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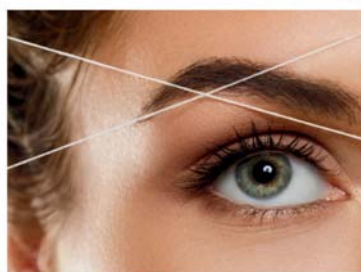
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Is The Past Week A Turning Point For Trump's Second Term?

By KAREN TUMULTY

Recent days have brought signs of something that might have been all but unimaginable just a few months ago: Could it be that President Donald Trump's grip on the Republican Party is slipping?

One of the most startling indicators was the announcement Friday night (November 21, 2025) by Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-Georgia) that she is resigning her House seat rather than allowing herself to be treated by Trump like what she called "a battered wife hoping it all goes away and gets better."

For years, one of the most stalwart and high-profile of Trump's hard-right backers, Greene has more recently broken with him. That included on issues such as health care and the government shutdown, as well as pressing for the release of Justice Department files on convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein.

For her apostasies, Greene has become a target of the president, who has repeatedly attacked her on his social media platform, calling her "a traitor" and "a ranting Lunatic" who has gone "Far Left." Early Saturday, he wrote on social media that her decision to quit Congress was based on "PLUMMETING Poll Numbers, and not wanting to face a Primary Challenger with a strong Trump Endorsement."

But while Greene is leaving Washington, she made it clear that she does not plan to vanish from politics.

Near the conclusion of her four-page statement announcing her decision to step down from Congress was this warning, written in Trump's own run-on and creatively capitalized style: "When the common American people finally realize and understand that the Political Industrial Complex of both parties is ripping this country apart, that not one elected leader like me is able to stop Washington's machine from gradually destroying our country, and instead the reality is that they, common Americans, The People, possess the real power over Washington, then I'll be here by their side to rebuild it."

All of this came days after what has thus far been the most dramatic collective act of rebellion by Trump's foot soldiers on Capitol Hill: a near-unanimous vote by both chambers of the GOP-controlled Congress to force the Justice Department to make its files on Epstein public.

For weeks, the president had fiercely resisted the move, insisting the push to release the files was nothing more than a "Democrat hoax."

Speaker Mike Johnson (R-Louisiana) fell in line, adjourning the House during the government shutdown in part in an apparent effort to avoid having to schedule a vote. Senate Majority Leader John Thune (R-South Dakota) was noncommittal, waiting to see whether the House would force his hand.

Only four House Republicans, including Greene, had been willing to oppose Trump publicly on his resistance

PHOTO: ALLISON ROBERT/FOR THE WASHINGTON POST



President Donald Trump has lately stumbled in trying to keep his party leaders in line.

to bringing the matter to a vote. Meanwhile, the MAGA base, with a drumbeat from its online influencers, had been agitating for the release of whatever the government has on Epstein.

But once the requisite majority of House members had signed a petition that would force the vote, rank-and-file Republicans faced a choice: Would they stand with Trump or the wishes of their constituents? Seeing the coming stampede, Trump abruptly changed course and said he would support releasing the files.

Rep. Thomas Massie (R-Kentucky) had joined Rep. Ro Khanna (D-California) to introduce the bill in July and then lead the signature-gathering exercise to force a vote. Massie said in an interview that his own party's leadership in the House has ceded too much to Trump.

"Basically, Mike Johnson has handed the keys to the House of Representatives to the president, and we took the keys back this week," Massie said. "They weren't driving very well, and we were able. We didn't crash the car. We got it right to the destination."

But he noted that the Epstein controversy presented a unique set of political circumstances, one in which Trump was at odds with not only the majority in the country but with his MAGA supporters.

Indeed, Trump as a candidate had elevated the unresolved questions surrounding Epstein as an exemplar of how the elites operate – only to find himself accused of doing the same thing.

The president was once a friend of Epstein, who pleaded guilty in 2008 to state charges of soliciting a minor for prostitution and served a 13-month jail sentence. But Trump said they had a falling out decades ago. Trump has insisted he knew nothing of the activities. Epstein was later arrested in July 2019 on charges of sexually trafficking girls. The financier was found dead by suicide in his prison cell the following month.

"Will we be able to do it again? I don't know," Massie said. "It won't ever come together like this, where you have an issue that's so defensible, and it's bipartisan, and

it's something the president campaigned on."

Still, the stirrings of possible rebellion in Trump's party have come against a backdrop of setbacks, including a Democratic sweep of this month's elections; Trump's slumping poll numbers, including on issues such as crime and immigration, where he and the Republicans have enjoyed an advantage; and a growing perception among voters that he has not delivered on his central campaign promise of lowering the cost of living.

For Republicans trying to hold onto their majorities in both houses of Congress, all of those things suggest the makings of a rout in next year's midterm elections.

But Democrats in Congress say their GOP colleagues have not yet reached a true breaking point with Trump.

"It's way premature to declare that Trump's lock on Republicans in Congress has been broken, and I know I've seen that narrative beginning," Sen. Chris Van Hollen (D-Maryland) said in an interview.

Polarization and gerrymandering have left few congressional seats truly competitive between the parties. For the vast majority of Republican incumbents, survival "means winning a Republican primary, and Donald Trump's endorsement still is make-or-break," Van Hollen said.

What distinguishes some of the breakaway Republicans, including both Massie and Greene, is that they have built their own identities and constituencies separate from Trump.

Early in her career, Greene embraced the fringe theories of the QAnon movement, which were built on baseless claims that Trump was secretly battling a cabal of "deep state" actors who sexually trafficked children and worshiped Satan. She also helped spread tropes that California wildfires had been started by Jewish-operated space lasers, that school shootings were staged and that 9/11 was an inside job.

Greene has since disavowed those statements. And last weekend, she did something truly remarkable in the never-back-down, never-apologize ethos Trump has fostered in the GOP.

In an interview with CNN's Dana Bash, Greene lamented Trump was using words that "can radicalize people against me and put my life in danger." Bash pointed out that Greene had never spoken out against that kind of rhetoric until it was turned on her.

"I think that's fair criticism. And I would like to say humbly I'm sorry for taking part in the toxic politics. It's very bad for our country," Greene said. "I've been working on this a lot lately – to put down the knives in politics."

If Greene is sincere in her conversion, that may turn out to be a lonely cause. Because, for the time being at least, the GOP is still Trump's party."

-THE WASHINGTON POST



Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-Georgia) had been one of the lawmakers leading the charge to force the Justice Department to release the files it had on convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein.



Congressman Ro Khanna, D-California, speaking at the press conference on Capitol Hill, surrounded by some of the Epstein abuse survivors, September 3, 2025.



Rep. Thomas Massie (R-Kentucky) says his party's leadership in the House has ceded too much to Trump.

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WHERE TO WATCH?

Scientists May Have Solved Why This Ancient, Advanced Indus Valley Civilization Vanished

By KASHA PATEL

At its peak, the ancient Indus River Valley civilization featured gridded streets, multistory brick homes, flush toilets and bustling shops. Its people traded gold, precious stones and items such as bronze carts along the region's waterways. Others carved detailed human figurines and molded clay toys. They grew wheat, barley and cotton, and crafted tools to bring water for crops from nearby rivers.

The valley, largely located in modern-day Pakistan and northwest India, hosted one of the most advanced societies at the time, along with Mesopotamia and ancient Egypt. And then – with little signs of fighting or power struggles – it mysteriously disappeared.

Today's scientists have been trying to explain the puzzling downfall of Harappa, one of the valley's largest cities, by looking at the environmental conditions. In a study published Thursday (November 27, 2025) in the journal *Communications Earth & Environment*, an international team used paleoclimate data and computer models to re-create the climate during the civilization's existence between 3000 and 1000 B.C. They found four intense droughts reduced rainfall and dried up waterways and soils, which probably caused Harappan residents to relocate frequently.

"The most surprising finding is that the Harappan decline was driven not by a single catastrophic event, but by repeated, long, and intensifying river droughts lasting centuries," said Hiren Solanki, lead author at the Indian Institute of Technology at Gandhinagar, India.

Of course, the droughts alone wouldn't be the sole reason for the downfall, said co-author Balaji Rajagopalan, who researches hydrology at the University of Colorado at Boulder. But he said if there is less food and a weak governance structure, for instance, then severe successive droughts can push a society "more and more toward decline and dispersement."

Even so, the civilization lasted a very long time despite the persistent drought conditions – providing a lesson on adaptation relevant to communities facing difficult environmental conditions today, the researchers said.

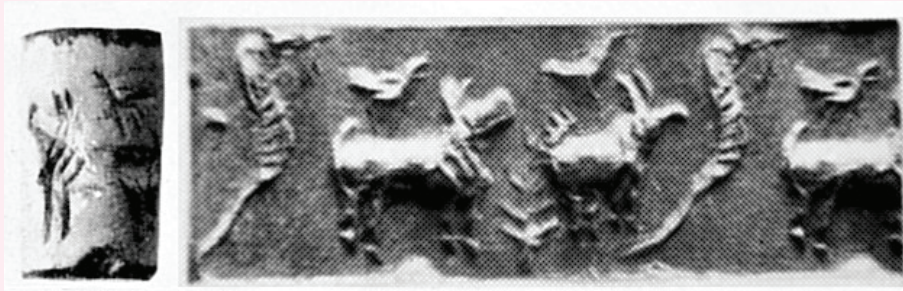
"The Harappans switched crops, diversified their trade, and relocated settlements to make them more resilient to climate change," Solanki said. "This underscores the importance of proactive planning, diversified water sources, and resilient agricultural systems in the warming world."

Over about 2,000 years, Harappan settlements became more concentrated at sites closer to water – first around tributaries, and then further west in clusters near the Indus River.

To understand the broader context of these moves, the team simulated the climate conditions at the time. They combined the model results with environmental clues, including stalactites and stalagmites in two Indian caves and water level records of five Indian lakes.

They determined that between about 3000 and 2475 B.C., vigorous monsoons brought a lot of rain across the region and created much wetter conditions than today.

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Indus Valley civilization cylinder seal.



Archaeological artifacts recovered from Khirsara, Indus Valley Civilization. Anil K. Pokharia, Rajesh Agnihotri, Shalini Sharma, Sunil Bajpai, Jitendra Nath, R. N. Kumaran, Bipin Chandra Negi.



Well at Indus Valley Civilization, Rupnagar, Punjab, India.

Rajagopalan said the robust monsoon activity can be explained by a cooler tropical Pacific Ocean at that time (La Niña-like conditions), which created conditions favorable to a wetter South Asia. Accordingly, settlements congregated around those rain-heavy areas.

But he said the tropical Pacific began to warm in subsequent centuries, creating drier conditions that decreased rainfall and increased temperatures. Drought ensued.

The team identified four droughts – each lasting more than 85 years – between about 2425 and 1400 B.C. The third drought, peaking around 1733 B.C., ranked as the most severe: It lasted about 164 years, reduced annual rainfall by 13 percent and affected nearly the entire region.

Overall, the team found the temperature increased by 0.5 degrees Celsius (0.9 degrees Fahrenheit) and rainfall decreased between 10 and 20 percent.

The rainfall changes had profound effects on the ground, co-author Vimal Mishra, also at IIT Gandhinagar, and his colleagues said. Using hydrologic models, they showed lakes and shallow waterbodies called playas shrank, river flow decreased and soil dried up.

"That means you cannot move your boats and barges," Rajagopalan said. "If you're dependent on trade, suddenly you can only move your goods at only a certain time of the year. You might have to find deeper parts of the river."

Agriculture also became tougher in central regions away from waterways, Solanki said.

Those changes pushed people to move and consolidate, which then may have contributed to the shrinking or decline of the society.

The research is a "significant step ahead in studying hydroclimate's role in the evolution of ancient civilizations," said Liviu Giosan, a geoscientist at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution who was not involved in the study.

Previous research, including his own, used limited data from caves or minerals to ascertain rainfall patterns, but the new study puts all the records together and shows the water cycle at a larger scale. The methodology could help illuminate patterns in other ancient cultures dependent on rain and rivers, such as Mesopotamia, Egypt and China.

"There are unexpected surprises, such as how droughts influenced settlement location choice in the Indus territory, which provides a framework testable in the field by archaeologists," Giosan said.

"It is remarkable that they survived so long under repeated climate crises," he added. "A lesson for us? Prolonged climatic stress weakens society and could lead to collapse if not prepared."

It's unclear if modern communities could face a fate similar to the vanished Indus civilization. Pakistan and India are experiencing temperature increases, as did their predecessors, but Rajagopalan said understanding the future variability of ocean temperatures in the tropical Pacific will have major implications on rainfall patterns.

"One of the big million-dollar questions is, under a warmer climate, what is the tropical Pacific going to do?" he said. "That's where much of the cutting-edge research is in climate."

-THE WASHINGTON POST



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Trump Says Patel Doing Great Job, Denies Considering Ouster

By KATE SULLIVAN

President Donald Trump denied a report that he was considering removing FBI Director Kash Patel amid a string of controversies.

"No, he's doing a great job, I think," Trump told reporters Tuesday aboard Air Force One.

MS NOW reported earlier Tuesday that Trump was considering replacing Patel with FBI co-Deputy Director Andrew Bailey, as concerns swirled over the director's social media posts during high-profile investigations and the use of a government jet to visit his girlfriend.

"This story is completely made up," White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt responded on X.

Bailey, the former Missouri attorney general, has for months been seen as a



FBI Director Kash Patel.

possible replacement-in-waiting for both Patel and his other deputy, Dan Bongino, known more for their conservative political commentary than law enforcement experience.

The FBI did not immediately respond

to a request for comment on the report. A spokesperson for MS NOW said the organization stood by its reporting.

Trump also praised Patel in an interview with Fox News Radio last week, saying he had "a lot of confidence" in the

director.

Still, Patel's conduct has come under intensified scrutiny in recent weeks. The New York Times reported the FBI dispatched a SWAT team to serve as a protective detail for Alexis Wilkins, his girlfriend and a country music singer. Patel has used government jets to visit Wilkins and for recreational travel, including a golf trip. The director defended the practice as standard in order to maintain access to secure communications equipment.

Legal experts have also pointed to instances where Patel posted information about ongoing cases on social media, including during the search for the man accused of assassinating conservative activist Charlie Kirk and what the FBI described as a planned Halloween terror attack in Michigan.

-BLOOMBERG

Republican Sharanjit Singh Thind Announces Run For Congress From NY's District 18

By PARVEEN CHOPRA, SPECIAL TO NEWS INDIA TIMES

Sharanjit Singh Thind filed his candidacy in September 2025 for the US House of Representatives from New York's District 18 in the Hudson Valley. A lifelong Republican and Sikh born in Punjab, India, he believes this Democrat-held seat is ready to flip. His campaign focuses on promoting business, making jobs AI-proof, defending family values, and prioritizing community safety. With extensive experience in both the private and public sectors, he sees himself as the best candidate to represent this district north of Manhattan.

In a wide-ranging conversation over coffee, Thind told me that he believes he has the blessing of the party's establishment. Before filing his nomination papers in September, he met with New York Republican State Committee Chairman Ed Cox—son-in-law of President Nixon—to discuss the party's support. At the time, Thind was told that there were no other Republican candidates in the fray and that the 18th Congressional District (CD-18) would be a strong place for him to run. "But, even with the best intentions and backing of the party leadership, primaries are unavoidable and even healthy," said Thind.

Thind describes himself as fully familiar with CD-18 and notes that he is in close contact with local party leadership, thanks to Chairman Cox. "I am getting a very enthusiastic response when I interact with constituents of all stripes and backgrounds," he added.

While agreeing that the incumbent, Patrick Ryan, defeated Alison Esposito (R) by 14 points in 2024, Thind points to a changed environment that would help him emerge victorious on November 3, the election day in 2026. "People were fed up seeing hotels and motels teeming with illegal migrants housed in the Hudson Valley under President Biden and Mayor Adams. Under President Trump, that threat to law and order has been cleared."

The recent election of self-declared socialist and freebies-promising Zohran Mamdani as Mayor of New York City is worrying all, Thind claims. In sharp contrast are Trump's America First, pro-business policies, which he supports as do most upstate New York voters. In the context, Thind talks passionately about what has made



Sharanjit Singh Thind.

America the world's largest economy and a magnet for the world's best. The answer is: by putting business first. To do that, you have to know about business, which he does, having run media and real estate businesses.

APPEALING POLICY PLATFORM

The policy platform Thind is building is solely to serve his constituents he says. "The biggest challenge in the coming months and years," Thind projects, "is that many, many jobs will evaporate under the AI heat. I am not against AI or automation, but I will make the AI behemoth companies accountable, to make them funnel back some of their profits to retrain the retrenched workers." Similarly, banks should be held accountable for the financial scams happening under their nose that upend so many seniors' lives.

Promoting tourism in the picturesque Hudson Valley is a no-brainer. "I will give tourism full attention to attract high-paying visitors and create jobs," says Thind while pointing to a recent Netflix series, 'Four Seasons', which was shot there and stars Steve Carell and Tina Fey. With his business acumen and the region's appeal, he is confident that more entertainment projects will follow.

Thind can boast a rich resume that highlights his multifarious career. Armed with an MBA and a journalism degree, Thind arrived in America at the cusp of this century. Over the years, he worked for many reputed companies, founded his own ad agency in Manhattan, and has been Editor-Publisher of 'The South Asian Insider' for almost two decades. Recently, he became an author with "The Beginning – Mad Men of Nu Way Advertising," highlighting his experience at the helm of the once-thriving ad agency on Madison Avenue.

EXPERIENCE IN GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

From 2012, he has worked with the government in one capacity or another. He served as a Commissioner on the Nassau County Human Rights Commission until 2018. He also worked with the Receiver of Taxes office in the Town of Hempstead, the largest township in America.

In electoral politics, Thind has gained valuable experience helping others run for office. "From local councilman, mayoral to state senate and assembly to DA to Congress races, I have been very closely involved, spending long hours strategizing policy. I have helped raise and also personally contributed to the campaigns of quite a few races," he says. Twice, he has received the Congressional Excellence award. Running for Congress, Thind insists, he also draws on the perspective he gained as an editor on how government is run and what needs to be done to fix what is broken.

To kick-start his campaign, Thind will put his own money into it and seek support from small donors (the maximum individual contribution is \$3,535). He clarifies that no government matching funds are available for Congressional races. Because CD18 is flippable and can help the GOP retain control of the House after 2026, Thind expects "America-loving, like-minded" individuals to help lift his campaign to victory.

Thind owns a property in the Catskills and is in the process of signing a lease for a house in Saugerties, in Ulster County. He lives with his wife and two sons on Long Island.

Thind's appeal is straightforward: Elect a representative who will bring more jobs and protect those jobs from AI; bring more tourism to the Hudson Valley; expand healthcare benefits; protect family values; and pass laws to save senior citizens from scams.

Congressional Candidate Neil Khot Outlines Vision for Revitalizing Illinois' 8th District

NEIL KHOT
IS FIGHTING
FOR IL-08

NEIL
FOR CONGRESS



By BHAILAL M. PATEL

Chicago, IL — In a comprehensive and candid discussion, Illinois congressional candidate Neil Khot sat down for an exclusive interview to talk about his background, priorities, and plans for the future of the 8th District. Khot, a first-generation American and self-made entrepreneur who built a business employing more than 200 people, is running as a Democrat with a pledge to restore the American Dream through pragmatic, results-oriented leadership.

Khot stressed that he is “not a career politician,” describing himself instead as a community-based leader shaped by hard work and lived experience. His campaign, he said, centers on expanding economic opportunity for a district that has endured the exits of major employers, including Motorola, Sears, and AT&T.

Jobs as the Top Priority

When asked about his central focus, Khot did not hesitate:

“My number one priority is to bring back well-paying jobs.”

He emphasized his intention to attract new industries, spark innovation, and rebuild the region’s employment base through strategic partnerships and economic revitalization.

Standing Out in a Crowded Primary

With eight Democrats currently vying for the nomination, Khot believes his story and experience set him apart. He arrived

in America with just \$300 and eventually built a thriving business—an achievement he credits to grit, opportunity, and the support of his community.

He cited several defining qualities:

- His perspective as a first-generation immigrant
- A deep understanding of the value of opportunity
- A commitment to protecting the American Dream
- A record as a job creator
- A determination to oppose political extremism

All the candidates are good people,” Khot said, “but I bring the real lived experience of the immigrant story and the business acumen needed to get results.”

Engaging a Diverse Electorate

Khot described a multi-pronged strategy to reach voters across IL-08, combining digital outreach on Meta platforms and X with traditional door-to-door canvassing. If elected, he plans to host monthly virtual town halls to ensure transparency and regular communication.

Growing List of Endorsements

Khot has secured several high-profile endorsements, including:

- Congressman Shri Thanedar (Michigan)
- Mayor Tom Dailly (Schaumburg, IL)
- Alderman David Moore (Chicago, IL)
- Americans 4 Hindus
- Actress Taylor Treadwell

He also noted that additional endorsements from national and local leaders are

currently in discussion.

Campaign Finance and Momentum

In the interview, Khot shared that his campaign has raised \$750,000, with \$480,000 cash on hand, positioning him as a leading contender in the race. His support among Hindu American voters continues to fuel grassroots momentum as he prepares for the final stretch into Q4 2025.

An Experienced Team Behind the Campaign

Khot’s operation includes a ten-member core staff and over 25 volunteers, guided by nationally recognized strategists such as Bill Hyers, known for his work with Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Sen. Tammy Duckworth. The team leads the district in field organizing, digital strategy, and fundraising.

Policy Vision: Healthcare, Economy, Climate, and More

Healthcare:

Khot proposes major reforms centered on preventive care, expanded medical residency slots, and lowering prescription drug costs by allowing direct manufacturer purchases.

Economy & Job Creation:

He plans to leverage the district’s strategic advantages — including major highways, rail access, and proximity to O’Hare International Airport — to attract national and international employers.

Climate & Energy:

His climate platform includes investments in resilient infrastructure, support for solar, wind, and nuclear energy, and an expansion of rooftop solar programs.

Voting Rights:

Khot supports both election integrity and accessible voting systems, including mail-in ballots, stating, “Voting is a right and a duty.”

Support for Seniors & Families:

He emphasized protecting Medicare and Social Security, expanding universal pre-K, and improving support structures for caregivers. He cited admiration for Commissioner Martin O’Malley’s work on senior issues.

Commitment to Transparency

If elected, Khot promises open-door district and DC offices, consistent communication, and monthly virtual town halls. His primary benchmark, he said, will be simple: “The number of people we can help.”

A Personal Story That Fuels His Mission

Reflecting on his journey, Khot said: “I came to America with \$300 and a dream. I built a life, a family, and a business here. But today, those opportunities are slipping out of reach for many young Americans. I want to restore that pathway to success.”

He described his greatest strength as his open-mindedness and eagerness to learn, while acknowledging that his passion sometimes causes him to hyper-focus on certain issues. In his first 100 days, he plans to prioritize bringing new companies and innovation hubs to the district.

-Advertorial

AAPI Holds Successful Inaugural Ayurveda & Wellness Retreat In Fairfield, Iowa

BY A STAFF WRITER

The American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI) held its first-ever Ayurveda & Wellness Retreat, hosted at The Raj Resort and Maharishi International University (MIU) in Fairfield, Iowa. The sold-out event, held from November 12–16, 2025, brought together physicians and their families for an immersive experience blending the ancient wisdom of Ayurveda with the rigor of modern medical science.

“It’s both remarkable and ironic that it took us this long to formally embrace Ayurveda, a tradition nurtured here at The Raj for over 30 years,” noted AAPI President Dr. Amit Chakrabarty. “We’re thrilled to finally bridge this gap and offer our members a handcrafted retreat designed to rejuvenate body, mind, and spirit.”

Limited to just 25 couples so as to offer personalized care, the retreat included Ayurvedic therapies like Abhyanga (herbal oil massage) and Shirodhara (warm oil therapy)—as well as daily yoga, meditation, and Pranayama sessions. “It’s rare to find a program that so seamlessly integrates scientific rigor with ancient wisdom,” said Dr. Amit Shah, one of the retreat’s organizers.

Indian musicians and dancers performed in the evening, and the culinary experience featured Satvik cuisine prepared by Indian chefs.

AAPI’s vision for the retreat was clear: to provide physicians with evidence-based knowledge of Ayurveda while fostering personal renewal. Attendees consulted with Ayurveda Vaidyas, explored Transcendental Meditation (TM)—endorsed



Some 25 couples of the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin, AAPI, enjoyed an Ayurveda & Wellness Retreat at The Raj Resort in Fairfield, Iowa, November 12-16, 2025.

by the American Heart Association and American Medical Association for managing hypertension—and attended presentations on longevity, vitality, and daily wellness routines. “This retreat is about addressing the growing stress and burnout among medical professionals,” emphasized Dr. Chakrabarty. “We want our members to leave feeling truly revitalized.”

On November 15–16, MIU faculty led Continuing Medical Education (CME) sessions were held based on Ayurveda’s “consciousness-based” approach, the

foundational principles of Vata, Pitta, and Kapha, dietary and lifestyle recommendations for disease prevention, and integrative strategies for managing inflammation and chronic conditions. “These sessions are designed to equip physicians with practical tools to incorporate Ayurveda into their clinical practice, enhancing patient care through holistic modalities,” explained Dr. Arti Prasad, a key organizer.

A highlight of the retreat was the classical music performance by Dr. Aarti Pandya. Other cultural items included a Bharatnatyam recital by Rebecca, a tran-

scendental meditation therapist raised in Fairfield.

AAPI said it secured an all-inclusive package for members at less than half the standard rate, making the elite experience accessible. “With 15 spots already booked before the official announcement, it’s clear that interest in integrative health among medical professionals is surging,” commented Dr. Shah.

Beyond wellness treatments, participants toured The Raj Panchakarma facility and MIU, a fully accredited institution offering consciousness-based education. The visit to the Golden Domes at MIU, where hundreds of TM practitioners meditate together, was described as “a scientifically measurable positive influence on the environment,” by MIU faculty. Guests also enjoyed shopping at the Maharishi Ayurveda Products and Gift Store.

Founded 33 years ago and built according to Vedic architecture (Vastu), The Raj pioneered the integration of Ayurvedic medicine in the U.S. Retreat organizers—including owners Candace and Rogers Badgett and MIU faculty are committed to hold the retreats.

“We will continue to uphold and promote this tradition in the years ahead, showcasing the timeless wisdom of India’s ancient medical heritage,” promised Dr. Chakrabarty, adding, “This is more than just a retreat; it’s a new era for holistic health initiatives in the U.S. We invite physicians and their families to join us on this ongoing journey toward integrated well-being.”

For more information or to reserve a spot at future events, visit www.aapiusa.org.

GOPIO OC (Orange County) Chapter Re-Launched In Southern California

BY A STAFF WRITER

GOPPIO International, the Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (www.gopio.net), welcomed the re-launch of its new chapter GOPIO-OC (Orange County) California, to a house full of 55 guests, on Nov 16, 2025 at the India Gate Restaurant, Tustin, CA.

Hosted by its former president, now Chairman Amrit Bhandari, current president Hark Vasa, and GOPIO Orange County Executive Committee, there was much pent-up excitement and celebration as in the opening of a new chapter. GOPIO OC, with its brand-new Executive Committee welcomed the guests in an initial meet and greet hour with tea and refreshments, prior to the formal information exchange



Lamp lighting ceremony of the GOPIO-Orange County re-launch.

session, followed by lunch and co

The key objectives of this gathering were to:

1. Raise awareness of what GOPIO is, its mission, and goals
2. Introduce the newly invigorated Executive Team, and
3. Invite guests to become members to further GOPIO’s work

Attending as speakers were top three of GOPIO International Executive Team, namely: — — — Prakash Shah, President, along with his wife Rajul Shah. Kewal Kanda, Vice President and local community leader, and J Nami Kaur, Global Ambassador.

The event opened with a Welcome address by Amrit Bhandari, Chairman of GOPIO-OC, introducing the above dignitaries and setting the tone of the meeting.

ગુજરાત ટાઈમ્સ
Gujarat Times



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Rep. Krishnamoorthi Gets Another Major Endorsement In Run For Senator

BY A STAFF WRITER

Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi, D-Illinois, secured yet another important endorsement in his run for the US Senate – Former Lieutenant Governor of Illinois Sheila Simon who announced her support for the Indian American candidate in a video released December 1, 2025.

“Raja is the kind of leader who listens to and fights for every Illinois community, not just the ones closest to Chicago,” said Former Lt. Governor Simon. “Raja is ready to not just represent the state of Illinois, but to be the kind of national leader we need right now. He is primed to step into the traditions of some amazing U.S. Senators — Dick Durbin, Barack Obama, and my favorite, my dad.”

Simon served as Illinois's 46th Lieutenant Governor from 2011 to 2015, where she led on key issues including education policy and securing funding for rape crisis centers. Her public service career includes four years as a Jackson County prosecutor, four years on the Carbondale City Council, and service on the Illinois Reform Commission. Today, she serves as Acting Associate Dean and Associate Professor of Law at the Southern Illinois Simmons School of Law. She is the daughter of former U.S. Senator Paul Simon, who represented Illinois from 1985 to 1997.

Krishnamoorthi praised Simon saying she “has spent her career fighting for justice and standing up for communities too often pushed to the margins, and I am honored to have earned her endorsement in this race.”

Simon's endorsement strengthens Krishnamoorthi's candidacy. A son

of Peoria, Illinois, Krishnamoorthi is currently on a “listening tour” of his state and has the Quad Cities, Rockford, Petersburg, Bloomington, Springfield, East Alton, and more. At the tour's Carbondale stop, former Lt. Governor Simon hosted Raja in her family's home, bringing friends, students, and community members together to meet directly with him.

Simon's endorsement builds on the campaign's downstate momentum driven by a broad coalition of local leaders and a growing list of current and former elected officials, including Congressman Phil Hare (IL-17), State Representative Sharon Chung, as well as trusted local leaders, including Mason County Democratic Chair Jay Briney, Madison County Democratic Chair Andy Asadorian & Pope County Democratic Chair Sandra Cummings.



Former Lt. Governor of Illinois Sheila Simon endorsing Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi for US Senate via a video message.

World Book of Records, London Virtual Felicitation of Dr. Manu K. Vora

BY PRESS RELEASE

Recently, the World Book of Records, London, UK virtually felicitated Dr. Manu K. Vora with a ‘Certificate of Excellence’ for his extraordinary global contributions in the domains of Quality Management, Leadership Excellence, Professional Education, and Social Empowerment. Serving as the Founder and President of Blind Foundation for India, he and his team has raised over \$7 million for the Free Chakshu Daan Project benefiting Two Million adults and children in India with free eyesight checkups. Additionally, he was recognized for his pioneering contribution to the Free Gyan Daan Project delivering Soft Skills Program benefiting over 1.2 Million students, faculty, and professionals in India for over 12 years for better employability, as well as being Member of the AICTE NEP 2020 Implementation Plan Committee. His global contributions are shining examples of excellence, dedication, humility, and service.

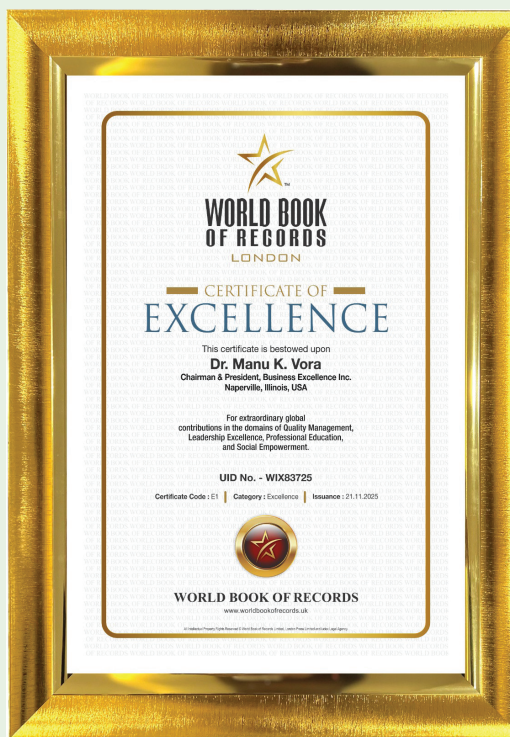
This award was presented to Dr. Vora in a Virtual Felicitation Ceremony by Shri Shakti Tiwari, Secretary, World Book of Records, London, UK. Dr. Rajasekhara David, Assistant Professor,



Dr. Manu K. Vora.

IIM Ranchi served as a Co-Host.

On this auspicious occasion, Dr. Mamta Rani Agarwal, Additional Secretary, Association of Indian Universities, Ministry



WBR Certificate of Excellence.

of Education, Government of India was the Chief Guest. Dr. Rakesh Kumar, IAS, Chief Advisor (Global Health), Wadhwani Institute for Artificial Intelligence, USA

was the Guest of Honour.

There were nine Special Guests (Nav Ratnas) at the Ceremony including Dr. Vijay Batra, Ret. Associate Director (R&D), P&G, USA; Prof. Anil Kumar Agrawal, Emeritus Professor, Gati Shakti Viswavidyalaya, Vadodara; Dr. Sarika Shrivastava, Director, Ashoka Institute of Technology and Management, Varanasi; Mr. Jawahar Goradia, Owner, Goradia Services for NDT, Mumbai; Mr. Rajendu Baxi, Treasurer, Blind Foundation for India, USA; Dr. Nila Vora, Ret., Loyola University Medical Center, USA; Mr. Debashis Sarkar, Managing Partner, Proliferator Advisory and Consulting, Mumbai; Dr. Lakshmi Mohan, Pro-VC, ITM Skills University and Director, ITM Business School, Navi Mumbai; and Dr. Sridhar Ramamoorti, Associate Professor of Accounting, University of Dayton, USA.

Dr. Vora dedicated his WBR honor to his parents, all his teachers (from KG to PG), 15 Million blind people in India, and all the Faculty across India for empowering their students to become responsible citizens of India.

He thanked Blind Foundation for India Board Members and donors as well as members of his own family for their great support..

ASTROLOGY



This week for you

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

ARIES: This month keeps you fully immersed in ongoing projects, driven by your strong resolve to see them through. A family matter may require immediate attention. Someone could motivate you to adopt a steady fitness routine, improving both mood and stamina. A long-pending payment might finally reach you. Academically, clarity and guidance will boost your progress. On the romantic side, a careless act may lead to regret. Overall health remains balanced.

TAURUS: Your emotions may run deeper than usual, as someone close turns to you for comfort. Promising opportunities open up for job seekers or those considering a career shift. Students preparing for competitive exams will feel more confident in their abilities. Finances flow smoothly, allowing comfort in both spending and saving. Staying consistent with workouts or physical activity ensures great fitness. However, romance might take a back seat due to your busy routine.

GEMINI: You've earned a breather, so take time to relax. An inherited property or asset may soon come your way. Fun trips or casual get-aways with friends will lift your spirits. A casual friendship could evolve into something romantic. A senior may seek your help in a personal matter. Keep an eye on your budget to avoid overspending. Balanced meals and adequate rest will help you feel refreshed and healthy.

CANCER: Maintaining neutrality amid differing opinions will help preserve harmony. Don't let others' criticism affect your confidence — stay true to yourself. Academic progress looks promising, while professionals stand out for creativity and hard work. A business or official trip abroad could open valuable doors. Being mindful about expenses strengthens your financial position further.

LEO: Memories of someone far away may stir emotions this month. Those seeking marriage proposals must remain patient and persistent. Be cautious — someone might attempt to undermine your reputation. At work, stay vigilant to avoid scrutiny. Refrain from taking financial risks or carrying excess cash. Maintaining moderation in lifestyle ensures steady health.

VIRGO: Romance blossoms beautifully this month. A much-awaited vacation or getaway may soon come to life. A lucrative property deal could align perfectly with your budget. Your sharp communication skills attract exciting professional opportunities. Smart handling of finances strengthens savings steadily. Focusing on health and fitness sustains your enthusiasm, though it's best to curb impulsive spending.

LIBRA: Patience and consistency will be your greatest strengths this month. Continued efforts toward long-term goals promise fulfilling outcomes. Strong finances bring confidence to explore new ventures. You might take up a sport or exercise routine to boost overall wellness. Social gatherings and festive events will keep your spirits high and calendar buzzing.

SCORPIO: Your professional growth gains momentum as your hard work draws recognition. Business owners and freelancers can expect higher profits or fresh deals. Earlier investments begin to pay off, ensuring comfort and stability. Your renewed determination pushes you to get back into shape. Although work may pile up, you'll handle it efficiently. However, social plans might take a backseat due to a hectic schedule.

SAGITTARIUS: Your professional image continues to shine, reflecting your dedication and consistent results. Entrepreneurs aiming for expansion are likely to succeed. Increased earnings add to long-term financial strength. A focus on healthier habits and disciplined routines enhances vitality. Spending quality time with family restores emotional harmony. Academic pursuits thrive, bringing success within reach. Romance grows stronger and more meaningful.

CAPRICORN: Someone's growing interest in you may catch your attention, but proceed wisely. Professional matters demand close attention to prevent oversights. A brief financial strain could occur, yet your resourcefulness ensures quick recovery. Your commitment to health yields visible improvement. Love misunderstandings, if any, are likely to fade. Property dealings progress smoothly under your guidance.

AQUARIUS: Your clever planning brings excellent outcomes, provided you pair it with sincerity. Financial prospects brighten with fresh opportunities ahead. Strong focus and determination on the academic or career front help you outperform peers. Social life flourishes with parties or gatherings adding joy. A romantic date promises delightful memories, while travel plans to meet someone special may soon materialise.

PISCES: Keeping future plans private will work to your advantage. Consistent discipline helps maintain strong health. In business, hiring capable individuals ensures smoother operations. A family member may offer vital support to your endeavours. Some social commitments might be difficult to honour, so prioritise wisely. Keep real-estate discussions confidential until everything finalises.



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Punjabi Cultural Society Of Chicago Takes Part In 91st Thanksgiving Day Parade

By A Staff Writer

The Punjabi Cultural Society of Chicago (PCS), an all-volunteer, non-profit organization, participated in the 91st annual Chicago Thanksgiving Day Parade, continuing a tradition it began in 2005. This parade, recognized as the second largest televised Thanksgiving parade in the United States, draws millions of viewers nationwide.

Thousands of enthusiastic spectators lined State Street to kick off the holiday season, and PCS showcased Healthcare Heroes, and Punjabi culture in the mainstream event, a press release from PCS said.

A unique medical-themed float was unveiled, celebrating the dedication and contributions of community healthcare professionals. Showing symbolic features, the float carried PCS volunteers and healthcare workers in authentic medical attire, displaying the critical role they play in the system, and in line with PCS's commitment to health advocacy



PHOTOS: PUNJABI CULTURAL SOCIETY OF CHICAGO

The Punjabi Cultural Society of Chicago volunteers hold the banner of the organization at the 91st Thanksgiving Day Parade in Chicago.



Dr. Anand and Rajinder Singh Mago in front of the float at the Thanksgiving Day Parade 2025.

and honoring the tireless service of doctors, nurses, and first responders.

Performers energized the waving and cheering crowds with traditional Bhangra dance routines and lively Punjabi music, carried on live television and reaching households nationwide.

Since its inception in 1934, the Chicago Thanksgiving Day Parade has grown into an iconic holiday celebration, evolving with the city's diverse culture and

spirit. This year's parade featured a dazzling array of acts, including renowned marching bands, creative floats, celebrity guests, and community organizations. PCS stands out as a cultural ambassador, showcasing both artistic excellence and community engagement, organizers said.

"The Punjabi Cultural Society of Chicago is honored to be part of the 91st annual Chicago Thanksgiving Day Parade, celebrating both heritage and healthcare.

Through its medical-themed float and vibrant performances, PCS helps unite Chicago's communities, ushering in the holidays with joy, pride, and cultural exchange," said Dr. Param Puneet Singh the P.C.S. Chairman.

Upcoming PCS Events:

– "Rangla Punjab 2026," Punjabi cultural variety program of performing arts, music, songs, giddha and Bhangra dances to celebrate Vaisakhi festival on Saturday, April 25, 2026, at Gateway Theater (Copernicus Center), 5216 W. Lawrence Ave., Chicago, IL 60630. Performance items coordinators and participants are requested to start forming performance teams. The item's registrations will begin in December.

www.pcschicago.org.

– The 43rd Annual Asian American Coalition of Chicago (AACC) Lunar New Year Dinner Banquet," is on Saturday, February 28, 2026, at Marriott Marquis, Chicago, IL, hosted by the Chinese American community of Chicago.

PCS Contact: Phone: 847-359-5727
Email: info@pcschicago.org Website: www.PCSChicago.org

ASARP Delegation Represents Chicago's South Asian Realtors® At NAR's Annual Meetings In Houston

By Bhailal M Patel

In a landmark moment for Chicago's South Asian real estate community, a distinguished delegation from the Association of South Asian Real Estate Professionals (ASARP) made a powerful impact at the 2025 National Association of REALTORS® (NAR) Annual Meetings, held this year in Houston, Texas. With sweeping industry reforms, a newly unveiled Strategic Plan, and one of the strongest global turnouts in recent memory, the convention underscored NAR's evolving role in shaping the future of real estate both in the U.S. and worldwide.

A Strong Chicago Delegation; Leading the team was Pradeep B. Shukla, NAR Director and committee member on Federal Taxation and Commercial Committees. Joining him were: Sunita Kakarlapudi, President, ASARP; Harsha Shukla, Senior ASARP Member; Mohan Kakarlapudi, Member; Nick Verma, Treasurer, ASARP; and the inclusion of young professional Ria Kakarlapudi symbolized NAR's focus on youth leadership.

The ASARP delegation attended high-level committee briefings, MLS modernization panels, global advisory sessions, and policy discussions—ensuring that Chicago's South Asian real estate professionals remained



PHOTOS: AKSHAYA PATRA

With NAR leadership team. From left (back row): Craig W Sanford, Treasurer, Cristine Hansen, President Elect, Kevin Brown, President, Kevin Sears, Past President (front row): Riya Kakarlapudi, Nick Verma, Pradeep B Shukla.

actively engaged in shaping national conversations.

Record International Participation & Strong Indian Presence, "India-U.S. real estate collaboration is entering a new, mutually beneficial phase."

– Pradeep B. Shukla, NAR Director. "Our presence reflects the rising leadership of South Asian Realtors® in America's real estate future."

– Sunita Kakarlapudi, President, ASARP

The NAR Global Meetings drew more than 350 international delegates from over 70 countries, marking one of the largest global participations in recent years. India showcased a particularly strong delegation, representing NAR-India, major brokerages, and industry organizations seeking deeper collaborations with U.S. entities.

ASARP delegates met with Indian leaders to discuss: Adoption and expansion of MLS (Multiple Listing Service) frameworks in India, Cross-border commercial investment flows, Global certification programs like CIPS, Referral and co-brokerage opportunities between the U.S. and India,

A highlight moment came when the ASARP team was photographed with: NAR President Kevin Sears. Incoming President Kevin Brown... Senior members of NAR's leadership

The Association of South Asian Real Estate Professionals (ASARP) is a leading organization dedicated to empowering South Asian Realtors®, brokers, investors, and real estate entrepreneurs across Chicagoland. ASARP promotes professional development, advocacy, global partnerships, and representation in national real estate forums.

Shirlzar Dance Company Shines at Chicago's Thanksgiving Day Parade

BY A STAFF WRITER

Shirlzar Dance Company brought vibrant energy, color, and culture to the streets of Chicago as they performed in this year's prestigious Thanksgiving Day Parade. The invitation marked a milestone for the group, whose choreographers and directors, Elizar and Shirley, described the opportunity as a moment of "bursting excitement," especially as it allowed them to represent Indian culture on such a celebrated American stage.

The parade, known for drawing performers from across the country, was impeccably organized and featured a wide variety of artistic groups. Shirlzar took

part in two major segments: a featured performance on the main stage and a spirited walk through the parade route, engaging thousands of spectators.

Festivities began early, with television crews arriving as early as 5:15 a.m. to capture behind-the-scenes rehearsals. Shirlzar's dancers presented a dynamic blend of semi-classical and Bollywood fusion choreography, performing numbers ranging from "Dhoom Tana" to the ever-popular "Mera Wala Dance." The lineup also showcased "Nachle Nachle," an original track by Elizar under Shirlzar Productions.

The performance was broadcast live on CBS Chicago and Pluto TV's "Holiday" channel, allowing viewers nationwide to join in the celebration. Those who missed

it will have additional opportunities to watch the replay on CAN TV Chicago on Saturday, December 6 at 12 p.m. and 7 p.m., as well as Sunday, December 7 at 3 p.m. In addition, ITV Gold will soon feature the performance in its upcoming programming, further expanding the company's reach within the South Asian diaspora and beyond.

December 7 also marks another major event for the company: Shirlzar Dance Company's Winter Fest Recital in Plainfield. More than 350 students are slated to take the stage, showcasing weeks of hard work, talent, and dedication.



PHOTO: SHIRLZAR DANCE COMPANY

Kuchipudi Solo "Tulasi" Enchants Naperville Audience At The Matrix Club

BY ARUNA V. DAVIS

The Matrix Club in Naperville took on the atmosphere of an intimate temple on Sunday evening as more than one hundred attendees gathered for "Tulasi," a Kuchipudi solo presentation by dancer and artistic director Srivani Vokkarane. Timed to coincide with the centenary of Bhagwan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the performance radiated a spiritual energy that permeated the hall from the opening moment.

A SOLO PERFORMANCE THAT COMMANDED THE STAGE

Vokkarane's production centered on the classical Bhaanika technique—where a single dancer embodies multiple characters—an approach she executed with striking clarity and nuance. Moving from Satyabhama's intensity to Rukmini's gentle devotion, and from Narda's mischievous sparkle to Krishna's serene divinity, she delivered each transformation with seamless fluidity.

For seasoned practitioners in the audience, it was a demonstration of masterful abhinaya and precise Kuchipudi footwork. For newcomers, it offered a glimpse into the narrative power that defines Indian classical dance.

Srivani Vokkarane embodies the essence of Satyabhama, radiating grace and confidence against a richly staged backdrop of classical tradition. Photo: Kaivalya Arts

THE EMOTIONAL APEX: TULABHARAM

The evening's most memorable moment came during the Tulabharam sequence. A large set of scales, specially transported from India for the production, stood prominently at center stage. When the character of Rukmini placed a single Tulasi leaf on the scale—balancing the divine weight of Krishna—the audience erupted in spontaneous applause. The symbolic triumph of devotion over material wealth resonated deeply with viewers of all ages and backgrounds.

The graceful presence of esteemed guests—including (left to right) Maragatham Sundaresan, Shobha Natarajan, Vanitha Veeravalli, Sushmita Arunkumar, and Ramya Roddom—along with Aruna Davis, elevated the



PHOTO: KAIVALYA ARTS

In front of the revered Tulasi, Artistic Director Srivani Vokkarane embodies grace and storytelling, blending classical technique with soulful expression.

Tulasi experience. Photo: Kaivalya Arts

A RARE THEME, RENDERED WITH CARE

Tulasi is a theme seldom tackled in classical dance due to its emotional subtlety and scriptural depth. The performance drew the appreciation of several distinguished gurus present as special guests:

- Maragatham Sundaresan, renowned Sanskrit scholar, Carnatic musician, and expert in Natya Sastra
- Shobha Natarajan, Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi exponent and Artistic Director of Samskriti Foundation
- Vanitha Veeravalli, respected Bharatanatyam guru and Founder of Bharatam Academy
- Sushmita Arunkumar, disciple of Adyar K. Lakshman and Artistic Director of Nrithyanjali School of Dance

Each guru commended Vokkarane for the production's clarity, adherence to classical principles, and sensitive portrayal of Tulasi's essence. Their collective praise underscored the artistic accomplishment of the presentation.

A devotional masterpiece, Srivani's Vishnu painting—guided by Artinique Studio's artistic director Ramya Roddom—was unveiled at Tulasi. Photo: Kaivalya Arts

A PERSONAL MOMENT OF DEVOTION

The performance also featured the unveiling of a Vishnu painting created under the guidance of Guru Ramya Roddom. Dedicated to Vokkarane's parents, the artwork served as a poignant bridge between her artistic journey in the United States and her roots in India. The unveiling drew visible emotion from both the artist and the audience.

Family Support at the Heart of the Evening

The evening's warmth extended beyond the stage. Vokkarane's two sons watched proudly from the audience, while her husband, Srinu, offered heartfelt closing remarks acknowledging the months of preparation that went into realizing Tulasi. A light-hearted raffle conducted by Smt. Lakshmi Venkatraman added a final note of community spirit.

BRIDGING THE CLASSICAL AND THE CONTEMPORARY

Audience reactions captured the collective sentiment:

"A Sunday evening well spent."

"I learned so many new things about Tulasi."

"A beautiful way to begin Thanksgiving week."

Whether seasoned connoisseurs or first-time spectators, attendees found themselves drawn equally into the production's blend of technique, clarity, and storytelling.

AN OFFERING OF GRATITUDE

As guests stepped into the crisp November night, the sense of shared experience lingered. Tulasi had offered more than an evening of dance—it became a Thanksgiving-season meditation on devotion, gratitude, and artistic excellence.

Srivani Vokkarane did more than narrate the story of Tulasi. Through her performance, she embodied it—carrying the tale with grace, depth, and reverence.

About the Reviewer

Aruna V. Davis is a writer, educator, and arts enthusiast. She is the Founder and CEO of Learn To Write Now and has served as emcee and reviewer for numerous cultural events across the Midwest.

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MONDAY

DHS Launches “Cyber Monday” Offer: Free Holiday Flight Home and \$1,000 Exit Gift Through CBP Home App

By A Staff Writer

Washington, D.C., Dec. 1, 2025 — In an announcement that has already sparked nationwide discussion, the Department of Homeland Security unveiled what it calls “the holiday deal of a lifetime”: a program offering individuals living in the United States without legal status a ****free flight home for the holidays**** and a ****\$1,000 “exit gift.”****

According to the DHS press release, the offer is available through the federal government’s CBP Home App, which allows eligible individuals to arrange voluntary departure directly from their phones.

Assistant Secretary Tricia McLaughlin described the deal as a **“fantastic gift this holiday season,”** saying participants would receive paid travel, a financial incentive, and what DHS frames as a chance to **“return to America the right, legal way”** in the future.

“The choice is simple,” McLaughlin said in the statement.

“Choose self-deportation and reap the rewards, or stay here and continue breaking our laws, which will lead to you being arrested and deported.”

How the Program Works

DHS says the process is designed to be “fast, free, and easy.” After downloading the CBP Home App and submitting basic information, users can schedule a voluntary departure flight. DHS then covers travel costs and issues a \$1,000 payment once return travel is confirmed.

The press release also highlights additional incentives:

- Forgiveness of civil fines or penalties for failing to depart,
- Preservation of a potential future legal pathway back to the United States.

DHS claims more than ****2 million individuals**** have already left the country through similar self-departure pathways.

A Hard Sell — and a Hard Deadline

The tone of the announcement mirrors the urgency of a retail promotion. A Cyber Monday graphic posted on the DHS account on X describes the offer as “the best deal of the season.”

But the agency also issues a stark warning to those who choose not to participate. The press release states that individuals who decline the self-deportation option “will be arrested, deported, and... will never be able to return to the United States.”

While supporters may view the offer as a cost-effective way to encourage voluntary compliance with immigration law, critics are expected to raise questions about the ethical and practical implications of framing deportation as a promotional “deal.”

The unusual messaging—pairing holiday cheer with immigration enforcement—makes the announcement one of the most striking government communications of the year.

For now, DHS is urging eligible individuals not to “miss out” and to download the CBP Home App immediately. Whether the offer is embraced, debated, or challenged, it has ensured one thing: immigration policy has entered the holiday news cycle with an unexpected twist.

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In Houston Suburbs, Abbott's Attacks On CAIR Unnerve Muslim Residents

BY MOLLY HENNESSY-FISKE

Whether speaking at local government meetings or protesting over the war in Gaza and Islamophobia in public schools, Amina Ishaq counts on the Council on American-Islamic Relations to defend her rights and those of the growing Muslim community in this politically divided Houston suburb.

"They used to come out to our protests to make sure we were okay," said Ishaq, a social worker who is active at her local mosque.

Earlier this month, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott designated CAIR – one of America's largest Muslim advocacy and civil rights groups – a "foreign terrorist organization," along with the Muslim Brotherhood, an Islamist organization. He accused the groups of attempting to "subvert our laws through violence, intimidation, and harassment."

Abbott said the designation would bar CAIR from acquiring Texas land under a law passed by the state legislature earlier this year and clear the way for the state attorney general "to sue to shut them down."

"These radical extremists are not welcome in our state," Abbott said in a statement.

To Ishaq, it is as if Abbott and other Republican officials are attacking the Anti-Defamation League, a historic anti-hate group founded to combat antisemitism, or the NAACP. "They're protecting our civil liberties," she said of CAIR.

Abbott's declaration accused the D.C.-based nonprofit of having ties to Hamas, which the federal government has labeled a terrorist group (CAIR officials deny any ties to Hamas). The governor also suggested, citing court cases, reports by the FBI, and the Program on Extremism at George Washington University, that CAIR leaders sought to impose Islamic law, or sharia, on Americans.

CAIR officials, who along with the Muslim Legal Fund of America have sued Abbott and state Attorney General Ken Paxton (R) over the declaration, deny that allegation as well. CAIR's Dallas-Fort Worth and Austin chapters asked a federal judge to strike down the proclamation, which also labeled the group "a transnational criminal organization."

"This attempt to punish the nation's largest Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization simply because Governor Abbott disagrees with its views is not only contrary to the United States Constitution, but finds no support in any Texas law," the lawsuit says, noting that CAIR, founded in 1994, has 25 chapters nationwide.

CAIR officials accused the governor of threatening all civil rights groups, not just Muslim ones.

"No civil rights organizations are safe if a governor can baselessly and unilaterally declare any of them terrorist groups,



Texas Gov. Greg Abbott (R) gives a thumbs-up at an event with President Donald Trump in the East Room of the White House on March 20.

ban them from buying land, and threaten them with closure," CAIR Litigation Director and General Counsel Lena Masri said in a statement.

A spokesman for Abbot declined to answer questions about the governor's allegations against CAIR, referring a reporter back to his proclamation and recent press releases. The governor doubled down on his criticism of CAIR on Monday, after President Donald Trump issued his own executive order labeling chapters of the Muslim Brotherhood a terrorist group.

In a radio interview, Abbott said his declaration was a response to concern from members of the Texas GOP about the state's growing Muslim population and the ascent of Muslim officials such as New York Mayor-elect Zohran Mamdani.

"The concern is high, especially when you see someone like Mamdani get elected and the cataclysmic problems that's going to cause," Abbott said. "... We have freedom of religion, however, your religion cannot become a threat to our freedom."

He did not offer examples of how Muslim Americans were threatening the freedom of others.

About 420,000 Muslims live in Texas, mostly concentrated in urban centers like Houston, Dallas and surrounding suburbs, which have numerous mosques and Muslim-owned businesses. Sugar Land's Fort Bend County is among the most diverse in the country, its population equally divided among Asian, Black, Latino and White residents. The number of foreign-born residents increased 71 percent between the last two censuses.

The Texas GOP has been grappling for years with how to maintain dominance in such rapidly growing and diversifying suburbs, where Muslim voters share many of the party's values – freedom of religion, economic markets and development – but

not its predominant Christian faith.

Earlier this year, Abbott and Paxton objected to a 400-acre residential project called EPIC City being developed by members of a mosque northeast of Dallas.

Abbott called the development illegal and directed state agencies to investigate. The U.S. Justice Department in the summer found developers had pledged to abide by federal fair-housing laws. Abbott and Paxton have said state officials are still investigating; the project has been renamed The Meadow and has yet to break ground.

"Within the Texas Republican Party there is a sector that views Islam as an existential threat to Christianity," said Mark Jones, a political science fellow at Rice University. "Those Republicans see the spread of Islam in Europe as foreshadowing what could happen in the United States if Republicans are not careful. They would even point to cities like Minneapolis, where the call to prayer is broadcast on loudspeakers."

He noted that Abbott is running for reelection and Paxton is locked in a competitive U.S. Senate primary with incumbent John Cornyn (R). While Muslims are still a minority of voters in Texas, Jones said, evangelical Christians are a powerful block of GOP primary voters, "and a significant share of them do view Islam as a threat to Christianity and the state and Texas."

"They view the United States as a Judeo-Christian country," Jones said, noting public opinion polls and a state law – mostly halted by courts so far – that requires the Ten Commandments to be posted in public school classrooms.

Some Muslim Republicans in Texas have condemned Abbott's attack on CAIR.

Mo Nehad – a police officer who ran unsuccessfully for Fort Bend sheriff last

year after joining the GOP at the urging of his Republican activist daughter – called Abbott's proclamation "ridiculous."

"There is no basis for it," Nehad said late last week, dismissing the fear of Muslims trying to impose sharia law in Texas as "biased and unproven."

"We need to worry about our veterans, single parents, kids who cannot buy lunch, and illegal immigration," Nehad said, adding, "Abbott needs to align himself with Trump."

Democratic state Rep. Suleman Lalani, a Sugar Land-based doctor who two years ago became one of the first two Muslim state lawmakers elected in Texas, said the governor's attack on CAIR has alarmed his constituents.

"There's a lot of anxiety, fear, sadness from this proclamation, which is baseless and unconstitutional," Lalani said. "People have been bullied. People are scared to go out in public places, avoiding things deliberately because of the fear. They are feeling they have been alienated in their own home even though they are taxpaying citizens."

He noted that a group of Muslim high school students praying outside a Yemeni cafe north of Dallas earlier this month were harassed by a man who said, "I'm mocking your religion" (CAIR has asked authorities to investigate).

Lalani called on Abbott to "avoid the politics of division, avoid the politics of fear and put people first."

Outside the Maryam Islamic Center mosque in Sugar Land last week, girls in abaya dresses played basketball as families arrived for evening prayers.

"We're law-abiding citizens. We pay taxes. We're teachers, attorneys, nurses," said one congregant, Zain, as he stood outside the mosque with his wife and two young sons. He spoke on the condition that he be identified only by his first name out of concerns for his family's safety.

Zain, who works in real estate, said Abbott and the Texas GOP's concern about Muslims imposing religious sharia law was "baseless."

"I've never heard anybody say we need sharia law here," he said. "We don't get taught that."

He also condemned the governor's attacks on CAIR.

"These type of claims just cause division instead of unity. We don't need that in this day and age," he said.

"They're fighting for civil rights for all," his wife, Sarah, said of CAIR.

Ishaq, the Sugar Land social worker and activist who attends the same mosque, said she's been upset to see the Ten Commandments posted at her daughter's high school this year, the attacks on CAIR, and anti-Muslim sentiment by lawmakers. And she plans to continue protesting.

"We're just going to keep speaking up," she said.

- THE WASHINGTON POST

The Washington Post

By Hannah Sampson, Natalie B. Compton

10 Festive Airports that go all out for the Holidays

When the humongous aluminum reindeer come out, you know the holiday season has arrived in Charlotte. Wilbur and Orville, who made their first appearance at Charlotte Douglas International Airport several years ago, are 25 feet tall and weigh about 1,500 pounds each. Each contain more than 3,000 lights and 125 metallic stars. “They’re massive and we assemble them like puzzle pieces,” said Lauri Golden, the airport’s customer engagement manager. Everywhere across the country, airports are decking their halls for the winter holidays. They’re busting out trees, garlands, wreaths and ribbons, calling up the choirs and carolers. And, yes, assembling the reindeer. “The regular travel day, we know it’s on and off planes, it’s flagging down whoever is the lucky soul to pick us up at the airport or drop us off,” Golden said. “How can we add some special pixie dust along the way?” Here are some airports where the season shines bright.

‘Home Alone’ in Chicago

For “Home Alone” fans, there is no place like Chicago O’Hare for the holidays. Terminal 3’s main atrium, where some of the film’s most iconic scenes were shot, will take you back to 1990, with its gigantic garlands, bows and twinkling lights. A lot has been added since the McCallisters sprinted through, like 25-foot-long ornamental curtains in the airport’s exterior windows and illuminated roadway displays. This year, the airport also has a new 20-foot Christmas tree in Terminal 5, in addition to a collection of 9-foot trees decorated with ornaments from local cultural organizations. Massive inflatable ornaments dangle over the O’Hare Family Lounge.

‘Festival of Trees’ in Charlotte

The towering reindeer, named after the Wright brothers, can be found in the atrium of Charlotte Douglas International Airport. They are joined by flocks of lit-up aluminum doves and new large-scale ornaments. Nearly two dozen trees - the “Festival of Trees” - vie to be voted the favorite by passengers.

Real reindeer in San Antonio

San Antonio may not have the biggest airport in Texas, but it may have the biggest holiday spirit. This season, travelers can expect holiday music with local school choirs (an annual tradition), visits from “Santa and Mrs. Claus,” a holiday music playlist in rotation and ... real reindeer? Tonya Hope, public relations manager for San Antonio, said at least one and sometimes two of Santa’s trusty steeds will be greeting travelers as they arrive in the baggage claim area of Terminal B on Dec. 16 and Dec. 22. Check the airport’s social media to stay tuned for more updates.

Dickens carolers in Orlando

For its “grand holiday takeover,” Orlando International Airport is welcoming travelers with massive (45-foot and 55-foot) trees. The largest has more than 550 branches, a six-foot drum for a base and takes roughly 11 hours to install and decorate, according to airport spokeswoman Angela Starke. A team of singers made up of employees will traverse the airport, which will also feature a harpist, sax and trumpet jazz duo, handbell ensemble and carolers in Dickens-era costume. “As a tourist destination, we try to bring in a variety of performances to meet different musical tastes,” Starke said in an email.

Daily piano in Denver

In previous years, the Denver International Airport went all out for the holidays with an ice rink and a “Santa’s Layover Lounge” pop-up bar. The rink won’t return this year, but travelers can still expect festive music and decor. From Dec. 4 to 22, a pianist will play in the airport’s Great Hall - where you’ll find a 24-foot-tall Christmas tree - from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., and carolers will roam the concourse from Dec. 15 to 24.

Letters to Santa in Minnesota

Every year, the Minneapolis–Saint Paul International Airport applies its Midwest charm to the holidays, from decorations to its previous Make-A-Wish flights to the North Pole. Don’t miss the bright red mailbox - marked with a sign “North Pole Air Mail Only” - where kids can drop a letter to Santa Claus with their Christmas wishes. Travelers can check the Airport Foundation MSP website for a schedule of the airport’s live performances (even ballerinas dancing “The Nutcracker”!) and therapy animals.



All Photos: Canva

Santa party in Indianapolis

Santa takes a break from Christmas prep at Indianapolis International Airport the Saturday after Thanksgiving when he crosses the tarmac on a fire truck and meets more than 1,000 kids. The Holly Jolly Jetway event, an annual gathering, also features the Grinch, elves on stilts, the Sugar Plum Fairy from the Indianapolis Ballet and vintage typewriters for letters to Saint Nick. Festivities continue with daily musical performances from Dec. 12-24.

Cocoa and cookies for D.C.

Reagan National Airport set up its holiday trees before Thanksgiving and offered a sorry-not-sorry “to all the cotton-headed ninnymuggins” who might be offended. “We understand that some passengers were startled when they came in expecting pumpkins and turkeys and instead found multiple 30-foot trees,” the D.C.-area airport’s Instagram account said. Both DCA and Washington Dulles International Airport will observe National Cookie Day on Dec. 4 and offer hot cocoa sampling late the morning of Dec. 12. The airports will also feature visits from Santa, musical performances and gift-wrapping on various dates in December.

Holiday markets in Portland

Holiday markets are planned throughout December at Portland International Airport in Oregon, the best airport in America according to our research. Markets at different concourses include samples, promotions and appearances from visiting llamas and dogs. A pre-security market is scheduled for 10 a.m. to noon Dec. 23. For anyone who wants to shop from the everyday retail spots - where prices must be the same as they would be in town, with no markups - two hours of parking will be free with a purchase of at least \$20 at pre-security stores or restaurants.

Poinsettias galore in Salt Lake City

Salt Lake City International looks like the inside of a snow globe during the holidays, festooned with wreaths, trees, snowflakes, nutcrackers, a menorah, thousands of feet of garland and a photo-ready polar bear. Even Ally the airport Allosaurus gets in the spirit with a Santa hat. More than 1,500 poinsettias complete the scene, all grown in the airport’s greenhouse.

Homebound: True Stories Of Courage, Compassion, And Resilience In The Pandemic Era

By ILYAS QURAISHI

Homebound is a quiet, heart-wrenching film that lingers long after the screen goes dark. The story is rooted in reality — inspired by a true event described in an article by Basharat Peer in 2020 for The New York Times — but what it shows is universal: friendship, resilience, and survival in a world that often ignores human suffering.

Chandan (Vishal Jethwa), born into a low-income Dalit household, hides his caste in public to avoid social exclusion. Despite his caution, he carries a deep sense of isolation. At home, his circumstances are slightly different — he's allowed to finish his graduation so he does not end



PHOTOS: COURTESY NETFLIX

Shoaib and Chandan share a quiet moment, finding friendship and hope amid hardship, a scene from the movie.

and daily-wage migrant workers forced to leave their homes and families in search of survival. Administrative mismanagement leaves them stranded, hungry, and exhausted. The exhaustion of walking miles under harsh conditions, the fear of hunger, and the uncertainty of reaching home are portrayed with quiet, heartbreaking realism. Homebound captures not just their struggle to survive, but also the dignity with which ordinary people endure extraordinary hardships.

The film raises larger questions about empathy, sacrifice, and duty. Children give up their futures for their parents, and parents for their children. Lives are shaped by necessity rather than choice, and the film forces the viewer to reflect on how society often overlooks these cycles of struggle and resilience.

Technically, the film is impeccable. Directed by Neeraj Ghaywan and written by Shreedhar Dubey, Neeraj Ghaywan, and Varun Grover, it excels in storytelling and pacing. Cinematography, sound, lighting, and production design all work together to create an immersive, emotionally charged experience. The editing by Nitin Baid, production design by Khyatee Kanchan, and background score by Naren Chandavarkar and Benedict Taylor elevate every scene, giving the film a deeply affecting rhythm and soul.

Homebound is more than just a film. It's a meditation on friendship, humanity, and survival in the face of adversity. It's a story of empathy in a world often blind to suffering, a testament to human dignity, and a moving reflection on the struggles faced by the marginalized during extraordinary times — made even more powerful knowing it stems from true events and real people.

Moreover, with its selection as India's official entry for the 2026 Oscars (Best International Feature Film), the film now carries India's hopes. Its powerful story — rooted in caste, faith, friendship, and survival during the pandemic — gives it a strong chance to resonate not just with Indian audiences, but also with global viewers and academy voters.



A poignant scene from the movie Homebound.

up as a laborer like his parents. His sister, Vaishali (Shalini Vatsa), sacrifices her education to support the family. Shoaib (Ishaan Khatter), an only child devoted to his ailing parents, faces prejudice because of his faith, which slowly chips away at his natural kindness and openness. Their bond becomes a lifeline — a friendship that transcends religion, social boundaries, and societal expectations.

The film also highlights supporting characters with subtle depth. Chandan's mother (Shalini Vatsa) embodies quiet strength and resilience, navigating a family's struggles with dignity. Janhvi Kapoor makes a brief yet sincere appearance that adds emotional texture. The minor characters, from neighbors to fellow workers, populate the world realistically, reinforcing the hardships faced by marginalized communities.

When the pandemic hits, life takes a brutal turn. The film depicts the suffering of low-income



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ST. LOUIS, MO
Wanted Motel Manager and Housekeeper for Franchise Motel in St. Louis, MO.
Good Salary and Accommodation Provided.
CALL 314-497-3292 or 314-330-4621
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Hotels are looking for skilled Front Desk, Housekeeping & Laundry attendants. If you are experienced & ready to contribute,
Pls call/text: 540-324-8786
11/15/24 - 12/19/25 -SH

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND
Franchise Hotels seek Front Desk help. 7 days per week, 8 hours shift \$950/week. Legal must. Free accommodation provided.
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MARYLAND
We need 2 people to manage a small local independent Motel in Baltimore. Duties include managing the housekeeping, office and preventive maintenance. Must have legal status and must be able to speak good English. Accommodation is attached to the office.
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WISCONSIN
Boutique Hotel in central Wisconsin seeks middle-aged couple (legal US workers) for Front Desk/Asst. Admin Manager and Housekeeping roles. Min. 1-yr experience preferred; training provided. Free accommodation; background check required. Clean, friendly university town environment. Contact MJ at 715-544-4338 or email nmequitiesllc@gmail.com.
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AUGUSTA,GA
2 franchise motels 110 rooms and 65 rooms in Augusta,GA immediately need Single/couple for front desk clerk and Manager. Legal status must. Accommodation will be provided on site. Please call Meena: 706-877-1991, 706-631-2626 meena888patel@aol.com
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NEW YORK / NEW JERSEY
FRANCHISE HOTEL NEED Couple for Housekeeping and Single for Front Desk Help (English must). Good pay with free accommodation. Legal must.
Call Nishith: 5163739274 / Nick (201) 637 5062
04/18/25 - 04/17/26 -SL

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Franchise Hotel in NJ is looking for Single/Couple for: Housekeeping, Front Desk, Maintenance. Good salary and accommodation will be provided. Also looking for Hotel Sales Associate. (Experience and good communication skills required)
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• Vivian (757) 620-9207 • Hina (201) 936-8762
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PERRYVILLE, MARYLAND:
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Need Single for Front Desk Help (Fluent English, Computer literate) and Couple for Housekeeping help. Experienced preferred but ready to train. Accommodation provided. Legal must.
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NASHVILLE, TN
Franchise Hotels hiring Night Desk clerk & Housekeeping couple. Must have own transportation. Accommodation provided. Competitive salary. Legal status must.
Call (615) 594-5454.
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PHILADELPHIA & NEW JERSEY :
Need Single / Couple Front Desk & Housekeeping help for Franchise Motels in the Philadelphia area, Pittsburgh - PA and Cherry Hill - NJ. Free accommodation provided.
Call Ghanshyam Patel (610) 279 0150.
09/26/2026 - 09/18/2026-SL

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Franchise Motel in Virginia Front Desk. Need a couple or single with hotel experience preferred, fluent English, computer literate and legal status must. Accommodation provided.
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36 rooms Independent motel in Central Virginia needs two couples for Housekeeping. Good pay and accommodation will be provided.
Call:(540) 486-1333
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LONG ISLAND, NY
20 Rooms Independent motel in Long Island, NY needs a couple for Front desk help. Experience, Fluent English, computer knowledge and legal status must. Accommodation will be provided. Contact: Ishwar Ahir: (607)-262-0157
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PENNSYLVANIA
Hotels in Pennsylvania (PA) looking for following positions 1) Front Office Manager 2) Front Office Agents 3) Housekeeping supervisor 4) Housekeepers. Candidates with Marriott or similar hotel experience preferred. Must be legal.
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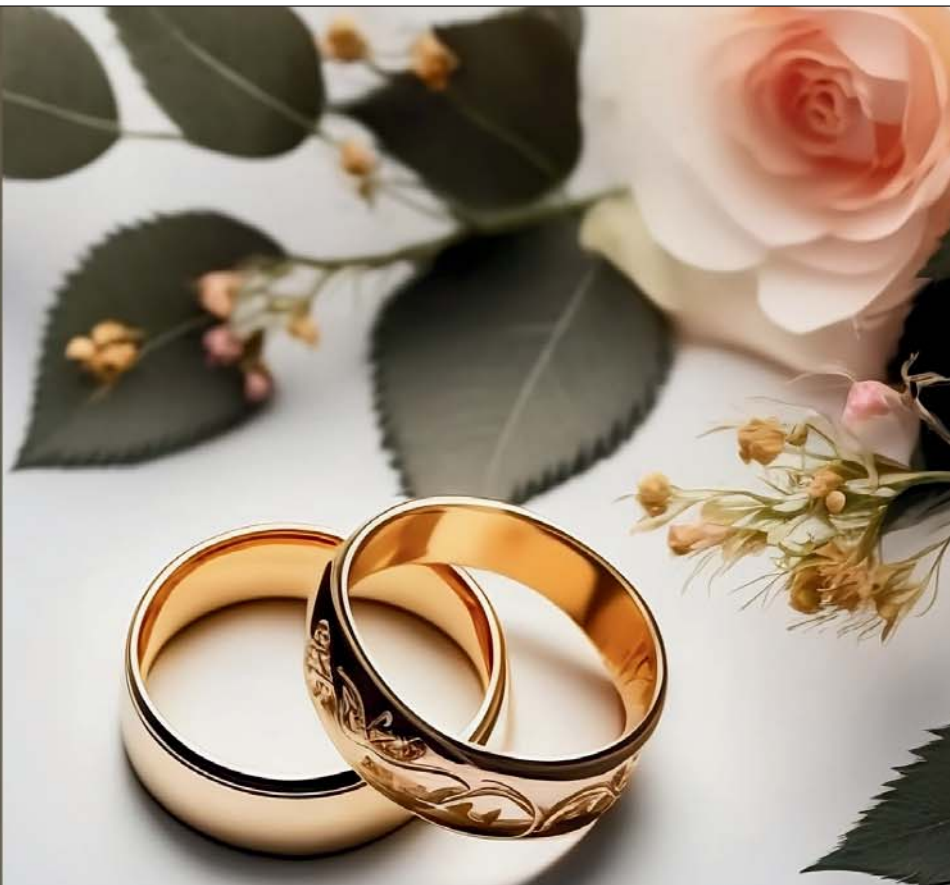
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Dear Voter:

The Chicago Board of Elections is seeking to hire and train paid bilingual Election Judges. Specifically, the Board needs citizens who are registered to vote in Cook County and are fluent in English and Hindi.

Election Judges are an essential part of our democracy and help ensure a happy and smooth Election Day for all. Those who meet the requirements will require to complete in-person training to work for the Midterm Primary Election on Tuesday, March 17, 2026. Election Judges will be paid \$230 for their services (\$170 for Election Day, \$60 for full-credit training).

For a complete list of requirements, please visit our website chicagoelections.gov. If you can speak and read English and Hindi, please specify 'Hindi' under language section before submitting your online application at pollworker.chicagoelections.gov.

On behalf of the Board, I thank you in advance for your participation in this important effort. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 773-771-9480 or email at hindivote@chicagoelections.gov.

Kimico Mehta

South Asian Outreach

Chicago Board of Election Commissioners, 69 West Washington St, Suite 600 Chicago, IL 60602

773.771.9480 (cell), 312.269.7990 (desk) kmehta@chicagoelections.gov, hindivote@chicagoelections.gov



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शिकागो चुनाव आयुक्त परिषद, द्विभाषी चुनाव न्यायाधीशों को नियुक्त और प्रशिक्षित करना चाहता है। विशेष रूप से, परिषद को ऐसे नागरिकों की आवश्यकता है जो कुक काउंटी में मतदान करने के लिए पंजीकृत हों और अंग्रेजी और हिंदी बोलने और पढ़ने में सक्षम हों।

चुनाव न्यायाधीश हमारे लोकतंत्र का एक अनिवार्य हिस्सा हैं और सभी के लिए एक सुखद और सुचारु चुनाव दिवस सुनिश्चित करने में मदद करते हैं। जो नागरिक, चुनाव न्यायाधीश बनने की आवश्यकताओं को पूरा करते हैं, उन्हें मंगलवार, 17 मार्च, 2026 को मध्यावधि प्राथमिक चुनाव में काम करने के लिए व्यक्तिगत प्रशिक्षण पूरा करना होगा। चुनाव न्यायाधीशों को उनकी सेवाओं के लिए \$230 का भुगतान किया जाएगा (चुनाव दिवस के लिए \$170, पूर्ण प्रशिक्षण का श्रेय- \$60)।

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