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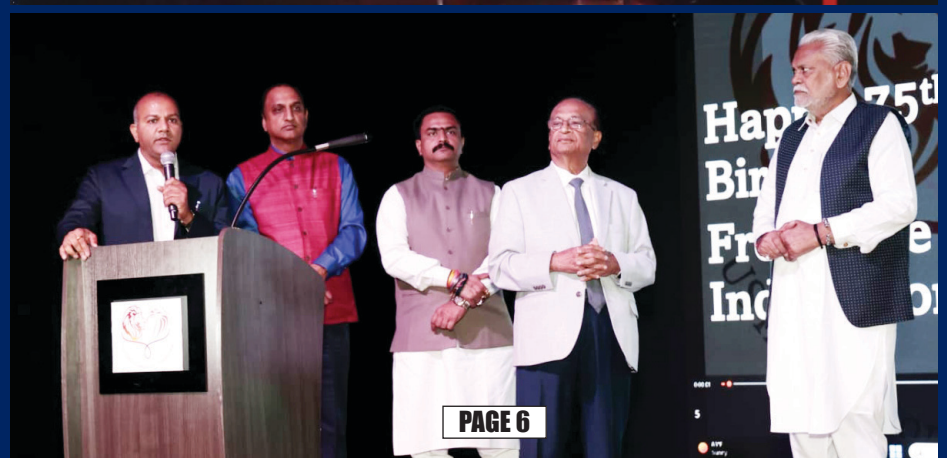
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**Overseas Friends of BJP, Parikh Worldwide Media, and community celebrate PM Modi's birthday in New Jersey**



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**US-India Community Foundation in Chicago hosts celebration for PM Modi's 75th birthday**

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# Cricket Must Not Lose Its Soul: Competition Not At Cost Of The Game's Spirit

By RAYEES MASROOR

**The game must be allowed to find a way to restore its dignity and balance on the ground. Not only is there a need to check the unregulated commercialization but there is a need for the introduction of regulations that give bowlers a fair chance, have sporting pitches, and fair future tour programs that preserve Test cricket's relevance.**

Cricket, once celebrated as the “gentleman's game,” has undergone a fundamental transformation. The rise and growth of franchise cricket and different T20 leagues around the world, power-hitting, televised match schedules and advertisement have not only changed the game on the ground, but also how it is played and perceived by its fans and followers. The emphasis today seems to be less on competition and more on earning money and entertainment.

Flat pitches, short boundaries, and heavy bats engineered for six-hitting have reduced bowlers to mere participants in one-sided competitions. Cricket matches, especially the T20 games often resemble batting feasts, where skill, patience, and strategy are sacrificed at the cost of instant gratification. Even Test cricket, referred to as the purest form of the game, is being degraded, with people at the helm pushing for shorter, faster and commercially viable formats.

## CRICKET WAS ABOUT NARRATIVES

The gentleman's game, a title that evokes images of sportsmanship, mutual respect, and moral conduct on the field, but it seems that international cricket today just doesn't have such character. Growing up in the 90s, cricket was not simply commercialization or entertainment, it carried larger narratives. Embedded in it were so many stories of teams, individuals and even entire nations. Sri Lanka's dramatic surge in the 1996 World Cup; Sachin Tendulkar's desert storm; South Africa's misery in 1999; Australia's legendary team; Steve Waugh's grit; Shoaib

Akhtar's unrestrained pace; Courtney Walsh and Curtly Ambrose's terror, Brian Lara's unparalleled class and the pace battery of two Ws. There was so much to cricket beyond just bat and ball. Even the saying “gentleman's game” stems directly from the expectation that cricket should be played with honour. What it means to be a sportsman or sportsmanship was even exemplified on the ground. It was not just about competing on the ground only but mutual respect and admiration.

Back in 2003 World Cup Australian wicketkeeper Adam Gilchrist walked off the field without waiting for the umpire's signal, even though the edge he had made was faint and not spotted by officials. In the 2005 Ashes series, after a tense finish where England narrowly defeated Australia, Andrew Flintoff immediately bent down to console a heartbroken Brett Lee. Rahul Dravid's entire career was full of ethical brilliance and Sri Lankan legend Kumar Sangakkara was known for his on and off the field sportsmanship.

## LOSS OF DECORUM

With utter disregard to its glorious past, many observers believe that the term “gentleman's game” no longer applies, especially with the rise of excessive commercialism and scandals. The growth of T20 leagues like the Indian Premier League has brought renewed attention, money, and viewership to the sport. While positive in many, there is a strong feeling that the entertainment and sponsorships have overtaken the real spirit and sportsmanship. Not only the excessive commercialization but there are few other things like aggressive celebrations, player auctions, and market branding which has radically changed the tone of the game. Although the branding, the accessibility and passion is welcomed, the loss of decorum is seen as a step away from the game's true spirit.

Modern cricket has elevated the game's reach, brought in global audiences, and created global heroes of the game. Modern cricket players are celebrities with massive fan following and wealth. Cricket has become a multi-billion-dollar industry. But during this shift not only the

balance between sport and show but between the bat and the ball has dangerously tilted. The joy of watching a bowler set up a batter over several overs to get his wicket, the delight of a hard fought 250 in a Test match, or the concentration required to survive a tricky fast spell, the spin web with fielders around the bat were the ingredients that gave the game its charm. If these are lost, cricket risks becoming just another tool of entertainment devoid of its true character. Unlike the money minting machine, the real spirit of cricket refers to the unwritten values that guide player behavior, including respect for the opponents, umpires, and the sport itself. It goes even beyond the rulebook and emphasizes sincerity, sportsmanship, and fair play.

## RESTORE THE GAME'S DIGNITY

The game must be allowed to find a way to restore its dignity and balance on the ground. Not only is there a need to check the unregulated commercialization but there is a need for the introduction of regulations that give bowlers a fair chance, have sporting pitches, and fair future tour programs that preserve Test cricket's relevance. The governing bodies like the ICC or BCCI must act now; otherwise, cricket may continue to entertain,

but at the heavy cost of losing its very soul. There is a hope that better sense prevails and the “gentleman's game” is rescued.

**The author is a columnist and academician based in Kupwara, Jammu & Kashmir. He writes on educational, social and political issues. Views expressed are personal. He can be reached at rayeesmasroor111@gmail.com**



PHOTO: SAM

(USED UNDER SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT WITH SOUTH ASIA MONITOR)

# Pak-Free World - Panache For India's Terror Troubles

By ANAND VELAYUDHAN

While the 1st part dealt with ways to make India more economically reliable and attractive to neighboring countries by firm imposition of laws, here we discuss other side. It is said that every adversity is also an opportunity in disguise. The relentless and often pointless adversarial behavior of Pakistani establishment towards India needs to be urgently addressed and reset.

It is severely flawed to brand every Pakistani national, an enemy of India. Hundreds of Indians visiting Pakistan each year near Wagah border are amused by the amiability of Pakistanis and remain allured for a long time. Nearly all Indian tourists visiting Pakistan remain tempted to go back again and possibly deeper into Pakistan's hinterland.

For instance, Sunita Dwivedi, modern day chronicler of Gautam Buddha's journey recalls Pakistanis to be very civilised and friendly in an interview with me. People would come out of their homes to greet her during her stay there. Clerics would welcome her into their mosque, offering a place to rest and refreshments. But never was she judged for her nationality or religion. She even observed that she felt safe in Pakistan but was unsure if a

Pakistani could feel the in any part of India.

In a television discussion Senior journalist Rajdeep Sardesai emphatically distinguished between Pakistani people and Governments. He had no doubt that the average Pakistani bears none or probably far less hatred for Indians than what is imagined. It is the Pakistani establishment that remains obsessed with the idea of enmity with India. Very few Pakistani civilians hate India as much as general Munir does.

Alleviating swathes of citizens from financial hardship was India's response to decades of Pakistani hostility. These changes while at work for long, and quite possibly a culmination of years of work, has now manifested in the form of development. This is not going unseen by average Pakistani and many even secretly admire Modi for hastening progress on many fronts. India's status as the '5th largest economy' is being noticed.

Contrary to common beliefs, for much of Pakistani civilians Ayodhya temple / Babri masjid may not matter while their own financial prospects remain bleak.

Many in Pakistani understand that their enmity with India benefits other world powers and smugglers. An AI response to google search “do Pakistanis love Indians” reveals that very few can be said to adore India. But most of these quotes are from scans of media reports - AI confesses. However, source publications of these finding

are invariably European. Actual real time response of individuals may still reveal the exact opposite.

So, how can India achieve more acceptance of herself within Pakistan? The answer lies in winning hearts and minds—especially among youth and women. Friendships between Indians and Pakistanis in Gulf countries already prove that bonds can thrive beyond politics. Yes, vigilance is necessary, but dialogue and empathy can be powerful tools

Bollywood too has a great role here. Films like “Bajrangi bhaijaan” prove that art can transcend boundaries... kindle compassion. Am sure every pair of eyes watching that movie were wet with joy during the last scenes.

At a time when global dynamics are shifting-even bringing India and China closer on economic fronts-India must rationalize its resources and push the Pakistani government to acknowledge its people's genuine wishes: peace, prosperity, and coexistence. Because, at the end of the day, ordinary persons only want to build a better life for themselves and their families.

Hence, solution to India's terror troubles is in unleashing their own diplomacy with never before fervor, lifting the Indo Pak narrative from mores of hatred and employing the current Indian governments' firm belief - world is one family - Vasudaiva Kutumbakam !!



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# US-India Community Foundation Hosts Celebration Of PM Modi's 75th Birthday

By BHAILAL M. PATEL

**T**he US Indian Community Foundation (USICF), under the visionary leadership of Dr. Bharat Barai, hosted a historic and heartfelt celebration marking the 75th birthday of Shri Narendra Modi, Honorable Prime Minister of India. The event, held at The Matrix Club in Naperville, Illinois, brought together dignitaries, cultural leaders, and hundreds of members of the vibrant Indian-American community for an evening of reflection, unity, and pride. Chief Guest: Shri Parshottam Rupala, MP Lok Sabha, Guests of Honor: Shri Somnath Ghosh, Consul General of India in Chicago; prominent community and organizational leader

The US Indian Community Foundation is a platform dedicated to celebrating the rich cultural heritage of the Indian community in the United States while strengthening ties with India.

The United States, long celebrated as a mosaic of diverse cultures, is home to more than 2.2 million Hindus—around 0.7% of the total population—who form one of the most successful immigrant groups in the country. With high levels of education, entrepreneurship, and professional excellence, the Indian diaspora continues to enrich American society and foster global connections.

Indian Americans remain deeply connected to their homeland. This “India in the Heart” bond is the very foundation of USICF’s mission—to serve as a bridge of identity, belonging, and service between the diaspora and India, organizers say. The Foundation’s initiatives ensure that the community’s love for Indian culture, traditions, and values is preserved for future generations, while also advancing India’s progress and India-US collaboration.

The Chief Guest was Indian Member of Parliament Parshottam Rupala. Another VIP was India’s Consul General



PHOTOS: COURTESY ORGANIZERS

Lt to Rt. Nirav K Patel, Official US Indian Community Foundation, Amitabh Mittal Official US Indian Community Foundation, Jaideep Barot, who is the President of the BJP, from the Gandhinagar area, Dr. Bharat Barai, chairman of US Indian Community Foundation, Chief Guest: Parshottam Rupala, MP Lok Sabha.



Consul General of India in Chicago Somnath Ghosh, who was the Chief Guest, is seen here addressing the gathering.

in Chicago Somnath Ghosh. Prominent leaders from the Federation of Indian Associations (FIA), ABVP, cultural organizations, elected officials, and faith-based

associations, also attended.

In his opening remarks, Dr. Bharat Barai, Chairman of USICF, set the tone. “This celebration is not only about hon-

oring the 75th birthday of Prime Minister Modi ji, but also about recognizing the extraordinary contributions of the Indian diaspora in strengthening India-US relations. The Foundation’s mission is to preserve our culture, deepen our engagement, and create platforms where India and America can work together for a brighter future.”

Indian MP Rupala, addressing the gathering, praised Prime Minister Modi’s transformative leadership and the global admiration he commands. He stated:

“Prime Minister Modi has redefined India’s global identity with his unwavering commitment to development, transparency, and cultural pride. The Indian diaspora, especially here in the United States, plays a crucial role in amplifying India’s voice on the world stage. This celebration is a testament to that enduring bond.”

Consul General Ghosh echoed the sentiment, adding: “It is heartening to see the Indian-American community come together in such strength and spirit to honor Prime Minister Modi. Events like these reflect the deep-rooted connection between India and its diaspora, and the shared vision for a prosperous and united future.”

The evening included cultural performances, musical tributes, and heartfelt reflections from community leaders. Messages of pride and unity poured in from across Chicagoland’s Indian-American organizations, celebrating Prime Minister Modi’s leadership and the achievements of the diaspora.

Attendees honored Dr. Barai for his four decades of service, noting his pivotal role in organizing large-scale diaspora events in Chicago, Washington D.C., New York, and beyond, which have brought together Indian Americans in unity, celebration, and collective action.

The evening concluded with a ceremonial cake-cutting and prayers for Prime Minister Modi’s health and continued leadership.



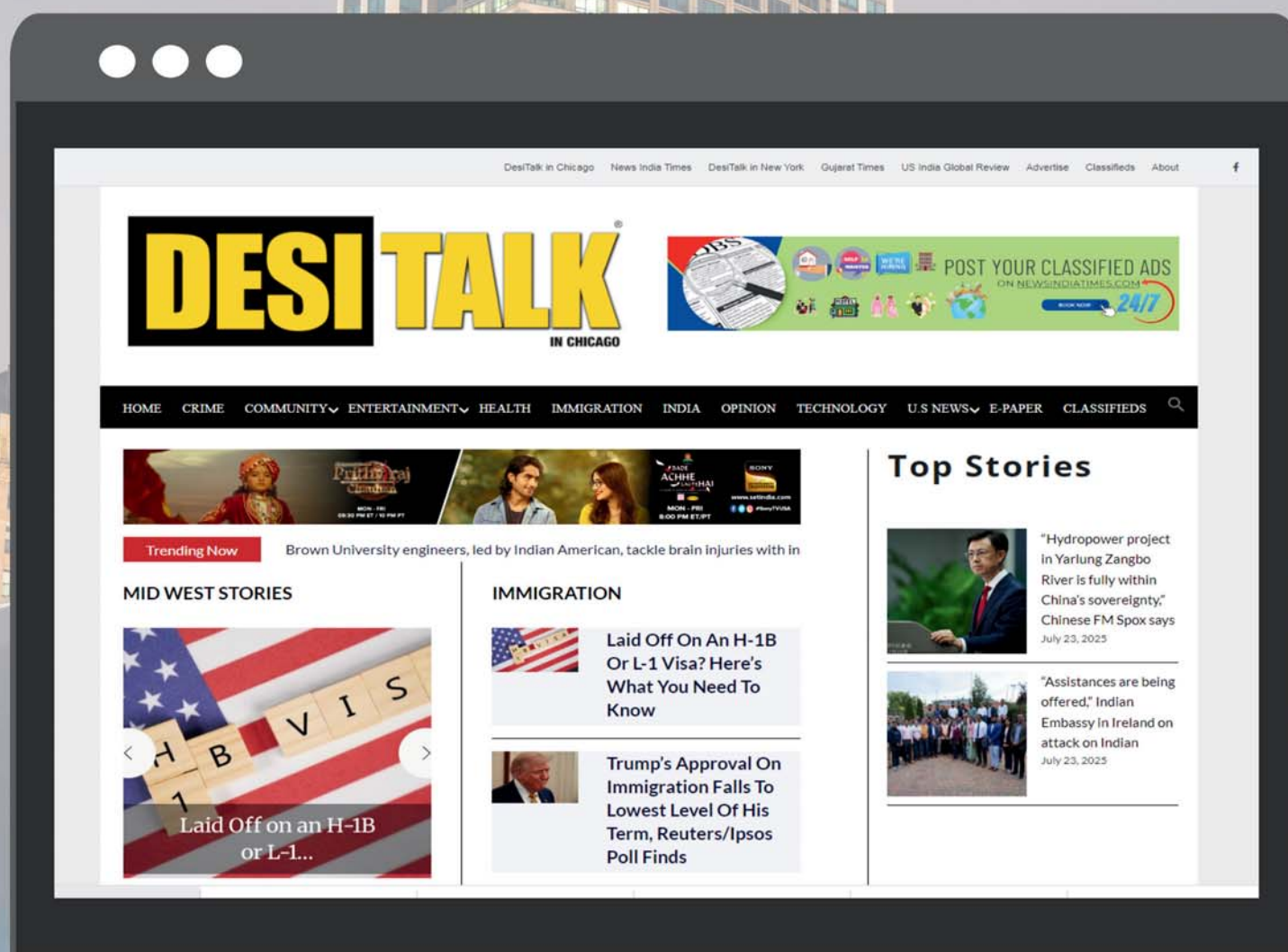
Chief Guest Indian MP Parshottam Rupala, left, and other guests, right, look on as a cake is cut for PM Modi’s 75th birthday by Santosh Kumar, executive director at MAFS services.



A section of the audience present to celebrate Indian PM Modi’s 75th birthday celebrations in Naperville, Illinois. Many leaders of various organizations attended the event.



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# Musical Icons Kavita Krishnamurthy & Dr. L. Subramaniam Perform In Support Of Moksh Dham

By BHAILAL M. PATEL

Indian Americans in Chicago witnessed a landmark cultural event on Friday, September 19, 2025, when two of India's celebrated musical icons — Padma Shri recipient Kavita Krishnamurthy and Padma Vibhushan recipient Dr. L. Subramaniam — headlined a fundraising concert at The Matrix Club, Naperville, in support of Moksh Dham, the nation's first dedicated Hindu cremation and last-rites center.

More than 1,200 attendees, including community leaders, spiritual advocates, and music enthusiasts, filled the prestigious venue. The evening blended melody and meaning, raising critical awareness and support for a project that fulfills one of the Indian-American community's most heartfelt spiritual needs — a dignified and culturally authentic space for Antim Sanskar (final rites) in the United States.

Kavita Krishnamurthy — Bollywood and devotional playback legend, with more than 50,000 songs in 45 languages, performed timeless melodies and bhajans, reminding the audience why she remains one of India's most cherished playback singers.

Dr. L. Subramaniam — India's violin maestro, often called “the Paganini of Indian Classical Music,” performed a seamless fusion of Carnatic, Western classical, and world music traditions. A physician-



Anandita Somnath Ghosh, Consul General of India in Chicago Somnath Ghosh, Dr. L. Subramaniam, Kavita Krishnamurthy Dr. Bharat Barai, Dr Panna Barai, Prachi Jaitly, Dr. Rashmi Patel, founder and President of Moksh Dham.

turned-musician, Dr. Subramaniam is internationally recognized for his cross-genre collaborations and virtuosity.

The event began with a solemn Deep Pragtya (lamp-lighting ceremony), symbolizing illumination and spiritual awakening.

During the program, Moksh Dham recognized its Super Trustees — visionaries whose contributions of \$25,000 or more are helping turn the project into reality. Honorees included: Mafat Patel, Ashok Pandya, Mahesh Pandya, Rajesh Patel,

Bharat Barai, Nitin Patel, and Dr. Rashmi Patel.

Their leadership inspired further giving, as donation appeals led by Dr. Rashmi Patel and Dr. Bharat Barai encouraged attendees to join in building this sacred legacy.

Moksh Dham is a non-profit 501(c)(13) initiative led by Dr. Rashmi Patel. The vision is to create a serene, accessible, and culturally authentic facility where Hindu families — along with Jain, Sikh, and Buddhist communities — can perform Antim

Agni-Sanskar (cremation rituals) with dignity.

The project, expected to be completed in 2027, addresses urgent community needs. The Chicago metro area's 250,000 South Asians, 35% of whom are seniors, face limited and costly cremation options. Cremation requests have risen nearly 30% in recent years, yet facilities remain scarce. Families often encounter emotional and financial distress without culturally aligned services.

“This is not just a building — it's a legacy,” said Dr. Patel. “Just as Lord Ram invited all to build the Setu, Moksh Dham is a collective effort. Every soul deserves a dignified farewell rooted in tradition.”

India's Consul General in Chicago Somnath Ghosh, addressing the gathering, emphasized the project's significance. “Cremation is not only a religious rite but a sacred passage to liberation. Moksh Dham fills a deep cultural and emotional void for our community here in America,” Consul General Ghosh said.

Dr. Barai, a community leader and Moksh Dham trustee, emphasized the urgency of the project. “For our 250,000-strong South Asian community in Chicago, this center is not a luxury but a necessity. Nearly one-third of our population are seniors, and when the time comes, families deserve to perform Antim Sanskar without financial burden, delays, or cultural compromise. Moksh Dham ensures dignity in farewell and peace for the soul.”



A section of the audience of more than 1,200 people at the concert for Moksh Dham, Sept. 19, 2025.



Heena Pandya, Dr Panna Barai, Dr Bharat Barai, Dr. Rashmi Patel, Dr. L. Subramaniam, Kavita Krishnamurthy and Moksh Dham active members.

## NATIONAL AFFAIRS

# Indian American Hoteliers Host 4th Annual ‘Herownership’ Conference

By A STAFF WRITER

The Asian American Hotel Owners Association, AAHOA, made up mainly of Indian American members, held its 4th Annual HerOwnership Conference September 11 and 12, at the Sonesta Resort Hilton Head Island in South Carolina.

The theme of the Conference was “Guiding Light:

Leading with Strength, Shining with Purpose” and it attracted women hoteliers from across the country.

With educational sessions focused on creating a sustainable hotel operation, marketing and storytelling, and using artificial intelligence for women entrepreneurs, the conference showcased the growing impact of women in hospitality and the strong community behind their continued success, a Sept. 17, press release from AAHOA said.

“Women hoteliers are essential forces in today's hospitality industry,” AAHOA Chairman Kamallesh (KP) Patel is quoted saying in the press release. “They are leading multimillion-dollar businesses, building strong teams, and contributing meaningfully to their communities.”

Conferences like HerOwnership aren't just about inspi-

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# FBI Director Kash Patel Clashes With House Democrats Over Epstein Files

By JEREMY ROEBUCKL

**F**BI Director Kash Patel rejected assertions from Democratic lawmakers Wednesday that he is concealing evidence from the investigation into deceased sex offender Jeffrey Epstein and said the bureau had released all that was legally allowed.

Fielding questions from the House Judiciary Committee, Patel maintained that the FBI had no “credible” evidence implicating others in Epstein’s alleged sex trafficking of young women.

But he sidestepped answering how prominently President Donald Trump’s name featured in investigators’ files on the case. Patel said he had never spoken directly to the president about the Epstein files. He acknowledged that he had not personally reviewed all the evidence the bureau had amassed.

“Any allegations that I’m part of a cover-up to protect child sexual trafficking and victims of human trafficking and sexual crimes is patently false,” Patel said.

“We have released more material than anyone else before,” he said. “The Biden administration, the Obama administration had the opportunity to release this exact material. They never did.”

But House Democrats kept coming back to questions about Trump. Patel insisted he had not held back any credible evidence related to the president. Trump, a former Epstein friend, has denied any knowledge of Epstein’s criminal activity.

“It’s not news that Epstein knew Donald Trump, because Donald Trump kicked Epstein out of his club for being a creep,” White House spokesperson Abigail Jackson said in a statement. “Democrats and the media knew about Epstein and his victims for years and did nothing to help them while President Trump was calling for transparency, and is now delivering on it with thousands



FBI Director Kash Patel on the second day of his testimony at the House Oversight Committee Sept. 17, 2025.

of pages of documents.”

Wednesday’s oversight hearing was the second day of congressional testimony for Patel, whose seven-month tenure as FBI director has seen him embroiled in several controversies and left his future in the role in doubt.

In a contentious Senate Judiciary Committee hearing Tuesday, the director rejected criticism over his firing of scores of agents and senior FBI leaders, and missteps during the investigation into the slaying of conservative activist Charlie Kirk.

As in that earlier proceeding, Patel struck a defiant tone at the House proceeding Wednesday. He repeatedly dismissed questions from Democrats as “disgusting,” based on false premises and as efforts to score viral media moments.

“You are hiding the Epstein files, Mr. Patel. You are part of the cover-up,” Rep. Dan Goldman (D-New York) said to him at one point. Patel shot back, calling the accusation “patently and categorically false.”

“Your fixation on this matter and baseless accusations that I’m hiding child pedophiles is disgusting,” he later told Rep. Eric Swalwell (D-California) in a heated exchange. Patel added later: “I’m going to borrow your terminology and call bulls— on your entire career.”

Despite that vitriol, Democrats managed to wring some answers from Patel on the Epstein probe – a matter that has riven the House for weeks.

Republicans, facing increasing pressure from their base and some members of their conference, reluctantly subpoenaed the Justice Department for its Epstein files last month. And Democrats have eagerly seized upon divisions the issue has exposed within the GOP to exert political pressure on their rivals.

Rep. Jared Moskowitz (D-Florida) balked Wednesday at Trump’s assertion that his signature had been forged on a sexually suggestive 2003 birthday note to Epstein. The message, including a drawing of a nude woman’s form that purportedly bears the president’s writing, was included in a book assembled for Epstein’s 50th birthday. Epstein’s estate, under subpoena, produced a copy of the book and gave it to Congress last week.

“Will you be opening up an investigation into the Epstein estate for putting out a fake document with the president’s signature linking him to the world’s largest pedophile ring?” Moskowitz asked Patel.

“Sure. I’ll do it,” Patel replied.

Patel also committed the FBI to further meetings with Epstein’s accusers, who have said they feel their allegations of involvement by others have never been fully investigated. He stopped short, however, of saying he would personally meet with them.

—THE WASHINGTON POST

## Indian American Hoteliers Host 4th Annual ‘Herownership’ Conference

—CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

ration, he noted, they are about equipping women with the tools, connections, and confidence to take ownership of their future in this industry.

Among the high profile guests at the Conference was Hilton Head Island Mayor Alan Perry, who issued a proclamation declaring September 11–12 as AAHOA HerOwnership Days.

Mayor Perry said the conference’s theme “reflects the core mission of inspiring women to step into leadership roles within their businesses, communities, and beyond.”

The keynote speaker was Amy Diehl, Ph.D., an award-winning information technology executive and leading expert on gender bias. She is the author of GLASS WALLS: Shattering the Six Gender Bias Barriers Still Holding Women Back at Work.

“Women make up more than 50 percent of the hospitality workforce but hold less than 10 percent of hotel ownership roles,” pointed out AAHOA President & CEO Laura Lee Blake. This Conference was meant to close that gap, the place where ambition meets opportunity.

The event featured sponsored sessions focused on innovative financing strategies (Red Roof) and what it takes to win using vision to value (M3).

There were also two pre-conference masterclasses: Davonne Reeves with The Vonne Group on capital strategies and Gauthier, Murphy & Houghtaling on driving results in property claim disputes. DISH Business sponsored the



Shown (from left) are AAHOA President & CEO Laura Lee Blake, Purnima Patel, Womens Hotelier Director, Eastern Division, Arti Patel, Womens Hotelier Director, Western Division, and AAHOA Chairman Kamalesh (KP) Patel.

Seaside Soiree Reception.

“The best part of HerOwnership is how it blends practical learning with genuine connection,” said Purnima Patel, AAHOA Women Hoteliers Director, Eastern Division. “You could feel the encouragement in every room—from panels and breakouts to casual hallway chats. We’re creating a culture where women lift as they lead, and that’s how real change happens.”



Women hoteliers from across the country gathered for this two-day, women-led event designed to elevate and empower women in hotel ownership and leadership.

“HerOwnership continues to be a space where women can explore ownership with real guidance and community support,” said Arti Patel, AAHOA Women Hoteliers Director, Western Division. “So many attendees left the event not just inspired, but ready. Ready to take the next step, make their first investment, or grow their existing business. That’s the power of a room full of women who believe in each other.”



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# Trump Unveils \$100K Yearly Fee On H-1B Visas In Clampdown On Legal Immigration

By CAT ZAKRZEWSKI, LAUREN KAORI GURLEY,  
DAVID NAKAMURA

**P**resident Donald Trump on Friday announced an annual \$100,000 fee on successful applicants for a high-skilled worker visa program that is widely used in Silicon Valley, constraining a key path to legal immigration.

The president also signed an executive order that would allow wealthy foreigners to pay \$1 million for a 'Gold Card' for U.S. residency and companies to pay \$2 million for a 'Corporate Gold Card' that would permit them to sponsor one or more employees.

"The main thing is we're going to have great people coming in and they're going to be paying," Trump said. "We're going to take that money and we're going to be reducing taxes and we're going to be reducing debt."

Both moves likely will face legal challenges. If upheld, however, they would dramatically tighten legal immigration systems while opening access to the U.S. for wealthy foreigners. That would deliver a win to outspoken members of Trump's nationalist base who have argued for years that the H-1B program takes jobs away from American workers. Left-leaning critics also have faulted the program, which they say can be used to exploit workers from overseas.

The announcement is one of the steps that Trump has taken to restrict legal immigration to the United States in addition to his moves to deport those in the country illegally.

The \$100,000 payment for an H-1B visa could be made each year for six years, Commerce Secretary Howard



A replica "Trump Gold Card" on display Friday in the Oval Office.

Lutnick said in an Oval Office ceremony unveiling the actions. Roughly half a million people in the U.S. work through H-1B visas, and most renew their status every three years. A significant number apply for green cards through their employer to receive legal permanent residency but confront significant delays due to backlogs in processing.

"The company needs to decide ... is the person valuable enough to have a \$100,000-a-year payment to the government, or they should head home, and they should go hire an American," Lutnick told reporters. "Stop the nonsense of letting people just come into this country on visas that were given away for free. The president is crystal clear: valuable people only for America."

The country's largest tech companies were notably silent about the policy on Friday night, in a dramatic departure from their frequent criticisms of Trump's immigration policies during the first administration.

If upheld, the restrictions on H-1B visas could upend the way Silicon Valley has operated since its founding. Many of the country's most famous entrepreneurs, including Elon Musk, once held H-1B visas, and many tech founders attribute their companies' success in part to the United States's ability to attract the world's best computer scientists and engineers.

Some executives and spokespeople said they were still reviewing the implications of the policy. But the industry is remaining quiet after executives have largely supported Trump in his second presidency – working with Trump on major investment announcements or presenting him with lavish gifts.

Applicants for Trump's gold card would need to pay a processing fee and undergo Department of Homeland Security vetting, according to a government website beckoning users to "Unlock life in America." If approved, gold card applicants would have to "make a gift of \$1 million, which has been determined to provide sufficient evidence that the individual will substantially benefit the United States," the website said.

Separately, a platinum card offering marked "coming soon" on the website would cost \$5 million and allow individual applicants to reside in the United States for up to 270 days per year without being taxed on non-U.S. income. That program will have a wait list and must be approved by Congress, Lutnick told reporters.

-CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

## US New H-1B Visa Fee Will Not Apply To Existing Holders, White House Says

By JEFF MASON

**A** new \$100,000 fee for H-1B visas in the United States that goes into effect on Sunday will be levied per petition and will not be applied to existing visa holders re-entering the country, the White House said on Saturday.

"This is NOT an annual fee. It's a one-time fee that applies only to the petition," White House spokesperson Karoline Leavitt said in a post on X on Saturday.

A petition is a request by a company to bring a skilled worker from another country into the United States.

### FEE ONLY FOR NEW H-1B VISAS

Leavitt said that current H-1B visa holders who are currently outside of the country will not be charged \$100,000 to re-enter the United States.

Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick on Friday said the fee would be paid annually but added that details were "still being considered." The White House clarification on Saturday represented a walkback from Lutnick's statement.

Some companies including Microsoft, JPMorgan, and Amazon had responded to the Friday announcement by advising employees holding H-1B visas to remain in the United States, according to internal emails reviewed by Reuters. A Goldman Sachs internal memo seen by Reuters on Saturday urged employees with such visas to exercise caution on international travel.

Leavitt said on X that H-1B visa holders can leave and



Reuters videograb of President Trump signing new regulations for skilled worker visas.

re-enter the country as they normally would and that the new fee would only apply in the next H-1B lottery round and not to current visa holders or renewals.

The White House said the fee was being imposed to level the playing field for American workers which it said are being "replaced with lower-paid foreign labor."

The proclamation imposing the new fee on H-1B visa applications, which was signed by President Donald Trump on Friday, could disrupt the global operations of Indian technology services companies that deploy skilled professionals to the United States, Indian IT industry

body Nasscom said early on Saturday.

In a fact sheet distributed on Saturday, the White House said it would allow an H-1B visa application without the \$100,000 fee on a case-by-case basis "if in the national interest."

The fact sheet said that the share of IT workers with H-1B visas had risen from 32% in FY 2003 to over 65% in recent years.

Trump's proclamation requires the Departments of Labor and Homeland Security to issue joint guidance for verification, enforcement, audits, and penalties, and directs the Labor Secretary to start a rulemaking process to "revise the prevailing wage levels for the H-1B program" and "to prioritize high-skilled, high-paid H-1B workers."

### TECH WORKER PANIC

Friday's announcement sparked concerns among employees across swaths of corporate America.

On the popular Chinese social media app Rednote, many H-1B holders shared stories of rushing back to the U.S. — some just hours after landing abroad, as they feared being subject to the new \$100,000 fee.

The White House said Trump's move was designed to address threats to U.S. national security.

"President Trump is imposing higher costs on companies seeking to use the H-1B program in order to address the abuse of the program, stop the undercutting of wages, and protect our national security," it said.

-REUTERS



ASTROLOGY



### This week for you

By DR. PREM KUMAR SHARMA

E-mail: psharma@premaastrologer.com Contact No - 01147033152/40532026

**ARIES:** Students are likely to feel optimistic as their hard work begins to show results. Fresh opportunities may soon appear for those eager to start their careers. Focusing on a nutritious diet can give you a significant health boost. Newly married couples may long for more time together to cherish their bond. Clearing pending bills and dues before the weekend will bring relief. Property owners may find reliable tenants without much difficulty.

**TAURUS:** Overspending could disturb your financial balance, so reviewing your expenses will be important. Domestic duties require patience, even if your schedule feels tight. Elders will value your support and presence at home. Avoid getting dragged into arguments that don't concern you, as they may only drain your peace. Take some quiet time to reflect on your thoughts. A reunion with your partner may refresh your bond, while travel abroad may open doors to exciting prospects.

**GEMINI:** Setting aside worries and focusing on your well-being will help bring clarity. Networking and professional collaborations are well-favoured this week. Recognition from superiors could lead to financial gains or advancement. Investing in promising ventures may prove wise if approached with confidence. Addressing family matters early will prevent misunderstandings, and guidance from elders may help. A delightful gesture from your partner may bring warmth into your relationship.

**CANCER:** Maintaining focus and making thoughtful choices will ensure steady progress at work. Some may discover extra sources of income that improve their finances. Those engaged in property matters should consider waiting for a more favourable time. Traditional methods of meeting people may help you find a lasting partner and build a joyful married life. Recovery from a lingering health issue may allow you to enjoy life more freely.

**LEO:** Resolving differences with parents or siblings should be your priority this week. Control your temper and avoid saying things you may later regret. When it comes to romance, act only when you are certain of your feelings. Entrepreneurs investing in creative marketing efforts may land profitable opportunities. With a balanced mind and body, you'll feel ready to take on upcoming tasks with enthusiasm.

**VIRGO:** Diligence and precision in your work can earn recognition, possibly bringing rewards or new responsibilities. Avoid getting trapped in risky deals and think carefully before committing your money. Relationships may feel harmonious and re-

warding this week. A family trip may be planned, offering a refreshing break. Openness to constructive criticism will help refine your ideas and improve outcomes.

**LIBRA:** Keeping family life peaceful will require you to take charge of decisions. Stepping back, staying calm, and regaining balance may dissolve ongoing tension. Those looking to expand their family may receive positive news. Before starting a long trip, confirm all details to avoid stress. A co-worker may show more interest than expected, which could spark a romantic connection.

**SCORPIO:** Professional outcomes related to tenure or stability may work in your favour. Couples are likely to share joyful and encouraging moments together. This is a favourable time to expand your social circle and enjoy new company. Travel plans with family may not be ideal at present. Stomach-related issues could trouble you, so be mindful of your diet. By controlling food habits, you may avoid health concerns.

**SAGITTARIUS:** Romance appears promising, and you and your partner may discuss future adventures. Visiting relatives may bring laughter and cherished memories later in the week. If possible, delay journeys until situations seem smoother. Taking time out for yourself will help restore balance and refresh your outlook on life.

**CAPRICORN:** The love and support of your partner may inspire you to face challenges with confidence. Take professional advice before starting new ventures, as rushing could cause setbacks. Health should not be neglected, and medical attention may be needed for ongoing concerns. A property dispute that dragged on for long may finally conclude in your favour. Travelling with close ones may bring a sense of spiritual growth and renewal.

**AQUARIUS:** Financial prospects appear bright, with investments showing encouraging results. Maintaining your fitness regime will strengthen both body and mind. A positive attitude will help you overcome romantic disappointments with ease. This week is also beneficial for those seeking gains in real estate.

**PISCES:** Landlords should carefully screen tenants to avoid later conflicts. Planning a family trip now can create happy memories for everyone. Do not alter your lifestyle habits without medical advice, as it may do more harm than good. Even small mistakes could have lasting effects, so remain cautious. A little self-indulgence will be rewarding, but avoid overspending on one item.

# THIS WEEK WITH Dr. SUDHIR PARIKH



## INDIA ADVOCATE, PUBLISHER, PHILANTHROPIST, PHYSICIAN.

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# Trump Unveils \$100K Yearly Fee On H-1B Visas In Clampdown On Legal Immigration

-CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

Both the H-1B proposal and the new gold and platinum card visa program are likely to face rapid legal challenges from companies and workers, said David Bier, an analyst at the libertarian Cato Institute. Under federal law, he said, only Congress has the power to create new visa entry programs and add fees to existing categories.

Lutnick said he expects that the Gold Card program will raise more than \$100 billion in revenue and the Platinum Card program will create \$1 trillion. Analysts have said such figures are dubious. They suggested the biggest market for such visas could come from wealthy people in China, Russia and Saudi Arabia, potentially raising national security concerns.

The president first announced plans for a \$5 million gold card earlier this year, and Lutnick previously said that more than 250,000 people had expressed interest.

The Trump administration landed on the \$100,000 fee for H-1B visas because it would deter companies from using the program to bring in entry-level employees and incentivize employers to rely on the program strictly to recruit "the great engineers" and "impressively detailed executives," Lutnick said.

Employers rely on H-1B visas to hire foreign workers with specialized skills, usually in science and technology, when they cannot identify American workers to fill those jobs. Tech companies are the largest beneficiaries of such visas, but employers in manufacturing, finance, education, retail and health care employers also use the program.

About 85,000 new H-1B visas are available each year, although Congress exempts universities from that cap. Last year, the government received about 425,000 H-1B visa petitions. Recipients are selected through a lottery.

Current H-1B visa application fees depend on employer size and status, but rarely exceed \$5,000 in total, excluding lawyer's expenses. There is a \$215 fee to register for the lottery and a \$780 fee for an employer sponsor to file a petition for a nonimmigrant worker. Universities and nonprofits pay a lower fee than private employers.

Trump's coalition is divided over H-1B visas, which are important to his allies in the tech industry.

Trump's coalition splintered over the visas during the presidential transition, when far-right activist Laura Loomer sparred on X with Trump's top tech supporters over the program. Musk, who was one of Trump's closest allies at the time, aggressively defended the program, but he has since fallen out of favor with Trump. Stephen K. Bannon, a top White House adviser in Trump's first term, has railed against H-1B as a "total scam" and has advocated eliminating the program entirely.

Trump has ramped up his mass deportation cam-



Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick speaks as President Donald Trump signs an executive order Friday in the Oval Office.

paign while also moving to restrict legal immigration, in particular targeting vulnerable migrants who are fleeing hardship, including wars and natural disasters, in their native countries.

More than 70 percent of H-1B visa holders in the 2024 fiscal year were born in India, according to the Department of Homeland Security. Chinese nationals received 12 percent of new visas. Workers from the Philippines, Canada and South Korea were also among the top recipients.

J. Mike Sevilla, an immigration attorney at the firm Dorsey & Whitney said in an emailed note that "a \$100,000 fee for H-1B petitions would be devastating to several industries as it would significantly prohibit the hiring of foreign national talent in this visa classification."

Bier said Trump's new H-1B requirements could effectively undercut the value of hiring them and convince companies to move their operations outside the United States.

Depending on how it is structured, "this would effectively end the H-1B program," said Bier, who favors significantly expanding the cap on H-1B visas or eliminating the cap altogether. "This is further evidence that companies will use to assess their operations in the future."

He pointed to Trump's decision in June 2020, during his first White House term, to suspend the program, a move that Bier said increased offshoring of jobs.

"That's exactly the opposite of the policy the president says he is pursuing, which is onshoring. It makes no sense," he said.

Sarah Spreitzer, vice president and chief of staff for governmental relations for the American Council on Education, said the changes would be really difficult for

colleges and universities, which rely on H-1B workers for faculty positions, especially in high-need STEM fields.

"It's going to cost institutions of higher education and other U.S. businesses a lot more money to bring in skilled talent that we may not otherwise be able to fulfill with the current workforce," she said, "and I think it's going to restrict our ability to find the best people for the jobs."

Adam Kovacevich, a former Google executive and the CEO of Chamber of Progress, a left-leaning industry trade council, said that "Trump talks about attracting the world's best minds, but now he wants to impose a six-figure talent tax."

"We're not going to win the AI race if we slam the door on top talent," he added.

But Ira Mehlman, media director at the Federation of American Immigration Reform – a restrictionist group that supports a merit-based immigration system in which high-skilled workers have precedence over families – said Trump's announcements appear to be a step in that direction.

Mehlman said the proposed fees to the H-1B program are "significant enough that the employers will consider carefully whether this is somebody they really need."

Leaders of FAIR have previously spoken critically about Trump's proposed gold card program, saying it amounts to selling citizenship to the highest bidder. Mehlman said the group is seeking more details about Trump's executive order before rendering a judgment.

Amazon was the largest beneficiary of the program in fiscal year 2024, with 3,871 new H-1B employees, according to data compiled by the nonpartisan organization National Foundation for American Policy. Other tech giants – Google, Meta, Apple and IBM – rank among the top 10. Amazon founder Jeff Bezos owns The Washington Post.

Congress created the H-1B program in 1990 to address labor shortages. Critics on both the left and right say the program and lottery allows certain employers to exploit the system and underpay foreign workers to do jobs that American workers could fill.

Ron Hira, an associate professor of political science at Howard University who has researched the issue for decades, said that the \$100,000 fee as well as higher pay standards could help improve a system that allows Silicon Valley companies to profit off cheaper foreign-born labor.

"The idea here is to signal you're really bringing in somebody super specialized if an employer is willing to pay \$100,000," Hira said. "One of the criticisms is they're bringing in people with ordinary skills and the reason employers like them is not because they have special skills but because they're cheaper and they're indentured to their employer."

-THE WASHINGTON POST

## US H-1B Visa Clarification Eases Uncertainty, India's IT Industry Body Says

The United States specifying that higher fees for H-1B visa applications will be imposed only on new applications has helped reduce uncertainty, India's information technology industry body Nasscom said on Monday.

Indian and India-centric companies operating in the U.S. have significantly reduced their reliance on H-1B visas, Nasscom said, adding that it expects only

a marginal impact for the sector.

U.S. President Donald Trump imposed a \$100,000 fee for new H-1B visas from Sunday.

The White House has clarified that the order applies only to new applicants and not holders of existing visas or those seeking renewals, addressing some of the confusion over who would be affected.

The clarification that the fee is a one-time fee and not annual alleviates con-

cerns on business continuity, it said.

The fee, which is applicable from the next cycle of H-1B applications, which will be in 2026, gives companies time to step up skilling and hire more in the U.S.

Companies in India's \$283 billion IT sector, which derives about 57% of revenue from the U.S., send workers onshore to work on client projects. Even a one-time fee of \$100,000 for new visas is prohibitive, analysts and lawyers have said.

The number of H-1B workers is a "mere decimal point" of the overall U.S. workforce, Nasscom said.

IT companies have been reducing their reliance on H-1B visas.

"The industry is spending more than \$1 billion on local upskilling and hiring in the U.S., and the number of local hires has increased tremendously," Nasscom said.

-REUTERS



# Indian American Raj Goyle Steps Into NY State Comptroller Race

By ELA DUTT

**R**aj Goyle, entrepreneur, attorney and former state legislator, has thrown his hat into the ring to get the Democratic Party endorsement in his run for New York State Comptroller. He and several other candidates are pitted against current fellow Democratic incumbent Thomas P. DiNapoli who has held the office since 2007.

Democratic candidates who have declared they are in the race to date, include Drew Warshaw an affordable housing advocate; Adem Bunkedekko, former executive director of Coro New York who tried twice to win a seat to the US Congress from NY District ; And Goyle, a Kansas State Representative from 2007-2011.

DiNapoli has never had to face a primary opponent in any previous re-election, and has continued to be a popular official, according to Politico, which means it will be a hard-fought race for Goyle. But he has proven his ability as a come-from-behind candidate when he defeated a longtime incumbent Republican incumbent in Kansas to win a seat in that State Assembly in 2006.

Kicking off his campaign on Thursday, September 18, 2025, Goyle indicated he had a “new vision” for the office, “which for too long has been out of sight, out of mind” during the 2nd Trump term.

In his campaign launch video, available on LinkedIn, Goyle says he did not make this decision lightly, but felt “a true calling to re-engage in public service and be back on the ballot.”

Goyle and his wife Monica, moved to New York 15 years ago, but his immigrant parents immigrated to the US and Rochester, NY back in 1970. Brought up in the Midwest, Goyle has brought up his children in New York.

“The New York State Comptroller’s office is the most powerful office you have never heard of,” he says in the video. “It has enormous capacity to tackle the affordability crisis plaguing New York, return more money to people’s pockets and be a force to fight the national forces battling NY values. It can either be a rubber stamp for the status quo, or it can be a lever for fairness, accountability, and opportunity. My mission is clear: to give New Yorkers their power back,” says Goyle. He adds that he wants to offer Democrats “a blueprint for re-imagining governing using every lever of authority, and proving to voters that the party stands for bold action.”

The New York Comptroller is the chief fiscal officer of the state and his responsibilities include: Protecting taxpayer funds by uncovering waste, fraud and abuse; Managing the State pension fund of \$280 million and administering the State retirement system; returning unclaimed funds, exercising oversight on state and NYC local finances; training local government officials and school districts, as well as reviewing State contracts and payments.

A September 22 press release said Goyle plans to broaden the scope of the office of Comptroller to tackle New York State’s “most pressing issues” such as affordability.

“I’m the only candidate in the race who’s been both an elected official and a successful private sector CEO. I know how to manage money and fight—and win—tough battles,” he said, accusing the incumbent of reflecting “the wrong priorities for New York.”

Goyle added. “The Democratic Party is at a crossroads. We’re at 40-year lows in public trust because people don’t know what we stand for and what we can deliver. Nothing makes my blood boil more than wasting political power and money—and this office is a



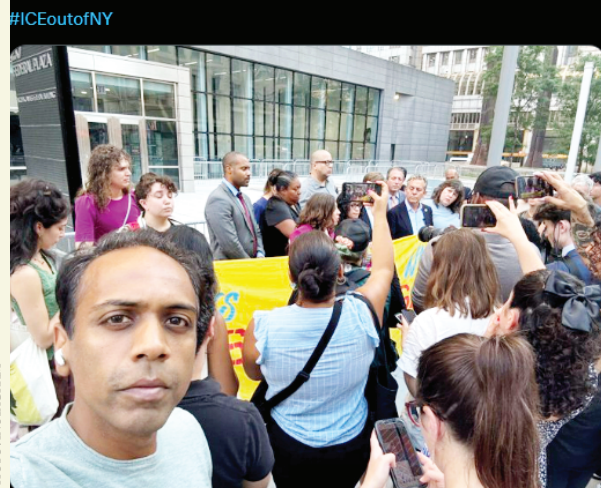
Raj Goyle, candidate for NY State Comptroller in 2026.



Raj Goyle announcing his candidacy for New York State Comptroller on September 18, 2025.

**Raj Goyle** @RajGoyle · Sep 18  
Today, we made it clear that we will not stand idly by as ICE rips our neighbors out of our communities.

Thanks to @bradlander, @JumaaneWilliams, and so many New York community leaders for leading this fight.



Raj Goyle taking a selfie with a crowd rallying against ICE actions.

perfect example of that waste. I’m going to put an end to that.”

With tongue-in-cheek, Goyle announced, “A Plan to Transform the Most Powerful Office You’ve Never Heard

Of” and his intention he adds, is to be “proactive” in wielding power.

“I grew up reading about FDR and JFK. The Democratic Party I am proud to be a member of once believed in using power to improve people’s lives. The New Deal and the Great Society created the foundations of New York’s safety net. We need Democrats who fight like that—and I’m going to show how we can do it again,” Goyle said.

Goyle’s platform centers on three core priorities which include “standing as a bulwark against Trumpism”, rebalancing the pension fund, and eliminating waste and excess to secure retirees’ futures.

He details four key elements he wants to focus on if elected:

**Investing in New York Housing:** Redirect pension investments from out-of-state developments to building affordable housing here in New York.

“The Comptroller should treat affordable housing as a core asset class that benefits New Yorkers,” said Goyle. **Delivering Childcare and Debt Relief for New Yorkers:**

Issue groundbreaking audit on the current economic hit to New York without universal child care

**Cracking Down on Exploitative Business Practices and Scams;** and

**Reducing Wall Street Waste.**

“Stop wasting billions on excessive asset manager fees for cookie-cutter approaches and instead use best-in-class software to identify proactive investments and maximize returns,” Goyle’s plan says.

**Rooting Out Corruption and Abuse.**

“Use the office’s 250 auditors and subpoena power to expose corruption in local government, investigate utility companies that gouge consumers, and root out other abuse taking place under the over \$250 billion in state spending overseen by the office.”

Acting as the state’s procurement watchdog, the Comptroller reviews and approves many state contracts and can withhold approval or reject agreements that contravene state law or labor protections, including those that would facilitate ICE raids, Goyle’s platform says.

“ICE raids are a threat to the New York economy and our people. We value our immigrants in New York,” Goyle said. “The Comptroller should be on the front lines of that fight, not just personally, but using the power of the office to make sure that we do not allow ICE and we don’t allow the federal government to trample the rights of New Yorkers.”

Goyle’s team points to what it describes as his “Proven Track Record of Fighting and Winning” which includes his 2006 victory from a Republican held district, to the Kansas House of Representatives, winning a re-election; then building a technology company in New York and raising four rounds of financing for it.

“I knocked 15,000 doors to win campaigns nobody thought I could win,” said Goyle. “It took me four years to sign my first client as a CEO. These experiences forge steel, and that’s what we need to transform this office and fight Trump.”

Most recently, Goyle is the founder of Phone Free New York, which is leading an initiative to ban phones in schools. He is the board chair of the think tank 5BORO Institute that aims to solve public policy issues facing the NYC Metro area.

A graduate of Duke University with a JD from Harvard Law School, Goyle has also worked as a civil rights lawyer at the American Civil Liberties Union and was CEO and co-founder of Bodhala, a legal artificial intelligence company which was acquired in 2021.





All Photos: Canva

# L-1 Visa Insights: How Policy Statements Support Intra-Company Transfers

IN MEMORIAM



Michael Phulwani



David Nachman



Ludka Zimovcak



Snehal Batra

The L-1 visa remains one of the most valuable tools for multinational companies seeking to transfer executives, managers, or specialized knowledge employees into the United States. It provides a legal pathway for global organizations to share expertise, establish new offices, and strengthen cross-border operations.

Recently, public statements by political leaders have drawn attention to the importance of bringing international expertise to the U.S. workforce. These statements reinforce why the L-1 program continues to play a vital role in supporting economic growth and innovation.

## What Is the L-1 Visa?

The L-1 visa allows multinational companies to transfer employees from foreign offices to U.S. offices. There are two primary categories:

- L-1A Visa: For executives and managers.
- L-1B Visa: For employees with specialized knowledge.

To qualify, the employee must have worked abroad for at least one year in the past three years for the same company or affiliate, and they must be coming to the U.S. to work in a qualifying managerial, executive, or specialized knowledge role.

## Why Political Commentary Matters

In a recent social media post, a political leader emphasized that when foreign companies bring large investments into the U.S., they should also bring experts to train and teach American workers in highly specialized industries such as semiconductors, computers, and shipbuilding.

Note: This statement was made on social media and does not represent official U.S. immigration policy. However, it reflects broader recognition of the value of knowledge transfer through programs like the L-1 visa.

## This sentiment mirrors the policy intent behind the L-1 visa program:

- Encouraging investment: U.S. immigration law recognizes that foreign companies investing in the U.S. benefit the economy.
- Promoting knowledge transfer: The L-1 visa facilitates training and mentorship, allowing U.S. employees to learn cutting-edge practices from global experts.
- Strengthening industries: The U.S. economy gains from exposure to advanced technologies and global business methods.

## Benefits for Employers and Employees

For companies:

- Expand operations in the U.S. quickly and efficiently.
- Transfer trusted leaders to oversee U.S. projects.
- Leverage specialized knowledge to support innovation.

For employees:

- Gain international work experience.
- Access opportunities for career growth in the U.S.
- Work on cross-border projects that shape industries.

## Challenges and Considerations

Despite its benefits, the L-1 visa process can be complex. Common challenges include:

By David H. Nachman, Esq

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- Proving specialized knowledge: Employers must document why the employee's expertise is essential.
- Demonstrating a qualifying relationship: Clear evidence is needed to show the U.S. and foreign entities are part of the same organization.
- Adhering to compliance standards: Employers must follow U.S. immigration laws carefully to avoid delays or denials.

## Conclusion

The L-1 visa program continues to align with U.S. economic and workforce policy goals. Political commentary supporting the idea of bringing global experts into the U.S. highlights the importance of intra-company transfers. For businesses, the L-1 visa is not just about moving employees — it is about strengthening U.S. operations, sharing knowledge, and investing in America's future.

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

### 1. Who qualifies for an L-1 visa?

Employees who have worked abroad for at least one year in the last three years in an executive, managerial, or specialized knowledge role for a qualifying company.

### 2. How long can someone stay in the U.S. on an L-1 visa?

L-1A visas are generally valid for up to 7 years, while L-1B visas are valid for up to 5 years.

### 3. Can L-1 visa holders apply for a green card?

Yes. L-1A visa holders often transition to permanent residency through the EB-1C green card category for multinational executives and managers.

### 4. Can family members accompany L-1 visa holders?

Yes. Spouses and children under 21 can obtain L-2 visas, and spouses may also apply for work authorization in the U.S.

### 5. What industries most benefit from the L-1 visa?

Sectors that require transferring specialized expertise, such as technology, finance, pharmaceuticals, and manufacturing, often use L-1 visas to bring key employees to the U.S.

## Contact Information

If you or your family members have any questions about how immigration and nationality laws in the United States may affect you, or if you want to access additional information about immigration and nationality laws in the United States or Canada, please do not hesitate to contact the immigration and nationality lawyers at NPZ Law Group.

You can reach us by emailing [info@visaserve.com](mailto:info@visaserve.com) or by calling us at 201-670-0006 extension 104. We also invite you to visit our website at [www.visaserve.com](http://www.visaserve.com) for more information.



# Overseas Friends Of BJP, Parikh Worldwide Media, And Community, Celebrate PM Modi's Birthday

BY A STAFF WRITER

**O**n Saturday, September 20, 2025, the Overseas Friends of Bharatiya Janata Party and Parikh Worldwide Media as well as diaspora community members held a celebration of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 75th birthday at the ITV Gold studios in Edison, NJ. Modi's birthday falls on September 17. The gathering was attended by community leaders, volunteers, and well-wishers from across New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

Several leaders who addressed the gathering, recounted the initiatives taken by PM Modi to grow India's economy and bring relief to the underprivileged. A video showing Modi's achievements over the last 11 years, was shown at the celebration. And a cake was cut by the leaders at the event, and shared with those present. Slogans were shouted extolling Modi and India. Food donations were also collected for the Community Food Bank of New Jersey (CFBNJ). The program also commemorated Telangana Liberation Day, which falls on September 17th, marking the historic 1948 integration of the Hyderabad state into the Indian Union under Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's leadership.

Gunjan Mishra, a volunteer and the emcee of the evening, welcomed attendees, expressing gratitude to all for joining over the weekend. Kalpana Shukla and Vilas Reddy Jambula sang the patriotic song, "Vande Mataram."

The main speakers at the event were Keynote Speaker Dr. Sudhir Parikh, chairman of Parikh Worldwide Media, Adapa Prasad, president of OFBJP-USA who came from Washington, D.C., Krishna Reddy, past president of OFBJP-USA, and leaders of the Telangana chapter of OFBJP – USA, among others.

"Today is a great day to celebrate beloved Prime Minister Narendra Modi. We all love him and most of us know him personally," said Dr. Parikh. "I had the privilege to know him since he was general secretary of BJP in the late '90s when he used to come with the former Prime Minister Atal ji and Advaniji to the UN General Assembly meetings." Dr. Parikh



Padma Shri recipient Dr. Sudhir Parikh, chairman of Parikh Worldwide Media/ITV Gold, addressing the gathering celebrating PM Modi's 75th birthday. The event was held on Sept. 20, 2025, in Edison, NJ



President of OFBJP-USA addressing the September 20, 2025, celebration of PM Modi's 75th birthday at the ITV Gold Studios in Edison, NJ.



Krishna Reddy during 75th Birthday celebration of Narendra Modi ji by OFBJP USA at Parikh Worldwide Media studios of ITV Gold.



Lamp Lighting ceremony during 75th Birthday celebration of Narendra Modi at ITV Gold studios Sept. 20, 2025.

recalled how the community held public functions for the then PM Atal Behari Vajpayee.

"Narendra bhai ji was very helpful and very good advisor," Dr. Parikh said. All supporters already know what Modi has done for India since he was elected in 2014, Dr. Parikh said. He wants to make India a developed country by 2047 like Europe or America." And since he was elected, India has become the 4th largest economy in the world, he noted. Dr. Parikh said that it was Modi who encouraged him to launch a television channel to broadcast Indian culture and news in America, which ultimately became ITV Gold. Today, the channel broadcasts

Doordarshan news daily in the U.S.

Adapa Prasad, in a lengthy speech, described Modi as a "priceless jewel" (Anmol Ratan), crediting him with making the aspirations of India's leaders since independence in 1947, into a reality today. "He already has a vision up to 2047 .... But how many people know that he has a vision of India for the next 500 years?" Prasad said.

Adapa said Modi was "working meticulously" to bring about change. "What he has accomplished across the board – it will take a whole day to list ...."

Speaking to ITV Gold, Dr. Parikh said the celebration was on behalf of the Indian diaspora which wished Modi a very

happy and healthy life.

Deepti Jain of OFBJP, wished Modi a long and healthy life, and thanked Dr. Sudhir Parikh and Dr. Sudha Parikh for hosting the event. "Narendrabhai is like my older brother. I remember the time he came to my home. May God give him courage and strength and many years to live," Jain said.

Suresh Patel, president of the Federation of Indian Seniors Associations of North America, FISANA, wished Modi a happy and healthy life, as did Rajan Singh of ITServe Alliance, Dr. Sudha Parikh, and others.

Kalpana Shukla of OFBJP, told ITV Gold about Modi, "Every day he comes up with a new initiative – just when we think he has done enough, he comes along with something new- which no one has thought of, but which is for the betterment of the people."

Krishna Reddy noted about Modi, "He transformed the country ... He alleviated poverty for millions and millions of people. And he immensely changed the infrastructure. Now, it's a new India, a completely new India."

Charan Singh from OFBJP, said, "We have seen how many achievements have been made, including for girls, farmers, soldiers. India is surging ahead in its economic power and defense power."

The event concluded with Anita Chadha singing a birthday song wishing PM Modi.



A video was shown about the achievements of PM Modi at the 75th birthday celebrations held in his honor in Edison, NJ.



Food Donation drive by OJ BJP-USA during 75th Birthday celebration of PM Narendra Modi



# FINALLY, THE ERA OF FREE IN FLIGHT WIFI IS NEAR

By Andrea Sachs

In 2025, WiFi feels more like an inalienable right than a premium amenity. For years, travelers have been able to find free connections at hotels, airports, coffee shops and museums around the world. You can check your email at McDonald's. Many airlines, though, have been holding out. Even when getting online is free, it can feel impossible to surf and stream. On a return trip to D.C. from Boston, I had free WiFi for every step of the journey, including the shuttle to Logan airport and the American Airlines gate. The plane, however, was a total disconnect. I had no service before takeoff and had to pay for internet once we were airborne. This type of experience will soon be history. The airline industry has been shifting toward complimentary WiFi, with Southwest the latest to join the movement. There is a future in sight where we can watch Doug the Pug without interruption at 35,000 feet. "Every airline has a little bit of a different timeline, but I think we're really at an inflection point where this is quickly becoming the industry norm to have decent or good WiFi on board and to offer it for free," said Sean Cudahy, senior aviation reporter at the Points Guy.

In 2017, JetBlue became the first U.S. carrier to introduce free, high-speed WiFi across its fleet, more than dozen years after Lufthansa debuted WiFi on a flight from Munich to Los Angeles. The German carrier charged \$10 for a half-hour, plus 25 cents per additional minute, or about \$30 for the entire journey, according to Viasat, a global technology company. The fee has fallen in the intervening years. U.S. airlines typically charge a flat rate between \$5 and \$10 per flight, or a monthly subscription fee for frequent fliers. Onboard amenities often include free messaging on such apps as iMessage and WhatsApp, plus access to free entertainment through the airline's app or website.

## In-flight networks will get faster

Some of the fastest and most efficient WiFi available in all altitudes will cost passengers nothing. Telecommunications experts say Starlink is the gold standard of satellite internet providers. Intelsat and Viasat, which many U.S. and foreign carriers are using, are also solid.

Kerry Baker, an industry analyst for the Americas with Ookla, a connectivity intelligence company, said internet connections have vastly improved as airlines switch from ground-to-air WiFi, which relies on earthbound towers, to gate-to-gate WiFi, which engages with a constellation of satellites orbiting Earth. The advanced technology promises high-speed and lower-latency connectivity from the moment you board the plane.

That means no more waiting for the plane to reach cruising altitude to book dinner reservations in your vacation destination or stream the latest season of "Emily in Paris." You should also experience fewer delays and disruptions online. Sally French, lead writer at NerdWallet, said she has been frustrated by in-flight WiFi on several occasions and has requested refunds from airlines.

"I've been in many situations where I've paid \$30 for WiFi and it has barely loaded," she said.

"I'll write to their customer service desk for a refund, and I always get it." Frequent travelers Cudahy and Baker have had better success. Cudahy said he has streamed YouTube videos or music while working on a flight. Baker said he watched the Baseball Hall of Fame induction ceremony live on an Alaska Airlines flight from Seattle to Denver.

"We were in a metal tube flying through space, watching the ceremony," said Baker, an Ichiro Suzuki fan. "It was amazing."

## Airlines adopt Starlink

Airplane WiFi doesn't normally receive high praise. This year, the American Customer Satisfaction Index added "quality of in-flight WiFi" to its annual survey of airlines. The newcomer took last - or 21st - place, ranking below such vilified categories as seat comfort, airline food and baggage handling.



Photos: Canva

Carriers also grant certain groups of passengers online privileges. T-Mobile customers can connect for no extra charge on Alaska Airlines, American, Delta or United. Southwest waives its fee for A-list Preferred members and Choice Extra customers. The model, however, is quickly changing to free WiFi for all. Southwest, which is undergoing a total transformation, announced that it will start offering free WiFi on Oct. 24, through a partnership with T-Mobile. The fleetwide perk will be available to members of its Rapid Rewards program, which is free to join. (To access free WiFi, most carriers will require users to sign up with their loyalty program.) Since 2023, Delta has been rapidly filling in its free WiFi coverage map. Travelers can connect on flights in the Lower 48 states, Hawaii, Canada, Mexico, Europe, Israel, West Africa and Latin America.

In June, Baker released a study that analyzed Speedtest data for airlines and their service providers. According to the data, in-flight WiFi was inferior to ground networks, but two airlines - Qatar and Hawaiian - stood out as top performers. Both use Starlink.

He said many other carriers, including Spirit, Delta, Breeze and American, are delivering reliable WiFi with respectable download speeds. Though passengers might not be able to access gigabyte-intensive video games or videos, they should be able to send emails and browse the Web. Even with the advancements in technology and telecommunications, hiccups will happen. In May, Benjamin Din, a lead travel writer with NerdWallet, tested Starlink on a United media flight.

During the 90-minute trip, he watched YouTube videos, streamed shows and listened to Spotify. Another passenger, he noted, was bravely playing "World of Warcraft." The experience was not seamless, however. Internet speeds sometimes slowed, he said, gumming up YouTube load time.

Baker said several factors could interrupt service, such as different international agreements covering satellites and spectrums, or satellite deserts. French said travelers should temper their expectations and, if possible, prepare their online workload before they board.

"If you have very complicated pages that you need to load, boot them up at the gate before you get on the flight, so you have that page open," she said. In addition, French said, do not limit your open tabs. She will have "100 tabs open," so she doesn't have to risk a reload. When first connecting, Cudahy recommends copying the web address that appears in the pop-up message box and plugging it into your browser.

"Usually, that's the easier way to do it," he said.

Also, sign up for the airline's loyalty program before boarding, and keep your membership number and password handy.

Otherwise, you could get stuck offline, staring at the flight map for the duration of the flight.

South Africa, Asia, Australia and New Zealand are next on deck, with the goal of completing the transformation by 2026. The airline said more than 900 aircraft and all domestic mainline flights are connected.

"Delta just finished outfitting a bunch of long-haul planes with its new technology," Cudahy said. "It's a methodical rollout."

Last year, Hawaiian Airlines unveiled free WiFi on its Airbus flights between the islands and the U.S. mainland, Asia and Oceania.

Its next project is to outfit its Boeing 787-9 fleet with Starlink, which is owned and operated by Elon Musk's SpaceX. The airline said it will not offer the amenity on its shorter interisland routes.

Alaska Airlines, which acquired Hawaiian last September, will incorporate Starlink technology into its aircraft next year and into 2027. United is a Starlink convert, too. It launched its first commercial flight with it on May 15, flying from Chicago to Detroit.

"United started with its regional jets," Cudahy said, "and then it'll keep expanding over the next couple of years."

Finally, American plans to install high-speed Viasat and Intelsat satellite connectivity on more than 500 regional planes by early 2026; nearly 300 planes have been completed. Beginning in January, the airline said, about 90 percent of its fleet will have free WiFi for AAdvantage members.

"American already has very fast WiFi across a lot of its fleet, so I think it's just a matter of pushing the button and shifting over to free," Cudahy said.

Though typically less generous with the extras, budget airlines have stepped up their WiFi game. On Spirit, passengers can browse or stream on all flights in the U.S., Caribbean and Latin America. The service is free for passengers who book a Spirit First package or are Free Spirit Gold members, the highest tier of its loyalty program. Similarly, Breeze Airways includes free WiFi in its Nicer and Nicest bundles.

Breeze Easy Visa credit cardholders are also eligible.



# Indian American Documentary Nominated For Two Emmy Awards

BY A STAFF WRITER

**D**ESTINATION OAK TREE ROAD, an acclaimed documentary film about the meteoric rise to global recognition of a New Jersey retail and residential neighborhood from years of decline, has been honored with two 2025 New York Emmy Award nominations.

The film, directed and narrated by broadcast journalist Rohit Vyas, received the nominations for Documentary Historical and Performer/Narrator categories. The recognitions were announced recently at the PIX 11 studios by the New York chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences (NY NATAS).

"I am honored that the hard work put into this production by our entire team has been recognized by esteemed peers in the industry," Vyas is quoted saying in the press release. "Having spent decades as a broadcast journalist covering the Indian and South Asian diaspora communities, this first documentary film project is particularly special. It is profoundly gratifying to see that the collective effort has made an impact," he added.

DESTINATION OAK TREE ROAD spotlights the history of Oak Tree Road, a mile-and-a-half-long, once-desolate but today bustling cultural and business district in New Jersey that stretches from Edison Township to Iselin in Woodbridge Township.

Officials and long-time residents interviewed in the film attribute the area's revitalization to the hard work and commitment of the Indian American community. The production delves into how the community's efforts, in spite of numerous early obstacles, brought Oak Tree Road wide recognition and attracted investment from multinational corporations.

Nominated alongside Rohit Vyas are fellow producers,

PHOTO: COURTESY VYAS PRODUCTIONS



Broadcast journalist Rohit Vyas.

14-time Emmy Award Winner Janice Selinger, Actress/ Sports Host Aditi Vyas and Arts Advocate Isha Vyas. Also nominated for the project is Joe Lee, former NJPBS Vice President and General Manager as the Executive in Charge of Production and Steve Stone as Director of Photography. The film, which first aired on NJPBS, is a co-production of Vyas Productions and NJ PBS/The WNET Group. It is currently available to stream on PBS.

"The Asian Indian community in New Jersey is one of the largest in the country," said Rohit Vyas. "This documentary aims to reflect its history, challenges, and successes through the microcosm of one small but impactful area. Most importantly, it is a quintessentially American story. Work hard, achieve success, and live the American Dream."

The 68th Annual New York Emmy Awards takes place in New York City on October 11.

## Announcement From BAPS North America: Case Dismissed By Justice Department

MANDIR NEWS

Thursday September 18, 2025

STATEMENT

**T**he BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha in the United States welcomes the decision by the United States Department of Justice and the United States Attorney's Office for the District of New Jersey to close their investigation of BAPS and the creation of BAPS Swaminarayan Akshardham.

The United States Government's decision to end this investigation sends a clear and powerful message in support of what our organization has maintained from the outset: that BAPS Swaminarayan Akshardham—a place of peace, service, and devotion—was built through the love, dedication, and volunteer service of thousands of devotees from all walks of life.

The Hindu community in the United States represents a comparatively newer faith tradition in this country. Yet the fact that our community came together to create such a landmark is a testament to the values that make



PHOTO: PROVIDED BY BAPS

America great. BAPS Swaminarayan Akshardham stands as an enduring symbol of how the community has become an integral part of the fabric of the United States.

Our spiritual teachings have long emphasized that in the face of adversity, one must maintain faith and respond with cooperation, humility, and a commitment to truth and understanding. As our scriptures have guided us for thousands of years, "Satyameva Jayate" or "truth will always prevail."

This period has been challenging for our fellowship, but with the grace of Bhagwan Swaminarayan and the blessings of our spiritual leader, His Holiness Mahant Swami Maharaj, we emerge with renewed

strength and deepened faith—in God and in the enduring spirit of this nation.

We warmly invite all to visit BAPS Swaminarayan Akshardham and experience the art, traditions, devotion, and spirit of service that imbue every corner of this sacred space. We pray for the continued well-being and betterment of all.

## Maestro Amjad Ali Khan Leads Sarod Quintet At Kennedy Center: Three Generations, One Legacy

BY A STAFF WRITER

**D**C South Asian Arts Council Inc in Collaboration with Embassy of India presented Sarod Quintet- Three Generations, One legacy, September 17, 2025, at the Kennedy Center.

Led by maestro Amjad Ali Khan, the program represented the 6th, 7th and 8th generation of an unbroken chain of musicians coming together on stage and performing together, "Keeping India's ethos of traditions and legacies alive," the Kennedy Center program announcement said.

The concert features Sarod Grand Master Amjad Ali Khan and his sons Amaan Ali Bangash and Ayaan Ali Bangash on Sarods. They are joined by Ayaan's 13 year old Twins Zohaar and Abeer.

The DC South Asian Arts Council Inc. (DC-SAACI) is a registered non-profit organization which declares its mission is to provide opportunities to South Asian artists to showcase talent via films, dance, books and art.

At the Kennedy Center event, according to South Asian Herald, Khan said he was devoting the program to India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi on his 75th birthday which coincided with the date of the Kennedy Center event.

Performing since he was 6 years old, Amjad Ali Khan is considered among the greatest sarod players in the world in the 20th century. He is the recipient of numerous awards and recognitions including the Padma Vibhushan from the Government of India, the United Nations, as well as from cities in the US.



PHOTO: KENNEDY-CENTER.ORG

Sarod maestro Amjad Ali Khan and family.



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04/18/25 - 04/17/26 -SL

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08/29-09/26 - SD

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09/05-09/26 SD

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08/08/25 - 10/03/25 -SH

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09/26/2026 - 09/18/2026-SL

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09/12-10/03 SL

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09/12-10/10 SD

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