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NATION



After 55 days on the run, how the Sandeshkhali accused was arrested and suspended from TMC **▶▶ 10**

ENTERTAINMENT EYE



Cast and crew celebrate as 'Article 370' makes success and earns a shoutout from PM Modi **▶▶ 40**



Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrives for Bharatiya Janata Party CEC meeting

BIG STORY
▶▶ 6

ELECTIONS 2024 MODI LEADS THE WAY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has set the tone for the elections by claiming the BJP would win more than 400 seats. What is the party doing to achieve such ambitious target?

NA
NEWSLINE
▶▶ 18



MAYOR ADAMS UNVEILS AMBITIOUS PLAN TO MAKE NEW YORK CITY LEADER IN 'GREEN-COLLAR' JOBS

SPORTS
▶▶ 46



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New Delhi, INDIA

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar meets a delegation of Sikhs for America led by Jasdip Singh in the national capital on Thursday (ANI)



Mumbai, INDIA

Bollywood actor Paresh Rawal, BJP MP and Bollywood actress Hema Malini, Dr. Uma Rele, Director-Principal of Nalanda Juhu Mumbai and others in a group photo during Nalanda Nrityotsav 2024 at Nalanda Dance Research Centre on Wednesday (ANI)

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ELECTIONS 2024

MODI LEADS THE WAY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has set the tone for the elections by claiming the BJP would win more than 400 seats. What is the party doing to achieve such ambitious target?

OUR BUREAU

New Delhi/Mumbai/Guwahati

The Lok Sabha polls are expected to be held in April-May this year. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has already set the tone for elections by coining a slogan of 'Crossing 400' in this year's Lok Sabha elections. The BJP aims to win more than 370 seats on its own.

It will be the most important election in a generation. On one hand, Modi has a chance of making a hat-trick of wins; on the other hand, the Congress party has an opportunity to revive itself. Two competing ideas of India are at stake in 2024.

Modi is already leading his party's campaign and managing all aspects of the elections. On Thursday, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Central Election Committee Meeting (CEC) regarding the Lok Sabha elections at the party headquarters in Delhi comprised discussions on the seats of Lok Sabha across about 17 states and set seals on more than 155 seats, the list of which will be released soon.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, BJP's National President JP Nadda, Home Minister Amit Shah, Defense Minister Rajnath Singh, Organization General Secretary BL Santosh, Chief Ministers, State Presidents, In-charges, Co-In-charges, and Election In-charges of various states were present in this meeting.

Discussions were held with Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath regarding the names of candidates in the meeting. Discussions



Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Central Election Committee (CEC) meeting, at the party headquarters, in New Delhi on Thursday. Union Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP National President JP Nadda are also present (ANI Photo/ Shrikant Singh)

were also held on the names of candidates with BJP leaders from Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Kerala, Gujarat, Jharkhand, and Uttarakhand.

Discussions were also conducted on candidates for the seats in Jammu, while deliberations for Kashmir will take place in the next meeting.

Additionally, discussions were held on two to three seats in Delhi, but another round of meetings will happen. Candidates have been final-

ized for one seat in Goa, while one seat is yet to be decided.

Around 17 states like Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Kerala, Gujarat, Jharkhand, and Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Telangana, Assam, Goa and others were discussed in the meeting. Sources say, candidates for nearly 155 seats were finalized in the meeting on Thursday night.

As per sources in the UP BJP, discussions were held on 50 seats

in Uttar Pradesh; however, the party has decided to release half of the names in the first list. Among these seats, six have been given to alliance partners in Uttar Pradesh. Apna Dal (Sone Lal Patel) will fight for 2 seats, Rashtriya Lok Dal is likely to get 2 seats in Western Uttar Pradesh, Om Prakash Rajbhars SPBSP will contest for 1 seat, and Sanjay Nishad's party will contest for 1 seat.

Continued on next page... >>

All five seats in Uttarakhand were discussed in CEC and the names could be announced in the first list of the party.

Former Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh Shivraj Singh Chouhan, BJP leader Prahlad Patel, and BJP's State President VD Sharma were also present in the meeting, where discussions were held regarding the names of candidates for all 29 seats in Madhya Pradesh.

Out of 17 seats in Telangana, candidates for 4-5 seats were discussed and will get a place in the first list. Three current MPs, G. Kishan Reddy, Bandi Sanjay Kumar, and Arvind Dharmapuri may also get tickets again.

Even as the lists are being finalized, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has reiterated the "400 seats pitch" during his address to a public event in Jharkhand's Dhanbad on Friday and said that the slogan of '400 paar' is being raised because the country has faith in "Modi's guarantee."

Addressing a public rally in Dhanbad on Friday, PM Modi said that only one sound is audible everywhere and that is 'Ab ki Baar, 400 paar'.

"The slogan of '400 paar' is being raised because the country has faith in Modi's guarantee... I want to apologize that the 'pandal' is too small today. Only 5 per cent of the people are inside, the rest 95 per cent are outside in the sun," the Prime Minister said. He further said that the NDA would win over 400 seats in the Lok Sabha polls as the country is relying on Modi's guarantee.

The PM hit out at the Congress and its allies saying that they were the enemies of positive development in the country.

"Congress and its alliance parties are the biggest enemies of development... The foundation stone of the Electricity power plant of North Karanpura was laid by former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee at the end of the previous century... After that, the scammer government of Congress came into power and this project was shut down... In 2014, I gave a guarantee of reviving this project. Today, a no. of houses are lightened because of this power plant" the Prime Minister said.

Earlier, Modi on Wednesday said that every moment of his life is devoted to the resolve of making India a developed country and the development work done by his government over the past 10 years has laid the foundation for the next 25 years.

Addressing a gathering here in



Gathering at the public meeting addressed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi (Unseen), at Arambagh, in Hooghly, West Bengal, on Friday (ANI)

which he unveiled multiple development projects worth over Rs 4900 crore, the Prime Minister said there is an echo in the entire country that the BJP-led NDA will get over 400 seats in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

"I bow down to the land of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. I also bow down to Baba Saheb Ambedkar... When, 10 years ago, I came to Yavatmal for 'Chai pe Charcha', you blessed us. The people of India made the NDA cross 300. In 2019, we crossed 350. Today ahead of the 2024 election, when I have come to join the festival of development, then only one voice is echoing in the country, this time over 400," he said.

He said women from all sections have come to the programme "to

bless us".

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma too has expressed confidence in the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) crossing 400 seats in the general elections of the Lok Sabha. While addressing a press conference at Basistha in Guwahati district on Thursday, CM Sarma claimed that the Congress party is 'bound to be history'. He further claimed that the grand old party's national status will diminish.

"Congress is bound to be history. Congress will be segregated into various regional parties. The national status of Congress will diminish after this election because the NDA is heading to a 400-plus victory," CM Sarma said.

After the ruling party in Uttar Pradesh won eight seats in the Rajya Sabha elections, BJP leader Sudhanshu Trivedi expressed happiness and said that it was an indication that the party would cross the 400 mark in the Lok Sabha elections and win 80 out of 80 seats in the state. "It is a matter of great happiness that all eight BJP candidates won. This is an indication that this time we will cross 400 (in Lok Sabha elections) and win 80 out of 80 seats in Uttar Pradesh," said Trivedi.

But after the cross-voting in the Rajya Sabha elections, in which the Bharatiya Janata Party won 10 out of 15 seats in three states, Lok Sabha MP Danish Ali on Wednesday said that it is happening for the first time in our country that, on one side, the ruling party is saying that they will get 400 seats this time, but on the other hand, they are working to break the opposition parties. Danish Ali also mentioned that these types of things are not good for democracy and the country's politics.

"This is happening for the first time in the politics of the country. On one side, the ruling party is saying that they will be at 400, but on the other hand, they are working to break the opposition parties. The ruling party has formed a committee, and these people are responsible for seeing who will do cross-voting and who will break the MLAs of other parties. This is not good for Indian politics or Indian democracy," he said.

The election 2024 will be a big test for Indian democracy, with two competing visions in front of the biggest electorate in the world.



Samajwadi Party (SP) Chief Akhilesh Yadav joins Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and party General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra for the party's Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra, in Agra (ANI)



RAJYA SABHA POLLS

How the BJP gained with major cross-voting and rocked the Congress Govt in Himachal Pradesh

Himachal Pradesh Assembly Speaker Kuldeep Singh Pathania disqualifies the six Congress MLAs who cross-voted in the Rajya Sabha polls

OUR BUREAU

New Delhi/Shimla

Beating all expectations, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won 30 seats, including 20 unopposed out of 56 Rajya Sabha seats for which the elections were held on Tuesday. The numbers will take the BJP's tally in Rajya Sabha to 97 and that of BJP-led NDA to 117, just four short of the majority mark of 121 in the 240-member House once all 56 members are sworn in.

Of 56 Rajya Sabha seats that fall vacant in April, BJP won 30; 20 unopposed and 10 in elections held Tuesday. The Rajya Sabha polls for 15 seats across three states were marked by cross-voting, with the BJP winning 10 seats, the Congress three and the Samajwadi Party two seats.

Last week, as many as 41 candidates were declared winners as there were no other candidates in the fray on those seats. The BJP was the main gainer, having won an additional seat in Uttar Pradesh and bagging one in Himachal Pradesh.

Heading into polling day, the ruling NDA had 109 MPs in the Upper House, 10 members short of the halfway mark in the 238 member Rajya Sabha. The Opposition INDIA bloc had 89 MPs. During the biennial polls, Uttar Pradesh had the highest number of seats going to vote (10), followed by Maharashtra and Bihar (6 each), Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal (5 each), Karnataka and Gujarat (4 each), Odisha, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, and Rajasthan (3 each), and Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, and Chhattisgarh (1 each).

However, after the results out on



Himachal Pradesh CM Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu presides over a cabinet meeting with Congress MLAs, in Shimla on Thursday. (ANI Photo)

Tuesday evening, the BJP remained the single-largest party in RS with 97 members (including five nominated members who joined the party) followed by Congress with 29 members, Trinamool Congress with 13, DMK and AAP with 10 each, BJD and YSRCP with nine each, BRS with seven, RJD with six, CPM with five, and AIADMK and JD(U) with four each.

The NDA, with 117 members, is now only four short of the majority mark of 121.

Now, Himachal Pradesh Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) president Rajeev Bindal said on Thursday that the Congress has no right to stay in power after the party lost the Rajya Sabha election despite having a majority in the state assembly. "Our experts analyze the situation and after looking at their judgements, we will take a decision. It is too early to say anything. Congress was totally ex-

posed in the Rajya Sabha elections... Congress has lost its opportunity," Rajeev Bindal said, adding, "Morally, they have no right to stay in power."

In a stunning upset for the Congress, on Tuesday, the ruling Congress's Abhishek Manu Singhvi lost the Rajya Sabha election to the BJP's Harsh Mahajan despite the Congress enjoying a comfortable majority in the state assembly.

Both candidates secured 34 votes each in the 68-member state assembly. Victory tilted towards Mahajan after a draw of lots was held as a tie-breaker.

After the 2022 Assembly elections, the Congress had 40 MLAs, while the BJP had 25 in the 68-member state assembly. The remaining three seats are held by independents. With the six rebel MLAs disqualified, the strength of the house comes down from 68 to 62, and the halfway

mark is 32. With the loss of 6 MLAs the Congress now has 34 MLAs and the BJP, with independents, has 28. The fortunes of the Congress will now rest on its ability to keep the rest of its flock together.

The BJP has claimed the Congress has lost the moral standing to be in power after losing majority in the Assembly. Himachal Pradesh Assembly Speaker Kuldeep Singh Pathania disqualified the six Congress MLAs who cross-voted in the Rajya Sabha polls.

Himachal Pradesh Assembly Speaker Kuldeep Singh Pathania said, "Six MLAs, who contested on the Congress symbol, attracted provisions of the anti-defection law against themselves...I declare that the six people cease to be members of the Himachal Pradesh Assembly with immediate effect."

The beleaguered Congress government in Himachal Pradesh got a bit of reprieve on Wednesday after former Chief Minister Virbhadra Singh's son Vikramaditya Singh, who had tendered his resignation as minister, agreed not to press its acceptance following intervention of party observers sent to the hill state to deal with the crisis and Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu sought to defuse the tension saying "we believe in forgiveness, not revenge."

The crisis, which hit the Congress government on Tuesday during Rajya Sabha polls as six party MLAs cross-voted in favor of BJP, escalated on Wednesday with PWD Minister Vikramaditya Singh tendering his resignation. The Congress government also faced trouble in the state assembly as 15 BJP MLAs including Jairam Thakur were suspended.



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WEST BENGAL VIOLENCE

After 55 days on the run, how the Sandeshkhali accused was arrested and suspended from TMC

Close to two months Sheikh Shahjahan was reported untraceable in the wake of the attack on an ED team, which was on its way to raid his residence

OUR BUREAU

New Delhi

In a major breakthrough on Thursday, Sheikh Shahjahan was arrested by West Bengal police in connection with an alleged assault on ED officers during a raid in January earlier this year. West Bengal Governor CV Ananda Bose called Shahjahan's arrest an 'eye-opener', adding that it is only the 'beginning'.

Sandeshkhali in West Bengal's North 24 Parganas district had been witnessing widespread protests against TMC strongman Shahjahan Sheikh this month as a section of women were seeking justice against alleged atrocities committed by the TMC leader. A large number of women in Sandeshkhali had accused Shajahan Sheikh and his close aides of "land-grab and sexual assault" under coercion.

Close to two months after Sheikh Shahjahan was reported untraceable in the wake of the attack on an ED team, which was on its way to raid his residence in the North 24 Parganas in connection with the alleged ration scam, the TMC strongman, who is also alleged by the women of Sandeshkhali to have perpetrated grave atrocities along with his henchmen, was arrested by West Bengal police on Thursday morning.

His close aide, Aamir Ali Gazi, was also arrested by West Bengal Police from Jharkhand.

Advocate Alakh Alok Srivastava, who filed a PIL in the Supreme Court and sought an independent probe in the Sandeshkhali incident, said on Thursday that it was surprising that after court allowed the CBI and ED to arrest Sheikh Shahjahan, within a few hours he was arrested by the West Bengal police.

Meanwhile, Shahjahan's close aide, Aamir Ali Gazi, has been arrested by West Bengal Police from



Suspended TMC leader Sheikh Shahjahan being brought to Bhabani Bhawan in the CID office regarding the Sandeshkhali incident, in Kolkata on Thursday. (ANI Photo)

Jharkhand, police said on Thursday.

Trinamool Congress on Thursday suspended Sheikh Shahjahan from the party for six years. TMC leader Derek O'Brien held a press conference here today and said that by the time West Bengal Police was given freedom, it took two days to arrest the culprit.

"All India Trinamool Congress has decided to suspend Sheikh Shahjahan from the party for six years. There are two types of political parties, one is who only talks but TMC walks the talk. This is not the first time we are doing this; we have

done it in past too. Mr Modi, we dare you to suspend Narayan Rane, Himanta Biswa Sarma and Suwendhu Adhikari. But you will not do as you are not from TMC," he said.

Lawyer Raja Bhowmick, who represented Shahjahan in court, said, "14-day police custody (of Sheikh Shahjahan) was demanded, but the court allowed 10-day custody." "On March 10, he will be produced in court again," he said.

"It is very surprising that after a few hours of this, the accused was arrested by the police. In the last 55 days, he was not arrested," he added.

Further, he said that the Supreme Court has advised him to go to Calcutta High Court with his PIL.

After the arrest of absconding TMC strongman Sheikh Shahjahan, who was on the run for 55 days, West Bengal Minister Chandrima Bhattacharya said that the TMC has never taken any step to shield any offender. West Bengal Minister Chandrima Bhattacharya said, "We have always said that we never take any step to shield any offender. He has been arrested because he is an accused. Sheikh Shahjahan has also been suspended from the party for 6 years."

Taking a dig at the TMC government and West Bengal Police over the arrest of absconding strongman and Sandeshkhali accused Sheikh Shahjahan, and, his 10-day remand, BJP Rajya Sabha MP Sudhanshu Trivedi on Thursday said he has been put under the 'mehman-nawazi' (hospitality) of the state police in a bid to avoid arrest by the Directorate of Enforcement (ED) and the CBI.

But after the suspension of Trinamool Congress leader Shahjahan Shiekh for 6 years by the TMC, Union Minister Giriraj Singh launched a scathing attack on West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee, saying that she has set a standard for appeasement.

He said that Mamata Banerjee is saving people like Shahjahan and allowing such people to play with the dignity of Hindu women.

"Mamata Banerjee saved Shahjahan in such a manner that no sections of women harassment have been registered against him. You have set a standard of appeasement. You took a long time to arrest him. For votes and appeasement, you are saving people like Shahjahan and allowing such people to play with the dignity of Hindu women," said Union Minister Giriraj Singh.



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Jiye Jaa

Great Powers' Game in Myanmar: Counting Three Years of Military Regime Through Geo-Political Lens

In Myanmar, China's interests lie in its economic and strategic significance by accessing the Indian Ocean directly. China's unstoppable support of the Junta benefits its short- and long-term interests

DR. ANURADHA OINAM

On February 1, 2024, Myanmar completed its three years of military regime under the leadership of Min Aung Hlaing. Since the February Coup in 2021, Myanmar has been in turmoil, with intense violence and humanitarian crisis coupled with widespread displacement because of the violent clash between the military forces and non-state armed groups called Ethnic Armed Organizations (EAOs). One of the salient features of the long-running civil war is the involvement of the majority Barman ethnic group allying with other rebel groups in the pro-democracy movement against the military. Another feature amidst the complexity is the battle between those who want to restore democracy and those who support the military junta, given Myanmar's vital geo-strategic and geo-political significance in the region. This article explores the February coup and assesses the role of rebel groups, especially after Operation 1027, which was launched by the Three Brotherhood Alliance. It further explicates the great powers' game amid the civil war in the changing geopolitical dynamics of Myanmar.

Myanmar's military regime under the leadership of Min Aung Hlaing completed its three years on February 1, 2024. On the other hand, the people of Myanmar living within and abroad called the year 2024 the year of the Spring Revolution. Undeniably, the country has been in turmoil since Feb 2021. The simmering civil war continues with intense violence, a humanitarian crisis with widespread displacement because of the violent clash between the military forces and non-state armed groups called Ethnic Armed Organizations. It is estimated that a total number of 50,000 people have been killed, more than 660,000



Myanmar gains protection from the United Nations being with Russia while reducing its dependency on China (File photo)

people have been displaced since 27 October 2023 and 2.6 million people are displaced nationwide.

PUSH FACTORS

Myanmar, after a decade-long military regime, was all set to transition from military rule to democracy by conducting three successful elections between 2010 and 2020. With profound initiatives such as the release of political prisoners, press freedom and the functioning of political parties, people were hopeful for the new democratic transition. However, these hopes were shattered, and they felt betrayed by the 2021 coup. This military coup was not planned overnight, as the military had the liberty to function in the quasi-democratic government in 2011 and 2015, respectively. Bertil Lintner, an expert on Myanmar, states that "the military's claim 2021 coup was not a coup but a constitutional change of government".

Since Feb 2021, Myanmar has been ranked as one of the most violent of the fifty wars worldwide, according to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED). With the suspension of the National League for Democracy (NLD) along with other democratic parties of Myanmar, Tatmadaw provided little room for the democratic leaders and the people of Myanmar.

The long-running conflict's impact on Myanmar is multi-faceted. The country's economy is affected due to disruption in trade routes, the burden on logistics and interruptions in ongoing international projects such as India-Myanmar- Thailand Trilateral Highways, KMMP and so on. Besides, human rights violations, including mass killings, crimes against humanity, arbitrary detention, war crimes, etc., are also reported. In addition, the military has used airstrikes and shelling, targeting the populated

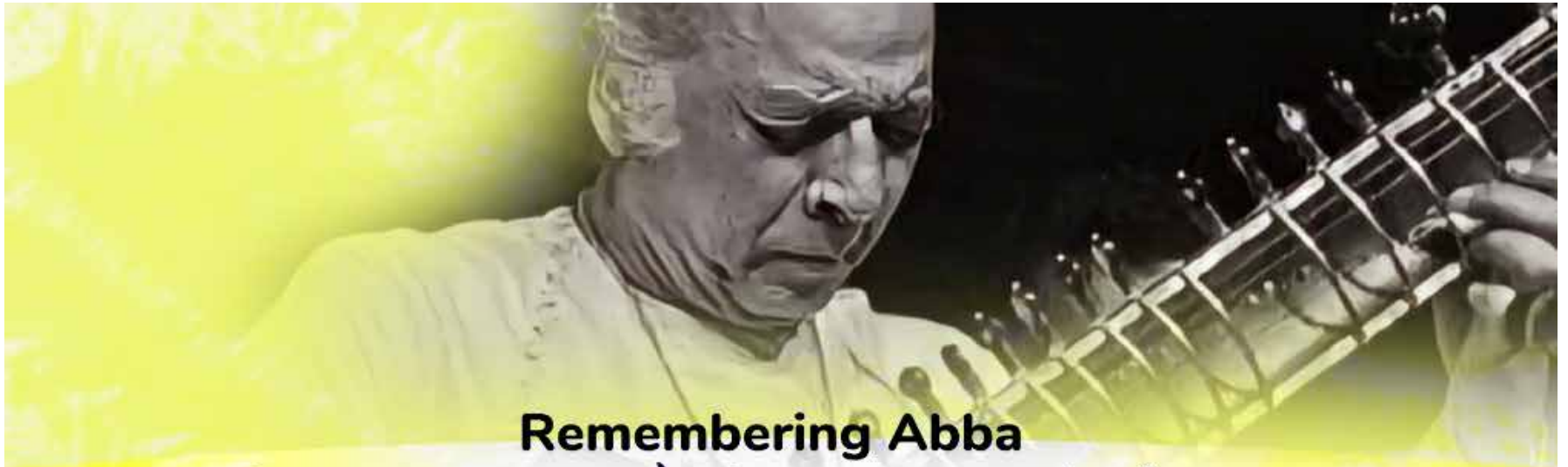
areas and villages where rebels are prominent.

ALLIANCE OF REBEL GROUPS

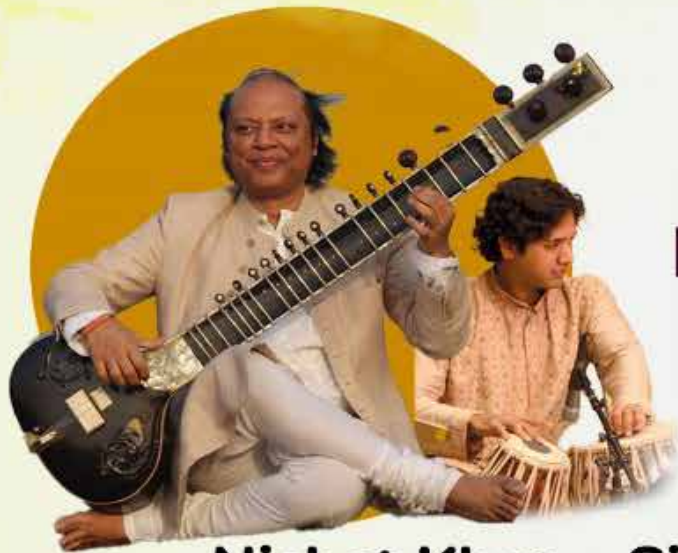
The conflict in Myanmar became more intense after 'Operation 1027' launched on 27 October 2023 by the Three Brotherhood Alliance, constituted by the Arakan Alliance (AA), Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), and Taang National Liberation Army (TNLA) against the Junta. In this pro-democracy movement, the involvement of the majority of the Barman ethnic group revolting against the military by allying with other ethnic rebels is one of the salient features. This new alliance formed by the EAOS from the country's periphery and People's Defense Forces (PDFs) comprised of the Bamar ethnic majority, which is concentrated in Myanmar's Dry Zone, the heartland of the Bamar majority,

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is a new threat to Junta. These groups unite to fight against the military by keeping all their differences aside for a common goal towards democracy. Since Operation 1027, it is reported that more than 5,500 military troops have been either seized or murdered, along with 10 Brigadier generals. A total number of not less than 30,000 troops lost their lives since then.

The Acting President of the National Unity Government (NUG), Duwa Lashi La, in a press release on 1 February 2024, stated that the people of Myanmar “shattered a decades-old myth that the Myanmar people can never topple the military”. He appreciated the people of Myanmar for fighting against the junta with resilience, renewed resistance, sacrifice, unity, and momentum. He affirmed that the Spring Revolution (which began in Feb 2021) would become more assertive in the days to come with the support of like-minded friends such as Australia, Canada, the European Union, New Zealand, Norway, the Republic of Korea, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States. Duwa Lashi La urged the world community to support the people of Myanmar to:

“Formally recognize the National Unity Government and its Ethnic partners. Increase direct financial, technical, material, and humanitarian assistance. Block the Junta’s access to arms, weapons, cash, and jet fuel. Reject any junta to launch a negotiated settlement as a lifetime.”

Amidst the complexity, another irrefutable facet of the conflict is the great powers’ interest in Myanmar, given its vital geo-strategic and geo-political significance. Myanmar, thus, has become a battleground between those who want to restore democracy and those who support the military junta. A case in point is the U.S./West’s sanctions on the Junta against China and Russia’s support of the coup.

CHINA VERSUS THE WEST

In Myanmar, China’s interests lie in its economic and strategic significance by accessing the Indian Ocean directly. Another is procuring energy by developing an energy corridor through Kyaukpyu deep seaport and overcoming the Malacca dilemma. The third is to exert more influence in Naypyidaw by diluting the West’s influence. Hence, China’s unstoppable support of the Junta benefits its short- and long-term interests.

However, the Dragon plays a double role by balancing its relation-



India, which shares a 1643km long porous border with Myanmar, has been impacted brutally since Feb 2021 due to the influx of Myanmar refugees from across the border (File photo)

ship with rebel groups such as the United Wa State Army (UWSA) by supplying with “man-portable air-defense systems, howitzers, a wide range of mortars, rocket launchers, machine-guns and assault rifles and armored personnel carriers” (Lintner, 2019) in fighting against the junta. Reflecting on China’s policy in Myanmar, Lintner opines that “China is not interested in peace the way people in Myanmar see it, that is, a political solution to decades of ethnic wars. China doesn’t want either; it wants stability, which, for the time being, means a status it can use to achieve its geostrategic goals” (Zaw, 2019). For instance, China delegated its new special envoy for Myanmar to meet with the seven most potent ethnic Armed Organizations (EAOs) in December 2022. Instead of any decisive political solution, Beijing urged EAOs to maintain a distance from the West-backed NUG. Chinese diplomats often attempted to be peace brokers between the junta and the members of the Federal Political Negotiation and Consultative Committee (FPNCC). Still, it could not achieve any positive results.

Russia, which has been a friend of Myanmar for years, supports the military regime by supplying weapons such as aircraft. It is a way to contest its supremacy with the West. Myanmar and Russia recently con-

ducted naval drills in the Andaman Sea. Besides, Russia and Myanmar signed several agreements, including the MoU for nuclear construction, in October 2023 to address Myanmar’s fuel and electricity crisis. Myanmar gains protection from the United Nations being with Russia while reducing its dependency on China. Russia, in return, finds a new gateway’ for itself, connecting the Western Indian Ocean with the Eastern Indian Ocean and further linking with South and Southeast Asia.

Unlike China and Russia, the U.S./West supports the NUG instead of the Junta. Just after the coup, they imposed sanctions on selected Myanmar military personnel or enterprises. They even used platforms like the ASEAN with like-minded nations like Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia to restore democracy. They supported NUG, the National Unity Consultative Council, and other groups in reestablishing peace. However, ASEAN’s ‘five-point consensus’ could not be implemented, and the whole effort did not bear fruitful results. On the contrary, countries like Indonesia and Thailand began to engage bilaterally with Myanmar.

India, which shares a 1643km long porous border with Myanmar, has been impacted brutally since Feb 2021 due to the influx of Myanmar refugees from across the border.

Though India has called for the restoration of democracy, it plays a balanced approach, given the trans-border issues pertinent to immigration, insurgency, and drug trafficking, to safeguard its security interests. India provided fuel and weapons to the Junta. It is reported that Indian entities have delivered \$51 million worth of military-related exports to Myanmar since Feb coup.

ASSESSMENT

The February coup is disparate from those earlier ones. Firstly, most of the Barman ethnic group allied with other rebel groups in the pro-democracy movement against the military. It has shifted a new paradigm in the civil war of Myanmar. Secondly, Myanmar becomes a battlefield for great power competition as China and Russia are supporting the coup against the U.S./West. Great powers are getting involved to showcase their power, influence, and values, similar to those proxy wars fought during the Cold War, but in their national interest. Thirdly, Naypyidaw is playing many cards and hedging with as many great powers as possible to maximize its power and achieve goals.

This article first appeared in the Web Articles section of the website (www.claws.in) of Centre for Land Warfare Studies, New Delhi

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Making it Easier for Working-Class New Yorkers to File Their Taxes and Put Money Back into Their Pockets

Jobs are up, crime is down, and our streets are cleaner, but we know the hustle is still real for so many across our city



ERIC ADAMS

New York City was built on the backs of working-class New Yorkers; people like my mother, Dorothy Mae Adams, a single mother who worked multiple jobs to support my five siblings and myself. She sacrificed everything for us, and I know that there are thousands of New Yorkers doing the same today in our city for their families.

Those are the people we have been fighting for since day one of this administration. We've been clear that our mission has been to deliver those working-class New Yorkers a city that protects public safety, revitalizes the economy, and is more livable.

We've made our city safer, created 270,000 private-sector jobs, set a first-of-its-kind minimum wage for deliveristas, and worked with our brothers and sisters in labor to get them the pay and benefits they deserve.

We have broken affordable housing records — financing the most affordable homes in city history and connecting more New Yorkers to affordable homes than any other year in our city's history.

We drove down the cost of child-care for working parents, increased public school enrollment, boosted



Free tax prep is another simple and straightforward way our administration is making sure working-class New Yorkers get their fair share (File photo)

test scores, and revolutionized reading in our classrooms.

Jobs are up, crime is down, and our streets are cleaner, but we know the hustle is still real for so many across our city. That is why we are fighting to put money back into New Yorkers' pockets — money they have earned and need to support their families.

We know that filing taxes can be overwhelming, so, this tax season, our administration is making it easier for New Yorkers to file.

If your family earns \$85,000 or less or you make \$59,000 or less as a single filer, you can get your taxes done for free with NYC Free Tax Prep. New Yorkers can file their taxes for free at any one of our NYC Tax Prep locations across the five boroughs or online at getyourrefund.org/nyc.

Some of these locations also

offer tax services for self-employed New Yorkers, including freelance workers, gig workers, and small business owners.

And a number of New York City Health + Hospitals locations are also offering free, in-person and virtual tax prep for eligible New Yorkers. Select sites offer support in Spanish, Chinese, and Bengali, and virtual tax preparation is available in Spanish as well, so New Yorkers from different backgrounds can get their taxes filed for free.

New Yorkers can schedule an appointment at a NYC Free Tax Prep location in advance at nyc.gov/taxprep and must bring identification and proof of income to their appointment. For virtual services, New Yorkers can upload their documents and meet virtually with a tax preparer to review their tax return before submission.

Free tax prep is another simple and straightforward way our administration is making sure working-class New Yorkers get their fair share, and it is the easiest way to get the maximum tax credits and the full refund you deserve.

Putting money back into your pockets is also exactly why our administration went to Albany to secure the first increase in the city's Earned Income Tax Credit in 20 years — to ensure that New Yorkers get to keep the money that helps them pay for the essentials like bills, rent, and food.

Our administration will continue working every day to ensure working-class New Yorkers can keep their fair share, and this tax season, we're making it easier than ever to do so.

Eric Adams is the Mayor of New York City, NY

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MAYOR ADAMS UNVEILS AMBITIOUS PLAN TO MAKE NEW YORK CITY LEADER IN 'GREEN-COLLAR' JOBS

Plan Will Advance \$100 Million Climate Innovation Hub at Brooklyn Army Terminal, Create More Than 12,000 Green Economy Apprenticeships by 2040

OUR BUREAU

NEW YORK, NY

New York City Mayor Eric Adams, New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC) President and CEO Andrew Kimball, and Mayor's Office of Talent and Workforce Development (NYCTalent) Executive Director Abby Jo Sigal today announced the release of the Green Economy Action Plan — a first-of-its-kind plan that lays out a roadmap to growing the city's green economy. The plan invests in jobs and sectors that will help the city combat climate change, and train and position New Yorkers — particularly those from environmentally-disadvantaged communities — to benefit from the nearly 400,000 projected 'green-collar' jobs in New York City by 2040.

Critical to this plan is the creation of a new "Climate Innovation Hub" at the Brooklyn Army Terminal, which will help grow green technology startups and businesses, and which will be joined together with the Trust for Governors Island and the Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation to create a green economy ecosystem across three campuses that will support 5,000 new permanent jobs, educate and train 2,100 New Yorkers, and generate \$55 billion of economic impact. The Green Economy Action Plan delivers on another promise in Mayor Adams' State of the City address, and builds on his commitment to invest in future-focused industries and create a "Harbor of the Future" with job and innovation hubs along the East River.

"Our city didn't recover the nearly 1 million jobs we lost during the pandemic and reach a new private-sector job high by looking backward — we did it by building an economy of the future. And we must draw on all our resources to protect our city from the effects of climate change," said Mayor Adams. "From building resiliency projects and retrofitting apartment buildings, to installing solar panels, EV charging stations, and wind turbines, 'green-collar' jobs are already in demand and leading the way. Our Green Economy Action Plan will harness the growth of a new kind of industrial revolution and give New Yorkers the tools they need to build a resilient and prosperous city and thrive in our future-focused economy."

The Green Economy Action Plan delivers the first forecasting of New York City's green econo-



my and job growth through 2040. New York City's green economy will host nearly 400,000 jobs by 2040 — up from 133,000 today — as it becomes the anchor of a prosperous, equitable, and just future for New Yorkers, while it simultaneously advances the city's ambitious goals to reduce the city's threats due to climate change. The plan identifies key occupations that are essential to growing the green economy and highlights 21 occupations that provide pathways to economic mobility, many of which do not require higher education degrees.

"Treating the climate change crisis with the urgency it requires doesn't just support our infrastructure but our economy too, with good, 'green-collar' jobs for New Yorkers with diverse educations and histories," said Deputy Mayor for Operations Meera Joshi. "As unusual weather events become all too usual, we all have a role to play in protecting our city. Our city is creating the framework so that everyone can get involved."

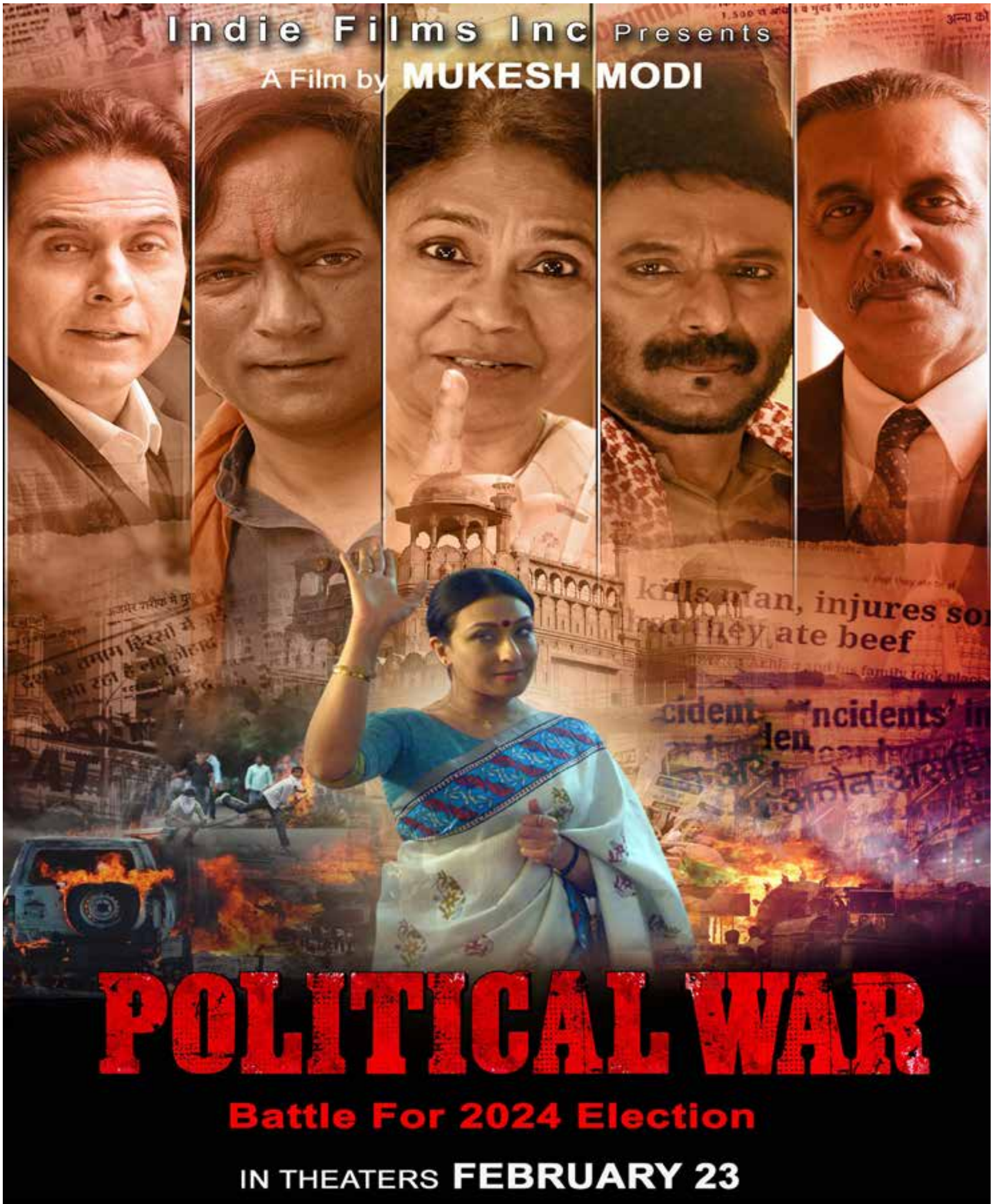
"By co-authoring the Green Economy Action Plan, we wrote the roadmap for an historic opportunity to tackle the climate crisis, create jobs, and drive economic mobility, while positioning New York City as a global leader in the green economy," said NYCTalent Executive Director Sigal. "The plan represents the city's commitment to concrete strategies to ensure that all New Yorkers contrib-

ute to and benefit from our city's growth and prosperity."

"The Green Economy Network and JobsFirstNYC applaud New York City Mayor Eric Adams, NYCEDC, and NYCTalent for unveiling the Green Economy Action Plan, a visionary roadmap for the city's sustainable future. Most notably, the mayor's plan centers equity, employment, and economic growth, and we are committed to collaborating with the administration and citywide partners to ensure the success of this plan," said Keri Faulhaber, vice president, JobsFirstNYC. "Together, we can pave the way for a resilient and inclusive green economy, creating opportunities for New Yorkers, especially those in environmentally-disadvantaged communities, to thrive in the nearly 400,000 green collar jobs projected by 2040."

"The Green Economy Action Plan is a groundbreaking initiative that will propel New York City to the forefront of the global green economy and ensure a more sustainable future for all New Yorkers," said Carlo A. Scissura, Esq., president and CEO, New York Building Congress. "By committing to the creation of nearly 400,000 green collar jobs by 2040 and a \$100 million Climate Innovation Hub, we are not just investing in the environment, we are investing in our people and our collective future."





A Universal Message of Harmony and Compassion Finds Its Home on the Moon in the Historic IM-1 Lunar Landing: BAPS

‘In the joy of others lies our own, in the good of others abides our own’ – a simple, yet profound maxim of His Holiness Pramukh Swami Maharaj was etched on a disc that travelled on aboard IM-1 on a remarkable journey to the south pole of the Moon.

OUR BUREAU

Piscataway, NJ

On Thursday, February 22, 2024, at 6:23 pm, the Intuitive Machines-1 commercial lander, in collaboration with NASA and SpaceX, successfully landed on the Moon, carrying along with it an etched disc commemorating the life and universal messages of His Holiness Pramukh Swami Maharaj (1921-2016), the late spiritual leader of the BAPS Swaminarayan Hindu organization.

Amid the celebrations that followed the exciting announcement from mission director Tim Crane, “Odysseus has found its new home,” soared a loving tribute in the hearts of those who knew Pramukh Swami Maharaj. ‘In the joy of others lies our own, in the good of others abides our own,’ was his life motto, a simple but profound message, etched on a disc developed by Relative Dynamics, that travelled along IM-1 on this remarkable journey to the south pole of the Moon.

The mission not only represented the first controlled descent to the lunar surface by a U.S. spacecraft in over 50 years, but also symbolized, as aptly put by NASA Administrator Bill Nelson, a “triumph for humanity.” A triumph in the form of a universal message of harmony and compassion for all of humanity as lived by a spiritual leader, coming together with the finest application of science and technology in a spacecraft by scientists and innovators, to ascend in unison towards this historic lunar landing.

Commemorating the teachings and universality of the values practiced by Pramukh Swami Maharaj, Intuitive Machines shared the following message on LinkedIn ahead of the landing:

“Created in coordination with



Intuitive Machines and Relative Dynamics Inc., the IM-1 mission will fly an eternal tribute to His Holiness Pramukh Swami Maharaj, the fifth guru of the BAPS Swaminarayan organization. The etching honors the life and service of Pramukh Swami Maharaj, a Hindu spiritual leader who championed the universal human value of selfless service. Such a cultural engagement between nations and corporations allows for the development of shared values, efforts, and responsibility in the pursuit of space exploration.”

The disc was blessed by the current spiritual leader of BAPS, His Holiness Mahant Swami Maharaj,

on December 29, 2022 during the centennial celebrations of Pramukh Swami Maharaj in Amdavad, India. It carries Mahant Swami Maharaj’s heartfelt prayer of peace and happiness for all:

“In the joy of others lies our own. In the good of others abides our own. With this life-motto, His Holiness Pramukh Swami Maharaj (1921-2016), a universal spiritual leader and great saint of our time, dedicated his entire life in the upliftment of humanity. On the occasion of his Centenary Celebrations, I pray at the lotus feet of Bhagwan Swaminarayan that may all people get bliss and happiness through imbibing spiritual and moral values.

May harmony and unity spread everywhere in the world. May love and respect for each other flourish everywhere. May auspicious wishes come true.”

Stressing this spirit of the shared values for all of humanity, Intuitive Machines CEO Stephen Altemus, remarked, “It is clear that space exploration endeavors are for all of us, all of humanity, to strive for and share in.”

In this manner, a universal message of harmony, unity, and compassion touched the Moon in a true extension of the Hindu scriptural sentiment, Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, meaning, ‘The world is one family.’



IOC Inaugurates Karnataka Chapter to Further Bolster INC Efforts in Upcoming Lok Sabha Elections

OUR BUREAU

STATEN ISLAND, NY

On February 24, 2024, the Indian Overseas Congress USA confirmed the appointment of new officers for the Karnataka Chapter during their inaugural dinner ceremony held at the Five Star Banquet Hall, Long Island City, New York.

This chapter will work under the leadership of Sri Rajiv Gowda, an experienced advocate who has dedicated his life to fighting for equality, fairness, and democratic principles.

Sri Harbachan Singh, Secretary General, IOC USA, opened the event with greetings and remarks, "Congratulations to Sri Rajiv Gowda, today marks a momentous occasion as we embark on this journey under your capable leadership. Your ability to assemble such outstanding team speaks volumes, and I am eager to witness the remarkable achievements that await us, especially with the Lok Sabha elections in the horizon. The upcoming Elections are particularly important, and we will communicate with each other to ensure we are in sync with the voters of India and support their yearnings for a change in the status quo. We need every voter to participate and support the Indian National Congress so democracy can be saved for everyone today and future generations."

Vice Chairman of IOC USA, Sri George Abraham, addressed the gathering and highlighted India's dire current political situation and the apparent threat to democracy and free and fair elections. Sri Abraham introduced the new president of the Karnataka Chapter and said, "It is my distinct pleasure to have the Karnataka Chapter officially on board to help us in the people's fight to retake our beloved country from those who want to foster and facilitate discrimination, division, and a blatant disregard for freedom in our motherland."

In his address via Zoom, IOC



(Front row L-R) Malini Shah, Yamuna Nagaraj, Rajiv Gowda, Leela Maret, Nivedita Chandrapa and Thomas Matthews. (second row L-R) Mohammad Shahada, Abhishek Harish, Amrick Singh Pehowa, Amer Singh Gulshan, Mohammed Murtuza, George Abraham, Rajeshwara Reddy, Harbachan Singh, Baldev Randhav, Imran Pasha. (Third row L-R) Mahesh Patel, Manoj Mulki, Sharat Vemuganti, Ram Gadula and John Joseph.

Global Chairman Sri Sam Pitroda offered a heartwarming congratulations and introduction. He said this chapter's presence marks a particular moment in our collective mission, "I stand with unwavering pride to extend my heartfelt congratulations to you and your team. Your dedication has formed a new bedrock for the INC and is poised to be a loyal advocate for democracy in India. The Karnataka Chapter will resonate as a powerful voice, upholding the fundamental principles of democracy, justice, freedom, equality, fraternity, and secularism, regardless of caste, language, or religion." Sri Pitroda specifically commented on the crucial timing as the INC is poised to shape the future of India, particularly in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. He said, "the recent Supreme Court ruling on electoral bonds, farmer unrest, and encroachments on civil liberties serve

as stark reminders of the challenges facing Indian democracy. Yet, united as a cohesive force, we possess the power to cause meaningful change. Through our collaboration, we will thwart any further attempts to erode the democratic fabric of India."

In a taped video message, Dr. Arathi Krishna, charge secretary of the All-India Congress Committee IOC, offered a warm welcome and congratulated Sri Rajiv Gowda. She said, "You are bringing a unique experience to the IOC USA family, and we are confident that the newly organized chapter will soar to success under your leadership. Karnataka's decisiveness in the state elections sent a powerful message to the nation under the leadership of CM Sri Siddaramaiah and Deputy CM Sri D.K. Shivakumar. Our democracy is in crisis, and we must stand shoulder to shoulder to fight for a win in the upcoming

Lok Sabha elections."

IOC USA President Sri Mohinder Singh Gilzian, who is in India on an important INC work via phone, congratulated Sri Rajiv Gowda and wished him and his team a successful inaugural event as you earnestly start working this election year.

Senior leaders Sri John Joseph - Sr. VP/IOC USA, Sri Baldev Randhav - VP/IOC USA, Malini Shah, VP/IOC USA, Sri Sharat Vemuganti - General Secretary/IOC USA, Rajeshwara Reddy - President Telangana Chapter, Ram Gadula - Chair Telangana Chapter, Amer Singh Gulshan - President Haryana Chapter, Leela Maret - President Kerala Chapter and Dr. Joshua Jaya Singh - President Tamil Nadu Chapter addressed the gathering and congratulated Sri Rajiv Gowda.

Sri Rajiv Gowda, the newly appointed president, thanked everyone for the opportunity to serve Indians everywhere and the tremendous responsibility he is ready for. In his remarks, Sri Rajiv Gowda said, "India is the largest democracy in the world and must stand as a beacon for all others who dream of living in a democratic country. As a democracy, we cannot be afraid of those who abuse the power given to them by the people. Instead, when they abuse that power, the people must take it back from them and give it to those that will strive to create a unified India, an India that can truly emerge on the global stage as a rights-respecting democracy."

Yamuna Nagaraj and Thomas Matthews were appointed as General Secretary and Treasurer, while Manoj Mulki assumed the role as Joint Secretary. Abhishek Harish, Nivedita Chandrapa, Mohammad Sahada were appointed as members of the Executive Committee. Newly appointed Nikhil Thagdur - Joint Secretary, Indira Reddy - President, Mahila Congress, Govindaraj and Madhu Iyer - executive board members were unable to attend the event.





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Washington State Senate passes resolution honoring Sikh Americans



OUR BUREAU

Olympia, WA

The Washington State Senate passed a resolution honoring the contributions of Sikh Americans to the culture and history of Washington state and the United States.

The measure was sponsored by

Sen. Manka Dhingra (D-Redmond), the first Sikh American elected to a state legislature in American history, who spoke about how Sikh values have inspired her and many others to public service.

“Every year, this resolution is a joyful opportunity for the Sikh community of Washington to gather in Olympia, and for this body to re-

member the contributions of so many Sikh Americans to our state,” said Dhingra.

“We are a community that is deeply rooted in the ideas of truth and service to community. And that all that we do is done with humility. This is a religion that was talking about equality among humans back in the 15th century, especially gender

equality.”

The Senate also recognized members of the Sikh community including Hira Singh, Sunny Singh, Puneet Kaur, and staff of the Sikh Coalition and the Washington Sikh Community

The session was opened with a prayer by Sikh youth leader Sharn Kaur of the Khalsa Gurmat Center.

NYC MAYOR ANNOUNCES ACTIVATION OF CITY'S FIRST PUBLIC E-BIKE CHARGING SITE FOR DELIVERY WORKERS

Effort Part of Administration's "Charge Safe, Ride Safe" Plan to Support Safe E-Bike Use, Prevent Deadly Lithium-Ion Battery Fires

OUR BUREAU

NEW YORK, NY

New York City Mayor Eric Adams, New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) Commissioner Ydanis Rodriguez, and New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC) President and CEO Andrew Kimball today activated the first of five public e-battery charging locations as part of the city's new six-month pilot program to test safe, public charging of lithium-ion batteries by an initial group of 100 delivery workers. The first charging site is being located in Cooper Square in Manhattan's East Village and is a key component of the administration's overall "Charge Safe, Ride Safe: New York City's Electric Micromobility Action Plan" to support safe e-bike use and prevent deadly lithium-ion battery fires. New York City is among the first major cities in the United States to launch a public e-bike charging pilot program.

"We count on delivery workers for so much, and they should be able to count on us, too — whether that means fighting for fair pay or making their jobs and livelihoods safer," said Mayor Adams. "This pilot program we're kicking off today will give delivery workers the ability to access safe, accessible, outdoor battery-charging that will undoubtedly save lives, and we're eager to expand this pilot even further. We know the incredible potential of e-bikes in our city and it's on us to make e-bike use even safer."

"Delivery workers, their families, and their neighbors deserve to be safe from battery fires," said Deputy Mayor for Operations Meera Joshi. "Workers need on-street infrastructure for safe charging, and this pilot is an important step as we continue our work with the City Council to increase safety and worker protections



in every aspect of the quickly-growing delivery market. Thank you to DOT, NYCEDC, DCWP and the Fire Department for making this possible."

"E-bikes are critical tools for delivery workers to support our local economy. This pilot will offer convenient and safe charging options at public locations so that delivery workers do not have to charge their devices at home," said DOT Commissioner Rodriguez. "We're thrilled to launch this pilot and thank the mayor as well as our partners in labor for supporting this vision."

DOT developed the pilot through the agency's DOT Studio, a research and development partnership with NYCEDC and the urban tech growth hub Newlab. The announcement follows the release of the administration's Green Economy Action Plan, a first-of-its-kind plan that outlines a roadmap to grow the city's green economy — consisting of investments in jobs and sectors that will help the city combat climate change — and train and position New Yorkers, particularly those from environmentally-disadvantaged communities, to benefit from the nearly

400,000 projected 'green-collar' jobs in New York City by 2040.

Three companies — Swobbee, Popwheels, and Swiftmile — are providing charging infrastructure for the pilot. Swobbee and Popwheels are providing swappable battery systems, enabling participating e-bike users to swap a depleted, UL-certified e-bike battery for a fully-charged battery at designated outdoor battery cabinets. Swiftmile is providing a secure charging bike rack where participating e-bike users can lock up their bikes and charge while parked. The three technologies include fire safety features, ranging from automatic shutoff if a battery is overheating to fire suppression systems. The FDNY, a key partner in the pilot, reviewed product development and will also inspect each pilot location during installation and throughout the duration of the program.

Only participating delivery workers will be able to take part in the six-month pilot free of cost. In the coming days, DOT will sign as many as 100 delivery workers up to participate in the pilot program; during which the workers will provide con-

tinuous feedback about their experience with the charging technologies and hubs. Interested workers can fill out an Expression of Interest form or attend an onboarding event, including at Cooper Square on March 7, 2024 from 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM and at the Brooklyn Army Terminal on March 8, 2024 from 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM.

"We're excited about the launch of the city's first e-battery charging hub that will provide our delivery workers with places for safe charging," said Ken Podziba, CEO, Bike New York. "Many of the risks associated with dangerous lithium-ion batteries are preventable and offering these public charging stations, with hopefully many more to come, is a big and innovative step in the right direction. We'd like to thank Mayor Adams, Commissioner Rodriguez, and EDC President Kimball for their leadership in helping to combat the crisis of deadly fires associated with faulty lithium-ion batteries by offering real solutions for our hard-working commercial cyclists."

"Los Deliveristas Unidos supports this initiative led and implemented by the Department of Transportation," said Alejandro Grajales, representative, Los Deliveristas Unidos. "Building e-bike micro mobility infrastructure like e-bike charging has been a priority for Los Deliveristas Unidos. This type of infrastructure is critical to enhancing safety for not just the delivery workforce but the entire community at large."

"Our group has been waiting for this great project to begin that will provide charging stations for e-bike batteries," said Sergio Solano, representative, New York City Food Delivery Movement. "We thank the DOT for giving us the opportunity to be involved in this pilot program and thank the city of New York for considering us as essential workers."



Helmed by Puneet Issar, Jai Shri Ram – Ramayan, the Broadway-style musical to tour US and Canada

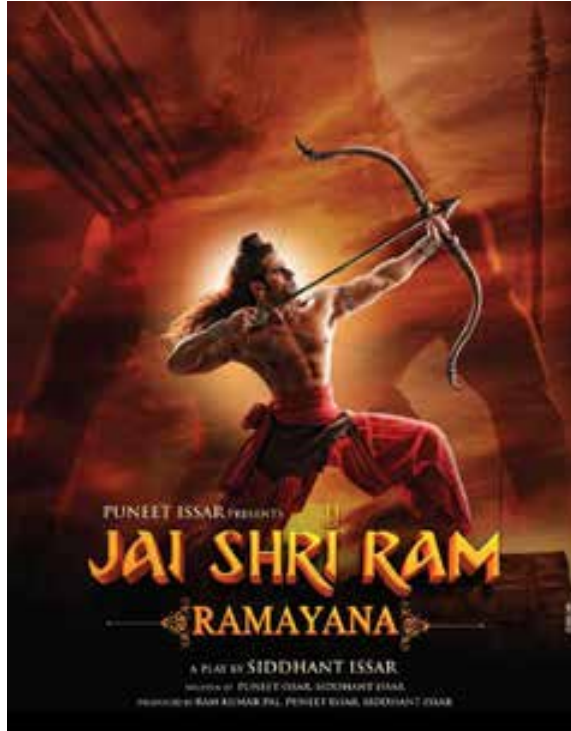
OUR BUREAU

New Jersey, NJ

The epic Ramayana will now tour USA and Canada in Broadway-style musical, 'Jai Shri Ram – Ramayan'. Following over 30 triumphant shows in India, the musical will be staged for audiences in the USA and Canada for the first time.

Crafted, written, produced, and directed by Puneet Issar and Siddhant Issar, the musical presents a cinematic experience on stage, in the USA and Canada, spanning cities such as Dallas, Bay Area, Los Angeles, New Jersey, Chicago, Houston, Toronto, Vancouver, Raleigh, North Carolina, Boston, and more from mid-April to May.

"I am thrilled to premiere this grandeur act, offering audiences in the US and Canada a glimpse of Indian artistry and talent through this unforgettable epic narrative. This is not only an ancient Indian epic, the production also portrays human relationships, and values of humanity, steering clear of religious themes. This show is a must for today's generation and I can't wait to spread joy



and entertainment through our performances. I am looking forward to forging new memories for sure," explained Puneet Issar.

The grand Broadway-style extravaganza features a stellar ensemble cast, with Puneet Issar portraying Raavan, Vinu Dara Singh as Hanuman, Shilpa Raizada as Sita, and Siddhant Issar in the role of Ram.

Puneet Issar excitedly added "Jai Shri Ram – Ramayan is India's longest-running Broadway-style musical extravaganza and making its debut in the USA & Canada, uniting global audiences in an unparalleled celebration of cultural richness. The idea behind this Broadway musical is to showcase and celebrate our Indian history, talent as well as artistry. After an incredible run in India, we are eager to amplify the excitement manifold as we embark on this fresh global stage experience."

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Ten Indian Americans named Sloan Research Fellows

OUR BUREAU

New York, NY

The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation announced 126 new fellows today, recognizing the most innovative young scientists across the US and Canada. These two-year fellowships honor outstanding early-career researchers in seven fields and have become one of the most prestigious and sought after awards available to young scholars.

Founded in 1934 by industrialist Alfred P. Sloan Jr., the Foundation is a not-for-profit grantmaking institution that supports high quality, impartial scientific research; fosters a robust, diverse scientific workforce; strengthens public understanding and engagement with science; and promotes the health of the institutions of scientific endeavor.

“Sloan Research Fellowships are extraordinarily competitive awards involving the nominations of the most inventive and impactful early-career scientists across the U.S. and Cana-



da,” says Adam F. Falk, president of the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. “We look forward to seeing how Fellows take leading roles shaping the research agenda within their respective fields.”

Winners receive a two-year, \$75,000 award which can be used flexibly to advance their research.

The Indian American fellows are— Priyanka Raina, Stanford University and Arvind Satyanarayan, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Computer Science); Dipti Nayak, University of California, Berkeley (Earth System Science); Aaditya Ramdas, Carnegie Mellon University, and Ananth Shankar, North-

western University (Mathematics); Vineet Augustine, University of California, San Diego; Vijay Mohan K Nambodiri, University of California, San Francisco; and Preeya Khanna, University of California, Berkeley (Neuroscience); and Karan K. Mehta, Cornell University (Physics).

A Sloan Research Fellowship is one of the most prestigious awards available to young researchers, in part because so many past Fellows have gone on to become distinguished figures in science. Renowned physicists Richard Feynman and James Cronin were Sloan Research Fellows, as was mathematician John Nash, one of the fathers of modern game theory.

To date, 57 Fellows have received a Nobel Prize, including Mounqi Bawendi, last year’s recipient of the Nobel Prize in Chemistry. 71 have won the National Medal of Science, 17 have won the Fields Medal in mathematics, and 23 have won the John Bates Clark Medal in economics, including every winner since 2007.

World Vegan Vision’s NJ Chapter Inspires Youth and Advocates Veganism



OUR BUREAU

Edison, NJ

World Vegan Vision’s New Jersey Chapter recently organized two impactful events geared towards empowering youth and championing veganism as a compassionate and sustainable lifestyle choice.

Dr. Kalindi Bakshi, President of the NJ Chapter, spearheaded a series of workshops aimed at educating teenagers on the advantages of plant-based nutrition. These workshops, hosted at Arya Samaj of New Jersey in

Park Ridge and Hindu Samaj Mandir in Mahwah, emphasized the significance of sustainable dietary practices and shed light on the essential nutrients present in plant-based foods.

Under the leadership of Sanjukta Basu for the ASNJ Youth Group and Anu Sehgal, Preeti Bansal, Monika Dhawan, and Dr. Savita Khosla for the Bergen County Youth Group of Hindu Samaj Mandir, these events are poised to inspire young individuals to adopt a lifestyle grounded in compassion and environmental awareness.

In a separate event on February 24th, World Vegan Vision was represented at the PSRM Mini Meditation Summit, a gathering celebrating meditation and spiritual science in the USA.



Participants engaged in discussions about the significance of veganism and its positive effects on health, animals, and the environment. The event featured enlightening talks by Abha Devarajan, emphasizing the importance of vegan outreach and addressing vegan-related queries. Notable participants at this session included Dr. Namrta Shah and Varsha Ji.

World Vegan Vision, founded by H.K & Malti Shah, is dedicated to promoting veganism globally as a compassionate and sustainable way of life. Through initiatives like workshops and events, the organization aims to motivate individuals to align their lifestyles with principles that prioritize personal health, ethical treatment of animals, and environmental sustainability.

World Vegan Vision is a global 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization devoted to educating and inspiring individuals worldwide to embrace a plant-based lifestyle for improved personal health, animal welfare, and environmental well-being.



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Tamil Nadu Foundation Golden Jubilee Celebrations held in Chicago



OUR BUREAU

Chicago, IL

Tamil Nadu Foundation (TNF), established in 1974 in Baltimore, stands as the oldest and largest U.S.-based humanitarian organization dedicated solely to Tamil Nadu. Over the last 50 years, TNF has evolved as a social organization impacting the lives of less privileged children and families through Education, Women Empowerment, Rural Development and Health & Hygiene.

Over the past five decades, TNF Life Members, TNF Chapters, and TNF Convention donors have collectively supported over 700 projects, positively impacting more than 500,000

underprivileged individuals across Tamil Nadu. This includes providing aid to over 200,000 students in government schools through TNF’s flagship ABC education initiative, assisting over 60,000 victims of the 2015 floods, aiding more than 20,000 victims of Cyclone Gaja in 2018, and donating over 1 million USD during the challenging COVID-19 pandemic.

To commemorate TNF’s Golden Jubilee, a significant milestone, we are delighted to announce our celebratory event scheduled from May 24 to 26 in Rosemont, IL (Chicago), marking 50 years of our Foundation’s journey.

TNF lifetime members and the Tamil diaspora are eager to celebrate their accomplishments, reflecting on

our journey from a small group of visionaries to impacting over 250,000 children and families across 650 villages in Tamil Nadu. The event promises a rich blend of music, dance, and informative sessions, providing an opportunity to engage with our Youth Force, the future bearers of our mission, and to minimize administrative costs through event profits, ensuring that 100% of donor dollars directly benefit the beneficiaries in Tamil Nadu.

Event Highlights: Grand Music Concert: Featuring the legendary “Isai Gnyani Illayaraja”; Therukoothu: By Sangagiri Rajkumar with 260 participants (Attempting to make Guinness record); “EGAI” Tamil Symphony: A spectacular musical event by Dr. Kan-

niks Kannikeswaran featuring over a hundred artists; Fusion Dance Performance: Showcasing 150 local talents; Tamil Isai - Featuring traditional Tamil musical instruments; The Renowned YouTube - Village Cooking Channel Team; Emerge 2024: An all-day Entrepreneurs Event sponsored by TNF and ATEA; Youth Conference: Organized by young adults; College Alumni Gathering: Expecting participation from over 25 colleges; Districts Parade: Representing 38 districts from Tamil Nadu; and other high-quality programs from TNF Chapters and local organizations.

Guests from various parts of North America and at least 50 other countries will converge to witness this mega event.

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- Nami Island
- N-Seoul Tower
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RAJA KRISHNAMOORTHY

Congressman is amongst Chicago's most influential people



The 'Chicago Magazine' has named Indian-American Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi as one of the 50 most influential individuals in Chicago, ranking him at 24th on the "heavy hitters" list. He is the highest-ranked individual of South Asian descent. In other words, it ranks him as the "most powerful" South Asian in the Greater Chicago Area.

"The heavy hitters in our Power 50," the magazine said, "know how to use their influence to make things happen in Chicago and beyond," while putting J.B. Pritzker, the Illinois Governor at number one and his sister, the former secretary of commerce Penny Pritzker at number 12.

Krishnamoorthi, 50, having been elected to Congress in 2016, is serving his 4th term as a representative for Illinois' 8th District, which consists of Chicago's west and northwest suburbs and the city's 41st ward.

Describing Krishnamoorthi as the "most powerful" South Asian in the Greater Chicago Area, Chicago Magazine also noted his intention to run for the US Senate in 2026. In 2022, Krishnamoorthi contributed \$460,000 to Democratic candidates and the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee.

SALIL PAREKH

Infosys CEO joins USISPF as a member of board of directors



Salil Parekh, CEO and managing director at Infosys, has joined the US-India Strategic and Partnership Forum (USISPF) as a member of its board of directors. The USISPF provides a platform for all stakeholders to come together in new ways to create meaningful opportunities with the power to change the lives of citizens in both countries.

An industry veteran with nearly three decades in the IT services industry, executing business turnarounds and managing successful acquisitions, Parekh, in his capacity as Infosys CEO, sets the strategic direction of one of India's most notable IT giants while nurturing a strong leadership team to drive its execution.

Infosys has been a household name in India, and IT services are one of India's biggest exports to the US, said USISPF president and CEO Mukesh Aghi. His addition. In an era of digital economy and digital trade, Infosys' success in the US is a testimony to the growing synergy in tech ties and how India's robust tech talent plays an integral part in strengthening and growing the tech sector in the United States, Aghi said.

USISPF chairman John Chambers said Salil and Infosys' participation on the USISPF Board will help forge a critical reliance for the two economies by consolidating digital trade, ultimately further establishing India as an innovation partner to the world, which is the organization's core mission.

Continued on next page... >>





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ASHOK VEERARAGHAVAN

Engineer honored with Texas’ highest academic award



Indian-origin computer engineer Ashok Veeraraghavan is the proud recipient of one of the highest academic honors in Texas—the Edith and Peter O’Donnell Award.

The Texas Academy of Medicine, Engineering, Science and Technology (TAMEST), which presents this award to rising researchers in the state, said Veeraraghavan, professor of electrical and computer engineering at George R. Brown School of Engineering at Rice University, was chosen for his revolutionary imaging technology that seeks to make the invisible visible.

The award is given annually to star researchers in the state engaged in pathbreaking work in medicine, engineering, biological sciences, physical sciences and technology innovation.

A professor at George R Brown School of Engineering at Rice University, Ashok Veeraraghavan completed his B.Tech. in electrical engineering from IIT, Madras in 2002. He then moved to the US for his master’s degree in electrical and Computer Engineering from the University of Maryland. Following this, in 2008, Mr Veeraraghavan completed his Ph.D. in Electrical and Computer Engineering from the same university.

Veeraraghavan has also co-developed FlatCam. It is a thin sensor chip with a mask that replaces lenses in a traditional camera. A recipient of many awards, before the Edith and Peter O’Donnell Award, he was honored with IEEE Fellow in 2022. In 2017, he received the NSF Career Award and the Hershel M. Rich Invention Award. Mr Veeraraghavan’s research work provides solutions in imaging scenarios, wherein there is inaccessibility of the visualisation target because of the scattering of light.

DR SAMIR SHAH

Media executive is BBC’s first Indian-origin chairman

Dr Samir Shah, an India-born media executive was recently confirmed as the new BBC chairman pursuant to his selection clearing the stages of scrutiny to be approved by King Charles III this week.

UK Culture Secretary Lucy Frazer announced his selection and said “With a career spanning more than 40 years in TV production and journalism, Dr Shah has a wealth of experience to bring to the position of BBC Chair.”

Further, she said “He has a clear ambition to see the BBC succeed in a rapidly changing media landscape, and I have no doubt he will provide the



support and scrutiny that the BBC needs to meet the challenges and opportunities of the future.”

Shah, the 72-year-old has been confirmed in the 1,60,000 pounds per year and four-year term role to take charge as the public broadcaster’s first Indian-origin Chair from March 4 till March 2028.

Shah was picked as the government’s preferred candidate in December last year and cross-party MPs of the House of Commons Media Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee quizzed him for his pre-appointment scrutiny.

“BBC is, without doubt, one of the greatest contributions we have made to global culture and one of our strongest calling cards on soft power. If I am able to put what skills, experience, and understanding of public service broadcasting I have built up during my career to help this brilliant organisation meet the complex and diverse challenges it faces over the coming years, it would be an honour,” said Shah.

“BBC has a great place in British life and a unique duty to reach a wide audience right across the country and I will do all I can to ensure it fulfils this in an increasingly competitive market,” he said.

SUNIL BHARTI MITTAL

Entrepreneur conferred Honorary Knighthood by King Charles III



Sunil Bharti Mittal, the founder and chairman of Bharti Enterprises, has been conferred an Honorary Knighthood by King Charles III of the United Kingdom. This prestigious recognition makes him the first Indian citizen to receive such an honour from King Charles III ‘for services to UK and India business relations.’

Sunil Bharti Mittal expressed his gratitude, stating, “The UK and India

Continued on next page... >>



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have historical relations, which are now entering a new era of increased cooperation and collaboration. I remain committed to working towards strengthening the economic and bilateral trade relationships between our two great nations.”

This is part of honorary awards to foreign nationals approved by His Majesty The King in 2024. This award recognise foreign and Commonwealth nationals who have made an outstanding contribution to the UK.

The 66-year-old entrepreneur stated that he was “deeply humbled” by the gracious recognition from King Charles.

FIROZ MERCHANT

Philanthropist donates Rs 2.25 Cr to free 900 prisoners in the UAE



In a pre-Ramzan gesture, a UAE-based Indian entrepreneur and philanthropist has donated 1 million dirhams (approximately INR 2.5 crore) to ensure the release of 900 prisoners from jails across the Gulf nation. Firoz Merchant, 66, is the owner of Pure Gold Jewellers, donated the money to the UAE authorities, a testament to the holy month’s message of humility, humanity, forgiveness, and kindness.

“Prominent Dubai-based Indian businessman and philanthropist Firoz Merchant of Pure Gold has donated close to Rs 2.25 Crores (AED 1 million) to ensure the release of 900 prisoners from jails across the Arabian nation,” said a statement from his office.

Under the aegis of The Forgotten Society initiative founded in 2008, Merchant has already been instrumental in obtaining the release of 900 prisoners across the UAE since the beginning of 2024, including 495 prisoners from Ajman, 170 prisoners from Fujairah, 121 prisoners from Dubai, 69 prisoners from Umm Al Quwain and 28 from Ras Al Khaimah.

With the help of the Director Generals of Police at the Central Jails across the UAE, Merchant has already made possible the release of over 20,000 prisoners over the years from a wide range of denominations, nationalities, and religions. He gets their debt paid and donates funds for their air tickets to fly back to their home country.

ARJANVEER SINGH

NY Sikh boy rolls out album of Gurbani Shabad Kirtan

12-year-old Arjanveer Singh has released his album of Gurbani Shabad Kirtan in 31 ragas of Guru Granth Sahib. A prodigy based at Albany, New York he learned the recital of Gurbani Kirtan in classical Ragas pointed towards his dedication towards Gurmat philosophy.

About his feat he said it was an initiative aimed at connecting children worldwide with the ‘Ragatmic Shabad Kirtan’ of Guru Granth Sahib. He rendered Gurbani Kirtan in Ragas such as Aasaa, Wadhans, Sorath and others.

He learnt Gurbani Kirtan based on 31 ragas of Guru Granth Sahib from renowned Sangeet Kirtankar Dr Gurnam Singh, former head of Gurbani Sangeet Chair of Punjabi University through Baljinder Singh, the head of the Rara Sahib Samprada.

The Sikh holy scripture, Guru Granth Sahib, is composed in and divided into a total of 60 ragas. This is a combination of 31 single raags and 29 mixed raags (a raag composed by combining two or three raags together).

Album containing Gurbani Shabad Keertan in 31 ragas sung by 12-year-old Arjanveer Singh was jointly released by Akal Takht Jathedar Giani Raghbir Singh, SGPC president Harjinder Singh Dhami, Rara Sahib Samprada head Baba Baljinder Singh and others at Akal Takht secretariat in Amritsar on Saturday. Dhami congratulated the family of the child.

RIMLI ROY

Surati founder receives the NJ State Council Fellowship award

Rimli Roy, Surati Founder and Artistic Director has received the NJ State Council on the Arts 2024 Individual Artist Fellowship award. Ms Roy is a recipient in the Interdisciplinary category which uses two or more artistic forms from the categories listed for this award in alternate years. She is also a past recipient of the Folk Arts Apprenticeship award from the NJSCA and the Sunshine Award in 2023.

“The New Jersey State Council on the Arts is pleased to share the exciting news that Ms Rimli Roy is among 76 artists selected from 692 eligible applicants in six artistic disciplines to be awarded a 2024 Individual Artist Fellowship. Your work was reviewed by a panel of peers working in your field, and they evaluated it to be of very high artistic quality. A Fellowship ...will be awarded to you in recognition of the outstanding work you are doing and in the hope that it will enable you to further your artistic goals,” stated NJSCA.

Roy is an artiste, dancer, choreographer, producer, director, actor, visionary and humanitarian from Kolkata, India who embarked on her artistic journey at the age of 4, immersing herself first in classical Indian dance forms like Odissi, Bharatnatyam, Manipuri under renowned gurus of India, while also learning Western classical pianoforte under the tutelage of the Trinity College of Music, London as well as Indian Classical music (Hindustani vocals and harmonium).

Her quest led her to explore beyond traditional practices. Significant milestones in her journey are the creation of productions like “Glimpses of India” and “Ramaavan – A Musical” that seamlessly blend genres from the East and the West. Ms. Roy’s artistry has graced iconic venues such as the United Nations, The Kennedy Center and The Library of Congress in D.C, The Lincoln Center in NYC, The Reichhold Center at the U.S Virgin Islands, The Indian Consulate in NYC, Times Square NYC, and The Alaska Performing Arts Center. Beyond her performances, she nurtures budding dancers and collaborates with tri-state organizations to democratize the arts. Her ensemble beautifully reflects her commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusivity.



To read more about Indian diaspora and Global Indians, log on to and follow our website www.TheIndianEYE.com



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Improved global trade and better supply chains boost Indian GDP growth to 8.4%

Our efforts will continue to bring fast economic growth which shall help 140 crore Indians lead a better life and create a Viksit Bharat: PM Modi

OUR BUREAU

New Delhi/Mumbai

India's GDP grew at a huge 8.4 per cent during the October-December quarter of the current financial year and the country continued to remain the fastest-growing major economy. The Indian economy grew 7.8 per cent and 7.6 per cent during the preceding two quarters - April-June and July-September, data released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation on Thursday showed.

India continues to be an outlier and remains the fastest-growing major economy and global agencies will reappraise their estimate of potential GDP growth in India, which is close to 7 per cent, if not higher, Chief Economic Advisor V Anantha Nageswaran has said.

In a virtual media briefing after third quarter GDP growth figures were released, Nageswaran said that India stands out as the fastest-growing economy, supported by stable external sectors, current account deficit nearing just 1 per cent of GDP, forex reserves covering 11 months of imports and substantial FPI flows contribute to economic resilience.

Nageswaran said that in the services sector, while hospitality growth has slightly dipped, it's seen as stabilizing after a strong recovery in FY22 and FY23. Tourist arrivals surpass pre-pandemic averages, signaling a positive trend in both business and leisure travel, he said. The CEA said that demand conditions are favorable, reflected in healthy passenger vehicle sales, domestic air passenger traffic, and a buoyant construction sector. With the external sector remaining stable, the country seems well-positioned for continued growth.

"Looking ahead to FY25, prospects are optimistic. Anticipated factors include a robust Rabi harvest, sustained manufacturing profitability and service sector resilience. Household consumption is expected to improve, supported by positive private capex cycles, improved business sentiments, and the government's focus on capital expenditure," he added.

The CEA highlighted that the global factors such as an improved outlook for international trade and integration into global supply chains, further bolster India's economic potential. Public digital platforms and strategic initiatives like PM GatiShakti and production-linked incentive schemes aim to stimulate manufacturing.

The CEA also referred to challenges with uncertainties in merchandise trade and geopolitical



Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the robust 8.4 per cent GDP growth in the third quarter of 2023-24 shows the strength of the Indian economy and also its potential

tensions potentially impacting growth.

"Despite these challenges, India's economic outlook for FY25 appears promising, with a combination of internal strengths and external factors poised to drive continued growth," he said.

The Indian economy grew 7.8 per cent and 7.6 per cent during the preceding two quarters - April-June and July-September, data released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation on Thursday showed.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said the robust 8.4 per cent GDP growth in the third quarter of 2023-24 shows the strength of the Indian economy and also its potential and the government will continue its efforts for fast economic growth to create 'Viksit Bharat'. PM Modi said in a post on X that fast economic growth will also help the citizens lead a better life.

"Robust 8.4% GDP growth in Q3 2023-24 shows the strength of Indian economy and its potential. Our efforts will continue to bring fast economic growth which shall help 140 crore Indians lead a better life and create a Viksit Bharat!" he said.

Underlining that Indian economy is on a high

growth trajectory, Confederation of Indian Industry in a statement on Thursday exuded confidence that Indian economy will continue to grow at 7 per cent plus growth rate over the medium term.

In a statement issued today, Chandrajit Banerjee, Director General, CII, said, "industry is enthused to note the strong set of GDP growth numbers for the third quarter (YoY), which surpassed expectations, recording an actual rate of 8.4 percent exceeding the previous quarter's 7.6 per cent".

"What is more comforting to note is the fact that the robust expansion came despite the recurring spate of geopolitical flashpoints and was premised on a healthy double-digit expansion in manufacturing and investment," he said.

The PLI scheme and host of other benefits announced for the manufacturing sector have buttressed the strong growth posted by the manufacturing sector, as per the statement

"Indian economy is on a high growth trajectory supported by structural reforms and improvements in both ease & cost of doing business. This makes us confident that the Indian economy will continue to grow at 7 per cent plus growth rate over the medium term", the statement added.





TECH T@LK

Elon Musk announces new ‘pinned post’ visibility feature on X

Twitter slams Microsoft about windows 11’s account registration

OUR BUREAU

San Francisco, CA

Elon Musk on Thursday announced a new user feature on his social media platform X (formerly known as Twitter). Musk said the platform’s recommendation algorithm will ensure that all of a user’s followers see their pinned post every 48 hours. As a failsafe to deter “gaming of the system,” Musk also revealed that this will only apply for one pinned post every two days. He added, “This only applies to one pinned post every 48 hours to prevent gaming of the system.”

On February 21, Musk posted on X, “When you pin a post, it is now automatically added to your highlights section. Soon, we will adjust the algorithm to prioritize showing pinned posts to your followers. This will only work once per day to prevent gaming of the system.”

As the platform continues to evolve, these changes are likely to reshape the way users interact with con-



tent and advertisements on X, providing more options for a personalized and seamless user experience.

Earlier, Musk dropped a complaint about his new laptop, which he said required him to register a Microsoft account to use it. “Just bought a new PC laptop and it won’t let me use it unless I create a Microsoft account, which also means giving their AI access to my computer!” wrote Musk.

“This is messed up. There used to be an option to skip signing into or creating a Microsoft account.”

Soon, however, a Community Note was added to the post, stating that he was incorrect. The Community Notes feature on X is a fact-checking tool that allows authors to give context to potentially misleading posts.

“It is still possible to set up the latest version of Windows without a

Microsoft account,” read the note.

Community Notes is intended to operate through crowdsourcing. Anyone who has been using X for more than six months has not recently broken its rules and has a verified phone number is eligible to participate in the programme as a contributor.

On Sunday, Elon Musk was less impressed with his own Community Notes on X, as per Mashable.

“Community Notes is failing here,” he wrote in a reply to his original post. “This option no longer exists.”

Amusingly, Musk’s response has now received another Community Note. Musk also highlighted concerns about the potential access this offers to Microsoft’s AI in an X post, questioning the account’s requirement for fundamental operations.

He also indicated that Microsoft can turn off your computer, writing, “But since they now require that you use their services just to use your computer, @Microsoft can effectively shut off your computer!”

The Power of Framework: How to Implement a system for Business Processes

By implementing a well-defined framework, organizations can foster a culture of efficiency, productivity, and continuous improvement



Hirav Shah



Regularly review and update your documentation to reflect any changes or improvements to the framework (Representative/File photo)

In the competitive world of business, having an efficient and effective system in place for managing your processes is essential. This is where the power of a framework comes into play. By implementing a well-defined framework, businesses can streamline their operations, improve productivity, and achieve their goals with greater ease.

In this article, we will explore the significance of implementing a system for business processes and how it can benefit your organization.

Understanding the concept of a framework

- Implementing a framework for business processes is crucial for organizations seeking to optimize their operations and drive success.

What is Framework?

- A framework can be defined as a structured approach or set of guidelines that provides a roadmap for managing processes and achieving goals.
- It acts as a blueprint for businesses, outlining the necessary steps and best practices required to streamline operations and ensure consistency.

Benefits of implementing a framework for business processes

- First and foremost, a framework helps businesses establish consistency and standardization.

- A framework provides businesses with a clear structure and direction, ensuring that everyone is on the same page and working towards a common goal.
- It helps in establishing standardized workflows, allocating resources efficiently, and identifying areas for improvement.
- By implementing a well-defined framework, organizations can foster a culture of efficiency, productivity, and continuous improvement.
- Implementing a framework also enables organizations to identify and eliminate bottlenecks and inefficiencies within their processes.
- By mapping out current processes and analyzing them, businesses can identify areas for improvement and implement changes that optimize workflows and enhance productivity.
- This can result in cost savings, improved resource allocation, and ultimately, a healthier bottom line.

Common types of frameworks used in business

- There are several types of frameworks commonly used in business, each with its own unique characteristics and applications. Some of the most widely used frameworks include:

1. Lean Six Sigma:

This framework focuses on minimizing waste and variability in business processes, resulting in improved

quality, reduced costs, and increased customer satisfaction.

2. Agile:

- Originally developed for software development, the Agile framework has gained popularity across various industries.
- It emphasizes iterative and collaborative work, enabling businesses to quickly adapt to changing requirements and deliver value to customers.

3. ITIL (Information Technology Infrastructure Library):

- This framework is specifically designed for managing IT services.
- It provides a set of best practices for delivering reliable, cost-effective IT services that align with the needs of the business.

4. ISO (International Organization for Standardization):

- ISO frameworks provide businesses with internationally recognized standards for quality management, information security, environmental management, and more.
- Implementing ISO frameworks can enhance the credibility and reputation of organizations, making them more attractive to customers and stakeholders.
- These are just a few examples of the frameworks available to businesses. The choice of framework depends on the specific needs and goals of the organization, as well as the industry in which it operates.

Steps to implement a framework for business processes

- Implementing a framework for business processes requires careful planning, execution, and monitoring. Here are the key steps involved in implementing a framework:

- Identifying and mapping your current business processes
 - Analyzing gaps and areas for improvement in your current processes
 - Designing and documenting your new framework
 - Implementing the new framework and managing change within your organization
 - Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of your framework
- By following these steps, businesses can successfully implement a framework for their processes and drive positive outcomes.
 - Conclusion:** The impact of a well-implemented framework on business success
 - Once the new framework has been implemented, it is crucial to monitor and evaluate its effectiveness continuously.
 - This involves setting key performance indicators (KPIs) and regularly measuring and analyzing the results.
 - Monitor the performance of your processes against the defined KPIs and identify any areas that may require further improvement.
 - Seek feedback from employees and customers to gain insights into how the new framework is impacting their experience.
 - Use this feedback to make necessary adjustments and refine your processes as needed.
 - Regularly review and update your documentation to reflect any changes or improvements to the framework.
 - By continuously monitoring and evaluating your framework, you can ensure that it remains effective and aligned with your organization's goals.

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Cast and crew celebrate as 'Article 370' makes success and earns a shoutout from PM Modi

Set entirely in the scenic backdrop of Jammu and Kashmir, the film is based on the landmark revocation of Article 370

OUR BUREAU

Mumbai/Srinagar

Banking in the success of her latest release, action-packed political-thriller 'Article 370', actor Yami Gautam on Monday said the cast and the makers had 'full faith' in the film finding favour with the audience. Revealing that the makers were told that such films may not find too many takers, the pretty actor said, "We were told that this film may not find success at the box office as viewers do not appreciate such subjects."

In the film that has opened to strong reviews and is drawing people to theatres on strong 'word-of-mouth', Yami plays intelligence officer Zooni Haksar. Set entirely in the scenic backdrop of Jammu and Kashmir, the film is based on the landmark revocation of Article 370, which guaranteed special constitutional privileges to the erstwhile state.

Helmed by Aditya Suhas Jambhale, the film also stars Priyamani, Arun Govil and Kiran Karmarkar in key roles.

In a bold move that few so coming, the Centre, on August 5, 2019, revoked Article 370, effectively stripping the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir of its special privileges and splitting the region into two Union Territories--Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

On the positive reviews and early box-office success of her latest release, Yami, during a free-wheeling conversation on Monday, said, "We had full faith in the film striking the right chords and finding favour with the audience. We knew once a viewer watches the film once, his views and opinions in the matter (revocation of Article 370 from Jammu and Kashmir) would change. A common refrain in the congratulatory messages that I have been receiving since our film hit theatres is that the youth should watch it as there's no propaganda in it."

Filmmaker and Yami's husband,



Yami Gautam Dhar with her husband and filmmaker Aditya Dhar pose for a photo during the screening of their film 'Article 370' (ANI)

Aditya Dhar, who produced this film, said, "We could only work hard for this film, which we did. We knew once the film arrived in theatres, we wouldn't have any control over how it was received by the viewers. There wasn't much we could do. We just submitted ourselves to the audience and hoped for the best. We knew it was the audience, and the audience alone, who could give our film its due. Our film had characters based on re-

al-life people, who worked tirelessly for the abrogation of Article 370 from Jammu and Kashmir. The idea was to narrate their struggles in real life and bring it to viewers through the audio-visual medium. However, we never imagined our film getting such a response and receiving so much love from viewers. We are truly overwhelmed. To those who called our film agenda or propaganda, all we said was that they should watch the

film before judging it or running it down. Abrogating Article 370 was the biggest-ever decision that an elected government at the Centre has taken since independence."

Addressing an event during a recent visit to Jammu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi gave a massive shoutout to the makers of 'Article 370' saying, "I have been told that a film titled 'Article 370' is being released this week. It's good that movies are being made on such issues. Apart from entertaining viewers, it will also raise general awareness on the events that led us to take this decision."

Responding to PM Modi's remark, Yami took to Instagram and posted, "It is an absolute honour to watch PM @narendramodi Ji talk about #Article370Movie. My team and I really hope that we all exceed your expectations in bringing this incredible story to the screen!"

According to the makers, the film has already minted Rs 34.71 crore gross worldwide in three days.

Meanwhile, director Aditya Suhas Jambhale shared his experience of working with Yami Gautam, Priyamani and producer Aditya Dhar in 'Article 370'. He also opened up about the kind of response the movie is getting from the audience. He said, "Yami is a fabulous actor and to work with her was a great experience. She is very studious in her approach. Priyamani is amazing."

Speaking about how it was to work with Aditya, he added, "He has been a great producer and has given me complete freedom. He forced nothing on me."

On the kind of response this movie is getting, he shared, "The way people are reacting and audience are reacting is beyond words. Every day they share videos and get messages from all over the world. I think when we started working on this project we knew that people would have the similar response and every Hindustani would react to it."





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Bollywood Gup-Shup



KAPIL SHARMA

Comedy show to stream on OTT from this date

Good news for all the Kapil Sharma fans. The comedian is all set to tickle your funny bones with the upcoming comedy show 'The Great Indian Kapil Show'.

On Thursday, the makers of the show released a special video and announced the streaming date of the show.

Taking to Instagram, OTT platform Netflix shared the video

that they captioned, "Aapke ghar ka raasta, hasee se hokar jaata hai. The Great Indian Kapil Show arrives at 8 PM every Saturday from 30 March, only on Netflix."

The new video features comedians Kapil Sharma, Krushna Abhishek, Sunil Grover, Kiku Sharda and Rajiv Thakur and actor Archana Puran Singh discussing how to make a grand announcement of the title of their upcoming show.



AAMIR KHAN

Son Junaid's debut film 'Maharaj' poster unveiled

Actor Aamir Khan's son, Junaid Khan, is all set to make his acting debut with the upcoming film 'Maharaj'. Produced by Yash Raj Entertainment, the makers on Thursday unveiled the film's poster and a short glimpse into the world of 'Maharaj'.

Taking to Instagram, OTT platform Netflix shared the poster of the film

star they captioned, "A powerful man with secrets to hide. A journalist's fight to uncover the truth. Maharaj is coming soon only on Netflix!"

The makers also unveiled a collage video of their upcoming projects, including Vaani Kapoor's 'Mandala Murders', 'Maharaj', and Anupam Kher's 'Vijay 69', that features short glimpses of the films.



SONAKSHI SINHA

Actor to star in Vishal Rana's romantic thriller

Actor Sonakshi Sinha is all set to come up with a romantic thriller in collaboration with producer Vishal Rana and debutant director Karan Rawal. Sonakshi took to Instagram and treated fans to new film excitement.

Sharing the picture with the team, she wrote, "When three people who LOVE their work, are borderline OBSESSED with it and cant wait to THRILL the audience come together - you get a Romantic Thriller with a twist you wont forget! Supper happy to be collaborating with the dynamic producer Vishal Rana (@itsvishalrana) of @echelonproduction and debutante Director Karan Rawal (@karanrawal2) on a film that will have you on the edge of your seats... watch this space for more! Filming soon."

As soon as the news was shared, actor's fans and industry members chimed in with their opinion in the comment section.



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Board of Immigration Appeals in Matter of Aguilar Hernandez Provides Glimpse of How Statutes and Regulations Will Be Interpreted Without Deference to Government



BY CYRUS D. MEHTA AND
KAITLYN BOX

On January 31, 2024, the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) issued a decision in Matter of Aguilar Hernandez.

Mr. Aguilar Hernandez, a noncitizen from Mexico, had been served a Notice to Appear (NTA) in 2019 that did not list the date and time of his individual hearing. He objected that this NTA was defective at both his individual hearing and moved to terminate the removal proceedings against him, but the

Immigration Judge denied his motion. In October 2022, Mr. Aguilar Hernandez again moved to terminate the removal proceedings due to the defective NTA. The Department of Homeland Security objected, arguing that the IJ had the discretion to allow it to cure the defective NTA rather than terminating removal proceedings. DHS filed a Form I-261 containing the date and time of the next hearing, and also listing the date and time of the original hearing, and served this form on Mr. Aguilar Hernandez. Over Mr. Aguilar Hernandez's objections,

the IJ denied his motion to terminate once again, without issuing a decision concerning DHS' submission of the Form I-261. Mr. Aguilar Hernandez then appealed to the BIA.

The BIA held that "DHS cannot remedy a notice to appear that lacks the date and time of the initial hearing before the Immigration Judge by filing a Form I-261 because this remedy is contrary to the plain text of 8 C.F.R. § 1003.30 and inconsistent with the Supreme Court's decision in *Niz-Chavez*." In *Niz-Chavez v. Garland*, 593 U.S. 155, 160-62 (2021), the Supreme Court held that DHS cannot cure a defective NTA by issuing a hearing notice that contains the date and time of the initial hearing in removal proceedings. The BIA also cited to *Pereira v. Sessions*, 138 S. Ct. 2015 (2018), in which the Supreme Court held that the "stop-time rule" at INA 240A(d)(1) is not triggered by an NTA that does not contain the time and place of a hearing in removal proceedings. The BIA reasoned that "The plain text of 8 C.F.R. § 1003.30 does not support DHS' argument, because it does not allow amendment of the date and time on the notice to appear by using a Form I-261. See, e.g., *Kisor v. Wilkie*, 139 S. Ct. 2400, 2415 (2019) (requiring agencies to follow the plain language of a regulation)." The BIA noted that the Supreme Court had held

that INA 239(a)(1) requires one "single document" in *Niz-Chavez*, and rejected the idea that DHS could provide adequate notice by issuing multiple successive documents containing the relevant information. See *Niz-Chavez*, 593 U.S. at 160-61.

Matter of Aguilar Hernandez is a victory for noncitizens seeking to terminate removal proceedings on the basis of a defective NTA, but it is interesting for another reason, as well – it represents one of the rare instances in which the BIA has cited *Kisor v. Wilkie*. As prior blogs have noted (here, here, and here) *Kisor v. Wilkie* laid out a three-step test for how it would view an agency's interpretation of its own genuinely ambiguous regulation. Under this test, the court must determine (i) that the regulation is "genuinely ambiguous" — the court should reach this conclusion after exhausting all the "traditional tools" of construction; (ii) if the regulation is genuinely ambiguous, whether the agency's interpretation is reasonable; and (iii) even if it is a reasonable interpretation, whether it meets the "minimum threshold" to grant Auer deference, requiring the court to conduct an "independent inquiry" into whether (a) it is an authoritative or official position of the agency; (b) it reflects the agency's substantive expertise; and (c) the agency's interpretation of the rule reflects "its fair and considered judgment." In *Kisor*, the Supreme Court narrowed the previous standard set forth in *Auer v. Robbins*, which held that courts would give

deference to an agency's interpretation of its own ambiguous regulation. In *Aguilar Hernandez* it does not appear that the BIA thought that 8 C.F.R. § 1003.30 was ambiguous, and so it did not even need to defer to the government's interpretation of this regulation even under the narrower standard as set forth in *Kisor v. Wilkie*. The plain language of 8 C.F.R. § 1003.30 did not support an expansive reading that would allow the government to cure a defective NTA by amending it through the submission of an I-261. An I-261 under 8 C.F.R. § 1003.30 only allows the government to add or substitute charges in an NTA or to add or substitute factual allegations.

The requirement that the government interprets the plain meaning of the regulation is part of a trend. The "Auer deference" standard as modified by *Kisor v. Wilkie* is quite similar to "Chevron deference", which holds that courts will give deference to a federal agency's interpretation of an ambiguous federal statute. *Chevron U.S.A., Inc. v. Natural Resources Defense Council*, 467 U.S. 837 (1984). However, when a statute is not ambiguous, the court does not need to even rely on Chevron deference and can side step the analysis all together. While requiring an agency to adhere to the plain meaning of a statute or regulation helped the respondent in *Aguilar Hernandez*, it may not always come to the aid of plaintiffs. For instance, the DC Circuit Court of Appeals in *Wang v. Blinken* held that it was clear that INA 203(d) required the



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counting of both the principal and derivative beneficiaries in the employment-based fifth preference. Indeed, the Court in *Wang v. Blinken* also rejected the government's argument that it was entitled to Chevron deference in interpreting INA 203(d) by counting derivatives as INA 203(d) was not ambiguous in the first place.

Two upcoming Supreme Court cases – *Relentless, Inc. v. Department of Commerce* and *Loper Bright Enterprises v. Raimondo* – may narrow Chevron or even eviscerate it altogether. If the Supreme Court's holdings in *Relentless* and *Loper Bright* deprive agencies of the ability to interpret ambiguous statutes without explicit Congressional authorization, it may result in both good and bad outcomes in the immigration context. According to the Think Immigration Blog: "For example, in removal cases, Chevron deference hurts those seeking review of immigration judge or Board of Immigration Appeals decisions. It can also hurt employers seeking to obtain a favorable interpretation of a statute granting H-1B or L visa classification to a noncitizen worker. However, Chevron deference can help when the immigration agency seeks to give

employment authorization benefits, such as with the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program or with F-1 optional practical training."

At present, courts also rely on the "major questions" doctrine in *West Virginia v. EPA*, 142 S. Ct. 2587 (2022) to side step Chevron deference even if a statute is ambiguous. Here the Supreme Court held that "in certain extraordinary cases" where it is unclear whether an agency action was authorized by Congress, "given both separation of powers principles and a practical understanding of legislative intent, the agency must point to 'clear congressional authorization' for the authority it claims". Such extraordinary cases where the "major questions" doctrine is invoked have

vast economic and political significance. The dissent in *Washington Alliance of Technology Workers v. the U.S. Department of Homeland Security* ("*Washtech v. DHS*"), for example, argued that the issue of whether DHS' 2016 OPT Rule exceeds its statutory authority was a "major question". Similarly, in a footnote, the court in *Texas v. USA* cited *West Virginia v. EPA* in holding that DHS had no Congressional authority to implement the DACA program. The standard articulated in *West Virginia v. EPA* requires agencies to assert clear Congressional authorization when implementing a new policy of major significance, while Chevron imposes an almost opposite standard by saying that if the court cannot

identify clear congressional authority disapproving what the agency proposes to do, the court should uphold the agency action if it is reasonable. The Supreme Court's decisions in *Relentless* and *Loper Bright* could help to resolve this discrepancy. If Chevron deference is eliminated, courts need not even need to go into the "major questions" doctrine.

Matter of Aguilar Hernandez gives us a taste of how courts will interpret INA provisions and regulations in a post Chevron world although it remains to be seen whether the end result will always be beneficial.

**Kaitlyn Box is a Senior Associate at Cyrus D. Mehta & Partners PLLC.*

Cyrus D. Mehta, a graduate of Cambridge University and Columbia Law School, is the Managing Partner of Cyrus D. Mehta & Partners PLLC in New York City. Mr. Mehta is a member of AILA's Administrative Litigation Task Force; AILA's EB-5 Committee; former chair of AILA's Ethics Committee; special counsel on immigration matters to the Departmental Disciplinary Committee, Appellate Division, First Department, New York; member of the ABA Commission on Immigration; board member of Volunteers for Legal Services and board member of New York Immigration Coalition. Mr. Mehta is the former chair of the Board of Trustees of the American Immigration Council and former chair of the Committee on Immigration and Nationality Law of the New York City Bar Association. He is a frequent speaker and writer on various immigration-related issues, including on ethics, and is also an adjunct professor of law at Brooklyn Law School, where he teaches a course entitled Immigration and Work. Mr. Mehta received the AILA 2018 Edith Lowenstein Memorial Award for advancing the practice of immigration law and the AILA 2011 Michael Maggio Memorial Award for his outstanding efforts in providing pro bono representation in the immigration field. He has also received two AILA Presidential Commendations in 2010 and 2016. Mr. Mehta is ranked among the most highly regarded lawyers in North America by Who's Who Legal – Corporate Immigration Law 2019 and is also ranked in Chambers USA and Chambers Global 2019 in immigration law, among other rankings.



ENGLAND IN INDIA

All eyes on India's young talent in the fifth Test after hosts sweep the series 3-1

India will lock horns with England in the fifth and final Test match of the series from March 7 at Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association Stadium in Dharamshala

OUR BUREAU

Mumbai

India wicketkeeper-batter KL Rahul, whose participation was subject to fitness, has been ruled out of the fifth and final Test against England in Dharamshala, while star speedster Jasprit Bumrah will link-up with the squad.

"The BCCI Medical Team is closely monitoring him and coordinating with specialists in London for further management of his issue," BCCI said in an official statement on Thursday.

Rahul could not join the second, third, and fourth Tests against England due to injury after he played the series opener in Hyderabad.

In a major boost for the hosts in the fifth Test, the right-arm seamer Bumrah, who was released from the squad for the 4th Test in Ranchi, will link-up with the squad in Dharamshala.

While providing the fitness update about Mohammed Shami, the board stated that the pacer successfully underwent a surgery on Monday for his right heel problem. He is recovering well and will soon head to the National Cricket Academy (NCA) in Bengaluru to commence his rehabilitation process.

"Washington Sundar has been released from the squad. He will join Tamil Nadu - his Ranji Trophy side - for their Ranji Trophy Semi-final fixture against Mumbai, starting March 2nd, 2024. He will join the India squad after the completion of the domestic fixture for the fifth Test, if need be," the statement fur-



Dhruv Jurel plays a shot during Day 3 of the 4th Test match against England (ANI)

ther reads.

In the ongoing series, England lost their third consecutive match in the series, unable to capitalise on their early 1-0 advantage following a narrow victory in Hyderabad. The visitors had their chances, notably in Rajkot and Ranchi, but India came back strong on both occasions to win.

India will lock horns with England in the fifth and final Test match of the series from March 7 at Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association Stadium in Dharamshala.

With the five-match Test series in their bag by 3-1, India will lock horns with England in the fifth and last match, starting on March 7 in Dharamshala.

India's updated squad for the 5th Test: Rohit Sharma (C), Jasprit Bumrah (VC), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Shubman Gill, Rajat Patidar, Sarfaraz Khan, Dhruv Jurel (WK), KS Bharat (WK), Devdutt Padikkal, R Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohd. Siraj, Mukesh Kumar, Akash Deep.

MSK Prasad hails Jurel, Sarfaraz's performance

Former Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) chief selector Mannava Sri Kanth Prasad on Wednesday showered praise on youngsters including Dhruv Jurel and Sarfaraz Khan for their "match-winning knocks" against England in the third and fourth Test matches of the five-match series.

Speaking to the media, Prasad *Continued on next page... >>*

opined that resting a few players to manage their workload is very important since the T20 World Cup is coming. He added that Jurel and Sarfaraz got their chance in the squad because the team management had rested players.

The former India cricketer further added that the youngsters have been doing “extremely well”.

“It is always important to understand that the mega T20 World Cup is coming. It is always important to rest players and prepare them for the right moment. In the process, several youngsters have benefited someone like Dhruv Jurel, even Sarfaraz Khan. They have been doing extremely well. It is very important that under these circumstances those youngsters who got a chance have stood up for the cause. They not just stood up but played match-winning knocks,” Prasad said.

Asked if Mohammed Shami’s absence in the upcoming T20 World Cup will make a difference for Team India, he said his not playing will be a loss to the team.

“It is very unfortunate. If Shami will not be playing, it will be a big loss for Team India.”

Earlier on Monday, Shami provided a huge update and disclosed that he has undergone an operation on his Achilles tendon.

The 33-year-old, who is not playing in the current five-match Test series against England, last represented India in the ODI World Cup final against Australia in November. The senior pacer finished as the tournament’s highest wicket-taker and dismissed 24 batters in only 7 matches. The latest update has reportedly ruled him out of the upcoming Indian Premier League (IPL) 2024 with the Gujarat-based franchise.

Talking about England’s ‘Bazball’ approach, Prasad said that it works only in high-scoring conditions.

“I don’t think it worked in India. It works only in conditions where scoring becomes very easy like Australia and New Zealand. But it is trying and testing conditions in India. You need to adapt to the conditions and mould your game accordingly,” he concluded.

Anil Kumble praises Dhruv Jurel

Former India spinner Anil Kumble has said that wicketkeeper batter Dhruv Jurel has the potential to reach the level of success



Jasprit Bumrah and teammates celebrate the wicket of Zak Crawley on Day 4 of the 3rd Test match against England (ANI)

that former India skipper MS Dhoni attained in his career.

Jurel played a stellar role in India’s match-winning performance in the fourth Test against England with his valuable knocks in the first and second innings. He scored 90 runs in the first innings and played an unbeaten winning knock of 39 runs in the second innings.

Jurel made his debut in the third Test at Rajkot as he replaced KS Bharat.

“Oh yes, there’s Rishabh Pant. We don’t know of course when he comes, comes back whenever that happens. Sooner hopefully for Rishabh. But otherwise, yes, he certainly has all the credentials to get to where MS (Dhoni) reached in his career. He’s not just shown the temperament of his technique to defence but even when he’s attacking. Even in that first innings, he was very assured, he went after and then hit those big sixes,” Kumble said on Jio Cinema.

The 53-year-old further stated that Jurel has been exceptional so far especially against the speedsters. He also said that Jurel will get better as he plays more matches.

“He’s been exceptional, especially of the faster bowlers...He’s only going to improve. This is only his second Test and I’m sure as he starts playing more and more he’ll only get better. And it only augers well for India. And to have him in a squad

is exceptional. Yeah, I mean it’s not been easy for KS Bharat,” the former India head coach added.

“Don’t feel too strongly about being critical”: Atherton

Former England cricketer Michael Atherton feels it is hard to be too “critical” of the Three Lions’ performance against India following their Test series defeat in Ranchi.

England rode high in during some phases of the Test match, on the back of strong performances from Joe Root and young spinners Shoaib Bashir and Tom Hartley.

Shubman Gill and Dhruv Jurel’s unbeaten 72-run stand took India across the finishing line during the tricky chase of 192 runs.

“I don’t feel too strongly about being too critical of England. It’s a difficult place to come and win, obviously, with nobody able to do so since 2012/13,” Atherton said on the Sky Sports Cricket podcast.

Atherton went on to state that the series has been competitive from the very first match but India ended up being too good in the home conditions.

“When we were talking about the series before a ball was sent down then I don’t think we expected England to win here, given the relative strength of the spin attack. I feel that it has been a competitive series. I feel like India know they’ve been in the tussle, but in the end they were just

too good in home conditions,” Atherton added.

England kicked off the series on a dominant note with a 28-run triumph in Hyderabad. In the following three games, they had their moments of brilliance but failed to capitalise on them.

In the fourth Test, Joe Root’s 122* put England in a strong position. However, in the second innings, Ravichandran Ashwin spun the team with his five-wicket haul and restricted England on 145.

“I thought this was a particularly good effort from India to win the Test. They lost the toss, they were behind on first innings, but they pulled it around. It could conceivably be 4-0 to India because they will feel they should have won that first game in Hyderabad and probably ought to have done,” Atherton said.

“You could also say it could be 2-2 as well because England did win in Hyderabad and threw away a strong position here. Even at Rajkot, I know they ended up losing by a massive margin, but that day three was a similar day three here. I felt that the cricket has been competitive and India know they’ve been in a tussle,” Atherton added.

