



FOG Telugu Ugadi Celebrations in Fremont

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'We are hearing that challenge loud and clear'

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Understood power of 'Namaste': Aamir

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INDIA POST SURVEY
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This week's question

Will Trump go to jail if charged?

Last week's result

Does Rahul Gandhi have leadership quality?

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FORCED CONVERSIONS

Daughters of Hindus being forcibly converted to Islam: Pakistan Senator

ISLAMABAD: Danesh Kumar, a Senator in Pakistan's upper house has gained the attention of all during the ongoing Senate session for highlighting the forced abductions and conversions of Hindu girls in Pakistan's Sindh province.

"Daughters of Hindus are not a booty that someone should forcibly change their religion. Hindu girls are being forcibly converted to Islam in Sindh. It has been two years since innocent Pooja Kumari was abducted. The government does not take action against these influential people," Danesh said while addressing the

Senate session.

He stated that the forced abduction and conversion of Hindu girls is being done by influential people and religious groups, who enjoy the support of the political powers that continue to target religious minorities, especially Hindu minority girls.

Abducted and forcibly converted to Islam, they are married off to Muslim men.

Danesh mentioned that all of this is being done under the pretext that teenage Hindu girls are converting as per their free will.

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Americans4Hindus launches Hindu Rajneeti Academy

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Exploring the timeless allure of Indian clothing

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Why young men must be aware of testicular cancer

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President Droupadi Murmu offers prayers to Lord Ram at the Ram temple (left) and performs aarti while offering prayers on the banks of the Saryu Ghat, in Ayodhya on May 1. (ANI Photo)

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POSTMASTER: Send address changes to India Post, 1860 Mowry Ave Ste 200, Fremont, CA 94538-1730.

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FORCED CONVERSIONS

Daughters of Hindus being forcibly converted to Islam: Pakistan Senator

HAMZA AMEER

ISLAMABAD: Danesh Kumar, a Senator in Pakistan's upper house has gained the attention of all during the ongoing Senate session for highlighting the forced abductions and conversions of Hindu girls in Pakistan's Sindh province.



Danesh Kumar

"Daughters of Hindus are not a booty that someone should forcibly change their religion. Hindu girls are being forcibly converted to Islam in Sindh. It has been two years since innocent Pooja Kumari was abducted. The government does not

take action against these influential people," Danesh said while addressing the Senate session.

He stated that the forced abduction and conversion of Hindu girls is being done by influential people and religious groups, who enjoy the support of the political powers that continue to target religious minorities, especially Hindu minority girls.

Abducted and forcibly converted to Islam, they are married off to Muslim men.

Danesh mentioned that all of this is being done under the pretext that teenage Hindu girls are converting as per their free will.

"For many influential religious groups, such conversions and marriages are celebrated considering it to be a devotion to Islam. However, the teaching of Islam preaches otherwise. The law/Constitution of Pakistan does not allow forced religious conversions and neither does the Holy Quran," he said.

Danesh has raised an issue that has been haunting Pakistan for years as many global bodies have raised serious reservations and concerns over Islamabad's inability to put an end to the ongoing suffering of religious minorities.

There have been innumerable cases of girls from the minority Hindu community being forcibly abducted, converted and married off to Muslim men, most of them twice their age or even more.

The United Nations (UN) recently slammed Pakistan over what it termed as an "alarming situation" at the continuing lack of protection of young women and girls belonging to minority communities in the country.

"Christian and Hindu girls continue to remain vulnerable to forced religious conversion, abduction, trafficking, child, early and forced marriage, domestic servitude and sexual violence," read a UN statement.

"The exposure of young women and

"For many influential religious groups, such conversions and marriages are celebrated considering it to be a devotion to Islam. However, the teaching of Islam preaches otherwise. The law/Constitution of Pakistan does not allow forced religious conversions and neither does the Holy Quran," he said

girls belonging to religious minority communities to such heinous human rights violations and the impunity of such crimes can no longer be tolerated or justified," it added.

Highlighting the legislative and judicial failures to protect vulnerable underage girls, the UN experts have underlined that early and forced marriage cannot be justified on religious or cultural grounds, adding that consent is irrelevant when the victim is a child under the age of 18.

"The matter is not limited to only forced conversions and marriages of Hindu girls; it is being validated by the courts, who invoke religious laws and justifying keeping victims with their abductors rather than allowing them to return to their parents," said Hafeez Tunio, a local journalist from Sindh province.

"Perpetrators often escape accountability, with police dismissing crimes under the guise of love marriage," he added.

While the matter of forced conversions is pivotal and needs immediate and ur-

gent attention of the government, experts say non-application of relevant provisions of Pakistan Penal Code, coupled with failure of the parliament of Pakistan to adopt further legislation to address the issue of forced conversions and marriages of minority women and girls, has further encouraged influential religious groups to continue with their vicious agenda, which they shelter under the facade of religious teachings and its spread. IANS

Chief of Defense Staff Gen Chauhan participates in US Indo-Pacific Command meeting

NEW DELHI: India's senior-most military official, Chief of Defense Staff, Gen Anil Chauhan, recently interacted with senior military leaders of 27 countries during the meeting of Chiefs of Defense hosted by US Indo-Pacific Command virtually.

The discussions were held on strengthening military-to-military relationships, common security issues and opportunities to foster cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, in addition to

reviewing the progress of agreed-upon objectives, according to Defense officials.

The meeting by Admiral John C Aquilino, US Commander of Indo-Pacific Command hosted the virtual Chiefs of Defense meeting at the USINDOPACOM headquarters in Hawaii to strengthen military-to-military relationships, discuss common security issues and foster regional cooperation on April 29, according to an official release

of US-Indo Pacific Command.

During the meeting, Aquilino discussed the importance of deepening security cooperation opportunities and security challenges within the Indo-Pacific region with an emphasis that USINDOPACOM will continue to work closely with Allies and partners to ensure a free, open, and prosperous Indo-Pacific, the statement read.

USINDOPACOM hosts virtual CHOD meetings quarterly to provide a forum for

open dialogue between military leaders and to discuss the regional security environment.

The next in-person CHOD conference will be in September 2024, he said.

At the meeting, Aquilino also introduced Adm. Samuel Paparo, who will become the USINDOPACOM commander upon completion of a change of command ceremony on May 3 this year. ANI

India diaspora conducts Havan for PM Modi's resounding victory in LS elections

REENA BHARDWAJ

WASHINGTON: The Indian-American community conducted Havans across the US, praying for the success of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Bharatiya Janata Party in the ongoing Lok Sabha elections.

Volunteers of Overseas Friends of BJP-USA, led by their President, Adapa Prasad, and Vasudev Patel, General Secretary organized Havan/Homam ceremonies nationwide.



The Sudarshana Homam was held at the Sri Shiva Vishnu Temple, Sai Datta Peetham in Edison, New Jersey. During the ceremony, participants recited the Sudarshana Mantra.

Hundreds of supporters of PM Modi and the BJP participated in the event for the victory of BJP in the Lok Sabha elections and PM Modi's successive third term.

Adapa Prasad commended the efforts of OFBJP volunteers, stating, "These sacred rituals evoke spiritual strength and symbolize our collective determination to support BJP's vision for a prosperous India under Prime Minister Modi's leadership."

"It is a profound expression of our unwavering commitment to India's progress and development," he added.

There was strong enthusiasm and confidence among the members of the Indian community who had gathered at the havan ceremony.

Indian-American Krishna Reddy also exuded confidence that with divine blessings, BJP and Prime Minister Modi would achieve a resounding victory in the elections.

Charan Singh, another member of Indian diaspora highlighted the strong support for BJP among the NRI community. Kalpana Shukla praised PM Modi's tireless



efforts for the betterment of people in India and globally.

Deep Bhatt highlighted the excitement among youth to support PM Modi, while Santosh Reddy noted that thousands of people were heading to India for the campaign.

Another Indian-American, Vilas Reddy described it as a unified expression of support and aspiration, reflecting the collective hope for a resounding BJP victory under Prime Minister Modi's leadership.

The event also drew participation from the Indian diaspora across New Jersey, with prominent community leaders and volunteers such as Padmasree awardee Sudhir Parekh, Jayesh Patel, K Narula, Rajyalaxmi, Gunjan Mishra, Harry Sethi, Madhukar Reddy, Ganesh R. Govindraj, Srikanth Reddy, Sanil, Gopi, and many others.

Chicago

In a stirring display of solidarity and devotion, Indian-American professionals, entrepreneurs, and residents of Chicago converged at a Hindu temple nestled in the city's suburbs to partake in a sacred 'havan' ceremony.

The 'Chandi Havan' ceremony was conducted with utmost reverence and enthusiasm while praying for a resounding BJP victory.

The event witnessed a notable presence of esteemed personalities, including Prakriti Batra, the granddaugh-



ter of the late Balram Ji Tandon, former Governor of Chattisgarh. This 'Chandi Homam' in Chicago was graced by Amar Upadhyay, Nirmala Reddy and Rakesh Malhotra, members of Indian diaspora.

Washington DC Metro

NRI supporters of OFBJP gathered at the 'Sri Venkateswara Lotus Temple' in Fairfax, Virginia, to perform a Ganapati Homam, praying for the well-being and prosperity of India and seeking Lord Ganesh's blessings for PM Modi and BJP's success in the ongoing 2024 general elections.

Around 50 volunteers, well-wishers, and karyakarthis attended the event, with senior priest Sriman Kesavan from Sri Venkateshwara Lotus Temple leading the ceremony.

Similar havans were organized in Los Angeles, Austin, Detroit, and Raleigh. PK Naik, Anil Mahajan, Venu Uppala, Shyam Enaganti and Raju Kurapati and, other volunteers have graced these havans respectively. ANI

"Unwarranted, unsubstantiated imputations": India slams US media report on alleged plot to kill Gurpatwant Singh Pannun

NEW DELHI: External Affairs Ministry has rejected a report in The Washington Post naming Indian Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) official's involvement in the alleged plot to kill Khalistani terrorist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun in the US.

Describing it as an "unwarranted and unsubstantiated" imputation on a "serious matter" that is under investigation, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) official spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal on Monday said the US media report was "speculative and irresponsible".

In response to media queries on the report that appeared in Washington Post, a US national daily, Jaiswal said that a High-Level Committee set up by the Indian government is carrying out an investigation into the security concerns shared by the US government on networks of organized criminals, terrorists, and others.

"The report in question makes unwarranted and unsubstantiated imputations on a serious matter. There is an ongoing investigation of the High-Level Committee set up by the Government of India to look into the security concerns shared by the US government on networks of organized criminals, terrorists and others. Speculative and irresponsible comments on it are not helpful."

Citing officials and a US indictment, the Washington Post report claimed that the RAW official identified as Vikram Yadav had directed Indian businessman Nikhil Gupta, now in custody in the Czech Republic pending extradition to the US to stand trial in the case, to hire a hitman to kill GS Pannun outside his New York residence. As per the report in the US daily, the operation targeting Pannun was approved by then RAW-chief Samant Goel.

Gurpatwant Singh Pannun is an India-designated terrorist who holds American and Canadian citizenship. Earlier in November, the US Justice Department unsealed an indictment against an Indian national for his alleged involvement in a foiled plot to assassinate Pannun. ANI

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Jaishankar interacts with participants of IAF MCC's Warfare and Aerospace Strategy Program on his book 'The India Way'

NEW DELHI: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar spoke to participants of the Indian Air Force (IAF) - Media Coordination Centre's (MCC) Warfare and Aerospace Strategy Program (WASP) on his book 'The India Way.' Jaishankar said that the discussion focused on current geopolitics and India's strategic choices.

In a post on X, Jaishankar stated, "Spoke to participants of @IAF_MCC's Warfare & Aerospace Strategy Program (WASP) on my book: The India Way. A focused discussion on current geopolitics and India's strategic choices."

In 2022, Jaishankar released the book 'The India Way: Strategies for an Uncertain World.' He had presented the first copy of his book to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. In 2024, Jaishankar released his second book "Why Bharat Matters."

While speaking at the Raisina Dialogue 2024 in February, EAM Jaishankar highlighted that his first book was about the way, and the second is about India's significance in people's lives.

He said, "The first one was about the way, the second is about India's significance in people's lives."

He further said that he used the word Bharat in the second book, "Why Bharat Matters" as opposed to "The India Way" because he was "trying to capture, a kind of



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar with Indian Air Force (IAF) Chief Air Chief Marshal VR Chaudhari during a meeting with the participants of the IAF No. 3 Warfare and Aerospace Strategy Program (WASP), in New Delhi. (ANI Photo)

transformation that has taken place in our society, in our polity, in our mindset, in our approach to the world."

Moreover, he said, "If we look at the thought pro-

cesses that are driving us today, they are much more authentic. They are much more deeply rooted in our culture, in our traditions, in our heritage." ANI

Sri Lanka signals shift in interest as Indian firm to jointly manage China-built airport

SUSITHA FERNANDO

COLOMBO: An Indian firm jointly taking over the management of China-built country's second biggest airport in Hambantota - one of the hotspots of China's controversial Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in Sri Lanka - sends a strong signal of Colombo's growing power shift to New Delhi from Beijing.

On Friday, the Sri Lankan Cabinet of Ministers gave the green light to hand over the management of the Mattala Rajapaksa International Airport (MRIA) to Shaurya Aeronautics (Pvt.) Ltd of India and Airports of Regions Management Company of Russia for a period of 30 years.

"The Cabinet of Ministers expressed their consent to the resolution furnished by the Minister of Ports, Shipping and Aviation to entrust M/s Shaurya Aeronautics (Pvt.) Ltd of India and Airports of Regions Management Company of Russia with the management of the Mattala Rajapaksa International Airport for 30 years," the Department of Government Information announced.

"A total of five institutions submitted their proposals and two companies were selected," Cabinet Co-Spokesman and Minister Bandula Gunawardena told media announcing the decision to hand over the management of the airport branded as one of the "emptiest" airports in the world.

Built at a cost of \$209 million Chinese commercial loan, out of which \$190 million was taken on a high-interest from the Exim Bank of China, the airport has been plagued with problems since its inauguration in 2013 with hardly any flights operating from it considering its 230 km access from capital Colombo. IANS

Representatives from 10 countries set to get first-hand insight into BJP's election campaign

NEW DELHI: As many as 22 representatives of 18 political parties from 10 countries will be in New Delhi to get first-hand experience and insights into the election campaign of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

The representatives will be meeting BJP President J.P. Nadda at the party headquarters besides also holding interactions with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnav.

According to Vijay Chauthaiwale, who heads BJP's Foreign Affairs Department, the foreign representatives will be briefed about the party's election campaign strategies along with the overall electoral process.

The participating political parties include Liberal Party (Australia), Communist Party of Vietnam, Bangladesh Awami League, Likud Party (Israel), Uganda's National Resistance Movement, Chama Cha Mapinduzi (Tanzania), United Russia Party, Sri Lanka's United National Party and Lanka Podujana Peramuna, Mauritius Labour Party, Mauritian Militant Movement, Militant Socialist Movement (Mauritius), Parti Mauricien Social Democrate (Mauritius), Nepali Congress, Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist), Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), Janamat Party (Nepal), Rashtriya Swatantra Party (Nepal). IANS

'Overseas Friends of Ram Mandir' US distribute 101 kg Ayodhya Laddoos globally

WASHINGTON, DC: As Ayodhya's Ram Temple celebrated Ram Navami, 'Overseas Friends of Ram Mandir' US distributed more than 101 kg of 'Raghupati Laddoos' brought from Ayodhya to the United States and then further distributed them to devotees across the globe as 'prasad'.

"Of the total number of this special Indian sweet, 101 kg laddoos were distributed among devotees of Lord Ram and Hanuman in countries like the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Norway, Canada, and UAE," said OFRM (US) founder Prem Bhandari.

The ingredients for making these laddoos have been sourced from Ayodhya's Ram Mandir while Bhandari paid a visit to the temple.

The community leader visited the temple for the first time with former Indian Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla. During this visit, Bhandari also met with Champat Rai, a key person in the realization of the centuries-old Ayodhya Ram temple.

"Prem has been instrumental in spreading Sanatan Dharma even though he lives in America," Rai added.

"After visiting the historic Ram temple, I had an idea to bring back laddoos to the United States, with a thought of further distributing it to other devotees across the world," Bhandari told ANI.

"More than 100 boxes have been dispatched, and some have been distributed in person in New York," in addition to that in Rajasthan Association of North America RANA's annual Holi sneh Milan function, Ayodhya Prasadam was distributed to over 400 people," Bhandari also said. ANI

Flipkart-owned Cleartrip's CFO steps down, Akshat Mishra takes over

NEW DELHI: Flipkart-owned online travel aggregator Cleartrip announced that Aditya Agarwal will step down as Chief Financial Officer (CFO) owing to personal reasons.

Akshat Mishra will take over as the new Head of Business Finance at the company.

Agarwal will remain with Cleartrip for a few months to facilitate a smooth transition, the company said in a statement.



Akshat Mishra

"With two years of experience in the Cleartrip Business Finance team and eight years within the Flipkart Group, Mishra brings a deep understanding of both Cleartrip's operations and the broader ecosystem in which it operates," it added.

Agarwal worked for nine years at Cleartrip, wherein he was instrumental in shaping its financial strategy and organizational growth.

He played a pivotal role during the successful merger and subsequent integration of Cleartrip into the Flipkart Group.

Meanwhile, Mishra "brings a deep understanding of both Cleartrip's operations and the broader ecosystem in which it operates."

"The transition reflects Cleartrip's commitment to nurturing internal talent and ensuring continuity in its financial leadership," said the company.

In April 2021, Flipkart acquired a majority stake in Cleartrip.

Cleartrip witnessed a nearly two-fold increase in its net loss in the financial year that ended March 31, 2023. IANS

We need time in life to stop & smell the roses: Anand Mahindra

NEW DELHI: Sharing a video showing scenic views from Kalsubai Peak (a mountain in Maharashtra), Mahindra Group Chairman Anand Mahindra recently said, one should definitely take the time out of their busy schedule to enjoy or appreciate the beauty of life.

"This is Mt. Kalsubai in Maharashtra near Igatpuri, near our engine factory. I've been to Igatpuri several times but never heard about this place & its beauty. Let alone visiting it," Mahindra wrote in a post on X. IANS



AdaniConneX establishes India's largest sustainability linked financing to raise up to \$1.44 billion

AHMEDABAD: In a bid to accelerate digital infrastructure growth in India, AdaniConneX, a JV between Adani Enterprises and EdgeConneX, recently said it has established the country's largest sustainability-linked financing to raise up to \$1.44 billion.

The transaction elevates AdaniConneX's construction financing pool to \$1.65 billion, building on the maiden construction facility of \$213 million executed in June last year.

"This successful exercise is a testament to the collective resolve of the parties to meet the challenges of establishing sustainable and robust digital infrastructure, thereby pushing norms and setting new industry benchmarks," said Jeyakumar Janakaraj, CEO of AdaniConneX.

The upcoming data center facilities will employ state-of-the-art technologies and renewable energy solutions to minimize the ecological footprint while optimizing operational efficiency.



The new financing has an initial commitment of \$875 million, with an accordion feature to extend commitment up to \$1.44

billion.

"Construction financing is a core element of the AdaniConneX capital management plan, enabling us to deliver a data center solution firmly

rooted in sustainability and environmental stewardship," Janakaraj added.

According to the company, a

key feature of the data center facility is the innovative solution of a syndicated guarantee-backed assurance program in sync with the projects' procurement strategy.

The agreements have been executed with eight international lenders -- ING Bank N.V., Intesa Sanpaolo, KfW IPEX, MUFG Bank Ltd., Natixis, Standard Chartered Bank, Societe Generale and Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation, informed the company.

AdaniConneX aims to build an environmentally and socially conscious 1GW data center infrastructure platform by leveraging the complementary capacity of the Adani Group and EdgeConneX, one of the largest private data center operators. IANS

Will double India headcount annually for 3 years to expand footprint: Transcom India

NEW DELHI: Generative AI-driven customer experience services (CX) company, Transcom India, said it aims to double its current headcount of 700 annually for the next three years, taking its employee strength to 7,000-10,000 and further strengthen its footprint in the country.

Transcom recently acquired homegrown IT services company V Cosmos, which is now called Transcom India.

"V Cosmos, now christened Transcom India, is the most strategic fit in our strategy to provide AI-powered and competitive offshore delivery to our marquee customers and fast-growing consumer brands from North

America and Europe," Travis Coates, Global COO for Transcom, told IANS.

India offers Transcom an unbeatable combination of a scalable and affordable talent pool that led to a rapid growth of the country's business process

India offers Transcom an unbeatable combination of a scalable and affordable talent pool that led to a rapid growth of the country's business process management (BPM) industry to an estimated \$50 billion and IT services revenue of \$130 billion

management (BPM) industry to an estimated \$50 billion and IT services revenue of \$130 billion in FY2024 despite a significant drop in global IT spend.

Transcom said that with its

edge in the Gen AI-led tech platforms and proprietary tools, it is poised to garner a growing market share of the BPM industry by implementing futuristic solutions for evolving customer and business needs.

"Transcom India is an amal-

gam of ethos of speed and dynamism of a startup, experience and maturity of building one of the great places to work and the new age proprietary tools from Transcom to deliver

differentiated outsourcing services at optimum costs," said Amandeep Singh Arora, CEO and MD of Transcom India.

Transcom India offers customer experience services to industries like fintech, mobile devices, hospitality, and e-commerce sector in eight Indian languages, in addition to several foreign languages.

"With our team in India, we envision significant contributions to our global business plans," Coates told IANS.

Transcom, headquartered in Stockholm, provides AI and digitally enhanced customer experience (CX) services to some of the world's most ambitious brands. IANS

India's gold demand rises 8 pc in Jan-March despite soaring prices

MUMBAI: India's gold demand rose to 136.6 tons in the January-March quarter, which represents an 8 per cent increase over the same quarter of the previous year, according to figures released by the World Gold Council (WGC) on 30th April.

Gold purchases have increased despite rising prices, reflecting higher incomes in a growing economy, according to market analysts.

Out of the total gold demand, the jewelry demand in India increased by 4 per cent to 95.5 ton from 91.9 ton. The total investment demand (in the form of bar, coin among others) grew 19 percent to 41.1 ton from 34.4 ton.

India's gold demand in value terms rose 20 percent to Rs 75,470 crore during the quarter compared to the same period last year.

The increase in the demand was higher from investors who saw gold as a safe-haven asset amid rising geopolitical tensions in the Middle East and the Russia-Ukraine war.

The Reserve Bank of India also stepped up buying of the precious metal which saw its gold reserves increasing by 19 tons in the January-March quarter this year, surpassing last year's net purchases of 16 tons, the WGC said.

Demand for gold from India is likely to range between 700 and 800 metric tons in 2024, with the figure falling near the lower band if prices continue to increase, said

Sachin Jain, CEO of WGC's Indian operations.

Domestic prices of gold soared to a lifetime high of Rs 73,958 per 10 grams in April after steadily rising by more than 13 percent in 2024. The increase comes on top of a 10 percent rise in 2023.

Rising gold prices are leading to higher returns for investors, but the consumption demand for use in jewelry



is being dampened due to the higher cost, Jain said.

Increased purchases of gold during the Gudi Padwa festival further fuelled gold prices this month. The sharp increase in prices could lead to some moderation in gold purchases during the Akshaya Tritiya festival compared to last year, according to jewelers. IANS

Travel & tourism sector expected to add over 58 mn jobs in India by 2033: Report

NEW DELHI: The travel and tourism sector in India, which registered remarkable growth post the Covid-19 pandemic, is expected to add 58.2 million jobs by 2033 throughout the country, a new report said.

In the pandemic year 2020, the tourism sector accounted for 39 million jobs, constituting 8 percent of the country's total workforce. Talent demand in this sector registered a spike of 44 percent in August last year, according to the global technology and digital talent solutions provider NLB Services.

Serving as a vital source of foreign exchange, the travel and tourism sector contributed Rs 15.9 trillion (\$191.25 billion) to the country's economy in 2022 and was estimated at Rs 16.5 trillion in 2023.

Among the job roles that will continue to be in demand

experiencing (year-on-year) surges include sales (18 percent), business development (17 percent), chefs (15 percent), travel consultants (15 percent), tour operators (15 percent), wildlife experts (12 percent), transportation providers (15 percent), and more, the report mentioned.

From a location perspective, the top five states attracting domestic tourists so far include Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Maharashtra.

According to the report, the top cities driving the increase in hiring include Delhi NCR, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Pune, and Kochi.

Jaipur, Ahmedabad and Chandigarh, are among the tier two cities. In the coming nine years, new jobs are also expected across emerging cities in Gujarat, Lakshadweep, and West Bengal, according to the report. IANS



Himansh Verma: Former 19-yr-old millionaire who built Navrattan a billion dollar company

NEW DELHI: In a groundbreaking move, Himansh Verma, the visionary founder of Navrattan Group, headquartered in Mumbai, is set to revolutionize India's infrastructure.

Hailing from Patiala, Verma rose to prominence as the youngest millionaire in India at the age of 19.

Now 38, his entrepreneurial journey continues to make waves as he pioneers sustainable solutions for the nation.

Verma's latest endeavor involves the introduction of green cement, marking a historic milestone in India's construction industry. This eco-friendly alternative promises to significantly reduce carbon emissions and environmental impact, setting a new standard for sustainability in the sector.

In addition to his eco-friendly cement venture, Verma is also poised to introduce electric buses to the Indian market for the first time ever.

With a commitment to reducing reliance on fossil fuels and mitigating pollution, this initiative aligns with India's broader goals for clean and efficient transportation.

With a net worth exceeding \$1 billion, Verma's success stresses the potential of youth entrepreneurship and innovation in shaping India's future.

His bold ventures not only drive economic growth but also pave the way for a more sustainable and prosperous nation.

Stay tuned as Himansh Verma continues to inspire and lead the charge towards a greener, more sustainable India.

The Navrattan Group stands as an epitome of innovation and sustainability in the Indian business landscape.

Headquartered in Mumbai, this multinational conglomerate boasts a formidable global presence, underpinned by a combined net worth surpassing \$1 billion.

Renowned for its commitment to environmental stewardship, the group has strategically diversified its portfolio to encompass a wide array of cutting-edge ventures, including science and technology, clean energy, green cement, entertainment, renewables, and e-bus.

Founded by visionary entrepreneur Himansh Verma, the Navrattan Group continues to spearhead transformative initiatives that not only drive business growth but also contribute to the collective well-being of society and the planet.

With a steadfast focus on sustainability and innovation, the business group remains at the forefront of shaping a brighter, greener future for generations to come. IANS



Himansh Verma

Congress promoting reservation on religious lines, says PM Modi in Goa

PANAJI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi said here the Congress and its allies are spreading negativity for vote-bank politics, as he accused them of trying to promote reservation on religious lines.

Addressing a public meeting at Sancoale in South Goa last week, PM Modi said, "The Congress is trying to give reservations based on religion in Karnataka. It is trying to give the shares of STs, SCs, and OBCs to others for its vote-bank politics."

The Prime Minister also said that the feedback and enthusiasm among the people after two phases of polling for the Lok Sabha elections suggest that it is going to be "Phir Ek Baar, Modi Sarkar".

He said the INDIA bloc's politics is for self-interest and their families, whereas the BJP has an approach of saturation.

"We are going ahead with the approach of saturation. We have provided the benefits of several schemes to the people without any discrimination. Chief Minister Pramod Sawant has truly implemented a saturation approach by giving facilities to the people of the state. This is real secularism and social justice. Hundred per cent governance has benefited the poor, farmers, fishermen, and women," the Prime Minister said. *IANS*

Vedant Patel said, "The Government of India can speak to its own visa policy. That's not something I'm going to opine on from here."

"India can speak to its own visa policy": US on Australian journalist's claims not allowed to cover elections

WASHINGTON, DC: The US on Thursday (local time) rebuked a Pakistani reporter's questions on allegations of an Australian journalist's claims not allowed to cover Indian general elections and said that the country determines which non-citizens it allows to enter, either as short-term travellers or international journalists.

Responding to a question by a Pakistani reporter on allegations of denial of visa renewal to Australian journalist, Avani Dias, US State Department Principal Deputy Spokesperson Vedant Patel said, "The Government of India can speak to its own visa policy. That's not something I'm going to opine on from here."

Patel further emphasized the role of the free press in the fabric of democracy.

"Broadly, we have been clear with countries around the world about the integral role that a free press plays in the fabric of democracy. That's why we come up here and take questions regularly. But I will let the officials in India speak," he said.

Avani Dias, an Australian journalist claimed that she was not allowed to cover the 2024 Lok Sabha polls and was com-

pelled to leave the country, however, the sources highlighted that her claims are "not correct, misleading and mischievous."

However, sources said that Avani Dias, South Asia Corre-

Meanwhile, at her request, Dias was assured that her visa would be extended for the coverage of the general elections.

Moreover, the sources emphasized that Avani's claims

Patel also denied making any remark on the internal investigation report by the Indian Government on the alleged assassination plot of Khalistani terrorist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun.

He said, "I'm not aware of the report that you're referencing. This is ultimately a Department of Justice matter and I will defer to them and let them speak to this."

Gurpatwant Singh Pannun is an India-designated terrorist who holds American and Canadian citizenship. He has repeatedly issued threats against India.

As per the US Justice Department indictment, an Indian national, Nikhil Gupta, who is currently in custody, has been charged with the murder-for-hire of Pannun. The US Justice Department had claimed that an Indian government employee, who was not identified in the indictment filed, had recruited Gupta to hire a hitman to allegedly assassinate Pannun, which was foiled by US authorities. *ANI*



US State Department Principal Deputy Spokesperson Vedant Patel

spondent of Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) was also found to have violated visa rules while undertaking her professional pursuits while "undertaking her professional pursuits."

about not being permitted to cover elections are also factually incorrect, adding that covering election activities outside of booths is permitted to all visa-holder journalists.

During the press briefing,

Record low birth rates leading to population collapse in Europe, most of Asia: Musk

NEW DELHI: Elon Musk recently warned that record low birth rates are leading to population collapse and such countries will fall into ruin like several dead civilizations.

Replying to far-right Dutch political commentator Eva Vlaardingerbroek who promotes the idea of the 'Great Replacement' theory, the tech billionaire said the problem with the theory is that it fails to address the foundational issue of low birth rates.

"Record low birth rates are leading to population collapse in Europe and even faster

population collapse in most of Asia. Immigration is low in Asia, so there is no 'replacement' go-



Elon Musk

ing on, the countries are simply shrinking away," the Tesla CEO emphasized.

If this does not turn around,

then any countries on Earth with low birth rates will become "empty of people and fall into ruin, like the remains we see of the many long dead civilizations," the X owner argued.

Vlaardingerbroek posted that 'Great Replacement' is not a theory but a reality.

"White Europeans are being replaced in their own countries at an ever-accelerating rate and it will mean the end of our civilization if we don't turn things around," she said. The 'Great Replacement' theory has been widely criticized for its "blatant absurdity". *IANS*

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"We are hearing that challenge loud and clear": US envoy Garcetti

NEW DELHI: Addressing the issues of Visa backlogs, and recalling President Joe Biden's order to reduce the visa time for Indians, the Ambassador of the United States to India, Eric Garcetti has said that the challenge is heard "loud and clear" and added that he is proud of the work done in just one year to reduce the visa wait time by three quarters.

In an interview with ANI, Garcetti said, "I am very proud of the work we have done in just one year to reduce the visa wait time by three quarters and to have no visa wait time in any of the categories except for first-time tourist visa which is down 75 percent."

He highlighted how at the same time, the US has "increased the number of visas with the same number of people by 60 percent in a single year, so we are hearing that challenge loud and clear."

"We are excited about the number of Indians who want to come for reasons from business to students to even immigrant visas people becoming citizens..." Garcetti said.

In March, Garcetti told ANI that President Joe Biden told him to bring down the visa times in India, adding that it was the first instance that an ambassador was told to look into something like this in any country.

Garcetti underscored that a part of the green card backlog issue is a legislative problem and said that it is what Congress will have to address.

However, he highlighted that the number of visas that have been adjudicated has brought down the waiting time by 75 percent.

The envoy had said, "Now, part of this is a legislative problem that Congress will have to address on the

whether it's the number of legal immigrants, the number of green cards, or the number of people who can become citizens. There's just limits on that. Like any country, I'm sure there's limits here, too. And that is frustrating for Indians, I think, because there's so many Indians who want to come to America. And that's a great part of our news, by the way. Second only to Mexicans, where Indian visas last year, the biggest number of students double the second biggest."



Ambassador of the United States to India, Eric Garcetti

"Last year, over 245,000 student visas came from India. Number one in adoptions, number one in all these categories that show 1.4 billion people, a lot of them would love to come to America. And so it's a good problem to have. But a couple of things were changing..." he said, on being asked about the green card backlog issue, and why there are mostly Indians who are on the backlog.

Further, on being asked if US has similar plans just like Australia to launch the foreign branch campus of universities here in India, Garcetti said, "Absolutely, it's my goal to get as many Americans to India as we are seeing Indians come to America... You will see announcements in the coming years of dozens of US campuses"

"We will have joint campuses, and joint programs here; one Arizona State University announced that there are going to be in more than 10 different campuses around India. To me, this is what the future is about," he said.

"Indians know more about the US and the US knows more about Indians, taking the world where we can be multiplicative as India times the US, I think the relationship is not just India plus the US," the envoy added.

Notably, Australia's Deakin University earlier inaugurated its branch campus in GIFT City, Gujarat.

In January this year, Vice Chancellor of Australia's Deakin University Iain Martin met Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Gandhinagar, where they had a productive discussion on enhancing collaboration between government and academic institutions about cybersecurity. In a post on X, the Prime Minister welcomed Deakin University to collaborate with Indian universities to promote research and innovation. ANI

USCIS Announces Open Application Period for the Citizenship and Integration Grant Program

WASHINGTON: U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services today announced the application period for the Citizenship and Integration Grant Program, which provides funding for citizenship preparation programs in communities across the country. The 16-year-old program, specifically Citizenship Instruction and Naturalization Application Services, will provide up to \$10 million in grants to prepare legal immigrants for naturalization and promote civic integration through increased knowledge of English, U.S. history, and civics.

"The announcement of the Citizenship and Integration Grant Program application period is always an exciting time for USCIS," said USCIS Director Ur M. Jaddou. "Through this program, we empower organizations to help legal immigrants pursue citizenship. Our outreach efforts this year seek to ensure eligible organizations that focus on remote, underserved, or isolated communities are aware of USCIS funding opportunities and that grant funds are assisting more historically underserved communities."

USCIS expects to award up to 40 organizations up to \$300,000 each for two years to expand availability of high-quality citizenship and integration services. This grant opportunity will fund public or nonprofit organizations that offer both citizenship instruction and naturalization application services to lawful permanent residents. Applications are due by June 21.

Since 2009, the USCIS Citizenship and Integration Grant Program has awarded \$155 million through 644 grants to immigrant-serving organizations. These grant recipients have provided citizenship preparation services to more than 300,000 immigrants in 41 states and the District of Columbia. In fiscal year 2024, USCIS received support from Congress through appropriations to make this funding opportunity available to communities and expects to announce award recipients in September 2024.

To apply for this funding opportunity, visit www.grants.gov. USCIS encourages applicants to visit www.grants.gov before the application deadline to obtain registration information needed to complete the application process.

For additional information on the Citizenship and Integration Grant Program for fiscal year 2024, visit or email the USCIS Office of Citizenship at citizenshipgrantprogram@uscis.dhs.gov. USCIS

"The announcement of the Citizenship and Integration Grant Program application period is always an exciting time for USCIS," said USCIS Director Ur M. Jaddou. "Through this program, we empower organizations to help legal immigrants pursue citizenship"

Israel demands release of at least 33 hostages to prevent Rafah attack

TELAVIV: Israel has demanded the release of at least 33 hostages by Hamas to prevent the planned attack on the city of Rafah in the south of the Gaza Strip.

Sources in the Israeli Defense Ministry told IANS that the demand was put forward by Mossad chief David Barnea before the visiting Egyptian delegation headed by its intelligence chief Major General Abbas Kamel.

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi has already expressed his country's concern over the planned attack on Rafah to the US Secretary of State Antony Blinken during the latter's recent visit to Cairo.

Egypt fears that an attack on the Rafah region would lead to civilian catastrophe as well as a huge refugee exodus to Egypt as Rafah borders the Sinai region of the country.

Israel, citing its internal report, has said that of the 129 Israeli hostages, there are 33 people who fall in the category of aged, women, and ill. According to Israel, many of the 129 hostages are dead. IANS

Center paid Rs 147.82 crore in interest subsidy on loans under PM SVANidhi

NEW DELHI: The central government has paid Rs 147.82 crore in interest subsidy to street vendors under PM SVANidhi scheme since it began in 2020 and till March 31, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs said.

The street vendors availing loans under the scheme are eligible to get an interest subsidy of 7 percent for all the loans -- 1st, 2nd, and 3rd loans.

The interest subsidy amount is credited into the borrower's account quarterly.

As per a reply to an RTI query, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs informed: "As of 31st March 2024, interest subsidy of Rs 147.82 crore has been released to scheme beneficiaries."

Lenders have to submit quarterly claims for interest subsidy for quarters ending on June 30, September 30, December 31 and March 31 during each financial year.

The Union housing ministry launched Prime Minister Street Vendor's Atma Nirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) Scheme on June 1, 2020 with the aim to facilitate collateral-free working capital loans to street vendors to restart their businesses, which were adversely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic ANI

'Bengaluru's rental income highest in Q1-2024, Mumbai next'

NEW DELHI: With a steep rise in rental housing demand in the top cities, average rental values have soared, and rental income has been heading steadily north. Rental income is the annual rate of interest investors earn from capital invested in a property.

The latest data from real estate consultancy firm Anarock indicates that as before, IT-dominated Bengaluru tops the list with a rental yield of 4.45 percent in the first quarter of 2024. Cont'd on page 13

Realty consultancy Rise Infra achieves massive 110% increase in gross sales

GURUGRAM: Leading Real Estate Consultancy Firm Rise Infraventures Ltd. announced that it has achieved massive gross sales of Rs. 2620 crores in FY 2023-24. This is a whopping 110% higher than the previous year's numbers. In FY 2022-23, the company's gross sales figure was Rs. 1428 crores. This stupendous performance comes on the heels of record realty sales in the last two years and the boom in premium and luxury housing.

Buoyed by the numbers, the company has set its sights on a gross sales target of Rs. 4000 crores for the next financial year, 2024-25.

"Gross sales target of Rs. 4000 is an easily attainable number. The last two years have been immensely good for the real estate sector. Riding on the back of India's economic growth as well as rapid infrastructural development, the realty sector is experiencing a massive tailwind and is



poised to scale new heights of growth. Besides, we are investing in this potential, which will enable Rise Infra to attain the numbers we have set our sight on," says Sachin Gawri, Founder & CEO, RISE Infra.

Meanwhile, the company, seeking to capitalize on NRIs' interest in India's realty market, has opened a new vertical called Rise International. It has

also opened two new offices in Mumbai and set up a new division, Rise Homes. The company has also leveraged its services while consolidating its leadership position in the luxury segment.

Rise Infra will tap new markets, open 5 new offices, and increase its current manpower strength by 55% to attain a whopping 1.5 times increase

in its gross sales percentage.

Further, Rise Infra has also announced its targets for the next three financial years - 5000 cr (2024/25), 6250 (2025/26) and 7500 (2026-27).

Attractive pricing, improved service, and availability at a large number of locations will further help Rise Infra seal the deal. NewsVoir/ANI

Delhi-NCR closed 29 mega land deals for 314 acres in FY24: Report

NEW DELHI: Delhi-NCR saw 29 land deals for approximately 314 acres in FY24, in comparison to 23 land deals covering nearly 273.9 acres in FY-23, a recent report shows.

Delhi-NCR continues to be a hotspot for real estate transactions across various sectors and as in the previous financial year, land deals have been a significant part of real estate development, according to Anarock data.

"About 26 separate land deals, totaling nearly 298 acres,

were proposed for residential and township projects to meet the region's growing demand for housing and urban development," said Santhosh Kumar, Vice Chairman, Anarock Group.

At least two land deals, spanning over 7 acres each, were planned specifically for commercial real estate projects.

"A separate deal involving approximately 8.61 acres was

dedicated to an education-related project," Kumar informed.

In Delhi, one deal covering 5 acres was closed for residential development. Gurugram led the way with 22 deals, totaling

208.22 acres.

These included one deal each for educational, residential and retail purposes, while the remaining 20 deals were exclusively for residential development, according to the report.

In Faridabad, a 15-acre land deal was finalized for residential purposes.

Greater Noida saw an 8.9-acre deal secured for residential development and Ghaziabad witnessed a substantial 62.5-acre deal signed for a township project. IANS



Investment opportunities in Indian hospitality

ASHISH TIWARI



NEW DELHI: The Indian hospitality sector has long been recognized as a promising investment avenue, driven by the country's vibrant culture, diverse landscapes, and growing economy. Despite facing challenges due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the sector is poised for a significant rebound in 2024, offering lucrative opportunities for investors.

RESILIENCE AND RECOVERY

The Indian hospitality sector has shown remarkable resilience in the face of adversity. Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, this sector has demonstrated its ability to adapt and innovate. With the gradual reopening of the economy and the easing of travel restrictions, the industry is expected to witness a strong recovery in 2024. This presents an ideal opportunity for investors looking to capitalize on the sector's growth potential.

GROWING DOMESTIC TRAVEL

The domestic travel market in India has been a key driver of growth for the hospitality sector. With international travel still facing restrictions, domestic tourism is expected to surge in 2024. This presents a significant opportunity for hoteliers and investors to cater to the needs of domestic travellers. Investments in resorts, boutique hotels, and homestays in popular tourist destinations are likely to yield high returns in the coming year.

RISE OF BUDGET AND MID-SEGMENT HOTELS

The budget and mid-segment hotel segments have been gaining popularity

in India, driven by the increasing demand from budget-conscious travellers. Investments in this segment are expected to be particularly lucrative in 2024 as travellers prioritize affordability and value for money. Hotel chains focusing on this segment are likely to see strong demand, making it an attractive investment opportunity.

FOCUS ON HEALTH AND WELLNESS TOURISM

The Covid-19 pandemic has led to a heightened focus on health and wellness, with travellers seeking destinations that offer wellness experiences. India, with its rich heritage of traditional medicine and

Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, this sector has demonstrated its ability to adapt and innovate. With the gradual reopening of the economy and the easing of travel restrictions, the industry is expected to witness a strong recovery in 2024

wellness practices, is well positioned to capitalize on this trend. Investments in wellness resorts, spas, and retreats are expected to be highly profitable in 2024 as travellers prioritize health and well-being in their travel choices.

TECHNOLOGY AND DIGITIZATION

The pandemic has accelerated the adoption of technology in the hospitality sector. Hotels and resorts are increasingly leveraging technology to enhance the guest experience, streamline operations, and improve efficiency. Investments in technology-driven solutions such as contactless check-in, mobile

payments, and AI-driven customer service are expected to be key drivers of growth in 2024.

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PRACTICES

Sustainability has emerged as a key trend in the hospitality sector, with travellers increasingly seeking eco-friendly and sustainable travel options. Investments in sustainable tourism practices, such as green hotels, eco-friendly resorts, and responsible tourism initiatives, are expected to be highly profitable in 2024 as travellers prioritize environmental conservation and respon-

sible travel.

LUXURY SEGMENT:

The luxury segment continues to attract significant attention from investors. With India emerging as a favored destination for high-net-worth individuals and luxury travellers, upscale hotels and resorts are witnessing a surge in demand. Investing in luxury properties can offer handsome returns, particularly in prime locations such as popular tourist destinations and metropolitan cities. *IANS/ife*

Bengaluru's rental income highest in Q1-2024, Mumbai next: Anarock report

Cont'd from Page 14

Backed by strong post-pandemic rental demand, rental values in the city's key areas have been rising inexorably after IT companies' return to office calls. Bengaluru's rental yield in pre-Covid 2019 stood at 3.6 percent.

Mumbai comes next among the top cities with a rental yield of 4.15 percent in 2024 as against 3.5 percent back in 2019 - a 19 percent growth. Gurugram is close behind with a rental yield of 4.1 percent in the last quarter against 3.5 percent in 2019.

"Residential rental yields in India had chronically stagnated before the Covid-19 pandemic, with the national average at just 3 percent for many years," said Santhosh Kumar, Vice Chairman - ANAROCK Group.

"With post-pandemic rental demand soaring after offices resumed, rental yields are heading north too. IT-dominated cities including Bengaluru, Gurugram, Pune and Noida, and also MMR (Mumbai), have seen considerable upticks in their rental values, and therefore yields," Santhosh Kumar added.

Residential rental values in India's top cities have resurged tremendously after the pandemic, with 2023 seeing them soar by over 30 percent. In the last quarter of 2023, rental values stabilized in most cities as renting activity usually abates in the last quarter of the year. However, the rental real estate market picked up momentum again in the first quarter of 2024.

In the prominent localities of the top seven cities, there has been an average jump of 4-9 percent jump in residential rents in the first quarter of 2024. Considering that the typical annual increase is 5-10 percent, this is very significant and while it certainly bodes well for landlords, it signifies a worrisome element of cost-of-living inflation for tenants, Anarock said.

India's Silicon Valley Bengaluru leads this trend. As per Anarock data, the average rental values in Sarjapur Road and Whitefield rose by 8 percent each in the first quarter of 2024 against the previous quarter. *ANI*

For detailed story visit www.indiapost.com

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)

Why young men must be aware of testicular cancer

NEW DELHI: Although rare and curable, young men must be aware of testicular cancer, which can severely impact their reproductive health, say experts.

Testicular cancer is not only rare worldwide, but also in India. The country has one of the lowest incidences of testicular cancer with less than 1 man per 100,000 population affected by this condition. However, it is the most common cancer in young men aged 15 to 35 years, and can significantly affect their fertility levels.

"Testicular cancer has a direct impact on the organs that produce sperm, which may interfere with the ability to reproduce," Dr Pallavi Prasad, Fertility Consultant, Nova IVF Fertility, Basaveshwara Nagar, Bengaluru, told IANS.

"Surgery is frequently used as the primary therapy for testicular cancer, which involves removing the cancerous testicle. While this surgery tries to eliminate malignant cells, it may influence sperm production. Even if the remaining testicle is healthy, sperm production might be temporarily or permanently impaired," she added.

In addition, chemotherapy and radiation therapy, used to target cancer cells throughout the body, can also cause collateral harm to sperm cells, reducing sperm production and quality. IANS

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May 3, 2024

Undiagnosed immune deficiency rising among Indian children: Doctors

NEW DELHI: Undiagnosed immune deficiency is significantly rising among children under the age of five in India, said doctors, as part of the World Primary Immunodeficiency Week.

Every year, April 22 to 29 is observed as World Primary Immunodeficiency Week. It aims to raise awareness about Primary immunodeficiency (PIs), also known as inborn errors of immunity (IEI) -- a group of 450 rare and chronic conditions where a part of the body's immune system is missing or does not function correctly.

Dr Gaurav Kharya, Director, Department of Bone Marrow Transplant and Cellular Therapy, Indraprastha Apollo Hospital, New Delhi, told IANS that the prevalence of primary immunodeficiency disorders (PIDs) is rising in India.

"These are potentially fatal genetic conditions that affect a child's immune system, making them more susceptible to infections, autoimmunity, and malignancies," he explained.

While there is no nationwide data on the prevalence of PIDs in India, statistical projections claim that there could be more than one million patients with PIDs in the country.

Dr Sagar Bhattad, Consultant-Pediatric Immunology & Rheuma-

per month, which has now increased to 10-12 every month -- a significant five-fold increase. In the past year alone, over 125 diagnoses were made, and experts predict this number to rise substantially in the coming years.

"It is estimated that before

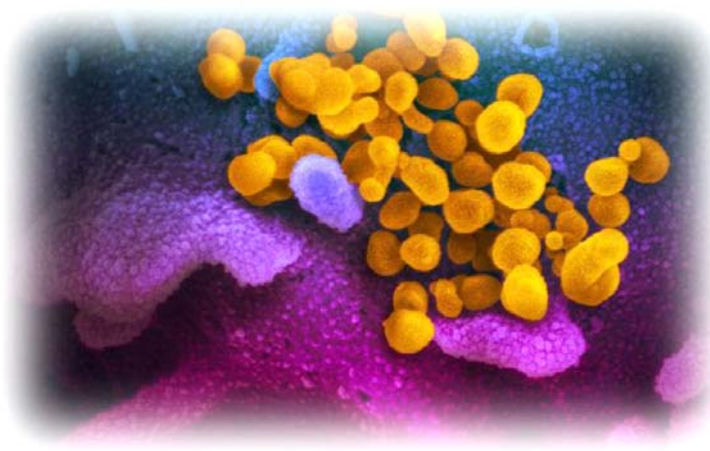
ginger 300-400 per cent increase over the past decade," Dr Sagar said.

The doctors blame lack of awareness about the conditions as well as treatment facilities to be a major reason for the rise in PIDs.

"These genetic conditions are more common in communities that practice consanguineous marriages. Many cases of immunodeficiency go undiagnosed due to a lack of facilities and awareness, especially in rural areas," Dr Gaurav said.

"The lack of awareness and diagnostic facilities are often the reasons why these patients do not reach tertiary care centers where they can be treated for these disorders," he explained.

The doctors stressed the need for recognizing the signs and symptoms that can help in early diagnosis, as well as better outcomes. Genetic testing during pregnancy can be key to identifying potential problems and preventing recurrence in future pregnancies. IANS



tology, Aster CMI Hospital, Bangalore, told IANS that over the past seven years, the hospital has identified more than 450 children suffering from rare and complex immune deficiency diseases.

"Whereas, a decade ago, the number was limited to 1-2 cases

2004, less than 50 cases of immune deficiency were identified nationally. This number has risen dramatically, with an estimated 300-500 cases diagnosed in 2014 and a further increase to 2,500-3,000 cases projected in 2024. This represents a stag-

Why losing keys, everyday items may not always signal poor memory

NEW DELHI: Are you worried that your habit of losing keys and everyday items may be a sign of poor memory? Well, a new book suggests that it may not be the case "always."

The new book 'The Psychology of Memory' by two US professors from Rhode Island College and Indiana University suggests that anyone can boost their powers of recall, and that "losing keys is normal."

In the book, Dr Megan

Sumeracki and Dr Althea Need Kaminske stated that storing and retrieving information is far more complex than people think.

The book also highlighted simple recollection-boosting techniques to improve learning.

"Because we are most aware of our memory when we have trouble remembering something, our intuitions about how memory works might be a little biased," Dr Kaminske said.



"You may be unsurprised to learn that our memory systems are not necessarily designed to remember where we put our phones. Or keys. Or water bottles."

"Though we would hazard a guess that if we were in a survival scenario where dehydration was a concern, we would be much more aware of water sources."

"People are better at remembering information when they process it in a fitness-relevant scenario, such as being

stranded in the grasslands of a foreign land," the authors said.

Further, the book shows how memory can be impaired by alcohol, sleep deprivation and caffeine.

The authors suggested memory-boosting techniques like 'retrieval practice' -- the strategy of 'pulling' facts from memory. For example, deliberately addressing a new colleague's name every time you see them may help you memorize the name. IANS

Indian study shows hilly areas linked to high risk of childhood stunting

NEW DELHI: Children under 5 years of age in India, living at higher altitudes -- over 2,000 meters above sea level -- may be at about 40 percent higher risk of stunted growth, according to a recent study.

The study, published in BMJ Nutrition Prevention & Health, showed that despite various initiatives, childhood stunting, caused by chronic malnutrition, remains a major public health challenge in India, affecting over a third of 5-year-olds.

"In recent decades public health interventions in India have effectively tackled previously prevalent nutritional problems, such as Iodine deficiency, which are associated with living at higher altitudes," said Professor Sumantra Ray, Executive Director of the NNEdPro Global Institute for Food, Nutrition and Health, a think tank.

"But this study highlights the complexi-

ties of malnutrition in hilly regions where wider determinants of malnutrition among the under-5s require further study to elucidate the relative contributions of heredity, environment, lifestyle, and socio-economic factors," Ray added.



Pic courtesy - News Agency

To explore further, the researchers drew on data from the 2015-16 National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4) on 167,555 children under the age of 5. About 1.4 percent of kids lived between

1,000 and 1,999 m above sea level, and 0.2 percent lived at or above 2,000 m.

Overall, stunting was seen among 36 percent children, with a higher prevalence among those aged 18-59 months (41 percent) than among those less than 18 months of age (27 percent).

Stunting was also found to be more common among children of third or higher birth order (44 percent) than it was among firstborns (30 percent).

Stunting rates were even higher among those children who had been small or very small (45 percent) at birth.

However, the study is "observational" and cannot confirm "altitude as a cause of stunting", said the researchers.

According to them, chronic exposure to high altitudes which can reduce appetite, restrict oxygen delivery to tissues, and limit nutrient absorption, are reasons for stunted growth. *IANS*

Nearly 23 pc of Canadian population reported food insecurity in 2022

OTTAWA: Approximately 8.7 million people, or 22.9 percent of Canada's population, lived in households that reported some form of food insecurity in 2022, Statistics Canada has said.

This is an increase of just under 1.8 million from the previous year when the rate was 18.4 percent; the national statistical agency was quoted by Xinhua news agency.

The proportion of those who were marginally food insecure remained relatively stable, at 6 percent, while the proportions of those who were moderately and severely food insecure both increased to reach nearly 17 percent.

According to the agency, people in one-parent families and unattached non-seniors remained at a particularly high risk of food insecurity. People in non-senior couples and couples with children had somewhat lower rates, though all were higher than the rates for people in senior families or unattached seniors. *IANS*



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Americans4Hindus launches Hindu Rajneeti Academy

RITU MAHESHWARI
India Post News Service

FREMONT, CA: Americans4Hindus launched 'Hindu Rajneeti Academy' to focus on political education, enlightenment and empowerment on Sunday, April 28th at Fremont Hindu Temple. It is structured in a way that makes it easy to understand, follow and practice key principles of community services, leadership and politics. Its focus on empowering its members by taking them through an immersion series of 2 hours each weekend integrates policy knowledge, practical knowledge imparted by leaders in political and public service fields and logistical help that includes unearthing opportunities, providing operational and financial support for members to choose public service and get involved in community.

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Hindu Mandir of Lake County celebrates Hanuman Jayanti

GEETA PATIL

CHICAGO: The Hindu Mandir of Lake County, Grayslake, a Chicago suburb celebrated Hanuman Jayanti as the birth anniversary of Lord Hanuman with great fervor and devotion.

More than three hundred devotees attended the program on Tuesday, April 23, 2024, the Purnima Tithi, the full moon day of Shukla Paksha in the Chaitra Masa. Devotees gathered to celebrate Hanuman's divine grace and ask for his blessings for happiness, prosperity, and spiritual fulfillment. Lord Hanuman, the son of Anjana and Kesari, is also called Vanara God, Bajrangbali and Vayu Dev. Known for his unwavering devotion to Lord Rama and Sita; Hanuman is also referred as Anjaneya.

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Mantras to start Alabama House of Representatives

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COMMUNITY ACROSS AMERICA

16 India Post

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May 3, 2024



FOG Telugu Ugadi Celebrations in Fremont Hindu



India Post News Service

FOG Telugu Ugadi Celebrations in Fremont Hindu temple was a grand success with full house of 1500+ audience, hosted and organized by Jo Sharma (Jyotsna) FOG Telugu Chairperson/FOG Cultural Chair and Arvind Kotha (FOG Telugu President) under the leadership of Dr.Japra (Founder of FOG/FIA). The event was celebrated with festive decorations depicting festival theme, cultural competitions with 100+ dance groups/singing groups/art competitions/colorful Fashion Show walk with 75

people where audience also participated and enjoyed the festival celebrations and also participated in the M4M Movie Challenge contest.

Trophies were given to all the competition winners. Women's Achievement Awards were honored to 30 women with customized plaques, and it was sponsored by the



"M4M" (Motive for Murder) Movie (Bollywood/Tollywood). Vice Consul Ms. Himani Dhamija attended as chief guest, addressed the gathering and appreciated the authentic celebration, and conveyed Ugadi wishes.

Shweta Singh Kriti (Author/Thought Leader) received a Women Achievement

Award, and she was honored as an honorary guest on stage. Hon Lien Councilwoman Milpitas, Teresa Cox Fremont City Council, were honored on the stage. Ruchika Sharma Social Secretary of Consulate supported the event. Vice Consul Ms. Himani, along with Shweta Singh Kriti, were invited for authentic South Indian Lunch along with the FOG team along with 500+ people joined for lunch served with Ugadi special Pacchadi (soup), Tamarind Rice and all other dishes.

Cont'd on page 18



Student debt forgiveness: The good, the bad and the ugly

VIDYA SETHURAMAN
India Post News Service

Student debt is the second largest form of consumer credit, next to mortgages, and today, more than 45 million people owe nearly \$1.7 trillion. Every 26 seconds one of those student loan borrowers defaults on their loan. The effect is not just that people can spend their whole lives deeply in debt, sometimes into old age, but that it generates further economic, gender, and racial inequality in our society. Over the last few years, the Biden Administration has tried to ease and expand on student debt forgiveness programs launched under the Obama administration, achieving some success in the process, but continuously facing legal challenges from Republican states that have halted an extensive program unveiled in 2021 and threaten to do the same with one released last year. In the meantime, borrowers still have options if they are low-income, have paid up for a decade or two, or have worked on public service jobs, but the loan-servicing panorama is complex and plagued by lax regulations and bad actors. A panel of experts explained what programs are still on the books, which ones have been stopped or threatened, and the future avenues for college affordability and equity. Experts suggested that there are two main reasons for the current crisis. One is the increase in tuition fees, and the other is the increase in the proportion of tuition fees that students and families need to pay.

Adam Minsky, student loan lawyer and author, said in June 2023, the Supreme Court ruled 6-3 that the massive \$400 billion student loan forgiveness plan that the Biden administration was trying to implement violated the law, and the plan was shelved. In addition, the federal income-based repayment (IDR) requires borrowers to have their remaining student loans forgiven after 20 or 25 years of payment. There is also the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program (PSLF), which allows borrowers to have their student loan balance forgiven after 10 years of service in government agencies or non-profit organizations. The latest student loan forgiveness plan is the Savings on a Valuable Education Plan (SAVE Plan). Under this plan, borrowers repay their student loans every month based on their income and family size. If the loan amount is less than \$12,000, the balance will be forgiven after 10 years of monthly repayment of the student loan. Regarding this plan, Michele Shepard Zampini said that rather than a student loan forgiveness plan; it is a plan

that can make student loans repayable better. Under this policy, the monthly repayment of student loans will be reduced, which can make students more repayable. The applicant's loan repayment plan is back on track.

Michele Shepard Zampini, TICAS Senior Director of College Affordability, a non-profit organization that advocates equal access to school, said that college tuition has increased sig-

nificantly in recent years, coupled with the original government-subsidized tuition. The portion has been reduced and an increasing portion has been borne by students and families, leading Americans to gradually fall into a student loan crisis. She said that it is necessary to strengthen the supervision of the university's use of funds so that the federal and state government loans received by the

university can be fully utilized.

Virginia Brown, a mental health counselor and social worker who just retired and was able to move closer to her family thanks to debt forgiveness. Beginning with the Obama administration, the federal government has launched various student loan forgiveness programs.

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Fremont Hindu Temple
Vedic Dharma Samaj

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FOG Telugu Ugadi Celebrations in Fremont Hindu



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Suneeta Bendapudi, Advocate Hyderabad High Court/Supreme Court, was honored with the Women's Achievement Award and Appreciation. FOG President Rajesh Verma Ji, Vidya Sethuraman, Ritu Maheswari,

FOG Telugu Vice President Abhilash Maraju, and FOG Telugu VPs Cultural Shubadha Ingole and Hemangini Vora, helped to execute the program.

FOG Telugu Leads Srini Gotte, Raghu, Nagendra, Suneeta, Phani, Varsha, Gauthami, Krishna, Srinivas and many other volunteers helped with the event.

Alka Bhatnagar and Megha Mocherla are judges for the event. Media coverage was done by IndiaPost, Telangana Times, TV5, Sakshi TV, TV Asia, ManaTV, OurTripVideos and APLatestNews channels. Sponsors "M4M" (Motive for Murder) Tollywood Movie, Srinu F3 Financials, Rushat contributed to the event.



Americans4Hindus launches Hindu Rajneeti Academy



RITU MAHESHWARI
India Post News Service

FREMONT, CA: Americans4Hindus launched 'Hindu Rajneeti Academy' to focus on political education, enlightenment and empowerment on Sunday, April 28th at Fremont Hindu Temple. It is structured in a way that makes it easy to understand, follow and practice key principles of community services, leadership and politics. Its focus on empowering its members by taking them through an immersion series of 2 hours each weekend integrates policy knowledge, practical knowledge imparted by leaders in political and public service fields and logistical help that includes unearthing opportunities, providing operational and financial support for members to choose public service and get involved in community.

Political education and empowerment are crucial components of a healthy democracy, serving as the bedrock for informed citizenry and active participation in governance. Through political education, members gain a deeper understanding of the mechanisms of their political system, including the roles and responsibilities of different branches of government, electoral processes, and the significance of serving and gaining influence for community.

First session of Hindu Rajneeti academy received tremendous response, with over 50 enthusiastic youth and A4H (Americans4Hindus) members registered to embark on this journey.

Fremont Councilmember Teresa Cox and Sunnyvale Councilmember Murali Srinivasan shared their journey

to political leadership, what motivates them and, why it is important to have a voice and influence in policy-making circles.

Dr. Romesh Japra, Founder A4H said "Americans4Hindus strives to protect, promote and support Hindu Values by helping Hindu and Pro-Hindu voices in politics and policy making. It is critical for our community to participate and influence the narrative to ensure we are not discriminated and victims of neglect or worse just for being model citizens. The only way for that to happen is to ensure we have a seat at the policy making tables that affects our way of life."

On today's complex political environment in USA,



there are multiple political trends and views emerging. While opinions farther from bipartite moderate center are hardening more than ever, there is a huge divide appearing, driven by false narratives and extreme views on both sides of the spectrum. It often becomes confusing to discern who is aligned with what matters to us most.

Hindu Rajneeti Academy will hold 2 hour educational and lecture series every week and support its members become more aware and participate in political process locally, statewide or at national level.

You can register at Americans4Hindus.org to participate.



Hindu Mandir of Lake County celebrates Hanuman Jayanti

GEETA PATIL



Devotees celebrating Hanuman Jayanti



Baby Hanuman Ji

CHICAGO: The Hindu Mandir of Lake County, Grayslake, a Chicago suburb celebrated Hanuman Jayanti as the birth anniversary of Lord Hanuman with great fervor and devotion.

More than three hundred devotees attended the program on Tuesday, April 23, 2024, the Purnima Tithi, the full moon day of Shukla Paksha in the Chaitra Masa. Devotees gathered to celebrate Hanuman's divine grace and ask for his blessings for happiness, prosperity, and spiritual fulfillment. Lord Hanuman, the son of Anjana and Kesari, is also called

Vanara God, Bajrangbali and Vayu Dev. Known for his unwavering devotion to Lord Rama and Sita; Hanuman is also referred as Anjaneya.

The program started with sponsor Sankalp and followed by Lord Ganesh, Hanuman Ji, and Ram Parivar Pujan. Devotees chanted Hanuman Chalisa, a hymn in the praise of Hanuman 100 times. Neera and Madhup Dhoan lead this chanting. Temple priests, Pt. Anil Joshi Ji, Pt. Balaji Gopal, and Pt. Radha Krishna along with sponsor devotees performed Abhishekam of Lord Hanuman Ji with

Saffron milk. Lord Hanuman reverberated with Vedic Mantras and shloka. Then came the exciting scene of Baby Hanuman Ji entering into shrine while devotees chanting slogans such as Ram Lakshman Janaki, Jai Bolo Hanuman Ki and Shree Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram.

Devotees brought homemade traditional Chappan Bhog for Naivedyam and, later served it as Maha Prasadam to all the devotees. Pt. Joshi Ji thanked and blessed all the devotees for their active participation and great success in their lives.

Mantras to start Alabama House of Representatives

India Post News Service

CHICAGO: Mantras are planned to be read on May 2, 2024, in the Alabama House of Representatives for the first time since the creation of Alabama legislature in 1818 containing verses from world's oldest extant scripture.

For the first time, two Hindu invocations are scheduled to be read on May two, instead of the usual one. Arpita Patel and Hindu statesman Rajan Zed will be the invocators. May 2 is also National Day of Prayer.

Zed, President of Universal Society of Hinduism, will deliver the invocation from ancient Sanskrit scriptures in the Alabama House of Representatives. After Sanskrit delivery, he then will read the English interpretation of the prayers. Sanskrit is considered a sacred language in Hinduism and the root language of Indo-European languages.

He will recite from Rig-Veda, the oldest scripture of the world still in common use; besides lines from Upanishads and Bhagavad-Gita (Song of the Lord), both ancient Hindu scriptures. He plans to start and end the prayer with "Om", the mystical

syllable containing the universe, which in Hinduism is used to introduce and conclude religious work.

Reciting from the *Brahadaranyakopanishad*, Zed plans to say "Asato ma sad gamaya, Tamaso ma jyotirgamaya, Mrtyorma mrtamgamaya"; which he will then interpret as "Lead us from the unreal to the real, Lead us from darkness to light, and Lead us from death to immortality." Reciting from *Bhagavad-Gita*, he proposes to urge House members and others present to keep the welfare of others always in mind.

Rajan Zed is an interfaith leader and produces a weekly multi-faith panel "Faith Forum" in a Gannett publication for over 13 years. He thanked the Alabama House of Representatives for its inclusivity gesture in welcoming the Hindu prayer.

Hinduism is the oldest religion of the world with about 1.2 billion adherents and moksh (liberation) is its ultimate goal. There are about three million Hindus in USA. The Alabama House of Representatives in Montgomery is comprised of 105 members. Nathaniel Ledbetter is the Speaker.



Hanuman Ji Abhishekam

Student debt forgiveness: The good, the bad and the ugly

Cont'd from page 17

Although these programs have been effective, many of them have been interrupted by legal challenges from all walks of life, and the student loan forgiveness program has also confused many people because of the lack of detailed policy explanations and personnel assistance. She is a first-generation immigrant. When she came to the United States, her son was five years old. At that time, in order to have a better family life, she mustered up the courage to return to school and study psychological counseling. She attended

a private university at the time and started over from the undergraduate level. Unable to afford the expensive tuition, Virginia Brown had to apply for the federal student loan program. However, after graduation, even though she repaid her student loan every month, the interest on it continued to increase, eventually resulting in a debt of \$100,000. She finally qualified for student loan forgiveness in mid-2021. But before that, in order to qualify for the exemption program, she had to work in a non-profit organization and engage in public service, which in turn resulted in a lower salary and an inability to pay her student loans.

Alameda County District Attorney Pamela Price Joins the Alameda City Attorney in Civil Enforcement

Action Against the Owners/Operators of Barnhill Marina & Boatyard for Alleged Violations of Tenant Protection Laws and California's Unfair Competition Law

OAKLAND, CA: Alameda County District Attorney Pamela Price joined Alameda City Attorney Yibin Shen in a civil enforcement action earlier this month against the owners and operators of Barnhill Marina & Boatyard ("Barnhill"). The defendants are Valley Investments-Redwood, LLC (Valley), which purchased Barnhill in 2021, and its manager, Amarpal Narang ("defendants"). Given the egregiousness of the violations alleged, this is the first major tenant protection action joined by the District Attorney's Consumer Justice Bureau and the first time District Attorney Price has agreed to share her authority to enforce California's Unfair Competition Law with a City Attorney's office.

The Barnhill Marina, located on Alameda Island, has 56 berths occupied by floating homes. Floating home residents must pay monthly rent to Valley to occupy a berth. These renters are tenants under state law and Alameda rent control ordinances. Many of Barnhill's tenants are low-income seniors, some in their late 60s.

The civil complaint, filed on April 11, 2024, in the Alameda County Superior Court, alleges that the defendants violated California's Unfair Competition Law by repeatedly refusing to comply with local ordinances and state laws protecting tenants from excessive rent increases and harassment. Specifically, the complaint alleges that after Valley purchased Barnhill in 2021, the defendants repeatedly refused to follow Alameda's Rent Control Ordinance, which requires rental-housing businesses to register their units and pay mandatory Rent Program Fees. The Complaint further alleges that the defendants used unfair business tactics to harass and try to force out long-term Barnhill tenants, including by drastically raising their rents and interfering with some residents' attempts to sell their floating homes.

"Valley's alleged failure to follow state and local rent control laws gives it an unfair competitive advantage over law-abiding rental housing businesses in Alameda," said District Attorney Pamela Price. "My office's Consumer Justice Bureau is joining in this enforcement action with the Alameda City Attorney to ensure that laws protecting tenants' safety and security are enforced and to make sure rental housing business owners are held accountable and all follow the same laws."

The defendants have 30 days from service to respond to the Complaint.

Contact: damedia@acgov.org
(The Alameda County District Attorney's Office (DAO) is one of California's largest prosecutors' offices and is led by Alameda County's first Black woman District Attorney Pamela Y. Price. Price brings her vision to this office to fairly administer justice in the pursuit of thriving, healthy, and safe communities for every person who steps foot in Alameda County, no matter their race, gen-

der, religion, sexual orientation, income, or zip code. Price has been recognized as one of the most progressive prosecutors through her forward-thinking, innovative strategies to interrupt cycles of violence and crime and bring change to a criminal justice system rooted in systemic racism. Follow Madam DA on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook, and @AlamedaCountyda on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook.)





Fremont Hindu Temple
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Sri Jagannath Parivaar open their eyes on the 15th day and devotees come for darshan after a gap of 15 days to seek blessings from the divine siblings. It's a blessing to be able to experience the same here in Fremont Temple. Please join to receive blessings.

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FIA Chicago celebrates Holi - Festival of Colors with fervor

JAYANTIOZA

CHICAGO: The Federation of Indian Associations (FIA) Chicago, a 501(c)(3) organization, hosted a vibrant colorful Holi celebration marked by a beautifully decorated stage and premises filled with music, dance, Thandai (a special India drink), delicious food and singing, depicting Indian culture at the Mall of India, Naperville, a Chicago suburb on Sunday, April 21, 2024.

The grand event kicked off with an ensemble by Maharashtra Mandal called 'Dhol Tasha'. This rhythm got the entire crowd, including the mall visitors, to join in the fun and dance together. The mayor of Naperville, Scott Wehrli, joined in the traditional dance and learned a few steps. This was followed by the emcees Nilabh Dubey (Secretary-General) and Sanskriti Sharma taking over the program by inviting FIA Chairman and Founder, Sunil Shah, President Pratibha Jairath and Past President Vinita Gulabani, on the stage.

Sunil Shah welcomed Chief Guest for the day, CG Somnath Ghosh followed by welcoming the Mayor of Naperville, Scott Wehrli, Congresswoman Michelle Mussman, Mayor of Oakbrook, Larry Herman, and the Alderwoman of Aurora, Shweta Baidon the stage, the dignitaries were joined by Advisory Board members Pinky Thakkar, Sushma Bhanot and Dr. Bhupinder Beri. Scott Wehrli spoke about why Naperville gets constantly ranked as the number one city to live in the USA and the contributions of the Indian diaspora in building Naperville into a great city.

Larry Herman articulated the fun involved in applying the colors to each, bringing us all together as part of one family. Michelle Mussman, who was attending the Holi festivities with FIA for the eighth time, spoke about how FIA brings the west and east together and truly proves there is unity in diversity. Shweta Baid spoke about the vibrant Indian community and the welcoming nature that ensures smooth integration, wherever they live.

CG Somnath Ghosh spoke about how the Indian diaspora brings vibrancy and economic development to wherever they live. He also spoke about the world's great democracy, starting the election for the new government, where 1.4 billion people will decide their representatives. The transition of applying colors to the forehead was done by Chairman Sunil Shah and Pratibha Jairath to all the dignitaries. Specially made Holi T-shirts were gifted to all the dignitaries.)

This was followed by the cultural program. The mic was handed to Richa Chand, the emcee for the entertainment



segment. Culturalists were kicked off by Jitendra Bulasara and Shaila Khedkar, singing patriotic and special Holi songs. We had great performances from many dance schools: Purna, Kabita, Trusha (Pika Munshi), Bollywood Beatz (Anita Rotiwar) and Suhani Dance Academy (Falguni Rana). The surprise was an amazing dance performance by FIA directors, Falguni Rana, Dolly Bansal, Sonika Khandelwal, Sanskriti Sharma and Falguni Sukhadia.

This was followed by Garba singing by Jigna Pathak and Jitendra Bulsara. All the dignitaries could not resist themselves from joining the dance when the Garba team sang 'Dholidapankhida' hit songs and members of the audience jumped in. This was brought to an end by another surprise, when Richa Chand and Nilabh Dubey called Sunil Shah and Rita Shah to sing a foot-tapping duet. The dancing continued with greater fervor.

The last segment of the program was the actual playing of colors, which was done outside in the open. On the way, as we moved from indoors to outdoors, Vandana Jhingan, representing the press and media in Chicagoland, interviewed CG Somnath Ghosh and Founder Chairman Sunil Shah for the TV News segment. CG Somnath Ghosh spoke eloquently to the press about how FIA is at the forefront of bringing Indian culture to the USA.

The surprises did not end here. Anu Malhotra (Executive Vice President) prepared Thandai (a special milk and dry fruit-based drink) for all the folks who joined the Holi. Everyone got the Indian snacks and a special Holi T-shirt before the folks went out to play Holi. The impeccable stage and the outside set-up were done by Neelam Jai.

The color-play of Holi was kicked off with Sunil Shah, Pratibha Jairath, Vinita Gulabani and Sudhir Agrawal, blasting the colors 25 feet up in the air. DJ and the Dhol team revved up the spirits with their music, Free colors provided for all the 600 people who joined the celebrations. It was such a colorful moment; amidst the chaos of colors, there were countless moments of joy and camaraderie!!



Ask NAPCA

In this month's column, we selected general questions about Medicare and other social benefits; from the calls and letters we received and, would like to share the information. If you have additional questions about Medicare, Medicaid, Affordable Care Act Health Insurance Marketplace, Social Security Retirement Benefit, Supplemental Security Income, Social Benefits for Seniors, or COVID/Flu vaccination, there are 3 ways you can reach us today: Call our Senior Assistance Center at: (English) 1-800-336-2722, Email: askNAPCA@napca.org, Mail: 1511 3rd Avenue, Suite 914, Seattle, WA 98101

Q1. I just turned 65. Can I sign up for Medicare?

Yes. Medicare is a health insurance program for people 65 or older.

If you have been receiving Social Security benefits for at least 4 months prior to turning 65, you'll get Medicare automatically. If not, you must actively sign up. When you first sign up for Medicare, during your 7 month-IEP (Initial Enrollment Period) you will have Medicare Part A (hospital/inpatient coverage) and, Part B (medical/outpatient coverage), which is known as Original Medicare or Traditional Medicare.

You must pay a monthly premium for Part B and/or Part A (almost all beneficiaries don't have to pay a Part A monthly premium if they or their spouse have at least 40 Social Security work credits). You still have to pay 20% coinsurance and deductible. If you want to fill this expense gap, you can choose to purchase either Medicare Part C (Medicare Advantage plan) or, Medigap (also called Medicare Supplement Insurance).



NATIONAL ASIAN PACIFIC
CENTER ON AGING

Lastly, there is Medicare Part D, prescription drug coverage. Part D covers prescription drugs. If you have Original Medicare and want prescription drug coverage, you should purchase a stand-alone drug plan; however, many Medicare Advantage plans include prescription drug coverage.

Q2. What are Medicare Advantage Plans and Medigap?

If you have Part A and Part B, you can join a Medicare Advantage Plan, sometimes called "Part C" or an "MA plan." MA plans must offer, at minimum, the same

benefits as Original Medicare. Unlike Original Medicare, MA plans can offer additional benefits such as dental or vision coverage and have annual out-of-pocket maximum limits. Many MA plans provide Part D coverage as part of their benefits package. You have to pay a monthly premium for MA, but some MA plans have \$0 monthly premiums. So, you can save significantly on your health care costs. However, MA plans typically have

Part B and Medigap plan (and if applicable, additional coverage plans), totaling about \$400 or more per month. Original Medicare supported by Medigap (with/without a prescription drug plan) would be a good choice for those who need recurring care for a chronic condition, travel a lot, or live in rural areas.

Q3. Do you know that you may also be eligible for energy cost assistance?

LIHEAP (Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program) is a federally funded program that helps low-income households to meet their immediate home energy needs. This program provides your household with an annual cash grant to help you pay for your home heating and cooling costs. The grants are paid either directly to you or to your energy company. To be eligible a household must have an income that does not exceed the greater of 150% of the federal poverty guideline (e.g., \$2,555 for a two-person household) or, 60% of the state median income level. Enrollment periods may not be year-round, and the open period depends on the state. The application processes and agencies vary depending on the area where you live. Please call us to see if you are eligible.

National Asian Pacific Center on Aging (NAPCA) is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the quality of life of AANHPI older adults and their families. We operate a NAPCA Senior Assistance Center for Older Adults and Caregivers and is available in 5 different languages.

TNF Golden Jubilee celebrations

India Post News Service

Chicago Tamil Nadu Foundation (TNF), established in 1974 in Baltimore, Celebrates its Golden Jubilee, a significant milestone event, scheduled from May 24 to 26 in Rosemont, IL (Chicago), marking fifty years of Foundation's impactful journey.

TNF lifetime members and the Tamil diaspora will celebrate their accomplishments, reflecting on its journey from a small group of visionaries to impacting over 250,000 children and families across 650 villages in Tamil Nadu.

The event promises a rich blend of music, dance, and informative sessions, providing an opportunity to engage with our Youth Force, the future bearers of our mission, and to minimize administrative costs through event profits, ensuring that 100% of donor dollars directly benefit the beneficiaries in Tamil Nadu.

Event Highlights:

- Grand Music Concert: Featuring the legendary "Isai Gnyani Illayaraja."
- Therukoothu: By Sangagiri

Rajkumar with 260 participants (Attempting to make Guinness record).

- "EGAI" Tamil Symphony: A spectacular musical event by Dr. Kannik Kannikeswaran featuring over a hundred artists.
- Fusion Dance Performance: Showcasing 150 local talents.
- Tamil Isai - Featuring traditional Tamil musical instruments.
- The Renowned YouTube - Village Cooking Channel Team.
- Emerge 2024: An all-day Entrepreneurs Event sponsored by TNF and ATEA.
- Youth Conference: Organized by young adults.
- College Alumni Gathering: Expecting participation from over 25 colleges.
- Districts Parade: Representing 38 districts from Tamil Nadu.
- Other high-quality programs from TNF Chapters and local organizations.

Guests from various parts of North America and at least 50 other countries will converge to witness this mega event.

Visit www.tnfusa.org for more details.

network restrictions, meaning that you will likely be more limited in your choice of doctors, hospitals, and service areas. Plans may require a referral for specialist visits or prior authorization from your plan. If cost is your prior concern or you live in an urban area, MA plan may be a good option.

Medigap (also called Medicare Supplement Insurance) is a private health insurance policy to fill cost sharing gaps such as 20% coinsurance in Medicare Parts A & B and only those enrolled in Original Medicare can purchase a Medigap plan. Medigap offers neither prescription drugs nor additional benefits such as dental or vision. If you want additional coverage, you'll need to purchase the plan you want to add separately. You will need to pay monthly premiums for

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Prof. Vishwanath D. Karad

PRACHI JAITLEY

CHICAGO: Prof. Vishwanath D. Karad, Founder President of the renowned MAEER's MIT World Peace University, Pune, India, reaffirmed his commitment to bring to reality Swami Vivekananda's famous prophecy, "Union of Science and Religion / Spirituality alone will bring Peace and Harmony to mankind," during his path-breaking address at Fullerton Hall, Chicago.

He also stressed upon the urgent need to promote a "Value Based Universal Education System" in the world to establish a "Culture of Peace", particularly on the background of the chaos, confusion, horrifying violence, terrorism, bloodshed and atmosphere of fear and suspicion in the world today.

Prof. Karad was addressing a gathering of eminent scholars, thinkers, philosophers, scientists, academicians, educationists, etc., as well as the alumni of MIT Group of Educational Institutions, Pune, India to commemorate 130 years of the historic and epoch-making speech delivered by Swami

Vivekananda on 11th September 1893 at Fullerton Hall, Chicago.

Prof. Dr. Vishwanath D. Karad is an ardent follower of and draws inspiration from the immortal words of wisdom spoken by Swami Vivekananda and for over four decades, has promoted and practiced the concept of VALUE BASED UNIVERSAL EDUCATION SYSTEM with an appropriate component of Science and Spirituality for the development of peace-loving glo-



Mantras to start Paradise Town Council in CA

India Post News Service

PARADISE: Hindu invocation (opening-prayer) was read on April 22 2024 in Town Council of Paradise, CA, which was devastated by wildfire few years back; containing verses from world's oldest extant scripture.

Rajan Zed the President of Universal Society of Hinduism, delivered the invocation from ancient Sanskrit scriptures in Paradise Town Council. After Sanskrit delivery, he read the English interpretation of the prayers. Sanskrit is considered a sacred language in Hinduism and the root language of Indo-European languages.

Reciting from Brahadaranyakopanishad, Rajan Zed plans to say "Asato ma sad gamaya, Tamaso ma jyotirgamaya, Mrtyormamrtamgamaya"; which he will then interpret as "Lead us from the unreal to the real, Lead us from darkness to light, and Lead us from death to immortality." Reciting from Bhagavad-Gita, he proposes to urge town council members and others present to keep the welfare of others always in mind.



Zed has been bestowed with the World Interfaith Leader Award. Zed is Senior Fellow and Religious Advisor to Foundation for Religious Diplomacy, on the Advisory Board of The Interfaith Peace Project, etc. He has been panelist for "On Faith", a prestigious interactive conversation on religion produced by The Washington Post; and produces a weekly multi-faith panel "Faith Forum" in a Gannett publication for over 13 years.

Hinduism, oldest and third largest religion of the world, has about 1.2 billion adherents and moksh (liberation) is its ultimate goal. There are about three million Hindus in USA.

Ronald Lassonde and Jim Goodwin are Mayor and Town Manager respectively of Paradise, which was incorporated in 1979, and hosts oldest harvest festival of California since 1888 known as Johnny Appleseed Days. Nestled in the foothills of Sierra Nevada Mountains, scenes from a 1939 American epic historical romance film "Gone with the Wind" were filmed here. Its tagline is: May you Find Paradise to be All the Name Implies.

bal citizens with WINNING PERSONALITIES, who are physically fit, mentally

alert, intellectually sharp and spiritually elevated.

SRS Medical Clinic hosts Health Fair

India Post News Service

CHICAGO: The SRS Medical Clinic hosted a Free Medical Health Fair last week, with an impressive turnout of volunteer medical professionals.

The event was graced by the presence of five dedicated nurses and 15 doctors, each specializing in various fields such as General Practice, Rheumatology, Mental Health, Pain Management, Dental Care, Pediatrics, Cardiology, Neurology, Optometry, and Pharmacy.

The roster of compassionate doctors included Dr. Amrit Anand, Dr. Navdeep Bhatti, Dr. Naina Batish, Dr. Jasvinder Chawla, Dr. Prempreet Bajaj, Dr. Amrit Virk, Dr. Annie Bajaj, Dr. Neil Chandok, Dr. Navjit Snghera, Dr. Raman Bhakhri, Dr. Ritu Talwar, Dr. Vikramjit Gill, Dr. Hargurmukh Pal Singh, Dr. Dharm Bains and Dr. Amarjit, who selflessly dedicated their time and expertise to serve the community.

This endeavor wouldn't have been possible without the unwavering support of the diligent nursing staff, including Neetu Kaur, Gagan Singh, Amrita Randhawa and

Anchalpreet Kahlon, Carlien Van Jaarsveld, whose assistance was invaluable throughout the event. Supported by Harsimran Singh, Vikramjit Singh, and Lukas.

Furthermore, the collaboration with the Illinois College of Optometry brought additional resources to the fair. Dr. Navi and Dr. Raman, along with their team of students, brought in specialized equipment and lent their expertise, ensuring that the optometry services ran seamlessly from start to finish.

One of the most remarkable aspects was its accessibility, as no insurance or any payment was required. This inclusive approach allowed many members of the community to benefit from free consultations and second opinions, thereby fulfilling the clinic's mission of serving the sangat with compassion and care.

SRS free Medical clinic is open every Sunday from 10 AM to 11 AM Mental Health focus, and then the regular medical doctor from 11 AM to Noon. Monthly schedule is published and is available on the door of the clinic as well as via SRS newsletter.

One of the most remarkable aspects was its accessibility, as no insurance or any payment was required



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Bollywood superstar Aamir Khan, who was last seen in 'Laal Singh Chaddha', shared that he understood the power of 'Namaste' while shooting for his 2016 blockbuster 'Dangal' in Punjab.

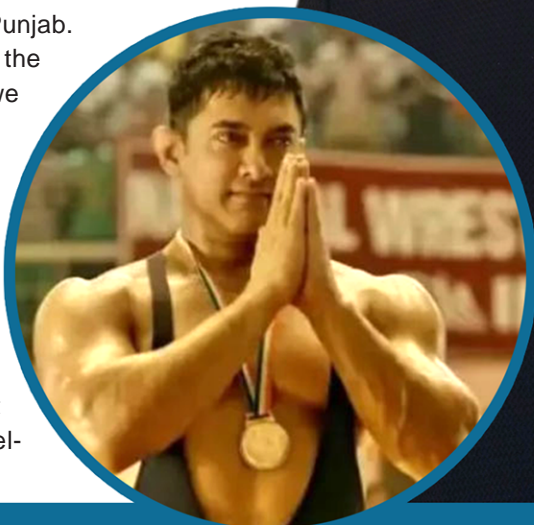
Aamir recently appeared on the streaming comedy show 'The Great Indian Kapil Show' and spoke with Kapil about various topics, including his last two films, 'Laal Singh Chaddha' and 'Thugs of Hindostan', which didn't perform well at the box office.

During the conversation, he also reflected on being raised in a Muslim family and how he learned about the cultural significance of 'Namaste'.

Recalling a memorable experience, he first mentioned shooting for 'Rang de Basanti' in Punjab.

The actor said in Hindi, "The people, the Punjabi culture, is full of love. So, when we went for the shoot of 'Dangal', it was a small village we were shooting in. We shot for more than two months in that location and that house."

"You won't believe it, but when I used to arrive there around 5 or 6 in the morning, as my car entered, people would stand outside their homes just to welcome me with folded hands and 'Sat Sri Akaal'. They used to just wait to welcome me. They never disturbed me, never stopped my car, nothing. After my pack-up, when I would return, they would again be standing outside their homes and would greet me 'Good Night'," he said. *IANS*



Aamir Khan understood power of 'Namaste' during 'Dangal'



Ankita Lokhande on how dance taught her

On the occasion of International Dance Day, actress Ankita Lokhande shared how dance has been an integral part of her life and has imparted valuable lessons to her.

Ankita took to X and shared a video.

The clip begins with her putting a "teeka" on Lord Natraja. Subsequently, she is seen wearing her ghungroos before commencing her classical dance performance.

The video then showcases snippets of the actress's dance performances in movies and shows.

"Dance has always been an integral part of my life. Mere first school annual day performance se lekar ab tak, dance has taught me a lot," Ankita wrote.

"This reel is just a short summary of my connection with dance. Happy International Dance Day #Ankita #AnkitaLokhande #InternationalDanceDay," she added. *IANS*



TOP TEN HINDI FILM SONGS

- 1 Soulmate: *Ek Tha Raja*
- 2 Mirza: *Maidaan*
- 3 Pehla Ishq : *Ruslaan*
- 4 Saza: *Saza*
- 5 Rang Ishq Ka : *Bade Miyan Chote Miyan*
- 6 O Maahi: *Dunki*
- 7 Pehle Bhi Main: *ANIMAL*
- 8 Akhiyaan Gulaab : *Teri Baaton Mein Aisa Uljha Jiya*
- 9 Useless Bhawra: *Useless Bhawra*
- 10 Gulabi Ankhian: *LSD 2*

Sreeleela opts out of dance number with Thalapathy Vijay in 'GOAT'

Actress Sreeleela, who predominantly works in Telugu and Kannada movies, has declined to work in a dance number opposite Tamil superstar Thalapathy Vijay in the upcoming Tamil film 'GOAT'.

The film would have marked Sreeleela's foray into Tamil cinema and her pairing opposite Vijay, who's known for his dancing skills, would have been a treat for the fans. But, as per a media report, the actress didn't want to debut in Tamil cinema with a dance number. Hence, she politely turned down the offer for the song.

Sreeleela has emerged as a dancing sensation, and her latest song 'Kurichi Madathapetti' from the Telugu film 'Guntur Karam' with Mahesh Babu has been trending on the Internet.

The actress has different plans for Tamil cinema and is waiting for the right opportunity with a substantial role.

The US-born actress, who has been feted thrice with SIIMA honours from 2021 to 2023, will be next seen in the Telugu film 'Ustaad Bhagat Singh', which also stars Telugu superstar Pawan Kalyan. *IANS*

Raveena wears recyclable material saree in 'blistering heatwave'

Raveena Tandon is surely the epitome of grace and elegance, as she treated fans to beautiful pictures of herself wearing a saree made of sustainable, recyclable material.

Taking to Instagram, the actress, who was most recently seen in the legal drama film 'Patna Shuklla', shared a series of photos donning a plain red transparent saree.

Raveena opted for a matching halterneck blouse.

For makeup, Raveena is all glammed up with nude pink glossy lips, kohl-rimmed eyes, and highlighted cheeks. She kept her hair tied in a clean bun.

The 'K.G.F: Chapter 2' actress opted for golden earrings and matching bangles.

The post is captioned: "Red. In this blistering heatwave! #global warming is real folks. Wake up to it before it's too late. In a saree made of sustainable recyclable material by @vaishalisstudio."

Fashion designer and wife of actor Arbaaz Khan, Sshura Khan, commented on the post and said: "Stunner."

Sonakshi Sinha dropped fire emojis.

In 'Patna Shuklla', Raveena plays the role of Tanvi Shukla.

The film revolves around the uncommon journey of Tanvi, a common woman, who takes matters into her own hands when she sees a student entangled in a roll number scam, and soon realizes that she is pitted against a Chief Minister candidate. IANS



SONAKSHI THANKS FILMMAKERS WHO'VE TAKEN 'THE RISK' TO CAST HER DIFFERENTLY

In a career spanning over a decade, Bollywood actress Sonakshi Sinha has fearlessly explored roles outside the box.

The actress is thankful to filmmakers, who have taken the "risk" of showcasing her in a different light.

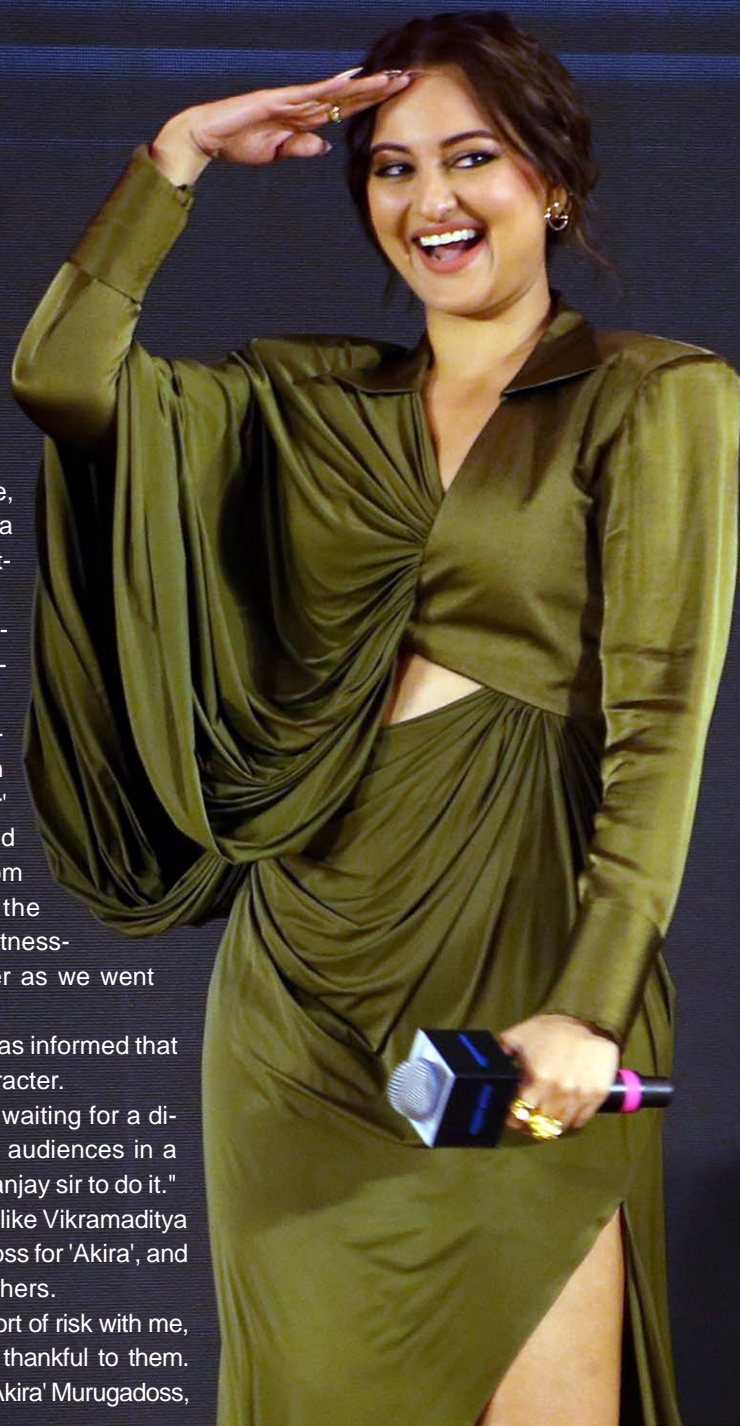
Reflecting on her journey from being in talks for her character in 'Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar' to becoming Fareedan, Sonakshi told IANS: "It was a beautiful journey, from actually meeting him, discussing the project, listening to the story, and witnessing how he developed my character as we went along. It was a beautiful process."

Sonakshi was thrilled when she was informed that she would be playing a negative character.

The actress added: "I have been waiting for a director to see and portray me to the audiences in a different light, and who better than Sanjay sir to do it."

Sonakshi is thankful to filmmakers like Vikramaditya Motwane for 'Lootera', A.R. Murugadoss for 'Akira', and Reema Kagti for 'Dahaad', among others.

"Very few people have taken that sort of risk with me, and whoever has done it, I am truly thankful to them. Vikramaditya Motwane with 'Lootera', 'Akira' Murugadoss, Reema Kagti in 'Dahaad', and now this," she said. IANS



SHUBHANGI ATRE BELIEVES IN POWER OF MANIFESTATION

Actress Shubhangi Atre, best known for her role in the sitcom 'Bhabhiji Ghar Par Hai', strongly believes in the power of manifestation, and practices it every day.

She feels an actor's hard work and determination enable him/her to climb the ladder to success.

"I believe in luck, but I see it as more of a chance-giver. Luck might open doors for you, but it's your hard work and determination that truly matter. I think luck contributes about 40 percent, while the remaining 60 percent comes from your effort, consistency, and dedication," she said.

Speaking about the power of manifestation, Shubhangi shared: "However, it's not just about wishing for something and waiting for it to happen; you need to put in efforts too. If your intentions are pure and your hard work matches your desires, manifestation can truly work wonders. I believe that cosmic energies play a role in helping us achieve our goals."

She added: "I believe in the power of positive energy and the concept of manifesting our desires strongly, as mentioned in 'The Secret'. My entry into 'Bhabhiji Ghar Par Hai' was another sudden opportunity, and despite the responsibility of replacing someone, I embraced it with hard work and dedication. I've learned that putting positive efforts into anything yields results." IANS





Exploring the timeless allure of heritage Indian clothing

KAVITA BAJPAI

NEW DELHI: India's cultural diversity is vividly reflected in its traditional attire, showcasing a myriad of styles, colors, and techniques. From the opulent ghagra choli of Rajasthan to the refined grace of Kerala's Kasavu sarees, each garment encapsu-

lates centuries of tradition and craftsmanship.

Though related, Traditional and modern wear represent divergent approaches to Indian fashion. Traditional wear reveres the past, preserving ancient techniques and motifs with me-

ticulous care, while modern wear embraces innovation and global influences, reinterpreting classic styles for contemporary tastes.

Despite their differences, both categories contribute to India's vibrant sartorial landscape, offering a tapestry of options for self-expression and cultural celebration. Together, they form a dynamic fusion of heritage and modernity, embodying the enduring allure of India's rich cultural heritage in the ever-evolving world of fashion.

Traditional wear in India is more than just clothing; it is a tangible expression of the country's rich cultural heritage and identity. Spanning across regions and communities, traditional attire serves as a unifying force, transcending geographical boundaries to embody the essence of pan-Indian culture.

Whether adorned with the intricate embroideries of Banarasi sarees or the reflective brilliance of Rajasthani lehengas, each garment tells a story of craftsmanship and tradition passed down through generations. These garments are not mere fabric; they are living testaments to India's historical legacy, carrying within them the artistry and skill of centuries-old techniques.

From the vibrant hues of Gujarat's Bandhani to the graceful drapes of South India's Kanjeevaram sarees, traditional wear celebrates the diversity of Indian craftsmanship while preserving the cultural nuances that make each region unique.

What distinguishes tradi-

Varanasi to the elaborate weaving traditions of Kanchipuram, traditional wear pays homage to the craftsmanship of yesteryears with unparalleled precision.

In an era marked by rapid modernization, traditional wear serves as a timeless link to the past, offering a sense of continu-

A SCIENTIFIC EXPLORATION OF HERBAL SUPPLEMENTS FOR WELL-BEING IN INDIA

NEW DELHI: A country like India boasts a rich cultural heritage with well-established traditional health practices, including Ayurveda. However, achieving optimal well-being in the modern world presents unique challenges. Dietary limitations due to cultural norms can lead to micronutrient deficiencies. Chronic stress, often associated with work-life balance, disrupts hormonal homeostasis and depletes energy reserves. Additionally, age-related concerns like bone health and hormonal fluctuations become prominent.



Advancements in scientific research have led to the development of targeted supplements designed to address these challenges. These supplements leverage the power of natural ingredients often backed by clinical studies to demonstrate their efficacy. Mihir Gadani, co-founder of OZiva shares with IANSlife some popular options with scientific backing that can empower individuals in India to take charge of their health and well-being. *IANSlife*

For detailed story visit www.indiapost.com

Traditional wear in India is more than just clothing; it is a tangible expression of the country's rich cultural heritage and identity

itional wear in India is its unwavering commitment to authenticity. These garments act as guardians of cultural heritage, carefully conserving ancient techniques and motifs originating from eras long past. From the intricate handloom textiles of

ity in an ever-changing world. It embodies a profound reverence for heritage, not merely as clothing but as tangible embodiments of cultural identity and legacy. *IANSlife*

For detailed story visit www.indiapost.com

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Philosophy

ADISHANKARACHARYA

One should understand that the Atman is always like the King, distinct from the body, senses, mind and intellect, all of which constitute the matter (Prakriti): and is the witness of their functions.

The moon appears to be running when the clouds move in the sky. Likewise to the non-discriminating person the Atman appears to be active when it is observed through the functions of the sense-organs.

Depending upon the energy or vitality of Consciousness [Anna Chaitanya] the body, senses, mind and intellect engage themselves in their respective activities, just as men work depending upon the light of the Sun.

Fools, because they lack in their powers of discrimination superimpose on the Atman, the Absolute-Existence-Knowledge (Sat-Chit), all the varied functions of the body and the senses,

Just as the person who regards a rope as a snake is overcome by fear, so also one considering oneself as the ego (Jiva) is overcome by fear. The egocentric individuality in us regains fearlessness by realising that it is not a Jiva but is Itself the Supreme Soul.

Just as a lamp illumines a jar or pot so also the Atman illumines the mind, and the sense organs, etc. These material-objects by themselves cannot illumine themselves because they are inert.

A lighted-lamp does not need another lamp to illumine its light. So too, Atman which is Knowledge itself needs no other knowledge to know it.

By a process of negation of the conditionings (Upadhis) through the help of the scriptural statement 'It is not this, It is not this; the oneness of the individual soul and the Supreme Soul, as indicated by the great Mahavakyas, has to be realised.

The body, etc., up to the "Causal Body"- Ignorance -which are objects



Adi Shankaracharya

Like the King, Atma is distinct from body, senses, mind

I am other than the body and so I am free from changes such as birth, wrinkling, senility, death, etc.

just as they attribute blue colour and the like to the sky.

The tremblings that belong to the waters are attributed through ignorance to the reflected moon dancing on it: likewise agency of action, of enjoyment and of other limitations (which really belong to the mind) are delusively understood as the nature of the Self (Atman).

Attachment, desire, pleasure, pain, etc., are perceived to exist so long as Buddhi or mind functions. They are not perceived in deep sleep when the mind ceases to exist. Therefore they belong to the mind alone, and not to the Atman.

Just as luminosity is the nature of the Sun, coolness of water, and heat of fire, so too the nature of the Atman is Eternity, Purity, Reality, Consciousness and Bliss.

By the indiscriminate blending of the two-the Existence-Knowledge aspect of the Self and the thought-wave of the intellect-there arises the notion of "I know".

Atman never does anything, and the intellect of its own accord has no capacity to experience but the individuality in us delusorily thinks he is himself the seer and the knower.

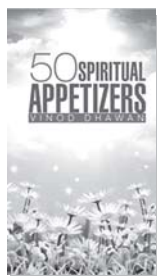
perceived, are as perishable as bubbles. Realise through discrimination that I am the 'PureBrahman' ever completely separate from all these.

I am other than the body and so I am free from changes such as birth, wrinkling, senility, death, etc. I have nothing to do with the sense objects such as sound and taste, for I am without the sense-organs.

Excerpted from 'Atma Bodha' translated by Swami Chinmayananda. The 1236th birth anniversary of Adi Shankaracharya was observed on April 20

50 SPIRITUAL APPETIZERS

Vinod Dhawan



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Jac O'Keeffe
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The Third Eye: Efficiency is the new mantra of business

D.C. PATHAK

Efficiency is classically defined as the measure of productivity per unit of time and is therefore traditionally linked to the 'work attitude' of the employee, the quality of management that provides for a strong 'supervision', and the system of 'performance evaluation' that was expected to be free of personal bias or favoritism.

There has been a conceptual advancement in the understanding of these roots of efficiency.

The importance of workplace environment is now recognized in terms of not only the adequacy of physical 'equipment' provided to the employee but also the harmony and peace in the atmosphere that would add to the ease of maintaining a 'work-life' balance for the individual. This combination helped the employee to

given work attitude, as a human being with emotional content and as a person who has burdens and responsibilities beyond the workplace.

An arid, output-related evaluation as per prescribed paradigms is to be tempered with the correct knowledge of the circumstances of the employee that might have caused an unexplained shortfall.

Secondly, the senior should have an astute ability to make out the difference between 'brilliance' and 'diligence' and give due importance to both -- some people may look very bright and busy but produce very little at the end of the day. Last but not least, the boss with a reputation of being transparent and fair, in evaluating the subordinates, retains his or her image as a leader -- biases and favoritism in making evaluations destroy

that image often without the leader even knowing it.

An important task of Human Resource development people in an enterprise today is to work out arrangements for up-skilling those who were not lacking in effort but

The importance of workplace environment is now recognized in terms of not only the adequacy of physical 'equipment' provided to the employee but also the harmony and peace in the atmosphere that would add to the ease of maintaining a 'work-life' balance for the individual

work with concentration -- aided by freedom from mental distractions -- and thus added to the output against time.

The concept of supervision has also changed from the perception of a senior breathing down one's neck to a boss who nurtured the junior and made himself or herself available for providing guidance if sought by the latter.

The modern system of business ensures adequate 'training on the job' for the employee on one hand and encourages 'participative management' emerging out of the conviction that the entire hierarchy of the enterprise is wedded to the same organizational goals, on the other.

In 'performance evaluation' three things become crucially important. One is rooted in the mandate of the 'age of information' that one has to be a well-informed person to achieve success in any field. This is because only knowledge-based decision-making showed the right path.

In judging one's performance, the boss should have complete knowledge of the subordinate -- as an employee with a

who had the potential to enhance the output further through special training.

Cost-effectiveness is still not fully built into business operations since a generally prevalent notion is that investment has a direct line to growth and profitability -- this substantially drove expenditure on sales promotion through attractive advertisements to cope up with a highly competitive world.

It is not adequately realized that practicing cost-effectiveness -- even when funds were available -- is an instrument of profitability since it helps to keep up the given level of productivity with lesser use of resources -- man, material or money. If an existing operation can be handled with three persons instead of four deployed at present or if a process is done in seven stages but could as well be completed in five steps, then the resource-saving option must be chosen.

(The writer is a former Director of the Intelligence Bureau) IANS

For detailed story visit www.indiapost.com

Disclaimer: Views expressed are personal to the author

Your Weekly Future



by **VANEET SHARMA**

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ARIES

MAR 21 to APRIL 20

This week shall be bringing good luck to you from the mid of it. The domestic happiness shall enhance. You shall be developing strategies for becoming successful in professional life. 3rd and 4th May is good for your travel, love life and progress of children. Your confidence & Immunity level shall be excellent and you shall work with focused approach. On 8th May a certain amount of enthusiasm & inspiration is indicated which would result in big increase.



CANCER

JUN 21 to JULY 22

This week is excellent for your progress with tremendous recognition in your work and all other areas of life. Your confidence level and social activities shall be at its peak in this week. You would be getting excellent support and appreciation from your boss. Your health shall also be good. You would be creating strategies for the development of your fate and personality and for earning branding for your abilities as a great professional.



LIBRA

SEP 23 to OCT 22

Initially you shall be concentrating on your education, personality development and meditation. From 4th May you shall plan to visit your native place. The success of spouse shall bring in recognition for you. You shall be spending on luxuries. Marital bliss shall remain intact. Your partnership venture shall be successful. You would get better favor of destiny. On last two days of the week you might remain slightly upset.



CAPRICORN

DEC 22 to JAN 19

In this week although your expenses shall remain uncontrolled but your involvement in public welfare activities can expand your glory suddenly but you won't be able to save money means financial burdens shall continue to chase you. From the beginning of the week the work conditions shall be fully under control. The latter half of the week indicates tensions, arguments, uncontrolled expenses, unwanted travels.



TAURUS

APRIL 21 to MAY 20

Family feuds can be there. You would be losing your patience. You won't be able to control your anger. You are advised not to get into arguments unnecessarily. The expenses shall increase and go uncontrolled. You will have lot of stress. Possibility of getting an injury is also indicated. This week won't be good for your health, happiness, state of mind, investments and decision making and the situation might turn worse in the latter part of the week.



LEO

JULY 23 to AUG 22

The beginning of the week shall enhance your hidden potential and working efficiency. You would be spending good time with family and friends in this week. This week is not only excellent for social activities but your all energies shall also get channelized in attaining success in personality development, enhancement of confidence, working efficiency and partnership ventures. Last day of the week shall be more auspicious for competition, emotional relations.



SCORPIO

OCT 23 to NOV 22

The beginning of the week indicates travelling and mental tensions. This week shall be full of fun especially from family, friends, house and travelling. Planetary transit indicates active social life with an increase in confidence and social influence. You would think of making some property. Although there might remain stress on mind however your mind shall be fully focused in activities related to work area & entertainment.



ACQUARIUS

JAN 20 to FEB 19

You shall be getting good results in all areas of life including attainment of favor of destiny, excellence in professional life with tremendous increase in income. This whole week shall be fulfilling in all aspects without any disturbance of any type. 4th, 5th & 6th of May are excellent dates for attaining better favor of destiny, and betterment in work area with increase in gains. The last days indicate travelling and lot of fun with an increase in expenses.



GEMINI

MAY 21 to JUN 20

This week is excellent especially for your work area. There shall be an increase in your gains but saved money might get spent. Sudden arguments in family shall disturb family atmosphere. You shall work with balanced approach and in this week you shall be getting solutions for the rectification of tensions on domestic and work front. This week shall be lucky week for education, emotional relations, studies of children & compatibility with spouse.



VIRGO

AUG 23 to SEP 22

You shall be happy with your sweet bonding with family members in the beginning of the week. There shall be a sudden boost in immunity level. The confidence and focus shall increase with the support of friends after the mid of the week. The domestic happiness shall remain average. In the latter half of the week you shall devise solid strategies for enhancing your hidden potential. You shall earn sudden financial gains in this week.



SAGITTARIUS

NOV 23 to DEC 21

The beginning of the week indicates slight disturbed state of mind but there shall be restoration of confidence from the mid of the week. The work area shall improve and the inflow of money shall get enhanced along with tremendous improvement in health, fitness and immunity in the mid of the week especially. You shall be emerging as a very good advisor. Your energies shall be at the maximum in this week. You shall be giving some money in charity also.



PISCES

FEB 20 to MAR 20

The beginning of this week is not auspicious for your happiness and state of mind. Do not take any important decision during initial two days. This time will be great to prove your talent as your all knives shall be sharp this week so your enemies, opponents and competitors won't be able to compete with you. From 3rd May you shall be focused about the execution of your plans. The association of artists and famous people shall help you go faster.

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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Manipur continues to smolder even after a year

LT GEN PRAKASH KATOCH (RETD)

In the first phase of polling for India's national elections on April 19, 2024, Manipur, which sends two members to the Lok Sabha, witnessed violence, arson and gunfire. This was more than expected with the rise of Arambai Tenggol, with their armed cadres roaming freely in Manipur (<https://www.southasiamonitor.org/spotlight/are-manipurs-warning-bells-going-unheeded>). The numbers of Arambai Tenggol cadres have reportedly swelled to 50-60,000 strong and they are well armed, which is fuelling the ethnic conflict. Understandably, the only major pre-election rally held in Manipur was by the Home Minister Amit Shah.

The Kuki Inpi Manipur (KIM), the apex body of Kuki-Zo, had given a call to boycott the elections in April. Kangpokpi witnessed a heart-wrenching procession of Kuki women holding pictures of the mutilated body parts of two recently killed Kuki guards. The video posted on social media said: "Viewer discretion is advised: This video contains gruesome content which may be too intense for some viewers."

National TV news channels showed a burning polling booth set on fire, while another showed an EVM vandalized and broken open. One woman told reporters, that she was standing in a queue with her family to vote but found their votes had already been cast, although she was not sure it was the handiwork of the Arambai Tenggol (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eRrTo4fINBE>). Firing at one polling booth reportedly injured three persons; in another incident, some voters were beaten up. Media reports indicate that police arrested three persons and recovered one gun and five rounds of ammunition.

According to government figures as of February 28, 2024, 219 people have been killed and 60,000 displaced since the vio-

lence that broke out in Manipur on May 3, 2023. Earlier figures also mentioned over 1,000 injured and 32 missing; 4,786 houses were burnt and 386 religious structures were vandalized, both temples and churches.

Ethnic cleansing and narcotics trade

The impression created by the political authorities is that the violence in Manipur is caused because of illegal immigration from Myanmar. However the Kukis, an ethnic group from the Chin-Kuki-Mizo Hills region of northeastern India, began settling in Manipur in the 16th century. Hence, they can hardly be confused with illegal immigrants from Myanmar. Moreover, with

The impression created by the political authorities is that the violence in Manipur is caused because of illegal immigration from Myanmar. However the Kukis, an ethnic group from the Chin-Kuki-Mizo Hills region of northeastern India, began settling in Manipur in the 16th century

the ongoing civil war in Myanmar, the maximum refugees from that country have come to Mizoram, especially since the Chins inhabit both sides of the international border.

The major reason for unrest in Manipur is the ethnic cleansing of the Kuki-Zo community, which is also to allegedly make available 6,000 hectares of land for a private firm from whom advance payment has been taken. Then there is also the narcotics trade which reportedly has an annual turnover of Rs. 50,000 crore - much more than the Manipur state budget.

Polling booths had also been set up on April 19 for the 60,000 persons displaced and in temporary camps. However, looking at the violence, the Election Commission of India (ECI) ordered re-poll-

ing in 11 booths of Inner Manipur, where Arambai Tenggol has maximum sway. The re-polling date given by the ECI was April 22, and voting reportedly was conducted peacefully that day.

The question here is why Manipur witnessed violence on April 19. Did the state not have adequate security forces after thousands of central forces were inducted into Manipur last year? Could the state not ask for additional forces to ensure smooth polling, as has been the case in the Maoists belt in Central India, particularly in the state of Chhattisgarh? Most importantly, does the rise, arming, and free hand given to Arambai Tenggol signal the arrival of private political armies in India?

Currently, the Arambai Tenggol, Meitei, Kukui-Zo and Nagas in Manipur are all well armed. Arambai Tenggol demands that the government should abrogate the Suspension of Operations (SoO) agreement with the Kuki-Zo, which would 'legalize' Arambai Tenggol operations against the Kukis in concert with Manipur police forces. But running over and decimating the Kuki-Zo would likely remain a chimera because China is supplying arms to both sides and the Nagas will join hands with Kukis, knowing that after Kukis they are the targets, which has already been voiced by Nagas.

(The author is an Indian Army veteran) South Asia Monitor

For detailed story visit www.indiapost.com



INDIA POST
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INHERITANCE TAX POLITICS

During his election tour, PM Narendra Modi launched a scathing attack on the Congress party following Sam Pitroda's remarks on inheritance tax laws. The Prime Minister says the Congress party wants to take away the rights of people's children from the hard earned money of their parents. The same people who considered the Congress Party as ancestral property and gave it to their children, do not want an ordinary Indian to give his property to his children," he added. The controversy began when Sam Pitroda advocated for implementing a US-style inheritance tax in India during an interview with a leading news agency.

Explaining the concept of inheritance tax prevalent in certain American states, Pitroda highlighted that upon an individual's demise, a significant portion of their wealth is allocated to the government, ensuring that a portion of the accumulated wealth benefits public welfare. This drew wide criticism from the BJP party and the Congress party also distanced itself from the remark.

In 1985, then Finance Minister V.P. Singh abolished it, as the income generated for the Centre via such taxes was much less than the cost incurred in the administrative process in executing it. As of date, there is no tax imposed on property inherited, whether through a will or, by intestate succession.

According to leading financial firm Pricewaterhouse Coopers (PwC), most European, American and, even African nations levy inheritance tax. In Europe, the top nations levying tax on inherited properties are: France (60%), Germany (50%), United Kingdom (40%), Spain (33%) and Hungary (18%). Other countries with high inheritance taxes are Japan (55%), South Korea (50%), Ecuador (37%), Chile (25%), South Africa (25%) and Taiwan (20%).

Similar to Estate duty, India also had the 'Gift Tax' Act. All taxable gifts were imposed with a duty of 30%; the government sought to recover some of the tax revenue lost when a high income tax donor transferred property to a donee falling in the lower income tax bracket. Due to similar constraints to those faced while implementing estate duty, this tax was scrapped by the government in 1998. However, in 2004, gift tax was reintroduced in the Finance Act as part of additions to the Income Tax Act. Any cash gifts above Rs.50,000 and any gifts in kind (i.e. immovable property) above the value of Rs.50,000 are taxable. Exceptions include donations, inheritance, and gift money received during weddings.

In 2017, reports suggest then Finance Minister Arun Jaitley was planning to levy taxes on inherited wealth. The proposed move was to levy tax on any property or cash above Rs.50,000 received or inherited, by a person as an 'income from other sources.' Due to severe backlash from the public, the move was scrapped. Later in 2018, Mr. Jaitley had claimed that inheritance tax was the reason for large endowments to hospitals, universities and, other institutions in the West. Contrasting it to India, he said funding for such institutions were mainly from religious groups and corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs. He claimed that endowments from rich individuals were not a norm in India. However, he did not suggest re-imposing the tax. Why to discuss such a controversial topic now? BJP gets ammo in its favor.

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Udupi Palace is a South Indian vegetarian BYOB restaurant. My friend and I had dinner there shortly after I returned from south India. We were greeted warmly and the ambiance is pleasant. The menu is so enticing that we ordered too much food but it was almost as good the next day.

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BEYOND THE TOURIST TRAIL

NEW DELHI: Whether you're sweltering in dry heat or drowning in humidity, the hills are calling to cool you down. Escape this summer heat and embark on a journey to these destinations nestled amidst the Northern hills beyond the traditional tourist places.

Picture-perfect landscapes await, promising a serene retreat away from the hustle and bustle of daily life. It's time to unveil the charm of five hidden gems that promise not just a getaway, but a rejuvenating "sleepcation" needed. Prepare to unwind, recharge, and immerse yourself in the blissful aura of these havens.

MASHOBRA, HIMACHAL PRADESH

Nestled amidst the serene hills of Shimla lies Mashobra. Dubbed 'Quiet Shimla', this underrated paradise offers a calm place from the chaos of urban life, with its pristine landscapes and minimal tourist footfall. Enjoy your rejuvenating getaway at properties located like Udman Grand Mashobra by Ferns N Petals. Mashobra Greens and Koti Resorts are in proximity to attractions like the Naldehra Golf Course and Carignano Nature Park. This destination is perfect for family travellers or an ideal retreat for friends looking for a staycation.

MANA, UTTARAKHAND

Perched at the edge of the Indian border with Tibet/

China in the majestic Himalayas lies Mana, the last Indian village. In the district of Chamoli, this quaint village has earned the title of a "Tourism Village" bestowed by the Uttarakhand government. With its surreal charm and proximity to Badrinath, Mana stands as one of the top tourist attractions in the region yet unrecognized. Properties like Sarovar Portico Badrinath provide the perfect blend of luxury and serenity for stays. This town invites adventurers and explorers to uncover its timeless beauty and cultural richness.

TOSH, HIMACHAL PRADESH

Set amidst Parvati Valley, this place is a true masterpiece of nature's beauty. Whether you fancy a peaceful walk by the Parvati River or crave delicious treats at cozy cafes, you'll find everything you need here. Known for its lively hippie vibes, Tosh is an ideal spot for both solo adventurers and group outings, promising an unforgettable journey of culture and spirituality. The village boasts numerous Buddhist temples and monasteries, offering a glimpse into its rich cultural heritage across the globe.

When it comes to accommodation, options like Hello Tosh and The Villster Resort offer the perfect blend of comfort and seamless services, ensuring a memorable stay amidst the serene surroundings.

LANDOUR, MUSSOORIE

Just a short journey from "Queen Of Hills", Mussoorie lies the cantonment town of Landour in Uttarakhand, India. Nestled at an altitude of 7500 feet, it perches gracefully akin to a jewel adorning the crown of the Queen of Hills, near the majestic peaks of the Himalayas. Despite its proximity to the bustling Mussoorie, Landour remains a hidden sanctuary, undisturbed and serene. From the luxury charm of Hotel Oakland Landour to the allure of Rokeby Manor, accommodation options offer a delightful escape amidst these mountains.

SPITI VALLEY, HIMACHAL PRADESH

Tucked within the Himalayas' grandeur, Spiti Valley in Himachal Pradesh beckons those seeking solace amidst nature's embrace. Its unspoiled beauty, bordered by Ladakh, Tibet, Kinnaur, and Kullu Valley, calls out to adventurers escaping urban chaos. At an altitude of 12,500 feet, Spiti's rugged mountains, lush pine forests, and quaint villages are enchanted with their serene landscapes. *IANSlife*





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