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# DESI TALK<sup>®</sup>

**IN CHICAGO**



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**Military hero Brandon Shah,  
who served abroad in several  
war theaters, shot to death  
in his own country**



**PAGE 4**

**Krishnamoorthi's Senate bid fails!**



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**Many Happy New YEARS!**

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# Indian American Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi Loses US Senate Bid From Illinois

By ELA DUTT

**T**wo hours into the election night vote count, (10 pm Eastern Time) it became apparent that the leading Indian American Congressman in the House of Representatives, Raja Krishnamoorthi, D-Illinois, had lost his bid for the US Senate, in the March 17 Democratic primaries in Illinois. With 67 percent of the vote counted, Krishnamoorthi was about 6 points (39.3%-33.6%) behind Lt. Gov. Juliana Stratton, who had the backing of Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker.

The loss also translates to into one less voice for the Indian American community in the halls of Congress – a bipartisan voice with a record of legislation, and committee appointments that were achievements in and of themselves.

The 52 year-old lawmaker was described by the New York Times as an “ambitious political operator” as well as “a fundraising juggernaut.” If elected, he would have been the 2nd Indian American Senator after former Vice President Kamala Harris.

His biography on the Congressional website is a testament to his accomplishments.

Elected to Congress in 2016, he is now in his fifth term (till this November 3 general elections) representing Illinois’ 8th District, which includes Chicago’s west and northwest suburbs as well as the 41st ward of the city.

He took the risk of losing this stronghold when he saw what seemed an opportunity to replace long time incumbent Senator Dick Durbin who was retiring. Krishnamoorthi ran despite a crowded field of fellow Democratic contenders. Anyone who won in this blue district was a shoe-in come November.

Running an aggressive campaign that criss crossed the state, Krishnamoorthi secured impressive endorsements, and pointed out he was proud of 80,000 individual contributions when large donations were questioned. But he faced a formidable opponent in Juliana Stratton who had the backing of Party heavy weights.

The news outlet Politico noted that, “Stratton overcame a crowded Democratic contest for the state’s open Senate seat, defeating front-runner Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi with the help of millions of dollars of outside spending — much of it from her old running mate, Gov. JB Pritzker.”

New York Times’ data analysis showed Stratton was successful in urban Cook County and smaller cities while Krishnamoorthi was successful in Chicago suburbs and rural parts of the state. Indian Americans, while not necessarily decisive in the vote, are concentrated in



Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi

the Chicago suburbs.

The Congressman lives with his wife Priya, a physician, and 3 children in Schaumburg, Illinois, a northwestern suburb of Chicago.

Only in America

Calls to the Congressman upon the results being declared were not returned.

not question the result.”

Journey to Capitol Hill

A political being since early on, Krishnamoorthi worked on President Obama’s Senate campaign years before he entered the White House.

While in Congress, Krishnamoorthi most recently has been serving as Rank-

End Youth Vaping and the bipartisan Solar Caucus.

The son of Indian immigrants who was raised in Peoria, Illinois where he attended public schools and was a valedictorian of his high school class.

Scholarships and student loans helped him to graduate summa cum laude from

Princeton University with a degree in mechanical engineering and a certificate from the Princeton School of Public and International Affairs. He then graduated with honors from Harvard Law School and clerked for a federal judge before practicing law in Chicago.

While practicing law he was appointed by Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan as a Special Assistant Attorney General to help start the state’s Public Integrity Unit created to root out corruption in Illinois.

As a member of the Illinois Housing Development Authority, the Congressman chaired the Audit Committee, helping to provide thousands of low and moderate-income families across the state with affordable housing, his biography



PHOTO: Facebook @rajaforil



Raja Krishnamoorthi on the campaign trail.

But his office promptly sent a statement saying –

“I called Lieutenant Governor Juliana Stratton and congratulated her on winning this primary. I trust that she will continue the lasting legacy that Senator Durbin leaves behind.

“Only in America can an immigrant with twenty-nine letters in his name go from public housing and food stamps to the halls of Congress. I will continue to fight for our country, the greatest on Earth, to make the United States of America the kind of country we all still believe in.”

In his concession speech, Krishnamoorthi said, “Obviously, this is not the result we sought. But, unlike Trump, I will

ing Member of the Select Committee on the Strategic Competition Between the United States and the Chinese Communist Party, making him the first South Asian American in history to lead a Congressional Committee for his Party.

He also on the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence and the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform as Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Health Care and Financial Services.

The Congressman is a Vice-Chair of the Equality Caucus and Co-Chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC) Immigration Task Force. In addition, he is the founder and Chairman of the bipartisan Congressional Caucus to

notes.

Congressman Krishnamoorthi also served as Illinois Deputy Treasurer, where he oversaw the state’s technology venture capital fund and where he is credited with helping make programs such as the state’s unclaimed property program leaner and more efficient.

He worked in the private sector, serving as president of research-oriented small businesses developing technology in the national security and renewable energy industries. Representative Krishnamoorthi also served as the Vice-Chair of the Illinois Innovation Council and co-founded InSPIRE, a non-profit that provides inner-city students and veterans with training in solar technology.



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# Brandon Shah Killed In Shooting At Old Dominion Was A Highly Decorated Military Leader

BY A STAFF WRITER

**H**is biography on the ROTC website still reads in the present tense and has not yet been taken down. It is a testament to this high-achieving serviceman, Lt. Col. Brandon Shah, who was cruelly gunned down March 12, 2026, when a man barged into his classroom while he was teaching at Old Dominion University, Virginia.

The 'Professor of Military Science & Department Chair' had served on the front numerous times and returned alive, making it even more ironic that he died at home. According to a Washington Post article, Rizwan Shah, said his cousin Brandon Shah's father was of Pakistani descent.

The FBI is treating the shooting as a terror attack and has identified the killer as Mohamed Bailor Jalloh, 36, a former Army National Guard, who, according to news reports, was previously convicted in a terrorism case involving ISIS. He was killed when some of Shah's students intervened. FBI Director Kash Patel posted the following on X:

"Earlier today, an armed individual opened fire at Old Dominion University, leaving one person dead and two others wounded. The shooter is now deceased thanks to a group of brave students who stepped in and subdued him – actions that undoubtedly saved lives along with the quick response of law enforcement." The FBI is investigating the shooting as an act of terrorism and its Joint Terrorism Task Force "is fully engaged, embedded with local authorities, and providing all resources necessary in the investigation."

Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Brandon A. Shah was a native of Virginia, an alumnus and commissionee of Old Dominion University (ODU), and at the time of his death, was a Professor of Military Science (PMS) at ODU's Army Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC).

Shah enlisted into the Army in 2003 as an Aviation Operations Specialist. While enlisted, he obtained the rank of Sergeant before transitioning, according to his biography. On completing his enlisted service, which included service in the Active Duty Army, Army Reserves, and Virginia Army National Guard, Brandon graduated from Old Dominion University.

During his tenure in the Army, Shah was deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom, and a rotation to Atlantic Resolve. Since his ODU commissioning, LTC Shah earned his Army Aviation Senior Aviator wings, flown more than 1,200 hours in 3 different aircraft, and completed over 600 combat flight hours.

Shah last served as the Brigade S3 in the 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade, Hunter Army Airfield, Savannah, GA. Before Brigade S3, he served as the Squadron S3 in the 3-17 Air Cavalry Squadron overseeing modernization efforts for Attack Helicopters. Brandon's command time exceeds 36 months which includes a command in A/1-3



Brandon Shah.

PHOTO: ODU/IEDU



Police deploy after a gunman opened fire at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, U.S., March 12, 2026, in a still image from video.

PHOTO: ABC AFFILIATE WVEC VIA REUTERS



Governor Abigail Spanberger  
@GovernorVA · Follow

Lt. Col. Brandon Shah was killed today in his classroom at Old Dominion University.

A devoted ROTC instructor, Lt. Col. Shah didn't just lead a life of service to our country, he taught and led others to follow that path.

8:00 PM · Mar 12, 2026

Screenshot of Governor Spanberger's post.

PHOTO: X/GOVERNORVA

Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, A/3-17 Air Cavalry Squadron, and B/603 Aviation Support Battalion. His service assignments include the 101st Airborne Division, 82nd Airborne Division, XVII Airborne Corps, United States Forces-Iraq, and 3rd Infantry Division.

Shah earned multiple degrees, Bachelor of Science in Sociology and a Military Science Minor from ODU, an MBA from the University of Georgia, and an MS in Engineering Management from the University of Kansas.

His individual awards include the Senior Army Aviator Badge, Combat Action Badge, Parachutist Badge, and Air Assault Badge. In addition, Shah has the Bronze Star (2 awards), Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal (2 awards), Air Medal with Valor, Joint Service Commendation Medal, Army Commendation Medal (3 awards), Joint Service Achievement Medal, Army Achievement Medal (2 awards) and numerous campaign and unit awards.

Governor of Virginia Abigail Spanberger, issued a statement praising Shah. "Lt. Col. Brandon Shah was killed today in his classroom at Old Dominion University. A devoted ROTC instructor, Lt. Col. Shah didn't just lead a life of service to our country, he taught and led others to follow that path," Spanberger said in her post on X. "I am grateful for his example, deeply saddened by his death, and praying for his family. Amid this tragedy, I thank the brave students, first responders, and law enforcement officers who responded quickly to today's horrific attack," she added.

News reports based on an FBI press conference said the killer shouted "Allah hu Akbar" before shooting. It also appears that the shooter did not die of gunshot wounds.

Tributes poured in for Lt. Col. Shah.

Congresswoman Jen Kiggans expressed deep emotions over Shah's death, and praised the students for acting.

"I am heartbroken by the loss of Lt. Col. Brandon Shah in today's tragic shooting at Old Dominion University. As we continue to pray for his family and for the other victims, we should also recognize the extraordinary courage shown by the Army ROTC students who acted quickly to defend their classmates and subdue the attacker. Their actions reflect the very highest levels of bravery and selflessness in the face of unimaginable danger, and I am deeply grateful for their heroism."

Republican members of the House of Representatives posted the following on Instagram: "House Republicans are praying for the family and friends of Lt. Col. Brandon Shah, the victim of today's apparent terror attack at Old Dominion University."

Virginia Lt. Gov. Ghazala Hashmi posted on Facebook, "My thoughts are with the Old Dominion University community, as they grapple with an on-campus shooting that left two individuals in critical condition. We are grateful to the first responders and campus officials on scene."

In a brief video address to the Old Dominion campus community, President Brian O' Hemphill said – As tragedy struck the main campus earlier today when a lone gunman entered Constant Hall and opened fire in a classroom, we join together to pay tribute to our fellow Monarch who was lost and the two students who were injured."

"In the days, weeks, and months to come, we will continue to provide resources to our campus and our community. I encourage all Monarchs to utilize the available services as they can truly make a difference during this difficult time. And, while this tragedy has changed us as individuals and as an institution, we will continue to focus on providing a safe and supportive environment, while also sharing updates as new information emerges," Hemphill said.

Recognizing the impact, the school issued an alert next morning saying Counsellors were available for those in need. The University remained closed on Friday, the 13th.



Old Dominion University President Brian O' Hemphill addressing the campus community following the shooting incident March 12, 2026.

PHOTO: SCREENSHOT



Old Dominion University campus following the shooting incident March 12, 2026.

PHOTO: SCREENSHOT FROM REUTERS

# Junaid Ahmed, Candidate For US House From Illinois' 8th District Outperforms Other Indian Americans In Democratic Primary

By ELA DUTT

Indian Americans made a valiant effort to keep Illinois' Congressional District 8 in the hands of the community in the March 17 Democratic primary.

They did not succeed. They were trying to replace long time incumbent Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi, who gave up the seat to make a bid for the US Senate. He lost in that primary to Lt. Gov. Juliana Stratton.

There were 3 Indian American candidates out of 8 Democrats running in the March 17 primary for the US House of Representatives – Junaid Ahmed, Neil Khot, and Sanjyot Dunung.

Ahmed made the best showing garnering 26.7 percent of the vote to winner Melissa Bean's 31.8 percent, according to results posted on Ballotpedia.

Khot secured 6.7 percent, and Dunung 2.5 percent.

On his campaign site junaidforus.com, Ahmed says his story is the story of millions of immigrants – his dad came in search of a better life for his children, working double shifts if needed, to give them a good education.

Ahmed attended City Colleges and then DePaul, all the while working full-time. He also earned a Masters in Business Administration while working at the Chicago Stock Exchange.



Banner photo on campaign site of Junaid Ahmed.

Entrepreneurship was his passion and expertise, and he started 2 tech companies, first in 2007 and then in 2013. His company employs 20 people and serves clients ranging from startups to national security agencies. "One of the innovations I'm most proud of is an early data-analytics system I helped create for UPS and U.S. Customs that flagged suspicious packages.... Before 9/11 changed everything."

During Covid, Ahmed started a non-profit to feed people, and Chi-Care has grown and is expanding to build a transitional shelter for those in need.

Numerous top Democrats endorsed Ahmed, a progressive Democrat, including Senators Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren, numerous Representatives like Pramila Jayapal and Ro Khanna, as well as Alexandria Ocasio Cortez. This, apart from several progressive organizations.

Upon losing his bid, Ahmed posted the following on Instagram-

"Last night's result is not what we hoped for, but I could not be more proud of the movement we built together. From the beginning, this campaign stood up to the powerful interests that too often

dominate our politics and together we built a grassroots coalition of volunteers, organizers, workers, students, and families who believe our government should fight for working people.

To everyone who knocked doors, made calls, donated what they could, and believed in this campaign, thank you. While this primary may be over, our work continues, and the energy and solidarity we built together will carry forward as we build a more affordable, just, and democratic future."

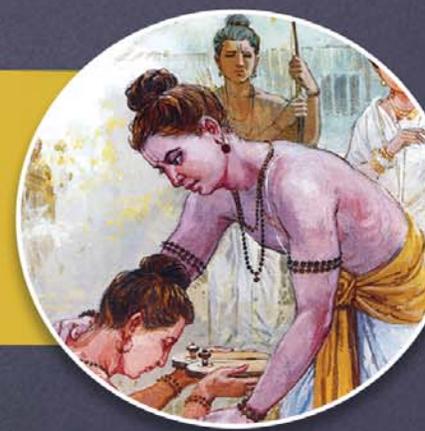
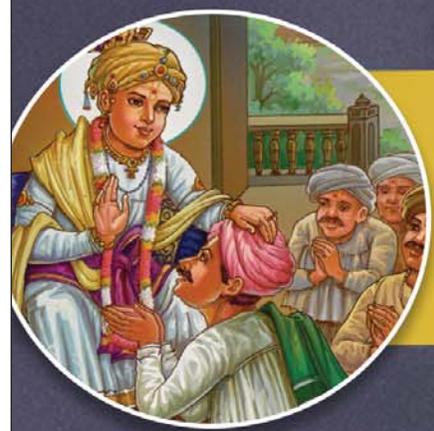


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# Happy New Years!

By ARCHANA ADALJA

**H**oli, the festival of colors and of love, has confirmed end of winter. Now is the time to celebrate the New Years!

Different states of India celebrate different new years, in different languages, with different cultural traditions and different festival foods. One thread is common through all the celebrations: the feeling of welcoming the new year with blessings of the gods and nature, wearing new clothes and sharing food with friends and family.

Four new years fall this year on Thursday, March 19: Gudi Padwa, the Hindu New Year or Chaitra Pratipada, Ugadi and Cheti Chand.

**Gudi Padwa**, the Maharashtra New Year, marks victory of good, prosperity, and new harvest.

The traditional Gudi, a bamboo stick, with upturned kalash pot, dressed in bright colored saree and garlands of flowers, is raised early morning at house entrances, windows or balconies, to ward off evil and invite prosperity.

Gudi symbolizes Rama's return to Ayodhya after completing his exile and his victory over Ravana. In Hindu scriptures, it is the day of King Shalivahanas victory over the Shakas, and the start of Shalivahana Shaka calendar.

Gudi Padwa is also deeply connected to nature, to the harvest of Rabi crops, when people refresh their outlook on life, leave old grudges and forgive and move ahead.

Homes are cleaned and the main entrance is decorated with torans of fresh mango leaves and marigold flowers and rangoli. Families offer prayers at home to god Brahma who is believed to have created the universe on this day.

A special feature of the day is eating neem leaves with jaggery early in the morning, signifying acceptance of both hard times and good times in life. Gudi Padwa meals are special, with Puran Poli, Katchi Amti, Shrikhand-Poori and more items.

Gudi Padwa is also celebrated with a shobha yatra, or a procession. Women walk in traditional Nauvari (nine-yard) sarees and men in Kurta-Pajamas with turbans, with performances of Lezim, Dhol Tasha and cultural floats. In the United States, UK, and Australia, Marathi cultural associations organize community gatherings.

**The Hindu Nav Varsh**, or Chaitra Shukla Pratipada, marks the start of the Vikram Samvat 2083 this year. Regarded as the start of the Hindu New Year in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and various regions of India, it signifies renewal, fresh beginnings and return to spiritual and seasonal



A new year procession on Gudi Padwa festival, Dombivli Maharashtra.



A Ugadi pooja tray with Pachadi served in a cup along with flowers and diya.



Gussadi Dance at Ugadi Celebrations in Pragathi Bhavan.



A Gudi hoisted on a pole in an apartment balcony.

balance.

Scriptures associate this day with Lord Brahma starting the cosmic cycle. The day is considered one of the sadeteen muhurs or three and a half auspicious moments, of the year, making it a good day to start new ventures, buy property, or make significant investments, rituals and resolutions.

In North Indian states, the Hindu Nav Varsh or Nav Samvat, is celebrated with prayers, readings of the panchang and family rituals. Houses are cleaned and decorated with torans and rangolis.

The Hindu New Year also marks the start of Chaitra Navratri, nine days of celebration for the Goddess Durga. Many people grow jawara or sprouts in small earthen pots as an offering to Durga. Many begin their 10-day long fasts on the day, performing pujas to Durga, and listening to bhajans,

concentrating on mental cleansing.

People visit temples to get blessings and meet friends and families and share special meals. In many states, celebrations include community fairs and cultural programs.

**Ugadi** or the Telugu and Kannada New Year, is celebrated in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka and Telangana on the first day of the Chaitra month like the other new years, with traditional customs.

People wake up before sunrise for a traditional oil bath using sesame oil and wear new clothes. Homes are thoroughly cleaned, torans of fresh green mango leaves are hung on entrances and and muggulu or rangoli is drawn to invite prosperity.

Families visit temples to offer prayers and seek blessings for the new year. People also listen to the Panchanga Sraavanam, where priests or elders recite the forecast for the new year. Family reunions, exchanging gifts, giving to charity, starting new business ventures, are all part of Ugadi celebrations.

The traditional six-flavored dish, Ugadi Pachadi, is part of the festive meal. The meals also include Obbattu or Holige.

**Cheti Chand**, the Sindhi New Year, is celebrated with pallavs or prayers offered to Jhulelal, the protector, who is considered to be an incarnation of Varun Dev, the god of water. Some people observe Chaliho, during 40 day before Cheti Chand, in strict penance, to thank Jhulelal.

Celebrations begin with a procession with a sacred tray called Baharana Sahib, containing a jyot or a wheat flour lamp, mishri or crystallized sugar, fruits, cardamom, and a coconut, which is taken to a river or lake and immersed.

The day is celebrated with community gatherings, traditional Chej dances, folk music and traditional dishes including Tairi or sweetened rice, and Chole.



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# New Years' Feasts

By ARCHANA ADALJA

**W**hat are festivals without special feasts of traditional and authentic dishes? Breaking bread together has always been considered a tradition which brings people together and celebrates friendships and comradery.

With four Indian New Years at the doorstep, one can get tempted to make a special dish, perhaps only to not be left behind by others who might be cooking up a storm.

YouTube offers many authentic recipes and their countless variations and most of us have some time or other checked a recipe on it for either ingredients or complex steps of cooking.

PHOTO: USHA NAGLE. CREATIVE COMMONS ATTRIBUTION - SHARE A LIKE 4.0 INTERNATIONAL LICENSE.



Maharashtrian Puran Poli for Gudi Padwa is made from Chana Dal and Jaggery.

## Gudi Padwa

- Typical Gudi Padwa dishes feature a blend of sweet and savory Maharashtrian delicacies including Puran Poli or sweet flatbread, Shrikhand or sweetened yogurt, coconut laddoos, batata bhaji or a vegetable dish of potatoes, Katachi Amti or a sweet and sour spicy lentil soup, onion pakoda, sabudana vada and kothimbir vadi. A Maharashtrian New Year does not begin without eating some bitter neem leaves with jaggery. It might be interesting to make a Maharashtrian dish this Gudi Padwa.

A good recipe of both Puran Poli and Katachi Amti, both authentic, is made available by chef Sanjyot Keer at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4z4vXDqjZtw>. Rendered in Hindi, the recipe offers an authentic foolproof method of making both the dishes for non-Maharashtrians. He also offers a traditional recipe of Masale Bhat at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pLApqJIP9ao>.

For those who understand Marathi, another authentic recipe is available by chef Sarita Padman at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WQVw8\\_bvljk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WQVw8_bvljk)

A little different method of making the sweet bread is also available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LFXPUT7kYPg> by chef Kabita. She also offers a complete Gudi Padwa thali recipes including Puran Poli, Katachi Amti, Rice, Aloo Bhaji and Pakoda at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bQoIAuwO\\_v4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bQoIAuwO_v4).

Another authentic Maharashtrian Masale Bhat easy recipe can be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-DElZkeXR0E> by chef Madhura. Although in Marathi, the recipe gives English subtitles.

And, if you are tired of the chefs talking too much, you can watch a recipe without any commentary with only subtitles at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WRYhRjFrJ1g>.

**Ugadi** - Typical dishes for the Telugu and Kannada New Year, Ugadi, include Ugadi Pachadi which is a blend of six different tastes and is made with neem flowers, jaggery, raw mango, tamarind, green chili and salt. Bobbatlu is a dish resembling Puran Poli, and Mamidikaya Pulihora is a raw mango rice. Side dishes for the new year's feast include pakodas or medu vadas.

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Rajasthani Dal, Baati and Churma are special dishes served on the Hindu Nav Varsh.

PHOTO: <https://www.livingsmarilandhealth.com/> /TAHIRI-TAVRL\_@FACEBOOK



Sindhi sweet rice with saffron is one of the special dishes at Cheti Chand celebrations.

PHOTO: PRASHUKALYAN. CREATIVE COMMONS ATTRIBUTION - SHARE A LIKE 4.0 INTERNATIONAL LICENSE.



Ugadi Pachadi and Pulihora or tamarind rice are special dishes for Ugadi, the Telugu and Kannada New Year.

An authentic Pachadi recipe can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k7nKwVvNhxg>, in Telugu with English subtitles. It is interesting to see that the

dish is actually a liquid dish.

A simple to follow authentic recipe of Pachadi in English can be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b3RC7vQsSUE> by chef Hema Subramaniam.

Sweet Bobbatlu or Holige, a flatbread similar to Puran Poli and a recipe in English is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U4Mg3EDtsws>.

Recipes of four Ugadi dishes are found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=85XeESJvGRM> with English subtitles and no commentary. The video offers recipes for coconut laddoos, temple style Puli-yogare, kesari bhat, and a new recipe of medu vada.

**Hindu Nav Varsh** - The festive Hindu Nav Varsh, features in Rajasthan rich and traditional dishes like Gatte Ki Sabzi or vegetable gravy with gram flour

dumplings, Daal Baati Churma or lentil soup, baked wheat balls and crushed sweet wheat, and desserts like Ghevar or Mawa Kachori.

An authentic Rajasthani recipe of Gatte Ki Sabji can be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p8DDt7ehk9Y>. Although rendered in Hindi, it still remains a good recipe to follow, if the constant chatter of the chef at Papa Mummy Kitchen can be ignored.

Chef Poonam Devnani offers an easy to

follow recipe in Hindi at her Masala Kitchen site with on screen list of ingredients in English at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TSMI7STQdH0>.

Interesting Daal, Bati and Churma recipes are offered by Chef Sanjyot Keer at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mZ4xTelTAGk>, which seem authentic as he says they originated in a Marwari home.

Chef Kabita's recipes of Dal, Bati and Churma are easy to follow at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IdAYLQmSEj8>.

**Cheti Chand** - Typical Cheti Chand dishes to celebrate the Sindhi New Year focus on sweet-and-savory combinations, with Tairi or sweet saffron rice, Mitho Lolo or sweet flatbread, Sai Bhaji or mixed greens vegetable, Bhuga Chawal or browned onion rice and sides of fried snacks like Aloo tuk.

An authentic Sindhi recipe of Meetho Lolo or sweet flatbread is offered by chef Kanak at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZhFM7B6Myypg>. Rendered in Hindi, the video contains English subtitles.

Chef Sanjeev Kapoor offers his version of Meetho Lolo in Hindi at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bo1Fr1RwAK8>, with ingredients listed on-screen in English.

A very well explained recipe of Meetho Lolo is available from chef Nisha Madhulika at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GyXMSzSuHg>.

Sai Bhaji which is a complex mix of vegetables can be learned in English at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KjXTb98T5v0>.

In an unauthentic version of the Sai Bhaji without onions and garlic, Nisha Madhulika teaches how to make it in simple steps at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7YRtwuY49jM>.

A simple pressure cooker recipe in English is offered by Veena Gidwani at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-M7HjJXINw>.

# Malabar Group Chairman M. P. Ahammad Honored with Business Bhushan Award 2026 by Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis

By BHAILAL M. PATEL

**M**umbai, India: M.P. Ahammad, Chairman of the Malabar Group, has been conferred the prestigious Business Bhushan Award 2026 at the Lokmat Maharashtra of the Year Awards, in recognition of his visionary leadership and remarkable contribution to transforming the global jewellery retail industry.

The grand awards ceremony was held at the historic Gateway of India in Mumbai, bringing together prominent policymakers, industry leaders, business pioneers, and celebrated personalities from across sectors.

The honour was presented in the presence of Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, along with several ministers, senior bureaucrats, and distinguished guests. Also present at the ceremony was Mr. Asher O, Managing Director – India Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds, along with other leaders of the organization.

The Lokmat Maharashtra of the Year Awards celebrate individuals whose leadership, innovation, and achievements have significantly influenced industries while contributing positively to society. Mr. Ahammad's recognition highlights his extraordinary entrepreneurial journey and his pivotal role in building Malabar Gold & Diamonds into one of the most respected jewellery brands in the world.

Under his leadership, Malabar Gold & Diamonds has grown to become the fifth-largest jewellery retailer globally and the largest jewellery retailer of Indian origin, setting benchmarks in customer trust, transparency, and responsible business practices.

**Chairman's Statement**  
Expressing gratitude upon receiving the award, Mr. M.P. Ahammad said: "I am deeply honoured to receive the Business Bhushan Award at the Lokmat Maharashtra of the Year Awards. This recognition



PHOTO: PROVIDED

M.P. Ahammad, Chairman of Malabar Group, has been conferred the Business Bhushan Award 2026 by Maharashtra Chief Minister, Devendra Fadnavis at the Lokmat Maharashtra of the Year Awards. The event was attended by Deputy Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Sri. Eknath Shinde, along with Mr. Asher O, MD-India Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds, other ministers, bureaucrats, and distinguished figures from across sectors.

reflects the collective dedication and hard work of the entire Malabar family and the trust that millions of customers have placed in us over the years. Our journey has always been guided by responsibility, integrity, and a commitment to creating lasting value for society while striving for excellence in everything we do."

**A Global Success Story**  
Founded in 1993, Malabar Gold & Diamonds has emerged as a pioneer in responsible and transparent jewellery retail. Over the years, the company has played a significant role in employment generation, strengthening the organized retail ecosystem, and providing customers with world-class jewellery designs and services.

Today, the brand stands as a global ambassador of Indian craftsmanship and heritage, operating more than 425 showrooms across 14 countries. The company has successfully integrated the entire value chain—from design and manufacturing to retail—redefining the modern jewellery industry.

**Strong Presence in Maharashtra**  
Maharashtra remains one of the most

important markets for Malabar Gold & Diamonds. The brand currently operates 34 showrooms across major cities in the state, contributing to local employment and strengthening the organized jewellery ecosystem.

The group has ambitious expansion plans and aims to increase its presence to 64 showrooms in Maharashtra by 2029, further enhancing customer access to quality jewellery designs and services.

**Commitment Beyond Business**  
Beyond commercial success, Mr. Ahammad has championed a purpose-driven business model, embedding CSR and ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) commitments at the heart of the organization since its inception.

The Malabar Group consistently allocates 5% of its profits to social welfare initiatives, supporting programs in education, healthcare, housing, hunger relief, environmental protection, and women's empowerment, positively impacting communities across regions where the company operates.

The Business Bhushan Award further

reinforces Mr. Ahammad's reputation as one of India's most respected business leaders whose visionary leadership, ethical values, and commitment to social responsibility continue to inspire future generations of global entrepreneurs.

Malabar Gold & Diamonds, established in 1993, is the flagship company of the Malabar Group, a leading diversified Indian business conglomerate.

With an annual turnover of approximately \$7.36 billion, the company ranks among the top five jewellery retailers globally and operates over 425 showrooms across 14 countries. The group also maintains offices, design centers, wholesale units, and manufacturing facilities across India, the Middle East, the Far East, the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.

Owned by more than 3,500 shareholders, the group employs over 30,000 professionals representing more than 26 nationalities.

Malabar Gold & Diamonds also operates an online retail platform allowing customers worldwide to purchase jewellery through its digital store.

The group has expanded into specialized retail concepts including:

- MGD – Lifestyle Jewellery, offering modern and lightweight jewellery designed for the contemporary woman.
- Mojawhraty by Malabar, a retail concept designed specifically for Arabic audiences, blending traditional elegance with modern design.

Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles have remained central to the group's philosophy since its inception. The company's major ESG initiatives focus on healthcare, housing support, hunger eradication, education, environmental sustainability, and women's empowerment.

Through these initiatives, Malabar Group continues to integrate responsible and sustainable practices into its core business operations while contributing to social development in the communities it serves.

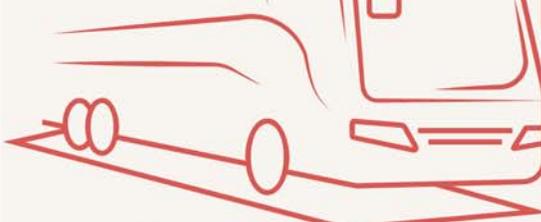
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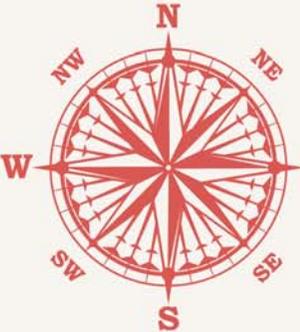
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# Purdue University, Indiana's Indian American Researchers Advance Science On Multiple Fronts

BY A STAFF WRITER

**R**esearchers of Indian origin are benefiting Purdue University, Indiana, through their research, turning results that are being patented, holding the potential of generating new financial and other resources. In just the first few weeks of March 2026, several of them were featured in the University's website. These researchers include:

1. Somali Chaterji who leads a team that has developed AGILE3D, the first adaptive 3D object detection system
2. Vaneet Aggarwal, Dipesh Tamboli, and Vineet Punyamoorthy who have developed technology that protects privacy during AI photo editing.
3. The National Academy of Inventors recognized Professor Arun Ghosh of the College of Science where he is the Ian P. Rothwell Distinguished Professor of Chemistry and Medicinal Chemistry and Molecular Pharmacology.

Somali Chaterji: Purdue University, Indiana's Associate Professor of agricultural and biological engineering Somali Chaterji, leads a team that has developed AGILE3D, a cutting-edge 3D object detection system with the potential to help companies manufacturing autonomous vehicles, industrial robotics, delivery robots and drones.

The University announced this development in a March 11, 2026 news release.

"AGILE3D is the first adaptive, contention- and content-aware 3D object detection system tailored for embedded GPUs, or graphics processing units," Chaterji is quoted saying in the article, adding, "The system can dynamically adjust detection strategies based on real-time hardware constraints and varying input data."

The system developed by Chaterji and her team is broadly applicable wherever a robot or vehicle needs fast 3D perception on a tight onboard computer budget, she said. It is most applicable to autonomous driving.

"Beyond cars, AGILE3D can benefit delivery robots and drones, industrial/mobile robotics, augmented reality/virtual reality perception, and outdoor autonomy in digital agriculture and forestry, especially when the platform relies on an embedded GPU and must keep latency predictable for smoother, safer operation," she is quoted saying.

"During comprehensive evaluations, AGILE3D achieved state-of-the-art performance, maintaining high accuracy across varying hardware contention levels and latency budgets of 100 to 500 milliseconds," Purdue said in the news release.

The Purdue Innovates Office of Technology Commercialization has applied for a patent. Meanwhile, Chaterji continues to make further improvements to the system.

Purdue University researchers Vaneet Aggarwal, right, and Dipesh Tamboli have developed and validated a system that dramatically reduces what AI



PHOTO: PURDUE UNIVERSITY PHOTO

Purdue University researcher Somali Chaterji leads a team that has developed AGILE3D. It is the first adaptive, contention- and content-aware 3D object detection system tailored for embedded GPUs.



PHOTO: PURDUE UNIVERSITY PHOTO/MUDIT GAUR

Purdue University researchers Vaneet Aggarwal, right, and Dipesh Tamboli have developed and validated a system that dramatically reduces what AI models learn about a user's identity when photos are edited and shared.



PHOTO: KHANNA.HOUSE.GOV

Professor Arun Ghosh.

models learn about a user's identity when photos are edited and shared. (Purdue University photo/Mudit Gaur)

Vaneet Aggarwal, Dipesh Tamboli & Vineet Punyamoorthy:

This team has developed the patent-pending system, used before and after photos are uploaded to an AI editing platform.

"Results of validation testing show that we can preserve editing quality while dramatically reducing what AI models can learn about your identity," Aggarwal is quoted saying in the Purdue news release of March 12. "This is a critical step toward trustworthy generative AI," he added.

Aggarwal, a University Faculty Scholar and the Reilly Professor of Industrial Engineering, worked with Tamboli who is a doctoral alumnus, and Punyamoorthy who is a doctoral candidate in computer and electrical engineering.

"Our system allows users to mask sensitive regions on their photo, like the face, from an AI editing service," Tamboli says in the news release. "Those regions are masked locally on the user's device using a detailed outline of the region."

Only the masked image is sent to the AI editing service.

"After the image is edited by AI, our system reintegrates the sensitive region back into the edited image using geometric alignment and blending," he said.

According to the team, their Purdue system is the first solution that delivers full privacy with sensitive data never leaving the user's device; High-quality edits; Compatibility with any commercial generative AI model; and Photorealism.

"It's privacy by design," Aggarwal said. "With our system, the AI platform never sees the face, but the final edited image still looks completely natural."

Their work is published in the peer-reviewed journal IEEE Transactions on Artificial Intelligence.

Arun Ghosh: The NAI in its recognition of Ghosh as a Fellow said, "Ghosh is a leader in the field of structure-based drug design and discovery, guiding a research group in multidisciplinary research projects in the areas of synthetic organic, bioorganic, and medicinal chemistry. One highlighted achievement was the design and discovery of a potent HIV protease inhibitor, a key medication in the fight against HIV/AIDS approved by the FDA in 2006 and now used in over 120 countries."

Ghosh is described by Purdue as a "prolific inventor, boasting a large portfolio with an abundance of technology encompassing both U.S. and foreign patents. His patents span multiple areas of research including HIV/AIDS, Alzheimer's disease, and SARS/COVID-19."

Ghosh said his recognition by the NAI "underscores the importance of advancing chemistry and drug discovery research to save lives and improve health outcomes. I am humbled by the honor and very grateful for my colleagues and collaborators and the support of Purdue for fostering an environment that encourages innovation and supports transformative research."

ASTROLOGY



This week for you

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

**ARIES:** Listening to someone experienced can save you from avoidable mistakes. Fine-tuning your romantic expression will bring better results in love. Confidence in your own abilities helps you rise above the competition. Pending payments or dues are likely to strengthen your financial position. You remain enthusiastic, inspiring colleagues. Health improves when you seriously follow advice about fitness.

**TAURUS:** Even if circumstances seem dull, one positive development can shift everything in your favour. Career decisions may face resistance, but your long-term interests remain protected. Reconnecting with old friends lifts your spirits. Financial comfort allows relaxed spending. Quiet self-reflection brings clarity and emotional healing. Expanding your professional circle, , proves beneficial later.

**GEMINI:** Clearing misunderstandings now prevents bigger issues later. Academic opportunities should not be ignored, as participation brings growth. Stay away from gossip, as it may distort your judgment. Be mindful of unnecessary spending. A personal goal moves closer to completion. Emotional lightness replaces recent stress. Warm interactions may spark a promising romantic connection.

**CANCER:** A little encouragement helps you achieve results that surprise even you. The week works strongly in your favour. Someone may extend special support to fulfil your wishes. Stand firm against unreasonable expectations. Financial returns may come indirectly if not in cash. Making healthier food choices leads you toward improved vitality.

**LEO:** Patience at work turns out rewarding. Extra academic effort at the last moment produces excellent outcomes. A relative from afar may bring lively moments into your routine. Although expenses rise, income remains stronger. Completing a task eases mental pressure. Partnering with someone for fitness goals keeps motivation high. Travel possibilities look exciting.

**VIRGO:** A trip to meet someone special outside town may materialise. An event in your honour adds joy. Married life feels harmonious for newlyweds. Career advancement or salary growth is possible. Singles may experience promising romantic developments. You edge ahead of rivals through preparation. Consistent exercise keeps you active and balanced.

**LIBRA:** Memories of happier times may make you reflective. Meaningful conversations strengthen romantic bonds. This is a favourable period to recover money lent earlier. Academic progress requires added effort. Ignoring minor health concerns may create issues later. Emotional sensitivity increases around personal matters. A visit from a younger family member brings cheer.

**SCORPIO:** If someone tests your patience, express yourself calmly rather than sharply. Romantic gestures require subtlety to succeed. A family gathering restores emotional balance. You may finally host the celebration you had been planning. Handling personal matters during office hours may become necessary. Academic performance remains stable and satisfying.

**SAGITTARIUS:** Clear communication with authority figures avoids confusion. Focused effort is needed to achieve academic targets. If ending a draining relationship feels necessary, evaluate carefully before deciding. Unexpected financial gains brighten the week. Heated debates may impact your well-being, so stay composed. Travel plans could face sudden changes.

**CAPRICORN:** Seeking assistance through proper procedures brings workplace support. Stay firm while negotiating important matters. Academic distractions may cost you competitive advantage. A partner's honest feedback may feel harsh but holds value. Lending money now involves risk, so exercise caution. Carelessness regarding health may create setbacks.

**AQUARIUS:** A fresh professional chapter begins, demanding full engagement. Determination helps you master academic challenges. A partner's playful gestures bring joy. Investment proposals require thorough analysis before commitment. Homemakers may feel inspired to reorganise living spaces. Accompanying someone on a long journey turns enjoyable and memorable.

**PISCES:** Sharing concerns with a trusted family member brings relief. A new work assignment stretches your abilities positively. Extra dedication improves chances of financial growth or increment. Maintaining optimistic thinking boosts academic results. Minor disturbances may arise in marriage. If your partner feels low, your support strengthens emotional closeness.



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# She Matters Global Foundation Launches With Tribute To Women In Downers Grove

BY BHAILAL PATEL

**T**he She Matters Global Foundation, a new nonprofit focused on empowering and supporting women, officially launched Saturday with an event titled “She Matters – A Grand Tribute to Womanhood” at Ashyana Banquets in Downers Grove.

The celebration brought together community leaders, entrepreneurs, artists and supporters to recognize women’s achievements and contributions across various fields.

The organization was founded by Rajkumari Rathod, who said the foundation was created to ensure women receive recognition, support and opportunities to succeed.

“This event was not just a celebration — it was the start of a vision that is very close to my heart,” Rathod said. “She Matters was created to uplift women, celebrate their achievements, support women entrepreneurs and build meaningful connections within our community.”

The evening featured the Women Excellence Awards honoring women making positive impacts in their communities. Guests also enjoyed cultural dance performances, live music, a gala dinner,



PHOTO: REUTERS

Members of the organizing team perform the traditional diya lighting ceremony during the launch of the “She Matters – A Grand Tribute to Womanhood” event hosted by the She Matters Global Foundation on March 7, 2026, at Ashyana Banquets in Downers Grove, Illinois. The ceremony marked the official opening of the celebration honoring women’s achievements and leadership within the community.

giveaways and a DJ celebration.

According to organizers, the foundation aims to create platforms that empower women through recognition programs, networking opportunities, mentorship and community initiatives designed to promote leadership and growth.

Members of the organizing team per-

form the tradiAttendees described the event as an evening of empowerment and unity that highlighted the strength, resilience and talents of women from diverse backgrounds.

Rathod said the foundation plans to host future programs and initiatives that support women’s entrepreneurship,

leadership development and community engagement.

“This is just the beginning,” she said. “Together, we are building something meaningful — a space where women feel encouraged, respected and empowered.”



Asian Media USA

Award recipients and organizers pose for a group photo during the “She Matters – A Grand Tribute to Womanhood” launch event hosted by the She Matters Global Foundation on March 7, 2026, at Ashyana Banquets in Downers Grove, Illinois. The event celebrated women’s achievements and honored community leaders through the Women Excellence Awards while bringing together supporters, entrepreneurs and artists for an evening of recognition and empowerment.

# Nonprofit Indo US Lions Club Organizes Business Networking Event

BY A STAFF WRITER

**I**ndo US Lions Club of Chicago, a 501C nonprofit organization serving the area community, organized a business networking event recently at the venue provided by the Pearl Banquet and Conference Center in Roselle, IL.

Attended by hundreds of entrepreneurs, business professionals, volunteers, sponsors and community leaders, Chicago area elected officials and guests, the event brought together the business community to brainstorm over enabling economic advancement.

The event also featured more than twenty interactive business booths which showcased their businesses and connected with local business leaders to discuss new trends in business, extend their professional reach and form lasting business relationships, according to the club’s press release.

Illinois State Secretary Alexi Giannoulias proclaimed the day of the event as Chicago Indo US Lions Club Community Service Day. In the proclamation, Giannoulias commended the Club for their volunteerism, humanitarian projects and health initiatives.

The event also raised funds to purchase necessary hearing and vision screening equipment, AIC testing devices, and other medical supplies to be distributed by Chicago Indo US Lions Club (the Club hereafter) in the underserved communities.

Speakers at the event spoke about the Club’s efforts to serve the community and enhance its economic growth. Many speakers sent video messages and letters praising the Club for promoting small businesses leading to economic growth and community development, stressing its positive impact in Chicago area. These included



PHOTO: PROVIDED BY CHICAGO INDO US LIONS CLUB

A collage of photos depicting the networking event organized in Roselle, IL, by Chicago Indo US Lions Club.

Illinois Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias, Governor of Illinois JB Pritzker, Cook County Treasurer Maria Pappas, Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi, and other elected officials and civic leaders.

In her message, Founder President Hina Trivedi said the community response to such events was inspiring. “Events like this reflect our shared vision of growth,

service, and lasting partnerships,” she said in her message, according to the press release.

President Kishan sent in a message thanking the participants, volunteers and sponsors for helping build stronger business connections and a stronger community.

The event was made possible and successful by their hospitality and support from Raj Jayara and Pearl Banquets and Conference Center. Sewa International USA supplied volunteers for smooth event operations. United Punjabi Association and its President Atul Wahi provided valuable support and collaboration of his team, and Sudhir Sakhuja was a major support with his behind the scenes efforts, according to the press release.

Major businesses of the Illinois area supported the event by sponsoring it. These included industrialist Darshan Dhaliwal, Parminder Singh Goldy from the hospitality industry, liquor distribution executive Sukhwinder Singh Ghaggar, Brijesh Patel of Core Exteriors for commercial and residential roofing solutions, Brij Kukreja and his Kite Entertainment, Santhosh Kumar of Universal Metro Aging Services, Chintal Mehta of Care for Soul, Dr. Rani Yousefzai of Belleza Med Spa and J&R Hair Academy, Dr. Andrew Thomas of Heals on Wheels, Avani & Hemant Trivedi of AUCI / 7-11, and Noman Khan of Illinois Media Group.

Chicago Indo US Lions Club has been focusing on community service and regularly provides assistance through meals, vision and hearing screenings, education and empowerment, health projects and volunteering in the local community.

It promotes business networking, professional advancement and cross-industry partnerships within the Indo US community and local US businesses, cultural engagement and philanthropic initiatives in the US and India.

# Immigrants Reduce America's Deficit. Congress Should Take Notice

BY DAVID J. BIER, CATO INSTITUTE

**A**mid ongoing congressional debates—culminating, of course, in a partial shutdown—over Trump's mass deportation agenda, one fact in particular should capture both Democrats' and Republicans' attention: immigrants provide an enormous boost to the country's long-term economic and fiscal health, reducing our massive deficit by a third.

Off the bat, the Trump administration's instincts on the economic effects of immigration are wrongheaded. "For decades, the structure of U.S. society, by intent and design, was remade to redistribute wealth, resources, property and opportunity from Americans to non-Americans," Deputy Chief of Staff Stephen Miller said in December. It's a compelling narrative, but it's simply incorrect.

The evidence for immigrants' significant economic contribution to America is overwhelming. Indeed, a new study published recently by the Cato Institute, analyzing three decades of fiscal policy for the first time, finds Deputy Chief Miller's logic precisely backward: foreigners are creating wealth and redistributing it to Americans. The study finds that immigrants reduced the U.S. debt by nearly a third, or \$14.5 trillion, from 1994 to 2023.

The Trump administration's instincts on the economic effects of immigration are wrongheaded.

Without immigrants, federal debt would already be more than 200 percent of GDP — a level some analysts fear could trigger a debt crisis.

In the Trump administration's telling, each new immigrant to the United States introduces a host of new costs, principally borne by the federal government in the form of additional public spending. Yet a big chunk of government spending is what economists call "pure public goods,"



PHOTO: REUTERS/JAMES LAWLER DUGGAN/FILES

A man exits the transit area after clearing immigration and customs on arrival at Dulles International Airport in Dulles, Virginia, U.S., September 24, 2017.

which don't increase just because a new person enters the country. We would, for example, have to pay our military and interest on past debt even if the immigrant population had shrunk.

From there, we can see that the average person in the United States paid more in taxes than they received from the government in services — which includes everything from education and welfare to roads and police. Therefore, if an immigrant's fiscal impact is no worse than the average, they reduce the debt.

And that is indeed the case. Immigrants pay more than the average in taxes and receive less than the average in services, greatly reducing the deficit every year since 1994 when the detailed government data series begins. On the revenue side, immigrants paid higher-than-average taxes because their employment rate

was 12 percentage points higher than that of the U.S.-born population. So, there was more income to be taxed.

On the spending side, the story is the same. While many believe immigrants must be a huge fiscal drain because they are more likely to live in poverty, it's important to remember that federal law prohibits many noncitizens—primarily those here illegally—from receiving welfare. The truth is that immigrants receive only about the population average in "needs-based" assistance.

This near-average level of needs-based assistance is more than offset by the fact that they receive 34 percent less than the average in public retiree benefits. That isn't due

to age: immigrants are only slightly less likely to be of retirement age. Instead, it's because many noncitizens are barred from applying for these benefits based on their legal status and only rarely work for the government, so they aren't eligible for expensive public pensions.

Immigrants are also much less likely to be in prisons or jails, reducing incarceration costs. But the far greater savings come from education. The average age at arrival for immigrants was about 25, after their education is typically over, so immigration gives the country fully educated workers ready to enter the labor force—effectively for free.

It's a far cry from the administration's assertion that immigrants impose a public cost.

We still don't know what kind of deal Congress will strike on immigration. But the data are clear that immigrants can have impressively positive effects on the government's finances. They also point to a possible compromise along the lines of the bipartisan Dignity Act, sponsored by Reps. Maria Elvira Salazar, R-Florida, and Veronica Escobar, D-Texas, which would give currently deportable immigrants without serious criminal records the right to stay, work, and pay taxes with little access to public benefits. A proposal along those lines would have much more positive fiscal effects than the current mass deportation strategy.

Whatever deal is ultimately struck, Congress should not overlook the enormous fiscal upside from immigrants. The day of reckoning on America's debt is coming. It would be better to meet it with some reinforcements.



PHOTO: CATO.ORG

**David J. Bier**  
Director, Immigration Studies,  
and The Selz Foundation Chair  
in Immigration Policy, Cato  
Institute



PHOTO: REUTERS

## Immigration

AT A GLANCE

Most Americans are immigrants or descended from immigrants who sought opportunity and freedom on our shores. They and their children worked hard, assimilated, and added to our nation's prosperity. Immigrants today continue to become Americans and, in the process, make the United States a wealthier, freer, and safer country. However, our current immigration system excludes most peaceful and healthy immigrants. Congress should look to America's past for inspiration to expand and deregulate legal immigration.

-SOURCE: CATO.ORG

# ABCs of H-1Bs (This Is Part 5 of a 7-Part Series): Does My Master's Degree Qualify for the H-1B Master's Cap?

By David H. Nachman, Esq

IN MEMORIAM



Michael Phulwani David Nachman Ludka Zimovcak Snehal Batra

Many F-1 visa holders, particularly those who are engaged in OPT change their immigration status to become professional and specialty workers (H-1B workers). The H-1B cap is the Congressionally mandated limit on the number of individuals who may be granted H-1B status during each fiscal year. Most foreign nationals seeking H-1B nonimmigrant classification are subject to the 58,200 cap. There are an additional 20,000 H-1B visas, which are limited to individuals who receive a master's degrees (or higher degree) from a United States College or University.

Effective April 1, 2019, USCIS started selecting H-1B registrations submitted on behalf of all beneficiaries, including those that may be eligible for the advanced degree exemption. USCIS will then select from the remaining eligible registrations, a number projected to reach the advanced degree exemption. Changing the order in which USCIS counts these allocations will likely increase the number of registrations for beneficiaries with a master's or higher degree from a U.S. institution of higher education to be selected under the H-1B numerical allocations.

Immigration practitioners, F-1 students, and prospective H-1B employers should note that not every master's degree from a United States College or University qualifies a foreign national for the additional 20,000 H-1B visas under the H-1B "master's cap". In order for an individual to qualify for the master's cap, a few criteria need to be met. First, the degree must qualify as a master's degree. Additionally, the master's degree must be issued by a "U.S. institution of higher education" as defined by section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965.

To determine whether a U.S. issued degree is a master's degree (for "master's cap" purposes), USCIS adjudicators consider more than the simple nomenclature of a degree. The fact that the degree itself is or is not titled as a master's degree is, by itself, not dispositive. For instance, in the field of Chiropractics, the entry-level degree is "Doctor of Chiropractic", and a bachelor's degree in any field is not required prior to obtaining that degree.

On the other hand, attorneys typically hold a "Juris Doctorate" degree (J.D.) and medical doctors hold a similar "Doctor of Medicine" degree (M.D.). Prior to earning either a J.D. or M.D. degree, the holder must first earn at least a bachelor's degree in some particular academic field. Accordingly, while neither degree is likely equivalent to a Ph.D., a J.D. or M.D. degree would be considered to be equivalent to, if not higher than, a master's degree.

## Why Master's Cap Eligibility Matters More in Today's H-1B Environment

As the H-1B cap process becomes more competitive and planning-driven, determining whether a degree qualifies for the H-1B master's cap has become increasingly important. While eligibility for the advanced degree exemption does not guarantee selection, qualifying under the master's cap provides an additional opportunity for selection beyond the regular cap.

Students and employers should carefully confirm both the nature of the degree and the status of the degree-granting institution before relying on master's cap eligibility. Assumptions about degree qualification—particularly where private institutions are involved—may lead to missed opportunities or unexpected outcomes during the H-1B registration process.

Early review of academic credentials and institutional status allows employers and students to plan more effectively and avoid last-minute surprises when preparing H-1B registrations.

To satisfy the second prong — the master's degree must be issued by a "U.S. institution of higher education" as defined in section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965. Under this law, the educational institution, awarding the master's degree, must satisfy five (5) requirements. First and foremost, the educational institution must be a public or other nonprofit institution. Second, the master's degree issuing institution must be accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association.

Moreover, the educational institution must meet the following three other requirements:

- (1) the institution must admit as regular students only persons having a certificate of graduation from a school providing secondary education, or the recognized equivalent of such a certificate;

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- (2) such an institution must be legally authorized within such State to provide a program of education beyond secondary education; and
- (3) the institution must provide an educational program for which the institution awards a bachelor's degree or provides not less than a 2-year program that is acceptable for full credit toward such a degree.

To illustrate, consider the case of two seemingly equivalent foreign students — one holding a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree from the DeVry University's Keller School of Management and the other one from Thunderbird School of Global Management. Since DeVry is a for-profit private university, holding an MBA degree from the Keller School of Management will not qualify the foreign student for the Master's H-1B cap. The second student who received an MBA from the Thunderbird School of Global Management will qualify for the Master's H-1B cap because, even though Thunderbird is a private business school, it is a nonprofit educational institution. However, note that the student from the Keller School of Management will qualify for the regular H-1B cap.

Based on the foregoing, students attending or who intend to attend a master's or higher degree program in the United States with the hope that their master's degree would qualify him/her for the master's H-1B cap should make two specific inquiries:

- (1) First, he/she needs to determine whether the educational institution is a private or a public institution; and
- (2) Second, he/she needs to determine whether the educational institution is classified as a not-for-profit or a for-profit academic institution. Holding a master's or a higher degree from a public educational institution will always qualify a foreign student for the H-1B master's cap. However, when attending a private university/school, it is worth checking to see whether the educational institution is classified as a for-profit or non-profit organization. Like public educational institutions, receiving a master's (or a higher degree) from a private non-profit educational institution will qualify the individual for the master's cap. But, if the private school/university is a for-profit educational institution, then having a master's or higher degree from that institution will not meet the requirements for the H-1B master's cap. Having said that, the student would still qualify for the regular H-1B cap.

## Contact Information

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

You can reach us by emailing [info@visaserve.com](mailto:info@visaserve.com) or by calling us at 201-670-0006 extension 104.

We also invite you to visit our website at [www.visaserve.com](http://www.visaserve.com) for more information.

# Alexandre Singh And Natalie Musteata Win In Live-Action Short Film Category

The Oscars ceremony saw a rare moment this year as the Live-Action Short Film category ended in a tie.

Two films, 'The Singers' and 'Two People Exchanging Saliva', shared the Academy Award this year. This is only the seventh time in Oscars history that two winners have shared the same award.

Actor and comedian Kumail Nanjiani presented the award at the ceremony. As he announced the result, he joked about the unusual situation. "Ironic that the short film Oscar is going to take twice as long," Kumail Nanjiani said while calling the winners to the stage.

The directors of both films came up one by one to accept the award and speak about their work.

'Two People Exchanging Saliva,' was directed by Alexandre Singh, who has Indian heritage, and Natalie Musteata.

During his speech, Singh spoke about the power of art and creativity.

"We believe art can change people's souls. Maybe it takes 10 years time, but we can change society through art, through creativity, through theater and



PHOTO: INSTAGRAM / SCREENSHOT FROM VIDEO POSTED BY CO-PRODUCERS ALAMBIC PRODUCTIONS

Natalie Musteata and Alexandre Singh receiving the Oscar for Live Action Short Film 'Two People Exchanging Saliva' March 15, 2026.

ballet, and cinema," he said.

Ties at the Oscars are usually very rare. The last time it happened was in 2013 when 'Zero Dark Thirty and Skyfall' shared the award for sound editing. Over

the years, there have been a few other ties as well.

One of the most famous ties happened in 1968 when Katharine Hepburn and Barbra Streisand both won the Best

Actress award.

According to the Academy, the rules were once different. In the early years, a film or actor could also win if the vote difference was very small. Today, a tie happens only when two nominees receive the exact same number of votes

Directors Sam A. Davis and Jack Piatt accepted the award for The Singers. During his speech, Davis shared his surprise at the tie. "A tie, wow. I didn't know that was a thing. But we're happy to be up here," he said. He then spoke about the message of the film. He described "The Singers" as a "simple story about the power of music and art to bring us together in a moment when we live in an increasingly isolated world." He ended his speech by saying, "May we keep looking for beauty in unexpected places, and may we all be brave enough to keep on singing."

The evening concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Srishti Kaul Narula, General Secretary of FIA, followed by a special dinner.

-ANI

## Priyanka Chopra Jonas Presents Best International Feature Award Alongside Spanish Actor Javier Bardem

Actor Priyanka Chopra Jonas was among the presenters at the ongoing 97th Academy Awards. The actor took the stage to present the award for Best International Feature Film.

Chopra shared the stage with Spanish actor Javier Bardem as they announced the winner in the category. The award was given to Joachim Trier directorial 'Sentimental Value.'

The film is a Norwegian drama that tells the story of two sisters who deal with their relationship with their father, a well-known filmmaker named Gustav Borg, after the death of their mother. The story looks at family bonds, memories, and how art can affect personal lives.

The movie stars Stellan Skarsgard and Renate Reinsve in key roles.

Chopra arrived at the ceremony with her husband, singer and actor Nick Jonas. The couple walked the red carpet together before the show began.

Ahead of her appearance, Chopra had also shared a glimpse of her preparations with fans on Instagram Stories. In a short clip posted earlier in the day, the actor was seen getting ready for the ceremony while dressed in the elegant white Dior creation, heading to the big show with Jonas by her side.



PHOTO: ANI

Priyanka Chopra Jonas with Javier Bardem presenting Best International Film award.

-ANI

## Dharmendra Remembered In Oscars 2026 'In Memoriam' List

The 98th Academy Awards paid tribute to several icons of world cinema on Monday morning, but veteran Indian star Dharmendra was absent from the televised segment despite being officially acknowledged by the Academy.

The legendary Bollywood actor, who passed away in November 2025 at the age of 89, was included in the Academy's official online In Memoriam list released on the day of the ceremony.

Another iconic Indian actor, Manoj Kumar, who also died last year, was similarly acknowledged by the Academy but omitted from the televised segment.

Legendary Indian filmmaker S. Krishnaswamy, and Indian actress, B. Saroja Devi were also acknowledged by the Academy.

Dharmendra remains one of Hindi cinema's most enduring stars. Over a career spanning more than

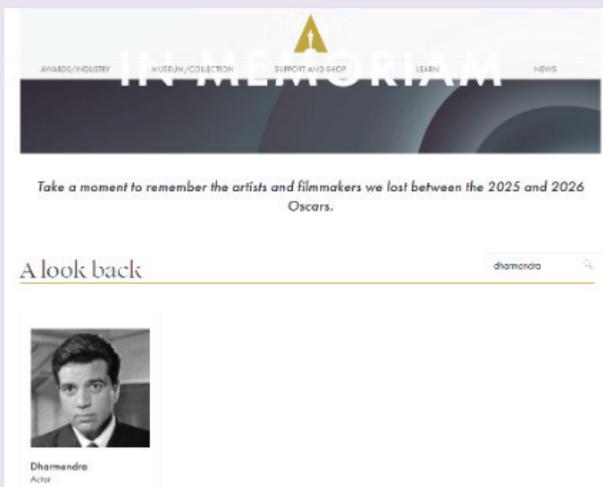


PHOTO: ANI

Dharmendra on Oscars memorium list.

six decades, he appeared in more than 300 films and delivered memorable performances in classics such as Sholay, Satyakam, and Chupke Chupke.

Earlier this year, the actor received a prominent international tribute at the BAFTA Awards 2026, where he was honoured during the In Memoriam segment. British singer-songwriter Jessie Ware performed an emotional rendition of The Way We Were, accompanied by a montage celebrating the late actor's life and cinematic legacy.

Indian-American filmmaker Geeta Gandbhir received nominations in two documentary categories for The Perfect Neighbor and The Devil Is Busy, though neither project won.

-ANI

The Washington Post

By Natalie B. Compton

# Don't get stuck in those viral airport lines. Here's what to do instead.

Early Monday, the line for security at Austin-Bergstrom International Airport stretched outside the terminal into the dawn.

"We're expecting a record-breaking volume of people - there are about 38k of you flying out today," the airport's social media account posted on X. "Please arrive at least 2.5 hours prior to your flight's departure for domestic."

It's not just Austin. Travelers across the country are facing longer wait times thanks to the confluence of Transportation Security Administration staffing shortages, bad weather and a spring break travel surge. Even line-cutting programs such as TSA PreCheck and Clear have sometimes proven futile.

But there is one hack many travelers are missing that could save them: TSA PreCheck Touchless ID.

TSA PreCheck Touchless ID is a separate lane from regular PreCheck that uses facial recognition to verify your identity. Instead of handing an ID over to a TSA officer for verification, enrolled travelers just pause for a face scan, then keep moving to the X-ray machines. It's not available at every airport and can be used only with participating airlines.

Crucially, travelers must opt in to the program before they check in for their flight. If you try to enroll at the airport while you're stuck in a long line, it's too late.

It's also not a foolproof work-around. We've shown up to the airport eager to try the program only to find the verification machine down for maintenance. We've also been lumped into the standard PreCheck line in terminals where TSA PreCheck Touchless ID is available, but no dedicated lane was set up. So don't cut your arrival time too short.

Here's what else you need to know.

## What is PreCheck Touchless ID?

The TSA said in an email that the program is a joint effort from U.S. Customs and Border Protection, airports and airlines that allows travelers "to move through dedicated lanes with ease, enjoying a smoother and more convenient airport experience."

The first iteration was launched in 2021 in partnership with Delta Air Lines at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport. It is expanding to 65 airports this spring.

Just because you don't have to show your ID doesn't mean you should leave it at home. TSA warns that travelers should still carry a physical Real ID-compliant form of identification as a backup.

## Who is eligible to use it?

To use the program, fliers must be a TSA PreCheck member with a valid "known traveler number" and an active airline profile (such as being enrolled in a loyalty program). They must also have a valid passport uploaded to their airline profile.

The airlines participating in the program include:

- Alaska Airlines
- American Airlines
- Delta Air Lines
- Southwest Airlines
- United Airlines

## What about families?

Children can use TSA PreCheck Touchless ID lanes with their enrolled parents, but there are a few caveats.

Children ages 13 to 17 must have a boarding pass that displays the PreCheck Touchless ID symbol. Children 12 and under do not need any indicator on their boarding pass.

Additionally, all tickets must be booked on the same reservation.

Children under 18 will not present their face for biometric comparison, but they may be asked to show their boarding passes.

## How do I sign up?

To use the program, travelers must first opt in through their airline's website or app before checking in to their flight.

The process varies by airline, but you can usually find the prompt under a "travel documents" section (where you add your known traveler number or passport details) of your airline loyalty program app or website.

American Airlines customers, for example, will find the opt-in choice toward the bottom of the "Information and password" page of their AAdvantage profile. Alaska Airlines customers should go to their account settings, then click the "travel documents" section.

Once travelers have opted in, then checked in for their flight, a TSA PreCheck Touchless ID symbol should appear on their boarding pass. At the airport, travelers should follow signs to a separate TSA PreCheck Touchless ID lane. Here, staff will

ask to see your boarding pass to ensure you're enrolled before allowing you to enter. If the symbol is not on your boarding pass, you won't be able to use the lane, even if you are enrolled. In airports or terminals without dedicated lanes, travelers may be directed to the standard PreCheck lane.

## Which airports offer PreCheck Touchless ID?

Travelers should check the TSA website for more information, as the program is expanding. TSA PreCheck Touchless ID is available at the following airports through varying participating airlines:

- Albuquerque International Sunport
- Austin-Bergstrom International Airport
- Baltimore-Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport
- Birmingham-Shuttlesworth International Airport
- Boise Airport
- Boston Logan International Airport
- Bradley International Airport
- Buffalo Niagara International Airport
- Charleston International Airport
- Charlotte Douglas International Airport
- Chicago Midway International Airport
- Chicago O'Hare International Airport
- Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport
- Cleveland Hopkins International Airport
- Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport
- Dallas Love Field
- Daniel K. Inouye International Airport
- Denver International Airport
- Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport
- Washington Dulles International Airport
- Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport
- George Bush Intercontinental Airport
- Harry Reid International Airport
- Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport
- Indianapolis International Airport
- Jacksonville International Airport
- John F. Kennedy International Airport
- John Glenn Columbus International Airport
- John Wayne Airport
- Kansas City International Airport
- LaGuardia Airport
- Long Beach Airport
- Los Angeles International Airport
- Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport
- Luis Munoz Marin International Airport
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- Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport
- Tampa International Airport
- Tulsa International Airport
- Will Rogers International Airport
- William P. Hobby Airport



## What should I know about privacy concerns?

The TSA is using more facial recognition at the airport, including in regular security lanes and CBP checks.

On its website, the TSA says, "Images are not used for law enforcement, surveillance, nor shared with other entities. Your photo and personal data are deleted within 24-hours of your scheduled flight departure."

Some say facial recognition technology raises privacy and civil liberties concerns. "Facial recognition technology is notoriously unreliable," said Nate Wessler, deputy director of the American Civil Liberties Union's Speech, Privacy and Technology Project.

"Denying people access to their flight because an algorithm got it wrong is a very bad outcome for travelers and something we don't want to be playing with," Wessler continued.

There has been bipartisan effort to put more guardrails on biometric use at airports. In the meantime, U.S. citizens have the right to opt out of biometric screening at the airport.

# The Choice To Be Happy

RAJYOGI BRAHMA KUMAR NIKUNJ JI

(On the occasion of the International Day of Happiness (20 March) declared by the United Nations)

**R**epresentational photo provided by Brahma Kumaris Media And Public Relations Services Office

Being happy and content is the biggest challenge that most of us face today. With so much advanced technology around us, yet none of us have found the formula to be happy and that too all the time. So, what does happiness actually mean? Well! To put it simply, to be happy is to be free of sorrow, worry and fear. And this can be easily achieved with truth, courage and faith. Doesn't it sound simple? Practically speaking, Happiness is not a big thing as it is made out to be. We need to understand simply that when we are not performing good, righteous actions, the return of that is what we experience – "Sorrow". Similarly, when we worry all the time, we are simply unable to perform good actions and again what we experience is "Sorrow". Let's understand this with a simple example. Most of us try and help those who are less privileged than us Right? So, before performing an action to help a needy person, we get a thought and feeling within us that we want to help someone. Now, this thought itself brings happiness within us, even before we have put it to action, how? Simply because when our mind is engaged in something good it is automatically healed and we feel good inside.

Most of us are in a stage of worry all the time. Why? Because we can't get "Detached" from everything around us. YES! It is our own attachment to the people, objects and property that causes sorrow within us. If we practise the art of detachment, we would experience deep love and peace from within. If there are thoughts of attachment, we will not enjoy ourself from within, because there will always be the feeling that something is wrong and we will feel confused and afraid all the time, instead of feeling happy. It's a medically proven fact that those who think too much are always in a state of confusion and easily get disturbed. Such people are like caged bird who is always unhappy and craves for liberation. Whereas



Representational photo provided by Brahma Kumaris Media And Public Relations Services Office.

those who are free birds, they do not think much about trivial matters and hence they get detached easily. When at one end of the scale there are negative thoughts of giving and taking sorrow and at the other end, there are positive thoughts of accepting and giving happiness, peace and love, what would you choose? So, let there be a feeling of a connection of happiness between you and others, let there be love and friendship in your interactions with everyone. Because life is too short to waste on small small worries. Remember! Happiness gained through relationships and possessions has seeds of sorrow because they are sown with expectations that stem from greed, selfishness, attachment or ego. Hence before getting yourself involved in anything, we need to ask ourselves – "Will this bring me happiness?"

In today's fast-moving world, we have also unknowingly connected happiness with achievement, comparison and approval from others. We often believe we will be happy when something happens, when we earn more, when we are appreciated, when things go our way. But true happiness does not come with such conditions. It is a choice we make daily through the quality of our thoughts and the maturity of our responses. A peaceful mind is not the result of a perfect life, but of a trained and stable perspective. We also

need to learn the simple art of pausing. A few moments of silence during the day, a little gratitude for what is going right, and acceptance for what is not, can gradually transform our inner state. Many times, happiness quietly hides in ordinary moments like, a kind word, a genuine smile, helping someone without expecting recognition, or even having the strength to remain calm when things do not go our way. These are the small but powerful victories of the soul that often go unnoticed.

The biggest secret to happiness is to have good wishes and pure feelings in our heart for everyone, no matter who they are, whether friends or foes, and even if they have defamed us in the worst way. When we hold pure, good wishes in the heart for others, we can maintain a state of constant happiness. Because, good feelings are like a bouquet of flowers in our heart that spreads its fragrance inside and keeps us happy, no matter how bad the situation outside is. We need to go within ourselves to tap the eternal source of happiness and for that firstly we need to be true to the self, know the self and be the self. Once we have understood the happiness that comes from within and as a result of the manner in which we conduct our lives, and ourselves then it is possible to understand how to share that happiness with others. Remember! increasing the happiness of others brings happiness to the self. So, keep distributing it to everyone, as this is the wealth that multiplies by giving, and brings the giver the added bonus of the good wishes and blessings of others. Let us also remember that happiness increases when we stop being too critical of ourselves. Accept your imperfections, learn from your mistakes and continue your journey with self-respect. A happy person is not someone who has everything perfect, but someone who keeps their intentions pure and their heart light. When our intentions are clean and our conscience is clear, happiness stops being something we chase and slowly becomes our natural way of living.

**Rajyogi Brahma Kumar Nikunj Ji is a writer and spiritual educator who has written for publications in India, Nepal & UK.**



PHOTO:PROVIDED

## OSCARS 2026

### Priyanka Chopra Dazzles In Backless Sequined Dress At Oscars After-Party; Nick Jonas Calls Her "Icon"

**W**hen it comes to red carpet glamour, Priyanka Chopra once again proved why she remains one of the most watched style icons on the global stage.

At the 98th Academy Awards, 'The Bluff' actor delivered not one but two striking fashion moments, culminating in a dazzling appearance at the star-studded Vanity Fair Oscar Party.

Priyanka first stepped onto the Oscars red carpet as a presenter in a flawless white gown that quickly became one of the evening's most talked-about looks.

However, the fashion moment did not end there.

Later in the evening, Priyanka arrived at the Vanity Fair after-party with a dramatic wardrobe change, embracing a bold and glamorous Hollywood

aesthetic.

For the celebration, she wore a custom metallic silver-champagne gold gown designed by Stella McCartney. The shimmering outfit featured a striking backless design, a deep cowl-style neckline and a thigh-high slit that added a touch of drama. The gown also included fur detailing that accentuated the silhouette.

She paired the statement dress with a floor-length brown fur stole and understated gold hoop earrings, allowing the shimmering gown to remain the focal point. Her beauty look was kept soft and elegant, with voluminous waves framing her face and a subtle, natural makeup palette completing the glamorous appearance.

Priyanka was accompanied throughout the evening by her husband, singer

and actor Nick Jonas. The couple coordinated their outfits for both events during the night. At the Oscars ceremony, Jonas wore a classic black velvet tuxedo.

For the after-party, he switched to a beige-coloured tuxedo coat paired with a crisp white shirt, black bow tie and black trousers, complementing Priyanka Chopra's shimmering ensemble.

Adding to the buzz around the look, Jonas later shared a behind-the-scenes clip from Priyanka's pre-party photo-shoot on social media.

In the video, Nick Jonas can be seen lovingly adoring his wife as she poses for the shoot. He then faces the camera and says "icon," referencing his wife.

In the caption, he praised the actor, writing "Confirmed."

-ANI

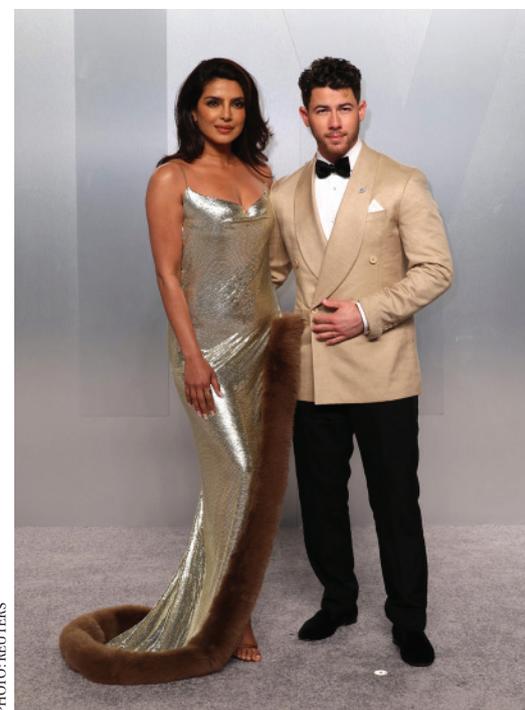


PHOTO: REUTERS

Priyanka Chopra, Nick Jonas @theOscars  
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