

KHAASBAAT

A PUBLICATION FOR INDIAN AMERICANS IN FLORIDA

JULY 2024

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Inside:



Upcoming event

Swami Mukundananda

2



Health

Cancer screening

4



Immigration

Biden actions

6



Classifieds

Help wanted

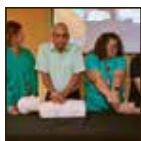
16



Astrology

July forecast

18



News

CPR training

19



SAVE THESE DATES!

Here are some important dates you want to note down on your calendar for later in the year.

TAMPA BAY AREA

INDIA FESTIVAL NOV. 23

Over 12,000 people are expected at the 31st annual event organized by the Gujarati Samaj of Tampa Bay.

ORLANDO/MAITLAND

'BEYOND BOLLYWOOD: SOUTH ASIAN FILM FEST' OCT. 5-7

Asian Cultural Association will hold the yearly film festival at the iconic Enzian Theater in Maitland.

SOUTH FLORIDA (FORT LAUDERDALE)

DIWALI CELEBRATIONS NOV. 16 IN FORT LAUDERDALE

The Festival of Lights is organized by the Indian Regional and Cultural Center (IRCC).

For more information on each event, please see page 16

FLORIDA'S BRUHAT SOMA WINS 2024 SCRIPPS NATIONAL SPELLING BEE

Story, page 9

PHOTO COURTESY: SCRIPPS



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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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E V E N T S

EVENTS

TAMPA/CLEARWATER/ST. PETERSBURG

JULY 3: GSTB SENIOR DAY; organized by Gujarati Samaj of Tampa Bay; India Cultural Center, 5511 Lynn Road, Tampa; 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.; \$10 for GSTB members, \$15 for non-members; lunch and entertainment; for information, call Mahesh Modha at (813) 476-1540.

JULY 7: JAGANNATH CHARIOT FESTIVAL; organized by Sanatan Mandir Tampa at Water Works Park, 1701 N. Highland Ave., Tampa; for details and sponsorship, call (813) 221-4482 or visit www.sanatanmandirtampa.org

JULY 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.

JULY 15-19: LIFE TRANSFORMATION PROGRAM; conducted by Swami Mukundananda; starts at 6:45 p.m. daily; Hindu Temple of Florida, 5509 Lynn Road, Tampa; for information, visit <https://www.jkyog.org/FL>

JULY 17: ICC SENIORS GET-TOGETHER; India Cultural Center, 5511 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

JULY 7: HSCF NEW AGE GROUP MEETING; Hindu Society of Central Florida community hall, 1994 Lake Drive, Casselberry; 2:30 to 5:30 p.m.; seminar on Alzheimer's disease; tea/coffee party with snacks; free for paid 2024 members with prior RSVP to hscfnewagegroup@gmail.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.

EMBARK ON A LIFE-TRANSFORMING JOURNEY WITH SWAMI MUKUNDANANDA JULY 15-19 IN TAMPA

Story provided by JK Yog



Discover a treasure trove of practical and spiritual wisdom by attending Swami Mukundananda's Life Transformation Program from July 15-19 at the Hindu Temple of Florida, 5509 Lynn Road. The ingredients of a successful life cost nothing since our thoughts are majorly responsible for happiness and distress. Swami Mukundananda will show us how to utilize thoughts to custom shape our lives by mastering our minds and applying those techniques daily. Swamiji's programs across the U.S. and India have improved and transformed the lives of many people. His teachings are rooted in ancient scriptures and modern science, offering invaluable guidance for navigating the

complexities of life.

Each evening starts at 6:45 with a Meet and Greet, followed by discourse and aarti. Dinner prasad will be served daily. Also, there will be daily morning walks and Satsang with Swamiji, providing opportunities to interact directly with him and ask questions.

Swamiji is a much sought-after speaker at companies like Google, Amazon and Apple as well as universities such as IITs, IIMs, MIT and Stanford. He is also spearheading the building of Jagadguru Kripalu University, a 100-acre campus in Orissa and has authored multiple best-selling books, including his recently published through Amazon, "Spiritual Secrets from Hinduism."

For information about the Tampa program, visit <https://www.jkyog.org/FL>

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MONTHLY EVENTS	WEEKLY EVENTS
TUESDAY, JULY 02 (6:00 PM) • PARDOSH PUJA	EVERY MONDAY - 6:30 PM • SHIV ABHISHEK AND PUJA
SATURDAY, JULY 06 (6:00 PM to 8:00 PM) • JAGANNATH NETROTSAV	EVERY TUESDAY - 7:00 PM • SUNDERKAND PATH • HANUMAN CHALISA
SUNDAY, JULY 07 (9:00 AM to 7:00 PM) • JAGANNATH RATH YATRA	EVERY THURSDAY - 7:00 PM • ALL SADGURU & SHIRDI SAI BABA BHAJAN SATSANG
SATURDAY, JULY 13 (4:00 PM to 8:00 PM) • JAGANNATH YAGNA	EKADASHI (6:00 PM) • MONDAY, JULY 01 • WEDNESDAY, JULY 31
SUNDAY, JULY 14 (4:00 PM to 6:00 PM) • ANAND NO GARBO	
THURSDAY, JULY 18 to TUESDAY JULY 23 (4:00 PM to 6:00 PM) • JAYA PARVATI VRAT PUJA	
SATURDAY, JULY 20 (4:00 PM to 8:00 PM) • GURU PURNIMA • DATTA SHIRDI SAI BABA PALAKI YATRA & HAVAN	For more detail, contact Pandit Manikya Sharma 813-484-9568 Pandit Rushi Vyas 813-503-3388 Pandit Pranav Bhatt 813-720-1460
SUNDAY, JULY 21 (5:00 PM to 8:00 PM) • MONTHLY MUSICAL SUNDERKAND PATH	
TUESDAY, JULY 23 (6:00 PM) • CHATURTHI HAVAN	
SUNDAY, JULY 28 (5:00 PM to 6:00 PM) • JHULAY LAAL BHAJAN	

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CANCER SCREENING RECOMMENDATIONS

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



Many people, including several doctors, are confused as to latest recommendations for screening for common cancers, such as breast, lung, prostate, colorectal, cervical, ovarian and skin. Screening entails performing tests on masses in large scale, who are otherwise healthy with no signs or symptoms of cancer. Such screening tests allow early detection of cancers that were hither-to unknown to exist, thus allowing early treatment and better chance for cure.

Breast cancer

USPSTF (Unites States Preventive Services Task Force) published its latest recommendations for screening for breast cancers in JAMA (Journal of American Medical Association) on April 30. This recommendation is also endorsed by American Cancer Society (ACS). All women are to get a routine mammogram every alternate year starting at age 40 till age 74. This is for those who are completely normal and healthy otherwise with no risk factors. Those who are known to have high risk for cancer should start screening much earlier or continue to further older age or get it done annually instead of biannually. From September onward, FDA is expected to mandate that the mammogram reports should specify findings of dense breast tissue when noticed, so that those women can choose to get additional tests such as sonogram or MRI. About 50 percent of women are noted to have dense breast tissue. Incorporation of artificial intelligence in readings of mammograms is expected to increase further accuracy.

Prostate cancer

American Cancer Society (ACS) recommends that all men above age 50 should get a blood test known as PSA (Prostate Specific Antigen). Generally, 4.0 ng/L is the cutoff. Anything above this level would warrant additional evaluations, and close follow-up. Otherwise, the test is to be repeated every other year. Progressively rising PSA level is cause for alarm and should be evaluated by a urologist to rule out prostate cancer. Screening tests can be stopped at age 80 or if life expectancy is less than 10 years for the individual.

Lung cancer

USPSTF made specific recommendations for screening for lung cancer in March 2021. The screening is required only for adults between 50 and 80 years of age, who have 20 pack-year history of smoking or are currently smoking or who quit smoking within the past 15-year period. They are recommended to have low dose computed tomography of chest (LDCT) once a year. If they have stopped smoking for more than 15 years duration or if they have serious other life limiting conditions, then the screening can be stopped. Basically, the test is a CAT scan of the lungs with low radiation to detect tumors or other abnormalities in the lung fields. A pack year of smoking means smoking one pack of cigarettes per day

for one year. Smoking includes cigarettes, cigars, vaping and any other form of nicotine use.

Colorectal cancer

Recognizing earlier onset of colorectal cancers, USPSTF and American Cancer Society in 2022 recommended screening for colorectal cancers to start at age 45. Initial tests could be fecal occult blood test (FOBT) or DNA stool test (Cologuard) or fecal immunochemical test (FIT) once every three years. FDA just approved a new RNA-based test on the stool (ColoSense). Further evaluation is recommended with colonoscopy once every 10 years till age 75. Alternative is virtual colonoscopy or sigmoidoscopy every five years. If any of the tests are abnormal, or if the person is at high risk or symptomatic, additional investigations are needed.

Cervical cancer

Women are recommended to have Pap smear (Pap test) between ages of 21 to 65 once every three years. In addition, those aged 30-65 can optionally get a co-test for HPV (Human Papilloma Virus) infection once every five years. According to a recent published study, there is a 90 percent reduction in cancer of cervix by doing routine Pap smear and HPV vaccination. It has been declared as a preventable cancer in the USA. The only HPV vaccine available in America is Gardasil 9 by Merck. Routine HPV vaccination of all boys and girls by age 11-12 is a recommendation to prevent not only cervical cancer, but also oral and anal cancers. However, this is met with hesitance and resistance by many parents.

Ovarian cancer

This is a hidden cancer that can grow to a large size with minimal symptoms. Unfortunately, there are no screening tests recommended for the general population. Risk factors such as previous cancers, family history of cancers or lower abdominal symptoms are to be followed up with medical evaluations.

Skin cancers

Skin cancers are the most common type of all cancers, but there are no screening tests. All abnormal looking spots are best evaluated by a physician or dermatologist. Biopsy may be needed for confirmation. A newer development in this field is AI (Artificial Intelligence) powered algorithms of images of skin lesions and tele dermatology platforms, where a mobile phone image of a skin lesion can be interpreted for diagnosis.

Cancers are dreaded diagnosis. The best chance for cure is with early detection and treatment. Screening tests are useful in this context for healthy living.

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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UPDATE ON NEW IMMIGRATION ACTIONS BY PRESIDENT BIDEN

By **DILIP PATEL**



A lot of media attention was devoted to the announcement on June 18, 2024, by President Biden of new actions for people who have been here many years to keep American families together and allow more young people to contribute to our economy.

First, it is important to note that these programs have not yet started. You cannot submit an application at this time. Details on how to apply will not be released until the end of the summer through a Federal Register notice.

These actions will be aimed at helping certain undocumented individuals in the United States, including certain spouses of U.S. citizens and college educated Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients.

Spouses of U.S. citizens

Spouses and children of U.S. citizens who do not have proof of legal entry and have been living in this country for at least 10 years. Such spouses may be eligible to apply for the green card without leaving the U.S., if, as of June 17, 2024, they had lived in the U.S. for at least 10 years and never left; and were legally married to a U.S. citizen (or, in case of children, the child had a qualifying stepchild relationship with a U.S. citizen parent).

Under the current process, such spouses would have to process their immigrant visas at a U.S. Consulate abroad and would need a waiver of the 10-year bar which would apply on the day they leave the U.S. for the consular interview. The new actions are aimed at allowing such qualifying spouses to apply for Adjustment of Status and obtain the Green Card in the U.S. without departure.

It is estimated that this may benefit approximately half a million spouses of U.S. citizens, and about 50,000 noncitizen children under the age of 21 whose parent is married to a U.S. citizen. The plan is to use a concept known as "Parole in Place". Parole would be granted for a one-time period of three years along with employment authorization for up to three years. The grant of the parole would enable eligibility to apply for the green

card. The applicant would still need to show that they do not have a negative criminal history or pose a threat to national security or public safety.

College Educated DACA recipients and Dreamers

The White House Fact Sheet also stated that the announcement, "will allow individuals, including DACA recipients and other Dreamers, who have earned a degree at an accredited U.S. institution of higher education in the United States, and who have received an offer of employment from a U.S. employer in a field related to their degree, to more quickly receive work visas."

However, no further details were provided. The Department of State followed with further guidance with the following Q & A. Bottom Line, if the applicant is qualified for a visa like the H-1B but are prevented from getting it because of prior unlawful presence, they could be eligible for a waiver of the 3- or 10-year bar (the "D3 Non-immigrant Waiver").

Q: What will these process clarifications mean for current NIV ineligibility waiver processing steps?

These clarifications will describe when consular officers should consider recommending that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) waive ineligibility for these applicants on an expedited basis, in conjunction with visa applications overseas. However, the processing steps will remain the same.

Waiver requests are adjudicated by the DHS, U.S. Customs and Border Protection's Admissibility Review Office.

For additional information related to visa ineligibility waivers, visit Ineligibilities and Waivers: Laws (state.gov).

Q: If an applicant needs a visa ineligibility waiver, how can they request one as part of a standard interview?

Applicants who are denied a visa will generally be notified by the consular officer of the basis for the ineligibility, and whether they are eligible for a waiver of their ineligibility.

If an applicant is ineligible for a visa based on certain grounds of inadmissibility in Section 212(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, they may be eligible for a waiver.

Waiver requests are adjudicated by the DHS, U.S. Customs

and Border Protection's Admissibility Review Office, based on a recommendation from the Department of State.

Q: How will forthcoming edits to the Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM) clarify existing guidance to consular officers?

Upcoming FAM updates will clarify when consular officers should recommend that DHS grant a waiver of the applicant's ineligibility, consistent with the waiver process that is already available under existing law to individuals seeking nonimmigrant visas, and consistent with department regulations that describe the types of cases in which consular officers should consider recommending a waiver of ineligibility. It does not confer any new benefits and is not limited to DACA recipients.

These updates will also encourage consular officers to consider recommending expedited review of waiver requests in conjunction with certain nonimmigrant visa applications overseas, consistent with existing Department regulations and guidance.

While leaving the U.S. to apply for a visa is not without risks, this policy will clarify when consular officers should consider recommending waivers, so that individuals and employers can make informed decisions and streamline the process so that those who qualify can get to work quickly.

Get the right help

While the announcement will be welcomed by many, it is too early to prepare and submit applications. Be patient and take the time to find the right help. The wrong advice could harm your chances of staying in the U.S., getting lawful status, or becoming a U.S. citizen. Don't be fooled by those who promise immediate results or special solutions in order to take your money. If you are unsure if someone is qualified to help, ask for proof of their credentials and retain a copy of that evidence. Finally, be aware that this program could also be legally challenged, which could impact its implementation. It makes it even more important to have a qualified, knowledgeable attorney.

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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ALL-NEW LEXUS TX SUV IS A SUPER HIT FROM THE GET-GO!

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

Not known to rest on its laurels, Lexus has added one more crossover SUV to its family. Based on the same platform as another fairly fresh Toyota Grand Highlander, the TX it comes with all the bells and whistles expected from the Japanese luxury carmaker division. There's bold styling, tremendous power, top-notch interior and tech-laden goodies to blow the competition away. Who would have thought the TX would take place of the RX-L?

Power for Lexus's innovative DIRECT4 all-wheel-drive SUV (providing immediate electric control to all four wheels) comes from a 2.4-liter inline-4-cylinder turbocharged engine. It packs 366 horsepower and 406 pounds-feet of torque. A front and rear electric motor assists with saving fuel. The TX hybrid is mated to an easy-to-engage 6-speed auto gearbox resulting in a quiet and receptive drivetrain. A F

Sport-tuned suspension handled via an independent MacPherson strut front and multilink rear absorbs serious bumps with ease. The electric power steering is razor sharp with a firm on-center feel. No worries about coming to a slowdown or stop as braking is handled by solid 15.7-inch front and 13.3-inch rear disc brakes. Normal, eco, sport and custom modes are at the driver's fingertips. Tow capacity is creditable at 5,000 pounds.

The sleek, aggressive front of the TX shows off a centered chrome bar with the distinct Lexus spindle grille flanked by auto-leveling bi-LED headlamps with a reversed L-shape design. The roomy cabin is tasteful and refined, allocating 20.2 cubic feet of space behind the 60/40 third row, 57.4 cubic feet behind the second-row Captain's chairs and 97 cubes with both seats folded. A mammoth 14-inch infotainment touchscreen display sits atop the dashboard while the driver can



LEXUS TX (F SPORT)

Tires: P255/45R22

Wheelbase: 116.1 inches

Length: 203.5 inches

Width: 78.3 inches

Height: 70.1 inches

Fuel capacity: 17.1 gallons

City: 27 mpg

Highway: 28 mpg

Weight: 4,730 pounds

Base price: \$71,300

Price as tested: \$78,254

Web site: www.lexus.com

stay focused on the 12.3-inch digital gauge cluster in the spacious 149-cubic-foot passenger capacity cabin. Other extravagant amenities include a tri-zone auto a/c, supple F Sport heated/cooled front seats, heated leather steering wheel and aluminum pedals/scuff plates, heated/cooled second-row Captain's chairs, fold-flat power third-row seat, head-up display, dual cupholders in third row, 21-speaker Mark Levinson sound system, and power lift gate and panoramic moon roof.

If the Grand Highlander is to your liking but you want to take a step up or two and can afford the steep price tag, opt for the stylish, functional, nimble and tidy TX. For \$71,300 base price, this six- or seven-passenger crossover shows off an upscale aura coupled with a degree of style and energetic performance. Honestly, Lexus has hit it out of the ballpark with the RX-L substitute.

COROLLA HATCHBACK GR IS A LITTLE POCKET ROCKET!

Take your standard 2024 Toyota Corolla hatchback and soup it up, as in turbocharge the little ride! Voila! You have the high-performance Corolla GR, or a pocket rocket of a ride to drive that moves quickly but gently down the road, and brakes just as swiftly and with poise.

An impressive 1.6-liter 3-cylinder engine cranks out 300 horsepower @ 6500 rpm and 273 pounds-feet of torque @ 5500 rpm. The all-wheel-drive hatch is mated to a sprightly and fun to drive 6-speed manual gear box. Rest assured that this chic Corolla will get up to speed with urgency, i.e. 0 to 60 in a mere 4.9 seconds with top speed at 142 mph. The MacPherson strut front and double wishbone multilink rear suspension soak up obstacles with ease and maintain stability in all types of tricky situations. Though not as responsive as one would like, the electric power steering is precise and crisp. Eco, normal, sport and custom modes are at the driver's disposal.

Up front, the hatchback is sleek, sharp and eye-catching. Flanking the slim, J-shaped LED headlights and fog lamps is a gloss grille and fender with the GR badge. It meets up to an aluminum bulge hood with functional air vents and a forged carbon-fiber roof. Triple brushed stainless-steel exhaust tips and spoiler enhance the aggressive outward appearance. The practical cabin is simply laid out with once again the GR emblem lavishly displayed on the 12.3-inch color TFT multi-information display, steering wheel, engine start button and front head rests. The Brin-Naub and synthetic leather seats with red stitches are gorgeous.



COROLLA GR (CIRCUIT)

Tires: P235/40R18

Wheelbase: 103.9 inches

Length: 169.9 inches

Width: 69.9 inches

Height: 57.1 inches

Fuel capacity: 13.2 gallons

City: 30 mpg

Highway: 38 mpg

Weight: 3,060 pounds

Base price: \$42,900

Price as tested: \$44,884

Web site: www.toyota.com

Other standard amenities are a single-zone auto a/c, 8-inch infotainment touchscreen, six-way power driver's and 4-way front-passenger seats, 8-speaker JBL premium sound system, 60/40 rear fold seat with center armrest, leather shifter knob and a manual tilt/telescopic steering column.

The sporty Corolla GR hatchback is incredibly nimble with a perky engine, which provides abundant punch to maneuver in rush-hour traffic. If you are one of those enthusiast drivers who likes to put pedal to the metal, you will take to this pocket rocket in a flash! Like we did!

Test-drive the Corolla at Gettel Toyota, 5088 N Dale Mabry Highway, Tampa, FL 33614, or call (813) 358-1002.

FLORIDA'S BRUHAT SOMA WINS 2024 SCRIPPS NATIONAL SPELLING BEE

By **NITISH S. RELE** – editor@khaasbaat.com

For a consecutive year, a Tampa Bay boy has won the Scripps National Spelling Bee. Bruhat Soma, 12, took the honor May 30 in the competition's ending spell-off. It came down to "Abseil" (meaning descent in mountaineering by means of a rope looped over a projection above), 29 of 30 words that the 12-year-old spelt correctly before he was awarded the championship title.

He became the third Florida winner after Dev Shah in 2023 and Nupur Lala in 1999, all Bay area residents. The seventh-grader previously competed in two national spelling bees. "Actually, this past year, I studied really hard. I gave it my best, practiced spell-offs, which is how I ultimately won," says Bruhat in an exclusive interview with Khaas Baat. The competition began with 245 contenders who earned their spots by advancing through regional spelling bees. They represented all the 50 states. The challengers then whittled down to 10 in the finals. Bruhat takes home \$50,000 in cash and a commemorative medal. What does he plan to do with the prize? "Donate it," he says. "There are many people who need it more than I do."

His father, Srinivas Soma, an IT professional at Verizon, recalled that when Bruhat was 6 years old, he joined the traditional sloka program of Jet USA (jetusa.org). "They are volunteers in Tampa, teaching slokas," he says. "His teachers told us that Bruhat has good memory, and he can quickly remember. That kind of helped with all the pronunciations. He knows 80 percent of the Bhagwad Gita."

Bruhat has taken part in numerous academic competitions, including the North South Foundation (www.northsouth.org), "I was 7 years old when I did my first spelling bee for NSF," he recalls. "Then I was in second grade and came in 8th. From there, I learned about the Web site spellpundit.com, which showed me what spelling bees are like." Plans for the future? "I want to be a doctor. Don't know what kind yet," he says.



Bruhat Soma with his parents and sisters.

PHOTO COURTESY: SCRIPPS

A student at Turner/Bartels K-8 School where he plays in a band, Bruhat's hobbies include playing basketball, other sports, reading, writing and watching TV. He has two sisters, and his mother Jyoti works at Citibank.

His advice to other kids? "If you have a goal, then work for it and you will be successful. And if not, set another goal and try harder."

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CATARACT AWARENESS MONTH: UNDERSTANDING, PREVENTION, TREATMENT

By Dr. ARUN C. GULANI



June was recognized as Cataract Awareness Month, a vital period dedicated to educating the public about cataracts — a leading cause of vision impairment among the elderly, yet often treatable with timely intervention. This month, health organizations and eye care professionals unite to highlight the importance of early detection and the effective treatments available for those affected.

I have in my previous columns (KhaasBaat) described my “cloudy” concept of cataract, the importance of awareness and the fact that modern technology today can allow cataract to be an excuse to custom designer surgery and provide you the best vision for the rest of your life

What is a cataract?

A cataract is a clouding of the eye’s natural lens, which lies behind the iris and the pupil. The lens works like a camera lens, focusing light onto the retina for clear vision. It also adjusts the eye’s focus, allowing us to see things clearly both up close and at a distance. As we age, the proteins in the lens can clump together, starting to cloud a small area of the lens. Over time, the cataract may grow larger and cloud more of the lens, making it harder to see.

Risk factors

While the most common cause of cataracts is aging, various other risk factors can accelerate their development: diabetes, excessive exposure to sunlight, smoking, obesity, high blood pressure, previous eye injuries or surgeries, prolonged use of corticosteroid medications and excessive alcohol consumption.

Most common symptoms

Cataracts start small and initially have little effect on your vision. Symptoms might include blurry sight, colors that seem faded, trouble with vision at night, glare and halos around lights and frequent changes in prescription glasses.

If you experience any of these symptoms, it’s crucial to see an eye care professional.

Prevention tips

While not all cataracts are preventable, certain actions might reduce your risk:

- * Wear sunglasses and a hat with a brim to block ultraviolet sunlight.
- * Quit smoking and reduce alcohol consumption.
- * Maintain a healthy weight and diet that includes plenty of fruits and vegetables.
- * Manage health problems like diabetes and high blood pressure.
- * Get regular eye examinations, especially as you age.

Advancements in treatment and lens implant technology

Cataract surgery has undergone significant advancements, making it one of the safest and most effective surgeries performed worldwide. The procedure generally involves removing the cloudy lens and replacing it with an artificial lens called an intraocular lens (IOL). Today’s IOL options include:

- * Monofocal lenses, which provide clear vision at one distance only (usually set for distance vision).
- * Multifocal lenses, which can reduce the need for reading glasses by providing clear vision at multiple distances.
- * Toric lenses, designed to correct astigmatism as well as cataracts.
- * Accommodating lenses, which can move or change shape inside the eye, allowing focusing at different distances.
- * Adjustable and combined lens implant technologies.

Additionally, new generation and innovative cataract surgical concepts like LenzOplastique® and further allow custom-designing of vision with advanced diagnostics, technology and artistic surgical skills.

AI-based advances in lasers and phacoemulsification make the surgery easier and predictable to include a smaller incision. This smaller incision often requires no stitches, reduces risks, and speeds up recovery time.

The Role of education

Education is key. Knowing about the risk factors, symptoms and treatment options can lead to earlier detection and care, significantly improving the quality of life. Various organizations provide resources and support for those affected, making it easier than ever to get help.

Conclusion: Cataract Awareness Month is not just about spreading awareness; it’s about encouraging action. It serves as a reminder for individuals to care for vision as they age. Early detection through regular eye exams can lead to effective management and treatment of cataracts, allowing individuals to enjoy clear vision longer. Let this month be a reminder to prioritize your eye health, for clear sight is a crucial part of a high-quality life.

So, don’t wait for your cataract to “mature;” please go see your eye doctor and insist on it being taken care of as an avenue toward your best vision potential.

Arun C. Gulani, M.D., M.S., is director and chief surgeon of Gulani Vision Institute in Jacksonville. He can be reached at gulanivision@gulani.com or visit www.gulanivision.com



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FINDING COLLEGE "FIT"

By **ROBERT A.G. LEVINE**



Learning isn't really dependent upon a school or its classes or teachers. It is actually about the individual student. Regardless of what is presented, do you learn anything well? Do you go beyond what is presented in class and pursue things that are not spoon fed? Do you rethink the paradigm and pursue a new state-of-the-art?

Success – in school and in life – is founded upon the best possible environment for you. Unfortunately, the term "college fit" is poorly defined and erratically applied.

At UCA, we utilize four factors in determining fit: the structure of the institution; the structure of the curriculum;

the on-campus culture; and the opportunities and limitations of the location.

Although seldom considered, the structure of the institution affects your education significantly. School size matters in terms of both student-professor interaction and social connection. However, beyond size, few people pay attention to how the structure of a school determines your environment.

At UCA, we consider schools as either "castles" or "open fields." Castle schools are universities which offer several "specialty" schools plus a general liberal arts school focusing on the arts and sciences. For example, the University of Pennsylvania offers the Wharton School of Business, the School of Engineering and Applied Science, the School of Nursing, and the College of Arts and Sciences. NYU is organized into 10 undergraduate schools; USC offers 23 schools and divisions. Think of them as housing much of their education within walls, while their broader curriculum is found outside in the courtyard.

Open field schools do not utilize sub-schools; everyone enters college and then picks their majors. Whom you meet and what you study will be more diverse than within a castle's walls. Harvard, Yale, Princeton and Stanford are liberal arts colleges which promote breadth of study, not just career paths.

The experience at each style of university will be different. When you study within a castle, you are immersed with students of similar career interests and take classes with similar academic focus. Within a castle, you are likely to "go deep." At an open-field college, where all students attend one school then select a major after studying for a year or two, you will study broadly.

You should also consider the school's term structure. Semesters split the school

year into two pieces. Quarters split the calendar year into four pieces: three during the normal school year, plus a summer quarter (which may or may not be optional). A Block Plan provides one course at a time: study for one month, take a final exam, rest and repeat. Co-op schools send students into internships – without classes – for one to four terms.

Beyond the institutional structure, consider each school's curricular structure. How many classes will you take? At Harvard, I took 32 classes in four years. At Northwestern, students usually take 45 to 48 courses. How many courses does a major require, and what are those courses? What one school includes in a business degree is not the same as at another. Are there distribution requirements beyond the major? In an Open Curriculum (for example, Brown University), there are no significant requirements. In a Core Curriculum, there are several courses required in many core areas; Columbia requires studying in 6 Core areas and offers 4 Core electives. In a school that promotes General Education, the distribution requirements vary between few and many.

Campus culture makes a big difference in your mood and thus also in your performance. Do you like competitive American sports? Do you want to be around people who drink alcohol, or not? Do the school's students primarily prefer academics, or do they like their academics to be joined by robust extracurricular activities? Are the students politically active, or religious?

Finally, do not underestimate the effect of location. Is the local airport a hub, or will you need multiple flights to arrive and depart (and also perhaps long journeys to/from the airport)? Are there opportunities for education and career immersion nearby? No college has robust business internships on campus, so if there's no society at your fingertips, your opportunities will be limited. If you like museums and theater, are they available? If you like the outdoors, will the concrete jungle of a big, metropolitan city fuel you appropriately? Is there public transportation, and is it easy to use?

We want the best for you. Understand what things work best for you, then find schools that provide those things.

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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DOES THE CORPORATE TRANSPARENCY ACT APPLY TO YOUR BUSINESS?

By **TEJAL DHRUVE**

Under the Corporate Transparency Act (CTA), many businesses are subject to new reporting requirements that went into effect on Jan. 1, 2024. That means certain companies are required to provide information related to their “beneficial owners,” i.e., the individuals who ultimately own or control the company, to the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN). Failure to submit a beneficial ownership information (BOI) report may result in civil or criminal penalties, or both.

Subsequent developments

On March 1, 2024, the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Alabama ruled that the CTA is unconstitutional. Does that mean that businesses no longer need to comply? Not necessarily. The federal government filed an appeal on March 11, 2024, in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit. That same day, FinCEN announced that the law’s requirements are still in effect for those not involved in the court case.

“While this litigation is ongoing, FinCEN will continue to implement the Corporate Transparency Act as required by Congress, while complying with the court’s order,” FinCEN stated. “Other than the particular individuals and entities subject to the court’s injunction ... reporting companies are still required to comply with the law and file beneficial ownership reports as provided in FinCEN’s regulations.”

More about the CTA

The CTA is intended to curb illicit finance, including terrorist financing, money laundering and other illegal activities. But it could also open the door to the inspection of family offices, investment angels and other private individuals who may have been shielded from scrutiny in the past.

The CTA’s rules generally apply to both domestic and foreign privately held reporting companies. For these purposes, a reporting company includes any corporation, limited

liability company or other legal entity created through documents filed with the appropriate state authorities. A foreign entity includes any private entity formed in a foreign country that is properly registered to do business in the United States.

The complete list of entities that are exempt from the reporting rules is too lengthy to include here, ranging from government units to not-for-profit organizations to insurance companies and more. Notably, an exemption was created for a “large operating company” that employs more than 20 persons on a full-time basis, has more than \$5 million in gross receipts or sales (not including receipts and sales from foreign sources), and physically operates in the United States. However, many of these companies already must meet other reporting requirements providing comparable information.

If an entity initially qualifies for the large operating company exemption but subsequently falls short, it must then file a BOI report. On the other hand, an entity that might not currently qualify for an exemption can update its status with FinCEN to potentially gain exemption status.

Compliance deadlines

The deadline to comply depends on the entity’s date of formation. Reporting companies created or registered prior to Jan. 1, 2024, have one year to comply by filing initial reports. Those created or registered on or after Jan. 1, 2024, but before Jan. 1, 2025, will have 90 days upon receipt of their creation or registration documents to file their initial reports. Entities created or registered on or after Jan. 1, 2025, will have 30 days upon receipt of their creation or registration documents to file their initial reports.

But stay tuned for more developments as the CTA case noted above goes through the appeals process. There could be other litigation as well, or Congress could make changes to the law.

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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TOTALLY OVERHAULED 2025 CAMRY IS A BOLD ATTEMPT ... AND IT WORKS!

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

We waited and waited for years and finally Toyota has delivered. A brand-new Camry unlike any other in the past, the 2025 sedan will take your breath away. It is a total overhaul from any of its predecessors, grille to bumper.

For starters, the V-6-cylinder engine is history. In fact, there is no non-hybrid powertrain. You can get a front-wheel or all-wheel-drive Camry with a 2.5-liter 4-cylinder hybrid engine putting out a decent 225 and 232 horsepower respectively and 163 pounds-feet of torque @ 5200 rpm. Instead of the sole electric motor, another one has been added to the rear. Gone is the previous 6-speed auto gearbox in the best-selling car in the United States for 22 years. It has been replaced with continuous variable transmission to result in gas savings. The retuned suspension is made up of the front independent MacPherson strut and a multilink rear. Noticeably lowered are noise, vibration and harshness (NVH) levels. Normal, eco, sport and EV modes are available.

Dimension-wise, the 2025 Camry mostly stays the same except for a slight length boost. For the sporty SE trim, that translates into a sleeker sedan portraying a wider black sport mesh grille with racing-inspired front-side canards, black air ducts and sport-styled rocker panels. Black CAMRY letters on the rear badge draw attention along with LED tail lamps, also with a smoke tinge, subtle lip spoiler and, of course, dual quad chrome exhaust tips. The functional interior is straightforward but well laid-out as expected of any Toyota. Though made of synthetic leather, the seats are cozy and pleasing enough. Storage spaces are



CAMRY (SE, AWD)

Tires: P235/45R18

Wheelbase: 111.2 inches

Length: 193.5 inches

Width: 72.4 inches

Height: 56.9 inches

Steering: electric power rack-and-pinion

Fuel capacity: 13 gallons

City, highway: 44 mpg each

Weight: 3,627 pounds

Base price: \$32,225

Web site: www.toyota.com

scattered throughout the cabin. Our test drive arrived with a splendid though optional 12.3-inch infotainment touch screen, dual auto a/c, eight-way power driver and six-way front-passenger heated seats, 60/40 rear seat, panoramic moon roof, three-spoke manual tilt/telescopic steering column and a wireless phone charger.

This bread-and-butter vehicle for and from Toyota is a nimble, athletic and tidy gas-sipper that seats five in comfort. The total revamp inside and out for the ninth-generation 2025 model, a pleasant surprise indeed, can only keep the midsize sedan at the top for several years to come

Test-drive the 2025 Camry at Gettel Toyota, 5088 N Dale Mabry Highway, Tampa, FL 33614, or call (813) 358-1002.

MAZDA3 SEDAN IS A FUN, ATTRACTIVE EVERYDAY RIDE!

The potential compact car buyer has endless options on a dealer's lot but there is one fine ride that stands out for its agility, coolness and sheer excitement. And that, of course, is the Mazda3. Take your pick: the sedan which we recently tested or the hatchback we have driven in the past. Both will leave a smile on your face.

Under the hood of the Mazda3 sits a turbocharged engine putting out 227 horsepower @ 5000 rpm and 310 pounds-feet of torque @ 2500 rpm (with 87 octane gas). A smooth-shifting 6-speed auto gearbox makes the drive even more fun.

Suspension is handled via a MacPherson strut front and a torsion beam axle rear so unpleasant road bumps or curves are handled with ease. The electric power rack-and-pinion steering is instant and on the mark. As always, it is equipped with the direct-injection Skyactiv, which uses a torque boost via a high compression ratio to increase fuel economy.

A black metallic-finish grille hosts a centered Mazda insignia, surrounded by horizontal LED adaptive headlights and daytime running lights. Also distinct are side sill extensions, rear hatch spoiler, heated power side mirrors, all in black, and a shark-fin antenna. Other carmakers could benefit from borrowing the simple command control center to operate the all-new and bigger 10.25-inch navigation/infotainment screen. Rich-looking black leather upholstery gives the



MAZDA3 AWD (PREMIUM PLUS)

Tires: P215/45R18

Wheelbase: 107.3 inches

Length: 183.5 inches

Width: 70.7 inches

Height: 56.9 inches

Weight: 3,395 pounds

Fuel capacity: 12.7 gallons

City: 23 mpg

Highway: 32 mpg

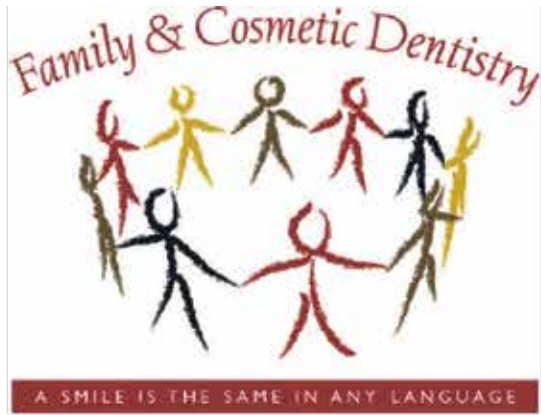
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cabin a gorgeous vibe. Other admirable comforts include eight-way power driver and four-way manual front-passenger heated seats, push-button start, dual auto a/c, 60/40 fold-down rear seat with hidden armrest and cup holders, overhead sunglass holder, head-up display, power windows and door locks, paddle shifters, power moon roof, Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, Bose 12-speaker audio and AM/FM.

The supple and exciting Mazda3 is a compact car, so we will excuse the tight rear seat for passengers. But this fuel-sipper, especially on the highway, is affordable, stylish and enjoyable for the daily jaunt or even to take on a long trip.



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**Happy
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Also know your “Janmaank or Lucky No.,” “Tattwa or Element of Air, Water or Heat” in your body; coz imbalance of these Tattwas’ is the root cause of our ailments!

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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We are a nice Indian family looking for a Nanny to help raise our newborn daughter. Preferably Hindi or Malayalam speaking, but not an absolute requirement. Should be OK with light housework. Call Silpa Taunk (Mom) at (202) 372-5626.

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Job opportunities in Tampa for Goldsmiths and Diamond Repair Specialists at Malani Jewelers. Please call 404-298-7811 or email info@malanijewelers.com for details.

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Tampa restaurant is looking for servers, food runners and front host. Good pay. Call (972) 900-1526 or email minervatampa@gmail.com

SAVE THESE DATES!

TAMPA BAY AREA INDIA FESTIVAL NOV. 23

Organized by the Gujarati Samaj of Tampa Bay, the daylong 31st India Festival will be held on Saturday, Nov. 23, at the Florida State Fairgrounds, 4800 U.S. 301 N. More than 12,000 people are expected to attend. As always, booths will offer clothes, jewelry, arts and crafts, photo studio and home décor/furniture and more. There also will be numerous eateries selling delicacies such as samosas, bhel puri, chicken curry and dosas.



In the entertainment area, performers will be adorned in colorful attire for categories of dance competition in various age groups – garba, raas, folk and bhangra. Several closed-circuit TV monitors will be set up so people can shop and eat while watching the dances.

This year’s India Fest chair is Nikunj Patel and can be reached at (727) 804-4513. For information, visit www.indiafestivaltampabay.com



Enzian Theater in Maitland.

ORLANDO/MAITLAND ‘BEYOND BOLLYWOOD: SOUTH ASIAN FILM FEST’ OCT. 5-7

“Beyond Bollywood: The 30th Annual South Asian Film Festival” will be held Oct. 5-7 at Enzian Theater in Maitland/Orlando. The event showcases diverse images of South Asian (India/Pakistan/Bangladesh) culture and heritage through acclaimed independent

films from across the globe. Part of Enzian Theater’s cultural festival circuit, it is co-presented with the Asian Cultural Association.

Enzian Theater is at 1300 S. Orlando Ave., Maitland. For a list of films, tickets and other details, visit www.enzian.org close to event date.

SOUTH FLORIDA (FORT LAUDERDALE) DIWALI CELEBRATIONS NOV. 16 IN FORT LAUDERDALE

All roads lead to the Broward County Convention Center as the Indian Regional and Cultural Center (IRCC) celebrates the 12th Diwali Festival of Lights, from noon to 10 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 16. The event, ideal for all ages with performances that include Bollywood/folk dances, showcases Indian clothing, jewelry, dance, music, art and cuisine.



Rangoli competitions are also planned.

Broward County Convention Center is at 1950 Eisenhower Blvd., Fort Lauderdale. For tickets and information, including sponsorship opportunities, vendor booths, donations and volunteering, visit <https://ircclorida.org/>

Disclaimer: Event details are subject to change; please check with local organizers.

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JULY 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)

The influences of some transitory planetary effects are to adversely go against interest. Expect fruitful results in business, trade circles and financial ventures.

Intellectual faculties may function effectively and spoken words could have power and command. Success in business ventures, marriage alliances are possible for eligible. Better period for pursuing educational studies and academical careers and an overall cheerful period lies ahead. Don't allow your Martian temper to overtake calm posture. You may tend to be rash at times but need to keep under control.

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) Some planets could produce mixed results. You are practical in every sense. The planetary aspect upon sign makes you a person of success in some new ventures. New ideas could flow in. Some fresh responsibilities should be entrusted. Spoken words may have great command and things can be done easily and effectively. Social contacts and circle of influence

increase, making it a practical month. Take care of health.

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) Transitory planets are favorable. An enthusiastic and cheerful period could lead in the right direction, making it a fun month. This means you may have satisfactory results in everything you touch. Success in undertakings is seen by some. Marriage and engagements can get settled to satisfaction. Business partnership and financial gains look favorable, and some may find unexpected sources to increase income.

CANCER / Kataka (Watery sign, ruling planet is Moon) - (June 22-July 22) Moon Sign – Stars covered Punarvasu (4th part), Pushya, Aslesha Cancerians are to go with testing times. Some planets may test patience and adverse conditions. Fluidity is the nature of the Moon and sign lord is the significator planet for the mind. It is highly recommended that one should exercise control over the mind, but not the other way round! Some may not be able to take firm decisions on important matters; it is recommended you break the comfort zone, shed inhibition and act according to the situation. Success in daily routine affairs, however, takes due precautions.

LEO / Simha (Fire sign, ruling planet is Sun) - (July 23-Aug. 22) Moon Sign – Stars covered Magha, Purva Phalguni, Uttara Phalguni (1st part) Most planets are favorable, some may also produce slightly negative effects; yet at the end, adverse effects are overcome. Beneficial conditions persist; however, expenditure matches income. Word power may have full command. Family and social standards could rise further. Many projects are likely to pick up. Success in the workplace is seen too, though there may be stress due to restlessness and overwork.

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) Mercury, the sign lord is transiting powerfully along with most planets, which are favorable too. However, some planets might create a testing time. This means there may be obstacles. Bearing this in mind, if one navigates skillfully and is tactful, success is possible, and goals can be achieved. Maintain unshakeable faith in the divine force.

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) The transition of Venus, sign lord, is encouraging for personal achievements, particularly, in finance, profession and business. You will enjoy family domestic happiness. Fortune may shine, and favorable health conditions can be seen too. Some may have to put extra effort owing to certain negative currents. Let Venetian power take over things. Some may find this to be a winning month with regards to professional upliftment and career progression. Be alert

against rash behavior though.

SCORPIO / Vruschika (Water sign, ruling planet is Mars) - (Oct. 24-Nov. 22) Moon Sign – Stars covered Vishakha (4th part), Anuradha, Jyestha Social circle, new contacts may develop. Family setup, financial improvements, domestic happiness can be helpful. Some of you may feel spiritually enlightened and inspired to rise. Easy flow of money, additional sources of income and special gains can be seen too. Health-wise, some people with weak digestion need to be careful with eating habits. Slightly heavy expenditure cannot be ruled out too!

SAGITTARIUS / Dhanush (Fire sign, ruling planet is Jupiter) - (Nov. 23-Dec. 21) Moon Sign – Stars covered Moola, Purva Shada, Uttara Shada (first part) Planetary transition looks satisfactory for marital matters along with change in workplace. Professionally, change of place for furthering career is possible. Expenditures equal income; take care of economic conditions. The transit of some planets can work adversely, and some may face unexpected hurdles in domestic sphere and physical health. Take due care.

CAPRICORN / Makara (Earthen sign, ruling planet is Saturn) - (Dec. 22-Jan. 20) Moon Sign – Stars covered Uttara Shada (last 3 parts) Shravana, Dhanistha (first 2 parts) Transition of major planets is highly congenial for health and family welfare. This seems to be a positive time for most natives. Professional and financial progress can be seen too. It is a positive time for people with constructive projects and a proper plan to act. Overall assessment shows a progressive month ahead with a cheerful note. Propitiation for Saturn, Rahu and Ketu may be highly rewarding.

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) Belonging to a well-dignified planet and mystic sign, Aquarians have leadership qualities. Your sign lord Saturn transits through the sign making it a positive time for many. Due promotions, business developments, partnership, expansions and developing new projects are possible owing to positive trends. Adverse currents are eliminated by virtue of positive power. However, guard against stressful conditions, heavy work pressure and stressful journeys. Remedy: Performing daily prayers with deep devotion helps ward off pessimism.

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 Time is valuable to implement ideas into action. Expansion schemes may work out well. Due to positive transitory effects, rich benefits are expected for income and sudden gains for some. Rewarding business travel is on the card for a few. You will march ahead in a cheerful manner with full self-confidence.

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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ADVENTHEALTH OFFERS CPR TRAINING AT GSTB SENIORS EVENT



Ten staff members of AdventHealth brought mannequins to provide Hands-Only CPR (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation) training to Gujarati Samaj of Tampa Bay on Senior Day June 5. They also offered advice on rescue breathing by Ambu bag (artificial manual breathing unit).

Life-threatening emergencies take place at home or workplace anytime of the day. During cardiac arrest, a person stops

breathing. Each year, half a million people suffer cardiac arrests and CPR can double or triple the chance of survival when bystanders act.

GSTB seniors meet the first Wednesday of each month from 10.30 a.m. to 2.30 p.m. at ICC, 5511 Lynn Road, Tampa. For information, call Mahesh Modha at (813) 476-1540.



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