

# KHAASBAAT

A PUBLICATION FOR INDIAN AMERICANS IN FLORIDA

APRIL 2024

WWW.KHAASBAAT.COM

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**Inside:**



**Health**  
Eating right

4



**Immigration**  
Expedite requests

6



**Motoring**  
Toyota Grand Highlander

8



**Life story**  
Of holding on

12



**Astrology**  
April forecast

16



**Classifieds**  
Help wanted

19



## SOUTH ASIAN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL OF FLORIDA SET APRIL 19-20 IN TAMPA

The inaugural South Asian International Film Festival of Florida (SAIFFF) is poised to illuminate Tampa on April 19-20, promising a cinematic extravaganza. This landmark event at LOOK Cinemas, 12332 University Mall Court, celebrates the rich tapestry of South Asian cinema and culture, marking a significant milestone in the region's cultural landscape. SAIFFF will showcase a diverse array of compelling films

from across the South Asian diaspora, offering audiences a rare opportunity to immerse themselves in captivating narratives, vibrant visuals, and thought-provoking themes that define the region's cinematic legacy. From gripping dramas to heartwarming comedies, poignant documentaries to groundbreaking experimental films, the festival ensures something for every cinephile's palate. *Continued on page 7*

### FORT MYERS INDIA FEST APRIL 6



Story, page 19

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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 / SIGNIFICANT DATES

### EVENTS

#### TAMPA/ST. PETERSBURG/CLEARWATER

**APRIL 3: GSTB SENIOR DAY;** organized by Gujarati Samaj of Tampa Bay; India Cultural Center, 5509 Lynn Road, Tampa; 10.30 a.m. to 2.30 p.m.; \$10; lunch and entertainment; for information, call Mahesh Modha at (813) 476-1540.

**APRIL 4: SPIRITUAL DISCOURSE WITH APTAPUTRA;** Hindu Temple of Florida, 5509 Lynn Road, Tampa; 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. followed by dinner; organized by Tampa Dada Bhagwan Parivar; for information, call 1-877-505-3232, Ext. 1015.

**APRIL 9: 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.

**APRIL 17: 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.

**APRIL 19-20: SOUTH ASIAN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL OF FLORIDA (SAIFFF);** LOOK Cinemas, 12332 University Mall Court, Tampa; for tickets, festival schedule, visit [www.saifff.org](http://www.saifff.org) or call (312) 933-2251.

**APRIL 24: THE TAMPA BAY COLLEGE FAIR;** presented by University Consultants of America and The Kiran C. Patel High School; 10721 Raulerson Ranch Road, Tampa; 6 to 8 p.m.; free to the public; for questions, email [info@universitycoa.com](mailto:info@universitycoa.com)

**APRIL 27: 25th ANNIVERSARY GALA;** Academy of Odissi Dance; Sacred Heart Knanaya, Catholic Community Center, 2620 Washington Road, Valrico; 6 p.m.; for tickets, call Gopa Rautray at (813) 992-5234.

#### ORLANDO/CASELBERY

**APRIL 7: HSCF NEW AGE GROUP MEETING;** Hindu Society of Central Florida community hall, 1994 Lake Drive, Casselberry; 1:30 to 5 p.m.; seminar on several

### SIGNIFICANT DATES

**APRIL 9: RAMADAN ENDS (EID MUBARAK)**

**APRIL 14: BAISAKHI**

**APRIL 23: HANUMAN JAYANTI**

topics; tea/coffee party with snacks; free with prior RSVP to [hscfnewagegroup@gmail.com](mailto:hscfnewagegroup@gmail.com)

#### OCALA

**APRIL 6: MARGUM-JOURNEY OF A DANCER;** organized by Strategic Community Alliance; Binal Wala, an accomplished choreographer and teacher of Bharatnatyam, will present a dance recital; Reilly Arts Center, 500 N.E. Ninth St., Ocala; 3 p.m.; \$25; purchase tickets at <https://www.reillyartscenter.com>; for information, email [shenimeghani@yahoo.com](mailto:shenimeghani@yahoo.com) or call (267) 575-1227.

#### FORT MYERS

**APRIL 6: INDIA FEST;** organized by the India Association of Fort Myers (IAFM); Caloosa Sound Amphitheatre, 2101 Edwards Drive, Fort Myers; 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Indian food, dance, henna, music, handicrafts and clothing; \$10 per person; for information, call (239) 530-8085, mail email [indiafest@iafortmyers.org](mailto:indiafest@iafortmyers.org) or visit <https://www.iaftmyers.org/india-fest>

**APRIL 7: VEENA CONCERT;** presented by RAAGA; Rajhesh Vaidya will be accompanied by M. Lakshman on mridangam and Shankh Lahiri on tabla; 5 p.m.; Rush Auditorium, J-103 FSW, 8099 College Parkway, Fort Myers; free; for information, visit [www.raagafl.org](http://www.raagafl.org)

#### SOUTH FLORIDA (DAVIE)

**APRIL 14: CLASSICAL MUSICAL CONCERT;** Indrajit Roy-Chowdhury on sitar and Gourisankar on tabla; 2 to 3:30 p.m.; Bailey Hall, Hugh Adams Central Campus, 3501 S.W. Davie Road, bldg. 4, (southwest corner of campus), Davie; register online at [www.apaiart.com](http://www.apaiart.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.*

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MONTHLY EVENTS	WEEKLY EVENTS
<b>SATURDAY, APRIL 06 (6:00 PM to 8:00 PM)</b> • SHANI PRADOSH PUJA <b>TUESDAY, APRIL 09 (10:00 AM to 12:00 PM)</b> • NAVRATRI KALASH STHAPANA • CHANDI PATH (6:00 PM) <b>WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10 to FRIDAY, APRIL 12</b> • MATA JI PUJA (10:00 AM to 12:00 PM) • CHANDI PATH (6:00 PM) <b>SATURDAY, APRIL 13 (7:00 PM to 7:00 AM)</b> • 8 <sup>TH</sup> MATA KA JAGRATA <b>SUNDAY, APRIL 14 to TUESDAY APRIL 16 (4:00 PM to 8:00 PM)</b> • 3DAYS SANATAN MANDIR 5 <sup>TH</sup> PATOTSAV (ANNIVERSARY) <b>MONDAY, APRIL 15 (5:00 PM to 8:30 PM)</b> • DURGA ASHTAMI HAVAN <b>TUESDAY, APRIL 16</b> • RAM NAVMI SHRI RAM JANM (12:00 PM) • SHRI RAM BHAJAN SANDHYA (6:30 PM to 8:30 PM) <b>TUESDAY, APRIL 23 (6:30 PM to 8:30 PM)</b> • PURNIMA HANUMAN JANMOTSAV PUJA & BHAJAN <b>SUNDAY, APRIL 28 (6:00 PM to 7:30 PM)</b> • MONTHLY JAGANANATH BHAJAN SANDHYA <b>APRIL 5 &amp; APRIL 19 (6:00 PM) EKADASHI</b>	<b>EVERY MONDAY - 6:30 PM</b> • SHIV ABHISHEK AND PUJA <b>EVERY TUESDAY - 7:00 PM</b> • HANUMAN CHALISA AARTI <b>EVERY THURSDAY - 7:00 PM</b> • SAI BABA SATSANG • MAHA PRASAD  For more detail, call Pandit Manikya Sharma 813-484-9568 Pandit Rushi Vyas 813-503-3388 Pandit Pranav Bhatt 813-720-1460

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**HEALTHY FOOD FOR HEALTHY LIFE**

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



You are in a restaurant with a mouthwatering list of items on the menu. What are you going to order? Internal conflict arises between what you like to taste and what you know is healthy. Sometimes, your tongue wins and other times your brain prevails.

What we eat matters. Variety of medical problems such as heart attack, stroke, high blood pressure, vascular problems, cancers, dementia, osteoporosis and obesity and reduced life expectancy can be related to diet.

With attention to proper healthy diet and nutrition, we can postpone the onset of many of these disorders, live longer and healthier. One example of a healthy diet is Mediterranean diet. It is similar to a diet called MIND that helps to improve cognitive function and delay the onset of dementia or Alzheimer's disease. It is also the same diet that is claimed to prevent heart attacks, cancers, high blood pressure, diabetes mellitus and stroke or plaque buildup in the arteries.

Plant-based diet is considered better for health. Green leafy vegetables, vegetables of multiple colors, roots, beans, lentils, legumes, peas, corn are used in various formats. Whole grain products, Matta rice (Kerala red rice), brown rice, wheat, oats or quinoa are the staple components. These give nutrients, fiber, proteins, carbohydrates and minerals. Soy products and tofu are usable for proteins and other nutrients. Nonvegetarians should try to avoid red meat (beef, lamb, pork) and instead use white meat (chicken, fish and seafood) whenever possible. Eggs are acceptable. Tuna fish salad or sandwich is another option.

Spices such as turmeric (containing curcumin) ginger, cinnamon, clove, cardamom or garlic are added. Black pepper is a natural alkaloid with antioxidant, anti-inflammatory qualities through a compound called piperine. The spices reduce chances of chronic illnesses and inflammation.

Fruits of different colors and taste are rich in antioxidants, polyphenols, vitamins and minerals. They also add to fiber. Nuts of different types can be used as snacks or added to the meal. They are good with minerals, proteins, vitamins and polyunsaturated fats. Peanut can be used in the form of peanut butter or humus or added to food items.

Probiotics are getting more attention lately. They can be obtained through yogurt, kimchi, kombucha or buttermilk. They bring back gut bacteria, protect stomach lining, reduce indigestion or diarrhea and lower blood pressure.

Avoid drinking any type of cola drinks or sugary soft drinks. Instead, drink plain water whenever possible. One or two cups of coffee or tea are considered healthy, as are fruit juices. Alcohol in any form is best avoided or minimized. A small amount of red wine is believed to be beneficial during social hours or dinner. It contains resveratrol to reduce plaque formations. However, alcohol use must be in moderation.

In choosing a cooking oil, it is preferable to use vegetable oils such as olive oil, avocado oil or sesame oil that contain polyunsaturated fats. Extra virgin olive oil is used over salad. Fish and fish oil are good with omega 3 fatty acids. It is advised to avoid margarine, ghee, shortening and butter. One needs to avoid trans fats and processed foods as far as possible. These are hydrogenated and processed oils with harmful saturated fats.

Salt and sugar are reduced as much as possible. Salt increases chances of atherosclerosis and heart attacks. Sugar increases calories rapidly. It is best to avoid taking sugary desserts. Instead, one may consume fresh fruits or dark chocolates.

Individuals with preexisting conditions need to take extra precautions with their diet. Diabetics must be extra cautious about intake of carbohydrates, sugars and sugary drinks and desserts. Those with kidney stones need to avoid oxalate in their diet. If there is Parkinson's disease, opt for a low-protein diet. Others may have food allergies. Why do we need fiber in the diet? Low-residue diet leads to constipation, cancer of colon and diverticular disease. These individuals tend to consume more calories. Fiber helps to have regular easy bowel movements and reduces chances of colorectal disorders and overall intake of calories.

To maintain ideal body weight and obesity, watch calorie intake. Avoidance of sugary drinks and sugary desserts and snacks will help toward the goal. Slow eating with long chewing time reduces total food intake. Stop when you are three quarter full, instead of filling up to the maximum. Another option is partial or intermittent fasting.

Taste is one of the five primary senses and is often ignored in our busy life. Elegant dining is an art by itself. Eating is one of the pleasurable actions in life. So, why not have a good time at it, while also building up chances for a healthy life.

**Dr. Venkit S. Iyer, MD, FACS, is a retired general and vascular surgeon. He has authored six books: "Decision making in clinical surgery" first and second editions; "Aging well and reaching beyond," "The Clinic," "Geriatrics Handbook" and "Iyer's story book for children." They are available through Amazon or from the author. His website venkitiyer.com has necessary links and contact information.**



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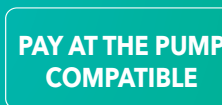
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**USCIS UPDATES GUIDANCE FOR EXPEDITE REQUESTS**

By **DILIP PATEL**



Do you need your Advance Parole expedited so you can attend a wedding? Read on.

Processing times at U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services for many applications are slow. In many situations, USCIS will not even entertain inquiries on applications until the application is well beyond their published average processing times. It has always been possible to request USCIS to expedite the processing of a pending application, but the request has to be based on a good reason for processing the application ahead

of others which were filed earlier and are still in process.

On March 21, 2024, USCIS issued a Policy Alert clarifying expedite requests. USCIS considers all expedite requests on a case-by-case basis and generally requires documentation to support such requests. The decision to expedite is within the sole discretion of USCIS.

**The new policy:**

- Clarifies requests based on government interests, including that when an expedite request is made by a federal government agency or department, USCIS generally defers to that agency or department’s assessment.
- Explains that USCIS may expedite adjudication of an Application for Travel Document (Form I-131) when an applicant demonstrates a pressing or critical need to leave the United States, whether the need to travel relates to a planned or unplanned event.
- Clarifies when USCIS may consider an expedite request based on clear USCIS error.
- Explains how to make an expedite request and clarifies how USCIS processes expedite requests.

**Expedites for Advance Parole Applications (Form I-131).**

This is of particular importance to people who have applied for Adjustment of Status on Form I-485 (for the Green Card) and have a need to travel while the Green Card application is in process. The general rule is that your pending application for AOS is deemed abandoned unless you have the approved Advance Parole document in your possession before you leave the U.S. and return while it is valid. There is a limited exception for those with valid H-1B

and L-1 visas returning to their approved employment. For most AOS I-485 applicants, the ability to travel and therefore the approval of the Advance Parole document is critical.

It has always been possible to request an Advance for Emergency Travel, but getting USCIS to accept an expedite request has been a challenge in situations other than life or death type of emergencies.

According to the USCIS policy, in the context of an expedite request, an emergency or urgent humanitarian situation is a pressing or critical circumstance related to human welfare. Human welfare means issues related to the well-being of a person or group. Examples include, but are not limited to, illness, disability, death of a family member or close friend, or extreme living conditions, such as those caused by natural catastrophes or armed conflict.

USCIS considers requests related to a requestor’s individual welfare and requests that are related to the welfare of others. For example, to facilitate the well-being of an individual, USCIS may expedite a benefit request where a vulnerable person’s safety may be otherwise compromised. To facilitate the well-being of others, for example, USCIS may expedite employment authorization for healthcare workers during a pandemic.

Expedited processing of a travel document may be warranted when there is an unexpected event, such as the pressing or critical need to travel outside the United States to obtain medical treatment in a limited amount of time, or due to the death or grave illness of a family member or close friend.

**Expedites of Advance Parole for Weddings or Graduations?**

In the past, requests for expedites to attend weddings or graduations were usually flatly denied.

The new Policy Guidance says the Expedited processing of a travel document may also be warranted when there is a pressing or critical need to travel outside the United States for a planned event, but processing times prevent USCIS from issuing the travel document by the planned date of departure. When the need to expedite issuance of a travel document is related to a planned event, USCIS considers whether the applicant timely filed the Form I-131 or timely responded to a request for evidence.

For example, a requestor may have applied for a travel document five months ago when they learned of the event, but their case remains pending, and they must travel for an event which is now in 45 days, such as for a:

- Work or professional commitment (such as a meeting, conference, forum, seminar, or training);
- Academic commitment (such as a study abroad program, research trip, forum, seminar, conference, or practicum); or
- Personal commitment (such as a wedding or graduation).

The examples of travel-related emergencies provided above are not exhaustive. The Policy Manual instructs officers to review travel-related expedite requests on a case-by-case basis to determine if the need to travel is pressing or critical.

A desire to travel solely for vacation generally does not meet the definition of a pressing or critical need to travel.

It remains to be seen how going forward, USCIS will actually handle requests to expedite travel permits to attend planned travel. The policy also includes more detailed guidance on expedites for business travel and other emergent needs. Reach out to your immigration attorney for further guidance and assistance with submitting a well-documented and persuasive request.

**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](mailto:dilip.patel@bipc.com)**

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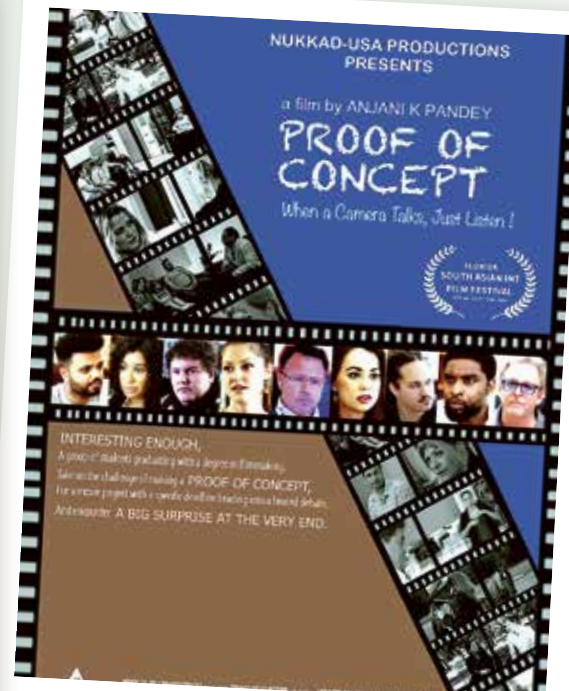
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# SOUTH ASIAN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL OF FLORIDA

Continued from page 1



"We are thrilled to bring the South Asian International Film Festival to Tampa for the very first time," said Hemant Dinkar, SAIFFF's founder and organizer. "This festival serves as a platform to celebrate the rich cultural heritage and cinematic achievements of South Asia while fostering cross-cultural dialogue and understanding. With an exceptional lineup of films and engaging events, we aim to create an unforgettable experience for audiences and filmmakers alike."

SAIFFF will host the North American premiere of the Hindi film "The Lost Girl," portraying the story of Suhani, a 5-year-old separated during the 1984 Sikh riots, surviving 15 years with strangers, haunted by memories until she embarks on a journey to find her true identity and family. Additionally, the festival will feature Bollywood actor Omi Vaidya's Marathi film "Aaichya Gavati Marathi Bol," showcasing the unexpected journey of Samar, who experiences twists and turns when he returns to India from America. SAIFFF will also present the feature film "Dada Lakhmi," directed by renowned Bollywood actor Yashpal Sharma, which delves into the musical journey of Pandit Lakhmi Chand, a folk artist of Haryana, known as the "Shakespeare of Haryana." Moreover, SAIFFF will present a lineup of short and feature films from Pakistan, Nepal, United Kingdom, USA, including shorts like "I am not down," "The beginning," "Once upon a time in Lahore," "Jamun ka darakht" and "Dancing in Fire," a documentary from Nepal.

**WHAT:** South Asian International Film Festival of Florida  
**When:** April 19-20  
**Where:** LOOK Cinemas, 12332 University Mall Court, Tampa  
**TICKETS, INFO:** [www.saifff.org](http://www.saifff.org), call (312) 933-2251.

Local filmmakers will also be spotlighted, including the North American premiere of filmmaker Anjani Pandey's feature film "Proof of Concept" and short films such as Edward Jayraj's "Vikki" and Ron Milton's "The Slice of Hope." The festival will present screenings of films from around the world, with a focus on narratives and documentaries from Pakistan and Nepal.

AIFFF expects Bollywood personalities like Omi Vaidya and Aryan Vaid to attend, with hopes of confirmation from other renowned actors and actresses. Alongside film screenings, the festival will feature insightful panel discussions and Q&As with filmmakers.

**For more information, schedule of films and to purchase tickets, visit [www.SAIFFF.org](http://www.SAIFFF.org) or contact Hemant Dinkar at (312) 933-2251.**



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## 2024 TOYOTA GRAND HIGHLANDER IS THE PERFECT FAMILY-HAULER!

Test-drive stories by NITISH S. RELE [motoringtampabay@gmail.com](mailto:motoringtampabay@gmail.com)

Want your ride super-sized? Or in this case, your Toyota Highlander. Then go for the 2024 Grand Highlander. It is longer by 6.5 inches, taller by 2, wider by 2.3, and up by 4 in wheelbase; cabin-wise, legroom increases by 5.5 inches, headroom by 1 and shoulder space by 2. This all-new Toyota Hybrid Max model is truly a blockbuster SUV not just in name but also in looks, performance, comfort and technology.

Our all-wheel-drive test drive was equipped with a 2.4-liter inline-4 cylinder turbocharged engine putting out 362 horsepower @ 6000 rpm and 400 pounds-feet of torque @ 3000 rpm. A front and rear electric motor assist with saving fuel. The Grand Highlander hybrid is mated to an easy-to-engage 6-speed auto gearbox with paddle shifters in the top-level Platinum trim. A sport-tuned suspension handled via an independent MacPherson strut front and multilink rear soaks up road bumps with ease. The electric power steering is razor sharp with a firm on-center feel. If venturing off-road, the multi-terrain select control offers mud/sand or rock/dirt/snow modes. Unlike the regular Highlander, this new vehicle is quite boxy and upright with LED headlights and eyebrow-like daytime running lamps that flank the upper grille with a centered Toyota emblem. But it is the large lower grille, reminiscent of recent Lexus models, that stands tall. The Grand Highlander offers cavernous cargo and passenger capacity, allowing for 20.6 cubic feet of space behind the 60/40 third row, 57.9 cubic feet behind the second-row Captain's chairs and 97.5 cubes with both seats folded. The dual 12.3-inch infotainment touchscreen display and digital gauge cluster are a standout in the spacious 149-cubic-foot



### GRAND HIGHLANDER (4WD PLATINUM)

**Tires:** P255/55R20  
**Wheelbase:** 116.1 inches  
**Length:** 201.4 inches  
**Width:** 78.3 inches  
**Height:** 70.1 inches  
**Tow capacity:** 5,000 pounds  
**Fuel capacity:** 17.1 gallons  
**City:** 26 mpg  
**Highway:** 27 mpg  
**Weight:** 4,920 pounds  
**Base price:** \$58,125  
**Price as tested:** \$59,878  
**Web site:** [www.toyotausa.com](http://www.toyotausa.com)

passenger capacity cabin. An overhead sunglass holder and digital rearview mirror add to the list. Other niceties include a tri-zone auto a/c, 10-way driver and eight-way power heated/cooled front-passenger seats, heated second-row Captain's chairs, fold-flat third-row seat, 7-inch head-up display, dual cupholders in third row, and power lift gate and panoramic moon roof.

With a good balance of comfort and performance, the Grand Highlander is exceptionally practical, powerful, spacious, stylish and a delight to drive. If in the market for a family-hauler that can seat up to seven, we highly endorse this bigger Toyota hybrid for a test drive. Or opt for the non-hybrid version. Either way, you won't be disappointed.

## ALFA ROMEO GIULIA OFFERS A PEEK INTO THE ITALIAN SOUL!

The Germans, whether it is Audi, BMW or Mercedes-Benz, have had a stronghold on the small luxury sport sedan market. Add the Japanese (Lexus) and Korean (Genesis) brands to the mix and the race becomes fierce. But amid the rivalry, potential car buyers often neglect one of the most thrilling rides with an Italian flair, the Alfa Romeo Giulia. And that is at their own peril!

The 2.0-liter inline-4 turbocharged Giulia cranks out 280 horsepower @ 5200 rpm and 306 pounds-feet of torque @ 4800 rpm, plentiful to cruise the highway or merge into peak-hour traffic. Zero to 60 is achieved in a mere 5.1 seconds with top speed of 149 mph in the rear-wheel-drive sedan. Coupled to an 8-speed auto gearbox, the Quadrifoglio-tuned double-wishbone front and an Alfa-link design rear suspension effectively eliminate sharp bumps on the road and reduce body roll. Providing a positive on-center response is the variable electric assist steering. Braking is handled skillfully by commanding 13-inch front and 12.5-inch rear Brembo vented rotors. The optional 19-inch sport aluminum wheels come shod with 225/40 up front and 255/35 at the rear. Toggle the "dna" button for dynamic, natural, advanced efficiency and race modes.

Our hats off to Alfa Romeo for the off-beat front styling – a massive V-Scudetto dark grille and large functional air intakes, skirted by triple adaptive matrix LED headlights. Glossy black LED tail lamps and Veloce-exclusive finned diffuser and dual dark exhaust tips grab attention. The red leather sports seats are fabulous! Further enhancing the lush cabin is a robust flat-bottomed Formula 1-inspired tilt



### GIULIA (VELOCE)

**Wheelbase:** 111 inches  
**Length:** 182.8 inches  
**Width:** 73.2 inches  
**Height:** 56.5 inches  
**Weight:** 3,522 pounds  
**Fuel capacity:** 15.3 gallons  
**City:** 23 mpg  
**Highway:** 33 mpg  
**Base price:** \$44,520  
**Price as tested:** \$55,140  
**Web site:** [www.alfaromeo.com](http://www.alfaromeo.com)

steering wheel with rock-solid grasp. Also worth a mention is the 12.3-inch digital instrument cluster with binocular hood to lend classiness. The 14-way power heated driver and 12-way front-passenger leather seats are not just plush but also comfy. Other perks include dual auto a/c, aluminum paddle shifters, heated rear seat, Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, 40/20/40 rear seat, and the 8.8-inch infotainment touch display, as well as a dual-pane sunroof.

With its distinct Italian looks, allure and touch, the Giulia touts a solid, nimble, luxury-packed and exciting ride. Plus, the splendid car brags vim and vigor that is absent in European contenders.



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**THE EVOLVING ROLE OF PARENTING – PART ONE**

By **ROBERT A.G. LEVINE**



Whenever a student achieves great success in admissions, we like to give credit to their parents for their guidance and support over the years. Invariably, I use these words:

“Congratulations! You got them here!”

Their usual response may surprise you: “But I didn’t do much....”

“Exactly!”

Because nobody seems to think I am being genuine when I applaud a “less-is-more” parenting effort, allow

me to explain.

First, please understand that I am applauding the final part of their parenting, not their earlier efforts. Second, please accept that just like plants, students need room to grow.

Part I of this article addresses early childhood guidance. Part II will address parenting during the teenage years.

In the first few years of child rearing, parents are incredibly attentive to their children. Remember how important it seemed that we purchase the best of everything, including diapers? Remember how many photographs we took of that most-beautiful-in-the-world infant? Remember that attempt to balance the best possible diet with “what on earth can I get them to eat?”

I’m not too concerned with infancy. Basically, for your child’s first three years of life, just do your best while remembering to take care of yourself, too. If I have one suggestion, try not to give your child any options nor ask them questions (do not end your statements with “OK?”). Their minds are not yet developed enough to juggle the choices you give them. Because they do better when you dictate, don’t overload.

Once your child starts to become reasonably conscious of life at home (and also at daycare), your decisions about their activities really matter. In fact, most everything your young child does will form, develop and mold their brains ... for life. But since you direct everything that happens at home, you are the one training them, consciously or unconsciously.

There are two aspects to nurturing: what they do, and what you do.

From my own experience, what a child does – and does not do – makes a difference. I didn’t start to learn a foreign language until seventh grade. Today, I am fluent in two languages: English, and Dog. I can speak to a dog in any country, but I struggle with “hello” and “thank you” everywhere I go. The

struggle is real, the result of something called “neural plasticity” (or lack of it) at age 12-13. Apparently, because I didn’t learn languages when I was very young, my brain is not structured to learn languages.

On the other hand, I have been blessed with a really competitive brain, the result of being a competitive swimmer. To win a race requires a combination of maximum effort and best technique, and that lesson learned applies everywhere, especially at work. But because being on a swim team doesn’t make swimming a true team sport, I am better trying to succeed on my own than being a teammate in the best sense. If only I had played basketball....

Me? I am more of a natural-born leader. Actually, I’m a trained leader.

Over ten years ago, I founded an education consultancy that now serves students all over the world, on every continent except Antarctica. Before this, while practicing law, I served as our firm’s managing partner. In law school, I was the Executive Editor of the law review. In college, I was the Station Manager at WHRB radio. In high school, I was both the Vice President and the Editor-in-Chief of our yearbook (plus swim team captain, newspaper columnist, etc. etc. etc.). And in second grade, I was our very first Class President.

When Miss Nelson announced that “We’re going to have elections for Class President,” my hand shot up in the air before anyone else’s. However, I didn’t even know what a Class President was. So, a few years ago, I sat down my parents and asked, “How did you do that?” How did they train me to do ... everything?

Mom answered that question immediately. “You saw what we did. We were always busy doing things with schools, clubs and groups. If you had not raised your hand, that would have been very surprising.”

I do lots of things because all I know is to do things.

Parents, you are not just a (benevolent) dictator, nor are you just a support human. You are a role model, and what you do (and do not do) will be examples that train your child forever.

Get your child to do all manner of things that influence their brain, but also show them how to be your best possible self.

**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](http://www.universitycoa.com)**




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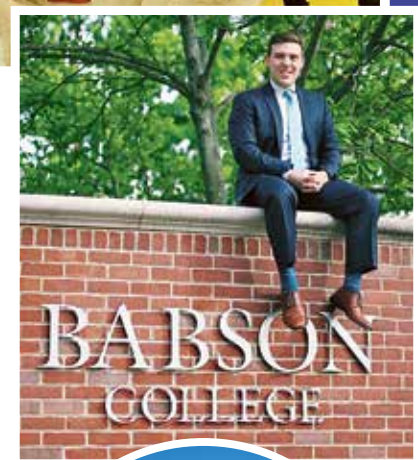
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## OF HOLDING ON AND LETTING GO



By **NANDINI BANDYOPADHYAY**

Being an only child comes with a lot of perks - at least, that's the general consensus. People often see the undivided attention the child receives and the parental resources they don't have to share. What is often missed are the lonely afternoons they spent by the windowsill, or a companion to share their fears or secrets, their joys and challenges. As only children get older, the responsibilities and consequent decisions around their aging parents weigh heavy on them; they often don't have anyone who really understood the history of their family, anyone to help sort out the details when their parents are gone forever.

I was an only child. After both my parents passed away, I was left to address a major unwritten question among many others; the fate of our apartment in India. I had made Tampa, Florida my home for more than twenty-five years. I knew that I would not go back to living in India, but even the thought of not having their home, our home, anymore was difficult, and I was torn.

When I first came to the USA, going back to India always meant reliving the experiences that I had missed. They were these dancing, ebullient bubbles of things to do, time to spend with my parents, delicious food to devour, and friends and cousins to meet and catch up with. And then Baba passed away in 2002, Ma passed away in 2012, and for the past few years, going back home has been a different, unending list of things to do: wrapping up my parents' lives into brown packing boxes, leafing through decade-old sepia journals with many forgotten pictures, and stuffing plastic bins with discarded wedding cards and accounts of monthly expenses. Glimpses of their lives, dear and close, were suddenly not relevant anymore.

I knew that it was extremely challenging to manage the apartment from afar - it wasn't even safe to leave it unoccupied for an extended period - but a part of me was unable to let go of my childhood refuge. The laughter that rang out from those pale-yellow walls, the aroma that wafted from that kitchen, and the familiar anecdotes that filled our rainy evenings would come flooding back and cloud my decision.

But the situation was getting grimmer. There was hardly anyone living in the other apartments that I knew and monitoring it from the US was getting to be a nightmare. So, the inevitable decision of selling the place was made. And then the long, arduous process of putting it in the market and finding someone ensued.

But it was not long before things started sorting out and the reality of letting go didn't seem so abstract anymore. The home, which was an integral part of my life, would be gone forever. Until then, the art of letting go was something I had read about in books; to implement that concept myself was taking its toll on me. In this period, one of Rumi's quotes struck a chord with me. "Life is a balance of holding on and letting go." I started writing about my feelings, but it was a long uphill battle, and some days were harder than others.

## LIFE STORY

***Khaas Baat is proud to feature this life story written by Nandini Bandyopadhyay, which was recently published in an anthology, "The Gift of a Long Life: Personal Stories on the Aging Experience." Bandyopadhyay, a Tampa resident, has a master's in Comparative Literature and has been published in both Bengali and English.***

Every time I made the trip back, the past came rushing by, and waves of nostalgia choked me. Ma's sarees in the almira were still neatly folded and smelled of mothballs. The soft silks nestled against the starched cottons while the heavier embroidered silks were wrapped in softer fabrics ... and a collage of my smiling Ma floated in front of me. Ohh! How I wished that I could wrap them around myself and smell her like I did in my childhood.

And every time I started putting their knick-knacks away, I glanced at the labels on those boxes. In bold letters they screamed, 'FRAGILE: Handle with Care' and I could feel millions of shards falling around me. The times that were gone forever, the faces that had blurred with each setting sun, and how inadequate my hands were in saving them from breaking.

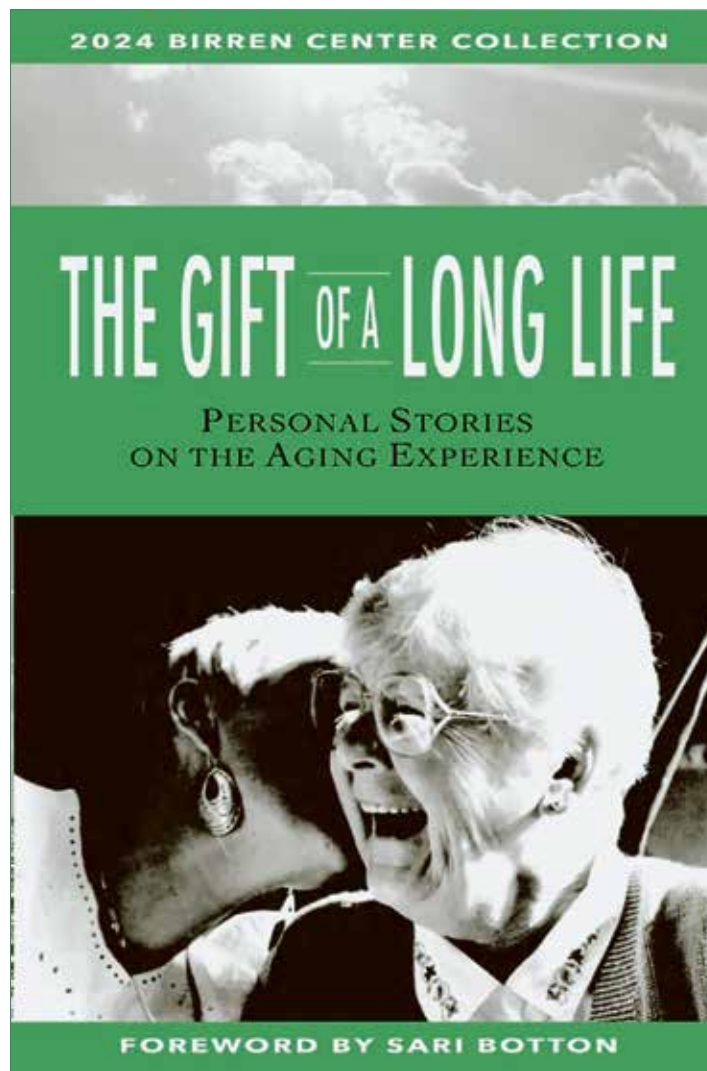
Finally, in 2018, I flew to India and realized that for the first time that I dreaded coming home. This was the trip that I was selling my parents apartment. I felt unmoored, insecure and lost. Even though I had been preparing with every trip back home for the last few years, I knew that this would be the last time I spent in this home. My apprehension remained buried deep inside, and some nights I would stay awake as I would remember snippets of life we lived in that modest home when we were all together. An image of my sons doing a similar purge when my husband and I were gone forever fleetingly crossed my mind, and I could sense their loss and helplessness.

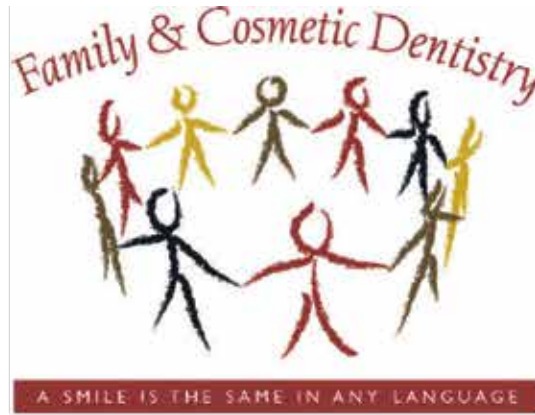
The day I finally said goodbye to that place I had called home for so many years, I was coming to terms with the concept of letting go. It was hard to close the door one final time (I remembered how ma used to tug the heavy brass lock after she finished locking!) and hand over the keys. But by then I had started slowly realizing that it

was not the literal place I was scared of losing; it was the presence of Baba and Ma, that I always felt in that home, that I was afraid to lose.

But they do walk with me in spirit, and I know that no matter how far I travel away from that home, I'll always carry them and their stories with me. And as the years slowly creep up around me, I also realize that I need to talk to my sons about the process so that they won't feel so lost when the time comes.

***Reproduced with permission from "The Gift of a Long Life: Personal Stories on the Aging Experience," Birren Center.***





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## APRIL 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)** Victorious attitude, pride, ambition, leadership traits are being displayed in your attitude. Some will remain self-motivated and self-inspired; do not let spirits down. Your attitude will help boost you and your family. Great time to enjoy domestic happiness, family time and material comforts. People are happy in your company. Stay away from overindulgence. All Colors: White, Red and Black. Precaution: Don't over-stress.

**TAURUS / Vrushabha (Earthen sign, ruling planet is Venus) - (April 21-May 21) Venus Sign - Stars covered Krittika (last 3 parts), Rohini, Mrigashira (first 2 parts)** Fortune and good luck shines on natives with a strong chart. Some enjoy elevated social status, name and fame and whatever you set your eyes upon. Do not let this opportunity go out of hand. Good news is all around you. With little push, many can gain professionally or change as well. Suitable: Colors White, Green, Copper, Yellow, Orange & Red. Precaution: Remain happy! Propitiate: Prayers offered for Jupiter, Saturn, Rahu & Ketu are highly beneficial.

**GEMINI / Mithuna (Air sign, ruling planet is Mercury) - (May 22-June 21) Mercury Sign - Stars covered Mrigashira (last 2 parts), Ardra & Punarvasu (first 3 parts)** There can be some difficulty in domestic happiness. Some may find it difficult to take firm decisions as the mind will be in a state of confusion. On the money front too, be careful. Virtues and luck may be shining and blessing many. Do not be negative, stay firm. Career change for artists, media folks and those in government jobs is seen. Suitable: Colors: White, Green, Orange, and Red. Propitiate: Prayer for Moon, Saturn, Rahu and Ketu are helpful.

**CANCER / Kataka (Watery sign, ruling planet is Moon) - (June 22-July 22) Moon Sign – Stars covered Punarvasu (4th part), Pushya, Aslesha** Keep away from confrontation, arguments or litigation. Domestic peace can be disturbed, and material comforts may also take a back seat. Some may suffer from headaches or mental confusion. Keep a tight control on money as a little extra care can help you save in a big way. Job front, be careful. Health needs extra attention. Suitable: Colors White, Yellow and light Green. Precaution: Have faith in self. Propitiate Mars, Saturn, and Rahu and Ketu.

**LEO / Simha (Fire sign, ruling planet is Sun) - (July 23-Aug. 22) Sun Sign – Stars covered Magha, Purva Phalguni, Uttara Phalguni (1st part)** Do not be indifferent, skeptical or fearful. Your indifference can lead to misunderstandings; instead, communicate and be open and genuine. For some, loss of material benefits might accrue. Despite best efforts, there might be confusion, jealousy and obstacles on the way. Control emotions and anger; Health conditions need to be taken care of at slightest provocation. Precaution: Propitiate Saturn, Jupiter, Rahu and Ketu.

**VIRGO / Kanya (Earthen sign, ruling planet is Mercury) (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) Mercury Sign – Stars covered Uttara Phalguni (last 3 parts), Hasta, Chitra (first 2 parts)** Despite best efforts, some may find it difficult to maintain speed and keep up to date with which you normally work. Results may get delayed, but they will reward you in the end though. Your sign lord casts full aspect on you, so luck will shine. Happy domestic conditions prevail. Despite higher earnings, the possibility of high expenses cannot be ruled out. Precaution: Propitiate Sun, Mars, and Mercury and Saturn.

**LIBRA / Tula (Air sign, ruling planet is Venus) - (Sept. 23-Oct. 23) Venus Sign – Stars covered Chitra (last 2 parts), Swati, Vishakha (first 3 parts)** Some will be happy and cheerful throughout though unforeseen difficulties may arise. There may be some obstacles; people around may feel jealous of your success and happiness. Financial gains are on the

increase, Love and romance is in the air. Health wise, you feel great, full of energy and enthusiasm and a positive outlook toward life. You stand to gain tremendously. Propitiate: Sun, Mercury, Rahu and Ketu.

**SCORPIO / Vruschika (Water sign, ruling planet is Mars) - (Oct. 24-Nov. 22) Mars Sign – Stars covered Vishakha (4th part), Anuradha, Jyestha** Social status for many may improve and bring rich gains. You will feel energetic; your actions look to be purposeful and meaningful. You will have to work hard on domestic front; happy conditions will prevail, however, be sympathetic toward younger siblings and take good care of them. On professional front, no job changes. Do not count much on luck; instead, work hard and you will be a winner on all fronts. Precaution: Propitiatory prayers for Navagraha will be helpful!

**SAGITTARIUS / Dhanush (Fire sign, ruling planet is Jupiter) - (Nov. 23-Dec. 21) Jupiter Sign – Stars covered Moola, Purva Shada, Uttara Shada (first part)** Some may face problems on domestic and financial fronts. They have both been your main issues for some time. Deal with utmost care and caution. Practice meditation, be spiritual and stay away from eating spicy food, which causes heat and anger in the body. Abstinence from eating non-vegetarian food on Thursday will be helpful. Donating yellow chana daal in your place of worship will ease the strains. On health issues, some may face liver, ear, sinus and allergy problems, take care. Precaution: Propitiate Jupiter, Rahu and Ketu.

**CAPRICORN / Makara (Earthen sign, ruling planet is Saturn) - (Dec. 22-Jan. 20) Saturn Sign – Stars covered Uttara Shada (last 3 parts) Shravana, Dhanistha (first 2 parts)** Domestic hardships cannot be ruled out; money conditions have also been strenuous for some time now; approach cautiously on these two fronts. Be wise while spending money, save more, spend less. Health may be affected by Kapha-related issues like sinus congestion, throat, allergies, diabetes, etc., and moderation in eating and lay emphasis on physical exercises more. Be extra careful while driving; do not gamble and work hard and count on less luck. Precaution: Propitiate Jupiter, Rahu and Ketu.

**AQUARIUS / Kumbha (Air sign, ruling planet is Saturn) – (Jan. 21-Feb. 19) Saturn Sign - Stars covered: Dhanishta (last 2 parts) Satabhisha, Purva Bhadra Pada (1st 3 parts)** Some of you may have more enemies than friends, be careful. Love life, domestic peace and happiness are all seen, this must be enjoyed with good health. Windy (Vaata) and phlegmatic (Kapha) diseases, troubles in the legs, unforeseen dangers, laziness, weakness due to over-exertion, mental affliction, and stomach troubles can erupt, so be careful. Money-wise, you will be able to balance between income and expenses. Precaution: Propitiate Jupiter, Rahu and Ketu.

**PISCES / Meena (Water sign, ruling planet is Jupiter) - (Feb. 20-March 20) Jupiter Sign - Stars covered: Purva Bhadra Pada (last part) Uttara Bhadra Pada, Revathi** You are creative and think of doing things differently. You have the fire in you and the ability to do things differently; whichever way, you are a winner. Take care of health, especially skin problems, problems related to Pitta (boils, ulcers, intestinal problems). Curb your temper. Fasting on milk and banana on Tuesday and Thursday may be beneficial. Monetary expenses will be high, spend wisely. Precaution: Navagraha pooja is highly beneficial.

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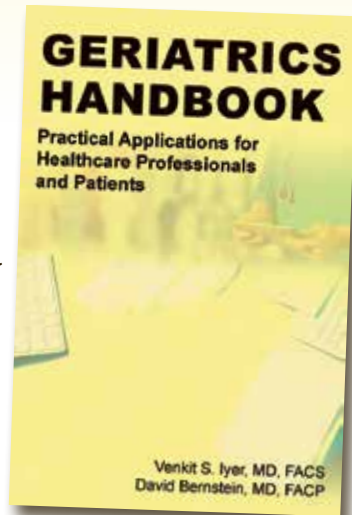
by Venkit S. Iyer, MD, MS, FACS, FRCS-C



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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## GENESIS GV70 ELECTRIFIED IS A GROUNDBREAKING RIDE!

Test-drive story by NITISH S. RELE [motoringtampabay@gmail.com](mailto:motoringtampabay@gmail.com)

Since Hyundai launched the offshoot Genesis in 2015, there has been no going back. In fact, the hot-selling luxury brand marches forward, solid and steady. The G70, G80 (gas and electric) and G90 sedans in the Genesis stable and the GV60, GV70 and GV80 SUVs have now been joined by the compact luxury GV70 Electrified. It provides more proof that quality, styling, design, and ease of use have been trademarks of Korean car builder's upmarket offshoot from Day One.

Sharing a platform with the Hyundai Ioniq 5 and Kia EV6, the all-electric and AWD GV70 is equipped with a 77.4 kWh lithium-ion polymer battery that assures the driver of going almost 236 miles on a full charge. Dual 160 kW front/rear electric motors crank out 429 horsepower and 516 pounds-feet of torque. Believe it or not, that takes the GV70 just four seconds to reach 0 to 60 mph in boost mode with 483 hp at its disposal.

Not bad for a vehicle that weighs nearly 4,890 pounds! 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. The good news is that Genesis is offering a three-year courtesy charge at any Electrify America station.

Up front, a clamshell hood meets up with jewel-like, parametric-pixel two-line LED headlights to convey a distinctive presence. The EV charging port is smartly hidden in the crest grille with its inverted G-Matrix pattern. Step inside and you'll discover a large 14.5-inch split-screen HD display for phone, nav and audio that can be controlled via a knob. Need to shift into park? The rotary dial selector is a handy touch. To be sure, Genesis coddles the occupants with three-zone auto a/c, 16-way power driver and 12-way front-passenger heated/cooled Nappa leather



### GV70 (PRESTIGE)

- Tires:** 265/45R20
- Wheelbase:** 113.2 inches
- Length:** 185.6 inches
- Width:** 75.2 inches
- Height:** 64.2 inches
- MPGe:** 98/83/91 (city, hwy, comb)
- Base price:** \$65,450
- Price as tested:** \$74,600
- Web site:** [www.genesis.com](http://www.genesis.com)

seats, head-up display, aluminum trim, three-zone climate control, heated second-row seat, hands-free liftgate, power/heated tilt/telescopic steering column and tilt-and-slide panoramic sunroof, Lexicon premium audio system and a suede headliner. A 12.3-inch digital cluster helps the driver monitor the speedometer, power, charge level and trip odometer gauges. And with Vehicle-to-Load feature, you can charge electric bikes, scooters and other gadgets via the outside port or another interface.

Its innovative looks, inside and out, plus cutting-edge technology make the GV70 Electrified an enticing choice. And with scarcely a carbon footprint to leave behind. Move over, Tesla, for a sensational and Electrified Genesis, with more promising EVs on the way.

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The 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. event will feature Indian food, dance, henna, music, handicrafts and clothing. More specifically, there will be live entertainment on the outdoor stage throughout the day, including modern and classical dances, and fashion shows. There also will be a Holi traditional color play from 4 to 5 p.m.

Tickets are \$10 per person. For information, call (239) 530-8085, email indiafest@iafortmyers.org or visit <https://www.iaftmyers.org/india-fest>



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If you don't know the above, contact, **Astrologer and Vedic Mantra Therapist, Pankaj Kohli** to create your Horoscope and perform a Personalized Pooja that Blesses YOU with Positive results.

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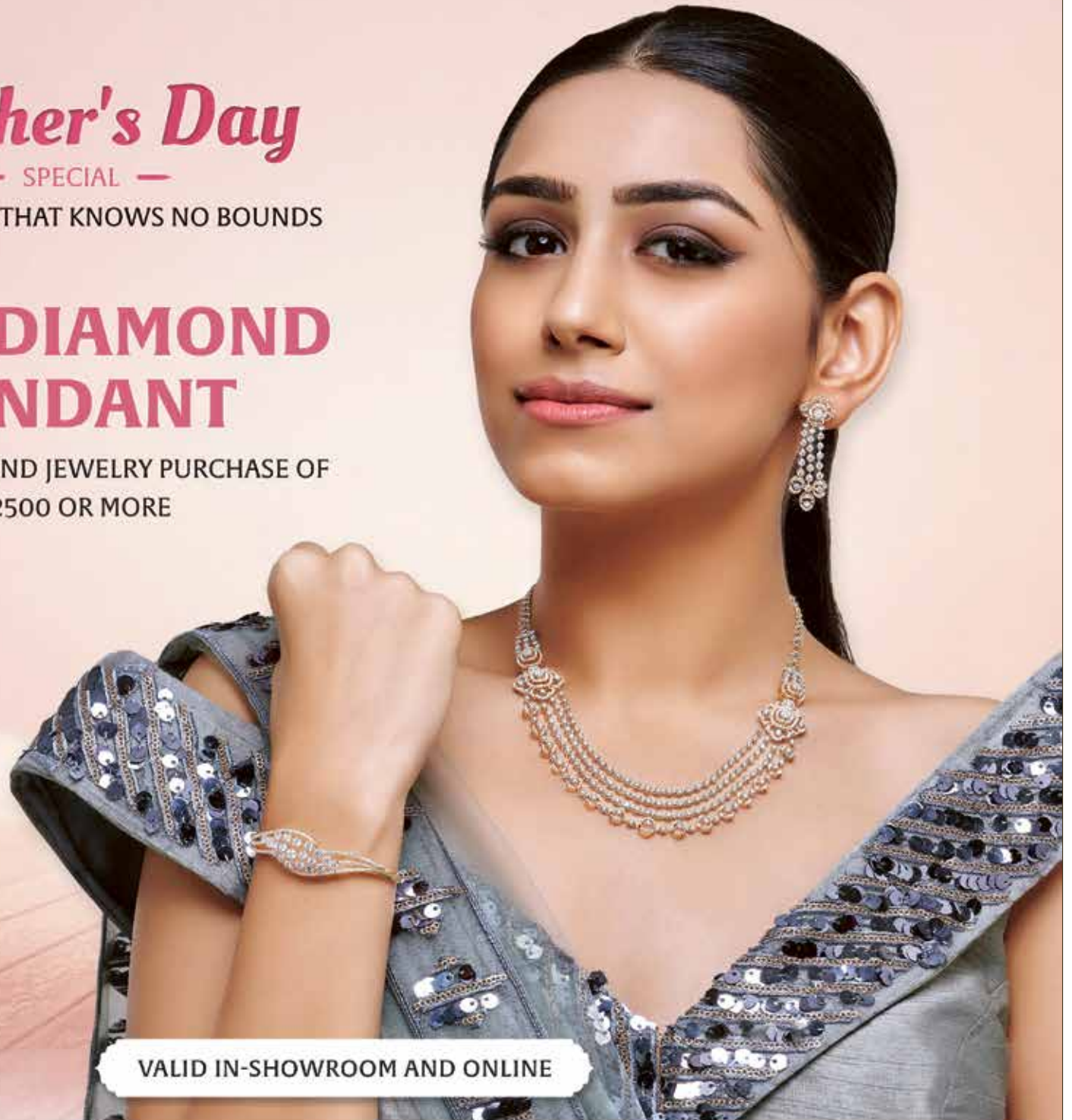
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