

THE DIASPORA



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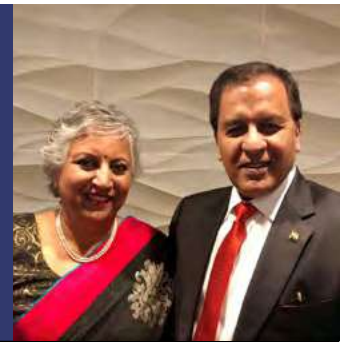
FIA And The Indian Consulate Celebrate Gujarat Maharashtra Day



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Cricket Pitch in Piscataway named after Late Mr. Jaswant Mody

IIT-K signs MoU with Anil & Kumud Bansal Foundation for US\$2.5 million



38TH EDITION OF FIA'S 'DANCE PE CHANCE 2022' DAZZLES AFTER 2 YEARS OF HIATUS



After a two-year hiatus, the 38th edition of FIA's 'Dance Pe Chance' returns on Saturday, May 7th, to the Patriots War Memorial Theatre in Trenton, NJ.

Over 300 children participated from the various community dance schools in the tri-state area, competing to showcase their talent, discipline, technique, and costumes. Children aging from 6 years old through 16 and mixed-age adult groups competed with a sporting spirit, shining on the grand stage of the theatre in colorful production lighting, backdrops, props, and music. The mesmerizing performances were a mixed repertoire of culture and tradition set to the tune of



contemporary Indian 'Bollywood' film songs. Inclement weather did nothing to dampen the spirit and the event saw a great turnout of over 1100 spectators.

A total of 16 different performances were showcased by the groups, which included non-scoring performances by adult dancing groups.

The judging panel this year comprised renowned Kathak dancer and actress Guru Archana Joglekar, Bollywood choreographer and director Kush Banker, popular actress of South Indian films, Manya, and the star emcee, sensational Bollywood actress Mannara Chopra.

Hon. Deputy Counsel General of India-New York Dr. Varun Jeph was in attendance. He expressed his joy in witnessing the participation of diverse community groups, including members from other communities in the USA. He expressed his gratitude to FIA for engaging the community's children with such confidence and discipline-building engagement that also

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instills our motherland's culture through the form of dance.

FIA President, Mr. Kenny Desai, thanked all the judges, sponsors, and FIA executive team, along with the all-female DPC team, that worked tirelessly to bring this complex event together. He also invited the community to

participate in numbers for the India Day Parade in Manhattan in August this year.

FIA Chairman, Mr. Ankur Vaidya, thanked the FIA President and his executive team, along with DPC Chair Saurin Parikh and Smita Miki Patel, for a job well done. He also remembered FIA's founding member, Yash Paul Soi, and his contributions to FIA and

to the DPC event over the past four decades. Vaidya thanked the Piscataway Township and Councilmember Kapil Shah for

naming the Piscataway cricket field in the memory of Jay (Jaswant) Mody. Jay Mody was a lifelong FIA volunteer and a



Judges at the May 7, 2022 Dance Pe Chance competition included Kathak dancer and actress Guru Archana Joglekar, Bollywood choreographer and director Kush Banker, popular actress of South Indian Films Manya.



Organizers and sponsors of the 38th Dance Pe Chance competition



India's Deputy Consul General in New York Dr. Varun Jeph, President of FIA Kenny Desai, FIA Vice President and Dance Pe Chance Chair Saurin Parikh and Chairman of FIA Ankur Vaidya, speaking at the 38th Dance Pe Chance competition

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community leader who served various other organizations during his community service tenure of over 40 years.

FIA Vice President & Dance Pe Chance Chair Mr. Saurin Parikh thanked all the sponsors, media partners, and the Consulate General of India in New York for their uninterrupted service to the community during the pandemic.

The entire CGI-NY team was felicitated with flowers on stage as a thank you from the community for their selfless service to our community and for staying open and accommodating urgently needed consular services.

Also in attendance were Past President & Board of Trustee Mr. Srujal Parikh, FIA Vice President

Mr. Himanshu Bhatia, FIA Secretary Mr. Parveen Bansal, FIA Jt. Secretary Ms. Smita Miki Patel, FIA Treasurer Amit Ringasia, FIA Jt. Treasurer Mr. Mahesh Dubal, FIA Past President, Mr. Alok Kumar, and BAJANA President Mr. Anurag Kumar, amongst others.

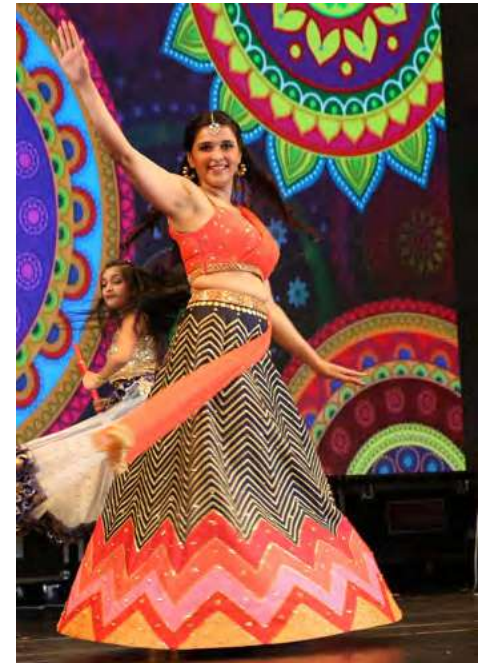
Over \$20,000 was given in cash prizes, with the first prize being of \$5,000.00, which was won in a tie between Aum Dance Creations and Atma Dance Studios.

Dance Pe Chance, over its nearly four decades, has seen the participation of nearly 19 thousand children, and the competition aims at bringing the diverse cultures of India, inspiring creativity and encouraging teamwork combined with competitiveness among children to make them

face the future better and make them aware of their roots, which lay in the diverse cultures and traditions of India. With support and compliments from the FIA executive team, and with the help of sponsors and supporters, and unlike any other dance competition this year as well, all meals and close to 400 tickets were given to the participating students to stay committed to FIA's vision of engaging the next generation of Americans of Indian origin with our culture and our motherland.

For the first time ever, the half-time show showcased a grand performance by actress Mannara Chopra (also the Master of Ceremonies), who, along with the help of choreographers Sandesh Shetty and Deepa Pais,

did a medley performance that concluded with a thunderous



Mannara Chopra performing at 38th Dance Pe Chance competition



Groups performing at the May 7, 2022 Dance Pe Chance event





Kush Banker in an exclusive Interview to FIA on DPC event

I'd like to remind every youngster who is participating in the DPC event that just being there is a big deal. Winning or losing should not matter; the most essential thing is to go on stage, and once there, you are already a winner.

Click to watch the full Interview



Exclusive

Mannara Chopra on FIA and its contribution to the community

There are many Indians in America who lose out on numerous Indian events that take place in India. So, FIA is the one organization that helps India connect to America and vice versa, and I am proud to be a part of it.

FIA is holding an Independence Day Parade in New York City on Times Square; there is a lot of enthusiasm about the Parade in India as well since Times Square will be blocked for three hours and Indian celebrities will be there. It's incredible to witness such an event, and now I'm a part of this organization. I consider it a huge accomplishment to have presented a show for FIA, and I wish FIA all the best in its future endeavors.

Click to watch the full Interview

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applause from the audience.

FIA gratefully acknowledges the support of its sponsors ICICI Bank, Parikh Worldwide Media,

TV Asia, Bansal Foundation, Arista Care, Dr Rashmi and Navin Mehta Foundation, New York Banners-Stands, Royal Albert Palace, and its Media Partners ITVGold, TV Asia, South Asian

Times, Radio Zindagi, and Indian Panorama.



FIA committee members at the DPC event

WINNERS OF FIA'S 'DANCE PE CHANCE 2022'

Group Category	Prize/Trophy Category	Group Section	Dance School
Minor	3rd place 2nd place 1st place	M3 M2 M1	Nartan Fusion Dance Academy AUM Dance Creations Bollymoves Dance Academy
Junior	Tied 1st place	J1 J2	AUM Dance Creations AATMA Performing Arts
Senior	2nd place 1st place	S2 S1	Bollymoves Dance Academy AUM Dance Creations
Adult	3rd place 2nd place 1st place	A3 A5 A2	Nitya Rhythm Dance Academy Aum Dance Creations Bolly Tech Philly
	Best Costume Best Technique Best Choreography Best of the Best	J2 A2 J1 J1 & J2	AATMA Performing Arts Bolly Tech Philly Aum Dance Creations AUM Dance Creations AATMA Performing Arts

FIA AND THE INDIAN CONSULATE CELEBRATE GUJARAT MAHARASHTRA DAY



The Federation of Indian Associations and the Indian Consulate celebrated Gujarat Maharashtra Day on May 1, 2022 at the Indian Consulate premises in New York as part of the ongoing celebrations of "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav", commemorating 75 years of Indian Independence.

The chief guests to grace the occasion were Ms. Archana Joglekar, a celebrated actress, director, and renowned Kathak exponent, and Ms. Kajal Oza Vaidya, a noted author, scriptwriter, radio jockey, and motivational speaker.

The event was attended by Hon. Consul General Sh. Randhir Jaiswal, Hon. DCG Dr. Varun Jeph, FIA President Mr. Kenny Desai, FIA Chairman Mr. Ankur Vaidya, Padma Shri H. R. Shah, Padma Shri Dr. Sudhir Parikh, Mayor of Edison Mr. Sam Joshi, and FIA's Srujal Parikh, Alok Kumar, and Smt Smita Miki Patel, amongst others.

The Hon CG Sh. Randhir Jaiswal welcomed the guests and said that the Indian Diaspora from both the states of Gujarat and



Dance performances at the Gujarat Maharashtra Day May 1, 2022 at the Indian Consulate in New York. Maharashtra, not only in America but in other countries as well, continues to contribute towards the economic and social progress of the countries they live in.

Hon DCG Dr. Varun Jeph, in his speech said that people from both the states are leaders in finance, business, and entrepreneurship, and they also stand out for their rich cultural traditions and heritage.

The FIA president, Mr. Kenny Desai, said that the state of

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Gujarat is the "Karambhoomi" of Lord Krishna and has been the land of many notable figures hailing from different fields, like Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Patel, Bhakt Narsi Mehta, Vikram Sarabhai, PM Narendra Modi, and the industrial houses of Ambanis and Adanis. He mentioned that Maharashtra has been the guardian of Hindu Sanatan Dharam and has produced bravehearts like Chattrapati Shivaji, Baji Rao Peshwa, and Ahilyabai Holkar. He said that

people from both states have contributed to the economic, industrial and financial growth of India.

In his speech, FIA Chairman Mr. Ankur Vaidya said that he was born and brought up in Baroda in Gujarat, which had a significant Maharashtrian influence and, as such, had the best of both cultures. He also emphasized the need to engage other Indian communities and have events and gatherings where all the members from the various Indian communities can participate. He said that Hon CG Sh. Jaiswal has done a tremendous

job in this direction to bring the communities together. He also lauded the efforts of the officials and staff of the Indian Consulate for doing an unprecedented job and being accessible to all.

One minute of silence was observed in the memory of founding member, past President and Vice Chairman Emeritus, the late Mr. Yash Paul Soi. Mr. Vaidya remembered him for his selfless service and dedication to the cause of FIA and lamented the loss FIA has suffered in his passing away.

Guru Archana Joglekar spoke

about the folk of Maharashtra. She explained in detail the culture and folk traditions of Maharashtra. She also spoke about the shared culture of both states.

Ms. Kaajal Oza Vaidya said that both the states should be seen in unison and commended the fact that the twin states took the path of progress and development and have excelled in the fields of enterprise, culture, commerce, and entertainment. She said that today's gathering is proof of the fact that our country lives in our hearts.

Padma Shri H.R. Shah said that



Attendees, organizers and special guests pose for a photo at the celebration of Gujarat Maharashtra Day



Dance performances at the Gujarat Maharashtra Day May 1, 2022 at the Indian Consulate in New York

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he is honored to be there for the event and gave a brief outline of the history behind the Gujarat Maharashtra day when the 2 states came into being.

Mr. Sam Joshi, Mayor of Edison, said that it was an honor to be present and spoke about his vision of having a satellite office of IIT India in Edison. He thanked the FIA for their initiatives, which go a long way towards keeping the Indian community in touch with their Indian roots.

Event Chair, Past President, and member of the Board of Trustees of FIA, Sh. Srujal Parikh said it's a great honor to celebrate the event and took pride in the fact that Gujarat is the Land of Lord Krishna and Mahatma Gandhi. He recognized and felicitated the sponsors, supporters, partner associations, and members for their efforts to make the event successful.

Padma Shri Sudhir Parikh said that he shares a personal

bond with Maharashtra as he did his schooling in Mumbai. He attributed his success to the state of Gujarat, as it accorded him his higher education.

The audiences were regaled with cultural performances

from both the states, especially the "Garba" and "Laavni," which they thoroughly enjoyed. The Maharashtrian folk dance was performed by the students of "Archana Nritalya", which is run by Guru Archana Joglekar.

The MC, Ms. Gayatri Joshi, did an effective job of keeping the audience involved.

It was a well-attended event, and it was an absolutely packed house.



Kaajal Oza Vaidya and Archana Joglekar at the Gujarat Maharashtra Day celebration



Sam Joshi addressing the gathering at the Gujarat Maharashtra Day



India's Consul General in New York Randhir Jaiswal addressing the gathering

Deputy Consul General of India in New York Dr. Varun Jeph, Kenny Desai, Ankur Vaidya, H.R Shah, Dr. Sudhir Parikh and Srujal Parikh speaking at the Gujarat Maharashtra Day celebrations held at the Indian Consulate in New York



Kaajal Oza Vaidya, Archana Joglekar and Sam Joshi being recognized by India's Consul General in New York Randhir Jaiswal, at the Gujarat Maharashtra Day

THE FORTNIGHT THAT WAS



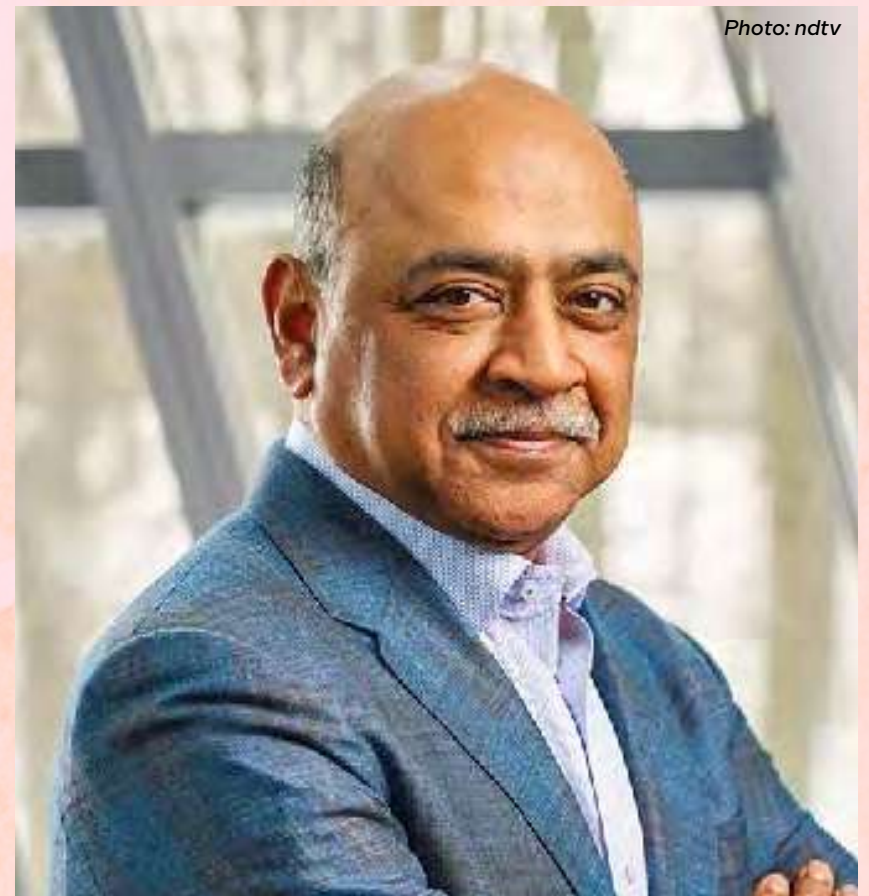
Sixteen states and several environmental groups filed lawsuits on April 28 against the United States Postal Service over its decision to replace its existing mail delivery vehicles with thousands of gasoline-powered trucks.



Lamenting that the number of registered overseas voters is "abysmally low," Chief Election Commissioner Sushil Chandra has told members of the Indian community in South Africa and Mauritius that the facility to extend postal ballot facility for NRI electors is being contemplated.



Russian President Vladimir Putin may be forced to give up control of the war in Ukraine for days as he is set for cancer surgery, and will reportedly nominate hard-line former FSB chief Nikolai Patrushev to take temporary control of the invasion while he is under the knife, a Kremlin insider has claimed.



IBM Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Arvind Krishna has been elected to the Board of Directors of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York.

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Six Indian nationals, aged 19-21 years, were arrested by the US border authorities after they were apprehended on a sinking boat during a failed attempt to be smuggled into America from Canada.

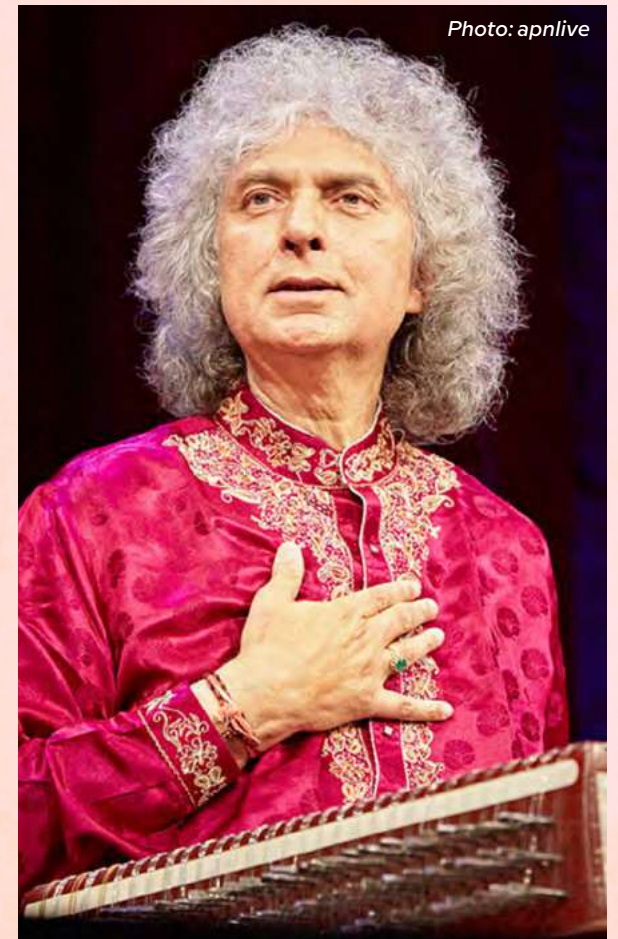


Amidst violent clashes and unrest in Colombo, Sri Lanka's Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa on May 9 resigned. He handed over his resignation to the President and his younger brother Gotabaya Rajapaksa.



Health ministers of different states who attended the 14th conference of the Central Council of Health and Family Welfare (CCHFW) have slammed WHO for its estimate of 4.7 million Covid-related deaths in India, saying it is "baseless" and "intended to show the country in a poor light". They said India has a robust, efficient and comprehensive system for registering deaths and all Covid fatalities are systematically recorded transparently following a legal process.

Influential Indian-American groups have urged the Connecticut State Assembly to rescind its official citation that congratulated a separatist Sikh body on the 36th anniversary of the so-called "declaration of Sikh independence".



Indian classical music legend Shivkumar Sharma has died at the age of 84. Sharma was an exponent of santoor, a dulcimer-like instrument. He suffered a heart attack at his residence in Mumbai on Tuesday morning. Sharma is credited with converting the santoor, which was mainly played in Kashmir, into a major instrument of Indian classical music. Sharma was also part of a duo - along with flautist Hariprasad Chaurasia - who worked on classical and film music. Shiv-Hari, as they were called, composed music for at least eight Bollywood films, including Silsila, Chandni, Darr and Lamhe.

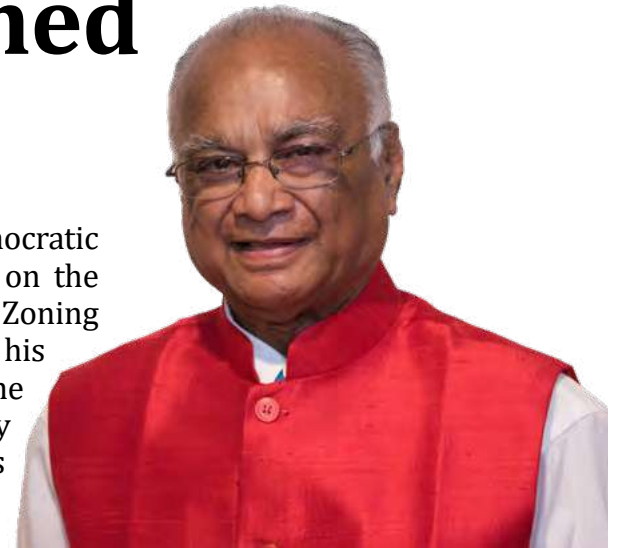
Cricket Pitch in Piscataway named after Late Mr. Jaswant Mody

Indian American Community Leader and former Vice President of Federation of Indian Associations, Jaswant "Jay" Bhailal Mody, will be honored on Sunday, May 15, with a new cricket pitch at Quibbletown Park in Piscataway being named after him. He was a

resident of Piscataway for almost five decades.

Mr. Jay Mody who passed away last year at the age of 83, was a much-loved township citizen and was known for his dedicated and selfless service to the community. He was a committeeman for over 20 years

with the Piscataway Democratic Organization and served on the Piscataway Township Zoning Board. In recognition of his service, he was given the Lifetime Service Award by the Association of Indians in America.



IIT-K signs MoU with Anil and Kumud Bansal Foundation for US\$2.5 million

The Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur (IIT Kanpur) announced the signing of an agreement with the Anil and Kumud Bansal Foundation to assist the establishment of IIT Kanpur's School of Medical Sciences and Technology (SMST). Anil Bansal, the founder of the Anil and Kumud Bansal Foundation, is an IIT Kanpur alumni who heads the Foundation with his wife Kumud Bansal. The Anil and Kumud Bansal Foundation has agreed to donate US\$2.5 million to the School as part of the MoU. Gangwal School of Medical Sciences and Technology is the new name for the school.

Prof. Abhay Karandikar, Director, IIT Kanpur said, "Our vision has been getting shaped with the growing generous insights and contributions from our global alumni network. We planted the seed for setting up a dedicated school to bridge the gap between medical and technology disciplines in order to bring a paradigm shift in medical research and innovation in India, and now it is our alumni who are coming forward to help us nurture that vision into a reality. We are grateful for this generous contribution from our alumnus, Mr. Anil Bansal, and welcome him to be a part of the Founder's Circle in our endeavor to achieve this goal."

Mr. Anil Bansal said, "To be able to contribute to one's alma mater always feels great and when the

occasion is such a noble one, the excitement gets multiplied. I am glad to witness IIT Kanpur scaling new heights under the able leadership of Prof. Abhay Karandikar and believe that this new endeavor to set up a one-of-a-kind School of Medical Sciences & Technology would truly bring

a new outlook to the field of medical research and innovation in India. My wife Kumud, and I are delighted to be part of this journey."

Mr. Anil Bansal completed his Bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering from IIT Kanpur in 1977 and went on to study at the

University of Notre Dame. He is the President of First National Realty Management, which owns and manages commercial properties across the United States. He was the principal creator of Indus American Bank and an investor in numerous IT start-ups. Mr. Bansal is involved in his New Jersey community, serving on the boards of various firms and charitable organisations. He is also an active member of Rotary. Mr. Bansal also runs the Bansal Charitable Foundation, which gives financial support to various charitable groups in the United States.

The medical school at IIT Kanpur will be completed in two phases. Phase I of the project will include setting up a 500-bed Super-Specialty Hospital, Academic Block, Residential/Hostel, and Service Block with a total built-up area of approximately 8,10,000 sq ft. Phase I will also include setting up Centers of Excellence (CoE) for pursuing R&D activities in futuristic medicine. This phase is tentatively planned to be completed over the next 3-5 years. The Phase II of the project will see the hospital capacity grow to 1000 beds, expand in clinical departments/centers, research areas, the inclusion of paramedical disciplines, alternative medicine, hospital management, sports medicine, and public health programs. Phase II is planned to be completed over a period of 7-10 years.



Anil bansal with his wife Kumud Bansal

CIA appoints Indian-origin as first-ever Chief Technology Officer

Indian-American Nand Mulchandani, who has more than 25 years of experience in Silicon Valley as well as with the Department of Defense, has been appointed by the Central Intelligence Agency as the first-ever Chief Technology Officer.

The CIA Director William J. Burns made the announcement of Mulchandani's appointment on April 29. "Glad about Mulchandani's appointment to the top post," said CIA Director Burns, adding, "Since my confirmation, I have prioritized focusing on technology and the new CTO position is a very important part of that effort."



Photo: newsindiatimes

Burns went on to say, "I am delighted Nand has joined our team and will bring his extensive experience to this crucial new role." Mulchandani brings substantial private sector, startup, and government expertise to the Agency, the CIA said in a media statement.

"I am honored to join the CIA in this role and look forward to working with the Agency's incredible team of technologists and domain experts who already deliver world-class intelligence and capabilities to help build a comprehensive technology strategy that delivers exciting capabilities working closely with industry and partners," Mulchandani said.

In his new role, Mulchandani will ensure the Agency is leveraging cutting-edge innovations and scanning the horizon for tomorrow's innovations to further the CIA's mission, the agency said in its announcement.

India-Born Scientist Elected to US National Academy of Sciences

Kamal Bawa, a well-known conservation biologist of Indian origin and President of the Bengaluru-based Ashoka Trust for Research, Ecology, and Environment (ATREE), has been elected to the United States National Academy of Sciences.

The members of the 170-year-old Academy elected him in appreciation of his major contributions to science. Bawa, who is also a member of the Royal Society of London and the American Philosophical Society, was elected to the National Academy of Sciences of the United States on May 4. "The election is the reaffirmation of our important work on the ecology, conservation, and management of tropical forests that are declining all over the world but are critical to humanity's well-being," said Bawa.

Biodiversity in tropical forests and other natural ecosystems is

a significant source of numerous ecosystem services as well as for climate change mitigation. ATREE is well-known for its work on biodiversity assessment and management, climate change, and water.

A few years ago, Bawa brought together scientists from India's leading institutions to develop the National Mission on Biodiversity and Human Wellbeing under the banner of the Biodiversity Collaborative. The effort was supported by the office of the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Indian government and is currently funded by the Rohini Nilekani Philanthropies.



Photo: indiawest

Modi's Europe Tour removes all Doubts about India's Global Stature and Credibility

In a world marked by geostrategic upheavals, ideological conflict, and divided power, Modi's India has emerged as a key global player with credibility on all sides.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent three-nation visit to Germany, France, and Denmark is an excellent example of precise timing and substance in conducting diplomacy with a region of tremendous strategic and economic relevance for India. This was Modi's first international travel in 2022, and it occurred amid the background of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, which has shattered European security norms. The well-considered Indian position against protracted war, its call for an immediate cessation of hostilities, and advocacy for a peaceful resolution of the dispute

contrast with the trans-Atlantic cacophony on sanctioning Russia, as well as the West's vicarious military response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.



Photo: freepressjournal

Modi's high-voltage engagement of the leadership of Germany, France as well as all

the Nordic states — Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland and Iceland — gave Europe a chance to understand India's viewpoint firsthand. Coming on the heels of

recent visits to India by European leaders such as Ursula Von der Leyen, President of the European

Commission, and several foreign ministers, the visit strengthened the economic, technological and strategic underpinnings of partnerships at a time when India has emerged as the fastest growing economy for the second year running, in a post-pandemic recovery phase.

Having achieved an ambitious export target of \$400 billion in FY2022, the Indian economy is now well placed to build stronger and enduring economic partnerships, including in innovation, with European partners. It is little wonder that the agreements between the Indian prime minister and his European counterparts covered a panoply of issues ranging from climate change and the Blue Economy to renewables, and from defence and space to

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fisheries and the Arctic.

The Indian community in Europe has grown in recent years, especially the number of Indian students in Germany. For the youthful student or the well-settled IT professional or businessman among the diaspora, Modi's India undoubtedly gives them a sense of pride in their passports and professions and provides a strong emotive connect to the India of tomorrow. In Germany, France and Denmark, the scenes were similar, and familiar, of large numbers of Indians seeking him out. His special connect with the masses was most evident in his affectionate interaction with children, whether the little boy who sang a patriotic song in his presence or the little girl who presented him with a sketch made in his likeness.

Germany, the first leg of his visit, provided the backdrop for the Sixth Inter-Governmental Consultations (IGC). Regular annual consultations with Germany, as with key strategic partners such as the US and Japan, were the norm until the COVID-19 pandemic struck and postponed physical meetings. This round, the first since 2019, was an opportunity for Modi to establish a personal rapport with Chancellor Olaf Scholz who came to power quite recently in December 2021 at the head of a coalition government that

includes the Green Party. Germany is at a major crossroads in terms of its shifting orientations, whether in regard to Russia or China. Notably, Scholz's first visit to Asia as Chancellor was to Japan, not to his predecessor Angela Merkel's favourite destination China. Alongside a rising defence budget, this indicates that Germany is perhaps shedding its earlier mercantilism in favour of a robust strategic outlook in Europe and the Indo-Pacific.

The Joint Declaration of Intent (JDI) on Green and Sustainable Development Partnership signed between India and Germany is one of the most important outcomes of the visit. Germany, Europe's economic powerhouse, will provide additional development assistance worth 10 billion euros between now and 2030. This will prove a shot in the arm for Modi's five-fold strategy to tackle climate change unveiled at the COP26 meeting in Glasgow, termed as the panchamrita (the five nectars). These are: enhancing India's non-fossil energy capacity to 500 GW by 2030, meeting 50 per cent of India's energy requirements from renewable energy by 2030, cutting total projected carbon emission by 1 billion tonnes by 2030, reducing the carbon intensity in the economy to less than 45 per cent by the end of the decade, and achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2070.

As the Indian prime minister wound his way to Denmark, renewable energy and the



Photo: Reuters



Photo: PIB Handout

environment remained on the agenda, but there were also other areas of interest such as agriculture, food processing, smart urban development and shipping. Modi particularly focused on the three "Ts" in Denmark—trade, technology and talent, the last being a reference to Denmark's emergence as a big market for India's human resources.

The Second Nordic Summit held during the visit to Denmark was timely, given India's recently released Arctic Policy which inter alia aims to bolster India's role as a stakeholder in the sustainable development of the Arctic region. India is only the second country after the US with which Nordic nations have this mechanism. As the polar ice caps melt, the new Arctic Sea routes are drawing greater attention, including on the part of China. As an Observer State in the Arctic Council with several expeditions to its credit apart from maintaining an Arctic station, India can play an important role in providing stability in a region of emerging

contestation over connectivity and resources. Modi invited the Nordic states to invest in the Blue Economy, especially in India's Sagarmala project. India also recognises the strengths of the Nordic countries, especially in innovation.

The last leg of the tour, France, held special significance. PM Modi and President Emmanuel Macron enjoy a warm personal relationship that provides impetus to a deepening strategic partnership. The defence sector remains the cornerstone of ties, linked to the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat in defence manufacturing. At the same time, France's independent foreign policy, its vital support for India as a member of the UN Security Council on sensitive issues, and its status as a resident power in the Indo-Pacific are equally significant attributes of the partnership. Modi became the first foreign leader to visit Macron following his recent re-election, which adds to the diplomatic success of the tour.

Richard Verma Named to Biden's Intelligence Advisory Board

President Joe Biden has named Indian American Richard Verma, a former ambassador to India, to a White House body that advises the president on the effectiveness of the country's sprawling intelligence community.

Biden also named retired Admiral James A. "Sandy" Winnefeld as chair of the body – President's Intelligence Advisory Board, – and Janet Napolitano, a former secretary of the department of homeland security

and Gilman G. Louie as members, like Verma.

The White House stated that the advisory board is an autonomous element inside the executive office and functions only to help the president by providing him with advice "independent source of advice on the effectiveness with which the intelligence community is meeting the nation's intelligence needs and the vigor and insight with which the community plans for the future".

Verma is presently the general

counsel and head of global public policy at Mastercard. He was sent to India as ambassador by President Barack Obama in 2014 – he was the first Indian American to be named US ambassador to India. He had earlier served in the state department as assistant secretary of state and National Security Advisor to the Senate Majority Leader.

Verma was a key component of Biden's 2020 presidential campaign, where he oversaw the team's outreach to the Indian American community.



Photo: freepressjournal

Community News

Two Indian American girls, Rhea Jethvani and Monica Pal are among 30 high school seniors in Southern California Edison's service area named 2022 Edison Scholars by one of America's largest electric utility holding companies. Edison International will award a total of \$1.2 million in scholarships intended to help these students pursue science, technology, engineering or math (STEM) studies.



Now What? Asian Americans and Social Justice



Are you an Asian American* college student looking for ways to advocate for your communities and support other marginalized groups? **Then join our full-day in-person workshop in NYC!** Lunch and snacks will be provided.

Students will:

- learn about Asian American history
- develop communication strategies for difficult conversations
- explore their racial experiences
- receive a \$50 gift card for their participation

Facilitators:

Linta Varghese, PhD
Assistant Professor
Dept of Race and Ethnic Studies
BMCC, CUNY

Linh An, PhD
Executive Director
Collected / CAFAMH

Sue Mendelsohn, PhD
Director, Writing Center
Columbia University

Jason Ueda
Program Coordinator, Writing Center
Columbia University

Flora Ferng
East Asian Communities Liaison
NYC Commission on Human Rights

Shaquan Womack
Racial Justice & Restorative Justice Specialist
NYC Commission on Human Rights

Sat, May 14, 2022

9:30AM to 4PM

**Lower East Side,
Manhattan**

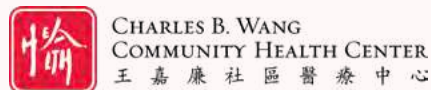
For more info & to apply:

<https://bit.ly/3OCjqll>

**Space is limited.
Apply by 5PM May 9, 2022**



*We define Asian Americans as people from East Asia, Middle East, Pacific Islands, South Asia, Southeast Asia, Central Asia, West Asia, and the Indo-Caribbean.



Community News

Bihar Foundation USA organized a “Career Guidance Webinar” for Engineering students

Bihar Foundation USA, East Coast Chapter organized a free webinar on “Career Guidance in Cloud Computing” for Purnea Engineering College Students on 7th May 2022. The program was organized under the guidance of Principal of PCE Purnea Prof Neeraj Kumar and Prof Saurabh Kumar, TPO, PCE Purnea. Around 150 students and Faculties from various streams took part in the 2-hour long event along with office bearers of Bihar foundation.

Chairman of Bihar Foundation USA, Shri Alok Kumar, in his Welcome speech, noted that today’s event aims to help students understand the requirements of the IT industry and prepare for challenges in terms of career designing and job opportunities. Mr. Kumar, a native of Darbhanga Bihar, currently lives in New Jersey and runs a successful tech company in the USA.

Mr. Pravin Dwivedi was the Speaker for the online session. He is a Cloud Architect with more than 15 years of experience in the IT industry. He talked about Cloud Computing and career options available within the domain. He explained various certifications, Programming languages, and their benefits in his talk. He

showed a road map to students by talking about the plan and execution of Cloud learning. He also said that if a student wants to make a career in technology, they must focus on the importance of practical exposure & soft skills while studying the theory to build a better career in it.

Further, he talked about the industries that are using cloud products and services. He concluded the session by saying that cloud technology is not going anywhere as far as the future is concerned, and students should skill themselves with

leading technologies.

Mr. Dwivedi has a master’s degree in computer science and serves as Vice president, Cloud architect at JP Morgan Chase USA. He has a deep interest in quality education-related philanthropic work and is associated with several education-related institutions in India and USA. Deeply rooted in Bihar and its values, Mr. Dwivedi loves to celebrate and share its rich culture and heritage. He hails from Hajipur, Bihar and currently lives in Philadelphia, PA, with his wife and two sons.

Mr. Chandan Trivedi,

Secretary Bihar Foundation USA, presented a vote of thanks at the end of the session. He extended his gratitude to the Speaker, students, and faculty members for making the event successful. Mr. Trivedi added that Bihar Foundation USA has an extensive network of professionals and experts in various domains and industries. The Foundation will continue to organize such events as we are committed to helping the people of Bihar, especially the younger generation, with our experience and knowledge.



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Part-2 (SOUTH DELHI)

SONIA DATE

"Why are you so decked up?", my husband asked with a bemused expression. The past months had done nothing to improve my fashion sense at home, though to be fair I wasn't the only one! Seeing me in full make-up including lipstick (the mask may slip), diamonds, lenses and of course sunglasses made it a rational question. I answered impatiently, "Aren't we going wedding shopping?" Both B and he exchanged glances and sly smiles. And then he quipped, "Oh! you mean, South Delhi!"

South Delhi has many connotations, especially when I go shopping. The biggest one is that I have to 'dress up'. Don't ask me the reason, again if you are a Delhi-wallah, you would know. Each area in Delhi requires different clothes. Even when you are out grocery shopping! Sly glances, snide remarks notwithstanding, I get ready with my ever-expanding list with Banno and husband in tow. The first stop, South Ex!

Unlike Chandni Chowk, no agents trail behind me. I am warned by the bride to be that she wants 'light stuff.' I roll my eyes and accede to her demands. I am in that stage where 'during our times' is a much-repeated phrase. Sadly, my mother isn't a part of my team, otherwise she would have waxed eloquently about what a gem her daughter was. Right now, I am warned about B's choices, and cautioned by my husband to zip it. I sincerely hope that my hours of yoga and meditation help my dwindling supply of patience.

The first stop is a huge three-story building. The mannequin with generous assets, and a depressing waist

is bedecked in a gorgeous ensemble. "All that glitter is not gold" comes to mind. Apologies dear Shakespeare, the price is similar to gold. And it's not even a designer dress! With my expectations slipping a notch or two we follow the salesman. An ugly thought enters my mind, do clothes spread the virus? Out comes my sanitiser, my weapon to combat the dreaded C.I instruct my entourage to check their masks.

Do you know that tea and coffee in most of the showrooms are proportional to your shopping? The salesman generously offers us coffee after we tell him to pack some outfits. I give instructions as to how I would like my coffee. Puhlease, I am in South Delhi!

I decide to keep quiet with my suggestions as my first few attempts are brushed aside. Banno has to wear the clothes not, I, though I do look longingly at the resplendent reds, pretty pink/magentas, and the fiery orange. I smile sagaciously at her choices. Light stuff is definitely not my cup of tea. I am a true-blue Punjabi.

I realize that it is human nature to covet things that are liked by others, or belong to them. This is especially while shopping. In one of the other shops, I glance furtively at a gorgeous sari being displayed to some other customers. I catch the salesman's eyes and he immediately understand. While the client is busy looking at some other section, I am extolled about its virtues. Banno is uncertain, "where and when will I wear it Ma?" I ignore her, and ask them to pack it. Its time I take the reigns in my hands. I am given cold looks by the ladies. Too bad,

one has to be decisive. Plus, I look the part, overbearing, designer glasses, and a mother to boot. It's difficult to mess with me!

We decide to give my better half a break for our next visit to Central Market. Now that's a place close to my heart. Each lane, and virtually every shop is known to me. From matching fabrics, to Punjabi juttis at one third the price, it is a treasure trove. Whether it is the glittering kaleera, rich dry fruits, 'real' costume jewellery, banal bindis and safety pins, no trousseau is complete without innumerable trips to this mecca of shopping. The fresh juices, steaming momos, and the light mattar kulcha help. Street food brightens the mood and energises you for another round of hard-core shopping. We are on a mission.

Weddings are always fun. Especially after months of depressing and even heart-breaking news. They are a reinforcement of life, of reasons of gaiety and excitement. And they are a reminder that the apple of your eye will longer be with you. Chandni Chowk, South Ex, Central Market, trips to the boutique, ebb the sadness buried deep inside. Yes, weddings are also a time to be emotional, of tears welling when you look at your daughter, trying out a sari in the shop, and wondering how time flies. It's also when she looks at you for final approval of something, despite her strong opinions. Weddings are when you want to buy everything you can for your daughter, when no wish is big enough and

everything else besides her is inconsequential. Weddings are when your heart is ready to burst with love, your house is full of shopping bags, and paraphernalia, yet you know soon it will be empty. Furthermore, when you want to hug Banno and never let go.

Daughters are blessings. They are the tinkle in your laughter, the soul of your house, the icing on the cake, the spice in your life. They give you strength, because you are ready to fight the world, they give you conscience for you have to lead by example and they are your best friends. So dear daughter, may this wedding, although small, be a grand one and may you always have love and joy. No

more sentimental outpouring. Let's party, it's my Banno di Shaadi



Thar



SONIA DATE

The opening scene pans across the harsh and stark landscape. The bare trees and unrelenting stony ground makes way for a bird that looks glaringly at its realm. The camera focuses on a water buffalo, lying twisted and dead in its parched grave. In the times of being spoilt for choice, where a 10-minute watch determines your viewing choice, Raj Singh Chaudhuri, Thar's director, has you hooked.

Anil Kapoor is a wily, bored cop, close to retirement. He is stationed in an obscure village near the border, and he has surges of discontent with his unremarkable job. Following his wife's mantra of staying alive by not taking any risks, he leads a life void of any action. However, this is short-lived when the village is riddled with a few murders.

A body is found hanging by a young shepherd, mutilated with gruesome injuries. The Inspector is assisted by an overweight deputy, Satish Kaushik, the ever affable and dependable actor.

Thar's dialogues are penned by Anurag Kashyap and echo the local flavor, adding weight to the narrative. This is essentially a revenge saga. Be forewarned of some gory scenes that make you cringe at their brutality. Were these necessary? Fatima Sana Sheikh and Mukti Mohan provide beauty to the visuals. The former is a breath of fresh air with her pretty and innocent face. Harshvardhan Kapoor has a screen presence, but unfortunately, like star kids, he draws comparisons with his father. And as actors go, Anil Kapoor is a tough act to follow. It would be fair to give him some time to carve out a place for himself. His unconventional looks don't help. Jitendra Joshi as Panna plays his part to the hilt.

Some scenes remind you of a western, the focus is on the ruined forts and barren land, rusty jeeps, and a local Dhaba that is the center of information. Most of all, the

two central characters look sullen and speak only when necessary.

The last half-hour short changes the viewer. It does not deliver the promise that it started with. The writing is weak, though some of the dialogues ring true. What one wonders is whether a weak motive for revenge warranted these d a s t a r d l y actions.

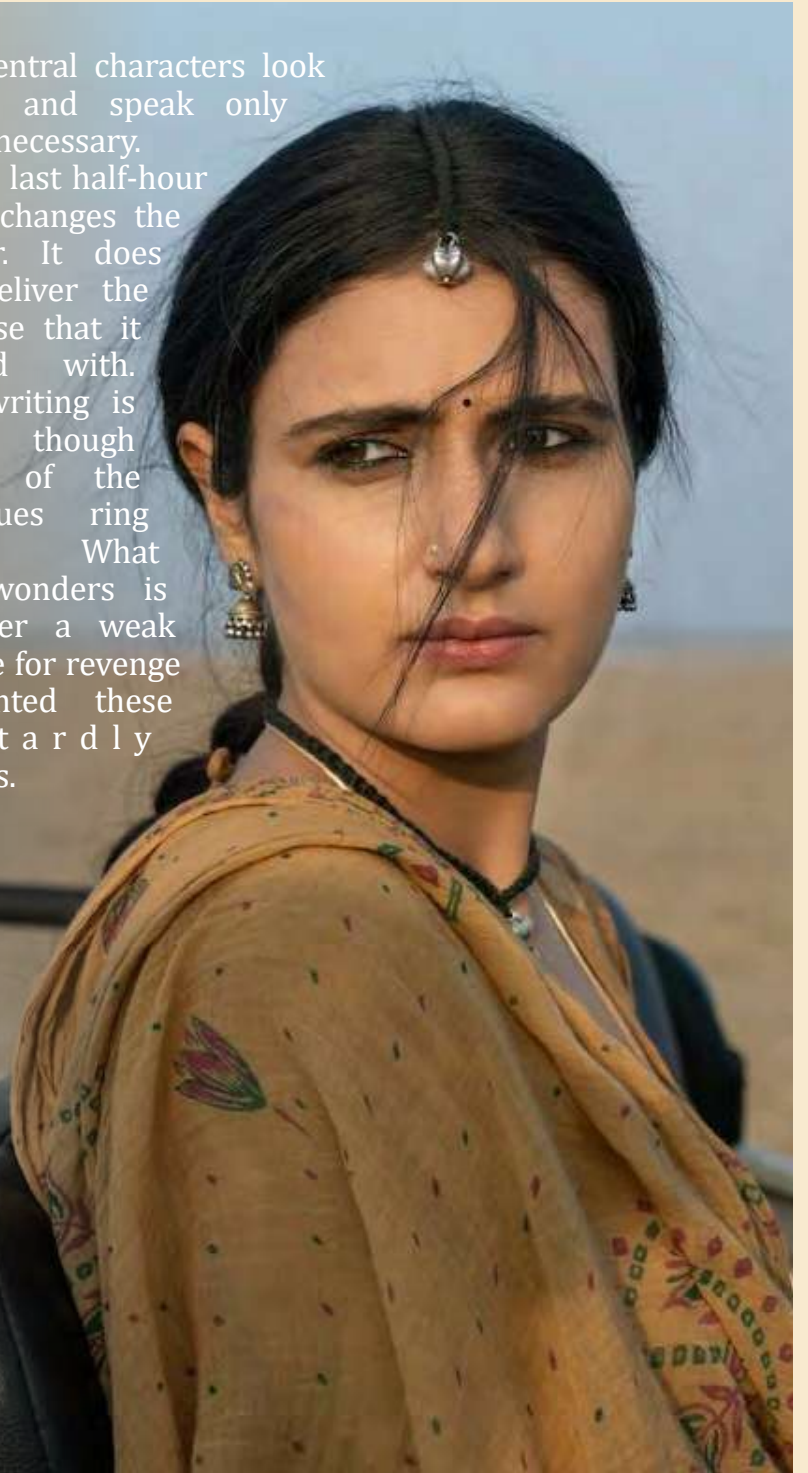


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RUNWAY 34

(2022 / Thriller/ Cinema Release)

An Engrossing Thriller With A Few Rough Edges

This thriller is based on a real-life incident wherein a disaster was averted when an airplane landing faced an extremely dangerous and life-threatening situation.

Cast Ajay Devgn, Rakul Preet Singh, Amitabh Bachchan, Boman Irani
Director Ajay Devgn
Writer Sandeep Kewlani, Aamil Keeyan Khan



Photo: Runway 34 Trailer

Plot

Pilot Vikrant Khanna (Ajay Devgn) is extremely competent and unabashedly smug.

He loves his family but has his vices too.

His experience and competence turned saviour in landing a turbulent plane after a life-threatening situation.

But... could his overconfidence and negligence have been the culprits?

Analysis

The film starts with introducing us to Capt. Vikrant and his swag. And that sets the ball and the mood rolling. Only events preceding the flight in question have been focused on and the pace remains crisp. The setting quickly shifts to the flight and the first half of the film is mainly set inside the plane.

What is very striking is that the film is extremely engrossing, remains true to the thriller format and keeps you totally glued, despite few rough edges.

It is not an easy task with such a closed setting and hardly any remarkable characters except the two main protagonists.

Despite the fact that the story could be guessed ahead to some extent (considering the real-life incident and the trailers), it maintains an intrigue factor. As the film raced towards intermission, it gives you some edge of the seat moments and an overwhelming culmination of the first half.

In the second half, the focus shifts to the inquiry, bringing in some interesting characters, fantastic actors like Big B and Boman, courtroom-like exchanges (though a tad over dramatic) but it keeps you gripped.

It's noteworthy that Ajay Devgn has given Big B (Narayan Vedant) an entry and introduction at par or even better than himself. It was absolutely dashing.

The film has some suspense under its layers, though not difficult to guess from far off, and has a cliched but

satisfying ending.

Performances

Ajay Devgn looks great as the cocksure and arrogant Vikrant. Compared to his own benchmarks like Omkara, Zakhm, or Singham, I wouldn't say this one was remarkable but his brooding demeanour and conceited body language suited the character well.

Rakul Preet as co-pilot Tanya Albuquerque is great. In a very subdued role, she makes a mark. Personally, I was left wanting to see more of her.

The most surprising opinion that made the Big B super-fan in me guilty was that Amitabh Bachchan as Narayan Vedant seemed repetitive, too loud and overly dramatic. We absolutely love the polished accent that rolls off his tongue, that suave and dapper look, those sharp looks and dialogues that come off him but don't know why they seemed over played this time.

Boman Irani looked good in that little role.

The film did have certain rough edges.

In my opinion, if the writing had been better, we could have had a much sharper film.

The dialogues could definitely have been much better. The screenplay at some places seemed a bit amateurish. Certain aspects looked odd like that sudden trendy music in AD's intro and the juvenile dramatic expressions of the inquiry committee members.

But despite those, it was quite an engrossing and entertaining thriller. For a duration of 2 hr 30 min, it kept us appreciably captivated with plenty of heart thudding moments, a decent intrigue factor and good VFX.

It is good, sensible and clean entertainment worth the money and time.

Definitely recommended for those seeking such cinema and for AD fans of course.

Score 3.5 on 5



NBA Star Dwight Howard Turns Pilgrim in Varanasi

“At peace with myself and the world after a visit to Varanasi. A spiritual journey that has rejuvenated the soul.” These are the words posted by the 36-year-old NBA star and current Laker player after his visit to the holy city.

Howard also hailed Prime Minister Narendra Modi for reforming the city. “Congratulations @narendramodi for the magical reformation of the holy city. Varanasi has inspired so many legends, I am humbled. I am sure the reincarnation of this sacred

city will inspire many more. @pixstoryapp,” posted Howard on Instagram.

The Uttar Pradesh Tourism Department also acknowledged the visit of the basketball player. “World-renowned basketball player and NBA champion @DwightHoward traveled to #Varanasi. He enjoyed witnessing the transcendental Ganga Aarti and shared his experience on his visit to this ancient city of spirituality & culture. #UPNahiDekhaTohIndiaNahiDe-kha,” tweeted UP Tourism.



Photo: indiawest

Sabyasachi Saree clocks in at the Met Gala 2022

Natasha Poonawalla, an Indian socialite and businesswoman, looked stunning as she represented Indian fashion on the Met Gala 2022 red carpet.

She nailed the night's 'Gilded Glamour' theme. She looked stunning in a golden saree and jewelry by Sabyasachi Mukherjee, while the bustier was by the house of Schiaparelli.

The infusion of desi glamour and the American-inspired theme instantly brought notice.

Sabyasachi said on Instagram: “For me the sari is a truly unique and versatile garment that owns its identity even as it transcends boundaries and geographies. Back when I was a young fashion student, I often wondered when I would see the sari at big global fashion events like the Met Gala.”

“For the 2022 Met Gala, themed ‘In America: An Anthology of Fashion’, Natasha Poonawalla’s vision was to interpret the dress code ‘gilded glamour’ with an Indian gaze that revels in its multi-culturalism

and authenticity.”

Sabyasachi celebrates Indian artistry with a gold handcrafted printed tulle sari and trail embroidered with silk floss thread and embellished with bevel beads, semi-precious stones, crystals, sequins, and appliqued printed velvet.

Sabyasachi added: “The jewellery is a curation of custom pieces from Sabyasachi Fine Jewellery and limited-edition collectibles from Sabyasachi’s Curiosity Art & Antiquity Project-crafted using traditional techniques with precious and semi-precious stones.

Natasha styled the look with sleek open hairdo, nude blush pink lip shade, embellished nails, bold winged eyeliner, metallic eye shadow, blushed skin, beaming highlighter and sharp contouring.



Photo: Instagram/ natasha.poonawalla

Deepika Padukone On Cannes 2022 Film Festival Jury

Deepika Padukone will represent India as a jury member at the 75th Cannes Film Festival.

On April 26 night, Cannes Film Festival revealed the Jury President and the competition member jury who will select the winners of this year's Palme d'Or honors and Bollywood star Padukone is a part of it.

Padukone, who made her red-carpet debut at the Cannes Film Festival in 2017, shared the news with her fans and followers by posting a photo of herself alongside other jury members including such Oscar-winning filmmaker Asghar Farhadi, Jeff Nichols, Rebecca Hall, Noomi Rapace, Jasmine Trinca, Ladj Ly, and Joachim Trier. French actor Vincent Lindon will be the

president of the jury.

The Cannes Film Festival will begin on May 17, and the jury will reveal the awards on May 28 in a grand event in Cannes.



The Jury of the 75th Festival de Cannes unveiled



FESTIVAL DE CANNES
17-28 MAY 2022



Deepika Padukone
Actress
India

Indian Actress, producer, philanthropist, and entrepreneur Deepika Padukone, is a huge star in her country. actor, producer, philanthropist, and entrepreneur from India. With over 30 feature films to her credit, she made her English language film debut as the female lead in *XXX: The Return of Xander Cage*, co-starring with Vin Diesel. She is also the principal of Ka Productions, the production company behind *Chhapaak* and *'83*, in which she also starred, as well as the upcoming film *The Intern*. Credits include *Gehraiyaan* and *Padmaavat*, as well as the award-winning and critically acclaimed film *Piku*. In 2015, she set up The Live Love Laugh Foundation, whose programs and initiatives aim to destigmatize mental illness and raise awareness about the importance of mental health. In 2018, *Time Magazine* named her one of the 100 Most Influential People in the World.

Photo: Instagram/deepikapadukone

Farhan Akhtar to appear in Ms. Marvel superhero series

Photo: cinemaexpress

Farhan Akhtar, the actor-filmmaker, will star in Ms. Marvel, Marvel Studios' first Muslim superhero series. Akhtar's first Hollywood endeavor will be the Disney+ show.

According to Deadline, which first reported the casting, the details of his character in Ms. Marvel have been kept under wraps, even though it is said to be a guest appearance. The 48-year-old actor also shared the news of him joining the cast of Ms. Marvel

in a post on Twitter.

Ms. Marvel will premiere on June 8 on streaming service Disney+ Hotstar, where it will be available in English, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, and Malayalam languages. It is part of the blockbuster Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU), is fronted by newcomer Iman Vellani as Kamala Khan aka Ms. Marvel, a Muslim American teenager growing up in Jersey City.



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