

# THE DIASPORA



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**BI-WEEKLY**

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Federation of Indian Associations NY-NJ-CT-NE. 501(C)3. The Largest Non-Profit Grassroot Umbrella Organization in the Eight-state of NY-NJ-CT-NE

## Indian American Community embraces the 100<sup>th</sup> episode of Mann Ki Baat - India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar addresses a packed house at 2:00AM



Honorable External Affairs Minister of India Dr. S. Jaishankar speaking to the Indian American community at the Community Event for 100th episode of Mann Ki Baat, over 600 people representing various Indian American communities gathered for the event



Honorable Indian Ambassador to the US Taranjit Singh Sandhu, Mayor of Edison Sam Joshi, NY State Representative Jenifer Rajkumar, NY State Senator Kevin Thomas, Honorable Consul General of India, New York Randhir Jaiswal graced the occasion



**F**IA organized a community event for the 100th episode of Mann Ki Baat in collaboration with the Indian Embassy and the Indian Community. The event took place on April 29, 2023, at The Marigold in Somerset, New Jersey.

The event was graced by the presence of Hon. External Affairs Minister of India Shri S. Jaishankar, who got a thunderous applause on his arrival. His speech, in which he spoke about various issues, including his personal association with Mann Ki Baat and the impact it had on the people over the years and other issues, was well received and evoked a strong, positive, and enthusiastic reaction from the audience of over 600, representing the various Indian American communities.

The event was also attended by the Honorable Indian Ambassador to the United States Taranjit Singh Sandhu, the Honorable Consul General of India, New York Randhir Jaiswal, the Honorable DCG Dr. Varun Jeph, New York State Senator Kevin Thomas, New York State Representative Jenifer Rajkumar, Mayor of Edison Sam Joshi, TV Asia Chairman Dr. H.R. Shah, Parikh Worldwide Media Chairman Dr. Sudhir Parikh, FIA Chairman Ankur Vaidya, FIA President Kenny Desai, and the entire executive committee of the FIA.

During the event, the Hon. Minister was presented with resolutions passed

by the States of New York and New Jersey in recognition of Mann Ki Baat.

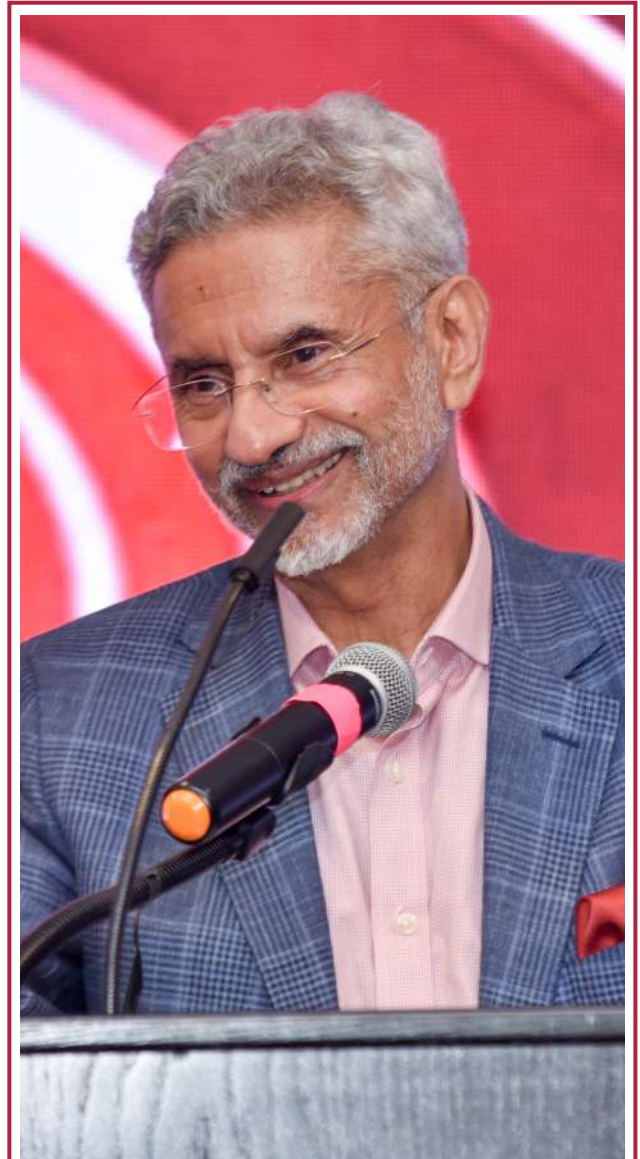
The resolutions acknowledge "Mann Ki Baat's contribution to the Indian diaspora in the US in promoting a better awareness of India and its people. The resolution also recognizes the efforts made by the Indian government to forge close ties with the United States and advance India's interests internationally.

The emcee for the evening, Mamta Narula, played a pivotal role in the highly successful event, and with her professionalism and skills, she helped to set the tone and create a positive atmosphere for everyone in attendance.

The audiences were regaled by a song sung by the child prodigy singer Ishan Tangrila and mesmerized by the fascinating performance by Mallakhamb, a traditional Indian sport and performing art that involves various gymnastic and acrobatic movements performed on a vertical wooden pole or rope by the Mallakhamb Federation.

The entire team of the Consul General of India in New York was there to support the event, and their contribution went a long way in making the event highly successful.

FIA thanks the participating member organizations and their media partners, namely Parikh Media, TV Asia, Radio Zindagi, and Divya Bhaskar.



*Honorable External Affairs Minister of India Dr. S. Jaishankar speaking to the Indian American community, listening in to PM Narendra Modi's 100th Mann Ki Baat*



*Honorable External Affairs Minister of India Dr. S. Jaishankar, was presented with resolutions by NY State Senator Kevin Thomas, NY State Representative Jenifer Rajkumar, Kenny Desai and Edison Township Mayor Sam Joshi that acknowledge "Mann Ki Baat contribution to the Indian diaspora in the US"*



*Honorable External Affairs Minister of India Dr. S. Jaishankar, Honorable Indian Ambassador to the US Taranjit Singh Sandhu, Honorable Consul General of India, New York Mr Randhir Jaswal with the ownership of The Marigold*



# Hon. Minister for External Affairs of India S. Jaishankar Unveils the Theme for FIA's India Day Parade

**D**uring the event hosted for the 100th Episode of Mann ki Baat at Somerset, New Jersey, the External Affairs Minister of India, Shri S. Jaishankar, unveiled the theme, "Mission Life Movement: Lifestyle for the Environment," for FIA's Annual Indian Day Parade this year.

Mission LIFE is expected to be an India-led global mass movement that

will nudge individual and collective action to protect and preserve the environment.

During the launch of the movement, the Indian PM said that Mission Life emboldens the spirit of the P3 model, Pro Planet People. "Mission Life, unites the people of the earth as pro-planet people, uniting them all in their thoughts. It functions on the basic principles of the 'lifestyle of the planet,

for the planet, and by the planet'."

FIA, taking up Indian Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's call, aims to spread awareness about the movement, which focuses on promoting a sustainable lifestyle and protecting the environment.

Several cultural and social groups will come together during the India Day Parade to work together towards a larger good.



Honorable External Affairs Minister of India Dr. S. Jaishankar, unveiled the theme of FIA's NYC Annual Indian Day Parade of 2023



FIA's NYC Indian Day Parade theme of the year 2023 "Mission Life Movement: Lifestyle for the Environment"



FIA NYC committee members with Honorable External Affairs Minister of India Dr. S. Jaishankar, during the Parade Theme unveiling ceremony





*Consulate General of India, New York team members along with Honorable External Affairs Minister of India Dr. S. Jaishankar, Honorable Indian Ambassador to the US Taranjit Singh Sandhu, the Honorable Consul General of India, New York Randhir Jaiswal, at the FIA NYC Parade Theme unveiling ceremony*



*FIA committee members along with Honorable External Affairs Minister of India Dr. S. Jaishankar, Honorable Indian Ambassador to the US Taranjit Singh Sandhu, the Honorable Consul General of India, New York Randhir Jaiswal, at the FIA NYC Parade Theme unveiling ceremony*



















# Mallakhamb Federation USA



- ❖ **Mallakhamb Federation USA** is the governing body for the sport in the USA.
- ❖ Mallakhamb is an ancient Indian which is as an amalgamation of various **Yoga** postures, **Gymnastic** elements, **Circus** skills and **Martial arts**
- ❖ Since our founding in **2015** we have nurtured **athletes and coaches**.
- ❖ We are sending a contingent of 12 of our top notch athletes to the **2nd Mallakhamb World Championships** happening in Bhutan in May 2023 representing **Team USA**
- ❖ This sport contributes greatly to one's physical fitness and mental resilience.
- ❖ When practiced properly, Mallakhamb provides the **entire body** with **maximum exercise in a minimum amount of time**.
- ❖ Some of the benefits of Mallakhamb are:
  - It makes the body supple and builds core strength
  - It assists in maintaining an appropriate hip to waist ratio
  - It greatly supports bone health and helps maintain a healthy spine and posture
  - Exercises the whole body and keeps one fit and boosts energy
  - Helps develop reflexes, concentration, and coordination.
- ❖ Competitive sports can be advantaged by the practice of Mallakhamb as it increases endurance, strength and stamina for athletes and helps improve gymnastic skills.
- ❖ The practice of Mallakhamb incorporates anti-gravity fundamentals, laws of motion, and other vectors like force, balance, bounce, spring, etc. while also incorporating fundamental principles from **High Intensity Training (HIT)** and **High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT)**.
- ❖ Mallakhamb is open to anyone with an interest and we have had **adults and children of different ethnicities** and levels of fitness sign up for Mallakhamb.
- ❖ Mallakhamb Federation USA is bringing **communities together** in the USA by initiatives like **Heritage events** to promote **diverse cultures** and **Family Picnics** with emphasis on physical games and fitness in the events.
- ❖ Other programs such as Police Training, Marines Training, Gymnastics, Yoga, Acro Yoga, Martial Arts, Aerial Arts, Natural Movement, Parkour, Cheer Leading and Circus Schools can also adopt Mallakhamb in their physical training activities.
- ❖ Mallakhamb Federation USA has conducted demonstrations at iconic locations like the **United Nations - New York, Times Square - New York and Governors Island - New York**.





# GANA in Association with Consulate General of India New York Celebrated Gujarat Maharashtra Day



**O**n May 1, 2023, FIA, in association with the Consulate General of India in New York, celebrated Gujarat Maharashtra Day at the Consulate premises.

Present at the occasion were Honorable Consul General of India, New York Randhir Jaiswal Honorable DCG Dr. Varun Jeph, Grammy Award Winner Falu Shah, Naveen Mehta, Sudhir Parikh – Chairman of Parikh Media, H.R. Shah Chairman of TV Asia, FIA Chairman Ankur Vaidya, FIA President Kenny Desai, along with the FIA Executive Committee, volunteers, and other notable members of the community.

Event Chair Srujal Parikh opened the event by addressing the gathering and thanking the co-convenors for the event, Naveen Mehta and Dipak Shah. He also gave a vote of thanks to partner organizations Marathi Vishwa and

Gujarati Association of North America.

In his speech, Hon. CG Randhir Jaiswal congratulated the community present on the day and appealed to the community to promote tourism to India, especially in the states of Gujarat and Maharashtra, where vast possibilities abound. He also mentioned that it has been an endeavor of the Indian government to connect with the diaspora of all the different states of India.

In their speeches, H.R. Shah and Sudhir Parikh spoke briefly about the history of the two states and brought attention to the contributions both states continue to make to the overall growth of India.

Kenny Desai reminded us that this day coincides with International Labor Day and said that it is the fruit of the labors of the FIA's selfless volunteers that the organization continues to grow from strength to strength.

He also went on to introduce the Executive Committee of FIA, namely Executive Vice President Dr. Avinash Gupta, Vice President Saurin Parikh, and Vice President Smita Miki Patel, General Secretary Nishi Dhami, Jt. Secretary Mahesh Dubal, Treasurer Priti Patel, and Jt. Treasurer Haresh Shah.

Ankur Vaidya thanked the Indian Consulate for their guidance and counselling, which go a long way in bridging the gap between the homeland and the motherland.

Renowned singer Himali Vyas rendered a beautiful folk song much to the delight of the audience, and the Shivay Dance Group of Rohan Virdi regaled them with a folk-dance performance of Lavni and Raas Garba.

The EMCEE for the event Gayatri Joshi facilitated the smooth movement of the event and kept the audience engrossed at all times.

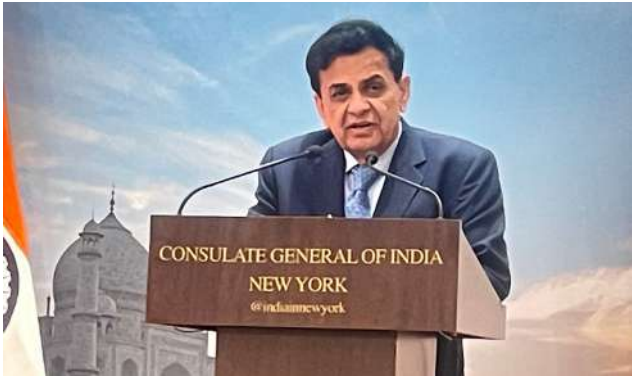


Honorable Consul General of India, New York Randhir Jaiswal, DCG Dr. Varun Jeph, Grammy Award Winner Falu Shah, Naveen Mehta, Dr. Sudhir Parikh, H. R. Shah, Ankur Vaidya and Kenny Desai present at the Gujarat Maharashtra Day event





*Honorable Consul General of India, New York Randhir Jaiswal, Srujal Parikh, H. R. Shah, speaks to the large gathering of community members at the Gujarat Maharashtra Day celebrations*



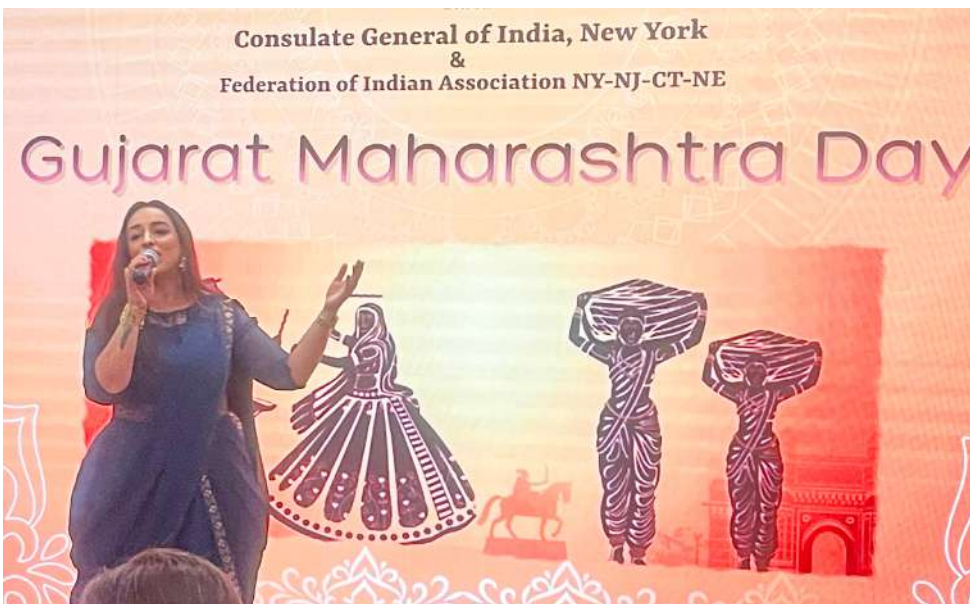
*Dr. Sudhir Parikh, Kenny Desai, Naveen Mehta speaking at the Gujarat-Maharashtra Day held at the Indian Consulate in New York*



*Dipak Shah speaking at the Gujarat-Maharashtra Day held at the Indian Consulate in New York*



*FIA Chairman Ankur Vaidya gestures to the audience at the Gujarat-Maharashtra Day event*



*Himali Vyas rendered a beautiful folk song at the celebration*



*Youths performed traditional dances at the Gujarat-Maharashtra Day event*



*EMCEE for the event Gayatri Joshi facilitated the smooth movement of the event*



*Honorable Consul General of India, New York Randhir Jaiswal received a memento at the event*



*Grammy Award Winner Falu Shah felicitated at the Gujarat-Maharashtra Day event*





*Himali Vyas, Dipak Shah, Naveen Mehta, Hemal Dhavalikar were felicitated at the Gujarat Maharashtra Day celebration (left to right)*



*Esteemed dignitaries and FIA committee members present at the Gujarat Maharashtra Day celebration*



*FIA women committee members present at the Gujarat Maharashtra Day celebration*



# FIA Holds its First Parade Council Meeting for India Day Parade 2023

**T**he Federation of Indian Associations held its first parade council meeting on April 19, 2023, at Akbar Restaurant in Edison, New Jersey.

Present at the event were Dr. Sudhir Parikh, FIA President Kenny Desai, FIA Chairman Ankur Vaidya, and the executive committee, comprising of Dr. Avinash Gupta, Saurin Parikh, Smita Miki Patel, Haresh Shah, Mahesh Dubal and Priti Patel. Also present were Board of Trustee members Alok

Kumar and Srujal Parikh.

A brief video, highlighting FIA's accomplishments over the previous 50 years opened the meeting, which was attended by approximately 100 FIA office bearers and volunteers.

Kenny Desai, who led the proceeding, spoke briefly about the past events of FIA held this year, including the very successful multi-city Artificial Limb Fitment Camps that were organized in collaboration with *Jaipur Foot* in India, *Dance Pe Chance*, which was the biggest so far, and International Women's Day,

which saw five trailblazing women being felicitated and honored by FIA.

He further went on to elaborate on the forthcoming events, including the *Gujarat-Maharashtra Day* to be held on May 1, 2023, at the Indian Consulate, the *International Yoga Day*, and the *India Day Parade* at Madison, New York on August 20, 2023. He also announced the subcommittees that will handle the various aspects of the parade.



PC- Vijay Shah, Freelance US Media

Guests gathered at the 1st IDP Council Meeting



FIA Chairman Ankur Vaidya addressing and thanking guests for joining the 1st IDP council meeting



FIA President Kenny Desai addressing and giving details of past and upcoming events of 2023





Ankur Vaidya said that it is indeed an honor to work with the executive committee and that he learns from his seniors in the organization. As India's economy expands from 3 trillion to 5 trillion dollars, so does the Indian Diaspora in the United States, but what

is lacking is a proper representation of the Diaspora, and to fill the need is what motivates him and FIA, he further went on to add.

One of the biggest cultural events in New York City, the *India Day Parade*, attracts thousands of spectators and

showcases the cultural diversity of India. Over the years, the parade council meeting has served as a platform for members to collaborate and make informed decisions that can contribute to the success of the *India Day Parade*.



**Mahesh Dubal, Jt. Secretary of the FIA**  
Executive team opened the 1st IDP  
Planning Meeting



**FIA's Veteran leader and Board member  
Dipak Patel** addressed the parade council



**FIA Senior Advisor and Board Member**  
extended his commitment and  
support in making the 41st India Day  
Parade a grand success



**Organization of BAJANA** extended full  
support during 2023 upcoming events



**Shri Shidhdivinayak Temple** promises to extend the support for upcoming events



PC- Vijay Shah, Freelance US Media

# FIA Team Participates in the Embassy held Meet and Greet in DC

**N**irmala Sitharaman, Indian Minister of Finance, along with Ambassador of India to the United States Taranjit Singh Sandhu, had a meet-and-greet with the Indian Diaspora in

the US. FIA team members attended the meet and greet. They spoke about the growing Indo-US cooperation and the galloping Indian economy in Washington, DC.





# US Commerce Secretary Recounts her Meeting with PM Modi

**A**ccording to US Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo, who recently met with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India and America will lead the artificial intelligence revolution. Raimondo, who visited India in March, said she saw the finest of India in terms of culture, tradition, and celebrations.

Addressing a gathering of Indian Americans at the India House, the commerce secretary fondly remembered her *Holi* celebrations this year in India.

"I was recently in India. I went a day earlier so that I could have the opportunity to participate in *Holi*.

And the defence minister was so gracious to host me with his family," Raimondo said.

"I had an incredible opportunity to spend an hour and a half with Prime Minister Modi. He is the most popular world leader for a reason. He is unbelievable, visionary, and his level of commitment to the people of India is just indescribable," she said.

Earlier this year, India and the United States established collaborations in space, defense, semiconductors, and next-generation technology.



# Democratic National Convention Comes to Chicago

**T**he 2024 Democratic National Convention will take place in Chicago, Illinois, according to the US Democratic National Committee (DNC).

The event will take place in the United Center from August 19 to 22

of the next year, during which the Democratic Party's delegates will formally nominate their presidential candidate.

The 2024 Republican National Convention will take place in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, from July 15 to

July 18.

Joe Biden, the President, stated on April 10 that he intends to run for reelection in 2024 but that his team is not yet ready to make the announcement.

# Joe Biden Administration: Expanding Healthcare for DACA Recipients

Immigrants who were brought to the United States as youngsters will be able to qualify for federal health insurance programs. President Joe Biden's administration has announced, in a move that was welcomed as "long overdue".

In a statement, the Biden administration said people enrolled in the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) programme would be able to apply for Medicaid, a health insurance programme for low-income earners in the US.

DACA recipients, also referred to as "Dreamers," would be able to access other services under the Affordable Care Act, as well.

"They're American in every way except for on paper," Biden said in a video shared on *Twitter*. "We need to give Dreamers the opportunities and support they deserve."

"While Congress has failed to act,

the Biden-Harris Administration has taken significant measures to protect Dreamers," the White House said in a fact sheet, including fighting legal challenges that "attempt to strip them of the only home they have ever known".

Approximately 580,000 people are presently registered in DACA, which was established in 2012 by former President Barack Obama to allow individuals to live and work in the United States without fear of deportation.

The Department of Health and Human Services will seek to change that regulation by the end of the month, *The Associated Press* news agency reported.

"We commend the Biden administration for moving to rectify this years-long injustice so that more DACA recipients can access the care they need," said Kica Matos, Executive

Vice President of programmes and strategy at the National Immigration Law Center.

"This move comes as many DACA recipients experience harmful mental and physical health effects from living through continuous, politically motivated attacks on the program," Matos said in a statement.

Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal wrote on *Twitter* that the move marked "a long overdue step toward justice". "Health care is a human right, and DACA recipients deserve access to that care just like everyone else," she said.

"Millions of Dreamers have called our country home since they were too young to remember anywhere else. They deserve EVERY opportunity to succeed and live a healthy life here in America," US Senator Tina Smith also tweeted.



# Indian Ambassador to the USA Taranjit Singh Sandhu Addresses New Hampshire House

**T**aranjit Singh Sandhu addressed the New Hampshire House of Representatives on April 6. He praised the House as a "temple of democracy" and said in his visit, he's been very impressed by the vibrant and growing

Indian-American community in New Hampshire.

"We feel very proud of them, that as professionals, as public servants, and as experts in different emerging technologies, they are an important part of New Hampshire," Sandhu said.

The ambassador told the House that he believes the US-India relationship would be one of the most important on the national stage through the rest of this century.



# US-India Relations to Strengthen: Biden Announces Trip to India in 2023

**U**S President Joe Biden is looking forward to visiting India in September, according to his administration's point person for South and Central Asia, noting that 2023 will be a "big year" for the India-US relationship.

"This is gonna be a big year. Of course, India is hosting the G20. This year, the United States is hosting APEC. Japan is hosting the G7. We have lots of our QUAD members who are taking on leadership roles. And it provides opportunities for all of us to bring our countries closer together," Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia, Donald Lu, told news agency PTI in an interview.

"I know our president is looking forward to travelling to India in September. That will be his first trip to India as part of the G-20 Leaders Summit. We are really excited about what is to come in the next few months," he said.

"We're only a little over three months into this new year. And we have had a number of really exciting things that happened," he said.

"In March Dr. Jaishankar hosted his QUAD counterparts for a ministerial meeting and extraordinary public events at the Raisina Dialogue with all four foreign ministers together. It was the first such public discussion with QUAD foreign ministers and really drove home how our four countries are coming together to support the people of the Indo-Pacific," he said.

"And then lastly, this month, the arrival of our new Ambassador Eric Garcetti. He has already received a



really warm welcome from our Indian and American staff at the US Embassy. Once he presents his credentials, he is looking forward to meeting with the rest of India and I think India will find that he is young, he is enthusiastic, and he's eager to bring our relations to new heights," Lu said.

"We are really thankful for the tremendous work India has done by hosting the G20 Foreign Ministerial meeting last month, and we look forward to actively participating in the many future G20 meetings coming up this year, including the New Delhi Leaders Summit in September," he said.

"We have seen how the G20 brings together countries for collective action. This meeting in March was no exception. As India has already shown during the first few meetings of its presidency, the G20 is a powerful forum where the world's leading economies can come together to respond to global challenges: food security, health, energy insecurity, climate change and unsustainable debt," he said.



# Udai Tambar on Racial Justice Advisory Board in US

**U**dai Tambar, the CEO and President of New York Junior Tennis and Learning (NYJTL), has been selected to the advisory board on the implementation of the Racial Justice Charter Amendments, which Mayor Eric Adams and Mayor's Office of Equity Commissioner Sideya Sherman launched last week.

"I am excited to partner with the new Advisory Board to represent NYC's most resilient communities," Tambar was quoted as saying in the statement.

"A majority of the families we serve at NYJTL are BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour) New Yorkers, and it is crucial that this new racial equity infrastructure ensures that they live in a society where they can flourish and achieve their fullest potential," he added.

"These added a statement of values to the city's charter; required the city to establish a racial equity office and commission, as well as racial equity-focused plans; and called for the city to measure the true cost of living for city

residents," the statement said.



PC- LinkedIn

# NITI Aayog Vice Chair Discusses India's Economy at Indian Consulate

**A** Round Table discussion about India's economy was held on April 20, 2023, in the Indian Consulate in New York. The discussion was led by India's Vice Chairman of Niti Aayog Suman Bery, who is on a visit to the United States. Suman is the vice chairman of Niti Aayog in India.

High-profile business guests like Deepak Raj, managing director of private investment firm Raj Associates, and Dr. Sudhir Parikh, chairman of Parikh Worldwide Media and recipient of the Padma Shri award, attended the round table, which had the theme "Indian Growth Story: Speed, Scale, and Opportunities."

"It was a pleasure participating in the roundtable discussion on the Indian Growth Story: Speed, Scale and Opportunities at the Consulate General of India, New York (@IndiainNewYork) last evening," Bery, an economist who took over at NITI last year in May, tweeted after the meeting.

About 50 business leaders from a range of industries, including IT, technology, finance, healthcare, high-level executives, and policymakers, attended the event.

Among the subjects discussed were the markers of India's economic growth making it one of the world's fastest-growing economies; elements of India's energy transition, New Delhi's Free Trade Agreements which give a strong push to Indian trade, India's G20 leadership, women's empowerment, etc.

With the aid of a visual table, Bery highlighted that the IMF projects

India's growth to be 5.9 percent in 2023 and 6.3 percent in 2024, significantly higher than the much lower world output projections of 2.8 percent and 3.0 percent.

With relevant visual representations, Bery noted that India has thus far inked 13 free trade agreements and 6 preferential agreements with its trading partners to ensure increased market access for domestic goods and promote exports. The newest free trade agreements (FTAs) were concluded with Australia, the UAE, and Mauritius.

India is also actively engaged in FTA negotiations with countries like the United Kingdom, European Union, and Canada.

India's energy transition includes elements of - increasing electrification; higher penetration of cleaner fuels in energy mix; accelerated adoption of energy-efficient technologies; rising digitalization, among other efficiencies, Bery noted.





# THE FORTNIGHT THAT WAS

## Minister Nirmala Sitharaman addresses Indian Americans in Washington

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has said India and the US are together building a foundation for a strong, peaceful and harmonious global community. Addressing a gathering of Indian-Americans at the India House, Washington DC, the Minister wished that India-US relationship grows from strength to strength.

Addressing the Reception at India House, hosted by Indian Ambassador to US Taranjit Singh Sandhu, the US Secretary said, Modi is an unbelievable visionary leader.

On this occasion, US Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo recalled her recent meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, calling him the most popular leader of the world.

Addressing the gathering, host Indian Ambassador Sandhu said that the India-US partnership will not only benefit the two countries but its rewards will be reaped around the globe. He said, India, the current G20 president, is ready to share its strengths and successes with the world.



PC- @SandhuTaranjitS

## India's Ambassador to US Honored with 'Sikh Hero Award'

The "Sikh Hero Award" was given to Ambassador Taranjit Singh Sandhu by Sikhs of America, an independent organization.

After accepting the honor, he delivered a speech in which he strongly condemned the separatists and addressed supporters of Khalistan.

"The Khalsa flag, which flies at the Takht (Golden Temple) and Nishan Sahibs, is a flag of unity, peace and universal love, use this symbol but do not insult it," said Sandhu in an apparent reference to the instances of violence by a small group of separatists in the US, Canada, UK and Australia holding the Khalistani flag."

"Khalsa, which was created on the Baisakhi day, by Guru Gobind Singh is a uniting and not a dividing force," he added.

"We must keep these cardinal virtues in mind and not what a couple of mischievous characters spin using virtual media," he said in an apparent reference to the so-called Khalistan leaders' messages on social media.

Sandhu encouraged the Sikh diaspora to connect with their roots and said "Punjab and the youth in Punjab need to be connected with the economic, financial, tech and digital revolution happening in India."

"The government, people and in particular the youth must take advantage of the expanding partnership with the US in various fields that Prime Minister Modi and President Biden are trying to implement," he said.



PC- opindia



## Tim Cook Unveils Apple's First Store in India

Apple CEO Tim Cook threw open the gates to the 28,000 sq ft store on April 19 to excited fans waiting for hours. Apple's second retail store in India opened in the national capital Delhi on April 20.

Soon after the opening of the first store, Cook tweeted that the energy in Mumbai is "incredible". "The energy, creativity, and passion in Mumbai is incredible! We are so excited to open Apple BKC - our first store in India," he said.

The company bills the store as one of its "most energy-efficient" in the world, saying solar panels allow it to run solely on renewable power. In a statement, Cook pointed to Apple's ongoing expansion in the country, saying its brick-and-mortar launch coincided with its 25th year of operating there.

"India has such a beautiful culture and an incredible energy," he said. "We're excited to build on our long-standing history — supporting our customers, investing in local communities, and working together to build a better future."

Cook also met with Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his visit to India to discuss the company's plans for investment and expansion in the country. Cook also spoke with Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw and Minister of State for Electronics and IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar. During these discussions, Steve discussed the idea of expanding Apple's component supplier base in India, as well as plans for a Bengaluru manufacturing site and app design and development accelerator.



## Missing Indian Students Found in US Lake

Bodies of two Indian students have been recovered after they went missing at a lake in the US state of Indiana, according to media reports. Siddhant Shah, 19, and Aryan Vaidya, 20, went swimming at Monroe Lake, roughly 64 miles southwest of downtown Indianapolis, with a group of friends on April 15 but didn't resurface, the *USA Today* reported.

Shah and Vaidya were boating on a pontoon on April 15 when their group anchored to swim. Both men did not resurface and friends attempted to help them but were unsuccessful, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources was quoted as saying by the newspaper.

One of the men was struggling in the water when others jumped in to help, said Lt. Angela Goldman, a Department of Natural Resources representative.

"With 15-to-20-mph sustained winds, we're struggling with that," Goldman said.

"A lot of the technology we use that makes things more precise needs better conditions. When dealing with whitecaps and wind, our sonar is not as effective." Sycamore Schools confirmed that Vaidya is a 2021 graduate of Sycamore High School.

## Indian-American Engineer Found Dead in Maryland Lake

The body of a 30-year-old Indian-American software engineer, who went missing on April 9, was recovered from a lake in the US state of Maryland, police said. Ankit Bagai of German town was found in Lake Churchill by officers who were called to the area after a body was reportedly seen in the water, a Montgomery police statement said.

Ankit Bagai was last spotted on April 9 at about 11:30 am when he left a treatment centre near Milestone Plaza after which his family led a search party and believed he may have been in Virginia or Washington DC, a *News4* report said. Ankit Bagai's family started their search at a local police station, going to several locations, including a shopping centre near where he was last seen and posted his image every few steps, hoping to generate a lead, the report said.

"On the day Bagai went missing, police responded to a report of a man in Lake Churchill. It was searched using sonar, using drag hooks, but they did not find anything. They were out there for three to four hours," Gobind Singh, Ankit Bagai's brother-in-law was quoted as saying.





## Indian-Origin Engineers: Discrimination Allegations Dropped

The California Civil Rights Department CRD voluntarily withdrew its caste discrimination action against two Cisco Systems engineers, Sundar Iyer and Ramana Kompella, on April 10, 2023.

A mediation conference between Cisco and the CRD is still set for May 2.

"Two Indian-Americans endured a nearly three-year nightmare of unending investigations, a brutal online witch-hunt, and a presumption of guilt in the media after the CRD sullied their reputation alleging that they engaged in discrimination based on caste," said Suhag Shukla, Executive Director of Hindu American Foundation (HAF).

"We are thrilled that Iyer and Kompella have been vindicated along with our position that the state has no right to attribute wrongdoing to Hindu and Indian Americans simply because of their religion or ethnicity," Shukla said.

According to court filings, Iyer, the CEO of the division, was accused of harassment based on caste despite evidence that he actively recruited "John Doe," who self-identifies as Dalit and on whose behalf CRD filed suit, and offered Doe a generous starting package with stock grants valued in the millions.

In a statement, HAF said these same court records showed that Iyer also hired at least one other self-identified Dalit who held one of the only three leadership positions in the division. This individual was also offered the other two leadership positions, including the one John Doe claimed discrimination over, prior to Doe filing his discrimination complaint, HAF said.

"This trial presents a cautionary tale of the legal morass that awaits Indians, Hindus and all South Asians, if the state of California adopts a policy that applies to only South Asians and institutionalized false and negative claims that stigmatize our community," said Samir Kalra, HAF's California based managing director.

"If you want to know why we're opposed to ethnically profiling South Asians with the creation of caste as a stand-alone category, this case launched by the CRD is a brutal illustration of a fate that can befall any South Asian working in the state," he said.

## Student Killed in US: Suspect's Photo Revealed

According to police in the US state of Ohio, a 24-year-old man from Andhra Pradesh, who was studying his Master's degree in the US, died of gunshot wounds in a reported shooting at a fuel station where the victim was working.

The student was identified as Saiesh Veera and the incident happened in the Columbus division of the state.

"On April 20, 2023, at 12:50 am, Columbus Police officers were dispatched to the 1000 block of W. Broad St. on a reported shooting. Upon arrival, the officers located an adult male victim, identified as Saiesh Veera, M/O/24, suffering from a gunshot wound," the police said in a notification.

Columbus Fire Service personnel arrived and transported the victim to a local hospital. Despite life-saving measures, the victim was pronounced dead at 1:27 am, they said.

According to Rohit Yalamanchili, who is overseeing an online fundraiser programme to send Veera's body back to India, the young man was doing his Master's course and he got picked under the H-1B visa with his graduation just 10 days away.

He was going to quit his work as a clerk at the fuel station in a couple of weeks, Yalamanchili added.

PC- opindia

**RECOGNIZE THIS SUSPECT?**

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614-645-4730 or JJude@columbuspolice.org

Central Ohio Crime Stoppers: 614-645-TIPS



## Community News

### NYC's Indian Consulate Hosts Festive Eid Celebrations

The Indian Consulate General in New York and Indian American Muslims in the United States celebrated Eid al-Fitr with remarkable zeal and magnitude. Elected authorities and other community members attended the event and exchanged greetings with members of the Muslim community. The program began with a Quran recital by Soha Naz, a 13-year-old student who also gave a presentation about the Ramadan month and festival.

The event was organized by Indian American Muslims under the leadership of Ilayas Quraishi, Ahmed Shakir, Ghulam Mohiuddin, Khaja Khateeb, Kazi Munir, Imran Pasha, Mudassir, Aslam, Syed Hussain, Minhaj Khan, and many others who highlighted the celebration of Eid as a shining example of the diverse cultures that coexist in India and America.

In his speech, the Consul General of India in New York spoke of the rich cultural heritage of India and the flavour of India, where festivals are celebrated with great zeal. He thanked the organizers and wished all the Muslims a joyous Eid.

Robert Jackson, a New York State Senator, not only attended the event but also addressed the audience and extended Eid greetings to the community. Another New York State Senator, John C. Liu, also greeted the audience at the event, emphasizing the importance of unity and inclusivity.

Dilip Chauhan, Deputy Commissioner for Trade, Investment, and Innovation in NYC Mayor Eric Adams' Office for International Affairs, also attended the event and expressed Eid congratulations to the community. It was inspiring to see such a diverse group of individuals coming together to celebrate a festival that is significant to Muslims worldwide.

The highlight of the event was when Senate Majority Leader and New York Senator, Chuck Schumer, addressed the audience through a video message. He extended his heartfelt greetings to the Muslim community and emphasized the importance of inclusivity and acceptance in America. New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy also greeted the community with a personal message and sent his Eid Mubarak wishes.

*Continued on next page...*



**Consul General of India New York  
Randhir Jaiswal addressing the audience  
at Eid Celebrations**



**Chuck Schumer, Majority Leader of  
the United States Senate and New York  
Senator address the event  
via his video message**



**A. K. Vijaykrishnan Consul (Community  
Affairs) Consulate General of India,  
New York getting honored at the event**



**Consulate Staff Shahana Bagban  
(Community Affairs)  
recognized at the event**



**Imran Pasha Community leader  
recognized at the event**



**John Liu New York State Senator honored  
at the event**



## Community News

Several people were honored at the event, including Hon. Randhir Jaiswal, Consul General of India in New York; Dr. Ashraf M. Dahod, a community supporter and successful entrepreneur; A. K. Vijayakrishnan, Consul (Community Affairs); Shahana Bagban (Community Affairs); Robert Jackson, New York State Senator; John C. Liu, State Senator New York; Imran Pasha, a community leader; and other members of the community who have significantly contributed to promoting diversity and inclusivity.

The celebration of Eid at the Consulate General of India was not just a religious event but also a great reminder of the cultural diversity that America and India cherish. It was wonderful to see elected officials and members of the community come together to celebrate the festival with great enthusiasm and positivity.

The event concluded with a short poetry performance by Mohammed Darbar and a ghazal mehfil by singer Suman Laskar and Gokul on tabla, who enthralled the audience.



*Randhir Jaiswal Consul General of India getting a plaque of appreciation*



*Robert Jackson New York State Senator getting plaque of appreciation*

## SUBSCRIBERS' SECTION

### The Light We Carry

Netflix

**T**his 90-minute conversation is part of the book tour of Michelle Obama's second book, *The Light We Carry*. According to Michelle Obama, "The book came from one of those low emotional places when it's hard to find your light."

The winning combination of Oprah Winfrey and Michelle Obama makes this show engaging and delightful. I haven't read her earlier bestselling memoir yet, but I've always admired the couple, who have tried to steer themselves from any slander with their charming personas and strong family ties. Do expect the strong presence of Barack

Obama in their conversations and in their lovely family photographs. That is expected from a former First Lady.

The show is interspersed with personal anecdotes, truisms, humor, and advice that is relevant and not lofty. It is more appealing to the fairer sex, especially the wise, whacky, wonderful, and young women in their 50s. Michelle Obama talks about the big M, marriage, raising children, her support system of staunch friends, and her complete disinterest in pursuing politics. Both iconic women make veiled digs at an unnamed President. No prizes for guessing the gentleman in question!

Watch it to get an idea of the tools required in your 'toolbox.' It's real. It is light and insightful. The strong bond between the powerful ladies makes the conversation easy and free-flowing.



*Credit- Sonia Date*





## NEWSMAKERS

# Raji Brar Joins CSU Board of Trustees

**R**aji Brar, a businesswoman from Kern County, has been chosen by Governor Gavin Newsom to the board of trustees of the California State University, providing the Central Valley a voice in the decision-making process for the country's largest system of public higher education.

"The Valley has to be part of the conversation. We can't get 10 or 15 years down the road and realize we should have focused more on the Central Valley. It's important that the other trustees hear the stories of Kern County students, and what we face. I'm grateful the governor understands that we need to be included," Brar told the news outlet of Cal State University, Bakersfield.



PC- theindianeye

"I graduated from CSU Bakersfield and got a job, my husband graduated from CSU Bakersfield and got a job, and after a year, we bought a home. I don't know if that's possible anymore and we must ensure that's happening for our kids when they get out of college. Ultimately, the goal is to enhance the quality of education and accessibility to everybody regardless of where they come from or what they look like," Brar told the *CSUB* news portal.

Owner and Chief Operations Officer of Countryside Corporation since 2003, Brar also holds many leadership positions in Kern County and is co-founder of the Bakersfield Sikh Women's Association.

# Jyoti Thottam Wins the Christopher Award

**J**yoti Thottam received the Christopher Award for her book "Sisters of Mokama: The Pioneering Women Who Brought Hope and Healing to India." The book is about the pioneering

Nazareth Sisters of Charity who founded a Nazareth Hospital in Mokama during the turbulent period following WWII and India's partition.

Thottam, a senior New York Times Opinion editor, wrote of Americans

and Indians, including her mother, who cared for everyone who came to their hospital in Mokama, a town approximately 100 kilometers southeast of Patna, Bihar's capital, during the tumultuous years following WWII and India's partition.

The book tells about the brave and radical women who ignored societal constraints. The hospital "was run almost entirely by women, who insisted on giving the highest possible standard of care to everyone who walked through its doors, regardless of caste or religion," according to the book's website.

According to the Matters India report, Tony Rossi, The Christophers' Director of Communications, said, "The stories we're honoring acknowledge that the struggles we endure in life coexist with beauty and hope when we work together, despite our differences, to add love and healing to our world."

The award committee says the book exemplifies the Christopher motto: "It's better to light one candle than to curse the darkness."



PC- theindianeye



# A Visionary Leader Takes the Helm at the World Bank

**A**jay Banga, the former CEO of Mastercard, was chosen by the World Bank's board of governors to lead the organization for a five-year term. Banga is an Indian-born finance and development expert who would restructure the bank to better address climate change and other global challenges.

Banga, 63, was nominated for the position in late February by US President Joe Biden and was the sole candidate to replace departing World Bank director David Malpass, an economist and former US Treasury official who served in the Trump administration. On June 2, he begins his new work.

The election came after World Bank board members interviewed Banga for four hours on May 1. Malpass's last day at the bank will be June 1. The decision came in a vote by 24 of the board's members, with Russia abstaining, instead of the usual consensus-based process, a source familiar with the process said.

Biden congratulated Banga on his "resounding approval" to run the World Bank, which he described as "one of humanity's most critical institutions to reduce poverty and expand prosperity around the globe."

"Ajay Banga will be a transformative leader, bringing expertise, experience, and innovation to the position of World Bank President," Biden said. "He will help steer the institution as it evolves and expands to address global challenges that directly affect its core mission of poverty reduction — including climate change."

Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said Banga brought the "right leadership and management skills" to the job, and would play a critical role in pushing forward with additional reforms,

including by forging partnerships between the public and private sectors and non-profit groups.

"Ajay understands that the challenges we face — from combating climate change, pandemics, and fragility to eliminating extreme poverty and promoting shared prosperity — are deeply intertwined. He has effectively built a broad global coalition around his vision for the Bank over the course of his candidacy," Yellen said in a statement.



PC- moneycontrol

# Radha Iyengar Plumb Shines as Deputy Under Secretary of Defence

**T**he US Senate confirmed Radha Iyengar Plumb, a national security expert, as the Deputy Under Secretary of Defence for Acquisition

and Sustainment, making her the latest Indian-American to be chosen to a significant position by the Biden administration.

"By a vote of 68-30, the Senate confirmed Radha Iyengar Plumb to be the Deputy Under Secretary of Defence," US Senate Periodical Press Gallery tweeted.

Prior to being named Chief of Staff, she was the Director of Research and Insights for Trust and Safety at *Google* and the Global Head of Policy Analysis at *Facebook*.

Plumb previously was a Senior Economist at the RAND Corporation

where she focused on improving the measurement and evaluation of readiness and security efforts across the Department of Defence.

She previously held high positions on national security matters in the Departments of Defense, Energy, and the White House National Security Council.

She began her career as an Assistant Professor at the London School of Economics and completed her postdoctoral studies at Harvard.

Plumb received her Ph.D. and M.S. in Economics from Princeton University, and she holds a B.S. from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, according to her profile released by the White House in June last year.



PC- wiki



# Religious Events

## Ved Mandir



1 Ved Mandir Dr, Milltown, NJ 08850 Ph: (732) 821-0404  
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AARTI TIMES  
Morning Aarti - 7:00 AM, Evening Aarti - 7:00 PM  
Everyday Online Session by Mandir Priests  
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## Sri Venkateswara Temple (Balaji Mandir)



1 Balaji Temple Drive, Bridgewater, NJ-08807, Ph: (908) 725-4477  
Mon - Fri: 8:30 AM - 12:30 PM & 4:30 PM - 8:30 PM  
Saturday, Sunday & National Holidays: 8:30 AM - 8:30 PM  
Every Sunday : Vishnu Sahasranama : 8:30 AM - 9:15 PM  
[www.venkateswaratemple.org](http://www.venkateswaratemple.org)

## The Hindu Temple Society of North America Sri Maha Vallabha Ganapati Devasthanam

45-57 Bowne Street, Flushing, NY 11355, Ph: (718) 460-8484  
Weekdays: 8:00 AM to 8:30 PM; Weekends: 7:30 AM to 8:30 PM







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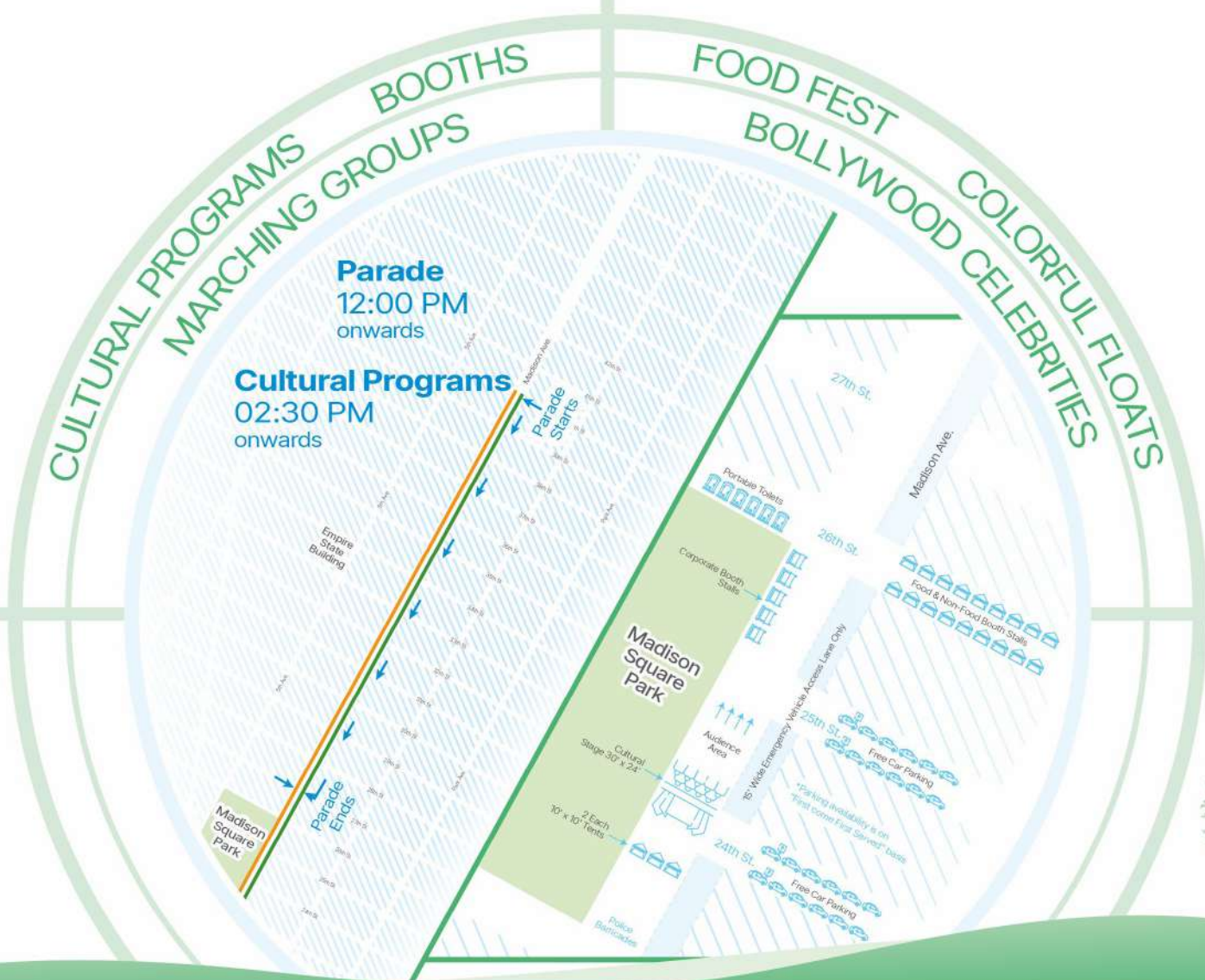
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# Gumraah

(2023/ Suspense Thriller/ Cinemas)

## Absolutely Engrossing Suspense Thriller even if not perfect!

**Director** Vardhan Ketkar

**Cast** Aditya Roy Kapur, Mrunal Thakur, Ronit Roy



*Gumraah* is a thriller that centers around a murder, two suspects, and a mind-bending investigation to nail the culprit.

When the suspects are being played by an actor you so admire, that definitely adds to your experience. And when the investigator is played by an actor you love, it is an added bonus, even though the character has a negative tone.

The story hits the ground running, wastes no time, and there is a lot that happens right in the first 30 minutes. The pace impressed me, and the proceedings kept me totally engrossed. My mind had started my own investigative guesses.

When the film takes an arc towards the back stories, I felt a slight lag, but that could have been because I wanted to get back to the present day, which seemed more exciting. I understand that they needed to create a build-up for the characters, but there was something that could have been better.

Anyways, the story comes back

to the investigation soon, and I was happy and smitten with the twister.

The only reason the film chips away its brownie points is what I might call joining the dots. That is a scenario that I have observed earlier with average suspense thrillers too. They are good at build-up and create mind-bending situations and tussles, which obviously the audience loves getting embroiled in. But it's easier to create difficult situations in stories, more difficult to create satisfactory explanations for what transpired.

The film, even though cannot be categorised as great, but it ticks quite a few boxes for me and possibly for many of you. I quite enjoyed watching it, despite some of its flaws. Of course, some of the points mentioned above may have been factors affecting my positive opinion.

Speaking of performances, Aditya Roy Kapur holds out very well in a double role. I wouldn't say he has been able to chisel out vastly different personas but as always, he wears his characters well, whether

as a charming lover boy or an intense one. He practically carries the film on his shoulders. I wish to see more of him in good roles that elevate the actor in him.

I was very happy to see Ronit Roy. The man is good at whatever he does, though the film has not been able to utilize his potential.

I was quite disappointed with Mrunal Thakur's performance, which I found very flat-toned throughout. In an effort to project a diligent investigator, she keeps a stern face on most of the times which seemed out of place at times.

The overall package that the film offers is not a bad deal. It has emotions, a bit of romance, a lot of suspense, drama and thrills, and you have a hottie playing the lead in a double role. I think it is definitely a good one time watch for you if any of the above factors appeal to you.





# Louis Leterrier Takes the Helm of F&F11

**L**ouis Leterrier, the filmmaker of *Now You See Me* and other Transporter action films, has been chosen by Universal to direct the 11th *Fast & Furious* film after stepping in to direct *Fast X*, which will be released in theaters on May 19.

“Louis joined the *Fast & Furious* team seamlessly, with an innate understanding of the franchise that is stronger than ever after two decades. Under his direction, *Fast X* is a high intensity thriller with all the spectacular action, emotion and twists that the fans have come to expect — and then some. We are thrilled that he will continue to work his magic in the director’s chair,” Universal Pictures president Peter Cramer said in a statement. The 11th film will be a companion to *Fast X*, Universal says.

Leterrier, an Emmy winner

best known for his work on the Jason Statham-led *Transporter* trilogy, has also directed *Clash of the Titans* and

*Now You See Me*, as well as successful shows *Lupin* and *The Dark Crystal: Age of Resistance*



Pc- Rodin Eckenroth/WireImage

# Ryan Reynolds and Jason Momoa Join ‘Animal Friends’

**L**egendary studio has cast Hollywood actors Ryan Reynolds and Jason Momoa in the upcoming film *Animal Friends*, which will combine live-action and animated characters.

Emmy-winning director Peter Atencio will helm the movie,

described as an “R-rated road trip adventure”, as per entertainment news outlet Deadline.

Actors Aubrey Plaza and Vince Vaughn will also feature in the film.

The writers Kevin Burrows and Matt Mider and Patrick Gooing, an executive at Reynolds’ production

company, Maximum Effort, got the concept for the movie during a general meeting.

*Animal Friends* will be produced by Legendary, Maximum Effort and Namit Malhotra’s Prime Focus Studios.



PC-newsdrum



# Coachella Hosts First-Ever Punjabi Performance

**D**iljit Dosanjh, a singer-actor, made history by playing at the Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival in Indio, California.

The weekend performance (April 13, 2023) establishes his domination not just in the Punjabi industry, but also on a global scale.

Diljit took the stage wearing a black kurta and tamba, giving off a strong Punjabi atmosphere. He swaggered up the appearance with a black turban, sunglasses, and even a pair of yellow gloves to light up the stage.

Fans expressed their admiration for the musician, saying how he made India proud. Bollywood celebrities complimented the singer on *Instagram*, expressing happiness and joy at Diljit's performance. Several Punjabi singers also commented on Diljit's achievement.

Actress Kareena Kapoor took to her Instagram to share an Instagram reel

of the 'Udta Punjab' co-star performing at Coachella. Actor Arjun Kapoor also referred to Diljit as G.O.A.T on his Instagram story. Actress Rakul

Singh shared the performance reel of Dosanjh and wrote "Wohoo Punjabi Fever at Coachella. What a firecracker performer you are. Dil Jit Lita Sab Da"



PC- Instagram

# Alia Bhatt Makes Her Met Gala Debut



PC- Instagram

**T**he star-studded event this year at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City was themed "Karl Lagerfeld: A Line of Beauty" in honor of the iconic fashion designer's contributions to the fashion world.

Alia Bhatt wore a custom Prabal Gurung gown inspired by Karl Lagerfeld's bridal look for Chanel's

1992 fall/winter collection. Her pearl-embroidered all-white gown gave her a dreamy appearance, and her edgy white fingerless glove was a tribute to Karl Lagerfeld's unique style.

The traditional princess gown makes a reappearance with Gurung's version for Bhatt, styled by Anaita Shroff Adajania. The entire pearly white gown screamed lovely Chanel

bride with an edge, with a scooped neckline and back and a full skirt.

She accessorized her look with earrings encrusted with pearls and spikes. The fact that Bhatt stuck to the subject rather than wearing a statement-making outfit will strengthen her place in fashion circles not just in India, but around the world.

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