

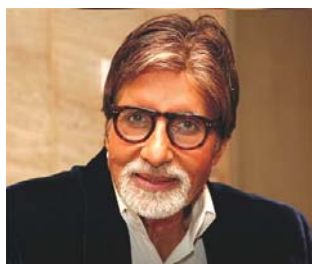


Investment Opportunities in India

► Details on page 16

FCB reaches deal to purchase SVB

► Details on page 10



Big B says 'the injuries heal slowly'

► Details on page 30

INDIA POST

SURVEY

survey@indiapost.com

This week's question

Will Rahul Gandhi eventually apologize for his comment?

Last week's result

Are US & UK unable to protect India's Missions?

YES 92% NO 08%

3 KHALISTANI HELD

Three suspected Khalistani extremists from India nabbed in Philippines

MANILA: Authorities in the Philippines have arrested suspected members of a banned Sikh separatist group, a government agency announced, as a massive man-hunt continued in India to arrest pro-Khalistani elements.

A joint operation by the Bureau of Immigration, the Cybercrime Investigation and Coordinating Center (CICC), and the Military Intelligence Group led to the arrest of three Indian nationals in an apartment in Iloilo City earlier in March, the Philip-

pines News Agency reported.

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"The President will not tolerate any foreign terrorist to set foot in the country," Ramos said.

Details on page 5



2 people shot at Sikh temple in Sacramento

► Details on page 5

Indian-origin Sikh takes oath as asst police chief

► Details on page 8

'Rahul thinks it's his birthright to rule this country'

► Details on page 9



Hundreds of Indo-Americans gather in solidarity outside the Indian consulate in San Francisco after the attack

India Post News Service

On March 25, outside the Indian consulate in the United States (US), members of the Indian diaspora gathered in San Francisco in show of soli-

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Details on page 6

CONTENTS

Bollywood	30-31
Classifieds	28
Community Post	16-23
Cover/Top Stories	5-9
Edit Page	29
Horoscope	25
Immigration Post	14
Info/Highlights	4
Life Style	26
OP-ED	27
TechBiz Post	10-11
Real Estate	24
Travel & Hospitality Post	15
Wellness Post	12-13



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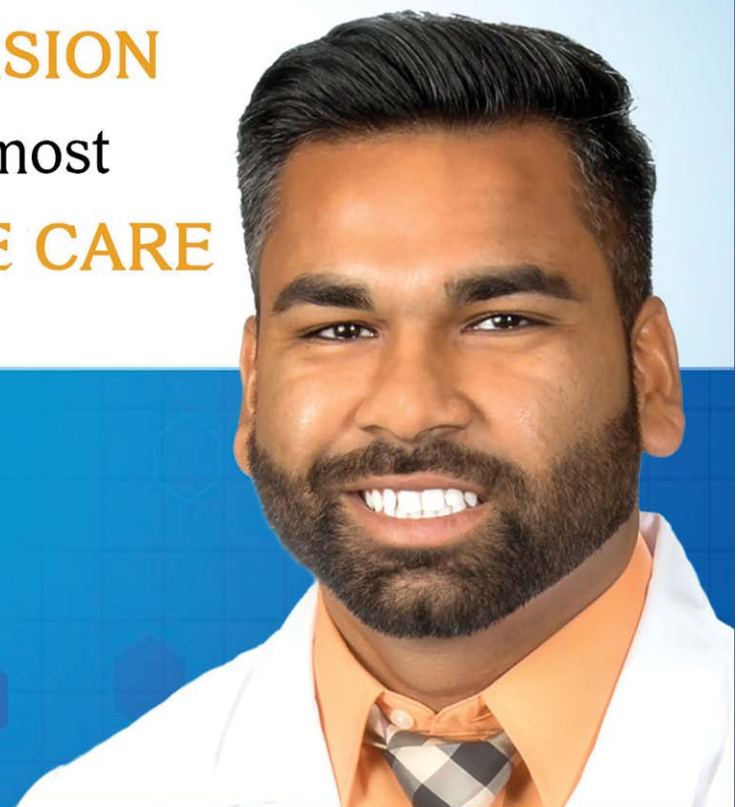
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To empower the Indian Diaspora and make their voice strong and effective in countries of their adoption. RJ Media conglomerate offers a credible, professional and complete package of news, opinion, entertainment, networking and information.

HIGHLIGHTS

Bollywood:

Big B: 'the injuries heal slowly'



Amitabh B, who religiously has a meet-and-greet with his fans outside his home on Sundays, took to his blog to share the update.

30



Lifestyle:

India at London Design Biennale 2023

The exhibition highlights the vital role of design in addressing challenges and providing solutions and encourages international collaboration and forge future partnerships.

26

Cover Story:

3 KHALISTANI HELD



Authorities in the Philippines have arrested suspected members of a banned Sikh separatist group, a government agency announced

5



Techbiz:

First Citizens Bank's SVB deal

"The 17 former branches of Silicon Valley Bridge Bank, National Association, will open as First Citizens Bank & Trust Company on March 27, 2023"

10

Community:

Investment Opportunities in India



CGI San Francisco and Institute of Chartered Accountants of India San Francisco Chapter, put together an event "Investment Opportunities in India & GIFT City"

16



Travel

Planning a trip to the temples?

India is one nation that is known to be the land of spirituality and where people truly value its culture.

15

Immigration:

Visa applications reach 80%



Visa application volume from New Delhi reached close to 80 percent of the 2019 pre-pandemic levels in 2022

14



Wellness:

Public participation helps check TB

Prime Minister NarendraModi said recently that India had made appreciable progress in eradication of Tuberculosis mainly due to public participation

12

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3 KHALISTANI HELD

Three suspected Khalistani extremists from India nabbed in Philippines

MANILA: Authorities in the Philippines have arrested suspected members of a banned Sikh separatist group, a government agency announced, as a massive manhunt continued in India to arrest pro-Khalistani elements.

A joint operation by the Bureau of Immigration, the Cybercrime Investigation and Coordinating Center (CICC), and the Military Intelligence Group-led to the arrest of three Indian nationals in an apartment in Iloilo City earlier in March, the Philippines News Agency reported.

"The well-coordinated lightning strike by operatives caught members of the militant group flatfooted and (they) did not attempt to resist the heavily armed troops," CICC Executive Director Alexander Ramos said in a statement on 27 March.

"The President will not tolerate any foreign terrorist to set foot in the coun-



try," Ramos said.

They are currently in the custody of the Philippine military, and belong to the banned Khalistan Tiger Force (KTF), according to an Arab News report.

Led by Hardeep Singh Nijjar, the

KTF has been listed as a terrorist organization in India, which aims to revive militancy in Punjab.

The suspects, identified as Manpreet Singh, 23; Amritpal Singh, 24; and Arshdeep Singh, 26 -- all Indian nationals, are also being probed for

their alleged ties to the Jammu and Kashmir Ghaznavi Force (JKGF), which is banned in India and draws its members from LeT and JeM.

According to the news agency, the three entered the country using fake passports, and are also on the Interpol Red Notice watchlist.

The development comes even as 'Waris Punjab De' chief and fugitive pro-Khalistani leader Amritpal Singh continues to evade arrest, changing his location and looks multiple times.

Khalistani sympathizers maintain an active presence in countries like, US, UK, Canada, Australia, Germany, France, Philippines and Malaysia.

According to police and intelligence officials in Punjab, nine organizations operating out of six different countries are to blame for the spurt in violence and terror. *IANS*

2 people shot at Sikh temple in Sacramento

NEW YORK: Two people were critically injured when shots were fired during a parade at a Sikh temple in Sacramento, the state capital of California, authorities said.

The shooting was reported at around 2.30 p.m. on 26 March at the Gurdwara Sacramento Sikh Society near Bradshaw Road and Gerber Road in Sacramento County, ABC10 News reported.

"All participants in that altercation seemed to have known each other. This seems to have stemmed from something far before this," Sgt Gandhi told ABC 10 News.

He further said both people shot are expected to survive and one will likely be in custody.

Their nationality remains unknown.

Stating that investigations into the inci-

"I am disheartened to learn that since there has been a shooting & several individuals were wounded," Sacramento City council member Lisa Kaplan wrote on Twitter.

"It breaks my heart that violence has destroyed a celebratory occasion. My prayers are w those wounded - may they have a full recovery. We must do more than pray & remove guns from our streets - so every celebration is that - all celebration w/o violence," she wrote.

Two in three California residents worry about becoming a victim of gun violence in the wake of the recent spike in mass shootings both in the state and around the US, according to a poll.

Conducted by the Institute of Governmental Studies (IGS) at the University of California, Berkeley, the poll revealed that about 63 per cent of the registered voters in the most populous US state -- home to around 40 million residents -- express worries that they or someone close to them could become the victim of gun violence.

In January, California witnessed back-to-back mass shootings.

As of February, the Gun Violence Archive has counted 80 mass shootings in the US this year.

Seven of them involved four or more fatalities. *IANS*



Sacramento County Sheriff's Office spokesperson Amar Gandhi said three people were involved in a fight that resulted in shooting.

He said "suspect 2" was down when "suspect 1" shot suspect 2's friend. Suspect 2 then shot suspect 1 before taking off.

dent are on, Gandhi said the suspect who took off has also been taken into custody.

According to the Sacramento County Department of Transportation, the Sacramento Sikh Society was hosting a Nagar Kirtan Parade that closed roads in the area for six hours.

US may prevent Pakistan's threshold alliance with China

HAMZA AMEER

ISLAMABAD: One of the biggest opponents of China may be the biggest wall between a full-fledged Pakistan-China alliance, says a report by the Washington-based US Institute of Peace (USIP).

The report titled, "The Future of the China-Pakistan Military Relationship", digs into the current status of relationship between Pakistan and China, terming it at a "threshold alliance", arguing that Washington may prevent Pakistan from extending its bilateral cooperation and relationship with Beijing, being one of the biggest opponent.

"Pakistan-China alliance may not lead to a fully-fledged future alliance, potentially due to China's own missteps, or due to opponents' active measures to arrest the relationship," it said.

One pivotal finding of the report highlights that during the year 2015, a decline in China-Pakistan relationship was observed.

However, the same year, the visit of President Xi Jinping to Islamabad, introduction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as a flagship project and announcement of sale of eight submarines to Pakistan, negated the previous observations. *IANS*

Hundreds of Indo-Americans gather in solidarity outside the Indian consulate in San Francisco after the attack



India Post News Service

On March 25, outside the Indian consulate in the United States (US), members of the Indian diaspora gathered in San Francisco in show of solidarity after the consulate was vandalized last week by Khalistani supporters. More than 130 locals, including Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus, gathered outside the consulate to show their support.

Scores of Indian Americans drove from in and around the San Francisco Bay area and waved the tri-color to show solidarity with India on Friday. All the supporters were spotted hoisting both the American flag and the Indian tricolor, in order to emphasize their unity. They were confronted and provoked by a handful of Khalistan supporters who have been camping near the consulate for days now. The presence of local police personnel in good numbers on the scene prevented the protesters from turning violent. Some of the separatists chanted pro-Khalistan slogans, but they were outnumbered by a large gathering of Indian-Americans who chanted "Vande Mataram" and waved the Indian national flag along with that of the US.

Thanks to Indian Diaspora who has taken a weekday off given volatile situations in the market & showed the strength for our Love to Matrubhoomi as CGI-SFO was attacked week back by fringe elements which was disturbing to not only Indian Americans but the whole world community. We wanted to show our solid support and solidarity hand in hand with India, " Satish Vale, a technology professional and community worker, said.



Last Sunday, some Khalistanis did a very violent protest at CGI San Francisco. Seeing these Videos many Indians assembled at the Consulate and did a peaceful rally to bring these facts up to the concerned authorities." In such a great country, one doesn't expect that the culprits should be allowed to do such things by which the



law abiding people start feeling insecure!" said Chandru Bhambhra, Community leader

Good to see pro-India supporters re-established vibrant enthusiasm, otherwise, it is alarming to see Khalistani extremism taking root in the US," Khanderao Kand from Foundation for India and Indian Diaspora Studies (FIIDS) said.

We are here to carry out a peaceful march in solidarity with the India consulate, which was attacked by some Sikh separatists, & during this encounter the separatists were still there shouting profanity, vulgarity & opening threatening to harass Hindu women. We purposely turned our back towards them so as not to engage with them. We wanted to keep it all peaceful but our sentiments were extremely hurt, said Parmeet Randhawa, a professional, communist activist who is an ardent supporter of pro India events and organizations in California.

The United States on Monday condemned the attack on the Indian Consulate in San Francisco by Khalistani supporters and assured New Delhi that the State Department is helping local authorities to investigate the matter.

"We certainly condemn that vandalism, it's absolutely unacceptable. The State Department's diplomatic security service is working with local authorities to properly investigate. And obviously, the State department will work from an infrastructure perspective to repair the damage," said US National Security Council spokesman John Kirby during a press briefing.

The US administration was reminded of its basic obligation to protect and secure diplomatic representation and has been asked to take the necessary steps to stop similar occurrences from happening again, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MEA) in New Delhi.

The entire Indian community is so upset with the Khalistani attack on the Consulate that it was an impromptu gathering. People took time off during a weekday to show up in large numbers. The community understands that it's just a small section of misguided youth creating troubles. Besides patriotic slogans and dances, the Indian community raised slogans such as Hindu-Sikh Bhai Bhai and Jo Bole So Nahaal, Sat Sri Akaal, to demonstrate that it's not a Hindu vs Sikh issue. It was a unity event with participation from Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs coming together in support of the Indian Consulate, said Ashish Khurana, Community leader.

Cont'd on page 7

Indo-Americans gather in solidarity...





Hundreds gathered in Los Angeles to support the CGISF

India Post News Service

Indians of Southern California spontaneously and passionately started a Jai Hind Rally in Support of India today in Artesia at Pioneer Boulevard. Around 120 American Indians joined the rally with American and Indian flags. Leaders and volunteers from all American Indian organizations participated in the rally. Rally was peaceful, and participants made sure it was not causing any inconvenience to the public, businesses, and traffic on the route.



Indian-origin Sikh sworn-in as Connecticut's first assistant police chief

NEW YORK: Indian-origin Sikh Manmeet Colon has been sworn in as first assistant police chief of Connecticut's New Haven city, becoming the department's first Indian-American and second female assistant chief of color to rise to the top position.

The Board of Police Commissioners in New Haven unanimously approved the appointment of Colon, 37, who was previously a lieutenant in the internal affairs office, The New Haven Independent reported.

Mumbai-born Colon moved with her family to Queens when she was 11, and studied criminal justice at the University of New Haven.

Colon hoped that her status as the department's first Indian-American assistant chief inspires others from similar backgrounds to pursue careers in law enforcement.

"I come from a Sikh family. I speak Punjabi. I'm very proud of my heritage," Colon was quoted as saying in The New Haven Independent.

"More important is the mission and the values of the department. To me, it's all about being fair and impartial. My background, my morals, my family values and traditions, I feel like I bring a lot to the table. I'm glad there's a space for me at the table," she added.

Colon's daughter pinned the new assistant chief badge on her mother's uniform, as Mayor Justin Elicker then administered the oath of office earlier this month.

"A trailblazer, AC Colon is the 2nd woman of color & the 1st of Indian descent to serve in the position in the history of the NHPD - and I'm confident she will continue to serve our city w/honor & distinction in this new role," Elicker tweeted.

In her tenure with the New Haven Police Department (NHPD), Colon has worked in patrol, as a detective in the special victims unit, as a sergeant supervising the robbery and burglary unit, as a lieutenant and district manager for Newhallville and Dixwell, and most recently as the head of the Internal Affairs division.

Police Chief Karl Jacobson, who had recommended Colon, hoped that the Indian-American's appointment will inspire more women to join the New Haven Police Department, which is currently 17 per cent female. *IANS*



"I come from a Sikh family. I speak Punjabi. I'm very proud of my heritage"

Rahul thinks it's his birthright to rule this country: Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw



Ashwini Vaishnaw

NEW DELHI: Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw launched a blistering attack on Congress leader and disqualified MP Rahul Gandhi, and said, "he thinks that it is his birthright to rule this country".

Addressing a press conference here on 29 March, the Minister said, "Rahul Gandhi insulted the OBC community and when the court convicted him, he said the court itself is wrong. Rahul Gandhi thinks it is his birthright to rule this country."

He further said, "Rahul Gandhi does the politics of entitlement. He thinks since he was born in a certain family, he is above the Constitution, court and Parliament. He also thinks that he is above the Constitution of India."

"People who are putting corruption allegations on us, should try to recall how during the UPA government, there was a conspiracy going on to weaken the institutions in the country."

He reiterated Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent statement to hit the opposition. Vaishnaw said, "All corrupts have come on one stage, they aren't happy as PM Modi is making sure he delivers all things that were due to the people right into their bank accounts. This isn't acceptable to the opposition, they want to go back to the days of corruption." *IANS*

Rahul's disqualification 'betrayal of Gandhian philosophy', says Ro Khanna

NEW YORK: Top Indian-American Congressman Ro Khanna said the expulsion of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi from Parliament is a "deep betrayal of Gandhian philosophy".

Taking to Twitter last week, the Democratic Congressman said: "The expulsion of Rahul Gandhi from Parliament is a deep betrayal of Gandhian philosophy and India's deepest values. This is not what my grandfather sacrificed years in jail for."

Flagging off Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his tweet, Khanna said, "You have the power to reverse this decision for the sake of Indian democracy".

The tweet came as a reaction to a New York Times report, which said, "the expulsion of Rahul Gandhi is a devastating blow to the once-powerful Indian National Congress party".

The report further stated that the senior Congress leader and "several other politicians are now in jeopardy through India's legal system".

On 24th March, Rahul Gandhi was disqualified from the Lok Sabha a day after a Surat court convicted him for two years in a defamation case.

He has been granted a 30-day bail in the case to allow him appeal in a higher court. "I am fighting for the voice of India and am ready to pay any price," Rahul had tweeted in Hindi reacting to his disqualification. *IANS*



Ro Khanna

Indo-Canadian arrested for fatally stabbing man in Vancouver

TORONTO: A 32-year-old Indian-origin man has been arrested and charged with second-degree murder of a Canadian in downtown Vancouver, police said.

Inderdeep Singh Gosal fatally stabbed Paul Stanley Schmidt, 37, after a brief altercation between two men outside the Starbucks cafe at West Pender and Granville Street on 26 March evening.

"We believe this homicide was witnessed by dozens of bystanders, and there may be people with information who have not yet come forward," Sergeant Steve Addison of Vancouver Police Department said.

"We particularly want to hear from anyone who was present in the moments before the stabbing, or anyone who has cell-phone video of the incident."

A constable patrolling in the area was flagged down moments after the stabbing, and arrested Gosal at the crime scene. Additional police officers attempted to save the victim's life by performing first aid, however he succumbed to his injuries after being rushed to hospital.

Investigators do not believe the victim and suspect knew each other, however the circumstances that led up to the fatal stabbing remain under investigation. *IANS*

"We particularly want to hear from anyone who was present in the moments before the stabbing, or anyone who has cell-phone video of the incident"

I was called 'pagan, greasy Indian': California state Assembly candidate Darshana Patel

MEENAKSHI IYER

NEW DELHI: As an Indian growing up in America, Darshana Patel who recently announced her bid to run for the California State Assembly District 76, was called a "pagan, greasy Indian", and was asked to "go back home".

The 48-year-old research scientist, who is the board president of California's Poway Unified School District, said that microaggressions were common, and the term ABCD -- American-Born Confused Desi -- haunted her as a child.

"The term ABCD haunted me as a child... As a young girl in second grade, I was called a pagan, greasy Indian (because my mother put oil in my hair), asked what tribe I was from, and often teased when I wore more traditional attire to school," Patel, who hails from Vadodara, said in an interview to IANS.

In an America, where one in five incidents involve language scapegoating of Asians, according to a recent AAPI study, Patel said post 9/11, a group of men in a pick up truck followed her, shouting "go back home and n-word" and "you are not welcome here".

"While conditions have improved in some ways for Indian immigrants (there are grocery stores, temples, and community organizations now), they have got worse in other ways as Indian-American are integrating more into the American fabric," Patel, who is part of the California Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs, said.

Running for the state Assembly in 2024, Patel told IANS that she wants to dispel ignorant and harmful stereotypes of Indian-Americans, and promote more cross-cultural and inter-sectional experiences and education, like ethnic studies in public schools.

California's Assembly District 76, which includes the cities of Escondido and San Marcos, portions of San Diego, and numerous unincorporated communities in San Diego County, has an active and diverse Indian community that makes up about two per cent of the voters and many more green card and visa holders.

"As the daughter of Indian immigrants who struggled to realize the American Dream, I understand that representation matters... Our main challenge is using our collective voice to affect policy that will help our community tackle pressing issues such as affordability, education and youth mental health, immigration reform, public safety, and high-quality comprehensive healthcare," she said. *IANS*



Darshana Patel

Jack Ma seen in China after long absence

NEW DELHI: Alibaba founder Jack Ma, who has rarely been seen in public in the past three years, has resurfaced at a school in China's Hangzhou, media reports said.

The 58-year-old has kept a low profile since criticizing China's financial regulators in 2020.

Ma was the most high-profile Chinese billionaire to have disappeared amid a crackdown on tech entrepreneurs, the BBC reported.

He recently returned to China after more than a year overseas, according to the South China Morning Post.



Alibaba founder Jack Ma

The Alibaba-owned newspaper said he had made a short stopover in Hong Kong, where he met friends and also briefly visited Art Basel, an international art fair.

It added that Ma has been travelling to different countries to learn about agricultural technology, but made no reference as to why he had disappeared from public view in recent years.

Ma, a former English teacher, met staff and toured classrooms at the Yungu School in Hangzhou, the city in which Alibaba is headquartered.

He talked about the potential challenges of artificial intelligence to education, according to the school's social media page, BBC reported.

"ChatGPT and similar technologies are just the beginning of the AI era. We should use artificial intelligence to solve problems instead of being controlled by it," he said.

Once the richest man in China, Ma gave up control of financial technology giant Ant Group in January this year. *ANS*

Microsoft lays off 559 employees as Seattle-area job cuts top 2,700

SAN FRANCISCO: Microsoft has laid off 559 employees from its Bellevue and Redmond in Washington state in the US, bringing the company's total to over 2,700 job cuts in the area.

The layoffs, announced by the Washington State Employment Security Department, hit Microsoft's security operations, reports The Seattle Times. The company in February announced a prior round of layoffs in which 617 employees in Redmond, Bellevue, and Issaquah were also let go. *ANS*

First Citizens Bank reaches deal to purchase Silicon Valley Bank

SAN FRANCISCO: The US Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) has announced that First Citizens Bank and Trust Company of Raleigh, North Carolina entered a purchase agreement for all deposits and loans of Silicon Valley Bridge Bank, National Association.

"The 17 former branches of Silicon Valley Bridge Bank, National Association, will open as First Citizens Bank & Trust Company on March 27, 2023," Fox Business quoted the FDIC as saying in a statement.

"Customers of Silicon Valley Bridge Bank, National Association, should continue to use their current branch until they receive notice from First Citizens Bank



& Trust Company that systems conversions have been completed to allow full service banking at all of its other branch locations," the statement continued.

Depositors of the Santa Clara, California-located bank will automatically become depositors of First Citizens Bank & Trust Company, according to the statement, and all deposits

will be assumed and insured by First Citizens Bank & Trust Company, up to the insurance limit, Fox Business reported.

The FDIC said: "As of March 10, 2023, Silicon Valley Bridge Bank, National Association, had approximately \$167 billion in total assets and about \$119 billion in total deposits. Today's transaction included the purchase of about \$72 billion of Silicon Valley Bridge Bank, National Association's assets at a discount of \$16.5 billion."

In addition, approximately \$90 billion in securities and other assets will remain in the receivership for disposition by the FDIC, Fox Business reported. *ANS*

Global financial stability at risk from banking turmoil: IMF chief

LONDON: International Monetary Fund (IMF) chief Kristalina Georgieva has warned that the global economy faces risks to its financial stability because of the turbulence in the banking sector.

Georgieva said rising interest rates had put pressure on debts, leading to "stresses" in leading economies, including among lenders, the Guardian reported.

She said the world economy would expand by just 3 percent in this year, as rising borrowing costs, combined with the war in Ukraine and scarring from the Covid-19 pandemic, would suffocate growth.

Adding to a growing chorus of warnings from economic leaders, the IMF chief said it



Kristalina Georgieva

was clear that risks to financial stability had increased after the recent collapse of Silicon Valley Bank and the Swiss-government brokered rescue of Credit Suisse by UBS.

Investors will be watching shares in Deutsche Bank when European markets reopen on 27 March after they led the sell-off in banking stocks last week.

"At a time of higher debt lev-

els, the rapid transition from a prolonged period of low interest rates to much higher rates -- necessary to fight inflation -- inevitably generates stresses and vulnerabilities, as evidenced by recent developments in the banking sector in some advanced economies," the Guardian quoted Georgieva as saying at a conference in Beijing.

Her stark comments came as the European Central Bank (ECB) said the recent turmoil in banking would have a real-world impact on business and growth.

The EU central bank fears problems in the banking sector will result in lower growth and dampen inflation, the ECB vice-president, Luis de Guindos, said in an interview with Business Post. *ANS*

Disney's 1st job cut round begins this week, 7K employees to be hit: CEO

SAN FRANCISCO: Disney will begin its first round of layoffs at the company this week. In total, the media and entertainment company will sack 7,000 employees in three rounds, its CEO Bob Iger has announced.

The job cuts will reportedly affect Disney's media and distribution segment along with ESPN and the parks and resorts division, according to CNBC.

"This week, we begin notifying employees whose positions are impacted by the company's workforce reductions," Iger wrote in the memo.

"A second, larger round of notifications will happen in April with several thousand more staff reductions, and we expect to commence the final round of notifications before the beginning of the summer to reach our 7,000-job target," he added.

In February, Iger had announced to lay off 7,000 employees as Disney looks to save billions of dollars by restructuring the company, cutting content, and trimming payroll.

"For our employees who aren't impacted, I want to acknowledge that there will no doubt be challenges



Bob Iger

ahead as we continue building the structures and functions that will enable us to be successful moving forward. I ask for your continued understanding and collaboration during this time," Iger elaborated in his memo.

Disney expects to deliver approximately \$3 billion in savings over the next few years, excluding sports.

Warner Bros. Discovery and other legacy media firms have also reduced several thousand jobs to cut costs.

"We have made the difficult decision to reduce our overall workforce by approximately 7,000 jobs as part of a strategic realignment of the company, including important cost-saving measures necessary for creating a more effective, coordinated and streamlined approach to our business," Iger wrote. *IANS*

Emerging headwinds could pose challenge in short-term for housing sector

NEW DELHI: Even as the sales in the housing sector have witnessed growth in the first quarter of the current year, emerging headwinds could pose a challenge in the short-term.

Nearly 1,13,770 units sold in Q1 2023 across the top 7 cities said the latest ANAROCK Research data.

This is a 14 percent yearly rise against approximately 99,550 units sold back in Q1 2022.

The two leading western markets -- Mumbai Metro-

Interestingly, Mumbai Metropolitan Region and Pune again saw the maximum new supply, accounting for 52 percent of the total new launches across the top 7 cities.

Individually, the two cities saw 58 percent and 34 percent yearly increases in their new supply, respectively.

Despite spiraling new launches in this and the previous quarter, the available inventory in the top seven cities remained almost similar at about 6.27 lakh units by Q1 2023-end. On a q-o-q basis, unsold stock saw a 1 percent dip across the top 7 cities.

Among the top cities, NCR saw the highest decline in its unsold stock in Q1 2023 - by 22 percent.

Anuj Puri, Chairman, ANAROCK Group, said: "The residential market's winning streak continued in the first quarter of 2023 with housing sales in top cities breaching the previous high of Q1 2022. The quarter has recorded the highest ever sales in the last decade amid significant rise in demand for high-ticket priced homes (>Rs 1.5 crore)."

"However, emerging headwinds could pose a challenge in the short-term," said Puri.

"Persistent inflation concerns along with another possible rate hike by the RBI in the near future could dent the housing market's growth trajectory in the upcoming two quarters. Once the dust of the ongoing economic disruptions settles, it is likely to regain again, backed by rise in homeownership sentiment," he added.

Pradeep Aggarwal, Founder & Chairman, Signature Global (India) Ltd said that the housing sector is experiencing strong sales due to increased affordability over the years. *IANS*



politan Region and Pune accounted for over 48 percent of the total sales in the top 7 cities, with Pune witnessing an over 42 percent yearly jump.

New launches across the top 7 cities also breached the one lakh mark and witnessed 23 percent yearly rise - from 89,140 units in Q1 2022 to over 1,09,570 units in Q1 2023.

Delhi-based techie gets job after applying to over 150 firms in 8 months

NEW DELHI: A Delhi-based software engineer, who applied to over 150 companies, out of which only ten responded and got scheduled interviews by only six, has recently landed a job in a tech firm after eight months of struggle.

Taking to LinkedIn, Delhi-based techie Farhan said: "It's been a tough time for the tech industry cause of the layoffs. I faced hundreds of rejections



during this time for various reasons. I had been on a job search since July 2022. I was surprised that getting a job despite being experienced was difficult compared to when I was a fresh graduate".

"Applied to 150+ companies, got a response from 10 of them and interviews scheduled at 6 companies," he added.

Moreover, Farhan mentioned in his post that, despite having passed all of the rounds and being scheduled for a final interview at Amazon's Scotland office, a hiring freeze was announced.

He was also a part of Google India's hiring process but was turned down after one of the rounds, and also said that three mid-sized startups had ditched him after the final rounds.

With some advice for fresh graduates seeking jobs, he concluded his post, saying: "If you're also on a job search and especially if you're a fresh graduate looking to start your career then don't get discouraged... You have to constantly work on your skills and make meaningful connections. Just do your work, give your best, and leave the rest to God." *IANS*

Tuberculosis remains key cause of ill health, death

JOHANNESBURG: Tuberculosis (TB) remains one of the leading causes of ill health and death in South Africa, the country's Deputy President Paul Mashatile said during the 2023 World TB Day commemoration.

"This is exacerbated by the fact that some TB patients do not complete their treatment while others remain 'missing', which means that they are either undiagnosed or are unreported even as they are diagnosed," Mashatile said last week, adding that the country must recommit to raising greater levels of awareness about the disease alongside its terrible health, social and economic implications.

It's concerning that the last South Africa TB Prevalence Survey positioned the country as one of the 30 high TB burden countries, he said.

"It is critical that everyone infected with TB is aware of the infection, is introduced to treatment and goes on to complete their treatment." The Deputy President announced that the country has launched the fifth national strategic plan for diseases, including TB, which aims to eliminate TB as a public health threat by 2030, Xinhua news agency reported.

World TB Day is commemorated annually on March 24 to raise public awareness about the devastating health, social and economic consequences of TB. *IANS*

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)

12 India Post

www.indiapost.com

March 31, 2023

Public participation will help check TB: PM Modi

VARANASI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi said recently that India had made appreciable progress in eradication of Tuberculosis mainly due to public participation.

Speaking at the One World TB Summit, he said that community initiative was appreciable and had yielded good results.

"Even Though World sets a target to end TB by 2030, India has resolved to end TB by 2025. We are working on a strategy to trace, track, and treat which has shown desired results," he said.

The Prime Minister said that India had used an integrated app to end TB.

"This is a new model of global war against TB. We have used people's participation, enhancing nutrition, treatment innovation, wellness and prevention to combat TB," he said.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses the One World TB Summit at Rudrakash Convention Centre, in Varanasi on March 24. (ANI Photo)

He further said, "TB Mukh Panchayat is a great initiative. Under this campaign, every representative of the village panchayat will take a resolution that their village will be completely TB free. Not even a single TB patient is in their respective villages."

The Prime Minister further

said that the 'One World TB Summit' India is fulfilling another resolution of Global Good.

"It is a matter of happiness that this summit is taking place in Kashi. Some time ago, India also took the initiative to take forward the vision of 'One Earth, One Health' and now through 'One World TB Summit' India is

fulfilling another resolution of Global Good," he added.

He said that in the last nine years, India has worked together on many fronts in this fight against TB.

"Nearly 10 lakh TB patients have been adopted by people. Even children have broken their piggy banks to ensure treatment of TB patients. This community initiative needs to be lauded. We are also increasing focus on areas where the number of cases is more. What we need to do is to help in removing the stigma attached to the disease," he said.

The Prime Minister said that technology was being used to contain the growth of TB and the duration of treatment had also been reduced.

"We have pursued the trace, test, track, treat and technology package to win this war," he ended. *IANS*

New nasal spray effective against XBB, other Covid variants

LONDON: Finnish researchers have developed a molecule that is, when administered nasally, extremely effective in preventing the disease caused by all known variants of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, including the currently circulating XBB variant.

The molecule, known as TriSb92, can be a key tool in preparing for future pandemics, as it is aimed at preventing both the transmission and spread of the virus, said researchers from the University of Helsinki in Finland.

They found that TriSb92

identifies a region in the spike protein of the Covid common to all current variants of the virus



and inhibits its functioning. Further, animal models have demonstrated that, unlike

facemasks, the molecule can, when sprayed into the nose, prevent infection even after a few

hours of exposure.

"When administered nasally, the TriSb92 molecule is ex-

tremely effective in preventing infection, and experiments carried out in cell cultures indicate that it also encompasses the very latest variants, including XBB, BF7 and BQ.1.1," said Anna R. Makela, postdoctoral researcher at the varsity.

In the paper, published in the journal Nature Communications, the researchers said that the molecule remains fully functional at room temperature for at least 18 months, making it well suited for use as a nasal spray.

While the worst stage of the coronavirus pandemic is, at least for the time being, behind

us, nasally administered protection can be a crucial help in preventing the spread of the virus in the future.

"The latest variants effectively avoid the immune protection provided by both vaccines and the Covid-19 disease, and current vaccines are not effective in preventing transmission," Makela said.

Moreover, the nasal spray can protect those people from serious diseases who do not gain sufficient immunity from vaccines, such as immunocompromised individuals and elderly. *IANS*



Covid-like virus in native UK bats raises spillover risk: Scientists

NEW DELHI: A team of international scientists has identified new bat species native to the UK that carry Covid-like virus, and may be just a few mutations away from infecting humans.

The scientists, including from the Imperial College London and University of Nottingham, screened for coronaviruses 48 fecal samples from 16 of the 17-bat species breeding in the UK.

They recovered nine (two novel) complete genomes across six bat species: Four alpha coronaviruses, a MERS-related betacoronavirus, and four closely related sarbecoviruses (a subgroup of coronavirus).

The four sarbecovirus genomes were recovered from two distinct horseshoe bat species, *R. ferrumequinum* and *R. hipposideros*.

Horseshoe bats (*Rhinolophidae*) are considered the reservoir of many zoonotic viruses - which jump from ani-

body and infect a wide range of human cells.

However, the binding affinity of RhGB07 spike to the human ACE2 receptor was found to be approximately 17-fold lower than that to SARS-CoV-2 spike.

"We provided evidence that at least one sarbecovirus isolated from UK horseshoe bats can bind human ACE2 receptors in vitro," they noted.

"But our findings indicate that the RhGB01-like viruses likely require further adaptations, particularly in their spike proteins, before they can make a zoonotic jump," the researchers said.

In addition, the spike proteins of these sarbecoviruses are just one mutation away from a furin cleavage site (FCS) that enhances infectivity in other coronaviruses, including SARS-CoV-2.

"The emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2019 is a sobering reminder of the massive impact of zoonotic viruses on global health and economy. Despite this, genomic surveillance in wildlife remains limited," the researchers said.

While in the study," the UK sarbecoviruses would require further molecular adaptations to infect hu-

The scientists, including from the Imperial College London and University of Nottingham, screened for coronaviruses 48 fecal samples from 16 of the 17-bat species breeding in the UK

mals to people including the close relatives of the viruses that cause severe acute respiratory syndrome and Covid-19.

The sarbecoviruses RhGB07, RhGB08, RfGB01, RfGB02 share 97-100 percent identity with RhGB01.

RhGB01 is linked with both SARS-CoV-2 (responsible for the current pandemic) and SARS-CoV (responsible for the initial 2003 SARS outbreak in humans).

The study "demonstrated that RhGB07 can bind and use the human ACE2 receptor for infecting human cells", the researchers wrote in the yet to be peer-reviewed paper, published on a pre-print website. ACE2 receptor is the entry point for the Covid virus to get into the human

mans, their zoonotic risk is unknown but warrants closer surveillance," they added. IANS



Do you know bone health is linked with dementia? Researchers reveal

MINNEAPOLIS: A study suggested that dementia may be more likely to affect people with poor bone density than those with high bone density.

The findings of the study were published in the online issue of *Neurology*, the medical journal of the American Academy of Neurology. The study does not prove that low bone density causes dementia. It only shows an association. "Low bone density and dementia are two conditions that commonly affect older people simultaneously, especially as bone loss often increases due to physical inactivity and poor nutrition during dementia," said study author Mohammad Arfan Ikram, MD, PhD, of the Erasmus University Medical Center in Rotterdam, Netherlands.

"However, little is known about bone loss that occurs in the period leading up to dementia. Our study found that bone loss indeed already occurs before dementia and thus is linked to a higher risk of dementia."

The study involved 3,651 people in the Netherlands with an average age of 72 who did not have dementia at the start of the study.

Over an average of 11 years, 688 people or 19% developed dementia.

'However, little is known about bone loss that occurs in the period leading up to dementia. Our study found that bone loss indeed already occurs before dementia and thus is linked to a higher risk of dementia'

Researchers looked at X-rays to identify bone density. Participants were interviewed every four to five years and completed physical tests such as bone scans and tests for dementia.

Of the 1,211 people with the lowest total body bone density, 90 people developed dementia within 10 years, compared to 57 of the 1,211 people with the highest bone density.

After adjusting for factors such as age, sex, education, other illnesses and medication use, and a family history of dementia, researchers found that within 10 years, people with the lowest total body bone density were 42% more likely to develop dementia than people in the highest group.

"Previous research has found factors like diet and exercise may impact bones differently as well as the risk of dementia," Ikram added. "Our research has found a link between bone loss and dementia, but further studies are needed to better understand this connection between bone density and memory loss. It's possible that bone loss may occur already in the earliest phases of dementia, years before any clinical symptoms manifest themselves. If that were the case, bone loss could be an indicator of risk for dementia and people with bone loss could be targeted for screening and improved care." ANI

USCIS Announces End of COVID-Related Flexibilities

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services have announced that certain flexibilities it first announced in March 2020, to address the COVID-19 pandemic will end on March 23, 2023. USCIS previously notified the public in its Jan. 24, 2023, announcement that barring any changes presented by the pandemic, the extension of these flexibilities announced on Jan. 24 would be the last.

You must respond to any notices or requests from USCIS dated after March 23 by the deadlines listed in the notice or request. This includes:

- Requests for Evidence;
- Continuations to Request Evidence (N-14);
- Notices of Intent to Deny;
- Notices of Intent to Revoke;
- Notices of Intent to Rescind;
- Notices of Intent to Terminate regional centers;
- Notices of Intent to Withdraw Temporary Protected Status; and

Motions to Reopen an N-400 Pursuant to 8 CFR 335.5, Receipt of Derogatory Information After Grant.

Additionally, if you wish to file Form I-290B, Notice of Appeal or Motion, or Form N-336, Request for a Hearing on a Decision in Naturalization Proceedings (Under Section 336 of the INA), regarding a decision dated after March 23, 2023, you must comply with the deadlines in the form instructions. *USCIS*

Immigration POST

14 India Post

www.indiapost.com

March 31, 2023

'We witnessed unprecedented demand from India in 2022 which led to an extended peak outbound travel season with steady volumes witnessed until December'

Visa applications from Delhi reach 80% of pre-pandemic levels

NEW DELHI: Visa applications from the national capital nearly touched the pre-pandemic levels last year, driven by pent-up demand, opening of international borders and eased Covid-related protocols, a report of last week showed.

According to VFS Global, the visa application volume from New Delhi reached close to 80 percent of the 2019 pre-pandemic levels in 2022 and registered a 93 percent growth when compared to 2021.

This trend of rise in visa application volume from New Delhi is in line with the overall growth registered in India, which was also close to 80 percent of the pre-pandemic levels in 2022.

"We witnessed unprecedented demand from India in 2022 which led to an extended peak outbound travel season with steady volumes witnessed until December. We are confident that the momentum will further grow and hence it is advisable for applicants to apply for their visas in advance to avoid last-minute surprises," said Prabuddha Sen, Chief Operating Officer-South Asia, VFS Global.

Premium optional services such as Visa At Your Doorstep (VAYD) that enables travellers to book the entire visa experience at a location of their choice, witnessed around 90 percent year-

result, we see an increasing number of travellers opt for such services that provide a seamless visa experience and prioritize safe travel," Sen added.

According to the revised

"Particularly this year with higher demand and limited appointment slots available, we urge applicants to apply for their visa as early as possible," said the company.

Visa applicants are advised to beware of fraudulent entities who charge fees from customers for scheduling appointments or providing any other services using VFS Global's name or independently.

VFS Global operates a global network with more than 3,400 application centers in 145 countries. The company has processed over 256 million applications since its inception in 2001. VFS Global is majority-owned by funds managed by Blackstone, the world's largest alternative asset manager. *IANS*



on-year rise in 2022.

"Health considerations continue to be a key determining factor in the new normal. As a

Schengen Visa Code, one can apply for a Schengen visa up to six months before the date of travel.

Hong Kong faces brain drain due to political environment created by China

HONG KONG: Hong Kong has been facing the worst brain drain problem in the medical field ever since China imposed the draconian National Security Law in the city in June 2020.

A lot of talented Hongkongers have been migrating to the UK, the US, Australia and other countries for better opportunities.

Political environment is one of the important reasons for the permanent emigration.

Hong Kong's Health Secretary Lo Chung-mau has conceded stating that emigration, the social environment and the political environment have played a role in the brain drain hitting the medical sector.

Mau's remarks have clearly indicated the gravity of the situation, which Beijing has refused to acknowledge, and instead stepped up efforts to further tighten its control over the former British colony.

The whole exercise is part of the 'grab' campaign finalized after all efforts to hire overseas doctors failed miserably in the recent past. The UK is the most obvious choice as it is the most preferred choice for Hong Kong youngsters seeking to study medicine outside the SAR.

However, a Hospital authority delegation would leave for the UK soon to recruit doctors after the SAR's public health sector suffered from one of its worst brain

drains in memory, Mau conceded. Besides the UK, US and Australia are in the list of preferred countries of Hongkongers.

The UK visit will be the first of many tours that will include other countries and places.

The 'grab' campaign comes after earlier efforts to hire overseas doctors failed miserably to get the number the authority wanted. After key registration legislation was amended in 2021 to make it easier for overseas-trained doctors to practice in the city, Mau and his colleagues at the authority had hoped to hire 100 foreign doctors. Only 10 have been willing to come. *IANS*

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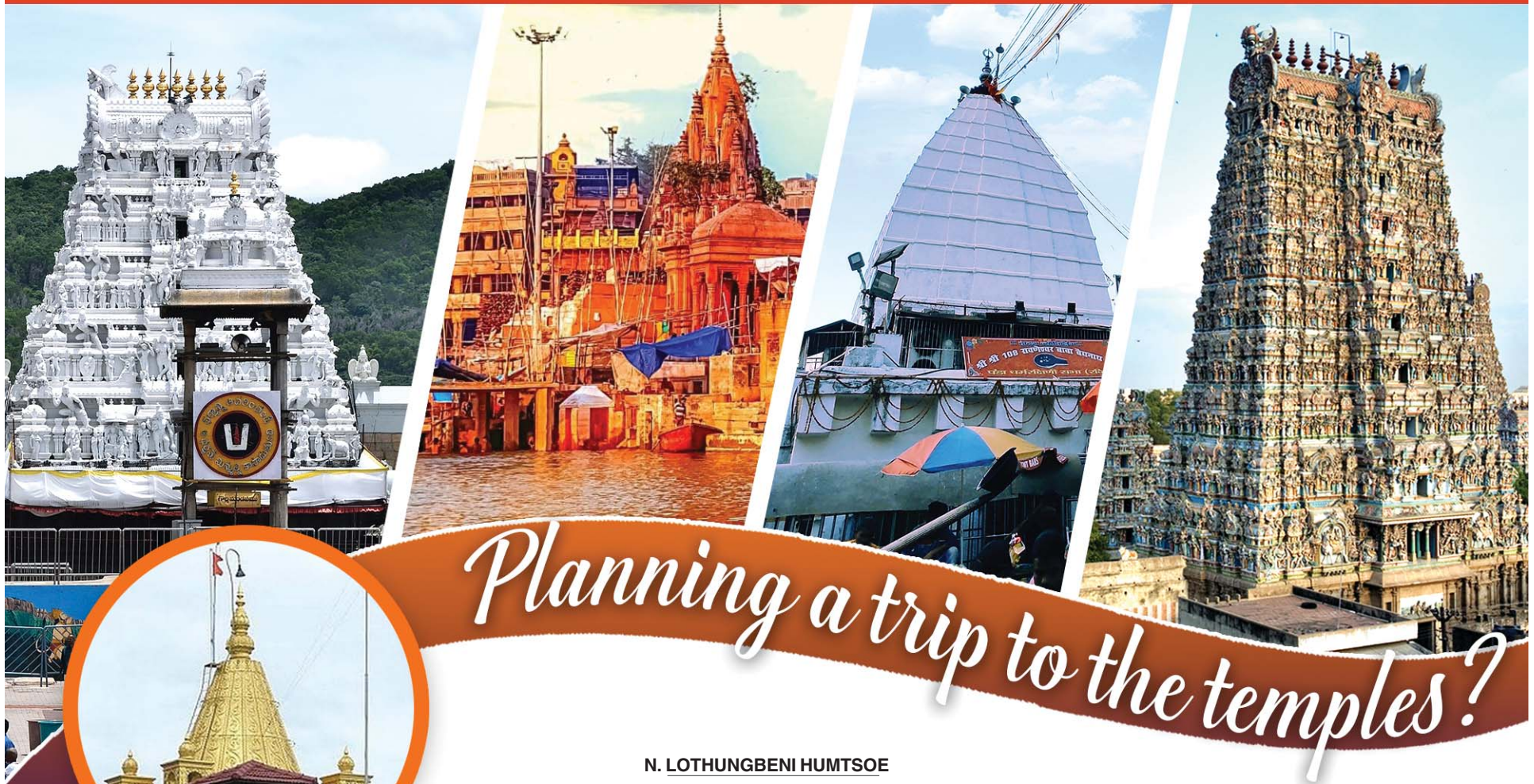
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Planning a trip to the temples?

N. LOTHUNGBENI HUMTSOE

NEW DELHI: Across the globe, India is one nation that is known to be the land of spirituality and where people truly value its culture. The country has worshippers in plenty and large groups of them often venture off from faraway corners for pilgrimage. India, being

one of the most renowned places for pilgrimage tourism, also has one of the strongest rail networks for it.

Here are five pilgrimages you can easily to by rail shared by Dinesh Kumar Kotha, the Co-founder and CEO of Confirmkt - an online train discovery and booking platform - and should absolutely check out if you're looking

to connect with your spiritual side: **Venkateswara Temple - Tirumala & Venkatadri Express Trains (17487)**

Amongst some of the most famous pilgrimage sites is the Tirumala Venkateswara Temple, located in the Tirupati city of southern state Andhra Pradesh. The site is so popular that it is visited by almost 60,000 devotees on an everyday basis. In order to reach the holy site by train, the pilgrims can board either the Tirumala Express or the Venkatadri Express.

Named after the Tirumala Venkateswara Temple, Tirumala Express is a train that shuttles between Visakhapatnam and Kadapa, covering a distance of 872 kilometers. On the other hand, the Venkatadri Express is also a popular train for the Tirumala pilgrimage and connects the Kacheguda in Hyderabad (Telangana) to Chittoor in Andhra Pradesh. Both trains are equipped with modern amenities to provide ease and comfort to travelers.

Meenakshi Temple - Tiruchendur Express (16105)

Lying in the temple town of Madurai, Tamil Nadu is the

Meenakshi Amman Temple, which is a place of great religious importance. The temple is dedicated to the goddess Meenakshi, who is a form of Shakti, and her consort, Sundareswarar, who is a form of Shiva. Throughout the year, devotees flock to Madurai to perform religious practice at the

The country has worshippers in plenty and large groups of them often venture off from faraway corners for pilgrimage. India, being one of the most renowned places for pilgrimage tourism, also has one of the strongest rail networks for it

Deoghar in Jharkhand is a crucial Hindu pilgrimage region and home to the Baidyanath Temple. Every year, between the months of July and August, 7 to 8 million devotees embark on the DeogharYatra, wherein they bring holy water from various areas of the Ganges. Some of the popular trains, which carry these pilgrims from across the country, are the 18045 - East coast Express and the 12710 - Simhapuri Express. Both the trains cover a distance of 1,586 kilometers and 643 kilometers respectively and are equipped with modern amenities for smooth travel.

Shirdi - BZA SNSI Express (17208)

Everyone knows of Shirdi in Maharashtra as one of the most prominent religious sites. It is immensely famous for the Sai Baba Mandir, which is visited by thousands of devotees every day. Devotees can travel to the site by boarding the 17208 SainagarShirdi-Vijayawada (BZA SNSI) Express, which runs between SainagarShirdi and Vijayawada Junction. *IANSLife*

temple. The travelers use the popular train Tiruchendur Express, which stops at several major stations along the way, including Chengalpattu, Villupuram, Trichy, and Madurai. According to reports, the train covers a distance of around 700 kilometers.

Deoghar - East Coast Express (18045) and Simhapuri Express (12710)

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'Journalist assaulted in DC receives prompt law agency help'

WASHINGTON DC: We have seen disturbing visuals of a senior Indian journalist from the Press Trust of India being abused, threatened & assaulted physically while covering so called 'Khalistan protest' in Washington DC earlier today.

We understand that the journalist was first verbally intimidated, then physically assaulted, and fearing for his personal safety and well being, had to call in law enforcement agencies that responded promptly.

We condemn such a grave and unwarranted attack on a senior journalist. Such activities only underscore the violent and anti-social tendencies of the so-called 'Khalistani protestors' and their supporters, who routinely engage in wanton violence and vandalism.

We thank the law enforcement agencies for their prompt response in the matter.

What is the Khalistan separatist movement?

BABU TANGEWALA

The recent attacks and violent protests at the Consulate General of India in San Francisco, and India High Commission in London, are the latest headline-grabbing incidents by supporters of the Khalistan separatist movement.

They come on the heels of incidents of anti-India and anti-Hindu vandalism at temples in New York City, in the Toronto area, and in Australia. Though largely dormant in India itself over the past two and a half decades, in the diaspora the Khalistan movement is resurgent and supporters of the movement in the US, Canada and UK are stoking its embers in India. What is its history, aims?

Details on page 20

COMMUNITY ACROSS AMERICA

16 India Post

www.indiapost.com

March 31, 2023



Investment Opportunities in India

VIDYA SETHURAMAN
India Post News Service

Consulate General of India, San Francisco in association with Institute of Chartered Accountants of India San Francisco Chapter put together an event on March 22, 2023 at Amber Restaurant, Los Altos with focus on "Investment Opportunities in India & GIFT City". ICAI San Francisco Chapter was established to serve the US based members of The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India. The San Francisco Chapter aims to generate goodwill between the accounting fraternities of India and the US and build an immaculate network to pave paths for its members to work with the local institutions and contribute to the well being of its economic citizens. The aim of this organization is to help the



social and economic reforms. For this, infrastructure is very important. The government has introduced a number of effective

CG Prasad urged all the venture capitalists based in Silicon Valley to invest in GIFT city and other parts of India. GIFTCity, an emerging global financial and IT services hub and a first-of-its-kind in India

Indo Americans with tax related queries and tackle misinformation for tax related issues.

Ambassador Dr TV Nagendra Parsad, CGISF thanked the ICAI and Consulate team for putting together this event. Ambassador Prasad said that India is expected to be the fastest growing economy of the seven largest emerging-market and developing economies. Apple is targeting manufacturing 25% of all of its iPhones in India, up from between 5%-7% currently. India is set to become the third biggest economy in the world by 2027 driven by rising consumption,

of the crisis by sending vaccines to them. Consul General Prasad also said violence has no space in our community. This was said in relevance with the latest attacks on the SF Consulate.

CG Prasad urged all the venture capitalists based in Silicon Valley to invest in GIFT city and other parts of India. GIFTCity, an emerging global financial and IT services hub and a first-of-its-kind in India, is designed to be at or above par with globally benchmarked business districts. It currently houses 38-funds, 23-banks, 23-insurance

companies and Intermediaries, two international exchanges and a slew of ancillary establishments making it a conducive business ecosystem. It continues to witness growing interest from Fintech players.

The startup ecosystem in India is the third largest startup ecosystem in the world, boasting an impressive 115 unicorns, which are billion-dollar enterprises. In 2021, Indian startups raised \$44 billion, with over \$33 billion going towards deals worth more than \$5 million.

Cont'd on page 23



Festivities at Fremont Hindu temple



VIDYA SETHURAMAN
India Post News Service

Chaitra Navratri falls in the month of Chaitra according to the Hindu calendar, which corresponds, to March-April as per the Gregorian calendar. The word 'Navratri' literally means 'nine nights' in Sanskrit, and it is a festival dedicated to the worship of the Hindu goddess Durga and her nine avatars - Durga, Shailputri, Brahmacharini, Chandraghanta, Kushmanda, Skandmata, Katyayani, Kaalratri, Maha Gauri, and Siddhidatri being worshipped. The Chaitra Navratri will be observed from March 22, 2023, to March 31, 2023.

Fremont Hindu temple celebrated the Mata ka Vishal Jagran on Saturday, March 25. It was attended by over 500 devotees. Veena Birla, Owner, Bharat Bazar and team has been working on this event and made it a huge success.

Chaitra Navaratri Garba was conducted on March 24. The celebrations of Navratri are incomplete without garba and devotion. Amita & Naresh Patel with their team put together the event and was attended by over 100 devotees.





L to R: BSC Secretary Rasila Dobariya, Pratima Shah, Frank Saverino (Run for Carol Stream Mayor), Meghna Bansal (Run for Naperville City Council), Rodney Craig Hanover Park Mayor, Nimish Jani (Community Leader) and Hari Patel (BSC President)

Color Holi Festival by Bharatiya Seniors of Chicago

JAYANTI OZA

CHICAGO: The Bharatiya Seniors of Chicago (BSC) celebrated Holi at the Rana Reagan Center in Carol Stream a north side suburb of Chicago over 800 members and guests participated

This colorful event was filled with vibrant colors and festival energy. The start was with BSC Secretary Rasila Dobariya singing " Ganesh Vandana" the BSC President Haribhai Patel welcomed Frank Saverino (Running for Mayor of Carol Stream), pitching for help re elect him.

Jigna Gandhi was the Master of Ceremony, KK fame and Vishruti Vyas made Holi Geet Gujarati program with Raas-Garba, Holi songs from Bollywood songs, Shar & Sayari foot -tapping music and dance performances.

And Played Holi by spraying color with BSC members and invited guest.

At the end of the program Hari Patel, Shardaben Patel BSC vice President Bachubhai Pagadal had paid visit to Lallubhai Sheth Arogya Mandir Hospital Savarkundla Gujarat (India) where close to 1500 patients come every day, They donated Cancer room for Chemotherapy Department on behalf of Bharatiya Seniors of Chicago. At the end everyone took delicious dinner and went home with memory of Holi celebration.



Group of Musical Bonanza



Jigna Gandhi (Master of Ceremony), Singer KK (Kalpesh Kharva) Vishruti Vyas singing bollywood songs for BSC members



BSC Members enjoying Holi program

Sci-Fi Writers Imagine Alternative Realities and Futures - A booming genre across the world

VIDYA SETHURAMAN
India Post News Service

An increasingly racially and ethnically diverse field of writers, both in the US and abroad, are using fiction (Speculative, Science, Fantasy) to reimagine their world and their future, as well as complex problems like climate change, the legacies of colonialism and globalization, violence against women, inequality and other issues.

A panel of writers and experts at the EMS briefing on March 24 discussed how fiction genres that used to be identified with aliens, spaceships, and monsters, coming out mainly from a Western, white, male perspective (with some exceptions), have become a popular way to deal -or react to world realities.

Ericka A. Hoagland, Associate Professor & Co-ordinator of Graduate Studies, English & Creative Writing, Stephen F. Austin State University; Co-Author of Science Fiction, Imperialism, and the Third World said believes that science fiction can truly explore the continuing legacy of colonialism, new manifestations of globalization, climate change, civil war, economics, interdependence among nations, etc. Hoagland mentioned that she often shares some stories with students in class. When thinking about these stories, they will start to look forward to possible futures, go beyond the stereotypes brought by previous science fiction, and localize, regionalize and integrate them into community and connecting to the world in which they live.

Libia Brenda, Writer, Editor, and Translator, based in Mexico City; Climate Imagination Fellow, Center for Science and the Imagination, Arizona State University said a lot of the imagination is rooted in our traditions, but it also incorporates a lot of foreign cultures.

Ken Liu, American Author of speculative fiction; winner of the Nebula, Hugo, and World Fantasy awards; winner of top genre honors in Japan, Spain, and France that technology has guided many of his own works to a certain extent.

In fact, the foundation of technology is far ahead of science. Technology is about human attempts to make the psychological structure tangible.

A panel of writers and experts at the EMS briefing on March 24 discussed how fiction genres that used to be identified with aliens, spaceships, and monsters, coming out mainly from a Western, white, male perspective

India Post News Service

CHICAGO: Celebration of Metropolitan Asian Family Service (MAFS) International Women's Day was held on Wednesday, March 8th, 2023, in Chicago.

International Women's Day is a global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women. This year's women's day theme was DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality," and it highlights the role of innovative technology in promoting gender equality and meeting the health and developmental needs of women and girls. The event emcee was Roshita Pandey, MAFS Grant Director. Dr. Santosh Kumar, Founder, and Executive Director of MAFS welcomed all for coming to celebrate the MAFS International Women's Day event.

Dr. Santosh Kumar mentioned the women from all over the world and from different fields/backgrounds who have achieved so much in their life. Dr. Santosh Kumar, through her speech, passed on a solid message to younger generations that feminism is being strong and confident in our own skin. Both men and women should celebrate their unique strengths and traits and work together in tandem to achieve great heights.

The event started with the lighting of the auspicious lamp by all the dignitaries. The esteemed panel of guests included Dr. Anindita Ghosh, wife of India Consul General of Chicago; Yolanda Curry, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Family and Support Services, City of Chicago; Nikki Garbis Proutsos, Assistant Commissioner, Department of Family

Achievements of women: Theme of the MAFS celebratory event



MAFS women achievements gathering



Lamp lighting ceremony at MAFS event

and Support Services. All of them were powerful women achievers in their own filed and they effectively addressed the topic of women empowerment and gender equality in their special ways.

While Dr. Anindita Ghosh, put light on the facts and figures and changing scenarios of women empowerment in India, Yolanda Curry gave facts that over 60% of college degrees rewarded in the United States are earned by women in education, health services, and social security. She emphasized the difference between equality and equity. She believed women should support women - 'each one, reach one'.

Nikki Proutsos recognized MAFS for proving meals to seniors during the pandemic. She profusely thanked Mrs. Santosh Kumar and Roshita for doing all the public benefit programs, hot dinner programs, and social security for more than 30 years. She shared her favorite quote that says 'A man is a head, and a woman is a neck, and she can turn the head anywhere she wants'.

The event showcased powerful dance performances on the theme of "Nari shakti" or "women empowerment" by MAFS/UMAS senior ad staff. A humorous Hindi play with a moral/life lesson was also staged by the seniors. It had the audience in splits. The last and the most awaited segment was the giving away of the "Woman of Substance Awards". The awardees were MAFS/UMAS staff and partners from across departments and roles. They were women who inspire others with their hard work, commitment, and passion for work, both on the professional and personal front.

The audience cheered for all the awardees and overall, the event was a big success in celebrating the spirit of womanhood.

JagranTV founder Dr. Avi Verma funds Computer Lab in Punjab school

India Post News Service

CHANDIGARH: In a heartwarming gesture, Dr. Avi Verma, the founder of JagranTV Chicago, honored the memory of his late father, Principal B.R. Verma, by inaugurating a state-of-the-art computer lab in SD Senior Secondary School in Punjab

The lab, fully equipped with modern computers, printers, and other accessories, will benefit hundreds of students from the school and nearby areas, who now have access to digital resources and training.

The computer lab is only the first of many significant steps Dr. Verma plans to take towards achieving that goal, for his commitment to education extends beyond just the computer lab. He is also pro-

moting scholarships for bright students across different regional schools and colleges. He aims to provide better education to those who cannot afford it due to financial constraints.

He expressed his deep attachment to the school, where his father had been principal for almost two decades. For

this reason and honor his father's legacy, Dr. Verma has always sought ways to give back.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by school staff, students, and local officials, who all expressed gratitude to Dr. Verma for his generosity and dedication to education.

The computer lab is a fitting tribute to the legacy of Principal B.R. Verma and a testament to the power of education to transform lives.

School staff with
Avi Verma

Picture Credit: Soumya Malaviya



Laughter is the best medicine...

ARCHANA ASTHANA

Masala Comedy Club, founded in 2019 by a group of four actors and comedy enthusiasts bringing their talents to tickle our funny bone. What sets them apart is the focus to bring NRI humor to the desi audience, who can laugh at situations relating to the homeland. An impressive lineup of eight comedians in 15-minute slots, provided merriment to a receptive audience on varied topics in Sunnyvale Theater over the last couple of weekends.

Rajiv Nema, the host did not spare the audience as the target of his jokes aimed at historic regional differences within India, and bared the perpetual lateness of Bombayites, the non-understanding of Hindi by South Indians and miserliness of Gujaratis.

The comedians formed a diverse collection with regional Indian flavors and the show debuted with Aditya Mahajan from South Delhi, who expanded on the misconception of the legendary arrogance and ignorance associated with Delhiites, even though they consider themselves the smartest, wealthiest and most accomplished!

Snehal Pachigar from South Bombay shared his experiences of a beginner skier with unintended consequences of his bravado. The audience roared with laughter at his kinesthetic narrative of the introductory lesson with "pizza" and "fries" (the stop and go feet positions for downhill skiing), and his unintentional skiing down the black diamond slopes...all in an effort to impress a girl.

Shiv Jayraman from Chennai, claimed

himself as the diversity inclusion and lamented the parenting skills and helicoptering tendencies of Indian parents, young and old, and gross exaggerations of their offsprings' achievements.

The only woman in the mix, Neha Goyal from Chandigarh discussed life as an only child with a name shared with half her classmates. To rectify that, she named her child rather uniquely...only to find out

other parents of her generation had the same idea!

The Nashik native, Abhay Paranjape confessed to turning 40 this year and going through a mid life crisis of "uncle-iyat"...a made up moniker for behaving like a typical "uncleji"...a phenomenon mostly associated with holding forth on all topics under the sun to an uninterested younger audience.

Ashok Vijay challenged the audience to keep up with his command of pure Hindi as spoken in Jhansi, UP while ruing the total lack of sex education for men growing up in India, who therefore resort to stealthways of procuring said knowledge, often inaccurately!

The tech jokes could not be far behind, so Ritwik Verma from Ranchi, Bihar kept up a commentary on Indian weddings taking place on Zoom in the recent past. Now that Zooming has become a universal experience, nods and grins were seen when he shared how the panditji had tech issues during the most critical mantra chanting times during the wedding.

In the final segment, Rajiv Nema from Indore, MP, circles back to tech difficulties when work from home shifts back to India. Much laughter was generated with the sounds and challenges of daily life in India becoming front and center in phone calls with foreign clients, including the bhajiwala's calls for fresh vegetables, the maid's arrival and the water tank overflow!

Bay Area with its large desi population finally enjoys a comedy show where all jokes are understood by the entire audience as evidenced by the non-stop laughter!



Med Learning Group's project ECHO Webinar on COVID-19

INDRAJEET TYAGI

Med Learning Group from New York organized their Complementary Live Interactive CMC/CNE Webinar on COVID-19 under their project ECHO, on Wednesday, March 22, 2023, on the topic, "Updating Outpatient Recommendations in COVID-19 Management: Identifying Opportunities for Risk Reduction in Non-Hospitalized Patients." Around 40 medical professionals from USA, India, and other countries attended the meeting and participated actively in the interactive por-



Dr Shyam Kottilil

tion of the presentation. This activity was co-provided by AMEDCO and supported by an educational grant from Pfizer.

This TeleECHO series was designed to update clinicians who treat patients at risk for and with COVID-19 with the most up-to-date guidelines on the prevention, diagnosis, and management of patients in the outpatient

setting. Dr. Christopher Palma, Associate Professor of Medicine University of Rochester, Rochester, NY was the program chair and the co-host. He welcomed all the participants and introduced the presenter, Dr. Shyam Kottilil, Professor of Medicine, Chief Division of Infectious Diseases Institute of Human Virology University of Maryland School of Medicine Baltimore, MD to the audiences. Dr. Kottilil spoke comprehensively on the COVID symptoms and the risk factors such as age, ethnicity, BMI, and comorbidities. He said that in the pre-vaccine data-2020,

This TeleECHO series was designed to update clinicians who treat patients at risk for and with COVID-19 with the most up-to-date guidelines on the prevention, diagnosis, and management of patients in the outpatient setting

age was a strong risk factor for severe illness, complications, and death and death rates directly correlated with advanced age. He also talked about challenges in diagnosis through PCR vs rapid testing and which one to use in what situations.

In the second part of his presentation, Dr. Kottilil talked about outpatient treatment of COVID-19 based on the clinical data with ritonavir-boosted nirmatrelvir, including EPIC-HR clinical study results, as well as the results of real-world studies in both vaccinated and unvac-

inated patients during the omicron wave. The results of the study showed that Nirmatrelvir + Ritonavir reduced risk for hospitalization or death among outpatients with COVID-19. Another clinical data with remdesivir in outpatient and inpatient use, including PINETREE clinical study showed that early administration of remdesivir prevents progression to severe COVID-19 in outpatients. In the PINETREE study, remdesivir resulted in an 87% lower risk of COVID-related hospitalizations or death compared with placebo and had an acceptable safety profile. It was also observed among the unvaccinated patients, aged ≥12 years were at increased risk for hospitalization and their mean age was 50 years. He presented another clinical data with molnupiravir in the MOVE-OUT study and said that using molnupiravir is recommended for mild-to-moderate symptoms among ≥18 years of age who are at high risk of progression to severe COVID-19, including hospitalization and/or death when other options are not available or clinically appropriate.

Dr. Kottilil spoke on the current clinical recommendations and investigational therapies that included diagnostic testing and antiviral therapy in patients with mild to moderate COVID-19 and anti-inflammatory therapy in



Dr Christopher Palma

patients with severe to clinical illness. According to Dr. Kottilil, communication with patients about their health conditions and appropriate clinical application of treatment, and preferences is the best practice. Therefore, both patient and healthcare provider (HCP) should work together to make a healthcare decision that is best for the patient. Because studies of Shared Decision-Making (SDM) practice have demonstrated better health outcomes, improved quality of life, increased compliance with treatment regimens, and lower demand for healthcare resources. He further emphasized on integrating telemedicine approaches as a patient assessment tools in practice to determine if in-person evaluation is necessary or outpatient therapy to prescribe.

The exciting part of the presentation was answering the polling questions in between the presentation and quite a few case studies including Q&A at the end of the presentation to check audiences' understanding was also excellent.

Dr. Kottilil concluded his presentation by saying at-home testing for COVID-19 is important for early diagnosis, and older age, increased BMI, and multiple chronic medical conditions, including immunosuppressed status are the risk factors for developing severe disease. Currently, antivirals such as ritonavir/nirmatrelvir, remdesivir, and molnupiravir are the effective drugs for the treatment of COVID 19 outpatients.

Mandi Theater's celebration 'Embrace the equality'

ALKA SHARMA



Mandi group with guests

CHICAGO: Mandi Theater hosted its International Women's Day celebration at the Mario Parente Theater, Oakbrook Terrace, Oakbrook, a Chicago suburb with a theme of 'Embrace the equality'. This play was a fitting tribute to the women who fight for their identity and equality.

The evening culminated with a very bold and brave play written and directed by Dr. Atamjit and co-



directed by Ms. Alka Sharma, founder of the Mandi Theater, a non-for-profit organization.

The play highlighted the prejudices and stereotypes that many women face, and the impact they have on their relationships with their loved ones. Finally, the evening of performances ended with bright colors of "Sindur Khela," a celebration of spring, womanhood and sisterhood.

What is the Khalistan separatist movement?

BABUTANGEWALA

The recent attacks and violent protests at the Consulate General of India in San Francisco, and India High Commission in London, are the latest headline-grabbing incidents by supporters of the Khalistan separatist movement. They come on the heels of incidents of anti-India and anti-Hindu vandalism at temples in New York City, in the Toronto area, and in Australia. Though largely dormant in India itself over the past two and a half decades, in the diaspora the Khalistan movement is resurgent and supporters of the movement in the US, Canada and UK are stoking its embers in India. What is its history, aims?

Land of the Pure: The Khalistan Movement in India. Starting in the early 1980s, radical separatists spearheaded a bloody campaign to carve out an independent, theocratic Sikh state known as Khalistan (Land of the Pure) in Punjab and other parts of Northern India.

The roots of Khalistan lie in the British colonial policies of the late 1800s and early 1900s that sought to divide Sikhs and Hindus. Sikhs were recruited into the British army in large numbers to use

against Hindu rulers that rebelled against the British Raj. Subsequently, after Indian independence in 1947, tensions between the state of Punjab and the central Indian government surfaced, leading to grievances amongst many Sikhs against the Indian government.

Punjab, for instance, was trifurcated into the states of Punjab, Haryana, and Himachal Pradesh in 1966, along linguistic lines (Punjab as a Punjabi speaking state, and Haryana and Himachal Pradesh as Hindi speaking states), which created resentment amongst many Sikhs that the historic contours of Punjab were being further divided after it has already been divided between India and Pakistan in 1947.

Many Sikhs in Punjab also resented sharing the joint capital of Chandigarh with Haryana, and viewed water sharing agreements with Haryana as unfair and favoring farmers there to the detriment of those in Punjab. Sikh religious leaders were additionally apprehensive of the community losing its identity and culture, and wanted greater state powers for Punjab.

Although these types of issues often mark normal state-federal government relations in newly independent countries such as India, they were perceived by many Sikhs as religiously motivated policies of discrimination against them and were exploited by radical leaders, who built a narrative that Sikh interests would only be safe in an independent Sikh country of Khalistan. This was further compounded by an "incendiary mix of unprincipled politics and the manipulation of religious identities and institutions" that brought radical Sikh forces to the forefront

ernment contributed to problems in the state by undermining democratic institutions and interfering with elections, and failing to adequately address local/state issues and relations between the state and the central government.

It is important to note however, that majority of the police, security forces and politicians in Punjab were and are Sikh. In fact, the police captain credited for ending the Khalistan insurgency, KPS Gill, was himself a Sikh. Moreover, Sikh politicians, such as former Chief Minister Beant Singh, were themselves assassi-

The Khalistan Movement in India. Starting in the early 1980s, radical separatists spearheaded a bloody campaign to carve out an independent, theocratic Sikh state known as Khalistan (Land of the Pure) in Punjab and other parts of Northern India

of politics in the state of Punjab.

Violent clashes between radicalized Sikh groups led by Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale and the Nirankari sect (considered heretical by the former) in April 1978 is considered the beginning of the Khalistan movement. And in 1980, Bhindranwale and his supporters started targeting Hindus and murdered Lala Jagat Narain, the publisher of Punjab Kesri, a vernacular newspaper, and a vocal critic of Bhindranwale. This was soon followed by large-scale violence against civilians across the state.

The Khalistan movement peaked in the 1980-90s and the violent campaign included bombings, assassinations, kidnappings, and selective killing and massacres of civilians. The movement resulted in nearly 22,000 deaths of Sikhs and Hindus alike, including approximately 12,000 civilians. The violence took on an international dimension in 1985 when Khalistani separatists based in Canada exploded a bomb on an Air India flight enroute from Toronto to New Delhi, killing all 329 people on board, including 82 children under the age of 13. That incident remains the deadliest terrorist attack in Canadian history.

In response to the movement, and in an attempt to end militancy in the state, Indian security forces and local Punjab police responded with force, at times committing human rights abuses. Moreover, the Congress Party led central gov-

nated by militants.

The majority of the victims of the militant violence were innocent Sikhs who were killed by separatists for opposing the Khalistan movement. In 1990-1991, for instance, Sikh civilians comprised over seventy percent of the victims of militant attacks. Moreover, Mazhabi Sikhs (so called lower caste Sikhs in Punjab) were frequently the victims of militant attacks.

Hindus were also targeted in large numbers as part of a strategy to ignite communal tensions and force Hindus to flee Punjab in fear. Along with systematic violence, posters often appeared in villages threatening Hindus to leave and those Sikhs that sought to help Hindus were similarly threatened by militants. As a result, thousands of Hindus fled their homes in Punjab and lived as refugees in neighboring states and New Delhi.

The horrific violence in Punjab was accompanied by virulent anti-Hindu rhetoric and propaganda that demonized and intimidated the state's minority Hindu community, and encouraged and celebrated violence against Hindu civilians. This was part of an attempt by militants, led by Bhindranwale, to disrupt the social fabric of the state and creation divisions between Hindus and Sikhs, who had historically enjoyed strong relations, shared religious traditions, and frequently intermarried.

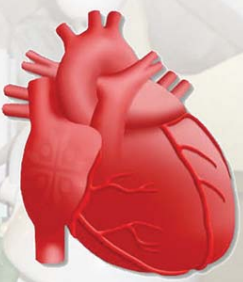
Cont'd on page 23


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What is the Khalistan separatist movement?

Cont'd from page 22

Bhindranwale, the most prominent Khalistan leader, frequently used anti-Hindu rhetoric in his speeches. Noted Sikh journalist, Kushwant Singh, described Bhindranwale as a "hate monger" who routinely used hateful and inflammatory language against Hindus and exhorted every Sikh to "kill 32 Hindus to solve the Hindu-Sikh problem. As the Khalistan movement expanded and violence escalated, Bhindranwale and his heavily armed followers occupied the Golden Temple, Sikhism's holiest shrine in Amritsar. Starting in 1982, Bhindranwale used the Golden Temple as a base of operations and stored arms and ammunition there. He openly declared that he was directing attacks and violent acts from the sacred Temple. There were also reports of militants committing atrocities on pilgrims and devotees inside the sacred space.

On June 6, 1984, Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi ordered an army operation - code-named Operation Bluestar - to flush out Bhindranwale and the militants holed up in the Golden Temple, the holiest of Sikh temples

According to an academic study of the Khalistan insurgency:

"...Thousands of pilgrims were in the Golden Temple grounds when the army assault began, and the insurgents used many of them as human shields. Bhindranwale and many of his associates were killed - but there were a very large number of civilian casualties as well."

The fallout from Operation Bluestar resulted in the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and the subsequent anti-Sikh pogrom in New Delhi in October

1984 in response to Prime Minister Gandhi's assassination. The pogrom took the lives of over 3,000 innocent Sikhs.

While the Indian government and judiciary have taken some positive steps to prosecute and convict those leaders involved in planning and carrying out the violence, several individuals and high level government leaders have still not been brought to justice more than 30 years later. Collectively, Operation Blue Star, and the anti-Sikh pogrom of 1984 and lack of justice thereafter have left a deep psychological wound in the minds of many Sikhs, and have further fueled the Khalistan militant movement or support for it.

In both its heyday and today, the Khalistan movement has received financial and logistical support from pro-Khalistan separatists based in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom, as well as Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) Agency.

In particular, according to Indian defense analyst, Ajai Sahni, Pakistan's ISI spy agency provided refuge, training, arms, and funding to Khalistani terrorist organizations and coordinated "their activities with Islamist terrorist organizations such as the Lashkar-e-Toiba and the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, as well as with organized crime operators, and drug and weapons smugglers who have assisted in the movement of men and materials across the border into Punjab."

Moreover, according to foreign affairs analyst Christine Fair, "The involvement of the diaspora was an important dimension of the Sikh insurgency. Not only was it a source of diplomatic and financial support, it was also a factor in enabling Pakistan to get involved in fueling the Sikh separatist efforts. Sikhs in Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States played impor-

tant roles in arranging for cadres to travel to Pakistan, where they received financial and military assistance."

Khalistan supporters in the West have actively used American, Canadian and British soil to lobby their respective governments against India, while raising funds for Khalistan terror groups, often using informal hawala networks (often used by criminal and terrorist organizations in South Asia) for transferring money.

There have further been a number of investigations into the activities of pro-Khalistan extremists in the US, including by the FBI, DEA, and United States Customs Service (USCS).

In March 2017, for instance, a Khalistan extremist and US resident, Balwinder Singh, was convicted of providing material support to Khalistani terrorist groups in India and sentenced to 15 years in federal prison. He had been arrested by the FBI in 2013 on "charges of conspiracy to provide material support to terrorists, conspiracy to murder or otherwise harm persons in a foreign country" and for falsifying an asylum claim. Singh was providing support to BKL and another group, Khalistan Zindabad Force, to commit acts of terrorism in India.

And previously, an undercover USCS sting operation of a Khalistan activist in California, Bhajan Singh Bhinder, revealed that he attempted to purchase military grade weapons, such as "M-16s, AK-47s, detonators, night-vision goggles, mobile communications equipment, remote-control equipment, grenade and rocket launchers," for Khalistan groups committing terror attacks in India. The investigation was later abandoned after Bhinder backed out of the deal. Bhinder has since gone on to found several other organizations, most notably Organization for Minorities of India (OFMI), which engages in anti-India and anti-Hindu activities.

Another US-based organization, Sikhs for Justice, has become the most prominent pro-Khalistan group in the west and reportedly enjoys the support of the ISI. It purportedly peacefully advocates for a 2020 referendum on Khalistan, but has openly associated with convicted Khalistan terrorists and those suspected of being involved in large-scale terror plots in India. It funded the legal defense of Jagtar Singh Tara, for instance, a leader of Indian designated terrorist group Khalistan Tiger Force, who assassinated the Chief Minister of India's Punjab state in 1995.

SFJ and its legal advisor, Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, have close links with Paramjit Singh Pamma, a BKL fundraiser wanted by Indian authorities for his material support of terrorism. Mr. Pannun himself was reportedly arrested by police in the United Kingdom in 2000 after receiving terrorist training in Pakistan and was sentenced to 30 months in prison for his involvement with BKL, a banned terrorist group in the UK, although he denies the allegation.

Resources on the Khalistan separatist and terrorist movement

HAF policy brief: Land of the Pure: The Khalistan movement in India

That's So Hindu podcast interview the Canadian Khalistan expert Terry Milewski: Where is the Khalistan movement today?

Hudson Institute report: Pakistan's Destabilization Playbook: The Khalistan Separatist Activism in the US

Investment Opportunities in India

Cont'd from page 16

In order to better understand the nuances from regulatory, tax, legal and other perspectives and identify measures required to make India the preferred location, IFSCA has constituted an expert committee to formulate a roadmap to onshore the Indian innovation to GIFT IFSC. Set up by the Indian government in 2015, the International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) is located in GIFT City, a special economic zone (SEZ) in Gandhinagar, Gujarat. It is designed for financial institutions that serve non-residents and deal with foreign currency.

Institutions that set up shops in IFSC enjoy certain tax benefits as well as light touch regulations. These benefits are aimed at attracting foreign financial institutions to set up in India as well as convincing Indian financial institutions to operate out of the country rather than set up offshore banking entities.

The power-packed event had an impressive line-up of dignitaries Sandip Shah, General Manager, GIFT city, Ashutosh Sharma, GM, IFSCA, Suresh Swamy, Pricewaterhouse cooper, Aditya Modani, Ernst & Young and Nilesh Shah, ICAI, SFO. All the panelists spoke on

the advantages and ease of having a presence at GIFT city that attracts and retains tremendous wealth creation and value creation to India.

Sandip Shah said the establishment of the international fintech institute will help bridge skill gaps among fintech professionals by providing them with multidisciplinary education and training and integrate it with higher education. It will also support applied research and development.

As part of the Start-up Ecosystem Banking, ICICI Bank has set up a dedicated team for start-ups that would serve them through an extensive network of branches. The Start-up Ecosystem Banking proposition of the bank will also offer treasury and transaction banking solutions, lending solutions, digital integrations, handling FDI and regulatory compliances, personal banking services for employees and founders.

In 2023-24, the government proposed an extension of tax benefits to funds relocating to IFSC, GIFT City till March 31, 2025. "For countries looking for digital continuity solutions, we will facilitate setting up of their Data Embassies in GIFT IFSC," Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said during her Budget speech.

Take your space from drab to delightful

NEW DELHI: Your home is your sanctuary, a place where you can relax, unwind, and feel comfortable. However, sometimes your space can feel a little lackluster, and you may find yourself wanting to give it a more luxurious look and feel.

Fortunately, there are several decor trends that can help take your space from drab to delightful. Sanjeev Sharma, Partner of Orionn Architects, shares nine ways to make your home look more luxurious.



Add metallic accents:

Adding metallic accents is an easy and effective way to make your home look more luxurious. You can incorporate metallic accents into your decor through various decorative pieces, such as lamps, vases, mirrors, or picture frames. Metallic finishes like gold, silver, and brass can add a touch of glamour and sophistication to any room.

According to Pinterest, searches for "mixed metallics" have increased by 96% in the past year.

Use statement lighting:

Statement lighting is another decor trend that can instantly make your home look more luxurious. Consider installing a chandelier in your dining room or foyer, or opt for an oversized pendant light in your living room or bedroom. Unique floor lamps can also add a touch of elegance to your space. You can also incorporate dimmer switches to create a cozy ambience and adjust the lighting to fit your mood.

Invest in quality textiles:

Investing in high-quality textiles is another way to make your home look more luxurious. *IANSlife*

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Real Estate POST

24 India Post

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March 31, 2023

Chinese real estate giant Evergrande rolls out restructuring plan

BEIJING: China's crisis-hit real estate giant Evergrande has rolled out its restructuring plan and it involves USD 20 billion in foreign debt, NTD reported.

China's giant property developer that defaulted on its US dollar bonds more than a year ago, has struck a deal with a group of bondholders, bringing its prolonged debt negotiations close to the finish line, The Wall Street Journal reported. Evergrande's negotiations with bondholders which investors said often seemed close to faltering covered over USD 19 billion of bonds, as per the news report. *ANI*

Why festive season is the best time to invest in real estate?

DELHI-NCR: The ideological osmosis of religious and cultural symphony plays a significant factor in increased property investments during festive times. The festive season is the most favorable time for investment in real estate. Indian homebuyers are attached to their rooted value systems and invest in heavy-duty assets like real estate according to their long-held beliefs of auspiciousness and inauspiciousness.

The most recent one in the festive season line-up comes Chaitra Navratri, which will begin on 22nd March this year and continue for nine days. There will be a massive uptick in commercial and housing sales due to buoyant demand, and a vortex of attractive discount offers designed for investors if real estate experts are to be believed. Talking about the same, Sanchit Bhutani, Managing Director, Bhutani Grandthum, said, "Religious sentiments and beliefs play a prominent role in Real Estate investment in the backdrop of festive times. The festive season is an auspicious time for real estate investment, rejuvenating customers' interests in various categories of property assets. If one invests in the property during festive seasons, it is considered to be a well-timed decision that will bring significant returns in the future as well. The cultural syntax of our country also justifies this philosophy, and hence we see a great deal of real estate investment during these times."

Sharing similar thoughts, Amit Jain, Director, Mahagun Group, stated, "The festive



seasons allow homebuyers and commercial investors to take benefits of attractive deals and multiple offers launched by developers. Any kind of real estate investment in NCR is a costly affair. Therefore, the end-users show a predilection to build or expand their real estate assets by going for investments in festive

seasons allow homebuyers and commercial investors to take benefits of attractive deals and multiple offers launched by developers. Any kind of real estate investment in NCR is a costly affair. Therefore, the end-users show a predilection to build or expand their real estate assets by going for investments in festive

tation of the Flexi-Pay option. The rampant economic slowdown, post-pandemic, made one-time multi-lakh or crore asset investments lose popularity for a while.

The Flexi-Pay option broke the investment plateau and revived housing demand. Many realty players during the Navratri season in 2022 adopted the practice and announced Flexi-Pay option models to regenerate customer interests and encourage them to invest in their projects

seasons so that they can make economically wise and judicious decisions."

One of the most crucial drivers that lead to an investment insurgence in real estate during festive galore is the facili-

adopted the practice and announced Flexi-Pay option models to regenerate customer interests and encourage them to invest in their projects.

Amit Modi, Director County Group & President Credai

(WUP) said, "Chaitra Navratri is considered most auspicious for buying new things like car, house or land. Most Indians want to invest in property during this period. The religious beliefs and ideologies of the people have special significance. It is seen as an auspicious time for real estate investment and buyers are also attracted by the attractive and well-equipped home prices. This is especially a time that witnesses an additional investment. Everyone waits for a long time for the auspicious time of Navratri. Most people also consider investing in real estate during Navratri as financially beneficial."

Rajesh K Saraf, MD, Axiom Landbase, said, "With a line-up of attractive investment-friendly offers, low EMI payment options, and Flexible Payment options also available, everything goes in favor of buyers and investors during festive seasons. Homebuyers usually strategize their investment plans after an assiduous property market analysis during festive seasons and then decide on which property to invest in after evaluating every option carefully. It is a sign of a constructive and intelligent buyer mindset, which has become one of hottest real estate trends in the past few years."

The real estate development is at a pari-passu during festive seasons in symmetry with buyers' engagement. New project launches are also announced in almost the same timeline with valuable offers and investment flexibility, attracting buyers and investors. *ANI/NewsVair*



Your Weekly Future

by **VANEET SHARMA** ● MAR 31ST to APR 6TH 2023



ARIES

MAR 21 to APRIL 20

The first half of the week is highly favorable, the mid frustrating whereas the weekend shall be great for your success. As per planetary transit you shall be getting great results without any damages to any area of life. Domestic atmosphere shall remain uncertain. Mid of the week is average for your happiness and health. You are advised to keep your patience intact and if you do that then this week shall bring in excellent results.



CANCER

JUN 21 to JULY 22

This week will be better for your state of mind, health and happiness as compared to the previous week. you might suffer from the problems of mood swings in the beginning of the week. But later it shall be a great period for achieving something special in the area of work. The last days of the week are showing more gains. As per planetary transit you shall be getting great results without any damages to any area of life.



LIBRA

SEP 23 to OCT 22

In the beginning of the week you shall get relief from your mental tensions. You would be doing some experiments in your love life. Initially in the first half of the week there shall be probability of improvement in education, love life and children's affairs. You shall earn lot of reputation in society. The last two days of the week shall be very bad for your happiness and decision-making.



CAPRICORN

DEC 22 to JAN 19

You shall be free from all tensions in this week and would come out of all types of problems. Your health shall be great. In the first half of the week you shall enhance your association with family members whereas in the latter half of the week you would be concentrating more on your social life and work area. It would be a wonderful week for your progress at work but you need to put a check on your being extra generous.



TAURUS

APRIL 21 to MAY 20

This week is excellent for travel, love and finance. In this week and the beginning is good for work area and decision-making. From 9th of May you shall become amazingly active and focused. You shall be doing very well professionally especially with the support of partner/spouse. Your spouse shall be playing key role in shaping your destiny. Your social life, relation with friends and relatives shall help you do better in all areas of life.



LEO

JULY 23 to AUG 22

First half of the week is average for your happiness and health. You are advised to keep your patience intact and if you do that then this week shall bring in excellent results like tremendous appreciation for rendering excellent consultancy service and giving advice to people. There shall be tremendous improvement in your emotional relations especially with spouse. The last day of the week is giving an indication of attainment of great recognition in work area.



SCORPIO

OCT 23 to NOV 22

Beginning of the week indicates some mental tensions, which shall disappear completely after some time. You are advised to be cautious about your domestic atmosphere in this week. In the mid of the week you might have to go on a journey to meet some influential person. The last day of the week indicates enhancement of your strength with the help of a female. You shall be spending money on yourself, your family and on journeys in this week



ACQUARIUS

JAN 20 to FEB 19

In the beginning of the week there might remain little stress however from 10th April everything shall be alright. The 12th & 13th are good dates for decision making and it shall be a great period for achieving something special in the area of work. The last days of the week are showing more gains. There is probability of getting injury etc too therefore you are advised to be cautious. Avoid getting into unnecessary argument with people around you.



GEMINI

MAY 21 to JUN 20

In this week you are likely to face serious anger and aggression related issues. Sudden financial gains are indicated but you might have some unnecessary arguments with family members. You shall be happy with some relief in financial matters with some sudden gains and betterment and expansion in work area. You shall shine in your social circles and you would be able to solve your issues with your active involvement in social activities.



VIRGO

AUG 23 to SEP 22

The beginning of the week shall mark lot of activity in matters related to children. In the first half of the week you shall be getting opportunity to travel but you might not avail it because of the attainment of complete favor of destiny with lot of pleasure at your place. You might have some mental tensions and for that reason you might seek support of family members to get rid of tensions. The last days of the week might remain full of tensions, frustration and mental pressure.



SAGITTARIUS

NOV 23 to DEC 21

In the beginning of the week you are likely to spend time with family members. You shall be having enough funds and you shall extend one or other type of help to all who are dependent on you. Your competitive spirit shall be at its best and you would continue to increase your personnel, social and political influence. In your social life you shall continue with your lead role and your confidence level, immunity and happiness shall also be at its peak.



PISCES

FEB 20 to MAR 20

The beginning of the week is not auspicious for your happiness and state of mind. You need to keep your patience intact and work on your anger management issues. After the mid of the week towards its end you shall see tremendous increase in your domestic happiness because of sudden and impressive progress on financial front. You shall be taking interest in the study of occult.

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.

VANEET SHARMA
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INDIA AT THE LONDON DESIGN BIENNALE 2023

NEW DELHI: The Netherlands' national museum and institute for architecture, design, and digital culture, the Nieuwe Instituut, will serve as the creative director of the fourth London Design Biennale, which will run from June 1 to June 25, 2023.

Participants from all over the world will be asked to envision and put into action new forms of international collaboration and participation including with each other through the use of design. The event will take over the entirety of Somerset House, including the Edmond J. Safra Fountain Court and River Terrace.

The India Pavilion at the London Design Biennale 2023 will be designed by The Design Village (TDV) and Studio Archohm. 'The Global Game: Remapping Collaborations' will be the focus of the fourth iteration. Chowk & Charpai: An Urban Living Room, a multi-sensory evocation of the essence of a modern Indian metropolis curated by The Design Village and created by Studio Archohm.

Speaking about the opportunity Mridu Sahai, co-founder at The Design Village expressed: "We are de-

lighted to represent India at this global design forum amongst 40 other countries and organizations. Somerset House is such an august cultural destination; we are excited to showcase the essence of contemporary India." The exhibition not only highlights the vital role of design in addressing challenges and providing solutions but encourages international collaboration and forges future partnerships.

The Indian pavilion uses the visual metaphor of a

THE INDIAN PAVILION USES THE VISUAL METAPHOR OF A CHARPAI, A TRADITIONAL WOVEN DAYBED FOUND ALL OVER INDIA, TO EVOKE THE ESSENCE OF A MODERN INDIAN CITY CHOWK-AN OUTDOOR MARKET AT THE INTERSECTION OF STREETS

charpai, a traditional woven daybed found all over India, to evoke the essence of a modern Indian city chowk-an outdoor market at the intersection of streets. The charpai's weave serves as a metaphor for Indian craftsmanship and is a timeless fashion icon.

As Somerset House soaks up the British sun, the pavilion will act as a sizable urban charpai sculpture that softly shades the building. The charpai's weave creates a play of light and shadow to create a chowk, or public square, where random encounters occur. The oversized web of the charpai symbolizes India, a country with a modern perspective and deep cultural roots.

Through the elements of touch, sound, sight, smell, and taste, the chowk will represent Indian urbanity, which adjusts and adapts through dense landscapes. The chowk is an epitome of resilience, endurance, and resurrection: juxtapositions that speak of democracy and autonomy, ego and humility, hope and pride, rapture, and rejuvenation - this plural paradox is its true eloquence.

The London Design Biennale, which was founded in 2016 by Sir John Sorrell CBE and Ben Evans CBE, encourages international cooperation and the significance of design around the world. Since its beginning, the Biennale has welcomed the most thrilling and ambitious artists, designers, and cultural organizations to the city. IANSLife

DON'T JUST DO-IT-YOURSELF; IT'S TIME TO DESIGN-IT-YOURSELF

NEW DELHI: India is the third greatest producer of municipal solid garbage in the world, with an annual scrapping rate of over one million metric tons of textiles. The results are extremely startling, necessitating that customers practice greater responsibility when it comes to the disposal of used clothing.

Up cycling or recycling old clothing are not only fun but a sustainable way to up your fashion game, giving a makeover to your wardrobe.

Check out these stylish and adorable DIYs to get you started:

Up cycling an old Shirt into a trendy Tote Bag! Up cycling is a great way to breathe new life into old clothes while reducing waste and being environmentally conscious. Have an old shirt with collars faded out? Well, you can now up cycle it to a tote bag, that is versatile and can be used for groceries, running errands, or even as a stylish accessory. In this process, you'll need some basic sewing skills, but it's a fun and easy project that you can do in a few hours. Here's how. IANSLife

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Philosophy

SWAMI RAMDAS

It is not by mere external renunciation that one attains God. There are so many who have externally renounced and gone to the forests but have not realized Him. It is not necessary that one should externally renounce anything. It is not the outer condition that matters so much as one's inner state of mind.

If we dedicate our life to God and live in His light, it does not matter where we live. We can live in the family and still realize Him, because God is everywhere and not only in forests and caves. He is in us, with us and all about us. To seek Him, we need not go anywhere.

The examples of Buddha, Chaitanya and Vivekananda are not for all to follow. They are rare cases in which God made them renounce the external ties also so that they might freely serve all mankind. When God wants us to undertake such a glorious mission, by all means, let us not resist the current when it comes to sweep away our narrow limitations.

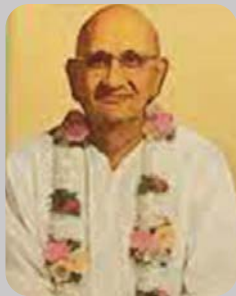
beings, creatures and things. Ramdas has only expanded the narrow family circle into a world-family. So it is not renunciation, but expansion.

God has in His mercy made him embrace the whole universe as his. Ramdas' Beloved dwells everywhere, as all beings and creatures in the world.

Action in itself is neither virtuous nor sinful. The error lies in attributing it to our false individuality, when really it emanates from Him. So no action which we are engaged in need be discarded. All actions are to be surrendered up to Him who is the master of all actions.

'Possess things, but do not be possessed by them'. Whenever you accept presents from any one, take it that the Lord Himself gives them to you and the moment an occasion comes when you have to part with them, give them away with as much delight as you had when you received them.

Understand that you are returning them only to Him who gave them to you. In the same light consider every gain and



Swami Ramdas

Sense of possession a great obstacle to realization

God-realization is not getting away from the world, but looking upon it as the manifestation of God and serving Him in all creatures and beings, in a state of perfect submission to His will

Sri Krishna and Janaka in their lives have shown that even for the work of Lokasangraha, the normal duties of life that fall to our lot need not be abandoned. To attain Moksha for oneself, willful breaking off from external ties is not at all necessary.

God-realization is not getting away from the world, but looking upon it as the manifestation of God and serving Him in all creatures and beings, in a state of perfect submission to His will. What we have to give up is the ego-sense, the idea that we are the doers.

God within us is the doer, the sole master of all our activities. If we dedicate all our actions to Him we can destroy our ego sense and find our supreme union with Him. Surrender does not denote any change in the external mode of life, but a right attitude towards it.

Ramdas still belongs to the world, not in a partial sense, but in totality. His Beloved is not only in particular persons, but is in His full power and glory in all

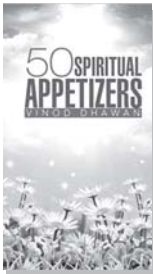
loss. The Lord gives and the Lord takes away. The sense of possession is a great obstacle to the realization of God.

The idea of 'I' and 'mine' must disappear entirely before the aspirant can find absolute freedom and peace in union with God. Verily, everything belongs to the Lord who dwells in the hearts of all creatures and things.

Excerpted from Thus Speaks Ramdas. The 139th birth anniversary of Swami Ramdas will be observed on April 10

50 SPIRITUAL APPETIZERS

Vinod Dhawan



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Reformed Multilateralism

D.C. PATHAK

It is an established principle that if you get the 'macro-picture' right you will be less troubled by 'details' - even when some of them look unsettling at first sight. It is a sign of civilizational confidence of India that it has for its G20 Presidency adopted the motto - 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam', which means 'the whole world is one family'.

Nothing can be more comprehensive and higher as the global mission for a world conference, than this thought embracing the entire humanity. A basic advantage here - from India's point of view - is that any 'small thinking' will show itself to all, producing if anything, a certain degree of embarrassment for the dissenter. It is in line with this approach that India favors reformed Multilateralism as a desirable idea to define international relations.

In one word this is multilateralism that produces a positive environment and no negative fall out at all. It goes to the credit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi that his

lutions in the UN and also did not endorse the supply of war equipment and arms to Ukraine by the US-led West in the proxy mode that had only prolonged the war-like situation.

India maintains that concerns of both Russia and Ukraine have to be addressed for working out a peace pact between the two neighbors. Significantly, India has in this period maintained the best of relations with the US, the UK and Europe and with a strategic finesse checked the drift of the world towards another Cold War between US on one hand and the Russia-China combine, on the other.

The second point about India's foreign policy that paved the way for a reformed multilateralism is that the latter is a natural by-product of India's favored option of going in for bilateral relations which were mutually beneficial to both sides in terms of economic and security interests. This policy effortlessly pursued by the Modi regime had ensured that bilateral relations were not at the cost of any other country.

The Sino-Pak axis on the other hand follows an opposite philosophy as it is geared to executing plans

Multiplicity of major powers makes it more likely that they would make a competitive contribution for improving the world economy and global peace - in their keenness to project a good image for themselves, internationally

foreign policy is marked by a consistent adherence to three seminal ideas that added up to this kind of multilateralism.

First is India's belief in a multi-polar world. This helps to diffuse the danger of the reappearance of the Cold War that was basically the product of a bipolar world order.

Multiplicity of major powers makes it more likely that they would make a competitive contribution for improving the world economy and global peace - in their keenness to project a good image for themselves, internationally.

It is India's independent foreign policy that made Prime Minister Modi the first world leader to reach out to both Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and advise them upfront to stop the armed conflict in favor of negotiated peace.

Through the year long Ukraine-Russia confrontation, India has retained its image as a world counsel for peace because it maintained that 'this is not an era of war', abstained from anti-Russia reso-

'against' India. The unholy alliance between a Marxist dictatorship and a fundamentalist regime is driven by hostility towards this country and is a perpetual threat not only to the security of South Asia but also to that of the entire democratic order.

For upholding the case of Pakistan in Afghanistan, China has in fact entered into a give-and-take arrangement with Pakistan on Taliban Emirate and even gone along with the Pak-sponsored faith-based terrorism that threatened global security.

Western democracies led by the US, must realize the motivation of faith that Islamic extremists and radicals brought to bear on the new global terror, has created a perpetual danger for the entire world. This threat had to be countered jointly by all peace-loving countries through exchange of Intelligence and coordinated action. *IANAS*

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India-Bangladesh-Myanmar-Thailand quadrilateral cooperation and connectivity will be hugely beneficial to the region

JUBEDA CHOWDHURY

Bangladesh is interested in joining the Myanmar-India-Thailand connectivity project. Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen said this after the third Foreign Office Consultation took place between Bangladesh and Thailand in Dhaka earlier this month. India and Thailand have agreed to include Bangladesh in the India-Myanmar-Thailand trilateral highway project. Earlier, a Thai delegation led by Sarun Charoensuwan, permanent secretary of Thailand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, met with a Bangladeshi delegation at the Foreign Ministry to review and explore the bilateral relationship between Thailand and Bangladesh.

Masud Bin Momen said:

cooperation and integration. The effectiveness of regional networks in facilitating the flow of goods, services, people and knowledge can be defined as regional connectedness. Countries can benefit from regional and sub-regional cooperation through connectivity for sustainable economic development, terrorism prevention, climate change mitigation and poverty reduction. Geographically, Bangladesh has two neighboring countries, having two sea-ports. When it comes to leveraging connectivity initiatives in South and Southeast Asia, Bangladesh has huge potential. Trilateral cooperation between Bangladesh and its two neighbors, India and Myanmar, can immediately boost the region's

shares a 1,879 km of border with India's northeastern region. India's northeastern region is home to 475 ethnic groups, which make the region complex from socioeconomic, and security perspectives. For improved trade relations between Bangladesh and the Seven-Sister region, according to India's Ministry of External Affairs, a total of 31 projects are at various stages of implementation. India is actively involved in over a dozen projects in Myanmar. Among them, the most prominent are the 160 km-long Tamu-Kalewa-Kalemyo road, the construction of the Rhi-Tiddim road in Myanmar and the Kaladan Multimodal Transport Project.

Bangladesh, India, and Myanmar, the three neighbors, have shared history. India has the 'Act East' policy to promote connectivity of the northeastern region with its neighboring states. Bangladesh is also promoting its 'Look East' policy to utilize the geographic advantage of Bangladesh in terms of its location as the gateway between western Asia and eastern Asia. Myanmar has natural resources with solid regional connectivity. However, domestic turmoil, sudden regime change, international sanctions, and the Covid outbreak have slowed the economic growth of Myanmar.

Bangladesh's 271 km border with Myanmar can play a strategic role as a potential trade corridor between the two countries. However, at present, the area is militarized due to ongoing internal conflicts in Myanmar. Were this to be resolved, Bangladesh could develop routes via Myanmar to access China to the east, the Association of South-east Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries to the south, and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) to the west. *South Asia Monitor*

For detailed story visit
www.indiapost.com

Myanmar is Bangladesh's next-door neighbor, with which Bangladesh shares a border with India. Myanmar and Bangladesh are almost on the same geopolitical axis, yet trade and other bilateral issues have never been effectively handled

"Bangladesh wants to join the Myanmar-India-Thailand connectivity project. We have talked with India and Thailand. They have no problem." "Besides, connectivity can also happen under BIMSTEC. But not only road connectivity, but we also want air and sea connectivity," he said.

Momen said: "We believe that the current trade of \$1 billion will increase to \$2 billion in the near future if the goals of our businessmen increase."

Thailand's Charoensuwan said that Bangladesh was progressing rapidly in economic development. "A business delegation has come with me to discuss trade and investment. We will work with Bangladesh," he added.

Connectivity is the cornerstone of any regional economic

regional socio-economic and security status.

Will enhance national security and land connectivity

Myanmar is Bangladesh's next-door neighbor, with which Bangladesh shares a border with India. Myanmar and Bangladesh are almost on the same geopolitical axis, yet trade and other bilateral issues have never been effectively handled. Bangladesh and Myanmar's relationship has changed of late. The initial lack of convergence between India and Bangladesh's energy policies aided China's successful implementation of a Myanmar-China gas (and oil) pipeline project.

Beyond trade and other collaborations, national security is another aspect of Bangladesh-India relations. Bangladesh



CONGRESS MUKHT BHARAT

When Modi sounded the bugle of "Congress Mukht Bharat" a few years ago, people in India never thought the grand old party that has existed for more than 100 years could just go away or be reduced to nothing. Let's analyze what is making it happen.

It is not that successive Prime Ministers starting from Nehru down to Manmohan Singh had not done anything. They did their best and to their fullest capacity but for an over populated country with low literacy and poverty it was simply not enough.

Until the 80s India was believed to be a notch ahead of China, which faced similar problems. However, due to lack of leadership and corruption India's development lagged behind. Over the past 25 years China has overtaken India by and is at least 30 years ahead in overall development.

Although Nehru did what was necessary then, he however neglected the development of young leadership to take on the Congress mantle after him. Instead he promoted his own daughter and groomed her to takeover. This was the beginning of the dynastic rule. Most Congress leaders then were connected with India's freedom movement or, were close associates of Nehru's family. After Indira Gandhi took over the grand old party, she made the same mistake as her father. She tried her best to groom her son Sanjay Gandhi to take her place. Unfortunately, the demise of Sanjay's death broke her and she had to force her elder son Rajiv Gandhi to replace Sanjay.

Rajiv Gandhi was a successful pilot with Indian Airlines at the time and was least interested in the political arena. After his mother's demise he automatically filled the gap and became the Prime Minister. He also tried to bring major developmental agendas for India, especially in telecom and IT sectors. However being a novice he could not handle the complex political arena and lost the election.

India went into deep recession and almost became bankrupt with barely 2 billion dollars to pay for essential imports. Once again the Congress bounced back to take control at the center with senior and experienced leader Narasimha Rao as the Prime Minister and Dr Manmohan Singh as Finance Minister. It was Narasimha Rao who brought major changes in development of modern India and began the demise of the License Raj. Although he tried his best to sideline the dynastic rule of Nehru family, he too failed to develop new leadership within the party.

When BJP did take control for few years, Prime Minister Vajpayee had to give up due to some corrupt leaders in his party. Congress was back once again with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh as a reluctant leader and became the proxy Prime Minister.

Since 2014 India witnesses the dynamic leadership of Narendra Modi from Gujarat with no baggage. BJP took over the agenda of development while Congress had lagged without leadership. This has brought the demise of Congress.

Rahul Gandhi became the victim unfortunately, to witness the dwindling of a grand old party. As a leader he has nothing to show what he has done except his best attempt to save the party with some yatras. He is making 'Congress Mukht Bharat' a reality.

Disclaimer: Views expressed are personal to the author



BIG B SAYS 'THE INJURIES HEAL SLOWLY'

Bollywood megastar Amitabh Bachchan has shared another health update on his recovery after he injured himself on the sets of his upcoming film 'Project K'.

Amitabh, who religiously has a meet-and-greet with his fans outside his home on Sundays, took to his blog to share the update.

He wrote: "The injuries heal slowly and today hope the effort is enough to climb the board and wave to the well wishers at the GATE... being away from them that have such sincerity with them is not approved in any manner... the life and the breath of the well-wisher is supreme... they live so I live."

It was earlier in March, when Amitabh suffered an injury during the shoot of 'Project K', in Hyderabad.

The actor shared his health update on his blog. After consulting a doctor and CT scan at AIG Hospital in Hyderabad, he left for Mumbai, where he is taking rest at his home.

The 80-year-old suffered a muscle tear to his right rib cage during an action sequence of the film. He wrote that after the incident the film shoot was postponed. *IANS*

TOP TEN HINDI FILM SONGS

- 1 Kesariya: *Brahmastra*
- 2 Heer Ranjha: *Heer Ranjha*
- 3 Baarish Mein Tum: *Baarish Mein Tum*
- 4 Manike: *Thank God*
- 5 Chupke Chupke: *Mister Mummy*
- 6 Main Tenu Chadh Jaungi: *Main Tenu Chadh Jaungi*
- 7 Tumhe Pyaar Karungga: *Tumhe Pyaar Karungga*
- 8 Thumkeshwari: *Bhediya*
- 9 Kinna Sona: *Phone Bhoot*
- 10 Dil De Diya: *Thank God*



Alia Bhatt sends gifts for NTR Jr's kids



Actress Alia Bhatt sent two bags full of goodies for star NTR Jr's children Abhay and Bhargava from her clothing brand.

NTR Jr took to his Instagram stories, where he shared a picture and thanked her for the presents.

He shared a picture of the two bags, which had "You are my favorite human 'bean'" written on it.

The actor captioned it: "Thank you @aliabhatt and @edamma always put a smile on Abhay and Bhargava's faces... Hope to see a bag with my name soon."

NTR Jr and Alia have worked together in S.S. Rajamouli's film 'RRR'. The song 'Naatu Naatu' pictured on NTR Jr and Ram Charan was feted with the 95th Oscar Award this year. It also won a Golden Globe and a Critics Choice Award. *IANS*



HRITHIK SAYS 'I SEE YOU' TO GIRLFRIEND SABA'S POST

Bollywood actor Hrithik Roshan has dropped a love-filled comment on his actress-singer girlfriend Saba Azad's picture dressed in a saree.

Saba took to Instagram, where she shared a few pictures of her in a shimmering blue and golden Manish Malhotra saree.

She captioned the image: "Mermaid but make it disco!!"

Hrithik could not stop gushing over her pictures. He wrote: "I see you" along with a heart emoticon.

The couple has been dating for several months and is often spotted together at film parties and events.

On the work front, Hrithik will next be seen in 'Fighter'. It also stars Deepika Padukone and Anil Kapoor. Saba is seen in 'Rocket Boys' season 2. *IANS*

KAVERI PRIYAM ON HOW SHE STRIKES A BALANCE

Actress Kaveri Priyam gained a lot of appreciation for playing a negative character in the show 'Yeh Rishtey Hain Pyaar Ke', and is currently seen playing a lead role in the show 'Dil Diyan Gallaan'.

She shared how she has started realizing the importance of relationships more in her life after portraying Amrita in the family drama.

She said: "It's been a while since I started playing the character of Amrita, and I must say that the way the show has depicted life's complexities and showcases how humans drift away due to miscommunications is beyond commendable. I think with 'Dil Diyaan Gallaan', I have become more aware of my parents' feelings and emotions."

"Now, I consciously make my people feel special and give them the love and time they deserve. Staying away from family and living in a different city can never be easy. With time, you learn how to deal with it; however, the void still exists, which your parents can only fill. Thankfully, I have a very loving family and parents who have always stood by my side and every part of my journey, so I'm very grateful," added the 'Ziddi Dil Maane Na' actress.

The actress further shared how she makes a balance between her professional and personal life and takes out time for her family.

"I believe that the best way to balance your personal and professional life. There can't be any room for misunderstandings if you communicate with the people you are close to. With such a hectic schedule, I usually don't get to speak to my parents often, but I try to talk to them during my breaks so that even they are updated about my day," she concluded. *IANS*



KUNAL HAS GROWN UP IN FRONT OF MY EYES: ASHWINI KALESKAR

Film and TV actress Ashwini Kaleskar recalled working with Kunal Kemmu on different projects, and also talked about his childhood days.

She praised Kunal for his acting skills and also for how he easily makes others laugh.

Ashwini, who is working with Kunal in the web show 'Pop Kaun', said: "For me, Kunal is like a baby who has grown up in front of my eyes. I used to be with his father, and at that time this little boy would come and run around and would come and sit on my lap. He was a naughty child, a very bubbly child. Then I worked with him in 'Golmaal' and he met me the same way."

Ashwini acted in movies such as 'Khakee', 'Kisna', 'Apaharan', 'Simmba', 'Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2', 'Cirkus', among others.

She was also part of several TV shows including 'Shanti', 'Farz', 'Jodha Akbar', 'Hitler Didi', 'Itna Karo Na Mujhe Pyar', 'Kavach...Kaali Shaktiyon Se', and many more.

Currently, she is part of the comedy series and working with Kunal again.

Ashwini said that for her it was like "little Kunal had come in front of him".

"He has not changed and like before he is very sweet, very down to earth, very humble, and what an actor. *IANS*



Raashii Khanna desires 'Aashiqui' kind of film with Kartik Aaryan

Actress Raashii Khanna has expressed her desire to work with actor Kartik Aaryan in a love story just like 'Aashiqui'.

Recently during an interview, while talking about Kartik, Raashii said, "I think with him, I would like to do an intense love story, not a comedy fun genre kind of film but like an intense film like Aashiqui."

"That film I think will be very nice because I love romantic films and I had done a film and that was the film that was immensely loved by the audience so they love me in a love story. So if I have to do with Kartik, probably a film like that."

On the work front, Kartik has an exciting line-up of films with Satyaprem Ki Katha, Aashiqui 3, and Kabir Khan's untitled next among others. *IANS*



ILLINOIS CREATIVE RECOVERY (B2B ARTS) HELP DESK IS LIVE

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) will distribute \$50 million in grant money to businesses, nonprofit organizations, and sole proprietors in the creative sector that suffered losses due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Applications will be accepted by DCEO between April 5 and May 10.

As a Community Navigator, Arts Alliance Illinois is providing technical assistance to prospective applicants, including a help desk to answer questions and guide you through the application when it becomes available. That help desk is now live. Access it on their website.

Access the help desk & Attend the webinar this Friday

Arts Alliance Illinois is also hosting webinars about the grant to help guide prospective applicants through the application process.

The first webinar is this **Friday, March 31, from 12-1pm**, and will include a program overview and a Q&A opportunity. Click below to register!

Register for Friday's webinar

Arts Alliance Illinois is serving as a Community Navigator for the Illinois Creative Recovery/B2B Arts grant opportunity to share information about the grant and provide potential applicants with technical assistance.

Arts Alliance Illinois cannot make final determinations regarding eligibility and will not play a role in determining grant awards. For more information about the Illinois Creative Recovery/B2B Arts grants, visit the DCEO



<http://artsalliance.org/creativerecovery/>

**More information coming soon at
www.illinois.gov/B2B**



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