The Putin

Interview:

Stoking of

a Nuclear

Vice Admiral Vijay Shankar,

PVSM, AVSM (Retd)

Vladimir

and timing of the interview, the

Western media will have the world

believe, was an attempt to influence

the American presidential elec-

tions. 'Naked and provocative prop-

aganda against President Joe

Biden's Ukraine Policy,' claimed the

detractors, which included the so

called 'liberal' media. And vet, the

NATO is suffering from pangs of

session comes at a time when

Ukraine Fatigue,' and burden of

the conflict has globally stressed

economies, drain on military

resources of the West hollowing out

their own preparedness, anxiety of

nuclear escalation, and indeed, the

third year of war and loss of lives

has left the Ukrainian citizenry

with fading appetite for the conflict.

inimitably sardonic style, set

about delivering a primer to

Tucker on Russian history.

Beginning with the first East

Slavic state, Kievan Rus, that

arose in the 9th century, through

the influence of the Byzantine

Church, that gave to the state

Orthodox Christianity, he arrived

at the rule of Oleg the Wise (879

CE), a Varangian Prince, who

founded an empire, which over

three centuries, spread to cover

the modern State of Belarus.

Slavonic-Norse Russia and signif-

icantly, Ukraine. Putin appeared

to emphasize that the unit of his-

torical understanding was nei-

ther nations nor epochs but soci-

eties such as that which bound

the Orthodox Christians together.

This historical narrative, to

Putin, established the civiliza-

tional connect with Ukraine and

set the stage for Tucker's and

obliquely the West's discernment

of Russia's title to territories

In dragging Tucker through the

common attributes of shared civi-

lizational institutions, what really

was Putin's aim? Was it to educate his

viewers through Mr. Carlson or was

it to show conviction that the West

and NATO could do little to alter the

new reality of Ukraine other than to

accept it. Intervention, as Putin

warned recently, would lead to

inhabited by cultural brethren.

In the meantime, Putin, in his

n 06 February, 2024,

breached his self-

imposed hiatus on the

Western media and

offered a sitting to Mr.

Tucker Carlson. This

is an insight into

world affairs and ram-

ifications. The reason

olar bears are furry and majestic beasts that roam across the cold Arctic ice. However, in the past few decades, sea ice in the Arctic has been melting at an alarmingly fast rate, leading the polar ice cap to shrink over time. Because of this, polar bears have been losing their habitats, their sources of food and, ultimately, dying from starvation and exhaustion. International Polar Bear Day aims to raise awareness of the issues threatening these creatures and encourage change. We can all do our bit to help protect these vulnerable creatures and ensure that they thrive.

राष्ट्रदुत 27 February 2025

Move over Big Screen!

Make Space for the Digital Revolution!

Streaming Stardom: IIFA Digital Awards 2025 takes OTT Glitz to the next level! Digital audiences, assemble! The IIFA Digital Awards 2025 is here to celebrate the biggest, boldest, and most bingeworthy content that had us glued to our screens. From edge-of-the-seat thrillers to heartwarming dramas, these awards honour the best of Indian OTT and digital entertainment, proving that storytelling has officially gone beyond the silver screen! With the 25th edition of IIFA bringing the magic of Bollywood to Jaipur, the Sobha Realty IIFA Digital Awards, copresented by NEXA, marks a revolutionary moment. This is where streaming stars shine, directors redefine cinema, and the best in digital entertainment gets its long-overdue moment in the limelight!



#IIFA JAIPUR

Who's Leading the

ment industry! From heartwarmances and mind-blowing stories from the streaming universe! the-seat crime dramas, this year's nominations prove that digital storytelling has no boundaries. So who's leading the charge in this

Best Leading Actor



- Chamkila)
- Vikrant Massey (Sector 36) Pratik Gandhi (Agni)
- Pankaj Tripathi (Murder
- Nawazuddin Siddiqui (Rautu







Kothari

oonus night of entertainment, Jaipur! If you thought the grand spectacle of IIFA 2025 was all about Bollywood's biggest stars, think again! The Sobha Realty IIFA Digital Awards, co-presented by NEXA, is here to celebrate our true obses sion-binge-worthy content that kept us glued to our screens all year long! And here's the best part,

it's all happening as a special extra

night of fun on March 8, 2025, right

before the grand IIFA Weekend

and Awards! Double the entertain-

ment, double the magic!

staying ahead of the curve, recognizing OTT brilliance across categories like Best Film, Best Series, Best Director, Best Performance in a Leading Role, Best Reality or Non-Scripted Series, Best Docuseries, Best Original Story, and Best Title Track.

■ n an industry that's con- And trust us, the competition stantly evolving, IIFA is is sizzling hot! Leading the 'Panchavat.' which dominates the nominations with 10 nods. Following closely are two pow Chamkila and Heeramandi. The Diamond Bazaar, each

charge is the fan-favourite, critically acclaimed show

securing 6 nominations.

From Theatres to Thrilling Streams: The Rise of IIFA Digital Awards!

he IIFA Digital Awards were first introduced in 2023 to recognize the unparalleled impact of OTT content on our viewing habits. With audiences shifting from cinema halls to cozy couches and unlimited streaming marathons, IIFA knew it was time to celebrate this digital storytelling revolution! Fast forward to 2025, and we're already at the third edition of this game-changing event, now making its dazzling debut in Jaipur! So, Jaipurites, get ready because your city is about to become the epicenter of digital entertainment!

- Panchayat, Season 3: 10 nominations! The heartwarming, small-town dramedy continues its winning streak with stellar storytelling and performances.
- Amar Singh Chamkila: 6 nominations! The high-energy, music-fueled biopic has audiences and critics raving.
- Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar: 6 nominations! Sanjay Leela Bhansali's grand spectacle is a visual and emotional masterpiece.

The Heavyweights of Digital Excellence A Night of Stars, Sizzle and Spectacular Performances!

carpet in style!

he IIFA Digital Awards 2025 isn't just about trophies, it's about bringing the OTT world to life! This year, get ready for an entertainment explosion, featuring hilarious hosts, show-stopping acts, and the biggest digital stars!

Power-Packed **Performances:** Nora Fatehi, Mika Singh, and Sachin-Jigar are all set to set the stage on fire! Witty Charismatic Hosts: Aparshakti Khurana, Varma, and Abhishek Baneriee will keep the night light livelv. and full of laughs! Global OTT Glamour: Streaming superstars. visionary directors, and vour favourite content creators will walk the green



- Siddharth P Malhotra (Maharai)
 - And let's not forget our powerhouse performances! Who will be crowned the King and Queen of

Best Leading Actress Nominees

he countdown is ON! March 8,



rajeshsharma 1049@gmail.com

Streaming Charge?

This year's nominees prove that OTT is ruling the entertaining village tales to high-octane thrillers, the Sobha Realty IIFA Digital Awards 2025 are set to honour the most spectacular perform-From thrilling biopics to edge-ofyear's race for streaming supremacy? Let's dive into the most antici-

Nominees





Gullak S04- A warm, nostalgio iourney into a middle-class

Best Film: The Ultimate Digital Blockbusters

Best Series Nominees: The Binge-Worthy Giants

Amar Singh Chamkila- A musical biopic that captures the rise and fall of a Punjabi

Panchavat Season 3- The

small-town dramedy that con-

tinues to steal hearts with its

Heeramandi: The Diamond

Bhansali's breath-taking period

Kota Factory Season 3- The

IC 814: The Kandahar

thriller based on real events.

Hijack- A nerve-racking

Maamla Legal Hai- A witty.

sharp legal drama that's got

keeps getting better!

beloved student-life saga that

- Sanjay Leela

- Phir Aayi Hasseen Dillruba-The mystery-romance thriller returns with more twists and Agni- A gripping action-drama
- packed with intensity. Sector 36- A crime thriller that keeps you on the edge of your

Maharaj- A historical drama

Best Director: The Visionaries Behind the Screen

- Imtiaz Ali (Amar Singh • Shuchi Talati (Girls Will Be
- Aditya Nimbalkar (Sector 36)
- Rahul Dholakia (Agni)



- Ananya Panday (CTRL) Parineeti Chopra (Amar Singh
- Taapsee Pannu (Phir Aayi Hasseen Dillruba)
- Preeti Panigrahi (Girls Will Be • Kriti Sanon (Do Patti)

Jaipur, Are You Ready?

2025 is the date, and Jaipur Exhibition and Convention Centre (JECC) is THE place to be! Extra Bonus Entertainment Night! This isn't just an awards show, it's an electrifying tribute to digital excellence that's rewriting the

rules of entertainment! So, who will reign supreme in the streaming world? Stay tuned, stay excit-

#WORLDVIEW

threat could rise exponentially.

sons, "Putin cannot be negotiated

with, and the West was not ready

Efforts to obtain authentic

for the war to end.'

THE PERILOUS BALANCE OF TERROR

ven after the many threats of uclear escalation during the course of conflict, few in the West subscribe to the view that Mr. Putin will make an irrational decision to attack NATO states with nuclear weapons in retaliation for support to Ukraine. And vet, everything about this conflict, whether it was the abrogation of the Minsk Agreements. President Yanukovych's ouster. Zelensky's bid to enter NATO, the purposeless sabotage of the Nord Stream gas pipeline, the self-blow to Western economies or even the stubborn support to a proxy war, are irrational in character and illogical in progression. The final astonishing contradiction is what the Western allies consider likely. Russia will use tactical nuclear weapons. Yet, they persist with supporting the war with munitions and training in the entrenched strategic belief that tactical nuclear weapons are far less damaging than city-destroying high-yield nuclear weapons and therefore (outrageously), more 'usable.' In this disordered ambience, is there mass insanity in the belief that the risk of escalation by Western allies is not a certainty? The hostile detonation of a

War?

nuclear weapon, of any yield, would be an unprecedented denial of the dogma of deterrence, a theory that has underwritten military policy for the past 75 years. The idea stipulates that adversaries are deterred from launching a nuclear attack because by doing so, they risk an overwhelming counterattack. Possessing nuclear weapons isn't about winning a nuclear war, the theory goes, it is about preventing one. It hinges, perilously, upon a balance of terror. But, one is at a loss to explain the brinkmanship that has persistently stimulated this line of thinking that the provocation for nuclear use, in some absurd way, advances the waraims. The danger of nuclear use in Ukraine fluctuates. It waned after Ukraine's counter-offensive of the summer of 2023 proved a fizzle. But, if Kremlin feels threatened by increased NATO intervention or conflict losses, it could create more dependency on Russia's nuclear arsenal, and the

Coming to the central issue of termination of the war in Ukraine, Putin made a revelation. A few weeks into the conflict, he disclosed that Ukraine was ready to sign a deal with Russia during 2022), until Western powers, led

peace talks in Istanbul (April by the then British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, ordered Kyiv to scrap the deal. Negotiators had tentatively agreed on the outlines of an inter im settlement, "Russia would withdraw to its position on 23 February, 2022, when it controlled part of the Donbas region (Donetsk and Luhansk), and in exchange, Ukraine would promise not to seek NATO membership, and instead, receive security guarantees from a number of countries." Putin then highlight ed the impact of Boris Johnson's surprise visit to Kiev on 09 April. 2022, its purpose, as he alleged, was to break off from talks and scuttle the deal for two key rea-

facts on details of the Johnson-Zelensky meeting through Britain's Freedom of Information Act 2000 have thus far met with bureaucratic chicanery. While on ground, the British government has encouraged the continuation of the war through huge arms' shipments and incendiary rhetoric. When read in conjunction with the US Secretary for Defence statement of the same period, that the Biden administration's objective in arming Ukrainian forces is to 'see Russia weakened to the degree that it can't do the kinds of things that it has done in invading Ukraine,' lends credence to Putin's revelation. In the meantime, the European Union goes into strategic dither as France turns Hawk from a Dovish posture of the past. French President Macron's stance towards the war in Ukraine is at best, inconsistent. He has argued that Europe 'must get prepared for a long war' in order to put Ukraine in the best possible position for negotiations. He also defended his decision to keep talkmust do everything to make a negotiated peace possible.'

Russia will use tactical nuclear weapons. Yet, they persist with

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supporting the war with munitions and training in the

far less damaging than city-destroying high-yield nuclear

weapons, and therefore (outrageously), more 'usable.'

Differences over the response to the war have deepened between Paris and Berlin in recent weeks. after the German chancellor said that long-range Taurus missiles would need German soldiers on the ground in Ukraine, to look after them, and that was a limit that he was not prepared to cross. President Macron has angered his NATO partners by suggesting that sending Western troops could not be ruled out. In this ambience of contrariety, what may be deduced is the absence of resolve to either fuel the conflict towards a decision point or to sue for a negotiated peace. Macron's logic for peace appears skewed when he warned that Russia was seeking to extend its power and would not stop now, "If we let Ukraine lose this war, then for sure. Russia will threaten Romania, Poland and Moldavia," forgetting that NATO is bound to defend the former two being members, while public opinion in Moldavia (over 60%) is against NATO membership. NATO Secretary General,

Jens Stoltenberg, further muddied the waters when he warned recently that Ukrainians were 'not running out of courage, they are running out of ammunition. He said that the shortage was one of the reasons why Russia had made recent advances on the battlefield, and he called on the allies to provide Ukraine with what it needed. He even suggested the possibility of deploying troops in Ukraine, much to the astonishment of some allies. In the backdrop, the Trump-Biden tangle, in the looming American general elections, has put on notice the (hitherto) trusty US security What is becoming increasing-

ly apparent is the lack of strategic solidarity in NATO's approach to the conflict, but more importantly, the inability to note that it is to the Kremlin's advantage to make this a conflict against NATO, for it frees Putin's strategic options. As the veil on the West's proxy war falls away, the West's rhetoric and discordant postures suggest the possibility of a mounting logic for a

REOPENING PEACE TALKS

utin's exposé is the cause for the-counter shipping corridor several misgivings. Why did The passageway is guaranteed Western leaders want to stop by no nation other than a notion-Kyiv from signing a seemingly reasonable deal with Moscow? Did they consider the conflict a proxy war whose aim was the emaciation of Kremlin's power? Why is the NATO rhetoric suggesting a more robust intervention in the war? And, most

importantly, what would it take to get back to the table? To restore peace talks is. debatably, very challenging. Particularly so, given that both Ukraine and Russia have (at least, publicly) hardened their negotiating positions, significantly in recent months. But there are some indications that could help in piecing together a deal. One possible track back to the negotiating table is to resurrect the 'Black Sea Grain Agreement' of July 2022, in which Kyiv, Moscow, Turkiye and the UN agreed to restart wheat exports from Ukraine's Black Sea ports. The deal had held strong despite continued hostilities, allowing more than one million metric tons of grain to enter the world's 'insecure food markets.' This accord broke down in July 2023. Today, it is replaced by a precarious underal humanitarian acceptance by both belligerents of the embar rassing impact of the war on deprived neutrals. This common position, if enlarged, provides an opening to a more all-embrac ing peace talks. The second track to a detente is centred on the Russian-held Zaporizhzhia nuclear power complex, that continues to be threatened by

artillery shelling from both sides. A monitoring committee of the IAEA has been tasked to ensure that the plant remains in safe condition. Kviv and Moscow have both shown, by this concession, that they want to diminish the co-lateral impact of the conflict, and are amenable to negotiate on this score. But, as long as this conflict does not find a truce, the spectre of a catastrophic event, whether through an unintended strike on the Zaporizhzhia com plex or a deliberate escalation to nuclear war, will continue to loom. It's time for Russia, nize that there's only one way to put an end to these risks, come to the negotiating table.

RAMIFICATION ON NUCLEAR ARMS CONTROL STRUCTURES AS A CONCLUSION

the much-delayed Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty Review in August 2022, citing concerns about clauses related to the situation at the Zaporizhzhia. The move highlights the negative effect that the conflict has had on the non-proliferation cause. But despite the failure of the NPT Review, there is a glimmer of hope in the endorsement of a framework for strategic arms limitation, "The framework for a U.S.- Russian arms control arrangement is not perfect and will require concessions from both Washington and Moscow. But this is part of the arms control bargain, and the benefits, like the non-use of nuclear weapons in warfare since 1945, have consistently outweighed the perceived costs" and indeed,

geopolitical markdowns.

nussia blocked a UN agree-

ment aimed at shoring up



in all this is the status of Russian Uranium exports to The USA. A programme, ironically, dubbed Megatons to Megawatts was part of a raft of non-proliferation efforts, undertaken 'cooperative ly' at one time by Moscow and Washington, to sequester and dilute stocks of nuclear weapons and materials. The Program continues unabated, conflict or no

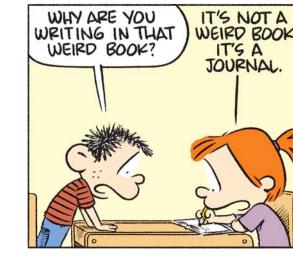
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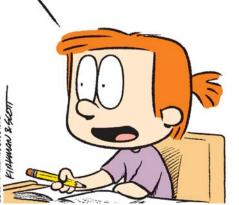
THE WALL

PEOPLE THINK I GO OUT OF MY WAY TO PISS THEM OFF. TRUST ME, IT'S NOT OUT OF

BABY BLUES



IT'S FOR WRITING ABOUT THINGS I THINK AND FEEL



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



ZITS



ing with Putin, arguing that 'we

IMUST MOISTURIZE TEN TIMES A DAY!

By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

