR CREATING AND PROMOTING THIS FAKE VIDEO"**

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## Shilpa Shetty: A huge compliment that I am able to still be relevant

**S**he ruled the big screen in the 1990s and is now owning the OTT space with her work; actress Shilpa Shetty says it feels good to still be around and finds it a huge compliment that she is able to reinvent herself.

Asked how it feels to be associated with projects like 'Sukhi' and 'Indian Police Force' on the OTT space, Shilpa told IANS: "Feels good to still be around, be loved, to be

in a position to surprise the audiences through different platforms. I take it as a huge compliment that I am able to reinvent myself and still be relevant."

Shilpa praised the OTT scene for creating more stars and bringing their talent to the forefront.

"In Covid times there were many stars that were created by this platform, an example being Pankaj Tripathi, being in the industry for so long people noticed his talent and there was a star quality in his talent and so many stars like Vikrant Massey to just name a few."

"I would say OTT reaches more people and worldwide audiences. So, you can't undermine what OTT brings to an actor's profile."

Shilpa's latest work is Rohit Shetty's series 'Indian Police Force'. The action-thriller is based in the cop universe by the filmmaker. It also stars Sidharth Malhotra and Vivek Oberoi. *IANS*



## Tamil superstar Vijay to quit films

**T**amil superstar Vijay, who was recently seen in 'Leo', and is awaiting the release of his upcoming film 'The Goat Life', has decided to quit cinema for his political career.



He announced his political party, Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam recently. The actor said that he will quit cinema after completing two films ('GOAT' and an untitled film) to become a full-fledged politician in Tamil Nadu.

His party members will contest in the 2026 elections. The actor recently met Class 10 and 12 students and also offered aid to people affected by the recent floods in Chennai.

In a long official statement, the actor said that there is a need for political power to do social work in a full-fledged manner.

The actor's official account on X posted: "You all are well aware of the political situation of Tamil Nadu. On one side, we have a dysfunctional administration and corrupt political culture, and on the other, we have divisive politics that aims to divide people along the lines of caste, creed, and religion. Both impede our progress. It is an incontestable truth that people, more so in Tamil Nadu, are longing for a change in a political scenario and want a selfless, honest, secular and talented party to bring about a change."

Vijay announced that he will be contesting in the 2026 state legislative assembly elections and will pave the way for the 'desired political transformation sought by the people of Tamil Nadu'.

The statement further mentioned: "Upon the approval of the election ordinance, our party's policies, manifestos, strategies, and programs will be unveiled, and our political journey for the people of Tamil Nadu will commence. *IANS*

## Poonam Pandey on faking her death: I don't need publicity

**A**ctress and model Poonam Pandey, who is currently facing a lot of backlash on the Internet for faking her death in order to raise awareness about cervical cancer, has issued a statement addressing the flak.

She said that she has not done this for publicity and that she doesn't need publicity. As per her, this was done for a "good cause."

Recently, she took to her Instagram and shared a video of herself defending her action of faking her death to get people to talk about cervical cancer. She said that she is not being insensitive in this case as she has seen her mother suffering from throat cancer, and she knows how tough the battle is.

She said in the video: "For those who think I'm being insensitive, I would like to tell you, my mother suffered cancer. She had throat cancer and I have seen this in my house how bad it gets. Here, I was promoting something for a good cause, a cancer which is preventable yet so many women die. In the live session with Hauterfly, I said this very clearly that none of the parties got paid for this."

She said that all this was done for a good cause as "no pharmaceutical company is involved" in this act.

She continued: "We did this to raise awareness, and it has. A lot of people, who had no idea of cervical cancer are Googling it now, and it is trending right now." *IANS*

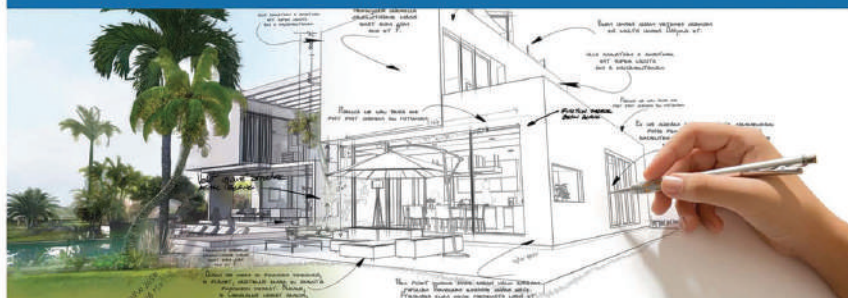


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## Hrithik Roshan praises 'Fighter' co-star Sanjeeda Sheikh

**H**rithik Roshan and Deepika Padukone-starrer 'Fighter' is receiving positive responses from the audience and doing well at the box office. It also stars Sanjeeda Sheikh as Saanchi Gill, who has already received a lot of praise from the 'War' actor.

He called her a "brilliant actor" in response to one of the social media users on X. Hrithik wrote while praising Sanjeeda, "I absolutely agree with you Sandeep. @iamsanjeeda is a brilliant actor! She made emoting in the scene so easy for me.."

He said this in response to an earlier post by one of the fans who mentioned, "Dear @iamsanjeeda. This is an appreciation tweet for you. You looked flawless in the movie #Fighter .Your emotional scene with @iHrithik is one of the best scenes in the movie. It was beautifully executed. #FighterBlockbuster #FighterMovie"

After receiving so much appreciation from the ace actor, Sheikh expressed her gratitude and wrote, "Thankyou for getting out the best from me...Most honest and giving actor@iHrithik"

Helmed by Siddharth Anand, 'Fighter' also stars Anil Kapoor, Karan Singh Grover and Akshay Oberoi. ANI



## Adah Sharma to play 'scary' bar dancer in 'Sunflower 2'

**A**ctress Adah Sharma, who is all set to play a charismatic bar dancer in the second season of 'Sunflower', has shared insights about her 'scary' role, revealing how she watched a lot of documentaries on serial killers and psychopaths to get into the skin of her character.

Created by show-runner Vikas Bahl and directed by Navin Gujral, the show stars Sunil Grover in the lead role, alongside Ashish Vidyarthi, Ranvir Shorey, Mukul Chaddha and Girish Kulkarni in prominent roles.

Adding a sizzling twist to the storyline, the second season introduces Adah as a bar dancer, and her entry promises to add a fresh dynamic to the show.

Talking about her role Rosie, Adah said: "I don't know if I am allowed to divulge anything about my character's profession yet. It might give away the suspense. But I play someone who is evil, yet sweet. She's also scary. I watched a lot of documentaries on serial killers and psychopaths to prepare for the role."

The actress, who was last seen as Shalini Unnikrishnan in 'The Kerala Story', said: "This role will definitely be very different from Shalini. I'm very lucky the makers are seeing me in different roles."

She added: "As an actor, I read Rosie's part and I was very excited that Vikas Behl and Chaitali have written the part for a girl who is funny, scary, sarcastic, sweet, and evil... Saying such wicked things, doing things that I would never do in real life is also a little intoxicating." IANS



**A**ctress Juhi Chawla, who has been married to industrialist Jay Mehta for 29 years now, shared a sweet anecdote about her love story, revealing how they used to exchange letters and cards with each other before tying the knot.

The actress, who appeared on the celebrity dance reality show 'Jhalak Dikhhla Jaa's' special episode 'Jashn Juhi Ka', an ode to Juhi's captivating career in Indian cinema, took a walk down memory lane as talked about her love story with Jay.

She said: "Before marriage, he used to write letters to me every day. But all of that stopped after marriage (laughs). Those days, we used to send letters and cards to each other which has now turned into emails and WhatsApp messages."

Juhi also shared that once on her birthday, Jay had sent her a truck full of red roses.

"Jay and I met at a dinner and then he started hovering around me. Once, on my birthday, he sent me a truck full of red roses. And I took a year to say 'yes' to him," she said.

In the special episode, Adrija Sinha, along with choreographer Akash Thapa, left everyone awed with their unique interpretation of the song 'Ae Mere Humsafar', highlighting the beautiful bond between a pen and paper.

Juhi, who was blown away by the act, said: "I am so happy today because once again your performance was outstanding. Both of you are such good dancers". IANS

*Before marriage, Jay wrote to me every day: Juhi Chawla*

# LA Fashion Week unveils a spectacular line-up celebrating style and innovation

India Post News Service

HOLLYWOOD, CA: LA Fashion Week, presented by LA Fashion Closet, is set to captivate the world's fashion enthusiasts with a dazzling showcase of creativity, style and innovation, on the grand stage at W Hotel, Hollywood, on March 23, 2024.

This premier fashion extravaganza promises a breathtaking display of the latest trends and designs, featuring some of the most prestigious designers and iconic models from around the globe. LA Fashion Week has emerged as a global platform, attracting attention from fashion aficionados, industry insiders, and media worldwide.

Key Highlights:

- **Date & Venue:** March 23, 2024, at the prestigious W Hotel, Hollywood.

- **Global Presence:** LA Fashion Week continues to elevate its status as a global fashion hub, drawing in designers, models, and media from various corners of the world.

- **Iconic Designers:** Re-

nowned and emerging designers will unveil their latest collections, pushing the boundaries of fashion and setting new trends.

- **Extravagant Runway:** The runway at W Hotel will be transformed into a breathtaking spectacle, showcasing the fusion of art, culture, and cutting-edge fashion.

- **Inclusive and Diverse:** LA Fashion Week celebrates diversity and inclusivity, featuring a lineup that reflects the rich tapestry of the global fashion landscape.

- **Celebrity Glamour:** Witness the presence of A-list celebrities, VIPs, and well-known personalities gracing the event, adding a touch of glamour and star power.

- **Social Impact:** LA Fashion Week is proud to partner with mental health awareness initiatives, demonstrating our commitment to impactful collaborations and supporting essential causes.

Quotes:

"LA Fashion Week has

evolved into a beacon of style and creativity, attracting top-tier designers and influencers. This year's event promises to be a showcase of innovation, art and a celebration of diversity in the fashion industry," says Shagun, Director of LA Fashion Closet.

We are inviting all brands, designers, vendors, and industry stakeholders to join us in this

extraordinary celebration of fashion and style. Partnering with LA Fashion Week provides a unique opportunity for international exposure and the upliftment of your brand on a global scale. Let's embark on this journey together and make a lasting impact on the world of fashion.

About LA Fashion Closet:

LA Fashion Closet is a leading force in the fashion industry, committed to promoting creativity, diversity, and innovation. With LA Fashion Week as its flagship event, the organization aims to provide a global platform for designers, models, artists and fashion enthusiasts to converge and celebrate the artistry of fashion.

## John Abraham, Sharvari Wagh-starrer 'Vedaa' 'Vedaa' is set to hit the theatres on July 12

Makers of the upcoming action thriller film 'Vedaa' starring John Abraham, Sharvari Wagh and Abhishek Banerjee announced the film's official release date on Wednesday.

'Vedaa' is set to hit the theatres on July 12 this year.

Taking to Instagram, John shared an intriguing poster of the film which he captioned, "#Vedaa #WaitForIt "She needed a savior. She got a weapon." Releasing in cinemas on July 12th!"



The first look poster features John holding a knife with an intense look on his face, while Sharvari stands behind him with scar marks under her eye.

Helmed by Nikkhil Advani, the film also stars Tamannah Bhatia in the lead roles.

Expressing excitement, Director Nikkhil Advani said in a statement, "Vedaa is not just a film. It's inspired from real events and is a reflection of our society and pushes the boundaries of reality. Working with John, Sharvari and Abhishek Banerjee has been an incredible experience and I'm glad to finally announce the release date and fingers crossed the audiences gets moved the way we all did when we first heard the story of Vedaa." ANI

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