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FIA BIDS FAREWELL TO DCG SINHA

FIA organizes reception for outgoing DCG of India-New York Shri Shatrughna Sinha as he heads back to India, leaving behind a legacy of strong administration and service to the community



Team FIA with outgoing Deputy Counsel General of India-New York Shri Shatrughna Sinha at his farewell reception

#NEW YORK

Warm, heartfelt words filled the air on Friday evening when the Indian-American community of the Tri-state areas of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut got to-

gether to host a grand farewell reception for outgoing Deputy Counsel General of India-New York Shri Shatrughna Sinha. The event was organized at Akbar Restaurant in Edison, NJ.

“It’s an honour to call you a friend, a fraternity brother of FIA. The interactions we have had in the numerous states in the

north-east are the memories that FIA will cherish for a long time,” said Ankur Vaidya, Chairman of the Federation of Indian Associations. Highlighting DCG Sinha’s promptness in helping community members, Vaidya recalled the time when the Yogi Divine Society members had reached out to FIA after the passing of YDS founder

Shri Hariprasad Swamiji in India. “The DCG said they would open the consulate and process the visas. About 164 people got the visa then. Some 12 of them even got went to get the US passport then. That is how we felt about the warm hospitality of the DCG,” he said.

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Expressing pride at having known DCG Sinha, FIA President Anil Bansal said, "Life is a journey. Among those you meet, there are a few who leave a lasting impression on you. DCG Sinha has been one such person who has always been ready to help everyone with a smile. I am sure India is proud of him."

DCG Sinha thanked the In-

dian-American community for being "a great pillar of support" without whom "we (the consulate) would not have been able to achieve what we could". Complimenting FIA for completing 50 years, he said, "Not many organizations can last that long. This speaks volumes of the values FIA carries and the support it enjoys."

The Pravasi Bharatiya Sanman, the highest honour bestowed by the Government of India on an

individual or organization, was awarded to FIA for its contributions to the community and strengthening bilateral relations between India and the US, Sinha said.

He also spoke about FIA's assistance with shipping a large consignment of medical supplies, donated by the New York City Council to India to tide over the health crisis because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Reiterating the role of the Indian-American community in the bilateral relationship of the two countries, he said, "We have shared interests, but more than that we have shared values—those of democracy, free speech, diversity..." On the occasion, he presented a cheque of \$5,000 to Abhimanyu Mishra, the youngest Grandmaster in the history of chess, on behalf of FIA as a token of appreciation.



Team FIA with DCG Shatrughna Sinha



DCG Sinha & Mrs Sinha being Honored by the FIA Executive team



DCG Sinha Presents a cheque to youngest chess Grandmaster Abhimanyu Mishra



FIA Senior Advisor Padma Shri H R Shah cuts his birthday cake in presence of DCG Sinha and others



Warm Reception



Ankur Vaidya, FIA Chairman



Mahesh Bhagia, Edison Democratic Org. Chairman



DCG Sinha speaks



Dr. Avinash Gupta, BJANA



Anil Bansal, FIA President



Vice Chairman Bipin Patel, FIA Board Member



Padma Shri Sudhir Parikh, Senior Advisor, FIA Board Member



Several members of the Indian American community had gathered on Friday evening for the farewell reception of DCG Sinha



Sam Joshi, Democratic Mayoral candidate for Edison



Kenny Desai, President of the TAK Group, speaks at the farewell reception



Radha Gopinath Temple Edison, Priest, Sri Sarvalakshana Das



Sai Temple Edison, Founder & Priest, Sri Raghu Sharma Sankaramanchi

FIA New-England Honors Community Leaders

Rhode Island Governor Daniel McKee felicitated Indian-Americans at the Independence Day Celebrations organised by FIA on August 15 this year at the State House

#PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

On August 15 this year, the Federation of Indian Associations-New England celebrated the 75th Independence Day of India at the Rhode Island State House. This was the first major celebration for the newly formed chapter of FIA. His Excellency the Governor of the State of Rhode Island Daniel McKee hoisted the Indian Tricolor alongside the American flag.

On the occasion, individuals who have served the community over past several years were felicitated by Governor McKee.

The event was attended by several high-ranking officials of the State government including State Treasurer Seth Magaziner, besides a large number of members of the Indian Diaspora from across New England.

Vibhav Rathore and Shubhanjay Khanal have been awarded for community volunteer services.

Ram Nehra



Ram Nehra moved to the US from Kenya. He had a very successful career as a pharmacist. After his retirement, he joined his wife Nishi's entrepreneurial journey and together they have been successful small business owners in Rhode Island.

Nehra always wanted to help bring education to those who are least able to access it. When

he learned about underserved communities in remote villages in India, he immediately took up the cause and became the founding member of Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation of USA.

The organization works with Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation of India to run single-teacher primary schools in 100,000 extremely remote villages in India. From 4,000 villages in 1988, the organization expanded to 100,000 villages in 2020. Now, it also has programs that bring digital literacy, health services and skill training to villagers, impacting the lives of over 100 million people. His work has been a game changer for millions in remote villages in India.

Dr Madhu Jhaveri



Dr. Madhu Jhaveri joined the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth in 1974 in Civil Engineering department and retired as a full professor in 2006. He was extremely popular among his students for his excellence in teaching. During his long career, he served as a mentor to many students and junior faculty members. His help was not limited to academics but extended to providing a ride to the airport, helping them find housing, providing food and counselling, etc. Whatever the challenge, they could count on his support like a family elder.

Along the way, Prof Jhaveri founded and/or served in senior positions of community organi-

zations which are still thriving. These include India Students Association at UMass Dartmouth, World Hindu Council of America (VHPA) and International Hindi Association. He started a week-long summer camp for Children in 1979 to impart Hindu ethical values to them which served as a model for camps in New Jersey and other states.

Harish & Binni Dang



For over 50 years, Harish Dang and Binni Dang have been helping new Indian migrants become US citizens.

Harish Dang graduated from Harvard and became a financial consultant. In this role, he assisted new migrant-citizens of Indian origin plan for their financial wellbeing. Mr and Mrs Dang

created a radio program in 1973 called 'Sounds of India' which they ran for 40 years. Using that as a pulpit, the Dangs brought together the then-small community and nurtured it to grow into one of the most flourishing ones. That radio program shared the joys of American citizenship, where cultural diversity is celebrated

Mahesh Patel



Since immigrating in 1977, Mahesh Patel has been helping new immigrant families settle in the US, strengthen the Indian community in Rhode Island Massachusetts and create opportunities for others to learn about the Indian culture.

He is chairman of the Rhode Island Hindu Temple and past

board member of the Indian Association of Rhode Island. He also serves as trustee of the Attleboro Library and is on the board of Attleboro Art Museum, the Massachusetts Hotel and Motel Association, the Asian American Hotel Owners Association and as a Rotarian for over 25 years.

Patriotism in the air



Tushar Patel, the event sponsor of FIA-NE's 75th Indian Independence Day celebrations at Rhode Island State House, was seen on the stage waving the flag.

TRIBUTE PAID TO US MARTYRS IN KABUL

INDIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY OF BOSTON ORGANIZED CANDLELIGHT VIGIL AT THE CITY HALL OF MARLBOROUGH, MASSACHUSETTS

Dozens of Indian Americans, led by Abhishek Singh, President of FIA's New England Chapter, and other community leaders like Subbu Kota, Raj Gupta, Brij Sharma, and ex-member of Rhode Island House of Representatives Robert Lancia, paid tributes to the 11 US Marines, an army soldier, and a Navy medic killed in Kabul in the August 26 suicide bomb attack, by organizing a candlelight vigil at the City Hall of Marlborough, Massachusetts, in the evening of August 30.

Johanny Rosaria, 25, a Marine sergeant from Lawrence, Massachusetts, was among the 13 US services members killed in the attack. The others included Lance Cpl. David Lee Espinoza, Marine Sgt. Nicole Gee, Marine Staff Sgt. Darin Taylor Hoover, Staff Sgt. Ryan Knauss, Lance Cpl. Rylee McCollum, Cpl. Hunter Lopez, Lance Cpl. Kareem Nikoui, Marine Corps Cpl. Humberto Sanchez, Marine Cpl. Daegan William-Tyler Page, Lance Cpl. Jared Schmitz, Sailor. Maxton Soviak, and Marine Lance Cpl. Dylan Merola.

The photos of the 11 Marines, an Army soldier, and a Navy medic killed in the attack were placed amid US and Indian flags at the

vigil. The dignitaries and other participants lit a candle and paid homage to the US service members for their supreme sacrifice.

"These 13 brave service members put themselves in danger to protect American values and American and Afghan people. We are all heartbroken about their death. They are gone but they will never be forgotten," Singh said.

Robert Lancia, who served as chaplain in the US Navy from 1987 to 2004, recited a prayer for the departed souls.

"The lives we lost were lives given in the service of America. They are true warriors and sacrificed their lives for the American people," he said.

Subbu Kota said their courage and selflessness represent the highest ideals of America.

"On behalf of the Indian American community here and elsewhere, we pay heartfelt tributes to the US troops for their sacrifice," he said.

Brij Bhushan Garg paid tributes to the fallen soldiers and asked the audience to join him in chanting the Gayatri Mantra and to pray for peace.

Rakesh led the audience in observing a mo-

ment of silence for the departed souls, while Mukta thanked the Indian American community for taking part in the candlelight vigil.

The US personnel were among nearly 200 persons killed in deadly blasts, claimed by ISIS-K, in Kabul in Afghanistan last week. The blasts happened amid evacuation exercises by the US troops in the war-torn country.



Community leader Subbu Kota (extreme right) with FIA-NE president Abhishek Singh at the vigil



Indian American community members pay tribute to the martyrs

COMING UP: LABOR DAY NEXT WEEK

IT FALLS ON SEPT 6 THIS YEAR

Labor Day will be celebrated on September 6, the first Monday of the month. This day honors the American labor movement.

In the late 19th century, when the trade union and labor movements in the US grew, it was proposed that a day be fixed to celebrate labor.

Public gatherings, parades, picnics and other events are part of the Labor Day celebrations.

In some cities, events include fireworks display as well. The long weekend preceding the day is known as the Labor Day Weekend.

In several other countries, Labor Day is celebrated on May 1, also the International Labor Day.

Back to school

The Labor Day marks the end of the summer season. Soon after the day, schools start reopening. The Covid-19 pandemic kept children away from school. However, now most of them will get back in the classrooms. Several schools have set their calendar.

In New York, a guide for vaccines, mask, quarantine protocol and remote learning was released last week.

Authorities say they expect fewer disruptions to learning.

GANESH CHATURTHI: MORE THAN A FESTIVAL

THE 10-DAY FESTIVAL TO WORSHIP LORD GANESHA WILL BEGIN ON SEPTEMBER 10

The season of festive celebrations is on in full swing. Rakshabandhan was celebrated on August 22, followed by Krishna Janmashtami on August 30. It's time now for Ganesh Chaturthi.

The 10-day festival will begin on September 10 and end on Anant Chaturdashi on September 19, when the Lord will be given the traditional farewell by immersing his idol in water. It is believed that as He leaves, He takes

away all obstacles from your life.

Carnival re-emerges

According to some reports, Ganesh Chaturthi was celebrated publicly earlier, but became a private celebration after the British rule began.

Following the 1857 revolution (read more about it on the following page), the British had banned public gatherings. However, they had allowed religious gatherings like Friday prayers at the Mosque.

Bal Gangadhar Tilak, or Lok-



manya Tilak, was one of the prominent leaders of that time who was fighting for freedom. The Hindu society was entirely

divided along caste lines. Lord Ganesha is worshipped by people of all castes. Tilak saw this as an opportunity to bring together Brahmins (uppermost caste among Hindus) and non-Brahmins. Around 1893, he revived public celebration of the 10-day Ganesh Chaturthi, popularizing it like a national festival. He also started the tradition of immersing the idol in water at the end of the period of worship. The Ganesh pandals thus became a common meeting place for people.

1857: India's first war of independence

Dubbed as the Great Rebellion, Revolt of 1857, Sepoy Mutiny, etc., the uprising nearly a hundred years before India's independence shocked the British. It failed because of lack of unity and efficient leadership, but it did sow the seeds of nationalism among people

India got independence from the British rule in 1947. But an uprising, which came to be known as the first war of India's independence took place nine decades earlier. Though the rebellion was scattered, its sheer intensity took the British by surprise.

The year was 1857.

The rebellion was called the Sepoy Mutiny, because it was fuelled by large-scale dissent among Indian soldiers serving in the British Army. But what happened was not a mutiny. It was a national uprising, triggered by the perceived attack on cultural and religious ethos both by Hindus and Muslims.

It may be recalled that the British, like many others, had come to India for trade. The East India Company was formed to trade in the Indian Ocean region, but soon seized large parts of the Indian subcontinent, ushering in British rule in India. Over the years, the Company started taking over the reins of states, leading to lot of dissent.

Like other major rebellion, the uprising of 1857 did not happen overnight, and other factors contributed to it.

The Doctrine of Lapse, introduced by 1846 by Lord Dalhousie as an annexation policy, was one of the major reasons of resentment against the British.

Under this policy, if a ruler of a princely state died without a male heir, the state would be annexed by the East India Company. The British took over several states under this doctrine.

It was this rule that Rani Laxmibai of

Jhansi opposed. Her husband Maharaja Gangadhar Rao died without a biological male heir. Laxmibai adopted a son whom she named Damador Rao. However, the British refused to accept him as the heir to the throne and prepared to annex the kingdom. A valiant Laxmibai fought bravely to keep Jhansi out of their clutches. She died on the battlefield in 1858.

The 1857 war also created other heroes, the first and foremost being Mangal Pandey. The reasons that made him revolt were also the ones that pushed others to follow suit.

Mangal Pandey was in service in the British army and was posted at Barrackpore in 1857. It was suspected that the new bullet cartridges introduced by the British then were greased with cow and pig fat, not acceptable to Hindus and Muslims respectively. The cartridges had to be bitten by teeth. Besides this, the British officers reportedly ill-treated Indian soldiers.

This led Pandey to revolt. One day, he opened fire at a British officer and then attacked him. Other sol-

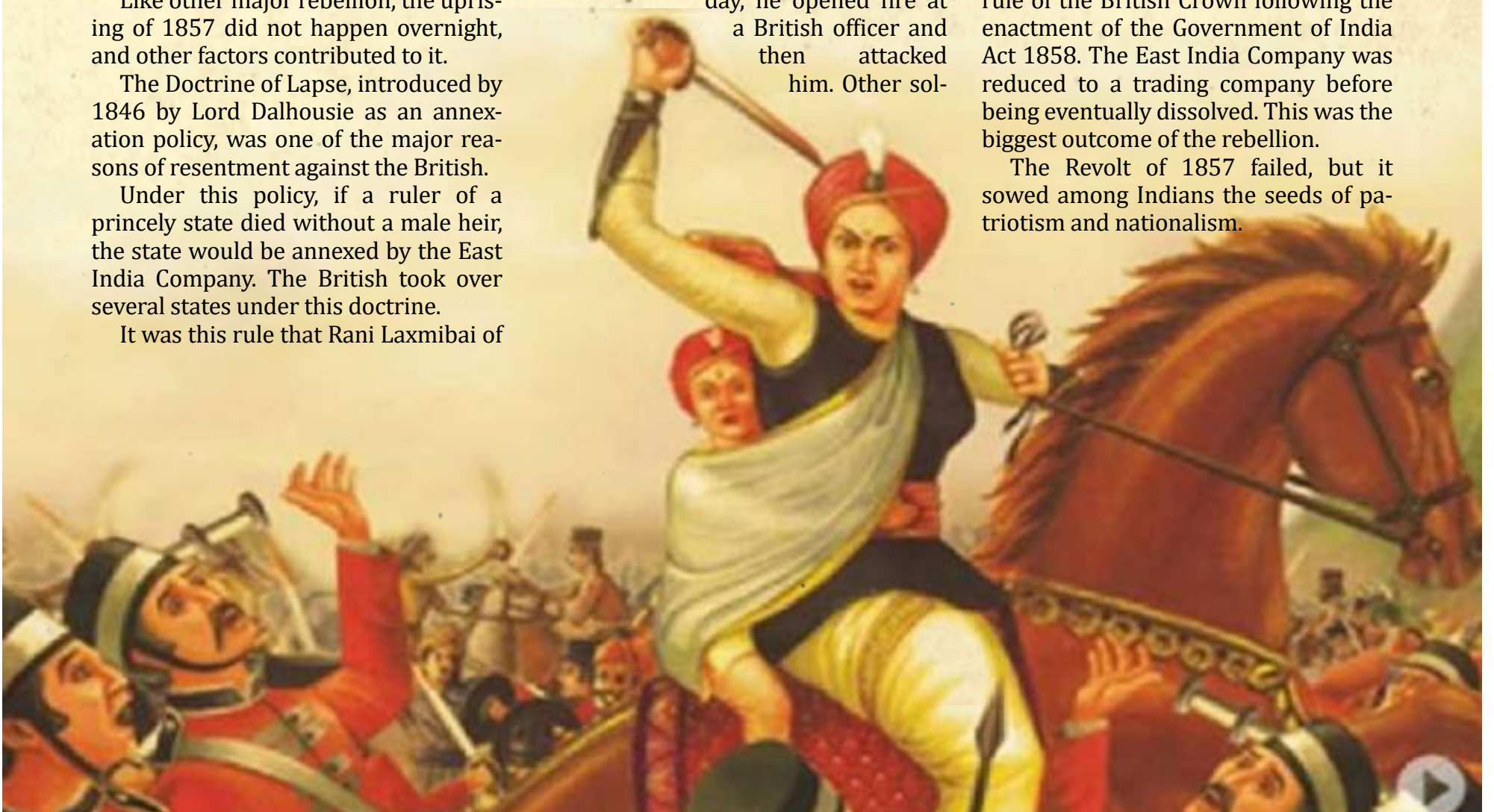
diers refused to detain him, and some even joined him. However, he was soon arrested by the British. He even fired at himself, and was injured, but did not die. He was brought to trial a few days later and was hanged on April 8. Mangal Pandey's open revolt made him one of the faces of the 1857 revolution.

Failure of the revolt and its impact

The Great Rebellion, as it was also called, was widespread but not unified. There was neither any planning nor efficient leadership that could take the massive uprising anywhere. The Indian forces also lacked the experience and the organizational and military expertise of the British.

In spite of having lost many British soldiers, the British soon recaptured all that they had lost to the rebels. Smarter from their losses, they also brought in changes in administration of the colony. A year after the uprising, the Indian colony was brought directly under the rule of the British Crown following the enactment of the Government of India Act 1858. The East India Company was reduced to a trading company before being eventually dissolved. This was the biggest outcome of the rebellion.

The Revolt of 1857 failed, but it sowed among Indians the seeds of patriotism and nationalism.



'Bell Bottom' brings hope in Covid times

Akshay Kumar's spy thriller, first big feature film to be released in several months, has been doing good business in India

Seems like Akshay Kumar-starrer spy thriller Bell Bottom has infused fresh life into struggling theatres and multiplexes. It is the first big feature film to have been released on the big screens amid the pandemic. And, it is already drawing crowds, giving fresh hope and confidence to theatre and multiplex owners as well as producers and distributors.

After a dry spell induced by Covid-19 pandemic, the film which is based on real-life incidents of airline hijacking, has managed to pull people to the theatres. The film has already started making good collections across the country.

The entertainment industry, like others, suffered huge losses during the Covid-19 pandemic. When the lockdown was announced during the first and second waves of Covid-19, theatres

and multiplexes had been closed down completely. However, even when the restrictions were eased, business failed to pick up.

Many films were released on the OTT platform. Theatre owners were reluctant to invest in films, unsure of returns.

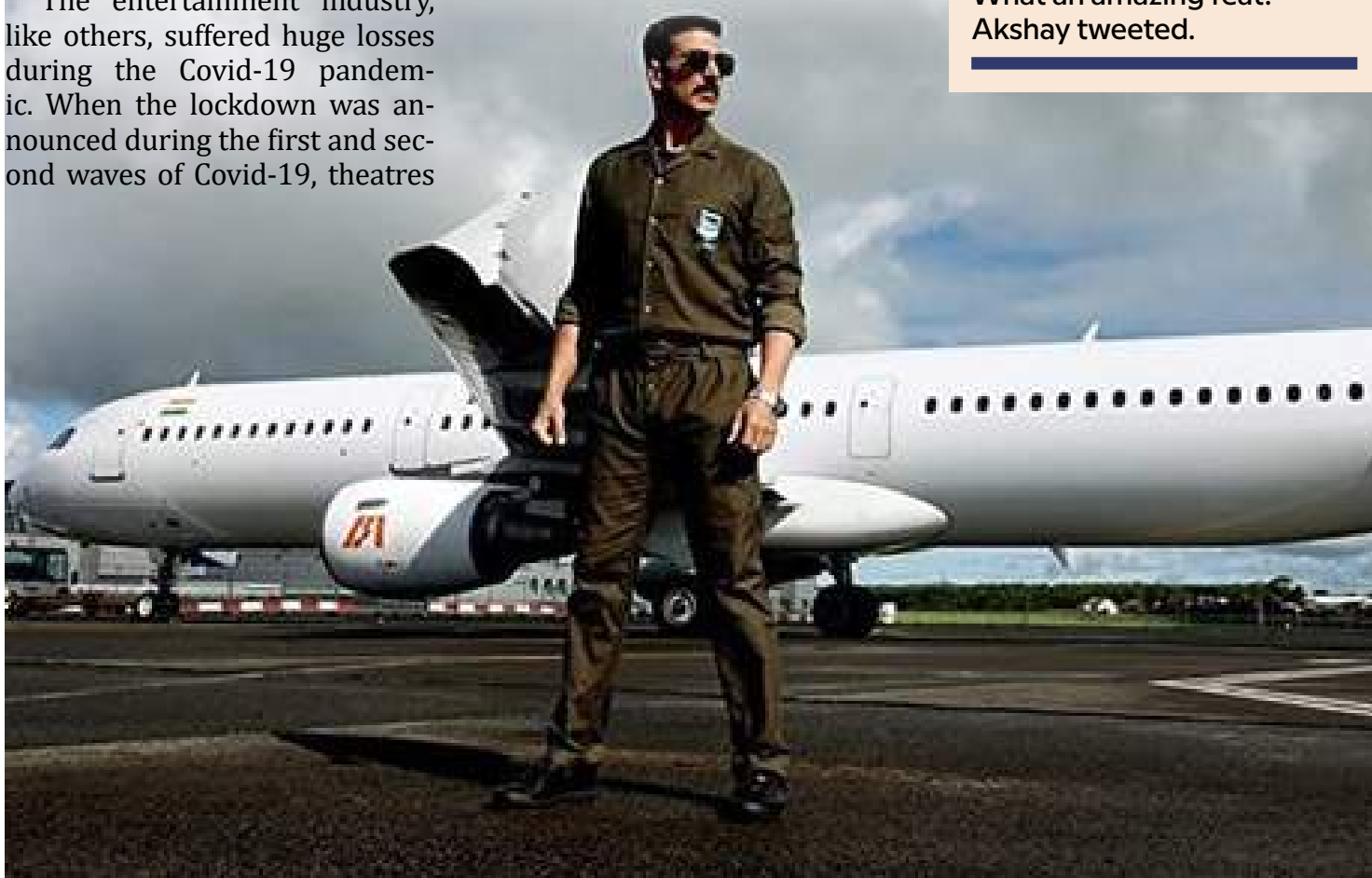
While the situation remains tense in several places, releasing a film as big as Bell Bottom would have been challenging, but the warm response to it will be some encouragement to others as well.

Big-ticket films like Suryavanshi (October) and 83 (November) are other much-awaited films this year.

Other films in the pipeline are Brahmastra, Atrangi RE, Jersey, Bhoot Police, etc.

BELL BOTTOM SCREENED AT WORLD'S HIGHEST MOBILE THEATRE

Another achievement for Bell Bottom was a unique screening. The film was screened at the world's highest mobile theatre in Ladakh. "Makes my heart swell with pride that BellBottom was screened at World's highest mobile theatre at Leh in Ladakh. At an altitude of 11562 ft, the theatre can operate at -28 degrees C. What an amazing feat!" Akshay tweeted.



It's H'wood romcom for Deepika

Actress signs 2nd Hollywood film, will produce it under her banner Ka Productions

Actress Deepika Padukone will be seen in another Hollywood movie, a romantic comedy. This will be her second Hollywood film after XXX: The Return of Xander Cage opposite Vin Diesel in 2017.

The film, with a cross-cultural story, will also be produced under her banner Ka Productions.

In a statement, Deepika said, "Ka Productions was founded with the aim to develop and produce purposeful content with global appeal. I'm thrilled to be partnering with STXFilms and Temple Hill Productions, who share Ka's ambition and creative vision and look forward to bringing impactful and dynamic cross-cultural stories to the world."

"Deepika is enormously talented with an infectious personality and her profile continues to grow as an international superstar. While she has been a phenomenal success in many Eros International films, we are thrilled to be building a romantic comedy with her and our friends at Temple Hill. We believe this project gives us the opportunity to tap into the spirit, voice, characters and vibrant settings of India and New York," said STXFilms chairman Adam Fogelson.



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