

# THE DIASPORA

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BI-WEEKLY

Issue: 60



Federation of Indian Associations NY-NJ-CT-NE. 501(C)3. The Largest Non-Profit Grassroot Umbrella Organization in the Tri-state of NY-NJ-CT-NE

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## Registration on "Global Pravasi Rishta Portal" of Government of India

New Feature

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# NEW YORK STREET NAMED AFTER RENOWNED GANESH TEMPLE

In a watershed event for the Hindu community in the United States, a roadway outside a well-known and prestigious temple has been renamed 'Ganesh Temple Street.'

The Hindu Temple Society of North America Sri Maha Vallabha Ganapati Devasthanam, also known as the Ganesh Temple, was founded in 1977 and is considered the first and oldest Hindu Temple in North America.

Flushing, Queens County, is home to the Hindu Temple. Bowne Street is named for John Bowne, a notable American pioneer of religious freedom

and the anti-slavery fight. In a special ceremony, the street was co-named the 'Ganesh Temple Street' in honour of the iconic Ganesh temple.

The special ceremony, during which the street sign was unveiled, was attended by Consul General of India in New York Randhir Jaiswal, Queens Borough President Donovan Richards, Deputy Commissioner for Trade, Investment and Innovation in the office of New York City Mayor Eric Adams, Dilip Chauhan and members of the Indian-American community. Jaiswal, during a special function held at the Indian

Consulate to commemorate Baisakhi, told the gathering that at a "beautiful function" in Queens, the Bowne Street just outside the Ganesh Temple was co-named the Ganesh Temple Street. He said the co-naming event was not just a celebration but it showed the "kind of hard work that has gone into reaching this milestone, years after years, decades after decades. It speaks so well of the Indian-American community, for all that you have done not just for yourself but bringing joy and happiness to people's lives around you." Richards, who shared a video on

Twitter of the unveiling of the street sign in presence of priests and a large cheering crowd, tweeted that "Bowne Street in #Flushing is now also Ganesh Temple Street! What a day to celebrate. Congratulations to Dr. Uma Mysorekar and everyone at the Hindu Temple Society of North America for all they do to spiritually support our families and uplift the collective soul of #Queens." Mysorekar is a leading obstetrician and gynaecologist and President of the Hindu Temple Society of North America Board of Trustees.

Photo: rediff





# Late Yash Paul Soi

(July 18, 1938 - April 2, 2022)

**T**he Federation of India Associations of the Tri-state area of NY, NJ, and CT and the Indian Diaspora are extremely shocked and saddened by the untimely death of one of its founding members and an incredibly resourceful and brilliant veteran community leader who served the Indian Diaspora for over 50 years.

Mr. Soi, who cheerfully attended FIA's special meeting on March 23rd, was anxious to make FIA's Golden Jubilee grand celebration and Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav this August. Mr. Soi was part of a joint committee of associations that was subsequently named the Federation of Indian Associations with the position of Vice President.

During his 45 plus years of association with FIA, he was twice named FIA President (1999 & 2008), Vice Chairman of the Board of Trustees (2009-2020), and proud recipient of the prestigious Ellis Island Medal of Honor Award (2014) from Guyana President H.E. Bharat Jagdev for his notable contribution in Guyana's

Freedom Struggle and had received numerous national and international recognitions. He was among the pioneers of the Indian Media Concert and entertainment bonanza, with Bollywood celebrities and musical marvels like Asha Bhosle, Anup Jhalota, Gulam Ali, Alka Yagnik, Kumar Sanu, Udit Narayan and scores of others. Through his popular radio program, Taj Geeta Mala, in New York City, Mr. Soi promoted Indian music and culture. He also runs the Taj Mahal Travel Service in Manhattan. He had established a direct link with NYC Mayor Ed Koch's office and was instrumental in several fundraising efforts, including one for Guyana's President, Chady Jagan, with the Caribbean community and Ramesh Kalicharan.

He also played an important role in the growth and success of FIA by holding various positions. He was a very articulate speaker, very methodical and meritorious in his work. Professionally, he was chief engineer in the NY City Environmental Dept. After retirement, he devoted

his prolific experience and expertise to organising many show-business related entertainment shows as well as helping several associations like Share and Care Foundation in their community-beneficial projects. His services were also in the US Congressional Record. Born in Lahore on July 18, 1938, Mr. Soi migrated with his family to Simla during India's partition. He went to school in Simla and then shifted to Chandigarh. He came to the USA and did his BS in Civil Engineering from the University of Utah and his MS in Industrial Engineering from Columbia University, New York (1971-74).

Besides, he was a melodious singer, an articulate orator, and a profound patriot. He was always in the forefront of India's cause. He was a true lover of Mahatma Gandhi and associated himself with the Mahatma Gandhi Foundation. He promoted the project of Bapu's statue at various locations. During his presidency in 1999, he raised a sizable donation for Kargil war martyrs' family members.

The Indian American

community in general and FIA in particular have lost a very gallant, noble, workaholic, devoted veteran leader, a proud husband, loving father, grandfather, generous human being, and fabulous friend, philosopher, and guide. Mr. Yash Paul Soi is survived by his wife (Dorty), two sons (Raja & Sunil aka Sonny), a loving brother, sister, and family, and hundreds of colleagues, well-wishers and friends.

Mr. Soi's funeral was held at Franklin Memorial Park in North Brunswick. Many community leaders, colleagues, family members, and friends attended with heavy hearts and fond memories of Yash Ji. FIA chairman Ankur Vaidya and Executive Committee members, as well as media friends, were in attendance. The community will have a big void to fill due to the death of Yash Paul Ji. We pray to the Almighty God to bless his soul and give strength to his family members to bear this untimely and huge loss.

Om Shanti!!



# THE FORTNIGHT THAT WAS

Photo: Thehindu



PM Modi moots free trade agreement for BIMSTEC(Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation). He mentioned the necessity for coastal shipping ecosystem and electricity grid interconnectivity, as two of the necessary components of the evolving shape of BIMSTEC.

Photo: Newindianexpress



A group of influential US lawmakers have introduced a bill in Congress to recapture nearly 380,000 unused family and employment-based visas, seeking to reduce a massive green card backlog, particularly affecting immigrants from countries like India and China. Among other things, it would allow immigrant US residents eligible for adjustment to Legal Permanent Residence (LPR) status to apply for adjustment after paying a fee but who are not able to do so presently due to the lack of an available visa number.

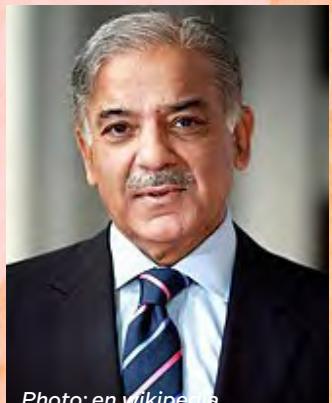


Photo: en.wikipedia

Mian Muhammad Shehzad Sharif was elected as the 23rd Prime Minister of Pakistan after Imran Khan lost the vote of no confidence in parliament. Indian Prime Minister Shri. Narendra Modi congratulated him on Twitter and said India desires peace and stability in the region so that we can focus on our development challenges, ensuring the well-being and prosperity of our people. Earlier, Pakistan's Supreme Court ruled that Prime Minister Imran Khan's move to dissolve parliament was unconstitutional and ordered lawmakers to return after Imran Khan had moved to break up the lower chamber ahead of the no-confidence vote, which he finally lost.

A governmental report said on Wednesday, April 6, that the number of Indian students in the United States increased by over 12 per cent in 2021, while those from China, which accounts for the largest number, dropped by more than eight per cent. In its annual report, US Citizenship and Immigration Services said the COVID-19 pandemic continued to impact international student enrollment in the United States in 2021.



Photo: Newindianexpress



A 21-year-old Indian student, Kartik Vasudev, was killed after sustaining multiple gunshot wounds following a shooting at the entrance of Sherbourne TTC subway station in St. James Town in Canada's Toronto city while he was on his way to work, according to police in Toronto. The Toronto Police Service said in a statement that Vasudev received medical attention from an off-duty paramedic and was taken to a hospital where he died during treatment.

**CONTINUES FROM PAGE 3**

*Photo: Thestatesman*

Chinese state-sponsored hackers targeted Indian electricity distribution centres near Ladakh over the last eight months, a report by private intelligence firm Recorded Future said on Wednesday 6, April, in a new potential flashpoint following a protracted military standoff between the two countries in the region. The government said the attacks were not successful.


*Photo: Theguardian*

Sri Lanka's economic crisis has deteriorated into a medical crisis, with the top medical union declaring a national health emergency over a life-threatening shortage of drugs.


*Photo: Economictimes*

*Photo: Ndtv*

A ship carrying 40,000 tonnes of diesel under a \$1 billion credit line given to Sri Lanka by India has reached the island nation. The fuel will be distributed across Sri Lanka.



Apple launched a \$50 million Supplier Employee Development Fund on March 30th, which would increase access to learning opportunities and skill development in India, as well as other supply chain hubs such as the United States, China and Vietnam.


*Photo: Thewire.in*

The United States, the United Kingdom and Australia declared that they will collaborate to develop hypersonic weapons under the newly formed trilateral security alliance known as AUKUS. The decision comes as the United States and its allies become more concerned about China's rising military aggressiveness in the Pacific.

# 'Russia Invades Ukraine - Aftermath'

Photo: thelocalreport



"We don't believe anyone, not a single beautiful phrase," Zelensky said in a video address to the nation, adding that Russian troops were regrouping to strike the eastern Donbass region.

Photo: expatica



The British government said on March 31, 2022, Thursday it had made 14 additions to its list of sanctions over Russia's invasion of Ukraine, including media organisations and senior figures within them.

Dnipropetrovsk Oblast Governor Valentyn Reznichenko said on Wednesday, 6 April that Russian air strikes destroyed an oil depot and set fire to a factory.



Photo: commons.wikimedia

Mr. Zelenskyy told the UN Security Council that the atrocities committed by Russian troops are no different from terrorists like the Islamic State extremists as he demanded immediate action to bring the Kremlin's forces to justice for "war crimes".

Ukraine's deputy prime minister says Russian forces have agreed on 10 humanitarian corridors for the evacuation of civilians in three eastern regions of Ukraine on Thursday 7, April. Russia is expected to intensify its military campaign for control of Ukraine's industrial east in coming days and weeks, and Ukraine has appealed to NATO for more weapons to help stop it.



Photo: wikipedia

The ruble has surged all the way back to where it was before Putin invaded Ukraine, closing at 79.7 in Moscow on Wednesday 6, April.



**Europe targets Russia's energy sector.** The European Commission proposed a ban on €4 billion (\$4.3 billion) worth of Russian coal imports per year as part of a fifth package of sanctions designed to further diminish Russian President Vladimir Putin's war chest. Other proposals target Russian technology and manufacturing imports, worth another €10 billion (\$10.9 billion).

In what is likely its strongest statement on the Ukraine situation so far, India on April 5 "unequivocally condemned" the killings of civilians in Bucha after hearing Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky and UN officials giving heart-rending descriptions of the atrocities in the city. "Recent reports of civilian killings in Bucha are deeply disturbing. We unequivocally condemn these killings and support the call for an independent investigation," India's Permanent Representative to the UN, T.S. Tirumurti, said at the Security Council.



Photo: idahopress

The killing of civilians in Bucha and Kyiv condemned as a terrible war crime. In a statement, UN human rights chief Michelle Bachelet said she was horrified by the images of people lying dead on the streets and in improvised graves. The US president says that the Bucha killings are a war crime and seeks new sanctions. The US president, Biden, called it a war crime and rolled out a new wave of financial sanctions against Russia that, according to Mr. Biden, would place a lasting penalty on the country's economy. The United Kingdom quickly followed suit, and more pain was coming from the European Union as the allies pressed forward with an escalating campaign to tighten the economic screws on Russian President Vladimir Putin for "war crimes."



Photo: boston



*Invitation*



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**&**  
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# A VIVID GLIMPSE OF DANCE PE CHANCE





# SAVE THE DATE



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FEDERATION OF INDIAN ASSOCIATIONS NY - NJ - NE





# Registration on “Global Pravasi Rishta Portal” of Government of India



The Government of India has created a, “Global Pravasi Rishta” portal for registration of all Indian nationals abroad.

It is requesting all Indian nationals, PIO and OCI holders including students to register themselves on this portal by following the link:

<https://pravasirishta.gov.in/userreg>

## Community Announcement

God forbid anyone should deal with the passing away of a loved one, but the departed should be accorded the formal respect of an obituary or a memorial celebrating their lives.

Remembrance is an important part of grieving, and FIA endeavours to share the loss with the community.

In order to better serve the community, FIA is starting a new section where obituaries and memorials can be published without incurring any cost in our fortnightly issue.

The details can be sent to editor@fianynjct.org

# How to Tackle Ukraine Crisis, Key Point in PM-Biden Virtual Meet

"I have spoken to the leaders of both Ukraine and Russia many times and urged them to directly talk," PM Modi said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi reiterated India's neutral stance on the war in Ukraine during his virtual meeting with US President Joe Biden, who declared that the two nations are going to continue "close consultation on how to manage the destabilising effects of this Russian war". Speaking of India's contributions to war-torn Ukraine in terms of medicines and relief material, PM Modi also reminded the US President of New Delhi's condemnation of the Russian aggression against civilians in Ukraine's Bucha and expressed hope that the "ongoing talks between Russia and Ukraine will pave the way for peace".

"I have spoken to the leaders of both Ukraine and Russia many times and urged them to directly talk," PM Modi said. "We hope that the ongoing talks between Russia and Ukraine will pave the way for peace," he added.

The virtual meet -- which PM Modi said was initiated by the

US -- coincides with the maiden India-US 2+2 dialogue under the Biden administration. It also comes amid a fresh tranche of US sanctions against Russia and Washington's efforts for a stronger line against Moscow from New Delhi.

Various US politicians have expressed their dissatisfaction with India's neutral stance. Despite US pressure on foreign leaders to adopt a harsh stance against Moscow, India's purchase of Russian oil and gas has raised concerns.

On March 21, President Biden said India was an exception among Washington's allies with its "somewhat shaky" response to the Russian offensive.

The US President said, "I want

to welcome India's humanitarian support for the people of Ukraine, who are suffering a horrific assault, including a tragic shelling on a train station last week that killed dozens ... attempting to flee the violence".

PM Modi reminded the US leader that India has taken a strong line against the violence in Bucha.

"Recently, the news of killings of innocent civilians in Bucha city was very worrying. We immediately condemned it and demanded a fair investigation... We have placed importance on the safety of the civilian population in Ukraine and the uninterrupted supply of humanitarian aid to them," he said.

"When I came to Washington

in September last year, you said that India-US partnership can contribute to the solution of many global problems. I completely agree with you. As the world's two largest and oldest democracies, we are natural partners," PM Modi added.

The two leaders had failed to reach a joint condemnation of the Russian invasion when they last spoke in March at a meeting of the "Quad" alliance of the United States, India, Australia and Japan.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi earlier said India's needs are connected to both Russia and Ukraine, but the country is on the side of peace and hopes that all problems get resolved through dialogue.

*Photo: DD News / Youtube*



## Chaitra Navratri

The holy festival of Chaitra Navratri 2022 came to an end with Maha Ashtami and Maha Navami (also known as Ram Navami). The eighth and ninth manifestations of Maa Durga, called Mahagauri and Maa Siddhidatri, are worshipped. Both the tithis (dates) are celebrated by offering prayer and treats to little girls, or kanyas. Navratri is essentially a celebration of nine divine nights that are dedicated to Lord Durga and her nine avatars.

Navratri is one of the longest Hindu festivals, and it is celebrated five times a year in different seasons. Along with Chaitra Navratri, there are also Ashadha Navratri, Sharada Navratri, and the Paush-Magh Navratri. The most important festivals are Sharada Navratri, which occurs at the start of autumn, and Chaitra Navratri, which occurs in the spring.

April 2, 2022: Day 1 — Maa Shailputri Puja

April 3, 2022: Day 2 — Maa Brahmacharini Puja

April 4, 2022: Day 3 — Maa Chandraghanta Puja

April 5, 2022: Day 4 — Maa Kushmunda Puja

April 6, 2022: Day 5 — Maa Skandamata Puja

April 7, 2022: Day 6 — Maa Katyayani Puja

April 8, 2022: Day 7 — Maa Kalaratri Puja

April 9, 2022: Day 8 — Maa MahaGauri Puja

April 10, 2022: Day 9 — Maa Siddhidatri Puja, Ram Navami

April 11, 2022: Day 10 — Navratri Parana



# Vaisakhi celebrations at India's NY Consulate

**S**ikhs, Hindus, and others gathered on April 2 at the Indian Consulate in New York for a celebration of Baisakhi, which occurs on April 14 and is commemorated by numerous religions and areas of India, as well as the diaspora. The huge hall of the Consulate

*Photo: newsindiatimes*

showcased India's numerous ethnic communities. Among the performers were children dressed in bright yellow outfits and navy-blue turbans. Several speakers performed Punjabi hymns and prayers, as well as spiritual poetry.

The celebrations also recognized the start of Navratri,

the nine-day Hindu festival. It also came on the eve of the start of the 30-day Muslim festival of Ramadan.

Professor Indrajit Saluja spoke about the importance of Baisakhi as the day of creation of the Khalsa in 1699 by Guru Gobind Singh. He noted how Sikhs now numbered some 30 million people. He

thanked India's Consul General Randhir Jaiswal for hosting the event. He called this year's celebration at the Consulate as 'historic' coming as it does after the pandemic.

Consul General Jaiswal offered auspicious wishes to the Sikh community and others for their different festivals including Cheti Chand by Sindhis, Ugadi in Andhra, Karnataka and Telangana, Gudi Padwa in Maharashtra, as well as others in Manipur and elsewhere.

"When we celebrate festivals and fairs of India, we are celebrating the diversity of India," Jaiswal said in his speech and noted that diversity was the strength of the community. He also noted that several landmark events during India's freedom struggle began on Vaisakhi. This year it was even more important to draw those connections as it is the 75th year of India's independence, Jaiswal said. He stressed the need for people to preserve, promote, nourish and nurture diversity, and make it the basis of unity and in helping each other.



# Joe Biden Nominates Indian-Origin Attorneys to Key Admin Positions

**U**S President Joe Biden has announced his intention to nominate Kalpana Kotagal, an Indian-origin civil rights attorney, and Vinay Singh, a certified public accountant, to key government positions.

Kotagal is the nominee for Commissioner on the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission while Singh has been nominated as Chief Financial Officer, Department of Housing and Urban Development, the White House said on Friday.

Kotagal is a partner at Cohen Milstein, a member of the firm's Civil Rights and Employment practice group, and co-chair of the firm's Hiring and Diversity Committee. She is the daughter of Indian immigrants. She is the co-author of the seminal legal

template 'Inclusion Rider'.

### Diversity, equity expert

Kotagal is also a diversity, equity and inclusion expert, and represents disenfranchised people in employment and civil rights litigation involving issues related to Title VII, Equal Pay Act, Americans with Disabilities Act, Family and Medical Leave Act, and the Fair Labor Standards Act, the White House said.

### Kotagal: A fierce advocate

Indian-American Impact, nation's leading civic Indian American and South Asian organisation, welcomed the nomination of Kotagal to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

"Kotagal is an exceptionally

talented litigator who has been a fierce advocate for employment equity and civil rights," said Neil Makhija, executive director of Indian American Impact.

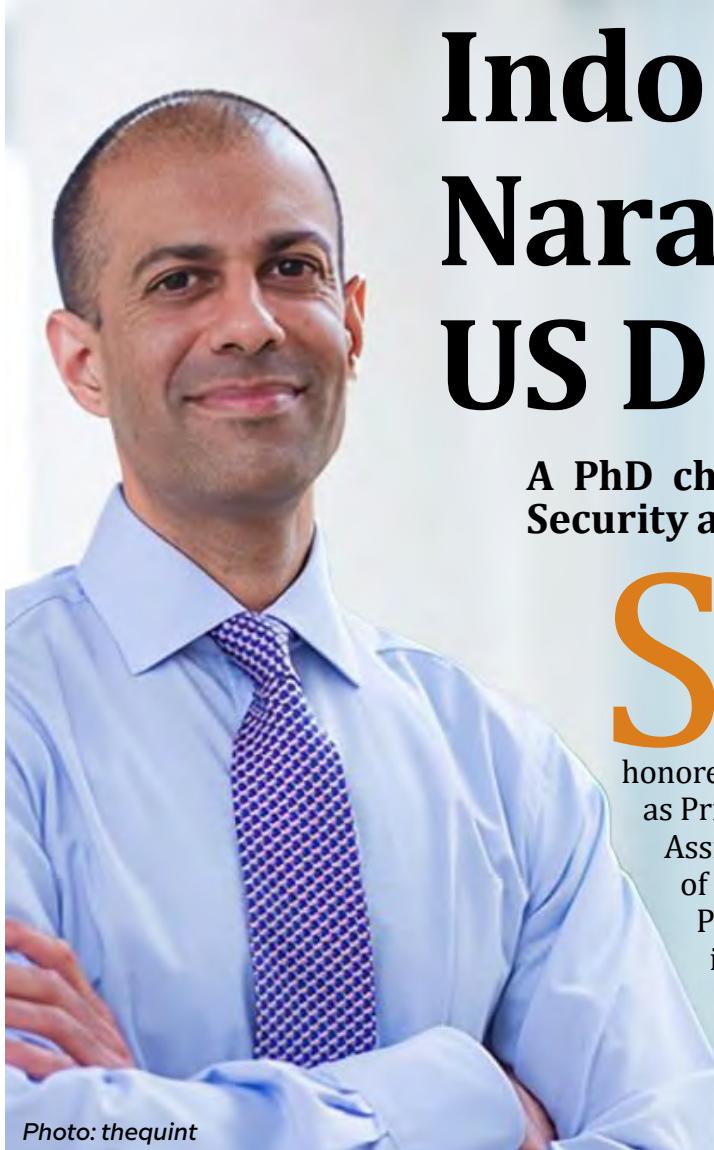
### A leading voice

"She has broken barriers as one of the first South Asian women to become a law partner in the plaintiffs' bar and has been a leading voice in the national conversation on diversity, equity and inclusion."

"We are proud to give our emphatic support to her nomination and look forward to celebrating her confirmation," Makhija said.



*Photo: ndtv*



# Indo-US Professor Vipin Narang of MIT to Work for US Dept of Defense

A PhD scholar from Harvard University in 2010, Narang teaches Nuclear Security and Political Science at Massachusetts Institute of Technology

**S**ome professional news: I am taking a public service leave from MIT. Today, I was honored to be sworn in as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Space Policy, which now includes nuclear, cyber, and missile defense policy. Very excited and humbled to work

at OSD/P, tweets Vipin Narang on March 28.

The Indian American is the Frank Stanton Professor of Nuclear Security and Political Science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, as well as a member of the Security Studies Program. He is widely known for his studies on nuclear weapons, war, and proliferation. He will be in charge of the Pentagon's space war-fighting at the Department of Defense.

The California raised

Narang has a master's degree in chemical engineering from Stanford University, an M Phil with Distinction in international relations from Balliol College, Oxford University, where he studied on a Marshall Scholarship and a doctorate from Harvard University.



Very excited and humbled to work at OSD/P

- Vipin Narang

## NEW FEATURE ANNOUNCEMENT

In a first-of-its-kind initiative we are excited to provide our readers with a platform to share their stories.

Our subscribers are invited to submit their short fiction, poetry, prose, musings on any topic. Submissions, not exceeding 500 words, can be done at [editor@fiannjct.org](mailto:editor@fiannjct.org) along with a passport size image in jpeg format.

Stories submitted will be reviewed and published accordingly along with photograph of the contributor.

Non subscribers can also submit by subscribing at <https://fiannjct.org/subscribe-newsletter/>

# Edison is in my blood, says Mayor Sam Joshi on 100th Day in office

The first Indian-American mayor of Edison, New Jersey, one of the most diverse communities in the country, has completed his first 100 days in office, reflecting his successes on the pledges he made during his election campaign last year.

He echoed similar feelings when he said 'Edison is in my blood' on the 100th day of his mayorship April 3, 2022, according to his quote in *MyCentralJersey.com* news outlet.

It appears that his plan from a very young age was to be Mayor of this city where he was born and raised, where he joined the Edison Youth Service Corps when he was 14, and where he began serving on the Zoning Board and then on the Township Council when he was still in his mid-20s. He was appointed Vice President of the Town Council at the age of 27.

In an interview with *MyCentralJersey.com* published April 3, the young Mayor said he knew from day-one of coming

into office what he wanted for his city. He hit the ground running, no, actually, "We hit the ground sprinting honestly," he said about what he described as a smooth transition over the last three months since he was sworn in January 3, 2022.

## Full Time Mayor

On his website Joshi ticked off with checkmarks showing the tasks he had laid down for himself on taking office and is continuing to implement, viz. that he would be a "Full Time Mayor" to address the city's challenges including ailing infrastructure, outdated Master Plan, and the absence of a long-term vision. The Master Plan, a blueprint for a long-term Township vision which had been drafted 30 years ago, was no longer suitable as the world has changed drastically since then, indicating that he was working on a forward-thinking approach and a vision that includes community-centric neighborhoods.

He continues to work at correcting the crushingly high property taxes, and has kept to his promise to prioritize cost savings

and new revenues outside of residential property taxes.

He also ticked off his efforts to "Embrace Technology for Efficiency" by downsizing Municipal government expenses by streamlining procedures in departments through technology.

His other promises continue to be leveraging public-private partnerships and shared services, an area where work is going apace. According to *MyCentralJersey*, Joshi's two campaign pledges are already being fulfilled. One, where the town is buying the South Edison property where a massive warehouse was going to be built by a developer; and another, where a developer is dropping

plans to build 23 townhouses on Plainfield Road.

He has talked of rejuvenating seven miles of riverfront area that is unused; and talked of uplifting neighborhoods in parts of Route 287 that are blighted for decades.

"We are going after blighted properties. At this point we are up to 14 condemnations that have been approved on the planning board," Joshi is quoted saying in *MyCentralJersey*, calling his approach different and targeted at spurring economic development, adding, "We want to be able to positively impact the most amount of people in every age and economic demographic."

*Photo: mycentraljersey*



# US Deputy NSA: If China Breaches LAC, Russia Will Not Help

According to US Deputy National Security Advisor Daleep Singh, nations that actively seek to bypass sanctions placed on Russia when it went to war with Ukraine would face repercussions.

While interacting with the media, Singh red-flagged that if China breaches Line of Actual Control, Russia will not help. He said that Moscow and Beijing are now in a "no limits partnership".

The US does not want to see a quick increase in India's purchases of energy and other commodities from Russia that are subject to global sanctions. Singh is widely regarded as the

mastermind of US sanctions aimed against Russian President Vladimir Putin.

"What we would not like to see is a rapid acceleration of India's imports from Russia as it relates to energy or any other any

*Photo: en.wikipedia*



other exports that are currently being prohibited by the US or by other aspects of the international sanctions regime," he said in response to a question about India's recent decision to take up Russia's offer of discounted crude oil. He also said: "I come here in a spirit of friendship to explain the mechanisms of our sanctions, the importance of joining us to express shared resolve and to advance shared interests. And yes, there are consequences to countries that actively attempt to circumvent or backfill these sanctions," he said, while also acknowledging that India and Russia are engaged in efforts to find a payment solution that is a workaround to the sanctions.

Stressing that "friends don't set red lines", Singh said: "We are very keen for all countries, especially our allies and partners, not to create mechanisms that prop up the rouble and that attempt to undermine the dollar-based financial system," he added.

"No one should kid themselves – Russia is going to be the junior partner in this relationship with China. And the more leverage that China gains over Russia, the less favorable that is for India. I don't think anyone would believe that if China once again breached the Line of [Actual] Control, Russia would come running to India's defense," he added.

# Virtual Celebration of Rajasthan Diwas

The Consulate General of India, along with the Rajasthan Association of North America (RANA) and Jaipur Foot USA, organised a virtual celebration of Rajasthan Diwas on 30th March. The event was addressed by Hon. Consul General Sh. Randhir Jaiswal, President of RANA and Chairman of the Jaipur Foot Association, Mr. Prem Bhandari. It was attended by the popular folk singer Swaroop Khan and other eminent artists from the state. Mr. Randhir Jaiswal said that Rajasthan's rich culture and heritage and the valour of its people are renowned all over the world. International tourists visiting India should make sure they visit the state of Rajasthan. Mr. Bhandari mentioned the commendable work being done by the Jaipur Foot Association in different parts of the world,

including India, Sri Lanka, and Africa. It is a matter of great pride that the Rajasthan Diwas is being

celebrated for the first time in America, and it also coincides with the completion of the Jaipur

Foot Camp in Sri Lanka.



# Air India suspends flight to Moscow as insurers flag security concern

Tata Group-owned Air India has suspended its flight from Delhi to Moscow after international insurance underwriters conveyed to the airline that its flights landing in Russia would not be valid for insurance given the threat perception there on account of the war, two people familiar with the development told The Indian Express.

"Air India has reached out to the government of India seeking its intervention in the matter so that flights to Moscow could be resumed as soon as possible," one of them said on Thursday.

In an official statement, an Air India spokesperson said, "Air

India has cancelled one return flight on the Delhi-Moscow-Delhi sector of 7th April, 2022. However, information sourced from the flight tracking portal Flightradar24 showed that the airline, which operates a flight on the Delhi-Moscow route every Sunday and Thursday, had cancelled the April 3 service as well.

Air India renews the insurance for its flights and aircraft every financial year beginning April 1. It typically buys insurance cover from Indian reinsurers such as New India Assurance, National Insurance Company, Oriental Insurance Company and the United India Insurance Company,

and the covers are underwritten by international companies, including some UK-based firms.

Airlines get insurance to protect themselves from unexpected losses in the event of an incident or accident affecting their aircraft. Every insurance policy is tailored to a specific airline and is often given by a group of reinsurers and underwriters.

Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the West sanctioned the country's aviation, resulting in the suspension of services conducted by European and American carriers. Russia's airlines were also denied access to international airspace.

Following the sanctions, Air India was one of the few airlines, along with a few Chinese carriers, that continued to fly to Russia.

"The insurance companies have only flagged a concern over aircraft landing in Russia, not with the overflight through the Russian airspace. So Air India's other flights to the US which fly over Russia continue to operate normally," a source said.



Photo: indianexpress

# Two Indians and One Indian Origin American win Grammy Awards 2022

## Falguni Shah

Falguni Shah, took home the award for Best Children's Music Album for her album A Colorful World.

In her acceptance speech at the awards, she said, "Who would have thought that having my mother sing an old children's lullaby from India would get a response from parents in America?" The performer also posted a picture of herself with her award on Instagram celebrating her win. In the caption alongside, she wrote, "I have no words to describe today's magic. What an honor to perform for the opening number of the GRAMMY Premier Ceremony, and then take home a statue on behalf of all the incredible people who worked on A Colorful World. We are humbled and thank the Recording Academy for this tremendous recognition. THANK YOU!"



*Photo: ndtv*

## Ricky Kej

Ricky Kej is a popular Indian composer, who is well-known across the globe and has performed at some prestigious venues including the United Nations Headquarters.

Ricky Kej, meanwhile, added to his 2015 win with a second Grammy Award. He and Stewart Copeland won the Best New Age Album award for Divine Tides. Taking to Twitter, Ricky shared a picture of himself and his collaborator and wrote, "Won the Grammy Award today for our album Divine Tides. Filled with gratitude and love this living-legend standing with me - @copelandmusic. My 2nd Grammy and Stewart's 6th. Thank you to everyone who ever collaborated, hired, or listened to my music. I exist because of you." Indian PM congratulated Ricky Kej on twitter. 'Congratulations for this remarkable feat and best wishes for your future endeavours!' - he tweeted.



*Photo: koimoi*

## Maryanne J. George

American singer and songwriter Maryanne J. George won the Grammy for the best gospel song. She highlighted her South Asian heritage at the Grammy Awards 2022 red carpet by wearing a saree designed by the Indian designer Masaba Gupta.

Maryanne's team won the 64th Grammy Award for Best Contemporary Christian Music Album for Old Church Basement.

The daughter of Indian immigrants from Kerala, George made her solo debut in 2021 with the release of her debut extended play, "Not Just Stories," via Tribl Records. It debuted at number twelve on the Top Christian Albums Chart and number three on the Top Gospel Albums Chart in the U.S.



*Photo: urbanasian*

# Ramadan: A time for spiritual growth!

Ramadan, also known as Ramzan in the Indian Subcontinent, is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, observed by Muslims worldwide as a month of fasting, prayer, and reflection.

A commemoration of Muhammad's first revelation, the annual observance of Ramadan is regarded as one of the Five Pillars of Islam and lasts for 29 to 30 days, from one

sighting of the crescent moon to the next.

Fasting from dawn to sunset is obligatory for all adult Muslims who are not acutely or chronically ill, travelling, elderly, breastfeeding, diabetic, or menstruating. The predawn meal is referred to as *suhur*, and the nightly feast that breaks the fast is called *iftar*. Although Muslims who live in regions with a midnight Sun or polar night should follow the timetable of Mecca, it is common practice to follow the timetable of the closest country in which night can be

distinguished from day.

The spiritual rewards of fasting are believed to be multiplied during Ramadan. Accordingly, Muslims refrain not only from food and drink but also from tobacco products, sexual relations, and sinful behaviour, devoting themselves instead to prayer and study of the Quran.

Ramadan began in the USA on Saturday, April 2nd and will end on Monday, May 2nd. (Dates may vary).





## SUBSCRIBERS' SECTION

# Poetry...

### Royal Ego

*As a child when I fell,  
got up and smiled,  
deliberately did it again  
to laugh for a while.*

*Delighted seeing others smile,  
replayed the act  
having no regrets  
never did I sigh.*

*Living with ease,  
walking with confidence but no grace.  
It was an immense pleasure.  
I still have those moments treasured.*

*Now I walk with all head high  
embarrassed at even a stumble,  
feel sheepish and shy  
resent the act utterly.*

*And if I happen to fall  
curse the roads, the path  
even the shoes,  
making me a 'laughingstock'.*

*No more happiness is found in fall!  
For the body and mind has grown so tall.  
'Royal ego' that was missing  
Resides on its throne forever beeping*

- Naleenee Mohan

### 8 Shortest stories, with beautiful meaning...

(1) Those who had coins, enjoyed in the rain.

Those who had notes, were busy looking for shelter.

(2) Man, and God both met somewhere,

Both exclaimed ...

"My creator"

(3) He asked are you- "Hindu or Muslim"

Response came - I am hungry

(4) The fool didn't know it was impossible....

So, he did it.

(5) "Wrong number", Said a familiar voice.

(6) What if God asks you after you die ....

"So how was heaven??"

(7) "They told me that to make her fall in love, I had to make her laugh.

But every time she laughs, I am the one who falls in love."

(8) We don't make friends anymore, We Add them.

- Suki

# An Elderly Sikh Man Assaulted in New York

*Photo: indiawest*

**A**ccording to police, Nirmal Singh had only been in New York City for two weeks when he was reportedly hit in the nose while walking.

The 70-year-old Sikh man is from Punjab, India, and is residing at the Sikh Cultural Society, a well-known religious and cultural centre in Queens' South Richmond Hill neighbourhood.

Singh was attacked while returning to the gurdwara, the Sikh temple, when he was punched in the face, he told CNN through his translator on Monday.

"We are working quickly to engage the Richmond Hill sangat (group) to collect more facts and details and assess what resources and support could be useful," the organisation said.

"We are extremely disturbed by the violent and heart-breaking images that are being shared on social media platforms. As we continue learning more about what happened and any potential motivating factors, we encourage everyone to pause on sharing the name/image of the community member involved until somebody with direct access to the



individual confirms consent and corroborates reported details," it added. Queens Borough President Donovan Richards also tweeted that his office is aware of the "incident in Richmond Hill"

and is contacting the New York City Police Department to learn more details about this reported attack. "Our thoughts are with him and we wish for nothing less than a full recovery," he said.

# Smears Against My Wife Awful, Says Rishi Sunak

**T**he embattled British Conservative party Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak, defended his wife, Akshata Murthy, the daughter of Narayana Murthy, one of the founders of software giant Infosys, against claims of evading taxes in Britain. Sunak, who is of East African and Indian descent, informed the media that rumours regarding her non-domicile status are "unpleasant smears."

A non-dom in the United Kingdom does not have to pay tax on her overseas income. The BBC estimated "she would have avoided 2.1 million pounds a year in UK tax".

This, while not unlawful, is embarrassing for Sunak, under whom comes Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC). "To smear my wife to get at me is awful," Sunak insisted.

Murthy is said to own a 0.9 per cent stake in Infosys, worth 500 million pounds. This holding's annual dividends are expected to be 11.6 million pounds. On April 7, it was revealed that she pays only 30,000 pounds per year in the UK on her British income.

The opposition Labour party said it would be "breath-taking hypocrisy" if the Chancellor's wife had reduced her tax bill as

he raised taxes for millions of workers — referring to the rise in National Insurance contributions imposed in last month's budget by Sunak.

*Photo: indianexpress*



However, a section of British newspapers has claimed that Prime Minister Boris Johnson's office is leaking damaging material about Sunak to the media. 10 Downing Street described the allegations as "categorically untrue" and "baseless".

The pro-Johnson Daily Mail ran a headline, which read: "Collapsed fitness chain backed by Rishi Sunak's non-dom wife was paid up to 650,000 pounds in furlough cash – while her billionaire father's IT firm claimed Covid handout for hundreds of UK staff".

Previously, the attack on Sunak ranged from him being the richest member of Parliament with a

net worth of 200 million pounds to Infosys operating in Russia, which western corporations are forbidden from doing following the West's sanctions against the Russian Federation following its

in British print media as well as Conservative circles that Sunak was a front-runner to succeed Johnson.

It was also pointed out at the time that, while other cabinet members were vehemently defending Johnson against the onslaught of calls for him to resign, Sunak was tepid in his support, which was misconstrued as 'ambition.'

Sunak became popular when the British government was significantly generous in protecting the livelihoods during the Covid-19 crisis. But having borrowed money to extend such assistance, it was inevitable that he would have to raise taxes to repay the debt.

However, given the cost-of-living crisis that had descended on Britons because of inflation, the Chancellor's recent budget has been condemned as uncaring.

In Britain, a budget is identified in particular with the Chancellor, although the intelligentsia is aware its contents have the prior approval of the Prime Minister. With Johnson not saying much to protect Sunak against the onslaught unleashed against him on his proposals or lack of them, an impression has grown that the latter is being thrown under a bus.



## BACHCHHAN PAANDEY



**AKSHAY & THE CAST SALVAGE AS BEST AS THEY COULD!**

**Cast -** Akshay Kumar, Kriti Sanon, Arshad Warsi, Abhimanyu Singh, Prateik Babbar, Saharsh Kumar Shukla, Seema Biswas, Mohan Agashe

**Director -** Farhad Samji

**Language -** Hindi

*Photo: Bachchhan Paandey Trailer*

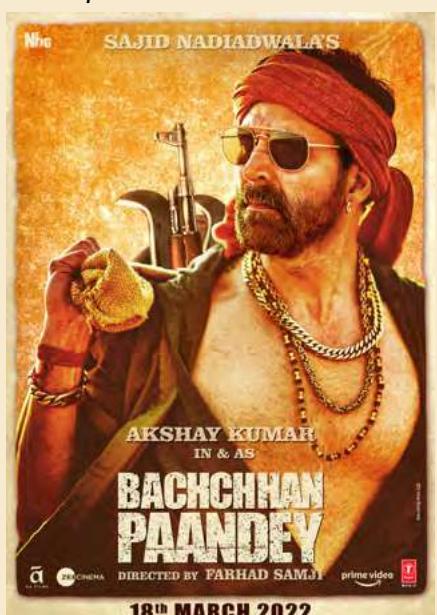
Farhad Samji and Akshay Kumar combo has always delivered slapstick humour with divided verdicts, which, if you numb down your brain and take everything with a pinch of salt, could somehow work.

Lured by the interesting central character and the cast I kept myself optimistic about it without keeping high hopes, obviously!

But unfortunately, the film failed to work for me, except in parts.

The major flaw was the writing.

*Photo: pro.imdb*



I had tuned myself into the slapstick category of humour. After all, I did manage to find "Houseful4" funny.

But this time I found the situational humour extremely average, with cliched dialogues that seemed to be a bane most of the time. You could feel the funniness but not enough to elicit loud laughter.

Thank God for the excellent cast who gave their best shot and their sheer presence salvaged the humour to a great extent.

Arshad Warsi is dependable as always.

Saharsh Kumar Shukla brings smiles and laughter in all his scenes.

Sanjay Mishra is completely unutilized.

Didn't find Prateik funny at all.

Pankaj Tripathi comes in late, for a short duration, and failed to work up his magic this time.

It saddened me to see an actor of Seema Biswas' calibre in such a small role with nothing to bite on.

It's purely Akshay's comic timing and charm that works all the way.

He fails to look menacing

though (partly because our heart knows he's the hero and partly because the violence has been mellowed down with humour).

Kriti Sanon looks great and delivers well.

The film did have its moments. There was laughter here and there, but clearly not enough.

Neither did the music make a mark.

***Overall, it turned out to be a very disappointing fare. A must watch for Akshay Fans though. They have a very different Akshay to enjoy this time.***

**Score: 2/5**



# DASVI

## The Three Leads Deserve All Credit for This Cute Little Entertainer!

Social Comedy / Netflix

**Cast -** Abhishek Bachchan, Yami Gautam, Nimrat Kaur, Manu Rishi

**Director -** Tushar Jalota

**Language -** Hindi

**Writer** Ritesh Shah, Suresh Nair, Sandeep Layzell



Photo: Dasvi Trailer

### Plot

Gangaram Choudhary is an unsophisticated, uneducated desi politician who lands up in jail for a corruption case.

Jyoti Deswal is a no-nonsense IPS officer who cares two hoots about his clout.

Their altercations make way for many changes in Choudhary's life, some good, some bad.

### Analysis

The first fifteen minutes into the film and my mind confirmed two things to me.

First - I was going to be treated to an adorable and all-consuming performance by Abhishek

Bachchan.

Second - I should be calibrating my expectations as far as the writing goes.

The initial start of the film seemed quite disappointing because of its similarity to the Lalu-Rabri story and the Huma Qureshi series Maharani. But gradually, and thankfully, the focus shifts to Abhishek and his shenanigans in jail.

As always, Abhishek gives his best shot. His lingo seemed quite in place, and his comic timing worked well. His Choudhary is so adorable and makes us root for him even when he behaves abominably.

I would say he successfully manages to carry the film on his shoulder and ensures that all your focus remains on him even when the mediocre writing and over simplified situations let down the screenplay. I know he gets steady adulation. But I just wish and pray that he gets the kind of script and success he deserves.

He is ably supported by Nimrat Kaur and Yami Gautam.

Even though her character begins with so many similarities to Maharani, Nimrat gradually finds her footing and we do get glimpses of the fine actor she is in some of the scenes, which make you crave for her in meatier roles.

Yami Gautam looks beautiful and does a fine job of playing Deswal. She's gradually and steadily

making her presence felt in the industry.

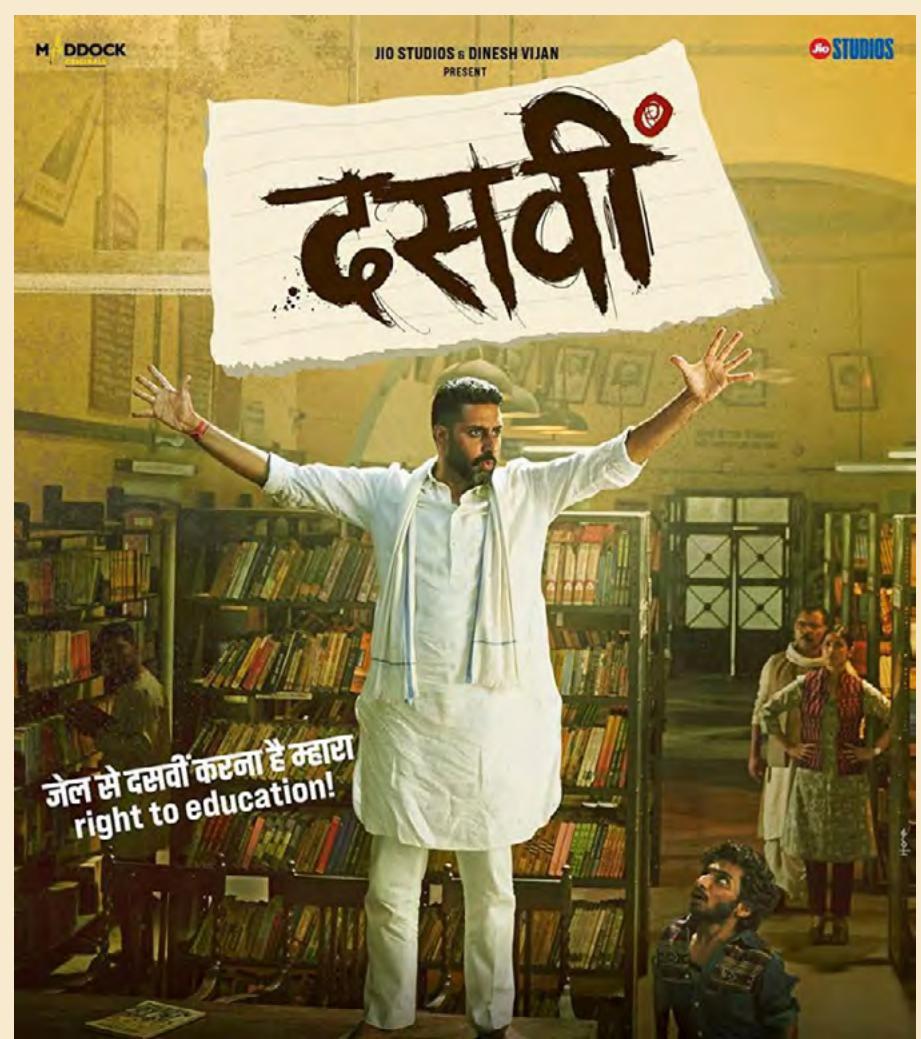
A special mention for Arun Kushwah in the role of Ghanti. He was a pleasure to watch.

Together the three lead stars ensure that we are

goodness winning and the positive change brought in by education makes for a perfect ending.

I feel Tushar Jalota has done a fine job at directing.

Photo: filmaffinity



engaged and often smiling even though the back of our mind keeps craving for something more substantial in terms of writing, situations and dialogues.

Gradually by the second half, your expectations have attuned and the story picks up slight pace and we began to quite enjoy the film. The climax about the inherent

With some more back-up of writing, he would have done wonders.

The film is a clean and light entertainer with a nice message.

Do not expect too much substance or nuance in the writing, but the three stars more than compensate for it and make it an adorable watch that leaves you smiling.



Photo: Dasvi Trailer

# Brahmastra - Part one shoot comes to an end

**T**he filming of the upcoming fantasy adventure film 'Brahmastra,' starring Bollywood duo Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt, has concluded.

The film's final filming schedule was completed in Kashi, and it will be released in theatres on September 9.

Alia took to Instagram and posted a video clip. The video appears to be from a song. She also tweeted a photo of the filmmaker Ayan Mukerji and Ranbir after they visited a temple.

For the caption, Alia wrote:

"We started shooting in 2018. And now finally ... The filming of Brahmastra (Part One) comes to an end!! I've been wanting to say this for such a long time...IT'S A WRAP!"

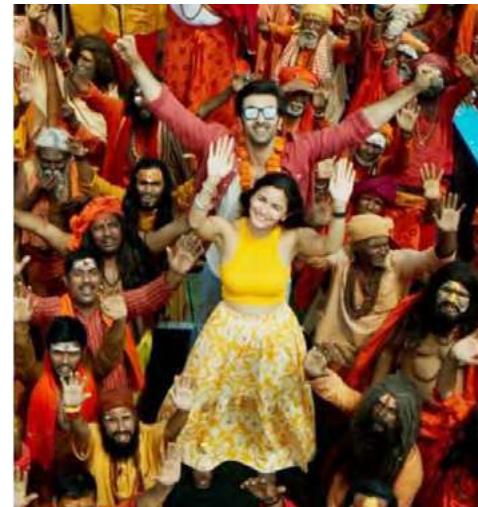
The movie appears to be set in two-time periods. The main plot takes place in the present day, when Shiva, a young man with superpowers, goes 3,000 years back in time to learn about weapons such as Brahmastra in order to complete a mission.

The epic opus, directed by Ayan Mukerji and produced by Fox Star Studios, Dharma

Productions, Prime Focus, and Starlight Pictures, will hit theatres on September 9 in five

Indian languages: Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Kannada.

*Photo: indianexpress*



## AB fulfills his promise to screen 'Dasvi' for Agra jail inmates

**A**bhishek Bachchan promised the inmates of Agra Central Jail an exclusive screening of his next film 'Dasvi,' which was shot on location there.

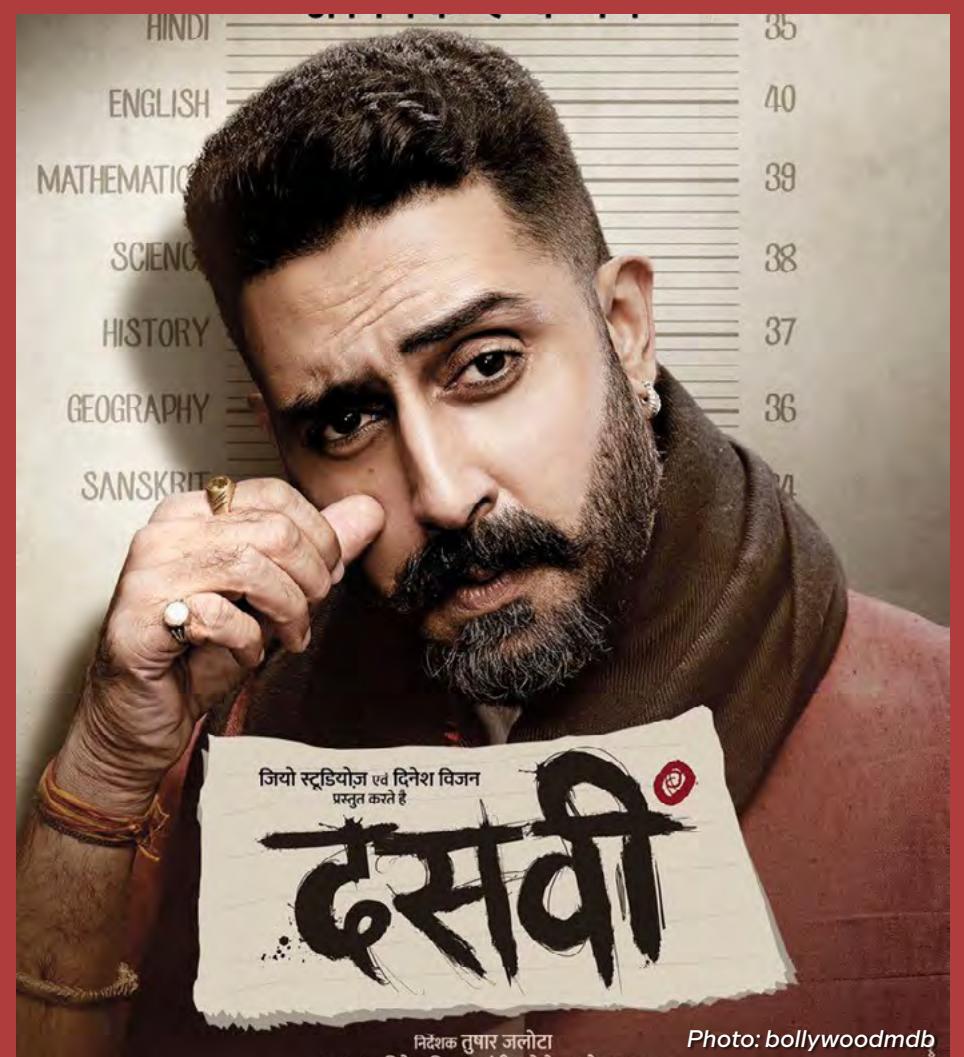
The actor returned to the city to give a screening of 'Dasvi' to 2,000 inmates. Senior authorities welcomed Abhishek and his co-stars Yami Gautam and Nimrat Kaur, as well as director Tushar Jalota, to the magnificent set up.

Abhishek reminisced on many memorable moments, excitedly showing some members of the media where he shot the 'Macha Macha' song

and other important scenes.

He also donated an assortment of books for the inmates to enjoy at the library. Sources close to the crew reveal that the inmates were humbled by the actor's thoughtful gestures.

He shared a video clipping of him talking to the inmates and captioned it: "A promise is a promise!! Last night I managed to fulfil a commitment I made a year ago. The first screening of our film #Dasvi held for the guards and inmates of Agra Central Jail. We shot the film here. Their reactions are memories I will remember and cherish for a lifetime."



*Photo: bollywoodmdb*

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