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# ASIA

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# Today

Monthly Newspaper

• Vol-VII • Issue-4 • Phone : 480-250-2519 • sales@asiatodayaz.com • April 2014

**35** **Basant Mela**

India Association of Phoenix hosted the Annual Holi Event at South Mountain

**23**

IACRF invites you to the 16TH ANNUAL GRAND INDIAN FESTIVAL!

**14**

The runaway actress **Deepika Padukon**

**32**

## “BAPS Charities” - The Spirit of Service in Action



**B**APS Charities is a 501(c)(3) registered nonprofit international charity organization committed to sincerely serving the world by caring for individuals, families and communities. BAPS Charities has amassed over 50 years of firsthand experience in initiating, managing and sustaining humanitarian operations throughout the world. BAPS Charities harnesses the efforts and collective spirit of vol-

• More on P03

## Hola Mohalla

Article by Deepa Walia  
Photos Courtesy of Jamshed Sani  
March 8, 2014

**O**n March 8, 2014, Asia Today was proud to make history by hosting Arizona's first ever HolaMohalla, with main sponsorship from Nishkam-SevaGurudwara. The event that was held across from the Gurudwara attracted a large audience and many talented children and adults. HolaMohalla, an event that was originated by Guru Gobind Singh Ji while he was in the midst of fighting both Aurangzeb of the Mughal Empire and the Hill Rajputs, was traditionally a day of mock battles and poetry contests at Holgarh Fort. Since then, the tradition has spread from the



town of Anandpur Sahib to nearby Kiratpur Sahib and the foothills of the Shivaliks and to other Gurudwaras around the world.

In Arizona, there were numerous contests including

the best Pag (Turban) tying contest and a SohniMutiyaar and SohnaGabroo (Beautiful Lady and Handsome Gentleman). There were also local dancers and performers, as

• More on P10

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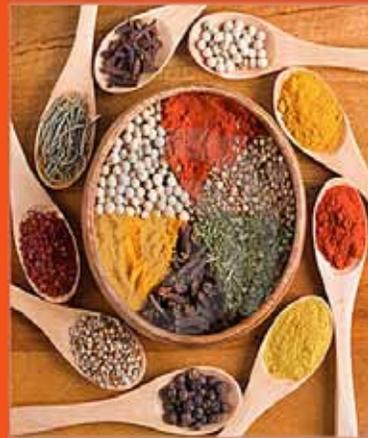
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unteers around the world to serve individuals, families and communities in five key areas: Community Empowerment, Educational Services, Environmental Protection & Preservation, Health & Wellness, and Humanitarian Relief. Taken together, these initiatives empower individuals to volunteer their time and resources to create a better community, nation and world.

**Walkathons:** BAPS Charities Walkathons in the United States and Canada are a key activity our volunteers organize throughout North America in support of their local communities. Individuals of all ages and from all backgrounds come together to raise support and awareness for a wide range of community, health and humanitarian organizations. With thousands of participants across both countries, BAPS Charities Walkathons are an activity created by and for the local community to build a better community, one step at a time.

## BAPS CHARITIES

### 5K WALK 2014, Phoenix AZ

BAPS Charities Walk in Phoenix, AZ benefitting Phoenix Fire Department & Susan G. Koman for the Cure Foundation took place on March 29th, 2014. Over 100 participants enthusiastically took part in the event, walking a grand total of 175 miles.

Date: Saturday, March 29, 2014  
Time: 10 AM

**Location: Steele Indian School Park**  
300 E Indian School Road, Phoenix, AZ 85012  
<http://www.bapscharities.org/usa/phoenix/>  
[www.bapscharities.org](http://www.bapscharities.org)



## “BAPS Charities” - The Spirit of Service in Action



### About Us

BAPS Charities is a global charity active in nine countries across five continents. Volunteers drive our efforts, dedicating a portion of their lives in selfless service of others both in their local neighborhoods as well as globally.

### Our Work

Working in five key areas, BAPS Charities aims to express a spirit of selfless service through Health Awareness, Educational Services, Humanitarian Relief, Environmental Protection & Preservation and Community Empowerment. From Walkathons or Sponsored Walks that raise funds for local communities to supporting humanitarian relief in times of urgent need or from community health fairs to sustaining hospitals and schools in developing countries, BAPS Charities provides an opportunity for individuals wishing to serve locally and globally.

### Our Symbol

BAPS Charities' charitable work is driven by an ethos of selfless service empowering individuals

to engage in projects that better one's community, country and the world. This ethos is captured by our motto, 'The Spirit of Service', and our symbol, a flame resting in a crucible. Representing the desire of selfless service glowing in the hearts of volunteers, we believe that the flame is an insightful representation of what true service is – the giving of ourselves to bring light and warmth, hope and joy to others around us. When an individual is motivated by the Spirit of Service, she sacrifices for the greater good of her community and the world.

### Our History

The concept behind BAPS Charities began decades ago with grassroots volunteerism in South Asia grounded in the spirit of service. As those young volunteers began to spread across the world, BAPS Charities took shape as a medium to continue and share this spirit with new and diverse communities. Formally established in 2000 as BAPS Care International, the organization changed its name to BAPS Charities in 2007 and proceeded to formalize and institutionalize the organization in countries across the world. Even as it has grown over the years, BAPS

Charities has striven to remain true to its mission of selfless service.

### Organizational Information

BAPS Charities is registered as a charitable organization in the eight countries listed below, in accordance with the respective laws of each country:

1. United States: BAPS Charities, Inc. – a registered 501(c)(3) not-for-profit charitable organization
2. Canada: BAPS Charities, Inc. – a registered federal corporation (CRA Registration Number: 864015441RR0001)
3. United Kingdom: BAPS Charities – a registered charity (Number: 1123367)
4. South Africa: Soham Sanctuary Trust / BAPS Charities (Trust No. 1445/87 / Public Benefit Organisation No. 930-021-937)
5. Kenya: BAPS Charities – a registered society
6. Tanzania: BAPS Charities – a registered society
7. Uganda: BAPS Charities – a limited company
8. New Zealand: BAPS Charities – registered under the Charities Act 2005



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**Personality Traits...The Everyday Little Ones and the Character Defining Big Ones**

I ran across a lot of good reads this past month of March and appreciate the wonderful people around me through which I have the opportunity to open my mind to new information and knowledge. In the month of March, I was exposed to articles that talked about top regrets from those at the end of their lives to top things to do to succeed in your 30s. In addition to reading, I also had the opportunity to watch some amazing people around me and their courage and perseverance as life continues to throw obstacles their way.

Just like they say about training, the most retained training is when you have the opportunity to apply it right away in a practical manner – same is true of reading. It seemed like what I was reading in parallel, I was also getting the opportunity to watch people around me utilize in their day to day challenges and it exponentially increased what I took away from what seemed like basic reads.

In one of those readings, I came across an article that talked about top things I would go back and tell myself at an earlier age and it made me start thinking. If I had the opportunity, what would I go back and tell myself? What is the biggest mistake I have committed that I would want to correct? The answer came to me almost instantaneously – what I would go back and tell a younger me is to change the way I choose my closest friends and relationships. When I was younger, I based those decisions on the everyday personality traits that were visible in people right away – do they say the right things?

Do they enjoy the same hobbies/interests? Are they able to change their perspective on things or stubborn and set in their ways? And other such things that show themselves in day to day life. Because, honestly, I was planning on spending a lot of time with these people, whether they be my closest friends or a life partner, so the day to day things would matter far more than anything else.

However, I have had that in friends and a partner – enjoyed the same music, the same activities, could change perspective, always said the right thing (i.e. what I wanted to hear). It made life easy but it didn't make me happy. Why? Because we were different at our core...our root! Now those traits that define your core and root are much harder to see. They only surface when life throws you curve balls you are not expecting – your reactions to those curve balls are what define your foundation.

This month I had the opportunity to see a couple

The month of March was an exciting month with lots of events happening: Holi, HolaMohallla, Giant India Festival, and many, many more.

While covering all these festivals continuing the efforts of Asia Today, I also started a new business “Gilbert Medical Billing” in partnership with Mr. SurenSheth. I am very excited for the Month of April and



**Editor's NOTE**

whose relationship I have always respected handle one of these curve balls. I respected and was always surprised by their relationship – they were so completely different but seemed to have such a great connection, how could that be? Having had the opportunity to see them handle a life-changing event made me finally realize how that could be. At their core, they are both amazing, selfless human beings that have the ability to care so deeply about the families and friends around them, the ability

to give so much and expect nothing back, the ability to look at life and say take whatever you want from me, I will eventually get it all back. Those foundational elements is what has kept them going for over a decade, despite their day to day differences.

So if I could go back and tell myself something from a decade ago, it would be this – ignore the day to day things that either attract you to someone or annoy you. Finding a person whose day to day things don't annoy you will be fairly easy – it is just a matter of similar likes and habits. But concentrate on someone whose core is the same as yours, whose heart beats to the same rhythm as you, and whose priorities are the same as yours. Those things will ultimately define your life in time of crisis and life is filled with them.

Does a person take you to dinner a few days a week? Do they remember birthdays and anniversaries? Do they say all the right and sweet things? Do they listen to all your emotional problems? It is easy to listen to problems and not act on them, it is easy to program birthdays/anniversaries into calendars and have a machine remind you, it is easy to say the right things and never follow through. And that is why in the end, answers to all those questions don't matter. The questions you should be asking yourself are: Will this person stand by your family in time of need and accept them their own with all their strengths and weaknesses? Will this person be your strength in times of crisis? Is this person capable of acting on and doing all the things their promises and words hold? Those are the questions that will define the strength of a bond with another person. After experiencing what I have experienced and seeing what I have seen more recently, I finally realize I will deal with the day to day issues – the forgetting of birthdays/ anniversaries, the completely different perspectives on everything and inability to come to common ground, etc. I will happily deal with all that to have someone that has the same sense of duty, care, and love for me, themselves, and the friends and family around both of us and the ability to come through for all of them in times of need and crisis.

**Deepa Kaur Walia**  
Editor, Asia Today, editor@asiatodayaz.com



**Marketing Director NOTE**

all the many more upcoming events. Just like March, April will be even more exciting.

Thank you to all those who are a part of my everyday life and to all those who help me always.

I am very grateful for all the people in my life.

-Manju Walia  
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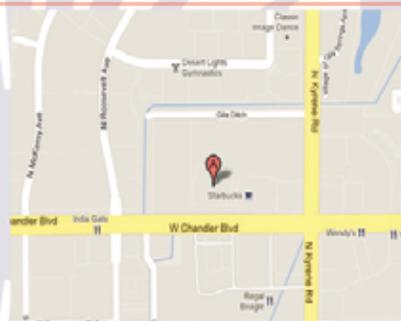
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# Hare Krishna Temple in Chandler celebrates Gaura Purnima - Lord Caitanya's appearance day & Holi

**G**aura Purnima festival celebrates the appearance of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, in Nadia, India, in the year 1486.

Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu is Krishna Himself in the mood of Radharani, appearing as His own devotee, to teach us that we can gain full enlightenment simply by chanting the holy names of the Lord: Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare Those who witnessed the Lord's pastimes saw Him dance and

chant with ecstatic love for God, the likes of which had never been seen before. Lord Chaitanya encouraged everyone to follow this same process. He taught that anyone—regardless of background or spiritual qualification—can develop their innate love of God and experience great spiritual pleasure by chanting the Hare Krishna mantra.

The present-day International Society for Krishna Consciousness continues the work begun by Lord Chaitanya, who predicted that the chanting of the holy names of Krishna would

spread all over the world.

Gaura Purnima means "golden full moon," signifying that:

- 1) Lord Chaitanya was "born" during a full moon, and
- 2) The Lord blesses everyone with the soothing, moonlike rays of His sublime teachings.

His followers generally observe this festival by fasting and chanting the holy names all day. At moonrise, a vegetarian feast is offered to the Lord and then enjoyed by all.

The program started with Ab-

hishekam of deities. New deities of Sri Pancha tattva also arrived the same day. After Aarti there was a class by HG Maha Visnu

Prabhu from Boston. There was ecstatic kirtan. Over 56 items of bhoga were offered to Their Lordships. After a sumptuous feast, the members of the congregation played with Holi colors.

Gaura Purnima the appearance anniversary of Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, who is Krsna Himself in the role of His own devotee. He appeared in 1486 in Mayapur, West Bengal.



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Sunday April 6th: Program 4:30pm - 9:00pm

Tuesday April 8th :Program 6:00pm - 9:00pm

Abhishekam, Bhajans, Arati, Katha, Dance & Prasadam

April 6, 20 & 27 : Sunday Lecture by HG JayaGuara Sundar Prabhu

April 8: Appearance day Lord Ramacandra - 5:45 - 8:45 pm program at the temple

April 9: Kamada Ekadasi

April 13: SB class and Sunday lecture by Jivananda Dasa Vanacari

April 14: SB class by Jivananda Dasa Vanacari

April 25: Varuthi Ekadasi

April 28: Appearance day Gadadhara Pandita Amavasya

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Sayana Aarti 8:30pm

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# Hola Mohalla

well as singers that were flown in from the Bay Area that sang religious kirtan to songs celebrating the bravery and eventful happenings of the rich Sikh History. An all-day event, it was hosted by Manju Walia (Marketing Director of Asia Today Arizona) and Harpinder (Happy) Saini. In addition, there were many volunteers and Sevadaars, as well as sponsors that hosted food, informational, or clothes/jewelry booths that made this event possible. Last, but definitely not least, the event also attracted the infamous national TV Channel Jus Punjabi, dedicated to

bringing Punjab to the world and covering Live Shows from all across America, and its host HarvinderRiar who flew in from New York especially to cover this historical event.

Asia Today is grateful to the immense support of NishkamSevaGurudwara and Sharan Saini, Jamshed Sani for photography, and Jus Punjabi and HarvinderRiar for covering the event. We are also grateful to all the volunteers and booth sponsors, as well as all those that attended to make this event a success and looks forward to hosting many such happenings with your support in the coming years.





# INDIAN SENIORS ASSOCIATION OF ARIZONA (ISAA)



**1. Rajyaguru Family sponsored luncheon on the 03-25-2014, 2. What fun in playing live garaba at the ISAA!, 3. Bansibhai & Subhadraben's Family as sponsors of the luncheon, 4. Warm welcome to Dr Kanubhai & Meenaben who also joined ISAA as members Fifty ISAA members were delighted to see Lataben joining for a fun at the Picnic., 5. Dr Shantubhai Amin speaking on causes and prevention of cancer, 6. Twenty-seven ISAA members signed up for theyoga/exercise class**

On March 04, 2014, there was an excellent educational, informative and relevant presentation by Dr. Shantubhai Amin. This covered his work of several years with his team of researchers on causes and prevention of deadly cancers among various populations of the world. The attendees of over seventy listened the talk very keenly as evidenced by intense questions resulting in to good discussions with the speaker. Dr. Kanubhai- the oncologist, added to the presentation his valuable comments regarding prevention by sharing his knowledge and experience with patients. Dr. Ojha also contributed his experience from food industry. This tied well with Dr. Shantubhai's work. A few of the key words to identify cancers are- inflammation, tobaccos, exhausts, emissions, bad habits, diets and chemicals. Also, Some beneficial words from prevention side are- broccoli, kokum, turmeric, garlic, onion, honey, cinnamon berries, daily used spices - peppers, fenugreek, ginger, lemongrass, curry leaves, bay,, red wine, pomegranate etc. We had several younger folks who came to attend the presentation. Amin family sponsored the luncheon.

On Mar 11, 2014, a change in an announced program due to technical difficulties was a learning experience. Thanks to Prakash Gandhi for his novel idea and hard work for the preparation of the program. As an alternate plan, we had a live garba program. All those



who participated had a wonderful time. Today's sponsors of the home-cooked food were Bansibhai and Subhadraben on the occasion of Subhadraben's 80th birthday was enjoyed by almost seventy people. ISAA wished her many happy returns.

On March 18, 2014, ISAA held their second picnic at Rio Vista Park. It was a beautiful sunny day with blue skies- perfect weather for a picnic. Almost fifty of us had a great time. Pakodas and tea were ready on time. People played cards, sang beautiful songs,

played antaxari and laughed at jokes. A number of took time to go around for a walk. Lunch was served around 1:00 PM by our sponsors -Meenben Sharma and Ishaji. It was good to see Vijayben & Dr. Tangri, Narendra & Daxaben, Tansukhbhai & Hemaben, and, Lataben & Chandrakantbhai.

On Mar 25, 2014, it was an "apni apni pasand" day. As if people had not met for weeks, everyone was busy socializing. Card playing had its own charm with some. The others were busy exchanging their thoughts where

they had left off last time. The sponsor today was the Rajyaguru family who celebrated Shantibhai's good health and thanked all for the good times. Over sixty members and guests were appreciative for the delicious meal. Chandrikaben gave us a brief gist of her lovely five -day retreat in Sedona Arizona. The main take was that be appreciative of what life has to offer and convey positive, loving energies to each and everyone in the universe.

Announcements: ISAA is happy to note that Chhotubhai was recognized by the American Society of Mechanical Engineering for his fifty years' services to the organization especially pioneering work in design and development of leak-proof air conditioning systems for automobiles. This sure has helped a lot in preservation of environment globally.

ISAA welcomed to new members -Dr. Kanubhai and Minaben Patel. It is nice to note that in addition to them being great professionals, the couple is very talented and would be an asset to ISAA.

**Obituary:** Narayanbhai led the seniors group in offering the peace prayers for Vimlaben and Induben's mother who passed away recently. \*\*\*\*



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# IACRF CELEBRATES GRAND INDIA FESTIVAL

The 16th Grand Annual India Festival held on Saturday, March 29, 2014 at the Indo-American Community Center in Phoenix was a big success drawing a large number of people who took advantage of the beautiful weather to come and partake in the celebration. The event organized by the IACRF in conjunction with all sister organizations is one of the major ethnic festivals in the Valley. Festival goers enjoyed a scintillating, fun-filled, vicarious tour of a 'desi mela' as the event provided a unique opportunity for residents of the greater Phoenix area to experience the diversity of foods, cultural performances and shopping so typical of fairs and melas in India without having to make the long journey to their motherland! It was the perfect setting for friends and family to enjoy time together and have fun. There was something for everyone – good food, fun games, great shopping and of course wonderful entertainment.

Tasty Indian Food made by local

Chefs from GCA, KSARA, VSAZ, HTA, AZGOSHALA, Malayalee Association, IACRF and other Sister organizations featured an array of 'desi street food' ranging from finger-licking bhel puri, paani puri, paav bhaji, Gota pank, Chole bhature, Gobi Manchurian, Majedar Kulfis, Zabardast Fruit Salad, Garam garam mirchi bhajia, pakore, Best in Arizona Samosa Chaat, crisp Mysore Masala Dosas, traditional Bangalore Iyengar Bakery treats, Indian pizzas, masala chai and much more. There was a wide variety that could please any palate.

The festival gave an opportunity for people to shop for Indian apparel and costume jewelry, for local businesses to promote their products, non-profit organizations to raise awareness of the work they do, and for community members to meet and greet our local leaders and policy makers. Chief Guests at the event were the Secretary of State for Arizona, Mr. Ken Bennett and Dr. Denis Simon, Vice Provost at

Arizona State University. In their remarks, both the Secretary of State and Dr. Simon congratulated the community on its accomplishments and successes. Dr. Simon, who was representing ASU President, Dr. Michael Crow was amazed that the community had grown from a mere 40 families to over 60,000 strong in the very short period of 40 years! He also noted that India had the second largest number of international students at ASU.

The highlight of the festival was the Cultural program which featured over 360 performers ranging in ages from 5 to adults who showcased their talent. Audiences came to cheer the performers and were blown away by the array of talent, and the variety of performances that were showcased on stage at the Festival. From Bollywood to Tollywood, classical to Hip Hop and contemporary and folk, there was a true medley of song and dance numbers to please all tastes. The talent on display was truly amazing with some of

the fusion hip hop groups, contemporary dances, and garba items being the show stoppers. In all, the event was a huge success and a great time was had by one and all. The event would not have been possible without the support of sponsors and the hard work of the organizing committee led by event Chair, Mr. Sudhir Kalra and his team consisting of Achut Kumar, Kalpana Batni, Manish Gupta and Neha Gupta under the leadership of President, Kul Bhushan Chhibber and many volunteers. Special thanks to Mr. Subhash Thathi for sponsoring the drinks for the event. Their dedication, commitment and enthusiasm were commendable.

IACRF would like to extend its sincere thanks to all the Sister Associations for their participation and support, all the artists who performed on stage, and all volunteers who helped at the event. The event would not have been possible without the combined efforts of all.

**Kalpana Batni & Kul Bhushan Chhibber**

## IACRF invites you to the 16TH ANNUAL GRAND INDIAN FESTIVAL!

The event portrayed Sister Organizations, Food Booths, Jewelry, Clothing, & Shopping all day! It is the most happening festival in the spring and we all had a blast. Below is a glimpse of the event.





## Indo-American Foundation of Arizona

(Registered Non-Profit Organization under Section 501 (C) (3))

Hindu and Jain Temple Ekta Mandir and Community Center,

Please Check Ekta Vision, [www.EktaMandir.org](http://www.EktaMandir.org) & [www.IndoFoundation.org](http://www.IndoFoundation.org) for more details



# Happy Lunar New Year

**Save the Date—Phoenix Health Fair**  
**Blood Draw—Saturday, April 19th, from 8:00 AM**  
 @ Ekta Mandir Assembly Hall  
**Medical Consultation—Sunday May 4th from 9:00 AM**  
**Please contact**  
**Mahesh Shah 480-544-9438, Chetan Patel 602-332-2878**  
**Rajesh Patel 480-277-5777**



**Mahavir Jayanti**  
**Saturday, April 12th**  
**At Ekta Mandir**  
**Contact**  
**Jitendra Khandhar 623-466-4671**



## Mata-ki-Chowki

**Friday, April 4th, 2014**  
**Starting @ 8:00 PM**  
**Please contact**  
**Kul Bhushan Chhibber 480-250-0779**  
**Sudhir Kalra 623-414-8248**



## Kanya Puja

**Sunday, April 6, 2014**  
**Starting at 6:15 PM**  
**Call Mahesh Shah**  
**480-544-9438**



## Ram Navami Celebration

**Tuesday, April 8, 2014**  
 10:30 to 11:45 AM Shree Rama SHODSHO-PACHAR POOJA and ABHISHEK  
 12 Noon—Shree Ram Janma Aarti  
 5:30 PM to 7:30 PM—Utsava Moorti Abhishek & Bhajan Program  
 7:30 PM Aarati followed by Mahaprasad



## Hanuman Jayanti

**Tuesday, April 15th 2014**  
**5:00 PM to 8:00 PM**  
**Satyanarayan Katha, Hanumanji Abhishek**  
**Please Contact**  
**Sudhir Kalra 623-414-8248, Mahesh Shah 480-544-9438 or Bajarang Agrawal 602-318-7563**



## Indo-American Foundation of Arizona

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 Hindu and Jain Temple Ekta Mandir and Community Center



# Ekta Mandir invites everyone to Sri Rama Navami Celebrations

on Tuesday, April 8, 2014 @ Ekta Mandir



**Please bring**  
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**10:30AM-12:30PM** Sri Ram Janma Mahotsav, Sri Ram Abhishek, Shodashopachar Puja, Ram Pragtya Aarti  
**3:30PM-6:30PM** Bhajans by Jalaram mandal  
**6:30PM** - Significance of Ram Navami (Pravachan)  
**7:00PM** - Cultural Programs  
**8:00PM** - Arathi to LORD Ram

**Mahaprasad - 7:00PM-9:00PM**

**FANCY DRESS:** Prizes for best dressed Ram, Sita, Lakshman and Hanuman. Children encouraged to participate. Please Contact Kalpana Batni - 602 998 9325 & Bajarang Agrawal - 602 318 7563

**Sponsorship: Grand Sponsor—\$501**  
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**Bajarang Agrawal - 602 318 7563, Dayaram Ahir 602 989 7100**  
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[WWW.EKTAMANDIR.ORG](http://WWW.EKTAMANDIR.ORG)

# Seniors' Meeting Feb 20th thru Mar 13th



50 to 60 Seniors are regularly meeting at the Indo-American Foundation Hall every Thursday from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. Seniors are enjoying various activities such as exercising or simply walking in the parking lot, card playing, music program, and movie screening. Of course, Socializing is most popular activity. It is proven that music plays (playing as well as listening) very important role in our life keeping our brain happy and nourished. Hence seniors opted for some musical program on every first Thursday of the month and will have movie show on second Thursday. On Feb 20th seniors volunteered to prepare envelopes to be mailed to all Life Members and Trustees for IACRF's annual general body meeting. The task involved stamping the returning address, putting mailing labels, opening and stuffing with notice paper, peeling off the tab, sealing and fixing the postage stamp. Thanks to all happy volunteers...Shantiben, Parixitbhai, Kalpanaben, Malatiben, Susilbhai, Mahendrabhai, Sevantibhai, Prembhai, Jaganji and Lalitbhai who got about 700 stuffed envelopes ready in no time to drop in outgoing mail box.

Seniors celebrated Munnu Bajpai's birthday. It was a surprise celebration when we saw two identical carrot cakes on the table. One cake was for birthday boy and the other was an appreciation from Mala Bajpai Kapadia's to Seniors Group. Thanks to Mala Kapadia. Lunch sponsors were Rajani Bajpai and Mala Kapadia. The lunch was not a traditional Indian food but it was pizza, pasta, spaghetti, lassania,



garlic bread, salads with and without onion, dressing of your choice and a top of that there was a mouth watering piece of carrot cake. Thanks to Rajani Bajpai and Mala Kapadia.

On Feb 27th, enjoyed picnic at Piestewa Park which is in the middle of the great city of Phoenix. It is a beautiful place right on the foothill of mountain called "Piestewa Peak". The place is surrounded by tall and beautiful mountain having excellent facility, enough paved parking, wash room facility, and plenty of covered benches to accommodate more than 100 people. Of course there are plenty of trails for enthusiastic seniors to explore the mountain. Thanks to Uma and Jagajji for sponsoring the picnic. It was their 47th anniversary celebration. Seniors congratulated them for their romantic 47 years of companionship and wished them many many more.

Seniors were happy to welcome back Maganbhai and Hansaben from Canada and Bhagubhai and Jayaben

back from their visit to India. Thanks to Maganbhai and hansaben sponsoring the lunch and all volunteers for preparing delicious lunch. Thanks to Jayaben and Bhagubhai and their families to sponsor elaborate and delicious lunch to celebrate Bhagubhai's 75th birthday. Menu consist of Puri, Shak,

Rice, Daal, Fulvadi, Raitu, Papad-papadi, and Kopara Pak imported from India. Thanks to Dilip and Jean Patel for leading all cooking activities and taking photos of the event. Thanks to all volunteers who actively helped in the kitchen and serving food.

-Lalit Patel



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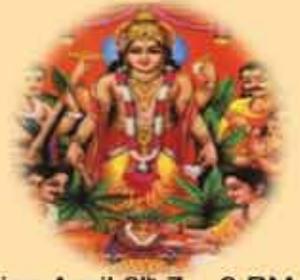
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**DUE DATE  
APRIL 30, 2014**

I bow to the **HINDU TEMPLE OF ARIZONA**  
**Hindu Temple of Arizona**  
**Hindu Temple of Arizona**

ॐ **HTA EVENTS APRIL 2014** ॐ  
**Ram Navami, Hanuman Jayanti, Maata Jagran, and Satyanarayanji Puja**



Ramayan recital from March 31<sup>st</sup> ( Recital during temple hours, conclusion April 8<sup>th</sup> 7 – 9 PM )  
**Ram Navami celebrations: April 8<sup>th</sup> ( Tuesday 7:00 – 9:00 PM )**  
**Maata Jagran: April 4<sup>th</sup> ( Friday 7:00 - 9:00 PM, Sponsorship \$101 )**  
**Hanuman Jayanti celebrations: April 14<sup>th</sup> ( 108 hanuman chalisa recital starts at 12:00 noon, Sponsorship \$51 )**  
**Satyanarayanji Puja : April 14<sup>th</sup> ( Monday 7:00 - 9:00 PM, Sponsorship \$101 )**

**Please call for additional details:**

Ram Navami & Hanuman Jayanti:	Ashwani Bakshi @ (480) 250 0903
Maata Jagaran:	Shashi Tuli @ (480) 614 1322
Satyanarayanji Puja:	Nirmal Chhibber @ (480) 926 8835
For scheduling puja at home:	Rohit Aggarwal @ (248) 613 4615
For general information:	Venkat Madduri @ (212) 518 1142

Please donate generously for ongoing improvements of temple

**Hindu Temple of Arizona**  
 3033 N Hayden Road,  
 Scottsdale, AZ 85251

**Maata Jagran**  
 Friday April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2014  
 7:00pm-9:00pm  
 Contact: Shashi (480) 614-1322

**Satyanarayanji Puja**  
 Monday April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2014  
 7:00pm-9:00pm  
 Contact: Nirmal (480) 926-8835

**Hanumanji Puja**  
 Every Tuesday  
 7pm-9pm  
 Contact: Sushma (480) 970-4439

**Venkateswara Swami Puja**  
 Every Saturday  
 10am- Noon  
 Contact: Sriniji (602) 535-6989

**Sunday Puja**  
 11am-1pm  
 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday - Ram Parivar  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday - Shri Jagannathji  
 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday - Balaji & Krishnaji  
 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday - Shivji Puja  
 Special puja: Rudra  
 Panchamrit Abhishekam  
 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday - Ganeshji Puja

Contact Temple Priest at  
 (480) 874-3200 for any Information  
 related to Temple Puja events or if  
 you need to schedule any Special  
 Puja at the Temple site or at Home.

ॐ **Murti Sthapna at the Hindu Temple of Arizona** ॐ

**Please join us on this historical event  
 of Pran-Pratishtha for**

**Satyanarayan Ji, Padmavati Ji  
 and Nav Graha's  
 on May 23<sup>rd</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup>, 2014**



Construction is in full swing and nearing completion

Please donate generously

Program details will be announced soon

**For sponsorship and information, please contact:**

Ashwani Bakshi @ (480) 250-0903  
 Surendra Singh @ (203) 300-2302  
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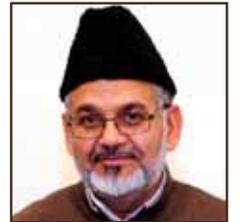
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# India Association of Phoenix hosted the Annual Holi Event at South Mountain.

**There was colors, DJ, and food. It was a blast! Here is a glimpse of Rang Barse...**



# Ahmadi Muslims celebrate Promised Messiah Day, 125th anniversary of Community



by Imam Shamshad A. Nasir (Baitul Hameed Mosque - Chino)

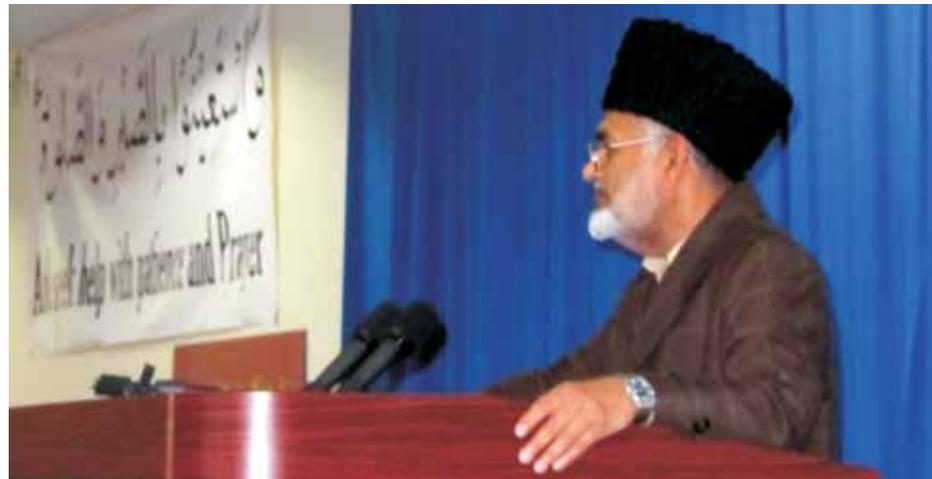


freshers course and overview of the Islamic worship, Prayer and how to correctly perform it. This is exactly what Brandon said he was looking for and he saw this as a Sign that he was directed that particular Sunday to go to the Ahmadiyya Mosque instead of others in Chino and Ontario. Since that day he has been a regular attendee of congregational prayers (including Tahajjud and Fajr) and other public outreach events, such as the "Muhammad: Messenger of Peace" symposiums held in March at UC-Riverside and Cal-Poly Pomona, and "Promised Messiah Day" on March 23rd at the Baitul Hameed Mosque to remember the founder of the Community.

All Muslims believe in the Second Coming of Jesus, but only one denomination -- the worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Community -- believes that Second Coming has already taken place. Around 300 men, women and children of the Southern California chapters of the Ahmadiyya Community held their annual "Promised Messiah Day" celebration on Sunday, March 23rd at the Baitul Hameed Mosque in Chino, CA. March 23rd, 2014, marked the 125th anniversary of the founding of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in northern India in 1889 by the Promised Messiah and Imam Mahdi, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian (1835-1908).



"Promised Messiah Day" took place from 11am-1pm and began with the recitation of the Holy Quran (with English translation), followed by the opening address by L.A. Inland Empire Chapter president Asim Ansari. He gave a brief, concise presentation of the state of the Muslims at the time of the advent of the Promised Messiah and Imam Mahdi in the last quarter of the 19th century, and how that advent sparked a profound rejuvenation and reformation in Islam through the writings and example of the Promised Messiah and the missionary work of his followers.



The speeches delivered at the gathering were on the following topics:  
The Claims and Teachings of the Promised Messiah.

Life Sketch of the Promised Messiah.

The Promised Messiah: a Beacon of Truth.

The High Morals of the Promised Messiah.

The Promised Messiah's Message to Contemporary Society.

The concluding address by Imam Shamshad A. Nasir presented an overview of the Promised Messiah's mis-

sion and his invaluable contributions to the betterment of Islam and those Muslims and non-Muslims who accepted him. Imam Shamshad also stressed the absolute necessity for Ahmadis to recognize the obligation of all Ahmadis to uphold and continue the mission of the Promised Messiah by reforming themselves and being the best example of Islam as a means to bring people to the truth and purification of Islam as established by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

A former member of Chino Hills Calvary Chapel named Brandon -- who had signed his Pledge of Initiation (Bai'at) and joined the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community -- was invited to speak about how he had been searching for a true and direct connection to God through prayer, and how that

quest brought him to the Community of the Promised Messiah.

In his search for answers, Brandon investigated many other faiths. At the same time, he was also studying the basic tenets of Islam -- the five pillars in particular -- and felt intensely drawn to the Islamic mode of worship in prostration five times a day.

It was Brandon's desire to learn how to pray as a Muslim that initially propelled him to look for a mosque in his area, Chino Hills. He looked up several in the Chino Valley, but said he felt drawn to visit the Ahmadiyya Community's Baitul Hameed Mosque at 11941 Ramona Ave. He came to the mosque on a Sunday when the usual routine of classes had been suspending for that day only so that the Imam, Shamshad Nasir, could conduct a re-

quest brought him to the Community of the Promised Messiah.

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was started in 1889 by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, who proclaimed that he was appointed by God as the awaited Second Advent of the Promised Messiah (Jesus for Christians), as well as the Imam Mahdi (the Guided Imam for Muslims). Ahmad inaugurated his Community with only 40 pious souls in the Punjab in northern India 125 years ago on March 23rd, and now there are tens of millions of Ahmadi Muslims in more than 200 countries of the world. The motto of the Ahmadiyya Community is: "Love for All - Hatred for None." To learn more, call 1-866-WHY-ISLAM or 909-627-2252 or 909-636-8332 or go online to: Alislam.org

### Who are the Ahmadi Muslims?

Ahmadis are members of the worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, established by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Imam Mahdi, in 1889. Their motto is: "Love for All -- Hatred for None." Ahmadis are the only peaceful, non-political and unified body of Muslims in the world. They are united under a spiritual leader (Khalifa) who condemns all terrorism and works tirelessly for global peace and interfaith harmony. For more information, call Imam Shamshad at 909-627-2252 or 909-636-8332 or go online to: Alislam.org



*Waheguru ji ka Khalsa! Waheguru ji ki Fateh!*

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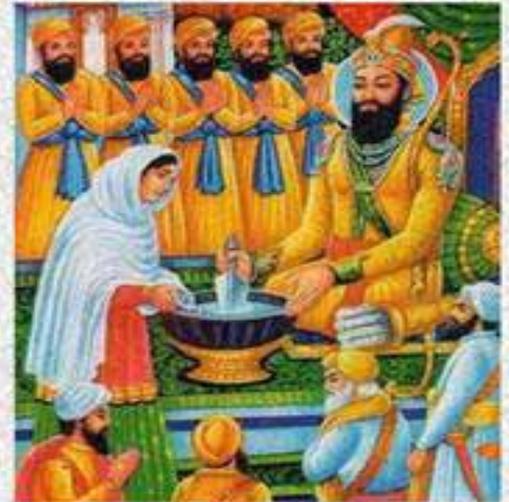
*The birth of the Khalsa*

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- Friday – evening Kirtan Darbar: 7:00PM to 8:30PM
- Saturday – Akhand Path and Langar all day
- Sunday – Akhand Path Bhog: 9:30 AM
- Sunday – Nishan Sahib Ceremony & Sukhmani Sahib: 10:00AM to 11:15AM
- Programs by Punjabi School children
- Kirtan Darbar – Nagar Kirtan – Guru-Ka-Langar



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# Real-estate sector in Arizona

Dear Friends,

Hope you all had a good Spring Break! Spring and summer are popular seasons for home shopping. In fact, the National Association of Realtors reports that most home sales take place between April and July. That's not much of a surprise, since many buyers are reluctant to uproot children during the school year. Since spring and summer are so popular for home sales, more sellers also put their homes on the market during those seasons—which means more inventory for you to choose from.

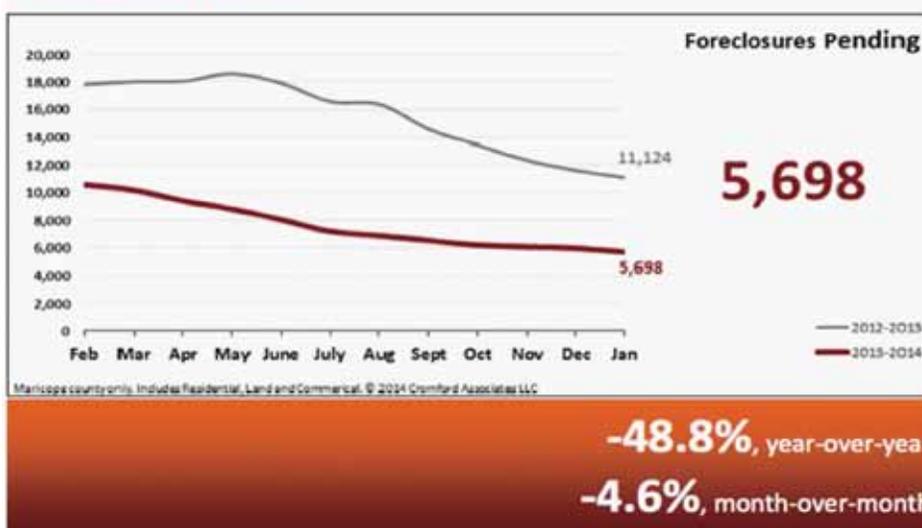
Rising home prices are bolstering seller confidence, fueling rapid growth in the number of homes for sale in many markets in February. Median list prices were up 7.6 percent from a year ago in February, to \$199,000, and the inventory of homes for sale rose 10.1 percent, to 1.74 million. In other words, there were 160,000 more homes for sale than the same time a year ago.

Two statistical studies released last week offered a glimpse of where the country is in terms of homeowner equity, seven years after real estate began to tumble and crash. The first was the Federal Reserve's quarterly flow of funds report. Among many other segments of the economy it toted up, the Fed found that homeowner equity has rebounded to its highest level in eight years — though it's still not quite back to it was during the high point of the housing boom in 2005.

The second study, from real estate analytics firm CoreLogic, focused on the flip side, impressive shrinkage of negative equity. According to researchers, nearly 4 million owners with mortgage debt have positive equity now. Thanks to rising prices and equity levels, about 4 million owners around the country last year were able to climb out of the financial tar pit of the housing bust 'negative equity'.

Whether you're thinking of buying a home or refinancing your mortgage this year, there are regulations being

## FORECLOSURES PENDING



## DISTRESSED SALES



implemented to meet goals set forth by the Dodd-Frank Act in Congress meant to correct the errors that led to the housing crisis. Basically, these rules require lenders to prove the borrower's ability to repay a loan by meeting several guidelines, including a maximum debt-to-income ratio of 43 percent. The new rules won't allow for such circumstances as significant cash reserves or a large down payment to be considered to offset a higher debt ratio.

Let's look at the February sales of Residential Homes in Maricopa County-

- Total sales for Single Family, Town homes, Condos for February were 4,744 whereas January were 4,095 and December was 5,180

- The Active listings for February were 24,719 whereas January was 23,420 and whereas December was 20,673

- Pending sales for February were 5,883 whereas January was 4,660 and December was 3,957

As you see the distress sale are declining steadily-

Let's take a look on commercial

side-

Meritex EnterprisesInc has acquired two industrial buildings at 21410 and 21415 N. 15th Ln in Phoenix, from Carlson Real Estate Services LLC for \$16.675 million, about \$91 per square foot. Located in Lincoln Deer Valley Phase I, the two assets were built in 2003 in the Deer Valley / Pinnacle Park Industrial area. Su Casa Properties LLC purchased the Park Village Apartments at 226 N. Hobson Rd. in Mesa from Tavaco Properties for \$3.9 million, approximately \$33,000 per unit.

The 118-unit, garden-style complex is comprised of 66 one-bedroom and 52 two-bedroom apartments. It was built in 1973 on 4.1 acres in the Royal Palms / Sherwood area. CFA Cabinetry LLC, a wholesaler of kitchen and bathroom cabinetry, signed a five-year lease for 63,840 square feet in the industrial building at 420 S. 53rd Ave in Phoenix.

The single-story 127,680-square-foot warehouse was constructed in 1987 on 6.3 acres in the SW N of Buckeye Road Industrial submarket, part of Freeport Center.

RGRAT Holdings LLC sold the industrial building at 7645 E. Evans Rd in Scottsdale to Ideal Mech for \$2.64 million, or about \$93 per square foot. Built in 1984, the 28,328-square-foot warehouse sits on a corner lot totaling 1.8 acres. Haynes Furniture Company, Incof Virginia affiliate The Dump has signed a lease renewal for 156,410 square feet at 6655 S. Kyrene Rd in Tempe.

Hope this article gives you a peek in what's happening in our valley. As always, I love all the questions, comments & feedback. Please keep them coming at [arti@artiiyer.com](mailto:arti@artiiyer.com) or call me at 480.242.8573

*Disclaimer: This article makes no representation or warranties of any kind as to the accuracy of the data. The source of data has been taken from several sources such as Armls, cromford report, Costar, Globest, BizJournal, NewsGeni, Realty times, azcentral, wall street journal.*

Kapil Chhibber, son of Kul Bhushan Chhibber, President Indo-American Cultural & Religious Foundation, recently was recognized as "40 Under 40" by the San Francisco Business Times, awarded annually to the most influential young leaders across



## Kapil Chhibber

the spectrum of Bay Area businesses - all under 40, and all high achievers for their companies, industries and the community. In the 2014 class are CEOs, entrepreneurs and top executives making a difference now, and certain to do so well into the future.

Kapil holds an MBA in Entrepreneurship & Innovation, Finance and Marketing from the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University and a BSBA in Management Information Systems

and Finance with Honors from the Eller College of Management at the University of Arizona.

Kapil is a Senior Vice President and Technology Executive at Bank of America under the Office of the CTO. His team is responsible for business development and strategic partnerships with emerging technology companies and venture capital firms.

Kapil will be honored at a private reception at AT&T Park in San Francisco on March 18, 2014.

Truth is purity, piety, grace, mercy, kindness, contentment, unity and oneness.

Truth has four fundamental qualities:

- \* Honesty
- \* Equality
- \* Justice
- \* Unconditional love

If we desire to learn about the truth, the first step we need to understand is the fundamental qualities about truth. As humans, we have significantly complicated thoughts about truth. We tend to use three kinds of truth. Those truths are individual truth, community truth, and truth associated with our nationality truth. As we meditate and learn the real truth, we have to sacrifice these three kinds of man-made truth.

Individual truth is the kind of truth we live in our everyday life. We believe that every human being considers that his or her individual truth is the only truth. This is not true.

Community truth has many traditional rituals. From ancient times, we have used these rituals as truth in our community. If someone seeks to avoid the commu-

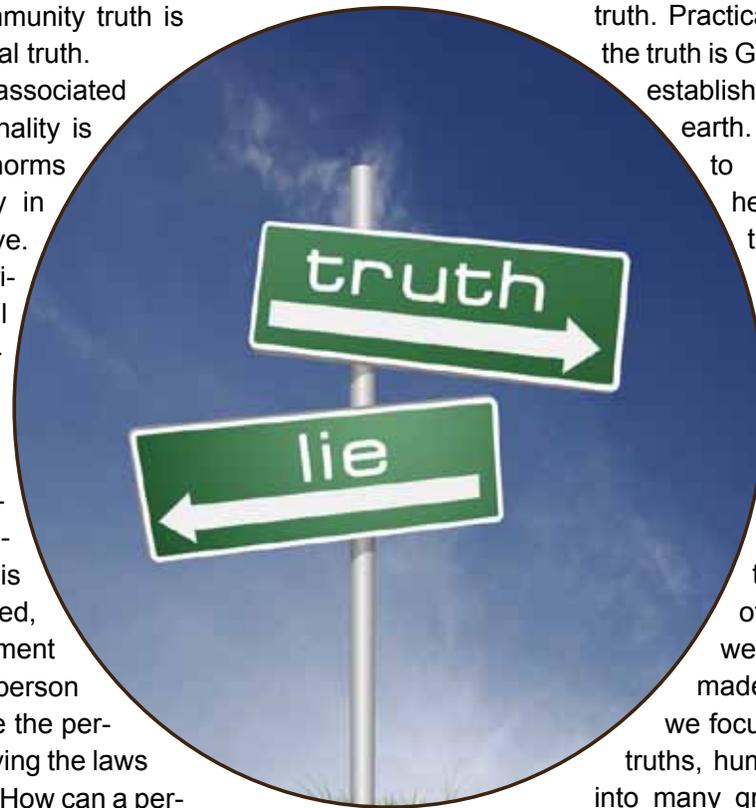
# What Is The Truth

nity truth, the community will speak against that person who doesn't want to believe the community truth anymore. It is a very difficult situation, but community truth is also not the real truth.

Truth associated with our nationality is the laws and norms of the country in which we live. We can sacrifice individual and community truths, but we cannot abandon the truth associated with our nationality. If this truth is ignored, the government can throw a person in jail, because the person is not obeying the laws of the country. How can a person ignore the whole country? Unfortunately, many people don't understand that these three human-made truths are not universal or real truth. As humans, we need to understand what universal truth is,

that truth based on the four fundamentals rules of truth.

As humans, we need to understand what universal truth is, that truth based on



the four fundamentals rules of truth.

The experience of universal truth is God. When we understand God, we can live a truthful life. To live without this knowledge, we may think we

are living a truthful way of life, but it is just another theory.

When we understand the universal truth, we will live with practical experience of the truth. Practical experience of the truth is God. Then we can establish heaven on this earth. We don't need to find any other heaven above in the sky. Heaven is on this earth, but once we forget this reality, we forget the truth.

When we fight, kill and have hatred towards each other that is when we adhere to man-made truths. When we focus on man-made truths, humanity is divided into many groups and communities. Man-made truths come from a foundation of fear. It is hypocritical thinking and it is very unfortunate. We are all one. We are all from the One, and we all will go into the One. So that is truth-

ful living. The reality of the truth is God.

The experience of truth is God. When we begin to experience God everywhere, in every place as a Supreme Creator of the universe, then fear will not be a part of our lives. Fear distracts us from the path of God and universal truth. When we live fearless lives, how can we discriminate against any person or other living being? How can we harm any living being? Everyone will be equal in our mind. We will see the nature of universal truth everywhere, and we will see that each creature is a part of this universe. We will know that we are all equal and we are the children of God. We are all brothers and sisters. With this knowledge, we can live peacefully, happily, and joyfully. We can enjoy nature as a part of our life, understand the reality of universal truth, and become an enlightened person.



-Gyani Ji Harbhajan Singh Sandhu

According to the New York Times, on Wednesday afternoon, March 5th, 2014, College Board announced that they will be making tremendously major changes to the SAT, by "ending the longstanding penalty for guessing wrong, cutting obscure vocabulary words and making the essay optional." Also, before the spring of 2016, the College Board will partner up with Khan Academy to offer free online practice problems and instructional videos showing how to solve these problems. These changes will begin this year and continue throughout next year. The first new SAT will be introduced and administered in the spring of 2016.

The key changes to the SAT will include: the vocabulary consisting of more commonly used words used in high school and college courses, the essay will become optional, the guessing penalty will be eliminated,

and the math questions will focus on three specific areas, linear equations, functions, and proportional thinking, and calculators will only be permitted in certain areas. Also, every exam will include a reading passage of a historical document, and most importantly, the overall scoring of the test will return to its original 1600 point scale, based on a top score of 800 in reading, 800 in writing, and then additional points if the student chooses to write an essay.



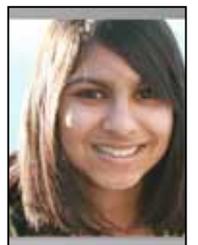
Additionally, according to the New York Times, Mr. David Cole-

man, president of the College Board, explained how the SAT had "become disconnected from the work of our high schools" and that "the tests are mysterious and 'filled with unproductive anxiety.'" Mr. Coleman also believes that only 20% of classroom teachers see the SAT as a fair measure of the work that their students have done. He also added that he wanted to change the test for the reason "to make the test reflect more closely what students did in

high school and, perhaps most important, rein in the intense coaching

and tutoring on how to take the test that often gave affluent students an advantage.

Some changes will make the new SAT like the ACT, which has outpaced the SAT for the last two years, according to the New York Times, and while the ACT has a science section, the redesigned reading test will include a science based passage, along with others. Also, the new essay revisions will focus more on analyzing and use of evidence, as well as different styles and techniques used with each prompt and source document given.



-Sammy Mallik

# Prof. Dr. Meena Sharma

It is my pleasure to introduce Professor Dr. Meena Sharma, who possesses a pleasant personality and is an accomplished academician and great individual to socialize with. She regrettably had lost her husband at a very young age with three small children to raise and take care of. She bravely continued to face the ups and downs of life and created her own path to success. She thrived to give the best to her children and also bring out the best in them. Who would not be so proud of the lady, who became a great educator providing an excellent education to so many students including all her three children single-handedly and making them great professionals! Her community spirit and family values are truly adorable. She is a great supporter to ISAA with a positive attitude. She believes in picking and choosing the best from the Eastern, and the Western cultures focusing primarily on love and care especially for the seniors! I take pride in submitting this profile of Prof. Meena Sharma, who is not just a nice human being, but, she is a great researcher and mentor to many graduate program students.

Prof. Sharma was born in Chandigarh, India. She moved from California to Arizona about 5 years ago in 2008, and, slowly but surely, she is getting use to the heat of Arizona. She is teaching to the graduate level science students in Punjab as a professional zoologist.

Prof. Sharma was honored with Bachelors (BS), Masters of Science (MSc), Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Zoology. Additionally, she also possesses Bachelor (B.Ed.) and Masters of Educational Science (M.Ed.) de-

grees. She is specialized in Entomology – the study of insects and their relationship to humans, environment, and other organisms.

Prof. Sharma started her professional career as a Professor of Zoology in one of the Punjab's most prestigious and oldest – 130 years old, Government (Mahindra) College, Patiala. She was promoted to the Head of the Zoology Department, and, she became Vice-principal of the same college prior taking an early retirement. She shared her knowledge in the same institute teaching Zoology and Bio-Tech to graduate program students for 30 years. Prof. Sharma continues making contributions by submitting articles and studies to various publications including the Newspapers and Universities. Her research work and articles included entomology, cytology, genetics Biological Control, Ecology, Molecular Entomology, and Vector Biology. She has organized many successful Wild Life educational Seminars and Science Fairs. She was an Honorary Board member for the University Education and Examination. She is a member of several professional organizations such as Zoological Association of America, Entomological society of America, International Entomological society and Indian Pest control association.

Prof. Sharma continued her service towards the field of entomology. She had a great opportunity to be in this field that, contribute towards the betterment of the civilization by spotting the

role of insects in many diseases and determining ways to protect livestock and fiber crops from being spoiled. She continued to do deeper studies in the field of entomology.

Prof. Sharma's goal has always been to support and encourage students with passion to be leaders in various professional fields including Medical Physicians, Scientists, Environmentalists, Botanists or Zoologists. She takes pride to be in this profession where she was able to shape India's young and bright students by guiding them into the right direction. She feels thrilled when she meets her students practicing as Scientists or Physicians in the City of Phoenix today.

Prof. Sharma supports the education for poor students in several ways through community service. She is a firm believer and promoter that the education should be rendered free to all kids throughout the world. In Phoenix, she volunteered her services for Arizona State University (ASU) and also through distance learning program to post graduate students in India in their research and other associated projects for the degree of Master of Philosophy.

Prof. Sharma also volunteered to support various activities in local Indian Community temples. She is an active member of Indian Senior Association of Arizona (ISAA). She has always volunteered to contribute actively in several ISAA activities such as organizing cultural and religious dance program, fun dance at fatana full of humors (a

dance depicting the selection process of marriage partner), singing patriotic songs, organizing field trips, and, providing inputs on several occasions, as needed.

Prof. Sharma was born in an Indian Army Family. Her father was a Physician holding the rank of a Colonel in Indian Army, who fought the World War II and retired as the Director of Health Services, Punjab. Her husband was the Inspector general of Indian Police (IPS). He also possessed Ph.D. in Economics, who had cleared his most difficult Indian Civil Service (ICS) examination at the age of 24. He died at a young age while on duty serving the nation.

Prof. Sharma is a proud mother of three professional children working as engineers and physician. She enjoys her four grandchildren dearly who make her laugh even when she doesn't want to! Prof. Sharma started doing Indian classical dancing since she was 3 years old and earned high awards in many university level competitions. She was a captain of Women's Hockey team in her college. She loves various outdoor activities such as running, fitness walking, hiking and exploring the world with her family. She likes mingling and enjoying the company of all age. My wife Panna and I are fortunate to have known and be associated with Mrs. Sharma as a friend for over three years. We all at ISAA wish her a continued good health and success. We also urge her to keep up the good work of providing support to these young students achieving the excellence in their career!



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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4 7th Annual Indo-American Golf Tournament @ Ocotillo Troon Golf Resort	5 Vaisakhi Mela @ Hammers Park
6	7	8	9	10	11	12 UTSAV 2014 - Festivals of India  Vishu Celebration 'Vishukkani' 2014
13 Aatif aslam & Shalmali concert @ Phoenix Symphony Hall	14	15	16	17	18	19 A night of Indian Classical Music  Ugadi Festival @ Indo American Cultural Center
20 Vaisakhi Kirtan Darbar @ Phoenix Convention Center  Ugadi Festival @ Indo-American Community Center  A Non profit Music concert at Arizona State University	21	22	23	24	25	26 Carnatic Vocal Concert
27	28	29	30			



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You should be trying to clear up legal contracts that have been pending. Don't count on getting any help from those you live with. Don't trust others with private information that could be used against you. Property investments will pay-off. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Thursday.

**ARIES**



Mar 21 to Apr 20

You can get phenomenal returns if you present your ideas to those who can back your interests. You should be making plans to spend some time with the ones you love. Don't let them blame you. You may find travel to be most rewarding. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Friday.

**TAURUS**



April 21 to May 20

You may be angry if someone tries to take credit for something you did. You need to put some trust in others. Try to stay calm and do the best you can. Throw yourself into your profession. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Saturday.

**GEMINI**



May 21 to June 21

This will be a good day for research and for sitting down with some good, informative reading material. You may be confused emotionally. Your emotional state could leave you vulnerable and confused. Invest wisely. Your personal life could have you tied up in knots. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Thursday.

**CANCER**



Jun 22 to Jul 22

You may not want to spend time around family or your home. Your ability to work with detail will bring recognition. Do something together and you'll be surprised how sweet a deal you can make. Try not to jump to conclusions. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Sunday.

**LEO**



Jul 23 to Aug 23

Be careful not to come on too strongly. Include the whole family or those you love. You will have to help family members sort out unfortunate difficulties. Keep busy and let them fume while you're not around. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Saturday.

**VIRGO**



Aug 24 to Sep 23

Don't delay; go to your physician or dentist and get to the bottom of the discomfort. You will find that social activities will be enjoyable and will promote new connections. Involvement in fitness clubs will be conducive to engaging romantic connections. Finish those changes you've been talking about making to your residence. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Wednesday.

**LIBRA**



Sep 24 to Oct 23

Make decisions about your professional objectives. Deal with the needs of children and get into groups that deal with self awareness. Don't gossip. Major job changes or opportunities to get ahead professionally are apparent. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Friday.

**SCORPIO**



Oct 24 to Nov 22

Secret intrigues could get you into trouble. People who try to persuade you to do things their way will annoy you. New relationships will surface through work related events. Put your efforts into money-making ventures. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Tuesday.

**SAGITTARIUS**



Nov 23 to Dec 21

They won't get away with it. You need activity. Travel could turn out to be more exciting than you imagined. Elders may need your help. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Friday.

**CAPRICORN**



Dec 22 to Jan 21

Make plans to do the things you enjoy. You need to keep busy doing things that you both enjoy. Sudden romantic infatuations could lead to a significant and prosperous connection. Your emotional partner will push the right buttons this month. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Monday.

**AQUARIUS**



Jan 22 to Feb 19

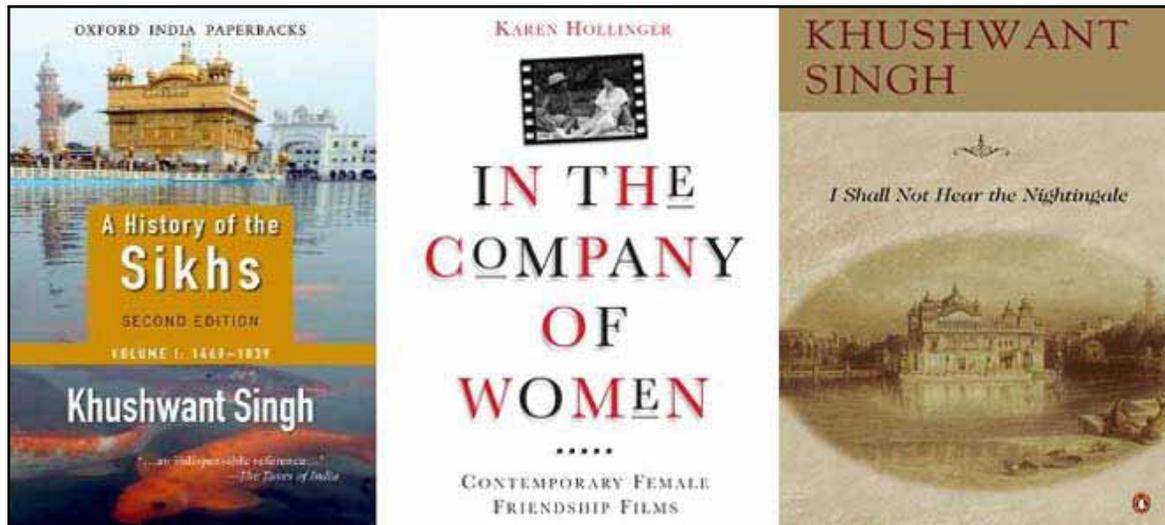
You should sit down with someone you trust and work out a budget that will enable you to save a little extra. You can expect to experience delays or additional red tape if you deal with institutions. Don't get depressed, get busy. You can accomplish a lot if you're willing to put in a little extra time. Be careful not to come on too strongly. Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Thursday.

**PISCES**



Feb 20 to Mar 20

# Best books of Khushwant Singh



Counted amongst India's best authors and columnists, Khushwant Singh's joie de vivre, acid wit, courage and innate belief in human goodness were all reflected on the pages of his books. He dabbled in all forms - from brilliant historical anthologies to moving novels to politically incisive comments to translations and social commentary.

The prolific author wrote his last book at the age of 98. He co-wrote *The Good, The Bad and The Ridiculous* with Humra Qureshi. Forced by failing eyesight and weak hands, he bid goodbye to his writing journey in Kasauli - the quaint hill town which played an important part in his literary journey. As an era ends with the death of the grand old man of Indian literature, we look at some of his most important works - a difficult task given the immense body of work he leaves behind.

## Train to Pakistan (1953)

In the summer of 1947 when India is being partitioned, the hamlet of Mano Majra comes to terms with the new reality of India and Pakistan, Hindus and Muslims. The truth is brought home when a ghost train arrives in the isolated village, carrying bodies of hundreds of refugees. It is left to a boy and a girl, from different religions, to rise beyond this abyss of religious hatred.

## I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale (1959)

Set in British India, Khushwant Singh's second novel is about a magistrate loyal to Britishers and his nationalist son who believes in using the gun to drive out the Britishers. The son is arrested and the father is given two choices - either the son betrays his comrades or get hanged.

## A History of Sikhs (1963)

This two-volume book is considered the most comprehensive and authoritative book on the Sikhs. Based on solid research, it is written in a way to be accessible to even the lay reader.

## The Company of Women (1999)

A work of fiction, Khushwant Singh wrote this novel at the age of 84. A comment on hypocrisy in the Indian society, the book tells the story of Mohan Kumar who believes "lust is the true foundation of love". The book was talked about for its unbridled sexuality and brazen views on man-woman relationship.

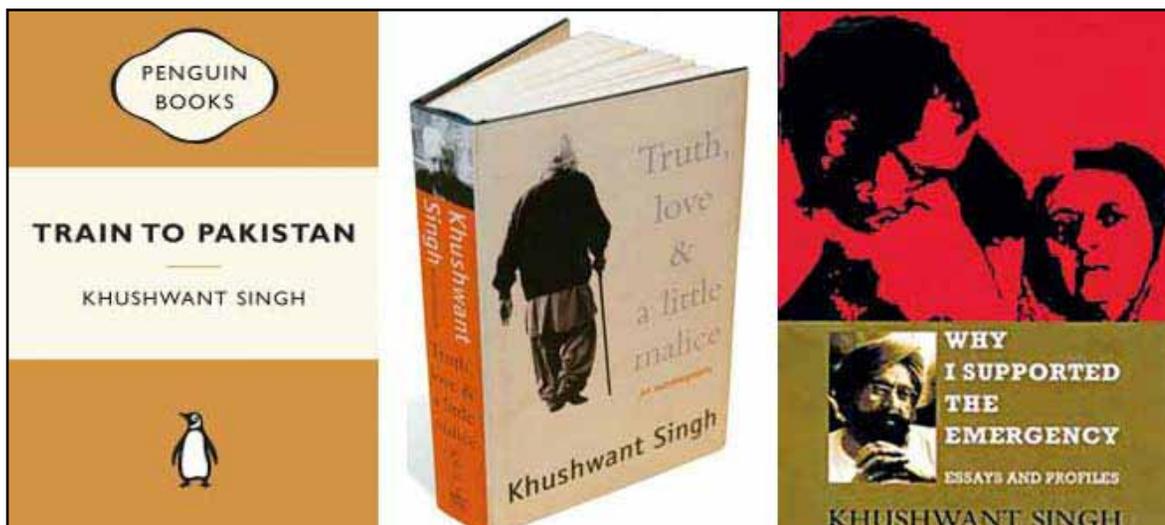
## Truth, Love and a Little Malice (2002)

His image was not something Khushwant Singh was ever overtly concerned about. His autobiography which delves into his personal life and all those he met during the journey was controversial yet true to its title. Right from his first relationship to important political events he witnessed to his familial roots - all find a place here and are handled unabashedly and truthfully.

## Why I Supported the Emergency (2004)

This bold and thought provoking collection of essays on India's Emergency explained the reasons why Khushwant Singh supported the proclamation on June 25.

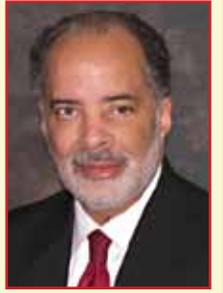
In the book, he goes to point out the mistakes which were made then and which, he says, must be avoided the next time conditions require suspension of democratic norms for the preservation of law and order. The book was edited by Sheela Reddy.



# POET OF MONTH

## Lester Lennon

Lester Graves Lennon is a poet and investment banker. During his 36 year career in public finance he has participated in the issuance of more than \$200 billion of municipal debt. His clients include the State of California, the City of Los Angeles, and New York City. Mr. Lennon has written two books of poetry. His first, "The Upward Curve of Earth and Heavens," was published in 2002, and is found in more than 70 public and university libraries including the Los Angeles Public Library, UC Berkeley, Harvard and Oxford. His most recent, "My Father Was a Poet," was published in April of 2013. Mr. Lennon was the first to approach the Mayor of Los Angeles about the City's need for a Poet Laureate and currently sits on the Los Angeles Poet Laureate Task Force. In addition, he serves on the Board of Directors of the Squaw Valley Community of Writers, the Board of Directors of Red Hen Press, and the advisory boards to the West Chester University Poetry Center and the English Department of the University of Wisconsin.



## The Name You Give This Pain Is, "God-Work Lost"

Here's how it is: your name is a new name.  
You are named by one who says he knows you.  
What he knows is he will give you pain.  
What he knows is you do not know God.  
What he knows is breaking you is God's work.  
You do not call him evil, you see he's lost.

You look into his eyes and see God lost.  
What you see will not give you back your name.  
What you see will not keep him from his work.  
He will bind you, his cables will mine you.  
He will bend you, unmend you like a god  
found false and bent, deserving bending pain.

What you see is your body steeped in pain,  
your home lost, your friend lost, your country lost  
in time uncountable as names for God.  
Here in the brimming dusk your dimming name.  
His needles, tears new steeples, enter you,  
their liquid cloaked confessors claiming closed work.

He asks for names you must not have. Your work  
shrinks dimly in the rising shrieking pain.  
What he needs is clear to him: names from you.  
What he needs is your will wrecked in shame, lost.  
What he needs is for you to need his name,  
is for you to find through him your new God.

You reach and howl or whimper for your God.  
What you hold is his fury wired as work.  
What you hold is you screaming at the name,  
a shapeless ink slinking towards your pain,  
bathing you in its ooze, staining you lost.  
Reach out to him. He is here for you.

What you hold you find broken, not holding you.  
He tells you kneel. You kneel before your god.  
He soothes you, says you are no longer lost,  
points you to your seat for your new work.  
More steeples pierce with ceaseless babbling pain  
you cannot understand. You sit and name

names, all you know and more he needs to work.  
Shaking, you jabber at your god your pain.  
You know you are lost. It is your new name.

From "My Father Was a Poet" (April 2013)

# The runaway actress Deepika Padukon

Deepika Padukone is fast acquiring the reputation of saying yes to a film and then backing out.

Deepika Padukone may be the most in-demand actress today but she seems to be rubbing a lot of filmmakers the wrong way by first showing interest in a film, agreeing to do it, and then backing out at the last minute, citing various reasons. Says an industry insider, "She has every intention of doing a film, then after she commits to it, she gets another offer which she likes more, and she walks out of the first film. A rival actress, however, says, "I am not sure if she is even approached for all the films that she claims to be approached for. It's good for an actress to have the image that she is approached for all the films and then she can't do them so the roles go to other actresses. But is the case really that all filmmakers want to cast Dippy in their films but she has no dates to fit them all in?" Let's take a look at the films that she was supposed to do...

## Hollywood calling

Deepika was offered a part in the latest James Wan's Fast & Furious series seventh part. Ultimately Deepika couldn't do it because of her date commitments to Sanjay Leela Bhansali's Ram Leela for the film's promotions and shooting of Happy New Year.

## Film with Ajay Devgn

It was reported that Rohit Shetty considered Deepika to be his lucky mascot post the success of Chennai Express and wanted to work with her again. That he'd promised her Singham 2 opposite Ajay. Finally the explanation was that Deepika couldn't manage dates from her busy schedule (the shooting starts this month).

## Zoya Akhtar's Dil Dhadakne Do

It was discreetly 'leaked' to the media that Deepika was approached for Zoya Akhtar's film based on a brother and sister. But the casting (but obviously!) fell through when Ranveer Singh was signed as the

male lead. After playing her lover, off-screen in Ram Leela and given that he is dating the actress, they could hardly play siblings.

## Film with Aamir

Another film that she's apparently signed was with Aamir Khan. They were to be paired for the first time in a time-travel film produced by Farhan Akhtar and Ritesh Sidhwani. Aamir rubbished the rumours and said he won't be acting in a film with Dips anytime soon.

## Film with Salman Khan

Deepika Padukone was all set to act in Sooraj Barjatya's film. But then before she film could go on the floors, she was offered Shuddhi. And a chance to work with SRK again after Chennai Express and Happy New Year. She backed out of the film citing date issues

## Corporate 2

Ms Padukone was touted as the heroine of Madhur Bhandarkar's film Corporate 2 which was supposed to be the sequel to his Bipasha Basu-starrer Corporate. But the director dismissed off these rumours. He claims he never even considered doing the sequel.

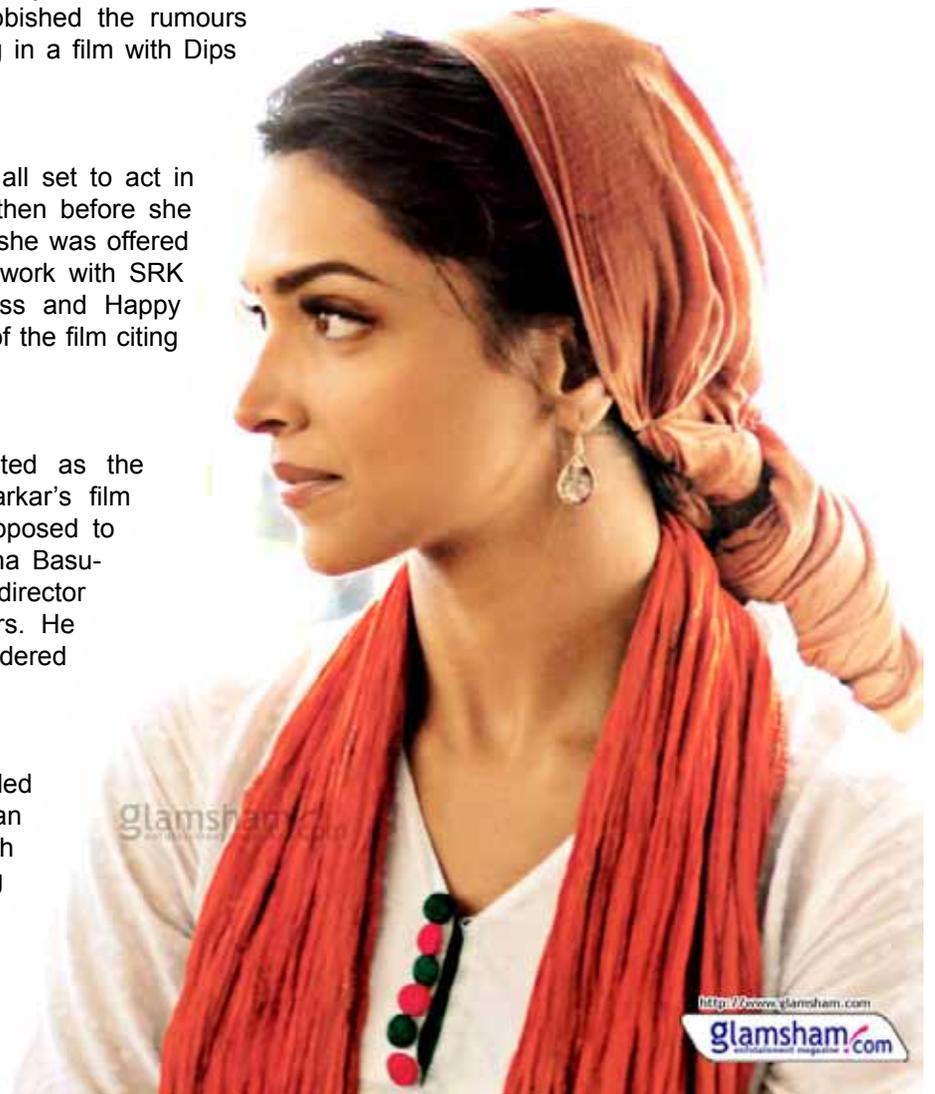
## In Dippy's kitty

Neeraj Pandey's untitled bio-pic, based on the Indian captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni's life, and starring Sushant Singh Rajput is said to star Deepika opposite him.

Karan Johar's Shuddhi. After Hrithik Roshan left the film,

it was delayed and then Kareena Kapoor didn't have the dates for the film, so she had to opt out as well.

Shoojit Sirkar's Piku, which is expected to begin in July this year, revolving around a father and daughter relationship, is said to star Amitabh Bachchan to play the father, while Deepika will be playing his daughter. *Imtiaz Ali's next film with Ranbir Kapoor.*



## Salman Khan to play two roles in two films next year

Salman Khan has played a double role only once in his 25-year-old career. It was 17 years ago in Judwaa. Now he is all set to star in two back-to-back double roles at around the same time.

Salman, who had at one time made a commitment to himself that he would only do another double role after Judwaa when the film's sequel will be made, now faces the dilemma of being in two back-to-back releases -- Anees Bazmee's No Entry Mein Entry and Sooraj Barjatya untitled film.

According to a source, "Salman doesn't want to be seen in every frame of the films that he stars in. And if he does two back-to-back double roles he feels the audience would be subjected to an

excess of his screen presence." Not just that he even has a third film for release in 2015 -- Kabir Khan's untitled film

Bazmee has now been asked to ensure that Salman's presence in his film is not a repeat performance of Barjatya's film. Says the director, "We are aware that Salman is playing a double role in both films. Luckily for us Sooraj is a very different filmmaker from me. What he would be doing in his film would be very different from what we'd be doing. However, we are taking precautions to avoid any similarity.

Two double roles needn't be similar. Rajesh Khanna's double role in Sachcha Jhootha was very different from his double role in Aradhana, though both the films came in the same year."



# That's no way to go for yesteryear actress Nanda

Yesteryear actress Nanda, known to break innumerable hearts with her tragic roles, died of a massive heart attack on Tuesday morning. She was 75.

"That's no way to go," says her buddy Asha Parekh. Known to be an incurable recluse, Nanda spent the last two decades completely away from the limelight.

"The only time I'd see her was when she would show up at Salim Khan's private screenings with her gal pals Waheeda Rehman, Asha Parekh, Helen and Sadhana. She was so beautiful and serene till the end," says Punam Sinha on hearing of her demise. Nanda was the daughter of the popular Maharashtrian actor Master Vinayak, hence, acting came naturally to her.

She worked in many movies as a child artist. She also worked with Mala Sinha and Rajender Kumar in *Dhool Ka Phool* in 1959. But it was LV Prasad's *Choti Bahen* in 1959, where she played the title role, that turned her into an overnight star. Along with playing serious roles, she was also seen in glamorous avatar in *In Jab Jab Phool Khile*, *Ittefaq* and *Naya Nasha*.

Her friends were few. No one knows how she lived or what she did with her free time. Her last screen appearance was as Padmini Kolhapure's mother in *Prem Rog* in 1983. In 1992, Nanda discovered belated love when she fell in love with filmmaker Manmohan Desai.

However, her joy was short-lived as Desai plunged to his death from the terrace of his home. No one knew what happened. Not even Nanda. Close



friends say she was shattered by his death, after which the actress went into a shell. Nanda reminded the poise and grace which marked the golden years of Hindi cinema.

## Amitabh Bachchan conferred Global Icon of the Year award

Megastar Amitabh Bachchan was conferred India's Global Icon of the Year award at the NRI of the Year awards here.

The 71-year-old, who has been ruling the film industry for over four decades now, dedicated the award to the younger generation of actors in the film industry.

"I want to thank Times Now (news channel) and ICICI Bank for honouring me with this (NRI) award," Big B told reporters Monday here at the awards red carpet.

"I think I am not the only one person who should be honoured with this award. In fact, there are many of my friends in the entertainment world, especially the actors of the younger generation because of whom our film indus-



try is known in the whole world, so I would like to dedicate this award to them," he added.

The awards, presented by Times Now in association with ICICI Bank, were given to the achievers who have made their mark internationally.

Meanwhile, Big B, who made

his movie debut with "Saat Hindustani" in 1969, recalled his early career and said: "During that time (when I started my career) I didn't have much releases, but I started doing thstage shows (the world over) around 1980s and then I came to know how much we (actors) are loved by them (people outside India) and how much we love them."

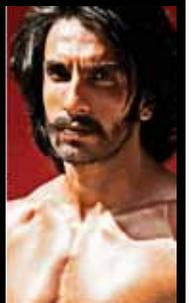
"Since then it is still continuing and...I would like to thank them all," he added.

Currently, the megastar is busy promoting his next "Bhootnath Returns", slated to release April 11.

Directed by Nitesh Tiwari, the sequel to 2008 film "Bhootnath", also features Shah Rukh Khan and Ranbir Kapoor in cameos.

## After Sunny Leone, now Ranveer Singh to endorse popular condoms to promote safe sex

Bollywood's goofy 'Gunday' hunk Ranveer Singh who is riding high on the success of recent films including 'Goliyon ki Rasleela Ram-Leela' will endorse 'Durex' condoms. He will be the first Bollywood star besides Sunny Leone to do so Ranveer Singh to endorse Durex condoms to promote awareness about safe-sex after Sunny Leone RNA Research & Archives



Even though, sex has played an important role in Bollywood films, stars have always shied away from endorsing condom brands.

Besides, adult star Sunny Leone, no other major actor has come forward to promote condom brands. But, in a fast changing trend, Bollywood's sporadic hunk Ranveer Singh will endorse 'Durex' brand of condoms.

It can be reminisced that Deepika Padukone had taken a jibe on ex-flame Ranbir Kapoor with the comment, "Gift him a packet of comdoms" on 'Koffee with Karan' with Sonam Kapoor.

The actor has been signed on the global brand Durex to endorse its condoms and the first look of the ad in which the actor is seen at his testosterone best with a wrapped condom in hand.

"As an actor and as an individual, I have a propensity for pushing the envelope, breaking the mould and taking the road less travelled. As such, I constantly endeavour to build an equity that is unique – one that truly stands out from the crowd. Over the past three-and-a-half years that I've been a part of the Hindi film industry, I've declined several tempting endorsement offers. I've been saving my brand virginity for the right one. And now, finally, I'm popping my cherry with the world's leading brand in Sexual Wellbeing - Durex!" said Ranveer Singh.

Nitish Kapoor, General Manager –RB India said, "Through our partnership with Ranveer, who is a hugely popular figure and loved by young people across the country, we will be able to positively engage in a discussion around the subject of sexual well-being and safe sex in India. We are extremely excited about our association and look forward to working with him." in a media statement.

Sex is still considered a taboo in our country and the idea behind my association with Durex is to create awareness around sexual wellbeing, promote safe sex and have fun while doing it! After intensive brainstorming, my partners at Durex and I have jointly devised a kickass creative campaign, but it'll be a while before it releases. It will surely hit the spot, but it won't be coming soon," his cheeky statement stated.

Though Ranveer Singh has been part of Bollywood scene for nearly four years, he has been very selective of endorsement deals. His alleged lady-love Deepika Padukone has been popular in advertisement scenario since her debut with brands like Nescafe, Sony, Coca cola and Lux in her kitty and this is Ranveer's first endorsement deal.

German fashion designer Helen Bender specialises in bridal wear but targets gay pride parades to pitch to new customers rather than wedding fairs.

Two years ago she chanced upon a gap in the market for custom-made 'hers & hers' bridal outfits when lesbian friends turned to her for help. "They just hadn't been able to find what they wanted," the 27-year-old told AFP at her studio in the western city of Mainz.

"I didn't even realise there was a need."

Key to Bender's role is keeping the couple's outfits for their big day under wraps from each other but ensuring they harmonise.

Pulling off the 'wow' factor is just one part of the task.

Like most women taking the plunge, lesbian couples want to look special and feel comfortable but also steer clear of gay stereotypes, said Bender, who lives with her female partner.

"What's really important to most of the couples is that they are not pushed into gender roles. You find people asking 'who is the male in the relationship?'," she said.

"A bride wants to be seen as a bride, even though she may be wearing a suit. That's why they want to match so they are seen as two brides... without looking like a 'man' and a 'woman'," she added.

Popular picks include white, cream and this season's favourite, cappuccino, in satin, silk and lace, but couples also depart from tradition, plumping for black leather, grey or fuchsia pink.

Trousers with a closely fitted jacket, 1920s-style dresses, jumpsuits or a "skirt-erall" alternative -- a long skirt worn over an overall and taken off for the evening reception -- are top choices.

One couple opted for bridal-style lederhosen for their Bavarian-themed celebration.

Bender agrees her designs have "attitude" but stresses that if a customer wants a simple dress -- or is adamantly anti-dress -- her preferences are paramount. The designer will be tying the knot herself in September with her police officer partner in outfits designed by her but sewn by a friend to keep an element of surprise.

#### 'Fancy' hot pants

Her most avant-garde creations include hot pants in black leather with sequins and a "hinter-skirt" cascading down the back. So far no-one has ordered it. "It looks great on the model but maybe it's too fancy," said Bender.

She takes pride in the design process being led by the brides themselves, teasing out ideas that

# Now, custom-made 'hers & hers' bridal outfits



may originate from just a colour or idea for a sleeve. "At the second fitting most brides bring their mums, mum-in-law or best friend," Bender said.

"Sometimes a best friend sees both outfits and reports back." Laboratory engineer Martina Eimann, 25, from Ingelheim, who is due to wed her partner, Sandra, in May, said Bender's input had been an important and fun part of their preparations.

"Our outfits mirror the fact that we don't want a standardised wedding. We want something very special where we feel comfortable and still are classily dressed," she said in an email.

#### 'There were tears'

After graduating from the Sigmaringen fashion school, south of Stuttgart, Bender threw herself into a three-year business course and was still studying when she made her first lesbian bridal wear for friends in 2012.

She paired a jumpsuit and jacket in gold and cream for one bride to off-set a clean-cut, floor-length gown with a cape in the same palette for the other.

They were thrilled. "At the first fitting there were tears, which is the way it should be," she recalled.

Word spread and two more orders followed at which point Bender realised she was onto something

and embarked on her first "hers & hers" bridal collection under her label "La Mode Abyssale".

"It means fashion without borders and although I came up with the name before the idea of the wedding outfits, it fits well," she said. Since 2001, German law has allowed civil unions for gay and lesbian couples, a status that falls short of marriage under the law.

Bender voiced disappointment that Germany has not yet gone as far as France, England, Wales and others but said committing to a civil union was the same, emotionally, as entering a marriage.

"I think (German) society is ready for it. I never felt discriminated against," she said.

Fourteen lesbian couples have taken their vows in Bender's creations, which cost 1,400-1,900 euros (\$1,950-2,650) each plus fabric, and more than a dozen outfits are underway for this wedding season.

After showcasing her bridal fashions in New York last year at Couture Fashion Week, she is eyeing the international market -- and that for male couples. At a gay pride event last year, her stand attracted interest from men, she said, but so far none have placed orders. "It's easier for them to find special, matching outfits, or custom-made suits."

## Craze for diamonds fading among women?

Diamonds have long been considered as a woman's best friend -- but a recent survey reveals that they are now more interested in receiving a gift with a personal touch, or a shared experience.

The research conducted by the multi-store gift card One4all, shows that over half of women would prefer a thoughtful gift to a diamond, reports femalefirst.co.uk. A joint experience or memorable trip with a loved one topped the poll, with 56 percent of the votes. The usual gifts like diamonds and designer handbags were some way behind.

It was also found that about 37 percent would opt for the money in their hand and over half would prefer a gift card.

"Attitudes to gifting are changing, people do want a more personal touch as this makes something all the more meaningful," said Declan Byrne, managing director of One4all Britain.



# Basant Mela

Article by Deepa Walia,  
Photos Courtesy of Jamshed Sani  
March 22, 2014

Pakistan Information and Cultural Organization (PICO) hosted its 12th Annual Kite Flying Festival also called Basant-Mela at Fountain Hills Park in Arizona. A free event, open to the public attracted many local performers as well as attendees that came to enjoy a beautiful day and a fun activity of flying kites. BasantMela is an event that is traditionally celebrated to welcome Spring by filling the beautiful blue sky with colorful kites. Asia Today is grateful to Jamshed Sani for providing coverage of the event.



Patience is a virtue – It also fosters awareness for the Simple Pleasures of Life; something that is becoming obsolete for today's emerging society. Taking a bite more than what one can actually chew on, seemingly is the new normal. It seems as though the society at large is just too busy handling 'unwanted stressful situations' many of them arising from what are called as the self-made miseries.

While it certainly makes sense to try and be the best in today's competitive world, one must also deeply reflect on whether extra efforts are worthwhile and is it more successful only when it is perceived as an enjoyable thing to do?. If not for these, these kinds of efforts have a better name – 'stresses' and 'pressures'. And ironically, what have come to be known as the stress factors

## Reflecting Patience

are the routines that need to be carried out everyday for survival! People are beginning to experience stressful situations even in normal circumstances, as they are taking up more and more responsibilities.

It is a good thing to take on more responsibilities in situations when that is the only option, but certainly not when one is already bogged down with so many tasks; that any more of the add-ons would be disastrous. It just becomes a matter of getting lured into taking it up for whatever reasons (peer pressures, trends, fear of falling behind) and getting over with the 'job' instead of focusing on actually learning and applying that learned skill in

our lives. The best bet in such cases is to wait until the time is right .In today's fast – everything world, patience has become something of an ancestral virtue. It is a dreaded word, for we feel things get out of hand real fast if we stick to it. Again, the idea behind this is that certain virtues are best used where its possible

to use and supposed to be used. Nobody wants to be left behind, but the secret to be ahead in the race is the same virtue – "Patience"!And what's more – it makes for a wonderful trade-in for another dreaded word – 'Stress'. As trends in a particular area keep changing at lightning speeds, it makes sense to be well versed in the basics of a skill

keeping in mind our best interests, but also wait and certainly build on it at a later stage when it is called for.

Mother Nature has blessed mankind with the unique qualities of being able to understand and being aware, using which, it is possible to live life in more meaningful ways than ever imagined. So the next time it is decided to take up an activity as a hobby or just to learn something new in leisure time, close the eyes, take a deep breath and introspect before you jump into this new bandwagon to eventually realize that it was a decoy waiting to get on the nerves.

-Deepa Badrinath



# Volcanic hikes: 11 adventurous destinations

For hikers seeking challenging terrain, breathtaking natural beauty and a sense of adventure, there is nothing like hiking up an active volcano. Below is a selection of destinations around the world where thrill-seekers can climb impressive fire-breathing peaks.

## Réunion



Hikers can head to this French-speaking country, part of the Mascarene Islands, to climb the Piton des Neiges, which is considered to be the highest peak in the Indian Ocean (3,070 meters). Those who make it to the top are rewarded by a panoramic view over the entire island. Next stop: Piton de la Fournaise, literally Peak of the Furnace, an active volcano surrounded by a moon-like landscape.

## Lanzarote



One of the oldest of the Canary Islands, Lanzarote was created by volcanic activity and is made primarily of solidified lava. The island includes some 140 volcanoes. In Timanfaya National Park, home to an area known as the Fire Mountains, adventurous hikers will find a rough landscape where access to certain areas is strictly controlled. Several guided hikes are available through the Spanish National Parks service.

## Greece



A UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Santorini Caldera is an attractive destination for hikers of all levels of expertise. Its two main volcanoes, Palea Kameni and Nea Kameni, are relatively small (less than 150 meters), which makes them ideal for hiking with kids. Several archeological sites acquaint visi-

tors with the geological history of Santorini, which was formed through the Minoan volcanic eruption around 3,500 years ago.

Nea Kameni, a volcanic mount on the Santorini Caldera, is a relatively easy climb even for amateur hikers

## Russia

The colossal Kamchatka Mountains are located



in Eastern Siberia, between the Bering and Okhotsk Seas. The active volcanoes in this mountain range spew tons of lava each year and were only opened to the public in 1990, so tourists are still a rare sight. Between 1,500 and 5,000 meters high, the peaks in this region can be climbed only when the snow and ice have melted, which is the case only two months per year during the summer.

## Iceland



This nation located near the Arctic Circle is home to over 200 craters, including around 100 currently active volcanoes. Hikers can expect to climb through ochre-colored landscapes in the summer or through snow and ice in the winter. One volcano not to miss is Askja, which has two lakes within its crater, one hot and one cold.

## Tanzania

In the heart of Maasai territory stands the Ol Doinyo Lengai, or Mountain of God in the tribal lan-



guage.

Hikers will find a surprising monochromatic landscape, as the black lava from the volcano turns white as it hits humid air. The Ngorongoro, another of Africa's most impressive active volcanoes, also offers a thrilling hike.

## Hawaii

Created by volcanic activity, the Hawaiian Islands consist of five major fire-breathing mountains. Less experienced hikers will enjoy the relatively easy climb up Hualalai, while those who are more advanced can head to Luamakami and Puhia Pele, some of the deepest craters on the island. Of course, there are plenty of opportunities for relaxing



after your hike, whether by admiring rivers of glowing lava from afar or by kicking back on the black sands of Hawaiian beaches.

## Galapagos Islands

Located around 1,000km from the Ecuadorian coast, this archipelago is home to around 40 volcanic islands. Thrill-seeking hikers can head to Isabela Island, where the volcanic activity is the most intense, to climb the 1,124m Sierra Negra (Black Mountain). Less ambitious climbers can opt for a trip to San Cristobal Island, with its 730 meter peak. Throughout the island, visitors can admire the wildlife the Galapagos Islands are known for, including marine iguanas, tortoises and a wide variety of birds.

## Costa Rica

The diversity of landscapes in this Central American nation is one of the factors that have made it a tourist hot spot. The volcanic peaks, which offer unparalleled views over the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean, are nestled within the nature reserves and national parks that occupy around one third of the country. Poás, Rincón de la Vieja and Turrialba are among the active volcanoes awaiting hikers.

## Indonesia

Part of the Pacific Ring of Fire, Indonesia is home to around 150 volcanoes, including some of the world's most active. In particular, the island of Java is where hikers will find some of the most active fire-breathing mountains, many of which have



a reputation for being dangerous. The island of Sulawesi also boasts several impressive volcanoes, including Soputan, Lokon and Mahawu.

**Japan:** Kyushu, the southernmost of Japan's islands, is home to several volcanoes, including around 40 which are still active. **(Relaxnews)**

I'm constipated on most days. I feel tired, my skin lacks lustre and my eyes don't sparkle. I don't have time for elaborate healthy meals. Can you suggest one or two superfoods that can help?

Over-farming has depleted the soil of its natural mineral content — chromium-deficient soils lead to blood sugar imbalances (hypoglycemia, diabetes); selenium-deficient soils lead to poor immune function, cancer and heart disease; iodine-deficient soils lead to thyroid problems; and zinc-deficient soils lead to stunted growth. To add to it, our food goes through processing to accommodate the stress of modern living. Slicing, cutting, freeze-drying and canning deprive the already depleted food of valuable nutrients. After food reaches our kitchens we overcook it, add salt, fry it and reheat it. By the time we actually eat it, it has lost more than 80 per cent of its nutrient value.

## A guide to superfoods

To restore some nutrients, we need to nourish our bodies with foods that are dense in nutrients.

### Wheatgrass

In colour therapy, green is known to correct most imbalances and weaknesses that exist in the body. The tender leaves of wheatgrass are rich in chlorophyll (the green colouring matter of plants) which is known to have tremendous health benefits. It benefits anaemic conditions, helps reduce high blood pressure, relieves constipation, purifies the blood and liver, benefits the skin, reduces body odour and is packed with loads of vitamins and minerals. Wheatgrass juice can be taken regularly to counter deficiencies. It is high on proteins and can pack up to 90

minerals out of the 102 generally found in rich soil. Additionally, it has unique digestive enzymes, which help solve indigestion. The molecular structure of chlorophyll is similar to that of haemoglobin and it is also known as 'green blood'.

### Micro-algae

Chlorella, spirulina and wild blue-green algae also come under the category of nutrient-dense superfoods. These foods are very rich in proteins, chlorophyll and pro-vitamin A. The nutrient content of these micro-algae vary according to the way they are cultivated. Micro-algae have three times more protein than animal foods, and are four times easier to digest. Foods of such high nutrient density can help correct protein, vitamin, mineral deficiencies.



## Yoga by Numbers: a new formula for fitness

The approach — complete with a numbered mat — was designed by a Boston woman whose own health scare inspired her to put yoga in reach for people with physical limitations, tight schedules or other roadblocks to traditional practice.

The oversized yoga mat is dotted with big, numbered circles that look like the target in a rifle scope. The accompanying DVD gives true yoga beginners — those who wouldn't know an up-dog from a Chihuahua — a step-by-step roadmap to learn the poses at their own pace.

Elizabeth Morrow was an athlete, a skier and soccer player who, two years ago, found herself hospitalized with a right lung full of blood clots, the lower lobe completely collapsed. When she was strong enough to start exercising again, she found even the easiest of yoga classes too taxing. She didn't have the stamina for an hour, couldn't hold the poses the way the instructor wanted.

So, the 32-year-old started thinking of ways to make it easier, more convenient and even more fundamental than the myriad DVDs already on the market.

"I was thinking about a paint-by-number kit where you don't need to be Picasso or van Gogh, you just follow what they tell you and you'll come out with something," she said.

"I just wanted something that felt really accessible and doable for people. The image of the mat just popped into my head, 'Wow, I can do yoga by numbers as well.'"

The DVD tells users exactly which circle to put their hands and feet in and allows for advancement to more challenging poses.

Yoga by Numbers has been compared to Twister, the popular game with giant colored circles, spinning wheel and crazy, cross-limbed poses. But Morrow's cool with that, even when it comes from critics.

"I think it's awesome when they have that reaction because to me, that means they get it and they know how to use it," said Morrow, a certified yoga instructor.

Morrow has sold to people who live far from a yoga studio, those with tight schedules who need to squeeze in practice whenever they can, and people with health conditions. The National Institutes of Health's National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine reports that recent studies of people with chronic low-back pain suggest yoga can help reduce pain and improve function. Other research shows regular practice might reduce heart rate, blood pressure and stress and may help relieve anxiety and depression.

"People who are older are using it because the DVD really focuses you on not contorting

yourself into Cirque du Soleil-style acrobatics," Morrow said. She demonstrated the mat recently at her parent's house in Bow, N.H., about an hour north of Boston.

The latest "Yoga in America" study, released by Yoga Journal, reported 20.4 million Americans practiced yoga in 2012, compared to 15.8 million in 2008. They spent \$10.3 billion on classes and products, up from \$5.7 billion the earlier survey.

Janet Lark teaches yoga in Ogdenville, Iowa, and had a bad experience with a poorly cut, astringent-smelling mat, so she started doing some research. She came upon Morrow's mat and was struck by how simple it was for novices.

"It truly was a 'Duh! Why didn't anyone think of that sooner?' moment," she said. "It is fantastic to notice how quickly the clients start to focus on making sure they are properly aligned."

Morrow, who worked in the nonprofit sector for several years, also hears from purists who pooh-pooh the mats as a gimmick.

"My response is that this is not a mandate," she said. "I think that if you're already practicing yoga and it works for you, that's great and I'm really excited for you. I'm interested in hearing from people

for whom the system doesn't work."

A spokeswoman for the nonprofit Yoga Alliance, which represents teachers, schools and studios, said the ideal situation is to learn from a master teacher in private classes, but time and cost can be barriers.

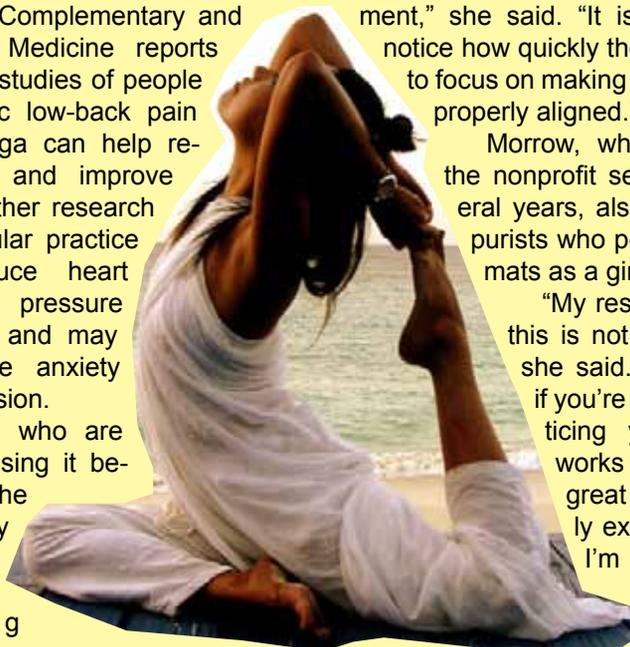
"Any tool that helps people practice yoga is a good thing," said Katie Desmond. "And so we applaud Elizabeth's ingenuity in spreading the power of yoga by helping to make the process of learning yoga as a beginner more accessible."

Morrow patented the idea and sells the mats, made in the U.S. from sustainable rubber, for \$119.95 including DVD and carry strap. She started selling on The Grommet, a website that launches undiscovered products, then had a successful, online crowd-sourced campaign to raise more start-up funds.

She also registered the business as a benefit corporation in Massachusetts, which means she can write into the bylaws that the company's social mission takes precedence over the bottom line for shareholders.

Up next: She wants to focus on reaching kids, especially those at risk, and hopes to partner with social services providers. If she makes money along the way, all the better.

"I think politicians sort of create this false dichotomy where you either have to be pro-business or pro-social program and that you can't do both," she said. "A lot of corporations want to put out the message that it's just not profitable and that is just not true."



# Anytime is Shopping Time in the West!

Whenever a relative or a dear friend of diaspora family visits from back home, the hosts living abroad usually become overfilled with an extraordinary level of joy and happiness. Their pleasure and excitement appears to be directly proportional to the time they have been away from their near and dear ones from back home. In fact, the elated sense of exhilaration seen among diaspora families on such occasions is much more than what is often noticed if the situation were to be reversed.

The memories of the time spent with visiting guests prior to the permanent departure for abroad, starts to suddenly invade the memory centers of our brains once again. A strong urge arises within us, the expatriates, to do all what is humanly possible to recreate and relive past memories of those beautiful bygone days. The cultural fissures and lacunae that had appeared in our daily lives from being away from friends and relatives for a long period of time, start refilling once again. The diaspora members try to reach out to the sky not only to exhibit their lost love for the visitor but also to prove, albeit subconsciously, that they indeed were not wrong in taking that emotionally painful step of leaving their motherland for good. It is often stated that the expatriates fully deserve the pinnacle of success that they reach abroad which by no means was possible had they decided to stay put? Thus in their minds, their ultimate success seems to validate their original decision of immigrating out of their motherland to the uncharted territories abroad.

But it is only at the time of visits from their near and dear ones that a rude awakening arises as to how far the diaspora members have moved away, not only distance-wise but also in their thought process, thanks to the ongoing influence of pervading alien culture. With the passage of time, however, not only the culture changes but so does the tradition. The immigrants become so much infiltrated with the new cultural traditions, both the good and the bad ones that it becomes difficult for a visitor as well as the diaspora member itself, to figure out as to who they actually were and what they have become? On the other hand, a notion still continues to persist, and rightly so, that the people left behind perhaps would not have become metamorphosed.

Yet the metamorphosis does take place in some, especially among those who happen to be the residents of large metros whereas majority of people

living in distant places and interior of the countryside have not yet been infiltrated by the Western culture. The modern day environment created by the politicians back home unfortunately doesn't let the fresh breeze enter in the lives of their citizens. Instead they remain mired into some of those "not so cool" traditions that the diaspora might have forsaken, consequent to the influence of their adopted country's culture.

The other day, one of my close relatives who we have not met for ages arrived from India to spend few days with us. My wife and rest of our family members became extremely excited and got busy in entertaining him leaving no time for needed grocery shopping. So one day, circa midnight, on returning back after having a dinner at the house of our common family friend, my wife, who usually does the grocery for the house hold, decided to go grocery shopping. This relative from India went into a kind of shell-shock as it sounded very unusual to him watching a woman leave home at that time of the night and that too for shopping. He could not figure out that world out here is relatively safe in U.S. for such matters.

In a way he was not to be blamed. Such a feeling stems from what is often heard in India about the life in the U.S. The killings and murders, he was told, happens to be the way of life in the West, especially in U.S. As a result, it enjoys the dubious distinction of being one of the most violent countries in the world with an easy availability of all kinds of guns. This, indeed, appeared to be reason for the difficulty our visitor encountered in comprehending about a woman going alone at mid-night for grocery-shopping.

No doubt his concern was justified, for as we all know; there is a great amount of truth in what our guest had heard. For example, back home one usually does not come across the use of guns so frequently and so openly where children are killed in mass murders at elementary schools with assault weapons and the religious places are attacked in broad day light as happens in the U.S. Yet, it occurred to me that the crimes being committed against women and girls in modern day India, especially in larger towns like New Delhi, are neither less in degree nor of a less shame. The gang rapes in the Capital of India in the most ghastly and appalling manner in the not so long distance past, one after the other, leaves the impression that we, the natives of one of the most spiritual

nations on earth, have finally and decidedly proven not to be worthy of such titles anymore.

Such a statement about gang rapes and murders is not a mere hearsay. The facts about it are not only born by news-items but also through the surveys conducted by several different people and organizations. A recent survey of 2,001 females and 1,003 males by Madison Park supported by UN women has been reported by CNN. According to this survey, 95% of females in New Delhi said that they felt unsafe in public places. In fact, this survey was conducted before the notorious incident of gang rape of a physiotherapy student on December 16th 2011. The series of rapes reported from the Capital of India has been sending shock waves among the people of India as well as the rest of world. The loss of freedom for the women in the streets of New Delhi is making them live in the grip of fear and panic. One often wonders that if such a frightening environment were to exist in the Capital of India, what the situation in the rest of the country would be like?

Needless to say that while the culture of this country i.e. U.S. does have its own difficulties with crime, their supermarkets and groceries stores as well as the shopping malls are relatively free of such a menace to a greater or lesser extent. As taking furlough for household chores is not part of work hour culture in the West, many of the busy men and women in the West end up doing their grocery shopping during off hours of the evening or even late at nights. Long hours of operation of the stores extending deep into the night thus become handy to undertake these ventures of buying groceries at night regardless of the location of the store.

The availability of personal vehicles added with safe surroundings of the large indoor departmental stores in the shopping mall filled with hustle and bustle of the customers at any time in the day or night makes such trips not only safe, but rather, an enjoyable experience in itself.

This culture of indoor shopping malls and major retails, a way of life in the West, though gradually taking hold in modern day India, is not yet truly feasible or available for the majority of Indian population. Our people still live and die in undeveloped small villages in the deeper part of the country. All what is usually available in terms of shopping is mostly located in the unlighted allies and small street shops. Going a distance alone in the middle of night for anyone, let alone a woman,



becomes a farfetched idea, to say the least. Yet, by no means do I imply here that this makes our back home culture somewhat less in any way or shape.

Having said it all, I must also qualify, that the surprise exhibited by my visiting relative might not necessarily be true with all the visitors that the members of diaspora entertain in the countries abroad. In fact, it all depends upon which part of back home country a visitor has come from and what his or her general awareness as well as the level of education happens to be.

Yet, the point needs to be granted that the elements of safety in large indoor settings of shopping facilities coupled with personal transportation of the citizens does offer the freedom to a busy woman of the West to do essential household shopping at any time, be it day or night. This makes her life relatively free and independent. But at the same time, it becomes very difficult for some back home visitors to comprehend this fearlessness of the local women in undertaking shopping at odd hour of the night and that too without having a concern for being attacked or hurt.

But the times are changing fast. Until the women of India get to enjoy same kind of freedom what men are able to, our efforts must continue, for it is the necessity of time and culture? Whatever little, we, the transplanted people from countries like India, could do through our resources and education in bringing more freedom to our women, it must be done. Once such resources become easily available and provisions for safety are provided by the concerned authorities, as is the case in the West, the women of India would certainly feel free and rise to the occasion. They may then take a lead in such ventures at odd hours, if needed, sparing them their working hours in staying busy in their jobs thus bringing them more happiness that in turn, could help not only their families but also the people of India in general.

\*Author of 1. "Square Pegs, Round Holes" [www.SquarePegsRoundHolesBook.com](http://www.SquarePegsRoundHolesBook.com) and 2. "Sikhism: Points to Ponder; Perspectives of a Sikh Living Abroad," as well as a recently published masterpiece about the cross-cultural dilemma of Indian subcontinent diaspora, 3. "One Coin, Two Sides," For details of the this new book, please go to the LINK <http://inkwellproductions.com/one-coin-two-sides.htm>

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