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Incomparable Heartthrob

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Akshaya Patra celebrates its 5 billion meals milestone at Rashtrapati Bhavan



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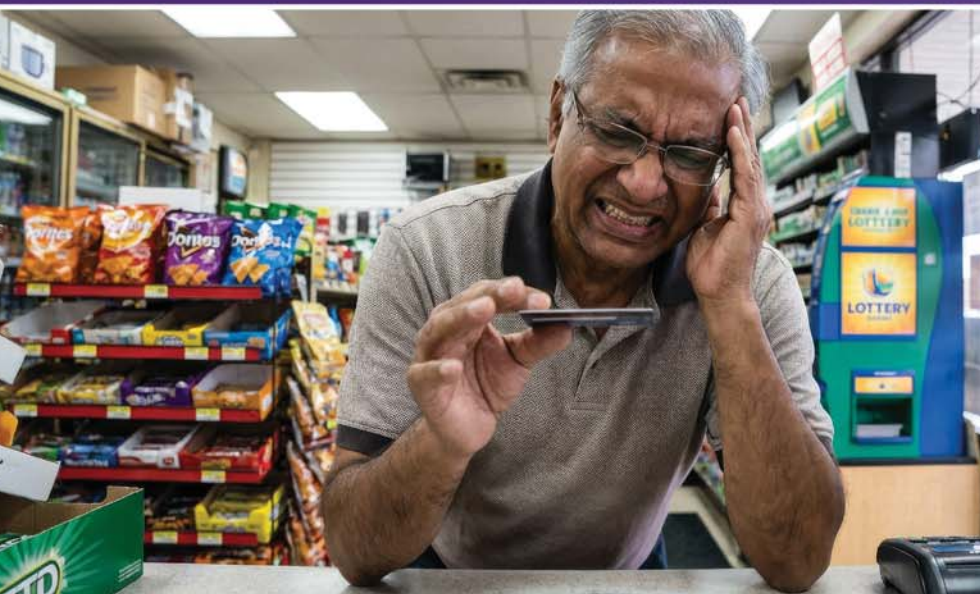
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# Akshaya Patra Celebrates 5 Billion Meals Milestone At Rashtrapati Bhavan With President Of India

BY A STAFF WRITER

The Akshaya Patra Foundation, one of India's largest non-profit organizations dedicated to combating classroom hunger and supporting education, made history March 17, 2026, when it reached the milestone of serving 5 billion meals at an event hosted at the Rashtrapati Bhavan in India. The President of India Droupadi Murmu, along with distinguished dignitaries, partners, and supporters from across the globe, attended the event.

Since its inception, the Foundation has been implementing the Government of India's Mid-Day Meal Program, delivering nutritious meals to millions of children across the country every school day.

President Murmu commended Akshaya Patra's transformative impact, highlighting how the organization has not only addressed child hunger but also significantly contributed to improving school attendance, retention, and learning outcomes, a press release said. The President emphasized the importance of collaborative efforts between government, civil society, and private stakeholders in building a nourished and educated nation. Education

Speaking at the event, Madhu Pandit Dasa Founder/Chairperson of Akshaya Patra, thanked all partners and supporters who contributed to this journey. "Reaching 5 billion meals is not just a number—it represents 5 billion opportunities for children to learn, grow, and dream. This milestone inspires us to expand our reach and deepen our impact," Dasa said.

The event also highlighted the vital role of global supporters in advancing Akshaya Patra's mission. Dr. Rachana Kulkarni, Vice Chair of Akshaya Patra USA, was present at the event. She is credited with playing a pivotal role in expanding Akshaya Patra's footprint in the United States, strengthening awareness, partnerships, and philanthropic support for the Foundation's mission across the U.S.

"Her presence at the event underscored the growing global momentum behind Akshaya Patra's efforts to eliminate classroom hunger," the press release said.

Among its strongest supporters in the US is also Padma Shri recipient and Senior Advisor Dr. Sudhir Parikh, chairman of Parikh Worldwide Media which publishes Desi Talk and News India Times. "Every year, here in the US, we hold a fundraising gala that raises funds reaching seven figures," Dr. Parikh told Desi Talk. "Akshaya Patra provides at least 2 million school meals every year, and its the reason i became involved with this philanthropic effort. I believe that with each disadvantaged child who has a free meal in school, more chil-

Member of Parliament (LS)  
Sambalpur, Odisha



President of India Droupadi Murmu, right, with Madhu Pandit Dasa Founder/Chairperson of Akshaya Patra, and others at the ceremony on 5 billion meals served.

dren are attracted to attend school, and ultimately leading to securing a better future for themselves and uplifting their families." US Election Coverage

Supporters of Akshaya Patra from around the world, including the United Kingdom, United Arab Emirates, Singapore, Australia, and the United States, were also present.

The event featured reflections on Akshaya Patra's journey, showcasing its innovative, technology-driven kitchen model, commitment to quality and hygiene, and its scalable approach to addressing hunger at a national level. Attendees also witnessed stories of beneficiaries whose lives have been positively impacted through access to nutritious meals.

Akshaya Patra's vision statement says, "No child in India shall be deprived of education because of hunger" and it continues to work towards scaling its operations to serve millions more children, the nonprofit said.



President Murmu serving the ceremonial 5 billionth meal at Rashtrapati Bhavan commemorating the milestone of Akshaya Patra.



Dr. Rachana Kulkarni, center, with Dr. Anand Kulkarni, left, and Dr. Varun Jeph at Rashtrapati Bhavan.



Akshaya Patra Board of Trustees with the President of India Droupadi Murmu.

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# Eight South Asian-Americans On Barron's List Of Most Influential Women In US Financial World

BY A STAFF WRITER

**T**he highly respected financial publication, Barron's, recently announced its seventh annual list of the 100 Most Influential Women in U.S. Finance. In the list are 7 women of Indian origin, and one, Saira Malik, of Pakistani origin.

The list honors women who have achieved leadership positions in the world of finance and are helping to shape its future, Barron's says.

"Our list, chosen by a panel of Barron's writers and editors, is based on external and internal nominations, and includes executives at major U.S. companies, investment managers and securities analysts, and public servants and policy makers," it noted.

All those selected are based in the U.S. Following are the Indian American women and one Pakistani American on the list:

- Anu Aiyengar, Global Head, Mergers & Acquisitions, J.P. Morgan
- Sonal Desai, Chief Investment Officer, Fixed Income, Franklin Templeton
- Meena Flynn, Chair of Global Private Wealth Management; Co-Head of One Goldman Sachs, Goldman Sachs Group
- Neesha Hathi, Head of Wealth & Advice Solutions,



Anu Aiyengar



Sonal Desai

- Charles Schwab
- Gunjan Kedia, President, CEO, U.S. Bancorp
- Saira Malik, CIO, Nuveen
- Sonali Pier, Managing Director, Portfolio Manager,

- Pimco
- Nishi Somaiya, Partner, Global Co-Head of Wealth Management, Goldman Sachs Group



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**Pramodbhai Pandya** passed away peacefully on March 11, 2026. Raised in Nadiad in a deeply spiritual family, he lived a life rooted in faith, integrity, and service.

He dedicated nearly 30 years to the State Bank of India, beginning as a cashier and rising through the ranks to manager, before retiring respectfully as a field officer prior to migrating to the United States.

A loving husband, father, and grandfather, he will be remembered for his kindness, humility, and devotion to family and faith.

He is survived by his wife Chandrika Ben Pandya, children Sanjiv and Rupal, and a loving extended family.

**Om Shanti**

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# HinduPACT American Hindus Against Defamation Releases Research Report Examining USCIRF's Escalating Calls For Sanctions On RSS And Broader Implications For American Hindus

PRESS RELEASE

First-of-Its-Kind Longitudinal Study of Two Decades of USCIRF Reports

-MARCH 18, 2026, WASHINGTON, DC,

**H**induPACT today announced the release of a new research report, *USCIRF Reporting on India (2007–2026): A Longitudinal Analysis of Narrative Frames and Hindu Organization Mentions*, which examines two decades of U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) reporting on India and documents what the report describes as a progression from descriptive monitoring to punitive policy recommendations targeting Hindu organizations, including the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS).

The report finds that by 2026, USCIRF's posture had shifted to explicitly recommending that the U.S. government evaluate RSS for targeted sanctions, including freezing assets and barring entry into the United States, while also urging similar measures against India's external intelligence agency. According to the report, this marks the first time in the 20-year period studied that RSS was moved from being described as an "influential group" to being recommended as a sanctions target.

Framed as a research study rather than an advocacy document, the report analyzes USCIRF's narrative evolution across annual reporting cycles from 2007 through 2026. It identifies a pattern of "escalation of naming," moving from generalized references such as "Hindu mobs," to "RSS-linked groups," and ultimately to recom-

mendations for targeted asset freezes and visa bans.

The report further argues that the RSS is widely recognized for its unparalleled social service, education, relief, and cultural activities in India. In that context, efforts to publicly frame the organization through a sanctions lens risk extending stigma beyond one institution to the wider Hindu civic experience in post-colonial India and among diaspora communities abroad. For American Hindus, such framing may contribute to misunderstanding of Hindu charitable and cultural work and reinforce patterns of suspicion toward temples, nonprofits, and community organizations.

"The release of this research report is intended to inform policymakers, journalists, academics, and the public about the serious implications of USCIRF's latest recommendations," said Ajay Shah, Founder and Executive Chair, HinduPACT. "When a large, longstanding Hindu social organization is discussed in the same sanctions framework as state agencies, the consequences do not remain confined to foreign policy debates. They inevitably affect ordinary American Hindus, their institutions, and their sense of belonging in the United States."

The report argues that such framing can have significant downstream effects on American Hindus. It warns that broad narrative compression can blur the distinction between organizations in India and legally autonomous Hindu American nonprofits, charities, temples, and civic groups in the United States. It also highlights the risk of financial de-risking, donor hesitation, enhanced scrutiny of Hindu organizations, and the spread of loyalty tests for American Hindus in public, civic, and professional life.

The study further notes that stigmatizing rhetoric tied to the "Transnational Repression" label or stigmatizing the term "Hindutva" (which means the essence of Hindu dharma) can contribute to identity-based bullying in schools and universities and may increase vulnerability for Hindu temples, community institutions, and small businesses.

"American Hindus should not be made collateral damage in increasingly politicized narratives about India," Shah added. "Research matters because it allows institutions and communities to examine patterns, methods, and consequences with rigor. This report raises legitimate questions about whether USCIRF has moved beyond monitoring religious freedom concerns into advocating coercive measures that can stigmatize Hindu identity far beyond India."

The report also concludes that USCIRF's recommendations have evolved from concern over local incidents to what it describes as "active policy warfare," culminating in calls to impose material penalties on RSS and to treat Hindu organizational networks through a punitive, national-security lens. It states that this trajectory has implications not only for U.S.-India relations but also for how American Hindus are perceived in civic and policy spaces.

HinduPACT said the report is being released to encourage serious, evidence-based discussion about the use of official U.S. platforms to characterize Hindu organizations and the ripple effects those characterizations may have on American civil society.

## On UN Observance Of International Day To Combat Islamophobia, India Points To Its Secular Ethos

By ARCHANA ADALJA

**P**ointing out India's multicultural and pluralistic society, India's Permanent Representative to the UN, P. Harish, said, "The philosophy of Sarva Dharma Sambhava: implying equal respect for all religions has been the civilizational way of life for India and one that inspired the secular ethos of Indian Constitution."

"India more than any other country, is acutely aware of the need for a world free from religious discrimination," he emphasized.

Harish was speaking at the commemoration of The International Day to Combat Islamophobia on March 16, 2026, at the UN, co-organized by the Office of the High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) and the United Nations Special Envoy to Combat Islamophobia, in collaboration with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

Reminding the General Assembly about India's 200 million large Muslim population which elects its own representatives, Harish said, "Muslims in India, including those in Jammu and Kashmir, elect their own representatives to speak for them."

India also pointed out the redundancy



India's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Harish Parvathaneni.

of holding a day to combat Islamophobia when the UN itself had put forth a declaration in 1981 to work impartially regardless of any religious affiliations of any country or people.

The 1981 Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief stipulates the rights of all of all religious followers without privileging any.

Harish pointed out that singling out a religion to pay attention to it is politicizing it and cautioned against agencies which indulge in this.

"We, therefore, urge caution against frameworks that exclusively focus on one faith, without addressing the broader

phenomenon of religiophobia in all its manifestations," Harish said.

He pointed out that Islamophobia can sometimes not just be directed at, but also meted out by those claiming to be victims of it.

Referring to "India's western neighbor", Harish said, "One wonders what would brutal repression of Ahmadiyyas in this country be termed, or the large scale re-outrage of the helpless Afghans or air-bombing campaigns in this Holy Month of Ramadan?"

The UN was formed to work for peace among all people, and not any particular people of any particular religion, Harish stated. "The UN has built its credibility through tireless work on conflict resolution, poverty alleviation, and protection of civilians. We urge the UN to remain anchored to this founding spirit," he said, at the same time assuring the General Assembly of India's commitment to the cause.

UN Secretary General, António Guterres, urged the Member States to commit to action. Referring to the spread of hate through internet, Guterres said, "Technology companies have a responsibility. Online spaces should bring people together, not drive them apart. They must do far more to identify, prevent, and address hate speech and harassment."

President of General Assembly, Annalena Baerbock, also cautioned that technology companies, governments, international institutions and civil society must play a proactive role in challenging harmful stereotypes.

Miguel Ángel Moratinos Cuyaubé of Spain, the United Nations Special Envoy to Combat Islamophobia, and High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), reemphasized his commitment to combating Islamophobia. OIC Permanent Observer, Hameed Opeloyer, pointed out that Islamophobia also "undermines human dignity, pluralism, and the freedom of religion or belief for all."

The event also featured addresses by the representatives of UN Member States and experts that cover Human Rights, racial discrimination and discrimination based on religion or belief.

Other speakers highlighted the need for concrete action from governments to protect religious freedom, and to combat misinformation, calling for increased solidarity in combating bigotry, xenophobia, and hate crimes against Muslims worldwide.

The International Day to Combat Islamophobia is observed annually on March 15, established by UN General Assembly Resolution 76/254 in 2022.



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# Respected Nonprofit Pratham Has Transformative 'Giving Day'

BY A STAFF WRITER

This past Friday, March 13, Pratham brought together high profile guests and supporters for India Giving Day, celebrating the power of giving. It also raised enough for Pratham USA to support 25,300+ children in India.

As part of the day, Pratham hosted a Changemaker Series conversation with cricketer Unmukt Chand and National Board Member Jai Das, who discussed how mentorship, education, and community support can help unlock the potential of the next generation.

In addition, in-person India Giving Day events were held in Chicago, San Francisco, and Dallas. These gatherings brought supporters together to celebrate the impact of collective giving, a May 17, press release from Pratham said.

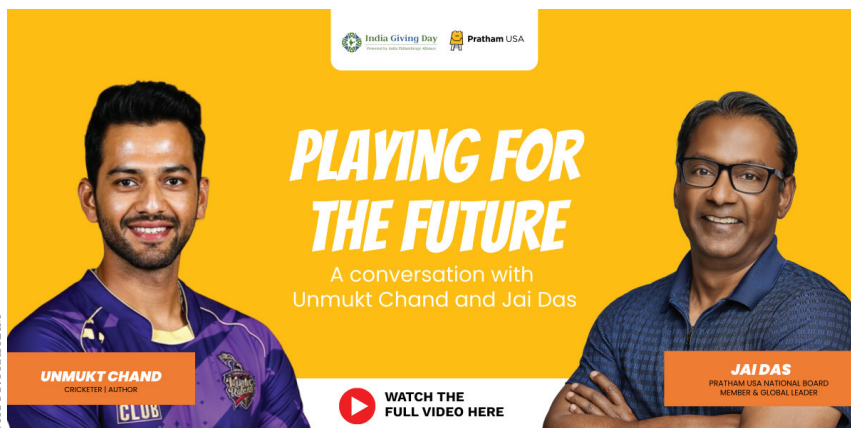
Pratham USA CEO & Global Executive, Manisha Bharti co-hosted India Giving Day LIVE, the official virtual broadcast celebrating the impact of the diaspora. Special guest speakers included Vijay Amritraj, M.R. Rangaswami, and Isheeta Ganguly.

Pratham USA National Board Member Deepak Raj, who also serves as National Co-Chair of India Giving Day and Advisory Council Chair for the India Philanthropy Alliance, also joined the three-hour long conversation to highlight philanthropy and the power of collective action.

During the livestream, Pratham USA shared a major philanthropic commitment from the Saireddy Family Foundation to support programs for vulnerable children in Hyderabad,



Pratham banner.



Cricketer Unmukt Chand, left in conversation with Jai Das.

Telangana in India. This commitment will support the Pratham Council for Vulnerable Children (PCVC), the

organization's child protection and rights initiative which works to prevent child trafficking, child labor, child marriage, and other forms of exploitation while ensuring children from vulnerable circumstances remain engaged in education. PCVC has more than two decades of experience supporting over 40,000 children and families across India.

The initiative will be a place-based community center model and begin by supporting 100 children and their families, providing sustained educational sponsorship. The Community Centres will serve as hubs for learning, mentorship, and child protection, ensuring young people receive the support they need to continue their education and pursue opportunities beyond high school. The program will also work closely with families to strengthen access to social protection schemes and livelihood opportunities. With a strong focus on supporting girls, who often face additional barriers to education, the program will provide sustained guidance beyond high school with pathways to higher education and vocational training that lead to long-term economic independence.

"We are deeply grateful to the Saireddy Family Foundation for their leadership and belief in the power of Pratham's mission," the organization said.

"The Saireddy Family Foundation and PCVC's mission are aligned and we are proud to make a long-term commitment that empowers children to learn without limits and boldly shape the futures they deserve. Together, we are transforming hope into real, lasting impact," Mahesh Saireddy, Pratham USA National Board member, and his wife Neeti Saireddy are quoted saying in the press release.

## A Multi-Faith Alliance Has Called For Urgent International Action To Protect Hindus In Bangladesh

BY A STAFF WRITER

An alliance of multi-faith organizations, human rights advocates, and prominent individuals has issued an urgent appeal calling on the international community to act decisively against the ongoing persecution of Hindus in Bangladesh.

The appeal was authored and coordinated by Hindu Advancing Human Rights Initiative (HAHRI)—an initiative of HinduPACT, an independent nonprofit human rights organization and has now been signed by over 125 organizations and individuals across 15 countries, organizers said in a press release issued February 9, 2026. For more information visit: <https://hindupact.org/2026/02/09/global-alliance-of-hindus-and-their-allies-calls-for-urgent-international-action-to-protect-hindus-in-bangladesh/>

"The letter documents a systematic, long-running pattern of violence, intimidation, and forced displacement targeting Hindus in Bangladesh, a trend that has intensified following the political transition under the Yunus-led interim government," the press release said.

"The Hindus of Bangladesh are the indigenous peoples of the country entitled to have their life and culture protected from discrimination under the UN Convention on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2007. What we

are seeing is the exact opposite. It is not episodic violence or isolated lawlessness," said Rahul Sur, Executive Director of HAHRI. "It is a sustained human rights crisis rooted in impunity. The international community has a moral and legal obligation to intervene before an entire indigenous religious community is erased through ethnic cleansing."

The appeal says it has drawn on publicly available reports by international bodies, human rights organizations, and media accounts that chronicle, instances of persecution of Hindus in Bangladesh.

"Bangladesh's Hindu population has declined sharply from approximately 22% in 1951 to under 7% today, with estimates indicating that hundreds of thousands of Hindus have fled over recent decades into India. Human rights experts point to this demographic collapse as evidence of ongoing ethnic and religious cleansing rather than voluntary migration," the press release said.

"The numbers alone tell a devastating story," said Ajay Shah, Founder and Executive Chair of HinduPACT. "A democracy cannot selectively protect rights. When a minority shrinks at this scale under persistent violence and intimidation, it is a failure of the state and of the global system meant to prevent such outcomes."

The letter from the alliance calls on the US government to:

- Designate Bangladesh as a Country of Particular

Concern

- Dispatch an independent fact-finding delegation
  - Require regular, public reporting on minority rights by the U.S. Embassy
  - Review Bangladesh's participation in UN peace-keeping operations
  - Provide refugee protections for persecuted Hindus
- It calls on the European Union to:
- Condition trade benefits on measurable improvements in minority protections
  - Initiate parliamentary review of religious freedom violations

On the United Nations and OHCHR to:

- Publicly condemn violations against Hindus
- Establish a fact-finding or monitoring mechanism
- Investigate misuse of blasphemy accusations as a tool of persecution

On the Government of India to:

- Prepare humanitarian measures for displaced Hindus
- Track and publicly document rights violations
- Explore diplomatic and legal avenues to compel minority protections

And the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)

to:

- Condemn violence against Hindus as inconsistent with stated commitments to human dignity



Joy of Sharing

Life Blood Centre: A Pioneer in Transfusion Medicine and Voluntary Blood Donation



Padma Shri Dr. Sudhir Parikh, Chairman, Life Global, NJ, USA

"The remarkable journey of Life Blood Centre in Rajkot stands as a shining example of how vision, scientific excellence, and community spirit can come together to save lives. For more than four decades, the centre has demonstrated that voluntary blood donation, supported by modern technology and dedicated professionals, can transform healthcare systems. I commend the entire team for their pioneering work and hope their inspiring model continues to motivate communities across India and the global Indian diaspora to support the noble cause of safe blood for all."



Established on December 6, 1981, Life Blood Centre (LBC) is the 1st blood bank in the Saurashtra region of Gujarat, India. Over the past four decades, it has evolved into a trusted centre of excellence in transfusion medicine, recognized for its scientific standards, modern technology, and dedicated service to the community. Equipped with a fully computerized system, a modern 15,000 sq. ft. facility, and a committed professional team, LBC ensures the provision of safe and high quality blood. With the strong network of voluntary blood donors, the centre plays a crucial role in ensuring the timely availability of safe blood and blood components, reaffirming its continued commitment to saving lives and serving society.

Significant Achievements

- 782,213 Blood Components Issued
- 8,610+ SDP Procedures Done
- 6,193 Blood Donation Camps
- 469,328+ Lives Served
- 3,072+ Antigen Phenotype Donor Registry



The centre has gained national and international recognition for its innovations and leadership in transfusion medicine. It became 1st standalone blood centre in India to receive the most prestigious ISBT Award for Developing Countries from the International Society of Blood Transfusion, presented in Amsterdam, The Netherlands acknowledging its contribution to strengthening blood transfusion services in developing regions. LBC has hosted Educational Symposium on Patient Blood Management (PBM) which was one of its kind in Gujarat State. National and International speakers took lectures and nearly 250 doctors attended the symposium.



LBC has consistently adopted cutting edge technologies to improve safety and efficiency. It was 1st blood centre in the Asia Pacific region to install an advanced X-Ray Blood Irradiator, significantly reducing the risk of transfusion associated graft versus host disease. In 2022, LBC became 1st centre in the country to adopt the Archimede Automatic Blood Component Extractor, enhancing precision and efficiency in the preparation of blood components. Alongside technological advancements, the centre has actively contributed to scientific research. Its team has presented around 60 research papers at national and international conferences in transfusion medicine. LBC has also played an important role in identifying rare blood groups, including Bx Positive, Bx Negative, B3 and the rare Bombay Blood Group, helping patients with uncommon transfusion needs receive timely support.



Public awareness and community engagement remain at the heart of the centre's mission. Through initiatives such as the "Thalassaemia Free Gujarat & India" campaign and "Know Your Blood Group" movement launched in 2021, LBC continues to promote preventive health awareness and encourage responsible blood donation. Motivational messages from several celebrities have also been broadcast nationally to inspire citizens to participate in voluntary blood donation.



The centre's commitment to quality and safety is reflected in the recognitions it has received over the years. It was 1st blood bank in India to receive accreditation from the AABB in 1985 and 1990, and quality certification in 2022. LBC is accredited by National Accreditation Board for Hospitals & Healthcare Providers (NABH), making it the only NGO run blood centre in the region to achieve this distinction. It is also recognized as a Regional Blood Transfusion Centre (RBTC) by Gujarat State Council for Blood Transfusion (GSCBT).



Over the years, the centre has received several prestigious awards and honours, including the International Harold Gunson Fellowship presented at global conferences in Berlin, Taipei, and Bangkok. In 2024, Executive Trustee Chandrakant Koticha was honoured with the Life Time Achievement Award by the Indian Society of Blood Transfusion and Immunohaematology (ISBTI) for his remarkable contribution to the field.



Beyond technology and recognition, the true strength of Life Blood Centre lies in its people, its donors, volunteers, and healthcare professionals. Through continuous training programmes, and educational initiatives, the centre ensures that its staff remain updated with the latest developments in transfusion medicine. As it moves forward, LBC plans to establish an advanced immunohaematology reference centre to further strengthen blood safety and patient care.

More than four decades since its inception, Life Blood Centre continues to stand as a symbol of compassion, innovation and community service. Its journey demonstrates that the simple act of voluntary blood donation, supported by science and dedication, can transform healthcare systems and save countless lives.

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## Rupali Chandar Is Awarded Highest Honor By University Of Toledo, Ohio

BY A STAFF WRITER

**D**r. Rupali Chandar, Professor at the College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics at the University of Toledo in Ohio, has been awarded this year the honor of Distinguished University Professor by the University for her continuing research on the origins of the universe.

Chandar is an expert in galactic formations, star clusters and life cycles of dense star clusters, which she has shown to begin to disperse in a few million years as opposed to the existing belief of them lasting for billions of years.

Having joined the faculty at The University of Toledo as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Physics and Astronomy in 2007, Chandar became a Professor in 2016, and currently is the Helen Luedtke Brooks Endowed Professor of Astronomy, and Associate Chair of the Department of Physics and Astronomy.

Chandar has developed a world-class research program to better understand how galaxies like our own evolve and the cycle of matter within galaxies including star and star clusters birth and death. Her research uses observational astronomy data, chiefly from the Hubble



PHOTO: COURTESY UNIVERSITY OF TOLEDO

Dr. Rupali Chandar, Professor of Astronomy at University of Toledo, Ohio.

Space Telescope, the James Webb Space Telescope, and other facilities.

Chandra's research has been funded by National Science Foundation, the James Webb Space Telescope, the Hubble Space Telescope, the Chandra Space Telescope, and observatory missions. She has been the Principal Investigator of 38 projects and Co-Principal Investigator or more than 40 projects. While at the University of

Toledo, she has published more than 150 research papers and mentored several post doctoral fellows, graduate and undergraduate students.

Dr. Chandar received her bachelor's degree from Haverford College and her master's and doctorate degrees from Johns Hopkins University. She completed postdoctoral fellowships at the STScI and Carnegie Observatories before joining The University of Toledo.

While at the University of Toledo, Chandar has demonstrated excellence in teaching, scholarship and professional contribution and professional service.

The honor of Distinguished University Professors at the University of Toledo is awarded to those who have earned national and international recognition and distinction for educational, artistic and scholarly contributions that have been transformative in their field. They are judged by their peers to be exemplary in teaching and education, in scholarly or creative contribution, and in service to their profession and their community.

The University of Toledo's astronomy program is highly regarded, ranking as an R1 top-tier institution for very high research activity. It was notably ranked 6th worldwide for successful NASA James Webb Space Telescope proposals in its first cycle and 18th in the Great Lakes region for "Most Focused" astronomy programs.

## Indian Seniors Of Chicago Host Ram Navami Celebration And Community Gathering

By JAYANTI OZA

**T**he Indian Seniors of Chicago (ISC) hosted a grand Ram Navami celebration on March 14 at Manav Seva Mandir, drawing approximately 380 attendees for a day of cultural, spiritual and community activities.

The program, organized by Bhupendra Suthar and Panna Shah, also included a celebration for members whose birthdays fall in the month of March. ISC President Kantibhai Patel, the event's special guest, was honored with flowers and a rendition of "Happy Birthday" by attendees.

The event began with cultural and wellness activities, including a yoga demonstration by Umaben, who was later felicitated with flowers in recognition of her presentation.

Community engagement was also a key part of the gathering. Neel Khot, a Democratic candidate in an upcoming congressional primary election, addressed attendees and encouraged civic participation, while Chitranjan Desai provided an overview of the election process.

ISC Treasurer Hemant Modi presented the organization's financial update for February and shared details about upcoming events, including a collective Satya Narayan Katha scheduled for April 5 at Manav Seva Mandir and a Gujarati play, "Chandu Chakdoleh Chadyo," set for March 20. He encouraged members to participate in both events.

During the program, longtime ISC Executive Committee member Manubhai P.



PHOTO: JAYANTI OZA

ISC President Kantibhai Patel is honored with flowers and a birthday tribute during the event.

Shah was honored for his years of service. He was felicitated with a shawl by Patel and Desai in recognition of his contribu-

tions to the organization.

The event also acknowledged the sponsors of the day's lunch, Kantibhai Patel

and Hasumati Ben, who were honored with flowers by ISC Vice President Dr. Narsinghbhai Patel.

ISC Secretary Jayesh Shah provided updates on the organization's general meeting and informed members about the distribution of stainless steel dinner plates.

The cultural segment featured performances by students of Kalapadam Bharat Natyam Dance Academy Chicago. Directors Anjali Varghese and Minaben led presentations depicting episodes from the Ramayana, followed by a lively Garba session. The celebration concluded with a community lunch.

The event highlighted ISC's continued commitment to fostering cultural traditions, community engagement and social connection among seniors in the Chicago area.



Anjali Varghese and Minaben, directors of Kalapadam Bharat Natyam Dance Academy Chicago, pose with their group.

ASTROLOGY



This week for you

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

**ARIES:** Professional matters progress without hurdles, bringing relief and confidence. Attempts to reconcile with someone you've been at odds with are likely to succeed. Adopting better health habits helps you manage workplace pressure effectively. Your opinion may be valued in an important money-related discussion. However, arranging funds for a startup or new venture could require extra effort. Stay consistent in matters of the heart and avoid wavering emotions.

**TAURUS:** Your dedication at work earns recognition from influential people. Those stepping into media or entertainment may receive quick appreciation. Singles could make a thoughtful move toward someone they admire romantically. Students may benefit from expert guidance to strengthen weak areas in studies. Staying disciplined with eating habits is essential now.

**GEMINI:** A domestic issue that feels overwhelming may need a creative solution. Your proactive style at work gives you a competitive advantage. Consulting a finance professional can clarify investment decisions. Admission concerns regarding a child are likely to resolve positively. An opportunity to holiday in a pleasant, cool destination may arise.

**CANCER:** Be cautious about making workplace promises you may struggle to fulfil. Offering support to a friend brings emotional satisfaction. Romantic plans for the future can create special bonding moments. Academic efforts yield excellent results as you push yourself harder. Financial stability continues to support your goals.

**LEO:** Clear pending responsibilities before committing to fresh assignments. Social gatherings linked to work may strengthen valuable contacts. Fresh graduates in management fields could shine in their initial roles. A generous relative may visit and brighten the home environment. Love brings warmth and excitement, so cherish the moments. Mindful eating keeps you in good shape.

**VIRGO:** Act swiftly when a promising career opportunity presents itself. Skillfully handling a demanding client discussion enhances your professional image. Domestic harmony replaces earlier tensions, restoring calm. Those expecting a pay rise may receive encouraging news. Property-relat-

ed concerns can be settled through diplomacy.

**LIBRA:** Joining a fitness routine can improve overall well-being. Stock market ventures may not deliver immediate gains, so patience is needed. Homemakers may remain busy attending to guests. Salary growth is possible for those in sales or merchandising. Business owners might extend financial support to someone on their team.

**SCORPIO:** A trusted team member proves dependable. Long-awaited payments are likely to come through. Event planners or coordinators may receive praise for flawless execution. A new admirer could express friendly or romantic interest. Household duties may feel exhausting, creating a desire for relaxation. Rental assets show signs of healthy returns.

**SAGITTARIUS:** Revisit unfinished workplace tasks with a fresh strategy. Be mindful of your belongings in crowded areas. Students should restructure their timetable to improve productivity. Travel plans may begin to take shape. Investing in tax-saving options can prove beneficial.

**CAPRICORN:** Those experiencing minor health concerns may benefit from exploring alternative healing methods. A low mood could influence your perspective, so stay mentally strong. Minor misunderstandings may surface within a joint family setup. Homemakers successfully implement creative household ideas. Spiritually inclined individuals may undertake a meaningful religious journey.

**AQUARIUS:** Monitor ongoing projects carefully to ensure steady progress. Health issues show signs of improvement. Purchasing something valuable may bring satisfaction. Students planning higher education might receive scholarship-related news. A romantic evening promises closeness and charm..

**PISCES:** Financial luck appears supportive, strengthening your savings. Choosing silence over reaction may help maintain peace in love matters. A train journey could bring a refreshing change of scenery. Your ability to manage multiple responsibilities at work earns appreciation. News of a loved one traveling abroad may stir emotions. Energy levels remain high and positive.



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# Congressman Thanedar Introduces Resolution To Censure Colleague For 'Bigoted' Rhetoric Against Muslims

BY A STAFF WRITER

Earlier this month (March 12), Democratic Congressman Shri Thanedar (D-Michigan) introduced a resolution to censure Republican Congressman Andy Ogles for "spewing hatred and bigotry" toward Muslim Americans and "disrespecting" America's diversity. The resolution would also remove Ogles from the Homeland Security Committee, of which both he and Thanedar are members.

Ogles recently tweeted, "Muslims don't belong in American society," "Pluralism is a lie," and "Muslims are unable to assimilate."

"Congressman Ogles' disgusting and bigoted words have no place anywhere in our country, let alone from a member of Congress," said Rep. Thanedar in the press release. "His words incite hatred against millions of Muslim Americans.

They disrespect the values of freedom of religion that our country was founded upon and are fundamentally un-American. I'm introducing a resolution to censure him for his disgraceful remarks, and I encourage all of my colleagues to join me in standing up against bigotry and hatred."

The full text of the resolution is available here.

In June of last year, Ogles referred to Zohran Mam-



Congressman Shri Thanedar at a Michigan Heroes event.

dani as "Little Muhammad" and urged Donald Trump to deport him, Thanedar said. In response, Congressman

Thanedar introduced a resolution to censure Ogles for those remarks as well.

## State Bank Of India and FIA-Chicago Host Successful Customer Connect At National India Hub

BY A STAFF WRITER

Chicago, March 21, 2026: In a bid to strengthen engagement with the Indian-American community and share valuable financial insights, the State Bank of India (SBI-Chicago), in association with FIA-Chicago (est. 1980), hosted a successful "Customer Connect" session at National India Hub, Schaumburg, Illinois.

Among those attending were the SBI-Chicago CEO R.K. Jain, along with his team, and prominent FIA-Chicago leadership including President Hemant Patel, Trustee Kanti N. Patel, Harish Kolasani, Rajesh Patel, Rakesh Malhotra, Vice President Joy (Dipen) Shah, Executive Amar Upadhyay, Director Bhavesh Patel, Jayantibhai Oza, and several community leaders.

During the session, Jha and the SBI team made a presentation covering a wide range of financial products and services. Key topics included NRE (Non-Resident External) accounts, NRO (Non-Resident Ordinary) accounts, and investment options such as Fixed Deposits (FDs) and Certificates of Deposit (CDs). Attendees showed particular interest in SBI's CD offerings, which were highlighted as especially competitive and attractive in the current market.

At then interactive session participants asked questions and receive personalized guidance, helping them better understand how SBI's offerings can support their financial goals both in the United States and India. "Reflecting strong interest and



Presentation being made about SBI financial offerings at FIA-1980 meeting in Chicago

trust, many community members took immediate steps to open new accounts

during the event," the press release said. For more information about SBI-Chi-

cago's services and offerings, visit: <https://sbichicago.statebank/>

## Ajita's Headspace: The Kebab Run

By AJITA KAPOOR

Let me ask you something. How far would you go for food that genuinely ruins you - not in the bad way, but in the way that makes every other version of that dish feel like a pale, apologetic imitation? Would you reschedule a meeting? Cancel plans? What about, say, miss a train?

Because we almost did. And honestly? I'd do it again without a second thought.

There are certain foods that don't belong to restaurants or recipes. They belong to people. My friend's mother made kebabs and I use the word "made" the way you'd use it for something closer to art than cooking. Every year, without fail, whenever we visited, those kebabs would appear. Smoky, tender, spiced in that precise, unreplacable way that only comes from decades of muscle memory and zero written measurements. The kind of food where you close your eyes on the first bite because your full attention is owed to it.

This time, though, life had other plans. We were back home on a short trip,



the kind where you're already mentally packing while you're still unpacking. The clock was merciless, the schedule tighter than it had any right to be, and a proper sit-down meal was simply not in the cards. We'd accepted it. Made peace with it. Said our goodbyes at the door of their bungalow like responsible adults with trains to catch.

And then our friend walked out holding a plate of those kebabs.

Just like that, every mature, time-conscious thought evaporated.

We grabbed them with the urgency of people who understood, on a cellular level, that this was not optional. Into the car we went, bags shoved in the back, kebabs in our laps; eating with the focused desperation of people who had their priorities perfectly sorted, thank you very much. The clock ticking, the station getting closer, the kebabs getting better with every single bite.

Then the railway crossing gates came down.

And there, through the windshield, we watched our train glide peacefully, unbothered, almost smugly into the platform.

Now here's where I need you to really picture this: the gates lift, the car barely stops, doors flung open, bags grabbed with zero grace, and two absolute maniacs sprinting through a train station; one still clutching a paper napkin, probably smelling magnificently of kebab. People stared. Someone may have laughed. It was, without question, a scene stolen directly from a movie except sweatier, louder, and considerably more fragrant.

We made it. We collapsed into our seats, breathless and grinning, hearts pounding, stomachs wonderfully full.

That journey home was spent retelling those four chaotic minutes with the kind of laughter that makes your eyes water and your stomach hurt. Here's what I've come to understand: some meals are just meals. But some meals are moments, ones that sit in the softest corner of your memory, not just for the taste, but for everything wrapped around them. The warmth of someone's mother pressing food into your hands at a doorstep. The ridiculousness of choosing flavor over punctuality. The way joy can taste like smoke and spice and a



little bit of panic.

So I'll ask you again and be honest with yourself here.

Are you the kind of person who plays it safe, or are you the kind of person who takes the kebabs and runs?

Because if there's a story somewhere in your life that ends with you breathless on a platform, heart full and no regrets — I have a feeling we'd get along just fine.

The author is an artist and designer based in the tri-state area.



PHOTO: PROVIDED

## Mahamahopadhyaya Dr. Bhadreshdas Swami of B.A.P.S Swaminarayan Sanstha Honored with the Prestigious Sahitya Akademi Award

PRESS RELEASE

March 17, 2025 — In a landmark recognition of Sanskrit scholarship and Hindu philosophy, Mahamahopadhyaya Dr. Bhadreshdas Swami, of the BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha, has been conferred the prestigious Sahitya Akademi Award for the year 2025 by the Government of India in the field of literature for his work "Prasthanachatushtaye Brahmaghosha."

Selected as the finest Sanskrit work in India, this text provides a comprehensive exposition of the Brahma principle based on the primary scriptures of Hinduism—the Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, and Brahma Sutras—alongside the Vachanamrut delivered by Bhagwan Swaminarayan.

Composed in a poetic style using aphorisms (sutras), scholars view this work as a piece of philosophical poetry. Considering its literary characteristics and philosophical depth, the selection committee of scholars chose it as the best Sanskrit work of 2025.

The text presents the philosophy propounded by Bhagwan Swaminarayan in a literary style. Published in 2018, the author composed this work under the guidance and instructions of the spiritual leader of BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha,



HH Mahant Swami Maharaj Blessing Dr. Bhadreshdas Swami.

His Holiness Mahant Swami Maharaj.

The announcement has sparked widespread celebration across India's academic and literary circles.

Scholars have lauded the Sahitya Akademi's decision, noting that this recognition underscores the continued vitality of Sanskrit as a medium for both intellectual rigor and creative expression.

Swami Bhadreshdasji, a renowned scholar who has previously authored extensive commentaries on the Prasthanatrayi, adds this national honor to a long

list of accolades for his contributions to Indian philosophy.

Mahamahopadhyaya Dr. Bhadreshdas Swami is an internationally respected, renowned Sanskrit scholar and thought leader in Indian philosophy. He holds multiple academic distinctions, including an M.A., Ph.D., D.Litt., and an honorary Doctor of Science (D.Sc.) from IIT Kharagpur. Currently serving as the Head of the BAPS Swaminarayan Research Institute, he has dedicated his life to advancing Sanskrit scholarship and Vedic

philosophy.

Dr. Bhadreshdas Swami is also the author of Swaminarayana Siddhanta Sudha, published in 2022, a profound Sanskrit treatise that systematically presents the Akshar-Purushottam Darshan, the philosophical doctrine revealed by Bhagwan Swaminarayan. He is also the author of the Swaminarayan Bhashyam, a five-volume Sanskrit commentary on the Prasthanatrayi (Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, and Brahmasutras), which reaffirms the Akshar-Purushottam Darshan as an independent Vedantic tradition. His contributions have been widely recognized both in India and abroad.

Over the years, he has been honored with numerous awards, including the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Indian Council of Philosophical Research (ICPR), the Vedant Martand Sanman from Silpakorn University, Thailand, and the Mahamahopadhyaya title from Kavikulguru Kalidas Sanskrit University.

Expressing his gratitude, Dr. Bhadreshdas Swami dedicated the honor to Bhagwan Swaminarayan, whose teachings inspired the Akshar-Purushottam Darshan, and to his gurus—Pramukh Swami Maharaj and Mahant Swami Maharaj—for their guidance and blessings. He emphasized that this recognition reflects the timeless relevance of Sanskrit and the enduring vitality of India's philosophical tradition.



Photo: Canva

## ABCs of H-1Bs (This Is Part 6 of a 7-Part Series): The H-1B Cap Was Reached; Do I Still Have a Chance of Getting an H-1B Visa

IN MEMORIAM

By David H. Nachman, Esq



Michael Phulwani



David Nachman



Ludka Zimovcak



Snehal Batra

Each year, thousands of employers register candidates for the H-1B visa lottery. When registrations exceed the annual cap, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) conducts a random selection process. Only those selected may proceed with filing an H-1B petition. This leaves many asking an important question: If I am not selected, do I still have options?

The answer, in many cases, is yes.

First, it is important to understand that a registration is not officially marked as “Not Selected” until the fiscal year concludes. USCIS may conduct additional selection rounds if initial petition filings do not meet the annual quota. In recent years, multiple rounds have occurred, providing additional opportunities for candidates who were not selected in the first round. Employers and beneficiaries should monitor their USCIS accounts carefully for updates.

That said, relying solely on the lottery can be risky. Strategic planning is essential. Employers should consider backup options early in the process, including alternative visa categories, cap-exempt opportunities, or concurrent employment strategies where appropriate.

### Understanding Cap-Exempt Opportunities

While most H-1B visas fall under the annual numerical cap (65,000 regular cap plus 20,000 for U.S. advanced degree holders), certain employers are exempt from this limitation. These include institutions of higher education, nonprofit entities affiliated with such institutions, nonprofit research organizations, and governmental research organizations.

To qualify as an institution of higher education, the organization must meet specific criteria under federal law, including accreditation, offering post-secondary education, and awarding degrees. Nonprofit research organizations and governmental research entities must primarily engage in basic or applied research.

One of the more complex areas involves determining whether a nonprofit organization is “related to or affiliated with” an institution of higher education.

This relationship may be established through shared ownership, common control, formal affiliation agreements, or operational connections such as being a branch, subsidiary, or cooperative partner.

### Employed By” vs. “Employed At”

Another important distinction is whether the H-1B worker is employed “by” a qualifying institution or “at” one. USCIS allows cap exemption in certain cases where a worker is

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employed by a third-party company but performs job duties at a qualifying institution.

However, the employer must demonstrate a clear connection between the work performed and the institution’s primary mission, such as education or research. This is often referred to as establishing a “logical nexus.”

### Planning Beyond the Lottery

Even if a candidate is not selected in the H-1B lottery, options may still be available. Cap-exempt employment, alternative visa categories, or future lottery opportunities may provide viable paths forward. Early evaluation of these options can help employers and employees remain flexible and prepared.

In today’s competitive H-1B environment, success depends not only on selection in the lottery, but also on thoughtful planning and a clear understanding of available alternatives.

For more information about the H-1B nonimmigrant work visa process or to consider H-1B nonimmigrant work visa options, the immigration and nationality lawyers and attorneys at the Nachman Phulwani Zimovcak (NPZ) Law Group, P.C. invite you to visit them on the web at [www.visaserve.com](http://www.visaserve.com) or to email them at [info@visaserve.com](mailto:info@visaserve.com) or to call the firm at 201.670.0006 (x104).

# Celebrating The Timeless Charm Of Shashi Kapoor On His 88th Birth Anniversary

**O**n March 18, 2026, the film world celebrates the 88th birth anniversary of the legendary Shashi Kapoor. Known for his infectious charm, crooked-tooth smile, and “taxi” speed, often shooting multiple films in a single day, Kapoor was a rare bridge between high-octane Bollywood masala and nuanced international art-house cinema. Here is a look back at the most iconic films from his six-decade-long career:

**DEEWAAR (1975)**

Perhaps the most significant film in Shashi Kapoor's career, this Yash Chopra classic pitted him against Amitabh Bachchan in a clash of ideologies. Kapoor played Ravi, the principled police officer



Deewaar (1975)

poor played Javed Khan, a reckless feudal lord during the Indian Rebellion of 1857.

The film won the National Film Award for Best Feature Film in Hindi.

**KABHI KABHIE (1976)**

In this multi-starrer romantic saga, Kapoor played a character that was remarkably progressive for the era. He played Vijay, the jovial and secure husband who is fully accepting of his wife's (Raakhee) past love. His effortless chemistry and mature performance provided a perfect balance to the film's intense emotional beats.

**SATYAM SHIVAM SUNDARAM (1978)**

Directed by his brother Raj Kapoor, this film was known for its bold storytelling and lush musical score. Kapoor



Jab Jab Phool Khile (1965)

who chooses duty over his criminal brother. He delivered the most famous rebuttal in Indian cinema history: “Mere paas maa hai”, a line that remains etched in Bollywood lore. He won the Filmfare Award for Best Supporting Actor for this performance.

**JAB JAB PHOOL KHILE (1965)**

This romantic blockbuster solidified Kapoor's status as a top-tier heartthrob. He played Raja, an innocent Kashmiri boatman who falls for a wealthy tourist (Nanda). The film's success made him a household name and inspired several

later films.

**JUNOON (1978)**

Produced under his own banner, Film Valas, this historical drama directed by Shyam Benegal showcases Kapoor's commitment to “meaningful” cinema. Based on Ruskin Bond's ‘A Flight of Pigeons’, Ka-



Junoon (1978)

played Rajeev, an engineer who struggles to reconcile his love for a woman's soul with his obsession with physical beauty. The film broke many social taboos of the time regarding sensuality on screen.

-ANI



Kabhi Kabhie (1976)



Satyam Shivam Sundaram (1978)

The Washington Post

By Natalie B. Compton

# You asked: I've been critical of Trump. Should I worry about flying abroad?

Traveling has always come with complications. Our By The Way Concierge column will take your travel dilemmas to the experts to help you navigate the unexpected. Want to see your question answered? Submit it here.

"I'm a U.S.-born citizen who will be traveling to France. I've been critical of Trump on social media. Should I be worried about getting back into the U.S.?" - Anonymous.

We know the government is interested in traveler social media - at least for foreigners. Last year, U.S. Customs and Border Protection floated a proposal for international travelers to disclose five years of social media history. And we also know that searches of devices belonging to American citizens is on the rise - from 8,657 in 2023, to 10,541 in 2024 and 13,590 in 2025 - according to CBP's latest reports.

Does that mean your posts could be held against you at the border?

First, I took your question to the Department of Homeland Security. Their response was simple: "This is absurd. No one has been denied entry to the U.S. because they were critical of President Trump," a spokesperson said in an email.

I also spoke to a few lawyers and travel risk experts to get their take. Here's what they told me.

Your free speech is protected

According to the law, U.S. citizens "have a First Amendment right to criticize the government on social media," said Sophia Cope, senior staff attorney for the Electronic Frontier Foundation. There are, of course, exceptions. Your speech isn't protected if your social media post was a credible threat of violence, for example.

But Cope does still have concerns.

"There is the law, and then there's the practicality of what's happening on the ground, and the delta between those two things makes me sad and frustrated," she said.

Cope believes President Donald Trump's administration has "shown that they have a pretty significant disregard for individual rights and the rule of law," she said, pointing to reports of travelers being held at airports for questioning. "So how do you give people advice when you're dealing with government agencies that behave that way?"

"Essentially we say one size doesn't fit all, because everyone has their own personal circumstances," Cope continued.

You can't be denied entry to the U.S.

John Rose, chief risk officer for the travel agency Altour, said he's had "more than a few" inquiries like this from clients.

"The main thing I tell people, though, is if you've got proof of citizenship, they can't deny you entry into the United States," he said. "They can delay it, but they can't deny it. So [you] should be fine."

Cope brought up the same point.

"U.S. citizens have a right to immediately enter their country, unless there's a probable cause to arrest for a crime," she said.

There's always a chance your device could be searched

Mike Ballard, director of intelligence at Global Guardian, a travel risk management firm, said that you should have "no concerns about getting back into the U.S." and that citizens "should have no issue going to and from Europe," regardless of political stance.

However, "there is always a possibility they may be selected for a search of electronic devices," Ballard said in an email.

Per the CBP website, all travelers coming into the country are subject to inspection, and "on rare occasions, CBP officers may search a traveler's mobile phone, computer, camera, or other electronic devices during the inspection process."

This isn't new with the Trump administration.

"The government has claimed the power to do that for years now," said Nate Wessler, deputy director of the American Civil Liberties Union's Speech, Privacy and Technology Project.

"DHS publishes data every year about the volume of those searches," he said, "and it has been steadily increasing over time and continues to increase under the Trump administration."

Maria Villegas Bravo, a lawyer who focuses on government surveillance of mobile devices as counsel for the Electronic Privacy Information Center, said travelers should be prepared for two kinds of potential CBP searches.

In a basic search (also called a manual or consent search), an officer will ask if they can look through your device and scroll through whatever's available (e.g. your photos or text messages) but shouldn't ask you to log into anything not immediately available on airplane mode without a warrant (such as a cloud storage account, for example).



All Photos: Canva

In an advanced or forensic search, they may plug your phone or laptop into a government device that downloads everything on it for further investigation. To conduct an advanced search, Wessler said officers "say they need reasonable suspicion, which is a pretty low bar."

Have a strong password

As a general precaution, Bravo recommends travelers have a strong password enabled to unlock their devices, and to turn off biometric authentication for extra security. That won't stop your device from being searched, though.

When a border agent wants to search your phone and it's locked, they'll ask you to either unlock it or give them the passcode. But "the government does not have the power to literally compel somebody to do that," Wessler said.

U.S. citizens can refuse to unlock their device but should be prepared for the ramifications.

For example, Wessler said the agent could seize your phone and let you into the country, but keep your device to send to a forensic examiner at a government facility "where they try to break into the phone," he said. "We've seen people who have been without their phones for at least weeks and sometimes many months."

Don't travel with sensitive information

Bravo said concerned travelers should think about "data minimization" when they're going abroad. Essentially: Don't bring what you don't want searched.

"It's something attorneys talk about all the time ... don't send an email that you don't want to show up in the court record," she said.

It might not be realistic for you to travel with a second phone, but you could store sensitive information elsewhere (an external hard drive or cloud storage account) and delete it from your device while you're on the road.

If you do get searched, stay calm

Altour's Rose was once detained in Frankfurt, Germany, for having a suspicious travel history after attending speaking engagements in South America, Africa, the Middle East and Greece. He stayed calm and explained himself to officers, and was eventually let go. He recommends any traveler who gets stopped do the same.

"I say practice patience with empathy because if you're mad at these agents, whether it's customs or TSA ... you're just subjecting yourself to additional scrutiny," Rose said. "They're also going to treat that as: 'Why is this person being belligerent? Do they have something to hide?'"

# No Rules, Whatever Makes You Feel Happy: Khushi Kapoor On Gen Z Fashion

Actor Khushi Kapoor turned showstopper for designer Aisha Rao as she unveiled her Spring Summer 2026 collection 'Inter-Hana' at Lakme Fashion Week x FDCI, showcasing a fusion of Japanese minimalism and Indian craftsmanship.

The Hyderabad-based designer's collection drew inspiration from Japanese artist Fumi Imamura and explored a dialogue between abstract floral art and textile innovation. The showcase highlighted a mix of structured silhouettes, fluid drapes and intricate in-house developed fabrics, reflecting Rao's signature design philosophy. *India Business News*

Khushi Kapoor walked the ramp in a floral-embellished crop top paired with a coordinated lehenga, expressing admiration for the collection's detailing and craftsmanship.

"I think just seeing all of the clothes and outfits together, just seeing all the colours and the patterns and everything just come to life was great," she told ANI.

Praising the intricacy of her ensemble, she added, "Aisha told me that everything was made in-house and it was made with so much purpose... all these details are so intricate, just the flowers and the colours, I think they all blend so seamlessly together."

Sharing her perspective on evolving Gen Z fashion trends, Khushi emphasised individuality and comfort over rigid rules.



PHOTO ANI

Designer Aisha Rao and Khushi Kapoor.

"I think it's the best form of self-expression... whatever makes you feel happy and comfortable in the moment should just make you feel good. I don't think there are any rules in fashion," she said.

The actor also spoke about her current style preferences, noting a shift towards bolder aesthetics. "I think I'm kind of moving away from minimalist fashion and going more into colour and more bold expressions... patterns, colours and different silhouettes are more interesting to me now," she added. *Apparel*

Designer Aisha Rao described Inter-Hana as a collection rooted in the idea of "in-betweenness," "Inter-Hana, from 'inter' meaning between, and 'hana', the Japanese word for flower, situates the collection within a state of in-betweenness. It occupies the space between gardens, between two significant chapters, and also between cultural vocabularies. The term 'inter' further operates as a structural metaphor for an interwoven crochet-like engineered mesh produced in-house in our atelier, where this surface becomes the story of cultural dialogue, structural interdependence, self-reliance and the continuity of craft."

The collection was presented by 360 ONE at Lakme Fashion Week x FDCI, receiving acclaim for its unique blend of art, craft and modern silhouettes.

-ANI

# "Staying True To Yourself Is Fashion": Nimrat Kaur Dazzles In Jamdani-Inspired Ensemble

Actor Nimrat Kaur turned showstopper for designer label 'Jajaabor' by Neelanjan Ghosh and Kanika Sachdev at Lakme Fashion Week x FDCI, presenting a striking blend of elegance and contemporary design on the runway.

Dressed in a gold Jamdani-inspired corset paired with a deconstructed single-sleeve cutwork jacket and a draped skirt, Nimrat Kaur showcased an Indo-fusion ensemble that balanced traditional craftsmanship with modern aesthetics. The look reflected a seamless integration of heritage textiles with contemporary silhouettes.

Speaking to ANI, the actor shared her perspective on fashion and individuality, emphasising authenticity and comfort.

"Fashion for me is staying true to yourself, your body type and the climate you live in, and trying to be original and remaining original," she said.

Nimrat, who was recently seen in 'The Family Man 3', also spoke about her experience of portraying a different kind of character in the series. "I really had a great time working on it. It was wonderful," she added.

Sharing a personal anecdote, the actor recalled celebrating her birthday in Varanasi for the first time.



PHOTO ANI

Jamdani-inspired fashion @LFW.

"It was beautiful. I was in Banaras for my birthday. I went there for the first time ever and I spent it at Kashi Vishwanath," she said, describing the experience as memorable.

The multi-designer showcase at Lakme Fashion Week x FDCI featured collections by Triune by Praseon Sharma,

Jajaabor by Neelanjan Ghosh and Kanika Sachdev, and Line Outline by Deepit Chugh. Each designer presented unique narratives inspired by personal journeys, cultural memory, and urban influences.

Jajaabor's collection, Calcutta • Kolkata, paid tribute to the evolving identity of

the city through Bengal's textile heritage and modern silhouettes. Nimrat Kaur's presence as a showstopper added star power to the presentation, highlighting the seamless fusion of craft and contemporary design.



Nimrat Kaur

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02/20-03/13-JG

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03/13-04/03-SL

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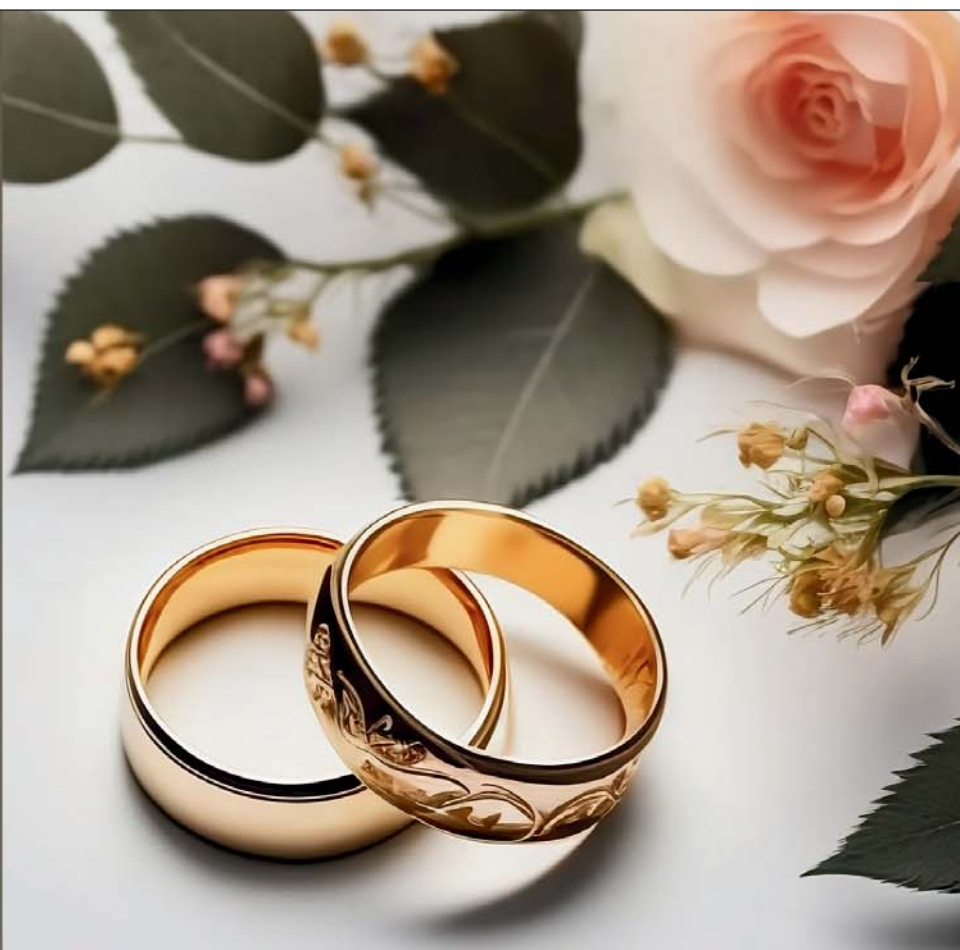
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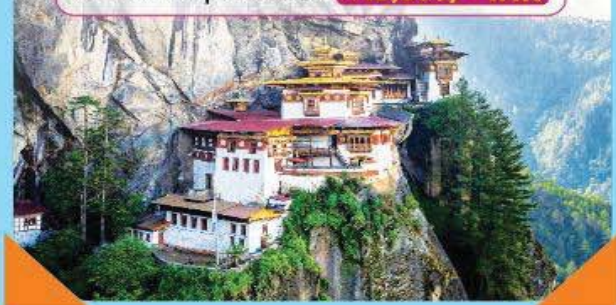


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