

INDIA WEST

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LA Consulate Marks Gandhi Jayanti

India-West News Desk

LOS ANGELES, CA – The Consulate General of India, Los Angeles, led a series of commemorative and community programs across Southern California and Nevada, with two events in the Los Angeles area marking the birth anniversaries of Mahatma Gandhi and former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri and reinforcing the Consulate's engagement with the Indian diaspora.

The Gandhi Jayanti observances were held in Los Angeles on October 2, with a morning program in Pacific Palisades and an evening



commemoration and community interaction in Cerritos.

Consul General Dr. K. J. Srinivasa led both programs, paying tribute to Gandhi's legacy while also referencing Shastri's message of "Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan."

Self-Realization Fellowship

In the morning, the Consulate held a program in collaboration with Self-Realization Fellowship at the SRF Lake Shrine, where participants paid floral tributes at the Mahatma Gandhi World Peace Memorial. The memorial contains a portion of Gandhi's ashes, which Paramahansa Yogananda had enshrined there. *Contd. on P14*

Congress Raises Alarm Over Heart Disease Risk Among South Asians

WASHINGTON, DC—A bipartisan group of US lawmakers has reintroduced legislation seeking more federal research, public awareness, and culturally appropriate programs to address the disproportionately high incidence of heart disease among South Asian Americans.

Representatives Pramila Jayapal (D-WA) and Joe Wilson (R-SC), along with Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ), introduced the South Asian Heart Health Awareness and Research Act. The measure would authorize the US health secretary to provide grants to states for programs focused on communi-



derstanding of heart disease and the unique risk factors in the South Asian community while ensuring that all those living with it get the resources,

ties disproportionately affected by cardiovascular disease.

"As the first South Asian American woman ever elected to the House of Representatives, I'm fully committed to increasing un-

derstanding of heart disease and the unique risk factors in the South Asian community while ensuring that all those living with it get the resources,

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Contd. on P15

'Gondhal' Selected As India's Oscars Entry



MUMBAI—Marathi-language film 'Gondhal' has been selected by the Film Federation of India

as India's official entry for the 99th Academy Awards. The Film *Contd. on P29*

Tragedy: CA Woman Was Killed After Months Of Harassment

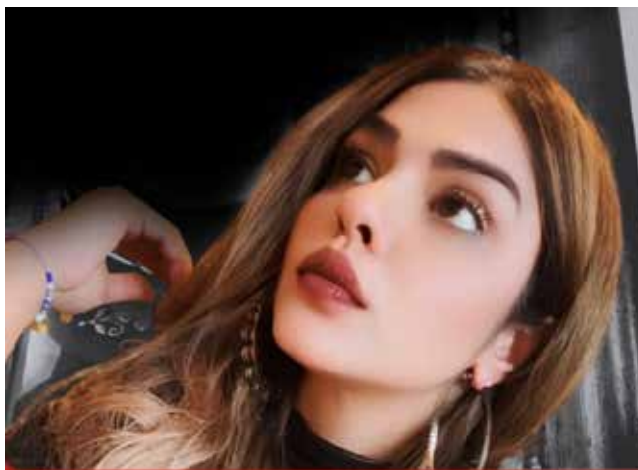
SACRAMENTO, CA – Shalini Thakur, 38, who was fatally shot outside her California workplace on September 8, had obtained a restraining order against the man accused of killing her after months of alleged stalking, harassment and threats, according to court records and the Sacramento County Sheriff's Office.

Her funeral, was held on September 14. She was the only child of her mother Sudesh Kumari.

Thakur was being dropped off at work at a shopping plaza when

22-year-old Rohit approached and confronted her, authorities said. She tried to flee, but Rohit allegedly chased her and shot her several times. After she fell, he shot her in the head at close range, the sheriff's office said.

Rohit fled and was located about seven minutes later on eastbound Highway 50 near Watt Avenue with the help of Flock camera. He died



by suicide during a standoff with deputies, authorities said.

A restraining-order filing shows that Thakur had reported an escalating pattern of behavior that began around September 2025. She knew Rohit through DoorDash pickups from her workplace

and said he increasingly showed up at her home and waited for her.

Among the incidents described in the filing, Rohit deflated her vehicle's tires and placed an Apple AirTag beneath her car's hood to track her location.

Authorities also said Rohit allegedly obtained a copy of Thakur's apartment key and entered her home while she was sleeping. He reportedly told her afterward that he had been worried about her because she had not answered him.

Contd. on P20

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Ganesh Festival Brings Thousands To San Ramon In Celebration Of Faith And Culture



sion and Ganesh Visarjan.

The festival also featured cultural performances, including classical dance, devotional music, Ganesh Vandana, bhajans and Mangal Geet. Children took part in an arts and activity zone as well as a

Ganesha art competition.

Food and shopping vendors were also part of the event, with organizers saying participating businesses saw strong customer engagement during the festival.

Several elected officials and community leaders attended the gathering, including San Ramon Vice Mayor Merisol Rubio, BART Board of Directors President Melissa Hernandez, Dublin Mayor Sherry Hu, Pleasanton Mayor Jack Balch, San Ramon Councilmembers Sridhar Verose and Richard Adler, and Dublin Councilmember John Morada.

Organizers credited Bishop Ranch/City Center, the City of San Ramon, sponsors, vendors, performers, volunteers, public safety teams, civic partners and community organizations for supporting the event.

India-West News Desk

SAN RAMON, CA – More than 25,000 visitors and devotees attended the Bay Area's Grand Ganesh Festival at Bishop Ranch City Center in San Ramon on September 19, bringing together families for prayers, cultural programs, food, shopping and other activities.

Held under the theme "East Bay Ka Raja," the festival featured a 12-foot Ganesha idol and a series of devotional programs, including the Ganesha Pratishthapana and sahasra aarti.

It was open throughout the day, with families and visitors arriving steadily to offer prayers. The evening program included a grand performance by Spartans Grand Dhol Tasha, followed by the Pallaki Seva proces-

Jains Across North America Mark Paryushan

India-West News Desk

LOS ANGELES, CA – Jain communities across North America observed Paryushan Parv and Das Lakshan Parv, important periods in the Jain calendar marked by prayer, reflection, self-discipline and forgiveness.

Paryushan is observed for eight days by the Shwetambar Jain community, while the Digambar community observes Das Lakshan Parv for 10 days.

More than 70 Jain centers across North America marked Paryushan with prayers, ceremonies, spiritual talks, meditation, Bhavna and Tapsya, including fasting and other forms of self-discipline.

The observance concluded with Tapsvi Bahuman, honoring those who completed extended fasts, followed by Parna, the traditional breaking of the fast.

Young Jains also participated in this year's observances. Members of Young Jains of America undertook personal Niyams, or commitments, and took part in fasting,

prayer, meditation and other spiritual practices while continuing with school, college, work and daily activities.



"Paryushan gives us a chance to pause and reflect on how we live our lives," said Atul Shah of Chicago, president of JAINA. "At its heart, it is about becoming better human beings. It was especially encouraging to see so many young people embrace these values in their own way."

Samvatsari, the final day of Paryushan, is dedicated to seeking forgiveness for any harm caused through thoughts, words or actions.

Jains traditionally say "Micchami Dukadam," asking forgiveness for their mistakes.

The observance also centers on Jain principles including Ahimsa, compassion, forgiveness and respect for all living beings.

हमें कैलिफ़ोर्निया से मोहब्बत है, और क्यों न हो?

आपने इस स्टेट को बनाने में मदद की है— अपना देश छोड़कर, अपनों को छोड़कर, और अपनों के बेहतरीन ज़िंदगी के लिए।

60 देशों के लोग एक स्टेट में – यह फूलों का गुलदस्ता, जहाँ हर एक फूल अपने रंग और खुशबू से इस जगह को महका देता है - वहाँ उनकी हिफाज़त भी ज़रूरी है।

आपको चाहिये थोड़ा सा प्यार, थोड़ा देखभाल --एक चैंपियन की, क्योंकि हर कैलिफ़ोर्निया-वासी को कारगर स्वास्थ्य सेवा मिलनी चाहिये।

आपको अपने या अपने बच्चों के स्वास्थ्य में चुनना न पड़े, या फिर अपनी ज़रूरी आवश्यकताओं को दबाना न पड़े, इसी लिए हम आपकी वकालत करते हैं। हम सौदा करते हैं ताकि आपको बेहतर स्वास्थ्य सेवा मिल सके।

हम स्वास्थ्य बीमा कंपनी नहीं हैं। हम इसमें आपके लिए हैं।



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COMMENTARY

Gandhi Jayanti Isn't Just About History But A Blueprint For Inspired Living

By Dr. K. J. SRINIVASA, Consul General of India, Los Angeles

When we gather on October 2 to celebrate Gandhiji or Lal Bahadur Shastriji, they are much more than commemorative events: They provide an opportunity to reflect upon the values that have shaped modern India and continue to inspire Indians and people of Indian origin across the world.

Mahatma Gandhi occupies a unique place in India's history and in the moral imagination of the world. His greatest contribution was not merely to India's freedom struggle, but to demonstrate that truth, non-violence, self-discipline and moral courage can become instruments of social and political transformation.

Gandhiji reminded us that "My life is my message." His message therefore was not confined to speeches or writings. It was embodied in the manner in which he lived, led and engaged with people.

His philosophy also resonates deeply here in the United States. From the American civil rights movement to movements for social justice across the world, Gandhi's ideas have travelled far beyond India's shores. His insistence on dignity, equality and peaceful democratic action continues to have universal relevance.

The United States and India are both vibrant, diverse democracies. Our societies are united by a deep respect for individual dignity, pluralism, democratic institutions and the rule of law. These shared values provide a strong foundation for the expanding India-US Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership.

And here in Southern California, those connections are particularly visible. The Indian-American community has become an important bridge between our two countries — contributing to business and



technology, medicine and education, science and innovation, entertainment and the arts, philanthropy and public service.

As the first Consul General of India in Los Angeles, I have had the privilege of witnessing this extraordinary energy across Southern California, Arizona, Nevada and New Mexico. The new Consulate has been established with a very clear purpose: to bring India closer to our diaspora, to strengthen people-to-people connections and to build new bridges between our two countries.

We want the Consulate to be not merely an office that provides consular services, but a platform for partnership — connecting Indian and American businesses, universities, entrepreneurs, investors, researchers, artists and young people.

Los Angeles itself offers extraordinary opportunities. It is a global centre for technology, entertainment, innovation, finance and entrepreneurship. We see enormous potential for an India-Hollywood corridor, stronger technology and startup partnerships, greater investment flows, and deeper educational and research collaboration.

The Indian diaspora can play a catalytic role in each of these areas.

Gandhiji's idea of Sarvodaya — the welfare and progress of all — also reminds us that development must ultimately translate into greater human opportunity and dignity.

It is therefore fitting that on this day we also remember another great son of India, Lal Bahadur Shastri.

Shastriji represented a different but equally profound dimension of India's national character — simplicity, integrity, humility and unwavering commitment to public service. His immortal call of "Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan" recognised the in-

dispensable contribution of India's soldiers and farmers at a crucial moment in our nation's journey.

His life demonstrated that leadership does not require grandeur. Sometimes its greatest strength lies in simplicity, personal integrity and a deep sense of responsibility towards the nation.

Gandhiji and Shastriji, though belonging to different generations and occupying different roles in India's history, shared a common belief: that public life must ultimately be about service to society and responsibility towards the nation.

Their legacies are particularly meaningful for the younger generation of Indian-Americans. Our young people inherit a remarkable heritage, but they also have the opportunity to shape the next chapter of India-US relations — through innovation, entrepreneurship, public service, scientific discovery, cultural exchange and community leadership.

Let us therefore remember that commemorating Gandhi is not simply about remembering the past. It is about asking ourselves how we can translate his values into action in the present.

Let us reaffirm our commitment to truth in public life, respect for diversity, peaceful dialogue, service to society and compassion for those around us. And let us continue to strengthen the bridge between India and the United States — a bridge built not only by governments, but by millions of people whose lives, families, ideas and aspirations connect our two great democracies.

May the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi continue to inspire us to pursue truth and peace, and may the example of Lal Bahadur Shastri inspire us to lead with humility, integrity and service.

"सत्यमेव जयते" —

Truth alone triumphs.

And as we move forward together, may the friendship between India and the United States continue to grow from strength to strength. Jai Hind!

Huge Spike: 500,000+ Anti-South Asian Hate Posts In 18 Months Documented

India-West News Desk

WASHINGTON, DC — A sharp rise in online hostility toward South Asian communities is being driven by immigration rhetoric, economic resentment, and digital amplification, according to a report released by the Center for the Study of Organized Hate (CSOH).

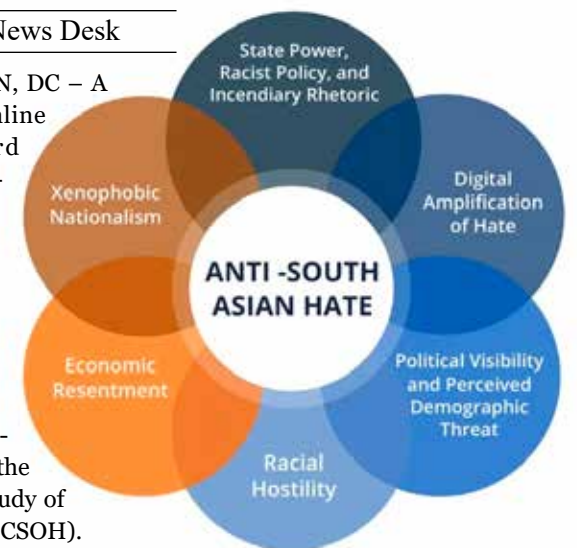
Titled 'The Rising Tide of Anti-South Asian Hate in the United States,' the study tracked online harassment targeting Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, and other South Asian groups across X, 4chan, 8chan, and Gab.

A Dramatic Surge Across Social Platforms

Researchers identified more than 500,000 anti-South Asian hate posts on X between January 2025 and June 2026, with monthly volume surging 75 per cent over the 18-month span. In 2025 alone, X recorded 328,747 such posts—a 60 per cent jump from the previous year. On fringe platforms, researchers logged nearly 400,000 hateful mentions in 2025, with over 90 per cent originating on 4chan.

Slurs, Tropes, Harassment

Immigration discourse and the H-1B visa program featured heavily in the findings. About 45 per cent of the posts analyzed on X depicted South Asians as "invaders," job thieves, or demographic threats. Racial slurs and dehumanizing tropes were widespread; the slur "pajeet" appeared in roughly 30 per cent of the X posts examined and 45 per cent of mentions on fringe sites. Hygiene-based harassment proved to be the fastest-growing category on X, leaping 171



per cent during the study window.

The report also detailed how generative AI tools are being deployed to produce racist caricatures that frame South Asians as criminals, scammers, or predatory threats.

Core Drivers of the Backlash

CSOH highlighted six main drivers behind the trend: official policy and rhetoric, xenophobic nationalism, racial hostility, high-profile political visibility, economic anxiety, and algorithmic amplification. The attacks frequently crossed religious lines, targeting Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs alike.

Escalating into Real-World Violence

Crucially, researchers warned that digital vitriol is translating into real-world harm. The report documented instances of doxxing, filmed workplace confrontations, and physical violence — including the July 2026 hate-crime stabbing of an Indian Muslim mall employee in Utah and the September 2026 stabbing of a Sikh truck driver in Wyoming.

"Online and offline hostility reinforce each other," the authors noted, as hateful narratives move fluidly from social media into political rhetoric and everyday life.

For detailed report: <https://www.csohate.org/>

INDIAWEST

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Advertising: advertising@indiawest.com

Classifieds: classifieds@indiawest.com

Website posting: info@indiawest.com

Publisher
Navneet Chugh

President
Parminder Singh
parminder@indiawest.com

Editor
Nimmi Raghunathan
nimmi@indiawest.com

Graphic Designer
Rishita Dagli

Advertising
advertising@indiawest.com

Content
Ravjot Kaur
Bharti Kumar
Reena Rathore

Phone: 1-866-621-9370
Email: info@indiawest.com
Website: www.indiawest.com



Offices:

Los Angeles, CA
15925, Carmenita Rd,
Cerritos, CA 90703

Santa Clara, CA
1600, Duane Ave,
Santa Clara, CA 95054

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COMMUNITY

Students Discuss Diplomacy, Books With Lakshmi Puri

India-West News Desk

ORANGE, CA – Southern California high school students took center stage in a September 23 conversation with former United Nations Assistant Secretary-General Lakshmi Puri, using the gathering to explore diplomacy, advocacy, women's rights and the role of young people in public service.

The program was organized by the Youth Civics Think Tank, a youth-led organization founded by Cerritos High School senior Eshan Patil. Aparna Hande was also a primary organizer and helped coordinate the program held at Tandoor restaurant, her.

Puri, who served as UN Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director of UN Women, spoke with Patil and Saivi Sodhi, a junior at Fairmont Preparatory Academy and a member of the YCTT team. Their conversation focused on how diplomacy and advocacy operate in practice, Puri's work on women's empowerment and her advice for students interested in public service.

Dr. K. J. Srinivasa, the inaugural Consul General of India in Los Angeles, attended the program as



guest of honor and addressed the gathering. La Palma Mayor Nitesh Patel, an advisor to YCTT, also participated and honored Puri, while Artesia Councilmember Zeel Ahir was among the civic and community leaders in attendance.

In the fireside conversation with Puri, she discussed her novel 'Swallowing the Sun,' including its inspiration, themes, characters and exploration of women's lives and social change. The book draws partly on the author's family history, including the lives of her parents, whom she described as feminists ahead of their time.

The title comes from a verse by saint-poet Muktabai, whose imagery of seemingly impossible feats became, Puri said, a source for the

novel's underlying belief in human possibility. The book is headed for a multi-season web adaptation. The event combined the youth-led civic discussion with the literary program along with recognition of Southern California based authors.

"A major part of our work is making civic institutions feel genuinely accessible to students who might not normally see themselves represented in these spaces," Patil said. "Representation matters, but access matters just as much, and young people need real opportunities to participate and speak their minds."

YCTT members including Omkar Siddeswaran and Aditya Komaragiri are all part of the group trying to advance the organization's youth-led approach.

UCLA Names P. Mukund Alum Of 2026



through both service and philanthropy. A member of the UCLA Samueli Dean's Executive Board, Padmanabhan has supported the engineering school in several ways.

His contributions helped fund the construction of the Engineering VI building, including a

India-West News Desk

LOS ANGELES, CA -Mukund Padmanabhan, an engineer and researcher who has also worked in quantitative finance, has been named the 2026 Alum of the Year by the UCLA Samueli School of Engineering.

Born and raised in India, Padmanabhan earned his master's and doctoral degrees in electrical engineering from UCLA in 1989 and 1992, respectively. The award is the school's highest honor and recognizes his work as an engineer and researcher, along with his philanthropic support for social and educational programs in the United States and India.

His ties to UCLA have continued

systems scaling laboratory named in his honor that houses one of the world's leading groups in semiconductor research.

He has also made several gifts to UCLA's Electrical and Computer Engineering Department, including funding for four endowed faculty term chairs in plasma physics, neuroengineering and cyber-physical systems. His support also includes three endowed graduate fellowships and an endowment for undergraduate scholarships.

Through his Guru Krupa Foundation, Padmanabhan has supported initiatives in education, social welfare, culture and environmental conservation in the United States and India.

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Several Hundred Join LA Consulate’s Viksit Bharat Run

India-West News Desk

LOS ANGELES, CA – Nearly 300 people took part in the Viksit Bharat Run 2026 at Don Knabe Community Regional Park, organized by the Consulate General of India, Los Angeles, in association with the United Indian Associations of Southern California.

The event drew children, youth, adults and senior citizens from across the Southern California Indian American community. Consul General Dr. K. J. Srinivasa inaugurated the run and joined participants, interacting with community members throughout the event.

Addressing the gathering, Srinivasa highlighted the Government of India’s vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 and Samarth Bharat, saying India’s development also depends on the participation and contributions of Indians and people of Indian origin



around the world. He urged young Indian Americans to stay connected with India and use their education, talent and ideas to contribute as innovators, entrepreneurs and leaders.

Srinivasa also spoke about the growing ties between India and Southern California, including the sister-city partnership between Mumbai and Los Angeles. He said the relationship could provide opportunities for greater people-to-



people, cultural, educational and economic engagement.

Participating community organizations included IALA, GOPIO, Santan Bengali Society, Los Angeles Hindu Temple, SMAP, Maharashtra Mandal LA, AIKOOTAN, NFIA, Step2Step, IASA and OBJP.

Awards were presented to participants in the Under-16, Adult and Senior categories. Community leaders were also recognized for their contributions to the Indian American diaspora.

The event concluded with continued interaction between the Consul General, participants and representatives of participating community organizations.

Cal State Researcher Gets NASA Grant For Growing Veggies In Space

India-West News Desk

NORTHRIDGE, CA – Chhandak Basu, a biology professor at California State University, Northridge, has received \$700,000 in NASA grants to study how plants and microbes survive under conditions that resemble those found in space.

Basu’s latest grant, worth \$400,000, will focus on leafy vegetables and how they respond to microgravity combined with drought-like conditions. The award follows a \$300,000 NASA grant

for his research on Halobacterium salinarum, a salt-tolerant microbe that can survive exposure to ultraviolet light, heavy metals and high salt concentrations.

His new project turns to plants, with researchers studying how leafy greens grow in microgravity and under the dry conditions that could be encountered on the moon or Mars.

Basu is collaborating with scientists at NASA’s Ames Research Center in Silicon Valley, including Craig Everroad, a co-investigator on the project. The team will also

study microbes that grow around the roots of plants cultivated in simulated lunar and Martian soils.

To simulate the effects of microgravity, the researchers will use a clinostat, a rotating device that alters how plants experience gravity. Basu will work with two to three CSUN students and NASA scientists to study how plants respond when their normal sense of gravity is disrupted.

Basu said fresh vegetables could give astronauts another food option during space missions. He also



pointed to the potential benefit of caring for plants in the enclosed environment of a space station, where astronauts live away from family and friends.

Born to a family of professors in Kolkata, Basu received a bachelor’s degree in agricultural sciences from B.C.K.V. (Agricultural University) in West Bengal. He then earned a Master of Science in agronomy from Montana State University and a Doctor of Philosophy in environmental sciences from the University of Rhode Island.

Patnaik to run for City of Cerritos elections in March 2027



Dear Cerritos Neighbor,

Like you, I am concerned about the rising cost of living, recent water rate increases, and the financial challenges facing our city. That is why I have decided to step up and run for Cerritos City Council on March 2nd 2027. For more than two decades, I have built my career helping businesses grow, creating jobs, managing major projects, and making sound financial decisions. As a Vice President and Commercial Lending Officer at Wallis Bank in Cerritos, I helped establish the bank’s Cerritos branch, exceeded deposit goals, brought more than 50 new business accounts into our community, and helped finance local businesses and entrepreneurs. My experience, however, goes beyond banking and finance. I began my professional career as a mechanical engineer and earned a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering from the National Institute of Technology in India. I later earned my Master of Business Administration from Pepperdine University. The combination of engineering, financial, and management experience gives me a unique perspective on the current challenges facing Cerritos. For example, our city recently faced problems involving a damaged water well and the water pipes system. I recommended exploring a more targeted and cost-effective approach of replacing or refurbishing the affected valves rather than undertaking a much larger reconstruction of the system which would cost \$81 Million. Unfortunately, my recommendation was ignored and now Cerritos residents’ water bills have doubled and future increases are planned. Residents deserve City Council Members who will ask tough questions, carefully examine the numbers, consider alternatives, and make decisions based on what provides the greatest value to our community. Together, we can keep Cerritos safe, financially strong, well maintained, and a community we are proud to call home. I respectfully ask for your support, and your vote for Cerritos City Council in 2027.

If there are any questions, please call me at 562-274-3210.

Pat Patnaik
City of Cerritos

Internal investment; External impact

Aho Gurudev celebrates Six Decades of Pujya Gurudevshri Rakeshji's Life and Work



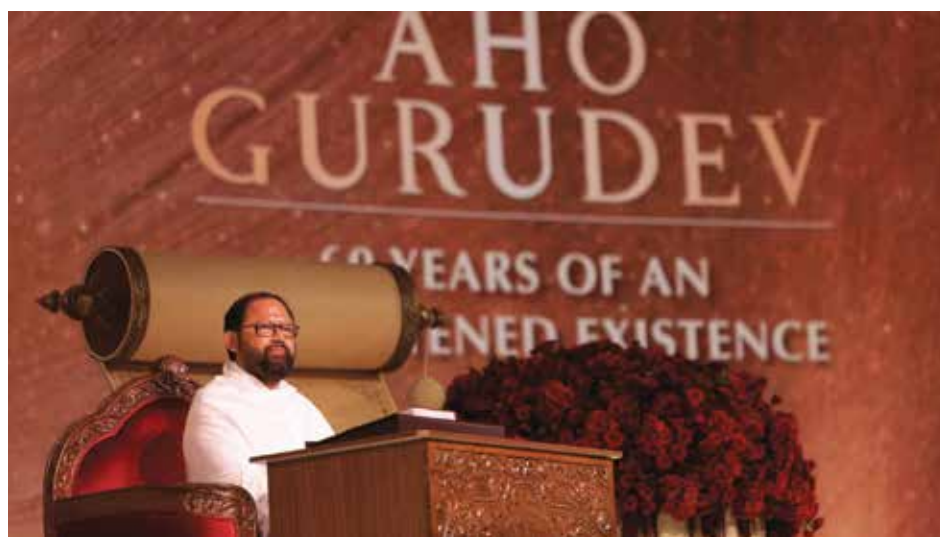
A Galaxy of Saints, Stalwarts and Seekers from Six Continents Gathers; 60 Landmark Initiatives Announced

60th Birth Anniversary of Pujya Gurudevshri Rakeshji, celebrates not just one Life, but the many Lives Transformed

The Jio World Convention Centre became a meeting point for the world on September 25th-26th 2026, as Shrimad Rajchandra Mission Dharampur hosted Aho Gurudev – 60 Years of an Enlightened Existence. The celebration honored the 60th birth anniversary of Pujya Gurudevshri Rakeshji, a globally revered Spiritual Master, Humanitarian and Ardent Devotee of Shrimad Rajchandraji.

This two-day gathering brought together revered spiritual figures including: Pujya Morari Bapu, Pujya Anandmurti Gurumaa, Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, Swami Swaroopanandji, BK Sister Shivani, Sadhvi Bhagwati Saraswati and Bhiku Sanghasenaji.

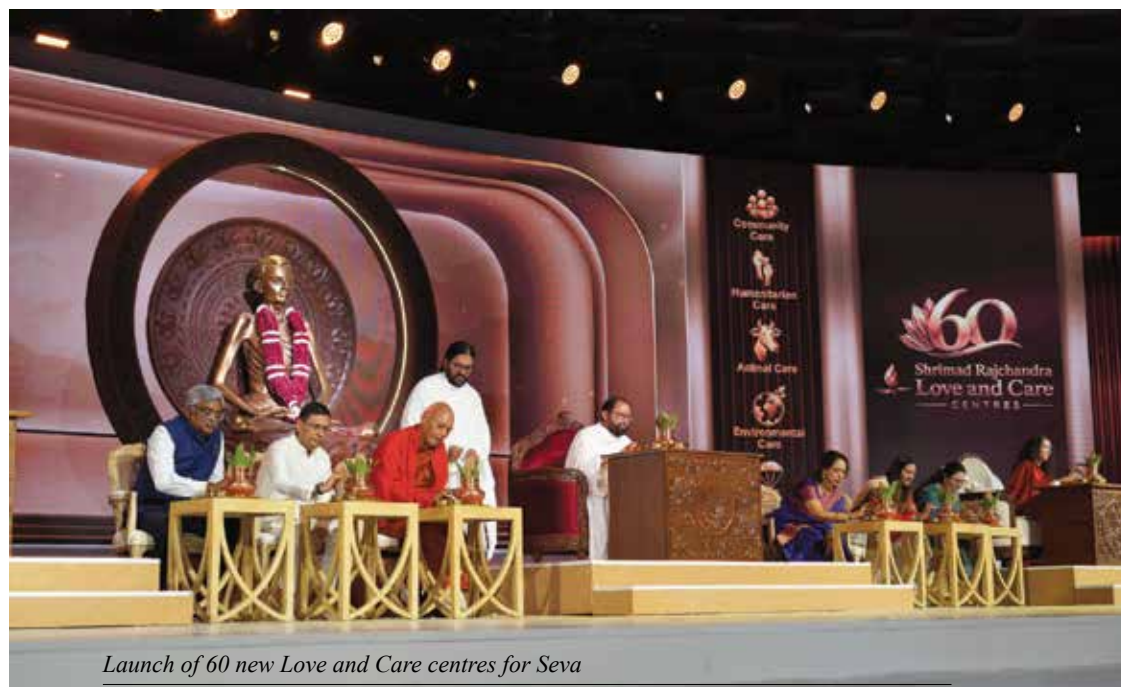
Other distinguished guests included Mangal Prabhat Lodha, Cabinet Minister, Government of Maharashtra; Padma Vibhushan N. R. Narayana Murthy, Founder & Chairman Emeritus of Infosys; Padma Bhushan N. Chandrasekaran, Chairman, Tata Sons; Lt. Gen. D. S. Kushwah, PVSM, AVSM, SM, GOC, Maharashtra, Gujarat & Goa Area; Padma Shri Hema Malini, Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha, Mathura); Padma Bhushan Deepak Parekh, For-



mer Chairman, HDFC; Padma Shri Dilip Shanghvi, Founder & Managing Director, Sun Pharmaceutical Industries; Padma Shri Sanjeev Kapoor, Culinary Icon & Co-Founder, Wonderchef; Manoj Modi, Director, Reliance Retail & Reliance Jio; Vinod Adani, Promoter, Adani Group; Ashok Hinduja, Chairman, Hinduja Group; Ranbir Kapoor, Actor & Producer; Sudhir Mehta, Chairman Emeritus, Torrent Group; Sonam Kapoor Ahuja, Actor & Fashion Entrepreneur; Nilesh Shah, MD, Kotak Mahindra AMC; Motilal Oswal, Co-Founder, Motilal Oswal Financial Services; and Madhukar Parekh, Chairman, Pidilite Industries.

In addition, there were corporate leaders, philanthropists, young volunteers and thousands of spiritual seekers from 214 cities and 24 countries across the world present.

A striking highlight was the announcement of 60 new initiatives, split equally between Spiritual and Seva (service) projects. The scale of Seva was truly monumental, spanning across multiple projects, including: Shrimad Rajchandra Sarvamangal Cancer Hospital; Shrimad Rajchandra Sarvamangal Hospital and Medical college in Surendranagar; Shrimad



Launch of 60 new Love and Care centres for Seva

Contd. on P10

60th Birth Anniversary, 60 Landmark Initiatives Announced

Contd. from P9

Rajchandra Mental Health Initiative; 60 new Shrimad Rajchandra Love and Care Centres; Multi-Specialty Mega Medical Camps as well as anemia and vision care camps across India reaching 60 Million lives; a mega campus for animal care including 4 institutions: Shrimad Rajchandra Animal Hospital, animal shelter, institute of veterinary science and Ahimsa Awareness centre in Dharampur as well an Animal hospital in Malad; Shrimad Rajchandra DISHA- a free, AI-powered career guidance platform; Shrimad Rajchandra School for Special Needs Children, Mumbai; Shrimad Rajchandra Sarvamangal University for the rural India; Shrimad Rajchandra Afforestation initiative and many other initiatives for women empowerment, community and environment.

For spiritual upliftment, several projects were unveiled, some of these



L to R - Ashok Hinduja, Hinduja Group; N. Chandrasekaran, Tata Sons; Actor Ranbir Kapoor; Manoj Modi, Reliance Retail & Reliance Jio - Launch 'Beyond' a visual Biography on Pujya Gurudevshri Rakeshji's Life



11 young souls embark the path of Renunciation



being: spiritual centers in Mumbai; new spaces within Shrimad Rajchandra Ashram, such as: Shrimad Rajchandra Wellness Center, solitude groves (Ekant Kutirs), and the Shrimad Rajchandra Museum; six new sat-sang centers in South America; Pujya Gurudevshri's discourses, books and meditations in 8 of the world's most

spoken languages-(six titles in 10 languages equaling 60 books); Pujya Gurudevshri's commentary of Shrimad Rajchandraji's Magnum Opus Shri Atmasiddhi Shastra in 60 languages; and BEYOND, a visual biography of Pujya Gurudevshri Rakeshji.

This event also brought the Sacred Atmarpit Diksha (renunciation) cer-

emony where eleven young seekers took vows of Celibacy, committing their lives to a higher purpose.

Across the program, Pujya Gurudevshri Rakeshji delivered three elevating discourses on 'Choosing Consciously', 'Renouncing Courageously' and 'Serving Compassionately'.

The celebration culminated with

seekers immersing in 'Aho Gurudev', a spectacular musical tribute which illuminated Pujya Gurudevshri Rakeshji's Life Journey.

With the first event held in Mumbai, "Aho Gurudev" is slated to move across India and then overseas, from Dubai and London to Toronto and cities across the US.

Contd. on P11

60th Birth Anniversary of Pujya Gurudevshri Rakeshji

Contd. from P10

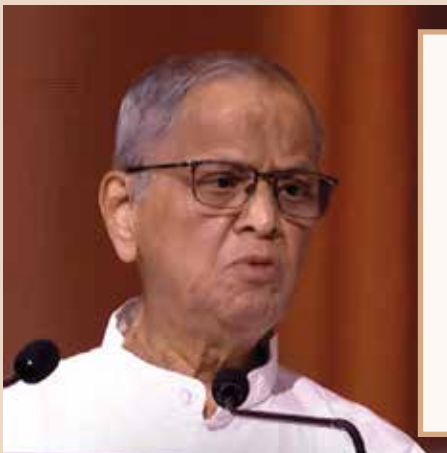


Vinod Adani, Promoter Adani Group; Sudhir Mehta, Torrent Group; Actress Sonam Kapoor and others launch 6 SRMD Satsang centres across South America



Ranbir Kapoor accepting the token of love from the revered hands of Pujya Gurudevshri.

Key Quotes:



Padma Vibhushan Shri Narayana Murthy,
Founder and Chairman Emeritus of Infosys

“Respected Gurudev dear Rakeshji, my deepest salutations to this extraordinary individual, who represents for us all the godly attributes. The true measure of any spiritual tradition lies not just in its teachings, but in the compassion it inspires through action. And that is what we saw today, the demonstration of these wonderful 60 initiatives. India’s future cannot be determined by technology and infrastructure alone. It’s destiny will ultimately be shaped by the quality of its people.



Padma Bhushan N. Chandrasekaran,
Chairman, Tata Sons

“Gurudev Rakeshji, Pranam. Good evening to all of you. It is my great privilege and honor to be here on this historic occasion to celebrate the 60th year of Gurudev. I have now spent 40 years in the Tata Group. Our group, as many of you know, is more than 150 years old. We are built on strong values. These values—trust, character, discipline, perseverance, and hard work—are what build great individuals and great institutions. And that is why the work of Gurudev is so meaningful. Through His teachings and His work with young people, these values and this sense of purpose are being shared with tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, and millions of people. That is the impact Gurudev is having on this world.



Actor Ranbir Kapoor

“I’m speechless experiencing this collective energy of joy and happiness. It is an absolute honor to be here for Your 60th birthday celebrations, Gurudev. For all the selfless work You have done over the years, for the countless lives You have touched and healed. You are often called the ‘Youth Magnet.’ And it is truly incredible to see young minds coming together and walking the path of spirituality under Your guidance. Seeing specialized doctors and healthcare professionals travel to the remotest parts of our country to heal people and serve communities, that, I believe, is what true spirituality is. After knowing You, I feel that I will come closer to my spiritual goals. I cannot wait to visit Your ashram in Dharampur. Happy birthday, Gurudev. Thank You so much. It is truly an honor to be in Your presence.”

Karandeep Anand Is Disney's New Chief Technology Officer



India-West News Desk

BURBANK, CA- Karandeep Anand, the former CEO of Character.AI, will join The Walt Disney Company as its Senior Executive Vice President and Chief Technology Officer on October 2, taking on a newly created role, Disney announced September 18.

Anand said he has admired Disney for combining storytelling and technology and that he was looking forward to working with its creative teams. He also said he hoped to build on Disney's existing technology capabilities

to help the company connect with fans around the world with its stories and characters in new ways.

Anand headed Character.AI during a period of rapid growth and focused on user trust and safety as the platform expanded, according to Disney.

Before Character.AI, Anand was President and Chief Product Officer at financial technology company Brex. He previously held several leadership positions at Meta, most recently serving as Vice President of Ads & Business Products. Anand spent 15 years at Microsoft earlier in his career, holding senior product and engineering positions. He was also part of the team that built the Azure platform.

He holds a degree in Computer Science from the International Institute of Information Technology, Hyderabad.

Starbucks Announces Chennai As Location For New Tech Center

India-West News Desk

CHENNAI – Starbucks will open a new technology hub in Chennai as part of its plans to establish a technology presence in India, the company announced Sept. 21.

The Chennai office will support Starbucks' global business and work with technology and business teams in the U.S. and other locations, including Seattle, Nashville, London and Hong Kong.

Starbucks had announced earlier this year that it planned to open a technology hub in India in fiscal year 2027, but had not identified a location at the time.

Anand Varadarajan, Starbucks' executive vice president and chief technology officer, announced the Chennai selection in a message to the company's Technology team.

"This is an important milestone in how we continue to build a more flexible and globally connected Technology organization," Varadarajan said.

The company said Chennai was selected based on several factors, including its pool of technology talent, talent retention and its ability to support Starbucks' long-term business needs.

The new hub will also allow Starbucks to



gradually bring some work currently handled by third-party service providers in-house, the company said.

The Chennai office will become part of Starbucks' broader Technology organization and will work with teams at its other locations. Starbucks said the office is intended to strengthen how its technology teams work across sites and focus on shared priorities.

The project is still in its early stages. Over the coming months, Starbucks will begin planning for local hiring, office readiness and the operations needed to support the new hub.

Recruiting is expected to begin in the first quarter of fiscal year 2027, with additional details to be announced as plans are finalized.

Ruias Bring Essar's Steel Ambitions To US With Multi-Billion Dollar Iowa Plant

India-West News Desk

WASHINGTON, DC – Rewant Ruia described a planned American steel investment as a "homecoming" as his family joined President Donald Trump at the White House to announce plans for a \$15 billion steel complex in Iowa, which the administration has described as the largest steel plant in US history.

"While I was born in India, I went to high school in New York, college in Boston, and did my MBA in Cali-

fornia. I spent half my life here so announcing this investment today is a great honor and a true homecoming for me," Ruia said.

The project is being developed by Mesabi Metallics, an Essar Group company, and is designed to connect its iron ore operation on Minnesota's Mesabi Iron Range with the proposed steel complex in southeastern Iowa. The integrated supply chain would run from iron ore mining through steel production, with US railways and energy infrastructure



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supporting the operation.

Detailed financing terms and a construction schedule for the Iowa facility were not provided.

Essar Group founder Ravi Ruia put the overall investment at "About \$18 billion," while Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick described a \$2.5 billion mine and a \$15 billion steel plant, totaling \$17.5 billion. Rewant Ruia told media the family was investing \$3 billion in the mine. No explanation was given for the differences. The US Export-Import Bank has said it could provide up to \$10 billion in financing for the project. Lutnick said the bank had helped finance the Minnesota mine, while private money would fund the Iowa steel plant.

The Iowa plant is expected to produce about 7.5 million tons of steel annually in its first phase, with capacity eventually increasing to 10 million tons. Production is targeted to begin in 2030.

IMMIGRATION

AAHOA Welcomes Newsom's Veto Of California Hotel Guest Disclosure Bill

India-West News Desk

SACRAMENTO, CA – California Governor Gavin Newsom has vetoed legislation that would have required hotels to publicly disclose when federal immigration enforcement agencies had reservations or contracts at their properties.

AB 2721 applied to agencies including U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP). Under the proposed law, hotels would have been required to provide public notice when they knew or should have known that such an agency had a reservation or contract at the property.

The measure had drawn opposition from the Asian American Hotel Owners Association, which submitted a formal veto request to Newsom after the bill passed.

AAHOA members own about 61% of California hotels. The association raised concerns about how hotel operators would determine which reservations were covered, meet the proposed notice requirements and protect guest confidentiality.



AAHOA Chairman Rahul Patel welcomed the veto, saying hotel owners needed requirements that were clear and workable. AAHOA President and CEO Laura Lee Blake said the proposed rules could have put hotel owners in the position of disclosing information about people staying at their properties.

The legislation also raised concerns about the responsibilities hotels would have had under the law and the potential legal uncertainty for owners and operators. AAHOA said the veto comes as similar proposals are emerging in other states. The association said it will continue working with industry partners and policymakers on legislation affecting hotel owners, employees and guests.

US Doubles EB-5 Investor Visa Fees, New Rates From Nov. 30

WASHINGTON, DC- The United States has finalized steep fee increases for its EB-5 immigrant-investor program, more than doubling the cost of filing some petitions in a change likely to affect applicants from India seeking permanent residence through investment.

US Citizenship and Immigration Services announced the revised fee structure on September 29. The new charges are scheduled to take effect on Nov. 30. The filing fee for Form I-526, used by standalone investors, will rise from \$3,675 to \$7,615.

The fee for an initial Form I-526E petition, used by investors participating through an approved regional center, will increase from \$3,675 to \$7,850. Initial I-526 and I-526E petitions will also include a \$75 technology fee. Regional-center investors must additionally pay the programme's investor integrity fee. The fee for Form I-829, filed by investors seeking to remove conditions on their permanent resident status, will increase from \$3,750 to \$5,000.

Charges imposed on regional centers will rise more sharply. The fee for an initial Form I-956 application seeking regional-center designation will increase from \$17,795 to \$44,115. The charge for Form I-956F, used to seek approval of an investment in a commercial enterprise, will rise to \$42,675.

The annual fee for Form I-956G will fall from \$3,035 to \$2,165, however. The final rule also establishes Form I-527 for certain investors seeking to amend older Form I-526 petitions. The new filing will cost \$10,330. The fee schedule was released for public inspection on September 29 and is due to be formally published in the Federal Register on Sept. 30.

USCIS said the revisions are intended to ensure that fees fully cover the cost of operating the EB-5 programme, help the agency meet statutory processing targets and support strengthened integrity measures, including audits, compliance reviews, site visits and efforts to detect fraud and abuse. USCIS is largely financed through application and petition fees rather than direct taxpayer funding. The agency said the costs of examining applications, verifying eligibility, conducting background checks and maintaining programme operations must therefore be paid by those using the immigration system.

The EB-5 Reform and Integrity Act of 2022 directed USCIS to undertake a separate study of the programme's costs and required the agency to set fees at levels sufficient to recover the full expense of administering it.

The law established processing goals and expanded oversight of regional centers, promoters and investment projects. The new rule also raises the annual EB-5 Integrity Fund payment from \$10,000 to \$11,000 for regional centers with 20 or fewer investors. The charge for larger regional centers will increase from \$20,000 to \$22,000.

It establishes penalties for late payments. A regional center paying in November after the deadline could face a 10 per cent penalty. The penalty would rise to 20 per cent for payments made in December, with possible termination for continued non-payment.

Congress created the EB-5 program in 1990 to encourage foreign capital investment and job creation in the United States. Qualifying investors may obtain conditional permanent residence for themselves, their spouses and eligible children by investing in an American commercial enterprise and creating the required number of jobs.

The program generally requires an investment of \$800,000 in a targeted employment area or qualifying infrastructure project, or \$1.05 million elsewhere. For Indian applicants, the government filing charges are separate from the required capital investment, legal expenses and administrative fees charged by individual regional-center projects. (IANS)

Children and volunteers at creative stations during the Krafty Kids x ALAS STEAM night at the ALAS Cultural Wellness Center in Half Moon Bay.

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Bay Area High School Student Maya Panchal Champions Accessible Education with Successful Coastsides STEAM Initiative

Leading her non-profit Krafty Kids, Maya spearheaded a collaborative evening uniting robotics, creative arts, and healthcare guidance for the Coastsides community.



Maya Panchal, founder of Krafty Kids.

HALF MOON BAY, CA – September 12, 2026 – Local families gathered at the ALAS Cultural Wellness Center on Friday evening for a vibrant, collaborative event bridging hands-on education, art, and health services. Hosted by the youth-founded non-profit Krafty Kids in partnership with ALAS (Ayudando Latinos a Soñar), community physicians and nurses, and the Los Altos High School Robotics Team, the free event successfully delivered STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) enrichment and wellness support to the Half Moon Bay community.

Founded by Bay Area high school student Maya Panchal, Krafty Kids is dedicated to ensuring that creative arts and STEAM education are accessible to all youth. Friday's event was made possible through a strategic partnership with ALAS, a nationally recognized nonprofit dedicated to honoring the hopes and dreams of Latino farmworkers and their families.

"We are incredibly grateful to Maya for choosing ALAS to help carry out her mission," said Dr. Kelly Delaney, Education Program Director of ALAS. "Her dedication to bringing accessible, high-quality STEAM learning to our Coastsides families perfectly aligns with our vision of uplifting the community through education and holistic support."

Throughout the evening, families were invited to engage in a wide variety of multidisciplinary activities designed to foster both learning and community connection. Youth participants explored their creativity by designing custom tote bags, crafting origami pinwheels, and visiting a highly popular hair tinsel station, while families collectively contributed to a collaborative ALAS Community Tree through hands-on hand-tracing artwork.

Beyond the arts, the Los Altos High School Robotics Team captivated students with a live, interactive robot demonstration that introduced foundational engineering and technology concepts in an approachable format.

A local medical group, including volunteer physicians and nurses, also provided free preventative health guidance including blood pressure checks and comprehensive nutrition advice.

"This event was designed to inspire curiosity and support the overall wellness of participating families," noted Maya. "Seeing parents and children from the Coastsides community come together to create art, discover robotics, and connect with health professionals' side-by-side exceeded our highest expectations."

The successful STEAM and Wellness evening highlights the growing need for inclusive community events that cater to both educational enrichment for children and practical support for adults.

Maya works to help children who have experienced adverse childhood experiences by using art as a healing tool. She recognizes that art provides an outlet for emotional expression



Children and volunteers at creative stations during the Krafty Kids x ALAS STEAM night at the ALAS Cultural Wellness Center in Half Moon Bay.

and helps reduce the effects of trauma, particularly for kids who have endured significant hardship. Through her student-founded nonprofit KraftyKids, she structures activities around collaboration and group work, believing these approaches foster connection and healing. Workshops have included clay art, painting, and interactive experiences like helping visually impaired children create and understand clay molds of stuffed animals. Vicente Garcia-Luna, the coordinator at LifeMoves in Mountain View where Maya regularly hosts workshops, says the kids respond enthusiastically to the activities and are visibly happier afterwards, with improvements in mood that carry through the week. Maya plans to expand KraftyKids by partnering with additional local organizations while maintaining her core mission of building positive mindset, fostering collaboration, and bringing vulnerable youth together through creative activities.

For more information or to support Maya's ongoing mission, please visit www.kraftykids.org.

Media Contact:
Maya Panchal, kraftykidsteam@gmail.com

(Photo courtesy of Krafty Kids.)

LA Consulate Marks Gandhi Jayanti With Tributes, Community Outreach

Contd. from P1

Srinivasa highlighted Gandhi’s enduring values of truth, peace and non-violence. He also spoke of the shared commitment of India and the United States to democratic values, peace and respect for humanity.

Swami Vishwananda Giri, vice president of Self-Realization Fellowship, and Brother Satyananda, minister-in-charge of SRF Lake Shrine, addressed the gathering. Srinivasa later led guests in a silent procession along the lakeside path to the Court of All Religions.

Chugh Firm

The evening commemoration in Cerritos brought the observance directly to the Indian American community in the Los Angeles area. Held at Chugh, LLP Attorneys & CPAs, the program began with Srinivasa garlanding a statue of Mahatma Gandhi and offering floral tributes.

The Cerritos gathering, spearheaded by Navneet Chugh whose office has installed the iconic Gandhi statue in SoCal also featured an open interaction between the Consul General and members of the Indian diaspora.

Community members reflected on Gandhi’s life and legacy and their continuing rel-

evance today, while raising a range of issues of interest and concern. Srinivasa listened to their views, interacted with guests and addressed questions and concerns raised by participants.

The interaction provided an opportunity for community members to engage directly with the Consul-

ate in an open setting, extending the Gandhi Jayanti commemoration beyond ceremonial tributes to dialogue and community participation. The Consulate General of India, Los Angeles, has emphasized its commitment to engaging closely with the Indian diaspora and promoting the values of peace, service, dialogue and community participation, it pointed out.



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Las Vegas

In Las Vegas on October 3, the Consulate, in collaboration with Friends of India – Las Vegas, brought together more than 100 community members for a morning run centered on fitness, unity and community participation. The program began with renditions of Vande Mataram and the National Anthem by members of the Indian diaspora.

Children, youth, adults and senior citizens took part in the run, held under the theme “Swasth Bharat, Viksit Bharat.”

Following the event, Srinivasa interacted with community members on issues and topics of interest to the diaspora, giving participants an opportunity to share their views and concerns directly with the Consulate.

San Diego

The following day, on October 4, Srinivasa inaugurated another Viksit Bharat Run at Lake Hodges in Escondido, organized by the Consulate in collaboration with CRY San Diego. Indian diaspora families across generations, from young children to senior citizens, participated in the event along the scenic trail.

Srinivasa encouraged participants to embrace fitness and community involvement while contributing to the goal of “Viksit Bharat 2047.”

He emphasized the role of the Indian diaspora, particularly younger generations, in India’s development and encouraged community members to remain connected with India and contribute through their ideas, skills and leadership.

The San Diego event was supported by community organizations including Brahma Kumaris and San Diego Tamil Sangam.

Srinivasa thanked participating organizations, volunteers and community members for their efforts.

Chhaya Malik Named To Santa Clara County Superior Court

India-West News Desk

SAN JOSE, CA – California Gov. Gavin Newsom has appointed Chhaya Malik to the Santa Clara County Superior Court, filling the vacancy created by the retirement of Judge Socrates P. Manoukian.

Newsom announced Malik's appointment September 18. She brings more than two decades of experience in law, mediation, public policy and public service to the bench. Malik has served as deputy director of dispute resolution at the California Civil Rights Department since 2022. She previously worked as a mediator at Devi Legal Mediation Services from 2020 to 2022 and as special counsel at Ehrlich & Craig from 2012 to 2022.

Earlier, Malik was a policy liaison with the U.S. Department of State from 2011 to 2012 and a staff attorney at the Advancement Project from 2009 to 2011. She began her legal career as an associate at Hogan Lovells, where she practiced from 2005 to 2009. Malik earned her Juris Doctor degree from the University of California, Berkeley School of Law. Presiding Judge Julie A. Emede welcomed Malik's appointment, citing her experience in dispute resolution, civil rights, public policy and private practice.



Kash Patel And Alexis Wilkins Announce Engagement

WASHINGTON, DC – FBI Director Kash Patel and country music singer Alexis Wilkins are engaged, with the couple confirming the news October 4 through social media posts.

Wilkins shared a photograph of herself with Patel on X, displaying her engagement ring. Along with ring and heart emojis, she wrote, "Went and got the law involved," and tagged Patel in the post. Patel replied from his personal account, using the same emojis.

The couple began dating in early 2023. Patel is 46, while Wilkins is 27. Wilkins, who is a country music singer, has also appeared in a handful of television shows and movies.

Patel has often faced criticism from lawmakers over his use of government-owned aircraft for private travel, including trips to see Wilkins perform.



Heart Disease Risk in South Asians

Contd. from P1

in the South Asian community. The South Asian Heart Health Awareness and Research Act is essential legislation that ensures that we

have the research, resources, and treatments to prevent heart disease cases and deaths in the South Asian community and beyond," she said. Wilson said the bill would expand research and education for communities disproportionately affected by heart disease.

"I am grateful that this bipartisan bill passed the House in multiple previous Congresses, and I look forward to its final passage into law," he added. Booker said the legislation would direct research funding towards risk factors that have received inadequate attention. "Heart disease is taking South Asian Americans from their families at rates the medical community still doesn't fully understand," Booker said.

"This bill puts real research dollars behind the risk factors hiding in plain sight, so doctors can catch what they've been missing. Every community deserves to have its heart health taken seriously, not treated as an afterthought," he said. The lawmakers said South Asians in the United States face four times the risk of heart disease compared with the general population. The community includes people who immigrated from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal, as well as their families.

Nearly two-thirds of middle-aged South Asian Americans face an intermediate or high risk of heart failure within the next 10 years, according to the lawmakers. They also said South Asians make up about 25 per cent of the global population but account for 60 per cent of heart disease cases worldwide and more than half of cardiovascular deaths.

The lawmakers cited gaps in federal health data, saying research agencies within the Department of Health and Human Services do not adequately disaggregate medical data for Asian American and Pacific Islander communities. This makes it difficult to examine health outcomes specifically among South Asian Americans. Under the bill, states could use federal grants to develop culturally appropriate materials on nutrition, diet and regular exercise. Community organizations could also receive support for health-promotion activities, while conferences and workshops could help bring more members of underrepresented communities into scientific research.

The health secretary would be required to report to Congress on grant activities and data gathered through the programs. Funding would be authorized through 2028. The legislation is co-sponsored by Representatives Nanette Barragan, Brian Fitzpatrick, Henry Johnson, Ro Khanna, Adam Smith, Suhas Subramanyam and Shri Thanedar. Supporters include the American Heart Association, Indian American Impact and several South Asian medical and public-health organizations. (IANS)

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Governor Gavin Newsom Names Rohit Chopra To Military Council

India-West News Desk

SACRAMENTO, CA – California Gov. Gavin Newsom has appointed Rohit Chopra, secretary of the Business and Consumer



Services Agency, to the Governor's Military Council.

Chopra has served as secretary of the Business and Consumer Services Agency since 2026. He was a fellow at Harvard Kennedy School from 2025 to 2026 and served as director of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau from 2021 to 2025.

He was a commissioner of the Federal Trade Commission from 2018 to 2021 and a special adviser to the secretary at the U.S.

Department of Education in 2016. Earlier, he served as an assistant director and student loan ombudsman at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau from 2010 to 2015 and was an associate at McKinsey & Company from 2008 to 2010.

Chopra earned a Master of Business Administration degree from The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania, and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Government from Harvard University.

The appointment does not require Senate confirmation and carries no compensation. Chopra is a Democrat.

Newsom also announced the appointments of Patrick Brown as chief deputy director at the Housing Development and Finance Committee, Kevin Hixon as deputy director for facility support of the Division of Adult Institutions, and Andrea Rosales to the Commission on Correctional Peace Officer Standards and Training.

Darshana Patel Delivers \$4.5M For San Diego Food Security

India-West News Desk

SAN DIEGO, CA – Feeding San Diego has received \$4.5 million in state funding for refrigeration trucks and additional storage space. The funding, secured by CA Assemblymember Dr. Darshana Patel, is the largest single contribution from a state lawmaker in the organization's 19-year history, CBS8 reported.

The money will not be used to buy food. It will instead help the organization increase its refrigerated storage capacity and transport rescued food from farms and packing houses to partner sites where it is distributed, the organization said.

It said it has access to a large amount of rescued food, particularly from farms and packing houses, but has limited refrigerated

storage space.

The new trucks will also expand the organization's warehouse capacity and allow it to deliver food directly to partner sites.

Patel said her decision to direct the funding toward food security was influenced by her childhood experience with economic hardship. Her father lost his job during the recessions of the 1980s, she said, and her family looked for ways to maintain food security.

Feeding San Diego distributed 43 million pounds of food last year and expects that figure to increase as changes to federal SNAP benefits affect who qualifies for assistance.

The organization serves about 200,000 people each month. It said that figure has surpassed peak pandemic levels and increased nearly 8.8 percent from a year earlier.

Ashok Patnaik Launches Cerritos City Council Bid

India-West News Desk

CERRITOS, CA – Pat Patnaik has announced his candidacy for Cerritos City Council, citing rising living costs, recent water rate increases and financial challenges facing the city as reasons for seeking elected office.

Patnaik, a longtime banking and business professional, said he wants to bring his experience in finance, engineering and project management to the City Council in 2027.

For more than two decades, Patnaik has worked with businesses on growth, job creation, major projects and financial decisions. As vice president and commercial lending officer at Wallis Bank in Cerritos, he helped establish the bank's Cerritos branch, exceeded deposit goals, brought more than 50 new business accounts into the community and helped finance local businesses and entrepreneurs.

His professional background also includes engineering. Patnaik began his career as a mechanical engineer and earned a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from the National Institute of Technology in India. He later earned a Master of Business Administration from Pepperdine University.

Patnaik said the combination of his engineering, financial and management experience has shaped his approach to issues facing Cerritos.

He pointed to recent problems involving a damaged water well and the city's water pipe system as an example. According to Patnaik, he recommended considering a more targeted approach involving the replacement or refurbishment of affected valves rather than a larger reconstruction project that he said would cost \$81 million.

Patnaik said his recommendation was not adopted and argued that the resulting water rate increases have placed an additional financial burden on residents. He said residents' water bills have doubled and that further increases are planned.

"Residents deserve City Council Members who will ask tough questions, carefully examine the numbers, consider alternatives, and make decisions based on what provides the greatest value to our community," Patnaik said.

His campaign platform also emphasizes keeping Cerritos safe, financially strong and well maintained.



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Jaishankar Criticizes Trump Admin: US-Pak Relations Hurting India-US Ties



NEW YORK, NY-External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said the United States' lack of sensitivity to India's concerns about terrorism emanating from Pakistan is creating a problem for Washington-New Delhi relations.

Jaishankar said India has faced terrorism from a neighboring country as part of a deliberate policy for many decades, making the issue particularly important for New Delhi.

"Perhaps there are very few countries which have been subjected to the kind of terrorism that we have from a neighbor as part of a deliberate conscious policy over many, many decades," he said.

"Now, if something which matters so deeply to us, there isn't enough understanding or appreciation or empathy of that, I think that creates a problem," he said.

"If one of my primary concerns is not fully appreciated by my partner, then clearly there is an impact of that on the relationship," he said.

Jaishankar made the comments during an event here while discussing factors affecting India-US relations. He said that besides trade, a lack of US sensitivity to India's concerns over terrorism was another factor affecting the relationship. Although he did not name Pakistan directly, Jaishankar's reference to terrorism from "a neighbor" was in the context of India's longstanding concerns over terrorism emanating from Pakistan.

His comments also amounted to criticism of US President Donald Trump's closer relations with Pakistan, which Jaishankar said did not sufficiently take into account India's concerns over terrorism. (IANS)

Sitharaman: Little Room Left For More Concessions In India-US Trade Talks



India-West News Desk

NEW DELHI – India and the US have reached a "plateau" in negotiations for a bilateral trade agreement, with further "giving or taking" likely to be "very, very difficult," Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said October 5.

Speaking at the Munich Leaders Meeting in New Delhi, Sitharaman said talks were continuing and that both sides could still move forward if there was room to operate.

She said the trade balance was "very much

in our favor," adding that the US would naturally seek to reduce the imbalance and address what it considers losses accumulated over the years.

Sitharaman also said countries were increasingly using tariffs alongside negotiations to address trade imbalances, while stressing the need for continued "give and take."

On trade agreements with European countries, she stressed the importance of maintaining strategic autonomy, including in the context of India's procurement of Russian oil.

She said countries were increasingly choosing bilateral agreements where they saw greater benefit, even as multilateralism had weakened.

She said greater access to the European market could generate more exports and jobs in labor-intensive sectors such as footwear, textiles, toys and processed products, many of which are linked to micro and small enterprises.

The Munich Leaders Meeting in New Delhi brings together about 100 senior decision-makers and experts to discuss geoeconomics, trade and connectivity, maritime security, defense cooperation and other international challenges.



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Two Indians Convicted For Multimillion Dollar Cargo Thefts In SoCal Using Trucking Firms

India-West News Desk

LOS ANGELES, CA -A US jury has convicted two Indian nationals for their roles in a cargo theft conspiracy that involved fraudulently obtaining shipping contracts, stealing freight worth millions of dollars and failing to deliver the consignments to their intended destinations, according to the US Attorney’s Office for the Central District of California.

Arshpreet Singh, 28, of Sacramento, and Vikramjeet Singh, 31, of Fontana, were convicted after a seven-day trial of one count each of conspiracy to commit theft from interstate or foreign shipments. The jury also convicted Arshpreet Singh of conspiracy to commit wire fraud, while Vikramjeet Singh was acquitted of that charge.

According to evidence presented

at trial, Arshpreet Singh and his co-conspirators operated the scheme between March 2024 and June 2025 by purchasing or fraudulently using legitimate trucking companies to bid for authentic freight contracts.

After securing the contracts, the conspirators allegedly took possession of cargo shipments but failed to deliver them to their destinations, instead stealing the goods.

Prosecutors said the stolen freight largely consisted of high-value consumer products, including televisions, laptops, household appliances and other electronics. Other items included vacuum cleaners, LED lights, footwear and tires. Authorities estimated losses from the thefts at no less than \$2 million.

The thefts took place at multiple locations in Southern California, including Fontana, Vernon, Santa Fe Springs, Perris, City of Industry,

Long Beach, Compton, Commerce, Pico Rivera, Chino and Moreno Valley. Investigators also linked the scheme to activity in Grand Prairie, Texas.

Court records showed that the accused acquired established trucking companies to facilitate the operation.

In one instance cited during the trial, Arshpreet Singh met in March 2024 with the owner of Texas-based carrier Z&F Transportation LLC and agreed to purchase the company for approximately \$22,000. Later that month, a co-conspirator acting on behalf of Z&F Transportation LLC collected a shipment of televisions in Fontana. The cargo was never delivered to its intended destination in Florida.

Prosecutors further alleged that in May 2024, co-conspirators purchased another carrier, Sky-

ways Trucking LLC, and subsequently used it to steal shipments that included laptops, televisions, solar panels and other merchandise.

Arshpreet Singh faces a statutory maximum sentence of 20

years in federal prison, while Vikramjeet Singh faces a statutory maximum sentence of five years in federal prison.



California Woman Was Killed By Stalker

Contd. from P1

The filing said Rohit tried to pressure Thakur into marriage, sought to control her social interactions and eventually threatened to kill both her and himself.

Sheriff’s officials urged Thakur



Shalini's mother (middle).



22 year old Rohit

to seek a restraining order, which she eventually obtained. Rohit was served with it May 19.

On July 29, Thakur reported that Rohit had left grocery items at her front door, which investigators considered a violation of the order. Deputies took a report, and detectives determined there was probable cause to arrest him for the suspected misdemeanor violation.

Lt. Amar Gandhi, a sheriff’s office spokesperson, said detectives made at least two attempts to locate Rohit at his home and other places he was known to frequent, but were unable to make contact.

The sheriff’s office said Rohit had no known local criminal history. Authorities also said the case was handled as civil harassment rather than domestic violence because there was no information that Thakur and Rohit had been romantically involved. Thakur had described him as a friend, Gandhi said.

Rohit’s immigration history emerged following the killing. The Department of Homeland Security said he was from India and entered the United States through Arizona in 2023. His exact immigration status was not immediately clear. Federal court records showed his case was pending, with no appeal recorded and no hearings scheduled.



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Three Cyclists Complete 3,168-Mile Ride From LA To DC In 52 Days

India-West News Desk

WASHINGTON, DC – Three Indian cyclists, Jai Rawat, 57, Anuradha Palnitkar, 54, and Samir Palnitkar, 58, have completed a 3,168-mile ride across the United States in 52 days without a support vehicle. The trio set out from Santa Monica Beach in Los Angeles on August 1 and reached the Washington Monument in Washington, DC, on September 21. They averaged about 65 miles a day, crossing 14 states and tackling more than 100,000 feet of climbing.

Part of the journey followed historic Route 66 before the cyclists continued east toward Washington. The ride brought extreme heat, thunderstorms and cold weather, along with stretches of highway without shoulders and heavy truck traffic. The cyclists also had to repair their bicycles, deal with dogs chasing them and recover from cycling accidents along the way.

They crossed the Continental Divide in New Mexico at 7,881 feet and the Eastern Continental Divide in Pennsylvania at 2,392 feet. Palnitkar became the first Indian woman to complete an unsupported, unpowered bicycle ride across the United States, according to the organizers. Rawat and Samir Palnitkar also became the first Indian Institute of Technology graduates to complete an unsupported, unpowered bicycle

ride across the country. The cyclists said the journey gave them a chance to experience small-town America and learn more about its history and communities. “We experienced small-town hospitality as people chatted with us, offered free coffee as they learned about our cross-country ride,” Rawat said. He also recalled motorists waiting patiently behind the bicycles and shop owners sharing stories about local historical artifacts. Rawat and Samir Palnitkar are graduates of IIT Kanpur and have been friends for 40 years. Palnitkar is a dietitian who now teaches at a special needs school. This was her first long cycle ride. The three have trekked together in Nepal, India, Patagonia, Ecuador, France, Italy, Switzerland and Africa. Before this expedition, Rawat and Samir Palnitkar completed an 800-km bicycle ride from San Francisco to Los Angeles in 2018.

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क्या सेरिटोस सिटी चार्टर में संशोधन करके निर्धारित आम नगरपालिका चुनाव की तिथि को प्रत्येक सम-संख्या वाले वर्ष के नवंबर माह में स्थानांतरित किया जाए और मंगलवार, 7 नवंबर, 2028 से इसे राज्यव्यापी आम चुनाव के साथ आयोजित किया जाए; तथा मेयर के वार्षिक चयन की तिथि और काउंसिल मेम्बर्स का कार्यकाल शुरू होने की तिथि को इस नई चुनाव समय-सारणी के अनुरूप समायोजित किया जाए और इससे संबंधित आवश्यक अनुरूप संशोधन किए जाएँ?	हाँ
	नहीं

यह भी सूचित किया जाता है कि कैलिफोर्निया राज्य के चुनाव संहिता के आर्टिकल 4, चैप्टर 3, डिवीजन 9 के अनुसार, शहर का विधायी निकाय, या निकाय द्वारा अधिकृत कोई सदस्य या सदस्य, या कोई व्यक्तिगत मतदाता या नागरिकों का कोई वास्तविक संघ, या मतदाताओं और संघों का कोई भी समूह, लिखित तर्क प्रस्तुत कर सकता है, जो 300 शब्दों से अधिक संख्या न हो, इसमें तर्क प्रस्तुत करने वाले लेखक(कों) का(के) लिखा हुआ नाम और हस्ताक्षर होना(ने) चाहिए, या यदि किसी संगठन की ओर से प्रस्तुत किया गया है, तो संगठन का नाम और उसके कम से कम एक प्रमुख अधिकारी का लिखा हुआ नाम और हस्ताक्षर होने चाहिए, जो शहर के उपायों के समर्थन या विरोध में तर्क प्रस्तुत करता है। कृपया ध्यान दें: लिखित तर्क प्रस्तुत करने वाले सभी लेखकों को तर्क पर अपना नाम लिखकर हस्ताक्षर करना होगा और साथ ही "तर्क प्रस्तुत करने वाले लेखकों द्वारा दाखिल की जाने वाली घोषणा" पर भी अपना नाम लिखकर हस्ताक्षर करना होगा, जो सिटी हॉल स्थित सिटी क्लर्क/चुनाव अधिकारी के कार्यालय में अनुरोध करने पर निःशुल्क प्राप्त की जा सकती है या election2027@cerritos.gov पर ईमेल के माध्यम से इसका अनुरोध किया जा सकता है। यह भी सूचित किया जाता है कि चुनाव के लिए, तर्कों और मतदाता सूचना मार्गदर्शिका को तैयार करने और मुद्रित करने के लिए यथोचित रूप से आवश्यक समय के आधार, सिटी क्लर्क/चुनाव अधिकारी ने सोमवार, 12 अक्टूबर, 2026 को शाम 5:00 बजे का समय निर्धारित किया है, यह वह तारीख है, जिसके बाद शहर के मतपत्र प्रस्तावों के समर्थन या विरोध में कोई भी तर्क, आर्टिकल 4 में दिए गए प्रावधान के अनुसार मतदाताओं के लिए मुद्रण और वितरण के लिए सिटी क्लर्क/चुनाव अधिकारी के समक्ष प्रस्तुत नहीं किया जा सकता है। तर्क सिटी क्लर्क/चुनाव अधिकारी को प्रस्तुत किए जाएंगे और उनके साथ तर्क प्रस्तुत करने वाले लेखक(कों) का(के) लिखा हुआ नाम और हस्ताक्षर होना(ने) चाहिए। यदि तर्क किसी संगठन की ओर से प्रस्तुत किया जा रहा है, तो संगठन का नाम और उसके कम से कम एक ऐसे प्रमुख अधिकारी का लिखा हुआ नाम और हस्ताक्षर होना चाहिए जो तर्क का लेखक हो और तर्क को Office of the Cerritos City Clerk/Elections Official, 18125 Bloomfield Avenue, 1st Floor, City Hall, Cerritos, California में प्रस्तुत किया जाना चाहिए। सिटी क्लर्क/चुनाव अधिकारी द्वारा निर्धारित तिथि, यानी सोमवार, 12 अक्टूबर, 2026 को शाम 5:00 बजे तक, तर्कों को बदला या वापस लिया जा सकता है। यह भी सूचित किया जाता है कि सिटी काउंसिल ने यह निर्धारित किया है कि विरोधी पक्ष के मूल तर्कों के लेखकों द्वारा प्रस्तुत किए गए खंडन तर्क, जिनकी संख्या 250 शब्दों से अधिक नहीं होनी चाहिए, क्लर्क के पास प्रस्तुत किए जा सकते हैं। उनके साथ तर्क प्रस्तुत करने वाले लेखक(कों) का(के) लिखा हुआ नाम और हस्ताक्षर होना(ने) चाहिए, या यदि तर्क को किसी संगठन की ओर से प्रस्तुत किया जा रहा है, तो संगठन का नाम और उसके कम से कम एक ऐसे प्रमुख अधिकारी का लिखा हुआ नाम लिखा और हस्ताक्षर होना चाहिए जो तर्क का लेखक हो। ये खंडन 22 अक्टूबर, 2026, गुरुवार को शाम 5:00 बजे से पहले प्रस्तुत किए जाने चाहिए। यह भी सूचित किया जाता है कि चुनाव संहिता के अधिकार के तहत दायर किया गया कोई भी अध्यादेश, निष्पक्ष विवेचन या प्रत्यक्ष (प्राथमिक) तर्क, तर्कों और विवेचनों को प्रस्तुत करने की अंतिम तिथि से कम से 10 कैलेंडर दिनों तक सिटी क्लर्क/चुनाव अधिकारी के कार्यालय में सार्वजनिक निरीक्षणों के लिए उपलब्ध रहेगा। /s/ Cynthia Nava, सिटी क्लर्क/चुनाव अधिकारी

Nimesh Patel Turns Modern Tensions Into Comedy Gold On Netflix

India-West News Desk

WASHINGTON, DC – “If you don’t drink, how do you read the news?” Nimesh Patel poses the question with a deadpan calm to a Washington, DC audience.

The special showcases a comedian effortlessly turning the anxiety of today’s fraught daily life into astute gags.

Patel’s cool, laid-back stage presence hides just how shrewdly calculated his comedy is. A mainstay of the New York scene who came up alongside Michael Che, Patel went on to write for the Academy Awards and Saturday Night Live. Over the past few years, he has built a massive following on YouTube through self-released specials.

What makes his first Netflix special stand out is how seamlessly he bridges intimate family life with broader political noise. On the domestic side, he skewers the chaotic ecosystem of his family’s WhatsApp group, contrasting his mother’s daily ego-boosting videos with his father’s stoic, thumbs-up emoji responses. Preparing for fatherhood offers no escape from the absurdities of the real world either, as Patel recalls his wife’s anesthesiologist walking into the birthing room wearing a Rolex and Louis Vuitton slippers. “Do not flex in the hospital,” he warns. “We don’t want to see our insurance payment on your wrist.”

That moment seamlessly pivots into a fearless take on the current political landscape. Performing in the nation’s capital, Patel marvels at how comfortable Americans have become with public corruption, offering dark humor and genuine empathy for career government experts now reporting to unpredictable leaders.

He reserves his sharpest jabs for high-profile Indian American figures like Usha Vance and Kash Patel, delivering biting punchlines while contrasting them with his own family’s unwavering connection to their heritage.



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SAAHAS FOR CAUSE CELEBRATES ITS 3RD ANNUAL GALA WITH “THE RIPPLE EFFECT”



Anaheim, CA | Saahas for Cause brought together 350 community members, supporters, leaders, and changemakers for its 3rd Annual Gala, held on September 12 at the Anaheim Marriott Suites. The evening celebrated a powerful idea that is at the heart of Saahas's work: meaningful change begins when someone has the courage to take the first step, and that one step can create ripples that can transform families, communities, and generations.

The celebration began the evening before with an intimate Board and Honorees Dinner at Spice Affair in Beverly Hills, hosted by Karanbir Singh and bringing together Saahas leadership and this year's distinguished honorees. The evening started with poetry and comedy skits and was concluded by a special book reading by Deepti Naval from her memoir, *A Country Called Childhood*. She highlighted not only the struggles but also what it means to be an immigrant, sharing powerful images from her story. One image that left a deep impact was that of her grandmother, who, after being displaced from Burma during World War 2, stood at the edge of a hill, her gramophone strapped to her back, forced to throw away the records her husband had bought for her. Each record symbolizes the treasured memories and feelings of home that one has to detach from as one is uprooted from their homeland.

The night came alive through their gala's theme, **"The Ripple Effect,"** which highlighted how meaningful change can begin when people come together and start with the smallest act of care. Whether it is choosing to volunteer, reaching out to someone in need, giving resources, or just being there, a single act of care can create ripples that extend through families and into the wider community.

Board Chair Dr. Seema Arora opened the evening by warmly welcoming and honoring acclaimed Indian actress, filmmaker, and writer Deepti Naval as the Chief Guest, along with Dr. K.J. Srinivasa, Consul General of India. The program unfolded like a conversation between where we are and what we want to achieve. A special highlight of the gala was an engaging fireside chat with Deepti Naval, hosted by Dr. Rohit Kohli. Their conversation brought an intimate and reflective dimension to the evening, reinforcing the gala's themes of courage, humanity, compassion, and the profound impact one individual can have on the lives of others. This year, across all our programs, Saahas has already served more than **20,579** members of our community.

The gala program was hosted by Dr. Rohit Kohli and Aakriti Kundra, who guided guests through an evening of reflection, recognition, and celebration. The evening also recognized five distinguished leaders whose contributions exemplify the spirit of service, leadership, and positive change. Mr. Navneet Chugh facilitated the awards presentation: CEO of the Year – Mr. Himanshu Palsule; Humanitarians of the Year – Mr. Shaku and Jay Nitturkar; Visionary Leader of the Year – Mr. Shashi Tripathi; Lifetime Achievement Award – Mr. Vinod Bhindi.

Saahas concluded the evening by expressing its heartfelt gratitude to Mr. Navneet Chugh, founder of Chugh LLP, for his extraordinary support and commitment. His support, ideas, and reflection have been the backbone of Saahas. From the earliest stages of planning through the execution of the gala, Mr. Chugh stood alongside Saahas not simply as a supporter, but as a dedicated member of the team. His efforts were instrumental in bringing these distinguished achievers to Saahas and helped advance our mission.

"You may never meet every person whose life you touch. You may never hear their name. You may never know the exact moment when your generosity created an opportunity for them, a resource, or simply a reassurance that they are not alone. Your generosity could be the answer to someone's prayer." – Payal Sawhney.

Dance, Devotion And The Many Forms Of Devi Take Center Stage In 'Amba'

India-West News Desk

IRVINE, CA – There are dance performances that entertain, others that impress, and then there are the rare ones that leave you speechless, struggling to find the right words. As one rasika remarked, 'Amba: The Eternal Mother,' presented by the Shrishti School of Performing Arts, was precisely one of those rare experiences.

On September 19, the auditorium at Northwood High School was filled to capacity for the performance. Conceived, directed, and choreographed by Charulatha Jayaraman, founder of the



Shrishti School, the production brought together Jayaraman and her senior students in a captivating homage to the Divine Mother, all in support of Orange County's Siva Kameshwari Temple.

Accompanied by a stellar ensemble of live musicians -vocalist Gomathy Nayakam, mridangist

Sakthivel Muruganandam, violinist Sigamani, and flutist Sunil Kumar -the dancers traversed the vast spiritual landscape of Bharat. Rather than confining the narrative to a single regional story, 'Amba' celebrated the multifaceted aspects of Devi as Gayatri, Saraswati, Mahalakshmi, and the all-powerful

Durga Maa and Kali Maa.

The repertoire wove together diverse languages and traditional musical forms from across India, moving effortlessly from the vibrant rhythms of the Maharashtrian Gondhal and the joyful procession of "Kolhapur Chi Amba Bai" to the soul-stirring Bengali bhajan "Jago

Tumi Jago," each piece unveiling a distinct layer of the sacred feminine.

Delicate yet powerful movements combined with fluid, expressive abhinaya to created a divine atmosphere. A highlight of the production was Guru Charulatha Jayaraman's own portrayal of Devi Maa; her commanding presence, grace, and luminous expressions had the audience's attention.

By dedicating the proceeds to the expansion and support of Siva Kameshwari Mandir, the production united art and spiritual purpose into a single, cohesive offering. The tangible aura of bhakti and prema vibrated throughout the auditorium.

Kathak And Bharatanatyam Enter A Rhythmic Dialog In Bay Area Recital

India-West News Desk

DANVILLE, CA – Bay Area Kathak dancer Pooja Khandelwal and Bharatanatyam dancer Sriyanka Sundar on September 20 brought two distinct Indian classical traditions into conversation here with 'Ekatva: A Kathak-Bharatanatyam Samvaad,' presented as part of the Eka Dance Festival.

Curated by Kalpavruksha Creations, founded by Durga Swaminathan, and Shanmukha Theatres, led by Artistic Director Ryan Nathan, the festival celebrates solo classical dancers and emerging artists from across the

U.S. 'Ekatva,' meaning oneness, did not seek to merge Kathak and Bharatanatyam into a single vocabulary. Instead, Khandelwal and Sundar allowed the character of each form to remain distinct, finding connections through rhythm, expression and storytelling.

The evening opened with Ardhanarishwara, the iconic representation of Shiva and Shakti united in one form. The contrasting movement languages of Kathak and Bharatanatyam became a way



of exploring two energies existing within a single whole.

That dialogue moved into 'Taal Samvaad,' where rhythmic phrases passed between the dancers through footwork, movement and gesture. Sometimes one re-

sponded to the other; at other moments, they moved together. Kathak's intricate footwork and rhythmic compositions met Bharatanatyam's distinctive patterns and geometry, creating an exchange without erasing the individuality of either tradition.

The rhythmic conversation gathered force in a 'Paran,' a powerful Kathak composition built around syllables traditionally associated with the pakhawaj. Dynamic movement and footwork carried its patterns toward a 'tihai,' a phrase

repeated three times before resolving on 'sam,' the first beat of the rhythmic cycle.

For Khandelwal, a disciple of Sayali Goswami and Pandita Uma Dogra, the evening brought together different artistic lineages. Sundar, a disciple of Durga Swaminathan, brought her Bharatanatyam training into the exchange.

The dancers were accompanied by two young musicians. Tabla artist Adhira Ganesh, a disciple of Ganesh Betageri and Pt. Keshav Joshi, and mridangam artist Siddharth Nair, a disciple of Sri Cherthala Jaydev, added another layer to the rhythmic conversation.

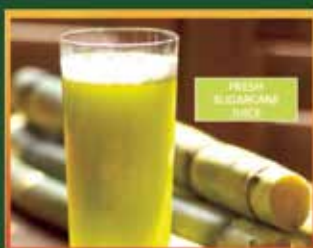
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BOOKS

Library Of Congress Names Ruby Lal Kluge Chair As She Works On Book On Taj Mahal

India-West News Desk

WASHINGTON, DC- Emory University historian Ruby Lal has been named the 2027 Kluge Chair in Countries and Cultures of the South at the John W. Kluge Center of the Library of Congress. Lal, a professor of Middle Eastern and South Asian studies in Emory College of Arts and Sciences, will spend four months in residence in Washington, D.C., beginning in January 2027.

Her work during the residency will center on her seventh book, 'The Genius of Mughals, A Magisterial History of the Taj Mahal.' The book will trace the human history behind the Taj Mahal and the Mughal Empire during the period when the monument was built.

Lal said the book will focus on the people involved in its creation, including the queen in whose memory it was built, the architects, a calligrapher, thousands of masons and stone cutters, and the Raja who provided the land. It will also examine the lands and rivers connected to the monument and the vision behind its design.

"In writing this book, I stand as a witness to those who were witnessing the Taj, a wonder of the world, as it was coming into being," Lal said.



Photo: Danish Sarooe/Emory

Lal's books include 'Vagabond Princess: The Great Adventures of Gulbadan,' which was shortlisted for the James Tait Prize and was a finalist for the Georgia Author of the Year award. Her earlier book, 'Empress: The Astonishing Reign of Nur Jahan,' won the Georgia Author of the Year Award in Biography and was a finalist for the Los Angeles Times Book Prize in 2018.

In spring 2025, Lal published 'Tiger-Slayer,' an illustrated young adult remix of 'Empress.' It was among the top two picks of the New York Public Library's 2025 non-fiction young adult selection and was a finalist for the Atta Galatta Bangalore Literature Prize.

Shashi Tharoor Headlines JLF Los Angeles Debut

India-West News Desk

LOS ANGELES, CA – The Jaipur Literature Festival made its Los Angeles debut this week, bringing writers, artists, historians, diplomats and cultural figures together for conversations spanning literature, culture, geopolitics, technology and the arts.

The Los Angeles edition, held September 14-16 at the ASU California Center Broadway in downtown Los Angeles, marked the festival's first appearance in the city. The 2026 JLF USA program expanded to six U.S. cities, with Los Angeles added to editions in North Carolina, Seattle, Colorado, New York and Houston.

The downtown venue, the former Herald Examiner Building at 1111 S. Broadway, provided the setting for the three-day program.

The opening evening featured Consul General of India in Los Angeles Dr. K. J. Srinivasa as keynote speaker. Johnny Figel of the American India Foundation; Sanjoy Roy and Suraj Dhirga of Teamwork Arts; Tim Disney from 2413 Hyperion; and Megha Kadakia were the others featured.



There were also photography, film and social-impact conversations. Photographer Vicky Roy, producer Mauktik Kulkarni and social-impact leader V. R. Feroze took part in a discussion titled "Framing Hope," held alongside an exhibition of Roy's photography.

Roy's story provided one of the evening's central themes. His journey from the streets of Delhi to photographing the reconstruction of the World Trade Center after the September 11 attacks has also become the basis for 'Street Dreams,' a forthcoming film about his life. The festival described the conversation as an exploration of resilience, memory and hope.

The festival's second day shifted more directly into international affairs, with author, politician and former diplomat Shashi Tharoor de-

livering a keynote on the changing world order.

Tharoor spoke in conversation with Kal Raustiala, director of the UCLA Ronald W. Burkle Center for International Relations. The program examined the changing position of the United States in global affairs and the implications for

India and other powers. UCLA's Burkle Center described the event as a preview of the 2027 JLF Los Angeles, which is planned as a weeklong international edition.

The discussion was followed by a panel moderated by foreign policy columnist Seema Sirohi, with Harvard historian Caroline Elkins, former U.S. Ambassador Nina Hachigian and writer Viet Thanh Nguyen. Their discussion ranged across empire, historical memory and American identity.

The Los Angeles event was co-presented with Zócalo Public Square and the UCLA Burkle Center for International Relations, with Teamwork Arts producing the festival. The program was billed as a preview of the 2027 Los Angeles edition, with the central question framed as "What Is the New World Order?"

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Clinton Global Initiative Backs Arogya To Teach Healthy Cooking To 10,000 Indian Street Vendors

India-West News Desk

NEW YORK, NY- Arogya World has committed to training 10,000 street food vendors across India in healthier food preparation practices over the next two years. The initiative was announced September 22 at the Clinton Global Initiative's 2026 Annual Meeting here.

Arogya World, is a US nonprofit focused on diabetes prevention, says it has reached more than 29.5 million people in India over the past 15 years..

The program will focus on reducing excess salt, avoiding repeated use of cooking oil, using healthier cooking methods and encouraging more balanced meals. It is aimed at helping prevent diet-related non-communicable diseases, particularly diabetes and hypertension.

Arogya World will work with

the National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI) to bring vendors from Mumbai, Bengaluru and other urban centers into the program. Training will use simple, visual materials for vendors with different levels of literacy, followed by assessments to measure changes in knowledge and cooking practices. Standardized materials will allow the program to be used in other locations.

"We want to change the way India eats," said Dr. Nalini Saligram, founder and CEO of Arogya World. She said educating street food vendors along with consumers is part of the organization's broader strategy to prevent diabetes.



India has an estimated 10 million street food vendors, according to Arogya World. Each vendor serves an estimated 80 to 100 consumers a day.

The initiative comes as noncommunicable diseases account for about 63% of deaths in India, according to figures cited by Arogya World. The ICMR-INDIAB study estimated that 101 million people in India had diabetes and another 136 million had prediabetes.

The Many Traditional Uses Of Fragrant Elaichi

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Ash of the Elaichi skin, 2 gm. with a little honey 4–5 times a day.
- Cold**
20 ml. decoction prepared from 5 gm. dhania, 1 gm. methi seeds and a little turmeric powder, 2–3 times a day.

Cough
A little Elaichi powder with a teaspoonful of honey 3–4 times a day. Chewing Elaichi (not more than 3 per day) frequently is helpful in dry as well as productive cough.

(Central Council for Research in Ayurveda and Siddha, India. The information provided here is based on traditional Ayurvedic practices and is intended for general informational purposes only.)



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RECIPE



JAGGERY RICE

Ingredients:

- 1 cup Royal® Authentic Basmati Rice
- ¾ cup jaggery, grated • 2 cups water
- 2 tbsp ghee • ¼ tsp cardamom powder
- 2 tbsp chopped almonds
- 2 tbsp chopped cashews
- 2 tbsp raisins • A pinch of salt
- A pinch of saffron (optional)

Preparation

Rinse the Royal® Authentic Basmati Rice under cold water until the water runs clear.

In a medium saucepan, bring 2 cups of water to a boil over medium heat. Add the drained rice, stir gently, and cover the pan with a lid. Reduce the heat to low and cook for 10–12 minutes.

Once the rice is cooked, turn off the heat. Drain any excess water and set the rice aside.

In a small pan, combine the grated jaggery with ¼ cup of water. Heat on low, stirring occasionally, until the jaggery dissolves completely. Strain the syrup through a fine-mesh sieve to remove any impurities.

In a large pan, melt 2 tbsp of ghee over medium heat. Add the cooked rice and stir gently to coat it with the ghee.

Pour the jaggery syrup over the rice, making sure it is evenly distributed.

Sprinkle in the cardamom powder, almonds, cashews and raisins. Add a pinch of salt. Stir gently and cook for another 5 minutes over low heat. If using saffron, soak a few strands in warm water and add them to the rice.

Turn off the heat and let the rice rest for a couple of minutes before serving warm.

Note: For a richer flavor, lightly toast the almonds and cashews in ghee before adding them to the rice. Adjust the amount of jaggery to suit your taste.

(Authentic Royal)

Nazranaa Has Heritage And Modern Couture Meet

India -West News Desk

NEW YORK, NY – South Asian fashion and bridalwear brand Nazranaa presented its Spring/Summer 2027 collection, ‘Samskriti 2.0,’ during New York Fashion Week, September 16, with actor Bhumi Pednekar making her global runway debut as the showstopper.

The presentation at Refectory Chelsea in New York City drew on Indian architecture, spirituality, festivals, literature, mathematics and poetry, in-



terpreting the themes through contemporary couture. ‘Samskriti 2.0’ built on Nazranaa’s earlier collection, ‘Samskriti,’ and was created by sibling founders and

by 7th-century Sanskrit poet Māgha, and incorporated it into a reversible geometric design.

Pednekar closed the show in a hand-embroidered velvet lehenga and blouse inspired by the Ramakrishna Temple at Belur Math. The design drew on the temple’s architectural elements associated with Hindu temples, mosques and

churches. The skirt featured a swan representing the Paramatman, or Supreme Self, from Swami Vivekananda’s emblem, while a net veil with scalloped lotus detailing completed the look.

“There is something very special about seeing Indian culture celebrated on a global stage like New York Fashion Week,” Pednekar said. “Closing the show for Nazranaa’s Samskriti 2.0 felt incredibly special because of the way they took stories, symbols and traditions that are so deeply rooted in India and translated them into beautiful, modern couture.”

“With Samskriti 2.0, we continue using fashion to bring India’s extraordinary temples, texts and intellectual traditions to a global audience,” Shashank Gupta said. “We want each garment to spark curiosity about the story behind it.”

designers Shivangi Gupta Singh and Shashank Gupta.

The collection included references to the Meenakshi Temple, Prem Mandir, Jagannath Puri Rath Yatra, Holi and Raas Leela. A lehenga drew inspiration from the Meenakshi Temple’s architecture, while another look referenced Vrindavan and the stories of Radha and Krishna.

“Our mother was born in Mathura, and we grew up spending time in Mathura and Vrindavan, surrounded by stories of Radha and Krishna,” Shivangi said. “Samskriti 2.0 brings that emotional connection to a New York runway.”

Two menswear jackets drew from India’s mathematical and literary traditions. One was based on Acharya Pingala’s Meru Prastara, using Laghu, Guru, 1 and 0. The other drew from the ‘Sarvatobhadra,’ a multidirectional pattern poem

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WELLNESS

6 In 10 Young Adults, College Students Report Mental Health Concerns

By Dr. KRISTINA PETSAS

Mental health challenges among young people remain persistently high, and many students and families are still trying to understand how best to respond.

Whether you're a parent, caregiver, educator, or navigating these challenges yourself, here are four ways to help support mental well-being:

Start with Open, Honest Conversations

Frequency doesn't always lead to understanding. Survey findings uncover that while 39% of parents

of college students believed their child felt understood after conversations, only 28% of students agreed, and 26% said they felt misunderstood. Meanwhile, young adults not enrolled in college report speaking with parents less often, yet their perceptions of mental health challenges were more closely aligned with their parents. Together, these findings suggest that how we communicate matters as much as how often. Prioritizing meaningful, two-way conversations that emphasize listening, empathy and understanding can make a meaningful difference.

Encourage Balanced Use of AI

Digital tools are playing a growing role in how young adults and students manage their mental health. Nearly one-third (31%) of respondents reported using AI-based platforms to explore symptoms or find coping strategies, and 26% of those users said they've turned to these tools for companionship, reassurance, or emotional support. While these resources can be helpful, they are most effective when used alongside guidance from qualified health care professionals.



Help Build Awareness of Trusted Resources

Many young adults are unsure where to turn for help, which can be particularly true when they or their families are navigating mental health concerns for the first time. At the local level, community organizations, nonprofits, and state-based services can provide accessible, often low- or no-cost support — from crisis lines to counseling and peer programs. Raising awareness of these options can make it easier to take the first step.

Health plans can also play a role in helping individuals understand and access available mental health support. For example, some insurers provide digital self-care tools, coaching, and 24/7 support lines for in-the-moment assistance, as well as

in-person and virtual care options.

Seek Professional Help When Necessary

If feelings of stress, anxiety, or depression start to feel overwhelming, reach out to your primary care physician (PCP). If you don't have a PCP, establish a relationship with one. Your PCP will provide valuable insights and care, and referrals if needed. Getting the right support can guide you toward a more balanced and fulfilling life.

If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, you can also call or text the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline for 24-hour, confidential support.

(Petsas is Chief Medical Officer of Quality and Compliance at West Coast Markets, UnitedHealthcare)



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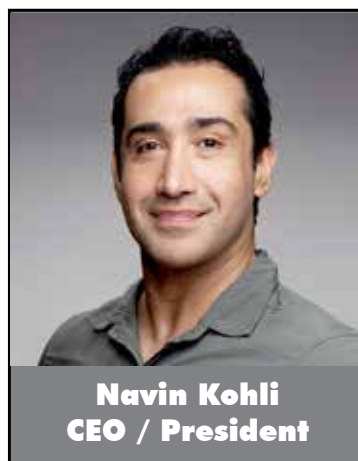
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Marathi Film 'Gondhal' Selected As India's Oscars Entry

Contd. from P1
Federation of India made the announcement in Mumbai on September 18. There were 33 films in contention this year, and the jury picked Santosh Da-



vakhar's film to represent India in the Best International Feature Film category at the 99th Academy Awards.

The film stars Kishor Kadam, Ishita Deshmukh, Yogesh Sohoni, Nishad Bhoir and Anuj Prabhu. It is set against the backdrop of the traditional Maharashtrian Gondhal ritual, a night-long folk performance involving music, dance and mythology.

'Gondhal' is the fourth Marathi film to represent India at the Academy Awards, after 'Shwaas', 'Harishchandrachi Factory' and 'Court'.

Prior to this, India's official entry for the Best International Feature Film category at the 98th Academy Awards was Neeraj Ghaywan's drama 'Homebound', starring Vishal Jethwa and Ishaan Khatter. The film subsequently made the 15-film Oscars shortlist for International Feature Film.

The 99th Academy Awards, honoring films released during 2026, are scheduled for March 14, 2027, at the Dolby Theatre at Ovation Hollywood in Los Angeles. The eligibility period runs from January 1 through December 31, 2026, while nominations are scheduled to be announced on January 21, 2027. Conan O'Brien is set to return as host for the third consecutive year.

(IANS)

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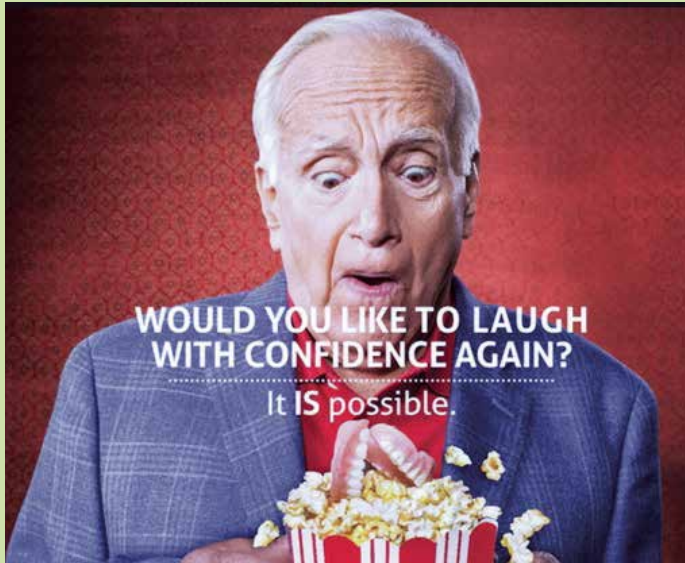
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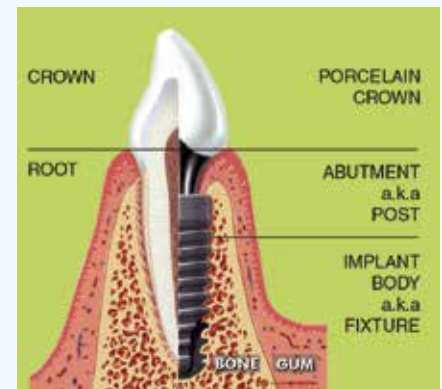


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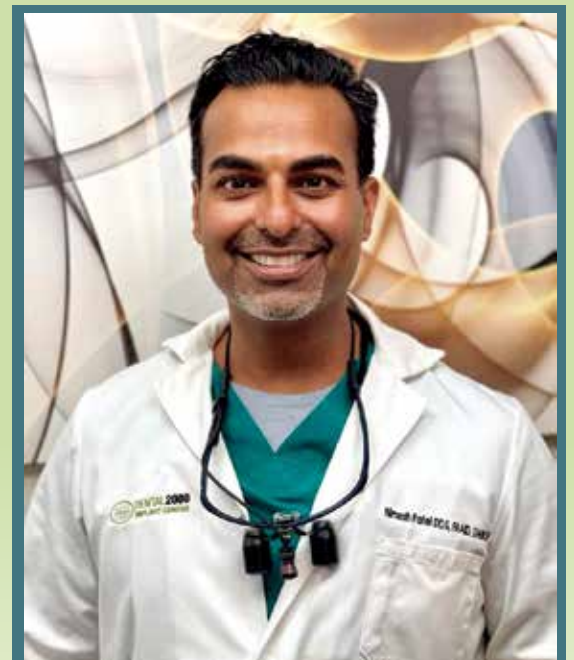
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