

# THE DIASPORA



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Federation of Indian Associations - New England. 501(C)3.

**BI-WEEKLY**

Issue: 64



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**Narendra Modi Government's 8 Years, Achievements**



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**Gun Violence: Indian-Americans demand immediate action and commonsense gun reforms**

## FIA EYES 2 GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS ON INDIA DAY PARADE, ANNOUNCES IN PRESS CONFERENCE AT PRESS CLUB OF INDIA



The Federation of Indian Associations' press conference on June 1 at the Press Club of India, New Delhi

The Federation of Indian Associations' (FIA) press conference on June 1 at the Press Club of India (PCI) was marked by the presence of marquee personalities from various walks of life, including

the world of sports and entertainment.

Some of the noted personalities and dignitaries who graced the event include Sumit Das (from Khadi India), Piyush Chawla, Sameep Shastri, Kapil Gupta, Bipin Babu, Renu Hussain, Ajay

Bansal, Chander Sharma, Rahul Dayal, Satnam Sambhy, Kamaljeet Kochhar, Ronit Agarwal, Ike Sinha, Manish Kumar and Sanjay Mallick. Earlier in the day, the team of FIA delegates visited the Indian Parliament House and met with some of the

Indian parliamentarians in their respective North and South block offices and presented them with the FIA exclusive mementoes, souvenirs, brochures and pleasantries besides bouquets and shawls.

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The FIA met with Union Defense Minister Rajnath Singh and Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, besides meeting a couple of other key Indian lawmakers and sought their blessing and guidance to make the event more encompassing and monumental for the Global Indian diaspora.

The FIA delegation also met

with the ISCON temple priest and presented him with bouquets, mementos and souvenirs.

The press conference held in the afternoon at the PCI was to announce the festivities being planned to celebrate 75 years of India's Independence Day and 40th Annual India Day Parade at Manhattan, NYC on August 21, 2022 and the historic attempts to set two Guinness World Records. This will be

a historically important year for 4.6 million strong Indian diaspora and the motherland - India. In the homeland of the USA, FIA will commemorate 75th Independence Day.

Furthermore, on August 21, the FIA will organize the India Day Parade followed by the Grand Gala reception at the prestigious Smithsonian Museum American Indian in the evening. The day will see 2 Guinness World Records

attempts at the India Day Parade - most Flags flown in an outdoor event and the largest Damru (2 headed drum) ensemble.

It will also witness a fun fair in Manhattan on August 26 between the Park Ave and Madison Ave.

These events will be marked by the presence of celebrities from the Indian Film Industry. Hon. Mayor Adams will also be present to grace the event.



*FIA delegation greets Defense Minister of India Shri Rajnath Singhji*



*FIA team met with Shri Parshottam Rupala Ji, Union Cabinet Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying*



*FIA Brochure Unveiled by Health Minister of India, Hon. Shri Mansukh Mandaviyaji*



*FIA team met with Shri Amitabh Kant, CEO Niti Aayog*



*FIA team honors Smt. Navika Kumar, Group Editor of Times Now*



*FIA team at Timesnow studio in Noida UP*



*FIA team met with Dr. Vinay Sahasrabuddhe, President - Indian Council for Cultural Relations and Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha*



*FIA team met with Shri Harivansh Narayan Singh, Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha*





FIA team visited Iskcon temple for a blessing from Shri Yudhisthira Maharaj



FIA team met with US consulate general Mr. Michael Rosenthal



FIA team met with Shri Sandeep Chakravorty, Joint Secretary (Europe West), Ministry of External Affairs



FIA team met with Padma Shri Kailash Kher, Indian playback singer and music composer



FIA team met with Shri Suresh Prabhu, Parliamentarian & Former Cabinet Minister



FIA team met with Dr. Chintan Vaishnav Mission Director, Atal Innovation Mission (AIM)



FIA team met with Shri Brajesh Pathak, Deputy Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh



FIA team with Mrs. Nisha Kothari, Actress, Philanthropist and Entrepreneur



FIA delegates visited the Rashtrapati Bhavan



FIA delegates visited the Indian Parliament House





# FIA's India Day Parade & Celebrations of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav Piques interest of the Indian Media

The Federation of Indian Associations' (FIA) Press Conference in Delhi got the attention of the Indian media. The Press Conference was given prominent and extensive coverage in the top media houses followed by an extensive reportage about the FIA's big plan for the 40th Annual India Day Parade in Manhattan, NYC. The festivities are part of India's 75 years of Independence Day and Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav being celebrated in the US.

The Federation of Indian Associations' (FIA) press conference was organized at the Press Club of India in New Delhi on June 1 2022. The Conference was presided over by the Executive Committee of FIA - Chairman Ankur Vaidya, President Kenny Desai, New England President Abhishek Singh, Board Member Mr. Srujal

Parikh, Ex Vice President Mr. Saurin Parikh, Vice President Mr. Himanshu Bhatia, Secretary Mr. Praveen Bansal, Jt. Secretary Mr. Mahesh Dubal, Past President Mr. Alok Kumar and BAJANA President Anurag Kumar.



Rajnath Singh @rajnathsingh · Jun 4

Glad to meet a delegation of Federation of Indian Associations-USA which is visiting India with plans to celebrate the #AzadiKaAmritMahotsav in the US this year.

The FIA did exceptional relief work in India during the Pandemic. My best wishes to them in their future endeavours.



Brajesh Pathak @brajeshpathakup · Jun 1

आज आवास पर फेडरेशन ऑफ इंडियन एसोसिएशन के अध्यक्ष श्री केनी देसाई जी, श्री आलोक कुमार जी, श्री सौरिन पारिख जी, श्री प्रवीण बंसल जी एवं श्री अभिषेक सिंह जी से शिष्टाचार भेंट की।



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569



Amitabh Kant @amitabhk87

Delighted to have met the delegation from @FIANYNJCTNE. Greatly appreciate their significant equipment contributions for #COVID19 relief work in #India, and congratulated them for hosting #AzadiKaAmritMahotsav celebrations in New York City and Capitol Hill. Gr8 work by them.



India in New York

## भारतीय संघों का संघ (एफआईए) ने भारत के स्वतंत्रता दिवस के 75 वर्ष पूरे होने के उपलक्ष्य में आयोजित किए जा रहे उत्सवों के कार्यक्रमों की घोषणा की

नई दिल्ली। भारतीय संघों का संघ (एफआईए) ने भारत के स्वतंत्रता दिवस के 75 वर्ष पूरे होने के उपलक्ष्य में आयोजित किए जा रहे उत्सवों के कार्यक्रमों की घोषणा की। मैनहट्टन, एनवाईसी (21 अगस्त, 2022) में 40 वां वार्षिक भारत दिवस परेड और दो गिनीज वर्ल्ड रिकॉर्ड स्थापित करने का ऐतिहासिक प्रयास करेंगे। कार्यक्रम में सुमित दास-खादी इंडिया, पीयूष चावला समीप शास्त्री, कपिल गुप्ता, बिपिन बाबु, रेणु हुसैन, अजय बंसल, चंद्र शर्मा, राहुल दवाल, सतनाम सांभ्य, कवलजीत कोचर, रोनिट अग्रवाल, इके सिन्हा, मनीष कुमार मौजूद थे। संजय मलिक, कार्यक्रम की अतिथि सूची का समन्वय डिजाइनर रोजी अहलुवालिया ने किया। उन्होंने बताया 4.6 मिलियन प्रवासी सदस्यों और हमारी मातृभूमि के ऐतिहासिक रूप से महत्वपूर्ण वर्ष हैं। संयुक्त राज्य अमेरिका की



हमारी मातृभूमि में एफआईए औपनिवेशिक शासन से 75 वां स्वतंत्रता दिवस मनाएगा। हम इसे वर्षों से आयोजनों के साथ मनाएंगे। टाइम्स स्क्वायर पर झंडा फहराना, एम्पायर स्टेट बिल्डिंग लाइटिंग, एफआईए का आजादी का अमृत महोत्सव एरियल डिस्प्ले हडसन नदी के ऊपर उड़ान भरता है। इसमें अलावा, 21 अगस्त को एफआईए शो को इंडिया डे परेड और गाला बैंकट का आयोजन करेंगे। इन आयोजनों को हमेशा उत्सवों के कार्यक्रमों की घोषणा की

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इके सिन्हा, मनीष कुमार मौजूद थे। संजय मलिक, कार्यक्रम की अतिथि सूची का समन्वय डिजाइनर रोजी अहलुवालिया ने किया। उन्होंने बताया 4.6 मिलियन प्रवासी

सदस्यों और हमारी मातृभूमि के ऐतिहासिक रूप से महत्वपूर्ण वर्ष हैं। संयुक्त राज्य अमेरिका की हमारी मातृभूमि में एफआईए औपनिवेशिक शासन से 75 वां

स्वतंत्रता दिवस मनाएगा। हम इसे तैयार करने के लिए आयोजनों के साथ मनाएंगे। टाइम्स स्क्वायर पर झंडा फहराना, एम्पायर स्टेट बिल्डिंग लाइटिंग, एफआईए का आजादी

का अमृत महोत्सव एरियल डिस्प्ले हडसन नदी के ऊपर उड़ान भरता है। इसमें अलावा, 21 अगस्त को एफआईए शो को इंडिया डे परेड और गाला बैंकट का आयोजन करेंगे। इन आयोजनों को हमेशा उत्तर और दक्षिण से समान रूप से भारतीय फिल्म उद्योग की मशहूर हस्तियों की उपस्थिति से चिह्नित किया गया है। साथ ही, माननीय मेयर एडम्स इस कार्यक्रम की शोभा बढ़ाने के लिए पूरी तरह तैयार हैं क्योंकि एनवाईसी के महापौरों के लिए इस वार्षिक परेड में भाग लेने के लिए वर्षों से यह वार्षिक प्रवृत्ति रही है।

## CELEBRATION OF 75 YEARS OF INDIA'S INDEPENDENCE DAY AND 40TH ANNUAL INDIA DAY PARADE IN MANHATTAN, NYC

New Delhi: The Federation of Indian Associations (FIA) held a Press Conference at Press Club of India in New Delhi on June 1, 2022 (from 3:00 to 5:00 pm) to announce the festivities being planned to celebrate 75 years of India's Independence day and 40th Annual India Day Parade in Manhattan, NYC on August 21, 2022 and the historic attempt to set two Guinness World Records.



The evening. This day will also recorded 2 Guinness World Record Attempts at the India Day Parade on the most flags flown in an outdoor event and the largest damru ensemble. It will also witness a Fun fair - in Manhattan on 26th between Park Ave and Madison Ave. These events will be marked by august presence of Indian Film Industry celebrities from north and south alike. Also, Hon. Mayor Adams will be present to grace the event as it has been the annual trend for years now for NYC mayors to attend this annual Parade. FIA is a 100 per cent volunteer run 501(c)3 non-profit organization established in 1970.

The guest listing of the event was coordinated by Designer Rosy Ahluwalia. The event will be celebrated with major events like Flag Hoisting at the Times Square, Lighting of Empire State Building Canopy in tricolor, FIA's Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav Aerial Display flies over the Hudson River. Furthermore, on August 21, the FIA will organize the India Day Parade followed by Grand Gala Reception at the prestigious Smithsonian Museum of the American Indian in

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India, Piyush Chawla Sameep Shastri, Kapil gupta, Bipin Babu, Renu hussain, Ajay Bansal, Chander sharma, Rahul Dayal, Satnam Sambhay, Kawaljeet Kochhar, Ronit Agarwal, Ike Sinha, Manish kumar, Sanjay Mullick. The guest listing of the event was coordinated by Designer Rosy Ahluwalia.

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75  
Azadi Ka  
Amrit Mahotsav

**40<sup>TH</sup>**  
SUNDAY  
AUGUST  
**21<sup>ST</sup>**  
2022 **INDIA DAY  
PARADE**  
MADISON AVENUE  
MANHATTAN, NEW YORK

FEDERATION OF INDIAN ASSOCIATIONS NY-NJ-CT-NE

**THE WORLD'S  
LARGEST  
INDIA DAY  
PARADE**



220' KHADI TRICOLOR OVER THE HUDSON RIVER



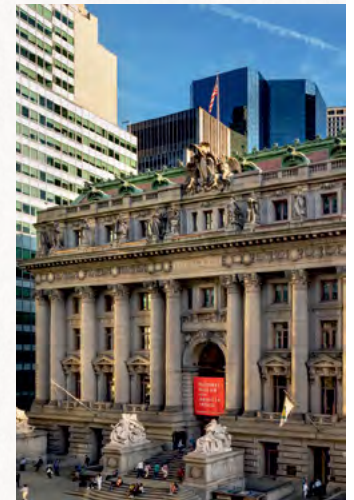
EMPIRE STATE BUILDING INDIAN TRI-COLOR LIGHTING

BILL BOARD AT TIMES SQUARE



INDIA DAY PARADE @MANHATTAN, NYC

GRAND GALA RECEPTION @ THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN, NYC



MONDAY, AUGUST 15<sup>TH</sup>, 2022

SUNDAY, AUGUST 21<sup>ST</sup>, 2022

GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS OFFICIAL ATTEMPT 1  
HIGHEST NUMBER OF **FLAGS**

THE HISTORIC ATTEMPT TO SET TWO GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS

GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS OFFICIAL ATTEMPT 2  
LARGEST DRUMS ENSEMBLE **DAMRUS**

ON **SUNDAY, AUGUST 21<sup>ST</sup>, 2022**



For Sponsorship: 848-248-0707, 732-325-7891, 201-709-6428

For Float: 516-652-7862 | For Booth: 973-879-6452

info@fianyjnct.org | www.fianyjnct.org | www.fianewengland.org



# FIA NY-NJ-CT-NE proudly supports Save Soil Movement and Walkathon

Conscious Planet-Save Soil initiative is a global movement launched by Sadhguru and Isha Foundation to bring awareness about soil degradation and advocate for policies to safeguard soil health across all nations. The Save Soil initiative is supported by the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the goal is to actively engage at least 3.5 billion people globally on the issue of soil health.

Beginning March 21, 2022 Sadhguru personally embarked on a 100-day journey across Europe, the Middle East and Asia as a lone motorcyclist covering 30,000 km and passing through 26 nations, creating awareness and support along the way. The movement has already garnered support from 73 countries and has reached approximately 2 billion people. After Middle East Sadhguru recently entered India and will soon culminate the journey in South India.

On the Father's day weekend of June 18th-- 19th, 2022 the movement is organizing a **3k-5k [Save Soil Walkathon](#)** in 60 cities across US, Canada and South America. The vision is to spread awareness about the Soil crisis and the need for policies to support 3-6% organic material in our agricultural soil so our children can inherit a healthy planet.

In **New York City** 1000 people are expected to walk on **Saturday June 18th** at Central Park West & West 72nd St. <https://bit.ly/305Dh1Q>

In **Skillman Park, New Jersey** more than 500 people are expected to walk on **Sunday June 19th** - <https://bit.ly/3MAGMwh>

**Pay-as-you-wish.** Register, bring family and friends, and walk to secure your children's future! Let's make it happen!





# Dilip Chauhan appointed as Deputy Commissioner, Trade, Investment, and Innovation in NY Mayor's office for International Affairs

**N**ew York – May 1, 2022 - New York Mayor Eric Adams office announced the appointment of Dilip Chauhan as the Deputy Commissioner, Trade, Investment, and Innovation for International Affairs, thus, adding a leading South Asian to his team and 1st to the coveted position. Mr. Chauhan's primary goal is to work to attract and retain businesses and foreign direct investments in the city as it recovers from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thanking the Mayor in a statement, Mr. Chauhan said he is honored to have been entrusted with the importance task of establishing strong relationships between New York City, the diplomatic corps, and the international business community. He will work to amplify New York City as a global economic center and a hub for innovation, Mr. Chauhan added.

"Specifically, I will work to attract and retain businesses and foreign direct investments across

our five boroughs as we recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic," he said in the statement, adding that through the management of relationships with Consulates, the United Nations, Permanent Missions, and Trade Commissions, he will ensure New Yorkers benefit from the City's innovative economic programs, including the Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprises.

In addition, he will also focus on strengthening partnerships related to Smart Cities, Sister Cities agreements, crypto-



*Deputy Commissioner Dilip Chauhan of Mayor's office of International Affairs*

related developments and cross-state international business development, he added in the statement. Mr. Chauhan comes to the Mayor's Office for International Affairs from the Brooklyn President's office, where he served as the Executive Director of Southeast and Asian Affairs. As the Executive Director, he worked towards empowering the South and Asian communities in Brooklyn.

Previously, Mr. Chauhan led the Minority Affairs office in Nassau County in New York as Deputy Controller, the first

South Asian to hold this office. In that role, he worked on setting guidelines, and was able to empower the Community for proper participation of MWBE businesses. He contributed to this effort by arranging different boot camps for small businesses, which created community awareness and participation campaigns, and built lasting strategic partnerships with various community organizations.

November 12, 2016, was declared as "Dilip Chauhan Day" in sixth US Congressional District New York in "honor of his work".



*Deputy Commissioner Dilip Chauhan with New York City Mayor Eric Adams*



## India values religious freedom, human rights: MEA Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi

**I**n response to media queries regarding the release of the US State Department 2021 Report on International Religious Freedom, the Official Spokesperson Shri Arindam Bagchi said, "We have noted the release of the U.S. State Department 2021 Report on International Religious Freedom, and ill-informed comments by senior U.S. officials.

It is unfortunate that vote

bank politics is being practiced in international relations. We would urge that assessments based on motivated inputs and biased views be avoided.

As a naturally pluralistic society, India values religious freedom and human rights. In our discussions with the US, we have regularly highlighted issues of concern there, including racially and ethnically motivated attacks, hate crimes and gun violence."

**Ministry of External Affairs  
Government of India**

**In response to media queries regarding the release of U.S. State Department 2021 Report on International Religious Freedom, the Official Spokesperson, Shri Arindam Bagchi said:**

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**June 03, 2022**



# Dr. Parag Mehta Elected President of Medical Society of the State of New York

**I**ndian-American physician Dr. Parag Mehta, was elected President of the Medical Society of the State of New York (MSSNY) on May 21, 2021. The MSSNY is the State's primary professional organization for physicians.

Dr. Mehta is the Senior Vice Chairman of the Department of Medicine and the Chief Medical Information Officer at New York Presbyterian Brooklyn Methodist Hospital (NYPBMH). In addition, he is an Associate Professor of Clinical Medicine at Weill Cornell Medicine, the May 23 press release from MSSNY said.

A graduate of NHL Medical College in Ahmedabad, Dr. Mehta completed his residency in OB/GYN at NHL Medical College and his residency in Internal Medicine at New York-Presbyterian Brooklyn Methodist Hospital in Brooklyn, New York.

He is Board Certified in Internal Medicine, Hospice and Palliative Care and Integrative and Holistic Medicine. He has taken courses in Health Information Technology

from Cornell University and Artificial Intelligence from MIT Sloan School of Management.

An active member of organized medicine, Dr. Mehta is the Governor for the New York Chapter of the American College of Physicians (NYACP) for Brooklyn, Queens and Staten Island.

In addition to MSSNY and NYACP, he is a member of AMA, Kings County Medical Society, American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin and Indian Medical Association.

In 2011, NYACP awarded him its highest honor, the Laureate Award, in recognition of his extraordinary contributions in the areas of governance, quality, public policy and education.

As a Physician Wellbeing Champion, he promotes wellness and engages discussion through grand rounds.

Dr. Mehta's many contributions to MSSNY include service as Councilor, Assistant Treasurer, Vice President, Commissioner of the Membership Division,

Chair of the Future Task Force for Infrastructure/Organization, Chair of the International Medical Graduate Committee, and Young Physician Councilor.

He presently serves as Councilor for Kings and Richmond County and as a New York Alternate Delegate to the American Medical Association.

Dr. Mehta has been involved with the implementation of EHR at New York-Presbyterian Brooklyn Methodist Hospital for the last 16 years and has helped the institution to reach HIMSS Level 7, the press release. In this role, he brings IT and clinicians together to improve the user's experience based on the user's input.

Dr. Mehta lives in Manhasset Hills with his wife, Isha Mehta, MD, who is Chief of Gynecology at Elmhurst Hospital and is a founder of "A Stitch in Time," an organization that treats gynecological conditions at no cost to women around the world. They have two daughters, Ruju, an environmental engineer,

and Setu, a pre-med student at Harvard College.

Founded in 1807, the mission of the Medical Society of the State of New York is to represent the interests of patients and physicians to assure quality healthcare services for all.



# Committed to make India-US ties among closest on earth: Biden to Modi

US President praised India's Covid vaccination efforts during his meeting with PM Modi at Quad summit

**U**S President Joe Biden on Tuesday, May 24, 2022, told Prime Minister Narendra Modi that he is committed to make America's partnership with India among the closest on earth, saying there is so much that the two countries can and will do together.

Biden, during a bilateral meeting with Modi after the Quad summit, praised India's Covid vaccination efforts. The two leaders are in Japan for the second Quad leaders' in-person summit.

Biden said he was pleased that the two countries have reached an agreement for the US Development Finance Corporation to continue this

important work in India, supporting vaccine production and clean energy initiatives.

"I am glad that we are renewing the Indo-US Vaccine Action Programme," he said.

"There is so much that our countries can and will do together. I am committed to make the US-India partnership among the closest we have on earth," Biden said.

On the issue of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the US President said that the two leaders also discussed the ongoing effects of Russia's brutal and non-justified invasion of Ukraine and the effect it has on the entire global world order.

"The US-India is going to continue consulting closely on

how to mitigate these negative effects," Biden said.



The U.S. President during a bilateral meeting with PM Modi at the Quad summit, praised India's Covid vaccination efforts

Photo: The hindu



# Narendra Modi Government's 8 Years, Achievements

The last three years in office in the second term have been full of challenges that were overcome with decisive leadership and strong political victory

Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government marked its eighth year in office on May 30. He has been leading the country since 2014, and in his second term, he was able to ensure that his party won the faith of the people by an even bigger margin.

The last three years in office in the second term have been full of challenges that were overcome with decisive leadership and strong political victory.

## Modi 2.0: Achievements

### ABROGATION OF ARTICLE 370

On August 5, 2019, Union Home Minister Amit Shah passed the Bill in Parliament to abrogate Article 370 and to bring the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh in the mainstream. Article 370, which gave special status to Jammu and Kashmir, was abrogated. The government also announced the split of the state into two Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

The construction of Ram Temple was in the manifesto of the BJP and the poll promise is now well on its way to being fulfilled. PM Modi laid the foundation stone of the new Ram Temple in August 2020 and as per the latest information available, it will be ready by 2023. It is set to be inaugurated on January 24, 2024 just a few months before the next elections. BJP is proud that Ram Lalla will be reinstated in the garbha griha (sanctum sanctorum) fulfilling the emotions of crores of Hindus.

### AZADI KA AMRIT MAHOTSAV

As India marks its 75th year of independence, the government has launched an umbrella programme "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav" that is being celebrated across the country recognizing all those who contributed to India's struggle for freedom. The campaign

highlights the contribution of unsung heroes of the nations.

Right from programmes being organized by the Ministry of Culture to the Film Festival at Cannes, where India was the Country of Honour, India has shown its prowess as a democracy and also demonstrated its rich cultural heritage.

### FREE RATION FOR MARGINALIZED

It was during the first wave of COVID that PM Modi announced free ration for the marginalized section of society. The scheme was then extended during the second wave and was extended for another six months till March 2022. Through this scheme, 80 crore beneficiaries were given free ration each month.

### WORLD'S LARGEST VACCINATION DRIVE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government launched the nationwide vaccination programme in the tough times of

years of age. India has also been successfully running its campaign for precaution dose to its adult citizens.

India developed indigenous vaccines in the shortest time. The country not just vaccinated its population but has also extended a helping hand to neighbouring nations by providing vaccines through the Vaccine Maitri scheme.

### AYUSHMAN BHARAT

Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana is a national public health insurance fund of the Government of India that aims to provide free access to health insurance coverage to low-income earners in the country. More than 22 crore people have registered in the scheme.

### OPERATION DEVI SHAKTI

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, operation Devi Shakti was launched in Afghanistan to rescue stranded Indians after the Taliban

operation carried out in war-hit Ukraine. The central government safely evacuated around 23,000 students including some foreign nationals. Four union ministers were sent as special envoys to the neighbouring nations of Ukraine to monitor the rescue operations.

### DIRECT TRANSFER SCHEME

Through this scheme, Rs, 6,000 is directly transferred to the bank account of farmers in three instalments of Rs 2,000 per year. The 11th instalment will be transferred to farmers on May 31 in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Shimla.

### FARM LAWS WITHDRAWN

Notably, the government has also withdrawn the controversial farm laws as a mark of gesture and respect for the farmers. The Prime Minister said that it was unfortunate that he was not able to explain the benefit of reforms to the farmers.

### AFFORDABLE HOUSING

This scheme that provides affordable housing to all, was launched by the Modi government in 2015. As per the available data till end of March 2020, more than 2 crore people have been provided homes under the scheme.

The BJP has also tasted electoral success in several states including forming government in Assam for the second time in a row. The party fared badly in Tamil Nadu and Kerala but was able to form a government in Puducherry. The BJP failed to realize its dream of winning West Bengal however the party saw a huge rise in its vote percentage and seats where it jumped from three to 75 seats. The year 2022 has been good for BJP in terms of electoral politics. The party registered a landslide victory in Uttar Pradesh while coming back to government in Manipur, Uttarakhand and Goa.



COVID-19. Said to be the world's largest vaccination drive, India so far administered over 193 crore doses of the COVID vaccine. The country has also managed to vaccinate most of its adolescent population between 15 to 18

took over Afghanistan. More than 700 people were evacuated from Afghanistan.

### UKRAINE RESCUE OPERATIONS

Another key achievement of the government has been the rescue



# Indian MoS for External Affairs visits US

**I**ndia's Minister of State for External Affairs and Parliamentary Affairs, V. Muraleedharan, is on an official visit to the United States of America from May 18-24, 2022.

As part of outreach to the Indian diaspora, he visited the Guru Nanak Darbar of Long Island in Hicksville on May 21, 2022. At the Gurdwara, the Minister

sought blessings and highlighted the remarkable contributions of the Sikh community in India's nation building. He urged the community members present to participate in celebrations of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', 75 years of India's independence.

In his remarks, Minister Muraleedharan also touched upon Prime Minister Narendra

Modi's strong outreach to the Sikh community including the recent celebrations of 400th Prakash Purab of Guru Teg Bahadur at the historic Red Fort in New Delhi and his hosting a delegation of more than 100 Sikhs from around the world at his official residence a few days ago.

The Sikh community in Long Island, "deeply appreciated

Hon'ble Minister's visit to the Gurdwara and thanked him for enquiring about their wellbeing," a press release from the Indian Consulate in New York said.

The Minister also met with a large number of community representatives at a function in Woodbury, New York.

Previously, on May 20, 2022, the Minister shared the Government of India's resolve to further deepen the connect with the diaspora in the 75th year of its independence. He called upon them to join the Consulate in celebrating Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav highlighting India's diversity, art, sporting achievements, innovation and much more.

During the event, the Minister also launched the Mobile App of the Consulate General of India in New York. The Mobile App brings all the Consulate's services on a smart phone, which the government described as "Another people-centric initiative of the Consulate."



V. Muraleedharan with Randhir Jaiswal and Indian-American community leaders Photo: Twitter at IndianinNewYork

# Geetanjali Shree Becomes First Indian Author to Win International Booker Prize

**I**ndian author Geetanjali Shree has won the International Booker Prize -- making her the first writer from the South Asian nation to claim the prestigious literary award. Shree's winning novel, "Tomb of Sand," follows an 80-year-old woman as she gains a new lease on life following the death of her husband. Set in the shadow of the 1947 partition of India, Shree explores themes of trauma, motherhood and feminism.

Translated from Hindi to English by Daisy Rockwell, the book is the first in an Indian language to win the award, which recognizes fiction translated into English and published in the United Kingdom or Ireland.

The International Booker Prize is separate from the Booker Prize, which is awarded to novels written in English. In 1997, Indian author Arundhati Roy became the first Indian to win the Booker Prize

for her novel, "The God of Small Things." Shree and American translator Rockwell will split the £50,000 (\$63,000) prize money.

"I never dreamed of the Booker, I never thought I could," Shree said during her acceptance speech in London on Thursday. "What a huge recognition. I am amazed, delighted, honored and humbled."

The chair of judges, Frank Wynne, said the book has "an exuberance and a life, a power and a passion, which the world could do with right now."

"This is a luminous novel of India and partition, but one whose spellbinding brio and fierce compassion weaves youth and age, male and female, family and nation into a kaleidoscopic whole," Wynne said. Writer, critic and broadcaster, Viv Groskop, called it "a real masterclass in narrative, in exploring identity and a brilliant look at family relationships."

Born in 1957 in the northern

state of Uttar Pradesh, Shree has written three novels and several short story collections. Her work has been translated into English, French, German, Serbian and Korean. "Tomb of Sand" is the first of her books to be published in the UK. Rockwell called it "one of the most difficult" works she has ever translated because of the "experimental nature of Geetanjali's writing" and "unique use of language."

Shree said her recognition "brings into larger purview the entire world of Hindi literature" and in particular, "Indian literature as a whole."

"It also brings into view the fact that there is a vast world of literature with rich lineages which still needs to be discovered," she said in an interview on the Booker Prize website. "I am pleased and humbled to be the conduit for this."



The book is the first in an Indian language to win the award



# Business is not easy, but you need to have determination: KV Kumar

**P**resident and CEO of the Indian American International Chamber of Commerce, IAICC, K.V. Kumar, in an interview May 19, 2022, with ITV Gold host Nidhi Kathuria, addressed challenges for small businesses in the U.S. and his role in U.S.-India relations.

Kumar is Chairman of KMF Investment Group, a company that invests in start-ups, small businesses in nano-technology, healthcare and other fields.

"KV" as he is more popularly known, has been engaged in volunteer and mentoring for more than 16 years working with small businesses, entrepreneurs, people with brain injury, youth and community organizations. He has served 6 U.S. Presidents in important positions in their administrations.

Kumar said the pandemic hit small businesses very hard since March 2020. His own IAICC, he said would be much larger today were it not for COVID-19. He said he has traveled thousands of miles

*Photos: ITV Gold*

to help small businesses apply for loans to keep their livelihoods. "They are all suffering greatly," he told ITV Gold, especially the mom-and-pop stores and restaurants, who need help.

Knowing which businesses to invest in is a "tough call" involving risks. The individual involved has to show a commitment and their knowledge of the business, their work ethic, etc.

"You have to be concerned about everything, and have knowledge of a little bit of macroeconomics, and how to cut costs," he said. "The right niche, right approach, and hard work," are what pay off, he indicated.

"Business is not easy, but you need to have determination, a good plan, a good implementation plan, and you go after that and don't back off if you are sure of what you are doing," Kumar advised. Even if many things are right, one might fail, but that means analysing what is wrong and working on that.

Currently, irrespective of what the President does, there is a limit to its effect, because of the many

exogenous factors, like the energy constraints etc. caused by global conflicts, Kumar said, adding that all U.S. Administrations usually work with "good intentions."

All presidents are faithful to the United States of America, despite the criticism they may hurl at each other, Kumar noted. At the same time there has to be a humanitarian approach which should also include the financial support aspect. Small businesses account for 60 percent of employment in the country, Kumar said, so governments need to pay attention to them.

Leaders should be engaged with the grassroots rather than with big organizations, he said.

In 1992, Kumar suffered an automobile accident, and had to undergo rehabilitation for a decade. He did not sue anyone, he noted, but he did get involved in the passing of the 1996 Traumatic Brain Injury Act.

His Indian tradition and philosophy he felt was what kept him from suing anyone. These ways of thinking are what should be spread more in the U.S., Kumar

opined.

Various India-U.S. pacts over the years Kumar noted, got a "main thrust" under the George W. Bush administration. "I was a little bit closer to George W. Bush because he and I worked on his father's transition team," he recalled.

He was also against the steps taken to impeach President Bill Clinton, who appointed Kumar to the Selective Service Board.

"I liked all the Presidents," Kumar said, though he was not as close to President Barack Obama even though he (Obama) appointed Kumar to the California State Appeals Board.

Kumar first met President Joe Biden when many years ago when he was a Senator.

Kumar said he initially supported President Donald Trump and was on the Asian American Advisory Council during the transition, and a delegate for Trump from California. "...Trump did some good things," but then ultimately, "he destroyed himself," Kumar said.

The annual convention of IAICC was to be held two years ago with a meeting with a White House briefing attended by the President and Vice President, and a reception on Capitol Hill. It was postponed and is scheduled to be held in October 17, 18, and 19, in Washington, D.C., at the Ronald Reagan International Trade Center, Kumar said. Kumar is set to meet India's Ambassador Taranjit Singh Sandhu in relation to that meeting. Ambassador I think is a man who does things and talks less. He has done good things for India and the U.S. and has been very good for Indian-Americans. He is representing India at a difficult time. I support him one hundred percent," Kumar said.



*K.V. Kumar, entrepreneur and philanthropist speaking during an interview on ITV Gold with host Nidhi Kathuria*



# Ahimsa & The Art of Non Violent Communication

The Hindu University of America is offering the course as a pilot for one quarter

**O**n the occasion of the 15th Anniversary of UN International Day of Non-violence this October 2nd, Mahatma Gandhi's birthday, KUMU Consulting, headed by Miss Kumu Gupta, has partnered with Gandhi Smriti Gandhi Darshan (New Delhi, India), where Gandhiji spent his final 144 days to offer a free short course on Communicating Non-violence way at the end of which participants get a Certificate of completion from Gandhi Smriti.

Miss Gupta is pursuing efforts to have 6 months free version of this course to be taught at the UN, Harvard and MIT Universities as well as Indian Embassy and Consulates in Washington DC, SF & NY virtually from Gandhi Smriti. And is pleased to announce a course based on these materials called "Ahimsa and the Art of Non-violent Communication" is to be offered by Hindu University of America (HUA) as a pilot for one quarter.

Kalyan Viswanathan, President of Hindu University of America, added the following:

"Today we are experiencing the immense sadness of daily acts of random gun violence in American society, as well as the sustained violence of war in various parts of the world. Under these conditions, Mahatma Gandhi -- who prioritized the power of love

and its capacity to heal and transform over the impulse to punish -- is ever more relevant. Hindu University of America anticipates offering a vitally important, transformational course in the coming quarters, on Ahimsa and the Art of Non-violent Communication."

Kumu is honored to know Gandhi Ji's granddaughter and meeting his two sons here in the US. Kumu was special invited guest to the inaugural wreath laying ceremony by Mayor of San Francisco and Indian Consul General on Pier 39 (SF) for Gandhi Ji's birthday, when Kumu lived there.

"I feel a strong special connection to Gandhi ji as my father took part in the Quit India movement and, being from a royal family (pre-British days) on mother's side, have a strong sense of free India being my birth right. Gandhi Ji is the ultimate NRI (non-resident Indian, an Indian living outside India), an experience I own, having lived outside India since childhood," said Miss Gupta.

During PM Modi's visit to the UN in 2019, he planted Gandhi Peace Garden with 51 trees for the Environment at a campus of Kumu's university SUNY Stony Brook and as a domestic violence advocate, Kumu took a class based on "Be the Change You Wish to see in the World" in Boston for Gandhi ji's birthday.



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To register for the course please see Gandhismriti.gov.in and hua.edu for information on Hindu University of America.

## Harini Logan Wins US Spelling Bee Contest, Internet in Bind



**A** video of an Indo-US girl spelling out incredibly difficult words with utmost confidence and ease in a rapid-fire round at the 2022 Scripps National Spelling Bee contest in the US has left social media users in a bind. Harini Logan got 21 words correct in the 90-second intense round.

Ms Logan, 14, is class 8 student from Texas and has defeated Vikram Raju in the contest.

The contest went to the spell-off after they were locked in a stalemate.

The video clip on Twitter has recorded more than 329k views.

The word that led to her triumph was: moorhen, a medium-sized bird defined as "the female of the

red grouse."

A number of people have reacted with awe to Ms Logan's answers.

Most of the users said that they have never heard any of the words that were part of the round.

"That was anxiety-inducing. Love it," said a third user.

It was Ms Logan's fourth and final appearance in the Bee. She described her victory as "surreal".



# US Envoy Commends India's 'Enormous' Help to Afghanistan

Washington: US special envoy for Afghanistan Thomas West commended India for bringing "enormous" capability in helping the people of Afghanistan with humanitarian assistance.

West, who was in India Wednesday May 25, 2022, praised India for working towards protecting the Afghan people with aid to the country. The special representative expressed his will to stand with India and other nations who are striving towards this shared goal of supporting the Afghan people. He also thanked Joint Secretary J.P. Singh for hosting the ambassador and his team for detailed discussions on Afghanistan policy in New Delhi.

Taking to Twitter, West wrote, "Many thanks to @MEAIndia Joint

Secretary J.P. Singh for hosting me and my team for detailed discussions on Afghanistan policy yesterday in New Delhi."

"India is providing critical humanitarian aid, has interests to protect, and brings enormous capability and experience to support the Afghan people. We'll continue to partner with India and others in the region to advance shared goals," the US special envoy added in his Twitter post.

Notably, India has remained steadfast in providing the necessary humanitarian aid to its neighboring country in these times of dire need.

Earlier, India announced that it will send 50,000 metric tonnes (MT) of wheat to Afghanistan

overland through Pakistan.

The first consignment of humanitarian aid of 2,500 tonnes of wheat from India reached Afghanistan's Jalalabad through Pakistan on February 26.

The second convoy of India's humanitarian assistance carrying 2,000 MTs of wheat left Attari, Amritsar on March 3 for Jalalabad, Afghanistan, the MEA had said.

Moreover, India sent the third consignment of 2,000 metric tonnes of wheat to Afghanistan in 40 trucks via the Attari-Wagah border on March 8.

The fourth consignment of 2,000 metric tonnes of wheat was dispatched for Afghanistan via the Attari-Wagah border on March 15.



# Quad Fellowship launched for graduate STEM degrees in the US. Here's everything you need to know

100 students from members countries will be sponsored for UG courses in Sci, Tech, Engg & Math in US

**T**he leaders of Australia, India, Japan, and the US on Tuesday launched the Quad Fellowship in Tokyo, wherein 100 students from members countries will be sponsored to study in the US for graduate degrees in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).

"This fellowship will become a bridge that connects our four nations and it will empower us to lead and to grow so that we can resolve many of the challenges of the Indo-Pacific region and around the world," said Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida at the launch of the event.

The Quad Fellowship application is live and will remain open until June 30. The first class of Quad Fellows will arrive on campus in autumn 2023.

This program, which was first announced in September last year,

will bring together exceptional American, Japanese, Australian and Indian masters and doctoral students in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics to study in the United States.

This new fellowship will develop a network of science and technology experts committed to advancing innovation and collaboration in the private, public, and academic sectors, in their own nations and among Quad countries.

## To be eligible, you need to

Be at least 18 years of age at the time of application

Be citizens or legal permanent residents of Australia, India, Japan, or the United States

Have a bachelor's degree or its equivalent in a STEM field by August 2023

Have a demonstrated record of superior academic achievement at the undergraduate level

If applicants are currently enrolled in a Master's or PhD program, they may apply if..

If applicants are currently enrolled in a Master's or PhD program, they may apply if they will be enrolled in a qualified academic program during their time as a Fellow (i.e., August 2023 - May 2024)

## What you'll get as part of the Fellowship

Each Fellow will receive a one-time award of \$50,000 which can be used for tuition, research, fees, books, room and board, and related academic expenses (e.g., registration fees, research-related travel).

All Quad Fellows are eligible to apply for separate demonstrated needs-based funding of up to \$25,000 to cover costs related to completing graduate-level studies.

## Three steps to making the most of the fellowship

**Pre-program:** Upon selection to the Quad Fellowship, Fellows Elect will have access to a variety of virtual resources and programming designed to build connections within the cohort as they navigate the graduate admissions process.

**Core program:** Beginning in August and extending through until the end of the academic year, Fellows will take part in a residential experience followed by virtual programming opportunities designed to deepen their understanding of topics at the intersection of STEM and society.

**Alumni program:** Upon graduation from the Quad Fellowship program, Senior Fellows will have access to resources that support a lifelong network across cohorts and the Quad countries.



# Gun Violence Indian-Americans demand immediate action and commonsense gun reforms

**T**he horrendous massacre at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas on May 24, 2022, that killed 19 innocent fourth graders, 9 and 10 years old, and their two teachers, and injured 17 others, shocked a nation wearied by the frequency, and parents and families of the victims in disbelief, anger, and unspeakable agony.

Ordering that flags at the White House, and federal buildings be flown at half-staff in honor of the victims, President Joe Biden addressed the nation on his return from Asia the same day

“As a nation, we have to ask: when in God’s name are we going to stand up to the gun lobby? When in God’s name will we do what we all know in our gut needs to be done?” adding “to lose a child is like having a piece of your soul ripped away. There’s a hollowness in your chest, and you feel like you’re being sucked into it and never going to be able to get out. It’s suffocating. And it’s never quite the same.”

Pleasant Davis, 22, is comforted by her friend, Tasha Dixon, 35, at a memorial honoring the victims of the Tops shooting across the street from the store in Buffalo on May 15, 2022. MUST CREDIT: Photo by Libby March for The

Washington Post.

Indian-Americans generally reacted strongly to the latest massacre.

“Enough is enough,” tweeted Vice President Kamala Harris. “As a nation, we must have the courage to take action and prevent this from ever happening again. It is long past time for our country to stand up to the gun lobby and pass reasonable gun safety laws.”

“If anyone doubted that gun violence is a public health crisis in America, yesterday was an unequivocal reminder that it most definitely is,” asserted United States Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy who has always held that view. “We owe it to the victims, the survivors, our kids, and each other to treat gun violence like the emergency it is. As a parent and as an American, I can’t fathom the depth of pain those grieving in Uvalde are feeling. ... We must do better as a country.”

“Words cannot express the heartbreaking and shocking nature of the event that occurred today,” Indian-American Judge K. P. George of Fort Bend County, Texas in a statement on May 24. “Our children go to school to learn in a caring and safe environment. The horrific actions of this single

individual, once again, serve(s) as a reminder, that even in our efforts to keep our schools safe, there are those who wish to inflict harm on the most vulnerable amongst us, our children.”

George also honored the victims with a Candlelight Vigil on May 26, at the Fort Bend County Justice Center, in Richmond, Texas along with Fort Bend County Sheriff, Eric Fagan, District Attorney Brian Middleton, and Attorney Bridgette Smith-Lawson.

Reacting to the shooting, Virginia State Senator, Ghazala Hashmi urged, “this is not the time for words. It is the time for action. It is the time for the federal government and our leaders in Congress to take steps to prevent future mass murders of innocents in our schools, grocery stores, shopping malls, houses of worship, concerts, and anywhere else that should be safe for children and families.”

The massacre has once again brought to fore the intense debate among Americans around the contentious issues of gun ownership, and second amendment rights. Mass shootings have become a perpetual issue, and gun-wielding youngsters indiscriminately taking innocent lives, have

become a constant spectacle in the US.

Republican leaders, gun lobbyists, and manufacturers of assault weapons have generally blocked any legislative efforts introduced in Congress to put an end to the epidemic of gun violence. Some have suggested arming school teachers so they can retaliate in active shooter situations.

Indian-American elected officials and candidates for political offices in Maryland and Virginia are now demanding swift actions, rather than prayers and condolences from their political leaders. They are appealing for an immediate end to the Republican filibuster in Congress, in order to advance gun control measures, and implement common sense gun reforms such as strengthening universal



Photo: Libby March



Photo: Allison Dinner/AFP Via Getty Images

Pleasant Davis, 22, is comforted by her friend, Tasha Dixon, 35, at a memorial honoring the victims of the Tops shooting across the street from the store in Buffalo on May 15, 2022.

People attend a vigil for the victims of the Robb Elementary School shooting at the Uvalde County Fairplex Event Venue and Indoor Arena on May 25, 2022, in Uvalde, Texas.

**CONTINUE ON PAGE 15**



**CONTINUES FROM PAGE 14**

background checks, prohibiting easy access to high-caliber assault weapons, and encouraging more states to implement Red Flag laws to address the issue without undermining second amendment rights guaranteed by the constitution.

“Red flag” laws, also known as Extreme Risk Protection Order laws, authorize courts to temporarily seize firearms from people who are believed to be a danger to themselves or society. Currently, 19 states and the District of Columbia have Red-Flag laws.

A White House staffer lowers the American flag to half-staff on May 24, 2022, in Washington, D.C, following the elementary school shooting in Texas. **MUST CREDIT:** Photo for The Washington Post by Oliver Contreras.

Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal, D-Washington, chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, noted that the Uvalde shooting comes just over a week after the deadly white supremacist mass shooting in Buffalo, and nearly a decade after Sandy Hook. “How many more elementary school shootings need to happen before Republicans decide to act?” adding, “year after year, the House has passed sensible gun reform legislation that would save lives. And year after year, the U.S. Senate has blocked those reforms from passing, thanks to the filibuster. It could – tomorrow- find 60 votes to pass sensible gun reforms or eliminate the filibuster, so senators are finally acting to save lives.”

Jayapal also pointed out that America has 4 percent of the world’s population but 42 percent of the world’s guns. “Yet Texas Governor (Greg) Abbott just recently signed laws loosening restrictions on gun carrying. Senator (Mitch) McConnell has led the GOP to filibuster even the most universally supported gun violence prevention laws for years. And Texas Senator (Ted) Cruz – as his own constituents try to pick up the pieces of their lives – is already waving away the call for these commonsense reforms.”

“I think all of us are just thinking about the families tonight,” Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi, D-Illinois, said. “It eerily resembles Sandy Hook and what happened there. And unfortunately, we thought that would be the catalyst for action but that did not result in any gun reform laws.”

Krishnamoorthi contends that “our inaction is recklessly leading to these horrible tragedies.” And suggested the filibuster be revoked in the U.S. Senate, a position the President has not yet supported.

Krishnamoorthi pointed out what polls have shown – that 90 per cent of gun owners support universal background checks, and that Red Flag legislation, would enable family members to intervene and ensure troubled persons do not have access to firearms.

Indian-American Democratic Gubernatorial candidate for Maryland, Ashwani Jain, told News India Times, “I am sickened that politicians and candidates will still call for ‘thoughts and prayers’ but refuse to release specific gun-safety legislation

that can prevent the constant murders of children and civilians in our schools and our communities. Enough is enough.”

Jain said that he hosted a Gun Safety workshop in 2018 after the Parkland shooting. At the end of that workshop, students ranging from age 11 to 19 made almost 200 calls to our Maryland lawmakers in support of SB 707, which would ban rapid-trigger devices in this state and keep weapons out of the hands of domestic abusers.

Calling the Texas shooting “a horrific culmination of inaction,” Latina-Indian American Democratic Candidate for Congress from Virginia 8th district, Victoria Virasingh asserted, “We need gun policy reform now. I’m running for Congress to create meaningful change. To prevent gun violence, passing stronger background check requirements to prevent people with dangerous histories from owning and carrying guns, prohibiting the sale of assault weapons and high-capacity magazines, requiring licenses before purchasing or obtaining a firearm, and enforcing Red Flag Laws, are essential.”

Alok Srivastava, executive director, of American Hindu Coalition while urging Governor Greg Abbott and Texas public officials to investigate and deliver meaningful solutions, questioned why security measures failed in the elementary school.

Srivastava told News India Times, “Texas is home to a large Hindu American population. We abhor violence, particularly against the innocent and the unarmed. But the U.S. Constitution guarantees an individual’s right

to bear arms for self-defense and to protect our loved ones and our property. So, we ask – why did the security measures in place at this Texas elementary school, including armed security officers, fail? We also ask – could an early intervention in this young man’s life by a licensed mental health professional have prevented such horrific violence?”

“We keep telling students that school is a safe place. How can we keep saying this?” questioned Sabina Malkani, an elementary school teacher in D.C. Public Schools. “Legislators need to come to the table and agree to tighten up gun laws right away. It doesn’t matter if you’re a Democrat or Republican. Fighting senseless murder cannot be about politics. It has to be about protecting the precious lives of our children. We don’t need any more thoughts and prayers. We need policy and change.”

Former Republican Candidate for Lt. Governor of Virginia, Puneet Ahluwalia, called it heart wrenching to lose loved ones “through deeds of bad horrible actors who don’t value life or freedom.”

To stop such incidents in future, Ahluwalia told News India Times, “We need to allocate more resources to protecting our kids in schools and colleges. Social media sites have to immediately notify authorities on posts which lead to these horrible tragedies and not glorify these sick individuals. Supporting our men and women in uniform and first responders with necessary training, equipment, and mental challenges is important at all times.”



Law enforcement officers outside Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, on May 24.



Photo: Oliver Contreras

A White House staffer lowers the American flag to half-staff on May 24, 2022, in Washington, D.C, following the elementary school shooting in Texas.



# NJ schools to increase security after mass shooting of students in Texas

**S**chools throughout New Jersey will have added security Wednesday in response to the deadly mass shooting at an elementary school in Texas on Tuesday.

Acting Attorney General Matt Platkin said state police will increase their presence at roughly 100 schools where troopers are the primary law enforcement, while county prosecutors will direct municipal departments to do the same.

An 18-year-old gunman, identified as Salvador Ramos, shot and killed 19 students and two adults Tuesday at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas. It is the deadliest school shooting since Sandy Hook

Elementary School in Connecticut a decade ago.

Ramos was killed.

"Nothing about this is normal. We do not have to accept that we live in a country where children are shot just for going to school," Platkin said in a statement. "My heart goes out to the families of the victims, and we must all do everything we can to end the epidemic of gun violence."

At a press conference on Wednesday, Gov. Phil Murphy once again pushed fellow Democrats who control the Legislature to pass another round of gun control laws, including a ban on .50-caliber rifles and requiring firearm safety training for new owners.

Murphy has signed two

rounds of gun safety measures since taking office in 2018 but he hasn't gotten enough support for his latest package of bills.

"Let's send the message now. Let's act before our nation gets lulled back into its slumber – as it was already beginning to do after the murders in Buffalo" two weeks ago, he said.

"Thoughts and prayers are worthless," he added. "Action is the only thing of value."

Paterson police stand outside John F. Kennedy High School in Paterson after it was put on lockdown Wednesday, Oct. 13, 2021. Shooting deaths rose 44% between 2019 and 2020, from 158 to 228, according to state police data. Shooting deaths have increased 12% since then, with

244 in 2021, according to the data. Since Murphy took office in 2018, gun killings have risen 33%, according to the data.

The directive from the attorney general is the second one stepping-up police presence following a mass shooting. Platkin issued one two weeks ago directing law enforcement to have a "visible presence" around houses of worship.

"It's ongoing," he said of both directives, "but we're tired that it is ongoing." Dustin Racioppi is a reporter in the New Jersey Statehouse. For unlimited access to his work covering New Jersey's governor and political power structure, please subscribe or activate your digital account today.

# 'End of an Era' New York's Iconic Payphone Booths Are Now Defunct

**Over the decades, the phone booths have featured widely in pop culture, from comic books to Hollywood blockbusters and TV shows**

New York: Marking the end of an era, New York City on Monday removed the last of its storied payphone booths, which have fallen victim to the ubiquity of free Wi-fi and cell phones in recent years.

But Superman fans can take comfort in the fact that Manhattan will keep four of the defunct booths, made famous as the impromptu changing rooms for journalist Clark Kent as he transformed into the Man of Steel.

Over the decades, the phone booths have featured widely in pop culture, from comic books to Hollywood blockbusters and TV shows. That ended Monday morning, when, in front of assembled media, Manhattan borough president -- the equivalent of the mayor -- Mark Levine had the last booth housing two Bell System payphones at the corner of 7th Avenue and 50th Street dismantled and lifted on to a flatbed truck.

Levine said on Twitter he was "on hand today to say 'Bye Bye' one last time to the famed (infamous?) NYC pay phone."

"I won't miss all the dead dial tones but gotta say I felt a twinge of nostalgia seeing it go," he added. Fixed-line payphones began disappearing from the streets of New York in the early 2000s as cell phone use spread, and then vanished even faster in the 2010s with the explosion of smartphones.

The final blow came when, in 2015, Manhattan went ahead with the installation of thousands of LinkNYC hotspots offering WiFi and free local calls.

Those new kiosks are to be gradually connected to the emerging 5G network.

"Truly the end of an era but also, hopefully, the start of a new one with more equity in technology access," said Levine, referring to neighborhoods in northern Manhattan, such as Harlem, that

are less well covered by telephone and internet networks. According to local media, Manhattan will keep four of the old-fashioned

phone booths on the Upper West Side, on West End Avenue at 66th, 90th, 100th and 101st streets.





# Gujarat Titans Win IPL Title in Maiden Season

**I**ndian Premier League, is one of India's and the cricketing world's most significant sporting events every year. This year the qualifying teams include Gujarat Titans with 20 points, Rajasthan Royals with 18 points, Lucknow Super Giants also with 18 points and Royal Challengers Bangalore with 16 points.

Gujarat Titans head coach Ashish Nehra said that while it's not easy for any team to finish on the podium in the first year of its inception, the boys "under the leadership of Hardik Pandya" had "gelled really well" to lift the IPL trophy in their opening season.

IPL newcomers Gujarat Titans defeated Rajasthan Royals by seven wickets at the Narendra Modi Stadium on May 29 to lift the prestigious IPL 2022 trophy on the back of finishing on top in the league table as well. "Yes, we've hit a six in the first year itself," said Titans skipper Hardik Pandya, adding that, "It doesn't

get bigger than this. Critics said we didn't have the strength in batting, that we lacked quality bowlers. But now that we have the trophy, it's alright."

Ashish Nehra, the first Indian coach of an IPL-winning side, said, "It's a nice feeling, but winning

the trophy notwithstanding, the more important thing is the way we played, the way we qualified. It was so very heartening to see. The first year is not easy, and all the boys did really well and gelled very well under Hardik's leadership."



David Miller, the Titans' middle-order batsman who scored an undefeated 32 off 19 balls in the title victory and was the backbone of the team's middle-order throughout the season, noted that the feeling of lifting the trophy gets enhanced if one is the underdog.

"It's been one of my most memorable IPL seasons. Being the underdogs throughout the competition, it's nice to lift the trophy and be champions," said Miller. "Batting in the middle order can be difficult but I just tried to stay calm no matter the situation and give myself the best chance. But what I've enjoyed the most this IPL season is playing spin. I've been working hard the last 3-4-5 years just getting better at spin. I never thought it was an issue, but I've really enjoyed playing spin and changed one or two things and it's definitely helped my game. Very chuffed about that," added Miller.

## Shane Warne – Legendary Leg Spinner Honored

**A**ustralia's legendary leg spin bowler, Shane Warne, who untimely passed away at the very young age of 52 in March 2022 in Thailand, has an interesting story about his jersey number "23." He has been a fan of a well-known Australian football player wearing jersey number 23 since he was a child. So, when he entered into a World Cricket Test match in the year 1993, on June 4, at the age of 23, in his very first match at Manchester, England, he bowled a leg break flighted delivery to England star batsman Mike Gatting, which from outside leg stump turned on the off side

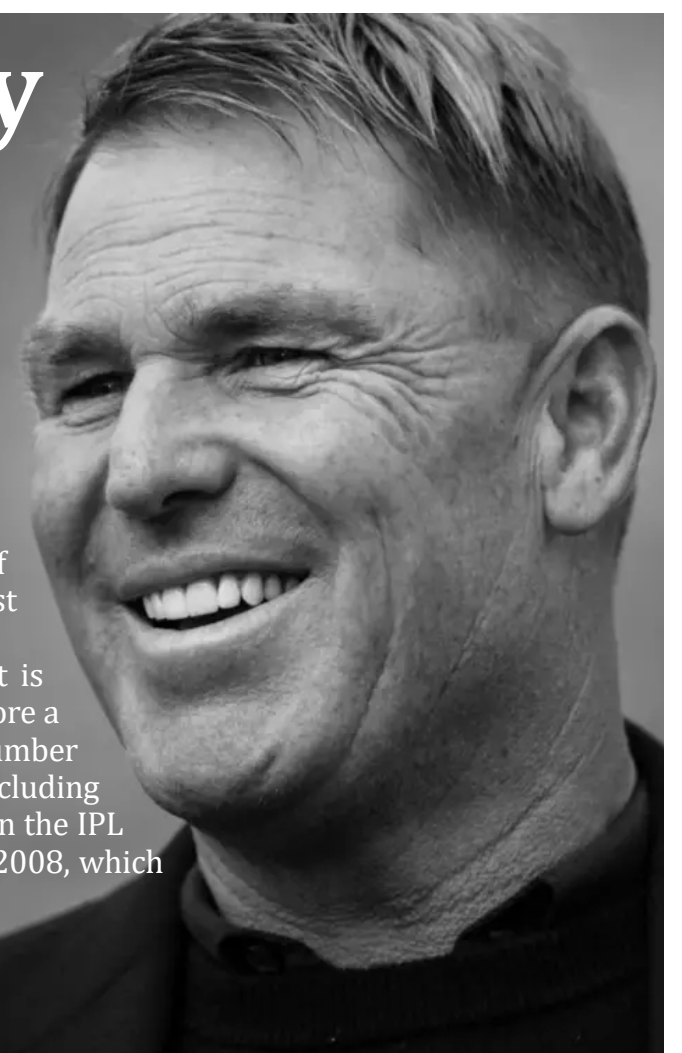
and uprooted his off stump. All players, spectators, and umpires were startled by such a 90 degree turn off the ball. Since then, it is known as the ball of the century.

Incidentally, recently at the Lords England Test Match, which is the 23rd between England and New Zealand, the match was stopped momentarily after the 23rd over for 23 seconds to pay tribute to Shane Warne, the legend. All the players and spectators clapped for 23 seconds. England's Lords Cricket Ground is well known as the Mecca of cricket, and its famous commentary box is now renamed in the memory of Shane Warne

as the "Shane Warne Commentary Box."

Shane Warne took 708 test wickets; the record was broken by Muttiah Muralitharan of Sri Lanka (800 test wickets).

The historical fact is that Shane Warne wore a jersey with a "23" number for his lifetime, including for Rajasthan Royal in the IPL inaugural season of 2008, which RR won.





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# ANEK

(2022/ Political Action Thriller/ Cinema Release)

## WELL CRAFTED, WELL INTENDED FILM BUT WITH A FLOUNDERING NARRATIVE!

**Cast** Ayushmann Khurrana, Andrea Kevichusa, Manoj Pahwa, Kumud Mishra, Mipham Otsam

**Director/Writer** Anubhav Sinha



**Plot**  
An undercover cop (Ayushmann) is assigned to reign in an insurgency in the North East to ensure a peace accord between the government and the most powerful rebel group.

**Analysis**  
The film hits the ground running, introduces its premise and characters, and we start seeing what it intends to do, wake us up to uncomfortable facts.

Anek sets forth with a well-intended message. It highlights the plight of marginalised states and people who crave for inclusivity and respect, who have been driven to violence in a bid to hold onto their individuality and yet have equal rights.

With a lot of sarcasm and symbolism, it sheds light on the diplomatic politics that plays behind the scenes.

It makes a humanitarian cry for the innocents who get embroiled and bear the brunt.

It also hits hard on our partisan mindset that judges

people as per their region or language.

The film comes across as finely crafted with many elements that shine. Excellent cinematography by Ewan Mulligan that not only delivers beautiful but often meaningful frames; excellent music score by Mangesh Dhakde that gives the right feel and impetus to the scenes; meaningful lyrics by Shakeel Azmi that convey a lot; thought provoking & tacit dialogues that could be the subject of hypothesis.

“What is peace to one could be chaos for others”

“Peace is often confused for control”

Yes ... Peace as a subject is definitely open to hypothesis!

Ayushmann delivers a solid performance with different shades, of focused cold officer and then the man who begins to think from the heart.

Kumud Mishra as the politician, Manoj Pahwa as the hardened bureaucrat and Mipham Otsam as the local school teacher, JD Chakravarty as forest officer add heft with their performances.

Andrea gives her character

an innocence that helps strike a chord.

Anubhav Sinha's past record has been mighty impressive.

Mulk, Article 15, Thappad, all the films have not only conveyed a much-required relevant message but also were impactful and overwhelming.

Anek has its heart in the right place, does convey what it sets out to but is not as engrossing and its emotional impact gets diluted in its narration.

Somewhere amidst the intended messages of diversity, inclusivity, violence vs peace, the film loses focus because of the intensity and quantum of what Sinha wants to convey.

The narrative moves forward but seems lost in an effort to try and convey too much. With lots of diplomatic politics, gunfire, violence (in that order), the film says much, some of it obvious, some of it implicit, some of it true & moving but some of it opinionated and coloured, some of it preachy and some

of it too symbolic.

Nevertheless, there is no denying the fact that it is an important film with an important message and leaves you with a lot of food for thought. It is definitely worth a watch. Whether to watch in cinema or not would depend upon how big of a fan you are of Anubhav Sinha kind of cinema.

As the last dialogue in the film, we would say “We agree with you but...”

**Score 3 on 5**





# KK, 53, dies after live performance in Kolkata

**K**rishna Kumar Kunnath, popularly known as KK, whose mellifluous voice gave India some of Bollywood's biggest hit songs of the 1990s and 2000s, died on Tuesday after a performance in Kolkata. He was 53.

On the way back to his hotel after performing at a concert in Kolkata, he felt uneasy and collapsed. He was rushed to the hospital where he was declared

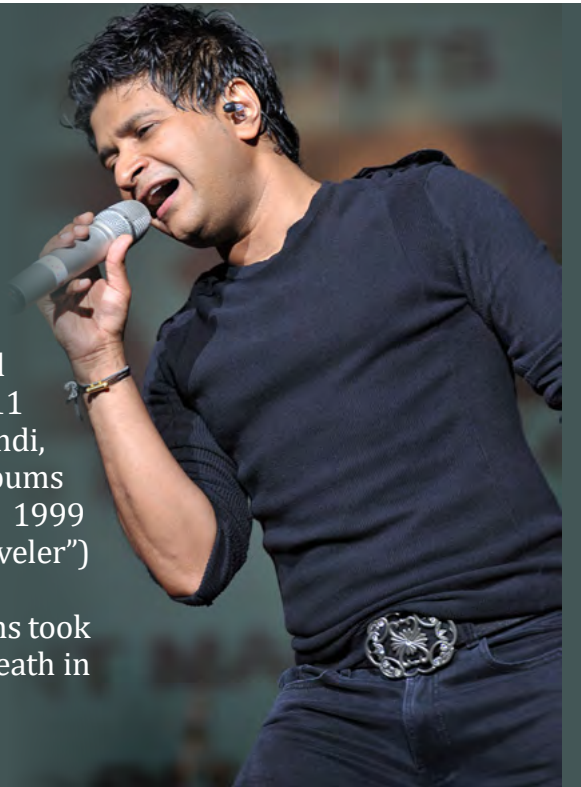
dead on arrival.

After graduating from Krorimal College in Delhi he did a short stint as a marketing executive and then gave it up to follow his passion for music. His struggling days saw him performing at hotels to make end meet. He saw success in Bollywood after after he sang in Machhis - a hit film based on the insurgency in the state of Punjab.

KK went on to become the voice of Bollywood stars

like Shah Rukh Khan, Ranbir Kapoor and Salman Khan. He recorded about 3,500 jingles in 11 languages, mostly in Hindi, and released popular albums like "Pal" ("Moment") in 1999 and "Humsafar" ("Co-Traveler") in 2008.

Millions of young Indians took to social media after his death in an outpouring of grief.



Photos: thehilllongtimes



Photos: economictimes



# IIFA Awards 2022: A Star-studded evening

**F**ollowing the pandemic break, IIFA has returned with a bang. The IIFA Rocks event was held on Friday 3rd June, while the main awards night was on Saturday 4th June. It was a full house at Abu Dhabi's Etihad Arena on Yas Island as Bollywood celebrated Hindi cinema. Salman Khan, Jacqueline Fernandez, Ananya Pandey, Sara Ali Khan,

and Nora Fatehi, among others, graced the red carpet with their gorgeous appearance.

The winners took home the coveted trophy in various categories amid Bollywood stars putting up rocking performances and setting the stage on fire. While Vicky Kaushal won Best Actor for Sardar Udham, Kriti Sanon won Best Actress for her portrayal in Mimi. Shershaah, based on the

life of Captain Vikram Batra, won the award for the Best Film and Vishnu Vardhan won the Best Director trophy for making the biopic on the Indian war hero.

Among the most-anticipated performances was Nora Fatehi's dance medley. The Moroccan-Canadian actor also brought onstage six-year-old Kashvi Majmundar, her die-hard fan, to share the stage. Sara Ali Khan,

on the other hand, grooved to Chaka Chak, while Ananya Pandey brought out the best of Gehraiyaan. Abhishek Bachchan also rocked the stage with a show-stopping performance to his old numbers in the presence of wife Aishwarya and daughter Aradhya. The show ended with Shahid Kapoor's tribute to late music director Bappi Lahiri.

Photo: iifa/instagram





# Johnny Depp to come out with new album alongside friend Jeff Beck

Photo: pinkvilla



It's possible that the wait won't be too long. According to Entertainment Tonight Canada, Jeff Beck revealed to The Guardian that the rumoured record featuring Johnny Depp will be released shortly.

Johnny Depp has been riding high since he won his landmark trial against his ex-wife Amber Heard and, as a result, acquired popular favour from the public.

In his chat with the outlet, Beck revealed that Johnny and his friendship goes way back, "I met this guy five years ago and we've never stopped laughing since."

The musician has been performing with Depp in England as they were seen on the stage together jamming to Jimi Hendrix's Little Wing and Marvin Gaye's What's Going On.

Johnny Depp even skipped the verdict of his highly publicised trial as he chose to fly over to the

United Kingdom and perform with Jeff Beck instead of showing up to court on the day of.

Meanwhile, Jeff Beck announced in the interview, that their album is soon to be out as he confirmed, "We actually made an album. I don't know how it happened. It will be out in July."

The eventful announcement by Jeff Beck comes after a day of Johnny's sweeping victory while the musician also seemingly commented on the trial on stage as he noted, "what a result."

Besides this, Jeff Beck has not addressed Johnny's win during any of their performances. Beck has three more concerts lined up, but it is not clear if Depp will continue to perform alongside him. As for Johnny Depp, he did publish an official statement in which the actor thanked the jury for giving him his "life back" which was for the past 6 years slandered because of Heard's claims.

# Goodfellas Actor Ray Liotta Dies in Sleep

Ray Liotta, 67, known for his roles in *Field of Dreams* and *Goodfellas*, died in his sleep.

He was working on a project in the Dominican Republic called *Dangerous Waters* when he passed away. He is survived by his daughter, Karsen and his fiancée, Jacy Nittolo.

Born in Newark, New Jersey, Liotta was the adopted son

of Alfred and Mary Liotta. He attended Union High School and went on to attend the University of Miami. He studied drama and was cast in his first play, *Cabaret*.

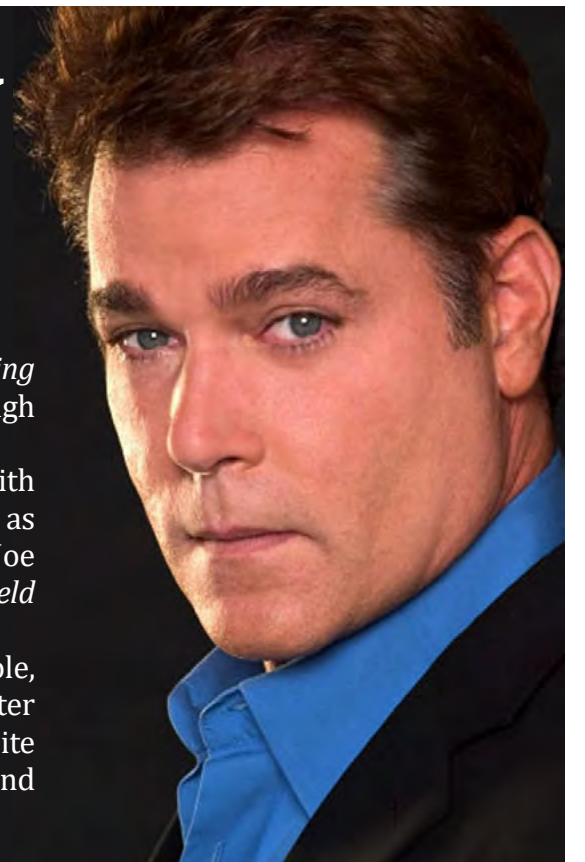
Then Liotta moved to New York City where he got work in commercials and was cast as Joey Perrini on the daytime soap opera *Another World*, in which he appeared from 1978 to 1981.

His performance as crazed ex-con Ray Sinclair in the 1986

Jonathan Demme film *Something Wild* proved to be a breakthrough role for the actor.

Liotta followed that with an acclaimed performance as baseball player *Shoeless Joe Jackson* in the box office hit *Field of Dreams* with Kevin Costner.

His most memorable role, perhaps, was as real-life mobster Henry Hill *Goodfellas* opposite heavy hitters Robert De Niro and Joe Pesci.



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