

INDIA WEST

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Man Held Without Bail For Murder Of Arti Varma In Burbank Attack



India-West News Desk

BURBANK, CA - A 30-year-old man has pled not guilty to murder and attempted murder

charges following a stabbing that killed a veteran elementary school teacher Arti Varma and critically injured her daughter, mental health advocate Meera Varma.

Sergio Fraire appeared in Pasadena courthouse facing one felony count of murder with a special circumstance of lying in wait, along with counts of attempted murder and first-degree residential burglary. He is being held without bail and is due back in court on June 12.

The attack occurred on the morning of April 21 at a home on North Brighton Street, where 59-year-old Arti Varma and her daughter, 25-year-old Meera, were found with multiple stab wounds. Arti, a first-grade teacher at Bret Harte Elementary School, died from her injuries. Meera Varma remains hospitalized in stable condition. *Contd. on P16*

Suparna Sharma, Anand Win Pulitzer Prize



India-West News Desk

NEW YORK, NY — Indian illustrator Anand RK and investigative journalist Suparna

Sharma were among the winners of the 2026 Pulitzer Prize for Illustrated Reporting and Commentary, with Sharma serving as *Contd. on P13*

My World Has Turned Upside Down: Victim of Sting Video

India-West News Desk

SANTA ANA, CA – Akash Singhania says his life was “turned upside down” after being falsely accused during a livestream by content creator Vitaly Zdorovetskiy, an incident that has since drawn scrutiny over online vigilante tactics.

The accusation occurred during a broadcast in Zdorovetskiy’s “Catching Child Predators” series, where Singhania was confronted and accused of attempting to meet a minor. Singhania immediately denied the claim and tried to show his phone to demonstrate he be-

lieved he had been communicating with an adult. Despite his efforts, the confrontation unfolded live before an online audience.

Singhania said the fallout was immediate and severe, describing harassment and damage to both his personal and professional relationships. “My world was turned upside down this weekend,” he said, calling the allegation completely false.

According to Singhania, officers from the Santa Ana Police Department responded to the scene and determined that no wrongdoing *Contd. on P13*

Pomona Stadium Construction Begins For Cricket’s Olympic Run



LOS ANGELES, CA -The International Cricket Council (ICC) has welcomed the start of construction of the cricket stadium here, calling it a major milestone as the sport prepares to return to the Olympic Games at LA28 after 128 years.

A groundbreaking ceremony was held at the Fairplex Grounds on April 22.

ICC Chairman Jay Shah said, “The groundbreaking marks an important milestone in cricket’s return to the Olympics and is a proud moment for all ICC Members and stakeholders worldwide. We’re confident this venue will take center-stage during the Games and leave a legacy for cricket in the USA.”

ICC Chief Executive Sanjog Gupta, who attended the ceremony, said the governing body remains *Contd. on P26*

‘Shape Of Momo,’ And ‘Room At The Farm’ Take Top Honors At IFFLA 2026



India-West News Desk

LOS ANGELES, CA –The 24th Indian Film Festival of Los Angeles (IFFLA) concluded at Landmark Sunset Hollywood with Tribeny Rai’s ‘Shape of Momo’ and Jasmine Kaur Roy and Avinash Roy’s ‘Room At The Farm’ taking the top jury awards.

The Grand Jury Prize for Best Feature was awarded to ‘Shape of Momo’. In its official citation, the features jury said it was “honored

to award the Grand Jury Prize to a debut film that deftly creates a protagonist who inhabits the gray area between righteousness and humility, and delicately charts her journey through the complexities of class and gender in a place steeped in tradition.”

In the shorts category, the Grand Jury Prize went to ‘Room At The Farm’. The shorts jury described it as “a delicate and nuanced allegory of the fragility of human relationships when faced with the impact

of modernization,” adding that the film “represents rural Punjab with a gaze rarely seen, one that centralizes humanity and desire.”

The IFFLA Industry Days Launchpad Pitch Competition awarded its \$10,000 development grant to Amarik Singh Khosa for ‘Blind Tiger’. Priyanka Krishnan and Raman Nimmala received an honorable mention for ‘Thottal Poo Malarum (Flowers Bloom When Touched)’. Audience awards, voted *Contd. on P26*




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OPINION

Indus Waters Treaty: Asymmetric Obligations, Unequal Concessions, Pak's Weaponization

By DR. PRADEEP KUMAR SAXENA,
Former Indian Commissioner For Indus Waters.

The Indus River System comprises six major rivers — the Indus, Chenab, Jhelum, Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej — flowing through the territories of both India and Pakistan. The system sustains drinking water, agriculture, and electricity generation across the Indus Basin, supporting hundreds of millions of people on both sides of the border.

When British India was partitioned in 1947, the Indus River System was also divided between the two successor states. The geographic reality was stark: India, as the upper riparian state, held the headwaters of most rivers, while Pakistan's agricultural heartland — the heavily irrigated Punjab plains — depended critically on continued water flows from the east.

India, for its part, required access to the system for its own development objectives in Punjab and Rajasthan, while seeking stability and normalized relations with its new western neighbour. Despite its own pressing domestic needs, India concluded this highly concessionary water-sharing pact with Pakistan on Sept. 19, 1960, in an agreement facilitated by the World Bank.

India Paid the Price for Rationality

The trajectory of the negotiations was shaped, from the outset, by the asymmetry between India's reasonable and constructive approach and Pakistan's maximalist demands — an asymmetry that anchored outcomes far more favorably to Pakistan than equity would have warranted.

The World Bank's first substantive proposal of Feb. 5, 1954 illustrates this plainly. Even at this initial stage, it required significant one-sided concessions from India:



- All planned Indian developments along the upper reaches of both the Indus and Chenab were to be abandoned, with those benefits accruing to Pakistan instead.

- India was required to forgo diverting approximately 6 MAF from the Chenab River.

- No Chenab waters at Merala (now in Pakistan) would be available for Indian use.

- No water development would be permitted in Kutch from the river system.

Despite these considerable impositions, India accepted the proposal in good faith almost immediately, signaling its genuine desire for a speedy resolution.

Pakistan, by contrast, delayed its formal acceptance for nearly five years until Dec. 22, 1958. As a result of this goodwill gesture by India, restrictions were

imposed on India while Pakistan continued developing new uses on the Western rivers without equivalent constraints.

Pakistan absorbed the lesson that obstruction pays and cooperation costs — and has applied this lesson consistently ever since.

What India Lost: The Scale of Sacrifice

Under the Treaty's allocation formula, India received exclusive rights to the three Eastern rivers — the Sutlej, Beas, and Ravi — while Pakistan received rights to the waters of the three Western rivers — the Indus, Chenab, and Jhelum.

India was permitted certain limited, non-consumptive uses of the Western rivers within its own territory, primarily for run-of-river hydropower generation, subject to extensive design and

operational restrictions.

In volumetric terms, the Eastern rivers allocated to India carry approximately 33 million acre-feet of annual flow, while the Western rivers allocated to Pakistan carry approximately 135 MAF — giving Pakistan roughly 80 percent of the system's water.

India received 20 percent in exchange for relinquishing all claim to the vastly larger Western system. The critical point is that India did not gain new water from the agreement. What India received was formal acknowledgment of flows it already accessed, in exchange for relinquishing all claim to the far larger Western system.

Financial Concession: Paying to Give Away

Perhaps the most striking anomaly of the Treaty is the fi-

ancial provision. India agreed to pay approximately £62 million (approximately \$2.5 billion in present value) as compensation to Pakistan to build water resources infrastructure in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

This payment represents a unique precedent in which the upstream country, already surrendering the majority of the system's water, additionally paid the downstream country for the "privilege" of doing so.

India essentially subsidized Pakistan's acceptance of a deal that heavily favored Pakistan on the fundamental question of water allocation.

The Treaty's Structural Unfairness

The Treaty imposes a series of specific design and operational restrictions on India's use of the Western rivers that have no corresponding obligations on Pakistan's side:

- India can develop only a limited Irrigated Cropped Area (ICA) in its territory.

- India faces strict limits on the volume of water that can be held in any storage facility on the Western rivers.

- India must comply with specific design criteria for hydropower facilities on the Western rivers, including restrictions on pondage and storage capacity.

These restrictions are one-directional. They constrain India's lawful development of resources within its own territory while imposing no equivalent transparency or restriction requirements on Pakistan.

The result is a treaty that treats the upstream state — India — as the party requiring oversight and restraint, while the downstream state benefits from guaranteed flows.

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

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Saree Run Makes US Debut In Southern California



States. The movement began in Bengaluru in 2016 with a small group of women and has since expanded to multiple cities across India.

Deshpande, a Bengaluru-based running coach e launched the initiative after noticing that many women interested in fitness were often held back by social expectations and family responsibilities. He said the sari also helped create a more approachable environment for participants by reducing the pressure often associated with fitness culture.

The Huntington Beach event featured yoga sessions, wellness workshops, vendor

booths and a “Saree Reimagined” fashion presentation by local South Asian designers.

Organizers said proceeds from registration fees were donated to the Artesia-based nonprofit South Asian Helpline And Referral Agency (SAHARA), which supports abuse survivors.

Interest in expanding the event to other U.S. cities, including Chicago, Austin and Denver, has already emerged following the Southern California debut, organizers said.



who said the initiative was created to encourage South Asian women to prioritize fitness while remaining connected to their cultural identity.

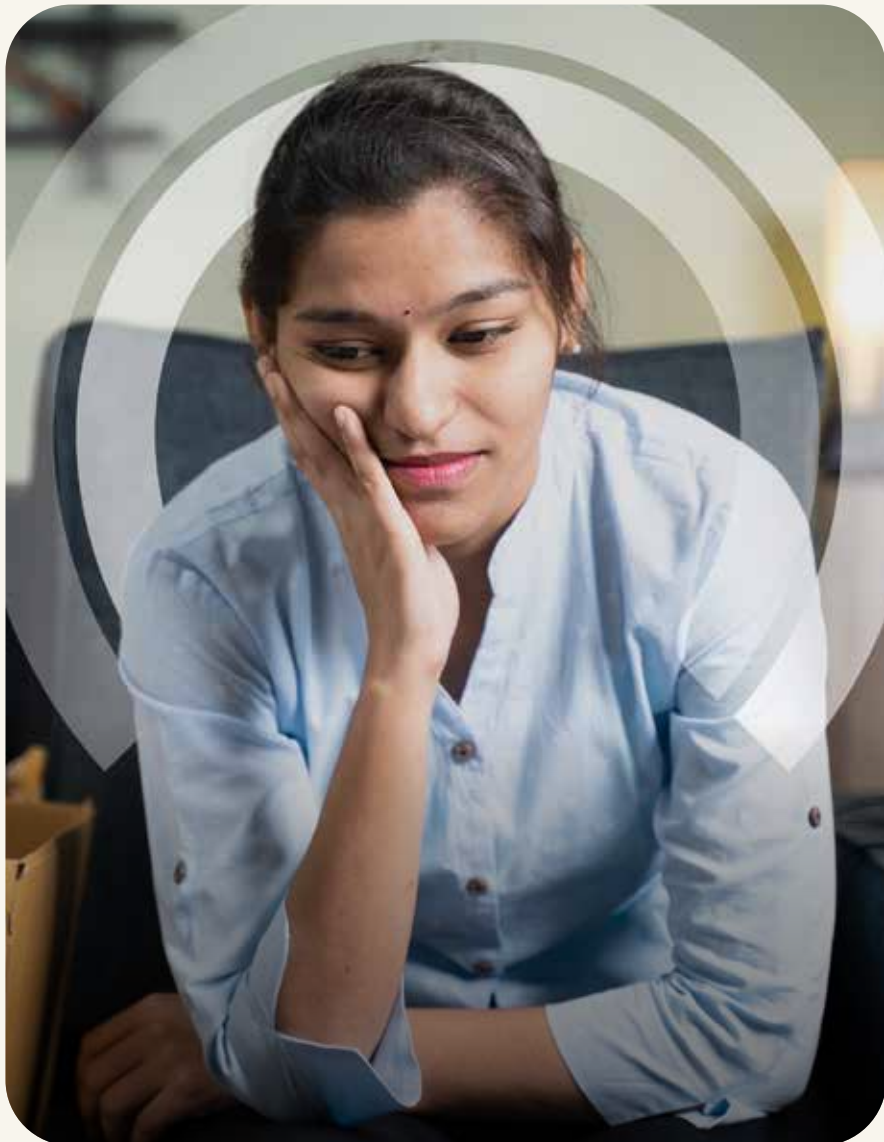
Patel told LAist that the goal was “fitness without inhibitions,” noting that South Asians face higher rates of conditions such as heart disease and diabetes.

Inspired by videos of the event in India, Patel worked with Saree Run founder Pramod Deshpande to bring the concept to the United

India-West News Desk

HUNTINGTON BEACH, CA– The first U.S. edition of the Saree Run brought nearly 250 participants to Huntington Beach Central Park East for a 5K fun run and wellness festival centered on health, culture and community.

The event was organized by Aanal Patel,



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COMMUNITY

AIF Gala Raises \$2.6 Million For India Development

India-West News Desk

SAN FRANCISCO, CA –The Bay Area chapter of the American India Foundation marked its 25th anniversary with a gala at Grace Cathedral, raising more than \$2.6 million to support programs serving underserved communities in India.

The total included \$1.4 million generated during the event’s pledge drive, organizers said. Funds will support AIF initiatives in public health, education, livelihoods and leadership development.

The evening’s top honor, the Legacy of Leadership Award, went to Lata Krishnan for her role in helping establish AIF in 2001 after the Bhuj earthquake in Gujarat and for her later leadership as president and co-chair of the global board.

Accepting the recognition, Krishnan said philanthropy is rooted in a shared sense of responsibility rather than obligation. She added that her journey with AIF had transformed both her and her family.

“When we talk about 25 years and 21 million lives, that achievement doesn’t belong to me; it belongs to all of us,” Krishnan said. Nishant Pandey, chief executive officer of AIF, said Krishnan’s leadership had helped strengthen the organization over the years. He described her as someone who brings people together around a common purpose and leads through action.

The gala also highlighted personal stories tied to AIF’s work in India, including that of Pushpanjali Majhi, who joined AIF’s LAMP program as a migrant child, completed



Members of AIF’s Global Board



Lata Krishnan



Kalpna Kanthan of AIF and auctioneer Jamie McDonald.



college and later became a teacher — the first person in her family to secure formal employment. Organizers said her progress helped lift her family out of intergenera-

tional poverty and encouraged other girls in her village to remain in school.

Sponsors included WestBridge Capital, Wadhvani Foundation, and several philan-

thropic supporters. Since its founding in 2001, AIF says it has reached more than 21 million people across 35 states and union territories in India through its development programs.

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Vikrant Massey Urges Indian Diaspora To Back Children's Causes At CRY America Galas



children's education, noting that early support can significantly alter life trajectories.

Speakers across the events reinforced the theme of collective responsibility. Priya Priyadarshini, a corporate vice president at Microsoft, reflected on the idea of paying forward opportunities, quoting the poet Rumi and urging attendees

in Seattle to act as enablers for others.

At the San Diego gathering, Los Angeles Consul General K. J. Srinivasa described support for children's rights as an investment in human potential, while Kranti Ponnamm underscored the importance of preserving childhood, encouraging donors to extend opportunities to those in need.

Adding a grassroots perspective, CRY project partner K. V. Ramma shared insights from work in rural Andhra Pradesh, detailing progress in improving school enrollment, reducing child labor, and preventing child marriages through sustained community engagement.

highlighted the role of diaspora-driven philanthropy in advancing equitable opportunities for children, with Massey's message serving as a central appeal for continued support.

Massey emphasized a shared sense of responsibility rooted in common heritage and values. "There is something that binds us all together," he told the San Jose gathering. "It is a common history, a common passion for compassion and humanity." He also expressed gratitude to the diaspora for sustaining opportunities for children supported by CRY's programs.

Venky Harinarayan, founder of Rocketship.vc, highlighted the long-term impact of investing in

India-West News Desk

SAN DIEGO, CA – Vikrant Massey called on the Indian diaspora to continue supporting initiatives for underprivileged children, as CRY America hosted its annual West Coast gala series across three U.S. cities.

The gala series brought together community leaders, philanthropists, and supporters in Seattle, San Jose, and San Diego to raise funds aimed at protecting children's rights and expanding access to education and care for underserved communities in India.

The 2026 gala series, held in Seattle on May 1, the Bay Area on May 2, and San Diego on May 3,

Dr. Bharat Patel Receives Lifetime Achievement Honor in Los Angeles



to healthcare for those in need, earning widespread respect within the Indian American community.

During the event, Rajendra Vora, founder and president of the Jain Social Group Beverly Hills, asked Patel how he felt about receiving the

honor. Patel responded that the recognition would motivate him to continue and expand his efforts.

"This will encourage me to do even more free surgeries and other activities," he said, adding that he plans to organize large-scale entertainment events to raise additional funds to support charitable medical services.

The ceremony was attended by representatives from several community organizations and local leaders, underscoring the broad support for Patel's humanitarian work and its impact across the region.

India-West News Desk

LOS ANGELES, CA – Dr. Bharat Patel was honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award at a community event hosted by Gujarat Samaj of Southern California and Indian American Senior Heritage, recognizing his decades-long service to underserved communities.

Patel was cited for his sustained commitment to providing free medical care, including surgeries and clinics across Southern California for more than 20 years. Working alongside colleagues, he has helped expand access

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Chiranjeevi Kolla, 37, Dies After Rare Severe Case Of Valley Fever In CA

India-West News Desk

WALNUT CREEK, CA - What began as mild, flu-like symptoms in early April turned fatal within weeks for Chiranjeevi Kolla, a 37-year-old Walnut Creek resident who died May 5 after a prolonged battle with Valley Fever and respiratory failure.

Kolla, the primary provider for his family, spent nearly a month in intensive care at Kaiser Permanente, where he was placed on a ventilator as doctors worked to stabilize his condition. Initially suspected to be severe pneumonia, his illness was later confirmed as Valley Fever, a fungal infection caused by inhaling spores of the *Coccidioides* fungus found in soil across parts of California and the American Southwest.

While many infected individuals experience mild or no symptoms, Kolla's case turned critical as the infection caused extensive damage to his lungs. Despite aggressive treatment, his condition continued to deteriorate.

"The doctors had done all that medicine could do," said Rama Koteswara Rao, Kolla's cousin, who is representing the family. "After thirty long days of machines and monitors and prayers, his exhausted body could fight no longer."

Kolla is survived by his wife, Pavani Marella, and their 5-year-old son, Vihan. His death has left the family grappling not only with grief but also mounting financial challenges, including medical expenses from his extended ICU stay and ongoing household needs.

Rao described Kolla as a man defined by quiet strength and integrity. "He was the kind



of person who never raised his voice, never cut a corner, and never made anyone feel small," he said.

According to his professional profile, Kolla worked in the healthcare technology sector in the San Francisco Bay Area, building a career while supporting his young family.

The family plans to hold final rites in both California and India. With Marella's consent, relatives have organized a fundraiser to help cover funeral costs, medical bills, and to establish future support for their son, including a college fund in Kolla's memory. "Chiranjeevi would have been quietly, deeply moved by this," Rao said. "He never asked for anything for himself."

Medically known as coccidioidomycosis, Valley Fever is contracted by inhaling airborne fungal spores commonly present in dry, dusty soil. Though most cases resolve on their own or with minimal treatment, severe infections can lead to complications in the lungs and, in rare cases, become life-threatening.

GOPIO-OC Hosts 'Strategic Life Management' Event



India-West News Desk

ORANGE, CA – The Orange County chapter of the Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO) launched its first major initiative of 2026 on March 22 at Tandoor Restaurant, here. The event focused on "Life Management" strategies, drawing community members and leaders from across Southern California to discuss financial growth, estate planning, and organizational expansion.

Amrit Bhandari, the founder and chairman of the OC chapter, opened the session by detailing the group's history and its evolving mission for the new year. Chapter President Hark Vasa introduced the keynote speakers and outlined an ambitious 2026 calendar. Notably, the gathering saw the attendance of presidents from all four Southern California GOPIO chapters. Vasa announced plans for the four chapters to unite for a large-scale joint event later this year, urging attendees to join local chapters to strengthen the Indian diaspora's community service efforts.

The technical portion of the program featured a dynamic, dialogue-style presentation by Mahesh Jain. A registered investment advisor and founder of Kuber Investments, he provided strategies for maximizing investment returns. This was complemented by Anju Multani, an attorney with over 30 years of experience and founder of the South Asian Bar Association, who addressed wealth preservation. Multani offered a comprehensive overview of estate planning, including the complexities of wills, probate, and various trust structures.

J. Nami Kaur, Global Ambassador and Chair of the GOPIO Foundation, provided updates on international initiatives launched since 2025. She highlighted the organization's digital transformation, including a website reboot, monthly webinars, and the ongoing dialogue regarding a Diaspora Museum.

The afternoon concluded with a cultural showcase featuring music and dance by local talent. Geeta Bhatt, Vice President of GOPIO OC, delivered the closing vote of thanks before guests transitioned to a networking lunch.

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Vishwa Hindi Diwas Celebrated At LA Consulate

India-West News Desk

LOS ANGELES, CA – The International Mahila Kavya Manch San Diego chapter, in collaboration



with the Consulate General of India, Los Angeles, marked Vishwa Hindi Diwas with a literary and cultural program held at the Consulate.

The event opened with the recitation of the Gayatri Mantra by Dr. Kamla Singh, Global President of MKM, followed by a ceremonial lamp lighting led by Consul General Dr. K. J. Srinivasa, along with Dr. Durga Sinha, Dr. Kamla Singh, and Vanmala. The program was anchored by Akhila Rao, President of MKM San Diego.

The event featured poetry recitations by 20 poets from across Southern California, who presented works in Hindi exploring themes of Indian identity, culture, and emotional ties to the motherland. The poets reflected on a range of subjects, including India's Chandrayaan moon mission, motherhood, love, and human emotions, capturing the sentiments of the Indian diaspora.

A highlight of the evening was a performance by Ashok Garg, grandson of renowned comic poet Kaka Hathrasi. Garg presented Kakaji's signature satirical poetry, drawing laughter and strong audience engagement.

The event drew attendees from Los Angeles, Orange County, and San Diego, with many traveling long distances to participate, reflecting a strong connection to Hindi language and Indian heritage.

In his address, Srinivasa spoke in Hindi and emphasized the language's growing global presence. He noted that such cultural gatherings strengthen community bonds and deepen the diaspora's connection to India.

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PEOPLE

Pichai, Mamdani, Vikas Khanna, Neal Mohan, Kiran Musunuru On TIME100 List



India-West News Desk

NEW YORK, NEW YORK, NY—Google CEO Sundar Pichai, chef Vikas Khanna, YouTube CEO Neal Mohan, New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani, and Bollywood actor Ranbir Kapoor are among those named to TIME magazine’s 2026 list of the 100 Most Influential People.

Released April 15, the annual TIME100 list honors individuals recognized for their impact on culture, innovation, leadership, and public life. This year’s list also includes President Donald Trump, Pope Leo XIV, Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney, Chinese President Xi Jinping, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and Artemis II commander Reid Wiseman.

Pichai was recognized for expanding the reach of artificial intelligence through products used worldwide. In his profile for TIME, Andrew Ng, founder of DeepLearning.AI and co-founder of Google Brain, said Pichai has overseen the conversion of Google research breakthroughs into tools used by billions since becoming CEO in 2015. TIME said Pichai has preserved a startup-style agility at Google while advancing new AI products, including Google AI Studio, NotebookLM, Gemini CLI, and Antigravity.

Mohan was honored for leading YouTube’s continued global growth. TIME said the platform has become a destination for content ranging from NFL games and podcasts to creators such as MrBeast and CoComelon. The magazine said Mohan combines technical credibility with business skill and creator trust. In the profile, creator Michelle Khare said, “Approachability is one of Neal’s superpowers.”

Khanna was recognized for his influence in food, culture and humanitarian work. TIME said his work reflects how influence can take many forms, including “a meal prepared by chef Vikas Khanna.” In Khanna’s profile, chef Eric Ripert, co-owner of Le Bernardin and a James Beard Award winner, described him as “a man of extraordinary heart,” adding that he uses food as “a universal language to build bridges and foster understanding.” Khanna is the founder of New York restaurant Bungalow, which TIME described as more than a restaurant, calling it “a living expression of storytelling,” where dishes reflect memory, heritage and shared identity.

Mamdani was recognized for his political rise in the United States. TIME said the New York mayor has given the Democratic Party “a new source of momentum.” The magazine noted that while Mamdani faces challenges tied to housing policy, finances, and coalition politics, he has worked with New York Gov. Kathy Hochul on childcare initiatives and secured federal housing funds.

Researcher and cardiologist Kiran Musunuru was named for his work in gene-editing and cardiovascular genomics. Musunuru, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania, focuses his research on genetic approaches to treating heart and metabolic diseases.

Kapoor was recognized for his contribution to cinema and storytelling. Writing his profile for TIME, actor Ayushmann Khurrana said there are actors who pursue legacy and those who become one through their craft, calling Kapoor “the latter.”

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THURSDAY, JUNE 25TH (6:30PM-9:30PM) BAL KRISHNA LEELA EVAM GIRIRAJ JHANKI	FRIDAY, JUNE 26TH (6:30PM-9:30PM) MAHARAAS EVAM RUKHMANI MANGAL	SATURDAY, JUNE 27TH (11:00AM-2:00PM) SUDAMA CHARITRA EVAM LATHMAR HOLI	

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My World Has Turned Upside Down: Akash Singhania

Contd. from P1

had occurred. He later thanked Officers Renald Galstian, Lorenzo Sanchez, and Joanna Hatziefstratiou for their professionalism in handling the situation.

Zdorovetskiy has since issued a public apology on social media platforms, acknowledging that his team misidentified Singhania and confirming that the video has been removed. He also urged viewers to stop contacting Singhania and to delete any saved copies of the footage. The streamer described the episode as a mistake and said his team would place greater emphasis on verification in the future.

For Singhania, however, the damage has already been done. He has retained a defamation lawyer and is preparing to file a multi million dollar lawsuit, arguing that the false accusation caused lasting harm to his reputation and wellbeing.

The incident has renewed concerns about livestreamed vigilante operations, particularly when accusations are made without verification. Law enforcement officials have



previously warned that such stings can interfere with investigations and create safety risks. Legal experts have also cautioned that public

confrontations by private individuals may undermine due process and expose innocent people to serious harm.

Pulitzer Prize Winners

Contd. from P1



the lead investigator on a major probe into cyber fraud networks and Anand bringing the story to life through visual storytelling. The award was presented to a collaborative team from Bloomberg for their project 'trAPPed,' which also included journalist Natalie Obiko Pearson. The work combined deep investigative reporting with graphic narrative techniques to expose the inner workings of sophisticated cybercrime operations across South Asia.

At the center of the investigation was the case of Ruchira Tandon, a neurologist based in Lucknow, who was subjected to a six day psychological ordeal by scammers impersonating officials. During what was effectively a forced "house arrest," the perpetrators used constant surveillance and intimidation to extract Rs 2.8 crore from her bank accounts.

The Pulitzer Board, based at Columbia University, praised the project for illuminating the growing global threat posed by digital scams and advanced surveillance tactics, calling it a definitive examination of how technology is being weaponized to manipulate victims.

Sharma, a freelance investigative reporter with more than three decades of experience, led the reporting efforts behind the probe. Her body of work spans coverage of crime, conflict, corruption and institutional failures.

Among her recent investigations is a 2023 report for Al Jazeera that uncovered negligence and profiteering in India's elder care sector following the deaths of two seniors in a Delhi facility.

She has also reported extensively on sensitive issues including allegations of sexual harassment raised by India's top women wrestlers against a senior official, as well as the role of political consultancies in influencing voters. Her work has appeared in multiple international outlets, including BBC Africa and The Indian Express, and she has held senior editorial roles across several newsrooms in India.

Anand RK, a Mumbai based illustrator and graduate of the Sir JJ School of Art, played a key role in translating the investigation into a compelling visual format. He previously won the Eisner Award in 2021 for Best Painter Multimedia Artist for the graphic novel 'Blue in Green,' created with colorist John Pearson. His portfolio spans major comic publishers and global clients, reflecting a diverse body of work across visual media.

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Kiran Mazumdar Shaw Solidifies Biocon Legacy With US Family

BOSTON, MA – Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, founder of biopharmaceutical company Biocon, has named her niece Claire Mazumdar as her successor, outlining a formal succession plan for the company, according to a report published on May 5.

The 73-year-old entrepreneur said she sees Claire Mazumdar, 37, as the right person to lead Biocon into its next phase of growth. “I am the sole owner of Biocon, and I need to make sure that I put it in good hands. I have seen my niece Claire as my successor because I think she has proved to me that she can run a company,” she said.

Claire is the founder and CEO of Boston based Bicara Therapeutics, a Nasdaq-listed company incubated by Biocon. Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, who has no children, also said a broader family ecosystem could help support the company’s future growth.

She referred to Claire Mazumdar’s brother, Eric Mazumdar, a professor at the California Institute of Technology and an artificial intelligence expert, as well as Claire’s husband



Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw (L) named her niece Claire Mazumdar as her successor.

Thomas Roberts, an oncologist at Massachusetts General Hospital.

As part of a wider organizational overhaul, Biocon has merged its generics and biologics businesses, simplified its structure, and reduced debt, the report said. The company is sharpening its focus on biosimilars, which contribute a significant share of revenue, with

several products already in the market and more in the pipeline, Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw said.

Claire Mazumdar holds a degree in Biological Engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, an MBA from Stanford Graduate School of Business, and a PhD in Cancer Biology from Stanford School of Medicine. (IANS)

Air India Trims North American Flights Amid Rising Costs

India-West News Desk

NEW YORK, NY – Air India is scaling back a significant portion of its long-haul operations to North America through July 2026, as rising fuel costs and extended flight paths continue to erode profitability on transcontinental routes.

In a message to employees, Chief Executive Officer Campbell Wilson said the airline had already trimmed some services in April and May, but worsening operating conditions have forced deeper cuts in the months ahead. He pointed to a sharp increase in aviation fuel prices and longer flight durations as key pressures, particularly affecting routes connecting India with the United States and Canada.

The reductions are part of a broader pullback impacting around 100 international services, with several North America routes among the most affected due to their distance and higher operating

costs. Flights linking major Indian cities with destinations such as New York, San Francisco, Toronto, and Vancouver have become increasingly expensive to operate under current conditions.

Air India said the challenges stem from a combination of volatile global oil markets and ongoing geopolitical restrictions. Aviation turbine fuel prices have surged amid uncertainty over supply routes, including concerns surrounding the Strait of Hormuz, a critical transit corridor.

At the same time, restricted access to parts of West Asian airspace has forced airlines to take longer alternate routes. For North America-bound flights, these detours can add significant flying time, increasing fuel burn, crew duty hours, and overall operating expenses.

Wilson noted that these compounded pressures have made several long-haul routes financially unsustainable in the short term.

Khan Academy Has A Low Cost AI College Plan

India-West News Desk

VANCOUVER – As artificial intelligence reshapes the future of work, Sal Khan is moving to redefine higher education with a new, lower-cost pathway aimed at preparing students for an AI-driven economy.

Khan has announced plans to launch the Khan TED Institute, a fully online college created through a partnership between Khan Academy, TED, and the Educational Testing Service. The initiative will initially offer a Bachelor of Science degree in applied artificial intelligence, with tuition expected to come in under 10,000 dollars, a fraction of traditional university costs.

The project, unveiled during the TED2026 conference, reflects Khan’s long standing ambition to build an alternative to conventional college systems. He said the idea gained momentum after discussions with TED head Chris Anderson about combining their organizations’ strengths in education and lifelong learning.

Khan’s plan centers on creating a program that blends academic fundamentals with practical AI skills and what he describes as essential human abilities. The curriculum, still under development, will focus on three pillars: core subjects such as math, science, history and writing, hands on expertise in applied AI, and strong communication and collaboration skills.

“Our goal is to prepare students for the next generation of jobs,” Khan said, emphasizing that rapid advances in artificial intelligence are already transforming white



collar careers and creating demand for new skill sets.

The institute will rely heavily on digital learning tools, including interactive lessons, simulations and live video instruction, building on Khan Academy’s existing global platform. Founded nearly two decades ago, Khan Academy now serves millions of learners worldwide with free educational content.

Khan said the program is designed to be flexible, allowing students to complete their degree in as little as three years depending on prior experience. Applications are expected to open within 12 to 18 months, pending accreditation approval in the United States.

The effort has also drawn interest from major employers, including Google, Microsoft, Accenture, McKinsey & Company, Bain & Company, and Replit, which are expected to help shape how graduates are evaluated for real world roles.

If successful, the Khan TED Institute could mark a significant shift in how students access college education, offering a scalable and affordable model built for an AI driven future.

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PERSONAL PROFILE

An experienced CPA and a Chartered Accountant. I have worked with many big 100 Fortune Companies in diversified industries at various management levels. I have extensive experience in Tax Filings and Tax related matters and practicing in Los Angeles and S.F. Valley since 2006.

FIELD OF EXPERTISE

1. Tax Return preparation and Tax planning for:-

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- Others.

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- Quarterly/Yearly Payroll Tax returns.

4. Management Services & other Services :-

- Financial management and planning.
- Inventory control and management.
- Formation of Partnerships and Corporations.
- Other advisory services.

All-New 2027 Kia Telluride Hybrid Debuts With X-Pro Off-Road Model

The all-new 2027 Kia Telluride arrived with its first-ever available hybrid powertrain and expanded X-Pro capability, marking the next chapter for Kia's flagship three-row SUV. Designed, engineered and equipped specifically for U.S. consumers, the second-gen Telluride is confident in stance and more refined in execution, building on the presence that helped define the nameplate.

With greater overall length, more cargo space and interior roominess, along with a sanctuary-like cabin outfitted with features and materials typically found in luxury SUVs, the second-generation Telluride arrives standard with a turbocharged powertrain or available turbocharged hybrid powertrain with up to 329 horsepower and an EPA-estimated 35 MPG combined 1 on the EX FWD trim.

The gasoline-powered 2027 Telluride is available now in LX, S, EX, SX, SX-Prestige, X-Line and X-Pro trims. Pricing starts at \$39,190 MSRP¹¹ for the LX and ranges up to \$56,790 MSRP¹¹ for the X-Pro SX-Prestige.

The 2027 Telluride Turbo Hybrid will begin arriving in showrooms this month and will be offered in EX, SX, SX-Prestige and X-Line trims. Pricing starts at \$46,490 MSRP¹¹ for the EX and tops out at \$57,590 MSRP¹¹ for the X-Line SX-Prestige.

Exterior Design: Precision in Motion

The Telluride's chiseled exterior design captures the spirit of the Rocky Mountains and its namesake Colorado town. A broad hood establishes a powerful stance, while vertical headlamps frame the high-gloss grille. Advanced lighting signatures create a high-tech, futuristic impression. Fluid body contours lend an elegant shape to the side profile, while aggressively defined triangular creases in the fenders resemble the chiseled facets of a diamond. Upward-flowing character lines give the impression of lifting the vehicle, while sculpted notches in the wheel wells are a smart and deliberate interruption. Flush door handles, as offered on the Kia EV9, lend to a clean and modern appearance. Such details contribute to a reduction in drag coefficient from 0.33 to 0.30 on non-X-Pro models.

Telluride X-Line and X-Pro variants wear blacked-out wheel arches, side mirrors, beltline trim, and D-pillars. Raised roof rails¹² reinforce an adventurous profile and are ready to carry the gear that takes you off the grid. Up front, a bold mesh-type grille is paired with a squared-off lower black bumper. The X-Pro comes standard with wider all-terrain tires, an upgraded suspension system, and increased 9.1 inches of ground clearance, while the X-Line boasts unique 21-inch wheels.

Interior Design: A Dreamer's Sanctuary

Inside the Telluride's cabin, opposites unite in a space that is both expansive and intimate; modern and yet harmonized with nature. The dash, instrumentation, and infotainment have a curved, wrap-around design. Wood-based textures add warmth, and hidden door handles tucked into the armrests blend function into form. Meanwhile, a grip handle on the front-center console (a nod to a signature interior element from the first generation Telluride) imbues the cabin with a sense of stability and rugged functionality. Durable SynTex upholstery with available SynTex suede inserts boost visual appeal. Available indirect LED ambient cabin lighting hues add a touch of aesthetic refinement more commonly found in luxury vehicles. In pursuit of a hushed cabin experience, the Telluride features a new available comprehensive Noise Vibration and Harshness (NVH) package. This includes enhanced triple door seals, expanded use of sound absorbing materials, and increased door glass thickness.

The all-new Telluride treats occupants to greater comfort, including available front relaxation seats⁶ with power leg rests. The available Ergo Motion driver's seat uses air pockets to provide a massage, adjust cushioning, and support the driver. Also new is the available memory-enabled power tilt-and-telescoping steering wheel. Dual standard wireless charging pads offer convenient charging for both front occupants.

For second-row passengers, newly available power-operated captain's seats with individual heated⁶ and ventilated seat functions provide first-class accommodations. The available heated third-row seats⁶ offer a new level of comfort to rear-seat occupants, while in the second row, an available two-tier sliding tray opens to reveal a functional storage compartment. Multiple USB-C fast-charging ports around the cabin make it easy for occupants to plug in devices in all three rows.

The 2027 Telluride boasts a 116.9-inch wheelbase, and 199.2-inch overall length (an increase of 2.7 and 2.3 inches, respectively). This translates into greater legroom comfort in the second and third rows. A new second-row slide and tilt seat design is intended to allow a variety of child seats to remain in place while accessing the third row. It also slides further forward than before, allowing for more room to access the third row¹³. The increased vehicle length allows for more cargo space¹⁴ behind the third row and contributes to an overall maximum cargo area of 89.3 cubic feet¹⁵ (88.3 cu ft in Turbo-Hybrid). With the second row upright, there is 48.7 cubic feet¹⁵ (47.7 cu ft in Turbo-Hybrid) of cargo space. With all seats upright, there is 22.3 cubic feet¹⁵ of cargo

space (21.3 cu ft in Turbo-Hybrid) behind the third-row seats. Cargo area features behind the third row include a standard folding luggage table with integrated cupholders, as well as a lower storage area with movable and removable dividers for flexible storage solutions.¹⁶

Telluride Technology: Connected to Your World

At the heart of the Telluride's dash is an infotainment system that is as intuitive as it is pleasing to the eyes. The innovative Connected Car Navigation Cockpit (ccNC) operating system spans more than half of the dash and is available with dual 12.3-inch panoramic digital displays¹⁷. The ccNC operating system features over-the-air¹⁸ update capability, enabling vehicle software updates, enhancing onboard systems including info-screens and navigation. Wireless Apple CarPlay¹⁹ and Android Auto²⁰ are standard across all trims. Furthermore, Kia's generative AI voice assistant²¹ allows for a more natural conversation, including the ability to ask for suggestions, or even play some voice games on the go. This can all be initiated simply by saying, "Hey, Kia...". For audiophiles, the available Meridian²² premium stereo system benefits from two additional speakers for a total of 14 as well as a larger 10-inch subwoofer. The enhanced ultrawideband-based Digital Key 2.0²³ allows customers to use their compatible Apple and Samsung smartphones or an NFC-enabled smart card as virtual vehicle keys to lock, unlock, and start the vehicle. These keys can be shared with up to three friends and family on compatible devices, including an Apple Watch¹⁹.

The Telluride SXP models also come equipped with an enhanced Full Display Digital Rear View Mirror²⁴, providing a wide, unobstructed field of view for the driver. The larger 12-inch head-up display (HUD)²⁵ projects key vehicle information, including speed, turn-by-turn navigation, and safety alerts directly on to the windshield.

True connectivity defines the 2027 Telluride, with available Entertainment and Data Services⁹, which supports streaming for Disney+, Netflix, and YouTube. Additionally, available display themes¹⁰ allow the driver to express themselves with exclusive artwork from some of Disney's[©] most iconic brands, which will be introduced throughout 2026. Display themes are also available for all 30 NBA teams. Getting home is more convenient thanks to Kia myQ Connected Garage²⁶. Using geo-fencing, the system can detect your vehicle's proximity and automatically opens or closes the garage door as you approach or leave home. Experience all the new ways to stay connected and entertained with these upcoming features and more, all available in the Kia Connect Store.

Telluride Powertrain: The Power of Choice

Whether you are an urban explorer, an outdoors enthusiast, or just want to conquer the commute, the Telluride delivers. The 2.5-liter turbo and 2.5-liter turbo hybrid powertrains are both enhanced for a wide range of conditions, delivering lively power, and the capability for towing toys on a weekend adventure. The Telluride 2.5-liter turbo develops 274 horsepower and 311 lb.-ft. of torque. This is a stout increase of 49 lb.-ft. over the previous ICE powertrain. Power is routed through an eight-speed automatic transmission to the front wheels or an available all-wheel drive³ system. Standard on X-Pro and available on all other trims, the integrated tow hitch blends into the rear bumper and can be hidden from view when not in use. When equipped, the turbo powertrain delivers up to 5,000 pounds of towing²⁷ capacity while the Turbo-Hybrid can tow up to 4,500 pounds²⁵, and the available self-leveling rear suspension system helps to deliver confidence while towing.

Telluride models equipped with all-wheel drive provide active distribution of torque to help improve off-road traction in a variety of circumstances. X-Pro all-wheel-drive models with the Electronic Limited Slip Differential (E-LSD) takes confident control a step further by being able to calculate certain driving conditions and control the AWD to modulate power from front to rear and from left to right. A center differential lock maintains an even 50/50 front/rear torque split.

The turbo hybrid powertrain ushers in a new era for the Telluride, providing confident performance and acceleration, with a rating of an EPA-estimated 35 mpg¹ combined and a total driving range of 637 miles² (Turbo Hybrid EX FWD only).

The Telluride hybrid combines the 2.5-liter turbo powertrain with a 1.65-kWh lithium-ion battery and electric motors to make a combined 329 horsepower and 339 lb.-ft. of torque. That's up to a 38-hp increase over the powerplant in the previous Telluride (291 hp) and 77 lb.-ft. more torque (262 lb.-ft.).

The Turbo-hybrid routes power through a 6-speed automatic transmission, sent to an available all-wheel drive system³. The hybrid is standard with Electrification – Vehicle Motion Control (e-VMC), with the system designed to help the driver achieve improved handling and stability by leveraging braking and motor control. The result is sophisticated power delivery and handling dynamics in a smooth, quiet ride.

The Telluride Hybrid also features Stay Mode. Stay Mode leverages the Telluride hybrid's battery pack to operate climate control,



cabin lighting, stereo, and other vehicle systems for up to an hour²⁸ or until the Hybrid battery is drained to about 20 percent without activating the internal combustion engine.

Regardless of powertrain, the Telluride is available with a power tilt/telescopic steering wheel with memory, and comes standard with Rack Mounted Motor Driven Power Steering (R-MDPS), replacing the column-mounted system found in the previous generation. R-MDPS offers improved feedback and responds more quickly to driver inputs. Precision is also enhanced, providing improved handling through corners and better high-speed stability.

Adventure-Ready X-Pro: Equipped to Explore

The Telluride X-Pro is designed for rugged excursions without compromising the dependable attributes that make it a stellar family vehicle the rest of the year. The Telluride X-Pro adds an exclusive suspension with additional travel stroke, e-LSD, and an impressive 9.1-inches of ground clearance, as well as multiple Drive Modes, including Terrain Mode. This rugged halo variant of the Telluride features front and rear recovery points²⁹, and all-terrain tires, giving enthusiasts the critical power delivery and increased traction that they need while getting away from it all.

It also delivers the technology they need to help master the trails, thanks to the introduction of the Ground View Monitor⁴. This system displays a composite view of the ground when driving below 6 mph. It uses onboard cameras and can be selected from the new off-road vehicle status screen accessed through the infotainment system. Among other important information, the screen illustrates pitch, roll and steering angle. Lastly, exclusive to the X-Pro, Ground Lighting on the front, side and rear areas surrounding the Telluride help illuminate your family's outdoor adventures.

Telluride ADAS: Confidence and Added Peace of Mind

The all-new 2027 Telluride is equipped with a robust roster of Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS)³⁰, including newly added standard Hands on Detection (HoD), Lane Following Assist 2 and In-Cabin Camera. Parking Distance Warning-Forward is now also standard, along with Parking Distance Warning-Reverse.

Available Highway Driving Assist 2³¹ is a driver convenience system that is designed to help maintain a predetermined distance from the vehicle detected in front, keep the vehicle within detected lane markers on certain highways, and assist in lane changes under certain conditions. Standard Lane Following Assist is a driving convenience feature that is designed to help the vehicle stay in the center of detected lane markers.

Other helpful ADAS features include Blind-Spot Collision Warning and available Blind-Spot View Monitor, which are designed to help detect vehicles approaching from behind in the next lane and, in a variety of circumstances, applying brakes to help mitigate some collisions while making lane changes.

The Telluride comes standard with a Rear Occupant Alert System³², which goes beyond a mere reminder. This system uses in-cabin radar motion sensors to detect the presence of occupants in the second and third rows. When the vehicle is parked and turned off, an initial visual reminder is issued to the driver. If the reminder does not yield a response, a secondary alert—both audible and visual—is activated to further prompt the driver. Finally, the feature can send a push notification to a compatible smartphone with the Kia Access app installed. Safe Exit Warning and Safe Exit Assist³³ is designed to provide alerts to occupants if another vehicle is approaching when exiting the vehicle.

Among its 10 standard airbags, the redesigned Telluride now comes equipped with a front-row center airbag. Located between the driver and front passenger, this new additional airbag is intended to reduce front-passenger impacts in certain collisions.

Kia America – about us

Headquartered in Irvine, California, Kia America continues to top automotive quality surveys. Kia is recognized as one of the TIME World's Most Sustainable Companies of 2025. Kia serves as the "Official Automotive Partner"; of the NBA and WNBA and offers a range of gasoline, hybrid, plug-in hybrid, and electric vehicles sold through a network of nearly 800 dealers in the U.S., including several SUVs proudly assembled in America*.

For media information, including photography, visit www.kiamedia.com. To receive custom email notifications for press releases the moment they are published, subscribe at www.kiamedia.com/us/en/newsalert

*Select trims of the 2025 all-electric EV6 and EV9 all-electric three-row SUV, Sportage (excludes Hybrid and Plug-in Hybrid models), Sorento (excludes Hybrid and Plug-in Hybrid models), and Telluride are assembled in the United States from U.S. and globally sourced parts.

CRIME

Ex-iLearningEngines CEO, CFO Arrested In Multi-Year Revenue Fraud Scheme

India-West News Desk

SAN JOSE, CA – Former iLearningEngines Inc. chief executive Puthugramam “Harish” Chidambaram and former chief financial officer Sayyed Farhan Ali Naqvi have been charged in connection with an alleged years-long scheme to mislead investors and lenders through fabricated revenue, sham customer contracts and false financial statements.

The Department of Justice said that the defendants “exploited investor excitement over the AI boom and presented a rosy financial outlook to investors and lenders that was built on lies.” He added that “the truly artificial part of the defendants’ story was iLearning’s customers and revenues.”

Chidambaram, 57, was arrested in Potomac, Maryland, while Naqvi, 44, was arrested in San Jose, California. Both are expected to appear later in federal court in New York.

According to prosecutors, iLearningEngines created an extensive network of purported customers linked to employees, associates and relatives. Some contracts were allegedly signed by individuals posing as executives of outside companies, while fake websites and other records were created to make the

relationships appear legitimate.

Prosecutors also allege that investor and loan funds were routed through outside accounts and later sent back to the company, allowing the money to be recorded as revenue. Authorities said the value of those transactions exceeded \$144 million.

Founded in 2010 and based in Bethesda, Maryland, iLearningEngines marketed artificial intelligence-driven automation tools for businesses. The company went public in April 2024 and began trading on Nasdaq under the ticker AILE. It later reached an approximate market value of \$1.5 billion.

According to the indictment, the company also secured \$60 million in loans around the time of its public listing.

The company came under scrutiny in August 2024 after an investment research report questioned its reported revenue and cited undisclosed related-party transactions. Its stock price then



iLearningEngines went public in April 2024. Photo: Nasdaq

fell sharply.

iLearningEngines filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in December 2024. The case was later converted to a Chapter 7 liquidation in 2025.

Before the company’s collapse, prosecutors said Chidambaram received more than \$500 million worth of company stock and additional restricted stock units valued at about \$12.5 million. Naqvi allegedly received stock worth about \$11.2 million, while the company also paid nearly \$4.5 million in cash to cover his tax liabilities.

The indictment includes charges of securities fraud, wire fraud and operating a continuing financial crimes enterprise. If convicted on the most serious charge, the defendants face a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years in prison and a maximum sentence of life.

Man Held Without Bail For Murder Of Arti Varma



Sergio Meza Fraire appears at the Pasadena Courthouse for his arraignment.

Contd. from P1

Meera has worked on mental health and suicide prevention initiatives associated with former President Joe Biden, former Vice President Kamala Harris, and media personality Oprah Winfrey.

Family friend Victor Goli described to KABC the difficult task of informing Arti’s husband, who was in India at the time of the attack.

“He couldn’t even speak. He was hysterical. He was crying,” Goli told the station.

Friends and neighbors remem-

bered Arti as a devoted educator who enjoyed celebrating Indian festivals, including Diwali. During a 2023 TEDx talk, Meera recalled her mother supporting her through her mental health struggles, quoting Arti as saying, “I love you. I’m not going anywhere. I’m here.”

Burbank Police said investigators determined the attack was not random and was not connected to a burglary, though a motive remains under investigation. Authorities said the relationship between Fraire and the victims remains under investigation.

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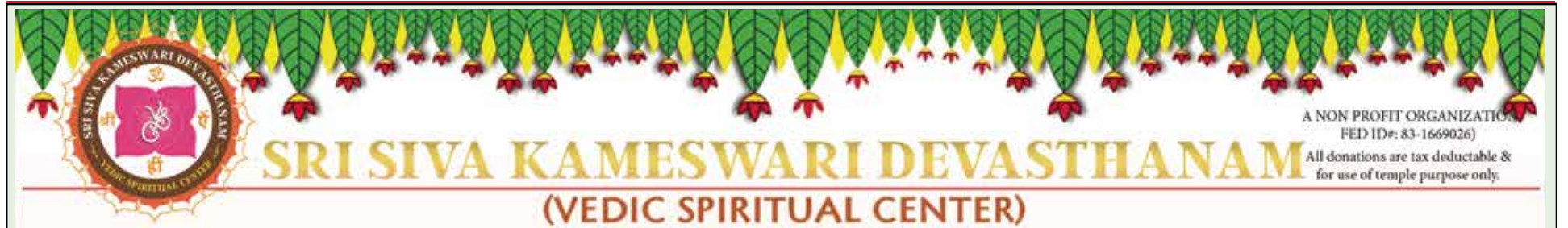
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MAY 2026 - UPCOMING PROGRAMS

DATE	POOJA/EVENT & DESCRIPTION	CATEGORY	TIME
May 16th - Saturday	Guru Gajanan Maharaj Monthly Satsang – Puja & Archana	Puja	11:30 AM
May 16th - Saturday	Nama Sankeertana	Puja, Bhajans	6:30 PM
May 17th - Sunday	Mahanyasa Purvaka Ekadasha Laghu Rudrabhishekam	Abhishekam	7:00 AM
May 20th - Wednesday	Punarvasu Rama Parivara Abhishekam	Abhishekam	5:00 PM
May 21st - Thursday	Skanda Sashti - Subramanya Abhishekam	Abhishekam	6:30 PM
May 26th - Tuesday	Samoochika Satyanarayana Vratam	Puja	7:00 PM
May 28th - Thursday	Pradosha Siva Abhishekam	Abhishekam	6:00 PM
May 30th - Saturday	Annamayya Pada Galarchana and Venkateswara Abhishekam	Abhishekam	10:00 AM
May 30th - Saturday	Sri Chakra Navavarana Puja & Jyeshtha Adhika Purnima Founding family monthly sankalpam	Puja	5:00 PM
May 30th - Saturday	Vasavi Kanyaka Parameswari Abhishekam	Abhishekam	5:30 PM


JUNE 2026 - UPCOMING PROGRAMS

June 3rd - Wednesday	Sankata Hara Chaturthi Ganesha Abhishekam	Abhishekam	6:00 PM
June 6th - Saturday	Ashtadala Pada Padmārādhana Seva	-	11:30 AM
June 13th - Saturday	Durga Maata ki chowki	-	6:30 PM
June 16th - Tuesday	Punarvasu Rama Parivara Abhishekam	Abhishekam	5:00 PM
June 19th - Friday	Masa Skanda Sashti	-	7:00 PM
June 20th - Saturday	Guru Gajanan Maharaj Monthly Satsang – Puja & Archana	Puja	11:30 AM
June 20th - Saturday	Ayyappa padipuja	Puja	6:30 PM
June 21st - Sunday	Mahanyasa Purvaka Ekadasha Laghu Rudrabhishekam	Abhishekam	7:00 AM
June 26th - Friday	Pradosha Siva Puja	Puja	6:00 PM



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Every Thursday	Shiridi Sai Baba Abhishekam	7:00 PM	Every Sunday	Satsang Bhajan Keertan	10:30 AM
Every Thursday	Guru Gajanan Maharaj abhishekam	7:00 PM	Every Sunday	Vallabha Ganapati abhishekam	10:30 AM
Every Friday	Siva Kameswari Abhishekam	7:00 PM	Every Sunday	Rahu Kalabhishekam	6:00 PM

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IMMIGRATION

International Students Could Face New Time Cap On Stay In US

WASHINGTON, DC -The White House is reviewing a proposal that could impose fixed time limits on international students staying in the United States on F-1 and J-1 visas.

The proposed regulation would replace the current “duration of status” system, which allows foreign students to remain in the country as long as they are enrolled full-time and comply with visa requirements. Under the new plan, most F-1 visa holders would face a four-year stay limit before being required to renew their status through the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

The latest review comes amid continuing uncertainty for international students in the US following visa interview delays and reports that thousands of students were affected by legal status issues in recent months.

According to the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, international student enrollment at US universities declined last autumn for the first time in three years.

The rule, identified as RIN: 1653-AA95, was submitted on May



5 to the Office of Management and Budget’s Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, marking one of the final steps before potential publication.

The proposal revives a policy first introduced during President Donald Trump’s earlier administration. At the time, universities and healthcare organizations opposed the measure, arguing that fixed stay periods could create administrative burdens and disrupt academic and research programs.

Trump Admin Quietly Reverses Immigration Freeze For Foreign Doctors

WASHINGTON, DC – The Trump administration is easing

of applicants, including medical professionals, in limbo.

The restrictions originated from a presidential proclamation issued on December 16, 2025, which took effect January 1, 2026. It expanded an earlier June 2025 order that had already limited entry from 19 countries. While individuals already in the United States were not immediately barred from staying, many awaiting renewals or status adjustments saw their applications stall indefinitely.

Now, in a notable but low profile reversal, USCIS has updated its guidance to clarify that physicians will no longer be subject to the processing freeze. The change effectively restores a pathway for foreign doctors to obtain or renew visas needed to work in American hospitals and clinics.

The adjustment comes amid concern from the medical community

about the impact of the restrictions on an already strained healthcare system. Internationally trained physicians represent a significant portion of the U.S. workforce, particularly in underserved areas.

According to a report cited by Newsweek, medical groups warned that nearly a quarter of licensed physicians in the United States received their training abroad. In an April 8 letter signed by more than 20 organizations representing specialties including family medicine, neurology and pediatrics, advocates stressed the critical role these doctors play in maintaining access to care.

The letter noted that 64 percent of foreign trained physicians practice in underserved regions or areas facing acute doctor shortages. It also highlighted that nearly 21 million Americans live in communities where such physicians make up at least half of the medical workforce.

part of its own far reaching immigration crackdown, quietly allowing foreign trained doctors to resume visa processing after months of uncertainty triggered by a broader policy freeze.

The shift follows a Department of Homeland Security move to adjust guidance tied to a sweeping travel restriction introduced earlier this year. That measure had effectively paused decisions on visa extensions, work permits and green cards for nationals from 39 countries, leaving thousands

Trump’s Gold Card Struggles To Gain Traction

India-West News Desk

WASHINGTON, DC – 338 people have filed requests for President Donald Trump’s so-called “Gold Card” visa, and only 165 have gone on to pay the \$15,000 processing fee, according to a Department of Homeland Security court filing, underscoring a muted response to a program pitched as a magnet for the world’s ultra-wealthy.

The tepid uptake stands in sharp contrast to earlier claims by Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick, who had projected the initiative would generate more than \$100 billion by issuing 80,000 visas. Lutnick also asserted in March that 1,000 Gold Cards had already been distributed at \$5 million apiece even before the program formally launched.

Yet attorneys advising high-net-worth clients are urging caution or outright rejecting the offering, citing legal and financial risks, according to reporting by The Washington Post, which is owned by Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, who has been donating, like most corporations, generously to Trump’s causes.

Seven lawyers who represent the program’s target clientele told the newspaper they are steering applicants away due to ongoing litigation, tax exposure concerns, and the absence of congressional authorization for the visa. The Washington Post reported that the lack of statutory backing means the program could be reversed at any time, a key deterrent for prospective applicants.

Some of the skepticism is coming from figures with ties to Trump’s

own circle. Immigration attorney Michael Wildes, who has represented First Lady Melania Trump, told The Washington Post that he would decline clients seeking the visa, calling it ethically question-



able given the uncertainty surrounding its legality.

Others echoed similar concerns. Rosanna Berardi, another immigration lawyer, said recommending such a program would expose clients to significant financial risk without clear legal footing. Meanwhile, attorney Mona Shah said she has clients moving forward despite warnings the visa could amount to “false advertising,” with applicants willing to risk losing substantial sums, The Washington Post reported.

The Gold Card, introduced by Trump in June and later formalized through an executive order, has not been codified by Congress. According to the DHS filing, applicants would not bypass existing employment-based visa categories such as EB-1 or EB-2, further limiting its appeal.

Lutnick has maintained that at least one individual has received a Gold Card, though details remain unclear. Speculation briefly swirled around Nicki Minaj, but a White House official told The Washington Post that any such card linked to her was merely a “memento,” not an actual visa.

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CALIFORNIA ELECTIONS

Arithmetic Is Not A Hate Crime: UC Berkeley Prof Enters CA Governor's Race

India-West News Desk

LOS ANGELES, CA – Democratic candidate Satish Rao is positioning his campaign around education reform, government efficiency, and what he calls a return to practical, results-driven policymaking, arguing that California must focus on fundamentals while cutting through entrenched bureaucracy.

Rao criticized the state's political culture, saying outcomes are too often shaped by "tribalism, power, and narrow incentives" rather than evidence-based solutions. He pointed to education as a primary example of systemic failure.

He also took aim at what he described as overcomplication in curriculum and instruction. "In California, basics are treated like villains and complexity like virtue," Rao said, citing "a thousand-page, state-approved physics book that's great for strong backs and publisher margins, but essentially unread."

Drawing on his experience as a professor at the University of California, Berkeley, Rao highlighted what he sees as inefficiencies in higher education. "At UC Berkeley—where I work—non-academic staff compensation alone runs north



of \$30,000 per student," he said. "That's before you pay a single instructor, professor, TA, tutor, reader, lab assistant, or researcher."

He argued that such spending patterns reflect deeper institutional issues. "The people who oversaw failure still control the institutions. That's not a conspiracy; it's bureaucracy," Rao said, adding that "power concentrates in administration, and budgets follow power."

Rao's campaign message is rooted in his personal story. Born overseas, he moved to the United States at age two and grew up in a small Texas town, where he began working early, selling newspaper

subscriptions door-to-door before eventually managing his own route. His family later moved to the Seattle area, where he held a series of jobs, including restaurant work and lifeguarding, while completing high school.

After attending college in the Boston area, Rao began his career in technology, including writing assembly code for Microsoft, before transitioning into academia. For more than two decades, he has taught large courses in subjects such as artificial intelligence, probability, and discrete mathematics, while also participating in education policy and local school governance.

Israni Is Financial Frontrunner With \$2M Fundraising Surge



India-West News Desk

FREMONT, CA – Rakhi Israni has established a commanding lead in the race for California's 14th Congressional District, reporting a fundraising haul of over \$2 million in ten weeks. The total outpaces the rest of the candidate field combined for the East Bay's open seat.

The early financial dominance is fueled by hundreds of individual donors, including many first-time contributors, the campaign said also stressing that Israni has refused money from corporate PACs and special interest groups.

Israni, a Fremont-based attorney and entrepreneur, attributed the fundraising success to a growing frustration with the current political climate. She noted that

families in the East Bay are facing increased pressure from rising costs, which she linked to federal trade policies and threats to healthcare access.

A daughter of immigrants, Israni built an education company that employs hundreds before entering the political arena. She remains active in the Fremont community, where she lives with her husband and four children.

Israni's platform focuses on defending democratic values and opposing extremist political attacks. Her policy priorities include fighting tariffs that drive up consumer costs, protecting healthcare, and enacting structural reforms such as term limits and a permanent ban on corporate PAC money in elections.

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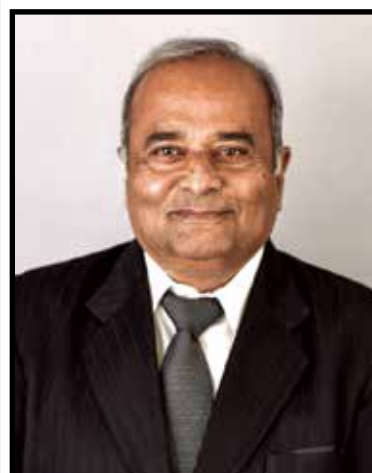
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At USC, Jay Bhattacharya Narrates Personal Struggles

India-West News Desk

LOS ANGELES, CA – Speaking to a crowded hall at the University of Southern California here, National Institutes of Health Director Jay Bhattacharya detailed the severe personal consequences he faced for challenging the medical establishment during the COVID-19 pandemic. Bhattacharya described a period of intense isolation, claiming that his opposition to lockdowns and mask mandates led him to believe his academic career was effectively over.

The physical and mental toll of this period was significant; Bhat-

tacharya noted that the stress left him unable to eat or sleep, resulting in a 30-pound weight loss. He framed his decision to continue speaking publicly as a necessary sacrifice to ensure that policy debates remained grounded in data rather than political pressure.

His appearance at the USC Open Dialogue Project on April 9 served as a broader “pitch for freedom” at a critical juncture for American civil discourse. While the Trump administration has been characterized by critics as conducting a sustained attack on institutional norms and intellectual independence, Bhattacharya argued that the true

threat to academic freedom often comes from within. He urged universities to reclaim their roles as sanctuaries for open debate and intellectual diversity, regardless of the political climate in Washington.

“I don’t see any way through but to be brave,” Bhattacharya told the audience at Wallis Annenberg Hall, USC Today reported. “You have to allow conversations



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to happen that people don’t want to have happen.” In conversation with Neeraj Sood, director of the Open Dialogue Project, Bhattacharya suggested that the health of academic discourse depends on a culture that tolerates disagreement. He pointed to a “small number of very, very intolerant faculty” who he believes have created an environment where scholars fear being ostracized for representing ideas that are unpopular with their colleagues.

The event, introduced by USC Provost Andrew T. Guzman, was part of an initiative launched by USC President Beong-Soo Kim to promote civil discourse.

Trump Expands Focus On IVF

WASHINGTON, DC – President Donald Trump on May 11 announced a new fertility benefit option for employers and launched a maternal healthcare initiative aimed at expanding access to IVF treatment, childcare support, and rural maternal care across the US.

Speaking at a White House event, Trump said the US Department of Labor would formally create a fertility benefit option that employers could offer outside traditional health insurance plans.

Trump said the initiative was intended to help American families facing high fertility treatment costs and broader maternal healthcare challenges. The US President credited Republican Senator Katie Britt of Alabama with drawing attention to IVF access following an Alabama court ruling that created uncertainty around fertility treatment. “She said, sir, we have to do something,” Trump said. “And I became the father of fertility.” Trump also announced the launch of Moms.gov, a federal website designed to centralize resources for mothers and families.

According to administration officials, the website will include information related to prenatal and postpartum care, childcare support, and fertility resources.

The administration also highlighted TrumpRx.gov, a prescription drug pricing program that Trump claimed had significantly reduced the cost of fertility medications. Dr Mehmet Oz, administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, said rural maternal healthcare remained a major concern, noting that maternal mortality rates were higher in rural parts of the country. (IANS)

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Nikhil Gupta Pleads Guilty, Retains Top Defense Team To Fight For Lighter Sentence

India-West News Desk

NEW YORK, NY – Attorneys Isabelle A. Kirshner and Brian David Linder of the prominent New York firm Clayman, Rosenberg, Kirshner & Linder LLP have been retained by Nikhil Gupta to lead his defense as he faces sentencing for his role in a foiled murder-for-hire plot.

The case continues to draw intense international scrutiny from both Washington and New Delhi due to allegations that the plot targeted Sikh terrorist and separatist Gurbatwant Singh Pannun, living in the US and amounts to what is being viewed as Indian government interference on US soil.

Gupta was originally charged in a three-count superseding indictment in late 2024, which accused him of coordinating the planned killing with others.

With Gupta having pleaded guilty on February 13, 2026,

to charges of murder-for-hire, conspiracy, and money laundering, his legal team's strategy has shifted entirely toward mitigat-

clude an iPhone 11 Pro Max and a Vivo Y56 5G cellphone, which were originally seized by Czech authorities in 2023 before being



ing a prison term that could reach 40 years. The final judgment, scheduled for May 29 before Judge Victor Marrero, will depend on a complex evaluation of federal offense levels and statutory sentencing factors.

As part of the proceedings, Gupta has agreed to forfeit \$15,000 in cash and two mobile phones to the U.S. government under a consent preliminary order. The forfeited assets in-

transferred to American custody. The \$15,000 in currency was seized by U.S. agents in Manhattan in June 2023.

Court filings also specify that Gupta is "jointly and severally liable" with co-defendant Vikash Yadav for the money judgment. This means Gupta could be held responsible for the full amount of any forfeiture judgment entered against his co-defendant in the case.

India-US Satellite Flags Sinking Of Mexico City

PASADENA, CA – A joint United States-India satellite mission has captured fresh evidence of rapid land subsidence in Mexico City, with parts of the metropolitan region sinking by several centimeters per month, according to new data released by the US space agency NASA and the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO).

The findings, based on early observations from the NISAR (NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar) satellite, underscore both the severity of the capital's long-running subsidence crisis and the growing capability of space-based monitoring systems to track ground movement in near real time, NASA said on April 29.

Mexico City, home to nearly 20 million people, has been sinking for more than a century due to intensive groundwater extraction and the weight of urban development compressing its ancient lakebed foundation. Historical data show that some areas subsided by about 35 centimeters per year in the late 20th century, damaging infrastructure, includ-



ing roads, buildings and the city's extensive Metro system.

The new NISAR data, collected between October 2025 and January 2026, reveal that certain areas are now sinking by more than 2 centimeters per month, NASA said.

One visible indicator of Mexico City's long-term subsidence is the Angel of Independence monument. Built in 1910, the structure has required the addition of 14 steps at its base over time as the surrounding land levels dropped.

The mission represents a major collaboration between the United States and India, with NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory leading the US contribution and ISRO providing key spacecraft components. The satellite was launched in July 2025 from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in India. (IANS)



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Jasmine Sandlas Recalls Family's Poverty After Move To U.S.

India-West News Desk

MUMBAI -Popular singer Jasmine Sandlas recently shared the story of her family's migration from Punjab to the United States, highlighting the stark contrast between her father's professional standing in India and the poverty they faced upon arrival. Speaking on the podcast hosted by Ranveer Allahbadia, the artist detailed how her father traded a high-profile legal career for manual labor to secure her future.

"My father worked in India in a powerful position and he was a law school valedictorian," Sandlas told Allahbadia. She recalled that upon moving to New York when she was in the eighth or ninth grade, the family of six shared a one-bedroom, low-income apartment.

Despite his academic and professional credentials in India, Sandlas's father took a job pumping gas. The singer recounted a specific memory of him sitting in the snow without proper footwear because "snow shoes are very expensive." Meanwhile, her mother worked in factories and picked cherries as a manual laborer to help the family survive on food stamps.



The family's financial situation eventually improved after moving to California, where her father re-entered the legal system as an interpreter. Sandlas noted that she did not speak English when she first arrived and attended local schools while the family navigated their new environment.

The singer, who gained initial fame with her viral track "Sharrat," is currently featured on the 'Dhurandhar 2' soundtrack. Her recent work includes the songs "Jaiye Sajana," "Main Aur Tu," "Aari Aari," and "Rang De Lal (Oye Oye)."

Shreya Ghoshal Captures 'Magic' Of LA's Dolby In New Album

MUMBAI-Five-time National Award-winning playback singer Shreya Ghoshal has spoken about the extensive process of turning her 'All Hearts Tour', which spanned 44 cities, into a live album.

"I think we had such a fantastic journey in this tour because it spanned over a year, and we traveled to every part of the world, almost every possible city which we could have. And we had so much love garnered on the way from the audiences wherever we went and we did some really memorable shows. I will remember them as closer to my heart concerts in terms of the venues, sometimes the audiences, sometimes the setlist, every time it was special. So, we thought that we would just curate all of it and make an album out of it. And it was a hard decision to, you know, which song to put. But we tried to get the best of the recordings from each of these venues," she said.

Recalling some of the venues, she said, "The acoustics and everything, the Dolby Theatre is a very prestigious venue, this year's Academy Awards were held



there. Then the Fox Theatre in Detroit where Lata Ji was the first Indian artist to perform there. And it's so historical. I mean, very beautifully made theatre, very old. So, each of these venues had a lot of memories. So, I thought we should make an album which reminds us of these times, not just for the audience members who attended and who could not and also for the band members and all of us who put in our hard work in that. And I think what we always try to do is do these songs a little differently from how it is

recorded originally".

She added that each arrangement on the tour carried fresh creative elements, added emotions, and evolving nuances that made every performance unique.

"So, if I am singing 'Deewani Mastani' once again, I don't think I will be doing that arrangement ever again. It's just we have moved on from there. So, I thought it was a great way to remember and keep it recorded somewhere", she said.

The 'All Hearts Tour' live album has been released under the Sony Music India label. (IANS)

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NY Returns \$14 Million In Stolen Treasures To India

India-West News Desk

NEW YORK, NY- In a landmark victory for cultural heritage preservation, the Manhattan District Attorney's Office has repatriated a massive cache of 657 antiquities to India. Valued at approximately \$14 million, the returned artifacts represent the culmination of multiple high-profile investigations into international trafficking syndicates.

The handover took place during a formal ceremony at the Consulate General of India in New York. While the event coincided with a period of heightened diplomatic activity, a spokesperson for the prosecutor's office clarified that the restitution had been choreographed months in advance and was independent of any concurrent royal visits.

The bulk of the collection is linked to the dismantled network of Subhash Kapoor, a notorious art dealer currently facing smuggling indictments. Among the most significant pieces recovered is a magnificent red



sandstone Buddha. Looted from Northern India and trafficked into the United States

by Kapoor, the deity is depicted in a standing posture with a raised right hand signifying divine protection.

The restitution also features a delicate bronze sculpture of the Buddhist deity Avalokiteshvara. Seated upon an inscribed double-lotus base and a throne flanked by lions, the piece was stolen and funneled into the American market as early as 1982, eventually surfacing in a private Manhattan collection in 2014. Additionally, authorities returned a sandstone

carving of a dancing Ganesha, which had been spirited out of India by Ranjeet "Shantoo" Kanwar, an alleged co-conspirator in the trafficking ring.

District Attorney Alvin Bragg Jr. emphasized the staggering magnitude of the illicit trade in a statement read at the consulate. He noted that the return of over 600 pieces serves as a sobering reminder of the expansive networks that have systematically targeted Indian heritage.

The Enduring Legacy Of Hamid Daudani And The Desi Stage



India-West News Desk

SAN DIEGO, CA – For thirty-five years, Hamid Daudani has been the quiet architect of Desi theater in San Diego, weaving cultural narratives into the fabric of the local arts scene. On April 18, that journey reached a poignant milestone at the Joan B. Kroc Theatre with the staging of 'Tumne Waada Kiya Tha,' the group's 30th production. It was more than just a play; it was a celebration of a three-and-a-half-decade commitment to storytelling that bridges the gap between heritage and the contemporary immigrant experience.

The production offered a compelling slice of life, inviting a full house to navigate the emotional peaks and valleys of a middle-class family. At the heart of this narrative were Paramita Datta Ghosh and Sachin Chawla, who portrayed Sumi and Shan with a nu-

anced confidence that anchored the evening. Their chemistry provided a steady pulse for the play, allowing the audience to feel the weight of their domestic triumphs and tribulations. This central gravity was lightened by Aarav Bhatia and Divya Bandyopadhyay, whose portrayals of the

couple's children, Asar and Aashi, captured the authentic, often humorous friction of sibling life.

True to the spirit of South Asian performance, the evening was a multisensory affair. Vivid dance sequences punctuated the drama with bursts of color and movement. During scene transitions, the audience was treated to musical interludes; a thoughtful touch that maintained the emotional atmosphere even as the sets changed.

Perhaps the most telling sign of the play's success was the audience's reaction. Cast members noted that viewers occasionally laughed during moments of high tension – not out of derision, but out of the uncomfortable, reflexive recognition of real life.

By mirroring the absurdity and the honesty of the human condition so closely, Daudani's direction tapped into something universal.

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Aziz Ansari On 'SNL' Serves Up A Biting Kash Patel Parody



India-West News Desk

NEW YORK, NY – Aziz Ansari took center stage in a sharply political cold open on Saturday Night Live May 2 episode, debuting a pointed and irreverent impression of Kash Patel that quickly became the highlight of the night.

The sketch, staged as a chaotic press conference, began with Colin Jost portraying on point Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, introducing Patel as someone eager to speak “before he’s almost certainly fired.” From there, Ansari’s exaggerated take on the embattled official drove the segment’s satire.

Addressing a fictionalized security scare tied to the White House Correspondents’ Association dinner and an alleged assassination attempt involving Donald Trump, Ansari’s Patel delivered a deliberately muddled briefing. “Now, after the attempted assassination of President Trump...another one... we conducted an investigation that could not have been more thorough,” he said.

“We dotted every ‘T’ and bulged every eye.”

The character’s absurd confidence escalated as he touted the agency’s progress, joking that it was “only six weeks away from pinpointing the exact location of Osama Bin Laden,” despite the long-resolved historical reality – a line that underscored the sketch’s blend of political commentary and surreal humor.

Ansari’s portrayal leaned heavily into self-deprecating and provocative humor. Declaring himself a “trailblazer,” his Patel quipped he was “the first Indian person to suck at their job,” adding that it proved “we can be just as incapable and incompetent as the whites.” The line drew attention for its biting tone and willingness to satirize both identity and performance in public office.

While the broader sketch touched on multiple political storylines, it was Ansari’s guest appearance that stood out. His performance brought a distinct comedic rhythm to the role, blending sharp timing with exaggerated physicality, including the character’s wide-eyed delivery and erratic bravado.



Shubhangi Shekhar Makes Directorial Debut With Indian Basketball Documentary

India-West News Desk

LOS ANGELES, CA-Filmmaker Shubhangi Shekhar makes her feature directorial debut with ‘Hoop Like This’, a documentary on the world’s first professional Indian basketball team, with Grammy-nominated musician Nav serving as executive producer.

The film features NBA champion Jeremy Lin, ESPN NBA insider Shams Charania, and actor Utkarsh Ambudkar. Also appearing are Sacramento Kings owner Vivek Ranadivé, ESPN SportsCenter anchor Kevin Negandhi, and comedian Nimesh Patel.

The documentary follows the Brown Ballers, a 12-member team assembled to compete in ESPN’s \$1 million tournament, The Basketball Tournament (TBT). The players, drawn from the Indian diaspora, balance professional careers -including medicine, engineering, and business -while competing at a high level.

The film traces the team’s journey from its

debut in 2022 and a loss to defending champions to a global scouting effort across India, Taiwan, Canada, and the United States. It culminates in a 2023 run that includes a first-round victory recorded as the biggest upset in the tournament’s history.

The story also highlights challenges faced by athletes of Indian origin, including restrictions on dual citizenship that have limited eligibility to represent India in international sport. “I realized that our community doesn’t need to look to fiction for heroes,” Shekhar said. “They exist in real life, right in front of us. It’s our responsibility to pay attention and tell their stories.”

Nav said his involvement was driven by representation and personal interest. “I’ve been a big hoops fan since I was a kid and our community has long been underrepresented at a national level,” he said. “Given where I am at now in my career it felt like the perfect time to champion a story like this.”

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'Shape Of Momo,' 'Room At The Farm' Take Top Honors At IFFLA 2026

Contd. from P1
by attendees, went to 'Breaking The Code', directed by Ben Rekhi and Swetlana, for Best Feature, and 'Rihanna', directed by Suraj Paudel, for



Jasmine Kaur Roy Avinash Roy Tribeny Rai

Best Short. In the feature category, Sarmad Sultan Khoosat's 'Lali' and Seemab Gul's 'Ghost School' received honorable mentions. The jury said 'Lali' "surprises us at every turn with its provocative cinematic choices," while describing 'Ghost School' as "a beautifully restrained, artistically precise

debut feature that works both as a powerful political allegory and as piercing social realism."

Among short films, Ananth Subramaniam's 'Bleat!' and Sana Zahra Jafri's 'Permanent Guest' were also recognized. The jury called 'Bleat!' "an absurdist commentary that throws into

question our understanding of religion, gender, and cultural identity with a profoundly original vision," and said 'Permanent Guest' "has crafted immense tension and finds both power and pain in what is left unsaid."

The festival featured 27 films from multiple countries, including India, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, and the United States. It opened with 'Breaking The Code' and closed with Anusha Rizvi's 'The Great Shamsuddin Family.'

Pomona Cricket Stadium Construction Begins



Contd. from P1

focused on expanding cricket globally, with its Olympic return marking a significant step toward that goal.

Among those attending the ceremony were LA28 Vice President of Sports Niccolo Campriani, Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval, Consul General of India in Los Angeles Dr. K. J. Srinivasa, Knight Riders Sports Chief Executive Officer Venky Mysore, and Fairplex President and Chief Executive Officer Walter Marquez.

The inclusion of cricket in LA28 is being seen as a major opportunity to expand the sport beyond its traditional strongholds and build a larger fan base in the Americas.

Cricket's return to the Olympic movement is also expected to increase funding and institutional support in many countries. The gap between established teams and emerging nations has narrowed in recent years, particularly in the T20I format, which will feature in both the men's and women's competitions at LA28. (IANS)



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FASHION

Met Gala:

Ambani Jewels, Malhotra's Designs, Some Experimentation



India-West News Desk

NEW YORK, NY – A showing of Indian fashion, cinema and high society marked this year's Met Gala, as designers brought heritage craftsmanship and contemporary experimentation to one of fashion's most watched red carpets.

Filmmaker Karan Johar made his debut at the event, calling it a full circle moment. Dressed in an ensemble by Manish Malhotra, Johar's look drew from the works of painter Raja Ravi Varma, aligning with the evening's artistic theme. "From loving cinema and costume as a wide-eyed dreamer to standing

on the steps of THE Met Gala... life really does come full circle in the most unexpected ways. This moment wasn't just about fashion for me," Johar wrote, adding that the outfit was "about taking the legacy of Raja Ravi Varma and letting it live again... this time, not on canvas, but in motion."

The gala, a fundraiser for the Costume Institute at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, is known for its thematic celebration of fashion as art, a concept reflected in several Indian appearances this year.

Malhotra himself appeared in a sharply tailored bandhgala layered with a dramatic cape, a creation that

reportedly involved over 960 hours of craftsmanship by more than 50 artisans across Mumbai and Delhi.

He also styled philanthropist Sudha Reddy embraced textile heritage in a kalamkari-inspired outfit by Malhotra, complemented by a striking 550-carat tanzanite pendant valued at \$15 million.

Among the standout looks, businesswoman Isha Ambani wore a sculptural gold sari-inspired ensemble by Gaurav Gupta, styled by Anaita Shroff Adajania. The daughter of Mukesh Ambani, true to her family's style, dripped in gems making a point of their wealth. She wore more than 1,000 gem-

stones totaling over 1,800 carats, blending heirloom diamonds from mother Nita Ambani's collection which was made to sound as legacy and honoring of family.

Royal presence was also noted, with Gauravi Kumari and Sawai Padmanabh Singh attending in understated elegance. Their ensemble by Prabal Gurung was quiet and spoke of being comfortable in the spotlight – as if it were an everyday occurrence.

Entrepreneur and singer Ananya Birla opted for a more experimental approach, wearing a sculpted black blazer by Robert Wun, paired with a mask by artist Subodh

Gupta. Styled by Rhea Kapoor, the look fused performance art with minimalist couture.

Meanwhile, Natasha Poonawalla leaned into couture spectacle, wearing a sculptural creation by Marc Quinn paired with Dolce & Gabbana, featuring a dramatic floral structure that transformed her silhouette into a wearable art piece.

From archival inspirations to avant-garde silhouettes, Indian attendees at this year's Met Gala underscored fashion's evolving dialogue between tradition and global modernity, positioning craftsmanship not just as adornment but as narrative.

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FOOD

Dosa On World's Top Pancakes List

India-West News Desk

CHENNAI— South India's masala dosa has secured a place among the world's top pancakes, ranking sixth in the May 2026 list of the 50 best pancakes released by TasteAtlas. Tamil Nadu's paper dosa and regular dosa also cracked the list.

The dish holds a 4.3 rating, making it one of the highest-ranked savory entries on the list. The broader dosa category is placed at number 15 with a 4.2 rating, while paper dosa ranks 35th with a 4.1 score.

Other Indian dishes making it to the top 100 include Pitha, Odisha (98), malpua (85). Utapam and rava dosa also featured at 74 and 96th positions.

The top five features a mix of international dishes. Latvia's kartupelu pankukas ranks first with a 4.4 rating, followed by France's crepes sucrees. Classic French crepes and Nutella crepes take the third and fourth spots, while China's jianbing completes the top five.



Bikaji Foods Founder Shiv Ratan Agarwal Passes Away

CHENNAI—Shiv Ratan Agarwal, Chairman and Managing Director of Bikaji Foods International, died on April 23 here after suffering a heart attack. He was 74. Agarwal had travelled to Chennai with his family for his wife's medical treatment.

According to sources, his wife had recently undergone heart bypass surgery and had been advised rest. The family was staying at a hotel in Chennai during her recovery. At around 7:30 a.m. on April 23, Agarwal reportedly began feeling unwell. As his condition worsened, he was rushed to a private hospital, where doctors declared him dead.

Agarwal founded the Bikaji brand in Bikaner and built it into one of India's leading packaged snack companies.

The company traces its origins to 'Shivdeep Foods Products', named after his son Deepak Agarwal, which later evolved into the Bikaji brand.

Following a division in the family business linked to Haldiram's, Agarwal chose to establish an independent venture. He moved to Bikaner and started a bhujia manufacturing business under Shivdeep Foods Products, laying the foundation for what later became a major player in India's snack industry.

In 1993, the company was rebranded as 'Bikaji', a name inspired by Rao Bika, the founder of Bikaner, giving the brand a distinct regional identity with wider appeal. (IANS)



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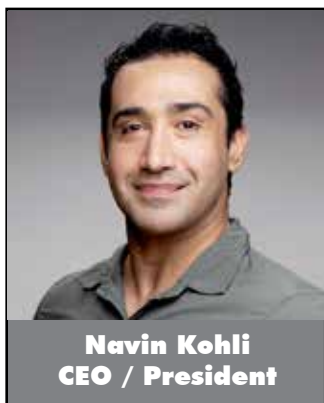
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Ashoka Brand Refresh: 'Made For Desis By Desis' Identity



India-West News Desk

MIAMI, FL – Ashoka, a longstanding staple in the international Desi food market, has officially unveiled a new packaging identity designed to “modernize its global presence while doubling down on its commitment to cultural authenticity.”

Announced on April 22, the refreshed visual system marks a strategic evolution for the brand, aiming to strengthen its shelf presence and better connect with a diverse, multi-generational consumer base.

The new design introduces a color-coded visual architecture intended to make the shopping experience more intuitive for consumers navigating crowded grocery aisles. Under the new system, green anchors the frozen range, orange defines ambient or shelf-stable products, and white distinguishes the brand's variety of chutneys.

By organizing its portfolio through this cohesive color palette, Ashoka hopes to maintain a consistent brand story across its wide array of products, which includes everything from ready-

to-eat meals and breads to pickles and snacks.

The company emphasizes that while the exterior has been modernized, the recipes remain unchanged, staying true to the “no shortcuts” philosophy that has built its



reputation.

Bimal Thakkar, CEO and Managing Director of ADF Foods, noted that the new identity is specifically crafted to sharpen how the brand appears on the shelf and to resonate with a younger generation of consumers who seek convenience without sacrificing the emotional connection to their heritage. He stated that the update reflects the confidence of a brand that understands what taste truly means to Desi consumers, ensuring that Ashoka remains a symbol of comfort and belonging for those living far from home.

By leaning into its identity as a brand “Made for Desis, by Desis,” Ashoka is betting that its unapologetic approach to traditional cuisine will continue to attract both long-time loyalists and new shoppers looking for a genuine taste of home.

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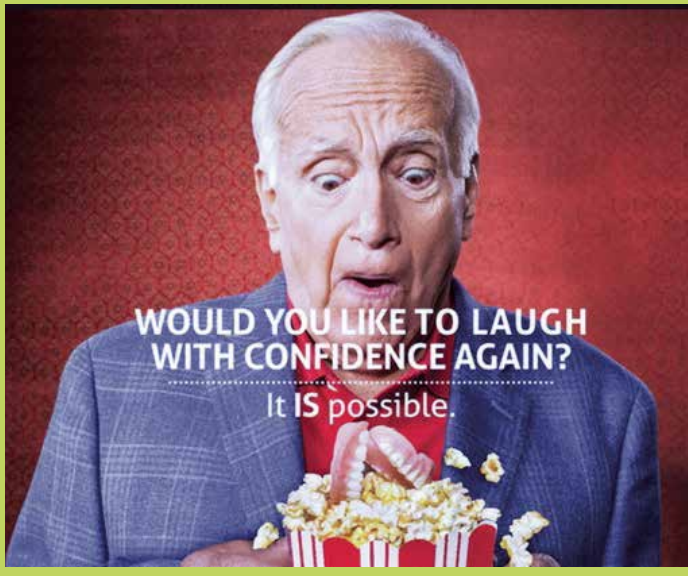
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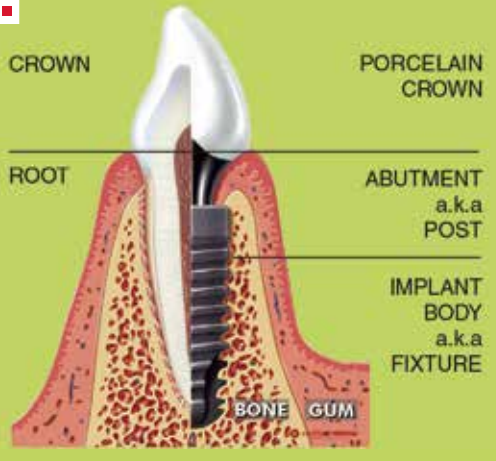


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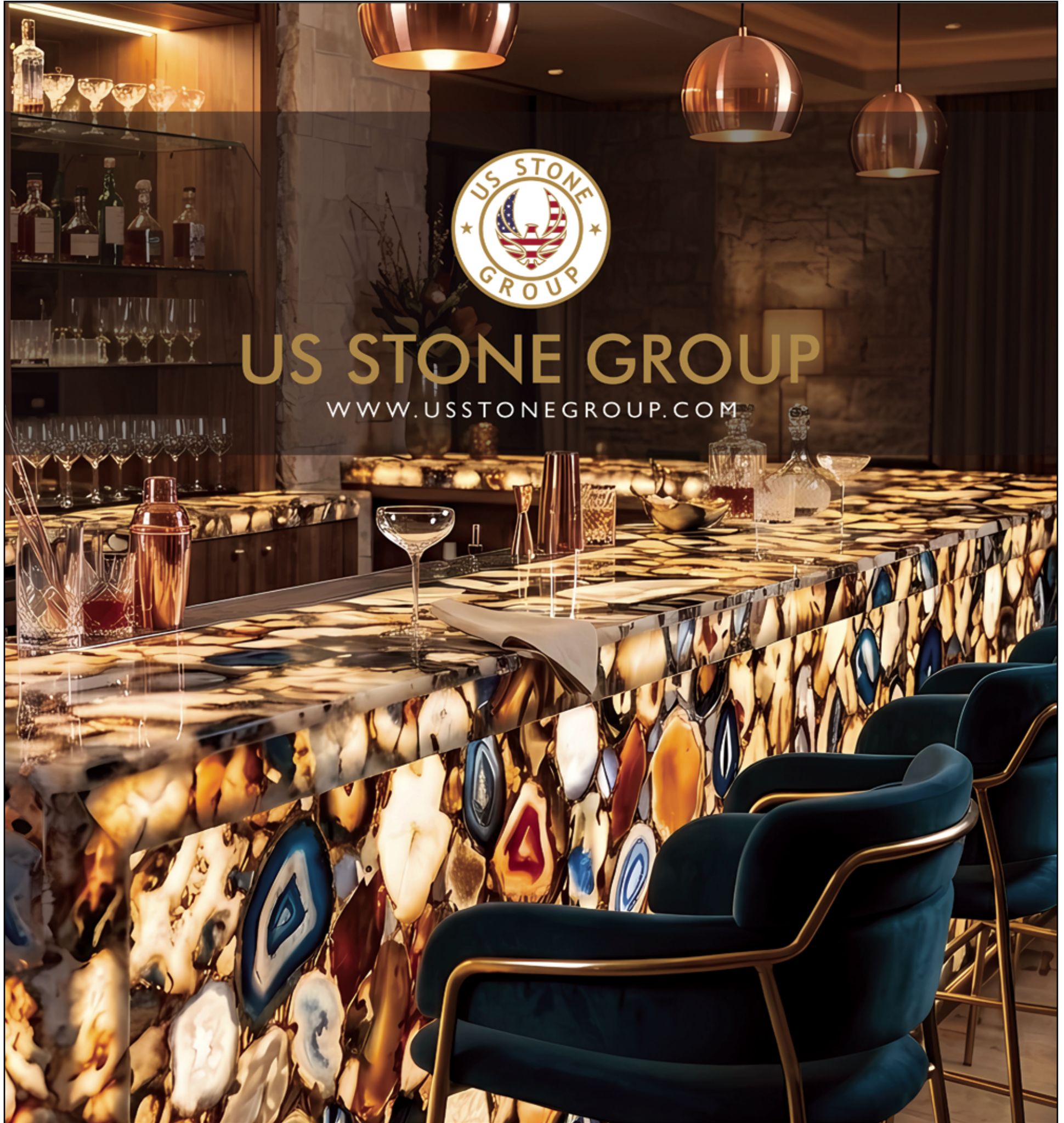
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