

KHAASBAAT

A PUBLICATION FOR INDIAN AMERICANS IN FLORIDA

DECEMBER 2023

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FLORIDA 7TH LARGEST HOST STATE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS; US RETAINS NO. 1 RANK

By NITISH S. RELE – editor@khaasbaat.com

Florida keeps its ranking as seventh in the United States for total number of international students (42,590) attending colleges in the 2022-23 academic year. That's up 7.5 percent from 2021-22. Most students are from India (17.3 percent), China (11.6 percent), followed by Brazil (5.9 percent), and Venezuela and Colombia, both at 3.9 percent. Florida ranked No. 7 among top host states with California, New York, Texas, Massachusetts, Illinois and Pennsylvania in the lead.

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DIWALI ANNAKUT DISPLAY at BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir last month in Tampa.



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WHO'S WHO

Khaas Baat is a monthly publication that has been in circulation since August 2004. Issues are direct mailed to subscribers and also are available at South Asian grocery stores and restaurants. It presents exclusive, informative and relevant news about the Indian American community in Florida to its readers.

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EVENTS

TAMPA/ST. PETERSBURG/CLEARWATER

DEC. 6: GSTB SENIOR DAY; organized by Gujarati Samaj of Tampa Bay; India Cultural Center, 5509 Lynn Road, Tampa; 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.; \$10; lunch and entertainment; for information, call Mahesh Modha at (813) 476-1540.

DEC. 12: HANUMAN CHALISA; second Tuesday of month; Vishnu Mandir Tampa, 5803 Lynn Road; 7 to 9 p.m.; for information, call Deo Gajadhar at (813) 817-9714.

DEC. 20: ICC SENIORS GET-TOGETHER; India Cultural Center, 5509 Lynn Road, Tampa; 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.; free seminar, lunch and entertainment; only for 65 years and older; for information, text email address along with your name to Bhikhu Nayi at (631) 560-2718 to receive details about seniors gathering every month; or call Mahesh Modha at (813) 476-1540.

ORLANDO/CASSELBERRY

DEC. 3: HSCF NEW AGE GROUP MEETING; Hindu Society of Central Florida community hall, 1994 Lake Drive, Casselberry; 1:30 to 5 p.m.; antakshri, games, tea, coffee, snacks; free for annual paid 2023 members, non-members \$5 per person; RSVP to hscfnewagegroup@gmail.com

DEC. 9: HOLIDAY GALA; organized by Indian American Business Association & Chamber; awards, banquet, entertainment; Caribe Royale Resort, 8101 World Center Drive, Orlando; 5 p.m.; for tickets and information, visit www.iabausa.com

Disclaimer: Event details are subject to change. Please check with local organizers. Event submissions are free, e-mail information to editor@khaasbaat.com by the 20th.

FLORIDA 7TH LARGEST HOST STATE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS; USE RETAINS NO. 1 RANK

Cont'd from page 1

Once again, no Florida university made it into the top 20 national ranking for number of international students. However, University of South Florida in Tampa continues to be the leader in the Sunshine State surpassing University of Florida in Gainesville with 7,142 students. UF came in at No. 2 with 6,203 students. Florida International University is third with 4,491 students, followed by University of Central Florida at 3,736 students and University of Miami with 2,905 students.

According to the Open Doors yearly report, published by the not-for-profit Institute of International Education, the total number of international students at U.S. universities increased by 11.5 percent to 1,057,188. It is the

fastest growth rate in 40 years. Also, the number of Indian students in the U.S. in 2022-23 is up 35 percent compared to the previous year.

China sent the most students, 289,526 to the U.S., followed by India, sending 268,923, an increase of 25.4 percent from prior year. In South Asia, Nepal sent 15,090 students, Bangladesh dispatched 13,563 students and Pakistan sent 10,164 students.

Currently, the leading host institutions for international students are New York University (24,496), Northeastern University in Boston with 20,637, Columbia University (19,001), Arizona State University-Immersion campus (17,981) and University of Southern California (17,264).

For more details on the study, visit www.iie.org/opendoors

KARVA CHAUTH MEHNDI EVENT HELD IN TAMPA

Another successful Karva Chauth mehndi event was held Oct. 30 in the New Tampa area. Organized by Ritu Sharma (owner of Taj Indian Cuisine in Tampa) and group, this is the 10th anniversary of the event. Originally started from Sharma's home with about 20 ladies and one mehndi artist, numbers have reached nearly 150 ladies with nine mehndi artists



to decorate hands for the much-awaited Karva Chauth festival every year. There were several group and solo dance performances, too, to celebrate the day on which married women fast from sunrise to dark for the longevity of their husbands. There was a \$26 entrance fee, which included dinner from Taj Indian Cuisine in Tampa.

Sharma can be reached at (813) 300-2585 for more information.



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FRIDAY, DECEMBER 22 (7:00 PM) • MOKSHDA EKADASHI • GEETA JAYANTI PUJA	EVERY THURSDAY - 7:00 PM • SAI BABA SATSANG • MAHA PRASAD
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 23 (7:30 PM) • JAGANNATH BHAJAN	
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DRUG ADDICTION

By **DR. VENKIT IYER, MD, FACS**



The Center for Disease Control (CDC) in their report on Sept. 13, 2023, stated that 111,000 people had died from drug overdose during the previous 12 months in the country. If we look at it differently, there were 304 deaths per day or 12 deaths every hour, or one drug overdose death every five minutes!

Drug addiction and drug overdose are quiet killers that receive no publicity. Drug addiction is a crisis for the nation, but the impact is personal for the victim and family. When people die one by one, there is little attention given.

Why is this happening in USA and not so much in other countries? There is a high demand for them here with easy availability and affordability. The law enforcement system is stretched, and punitive damages are minimal. Porous borders and sophisticated drug cartels allow inflow of the drugs. Societal structures are loose and culture is permissive. Political willpower and funding are lacking to combat the drug epidemic and educate the public.

What is an addiction? An addiction is the inability to stop using a substance or engaging in a behavior, despite knowing the ill effects or negative consequences. The reward center in the brain gives them an exhilarating experience with the release of certain happy hormones and addicts look forward to the pleasurable hyperarousal again and again.

Craving can manifest as addictive behaviors or addictive substance abuse. Addictive behaviors can be harmless or risky. An example of low-risk addictive behavior is competitive sporting activities, where winning uplifts the mood. Examples of risky addictive behaviors are race car driving, paragliding or deep-sea diving. Gambling can cause financial ruin and result in substance abuse. Engaging in activities such as card games, sex, or shop lifting can be compulsive. Obesity from overeating is another type of compulsive behavior.

A more serious problem is dependence on substances. Alcohol and tobacco are well-known to be addictive and harmful. Excessive use of alcohol can cause damage to liver, resulting in cirrhosis of liver, fluid accumulation in the abdomen, vomiting of blood, malnutrition and eventual death. Excessive tobacco use in any form can cause lung and throat cancers, asthma and various breathing disorders secondary to lung damage.

Marijuana has become more commonly available for medical or recreational use in many states. Despite some of the medical benefits claimed and short-term relaxation and euphoria, long-term usage can cause mental and cognitive disorders, memory loss, anxiety disorders, early onset of dementia and motor function deficits.

Several pain medications are initially used for pain control, which subsequently lead to dependence, increasing tolerance and addiction. Examples are morphine, Demerol, codeine containing medications such as oxycodone, hydrocodone, Tylenol with codeine and tramadol. These are initially prescribed by physicians for pain management. Patients demand more of the same medication as their

tolerance increases, requiring higher dosages. When they are no longer available from the physician, patients start seeking the meds from any available source such as pain clinics or from illegal vendors.

Illegal street narcotics include heroine, cocaine, fentanyl and phencyclidine (PCP). These are highly addictive agents that give immediate euphoria, excitement, happiness, laughter, floating sensation, heightened energy and relaxation. When the effect wears off, they become depressed, anxious, violent, and fatigued with a sense of crashing. Craving for more of the drug becomes intense. Unknowingly overdose occurs leading to respiratory failure, coma and heart failure resulting in death. In addition, injection of street drugs causes variety of medical complications such as HIV/AIDS, hepatitis, clotting of veins, and large open ulcers and wounds.

These addictive drugs have increasing tolerance levels. The person not only demands the substance frequently, but in increasing quantity. When they cannot get the substance, they develop withdrawal symptoms. Such withdrawal symptoms can be dangerous and include crushing depression, panic attacks, violent behavior, twitching and burning sensation of extremities, sleeplessness, vomiting, anger, crying, emotional outbursts, fighting and suicidal attempts. They start secretive plans to obtain supply of the substance ahead of time by whatever methods. It becomes a vicious cycle.

What can we do and how can we prevent drug addiction? There is no single solution. But the effort must come from every member of society – parents, family members, teachers, schools, churches and the individual too. Many teenagers under peer pressure are tempted to try it out of curiosity. Often the family structure is broken, and one of the parents may be using it. Public health education on avoidance drugs and dangers of drug addiction is needed.

What to do once someone has already become an addict? This again must be a concerted effort between the individual, family and society. The person must be determined to come out of the dark hole. Often, there is no simple remedy or medication. Detoxification medications and protocols are available. Empathy and support are needed with diet, psychological support, encouraging mental and physical activity and getting rehabilitation services.

Drug addiction is a major curse in American society. In addition to death and diseases, drug addiction is a major drag on the economy and healthcare system. Care of patients with drug overdose and complications is expensive. The person becomes non-productive at the workplace, with absenteeism, poor performance and family disruption.

It is up to every citizen to be alert and discourage drug addiction from happening in their homes, neighborhoods and among the circle of friends. It is a scourge that must be nipped. It is for us to keep saying "No to drugs."

Dr. Venkit S. Iyer, MD, FACS, is a retired General and Vascular Surgeon. He has authored four books – "Decision making in clinical surgery," "Aging well and reaching beyond," "The Clinic" and "Geriatrics Handbook." They are available through Amazon or from the author. His website venkitiyer.com has necessary links and contact information.

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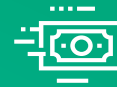
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'HOW IT WORKS': FINDING A GOOD JOB AFTER GRADUATION

By **ROBERT A.G. LEVINE**



When I travel the world, I am reminded of a universal truth: people everywhere are the same, but their surrounding environments differ. Recognizing that reality, I am unsurprised when parents insist that, when it comes to jobs and lifetime success, "You don't know how it works here."

News flash: I do know how it works. Let me explain so that you know how it works, too.

College is not job training or meant for job collection. It is an education for lifetime success (which does include career, of course). However, these are kids, not yet adults,

and things will change, both internally and externally. It can be folly to decide on a career too early. How do I know? Because made a career decision too early, without appropriate investigation. I made a mistake.

Trust me on this: being unhappy does not allow for success in career, much less life. In my opinion, the primary goal should be lifetime happiness and success (in all matters), not just career advancement. By the way, if you are happy, you will achieve more in your career.

So, when it comes to career success, how does it work? Here is my philosophy on earning money as an adult. In priority order:

First, be great. If you are great, you will get paid, whether in your own enterprise or in someone else's. It doesn't even matter if others consider your industry as "dying." Being the best leads to money. Note that attending a name brand school is not the same as pursuing greatness. Seek a school that supports you so that you can actually succeed!

Second, develop a great network of great humans. People can give you opportunities that a resume cannot. It's like the difference between standing in a long line at a dance club and passing that line because the club's owner escorts you inside. Personal equity trumps a resume every time. And let's face it: a new graduate's resume is not nearly as impressive as the resume of someone with even just a few years of experience. Get a job above what your resume suggests.

Third, do build a strong resume. This could include "name brand" schools, but not necessarily. There should be much more on a resume than merely "I went there for school." I do admit that there are some firms that chase "Ivy+" resumes,

but that's just so they pad their own corporate resumes. Those people usually leave those companies in two years (plus or minus), requiring that the company refill the slots with more Ivy+ resumes just so they can name drop.

It all starts with the admissions process. In applying to colleges, we believe that every student's list of prospective universities should be blended, from what some would call "reach" to "target" to "safety" schools. However, if you want success, each school must be a good fit for the student. "Fit" includes the structure of the school (is it "siloes" or broad-based?), the structure of the curriculum (especially the requirements beyond the major), the on-campus culture (would you love or hate the place?), and the off-campus opportunities for inspiration, education and resume-building. In most cases, you will not choose your college until April of grade 12, when you may actually decide on your best school from multiple good options (their deposit/decision is due by May 1). But you cannot choose from options that are not there, and things change a lot during grade 12. So, look for schools that might be optimal (they can have different attributes, but all should fit you well).

Here's two additional tips:

Look closely at the percentage of the school's students that attend summer school. When everyone attends summer school, the question of "what am I going to do over the summer" is not often considered. When you don't look for opportunities early (or at all), you miss out on valuable opportunities.

Also consider the school's location. If you are interested in a career in the social sciences (such as business), is there anything off-campus that can provide internship opportunities? College towns – while great for STEM students – may be insufficient for your professional growth.

An Ivy+ diploma is not a guarantee of success. If you want success, bet on yourself by putting yourself in a position to succeed.

Robert Levine is the founder and CEO of University Consultants of America, an independent educational consultancy assisting students around the world with applications to colleges, universities and graduate schools.

For more information, call University Consultants of America, Inc. at 1-800-465-5890 or visit www.universitycoa.com

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LABOR CERTIFICATION, EB5 PROGRAM

By **DILIP PATEL**



This month we provide updates on two items, the first relates to Labor Certification and the second about SEC actions on EB5 program.

Apple pays \$25 Million to Settle Claims related to Labor Certification Process

The U.S. Department of Justice announced on Nov. 9, 2023, that it reached a \$25 million settlement agreement with Apple Inc. to resolve allegations that Apple illegally discriminated in hiring and recruitment against U.S. citizens and certain non-U.S. citizens whose permission to live in and work in the United States does not expire. Under the

agreement, Apple is required to pay up to \$25 million in backpay and civil penalties, the largest award that the department has recovered under the anti-discrimination provision of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA).

Background

As readers may be aware, one of the most frequently used pathways to processing a Green Card is through sponsorship by an employer for a job for which the employer has obtained a "Labor Certification" from the Department of Labor (DOL). Labor Certification is confirmation from the DOL to the USCIS that there are not sufficient U.S. workers able, willing, qualified and available to accept the job opportunity in the area of intended employment and that employment of the foreign worker will not adversely affect the wages and working conditions of similarly employed U.S. workers. The Labor Certification program is usually referred to PERM and leads to Green Cards in the EB3 and EB3 preferences.

A PERM labor certification requires testing the job market and includes a recruiting period of at least 60 days, but no more than 180 days, prior to the actual filing of the application. The purpose is to test the market to determine if qualified U.S. workers are able, willing and available to fill the job at the time of filing the application. This is a highly regulated process and contains provisions to prevent discrimination against U.S. job seekers. U.S. citizens, U.S. nationals, asylees, refugees and recent lawful permanent residents are protected from citizenship status discrimination. An employer cannot limit its hiring only to U.S. citizens unless there is a law, regulation, executive order, or government contract requires the employer to do so.

The Apple Settlement

Here, DOL alleged that Apple violated anti-discrimination requirements of the Immigration and Nationality Act during Apple's recruitment for positions falling under the permanent labor certification program.

The department's investigation, started in February 2019, and alleged that Apple engaged in a pattern or practice of citizenship status discrimination in recruitment for positions it hired through PERM, and that the company's unlawful discrimination prejudiced U.S. citizens, U.S. nationals, lawful permanent residents, and those granted asylum or refugee status. These less effective recruitment practices deterred protected workers from applying to positions that Apple preferred to fill instead with PERM beneficiaries.

Specifically, the DOJ alleged that the department's investigation found that Apple did not advertise positions Apple sought to fill through the PERM program on its external job website, even though its standard practice was to post other job positions on this website. It also required all PERM position applicants to mail paper applications, even though the company permitted electronic applications for other positions. In some instances, Apple did not consider certain applications for PERM positions from Apple employees if those applications were submitted electronically, as opposed to paper applications submitted through the mail. These less effective recruitment procedures nearly always resulted in few or no applications to PERM positions from applicants whose permission to work does not expire.

Pursuant to the \$25 million agreement, Apple is required to pay \$6.75 million in civil penalties and establish an \$18.25 million back pay fund for eligible discrimination victims. The agreement also requires Apple to ensure that its recruitment for PERM positions more closely matches its standard recruitment practices.

Lessons for Employer Sponsors

Employers should seek and follow the advice of experienced immigration attorneys when seeking Labor Certification. Specifically, they need to ensure that all the recruitment steps are undertaken in good faith and follow their normal recruitment procedures in addition to those mandated by the DOL PERM regulations and guidance. The temptation to reduce applicants by failing to follow normal steps or introducing extra steps for PERM related recruitment should be avoided.

EB5 Industry News

Just days before the Thanksgiving holiday, the SEC announced that it had charged Nadim Ahmed, a New York-based businessman and his companies, NuRide Transportation Group, LLC and NYC Green Transportation Group, LLC, with making fraudulent misrepresentations in securities offerings to investors seeking permanent residency through the EB-5 Immigrant Investor Program. More surprising was that the SEC also charged Ahmed along with Mehreen Shah a/k/a Mona Shah, a New York-based immigration attorney, and her law firm with offering unregistered securities to investors in offerings that raised more than \$66 million from more than 100 investors. Mona Shah and her immigration law firm are prominent in the EB5 industry. Her law firm issued a statement on the following day that the firm is troubled by the allegations by the SEC that she, her firm and the Gravitax NYC Regional Center purportedly ran afoul of Section 5 of the Securities Act. "It is disappointing that the SEC has made these allegations based on a technicality, and we are confident we will show we acted appropriately," said Mona Shah, Esq.

The SEC has issued an Investor Alert to warn individual investors about fraudulent investment scams that exploit the EB5 program. It is available at: <https://www.investor.gov/introduction-investing/general-resources/news-alerts/alerts-bulletins/investor-alerts/investor-51>.

Dilip Patel of Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney PC, a board-certified expert on immigration law, can be reached at (813) 222-1120 or email dilip.patel@bipc.com

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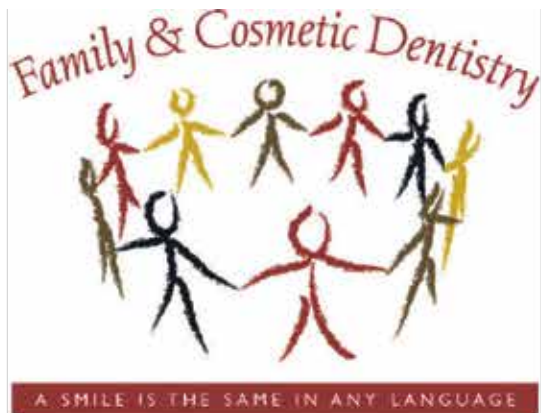
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TAX PLANNING

HOW TO BE READY TO SECURE A BUSINESS BAD DEBT DEDUCTION ON YOUR 2023 TAX RETURN



By **TEJAL DHRUVE**

Is your business having trouble collecting payments from clients or vendors? You might be able to claim a bad debt deduction on your tax return. But if you hope to take the deduction on your 2023 return, you'll have to get busy, because you must be able to show that you've made a "reasonable" effort to collect the debt.

Requirements

First, a cash-basis taxpayer may claim a business bad debt deduction only if the amount that's owed was previously included in gross income. Second, a business must establish that the debt is legitimate and can't be recovered from the debtor. To this end, as mentioned, you must make a reasonable effort to collect the amount that's due.

This doesn't necessarily mean you have to file a lawsuit against the debtor. But you can't just make a single phone call either. Give it your best shot. You might actually be able to collect the debt! But if you can't, you'll have put yourself in a position to potentially claim a bad debt deduction.

Partially or Totally Worthless

Often, the specific charge-off method (also called the direct write-off method) is used for writing off bad debts. In this case, you can deduct business bad debts that became either partially or totally worthless during the year.

For tax purposes, partially and totally worthless are defined as follows: Partially worthless. The deduction is limited to the amount charged off on your books. You don't have to charge off and deduct your partially worthless debts annually, so you can postpone this to a later year. However, you can't deduct any part of a debt after the year it becomes totally worthless.

Totally worthless. If a debt becomes totally worthless in the current tax year, you can deduct the entire amount (less any amount deducted in an earlier tax year when the debt was partially worthless).

Note that you don't have to make an actual charge-off on your books to claim a bad debt deduction for a totally worthless debt. But if you don't record a charge-off and the IRS later rules the debt is only partially worthless, you won't be allowed a deduction for the debt in that tax year. Reason: A deduction of a partially worthless bad debt is limited to the amount actually charged off.

Time Is Short

If you haven't started your collection efforts yet but hope to claim a business bad debt deduction for 2023, time is short. So, spring into action now. For instance, you might start collection efforts through phone and email contacts. If that doesn't work, you may want to follow up with a series of letters or even hire a collection agency. Finally, if all else fails, contact the office about the prospects of claiming a business bad debt deduction on your 2023 return.

Tejal Dhruve, CPA, LLC, a full-service tax and wealth management firm with offices in Wesley Chapel, Florida, and Dublin, Ohio, can be reached at (614) 742-7158 or email info@dhruvecpa.com



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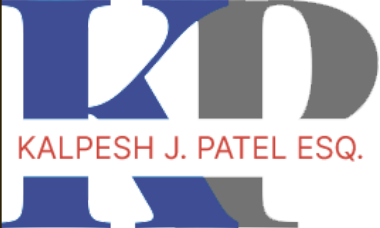


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DECEMBER FORECAST

By PANKAJ KOHLI



ARIES / Mesha (Fire sign, ruling planet is Mars) - (March 21-April 20) Mars Sign – Stars covered Ashwini, Bharani, Krittika (1st Part) Arians, there is an improvement in your financial situation, and some may stand to gain much in the coming months. Domestic and family happiness may prevail on an overall cheerful month. Parents may need personal attention in the latter part. Life is on the go. Professionally, career changes and new openings may be on the horizon. Business travel could be helpful for career growth.

TAURUS / Vrushabha (Earthen sign, ruling planet is Venus) - (April 21-May 21) Moon Sign - Stars covered Krittika (last 3 parts), Rohini, Mrigashira (first 2 parts) Taurians stand to gain in professional and personal matters. Business partnerships and matrimonial alliances may work in one's favor. Sound financial gains and all-round progress can be seen. It is a highly positive month as professional changes are seen. Health, cheerfulness, self-confidence cannot be ruled out for several natives of this sign.

GEMINI / Mithuna (Air sign, ruling planet is Mercury) - (May 22-June 21) Moon Sign - Stars covered Mrigashira (last 2 parts), Ardra and Punarvasu (first 3 parts) Your virtues may shine, bringing financial improvements. Mercury's position could bring success and help remove negative currents. Health wise, people need to take care. It is advisable to ensure domestic happiness as there might be undercurrents. Professional changes should be considered after careful evaluation.

CANCER / Kataka (Watery sign, ruling planet is Moon) - (June 22 – July 22) Moon Sign – Stars covered Punarvasu (4th part), Pushya, Aslesha Personal and financial success is on the rise. Some may see riches and gains through

the position and the strength of stars in their respective charts. Jupiter's divine blessings are bestowed upon your sign. However, the disposition of a few planets may put obstacles on the road to success. On a general note, professional, financial and sound health is possible for several natives of this sign.

LEO / Simha (Fire sign, ruling planet is Sun) - (July 23-Aug. 22) Moon Sign – Stars covered Magha, Purva Phalguni, Uttara Phalguni (1st part) Lions, move with caution regarding personal and financial matters. Expenditure may be higher than income. As for health, finance and profession, some are advised to be cautious. Seek medical guidance if need arises. Do not rely upon intuition, instead think before you act, onus of behavior is on you.

VIRGO / Kanya (Earthen sign, ruling planet is Mercury) - (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) Moon Sign – Stars covered Uttara Phalguni (last 3 parts, Hasta, Chitra (first 2 parts) It is a beneficial month. Some may see success at many a times. Positive planets bring riches and negative effects are removed by more powerful planets. Mercury brings personal success. Professional development and elevation in job front is forecast. The health part is manageable. There could be riches from unexpected sources. Avail yourself of all opportunities that come your way.

LIBRA / Tula (Air sign, ruling planet is Venus) - (Sept. 23-Oct. 23) Moon Sign – Stars covered Chitra (last 2 parts), Swati, Vishakha (first 3 parts) Planetary transition makes this month quite favorable. Social status and influence may increase, good recognition, financial gains and overall lucky time and rich gains for some Librans! Professionally, expect encouraging news. Love and romance is on cards for eligibles. The health aspect looks good generally.

SCORPIO / Vruschika (Water sign, ruling planet is Mars) - (Oct. 24-Nov. 22) Moon Sign – Stars covered Vishakha (4th part), Anuradha, Jyestha This month appears to be about taking precautions. Domestic and finances should be watched carefully, do not overspend or over commit while signing any contracts. Take care of health; this can be a problem. Professionally, move cautiously on job or business.

SAGITTARIUS / Dhanush (Fire sign, ruling planet is Jupiter) - (Nov. 23-Dec. 21) Moon Sign – Stars covered Moola, Purva Shada, Uttara Shada (first part) It is a highly beneficial period financially and professionally. It is also a great period for personal development and career growth. However, there may be health issues that should not be overlooked; chronic patients need to take extra care. Generally, life seems to be normal and cordial.

CAPRICORN / Makara (Earthen sign, ruling planet is Saturn) - (Dec. 22-Jan. 20) Moon Sign – Stars covered Uttara Shada (last 3 parts) Shravana, Dhanishta (first 2 parts) Luck shines for some, fortunes and virtues may be helpful. However, the transition of planets may bring out a change in place, either in job or any other respect; mixed changes can be seen. Finances are manageable. Professionally, it is a positive and a good period for natives belonging to this sign.

AQUARIUS / Kumbha (Air sign, ruling planet is Saturn) – (Jan. 21-Feb. 19) Moon Sign-Stars covered: Dhanishta (last 2 parts) Satabhisha, Purva Bhadra Pada (1st 3 parts) Overall planets promise success, happiness and luck; they may also bring monetary gains. Professional elevation cannot be ruled out on the job front. This is a great time for professional growth. Romance and love is within the minds of eligible people. Health and happiness are seen for many.

PISCES / Meena (Water sign, ruling planet is Jupiter) - (Feb. 20-March 20) Moon Sign - Stars covered: Purva Bhadra Pada (last part) Uttara Bhadra Pada, Revathi It is a great time; happy conditions may prevail with regards to finances, domestic happiness, personal success and various ventures that are planned properly and carefully. The present position of planets brings success and luck in profession and may bring tremendous success for natives. Bhagya (luck), profession and financial gains are on the increase. It shows as a positive month for a lot of natives.

For detailed horoscope analysis and chart reading, courtesy Pankaj-Astro Jyotish, call Pankaj Kohli at (905) 910-1441 or e-mail Pathofastrology@gmail.com

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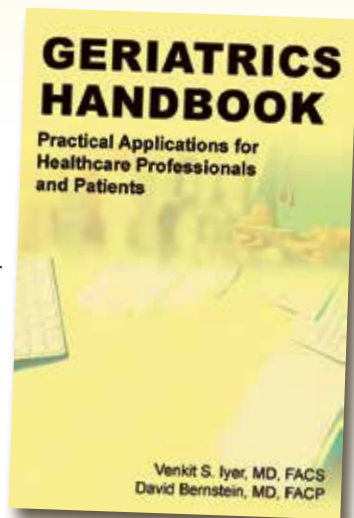
by Venkit S. Iyer, MD, MS, FACS, FRCS-C



Dr. Venkit S. Iyer, MD, FACS has recently published a new book with the above title. This timely publication gives details of all common illnesses that affect the elderly population and appropriate management of each disease.

Common symptoms as experienced by patients are addressed in the first part of the book. Elder care and end of life issues are described in the later part. In addition, list of medications are included in appropriate areas. The book is easy to read by anyone. It will be a valuable reference book for all. It is available on Amazon.

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ACURA INTEGRA MAKES A STUNNING COMEBACK!

Test-drive stories by NITISH S. RELE motoringtampabay@gmail.com



Acura debuted globally in 1986 with the two-variant front-wheel-drive Integra hatchback generating a massive bang with motoring enthusiasts. The signature pop-up headlight design literally ‘popped’ eyes out of people’s head with astonishment. Within no time, race-inspired, high-performance versions of the compact car were on-track championship winners. The exhilarating and fun drive continued till the Japanese carmaker retired the nameplate in 2006 (by then it was called the RSX).

After a 17-year hiatus, the Integra has returned! And it is much bigger, powerful (turbocharged) and truly a blast to take for a spin. Under the hood of our 2024 Integra Type S sits a 2.0-liter turbo inline-4 cylinder cranking out 320 horsepower @ 6500 rpm and 310 pounds-feet of torque @ 4000 rpm. Best of all, it is coupled to a 6-speed manual gear box with rev-match capabilities to delight the stick-shift crowd. Thanks to the Integrated Dynamics System (IDS), the driver can choose sport, sport+ normal and comfort settings. Valve-actuated adaptive dampers ensure a smoother experience in normal or comfort settings and even more enjoyable in sport modes. A MacPherson strut front and multilink rear suspension absorbs the hits of potholes and broken road surfaces with ease. The dual-pinion, variable-ratio electric power steering is forthcoming with instant turn-in.

That this is an Integra, and a Type S too, is evident from their emblems in front and rear fascia. The vented aluminum hood meets up with an eye-catching diamond pentagon grille, flanked by gorgeous four-element, jewel-eye LED headlights. Triple exhaust tips and a decklid spoiler further boost the classy touch. The cabin is awash in extravagance with black perforated ultrasuede inserts on red leather seats, a black

INTEGRA TYPE S (FWD)
Tires: 265/30R19
Wheelbase: 107.7 inches
Length: 186 inches
Width: 74.8 inches
Height: 55.4 inches
Weight: 3,219 pounds
Fuel capacity: 12.4 gallons
City: 21 mpg
Highway: 28 mpg
Base price: \$50,800
Price as tested: \$53,785
Web site: www.acura.com

suede shifter boot and Type S imprinted on the steering wheel and front seatbacks. Audiophiles will instantly take to the incredible 16-speaker ELS Studio 3D premium sound system. The 23.4 cubic feet space behind the 60/40 rear seat leaves plenty of luggage room for a weeklong trip. The 9-inch touch infotainment and 10.2-inch digital instrument clusters are standouts. Other luxuries include dual auto a/c, 12-way power driver and four-way front-passenger seats, head-up display, and wireless Apple CarPlay and Android Auto.

Welcome back, Integra! We are thrilled that Acura has brought its racetrack winner into the fold once again. Like previous gens, the stylish ride delivers a sports car performance with speedy acceleration and ample power just a throttle away. Gearstick fanatics and heavy lead footers, this one’s been reintroduced specially just for you!

PEEK INTO THE FUTURE IN ALL-ELECTRIC HYUNDAI IONIQ 6!

It’s World Car of the Year, World Electric Vehicle of the Year and World Car Design of the Year! The World Car Awards is comprised of worldwide professional automotive journalists, so there is significant validity in the recognition bestowed upon the all-electric 2023 Hyundai Ioniq 6. Need we say more?

Some months ago, Hyundai showcased the award winner to the automotive media in Savannah, Ga., whereabouts the Ioniq 6 along with other Hyundai and Genesis vehicles will be built. Covering nearly 3,000 acres, the Hyundai Motor Group Metaplant America will employ 8,100 people. With a price tag of \$5.4 billion, the EV assembly plant will produce 300,000 vehicles a year and then top up at 500,000. Full production will be in early 2025. The most aerodynamic Hyundai ever looks to attract millennials, singles or couples, to transition from gas to electric.

Our single-speed direct transmission Ioniq 6 was equipped with the 77.4 kWh lithium polymer battery with all-wheel drive and dual motors (320 horsepower). On 20-inch wheels, this fine sedan has a reach of 270 miles but on 18-inch, it can go up to 316 miles. On a 240-volt, it will take about seven hours but a fast DC charge (350 kW) can load up 80 percent in just 18 minutes. And a leased Ioniq 6 does qualify for a \$7,500 federal tax credit. Another good news is that Hyundai offers a two-year complimentary charge at any Electrify America station.

Up front, jewel-like parametric-pixel LED headlights, wide bumper and active grille shutters convey a distinctive presence. As you near the vehicle, flush automatic door handles are a sight to behold! Two high-tech dual 12.3 screens, one for infotainment and the other a digital instrument cluster of speedometer, power gauge, charge level, digital and trip odometers, stand out. The column-mounted shifter is straightforward to operate. Eight-way power driver and six-



IONIQ 6 (LIMITED, AWD)
Wheelbase: 116.1 inches
Length: 191.1 inches
Width: 74 inches
Height: 58.9 inches
Suspension: MacPherson strut front, multilink rear
Steering: motor-driven power
MPGe: 111 city, 94 highway, 103 combined
Base price: \$56,100

way adjustable front-passenger heated/cooled seats, dual auto a/c, 60/40 rear seat, bridge-type center console, eight-speaker Bose sound system and a flat-bottomed leather tilt/telescopic steering column are offered at no extra cost.

Dual front and side airbags, side curtain airbag, electronic stability and traction controls, brake assist, rearview camera, blind spot, forward-collision and rear-cross traffic collision avoid assists; front avoid, lane keep and follow assists; front crumple zones, tire pressure monitoring system and daytime running lights are standard.

As gas prices still hover over \$3 a gallon, the Ioniq 6 is a no-brainer. Its futuristic appearance and cutting-edge technology make the midsize sedan an enticing choice. And Hyundai’s five-year, 60,000-mile new vehicle, and 10-year, 100,000-mile electric battery warranties should convince you to sign on the dotted line.

INDIA HERITAGE DISPLAYED DURING ST. PETE INTERNATIONAL FOLK FAIR

Story provided by VICAS

Volunteers of India Culture, Art, Science Society (VICAS) showcased India's heritage during the 48th annual St. Pete International Folk Fair recently in St. Petersburg. The Indian Pavilion showcased sports, culture, arts and cuisine with the flag flying high. The SPIFFS board selected sports and games from various cultures at this year's fair theme. They also selected the word "teamwork" for visitors to learn in multiple languages. India's sports and games, including field hockey, cricket, soccer and indigenous games like Kabbaddi, Lezim, Gillidanda, Latu, carrom board, chess, Ludo, chaupar, Chaturanga and Pallanguzhi, etc., were displayed for the audience. Several posters and artifacts depicted heritage, culture, art and science related India/Bharat as a part of the exhibit. Mouthwatering dishes like chicken curry, biriyani, goat curry, gobi manchurian, jeera rice, chhole, naan, gulab jamun, rasgulla and masala chai were enjoyed by visitors. An ethnic henna tattoo hand designs by artist Zohra attracted several fair growers. VICAS promoted sustainability through a plant sale in collaboration with a local Lithia berry farm nursery. Musicians Prabhat and Ameya performed Indian folk music on harmonium and tabla. A dance show by an Indian group on the central stage accompanied by vibrant props and costumes wowed spectators. VICAS joined the international parade, wearing vibrant attire and playing Lezim to chants of "Bharat Mata Ki Jay."

Contact Dr. Rajiv Sahay at (727) 488-4001 or email vicastampabay@gmail.com to join VICAS.



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