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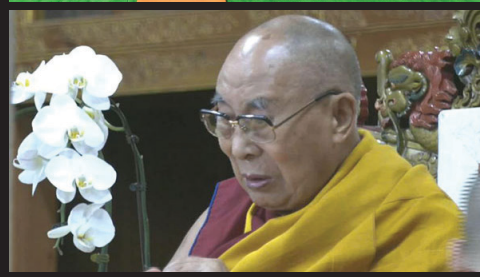
History made as first Indian American takes oath of office for Lt. Gov. of Commonwealth of Virginia



On 77th Republic Day: Evaluating Global Reach Of India's Cultural Heritage



PAGES 4, 6



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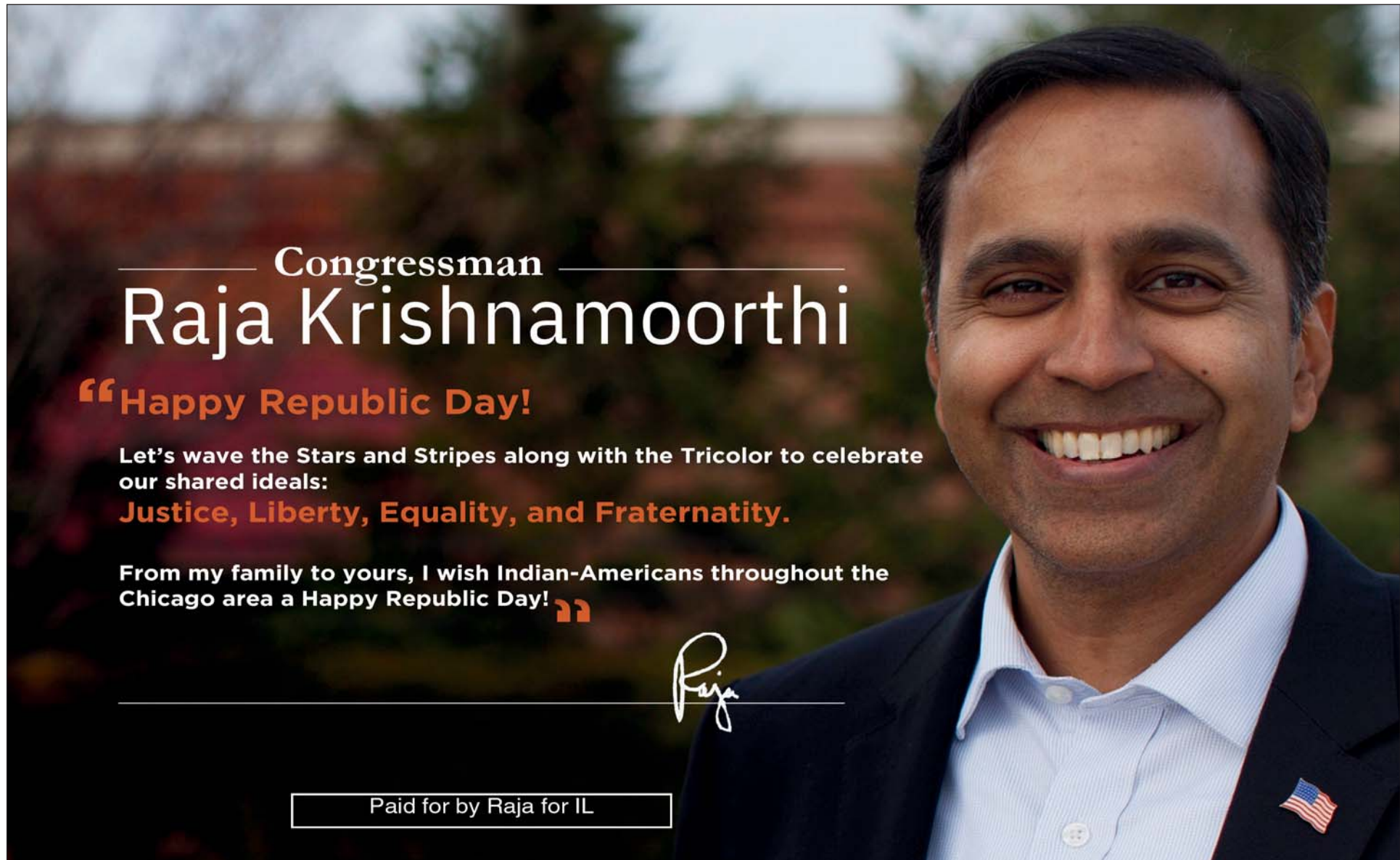


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Raja

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India's Global And Cultural Heritage

BY AMBASSADOR BHASWATI MUKHERJEE

India's cultural and civilizational heritage is her gift to the world. An understanding of what is our culture and civilisation would take us into a historical journey into our past.

Any serious discussion must begin with E.H. Carr. In 'What is History' Carr concludes:

"History is a continuous process of interaction between the historian and his facts, an unending dialogue between the present and past, a dynamic, dialectical process, which cannot be limited by mere empiricism or love of facts alone".

Another aspect is the inter-linkage between culture and imperialism in the 19th century. Dr. Edward W. Said noted in his seminal work on 'Culture and Imperialism':

"Partly because of empire, all cultures are involved in one another; none is single and pure, all are hybrid, heterogeneous, differentiated and un-monolithic".

This is an excellent definition of our own culture.

Efforts were made to belittle or downgrade our heritage after the arrival of the Dutch, Portuguese, French and British to India. This was the age of colonialism and imperialism. Dr. Said noted the notion of inferior races helped fuel the imperial acquisition of territory during this period. The culture of imperialism entailed venerating the colonialist's culture to the exclusion of other cultures, a notion completely antithetical to the Indian approach.

One of the most authoritative works of A.L. Basham 'The Wonder that was India' rejects the earlier Western interpretation that Indian civilisation is un-political, spiritual and unchanging i.e. Indian civilisation itself is static and non-dynamic. Basham demonstrates that India has a dynamic civilisation and cultural heritage. India's oral traditions also had an important contribution.

The civilisation that developed in the Valleys of the two great river systems, the Indus and the Ganges,



Devotees gather to take a dip at Sangam, the confluence of the Ganges and Yamuna rivers with the mythical invisible Saraswati river, to mark Maghi Purnima, one of the auspicious days during the "Maha Kumbh Mela", or the Great Pitcher Festival, in Prayagraj, India, February 12, 2025.

although in a sharply demarcated geographical region due to the Himalayas, was never an isolated civilisation. Settlers and traders came to India from the land and sea routes from East and West. As a great maritime power, Indians also travelled East and West.

This resulted in the development of a complex pattern of multi-dimensional culture, demonstrated in art and cultural traditions from Ancient to Modern India, whether the dancing Buddha's of the Gandharva school of art which was strongly influenced by the Greeks to the great temples of North and South India.

The Aryan period saw the development of Vedic literature as well as the Puranas. The earliest literary source was the Rig Veda and the two epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata.

Ancient Indian architecture and sculpture was dynamic, not static. Due to cross fertilisation of culture, India's ancient culture did not perish with the coming of Muslim invaders.

Ancient Indian culture was severely impacted by invasions from Muslim invaders from 10th century onwards. These invasions destroyed many elements of our ancient culture. They resulted in barbaric acts such as attacks on temples, including multiple attacks and destruction of the famous Somnath temple.

Later the Indo Islamic Mughal architecture and miniature paintings evolved as an example of India's syncretic culture. The most fascinating aspect of medieval history is the development of the Indo-Islamic style in art and architecture, through adaptation of Indian resources, expertise, designs and motifs. What developed in Mughal times was an eclectic pattern of culture of which the Taj Mahal remains the finest example.

It is important to recognise that India's culture and civilisation is a gift to its Diaspora. India is a multi-cultural state. With the contribution and partnership with its huge Diaspora, Indian culture has emerged as the force to connect, to build relations and to heal the ruptures created by history and politics.

It is internationally recognised that one of India's significant global contributions has been its ancient cultural and civilisational partnerships. 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' from the Maha Upanishads was among the first precursors of global citizenship as it is understood today.

'Udara charitanama tu, Vasudhaiva kutumbakam'.

It means that it is only for the generous hearted that the world is one family. It forms the basis of UNESCO's ongoing dialogue between cultures, religions and civilisations.

India's vibrant cultural and civilisational heritage, through her Diaspora has spread worldwide. It serves as a powerful reminder that India's values of tolerance, inclusiveness and cross fertilisation of cultures which

are an intrinsic part of our civilisation, are more relevant than ever before in the emerging, chaotic global disorder.

Cultural diplomacy now plays an important role in the dissemination of these values. Indian arts, culture and spiritualism have attracted people from all around the world for centuries.

Indian spirituality has had a global presence for centuries. One of its important manifestations in today's world is the large number of Yoga centres spread across the world. At the personal initiative of PM Modi soon after his first election in 2014, the UN General Assembly recognised 21st June as International Day of Yoga. It has been

Culture and cultural diplomacy have emerged as the force to connect, to build bilateral relations and to heal the raptures created by history and politics.

Most challenging is how do we preserve that culture? It is a living culture and can only survive if nurtured and strengthened by successive generations including our Diaspora. Indeed, unless we present our civilisation and cultural heritage in a manner which is both comprehensible and attractive to young India, this heritage cannot survive.

Our composite culture is our gift to the world. It reflects the evolution of our own history, the manner in which India seamlessly absorbed other cultures but never lost her own.

I had recently visited Vishwa Bharati University, Shantiniketan and read Gurudev's inspirational message at the entrance which still resonates today.

Gurudev said:

"India represents the wealth of mind which is for all. We acknowledge India's obligation to offer to others the hospitality of her best culture And India's right to accept from others their best."

We have done so and will continue to do so for generations to come. That is why we are Bharat that is India.



Ruins of the ancient Nalanda University.



Dehradun: Prime Minister Narendra Modi practices yoga 'asanas' (postures) on Fourth International Yoga Day at the Forest Research Institute, in Dehradun, Uttarakhand on June 21, 2018.

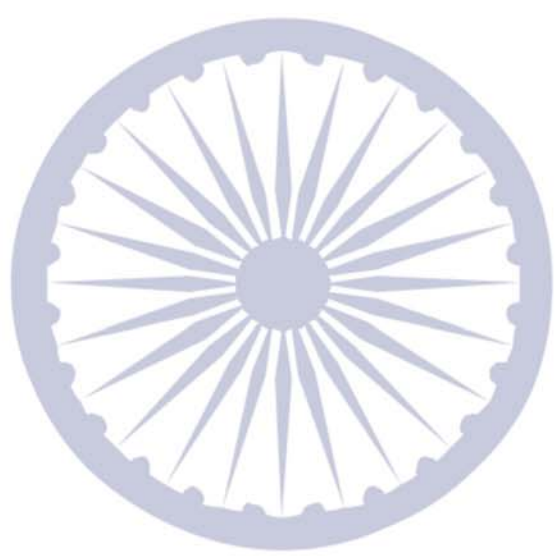


The Dalai Lama.



US Vice President J.D. Vance, Usha Vance, and their children at the Taj Mahal in Agra.

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India And The Global South

By Ambassador Ashok Sajjanhar

India's relations with countries of the Global South have deep roots in shared histories, common struggles, and mutual aspirations for development and self-reliance. Over the years India's role has evolved from being a leader in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) to becoming a pivotal player in contemporary South-South cooperation.

India's partnership with the Global South was propelled to a new level by Prime Minister Narendra Modi when he organized the first Voice of the Global South Summit (VOGSS) on 12-13th January, 2023 within a few weeks of India taking over the Presidency of the G20. This Summit was followed by another later during the year and a third one in 2024.

In addition to articulating the interests, priorities and aspirations of the Global South through several VOGSSs and raising these issues at all relevant fora, India also "Walks the Talk" and extends all possible assistance to countries of the Global South.

BACKGROUND

India's role within the Global South is pivotal, leveraging its growing economic power, democratic framework, and strategic geopolitical positioning to advocate for equitable global governance.

India's development assistance programs to members of the Global South underscore its role as a partner in progress. Through the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) program, India has provided training, capacity building, and technical assistance to over 160 countries. This program covers a wide range of areas, including healthcare, education, agriculture, and information technology, thereby contributing to human resource development in the Global South.

THE POLICY OF "VASUDHAIVA KUTUMBAKAM" (THE WORLD IS ONE FAMILY)

The spirit of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" has served as the guiding philosophy of India's foreign policy for the last more than a decade. This policy witnessed its fullest expression during India's Chairmanship of the G20 in 2023 when it adopted the motto of "One Earth, One Family, One Future" for its Presidency, and made sure that all decisions emanating from the deliberations fully reflected this commitment.

CURRENT STATUS

In recent years, India's "Global South" partnership has matured into a core pillar of its foreign policy. One of the most consequential achievements of India in its G20 Presidency was the inclusion of African Union, a body comprising 54 African countries, as a full-fledged member of the G20. This issue had been hanging fire for many years and it fell to India, with its commitment to the interests of the Global South, to bring it to fruition by evolving the requisite consensus on this important subject.

India has been able to significantly enhance its engagement with the Global South because its economy has grown significantly in recent years. When PM Modi assumed power in 2014, India's economy was the 10th largest in the world. Today it is the 4th largest with prognosis to emerge as the third largest by 2027. Today India is



Prime Minister Narendra Modi proposed a comprehensive Global Development Compact during his closing remarks at the Voice of Global South Summit.

the fastest growing major economy with its GDP growth registering an impressive 8.2% in the last quarter. India is expected to grow from a US\$4 trillion economy today to more than US\$10 trillion by 2035.

India's increased economic strength has inter alia enhanced its capacity to play a much more active role in global affairs and lend a helping hand in times of need to those in difficulty. During the Covid-19 pandemic, India supplied medicines and vaccines, most of them gratis, to several partners, particularly from the Global South. India provided medicines to more than 150 countries, and more than 300 million vaccine doses under its Vaccine Maitri (Vaccine Friendship) initiative to more than 100 countries. Because of its economic heft, India could come to the assistance of Sri Lanka to the tune of US\$4.5 billion when the latter's coffers were empty in 2022 and to the support of Afghanistan, Maldives etc. with financial support, food supplies and medicines when these countries had their backs to the wall. This has also enabled India to emerge as the First Responder in times of need and when calamities like earthquakes, floods etc. have struck in its neighbourhood and beyond.

KEY PILLARS OF ENGAGEMENT

India's "Global South Partnership" today is defined by

four distinct areas of cooperation:

A. Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) & "The India Stack"

India has moved from domestic achievements to global outreach.

- **Fintech Diplomacy:** UPI (Unified Payments Interface) is now operational or in pilot stages across several Global South nations, including Namibia, Sri Lanka, and parts of Southeast Asia.
- **Social Impact Fund:** India's \$25 million commitment to a Social Impact Fund helps smaller nations build their own digital identity (Aadhaar-like) and payment systems to promote financial inclusion.

B. Health & Pharmaceutical Leadership

Reaffirming its title as the "Pharmacy of the World," India has evolved from providing medicines and vaccines in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic to building Health Resilience.

- **Generic Medicines:** Providing affordable, high-quality generic drugs to nations in Africa and the Caribbean.
- **Regulatory Capacity:** India is now actively training drug regulators in Global South countries to help them establish their own pharmaceutical safety standards.

C. The Global Development Compact

Proposed by Prime Minister Modi in late 2024, this compact focuses on:

- **Trade for Development:** Reducing barriers for Least Developed Countries (LDCs).
- **Concessional Finance:** Offering project-specific grants rather than the "debt-trap" loans often associated with some other major powers.

D. Climate Justice & Energy Transition

India champions the principle of "Common but Differentiated Responsibilities" (CBDR).

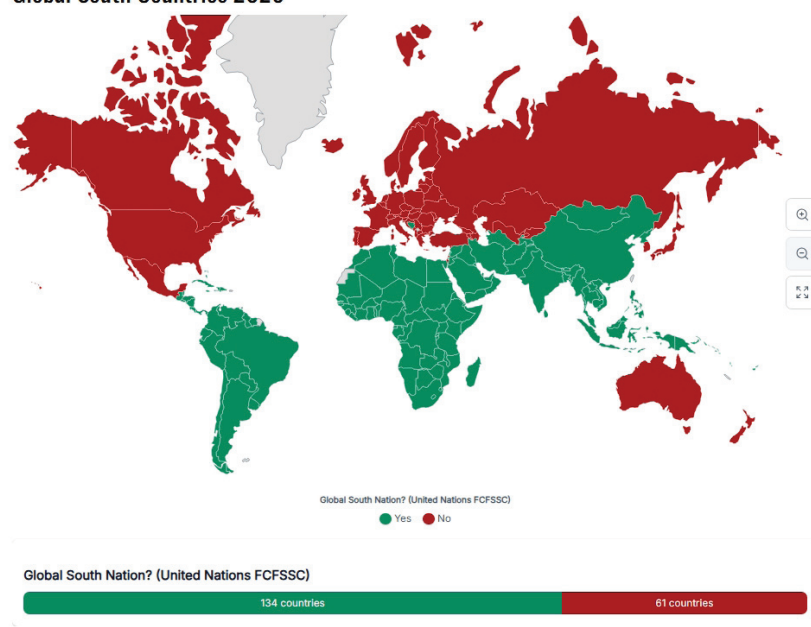
- **International Solar Alliance (ISA):** With 121 member countries, many of which are from the Global South, the ISA underscores India's commitment to addressing climate change and promoting renewable energy.
- **Mission LIFE (Lifestyle for Environment):** India encourages a shift toward sustainable consumption, a narrative that resonates with developing nations that are not the primary cause of climate change but have to endure its worst effects.

CONCLUSION

India's geopolitical dynamics with the Global South have evolved significantly over the years, reflecting its growing economic power, strategic interests, and aspirations to be a major player on the global stage. India's proactive engagement with the Global South underscores its commitment to a multipolar world where developing nations have a significant voice in global affairs. Through sustained efforts in diplomacy, economic cooperation, and strategic partnerships, India is poised to play a pivotal role in the evolving dynamics of the Global South.

As both a leader and a partner, India continues to play a crucial role in shaping the future of the Global South. Through sustained cooperation, mutual respect, and shared aspirations, India and the Global South can collectively navigate the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century.

Global South Countries 2026



Map of Global South.



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History Made When First Indian American Takes Oath Of Office As Lt. Governor Of Virginia

BY A STAFF WRITER

On Saturday, January 17, 2026, former Virginia State Senator Ghazala Hashmi was sworn in as the Lt. Governor of the Commonwealth, a history-making moment. She becomes the first Indian American to win a statewide office in that state, and also the first Muslim woman to win statewide office anywhere in the history of the United States.

In fact, some observers call the November elections a “new chapter” in the Commonwealth’s history when a trifecta of Democrats took over the reins after a long hiatus. Hashmi’s election coincided with another history-making event – the election of the first woman governor of the state – Abigail Spanberger, as well as the first Black Attorney General Jay Jones.

Interestingly, while in Virginia, the Lieutenant Governor is elected at the same time as the Governor, the two are elected separately, i.e., they do not run as a ticket. Therefore, it is possible to have a Governor and Lieutenant Governor belonging to different political parties.

Hashmi ran and won on her progressive platform that focused on diversity and inclusiveness, and defeated her Republican opponent John Reid, despite him being an openly gay Republican talk show host.

Furthermore, while the Governor is limited by the Constitution of Virginia to serving only one four-year term, there is no limit on the number of terms that can be served by the Lieutenant Governor. Gov. Spanberger replaces former Gov. Glen Youngkin who was term limited.

“Today, I was incredibly honored to take my Oath of Office as the 43rd Lieutenant Governor of Virginia. I look forward to working alongside our Governor and administration to build a Commonwealth focused on affordability, opportunity, dignity, and justice,” Hashmi posted on Facebook after her swearing in where her husband and daughters watched as she placed her left hand on a Quran.

Following her victory in the November 4, 2025 elections Hashmi, in an interview on PBS (PBS.org) on November 5, attributed her victory to policies in Washington. Virginia, which is adjacent to the national capital, is suffering the from the consequences of cuts in the federal work force, the federal shutdown, healthcare access, cuts to the SNAP benefits and rising costs, she said.

Asked how it made her feel to be the first Muslim woman elected statewide and in the country, Hashmi said, “Well, it feels tremendous, most especially because of the reactions and the responses that I’m hearing, not just from Virginians, but all across the country, especially from young women, women who come from diverse backgrounds and other faith traditions.”

She went on to say, “They see an opportunity, they value the representation, and they know how critical it is that diverse voices be at every level of government and also in those spaces where historically our perspectives and our representation has not been.”

“And they understand that value. And I’m very delighted to be the first. But I certainly know that I will not be the last.”



Virginia State Senator Ghazala Hashmi being sworn in January 17, 2026.

PHOTO: FACEBOOK



A campaign rally led by candidate for Lt. Gov. of Virginia Ghazala Hashmi.

PHOTO: SCREENSHOT FROM HASHMI'S CAMPAIGN VIDEO



Lt. Gov. Ghazala Hashmi at the podium on winning the election Nov. 4, 2025.

PHOTO: SCREENSHOT FROM CAMPAIGN VIDEO

According to Hashmi, the work that is being done in Virginia is “representative of the growing diversity of all of our communities and the need to ensure that multiple perspectives and backgrounds, ethnicities are truly present when decisions are being made.”

Ghazala F. Hashmi is the 43rd Lieutenant Governor of the Commonwealth and her election according to the Lt. Gov website reflects Virginia’s “continued progress toward a more representative and inclusive democracy.”

Prior to taking office as Lieutenant Governor, Hashmi served in the Virginia State Senate representing the 15th District for two terms.

First elected in 2019, “she built a reputation as a thoughtful, effective legislator focused on strengthening public education, expanding access to affordable healthcare, protecting reproductive freedom, and advancing economic opportunity,” Lt. Gov. website says.

She is credited with playing a key role in securing historic investments in K–12 and higher education, supporting working families, and defending civil rights for all Virginians.

Hashmi was born in Hyderabad, India, and raised in the United States. She earned her undergraduate degree from Georgia Southern University, a master’s degree from the University of Virginia, and a Ph.D. in American Studies from Emory University.

She taught for decades at Virginia’s community colleges, and before her election to the State Senate, Hashmi was in community leadership positions, serving on local boards and commissions and working closely with parents, educators, and civic leaders to strengthen public education and expand opportunity.

Her professional career has been defined by a commitment to ensuring that the government reflects and responds to the people it serves, the website notes.

“Lieutenant Governor Hashmi is focused on working with Governor Spanberger and the General Assembly to build a forward-looking Commonwealth: one that invests in education, protects fundamental freedoms, and ensures that every Virginian has the opportunity to thrive.”

The official responsibilities of Virginia’s Lieutenant Governor are spelt out in Article V of the Constitution of Virginia. Hashmi will serve as President of the Senate and preside over the Senate.

As Lieutenant Governor, she is first in the line of succession to Governor. Should the Governor be unable to serve due to death, disqualification or resignation, the Lieutenant Governor shall become Governor.

In addition to these Constitutional responsibilities, the Code of Virginia provides that the Lieutenant Governor shall serve as a member of several other state boards, commissions and councils, including the Board of Trustees of the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation and the Center for Rural Virginia; the Board of Directors of the Virginia Economic Development Partnership and the Virginia Tourism Authority; the Virginia Military Advisory Council, the Commonwealth Preparedness Council and the Council on Virginia’s Future.

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A New Chapter For Indian-Origin Entrepreneurs In America: From Traditional Stores To Modern Franchising

BY PANKAJ KUMAR, SPECIAL TO NEWS INDIA TIMES

For decades, Indian-origin entrepreneurs have played a central role in some of America's most recognizable franchise brands. Convenience stores such as 7-Eleven, quick-service staples like Dunkin', gas stations and motels became the foundation on which many Indian-American families built stability, cash flow and long-term security while learning the U.S. business system.

Those businesses shaped an entire generation of Indian-American entrepreneurship. They were dependable, recession-resistant and accessible — the classic “safe” investments.

Today, however, a noticeable and significant shift is underway.

Indian-origin business owners are no longer limiting themselves to traditional categories. A new wave of entrepreneurs is expanding into modern franchising sectors that reflect lifestyle goals, personal values and long-term vision rather than survival alone.

A SHIFT TOWARD LIFESTYLE-ORIENTED BUSINESSES

In recent years, Indian-origin investors have increasingly explored franchise sectors aligned with quality of life and scalability. These include health and wellness brands, beauty and self-care studios, international food concepts, home services, essential household support businesses, semi-passive or absentee ownership models, and scalable multi-unit opportunities.

The change reflects a broader mindset shift. Entrepreneurs are no longer operating primarily out of necessity. Instead, many are prioritizing freedom of time, portfolio diversification, work-life balance and generational wealth alongside profitability.

WHY THE CHANGE IS HAPPENING

Several factors are driving this transition.

First, demand for passive and semi-passive income models has grown. Many entrepreneurs no longer want businesses that require 14-hour days and constant on-site involvement. Flexibility, family time and travel have become important considerations. Wellness, beauty and service-based franchises, in particular, have gained traction because they offer structured management systems without sacrificing returns.

Second, Indian-origin entrepreneurs are increasingly seeking professional guidance. In earlier generations, many relied on self-navigation and community knowledge. As franchising models have grown more diverse and complex, business owners are now turning to consultants and industry experts to make informed decisions that fit their lifestyle and financial goals. This reflects growing maturity and strategic thinking within the community.

Third, the next generation is redefining entrepreneurship. During a recent franchise boot camp for Asian-origin youth conducted in collaboration with Edison Care, a nonprofit organization, participants focused less on traditional career paths and more on building businesses that create opportunities for others. Many demonstrated a strong grasp of branding, social media and global thinking, signaling a cultural shift from job-seeking to job creation.

Finally, out-of-the-box franchise concepts are becoming mainstream investments. Health clinics, stretch studios, lash salons, yoga franchises, solar energy businesses and eco-friendly service brands — once considered unconventional — are



PHOTO: NEWSINDIA TIMES.COM

News India Times AI Team



PHOTO: SREUTERS



PHOTO: SREUTERS

now seen as smart, scalable and consumer-driven opportunities. These sectors often combine strong demand, modern brand appeal and recession-resistant foundations supported by professional management systems.

A CHANGING IDENTITY

This evolution represents more than a business trend. It marks a shift in identity for Indian-origin entrepreneurs in America.

The community is moving beyond the image of tireless operators focused solely on survival. Increasingly, Indian-American business owners are becoming innovators, investors, franchise developers, multi-unit operators, mentors and community leaders. This transformation is likely to shape the next several decades of Indian-American entrepreneurship.

LOOKING AHEAD

From a franchise consulting perspective, Indian-origin entrepreneurs are showing greater confidence, curiosity and willingness to diversify. Many are choosing businesses aligned with purpose, passion and personal time, rather than obligation alone.

With the next generation already thinking like builders and creators, the outlook for Indian-American entrepreneurship appears strong. This moment represents an evolution — one that blends experience, vision and opportunity.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Pankaj Kumar is a franchise consultant, entrepreneur and founder of DNA Franchise Pro and Bowl'd Masala, a modern Indian-inspired fast-casual brand based in the United States.

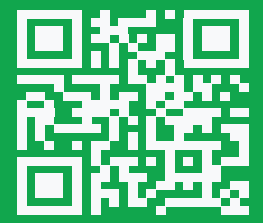
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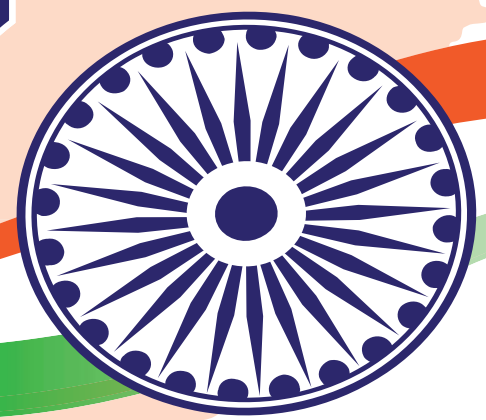


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Candidate For Maine Governor Nirav Shah Secures Indian American PAC's Support

BY A STAFF WRITER

The Indian American Impact Fund, a leading political action committee focused on Indian American candidates, announced January 15, 2026, it is endorsing Nirav Shah for Governor of Maine. If elected, Shah would be the first Indian American and person of color elected to Maine's governorship and would serve as the first Indian American Democratic governor in the United States. To date, two Indian American Republicans in the history of this country, have been Governors- Bobby Jindal of Louisiana, and Nikki Haley of South Carolina.

Shah has a law degree and medical degree from the University of Chicago, and in 2019, Shah was appointed as the head of the Maine Centers for Disease Control, leading the state through the devastating COVID-19 pandemic.

His work provided early PPE for healthcare workers, expansion of testing, and a vaccine rollout that was modeled across the country, achieving some of the highest vaccination rates in the country in the fastest times and maintaining one of the lowest death rates in the country, Shah's biography as well as Impact Fund recounted.

In recognition of this work, President Biden named Shah the Principal Deputy Director of the U.S. CDC, the agency's second-in-command.



PHOTO: @SHAHFORMAINE

Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi, D-Illinois, on Nirav Shah, candidate for the Democratic primary for Governor of Maine.

"Now he brings his leadership and knowledge back to Maine to help his state tackle the growing affordability crisis facing Mainers," the Impact Fund said.

The Executive Director of Impact Fund, in a statement, praised Shah's record saying, "We are proud to endorse Nirav Shah's candidacy to become the first South Asian Governor of Maine because he is the exact type of leader needed in this moment. He is battle tested and his work guiding Maine through one of the most devastating crises in American history will serve him in fighting the affordability crisis facing Mainers by tackling energy costs, increasing affordable housing, lowering healthcare costs, and fueling economic growth."

Shah in his statement, said, "I'm honored and humbled by the endorsement of the Indian American Impact Fund. My story and my family's story, like so many other Mainers', is rooted in the promise that hard work and service can make a real difference. Maine trusted me to lead in a moment of crisis, and now I'm committed to bringing that same steady, results-driven leadership to tackling affordability, strengthening our communities, and building opportunity for every Mainer. I'm proud to have the support of IMPACT as we take on this work together."

Since its inception in 2016, Indian American Impact Fund has endorsed and supported more than 200 candidates across the country, which, it says, has contributed to "the historic rise of Indian and South Asian American representation in politics."

The organization says it has marshaled upwards of \$20 million in funds to support candidates, mobilize voters and affect policies.

Several Faculty Of Indian-Origin At Brown University, RI, Win Prominent Awards, Distinctions

BY A STAFF WRITER

Over the Fall of 2025, several Indian-origin faculty at the prestigious Brown University in Rhode Island, received prominent awards and recognitions. The awards related to their research, service, scholarship and leadership, according to a January 15, 2026, news release on the University's website brown.edu/news.

At least five Brown faculty members of Indian origin, were recognized during the Fall semester (alphabetical order):

Professor of Engineering Pradeep Guduru, who was named the recipient of the B.J. Lazan Award from the Society for Experimental Mechanics. Guduru will be presented the award at the society's annual conference in June 2026. He was honored "for pioneering contributions to the mechanics of dynamic failure, electromechanics of batteries and the development of high-speed diagnostics and instrumentation."

Professor of Engineering Nitin Padture got the 2025 Humboldt Research Award from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation in Germany in recognition of his

outstanding research accomplishments in materials science, particularly emerging photovoltaics.

Kavita Ramanan, a professor of applied mathematics, was named president of the Institute of Mathematical Statistics, a post she will hold until August 2026. The IMS is an international professional and scholarly society devoted to the development, dissemination and application of statistics and probability.

Associate Professor of political science, international and public affairs as well as social and behavioral sciences Prerna Singh, was awarded a Max Planck-Hum-

boldt Medal for her research on the development of welfare states in the Global South. The prize of 80,000 euros aims to help fund her latest research project on vaccination hesitancy.

The Aspen Institute named Yashaswini Singh, an assistant professor of health services, policy and practice at the Brown University School of Public Health, a 2025 Aspen Ideas Health Fellow. She was nominated by Arnold Ventures as one of four health care leaders under 40. Singh is recognized for her achievements and her success in translating research into actionable policy.



Professor Pradeep Guduru.



Professor Nitin Padture.



Professor Kavita Ramanan.



Associate Professor Prerna Singh.



Assistant Professor Yashaswini Singh.

ASTROLOGY



This week for you

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

ARIES: This week calls for patience in professional matters. Avoid rushing, as clarity will emerge. Domestic surroundings feel supportive and help ease mental pressure. Academic goals may face temporary resistance, but determination will help you. Financial ambition grows. Those considering marriage should remain practical. Flexibility will help goals progress smoothly.

TAURUS: A achievement on the career front boosts confidence. Guidance from experienced individuals proves valuable in academic matters. Family life remains calm as routines fall into place naturally. Paying attention to your partner's feelings strengthens emotional bonds. Restarting a fitness routine improves stamina and focus. Balancing personal commitments with professional goals becomes essential this week. Small lifestyle adjustments bring long-term benefits and emotional stability.

GEMINI: Lack of seriousness at work may attract attention, so refocus immediately. Academically, juggling too many responsibilities reduces effectiveness. Financial planning becomes necessary, especially for loan repayments. Emotional sensitivity is required in relationships. Staying mentally present strengthens bonds. Organising tasks and setting clear boundaries helps regain control. Practical thinking and empathy together bring balance.

CANCER: Sorting matters becomes essential to regain emotional clarity. Avoid worrying about situations beyond your influence and allow events to unfold naturally. Adjusting your approach toward people improves interactions. Academic planning requires foresight. Listening to well-wishers offers valuable perspective. Emotional maturity helps you stay composed. This is a period for reflection rather than impulsive decisions, leading to steadier progress.

LEO: Domestic matters require patience. At work, remarks may feel personal, but overlooking them maintains harmony. Supporting a subordinate strengthens team loyalty. Financial caution is advised. Choose trust wisely. Maintaining composure benefits both professional and personal relationships. This week encourages restraint, understanding, and thinking. Calm responses avoid conflicts and protect stability.

VIRGO: Professional responsibilities demand leadership. A possible relocation may require quick adjustment. Preserving peace at home needs patience. Work-related confusion clears up. Financial opportunities should be examined. Health improves by breaking an unhealthy habit. Staying organised helps manage responsibilities. Thoughtful decisions now support stability in all spheres.

LIBRA: Staying informed becomes essential. Work pressure increases. Academic focus may weaken due to distractions. Reconnecting with someone from the past brings mixed emotions. Being considerate strengthens bonds. Emotional awareness improves relationships. This week highlights the importance of balance. Communication ensures smoother interactions.

SCORPIO: Household responsibilities may demand extra attention. Avoid workplace disputes by staying neutral and detached. Financial prospects improve as new earning opportunities appear. Students facing setbacks regain confidence through effort. Family matters need fairness combined with firmness. Calm handling prevents misunderstandings. Emotional control helps you manage responsibilities. This period rewards patience.

SAGITTARIUS: Observing someone's actions closely helps clear doubts. Misunderstandings may require explanation. Business ideas face delays, but patience ensures success. Financial stability strengthens through returns from investments. Property-related decisions prove favourable. Staying alert protects your interests. This week encourages thinking rather than impulsive moves. Careful planning now leads to gains and emotional reassurance.

CAPRICORN: Stepping outside familiar boundaries becomes necessary for growth. Professional efforts earn recognition, boosting morale. Academic discipline sets a positive example. A cheerful attitude spreads positivity at home. Offering help, brings deep satisfaction. Social invitations add enjoyment to the week. Balance ambition with generosity. This period supports progress through confidence, compassion, and consistent.

AQUARIUS: Seeking others' opinions proves helpful. Avoid bold moves for now. Efforts to strengthen your position at work face resistance. Investment plans promising quick gains should be reconsidered carefully. Thoughtful evaluation protects resources. Patience and realistic planning guide better outcomes. This week favours caution and steady progress rather than decisions driven by pressure.

PISCES: Maintaining focus becomes essential. Academic progress improves only through consistent effort. Financial limitations may delay a major purchase. If trying to justify yourself, rely on facts. Health requires attention through preventive care. Staying disciplined supports balance. This week highlights responsibility, clarity, and self-care. Practical thinking helps manage expectations and achieve improvement.

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NJ State Senator Gopal, Assemblywoman Donlon Sponsor Resolutions To Declare Sanskrit A World Language

FROM PRESS RELEASE

With the support of the advocacy organization Hindu American Foundation, Senator Vin Gopal and Assemblywoman Margie Donlon, D-Monmouth, have sponsored joint Senate and Assembly resolutions to declare Sanskrit as one of the world languages.

The resolutions, (SJR167) and (AJR230), recognize that Sanskrit is a language with a unique origin. Sanskrit is considered to be one of the most systematic, technical, and innovative languages. It has one of the largest vocabularies, approximately 102,000 words, making it highly versatile. Sanskrit has influenced nearly 97 percent of world languages, demonstrating its far reaching and profound impact on lan-



PHOTO: FACEBOOK @SENATOR VIN GOPAL

New Jersey State Senator Vin Gopal, the first Indian American to be elected to the upper house in the state.

guage and culture.

Sanskrit has been widely recognized for its sophisticated structure, efficiency in developing algorithms, and its ability to express subtle philosophical teachings. Sanskrit has 2,500 years of literature including poetry, philosophical writings, and Hindu traditions.

This resolution acknowledges not just Sanskrit's cultural and spiritual importance, but also New Jersey's vibrant Hindu community. In the last decade, New Jersey has seen tremendous growth of Hindu residents who now share a greater percentage of our population than any other state. The Swaminarayan Akshardham Mandir, in Robbinsville, which was designed in accordance with ancient Hindu scriptures, is the largest Hindu Temple in the United States and the second largest in

the world. As the foundational language, Sanskrit holds deep importance to Hindu traditions and spiritual framework.

Senator Vin Gopal serves as Senate Majority Whip and Chair of the Senate Education Committee, in addition to serving on the Senate Judiciary Committee. He previously served as Democratic Conference Chair (2022-2025) and Majority Conference Leader (2018-2021). Elected in 2018, a lifelong resident of Monmouth County, Senator Gopal represents residents of Asbury Park, Allenhurst, Bradley Beach, Colts Neck, Deal, Eatontown, Fair Haven, Freehold, Freehold Township, Interlaken, Loch Arbor, Long Branch, Neptune City, Neptune Township, Ocean Township, Red Bank, Shrewsbury, Shrewsbury Township, and Tinton Falls.

Dr. Roopa Modha Crowned Ms. Regal World 2025-2026

BY A STAFF WRITER

An international online pageant system Miss Regal World (based in the UK) has officially announced Dr. Roopa Modha as the reigning Ms. Regal World 2025-2026.

Modha was selected "by a panel of industry professionals for her lifelong dedication to global service and her exceptional achievements across the fields of law, media, and the arts," a press release from Modha said. Modha represented the USA in the international pageant.

Dr. Roopa Modha is an intellectual property law attorney holding a Doctorate in Jurisprudence (JD) from University of Connecticut School of Law with certificates in Intellectual Property Law and Tax Law.

"Beyond the courtroom, she is a celebrated TV host, author, lyricist, illustrator, journalist, and international pageant queen with many titles and awards to her name," the press release said, describing Dr. Modha as "An accomplished dancer and dance teacher," who excels in a range of dance genres including Bharatanatyam, Kuchipudi, Odissi, semi-classical, ballet, tap, jazz, and Bollywood (trained under Smt. Saroj Khan).

"To date, Roopa has 38 successful world records in dance, including 3 Guinness World Records and has earned titles and recognition around the world for her artistic performances and dancing prowess," the press release said.

Modha has advocated for women's empowerment and education and was recognized by President Barack Obama and the White House as a "Changemaker," the press release says. She was named



PHOTO: COURTESY DR. MODHA

Dr. Roopa Modha.

one of the "40 Women Leaders to Watch" by CWEALF and received the "Anokhi Advocate" award from Canada—an honor previously bestowed upon global icons like Priyanka Chopra and Malala Yousafzai. Connecticut's Malta House recognized her as a "Wonder Woman," a title officially bestowed upon her by the Connecticut Senate. She was the youngest recipient and only South Asian, the press release noted.

CITY VIEWS

United Senior Pariwar Of Chicago Celebrates Christmas And Welcomes New Year 2026



PHOTO: JYANTI OZA

Program was started with the ceremony of Deep Pragatya and Acharya Rohitbhai Joshi (Vice President of USPC) with musical group.

BY JYANTI OZA

More than 350 members and volunteers of the United Senior Pariwar of Chicago (USPC) came together to celebrate Christmas and welcome the New Year 2026 in a grand and joyful manner. The festive program reflected unity, culture, and the vibrant spirit of senior citizens.

The event began with the traditional Deep Pragatya (lamp-lighting) ceremony, performed according to Hindu rituals by Acharya Rohitbhai Joshi, Vice

President of USPC, accompanied by prayers and live music. This auspicious start set a devotional and celebratory tone for the evening.

Rameshbhai Chokshi, President of USPC, delivered a warm welcome speech, expressing gratitude to members, volunteers, and artists for their continued support and participation throughout the year.

The cultural program featured performances by well-known local and versatile artists Naliniben Parikh, Ishan,

-CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

Community Activist, Business Owner Neil Khot Releases First Ad In His Big For Congress From Illinois' 8th District

BY A STAFF WRITER

Neil Khot, a community activist and business owner running for the US Congress from the 8th District, recently released a wideranging ad to gain visibility in a crowded race. The District 8 seat is being vacated by long time, Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi who is making a bid for the US Senate seat from Illinois.

Since he declared his run a few months ago, Khot has presented himself as “not a career politician,” and hopes that message will resonate with constituents. At least 8 Democratic candidates are running in the March 17, 2026, primaries for this District 8 seat, among them, another Indian American Sanjyot Dunung, and other South Asian-origin hopefuls.

A first-generation American, Khot's campaign website says, “Neil is running for Congress because he's fed up with watching the people who built this country get squeezed by high costs and ignored by politicians in Washington. He's not looking for a title; he's looking to take his experience as a fighter for this community to Congress and finally deliver the results our community deserves.”

The Federal Election Commission website shows Khot has total receipts of \$750,792 of which his individual contributions equal more than half at \$374,845. His operating expenditures total \$247,459, and his cash on hand as of September 30, 2025, were at \$495,606. Khot has a big challenge ahead of him going into the primaries. His life experience shows he picks himself up from his bootstraps and could rise to that challenge.

On Jan. 14, 2026, he announced the launch of a six-



PHOTO: NEIL KHOT

caring for seniors, the rising cost of living, and ensuring communities are treated with dignity and respect.

“This campaign is about making sure voters know who I am and what I'll fight for,” Khot says. “I've seen firsthand how hard it is for seniors to navigate our healthcare system, how working families are being squeezed by rising costs, and how immigrant communities are being targeted instead of supported. I'm running to be a voice for people who feel like Washington isn't listening.”

In mid-December, Santita Jackson, the daughter of civil rights leader Jesse Jackson, endorsed Khot.

Born in Belgaum, India, into a lower-middle-class family, Khot lost his father at a young age and was raised by a single, widowed mother “whose unwavering courage became the foundation of his life.” He arrived in the US in December 1997 with \$300 in his pocket, the campaign website says.

“He knows what it means to start from the bottom and chase a dream with nothing but grit. Through hard work, he built successful socially responsible businesses that created hundreds of jobs across Illinois,” his campaign website says.

His mother's health care needs as she became a senior familiarized him with the complexities of the Medicare system and high cost of care.

“For Neil, giving back isn't a campaign slogan – it's a way of life,” his campaign says. Plus, it emphasizes his opposition to use of security federal forces in cities and ICE members on the streets. He accuses Republicans in the House of Representatives of surrendering their powers to the President, and he hopes to become a bulwark against that.



PHOTO: SCREENSHOT FROM YOUTUBE VIDEO

Neil Khot's advertising campaign for the run for US Congress from Illinois' 8th District.



PHOTO: NEILFORCONGRESS.COM

Neil Khot, candidate for US Congress from Illinois' 8th District meeting Santita Jackson, daughter of renowned civil rights leader Rev. Jesse Jackson.

figure paid media campaign anchored by broadcast television advertising across the Chicago media market, with additional placements on cable, streaming, and digital video platforms.

The campaign's first television ad is now airing and can be viewed online on YouTube. The ad introduces Khot as a first-generation immigrant, small business owner, and community advocate “who has spent his life giving back to the community that gave him everything.” The spot highlights Khot's personal connection to the issues facing families in the district, including

United Senior Pariwar Of Chicago Celebrates Christmas And Welcomes New Year 2026

-CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

Douceben Shukla, and Niranjhai Patel, with Kamaleshbhai Desai providing excellent keyboard support. The musical evening opened with the famous bhajan from the classic film “Satyam Shivam Sundaram” and continued with a selection of old Hindi songs that filled the hall with nostalgia. The performances created an atmosphere of youthful energy, taking the seniors down memory lane to their school and college days.

Adding a strong cultural flavor, attendees enthusiastically participated in Garba, celebrating Gujarat's rich tradition and identity. A special moment of the evening was the celebration



PHOTO: JAVANTI OZA

A Senior couple performing Christmas dance.

of birthdays of USPC members born in the month of December. They were honored with sweets as a token of love, along with wishes for a happy and healthy life.

As a gesture of appreciation for members' support throughout 2025, USPC distributed a box of Mathipak to all attendees. The evening concluded with a delicious Punjabi dinner, lovingly prepared and served by volunteers of the Swaminarayan Mandir, which everyone thoroughly enjoyed.

Overall, the celebration turned into a memorable event, as USPC joyfully bid farewell to the year 2025 and warmly welcomed the New Year 2026 with happiness, togetherness, and cultural pride.

H-1B Lottery Changes for FY 2027 (March 2026 Registration):

What Employers Need to Know

By David H. Nachman, Esq

IN MEMORIAM



Michael Phulwani



David Nachman



Ludka Zimovcak



Snehal Batra

The H-1B cap registration process continues to evolve, and employers planning ahead for the FY 2027 H-1B cap season should be aware of important upcoming changes. While the H-1B program has always been competitive, recent regulatory developments signal a shift toward a more strategy-driven and compliance-focused registration process.

For employers that rely on foreign national talent—and for professionals planning to remain in the United States long term—understanding these changes well before the March 2026 registration period is critical.

Why the FY 2027 H-1B Cap Season Matters

In recent years, USCIS has taken steps to increase integrity and transparency in the H-1B selection process. After moving to a beneficiary-centric system, DHS has now announced plans to introduce a weighted H-1B cap selection system, expected to apply beginning with the FY 2027 cap season.

While USCIS is still expected to use a lottery format, registrations may no longer be treated equally. Instead, wage level, job details, and worksite information may play a larger role in selection outcomes.

This change may have a meaningful impact on:

- Employers hiring early-career professionals
- Employers sponsoring recent graduates
- Organizations with lower wage structures or multiple worksites

How Wage Levels May Influence Selection

Under the anticipated weighted selection framework, registrations tied to higher prevailing wage levels may receive greater selection weight. Wage levels are determined by several factors, including:

- Job duties and requirements
- Occupational classification
- Geographic location of the worksite
- Salary offered

As a result, employers should not view H-1B registration as a last-minute task. Careful review of wage levels and job structure before registration opens is now more important than ever.

Why Job Location Accuracy Is Critical

Prevailing wages vary significantly by geographic location. The same position and salary may fall into different wage levels depending on where the employee will work. Because USCIS may review whether registration details align with the later-filed petition, employers should:

- Confirm the intended worksite at the outset
- Avoid placeholder or speculative locations
- Ensure consistency across registration, LCA, and petition filings

Inconsistencies may result in increased scrutiny or delays.

The \$100,000 Presidential Proclamation Fee: A Separate Consideration

Employers should also be aware of a Presidential Proclamation that may affect certain newly filed H-1B cases.

Under this rule:

- Certain H-1B cases processed outside the United States may be subject to a \$100,000 government fee
- The rule generally does not apply to approved change-of-status cases inside the U.S.
- Applicability depends on individual facts and circumstances

Because policy developments and litigation are ongoing, employers should evaluate this issue carefully before proceeding with international travel or consular processing.

Planning Ahead for the March 2026 Registration

The evolving H-1B landscape reinforces the importance of early planning. Employers should consider:

- Reviewing job descriptions and wage levels now
- Identifying which employees require sponsorship
- Evaluating alternative visa options if selection becomes less likely
- Coordinating closely with immigration counsel well before registration opens

Foreign nationals on F-1 OPT or STEM OPT should also plan ahead to avoid gaps in work authorization.

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Photo: Canva

FAQ

When will the new H-1B selection changes take effect?

The weighted H-1B selection system is expected to apply beginning with the FY 2027 cap season, with registration anticipated in March 2026.

Does this mean the H-1B lottery is eliminated?

No. USCIS is expected to continue using a lottery system, but registrations may receive different selection weight based on wage level.

Are entry-level positions still eligible?

Yes. Entry-level positions remain eligible, though they may face lower selection odds compared to higher-wage roles.

Why is worksite information so important now?

Wage levels vary by geographic location. Accurate worksite information helps ensure the correct wage level is applied at registration.

Does this affect current H-1B employees?

No. These changes primarily impact new cap-subject H-1B registrations and do not affect existing H-1B approvals or extensions.

Are there alternatives if an employee is not selected?

Depending on qualifications and nationality, alternatives may include L-1, O-1, TN, E-3, or E-2 visas.

Key Takeaway

The H-1B registration process is becoming more strategic and detail-driven. For the FY 2027 cap season, early planning, accurate job details, and thoughtful wage analysis can help employers reduce risk and improve outcomes.

Employers and foreign nationals are encouraged to consult with experienced immigration counsel to develop a compliant and forward-looking H-1B strategy.

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 or by calling us at 201-670-0006 extension 104. We also invite you to visit our website at www.visaserve.com for more information

Stay-At-Home Sons Are Here — And They're Not Going Anywhere

By SHANE O'NEILL

Brendan Liaw was kind of joking when he agreed he was a professional stay-at-home son during his appearance on "Jeopardy!" in May.

He had just earned a master's degree in political science from the University of British Columbia and had recently sent off a raft of applications to law school. But he was between jobs. And he did live with his parents.

"I figured, why not have some fun with it?" he said. "Better to be a 'stay-at-home son' than 'unemployed' or 'schmuck' or 'lazy guy.'"

He certainly wasn't expecting to set off a media moment of stories and think pieces on so-called "trad sons" — adult men who embrace the lifestyle of living with their parents.

"I'm sort of the origin of all this discourse," Liaw, 28, said. He was speaking from an apartment in Vancouver, British Columbia, where he had recently finished his first semester in law school and his first stint living outside his family's home, with a roommate.

Liaw was tickled by the sudden interest. He describes himself as a guy who is happy to be self-deprecating to get a laugh. "Most people know that it's a bit," he said. "I'm not actually endorsing doing nothing."

After his "Jeopardy!" appearance — during which he won almost \$60,000 across four games — several media outlets, including Vanity Fair, People and the Wall Street Journal published stories about a rise in "trad sons" or "hub-sons."

This is during a time of acute anxiety and curiosity about young men in America. Much ink has been spilled about their loneliness, their jawlines, their physical fitness and about being "performative males." The prolific podcaster Scott Galloway's book "Notes on Being a Man" jumped to No. 1 on the New York Times advice bestseller list when it was published in November and sparked fresh discussion about the "masculinity crisis." (On "Today," Savannah Guthrie asked Galloway why "this particular cohort — young men — have fallen so far so fast" as an infographic citing Galloway's book noted that one in five 30-year-old men still live at home).

A Pew Research Center analysis from April bears those statistics out. According to the report, 18 percent of adults ages 25-34 lived with their parents in 2023. That was a dip from a peak of 20 percent during covid restrictions, but more than twice the lowest rate (8 percent in 1970).

The reality has a bit more nuance. While young men were more likely to live at home (20 percent), 15 percent of young women hadn't left the nest either. And White men were less likely to live at home than men of color.

This wasn't a surprise to Che Durena, a comedian from New York City, who said the media interest in stay-at-home sons was missing some crucial cultural context. "That's just called being Italian or Filipino or Indian," he said in an Instagram video he uploaded last year with the caption "Cultural appropriation"

"A big part of American culture is the individualism, which is great because you get self-starters, entrepreneurship," said Durena, 33, from his home in New York City. Durena knows this well. He moved out at age 18 to pursue his career in comedy.

But he also has many friends who stuck around the family home until much later in life. "One of my friends who does comedy — he's Filipino and he left home at, like, 35," he said. "And his parents beg him to come back."

Mark Taylor, 39, agrees. He left a comment on Durena's video that read, "I'm Filipino and black. And I can con-



Abdullah Abbasi, second from left, with his family at their home in Barrington, Illinois.

firm that no lies were told in this statement."

Taylor, who installs gutters for a living, was born in the Philippines and moved to California at age 13. He moved out of his family home at 16 but came back home at age 19. He's lived independently for many years, but he says that there was no stigma in his family about adults staying — or returning — home.

Taylor is from Vallejo, California, which has a large immigrant population (27.1 percent of the population was born outside the United States, compared with a national average closer to 14 percent) and Asian community (about 28,000 people in a town of 123,000). Vallejo is also tied for the city with the highest rate of adults living with their parents in the U.S. According to the Pew analysis, 33 percent of people ages 25-34 in Vallejo live with their parents.

"My mother always had an extra room in case any one of us wanted to move back in," he said. His older brother did just that a few years ago following a divorce. His mother was happy to have him. "There was never some rule that we had to move out when we were 18," Taylor added.

Social distancing in the pandemic inspired Abdullah Abbasi, 24, to start selling "Stay at Home Sons" merchandise with two of his friends during the summer of 2020.

Abbasi said he hoped his first summer after college would be like a coming-of-age movie. Instead, he was spending most of his time in his parents' basement in Barrington, Illinois, playing "PGA Tour" on PlayStation.

"If you look at it from Hollywood terms, I was like that loser kid that lives with his mom," Abbasi said. "But we didn't necessarily feel like losers. We still felt very happy and very content."

Driven by boredom and a shared interest in clothes, he and his pals started making and selling "Stay at Home Sons" T-shirts. "Doing Nothing Is Hard" read the back of one hoodie.

"My mom initially took it as a jab," Abbasi said. As a stay-at-home mother, she thought they might be making fun of her. She came around quickly to the joke and was particularly excited when the T-shirts began getting media attention, sending the articles to her friends and family.

"This might be more like a South Asian community thing, but they love to be able to brag about their kids," Abbasi said.

The articles didn't lead to a significant boom in sales — "Maybe a couple orders" in Abbasi's estimation — but they

helped legitimize him in his father's eyes.

"I think it actually helped my dad be like, 'If these kids are ending up in articles, maybe he can do marketing,'" Abbasi, who works for his father's psychiatric telehealth practice, said. When he spoke, he was with his family in Islamabad, Pakistan, where part of his father's practice operates.

"Our situation — it's kind of like a support network, where we help and they help," Abbasi said. "I think it's a very Eastern thing where, like, what my father did is something I'll do."

His two older sisters have also followed in their father's footsteps, having earned medical degrees in Pakistan. They both have families of their own, something Abbasi is also planning.

Abbasi has never had a girlfriend and said that dating isn't really part of his family's culture. He's had mixed feelings on being single, but has recently embraced it. "I've really leaned back from [dating] in the last couple of years, a little bit out of respect for myself, a little out of respect for the wife I don't have."

Luke Parkhurst, 34, has been single since he sold his house in Houston, quit his job and moved back in with his mother in Las Vegas. He said he was making as much as six figures selling solar power door-to-door, but he had been struggling with addiction to drugs and alcohol.

"Spiritually, mentally, physically, I was dwindling," Parkhurst said. "I gained a lot of weight. My relationship with my family, my Lord and savior, my friends, my siblings, myself, was all just going out the window."

Last year, he called his mom and said he wanted to come home. "Luckily, I have such a cool mom, she just said, 'Okay, cool.'"

Things haven't always been cool between them. "Me and my mom have been distant in the past," Parkhurst said. His mother is Mormon and had a hard time when, he said, he veered from her religious values. They've gotten closer since he moved back in. "I think it's been a good healing, bonding experience for me and my mom," he said.

Parkhurst has fully and vocally embraced his new lifestyle. "I can look someone in the eyes and say, 'Hell, yeah, I'm a stay-at-home son,'" he said. "You work for a living? That sucks."

Last year, he started documenting his daily life with a tongue-in-cheek TikTok account. That led to a flurry of media coverage, which made him a bit of a poster boy for what some outlets have called the "trad son" movement. In a New York Post story, his mother called him her "hub-son." It was accompanied with campy photos of him cleaning her pool and cooking her steak while wearing a cherry-patterned apron.

The photos were posed, but the food was real. He says he cooks his mom steak five times a week, buying the ingredients with her Costco membership and credit card.

The broad smile he wears in the photos is also real. "I'm happier than I've ever been," he said.

He knows that his life isn't for everyone. "Different strokes for different folks," he said. "'Not everyone orders the Number 1 at McDonald's' is what I always say."

Eventually, though, he does hope to find a wife and fulfill what he calls a traditional role of husband as provider and protector.

How does he plan to find a wife without a job?

"If I need to take a girl out on a date, I'll steal my mom's credit card for the night," he said with a smile. Also: "Don't frickin' worry unless it's your wife that's trying to go out with me," he said.

-THE WASHINGTON POST

The Washington Post

\$12 FOR DINNER? WHY AIRLINE MEAL VOUCHERS ARE SO SMALL.

By Andrea Sachs



The American Airlines meal voucher arrived just in time for a late dinner at John F. Kennedy International Airport. On the menu that evening in New York: a cup of grapes.

After an extended delay or canceled flight, airlines will often issue an apology in the form of a food and beverage credit. However, trying to buy a satisfying meal within the confines of the voucher can make a hangry traveler even hangrier.

The grapes I purchased in Terminal 8 ate up nearly the entire \$12 voucher.

"Twelve dollars could get you a lunch somewhere on the street - at least an apple and a sandwich," said Alex Jacquez, chief of policy and advocacy at Groundwork Collaborative, which released a report last year about price gouging at stadiums and airports. "But that is not even enough to get you snack mix."

The voucher, typically valued at \$10 to \$15, is more like going halves with your airline than a receiving a comped meal.

For the three vouchers I received last year, I exceeded the \$12 limit twice. First at Reagan National, where I busted the budget by splurging on a high-protein vegan cookie, a pouch of apple puree and Diet Dr Pepper.

At JFK, pairing the grapes with a fig bar pushed me over the limit.

During a layover at Dallas-Fort Worth International, I gave up trying to eat like a responsible adult and spent the entire voucher on a supersized candy bar.

Why \$12?

U.S. airlines are not legally required to offer meal vouchers to passengers inconvenienced by "controllable" conditions, such as mechanical, maintenance or staffing problems. Most carriers issue the gift as a goodwill gesture.

All nine airlines on the Transportation Department's customer service dashboard say they will provide a meal or voucher whenever a passenger must wait at least three hours in the event of a flight cancellation. Sometimes the bar is higher - or lower.

Henry H. Harteveltdt, a travel industry analyst and president of the Atmosphere Research Group, said he did not receive a voucher from Alaska Airlines for a four-hour delay of his flight from Palm Springs, California, to San Francisco or a seven-hour delay on an American flight from San Francisco to Dallas-Fort Worth.

Yet I surprisingly earned one for an American Airlines flight that arrived in Dallas only an hour behind schedule and well before my connection to D.C.

"Some airlines have well-established rules that determine when vouchers are to be issued, as well as the value of vouchers to be issued. Other carriers delegate the decision to airport staff, though the values may be established by the corporate office," Harteveltdt said. "And some airlines, notably budget carriers, may opt not to issue vouchers at all."

Harteveltdt said the amount is based on several variables, such as route, cabin class and loyalty membership tier. For example, passenger with elite status who booked a premium cabin on a cross-country flight may receive a more generous voucher than a no-status traveler in a discounted coach seat on a short flight. Frontier spokeswoman Jennifer F. de la Cruz said the airline will factor in the circumstances and the time of day before offering vouchers. Its voucher amounts range from \$5 to \$15.

United said it takes into account cabin class and airport location. Airport destination also informs Delta's calculations.

American did not respond to several requests for information, but the prevailing voucher value seems to be \$12.

Gary Leff, founder of the View from the Wing blog, said he recently used an American Airlines voucher to purchase a kid's cheeseburger at his home airport in Austin. He had to dip into his own pockets to fully cover the tab.

Airport stores take advantage of travelers

Airport food, like stadium snacks and room service meals, is notoriously pricey.

Jacquez, of Groundwork Collaborative, said airport food is more expensive than off-site dining because of the unique environment and unusual challenges of operating in a secured transportation facility. The concessionaires, many of which are part of a conglomerate, must contend with high overhead costs and strict regulations. Merchants have limited competition and a captive consumer base.

"It's highly lucrative real estate," Jacquez said. "They will say they need to inflate their prices because of the extra costs associated with running a storefront inside airports, but they are really trying to maximize their chances for revenue."

Retailers in domestic airports usually charge street prices plus a markup of 10 to 15 percent. Some stores will charge even more, taking advantage of weak enforcement, Jacquez said.

Last year, Los Angeles International repealed its 18 percent cap, allowing the stores to set prices based on their own "business strategies, market conditions, customer preferences, and operational costs." The three major airports run by the Port Authority of the New York and New Jersey raised their limit to 15 percent, plus a 3 percent surcharge.

"If you walked into a New York airport right now, I'm sure you could find a snack that costs 18 percent more than you would find in a bodega," Jacquez said.

To protect travelers from price gouging, Salt Lake City International Airport and Portland International Airport in Oregon require vendors to charge street prices - and nothing more. In addition, PDX concessionaires must serve the same portions and quality as their city counterparts. The rule applies to establishments on both sides of security, as well as local brands and national chains.

A latte and lumberjack breakfast sandwich at Portland Coffee Roasters' PDX outlets costs the same as it does outside the airport.

How to stretch your voucher

Airlines typically inform passengers about vouchers by email or text or through their app. If you do not receive notification, inquire at the airline's customer service counter. If the delay was especially egregious, politely ask for two vouchers.

Terms and conditions will vary. With some vouchers, you must spend the total amount in a single

transaction.

Others allow multiple purchases at a variety of vendors. The airlines might limit the vouchers to airport businesses or extend them to a wider network of off-site establishments, such as hotel restaurants, mini-marts, and fast-food and coffee chains.

Frontier's meal vouchers are linked to a Visa or Mastercard debit or credit card that travelers can redeem only at participating airport businesses. United said its vouchers can be used at any airport retailer or dining venue that accepts them, such as hotel restaurants. Delta said its vouchers are good at any food establishment, grocery store or dining merchant that processes credit cards.

If you have the time and inclination, a meal run could be less expensive than staying put (factoring in transportation costs, of course).

"There is generally no geolocation restriction on the use of an electronic card," Leff said. "Your \$12 would go so much farther outside of the airport."

All vouchers come with an expiration date; they typically lapse by midnight or within 24 hours of issuance. Pay attention to the operating hours of airport businesses. Some places close early and open later in the morning. By the time I received my voucher at DCA, my nearby dining options had dwindled to a Hudson News. At Dallas-Fort Worth, I saved my voucher for breakfast, but not many places were serving before my 7 a.m. flight.

Because the vouchers can't be traded for cash, including the unused portion, you will want to spend every penny of it.

If you are staying on the airport grounds, shop around. Compare menus on both sides of the security checkpoints as well as at local establishments, national chains, and convenience stores and newsstands. You might find similar items with different price tags.

At DCA, for example, passengers craving chicken and greens can find a teriyaki chicken salad at Matsutake Sushi (\$21), a chicken Caesar salad at Ben's Chili Bowl (\$18.08), a Farmer's Fridge chicken Caesar at Solid State Books (\$14.49) and a market salad at Chick-fil-A (\$11.95).

If you can't use the voucher in a timely or appetizing fashion, Leff recommends charging the value from a card to an account for a food or coffee chain such as Starbucks, Panera Bread or Chick-fil-A. Once banked, you can use your voucher anytime, anywhere.

Oscar-Winning Composer MM Keeravani Composes Music For Republic Day 2026 Parade

Oscar-winning composer MM Keeravani said he feels honoured to have been given the opportunity to compose the music for the Republic Day Parade 2026.

Taking to X on Monday, MM Keeravani wrote, "Dear all, Vande Mataram! On the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the iconic song Vande Mataram, I feel deeply honoured and privileged to have composed the music for the 26th January Republic Day Parade, under the aegis of the Ministry of Culture. This grand presentation will be performed by 2,500 artists from across India. Stay tuned as we come together to celebrate the spirit of our nation — Vande Mataram!"

Meanwhile, the rehearsals for the 77th Republic Day parade are underway at Kartavya Path ahead of the January 26 celebrations.



MM Keeravani

Notably, the European Council President, Antonio Luis Santos da Costa, and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen will be the chief guests for the 77th Republic Day celebrations.

They will also represent the EU at the 16th EU-India Summit, scheduled for January 27.

The two presidents will meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi for a summit to consolidate the EU-India strategic partnership and further strengthen cooperation in key policy areas.

Discussions will focus primarily on trade, security and defence, clean transition, and people-to-people cooperation, a EU statement said.

-ANI

Bigg Boss Tamil 9 Crowns Divya Ganesh As Winner

After weeks of tough tasks, high-voltage fights, and emotional moments, Bigg Boss Tamil Season 9 has finally come to an end.

Actor Divya Ganesh has been crowned the winner of the Vijay Sethupathi-hosted reality show.

The grand finale took place on Sunday evening and was telecast live on Vijay Television.

The episode was also streamed on JioHotstar.

The ninth season began on October 5, 2025, with 20 contestants entering the Bigg Boss house. Later, four more joined as wildcard entries. Over time, friendships broke, new bonds formed, and strong rivalries came out in the open. In the end, only four reached the finale, Divya Ganesh, Sabarinathan, Vikkals Vikram, and Aurora Sinclair.

Sabarinathan finished as the first runner-up. Vikkals Vikram and Aurora Sinclair took the second and third runner-up spots.



Actor Divya Ganesh.

The finale started at 6 pm and was full of music, dance, and emotional moments. Earlier in the week, folk singer Gana Vinoth Kumar left the show after choosing the money box task and took home Rs 18 lakh.

Season 9 was also Vijay Sethupathi's second season as host. He took over from Kamal Haasan, who had hosted the show for seven seasons since it began in 2017.

Divya Ganesh started her acting journey in 2015 with the Tamil serial Keladi Kanmani. She later worked in popular shows like Vinnaithaandi Varuvaayaa, Lakshmi Vandhachu, Baakiyalakshmi, Sumangali, and Chellamma. She also worked in Telugu television with the serial Bhagyarekha in 2019. Over the years, she became a well-known face on TV.

-ANI

Siddhant Chaturvedi, Mrunal Thakur's Playful Chemistry Wins Hearts In 'Do Deewane Seher Mein' Teaser

Siddhant Chaturvedi and Mrunal Thakur's love drama titled 'Do Deewane Seher Mein' teaser is out, offering a glimpse into a fun-filled, playful chemistry between the duo.

The one-minute and four-second teaser showcases Siddhant and Mrunal's blooming love story, which includes their fun scooter rides and spontaneous dance routines together.

The teaser begins with the introduction of Siddhant and Mrunal's characters, which is followed by their impromptu lunch dates, scooter ride and other quality couple moments.

The teaser concludes with the couple's emotional scene in the rain.

The makers call the movie an "imperfectly imperfect love story."

Siddhant shared the teaser on his Instagram handle.

Apart from the lead cast, the film also stars Ila Arun, Joy Sengupta, Ayesha Raza, Viraj Gehlani, Sandeepa Dhar, Naveen Kaushik and others in prominent roles.

"Do Deewane Sheher Mein is a love story that feels timeless yet new, also touted to be one of the cutest and most heartfelt love stories of the coming year, bringing back the kind of romance we

haven't seen in cinemas for a very long time," the maker said.

Directed by Ravi Udyawar, the film is presented by Zee Studios and Sanjay Leela Bhansali's Bhansali Productions. It is produced by Sanjay Leela Bhansali, Prerna Singh, Umesh Kumar Bansal and Bharat Kumar Ranga in association with Ravi Udyawar Films.

'Do Deewane Seher Mein' is slated for a theatrical release on February 20, 2026, coinciding with the Valentine's Day week.

-ANI



Still from 'Do Deewane Seher Mein'.

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Housekeeping couple for a franchise property in Waukesha, Wisconsin (Near Chicago). Accommodation provided and legal must. If interested, please call Nick Patel at 443-760-5064.

01/23-02/13-S

ILLINOIS & IOWA

Need Single/Couple for Housekeeping and Frontdesk help for Franchise hotels in Illinois and Iowa. Accommodation Provided. Legal must. Call (973) 722-6238 (973) 220-7021

01/09-02/06-JG

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

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

NJ / PA / OH / FL

Franchise Hotel in NJ / PA / OH / FL need Manager, Single Couple for housekeeping, FD & Maintenance. Accommodation provided to the right candidate. Call 732-619-1850 / 786-878-0786 / 732-507-8455. E-mail: usa_today@yahoo.com

01/16-02/06-SL

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Need experienced General Manager, Asst. General Manager and Front Desk Clerks for Franchise Hotel / Motel in Newark, DE. Accommodation provided. Legal status must. Call / text (732) 423-1725 / email resume: joinmyhotel@gmail.com

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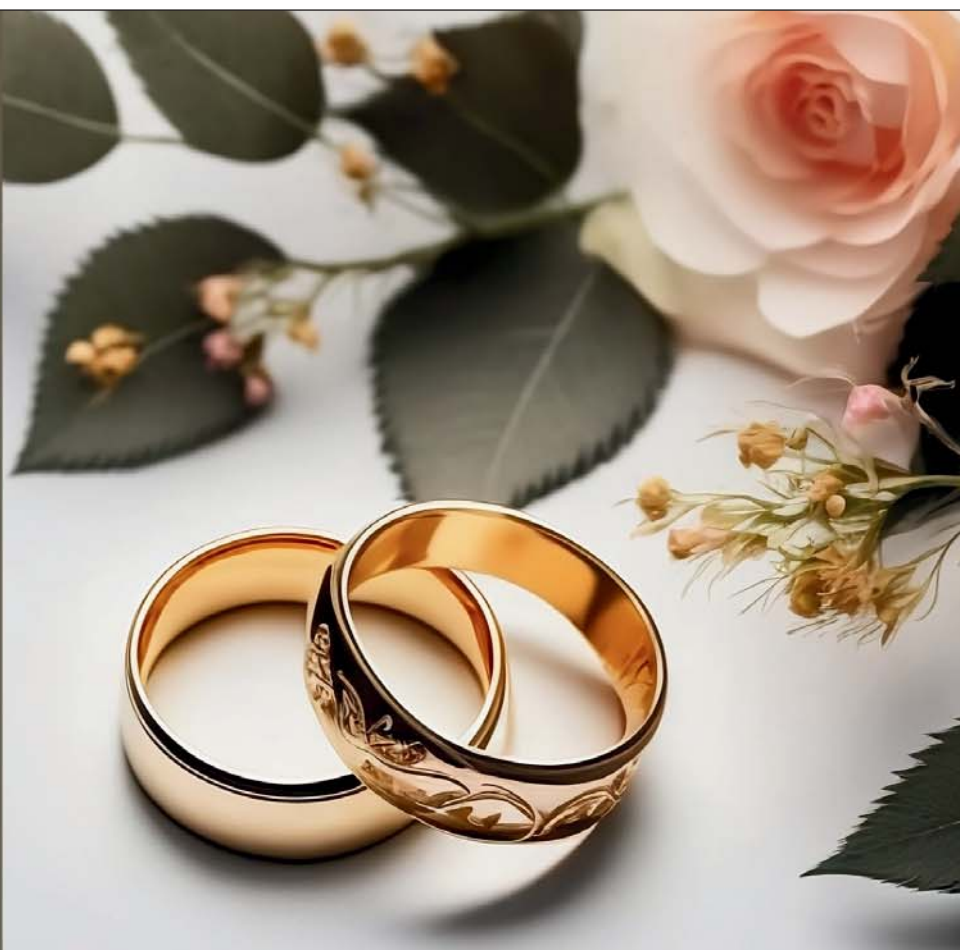
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