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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



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Mayor Eric Adams Convenes NY City's First Women's Health Summit at Hunter College

The Adams administration convened the first-ever Women's Health Summit at Hunter College, bringing together more than 100 professionals from various industries to help design New York City's first 'Women's Health Agenda,' which will be released this summer.

The summit follows New York City Mayor Eric Adams January citywide address, in which he, Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Anne Williams-Isom, and others - both inside and outside the administration - outlined their vision for an agenda. That is aimed at dismantling decades of systemic inequity that have negatively impacted the health of women across the five boroughs and, instead, making New York City a model city to support women's health at all stages of life.

Participants in the summit were divided into four working groups, each focusing on a different aspect of chronic disease, birth equity, sexual and reproductive health, and mental health.

"Health is wealth, and women need both," said Mayor Adams. "New York City has been shaped by tireless generations of women and today's Women's Health Summit brought us one step closer to making this city the nation's leader when it comes to women's health. This entire administration is committed to building a city that is here for all women and girls, and I am grateful to everyone who has joined the summit today for stepping up to make this vision a reality across all five boroughs."

"No matter the race, gender identity, body type, and more - all women deserve healthcare that meets their

needs," said Anne Williams-Isom. "I look forward to continuing to be part of this deeply needed and long overdue change alongside so many dedicated and accomplished women."

"Hunter College is honored to partner with Mayor Eric Adams on this summit and his courageous plan to undo decades of inequity that have negatively impacted the health of women across the five boroughs," said Hunter College President Jennifer J. Raab. "Hunter has always put the education of women first, and, as a result, is the only college to have two female *Nobel Prize* winners in medicine. On top of that, our alumna Evelyn Lauder fearlessly broke down barriers in breast-cancer research. Her husband Leonard's \$52 million gift to Hunter's School of Nursing in her honor that, in lockstep with Mayor Adams' vision, will help us train the next generation of nurses and nurse practitioners, who will serve communities across New York City."



Georgia Passes Resolution Condemning Hinduphobia

The US state of Georgia has passed a resolution condemning "Hinduphobia" - becoming the first state in the country to do so.

The resolution stated that there have been documented instances of hate crimes against Hindu-Americans in many parts of the country over the last few decades, and that *Hinduphobia* is exacerbated and institutionalized by some in academia, who support the dismantling of Hinduism and accuse its sacred texts and cultural practices of violence and oppression.

The Atlanta chapter of CoHNA initiated a step in this direction by organizing the first-ever *Hindu Advocacy Day* on March 22 at the

Georgia State Capitol. It was attended by approximately 25 lawmakers, both Republicans and Democrats, who joined the Hindu community to understand its concerns, commit to find means to protect the group from prejudice, and encourage the inclusion of Hindu voices in critical state decision-making processes.

"It was a true honor to work with Rep McDonald and Rep Jones as well as other lawmakers who guided us through the whole process of getting this County Resolution passed," said Rajeev Menon, CoHNA Vice President.

"We also heard that all the lawmakers had been working really long hours given the amount of legislative items on the agenda, but still decided to join us

at the Advocacy Day to show how much they value the Hindu community," he said.

CoHNA General Secretary Shobha Swamy said, "The issues faced by *Hindu Americans* in Georgia and the rest of the country via false, Hinduphobic narratives are negatively impacting a community that has been hardworking, law-abiding and enriching the fabric of America."

"We urged for their help in combating such bigotry which advances hatred and creates the idea that Hindus and people of Indian-origin need special laws and monitoring due to allegations around some inherent propensity to discriminate," she said.

IN OUR HEARTS FOREVER & ALWAYS

FIA Pays Tribute to Yash Paul Soi on
His First Death Anniversary



Late Shree
YASH PAUL SOI

July 18, 1938 - April 2, 2022

FIA FOUNDING MEMBER
FIA - VICE CHAIRMAN 2009-2020
VETERAN COMMUNITY LEADER



The Federation of Indian Associations (NY, NJ, CT & NE) fondly remembers the Late Shree Yash Paul Soi on his first death anniversary, whose untimely demise on April 2, 2022 has created an irreparable loss to the FIA as well as to the society.

One of the founding members and an incredibly resourceful, brilliant veteran community leader, who served the Indian Diaspora for over 50 years.

A noble soul who optimized hard work and dedication to community service. His devotion to the Indian-American society distinguishes him as an inspiring role model for the FIA fraternity.

Pray to the almighty to bless his divine soul and eternal resting peace. Om Shanti!

Indian-Americans Protest Against Legislation SB 403 on Caste-Based Discrimination

Indian-Americans held a peaceful rally in California to register their protest against a Democratic senator for introducing a bill in the state's Senate seeking to explicitly ban caste-based discrimination.

State Senator Aisha Wahab introduced the bill in the California Senate on March 22. If the bill gets passed, California could become the country's first state to outlaw caste-based bias.

Participants in the peace rally held by the Coalition of Hindus of North America claimed that Senator Wahab's proposal violates the fundamental principles of equality and justice for all, regardless of their race, religion and ancestry.

"This bill presumes guilt, profiles and stereotypes Hindus and Asians, which will increase hate and target our kids," said Harsh Singh, a Fremont city resident and tech worker.

Displaying posters and banners against the legislation, the protesters appealed to California lawmakers to not single out Hindus or presume that they are guilty of being oppressive simply due to their birth. Participants in the peaceful gathering in front of Senator Wahab's office stated that

legislation SB 403 intends to include "caste" as a protected category in California.

"If passed, the bill violates the civil rights of South Asians and other people of colour and denies them equal protection and due process," CoHNA said.

"SB 403 will entrench the false and dangerous concept of caste as solely connected to Hindus. It reinforces the very discrimination that its supporters claim to stop via SB 403! My children and children will be branded with a caste, despite not knowing what it is!" Sudha Jagannathan said.

"I am dismayed at how hate groups, like *Equality Labs* seek to co-opt my identity and weaponise it against the very traditions that nourished and gave succour to millions through the ages," said Aldrin Deepak, Tech Worker, LGBTQ and Dalit-American activist. They seek to deny the place of Valmiki and Vyasa, authors of the world's most glorious and influential epics—the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, the activist said.

"They negate the thousands upon thousands of subaltern-led temples that dot the landscape and attempt to refashion our sacred spaces to fit

preconceived notions more grounded in monotheism.

"I reject the attempts from *Equality Labs* and California lawmakers to speak for me or my community. SB 403 will profile us and leave us subject to being judged by so-called experts, based on subjective criteria like last names, dietary preferences, skin colour and more," Deepak said.

After introducing the legislation last month, Wahab told reporters that the "historic legislation is about workers' rights, women's rights, queer rights, and civil rights".

"We want to ensure organisations and companies do not entrench caste discrimination in their practices or policies, and in order to do that we need to make it plainly clear that discrimination based on caste is against the law," she had said at a news conference in Sacramento, California.

"Caste goes beyond religion and nationality. This legislation primarily protects millions who live in silence and have never had such protection because there is little understanding of this issue. This bill is about protecting people who are vulnerable," Wahab said.

India Secures 4-Year Term on United Nations Statistical Council

In a "competitive" election, India received a seat on the United Nations Statistical Commission for a four-year term.

India secured an overwhelming 46 out of 53 votes. A second candidate is yet to be decided between South Korea and China.

India was elected by secret ballot while Argentina, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, Ukraine, the United Republic of Tanzania and the United States of

America were elected by acclamation for a four-year term of office beginning January 1, 2024.

"India elected to the highest UN statistical body for a 4-year term beginning on 1 January 2024! Congrats Team @IndiaUNNewYork for coming through so strongly in a competitive election," External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said in a tweet.

He added that India's "expertise in the field of statistics, diversity &

demography has earned it a seat on the UN Statistical Commission."

The United Nations Statistical Commission is the highest decision-making body for international statistical activities, responsible for setting statistical standards and the development of concepts and methods, including their implementation at the national and international levels.

USA Qualifies for 2023 Men's Cricket World Cup

The United States qualified for the 2023 Cricket World Cup Qualifier with a significant win against Jersey at United Ground.

The US team ended first in the standings with four victories from five matches, ahead of the UAE, who tied the USA on points with a final-day win over Jersey. Hosts Namibia and Canada

both put forth great performances but came just short of qualifying with three victories from five games.

"It's a great feeling to be able to progress to the qualifiers in Zimbabwe, even though we see this as a big accomplishment for USA Cricket, we the players also know that it's going to require lots of improvements for us to compete with the bigger teams.

The players and support staff worked tirelessly prior to and during this event, and the hard work paid off. As I said prior to the playoffs, we have an opportunity to play in two World Cups in less than twelve months, and this group continues to believe and work towards that goal," USA captain Monank Patel said.

Be Ready for Tax Day: Things to Know

Tax Day is coming very soon. Most Americans have just until Tuesday, April 18, to submit their federal tax returns, though you can file returns for an extended period up to October 17, 2023.

Extension

Keep in mind that even if you obtain an extension, you must pay any outstanding taxes by April 18, 2023, in order to avoid interest and penalties. The IRS requires that you estimate your tax liability for the tax year and pay it when filing for the extension or by the deadline.

To file for an extension, you will have to complete IRS Form 4868. This is for an automatic six-month extension on your taxes for those filing a Form 1040, 1040NR, or 1040NR-EZ.

A tax extension should be submitted if you:

- You are coping with a problem, such as a family death or divorce, and

you require additional time to gather documentation for your return.

- You ran out of time to submit your taxes because you were too preoccupied during tax season.

- Are owed a refund but cannot get your taxes done on time.

- Can pay the estimated amount owed but need more time to file.

Where can one get Tax Assistance?

Tax returns can be submitted electronically or by submitting a printed copy to the IRS. For people with an income of \$72,000 or less and who are comfortable doing their own tax returns, the IRS provides free fillable forms. The IRS also offers



free Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) programs to qualified individuals.

One has the option of using commercial tax software or hiring a qualified tax preparer.

Penalties for Not Filing and Not Paying

Forgetting to file a return or failing to pay your taxes results in financial penalties from the IRS.

The penalty for failing to file a return is 5% of your unpaid balance per month or portion of a month, up to 25%, plus interest, which is presently 7%.

A smaller 0.5% penalty of your outstanding debt every month or portion of a month, up to 25%, plus interest is assessed for failure to pay a tax bill.

You can apply for an installment agreement, a long-term monthly payment plan, if you are unable to pay the whole debt.

Unlocking the US Green Card Journey for Aspiring Young Indians

When Dr. Aditi Paul, a researcher and author made the decision to relocate from Kolkata to Michigan for a PhD, she was more concerned about obtaining an F-1 student visa.

“When I graduated, I focused on the next step - get an H-1B work permit to be able to work in the US and then after my H-1B, I focused on the next step - get my green card or permanent residence petition,” she recollects.

“Navigating US immigration is like playing a video game. There are multiple levels to cross. And you are so focused on passing the level you are on that you don't even think about what's coming next,” Paul told *The Times of India*.

She added that through conversations with her sister (a US citizen) and her seniors from grad school, she realised that the only way she could get out of the long wait time for a green card was by qualifying for EB-1 (employment-based - first preference) - the category which is suitable for individuals, who, because of top academic qualifications or exceptional talent, are lucky enough to be on a very fast track.

There are three subcategories of the EB-1 category: EB1-A, EB1-B,

and EB1-C. Paul selected EB1-B "outstanding researcher/professor" out of the three options.

“This was because I was a professor then and it aligned well with my job and the better approval rates of EB1-B. Besides, the faster processing times of EB1-B compared to EB1-A was also a point,” says Paul.

“This was because I was a professor then and it aligned well with my job and the better approval rates of EB1-B. Besides, the faster processing times of EB1-B compared to EB1-A was also a point,” says Paul.

There were several challenges though. “I needed my employer's buy-in to petition for my EB1-B (you cannot self-petition EB1-B, unlike EB1-A). This is where the problems arose. My immigration attorney was not convinced I met the requirements of EB-1 and kept me on hold for eight months,” she remembers.

She worked hard throughout those eight months to improve her profile so that her EB-1 petition would be approved. This included publishing research at conferences and journals with high impact, writing a book with the support of over 20 academics, compiling all the research that cited her work, joining editorial boards

of reputable journals, receiving invitations to judge other researchers' work, speaking engagements at universities, corporations, and important stages, receiving letters of support from professors with a high rate of research output, and being quoted and interviewed by major media outlets. Her efforts were eventually successful, and in only seven days, her green card petition was accepted.

“My goal is to help Indian international students and professionals navigate and take charge of their immigration journey and thrive in the US. Having gone through the arduous international student to green card journey, I know first-hand how challenging immigration can be. That is why my goal is to help the next generation of immigrants navigate their journey with confidence and ease,” she says.

“The US immigration process for Indians can be dehumanising at every stage and you cannot even complain about the unfairness. Sharing knowledge, I feel, could bring back a sense of normalcy for many who are at the receiving end,” she added.

Indian City Makes the World's Best Public Transport List

On Time Out's list of the world's top cities for public transportation, just one Indian city was included. Mumbai, which has a vast suburban rail network, came in last among the 19 cities with excellent public transportation. The financial capital of India edged out Delhi with its famous Metro connectivity to claim the 19th spot on Time Out's

list. To create the rankings, Time Out surveyed more than 20,000 people in 50 locations around the globe. Germany's Berlin, where 97 percent of residents complimented the city's transportation system, was named the world's greatest city for public transportation.

"The subterranean U-Bahn is particularly delightful, an efficient maze of trains moving people from

sight to sight from morning to night," Time Out noted. Mumbai was placed at the end of the list of 19 cities. Eighty one percent of the residents surveyed stated it was simple to use public transportation to get to work. In addition to the suburban rail system, or Mumbai locals as it is known locally, the city has excellent bus, taxi, and autorickshaw access.

SUBSCRIBERS' SECTION

Global Peace One Man, One Woman, One Child at a time

Having grown up in Kuwait all childhood, my parents still lived there when Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. I still remember calling them after I heard Peter Jennings on ABC World News giving the breaking news of the invasion. And telling them to stay away from the windows in case of explosions, as they lived right across from the Amir's Palace in Kuwait City and could see helicopters over the Palace during the early hours of the invasion.

That was the last we, my siblings and I here in the United States, heard from them. They were unreachable for a whole month due to phone lines being cut off.

It was a very scary time for us children here in the United States, not knowing what happened to them. I finally got a call from my parents from Mumbai, India, after they were airlifted from Jordan by Air India planes sent by the government of India.

They had to take what they could and be driven to Jordan for that. And that's when I heard how they had to hide in the basement of their building with others while Iraqi soldiers went door to door knocking with the butt of their guns to find 'traitors'.

Also at the time, my only brother and youngest sibling was visiting us in the US from Kuwait with just his suitcase of clothes on summer vacation from an American school there and couldn't go back since the airport was closed with no news of how long it would be.

My next experience of worldly

unrest was when 9/11 happened. It hit home - my new home, America - because one of the planes was from Boston, where I had recently moved from California. But this time I took courage from another Massachusetts resident, Susan Retik, who lost her husband in one of the World Trade Center towers and despite her unimaginable loss decided to help other widows in Afghanistan stand on their feet, one hen at a time, by selling their eggs.

I am honored to say President Obama awarded my nomination of Susan for the President's Citizens Medal, with the medal for her bravery and compassion, at the White House in 2010.

More recently, worldly unrest has hit me where I live, with the Boston Marathon bombing leaving me in sheer terror and fear. What if, while on the run, the Tsarnaev brothers jump on the T, local subway, and jump off at the Quincy Center (20 minutes from downtown Boston), stop 5 walking steps outside my apartment building, get in through the back door facing the T station, leaving a crack open many times to hide from law enforcement hunting for them?

And finally, the unprovoked war in Ukraine, killing innocent civilians in their daily lives, is 'the straw that breaks the proverbial camel's back', and I have decided to 'be the change I want to see in the world' and launched my new initiative, "The Global Peace Secretariat." The initiative is based on Mahatma Gandhi's message of peace and nonviolence on his birthday, October 2. This day is observed

by the United Nations as the International Day of Nonviolence and marked the 15th anniversary in 2022.

The Global Peace Secretariat, an initiative not yet recognised as a non-profit, seeks to build global peace one man, one woman, one child at a time by bringing together non-profit organisations, students and communities around the world.

To that end, it offers, among other things, a free course on Nonviolent Communication in our daily lives at work, home and play, developed by and in collaboration with Gandhi Smriti in Delhi, India, where Mahatma Gandhi spent his last 144 days. It is a self-taught course that can be downloaded from <https://www.globalpeacesecretariat.com> and completed in about an hour over the weekend; at the end, you will receive a certificate of completion from Gandhi Smriti via email. There is also a free 6-month virtually taught version of Smriti for groups of 15-20 people.

With these challenging times of global and domestic unrest, mass shootings and *Black Lives Matter* incidents, I want to do what I can to have a peaceful planet living in harmony, like Mahatma Gandhi's grandchildren who I have been blessed and privileged to know and meet, who carry on his work into their late 80's & 90's golden age years because it's like the late Senator Ted Kennedy said 'the work goes on, the cause endures, the hope still lives, and the dream shall never die.'

- Kumu Gupta

THE FORTNIGHT THAT WAS

Richard Verma Confirmed for Top US State Department Position

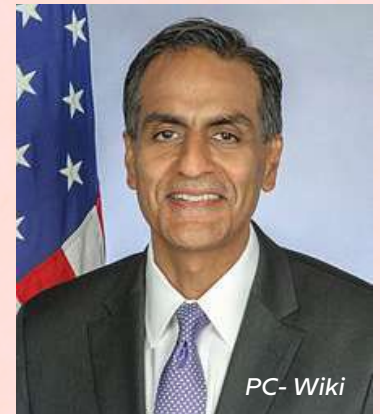
The United States Senate on April 30 confirmed Indian-American Richard Verma by a vote of 67–26 for a key position in the State Department.

The US Senate confirmed former US ambassador to India Richard Verma as Deputy Secretary of State, Management and Resources, a position which is normally seen as the CEO of the powerful State Department in the US Government, *PTI* reported.

From January 2015 to January 2017, Verma held the position of US Ambassador to India. He is currently Mastercard's Chief Legal Officer and Head of Global Public Policy.

During the Obama administration, Richard Verma was also Assistant Secretary of State for Legislative Affairs. Earlier in his career, he was National Security Advisor to United States Senator Harry Reid while he was Democratic Whip, Minority Leader, and then served as Majority Leader of the United States Senate.

He is the recipient of numerous awards and decorations, including the Distinguished Service Medal from the Department of State, the International Affairs Fellowship from the Council on Foreign Relations, and the Meritorious Service Medal from the United States Air Force.



PC- Wiki

Bus Accident Claims Life of Indian-Origin Data Expert

A 47-year-old Indian-American data analyst was killed on the spot after being struck by a bus at Boston's international airport where he had gone to pick up a friend, according to a media report.

Vishwachand Kolla worked for Takeda Pharmaceutical Company and was a native of Andhra Pradesh.

On March 28, according to US media, the event happened while he was waiting to pick up a visiting artist from the airport traveling to Boston at Logan International Airport in Boston.

"Kolla was standing on the driver's side of his Acura SUV while, simultaneously, the Dartmouth Transportation motor coach was traveling on the roadway. The investigation indicates that the middle of the bus made contact with Kolla and dragged him along the driver's side of his SUV," State Police spokesman Dave Procopio said in a statement.

An off-duty nurse rushed to help Kolla but he died at the scene, the report added.

Troopers interviewed the bus driver, a 54-year-old woman, and inspected the bus. She has not been charged at this point in the investigation, the report said.

In a statement, Dartmouth Coach said, "Our deepest sympathies are with everyone impacted by this evening's incident at Logan Airport. We're working in conjunction with the Massachusetts State Police and Massport to gather further information." Kolla worked at Takeda in the company's Global Oncology division. Takeda Industries told *Boston.com* in an email that they are "deeply saddened to learn of his unexpected passing." "We send our heartfelt condolences to Vishwachand's family, friends, and loved ones during this difficult time and will be looking at how we can help, offer any support as we respect the family's privacy during this time," they wrote.

Edison Apartment Blaze Destroys Homes, Impacts Dozens

Just after 3 pm on March 3, a two-alarm fire ripped through an apartment building on Waterford Road in Edison.

The Red Cross was on hand to assist two dozen families. A total of 74 persons were left homeless.

There were no casualties, according to Edison Mayor Sam Joshi. Authorities are currently investigating the cause of the incident.



Chef Raghavan Iyer Loses Battle to Cancer at 61

Raghavan Iyer -- a chef, cookbook author, culinary teacher, and curry master -- died on March 31 after a lengthy battle with cancer. He was 61. Iyer, according to the *New York Times*, taught Americans how to make Indian food. He has seven cookbooks to his credit, including the legendary *660 Curries*.

New York Times reported that the cause of his death was pneumonia complicated by colorectal cancer that had metastasized to his lungs and brain. He lived in Minneapolis and was visiting San Francisco at his death.

In one of his final interviews with *BBC* in March this year, he talked about the latest - and last - book, *On the Curry Trail: Chasing the Flavor That Seduced the World*. He said, "The book is telling the story of how curry travelled out of India, all around the world." Through his books, he wanted his readers to know that there is more to curry than just curry powders. He described the book as his "love letter to the world of curries" and hoped it would be his "lasting legacy to the richness and vastness of this dish simply called curry".



Missing Texas Boy Feared Dead, Parents Sought in India

A missing 6-year-old boy from Texas, whose parents fled to India from the US and face felony charges of abandoning and endangering their child, is believed to be dead, a top police official has said. Everman Police Chief Craig Spencer said that the search for the missing boy is now a death investigation and they are attempting to locate and recover his body. Noel Rodriguez-Alvarez, a special needs child, was last seen in November, shortly after the birth of his twin sisters in October last year.

"We currently have active felony warrants for the arrest of the mother Cindy Rodriguez Singh and Arshdeep Singh for abandoning and endangering a child, which is a second-degree felony," Spencer said at a press conference.

"We want these fugitives arrested and extradited to the United States so that we can seek answers for the disappearance of Noel," he said. Noel was one of 10 children to Cindy. Three siblings reportedly lived with grandparents, while Noel and the others lived with their mother in squalor in a shed in Everman, a suburb of Fort Worth. Singh, the boy's Indian-origin stepfather, also lived in the filthy shack.

The search for Noel began after the Texas Department of Family Services asked on March 20 that police in Everman conduct a welfare check, Everman police have said. On March 22, Noel's mother, Cindy, her husband and six children got on a plane and travelled to India, Spencer said, adding Noel was not with them, *NBC News* quoted police as saying.

"We are working with our federal partners and they are engaged with us. They are on the case working side by side. As we get more information, we will update," the police said. "We rely on our relationship with international agencies. When they have information to share back with us, they will obviously communicate that with us, but they're working on it," Spencer said in response to a question on status update with the Indian government. He said the circumstantial evidence, paired with interviews and work that has eliminated all other possibilities, has led police to believe that Noel is dead. Investigators concluded that Noel was likely dead after disproving multiple lies regarding his whereabouts told by Cindy.

"However, thanks to technology interviews, search warrants and the assistance of authorities in Mexico, investigators verified each one of these claims. Throughout the investigation, we learned that Cindy had been known to be abusive and neglectful," Spencer said. He said investigators learned through interviews that Cindy referred to Noel as "evil, possessed or having a demon in him" and believed he would harm the twins.

"Relatives and witnesses stated that food and water were often withheld from Noel because Cindy did not like changing Noel's dirty diapers. A relative even witnessed Cindy strike Noel in the face with keys because he drank water," he said. When Noel was last seen, he was described as "appearing unhealthy and malnourished," Spencer said. "We have not located any information that would suggest the child has been sold for traffic. We have additionally been able to disprove stories that Noel was given to other family members," Spencer said. "Although the course of this investigation has changed our commitments, we will continue to fight for Noel," he asserted.

"We are engaging with several experts and highly qualified organisations to assist us in this venture. Some organised searches have already begun and are expected to continue in the coming days," Spencer said.

President Droupadi Murmu Confers Padma Awards 2023

President Droupadi Murmu conferred Padma awards to distinguished awardees across diverse fields at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, BJP president JP Nadda and several Union ministers were also present at the function.

A total of 53 awardees were given the honour on April 5. The other distinguished personalities were given the awards on March 22.

Padma Vibhushan, the country's second-highest civilian award, is given for exceptional and distinguished service, Padma Bhushan for distinguished service of a high order, and Padma Shri for distinguished service in any field.

Author and Philanthropist Sudha Murty was conferred the Padma Bhushan for social work. Actor Raveena Tandon and music composer M.M. Keeravaani, best known for RRR, were awarded the fourth highest civilian award, the Padma Shri.

PC- twitter/@rashtrapatibhvn



President Droupadi Murmu presents Padma Shri to Raveena Ravi Tandon



Raveena Tandon led the FIA India Day Parade in New York



Veteran socialist leader and former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Late Mulayam Singh Yadav, Medical Professional Dilip Mahalanabis, Physicist Deepak Dhar, Novelist S.L. Bhyrappa, Vedic Scholar Tridandi Chinna Jeeyar Swamiji, Shri Anand Kumar, the founder of Super 30, a pioneering educator who has helped underprivileged students get admission into India's premier education institutions were among the few of many notable personalities who received the Padma awards.

Many of the awardees are unsung heroes who have been silently working for the betterment of society and people, and whom the Narendra Modi government has been honoring ever since it came to power in 2014, officials said.

While speaking about her interaction with President Murmu, Raveena said, "It was a very beautiful moment. President Murmu told me she has seen all my movies. It's so sweet of her that she said that it's an honour for her to give me this award. I told her that it was my honour that I am receiving this from you."



President Droupadi Murmu presents Padma Shri to Anand Kumar



Anand Kumar graced the occasion of FIA's Dance Pe Chance and India Day Parade in New York

NEWSMAKERS

Amit Kshatriya to Head NASA's New Moon to Mars Programme

An Indian-origin software and robotics engineer has been named the first head of NASA's newly founded Moon to Mars program. NASA intends to use this initiative to establish a long-term presence on the Moon in preparation for humanity's next giant step to Mars.

Kshatriya will serve as first head of the office, with immediate effect, the agency said in a release on March 30. This new office resides within the Exploration Systems Development Mission Directorate, reporting to its Associate Administrator Jim Free, it added.

"The Moon to Mars Program Office will help prepare NASA to carry out our bold missions to the Moon

and land the first humans on Mars," NASA Administrator Bill Nelson said in a statement. "The golden age of exploration is happening right now, and this new office will help ensure that NASA successfully establishes a long-term lunar presence needed to prepare for humanity's next giant leap to the Red Planet."

In his new role, Kshatriya will be responsible for programme planning and implementation for human missions to the Moon and Mars.

The program will include functions such as hardware development, mission integration, and risk management. It will use the Artemis Moon missions to usher in a new era of scientific discovery and to prepare for human journeys to Mars.



PC- NASA

5 Indian-Origin Women Named in '100 Most Influential Women in US Finance' List

Five female executives of Indian descent have been included to Barron's prestigious annual list of the "100 Most Influential Women in US Finance" for taking leadership roles in the financial services sector and helping shape its future.

"The list honours established and emerging leaders in financial services, the corporate world, non-profit organisations, and government," the magazine said in a press release.

Anu Aiyengar from JPMorgan, Ariel Investment's Rupal J. Bhansali, Sonal Desai of Franklin Templeton,

Goldman Sachs Meena Flynn and Savita Subramanian from Bank of America are among the 100 women who were named in the fourth annual version of the prestigious list.

Anu Aiyengar, assumed the role of global head of Mergers and Acquisitions (M&A) at JPMorgan in January after serving as a co-head of the division since 2020.

Rupal J. Bhansali, is the chief investment officer and portfolio manager of Ariel Investments' global equity strategies. She is a member of the board of directors of 100 Women in Finance.

Sonal Desai made history in 2018 by becoming the first woman chief investment officer in Franklin Templeton global investment fund. According to the release, she currently oversees \$137 billion in assets.

Meena Flynn, is a co-head of global private wealth management at Goldman Sachs Group, whose career in finance began soon after a sports injury.

Savita Subramanian, the head of US equity and quantitative strategy at Bank of America, also made it to the list.

PC- americanbanker, Barrons, linkedin, goldmansachs, southasianwomen



Anu Aiyengar



Rupal J. Bhansali



Sonal Desai



Meena Flynn



Savita Subramanian

Religious Events

Ved Mandir



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Bholaa

Wish the Great Action, Style & Cast Was Backed Up by Better Writing
 (2023 / Action Thriller / Cinema Release)

Directed by: Ajay Devgn

Cast: Ajay Devgn, Tabu, Deepak Dobriyal, Sanjay Mishra, Gajraj Rao, Vineet Kumar



Photo: Bholaa Trailor

Bholaa could loosely be categorized as a chase movie.

There's a huge cache of drugs worth "dus hazaar karor". Obviously, there's a chase around it. Some very interesting-looking main baddies, one interesting-looking superhero, dozens of side-baddies with their distinctive attack styles, and one very important TRUCK is what constitutes the crux of the film.

The truck needs to reach somewhere, and it takes more than 50 percent of the film's footage to reach its destination, and no, it doesn't contain the much sought-after drugs. Despite my lack of driving skills, I felt compelled to help it reach where it had to, just so that the story could move forward. But the writers strongly believed that "The journey is more important than the destination."

Bholaa has a decent base story (I haven't watched the original), a cast that I would call superb, lots of rustic styles and action, decent VFX, a good adrenaline-pumping background score, and I would say, fairly good direction.

And yet it doesn't ever reach its desired destination, though the consignment of the truck thankfully did. What it lacks is a good screenplay, which is the backbone of any film.

It does remain largely engaging, though, especially, if you are an AD

fan or a logic-defying action lover, or if you can enjoy the main cast's presence and performances. But it is lavishly interspersed with sequences that drag or are borderline irritating. So, the adrenaline works in spurts and you remain invested because you are curious to see what's next.

What also helped were the cast and the interestingly designed characters. Each character had a distinct style and get-up, which seemed fascinating and the lead characters have very dashing entry sequences.

Speaking of performances, the most impressive is Deepak Dobriyal in a menacing negative role. He is outstanding in a character that is way out of his comfort zone and diametrically opposed to the adorable characters he has always played.

Ajay Devgn is good in his trademark brooding style.

Sanjay Mishra, as always, is a pleasure to watch.

Vinnet Kumar looks menacing and scary in his minuscule role.

Gajraj Rao is good in a very different role.

Tabu, as always adds great value to the script even in "by now oft-repeated cop role". But I feel she was underutilized considering her potential.

We have seen Ajay Devgn's potential and work as a director. His

hard work is evident in most of the departments even in this film. But I do wish they had worked better on the screenwriting rather than just concentrating on the action and style. Also, tighter editing and a slightly shorter run would have helped.

Every time I see an entertainer that has an influence of south-style loud treatment (not tweaked enough to suit our palate), I get more and more hopeless. I add the tweak angle as we have had superb remakes like *Singham*. I shared this after *Shamshera* and I reiterate this now. What works for south films might not necessarily work for us. Hindi films, in a bid to entertain like loud south films, are losing their unique style. "Na idhar ke na udhar ke" is how I would describe the situation at best.

Overall, the film is a good one-time watch at best, for the select audience as mentioned in the review.

I enjoyed watching it but kept wishing it was better.



ROCKET BOYS 2

INSPIRATIONAL, INSIGHTFUL & ENGROSSING
MIX OF FACTS & FACTS!

Rocket Boys 2 (SonyLiv Series)

Director Abhay Pannu

Creator Nikhil Advani

Cast Jim Sarbh, Ishwak Singh, Regina Cassandra, Saba Azad, Rajat Kapoor, Dibyendu Bhattacharya, Namit Das, KC Shankar



Photo: Rocket Boys 2

Rocket Boys is one of the finest Hindi series that I have seen in a long time, probably my second favorite after *Scam 92*.

It is the story of two great men who paved the way and shaped the future for oncoming generations.

We owe their perseverance and passion to where we stand today in the field of space research or nuclear armament, or the benefits that a nation reaps from the two aspects.

The show is a fictional account that revolves around two geniuses who were close friends but often found themselves at crossroads with each other. They had vastly different ideologies and different fields that they were passionate about, but they had one thing in common: love and ambition for the nation. They most often disagreed with each other and yet were each other's closest supporters.

We have all studied briefs about Dr. Homi Jahangir Bhabha (Father of the Indian Nuclear Program) and Dr. Vikram Sarabhai (Father of the Indian Space Research Program), but interesting is the narrative style of the show, and so beautifully have they etched the characters that you fall in love with them and your heart overflows with reverence.

The show focuses on Dr. Sarabhai's personal life along with his professional life and passion for space research, while Dr. Bhabha's personal life has been briefly touched upon in reference to a close friend. I am quite impressed by the fact that these personal tracks do not slacken the story and blend well with the narrative.

But what makes the story absolutely engrossing is their struggles owing to India's economic and political scenario of that era. The story sheds light on how Jawahar Lal Nehru and Indira Gandhi, after

personal bouts of doubt and ifs and buts, supported the nuclear program despite stiff opposition from many quarters. The show introduces a young and enthusiastic Dr. Kalam and also tells us how Dr. Raja Ramanna took to fruition the efforts of Dr. Bhabha and Dr. Sarabhai and spearheaded India's nuclear tests.

What lends the series a thriller-like quality is the international geopolitics and conspiracies at play.

The Cold War, the role of the CIA, the international politics around nuclear armament and non-proliferation, the volatile political scene after Nehru ji's death, Lal Bahadur Shastri's mysterious death and Dr. Bhabha's assassination (an event that I knew was inevitable but that managed to give me quite a few tense moments, racing heartbeats, and a great deal of heartache)

I am surprised at how the makers have been able to pull off and ace so many aspects admirably.

The writers deserve credit for designing the entire show in a way that tells us an inspiring story that needed to be told, adds a human and emotional touch, throws in some fictional elements without affecting the real and important events, lends it an almost edge-of-the-seat kind of thrill, and gives us a culmination that bestows overwhelming joy and pride.

The second admirable aspect is the cast. The actors not only have great resemblance in terms of looks and get-up but also deliver superb performances.

I do not have enough words to praise Jim Sarbh's delivery of Dr. Bhabha. I have yet to read and find out what kind of personality he had in real life, but Jim's Homi is razor-sharp, vibrant, and dynamic, and his chutzpah is most adorable. He has a "Mai Hoon Na" air about him, one who could make everything possible,

one who could steer the ship no matter how bad the storms. With his assassination, you feel an intensely painful loss.

Ishwak Singh lends a sober, idealistic, and grounded hue to Dr. Sarabhai's portrayal. There's a quiet charm about Ishwak's Sarabhai.

Regina Cassandra looks superb as Mrinalini Sarabhai. Her elegance, poise, and, most importantly, her stoicism as Mrinalini is amazing.

Saba Azad, Dibyendu Bhattacharya, Namit Das, Rajat Kapoor and KC Shankar deliver good performances and lend great support. The only actor who I felt did not fit well was the one who played Indira Gandhi. She couldn't exude the aura that was required.

The series evokes so many emotions in you for the two men, to whom we will forever be indebted. Their journey and the roadblocks they navigated through make us realize how difficult it must have been for them to accomplish what they did. We owe so much to Dr. Bhabha's stubborn streak and passion for what he believed in. Had they not persevered, had they not dug their heels in, we wouldn't be where we are today.

I highly recommend the series, not only for the real story it conveys but also for how well they convey it. Those who are yet to watch are lucky that the two seasons are available now. We had to last through a painful wait of a few months for the S2 to drop in.

It is worth every moment of your time.



Hollywood A-Listers Sparkle at NMACC Grand Opening

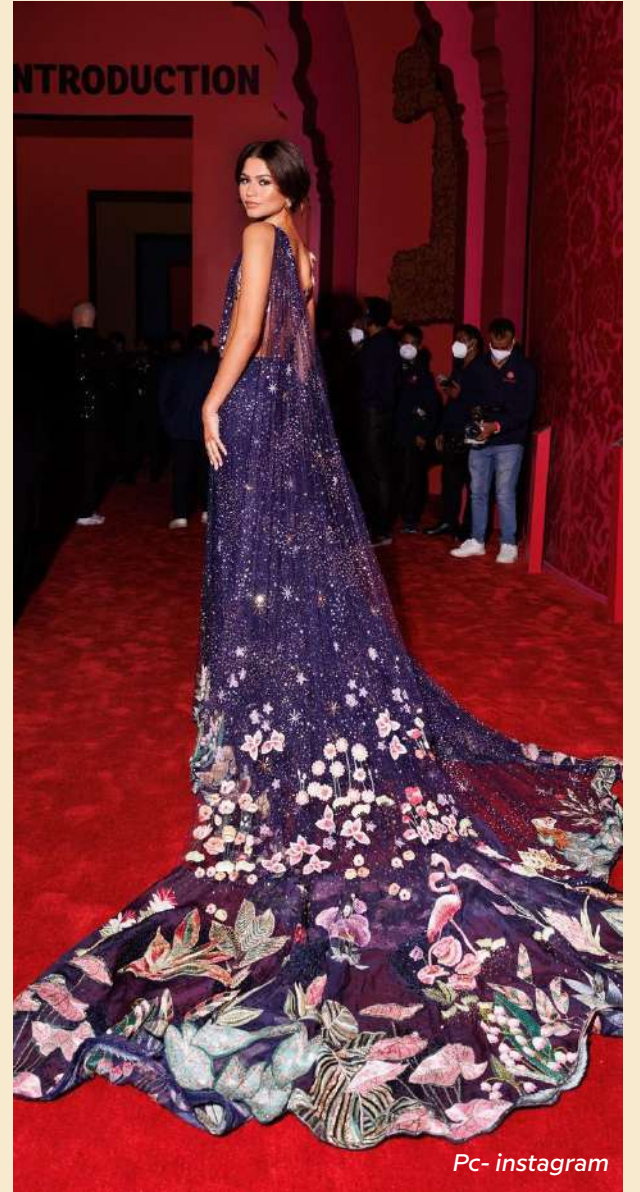
The spectacular launch of the dream project Nita Mukesh Ambani Culture Centre (NMACC) was attended by some of Bollywood and Hollywood's top celebrities.

Nita Ambani's dream project, housed within the Bandra-Kurla Complex's Jio Global Centre, intends to conserve and promote Indian arts.

Zendaya, Tom Holland, Penelope Cruz, Gigi Hadid, Nick Jonas, and French fashion designer

Christian Louboutin were among the Hollywood celebrities who attended the NMACC Grand Opening.

Zendaya wore a shimmering sequined saree and an embroidered top to the event, while Tom looked sharp in a suit. Gigi looked stunning in a beige and gold drape and accessorized with a slew of desi bangles. Penelope wore a thigh-high slit pink dress with feathery embellishments.



PC- Instagram



Cardi B Joins Voice Cast of Film 'Baby Sharks Big Movie!'

American rap musician, Cardi B, has now joined the voice cast of the upcoming animation film 'Baby Shark's Big Movie!', reported *Variety*.

Together with her family, Cardi B joined the voice cast of the movie. She will play Sharki B while her husband Offset plays Offshark and her kids Kulture and Wave play Kulture Sharki and Wavey Shark, respectively.

According to a synopsis from

the producers 'Baby Shark's Big Movie!' sees Baby Shark is forced to leave behind the world he loves after his family moves to the big city. He

must adjust to his new life without his best friend William. When Baby Shark encounters an evil starfish named Stariana who plans to steal his gift of song to dominate all underwater music, he must break her spell to restore harmony to the seas, according to *Variety*.

The movie will have its US premiere exclusively on Paramount+ later this year, and Paramount+ in other countries where the service is offered will soon follow.



PC- Cardi B Instagram

Ishaan Khatter to Star Alongside Nicole Kidman in 'The Perfect Couple'

Ishaan Khatter, has joined the cast of Nicole Kidman's limited series 'The Perfect Couple.'

According to *Variety*, a US-based media house, the official logline states, "Amelia Sacks (Hewson) is about to marry into one of the wealthiest families on Nantucket. Her disapproving future mother-in-law, famous novelist Greer Garrison Winbury (Kidman), has spared no expense in planning what promises to be the premiere wedding of the season — until a body turns up on the beach. As secrets come to light, the stage is set for a real-life investigation that feels plucked from the pages of one of Greer's novels. Suddenly, everyone is a suspect."

The series is an official adaptation of the Elin Hilderbrand novel. Apart from them, the series also stars Liev Schreiber, Eve Hewson, Billy Howle, Dakota Fanning, Meghann Fahy, Jack Reynor, Sam Nivola, Mia Isac, Donna

Lynne Champlin, and Isabelle Adjani.

The series will stream exclusively on the OTT platform *Netflix*. Ishaan will be seen portraying the role of Shooter

Dival, the groom's best friend.

The makers of the series are all set to begin production work in April second week.



PC- outlookindia



Diana Penty joins Amitabh Bachchan in 'Section 84'

The creators of Amitabh Bachchan's *Section 84* announced that actress Diana Penty had joined the cast. Ribhu Dasgupta of *Te3n* and *The Girl On The Trailer* fame wrote and directed the courtroom drama thriller.

Taking to Instagram, trade analyst Taran Adarsh shared the news and wrote, "DIANA PENTY JOINS AMITABH BACHCHAN IN COURTROOM DRAMA 'SECTION 84'... #DianaPenty joins the cast of #Section84, which stars #AmitabhBachchan in the lead... Directed by #RibhuDasgupta."

Diana said it has been a dream-come-true moment for her to be working with Bachchan. "Section 84 is very special to me. Not only because it is a riveting story, but also because it is a privilege to work with the legendary

Mr. Bachchan. A dream finally realised, to be honest! Ribhu Dasgupta has a very clear vision of what he wants and I am so happy to be collaborating with him on this film. I know this is going to be an experience I will remember, with much to learn from the very best," the actor, known, said in a statement.

Section 84 is presented by Reliance Entertainment in association with Jio Studios and produced by Reliance Entertainment and Film Hangar.



PC- instagram/ Diana

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