

# INDIA WEST

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## LA Consulate's Yoga Day Event Draws Community

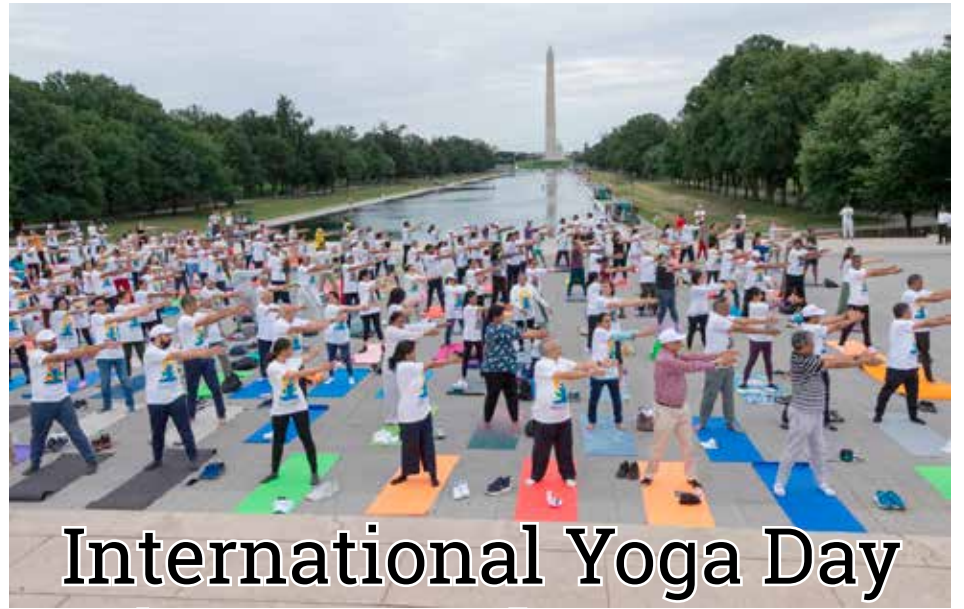


India-West News Desk

LOS ANGELES- The Consulate General of India, Los Angeles successfully celebrated the 12th International Day of Yoga (IDY) on 21 June 2026 at Loyola Marymount University (LMU), Los Angeles, under the global theme "Yoga for Healthy Ageing". The event was organized in collaboration with the Ministry of AYUSH, Government of India, Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), Loyola Marymount University and several

leading yoga and wellness organizations from Southern California. The programme was held from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon at the Drollinger Family Stage, Lawton Plaza, Loyola Marymount University.

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from members of the Indian diaspora, yoga practitioners, students, wellness professionals, community leaders, representatives of yoga organizations and friends of India from across Southern California. Participants  
*Contd. on P2*



## International Yoga Day Gains Ground Across US

LOS ANGELES,CA - From Texas parks and New York's Times Square to state legislatures and governors' offices, International Day of Yoga was celebrated across the United States this weekend, reflecting the growing mainstream acceptance of a practice that originated in India and has evolved into a nationwide wellness movement.

This year's theme, "Yoga for Healthy Ageing," focused on preventive healthcare, active living and mental well-being.

More than a decade after the United Nations designated June 21 as the International

Day of Yoga, the observance is now marked across the United States in parks, universities, community centres, public squares and government institutions. Yoga is practiced by tens of millions of Americans and has become one of the most visible examples of India's cultural influence in the country.

One of the largest celebrations on Saturday took place in Sugar Land, Texas, where Consul General D.C. Manjunath joined Mayor Carol McCutcheon at Brazos River Park for an event organised by Hindu Swayamsevak  
*Contd. on P5*

## How An Indian Fabric Became A U.S. Senate Tradition



WASHINGTON, D.C. – Every summer, U.S. senators wear seersucker as part of a long-standing Senate tradition. But few people may know that the fabric at the center of the annual observance traces its origins to India.  
*Contd. on P17*

## Players With Indian Heritage Feature At FIFA World Cup 2026



India-West News Desk

NEW DELHI — Several players with Indian heritage are representing their respective nations at the FIFA World Cup 2026, including New Zealand's Sarpreet Singh,

Australia's Nishan Velupillay, Qatar's Tahnin Mohammed Jamshid, and DR Congo's Samuel Moutoussamy.

Among them, Singh achieved a notable milestone when he became the first player  
*Contd. on P18*

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COMMUNITY

# LA Consulate's Yoga Day Event

Contd. from P1

collectively performed the Common Yoga Protocol and engaged in meditation, breathing exercises and wellness activities aimed at promoting physical health, mental well-being and healthy ageing. The event was attended by several distinguished guests, including Councilmember Zeel Ahir and Los Angeles County District Attorney Nathan Hochman.

Addressing the gathering, Consul General Dr. K. J. Srinivasa highlighted yoga as India's timeless gift to humanity and its growing relevance in addressing today's lifestyle challenges. He noted that yoga promotes harmony between mind and body and serves as a powerful tool for preventive healthcare and overall well-being.

A unique feature of the celebration was the participation of more than thirty yoga and wellness organizations, which showcased diverse traditions and approaches to yoga, meditation, holistic health and wellness. Organizations including Isha Foundation- founded by Sadhguru is a nonprofit organization that offers classical yoga and wellness programs for physical, mental, and spiritual well-being, Art of Living Los Angeles- Meditative community center offering courses, workshops and wellness retreats, World Yoga

Federation- Provides international certification and registry services for yoga professionals while supporting community engagement, corporate wellness programs, and regional partnerships in Los Angeles, State Bank of India- India's largest public sector bank with a strong presence in California, Vyasa LA- advances the vision of Swami Vivekananda by promoting the benefits of yoga through research-based education, wellness programs, seminars, workshops, and community outreach initiatives, Chinmaya Mission- global spiritual and educational organization that promotes personal growth, values-based living, and community service through the teachings of Advaita Vedanta, Amma Foundation- spiritual and humanitarian organization inspired by Mata Amritanandamayi Devi (Amma), promoting selfless service and compassion, Brahma Kumaris- Offering Raja Yoga meditation and programs for inner peace and personal development, Heartfulness Institute, Akshaya Patra- Supporting large-scale school meal programs to reduce hunger and improve child nutrition, Yoga Gives Back- Mobilizing global yoga community to fund education and empowerment for women and children in India, Hin-

du University of America- Advancing Hindu studies, philosophy, and Indic knowledge systems through academic programs, USC, Sankara Eye Foundation- Providing accessible eye care and restoring vision through high-volume free eye surgeries, IALA- Non-profit organization, Sanaayu- contemporary clothing brand offering thoughtfully designed Indian apparel and lifestyle wear, UIASC, Ayushkaam Ayurveda LLC, Tokkii, Chandika, Acuveda, DC Ayurveda, Ayo Ayurveda, Nutrition 360, Smart Village Movement, SoCal Channel, ZTV, Sahara, Sahaas LA actively contributed to the programme through demonstrations, outreach activities and community engagement initiatives.

The event also featured wellness exhibitions, guided meditation sessions, cultural presentations and interactive activities for participants of all age groups. Dedicated stalls were set up by participating organizations to provide information on yoga, mindfulness, Ayurveda and holistic living practices.

Curtain raiser events were organized in collaboration with Art of Living and Isha Foundation, while additional community yoga programmes were supported in San Diego on Saturday, June 20, 2026

Contd. on P5



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## COMMENTARY

# The Indus Waters Treaty: Obstruction And Exploitation

Dr. PRADEEP KUMAR SAXENA

## Systematic Obstruction of Indian Development

Since the Treaty's signing, Pakistan has consistently used its dispute resolution provisions as a strategic tool to delay and effectively obstruct development rather than genuine dispute resolution.

Virtually every significant hydropower project India has proposed on the Western rivers—even those explicitly permitted under the Treaty's terms—has faced formal Pakistani objection, technical challenge, or referral to arbitration.

Projects including Baglihar, Kishenganga, Pakal Dul, and Tulbul have all been subjected to prolonged Pakistani challenges. In several cases, Pakistan has acknowledged the potential benefits of Indian projects for regulated water flow—including flood moderation—while simultaneously opposing them.

This pattern reveals that Pakistani objections are not genuinely about Treaty compliance; they are about preventing Indian development in Jammu and Kashmir, regardless of the legal merits.

## The 'Water War' Narrative

Pakistan has simultaneously exploited India's consistent compliance with the Treaty to construct and disseminate an international narrative portraying India as a potential 'water aggressor'.

Pakistani officials, academics, and diplomatic channels have repeatedly raised the specter of India 'weaponizing water' against Pakistan—citing the very Treaty that India has scrupulously honored.

This narrative—posing the upper riparian as a threat—has proven remarkably effective with international audiences unfamiliar with the Treaty's history.

Pakistan has used it to generate diplomatic pressure, attract multilateral sympathy, and constrain India's ability to assert its legitimate Treaty rights.

The singular irony of this strategy is that India has not committed a single violation of the Treaty—not during the 1965 war, not during the 1971 war, not during the 1999 Kargil conflict, and not at any other point in the sixty-five years of the Treaty's operation.

India has maintained compliance even as Pakistan has used its territory to conduct state-sponsored terrorism against India.

## Consequences for India

### Unrealized Development Potential

The Treaty's constraints have had measurable, lasting consequences for India's development in the Indus Basin.

Vast areas of Rajasthan and parts of Punjab that could have been irrigated remain arid or dependent on alternative, more expensive water sources.

The agricultural productivity foregone over six decades represents an incalculable economic loss.

Jammu and Kashmir's Suppressed Hydropower Potential

The impact on Jammu and Kashmir has been particularly acute.

The Union Territory sits astride the Western rivers and possesses enormous, largely untapped hydropower potential.

Development of that potential is constrained at every turn by the Treaty's design restrictions, Pakistan's systematic objections, and the perpetual risk of multi-tiered long drawn dispute resolution mechanism.

Local populations have increasingly come to view the Treaty not as a framework for shared benefit but as an instrument of their own economic marginalization—an external imposition that prevents them from developing the natural resources flowing through their own territory.

### Energy Security Implications

India's inability to optimally develop the hydropower potential of the Western rivers has direct implications for national energy security.



The Treaty's restrictions mean that potential capacity—as a clean, renewable, and economically efficient energy source—has been sacrificed purely because of Pakistan's strategic obstruction of even the limited rights India possesses in this asymmetric agreement.

## India's Case

The Treaty was intended achieve the "most complete and satisfactory utilization of the waters of the Indus system of rivers" in a "spirit of goodwill and friendship"—a context that no longer exists.

The treaties derive their legitimacy not merely from the force of law but from the good faith implementation of their terms by all signatories.

Pakistan's documented and persistent use of state-sponsored terrorism as an instrument of foreign policy against India—culminating in atrocities including the 2001 Parliament attack, the 2008 Mumbai attacks, and most recently the Pahalgam attack of April 2025—fundamentally challenges the premise upon which India's continued compliance with the IWT rests.

Bilateral agreements cannot be selectively honored: a state cannot simultaneously breach the foundational norms of inter-state conduct while demanding that its negotiating partner fulfil treaty obligations that disproportionately benefit the norm-breaker.

The Treaty cannot be an island of Indian compliance within a sea

of Pakistani bad faith.

India's step represents an assertion long overdue—that international agreements are a two-way street.

## Conclusion

The Indus Waters Treaty has long been celebrated as a triumph of international diplomacy.

This paper has argued that such a characterization fundamentally misrepresents what actually occurred: a negotiation process in which Pakistani intransigence was rewarded with concessions, and Indian goodwill was systematically exploited to produce an agreement that was inequitable from its inception.

Nevertheless, India surrendered 80 percent of the water, paid £62 million (approximately \$2.5 billion in present value) to facilitate that surrender, accepted one-sided operational restrictions on its own territory, and has maintained scrupulous compliance for sixty-five years—including through Pakistan inflicted multiple wars and sustained sponsoring of cross border terrorism.

In return, India has received a Treaty agreed to in good faith that Pakistan uses as a tool of developmental obstruction, a 'water war' narrative it deploys internationally with no factual basis, and the permanent underdevelopment of vast tracts of Indian territory.

India's step is to protect its legitimate interests in the Indus Basin.

This is not aggression; it is the long-overdue correction of an asymmetric arrangement premised on a goodwill that was never reciprocated.

To those who ask why hold the Treaty in abeyance now, it would be useful to remember that there is no wrong time for a right decision. The Indus Waters Treaty has long been celebrated as a triumph of international diplomacy.

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*Dr. Pradeep Kumar Saxena, former Indian Commissioner for Indus Waters, examines the Treaty from India's perspective and assesses its long-term implications for India's water, energy, and strategic interests.*

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## LA Consulate's Yoga Day At Loyola Marymount Uni.

Contd. from P2

at Royal India; Irvine on Sunday, June 21, 2026 at Shri Nathji Haveli; Mesa AZ on Saturday, 20 June, 2026 at Chinmaya Mission Hall; Phoenix AZ on June 21, 2026 at IACRF Community Center & Ekta Mandir and Las Vegas on June 21, 2026 at Sunset Park helping to broaden participation and awareness regarding International Day of Yoga.

Loyola Marymount University, home to one of the leading Yoga Studies programmes in the United States, provided an ideal venue for the celebration and reinforced the growing academic and cultural interest in yoga in the United States.

The successful celebration of the 12th International Day of Yoga in Los Angeles reaffirmed the universal appeal of yoga and strengthened cultural and people to people ties between India and the United States. The event conveyed the message that yoga is a pathway to healthier lifestyles, inner balance and collective well-being for all.



Contd. from P1

Sangh and Hindu Yuva. The gathering brought together residents, elected officials and yoga enthusiasts for outdoor yoga sessions and wellness activities. Manjunath spoke about yoga's role in promoting "holistic health, well-being, and harmony."

In New York, the Consulate General of India organized a yoga session in Central Park ahead of the main observance. Describing it as "an evening of vibrant energy," the Consulate said the event celebrated wellness in the heart of New York City. Thousands of participants are expected to take part in the annual Solstice in Times Square program, continuing a tradition that transforms one of the world's busiest commercial districts into an open-air yoga studio every June.

In Washington, D.C., the Embassy of India led one of the country's largest International Day of Yoga celebrations at the Lincoln Memorial, on Friday. Hundreds of yoga enthusiasts gathered against the backdrop of the National Mall for a mass yoga session highlighting the theme "Yoga for Healthy Ageing."

The event drew diplomats, lawmakers, community leaders, yoga practitioners and members of the Indian American community, underscoring yoga's growing appeal

across the United States.

This year's celebrations were also accompanied by increasing recognition from American lawmakers and public officials. In New York, the State Senate adopted Resolution J1895, sponsored by Senator Shelley Mayer, memorializing Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim June 21, 2026, as Yoga Day in New York State. The resolution cited yoga's roots in ancient India, its widespread practice among Americans and its benefits for wellness, stress reduction and healthy living.

A Yoga Day resolution was introduced in New York State Assembly. The legislative recognition marked one of the most significant official endorsements of Yoga Day by a state government this year.

Delaware Governor Matt Meyer issued an official proclamation recognising June 21 as International Day of Yoga and encouraged residents to explore the practice as part of a healthy lifestyle.

In California, the city of Redlands proclaimed June 21 as International Day of Yoga, while several other municipalities issued citations and recognitions in conjunction with local celebrations.

On the West Coast, celebrations were held at Crissy Field in San Francisco overlooking the Golden Gate Bridge, while Indian diplomat-

ic missions and community organisations organised events across Los Angeles, Seattle and other cities in the Pacific Northwest. Community yoga sessions were also reported in Chicago, Atlanta, Miami, Denver, Detroit, Boston and on university campuses across the country.

Among the more distinctive celebrations was a devotional Yoga Day program organized by A Lotus in the Mud magazine at the Vedic Heritage Hanuman Temple in Hempstead, New York. More than 200 participants attended the event, which combined meditation, music, dance and a panel discussion on "Devotion as a Superhighway to Spiritual Evolution."

The program featured Padma Bhushan awardee and renowned oncologist Dr. Dattatreya Nori as chief guest. Organizers said the event sought to highlight yoga's spiritual dimensions alongside its physical and mental health benefits.

The expansion of Yoga Day celebrations across the United States illustrates how the observance has evolved from an annual diplomatic initiative into a broad-based public wellness movement. What began as a United Nations resolution proposed by India in 2014 is now marked in state legislatures, governors' offices, city halls, public parks and community centers across America.



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COMMUNITY

# Bengali Literary Icons Tagore And Nazrul Honored At SoCal Cultural Event

India-West News Desk

ALISO VIEJO, CA- The Aikootaan Social Association held its “Rabindra Nazrul Sandhya 2026” on May 2 at the Aliso Niguel High School Auditorium, bringing together more than 200 Southern California residents for an evening dedicated to the literary legacies of Rabindranath Tagore and Bangladesh’s national poet, Kazi Nazrul Islam.

The event celebrated their contributions through music, poetry and dialogue while also launching a new series of honors recognizing community impact and professional achievement.

The inaugural Bongo Bibhusan Samman 2026 was presented to Dr. Kali Pradip Chaudhuri, a physician and entrepreneur recognized for his work in healthcare, education and institution-building across the US and India. Dr. Sukrit Mukherjee accepted the award on his behalf from Kulwant Singh, Head of Chancery at the Consulate General of India in Los Angeles.

Other inaugural honors included the Sur Sadhana Samman, presented to vocalist and Surmala Music Academy founder Mala Ganguly for her work in Indian semi-classical music, and the Samaj Prerona Samman, awarded to educator and community ad-



vocate Dr. Seema Choudhary for her work supporting families in Orange County.

The program featured a panel discussion titled “Bridges of Words, Poetry and Songs.” Panelists Dr. Sukrit Mukherjee, Dr. Ratul Chatterjee, Dipankar Das and Jyotiska Ganguly discussed the role of literature and music in preserving cultural memory and strengthening community identity within diaspora communities.

A community food drive orga-

nized during the event supported Orange County families and encouraged attendees to contribute non-perishable food items.

The evening included vocal, instrumental and dance performances by the Aikootaan Cultural Team, and local talent.

Formal proceedings opened with a virtual address by Consul General of India Dr. K. J. Srinivasa, followed by a Shanti Path presented by Amit Maharaj of Bharat Sevashram Sangha West.

# Beach Tragedy Claims Lives Of Two Fremont Students



India-West News Desk

SANTA CRUZ, CA – Two young women from Fremont, California, have died after being swept into the ocean while napping at Bonny Doon Beach in Santa Cruz County.

Harshita Nair, 21, and Mahial Sran, 20, were resting near a coastal formation known as a “keyhole” on June 10 when rising tides swept them into the water. According to officials, the area is known for dangerous and unpredictable tides. Santa Cruz County Volunteer Fire Captain Kyle Breton said the keyhole can be deceptive because rising water can quickly catch beachgoers off guard. He said people often pass through the area to reach Yellow Bank Beach and later find themselves trapped as the tide comes in.

Emergency responders were alerted around 5 p.m. after a wit-

ness called 911. Multiple agencies responded, including eight rescue swimmers who entered the water to search for the two women.

Both women were rescued and brought to shore, where first responders immediately began CPR. One was airlifted by a Cal Fire helicopter to a nearby beach before being transported to a hospital, while the other was taken to Panther Beach and transported by ambulance.

Nair died shortly after being rescued. Sran remained hospitalized in critical condition before succumbing to her injuries on June 13.

Nair and Sran graduated from Washington High School in Fremont in 2023. Nair was studying legal studies at the University of California, Berkeley, and was expected to graduate in 2027. Sran was a public health student at San Jose State University.




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## U.S.-Based Opendoor Closes India Operations

NEW DELHI- U.S.-based real estate technology company Opendoor is winding down its India operations and relocating India-based roles closer to its customer base in the United States, a move that will affect about 250 employees.

In a note shared with employees and later posted on social media platform X, Opendoor CEO Kaz Nejatian said the company had begun winding down its India operations as part of a broader restructuring effort.

“Today we began to say goodbye to our colleagues in India as we wind down our India operations. Our customers are in America, and that’s where our operational work belongs,” Nejatian wrote.

Opendoor had nearly 250 em-



made significant contributions to the company.

“Our colleagues in India are great people, and we recommend them to anyone hiring,” he said.

Explaining the move, Nejatian said Opendoor’s operational work is best carried out closer to customers in the

United States. He added that the company has streamlined many processes, unified its systems and built smaller AI-native customer-facing teams in the U.S., reducing the need for a large offshore operational workforce.

Nejatian thanked the India team for its contributions and said affected employees would receive severance packages, outplacement services and other transition support. (IANS)

employees in India when it launched “Opendoor 2.0” a few months ago. While some roles had already been moved back to the United States, the company is now completing the relocation of the remaining operational positions. A small number of employees will remain temporarily to support the transition.

Nejatian said the decision was not a reflection of the performance of employees in India and described them as having

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## SpaceX Deal Makes Indian-Origin AI Founder Worth \$5.5 Billion



NEW DELHI- SpaceX has signed a \$60 billion agreement to acquire Anysphere Inc., the parent company of the AI coding platform Cursor. The deal has boosted Indian-origin co-founder Aman Sanger’s estimated net worth to \$5.5 billion.

Sanger, 25, serves as Chief Operating Officer of Anysphere, the startup behind the widely used AI coding assistant. Born in New York, he began coding at age 14 and later studied computer science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). He co-founded the company in 2022 after leaving MIT with classmates Michael Truell, Sualeh Asif and Arvid Lunnemark.

The company initially focused on AI for the mechanical engineering industry before pivoting

to AI-assisted coding, creating tools capable of analyzing entire codebases and generating complex software solutions.

Cursor’s growth has been rapid, crossing \$1 billion in annualized revenue in November 2025 and reaching approximately \$4 billion by early June 2026. The platform is currently used by developers at roughly 50,000 enterprises, including Nvidia, Adobe, Uber, Shopify and PayPal.

Reacting to the acquisition on X, Sanger wrote: “Excited to train some very strong models!” SpaceX expects to complete the acquisition by the third quarter of 2026.

The announcement follows SpaceX’s recent Nasdaq debut, which valued the company at about \$2.2 trillion. (IANS)

## U.S. Legal Blow Costs TCS Another \$70M



NEW DELHI-IT services giant Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) said on June 16 that it will set aside an additional \$70 million to cover damages, interest and legal expenses after the US Supreme Court declined to hear its appeal in a long-running case involving US technology company Computer Sciences Corporation (CSC), now known as DXC Technology.

In a regulatory filing, TCS said the Supreme Court declined to review a previous ruling by the US Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit.

The decision is another setback for TCS in its legal battle with DXC Technology.

The company said it had already

set aside \$150 million for the case in its accounts. Following the latest court decision, it will now make an additional provision of \$70 million as a one-time expense in the first quarter of FY2026-27.

TCS had previously informed investors about developments in the case through regulatory filings in June 2024 and November 2025.

Earlier, the Fifth Circuit upheld a \$194.2 million damages award and ruled in favor of CSC in the long-running trade secrets dispute.

TCS did not provide any further details on the financial impact beyond the additional \$70 million provision that will be recorded in the June quarter. (IANS)

## Army Corps of Engineers Appoints Lt. Col. Simratpal Singh To Lead Typhoon Recovery



India-West News Desk

WASHINGTON, DC— The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has appointed Lt. Col. Simratpal Singh to lead its Sinlaku Recovery Field Office. The transition, effective May 26, shifts the focus of the federal recovery mission from immediate emergency response to sustained operations across the islands of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota.

Singh currently serves as deputy commander of the USACE Japan District. Earlier in his career, he served with the 249th Engineer Battalion, supporting global emergency power missions and disaster response operations during Hurricanes Matthew, Harvey, and Maria.

“It is an honor to join this recovery mission

and continue supporting the people of the Commonwealth,” Singh said. “Our team remains committed to working alongside FEMA, CNMI leadership, and our local partners to deliver safe, effective, and timely recovery operations for impacted residents.”

Singh replaces Lt. Col. Adrian Biggerstaff, commander of the USACE Honolulu District, who led the field office through the initial emergency response and recovery phase following Super Typhoon Sinlaku.

During Biggerstaff’s tenure, USACE teams connected more than 120 temporary emergency generators at critical facilities, installed temporary roofing on more than 100 storm-damaged homes, advanced debris-removal efforts, and helped restore power across the affected islands.

Stay informed with recent political news, government updates, policy developments, election coverage, and political analysis followed by readers across Canada.

## Los Angeles Declares January 6, 2027 As Diljit Dosanjh Day

India-West News Desk

LOS ANGELES – The Los Angeles City Council has officially designated January 6, 2027, as “Diljit Dosanjh Day,” recognizing Indian Punjabi singer, actor and Bollywood star Diljit Dosanjh for his contributions to music and entertainment and for increasing South Asian representation in mainstream American culture. Geographic Reference

The civic resolution was presented to Dosanjh by Los Angeles City Councilwoman Monica Rodriguez on June 19 during his visit to the United States as part of his ongoing Dil-Luminati Tour.

A video shared online showed Dosanjh appearing surprised by the honor. According to footage of the event, the singer said he was “speechless” before singing a line from his 2009 track ‘Los Angeles’.

His team later shared news of the recognition on Instagram, posting a copy of the resolution with the caption, “Big News.”

The recognition comes as the Indian Punjabi artist’s influence continues to grow in India and internationally. Dosanjh became the first Punjabi artist to perform at the Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival in 2023 and has also built a successful Bollywood career, winning the Filmfare Award for Best Male Debut for ‘Udta Punjab’. His latest film, director Imtiaz Ali’s ‘Main Vaapas Aaunga’, was released on June 12.

The Los Angeles resolution marks a significant civic honor for the Punjabi star in the United States and reflects his growing influence among South Asian audiences and beyond.



## Leading Physician-Economist Dr. Amol Navathe Appointed Chair of the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission (MedPAC)

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) has officially announced the appointment of Dr. Amol Navathe, MD, PhD, as the new Chair of the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission (MedPAC). Navathe, a prominent internal medicine physician and leading national scholar on health care financing and behavioral economics. He previously served as vice chair and commissioner of MedPAC until 2025. His term as Chair will extend through April 2029.

Established in 1997, MedPAC serves as a vital, independent agency that advises Congress on payments to health care providers participating in Medicare’s traditional fee-for-service program, as well as health plans under the Medicare Advantage program.

“For nearly three decades, MedPAC has served as an independent, nonpartisan advisory body for Congress covering the full range of critical issues facing the Medicare program,” said Orice W. Brown, Acting Comptroller General of the United States and head of the GAO. “I am confident that the new leadership, in collaboration with commission members and staff, will continue to support congressional deliberations with robust, evidence-based information and recommendations”.

“I am honored to step into this role and lead MedPAC’s work in support of Congress, the Medicare program, and its beneficiaries,” said Dr. Navathe.

Dr. Navathe’s appointment comes at a crucial time for Medicare, as the program navigates complex fiscal challenges and a shift toward value-based care. Beyond his MedPAC duties, Dr. Navathe is a Professor of Medical Ethics and Health Policy at the University of Pennsylvania’s Perelman School of Medicine and a Professor of Healthcare Management and Economics at

the Wharton School. He is also a Senior Fellow at the Leonard Davis Institute of Health Economics (Penn LDI).

His extensive research portfolio bridges the gap between medical practice and economic policy. As the founding director of The Parity Center at UPenn, Navathe has pioneered work on using behavioral economics to design financial and nonfinancial incentives that improve patient outcomes while controlling costs. Recently, he and his colleagues at MedPAC have been highly focused on strategies to bring down prescription drug costs in the Medicare Part B program.

Navathe brings a breadth of experience to MedPAC, as a successful health care technology entrepreneur and with prior board service for SCAN Health Plan and Hawaii Medical Services Association, both of which operate Medicare Advantage plans.

Dr. Navathe completed his medical training at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine and postgraduate medical training at Brigham and Women’s Hospital at Harvard Medical School. He earned his PhD in Health Care Management and Economics from the Wharton School.

Dr. Navathe’s achievements also reflect a family tradition of academic excellence and service. His father, Dr. Shamkant Navathe, is a renowned computer scientist and longtime Georgia Institute of Technology scholar whose work in database systems, data modeling, database design, bioinformatics, and computing education has influenced generations of students and researchers. Dr. Sham Navathe



has been honored as an ACM Fellow for contributions to data modeling, database design, and database education. Together, the accomplishments of Dr. Sham Navathe and Dr. Amol Navathe represent a powerful intergenerational commitment to knowledge, innovation, mentorship, and public benefit—spanning computer science, data systems, medicine, healthcare economics, and national policy.

Dr. Amol Navathe’s unique dual perspective as a practicing clinician and a distinguished health economist will guide MedPAC as it continues to advise Congress on accuracy of payments in Medicare, the effects of payment on plans and providers, and protecting access to high-quality care for millions of beneficiaries.

**CRIME**

# Former Fort Bend Judge KP George Sentenced To Jail



India-West News Desk

HOUSTON, TX — Suspended Fort Bend County Judge K.P. George has been sentenced to 180 days in jail and five years of probation after being convicted on two felony money laundering charges tied to the misuse of campaign funds.

The sentence, handed down June 16, also includes a \$5,000 fine, 200 hours of community service and completion of an anti-theft program. George filed an appeal shortly after the ruling, meaning the sentence will not take effect until the appeals process is resolved.

The case stems from financial transactions that prosecutors said took place during the early months of George's tenure as county judge in 2019. Authorities alleged that campaign funds were moved into personal accounts and later used for personal expenses,

including a home down payment and property tax payments. A jury found George guilty earlier this year.

George was arrested and indicted in the case in April 2025. At the time, he denied wrongdoing, saying the transactions involved repayment of a legal loan he had made to his own campaign.

Born in Kerala, George immigrated to the United States and later entered public service after a career in financial planning. He made history in 2018 when he became the first South Asian elected as Fort Bend County Judge and was re-elected in 2022.

George was suspended from office in April. Earlier this year, he also lost the 2026 Republican primary for county judge after changing parties in 2025.

The money laundering conviction is separate from another criminal case that remains pending. George is scheduled to stand trial next month on a misdemeanor charge alleging he was involved in creating or promoting fake social media posts containing racist attacks against his own campaign during the 2022 election cycle.

George has denied wrongdoing and is appealing the conviction, which puts the sentence on hold pending the outcome of the appeal.

# Socal Man Arrested For \$100 Million Bank Fraud

India-West News Desk

NEWPORT BEACH, CA — Federal agents in California have taken Mahender Makhijani, a 44-year-old businessman and lawful permanent resident from India, into custody over allegations that he masterminded a \$100 million bank fraud scheme. Arrested on June 10 at his home in Newport Beach's Corona del Mar community, Makhijani faces a federal charge of bank fraud, which carries a potential 30-year prison sentence.

The criminal complaint outlines a deception involving Cantor Group V LLC, a firm under Makhijani's control. Under the terms of his lending agreements, the company was required to pledge only top-priority, or first-lien, real estate loans as collateral. Investigators allege that between September 2024 and April 2025, Makhijani and a subordinate manipulated these agreements by forging title insurance documents. Using Adobe software to edit metadata and records, they falsely presented the firm as holding primary claims on properties where other lenders actually held priority. These fraudulent documents were submitted to the bank alongside misleading financial spreadsheets and deceptive explanations.

First Assistant U.S. Attorney Bill Essayli, in announcing the arrest, highlighted the importance of banking integrity, noting that the national economy and public welfare rely on a healthy system; when lenders are misled, it triggers detrimental consequences

for other businesses and consumers.

Beyond these financial crimes, the court filing details a pattern of severe intimidation. Witnesses reported that Makhijani used threats to exert control over subordinates, claiming he would "kill" employees and warn them that he would put their "family on the street" and their "kids on welfare." The complaint further alleges he hosted parties involving illicit drugs and sex workers, subsequently using those activities to blackmail attendees into compliance.

Makhijani's broader business history has also faced legal challenges. In May 2026, an arbitrator awarded \$1.34 billion to Laguna Beach businessman Mohammad Honarkar following a civil dispute where it was determined that Makhijani had committed fraud and breached agreements. Additionally, the complaint links Makhijani to a 2023 property dispute at Hotel Laguna involving a confrontation between security personnel tied to him and the hotel's workers.

Despite living a life defined by private jet travel and a collection of luxury vehicles—including a Bentley, Porsche, and Mercedes G-Wagon—the government reports that his assets are elusive. The complaint notes that although he possesses significant wealth, investigators have struggled to trace his resources, which are likely held under other names. Makhijani has also previously boasted about his plans to flee to India should authorities investigate him. He is slated to appear in federal court in Santa Ana, where he is currently presumed innocent.

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# U.S. Retrogresses EB-1 Green Card Cutoff Date For Indians

India-West News Desk

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The U.S. Department of State has retrogressed the Employment-Based First Preference (EB-1) green card cutoff date for Indian applicants in its July 2026 Visa Bulletin, citing high demand for visas in the category.

According to the July Visa Bulletin, the final action date for India in the EB-1 category is now October 15, 2022. The State Department said the move was necessary to keep visa issuances within the

annual limit for fiscal year 2026.

The department warned that further retrogression or even making the category unavailable could become necessary in the coming months if India reaches its allotted share of EB-1 visas before the fiscal year ends on Sept. 30.

The EB-1 category is generally used by multinational executives and managers, individuals with extraordinary ability, and outstanding professors and researchers seeking permanent residence in the United States.

The July Visa Bulletin also un-

derscored ongoing visa backlogs for Indians. Both the Employment-Based Second Preference (EB-2) and Employment-Based Fifth Preference (EB-5) unreserved categories remain unavailable for the remainder of fiscal year 2026 after reaching their annual limits.

# EB-5 Visa Limit Reached For Indians Until October

India -West News Desk

WASHINGTON, D.C.-The U.S. Department of State, working with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, has announced that all available EB-5 unreserved immigrant visas for applicants chargeable to India have been issued for fiscal year 2026.

As a result, U.S. embassies and consulates cannot issue additional visas in this category to Indian applicants for the remainder of the fiscal year. Visa issuance is expected to resume on Oct. 1, 2026, when fiscal year 2027 begins and new annual visa numbers become available.

The development follows the exhaustion of the Employment-Based Second Preference (EB-2) category for Indian nationals. On May 22, the State Department said all available EB-2 visas

for applicants chargeable to India had also been issued for fiscal year 2026.

The State Department said the annual allocation of EB-5 unreserved visas available to India was fully used by June 5.

Federal law places annual limits on employment-based immigrant visas and imposes per-country



caps. The State Department noted that unused EB-5 reserved visas from fiscal year 2024 were made available to the unreserved category for fiscal year 2026 under the EB-5 Reform and Integrity Act of 2022. Despite that additional allocation, all available EB-5 unreserved visa numbers for India have now been exhausted.

# H-1B Reform Battle Moves To Congress Following Court Ruling

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Rep. Mike Kennedy, a Utah Republican, is seeking to advance legislation that would permanently impose a \$100,000 salary requirement for H-1B visa holders after a federal judge struck down President Donald



Trump's attempt to implement similar changes through executive action.

Kennedy said June 9 that Congress should enact the administration's H-1B reforms through legislation after the court ruled that such a significant change must be approved by lawmakers rather than the White House.

"An activist judge stepped in to strike down the President's critical H-1B immigration reforms. The judge claims only Congress can do this? Fine," Kennedy said. "I already introduced the PROTECT Act, which will codify the President's H-1B reforms and make it the law of the land. We need to pass the PROTECT Act and put American workers first."

The proposal could have major implications for Indian technology professionals, who receive the majority of H-1B visas issued each year and make up a significant portion of the U.S. technology workforce.

Kennedy's legislation, the Prioritizing Resources for Our Citizens and Talent Act, or PROTECT Act of 2026, would reshape the H-1B program, which allows U.S. employers to hire foreign workers in specialty occupations.

The bill would require employers to pay H-1B workers at least \$100,000 annually, adjusted for inflation, or the wage paid to a comparable U.S. worker, whichever is higher. It would also prioritize visa petitions offering higher salaries and tighten restrictions on workers placed at third-party worksites.

Kennedy said the measure is intended to reduce employers' incentives to hire foreign workers instead of Americans and restore what he described as the original purpose of the H-1B program.

The legislation includes exemptions for certain healthcare professionals, including physicians, registered nurses, pharmacists, therapists and other direct patient-care workers, if employers can demonstrate unsuccessful efforts to recruit qualified American workers.

Because Indian nationals consistently account for the largest share of H-1B recipients, proposed changes to wage requirements and employer obligations are closely watched by India's technology sector, outsourcing firms and thousands of professionals seeking employment opportunities in the United States. (IANS)

# Indian With Rap Sheet Held By ICE In Los Angeles

India-West News Desk

LOS ANGELES, CA – U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement has arrested a 26-year-old Indian citizen in Los Angeles who now faces possible deportation proceedings, according to the agency.India Travel Guide

ICE said Parminderpal Singh remains in immigration custody pending removal from the United States.

Authorities said Singh has a criminal record that includes allegations involving vehicle theft, grand theft, trespassing, and vandalism. ICE did not release additional details about his immigration status or any scheduled court proceedings.

The arrest comes amid continued immigration enforcement operations of non-citizens accused or convicted of criminal offenses.

Recent ICE enforcement actions involving Indian nationals have included cases tied to older deportation orders, immigration violations, and criminal allegations. Earlier in California, ICE also arrested Aman Kumar outside a Fresno courthouse following a hit-and-run case involving a four-year-old child. Authorities alleged Kumar was living in the United States illegally at the time.



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# Indian-Origin CEO Among 17 Facing Citizenship Revocation

WASHINGTON, D.C. -The U.S. Department of Justice has launched denaturalization proceedings against 17 naturalized U.S. citizens, including Indian-origin businessman Neeraj Sharma. Federal authorities allege the individuals concealed criminal conduct or provided false information during the naturalization process.

Sharma, 50, former chief executive officer of New Jersey-based staffing firm Magnavision LLC, is accused of making false statements and failing to disclose unlawful conduct while applying for U.S. citizenship.

According to the Justice Department, Sharma filed 11 fraudulent H-1B visa petitions that falsely claimed workers would be em-

ployed by a global financial institution. The petitions allegedly included forged signatures of company executives.

Federal authorities said Sharma applied for U.S. citizenship in 2017 and stated under penalty of perjury that he had never committed a crime for which he had not been arrested, never provided false information to U.S. government officials, and never lied to obtain immigration benefits.

The Justice Department said Sharma became a U.S. citizen in December 2017 but was later convicted of fraud and misuse of visas for conduct that occurred between April 2015 and April 2017.

The government is seeking to revoke his citizenship, alleging

that he concealed unlawful acts, provided false testimony, and withheld material information during the naturalization process.

Announcing the actions, Acting U.S. Attorney General Todd Blanche said, "When criminal aliens exploit the naturalization process by breaking the law, there are consequences. Criminal aliens are lying about their past crimes, including drug dealers, sexual predators, and fraudsters."

"Gaining U.S. citizenship is a privilege and under the steadfast leadership of President Trump, this Department of Justice maintains a zero-tolerance policy for the abuse



complaints allege that the individuals committed crimes during the period in which they were required to demonstrate "good moral character" to qualify for naturalization, while others are accused of concealing material information or providing

false testimony to immigration authorities.

Assistant Attorney General Brett A. Shumate said the department would continue pursuing cases involving individuals accused of unlawfully obtaining U.S. citizenship.

Under the Immigration and Nationality Act, U.S. citizenship may be revoked if it was obtained illegally or through willful misrepresentation or concealment of material facts. The Justice Department emphasized that the lawsuits are civil actions and that the allegations remain unproven. "The claims made in the complaints are allegations only, and there has been no determination of liability," the department said. (IANS)

of this process," Blanche said.

The denaturalization actions were filed in federal courts across the country and involve individuals originally from India, China, Haiti, Cuba, Colombia, Mexico, Jamaica, Somalia, the Philippines, Trinidad and Tobago, and other countries.

According to the Justice Department, the cases involve allegations ranging from immigration fraud and money laundering to healthcare fraud, securities fraud, and sexual abuse offenses. Many of the

## Wanted In Germany: ICE Arrests Indian National In California



India-West News Desk

SAN FRANCISCO -U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials recently took a 40-year-old Indian national into custody in Fairfield, California. According to the agency, the man, identified as Sandeep Singh, is wanted by authorities in Germany for attempted murder.

ICE San Francisco confirmed the arrest in a post on X, stating that they had taken the 40-year-old Indian citizen into custody in Fairfield. The agency noted that Singh entered the U.S. illegally from Mexico in 2023. According to the post, he remains in ICE detention while awaiting the outcome of his immigration proceedings.

At this stage, officials are working to determine the next steps regarding his potential deportation. Authorities have not yet shared any further details about the specific warrant or the circumstances of the case in Germany.

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**ELECTIONS**

# Ami Bera, Ro Khanna, Win Primaries, Look To November Mid-Terms

India-West News Desk

SACRAMENTO, CA - Democratic Congressman Ami Bera and Republican Nevada County Supervisor Robb Tucker advanced to the November general election after finishing among the top two candidates in California's June 2 primary for the state's 3rd Congressional District.

Bera, who has represented California's 6th Congressional District since 2013, is seeking reelection in the newly configured 3rd District following changes to California's congressional map. The district spans portions of the Sacramento region, including Folsom and Roseville, and extends east toward



Truckee and Lake Tahoe.

During the campaign, Bera highlighted investments in clean energy infrastructure, support for public-

private partnerships to strengthen local communities, and protecting access to reproductive healthcare. Tucker, a former small-business

owner, campaigned on reducing taxes and business regulations, expanding gun rights, and ending federal funding for sanctuary cities.

In another closely watched race, Democratic Congressman Ro Khanna advanced to the November general election in California's 17th Congressional District, where he remains favored to retain his Silicon Valley seat.

Republican Ritesh Tandon also advanced to the general election and will challenge Khanna in November. Moderate Democrat Ethan Agarwal, who was backed by several prominent technology executives,

finished fourth in the primary. Democratic candidate Michael Katz and Republican candidate Jennie Ha Phan were also eliminated.

Following the results, Khanna described the outcome as a victory for progressive politics, arguing that voters had rejected efforts by wealthy interests to influence the race.

"Tonight, we showed that you can stand up to billionaires in the heart of Silicon Valley and prevail," Khanna wrote on social media, referring to opposition he faced after supporting a billionaire tax proposal. He later congratulated his opponents and praised voter participation, saying the election demonstrated "the power of citizens over big money and special interests."

# Nithya Raman Advances To Los Angeles Mayoral Runoff

India-West News Desk

LOS ANGELES, CA - Los Angeles City Councilmember Nithya Raman has advanced to the Nov. 3 mayoral runoff, positioning herself to become the first Indian

American and first South Asian mayor of Los Angeles.

Raman finished second in the city's June 2 nonpartisan primary with 29 percent of the vote, securing a place in the general election against incumbent

Mayor Karen Bass, who led the field with 34 percent. Republican candidate Spencer Pratt placed third with 26 percent, narrowly missing the runoff.

The November election will be one of the most closely watched

municipal races in the country, as Raman seeks to unseat Bass, the first incumbent Los Angeles mayor forced into a runoff since 2005.



Born in Kerala to Tamil parents, Raman moved with her family to Louisiana as a child. She graduated from Harvard University and later earned a master's

degree in urban planning from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Raman first gained prominence in Los Angeles politics in 2020 when she defeated a longtime incumbent to win a seat on the City Council. Her victory made her the first South Asian and first Asian American woman elected to the council and established her as a leading voice on housing affordability and homelessness.

Since joining the council, Raman has built her political profile around expanding affordable housing, improving public services and address-

ing homelessness. Her mayoral campaign has also emphasized infrastructure investments and support for Los Angeles' entertainment industry, which faces growing competition and technological disruption.

Raman's advancement to the runoff reflects growing support among voters seeking new leadership at City Hall. While she and Bass share many policy positions as Democrats, the race is expected to highlight differences in governing style, priorities and approaches to some of the city's most pressing challenges.

If elected in November, Raman would make history as the first Indian American and first South Asian to lead Los Angeles, one of the largest and most influential cities in the United States.



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- \* 9:00 to 9:15 AM.....Walnut Punjabi School
- \* 9:15 to 9:30 AM.....Nirmolak Heera Academy
- \* 9:30 to 10:00 AM.....Riverside and Norco Punjabi School
- \* 10:00 to 10:15AM.....Bhai Gurbal Singh Ji
- \* 10:15 to 10:30 AM.....Bhai Kirtan Singh Ji
- \* 10:30 to 10:45 AM.....Bibi Balbir Kaur Ji
- \* 10:45 to 11:00 AM.....Bhai Beant Singh Ji
- \* 11:00 to 11:15 AM.....Bhai Gurdeep Singh Ji
- \* 11:30 to 11:45 AM.....Bhai Naib Singh Ji Nimana
- \* 11:45 AM to 12:00 PM..Bhai Kamaljeet Singh Ji Walnut
- \* 12:00 to 12:45 PM.....Bhai Bhupinder Singh Ji
- \* 12:45 to 1:00 PM.....Bhai Ramanjoth Singh Ji
- \* 1:00 to 1:15 PM.....Bhai Sukhdev Singh Ji
- \* 1:15 to 1:30 PM.....Bhai Satish Singh Ji Walnut
- \* 1:30 to 1:45 PM.....Bhai Maninder Singh Ji
- \* 1:45 to 2:00 PM.....Bhai Parvinder Singh Ji
- \* 2:00 to 2:15 PM.....Bhai Jaswant Singh Ji Zira
- \* 2:15 to 2:30 PM.....Bhai Ranjit Singh Ji and Bhai Sukhvinder Singh Ji Dhadhi Jatha
- \* 2:30 to 2:45PM.....Bhai Gurpreet Singh Ji
- \* 2:45 to 3PM.....Bhai Amrik Singh Ji
- \* 3:00 PM.....Ardaas

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**ELECTIONS**

# Jasmeet Bains Defeated In Congressional Primary Bid

India-West News Desk

CALIFORNIA- California State Assemblymember Dr. Jasmeet Bains has been defeated in the Democratic primary for the 22nd Congressional District by progressive challenger Randy Villegas. Villegas will now advance to the November general election to challenge incumbent Republican Rep. David Valadao.



Dr. Bains, a family physician and the first Sikh American and South Asian woman elected to the California State Legislature, campaigned as a moderate pragmatist. Born in Delano to Punjabi Sikh immigrants, Bains centered her platform on her professional medical background and her legislative record in the State Assembly since 2022. She specifically focused on healthcare access, fentanyl addiction, and public safety in the Central Valley, emphasizing her hands-on experience in regional medical infrastructure.

The primary reflected a sharp ideological divide within the Democratic Party. While Democratic Party leaders and the Democratic Congressional Campaign Commit-

tee viewed Bains as a stronger challenger against Valadao, Villegas's anti-corporate campaign, backed by national progressives including Sen. Bernie Sanders and Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, ultimately resonated with voters.

Following his win, Villegas stated, "Despite the onslaught of outside corporate money spent against us, we have shown that working people are ready for change." DCCC Chair Rep. Suzan DelBene subsequently backed the nominee, calling him a "people-first leader."

The general election is expected to hinge on healthcare, given that the 22nd District has one of the highest concentrations of Medicaid beneficiaries in the United States.

# Saikat Chakrabarti Ends Congressional Bid

India-West News Desk

SAN FRANCISCO- Saikat Chakrabarti has suspended his campaign for California's 11th Congressional District after finishing behind State Sen. Scott Wiener and San Francisco Supervisor Connie Chan in the primary election, ending his bid to succeed retiring Rep. Nancy Pelosi.

The Indian-origin tech entrepreneur and former congressional aide announced June 3 that he was stepping aside and congratulated Wiener and Chan, who advanced to the November general election under California's top-two primary system.

"I want to congratulate Sen. Scott Wiener and Supervisor Connie Chan on their victories and thank everyone who participated in this election. While this wasn't the outcome we hoped for, I'm incredibly proud of what we built together," Chakrabarti said.

Preliminary election returns showed Wiener leading the field with more than 41% of the vote, followed by Chan with nearly 29%. Chakrabarti was in third place with about 15% as ballot counting continued.

Pelosi, who is retiring after



nearly 40 years representing San Francisco in Congress, endorsed Chan in the race.

Chakrabarti, a former Stripe engineer who later served as chief of staff to Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, said his campaign was unable to overcome what he described as "7 million dollars of AI, Crypto, and AIPAC money" spent in the contest.

He also thanked supporters and volunteers, saying the campaign built "the largest grassroots field campaign San Francisco has ever seen" and showed that voters were seeking a different kind of politics.

"This campaign has come to

an end, but the challenges facing San Francisco and our country remain," Chakrabarti said.

"I love San Francisco, and I'm not going anywhere," he said. "I've dedicated my life to pushing forward the progressive movement and I'm going to continue to do that."

In an Instagram post after the result, Chakrabarti thanked supporters and said the campaign's goals would continue beyond the election.

"The campaign has ended, but the mission remains," he wrote. "Thank you to everyone who volunteered and supported this campaign."

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## US Removes “Indo” From Pacific Command

India-West News Desk

WASHINGTON, D.C. —The U.S. Department of War announced June 16 that the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM) will once again be known as the U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM), reversing a name change made in 2018.

The move does not affect the command’s mission, military operations, personnel, resources or area of responsibility. Its jurisdiction will continue to extend from the waters off the U.S. West Coast to the western border of India.

The command, which includes India within its area of responsibility, will maintain its existing commitment to working with regional allies and partners, according to a Department of War statement.

The department said the change restores the command’s historic

identity. “Restoring the legacy USPACOM designation honors the command’s deep historical roots, fostering a sense of pride and collective spirit among all who serve in the Pacific,” it said.

Established by President Harry S. Truman on Jan. 1, 1947, the command operated as USPA-

COM for more than 70 years before it was renamed in 2018. It remains the oldest and largest of the United States’ unified combatant commands.

The command was renamed the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command

in May 2018 by then-U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, who said the move recognized the increasing strategic connection between the Indian and Pacific Oceans.



“Relationships with our Pacific and Indian Ocean allies and partners have proven critical to maintaining regional stability,”

Mattis said at the time. “In recognition of the increasing connectivity between the Indian and Pacific Oceans, today we rename the U.S. Pacific Command to U.S. Indo-Pacific Command.”

## How An Indian Fabric Became A U.S. Senate Tradition

Contd. from P1

This week, U.S. Senators Raphael Warnock of Georgia and Bill Cassidy of Louisiana led the Senate’s observance of National Seersucker Day, celebrating a fabric that has become synonymous with Southern style and summer attire in Washington.

The lawmakers introduced a resolution designating June 11 as National Seersucker Day and encouraging Americans to participate in the observance. The resolution also designates every Thursday through the last Thursday in August as “Seersucker Thursday” and declares June 2026 as “Seersucker Appreciation Month.”

While seersucker is closely as-



sociated with the American South, its story begins much farther away. According to the Senate resolution, the lightweight fabric originated in India before making its way to the United States in the mid-19th century, where it gained popularity as a practical response to summer heat.

The Senate resolution notes that the word “seersucker” is derived from the Persian phrase “shir-o-shakar,” meaning “milk and sugar,” a reference to the fabric’s alternating smooth and puckered textures. Those distinctive stripes allow air to circulate more freely, making the material particularly suited to hot and humid weather.

Seersucker became widely popular in the United States after being promoted by New Orleans businessman Joseph Haspel and eventually evolved into a hallmark of Southern fashion. Its association with Washington grew when former Senator Trent Lott launched Seersucker Thursday in Congress in 1996. After the observance went unmarked in 2012 and 2013, then-Representative Bill Cassidy, working with the late Senator Dianne Feinstein, helped revive it in 2014.

Today, the annual observance is viewed as a rare moment of bipartisan camaraderie on Capitol Hill.

“Seersucker is interwoven with the style and tradition of the South,” Warnock said. “I’m proud to continue this storied bipartisan Senate tradition of Georgia cotton, Southern charm, and fashion alongside Senator Cassidy.”

Cassidy underscored the fabric’s ties to Louisiana and the Senate. “Seersucker is a New Orleans invention, a Senate tradition, and brings a welcome moment of unity to Washington every year,” he said.

Beyond the fashion and political symbolism, the observance highlights a little-known cultural connection between India and the United States. What began as a lightweight fabric suited to India’s climate eventually became an enduring part of American summer attire and a distinctive feature of life on Capitol Hill. (IANS)



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# The Climate Story Indian Americans Are missing, Is Happening On The Farm

By HISHAM MUNDOL

When Indians abroad picture India's climate story, it is usually power plants, electric vehicles, and solar farms across Rajasthan. These are the headlines. They deserve to be.

But the harder test of India's development model is unfolding not in the energy sector but in the fields, dairy sheds, and coastal villages — in how India feeds nearly 1.5 billion people without exhausting the natural systems that feed them. Environmental Defense Fund is actively supporting this — bringing in science, economics and pragmatism — all while keeping the farmer, herder and fisher at the centre.

This part rarely travels well across the diaspora. It should.

India's rural economy supports nearly 700 million people through farming, livestock, fisheries, and forests. For most Indians, these are not adjuncts to the economy; they are the economy. They are also where climate stress lands first — weaker monsoons, falling groundwater, warming seas, hotter summers. A farmer in Maharashtra, a dairy entrepreneur in Tamil Nadu, a fisherwoman on the

Kerala coast: all running businesses for which the old rulebook no longer applies.

But framing this as a tragic ledger of risk is incomplete. India's food system is not only a vulnerability — it is perhaps its most powerful lever for delivering productivity, livelihoods, and lower emissions in the same motion.

Take fertiliser. Indian farmers, on average, apply too much of it, and this is not unique

to India. Excess nitrogen does not become extra grain; it leaches into water, degrades soil, and releases nitrous oxide — a greenhouse gas nearly 300 times more potent than carbon dioxide. Tools built with Indian institutions and deployed through partners, whether governments, non-profits, and corporates, are helping farmers apply the right amount at the right time. Costs fall. Yields hold or even improve. Emissions decline. Three good outcomes from one careful intervention.

Take dairy. India is the world's largest milk producer, and the sec-

tor is a lifeline for tens of millions of households, disproportionately women. It is also a major source of methane. Better animal health, feed, and service delivery raises productivity per animal, lifting incomes and lowering emissions per litre of milk. A programme that began with a few hundred climate-smart dairy entrepreneurs in Tamil Nadu is now being adapted for state-wide scale across both there and in Maharashtra. Not aid. Enterprise.

Take groundwater. India spends enormously on public budgets, CSR, philanthropic capital, recharge structures by the thou-



that depends on how the fishery is managed. The most underused lever is traceability. When a buyer in Tokyo, Brussels, or San Francisco can verify where a fish was caught and how, sustainability stops being a cost and becomes a price premium. It turns environmental performance into market access, and creates demand for the very solutions science already supports.

For Indian Americans, the relevance is not ab-

stract. The grains, the dairy, the seafood you grew up with, and the families you fly home to visit, all sit inside this system. A sustainable food system in India is not a charitable cause. It is whether India can feed itself, with dignity, through the decades of climatic change ahead.

India has the science, scale, and institutional muscle. What it needs is the same thing it has shown elsewhere: in space, in digital payments, in renewables; the discipline to execute, and partners willing to stay the course.

The food systems question is not whether India can meet it. It is whether the world is paying attention while it does.

## For the Right to Belong: The Trial Warriors of MCX Legal

*Some law firms handle cases. MCX Legal fights for people.*

At the heart of that distinction are two attorneys who have built their careers around a single, unifying conviction: that everyone deserves a secure place in the life they have built — the right to belong. Sometimes that fight is over a paycheck and a body broken on the job; sometimes it is over the right to stay in this country at all. To Aneeta and Timothy, it is the same fight, and every person waging it deserves fierce, experienced representation.



**Aneeta Mishra**, Founder and Managing Partner, brings close to two decades of experience as a trial lawyer across a diverse set of areas of law, including work injury and immigration detention defense. A cum laude graduate of Western State College of Law who once defended large institutions, including her last stint as a partner at a Big Law firm, made a deliberate choice to switch sides — and has never looked back. She draws on her own understanding of how institutions fight to deny people what they are owed, and turns it against them. Today her practice runs along two fault lines: workers broken on the job and denied what they are owed, and non-citizens in immigration proceedings or held in ICE detention fighting for bond, release, and the right to stay with their families. On a personal front, she has been married for 16 years. She and her husband live with their two kids (girls, aged 8 and 3) in Irvine, California.

**Timothy Chan**, Partner and lifelong Los Angeles native, has spent more than a decade fighting for the people. He has won millions in settlements, benefits, and trial verdicts for his clients. Many of the people

he fights for are also immigrants who crossed borders to build a life here — and to Timothy, defending a worker's paycheck and defending a family's place in this country are the same mission. When ICE detains a breadwinner, an entire family is thrown into crisis — and Timothy fights in the immigration proceedings with the same ferocity he brings to a denied workers' compensation claim. Rooted in faith and community, he believes the law exists to protect and restore dignity — not just resolve disputes. He brings that conviction to every courtroom, every negotiation, every client.



Together at MCX Legal, Aneeta and Timothy represent one thing: working people against the systems that try to discard them or discourage them from pursuing their legal rights. Whether that system is an employer or insurance carrier denying a hurt worker the benefits they earned, or an immigration court moving to remove a family from the only home they know, the fight is the same — the right to belong — and Aneeta and Timothy show up ready to wage it. Hurt on the job or subject to an immigration proceeding, every client gets the same answer from MCX Legal: We fight.

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## Players With Indian Heritage Feature At FIFA World Cup 2026

*Contd. from P1*

of Indian heritage to start a FIFA World Cup match. The New Zealand midfielder was named in the starting lineup for his team's Group G game against Iran on June 16.

Born in Auckland to Punjabi parents, the 27-year-old played until the closing stages of New Zealand's 2-2 draw against Iran. Wearing the No. 10 jersey, Singh was involved in New Zealand's attacking play and had several attempts on goal.

Singh also made headlines in 2019 when he became the first player of Indian descent to appear in Germany's Bundesliga with Bayern Munich. He later played professionally in Germany, Portugal and Serbia before returning to New Zealand football.

Australia forward Nishan Velupillay made his World Cup debut on June 14 during Australia's 2-0 victory over Türkiye. The Melbourne-born 25-year-old, who has Tamil and Anglo-Indian roots, came on as



a second-half substitute.

Qatar winger Tahsin Mohammed Jamshid, born in Doha to parents from Kerala, is a member of Qatar's World Cup squad. DR Congo midfielder Samuel Moutoussamy, born in France to a Congolese mother and an Indo-Guadeloupean father of Tamil heritage, is also part of his nation's World Cup team.

# Survivor Story: A Heart Attack While Hiking Taught Me What Being “Healthy” Means

By SUDIP NAG

MOUNTAIN VIEW, CA – I thought I was healthy. I hiked regularly, played soccer, and stayed active. Like many people in the Bay Area tech community, I worked long hours, managed stress as best I could, and told myself I would call my doctor for an annual check-up when things slowed down. They never really did. And in 2024, that gap between intention and follow-through nearly cost me my life.

I was on a hike when I suffered sudden cardiac arrest. My life was saved by a physician who happened to be passing by and performed CPR. He kept me alive until emergency help arrived. I am forever grateful this stranger had the compassion, knowledge, and instinct to act; because of him, I am here to write this.

Recovering from a life threatening cardiac event requires specialized rehabilitation which I received at El Camino Health’s Cardiac and Pulmonary Wellness Center in Mountain View. Not knowing what to expect, I thought there would be exercises. What I got, however, was something I had never really had

before: a comprehensive understanding of what was happening inside my body. They coached me on nutrition, strength and stability exercises, and overcoming the psychological effects of the experience. I now have a set of principles to live by that can work for people at every fitness level. Today, I am sharing them with you:

**Know your numbers.** Blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar, and body mass index. I had always assumed that if something were seriously wrong, I would feel it. That is not how it works. The most important warning signs are invisible without regular monitoring and screening. I had been walking around with a cardiovascular crisis building inside me and had no idea. Do not wait until you feel sick to find out what is happening in your body.

**Exercise smarter, not harder.** Consistency matters far more than an intense, single workout. The American College of Cardiology recommends 150 minutes of aerobic exercise per week. That is achievable and sustainable.

**Do not skip strength training.** Aerobic exercise is good, but strength and balance training are



what actually protect you as you get older. They prevent falls, maintain bone density, and keep you functional for decades. I no longer ignore this as I had done before my cardiac event.

**Fuel your body properly.** Fresh vegetables, fruits, and plant-based proteins are the foundation. Not a diet or a detox. This is the foundation for what you eat every day. You either build your health or quietly erode it.

**Learn CPR.** A stranger’s imme-

diately action saved my life. It only takes a few hours, and it is one of the most important things you can do for the people around you.

**Find your team.** Growing up in an Indian household, regular checkups were simply never a priority. You went to the doctor when something was wrong — not to find out if something might go wrong. The difference-maker has been finding a group of people who would walk alongside me on my health journey. Whether it is

a rehabilitation team, an exercise group, or friends who share your priorities, people who exercise and stay accountable together are simply more consistent. Connection is not just emotionally nourishing. Research shows it is physiologically protective.

I now make my check-ups a priority. I track my numbers. I do not skip strength training. And I have thought a lot about what it means to be a lifelong soccer fan who almost did not make it

to another match.

The message I carry is simple. Your intention to be healthy is not enough on its own. You have to build the infrastructure around it before a crisis forces your hand.

Your health truly is your wealth. I learned that the hard way. I hope you do not have to.

*(Nag is a Bay Area resident. He completed cardiac rehabilitation at El Camino Health’s Cardiac and Pulmonary Wellness Center in Mountain View, California.)*

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# New Baby - Growing Family, Growing Needs

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Having a baby or adopting a child is one of life's greatest joys, but it also comes with a lifetime of responsibility. From making sure they get enough to eat, to ensuring they get good quality, safe sleep, there is a lot to worry about in the early days of parenting.

Health insurance may not be something you're thinking about right now, but getting yourself and your child enrolled in a high-quality health plan is one of the most important things you can do as a parent.

For many AANHPI families, welcoming a new child is also a cherished time that brings loved ones together. Covered California helps growing families find affordable, quality coverage and in-language support when they need it most. Whether it's your first child or your fifth, Covered California is here to help.

"As a parent of a toddler, I know how important those first few months are to bond and to give our children the healthy foundation for a long, happy life," said Covered California Executive Director Jessica Altman. "There are many decisions parents have to make in

the early days, and making sure children and parents get enrolled in a health insurance plan is one of the best things you can do for your growing family."

Whether you gave birth to or adopted your new child, you may be eligible to enroll during Covered California's ongoing special-enrollment period. This is the time outside of open enrollment when you can sign up for health insurance if you've recently experienced certain life changes.

"Getting your child the care they need early in life supports healthy development, helps keep them up to date on recommended immunizations and prepares them for a strong, healthy start in the world," said Covered California Chief Medical Officer Dr. Monica Soni. "That starts with getting your child insured with a health plan, and Covered California offers financial help to those who qualify."

This year, more than 141,000 children in California are enrolled in a health plan through Covered California. That's tens of thousands of California parents who have ensured that their children have a healthy foundation built on quality health insurance that covers all the essentials and more.

Many parents are also looking to Covered California for them-



selves so they can be there for their kids by taking care of their own health — parents like Nulu in Los Angeles. She takes care of her son while she looks for a job and her husband works. She recently had gallbladder surgery and is managing symptoms of postpartum depression, so she relies on her plan through Covered California to help take care of both her physical and mental health.

"We truly need health care and good health care, but at the same time, we don't want it to stretch our pockets," said Nulu. "I have a family of three surviving with one income. It would really stretch us. It would be difficult."

Covered California is the only

place where Californians who qualify can get financial help on a sliding scale to reduce premium costs. All health plans offered through Covered California come with free preventive care for you and your child, with access to different networks and doctors, plus optional children's dental insurance.

Visit CoveredCA.com and enter some basic information, like your age, income and location. From there, you can compare plans in your area, see estimated monthly costs, explore services that are covered and see what financial help is available to you.

Beyond the medical needs for a new parent, there is also a broader

public health case for coverage, especially for AANHPI families. The following circumstances are among the more common reasons people become eligible for Covered California's special-enrollment period, when you can apply for coverage within 60 days of a major life change such as:

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- Getting married or entering a domestic partnership
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- Moving and gaining access to new health plans through Covered California that were not available in your previous location
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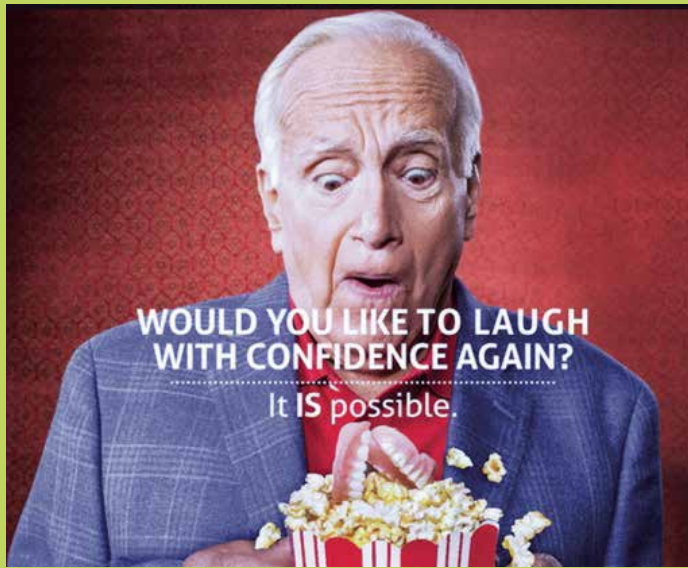
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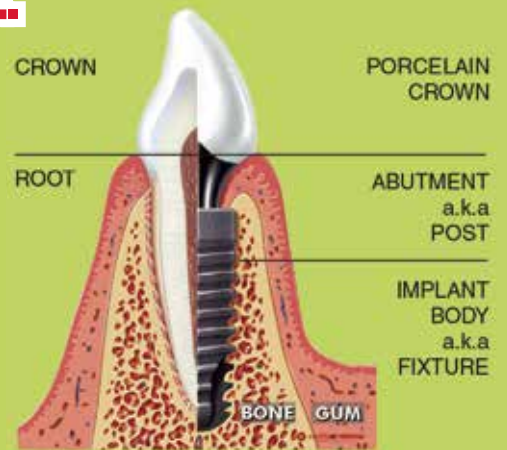


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# Mira Nair Unveils First Look Of Her New Film 'Amri'

NEWYORK, NY- Filmmaker Mira Nair has announced her upcoming feature film 'Amri,' inspired by the life and art of celebrated painter Amrita Sher-Gil, with actors Priyanka Chopra Jonas, Jaideep Ahlawat, and Jim Sarbh among the ensemble cast.

The filmmaker also unveiled the first look of the film, which is currently completing production across India and Hungary. Speaking about the project, Nair said the art of Amrita Sher-Gil had influenced her filmmaking journey for decades. "Every film I've made in the last several decades has been inspired by the art of Amrita Sher-Gil. She taught me how to see," Nair said.

"She absorbed the best European training to distill the soul of India in a way that no one ever had — it is this distillation that has informed my own cinema from the beginning. The bravery of her palette, color and framing of the ordinary people of India has eternally moved me," she added.

Actress Anjali Sivaraman will portray painter Amrita Sher-Gil in the film. The cast also includes British actress Emily Watson as Amrita's mother Marie-Antoinette Gottesman, actor Jaideep Ahlawat as her father Umrao Singh Sher-Gil, Hungarian actor Krisztián Csákvári as Victor Egan, actress Anjana Vasana as Indira Sher-Gil, actor Jim Sarbh as Karl Khandalavala, and actress Priyanka Chopra Jonas as Madame Azurie. Priyanka Chopra Jonas is also serving



as an executive producer on the film.

Set across Hungary, France, and India in the early twentieth century, 'Amri' traces the cultural influences and experiences that shaped Amrita Sher-Gil's artistic vision and identity.

The film also highlights Sher-Gil's artistic evolution after becoming the youngest student admitted to the Académie des Beaux-Arts de Paris, where she trained in European artistic traditions before developing a style focused on the everyday lives of ordinary people in India.

Producer Samudrika Arora said Amrita Sher-Gil's life reflected questions of identity and self-expression that continue to resonate with younger generations.

"Amrita Sher-Gil's life and oeuvres reflect the aspirations of the modern generation, where identity and unapologetic self-expression meet. There is something deeply human in the tension of coming from two wildly dif-

ferent worlds – the challenge of belonging to both, and never entirely to either," Arora said.

"What moved me to make this film is how Amri carried the best of each world within her, and not lose herself in the space between them. It is a privilege to bring this story to fruition alongside Mira, whose craft for telling cross-cultural stories is unparalleled," she added.

Producer Michael Nozik said Amrita Sher-Gil's story remained relevant beyond the period in which she lived.

"While the film is set between the two World Wars, Amrita is a character out of time and before her time — she is a true visionary artist and social revolutionary, her life story a beacon of inspiration. With Mira's direction, Anjali's performance of Amrita seizes that spirit of youthful curiosity and rebellion," Nozik said. (IANS)

## Mindy Kaling Reveals What Motivated Her 40-Pound Weight Loss



LOS ANGELES, CA – Actress and producer Mindy Kaling says her focus on long-term health and being present for her children motivated her weight-loss journey and lifestyle changes in recent years.

The 46-year-old 'The Office' alum and creator of 'The Mindy Project' told Bustle in an interview published on May 19 that her priorities shifted after becoming a mother to her three children, Katherine, 8, Spencer, 5, and Anne, 2.

"When I was younger, I would want to lose weight because of vanity

reasons," Kaling told Bustle. "Now I want to lose weight or have lost weight because I want to stave off things like diabetes." Kaling said diabetes runs on both sides of her family and added that maintaining her health is now tied to longevity and parenting. "I had it on both sides of my family, and trying to avoid those kinds of things will, I think, help longevity for me," she said. "And that's my goal."

The actress also said she wants to "live at least 20 more years" for her children. Kaling addressed public attention surrounding her appearance

and said she understands why some fans react strongly when celebrities undergo visible changes.

"You have an idea of what they were like when you grew attached to them, and it made them endear themselves to you," Kaling told Bustle.

"Of course, it's never a joy to be scrutinized, but also I truly understand it, as someone who consumes pop culture," she added. Stay tuned for the latest Hollywood news featuring breaking updates, celebrity stories, blockbuster announcements, and all the buzz from the world of entertainment.

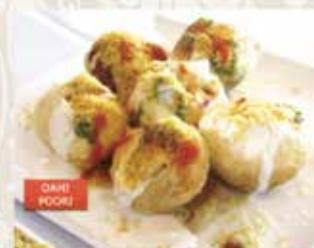
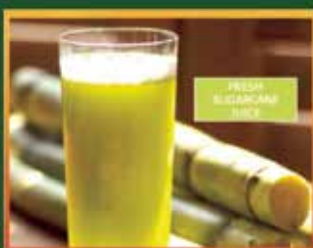
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# The Songs Belong As Much To The Audience As To Us: Vishal & Sheykhhar

India-West Staff Reporter

The famed duo of Vishal & Sheykhhar reflect on the emotional connection fans have built with their music over more than 25 years. They discuss the memories attached to their songs, the multigenerational energy of North American audiences, how they shape a live concert experience, and what fans can expect from their upcoming U.S. concerts dubbed the 'The Superhit Tour.'

**Q:** *Your music has become tied to so many personal moments for fans, from weddings and college years to road trips, heartbreak, parties, and family celebrations. When you build a live show, how do you decide what emotional journey to take the audience on?*

**A:** That's exactly how we think about it, an emotional journey. Our songs have become part of people's lives at different stages, so a concert isn't just about playing hits one after another. We want audiences to relive memories, celebrate the present, and create new ones together. The show moves through different emotions, joy, nostalgia, romance, celebration, and pure energy, because that's how people have experienced our music over the years.

**Q:** *Vishal & Sheykhhar's music now reaches multiple generations of listeners. Are you seeing younger fans connect with the songs differently than people who grew up with them when they first came out?*

**A:** Absolutely. What's fascinating is that

younger fans often discover songs through streaming, reels, or playlists rather than the films themselves. They connect with the music in their own way. Meanwhile, people who grew up with the songs have memories attached to them. Seeing both generations sing the same song together is incredibly special because it shows that music can travel far beyond its original moment.

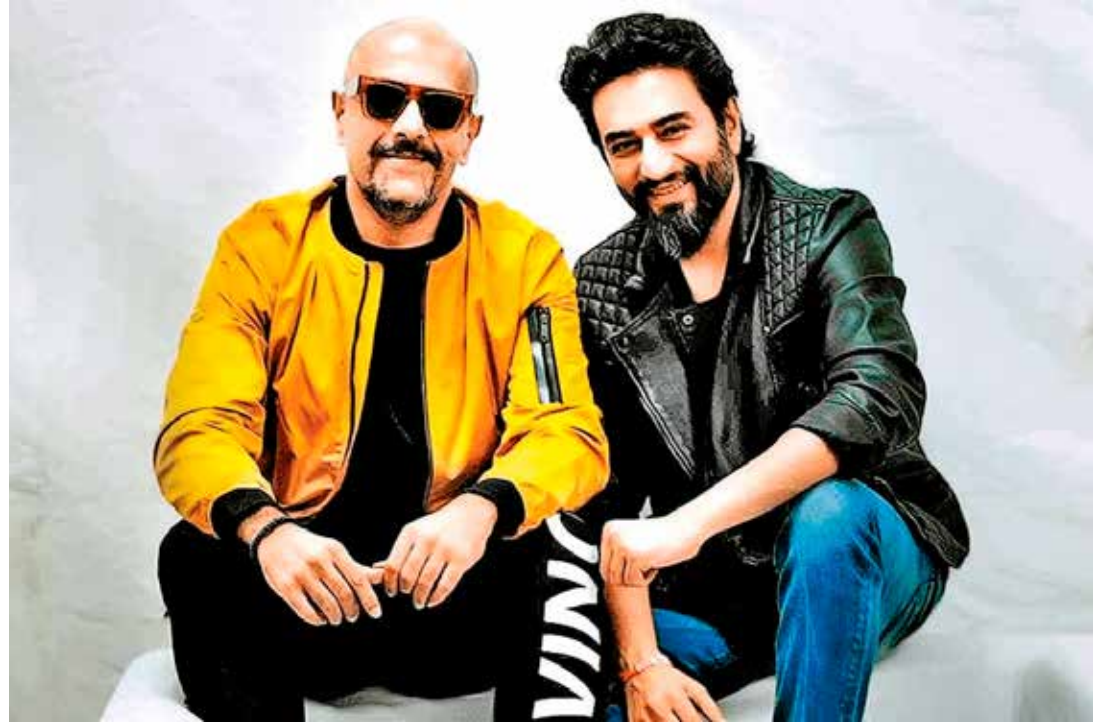
**Q:** *When you hear thousands of people singing your songs back to you outside India, especially in North America, what goes through your mind?*

**A:** Gratitude, first and foremost. It's a reminder that music doesn't recognize borders.

Many people in the audience have carried these songs with them through different countries, different phases of life, and different generations. When thousands of voices come together, it's a powerful reminder of how deeply music can connect people.

**Q:** *After more than 25 years, what does a Vishal & Sheykhhar concert mean to you today?*

**A:** Today, it feels like a celebration of a shared journey. The songs belong as much to the audience as they do to us. Every concert is an opportunity to reconnect with fans who have supported our music for years and to



welcome new listeners into that experience. That connection is what keeps it exciting after all this time.

**Q:** *Fans come expecting the greatest hits, but your catalog is so vast. How do you balance nostalgia with bringing newer music and fresh moments into the show?*

**A:** The hits are essential because people have emotional relationships with them. At the same time, we never want the experience to feel predictable. We constantly rethink arrangements, transitions, visuals, and the flow of the show. The goal is to honor the songs people love while making them feel

fresh and exciting in a live setting.

**Q:** *When you take a studio song to the stage with a full live band and large-scale production, what usually changes to make it work in a live concert setting?*

**A:** Energy becomes the priority. In the studio, a song can be very detailed and intimate. On stage, it needs to connect instantly with thousands of people. We often expand sections, create musical moments that encourage audience participation, and give the musicians room to bring their own energy. The song evolves into something larger than the recording. *Contd. on P25*



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# Sarod Maestro Amjad Ali Khan And Sons Honored With Grammy

India-West News Desk

NEW DELHI- Sarod maestro Amjad Ali Khan, along with his sons Amaan Ali Bangash and Ayaan Ali Bangash, have achieved a major milestone in their musical journey, officially taking possession of their personalized, engraved Grammy Award trophies. These handcrafted awards were recently dispatched from Los Angeles to the artists.

The trio was honored with the Grammy for Best Audio Book, Narration, and Storytelling Recording for their work on the album 'Meditations: The Reflections of His Holiness the Dalai Lama', making them the only Indian musicians to receive a Grammy this year. Following the receipt of their awards, the musicians traveled to McLeod Ganj, Dharamshala, on June 3



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to present the trophy to the Dalai Lama, who resides there. This project marked the first Grammy win for the 90-year-old spiritual leader.

The artists highlighted their deep personal connection to the project, noting that the Dalai Lama has served as a “guiding light” for their family for many years. Reflecting on the honor in a recent social media post, the family shared their feelings of humility, stating: “To hear his reflections interwoven with music has been a deeply moving experience — one that reminds us of the power of art to uplift the human spirit”.

They further expressed their hope that the music serves as a reminder that peace, kindness, and hope are not only possible, but essential.

The album is a collaborative fusion, blending Indian classical music with elements of pop, soul, jazz, and Latin styles.

The project was produced by author and composer Kabir Sehgal and features guest contributions from artists including Maggie Rogers, Rufus Wainwright, Andra Day, Tony Succar, Ted Nash, and Debi Nova.

Stay updated with the latest Music Industry News from India and the USA, covering trending releases, artist updates, album launches, concerts, charts, and entertainment developments. Designed for an India-focused audience, this section brings you global music insights, industry trends, and behind-the-scenes stories from both Bollywood and Hollywood music scenes, keeping you connected to the evolving world of music.

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MUSIC

# Vishal & Sheykhar: 'The Superhit Tour'

Contd. from P23

**Q:** Is there a song in your catalog that surprised you by becoming such a long-lasting crowd favorite in concert?

**A:** There have been quite a few. Sometimes the songs you expect to be huge live moments are exactly that, and sometimes a song takes on a life of its own over the years. What surprises us most is when songs continue to find new audiences decades after they were released. That longevity is something you can never predict.

**Q:** Your 2026 U.S. tour has additional cities following last year's sold-out run. How does performing in a new city change the energy or approach of the show?

**A:** Every city has its own personality. The audience might share a common love for the music, but the energy in the room is always unique. We pay attention to that and feed off it. The core of the show remains the same, but every concert develops its own character because the audience shapes the experience.

**Q:** Your catalog has become part of weddings, parties, playlists, films, and family memories for so many South Asian fans. Do fans ever share stories with you that



change the way you think about a song?

**A:** All the time. Fans tell us about songs that played at weddings, helped them through difficult periods, reminded them of loved ones, or connected them to home while living abroad. Those stories are incredibly moving because they remind us that once music is released, it becomes part of people's lives in ways we could never imagine while creating it.

**Q:** North American audiences bring to-

gether fans who grew up with your music in India, fans raised in the diaspora, and younger listeners discovering the songs in new ways. What feels special about performing for that kind of crowd?

**A:** It's one of the most unique experiences as performers. You can look out into the audience and see multiple generations singing together. Some people remember the songs from when they were first released, while others are hearing them through a completely different lens. That diversity creates an incredible atmosphere and reinforces the idea that great music

can connect people across time and place.

**Q:** If someone wanted to understand the evolution of Bollywood music through Vishal & Sheykhar's work, which songs would you point them to and why?

**A:** We'd probably point them to songs from different eras because each represents a moment in our creative journey. From energetic anthems and romantic ballads to contemporary pop-influenced tracks and large-scale cinematic songs, the catalog reflects the evolution of Bollywood music. More than any individual song, it's the variety that tells the story.

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## ARTS

# The Met To NYU, Sangeetha Kowsik Uses Art And Design To Connect Faiths, Cultures

India-West News Desk

NEW YORK, NY – By all appearances, Sangeetha Kowsik's life spans multiple disciplines: she is a Hindu chaplain trained in Islamic calligraphy, the former Head Designer at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and founder of a multidisciplinary studio that works across art, design, fashion, and beauty to bring communities, cultures, and faiths into conversation.

Born and raised in Fremont, California, Kowsik grew up in a Hindu household deeply connected to temple life. Her father helped build three Hindu temples in the US, including the Ganesha Temple in Flushing, New York, she says. From childhood, she trained in Carnatic and Hindustani vocal music, along with Bharatanatyam, Odissi, and Kathak.

"I grew up understanding that we share more than we differ," Kowsik says. She recalls that Ali Akbar Khan performed at the groundbreaking ceremony for the Shiva Vishnu Temple in Livermore, while Zakir Hussain hosted Saraswati pujas. "Music, spirituality, and artistic exchange between Hindus and Muslims have always existed," she says.

After moving to New York City to



study at Parsons School of Design, Kowsik built a career across fashion, beauty, luxury, and museums. She worked with brands including Estée Lauder, Ralph Lauren, and DKNY before joining The Metropolitan Museum of Art, where she later became Head Designer.

At the Met, Kowsik became increasingly aware of the lack of diversity and limited understanding of global faiths and cultures in museum spaces. She created an internship and mentorship program for people of color and international students. Her advocacy contributed to internships later becoming fully paid, work that

earned her the Rise & Recognize Award from Embrace the Change.

She worked on exhibitions including Alexander McQueen: Savage Beauty and the reopening of the museum's Islamic galleries. During that time, she studied Arabic calligraphy at New York University under Palestinian calligrapher Majid Saif while designing products for the museum shop.

"Arabic calligraphy is an art form that connects Muslim communities across regions," Kowsik says. "Wherever you find a Muslim community, you will find Arabic calligraphy."

NYU later appointed Kowsik as Hindu Chaplain, recognizing

her knowledge of Sanskrit, Hindu scripture, and temple traditions. In 2017, she founded the NYU Hindu Center as a space for education, spiritual practice, and interfaith dialogue. Her work was later recognized with "Chaplain of the Year."

As conversations around faith and identity became more polarized, Kowsik began using art and design to explore connections between Hindu and Muslim traditions. Inspired in part by her friendship with NYU Imam Khalid Latif, she created Arabic calligraphy renderings of Hindu deities, including Lord Ganesha.

That work developed into "Allah Swami," an interfaith exhibition

presented at NYU in 2019. Today, her Arabic calligraphy artwork hangs beside NYU's mosque.

Through her studio, Ihsan Ishan Design, Kowsik creates art, fashion, exhibitions, and products focused on global faiths and cultural histories. Her "Subhanallah Tabla" design draws from the collaborative traditions behind the making of the tabla, with different parts often crafted by Hindu and Muslim artisans. The piece was worn by Zakir Hussain.

Her collections also explore histories across North Africa, Persia, and Mexico. A recent Mexico City collection looks at the marigold flower's Indigenous Mexican origins and its parallels with South Indian ancestral traditions.

Kowsik says the central idea behind her work remains consistent: using design as a way to create understanding across communities.

On June 23 at 3 p.m., Kowsik returns to the Met to deliver a public talk for the exhibition 'Household Gods: Hindu Devotional Prints, 1860–1930.' "It feels full circle," she says. "I'm returning as a designer, artist, chaplain, and educator, sharing the traditions I care deeply about."

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## ARTS

# Bharata Natyam Trailblazers Share Legacy, Memory And Movement At Ektaa Event

By ARPITA BANERJEE

IRVINE, CA – For one afternoon in Irvine, five decades of Bharata Natyam history came alive on a single stage.

Ektaa Center's 'Dance Conversations: Five Decades. One Living Tradition,' presented May 2 at the Lakeview Senior Center, brought together six pioneering Bharata Natyam gurus whose work helped establish and sustain the classical Indian dance form across the United States. Before a full house of more than 250, the artists shared memories, performance excerpts, and reflections on a lifelong relationship with dance.

The gathering was as much an artistic showcase as it was an act of remembrance – a tribute to the women who carried Bharata Natyam from Indian stages into American cultural life and built institutions that continue to shape generations of dancers.

Participating were Katherine KunhIRaman, Hema Rajagopalan, Rathna Kumar, Mythili Kumar, Viji Prakash, and Ramya Harishankar. Each was among the earliest in her region to found an institution dedicated to Bharata Natyam in the United States, after first building distinguished per-



formance careers in India.

Together, they represent a foundational chapter in the history of Indian classical dance in America.

Throughout the afternoon, the artists shared archival photographs and video from earlier performances, tracing personal and artistic journeys that span more than half a century. They also performed a brief abhinaya piece, transforming the event from panel discussion into living demonstration.

There was a particular poignancy in watching artists whose careers have unfolded over decades continue to inhabit the emotional and expressive depth of Bharata



Natyam with striking immediacy.

Katherine KunhIRaman reflected on the beginnings of Kalanjali School of Dance, which she and her husband K. P. KunhIRaman founded in Berkeley in 1975. Over fifty years, Kalanjali has become a cornerstone of the Bay Area's dance landscape and a longtime presence at the San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival.

That same year, Rathna Kumar founded Anjali School for Performing Arts in Houston, the first school of Indian dance in Texas. She offered a moving interpretation of the Annamacharya padam 'Naakun Cheppare.'

Hema Rajagopalan revisited the expressive tradition of the Tamil padam 'Yaarukahilum Bayama,' drawing on training that began in childhood under devadasi guru Swarna Saraswathy. The dancer

established Natya Dance Theater, in Chicago, Illinois, also in 1975 and has become a byword for dance in the area.

Mythili Kumar, who established Abhinaya School of Dance in Palo Alto in 1980, shared video excerpts of large-scale productions that revealed the breadth of her choreographic vision before performing the padam 'Yentha Chakkani Vaade.'

For many in the audience, an emotional moment came when Viji Prakash danced to the javali 'Sakhi Prana,' accompanied live by Ramya Harishankar's singing.

Harishankar herself chose not to present archival visuals, but her performance became its own statement. When she stepped forward to perform 'Krishna Nee Begane Baro,' the audience was treated to a deeply expressive rendering that reflected

the rigor and artistry that have defined her work with Arpana School of Dance in Orange County since 1982.

The event was co-produced by Ektaa Center and Supriya Ghorpadkar, a student of Harishankar. Founded originally as Arpana Foundation in 1989 by Harishankar and her husband Harish Murthy, the organization later evolved into Ektaa Center, expanding its mission beyond dance into broader community engagement.

The afternoon concluded with remarks from 93-year-old musicologist Robert Garfias, who reflected on his memories of legendary dancer Balasaraswati, followed by a question-and-answer session moderated by Jennifer Fisher.

What made 'Dance Conversations' remarkable was not simply the rarity of seeing six eminent gurus together, but the sense of continuity embodied in the room. These artists were not being honored solely for past achievement. They remain active teachers, choreographers, performers, and mentors – still shaping the evolution of Bharata Natyam in America while remaining rooted in tradition.

*(Banerjee is a tech entrepreneur and Indian classical vocal and dance enthusiast based in Los Angeles.)*

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BOOKS

# Johns Hopkins Scholar Anand Pandian Wins 2026 Zócalo Book Prize

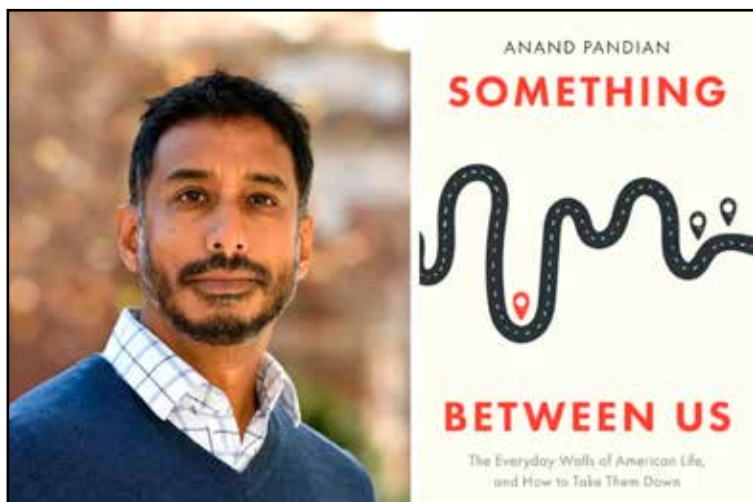
India-West News Desk

LOS ANGELES, CA — Indian American anthropologist Anand Pandian has been named the recipient of the 2026 Zócalo Book Prize for ‘Something Between Us: The Everyday Walls of American Life, and How to Take Them Down.’

Pandian will be honored at Zócalo Public Square’s annual Book Prize event on June 25 at the ASU California Center Broadway in Los Angeles. The program, titled ‘America, Can We Take Down the Walls Between Us?’, will feature a lecture by Pandian followed by a conversation with political strategist Mike Madrid, co-founder of The Lincoln Project.

The book grew out of travels Pandian undertook across the United States after becoming concerned about growing divisions in American public life during the 2016 election year. Visiting communities across the country, he sought to better understand the forces driving social and political polarization and the efforts underway to bridge those divides.

“Some years ago, I realized I barely knew this country where I was born and where I’ve spent most of my life,” Pandian said in a statement released by Zócalo



Public Square. “I set out to understand the impasses that we remain caught in as a country as well as what it would take to work beyond inherited histories of violence and indifference.”

He said the project introduced him to people working toward “a more just and humane future,” adding, “There’s a reason yet for hope in these United States.”

The Zócalo Book Prize, which includes a \$10,000 award, is presented annually to a nonfiction book published in the United States that advances understanding of community, social cohesion, and the forces that strengthen or weaken human connections.

Pandian joins previous recipi-

ents including Danielle Allen, Jonathan Haidt, Héctor Tobar, and Jean-Martin Bauer.

Pandian is the Krieger-Eisenhower Professor of Anthropology at Johns Hopkins University and author of ‘A Possible Anthropology: Methods for Uneasy Times.’ He is currently working on a project examining global efforts to build a zero-waste future, including research in India.

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# Padma Venkatraman Explores Grandparent-Grandchild Bond In New Picture Book

India-West Staff Reporter

‘Faraway Family’ by Padma Venkatraman, illustrated by Nicole Wong; Nancy Paulsen Books; ages 3-7; \$18.99.

Award-winning Indian American author Padma Venkatraman will make her picture-book debut



with ‘Faraway Family’, scheduled for release on August 25.

Known for acclaimed novels including ‘The Bridge Home’, ‘Born Behind Bars’, and ‘Safe Harbor’, Venkatraman turns her attention to younger readers in a story about family, belonging, and building connections across generations.

The book follows a young girl visiting relatives who live far away and initially feel like strangers. When a power outage leaves her without her night-light, her grandmother invites her into a game of shadow play that gradually transforms anxiety into friendship and helps bridge the distance between them.

Illustrated by Nicole Wong, ‘Faraway Family’ explores themes familiar

to many immigrant and diaspora families, where children often grow up separated from grandparents and extended relatives by geography, language, and culture. Through imaginative play,

the story highlights how relationships can develop over time and through shared experiences.

Early reviews have been positive. School Library Journal, in a starred review,

called the book “representation and reassurance to children with faraway families,” while Publishers Weekly described it as “a solidly comforting story that’s relatable for anyone building a new connection.”


Born in India, Venkatraman trained as an oceanographer before becoming an award-winning author. Her previous books have earned honors including the Walter Award, the Golden Kite Award, and the South Asia Book Award. She currently lives in Rhode Island.

With ‘Faraway Family’, Venkatraman offers young readers a gentle and reassuring story about overcoming unfamiliarity, strengthening family bonds, and finding connection across distances.

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## FOOD

## San Francisco Mango Pop-Up Draws Hundreds

India-West News Desk

SAN FRANCISCO – Hundreds of people gathered in a San Francisco park on May 31 for a free tasting event featuring popular Indian mango varieties, including Alphonso and Kesar.

The event was hosted by Indian-origin resident Darshil Patel, who has turned his appreciation for Indian mangoes into an annual community gathering. Volunteers peeled and sliced the fruit on-site as attendees sampled the seasonal varieties throughout the afternoon.

In a post on X, Patel jokingly said he had “solved the mango shortage.” What began as a small gathering among friends has grown into a larger community event that has attracted attention online.

Ahead of the event, attendees

were invited to experience why Indian mangoes remind many Indian Americans of childhood and home,



while introducing others to varieties they may never have tasted.

Photos shared on social media showed bright yellow-orange mangoes displayed alongside paper flower and butterfly decorations. Crowds were seen enjoying mango slices served on paper plates during the outdoor gathering.

The event also generated reactions online. One X user wrote,



“Indian Mango party. Best mangos I’ve had. Incredible vibes.”

Another X user, sharing photos from the event, wrote: “One of my favorite types of events: someone starts a niche tradition, enough people care that it becomes internet lore, strangers keep showing up and getting involved.” A third attendee commented on X, “I was 1 of 4 white guys (200 people came).



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## RECIPES

## Mango Horchata

*Ingredients:*

- 1 cup Royal Authentic Basmati Rice
- 4 cups water, divided (2 cups for soaking, 2 cups for blending)
- 1 1/2 cups whole milk
- 1 cup evaporated milk
- 1/3 cup monk fruit sweetener,
- 2 ripe mangoes, peeled and diced
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon,
- Ice, for serving

*Preparation*

1. Combine rinsed rice and 2 cups water in a bowl; soak for 3 hours or overnight.
2. Drain the rice and add it to a blender with the remaining 2 cups water. Blend until very smooth.
3. Strain through a fine-mesh sieve or cheesecloth into a pitcher, pressing the solids to extract as much liquid as possible.
4. Stir in the whole milk, evaporated milk, monk fruit sweetener, vanilla extract, and 1/2 tsp cinnamon.
5. Blend the diced mango with 1/4 cup of the horchata mixture, then fold it back into the pitcher for a swirled texture. For a smoother, uniform mango horchata, blend everything together instead.
6. Refrigerate until well chilled. Serve over ice and garnish with diced mango and a sprinkle of cinnamon.



## Honey Chicken Basmati &amp; Whipped Goat Cheese Flatbread

*Ingredients:*

- Royal basmati rice, 1 cup
- Unsalted butter, 1 tbsp
- Fennel seeds (lightly crushed), 1/2 tsp
- Salt, 1/2 tsp + 1/2 tsp + 1/2 tsp
- Carrots (sliced), 1 cup
- Zucchini (chopped), 1 cup
- Red onion (sliced), 1 small
- Olive oil, 2 tbsp + 2 tbsp
- Black pepper, 1/2 tsp + 1/2 tsp
- Honey, 2 tbsp + 2 tbsp
- Boneless, skinless chicken thighs/breasts (1" cubes), 1 lb
- Dark soy sauce, 1 tbsp
- Garlic (minced), 1 tsp
- Goat cheese (softened), 6 oz
- Heavy cream/milk, 2–3 tbsp
- Turmeric, 1–2 pinches
- Fresh basil leaves, 1/4 cup
- Flatbreads (oblong), 4

*Preparation*

1. Rinse the basmati rice, then soak it in water for 15–20 minutes. Combine the rice, 1/4 cups water, butter, fennel seeds, and 1/2 tsp salt in a saucepan. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to low, cover, and cook for 12–14 minutes. Fluff with a fork and set aside.
2. Preheat the oven to 425°F. Toss the carrots, zucchini, and red onion with 2 tbsp olive oil, 1/2 tsp salt, and 1/2 tsp black pepper. Spread on a baking sheet and roast for 18–20 minutes, until lightly caramelized and tender.
3. Heat 2 tbsp olive oil in a skillet over medium-high heat. Add the chicken, season with the 1/2 tsp salt and 1/2 tsp black pepper, and cook until browned and cooked through, about 6–8 minutes. Add garlic, soy sauce, and 2 tbsp honey, stirring to coat. Cook for another 1–2 minutes until the chicken is glazed.
4. In a bowl or food processor, blend the goat cheese, heavy cream or milk, turmeric, and the 2 tbsp honey until smooth and airy.
5. Warm the flatbreads in the oven or a dry skillet until soft and pliable.
6. Spread the whipped goat cheese across each flatbread, leaving some areas visible. Spoon the basmati rice over the top, followed by the honey-glazed chicken and roasted vegetables. Finish with torn basil and a light drizzle of honey.

A colorful flatbread loaded with flavor for your weekend table.



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### Hotel Management

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Responsibilities include working the front desk, managing staff, handling guest service, supervising housekeeping, maintaining property standards, and assisting with reservations, payments, and daily reporting. Must be dependable, hands-on, organized, able to work flexible hours. Hotel experience preferred. Couple preferred. Contact: 801-864-5151

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**House Keeping / Laundry Attendant** needed for Casper Wyoming We are looking for a reliable and hardworking Housekeeping / Laundry Attendant to join our hotel team in Casper, Wyoming. The main responsibility of this position is to help keep guest rooms, public areas, and laundry operations clean, organized, and ready for our guests. This is a hands-on position and requires someone dependable, detail-oriented, and willing to work as part of a team. Contact: 801-864-5151 / vishalsoni1984@gmail.com

### Hiring Front Desk Agent for Motel 6 in Prescott, AZ

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## OTHER

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I am an experienced Hotel/Motel Manager looking for a job in the same field in preferably California. Please contact me at 559-213-1103 or hardwaar@yahoo.com.

## NAME CHANGE - PUBLIC NOTICE

We, Ravinder Kumar and Manju Sinhmar, residing in Poway, California, USA, and having permanent resident at Rohtak, Haryana, India, declare that we have changed the name of our minor son, holder of Indian Passport V3581709, from Rajat to Rajat Kumar. Henceforth, he shall be known as Rajat Kumar for all official purposes. Contact: ravinder2828@gmail.com

Notice is hereby given that Kantibhai Bhaktibhai Patel of 1355 Jones St., Hemet, CA 92543 have changed my name to Kantilal B Patel and shall hereafter be known as same name. Contact: Priyanshu@msn.com

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