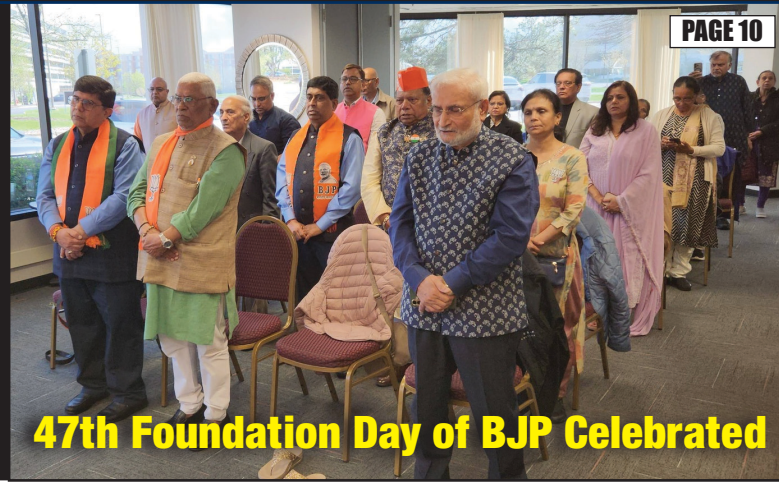


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**Dr. Manu Vora
Recognized**



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47th Foundation Day of BJP Celebrated



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**Natya Dance Theater Celebrates
5th Anniversary**

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PAGE 12

**More than 11 lakhs (1.1 million) Indians
travel back to home country as
Middle East crisis unfolds**



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**Fifth Anniversary of Fedex
shooting in Indianapolis
commemorated**

PHOTOS: MISCELLANEOUS

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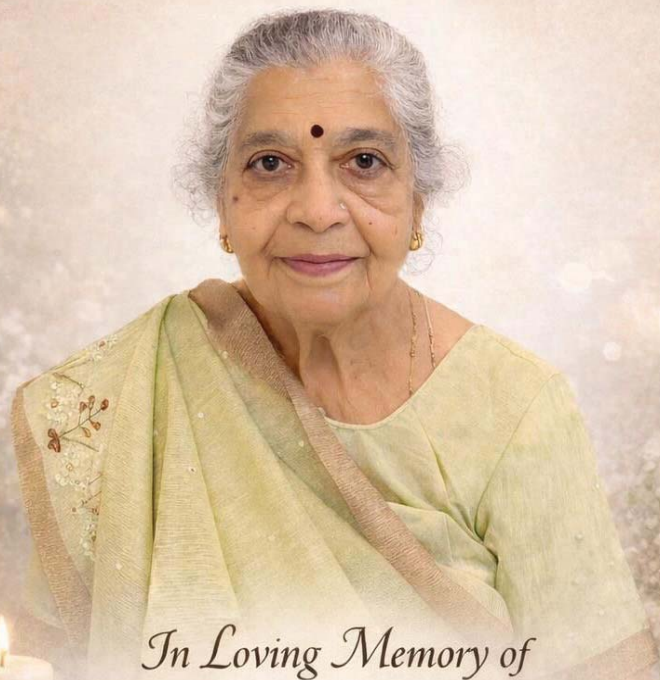


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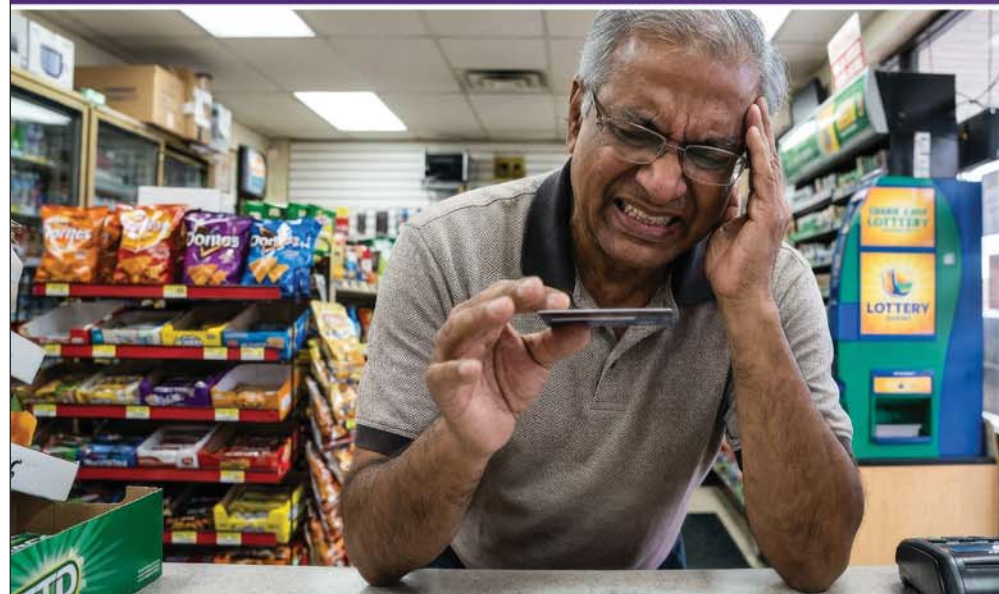


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Case For An Atmanirbhar Cyber Suraksha Mission

By VIVEK WADHWA

The cyberwar has already begun — and India is not responding at the level the threat demands

Something fundamental has shifted in cybersecurity, and while a few nations are beginning to grasp the implications, most, particularly India, remain dangerously unprepared for what comes next.

AI has lowered the barrier to offensive cyber operations in a way that makes scale and speed the defining advantages. (AP)

Last week, Anthropic revealed that its latest Artificial Intelligence (AI) system can autonomously discover, chain, and weaponise software vulnerabilities at machine speed, far beyond anything human teams can achieve. It identified thousands of high-severity zero-days across major operating systems and browsers and even uncovered a flaw in OpenBSD's TCP stack that had survived 27 years of audits and stress testing.

This rewrites the rules of cyber conflict by shifting attacks from tricking humans into clicking malicious links to machines that can independently find and exploit vulnerabilities. The entire lifecycle of an attack, the reconnaissance, exploitation, and persistence, can now run as a continuous, automated process operating faster than humans can respond.

Anthropic fully grasped the explosive implications of its breakthrough and deliberately chose not to release the system publicly. Instead, it created Project Glasswing, a highly exclusive, tightly controlled initiative that grants access only to a privileged circle of America's most critical institutions: Apple, Google, Microsoft, AWS, Nvidia, and JPMorgan Chase. The Pentagon and Wall Street were promptly briefed.

Tellingly, even though this same technology poses an equally grave — if not greater — risk to India's banks, tech giants, and critical infrastructure, Anthropic did not bother to extend the invitation to a single Indian institution.

The US is treating this with national urgency because the implications are so profound. AI has lowered the

barrier to offensive cyber operations in a way that makes scale and speed the defining advantages. What once required specialised teams can now be executed by machines, continuously and with little warning.

Recent events show how this capability is already being used and what it could mean for India. In January 2026, the US deployed AI-augmented cyber operations in Venezuela, triggering targeted blackouts across Caracas by disrupting power grids and air-defence systems, enabling the capture of Nicolás Maduro without large-scale military engagement. Weeks later, similar cyber effects were integrated into joint US-Israeli strikes on Iran, disabling communications, sensors, and command networks in minutes. These operations demonstrate how a country's critical infrastructure can be disrupted remotely, quietly, and with limited attribution.

The same playbook, if turned against India, could unleash catastrophic damage across the country — plunging Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru and other major cities into prolonged blackouts that would leave hundreds of millions of people without electricity, water or basic services; paralysing the national railway network and financial markets in a single blow; cutting off water supply to entire states; and blinding key defence installations — all within hours and with almost no chance of clear attribution.

While America is moving quickly, India remains dangerously complacent, still basking in its self-image as the world's IT superpower. Its companies secure the world's banks, cloud platforms, and Fortune 500 systems with world-class discipline and precision, yet that same rigour rarely extends to its own critical infrastructure. The result is a nation dangerously exposed: Outdated systems, inconsistent patching, and a security culture that still treats risk as a mere compliance checkbox rather than a core national responsibility.

The scale of India's exposure is already visible. More than 60% of advanced cyber threats targeting the country are believed to originate from the China-Pakistan axis, with over 265 million cyberattacks recorded in 2025 alone. These are sustained efforts to map critical infrastructure — power grids, water systems, telecom networks, and defence assets — for future disruption.

India has not responded at the level this threat demands. There has been no comprehensive national audit of foreign hardware dependencies; AI-driven red-teaming of critical infrastructure remains limited; and there has been little public acknowledgment of how dangerously exposed these systems truly are.

And that is just the software problem. The hardware nightmares are much worse.

Across India's power grids, water systems, transportation networks, and defence installations, millions of Chinese devices still form the backbone of operations; its surveillance cameras, routers, switches, and industrial control systems are embedded everywhere. These are not peripheral systems; they sit at the very core of critical infrastructure, are difficult to replace, and in many cases are not even fully understood.

While the US has acted to restrict Chinese networking equipment, recognising it as a national security threat, India continues to tolerate this deep dependence mainly because the devices are significantly cheaper. The government has no hesitation slapping import duties on Chinese smartphones and solar panels in the name of Atmanirbhar Bharat, yet when it comes to the routers, switches and industrial control systems that actually power the nation's critical infrastructure, cost still triumphs over security. India must treat this as a national security emergency and immediately launch an Atmanirbhar Bharat Cyber Suraksha Mission. High-risk foreign hardware needs to be systematically replaced across critical infrastructure with trusted and verifiable alternatives. This is a matter of national security.

India must also deploy AI within its own systems to continuously test and strengthen defences, identifying vulnerabilities before they are discovered externally. Critical systems should be isolated where necessary to reduce exposure and limit how far an attack can spread.

These actions require urgent coordination across government, industry, and academia, backed by sustained investment and strong political will — and there is no time to waste. Otherwise, to put it simply, complacency will lead to disaster.

Vivek Wadhwa is CEO, Vionix Biosciences.

Bihar Jharkhand Association Of Midwest (BJUS) Celebrates A Vibrant Holi Milan Event

By PRACHI JAITLEY

The Bihar Jharkhand Association of Midwest (BJUS) hosted a lively and colorful Holi Milan celebration, drawing over 200 community members for a day filled with cultural exuberance and unity.

The program began with a stirring rendition of both the U.S. and Indian national anthems, setting an inspiring tone for the day. This was followed by a one-minute moment of silence in memory of Poornima Jha, former President of BJUS, who passed away a month ago.

The event then unfolded into a rich tapestry of cultural performances by both children and adults, featuring traditional dances and music. A heartwarming diya lighting ceremony symbolized hope and new beginnings, and was graced by the presence of Chief Guest Mrs. Lima Mathew, Consul (Head of Chancery and Community Affairs). The ceremony was meticulously coordinated by the dedi-



PHOTOS: COURTESY BJUS

Bihar Jharkhand Association of Midwest (BJUS) Celebrates a Vibrant Holi Milan Event

cated BJUS core team, ensuring a truly memorable and radiant moment.

A special highlight of the program was a captivating tabla and Kathak jugalbandi performance by Ms. Bindoo Pathak, Founder and Director of Jugalbandi Academy of Tabla and Kathak Dance, along with her talented team. Another stand-



performance was a vibrant dance tribute to Dharmendra by BJUS members, which became one of the most celebrated acts of the day. Heartfelt appreciation goes out to all the children and adult performers who made the event so special.

Guests enjoyed a delicious spread of authentic Bihari Holi delicacies, includ-

ing malpua, katha sabji, dahi vada, and thandai, while a lively DJ kept the festive spirit high throughout the day.

Key highlights included an inspiring speech by Chief Guest Mrs. Lima Mathew, along with thoughtful messages from community leaders Neelam Dwivedi and Ashok Lakshmanan. The program was expertly emceed by BJUS members Rohini Sinha and Pramod Singh, whose engaging presence added to the event's success.

In a special moment of appreciation, Association President Shikha Kumari thanked all attendees for their participation. She highlighted that BJUS is a 35+ year-old organization that continues to grow and thrive based on community support. 'We are here because of you, and we sincerely thank you for being part of our journey,' said Shikha Kumari, President of BJUS.

BJUS remains dedicated to fostering cultural exchange and community engagement and looks forward to organizing more events that celebrate our vibrant heritage and traditions.



Joy of Sharing A Defining Moment of Empowerment



In a powerful stride toward inclusive development, on the occasion of International Women's Day, Project 'Life' proudly organized the 104th Life Women Empowerment Program on March 08, 2026, in Ahmedabad, extending its transformative outreach to 275 underprivileged women. Celebrated globally, International Women's Day serves as a powerful reminder of the strength, resilience, and achievements of women, while reinforcing the collective responsibility to advance gender equality and empowerment - an ethos that resonated deeply throughout the programme.



A distinguished moment of impact - Mr. Amar Shah, Founder - Life Global USA, Dr. Ketki Shah, Chairperson - Women Empowerment Committee, Share & Care Foundation and Mr. Sharad Shah, Patron - Life Global USA & Chairman - Board of Trustees, Share & Care Foundation, USA graciously engage with beneficiaries, championing dignity, skill empowerment, and pathways to self-reliance.

This landmark initiative was inaugurated by Dr. Ketki Shah, Chairperson of the Women Empowerment Committee, Share & Care Foundation, USA and graced this occasion by the August hands of Amar Shah, Founder - Life Global USA, a global humanitarian whose visionary leadership continues to bridge continents through compassion. His presence infused the occasion with purpose and profound significance. The event was further adorned by the presence of Sharad Shah, Patron - Life Global USA, whose enduring philanthropic commitment has become synonymous with impactful giving. Their collective encouragement transformed the programme into a moment of inspiration, not just for the beneficiaries, but for the entire community.

Redefining Empowerment | Beyond Livelihood to Life Transformation

At the heart of this initiative lies the Life Women Empowerment Centre, where empowerment is engineered with precision and compassion. Here, women are not just trained - they are transformed. From mastering vocational skills such as stitching, embroidery, beauty care, and catering, to gaining training for self-defence, gender equality, banking, budgeting, finance and market linkage for product, each beneficiary embarks on a journey from vulnerability to strength. The programme does not merely provide tools for survival - it crafts pathways for leadership, stability, and generational upliftment.

Global Philanthropy, Local Transformation

What sets this initiative apart is its extraordinary synergy between global vision and grassroots execution. The unwavering support from Life Global USA and allied partners reflects a powerful narrative, where the global Indian diaspora actively participates in nation-building with pride and purpose. Through the influential platform of the 'Joy of Sharing' series, Dr. Sudhir Parikh continues to amplify such impactful journeys, transforming them into global conversations that inspire action and awaken responsibility.

A Movement, Not a Milestone

The 104th programme is not an isolated success - it is a defining chapter in a much larger movement aimed at empowering 100,000 women in the years ahead. It stands as a powerful testament that when compassion is structured, leadership is visionary, and collaboration is global - impact becomes exponential. It is about transforming lives with dignity, creating opportunities with intention, and building a future where empowerment is not an exception - but a norm.

And in this extraordinary journey, Project 'Life' continues to remind the world when hearts unite with purpose, change is not just possible... it is inevitable.

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Chicago's Natya Dance Theatre Celebrates 50 Years Of Dance, Heritage, And Community

By BHAILAL M. PATEL

Natya Dance Theatre proudly marks its 50th anniversary in 2026, celebrating five decades of preserving, teaching, and innovating the classical Indian dance form Bharatanatyam while engaging diverse audiences across the globe.

Founded in 1976 by acclaimed dancer and choreographer Hema Rajagopalan, the organization has grown from a small community initiative into an internationally recognized dance company and training academy. Rooted in tradition yet boldly contemporary, Natya has become a leading voice in the evolution of Bharatanatyam in the global diaspora.

A defining highlight of this milestone year was the critically acclaimed production "Sharira/Shariri: Held Within," conceived and choreographed by Rajagopalan. The work brought together decades of artistic exploration into a powerful performance that explored interconnectedness and spiritual unity. Audiences and critics alike praised the production for its precision, emotional depth, and cohesive ensemble work, reinforcing Natya's reputation for excellence and innovation.

"Sharira/Shariri represents not only where we have come from, but where we are going," said Rajagopalan. "The classical form continues to evolve, and our work ensures that it remains vibrant and rel-



Hema Rajagopalan, Director and Founder of Natya Dance Theatre's Artistic Founded in 1976.

evant today."

Since its founding, Natya Dance Theatre has remained dedicated to both preserving the rich heritage of Bharatanatyam and expanding its expressive possibilities. Traditionally a solo art form, Natya has pioneered large-scale ensemble productions that reinterpret classical narratives for modern audiences. The company's performances combine intricate footwork, expressive storytelling (abhinaya), and philosophical depth rooted in ancient texts such as the Natya Shastra.



Local Chicago artists celebrating 50th anniversary of Natya Dance Theater.

Over the years, Natya has received numerous honors, including recognition as a Chicago Cultural Treasure and major support from organizations such as the MacArthur Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Illinois Arts Council. Rajagopalan herself has been widely celebrated for her artistic contributions and leadership.

Natya's collaborative spirit has also led to partnerships with prominent institutions and artists, including the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Yo-Yo Ma's Silk Road Ensemble, Ensemble Español, and Trin-

ity Irish Dance Company—further bridging cultural traditions through performance.

As it enters its next chapter, Natya Dance Theatre continues its mission to inspire, educate, and connect communities through dance.

About Natya Dance Theatre: Natya Dance Theatre is a Chicago-based nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation and advancement of Bharatanatyam. Through performances, education, and community engagement, Natya fosters cultural understanding while pushing the boundaries of classical Indian dance.

Founded by Hema Rajagopalan, the company has earned international acclaim for its ability to preserve classical Indian dance while pushing its artistic boundaries.

The anniversary is highlighted by "Sharira/Shariri: Held Within," a critically praised production exploring themes of interconnectedness and human unity. The work has been noted for its expressive depth, precision, and innovative ensemble choreography.

Over five decades, Natya has received numerous honors, including recognition as a Chicago Cultural Treasure and support from major institutions such as the MacArthur Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts.

As it celebrates its past, Natya continues to invest in the future through performance, education, and cross-cultural collaboration.

Dr. Manu K. Vora Receives 2026 Baldrige Award For Work With Blind Foundation for India

By BHAILAL M. PATEL

The Foundation for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, Inc. has honored Dr. Manu K. Vora with the distinguished 2026 Baldrige Foundation Award for Leadership Excellence in Nonprofit, recognizing his extraordinary leadership in advancing performance excellence across the United States and beyond.

Dr. Vora, Founder, Director, and President of the Blind Foundation for India (BFI), has led the organization since its inception in 1989. This historic recognition marks the first time an Indo-American nonprofit leader has received this esteemed national honor.

A Legacy of Excellence and Impact: Under Dr. Vora's visionary leadership, BFI has embraced the Baldrige Excellence Framework as its guiding strategic foundation for over three decades. By embedding principles such as visionary leadership, effective governance, data-



Dr. Manu K. Vora

driven decision-making, volunteer engagement, and donor-centricity into every aspect of its operations, BFI has built a model nonprofit organization rooted in



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US Lawmakers Recognize 5th Anniversary Of Mass Shooting At Fedex Facility Where 90 Percent Employees Were Sikh

BY A STAFF WRITER

U.S. Representatives Grace Meng (NY-06), Chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC), Pramila Jayapal (WA-07), André Carson (IN-07), and Judy Chu (CA-28), CAPAC Chair Emerita, are introducing legislation recognizing five years since a tragic mass shooting took the lives of eight employees at a FedEx Ground facility in Indianapolis, Indiana. The facility's workforce was nearly 90 percent of Sikh descent, a press release April 15, 2026, said.

Those killed included Matthew Alexander, Samaria Blackwell, Amarjeet Johal, Jasvinder Kaur, Amarjit Sekhon, Jaswinder Singh, Karli Smith, and John Weisert. Seven other workers in the facility were injured.

"Five years ago today, a gunman murdered eight innocent people, including four members of the Sikh community, at a FedEx warehouse in Indianapolis. This horrific tragedy shocked our nation and remains a painful reminder of the hate and violence that Sikhs continue to experience to this day," Rep. Meng said. "As we mourn those we lost, we must honor their memories by taking action to protect South Asian communities and end gun violence. That includes enacting commonsense gun safety legislation and standing up to the Trump administration's actions to defund hate crime prevention services," Meng added.

The other lawmakers echoed these sentiments.

Jayapal said, "Today we remember and honor their lives, and recommit ourselves to a world that is more just and safe for all communities."

"Indianapolis cannot forget the violent attack against our community on April 15, 2021. Eight Hoosiers were murdered at their jobs, including four members of the Sikh community," said Carson. "I am honored to co-lead this resolution to commemorate these eight lives, and to fight against the hate and prejudice that caused this senseless loss of life." He urged the House to pass the resolution.

"The April 2021 mass shooting in Indianapolis was a striking act of violence, deeply affecting Sikhs and the broader AANHPI community," said Rep. Chu. "On this anniversary, and especially in the face of rising racial targeting in our country, it is critical that we strengthen our commitment to ensuring all immigrants receive protection against discrimination and bigotry."

This resolution marked the fifth anniversary of the April 15, 2021, tragedy by:

- Condemning the heinous act of gun violence on that day;
- Honoring the memory of the eight victims and offering heartfelt condolences to their loved ones;
- Condemning acts of discrimination and bigotry,



Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department press briefing April 16, 2021, on the mass shooting at Fedex facility on April 15, 2021 late night around 11 pm.

white supremacist rhetoric, and the Trump Administration's crackdown on immigrant communities;

- Calling for the restoration and expansion of hate crime prevention programs in the Department of Justice;
- Calling on the Trump Administration to reverse its anti-immigrant policies; and
- Reaffirming the commitment of the federal government to protect civil and human rights.

"U.S.-based Sikhs have often been stigmatized and targeted because of their visible articles of faith and other aspects of their intersectional identities," the lawmakers noted in the press release. "Sikh immigrant truck drivers have been scapegoated for 'stealing' American jobs and posing a risk to road safety despite a lack of evidence for such claims," they added.

The Sikh Coalition, an advocacy organization also commented on the incident.

"There was a complex and frustrating aftermath for this tragedy; local and federal law enforcement officials investigated the shooting, but ultimately declined to categorize it as a hate crime," noted Harman Singh, Executive Director, The Sikh Coalition. "While this question of motive still remains unsettled for many in the local and national Sikh community, the importance of commemoration remains," said Singh.

Kiran Kaur Gil, executive director of the Sikh American Legal Defense And Education Fund, SALDEF, thanked Jayapal for introducing the resolution adding, "We deeply appreciate her recognition of the profound impact this

tragedy had on the Indianapolis community, as well as on the Sikh American community both locally and nationally," Gil said.

"This resolution is about remembrance, dignity, and accountability. When people use political rhetoric to target immigrants and Muslim, Sikh, and South Asian communities, the harm becomes real—it shows up in violence, in policy, in daily fear. Honoring those we lost means standing against the forces that continue to endanger our communities today," said Sim J. Singh Attariwala, director of Anti-Hate Program, Asian Americans Advancing Justice.

Manjusha Kulkarni, co-director and co-founder of Stop AAPI Hate, recalled the incident as a "painful" memory, and thanked Jayapal and others for condemning anti-Asian hate. "Today, the rising tide of racist rhetoric and anti-immigrant policies continues to target Sikh and South Asian communities. Our research shows that South Asian people are pulling back from social and civic life — and even making plans to leave the United States — out of fear for their safety, Kulkarni said.

The resolution is also sponsored by Suzan K. DelBene (WA-01), Josh Gottheimer (NJ-05), Raja Krishnamoorthi (IL-08), Eleanor Holmes Norton (DC-AL), Frank Pallone, Jr. (NJ-06), Lateefah Simon (CA-12), Darren Soto (FL-09), Tom Suozzi (NY-03), and Mike Thompson (CA-04).

Numerous Indian American and Asian American organizations also condemned the incident.

Dr. Manu K. Vora Receives 2026 Baldrige Award For Work With Blind Foundation for India

-CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

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Life-Sized Statue Of Swami Vivekananda Unveiled In Seattle

BY A STAFF WRITER

In a historic first, the City of Seattle has become the first city government in the United States to host a life-size statue of Swami Vivekananda at the Westlake Square Park in the center of downtown Seattle.

The installation in Seattle is sculpted by the prominent Indian sculptor Naresh Kumar Kumawat. With over 600 installations across more than 80 countries, his works serve as cultural icons of India across continents.

The life-size bronze statue was jointly unveiled April 12, 2026, by Seattle Mayor Katie Wilson and Consul General of India in Seattle, the Consulate said on Saturday April 11.

Sharing the details in an official statement, the Consulate said that this monument is the first installation of Swami Vivekananda, which is hosted by a city government anywhere in the United States. "Westlake Square" in downtown Seattle, is a unique melting spot in the center of the city that records over 400,000 daily visits and millions of visitors each month and is within walking distance of the Spheres (Amazon HQs), Seattle Convention Center and Seattle Center Monorail, according to the Consulate press release.

The unveiling ceremony was attended by several dignitaries from the Greater Seattle area, including Mayor of Seattle Katie Wilson; Mayor of Kent Dana Ralph;



PHOTOS: COURTESY ANI

Dignitaries including the Mayor of Seattle and the Indian Consul General in Seattle, pose for a photo during the unveiling event for the statue of Swami Vivekananda in downtown Seattle April 11, 2026.



Scene from the unveiling ceremony of Swami Vivekananda's statue in downtown Seattle April 11, 2026.

Mayor of Auburn Nancy Backus; Mayor of Tukwila Tom McLeod; Mayor of Normandy Park Eric Zimmerman; and Mayor of Kirkland Kelly Curtis. A large number of community leaders from the Indian American diaspora and members of city councils of Bellevue, Bothell, Dupont and Redmond also joined in the ceremony, the Consulate said in the statement.

Mayor Katie Wilson, in her speech, underscored that the installation of the

Swami Vivekananda Monument (SVM) in Seattle reflects the city's inclusive spirit and further strengthens cultural ties between India and the diverse metropolitan tech hub in the US Pacific Northwest.

The Swami Vivekananda Monument is a gift from the Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR) to the City of Seattle in recognition of the city's rich multicultural character and spirit of inclusivity and as such, it was befitting that the event was

held on the occasion of the celebration of ICCR Day. The installation of SVM is part of India's broader cultural diplomacy initiative, facilitated through ICCR and aims to strengthen people-to-people ties between India and the US Pacific Northwest.

Swami Vivekananda was a renowned philosopher and spiritual leader who introduced Vedanta and Yoga to the West.

OFBJP Chicago Marks 47th Bharatiya Janata Party Foundation Day With Community Celebration And Civic Dialogue

BY BHAILAL M PATEL

The Chicago Chapter of the Overseas Friends of the Bharatiya Janata Party (OFBJP USA) commemorated the 47th Foundation Day of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) with a well-attended event that brought together members of the Indian diaspora, community leaders, and media professionals.

The program opened with the national anthems of the United States and India, followed by a traditional lamp-lighting ceremony and Vedic invocation. Cultural performances by young student Vardaan Tiwari, who presented Vande Mataram on saxophone, and vocalist Yashaswini Desai added a patriotic and artistic dimension to the evening.

A moment of silence was observed in memory of veteran leader Shri Balbir Punj, honoring his contributions to India's public life.

Focus on Ideology, History, and Civic Engagement: Welcoming attendees, Chicago Chapter Coordinator Amar Upadhyay thanked the community for its continued support and engagement.

Rakesh Malhotra, Member of the OFBJP USA Executive Committee, highlighted the BJP's ideological foundations and historical journey from the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (1951) to its establishment in 1980. "India's destiny is greatness; our duty is to serve," said Rakesh Malhotra, emphasizing the party's commitment to inclusive development and public service.

Speakers also reflected on the principles of Integral



PHOTOS: COURTESY BJBIS

Humanism, Antyodaya, and Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, underscoring their relevance in today's global context.

Diaspora Dialogue and Policy Perspectives; Media professionals and community leaders discussed the importance of responsible storytelling and civic participation, particularly in shaping accurate global narratives about India.

The event featured active dialogue on diaspora engagement in U.S. civic life, with participants highlighting the role of organizations like OFBJP USA in strengthening India-U.S. relations through policy advocacy, trade cooperation, and community outreach.

Speakers also referenced key policy developments under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, noting their impact

on India's governance and socio-political landscape.

Recognition and Closing: The evening concluded with a felicitation honoring Amar Upadhyay for his leadership and service to the Chicago Chapter. A personal reflection by Hasmukh Patel, recalling early interactions with Prime Minister Modi, added a memorable and emotional touch to the program.

Leadership and Vision: OFBJP USA operates under the leadership of: Dr. Adapa Prasad, President, Dr. Vasu Patel, General Secretary

Global coordination is supported by BJP's foreign affairs leadership, strengthening engagement with the Indian diaspora worldwide.

FIA Chicago's Holi 2026 Celebration Draws Large Crowd, Highlights Unity And Culture



Bollywood Sensation Riya Senn with FIA Rockstars Group

By A Staff Writer

NAPERVILLE, Ill.: The Federation of Indian Associations (FIA) Chicago hosted a vibrant Holi celebration April 12 at the Mall of India, bringing together community leaders, performers and families in a colorful display of culture and unity.

The event, led by Founder Chairman Sunil Shah along with Presidents Altaf Bukhari and Richa Chand, showcased traditional and contemporary performances, drawing a diverse audience from across the region.

Bollywood Sensation Riya Senn with FIA Rockstars Group
The program opened with remarks from Shah, who welcomed Somnath Ghosh. Ghosh praised FIA's continued efforts to promote Indian heritage in the United States. Local dignitaries, including Shweta Baid and Larry Herman, highlighted the importance of cultural events in fostering community connections.

Emcees Chand and Munish Kaistha led the program, which featured dance and music performances from multiple groups, including Suhani Dance Academy, Shirlzaar Dance Academy and Sapphire Dance Group. Vocalists and performers added to the festive atmosphere, while DJs Mahesh and Sarita maintained high energy throughout the event.

A highlight of the celebration was the appearance of Bollywood actor Riya Sen, who presented certificates to performers and recognized community supporters. Sen commended the talent and enthusiasm of participants, noting the strong cultural spirit reflected in the event.

Organizers credited the success of the program to a large volunteer base, referred to as the "FIA Rockstar Team," along with past presidents and community contributors who supported logistics, stage design and



PHOTOS: FIA

FIA Chicago leadership and community members with Somnath Ghosh, Larry Herman and Shweta Baid during the Holi celebration

coordination.
The celebration concluded outdoors with a large ceremonial color display, symbolizing unity and shared heritage. Organizers thanked sponsors and community partners for their support and announced upcoming events, including a Mother's Day celebration in May and

a larger summer program marking India's 80th and the United States' 250th independence milestones.
FIA Chicago officials said the Holi event underscored the organization's mission to preserve cultural traditions while building a strong and inclusive community in the United States.

Diaspora: Over 11 Lakh Passengers Travel Back To India During West Asia Conflict

As the two-week ceasefire window in West Asia inches closer to the end on April 22, India has evacuated over 11 lakh passengers from the region through continuous flight ops from various countries in the region, to alternate routes.

The details were shared by Aseem Mahajan, Joint Secretary (Gulf) in the Ministry of External Affairs, during an inter-ministerial press briefing here in the national capital on Monday.

Mahajan said that flights continue to operate from the region to India from countries where airspace is open. "Since February 28th, around 11,30,000 passengers have travelled from the region to India. Airlines continue to operate limited commercial flights based on operational and safety considerations between the UAE and India.

Around 110 flights are expected to operate from the UAE to India today."

He added that flights are operating from various airports in Saudi Arabia and Oman to different destinations in India. With the Qatar airspace partially open, Qatar Airways is expected to operate around 10 to 11 flights to various destinations in India.

He said that while Bahrain airspace is open, Gulf Air of Bahrain has announced that they are planning to start limited flight operations from Bahrain to India. Gulf Air is operating non-scheduled commercial flights from Dammam Airport in Saudi Arabia to various destinations in India.

Mahajan told the media during the briefing that the Iranian airspace remains partially open for cargo and chartered flights.

"Our embassy in Tehran continues to facilitate the movement of Indian nationals through Armenia and Azerbaijan for onward travel to India. So far, 2,423 Indian nationals have moved out of Iran into Armenia and Azerbaijan. This includes 1,091 Indian students and 657 Indian fishermen", he said.

Mahajan also informed that the Iraqi airspace is open with limited flight operations to destinations in the region, which can be used for onward travel to India.



PHOTO: YOUTUBE/INDIA

Aseem Mahajan, Joint Secretary Gulf, in MEA.



PHOTO: REUTERS

With the Kuwait airspace closed, he said that Jazeera Airways and Kuwait Airways continue to operate non-scheduled commercial flights from Dammam airport of Saudi Arabia to various destinations in India.

The Joint Secretary said that the Israeli airspace is open and limited flight operations have resumed to destinations in the region, which can be used for onward travel to India. He informed during the briefing that India continues to facilitate travel of Indian nationals from Israel through Jordan and Egypt to India.

Underlining that India continues to monitor the developments in the Gulf and West Asia region, he said that efforts focus on ensuring the safety, security, and welfare of the large Indian community in the region.

Mahajan told the media that a dedicated special control room in the Ministry is operational and is working in close coordination with our missions and posts that are operating round-the-clock helplines to provide timely assistance and address queries.

Mahajan assured that high priority is being given to the welfare of Indian seafarers in the region.

"Our missions are extending all assistance to them, including coordination with the local authorities and agencies, extending consular assistance, and assisting with requests to return to India," he said.

As the security situation continues to evolve in the region, MEA Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal, during the inter-ministerial briefing, informed about the visit of National Security Advisor Ajit Doval to Saudi Arabia, and said that a positive meeting was held on regional issues and enhancing bilateral ties.

With millions of Indian expatriates living in the Gulf and a heavy reliance on the region for energy imports, the MEA highlighted that active contact with stakeholders, including Israel, Palestine, and Iran, is essential to protect India's "strategic and economic interests" during this unprecedented period of geopolitical realignment.

-ANI



Passengers from the Middle East disembarking at IGI Airport, Delhi.



Passengers from Dubai reach Sardar Vallabhai International Airport, Ahmedabad.

The Washington Post

Fuel shortage wreaks havoc on summer air travel.

Here's what to know.

By Andrea Sachs

Usually your spring break tan has faded before you need to turn your attention to the next big getaway, summer vacation. But not this season.

The war in Iran has created a sense of urgency in trip planning, a race against rising airfares and vanishing routes. For nearly two months, the Strait of Hormuz, a critical highway for the global oil market, has been closed or severely disrupted. Jet fuel prices have roughly doubled, sending the aviation industry into triage mode.

Last week, the head of the International Energy Agency warned that Europe's jet fuel supply could run dry within six weeks, according to the Associated Press. To conserve fuel and offset the escalating expense, airlines are slashing routes, suspending seasonal service and increasing supplemental fees and airfares.

The dire situation is putting pressure on travelers with or without summer reservations. Vacationers who have not yet booked their flights could be priced out of a destination or face slim pickings in terms of flight dates and times.

Rule," the golden standard for finding cheap fares. In more typical times, peak summer travelers should book three to seven months in advance of a domestic trip and four to 10 months before an international journey.

"That sort of went out of the window," said Katy Nastro, a travel expert with Going. "The cheapest seats have been elevated. I don't see a reality where we could see flight prices, especially to places like Europe, drop dramatically." Nastro said people hoping to travel during the first half of summer should book immediately, before airlines further ratchet fares or cut or consolidate routes.

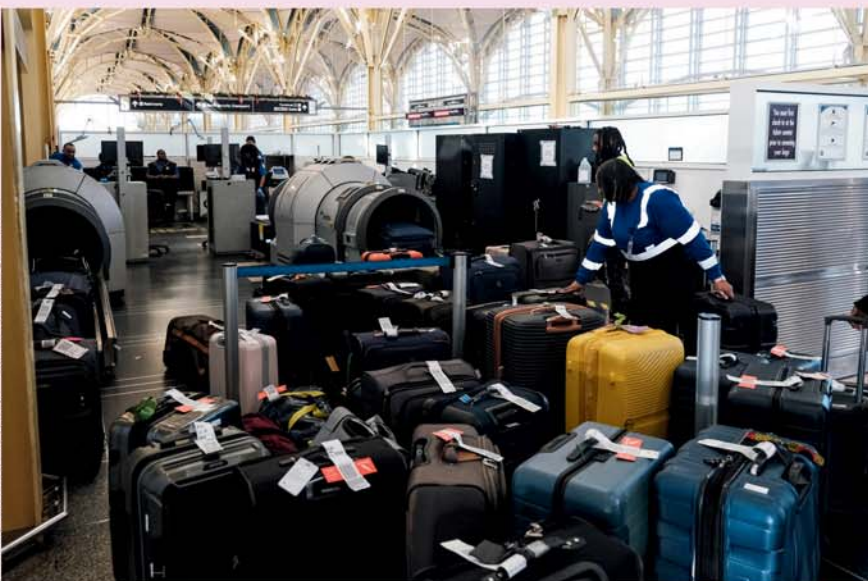
if you can push your trip to shoulder season, even better. Nastro said she has not seen any deals yet, but is hopeful.

"We still believe that there is an opportunity for those to happen," she said. "It just depends on how long this all lasts."

Which regions have the highest airfares?

Airlines in Europe, Asia and Oceania have been hiking up fares or implementing fuel surcharges since the early days of the war. As the conflict stretches on, the list continues to grow longer: Cathay Pacific, Japan Airlines, All Nippon Airways, Qantas, Scandinavian Airlines, Air France-KLM, Thai Airways, Virgin Atlantic, Virgin Australia and Air New Zealand, among others.

Photo by: Michael A. McCoy — For The Washington Post



transpacific flight or even a domestic flight, you're going to notice that in most cases, it is far more expensive than a few months ago, before the war began," Harteveltdt said. Airfares are fluid, but Nastro has seen a sharp uptick in fares to Europe and more moderate rises - and even plateaus - elsewhere.

"We're seeing prices to places like Milan and Paris up around 20 percent to 25 percent year over year, whereas prices to Punta Cana are up less than 2 percent and those to Cancún are just about flat," she said.

On a more granular level, Deutsche Bank's Airline Fare Monitor tracks the roller-coaster ride of weekly fares. In its most recent report, it noted that 21-day advance fares in more than 500 city pairs were higher week-over-week on transatlantic, intra-West Coast and Latin America routes.

The fare data is for May 8, several weeks before the airline industry normally jacks up fares for the summer rush.

Can airlines increase the price on a booked ticket?

A Spanish budget airline named Volotea recently caused a stir when it reportedly charged passengers an extra fuel charge after they had purchased their tickets, according to Reuters. A Spanish consumer rights group requested an investigation

Travelers with plane tickets may have to adjust their trips if the airline changes or cancels the itinerary to conserve fuel.

"This hurts everybody," said Henry Harteveltdt, an aviation industry analyst and founder and president of Atmosphere Research Group. "It is going to affect business travel. It is going to affect leisure travel. It is disrupting global commerce."

To help travelers navigate this fraught landscape, we compiled the most critical information for summer vacation planning.

I haven't booked my summer trip yet. Am I out of luck?

You still have time but, depending on your travel dates and destination, you may need to act swiftly and decisively.

"You definitely want to take advantage of the price and the availability as soon as you can," said Sara Rathner, credit card expert with NerdWallet. "Lock in those plans and then keep checking back in later to see if other options exist.."

This advice sharply diverges from the "Goldilocks Timing matters, especially for international travel," she said. "You want to get those tickets booked before we start seeing cuts come into play, which can bump up fares even higher because there's less competition and less availability."

Since the start of the war on Feb. 28, a growing number of foreign and domestic airlines have slashed routes or suspended seasonal service. The latest batch of carriers to announce changes to their schedules include Norse Atlantic Airways, the Norwegian budget carrier; Edelweiss, part of Lufthansa Group; Air Canada; and Delta.



Photo by: Charlotte Keel — For The Washington Post

Is it worth traveling later in the season?

Travel experts recommend travelers delay their trips to later in the summer, when jet fuel could be flowing freely again. They are also seeing lower prices further out.

According to Going data, domestic fares are averaging \$754 in June and \$579 in August. Nastro said the last two weeks of August are especially favorable, boasting the cheapest domestic and international fares of the summer.

Because of these regions' heavy reliance on oil from the Middle East, the strait blockade has squeezed their carriers more than U.S. airlines.

"The areas that seem to have the most pronounced fuel shortages right now are Europe and Asia," Harteveltdt said. "That doesn't mean it won't affect other parts of the world. But right now, it appears that the shortages will be the most severe in Europe and Asia."

However, Harteveltdt said domestic airlines have been quietly increasing their prices, too. Medium-haul and transcontinental flights, for example, are generally \$50 or more in each direction.

"If you're looking at a transatlantic flight, a

into the surcharge of up to \$16.50, which it claims violates consumer protection laws.

Harteveltdt said a retroactive change to a fare is unusual and unethical. If this happens, he recommends disputing the charge with the carrier or your credit card company. You should also raise the issue to the Transportation Department.

According to the DOT's Aviation Consumer Protection rules, the airline must notify the customer of an increase in a government-imposed tax or fee on a purchased ticket. The consumer must consent to the adjusted fare.

It's important to note that fuel surcharges are not levied by a government but are administered by the airlines, creating a Wild West for extra industry fees.

How can I avoid sneaky fees?

Airfares and fuel surcharges are nonnegotiable, but passengers can save money by avoiding supplemental fees, such as seat selection and checked bags.

To counter skyrocketing fuel expenses, airlines have been increasing fees for add-on services and amenities. For instance, the major domestic carriers recently raised their checked baggage fees.

To be continued on Page 16

FBI Director Kash Patel Sues The Atlantic For \$250M, Alleging Defamation

By SCOTT NOVER

FBI Director Kash Patel sued the Atlantic and staff writer Sarah Fitzpatrick in federal court, alleging that the magazine ran a “sweeping, malicious, and defamatory hit piece” against him on Friday (April 17, 2026) with the intention of marring his reputation.

In the complaint, filed in federal district court in D.C., Patel says he is seeking \$250 million in damages plus any proceeds from the article.

The Atlantic’s article contained extensive reporting – attributed to anonymous



FBI Director Kash Patel, seen in January.

PHOTO: DEMETRIUS FREEMAN/THE WASHINGTON POST

individuals – alleging Patel engaged in “excessive drinking” and “unexplained absences” while leading the FBI.

The complaint alleges that several incidents detailed in the article are defamatory. These incidents include that Patel was often intoxicated with White House and Trump administration staff, that meetings had to be rescheduled following nights that he drank, and that staff had to use “breaching equipment” to access rooms when Patel had reportedly been unreachable.

“We stand by our reporting on Kash Patel, and we will vigorously defend The Atlantic and our journalists against this meritless lawsuit,” Anna Bross, a

spokeswoman for the Atlantic, said in a statement.

Under defamation law, Patel – as a public official – would likely have to demonstrate that the Atlantic acted with “actual malice,” a legal standard established in the landmark 1964 Supreme Court decision in *New York Times v. Sullivan*.

To reach that standard, Patel would have to prove not only that the Atlantic’s claims were false but also that they knew they were false and published with reckless disregard for the truth. “They are so demonstrably and obviously false, or easily refuted,” the complaint said, “that it was at best reckless to publish them.”

–THE WASHINGTON POST

Professor Priyabrata Mukherjee Recognized For Outstanding Teaching By University Of Oklahoma

By A STAFF WRITER

Professor Priyabrata Mukherjee, Ph.D, was one of two University of Oklahoma College of Medicine faculty, along with Mary Moon, Ph.D., who were honored recently for their excellence in teaching and research. Moon received the 2026 Stanton L. Young Master Teacher Award, and Mukherjee received the Stanton L. Young Excellence in Research Award, an April 14, 2026, press release from the University said.

This is the 43rd annual presentation of the Master Teacher Award, which recognizes the “transformative power of exceptional teaching” and originates from nominations from students. The award was established through an endowment made by the late Oklahoma City businessman Stanton L. Young, and comes with a \$15,000 cash prize, one of the largest in the nation for medical teaching excellence, the University said.

According to the details provided by the press release, Mukherjee is a professor in the Department of Pathology in the OU College of Medicine. He also serves at OU Health Stephenson Cancer Center as the senior director of Research Partnership and Collaboration, as well as co-director of the Nanomedicine Program. He was honored for his “dedication to basic and translational science and his leadership in the fields of nanoscience and molecular oncology.”

Mukherjee’s research has been continuously funded by R01 grants, considered the “gold standard” in National Institutes of Health funding, and he is currently the principal investigator on three R01s and co-principal investigator on four other grants. He leads a multidisciplinary laboratory, publishes high-impact papers and creates patentable technologies, the University said.

Mukherjee is recognized as an “outstanding mentor” working with high school students through faculty members. Currently, his laboratory consists of early-career faculty members, postdoctoral fellows, graduate students and research technicians.

His previous recognitions and awards include the George Lynn Cross Professorship and the Presbyte-



Priyabrata Mukherjee and Mary Moon.

PHOTO: @MEDICINE.OUHSCHEDU

rian Health Foundation Presidential Professorship. He also holds the Peggy and Charles Stephenson Endowed Chair in Cancer Laboratory Research.

Additionally, he is a foreign fellow of the Indian National Science Academy and chair of the College of Fellows of the American Institute of Medical and Biomedical Engineering.

He is co-chair of the Web of Life Conference, which brings together experts from different fields to facilitate dialogue and foster collaboration.

The news release also noted comments made by those nominating and supporting Mukherjee for the award. They include praise for Mukherjee as “an outstanding biomedical engineer and scientist whose highly creative past and ongoing work holds great promise for our fellow Oklahomans and patients far beyond.” Another said that his work shows an “incredible depth and maturation” and yet another, that he is able to “build large teams of funded investigators who are doing cutting-edge, impactful research.”

President Trump Congratulates Delhi’s New Lt. Governor

US President Donald Trump congratulated “seasoned” diplomat Taranjit Singh Sandhu on his appointment as the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi, highlighting his role in strengthening India-US ties when he was Ambassador of India to the US.

In a post on Truth Social, Trump praised Sandhu’s diplomatic experience and extended his best wishes for his new role. “Congratulations to Taranjit Sandhu on becoming the new Lt Governor of Delhi! As a seasoned Diplomat and former Ambassador to the United States, he has always shown deep commitment to strengthening the U.S.-India relationship. Wishing him success in leading Delhi’s progress, and furthering global ties!” Trump wrote.

Meanwhile, in Delhi LG Sandhu highlighted the importance of strengthening India-US cooperation in the ‘Freedom250’ celebrations marking 250 years of American independence, which were launched in the national capital on Wednesday, April 16.

“It was a pleasure to meet US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor at the launch of the

Freedom250 celebrations in New Delhi. We had a productive conversation on enhancing American investments in Delhi and expanding India-US technology collaboration. The enduring partnership between India and United States remains a key pillar of global progress. I look forward to deeper cooperation that brings tangible benefits to the residents of our National Capital,” Sandhu said in a post on X.

Sandhu is the grandson of the eminent Sikh leader, Teja Singh Samundri. On March 11, Sandhu took the oath of office. His appointment is part of the major administrative reshuffle of Governors and Lieutenant Governors across the country.

–ANI



PHOTO: X @USANDINDIA

“It Feels Surreal”: Sadhvi Satish Sail Crowned Femina Miss India World 2026

Sadhvi Satish Sail was crowned Femina Miss India World 2026 at the grand finale of the 61st Femina Miss India held in Bhubaneswar. An elated Sail described her win as “surreal” and expressed deep gratitude for the opportunity.

“It feels very surreal right now. I am so, so grateful that we had this opportunity,” she told ANI, adding that all contestants shared a strong bond and had a “beautiful time” during the competition. Calling her fellow participants “winners”, she said the journey was about collective growth and friendship.

“Aur mere liye meri saari, saari sakhiyan aaj ke liye winners hai. Aur hum bas yehi chahate ki hum Bharat ka naam pure vishwa mein roshan kare. (And for me, all my friends are winners today. And we just want to make India proud across the world),” she added.



Sadhvi Satish Sail was crowned Femina Miss India World 2026.

beginning of a larger journey. The event also witnessed the presence of several dignitaries and jury members, who praised the scale and significance of the pageant. They highlighted how contestants from different regions of India brought unique identities while collectively representing the essence of the country.

Dancer and choreographer Terence Lewis noted that while beauty is inherent, qualities such as personality, poise and stage presence ultimately define a winner. He also praised the city, saying, “It’s a city of temples, and I have been here before... What’s interesting is this time I am coming to judge the finale of Femina Miss India... I love the people here; the simplicity is just stunning... There are 30 state winners, one from each state, who would now compete for the crown... The beauty is already there,



Reflecting on her journey, Sadhvi acknowledged that it came with its share of ups and downs but credited the organisers and mentors for their unwavering support. She highlighted the role of KIIT University and the Femina organisation in ensuring that contestants were well taken care of throughout the process, even during challenging moments.

Speaking about representing India on the global stage, Sail expressed excitement and a strong sense of responsibility. She said she aims to carry forward her journey with honesty, integrity and compassion while representing the country internationally. “There is a long journey ahead. This is just the beginning,” she added, seeking blessings and support from people across the nation.

Sharing a message for youngsters, Sail emphasised the importance of authenticity and self-belief. She noted that she began her preparation just three months before the competition and encouraged others to pursue their goals with dedication. “Do not compare yourself with anyone. Your authenticity is your biggest strength,” she said.

Rajnandini Pawar from Maharashtra, who was crowned the 1st Runner Up at the Femina Miss India 2026, expressed gratitude and optimism about her jour-



Rajnandini Pawar from Maharashtra was crowned the 1st Runner Up at the Femina Miss India 2026.

ney ahead. She described her experience as “extremely beautiful,” highlighting the hard work and perseverance that went into the competition. “If you truly desire something, the universe works to help you achieve it,” she said, adding that the achievement marks just the

and now it’s their personality that matters. The deciding factor for someone to win the show would be their personality, inner presence and poise.”

Bhubaneswar, hosting the event, received appreciation for its hospitality, cultural richness and vibrant atmosphere. Organisers also showcased an innovative initiative integrating traditional Indian handloom weaves with global fashion concepts, underlining the importance of preserving cultural heritage while embracing modernity.

Dancer and actress Lauren Gottlieb said, “This is my first time in Bhubaneswar, and I haven’t been able to see much of the place yet... I will explore and have some good food. I will get to go to a beach and the temples... The message to the participants is do your best and feel your best...”

Participants and guests emphasised that Femina Miss India is more than a competition, describing it as a platform for empowerment, transformation and self-discovery. They highlighted the importance of staying grounded, embracing individuality and representing not just beauty, but also intelligence, culture and compassion.

-ANI

ASTROLOGY



This week for you

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

ARIES: This week may keep you occupied with tasks you have already begun. A matter related to family could need immediate attention. Someone may inspire you to focus on fitness routine. Your hard work may finally bring the payment. On the academic side, hesitation could create setbacks. In matters of love, an impulsive action might cause regret later. Overall, your health is likely to remain stable.

TAURUS: You may find yourself supporting someone emotionally. The period looks promising for those searching for new jobs. Students preparing for examinations may feel more self-assured. Financially, things appear comfortable, allowing you to spend without much worry. Some people may begin a workout routine to stay healthy. However, your schedule could leave limited time to spend with your partner.

GEMINI: You may feel the need to take a break from responsibilities. There is a possibility of gaining assets through inheritance. A fun outing with friends may bring joy. A friendly bond could develop into a romantic connection. A senior might expect you to complete a personal task during your free time. Financially, it would be wise to focus on saving. Maintaining a healthy diet will benefit you.

CANCER: You may have to manage a sensitive situation between two opposing groups, and stay neutral. Do not let others' opinions about you affect your confidence. Academically, you may stay actively engaged in a subject or project that interests you. On the professional front, you could gain an advantage over a competitor. A business-related journey abroad may bring positive outcomes. Managing money will help you build savings for the future.

LEO: You might miss someone who has moved away in search of better opportunities. Those seeking a suitable marriage alliance may need to make efforts in the right direction. On the social front, someone could attempt to damage your image. At work, your performance may be closely reviewed and attract criticism. Be careful with finances, as there are chances of losing money. Your health, however, should stay reasonably good.

VIRGO: If love is on your mind, you may enjoy memorable romantic moments. A pleasant break, to a beautiful destination, may take shape. Property could become available. Your ability to handle clients well may help secure a business deal. Financial growth is likely as you focus on increasing income. Health will remain strong, if you stay dedicated to fitness. However, unnecessary spending on small things may occur.

LIBRA: This may not be the ideal time to introduce major changes, so be patient. Continuous effort and determination are likely to bring the results. Financial matters appear stable, and improvements may start becoming visible. Some of you might begin a sport, exercise routine, or fitness training simply to stay active. Social life may become lively with excitement surrounding an upcoming celebration or gathering.

SCORPIO: This week may offer the perfect opportunity to grow professionally and showcase your abilities. Professionals could see an increase in opportunities. Previous investments may provide financial comfort. You may feel motivated to improve your physical fitness. Work at the office might demand extra effort, but you will be able to handle. Some people may find it difficult to attend a social function.

SAGITTARIUS: Your recognition in professional circles may grow. Those looking to expand their business ventures are likely to see encouraging results soon. Financial gains may strengthen your savings. You may decide to follow discipline for better health. Spending time with loved ones will bring happiness. On the academic side, luck may help you achieve your goals. Romance will remain lively and joyful.

CAPRICORN: Be cautious, as someone may try to influence or manipulate you. Staying alert at work will be important so that no crucial detail is overlooked. A temporary financial challenge may arise, but you will likely manage it with careful planning. You may start exploring healthier lifestyle choices. Any misunderstandings with your partner may finally get resolved. A property-related matter could progress, though it may require your involvement.

AQUARIUS: Using intelligence and strategy may help you move ahead, but avoid overdoing it. Your consistent efforts could lead to financial growth and earnings. In studies or academics, perseverance will help you succeed despite strong competition. Socially, you may plan a gathering or celebration for friends and family. A romantic outing could turn out to be memorable and exciting. There is also a chance of travelling just to meet someone special.

PISCES: It may be wise to keep your plans private and reveal them only at the right moment. Health should remain stable without concerns. In business matters, hiring capable people and keeping talented staff may become important for growth. A family member might assist you in completing a work-related responsibility. Attending a social event may be difficult. Decisions related to property should be kept confidential.

Fuel shortage wreaks havoc on summer air travel.

Here's what to know.

BY ANDREA SACHS

Continued from Page 13

If possible, skip these extra comforts. Instead, at the gate, ask the agent whether a better seat is available. If the staff seeks volunteers to gate check their bags for no additional cost, raise your hand.

Which destinations have deals?

Open your mind to off-season beach destinations such as Florida, Mexico and the Caribbean. Fares to these traditionally winter and spring break spots are relative bargains in the summer, even during a fuel crisis.

Going highlighted a handful of deals to tropical locales with savings of up to 60 percent. Its sample set includes Syracuse, New York, to Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, for \$350 round trip; Norfolk to Aruba for \$359; New Orleans to Cancún for \$244; and Chicago to Orlando for \$186.

Similarly, Kayak has noted a downward trend in prices to Miami; San Juan, Puerto Rico; San José, Costa Rica, and Punta Cana, Dominican Republic. Skyscanner's list of cheapest alternative destinations features a few southern spots as well, such as Punta Gorda, Florida, and Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

Many of these coastal areas come with weather risks. In addition to the sweltering heat, hurricane season begins on June 1 and runs through November.

To stay out of the hurricane belt, consider the ABC islands (Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao) or Canada. On Kayak's new airfare trends dashboard, average fares from the U.S. to Toronto and Vancouver have been spiraling down since a high on March 26.

What are some strategies for finding lower fares?

Bookending a trip with weekends allows you to stretch your summer vacation time. However, departing on a Sunday will cost you about 16 percent more, Nastro said.

For vacation destinations, fares are

often less during the midweek, early in the morning or late at night.

When choosing a fare category, the cheapest tier - basic economy - might seem like the obvious choice. Yet, it's not always the most economical for people who need more flexibility. The restrictive fare doesn't allow seat selection or, on United, a free carry-on bag. Passengers must board last and can't change their flight without incurring a penalty.

During these unpredictable times, travel experts recommend a fare with more wiggle room, such as standard economy. If the fare drops, many airlines will credit you the price difference, as long as you are flying on an eligible ticket.

You can also save money by patching together different types of carriers or modes of transportation. If you are traveling to Europe, book the transatlantic legs on a major carrier and then switch to the ultra-low-cost carriers, such as Wizz and Ryanair, for the shorter hops between countries.

To keep transportation costs even lower, take a train or bus. Air France and KLM International sell a combo plane-and-train ticket from participating stations in France and Belgium. At Paris-Charles De Gaulle in Paris and Amsterdam-Schiphol, arriving travelers can pick up France's high-speed train, the TGV, from inside the airport.

"You can get creative about your final destination, because travel within Europe via train is so much more robust than it is in the States," Rathner said.

If you choose to rent a car instead of fly, take into account the cost of the rental vehicle plus insurance, gas, tolls and parking. If your destination has a well-connected public transportation system or pedestrian-friendly walkways, consider renting the car only for the days you need it.


To compare cars and planes, plug your itinerary into Kayak's trip calculator. For a sample July trip in Italy, the tool recommends driving instead of flying from Venice to Florence. Two travelers can save \$61 each, enough for matching leather bags.

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India Diaries: Priyanka Chopra Enjoys Local Flavours, Revisits Salman-Aishwarya's 'Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam'

Actor Priyanka Chopra gave fans a fresh glimpse into her life over the weekend as she shared a candid photo dump packed with personal moments, travel snaps and behind-the-scenes glimpses from her routine.

PeeCee, who always keeps her fans updated through social media, took to her Instagram to post a carousel of pictures on Saturday that showed different sides of her recent days.

The post opened with a mirror selfie that appeared to be taken during a prep or recovery session. Priyanka was seen in activewear with visible support gear.

The post also included fun family time moments. Some pictures showed her spending relaxed time with close friends and family, while another frame captured her during a flight with companions, showing a calm side of life away from busy sets and shoots.

The actress also shared a still from the Salman Khan and Aishwarya Rai starrer 'Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam,' to give fans a peek into her love for classic Hindi cinema.

The carousel also included visuals from other iconic films and songs. One frame featured 'Hum Aapke Hain Koun' with Madhuri Dixit, while another

showed late actor Sridevi from 'Mr India' during the song 'I Love You.'

Apart from film memories, Priyanka also shared simple fun moments from her day-to-day life. In some photos, she was seen swimming, while in others she enjoyed raw mangoes. She captioned the post, "Some here... some there..."

On the work front, Priyanka was last seen in 'The Bluff.' She is now preparing for her upcoming film 'Varanasi,' directed by S. S. Rajamouli, which is expected to release in 2027.



-ANI

PHOTO:ANI

'Pati Patni Aur Woh Do' Teaser Out: Ayushmann Khurrana Faces Triple Trouble In 'Pativerse' Expansion

The teaser of 'Pati Patni Aur Woh Do' has been unveiled, promising a fresh dose of chaos and comedy as the popular "pati-verse" expands with a new twist.

Backed by T-Series and B R Studios, the film is scheduled for a theatrical release on 15 May 2026.

Clocking in at 1 minute and 22 seconds, the teaser revisits the familiar "pati-patni-aur-woh" dynamic but raises the stakes significantly.

This time, the narrative follows Prajapati Pandey, played by Ayushmann Khurrana, who finds himself entangled not between two, but three women, portrayed by Sara Ali Khan, Wamiqa Gabbi, and Rakul Preet Singh.

Set against the backdrop of Prayagraj, the teaser opens with a nostalgic nod to the earlier "pati-patni" narrative before spiralling into a full-

blown comedy of errors.

As misunderstandings pile up, the situation grows increasingly tangled, amplifying the film's central theme of romantic confusion.

Adding to the mayhem is Vijay Raaz, who appears as a cop interrogating Prajapati Pandey about his complicated relationships, intensifying the comic tension.

Directed by Mudassar Aziz, the film is produced by Bhushan Kumar, Renu Ravi Chopra, and Krishan Kumar, with creative production by Juno Chopra.

Presented by Gulshan Kumar and B R Chopra, the project marks a continuation of the franchise's comedic exploration of relationships, now reimagined with a more complex love dynamic.

-ANI

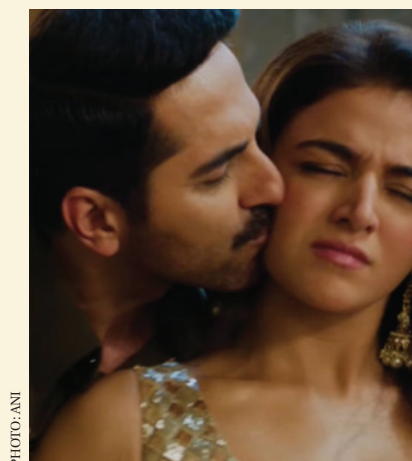


PHOTO:ANI



PHOTO:ANI

'Kara' Trailer Out: Dhanush Robs Banks To Survive Economic Impact Of Gulf War In This Vignesh Raja's Directorial

Dhanush has turned into a bank robber in his upcoming film 'Kara'. The makers have finally released the movie's trailer to offer a glimpse into an intense action drama rooted in a time of crisis.

The 'Por Thozhil' fame filmmaker Vignesh Raja is set to direct the movie 'Kara', which also marks his second directorial in his career. Apart from Dhanush, the movie stars Mamitha Baiju, K.S. Ravikumar, Karunas, Jayaram, Prithvi Pandiarajan, Suraj Venjaramoodu, MS Baskar, and Sreeja Ravi, among others, in the prominent roles.

Set against the backdrop of the 1991

Gulf War, the movie is based on the impact of the war on the global economy and the severe fuel crisis. The trailer opens with the news headlines stating the same, showcasing unrest among the citizens in India.

It is followed by Dhanush's series of bank robberies to meet the requirements for money regarding some undisclosed matters. The cat and mouse chase begins as Suraj Venjaramoodu decides to catch Dhanush after he creates havoc in the banks due to his successive robberies.

Apart from the thrill of a police-robber chase, the trailer also delves into the emotional aspects of the movie

when Mamitha Baiju is seen confronting Dhanush about his robberies.

The film is composed by GV Prakash Kumar. The music label of the film, Vels Film International, shared the trailer on their Instagram handle on Sunday.

The film is produced by Ishari K. Ganesh and Kushmitha Ganesh. The movie is jointly written by Alfred Prakash and Vignesh Raja. The editing of the film is handled by Sreejith Sarang.

The film is slated to release in theatres on April 30.

-ANI



PHOTO:ANI



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All Photos: Canva

Navigating the May 2026 Visa Bulletin: Continued Progress with Warning Signs Ahead

IN MEMORIAM

By David H. Nachman, Esq



Michael Phulwani



David Nachman



Ludka Zimovcak



Snehal Batra

The May 2026 Visa Bulletin shows continued forward movement across several categories, particularly in Family-Based preferences, while Employment-Based categories remain mostly stable. However, the Department of State has issued an important warning that EB-5 India may face retrogression or become unavailable later this fiscal year due to rising demand.

Employment-Based Preferences: Final Action Dates

EB-1: Priority Workers

- India: April 1, 2023 (unchanged)
- China: April 1, 2023 (unchanged)
- All Others: Current

EB-2: Advanced Degree / Exceptional Ability

- India: July 15, 2014 (advances)
- China: September 1, 2021 (unchanged)
- All Others: Current

EB-3: Skilled Workers & Professionals

- India: November 15, 2013 (unchanged)
- China: June 15, 2021 (advances)
- All Others: June 1, 2024 (unchanged)

EB-3 Other Workers

- India: November 15, 2013 (unchanged)
- China: February 1, 2019 (advances)
- All Others: February 1, 2022 (advances)

EB-4: Certain Special Immigrants

- All Countries: July 15, 2022 (advances)

Certain Religious Workers (SR)

- All Countries: July 15, 2022
- Program remains extended

EB-5: Unreserved

- India: May 1, 2022 (unchanged)
- China: September 22, 2016 (advances)
- All Others: Current

EB-5 Set-Asides (Rural, High Unemployment, Infrastructure)

- All Chargeability Areas: Current

Key Takeaways

- Family-Based categories show strong forward movement, especially F1, F2A, F3, and F4.
- EB-2 India advances significantly, offering a meaningful opportunity for applicants.

- EB-3 China and Other Workers categories continue gradual progress.
- EB-5 China advances, but India faces potential retrogression due to increased demand.
- The Department of State warns that retrogression later in FY 2026 remains possible if demand rises.

FAQ: May 2026 Visa Bulletin

Q1: Why is EB-2 India advancing this month?

Higher visa availability and lower-than-expected demand earlier in FY 2026 have allowed forward movement.

Q2: What is the warning about EB-5 India?

The Department of State indicates that demand may exceed limits, which could cause retrogression or unavailability later this year.

Q3: Are Family-Based categories improving?

Yes. Several categories, especially F2A and F3, are moving forward steadily.

Q4: Should applicants file now if eligible?

Yes. With potential retrogression later in the year, filing early is strongly recommended.

Need Strategic Help?

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Bollywood Show 'Bad Boys' Packs The House For Spectacular New Jersey Performance

BY A STAFF WRITER

Bollywood fans across the tri-state area turned out in full force as the live stage show "Bad Boys" played to a full-capacity audience, with organizers confirming a "house full" response for the much-anticipated event.

Presented by Tina Goyal and Maps Entertainment, along with Mohit Kapil and Aakash Rachh, in collaboration with national promoter Meenu Gupta of VOG USA, the show featured a star-studded lineup that brought iconic figures of Hindi cinema face-to-face with their U.S. fan base.

The event showcased veteran Bollywood actors Chunky Panday and Gulshan Grover — both widely recognized for their memorable "bad boy" roles on screen — along with a special appearance by filmmaker and entertainer Sajid Khan.

Billed as more than a traditional stage performance, the two-hour show delivered an interactive entertainment experience that blended Bollywood-style comedy, dance and fashion. The evening featured high-energy performances set to popular tracks such as "Ghafoor" and "Lal Pari," alongside a glamorous fashion showcase that added visual flair to the program.

Organizers said the event was carefully curated to offer a multi-dimensional cultural experience. In addition to live performances, guests were treated to a full-



Organizer Tina Goyal with Bollywood actors Chunky Panday and Gulshan Grover, and filmmaker and television personality Sajid Khan.



National promoter Meenu Gupta with organizer Tina Goyal and others.

course dinner and had the opportunity to participate in exclusive meet-and-greet sessions with the artists, creating a more personal connection between performers and attendees.

"The overwhelming response and our 'house full' status is a testament to the enduring love fans have for these incredible entertainers," Goyal and Gupta said in

a joint statement.

The strong turnout underscores the continued popularity of Bollywood-themed live entertainment in the United States, particularly in culturally vibrant hubs such as Edison, which has long been a focal point for South Asian arts and events.

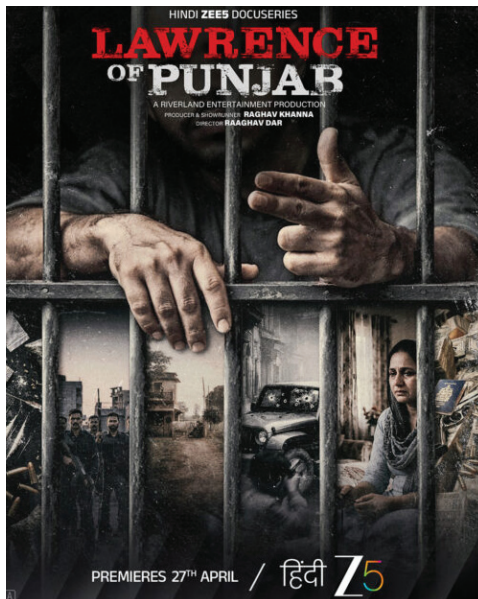
With its combination of star power, music, comedy, fashion and audience engagement, the "Bad Boys" live stage show is being hailed by organizers as one of the standout entertainment events of the year in the region.

'Lawrence of Punjab': Docuseries Based On Lawrence Bishnoi To Premiere On April 27

Zee5 announced the release date of the docuseries 'Lawrence of Punjab', which traces the journey of the criminal identity of Lawrence Bishnoi through the culture, systems and visibility.

ZEE5 unveiled a bold, gripping trailer of their upcoming original docu-series, Lawrence of Punjab, a culturally rooted story that explores how criminal identities are shaped. Produced by Riverland Entertainment and directed by Raghav Darr, the series will premiere on 27th April.

According to the press note by the makers, "Lawrence of Punjab traces the journey of a criminal identity through the lens of culture, systems, and visibility. From student politics and music to ideology and media amplification, the series pieces together how aspiration, power, and perception intersect to shape a new-age digital syndicate. With Lawrence Bishnoi as a key case study within this ecosystem, the nar-



rative expands beyond the individual to examine the larger cultural and social context, focusing on consequences."

Zee5 shared the trailer on their

Instagram handle.

Director Raghav Darr expressed his opinion about the show, saying, "Lawrence of Punjab was always envisioned as more than just a crime story. Our intent was to understand the 'why' behind the making of such identities: the environment, the influences, and the systems that shape them. At the same time, it was equally important to reflect on what these journeys leave behind. Through this series, we've tried to present a narrative that is both informative and deeply human."

Producer Raghav Khanna, Riverland Entertainment, said, "Punjab is a land of resilience and enterprise, with a rich cultural heritage. Lawrence of Punjab explores a recent chapter shaped by real events and multiple perspectives, examining the dynamics of power and influence. The documentary series has been approached with balance, restraint, and sensitivity."

-ANI

Raja Shivaji Trailer: Riteish Deshmukh Leads Fight For 'Swarajya' As Maratha Warrior

The much-awaited trailer of Riteish Deshmukh starrer 'Raja Shivaji' has been unveiled, taking audiences into the actor's intense pursuit for swarajya. With a powerful cast ensemble, the film aims to shed light on the extraordinary legacy of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.

With Riteish stepping as the Maratha warrior, he appears focused and determined, striving to establish swarajya. Genelia Deshmukh as Chhatrapati Shivaji's wife brings much emotional depth to the story.

The trailer also features Sanjay Dutt as a menacing ruler and Abhishek Bachchan as Sambhaji Shahaji Bhosale, offering a glimpse into their larger screen presence.

Among others taking up key roles are Vidya Balan, Bhagyashree, Mahesh Manjekar, and Boman Irani.

Mounted on a grand cinematic canvas, the film features high-octane action, rich worldbuilding, and top technical excellence. With music by the celebrated duo Ajay-Atul and cinematography by internationally acclaimed Santosh Sivan, Raja Shivaji is set to deliver a visual spectacle with strong emotional resonance.

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

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Single / Couple for Front Desk / Night Auditor (Experienced, Fluent English & Computer literate) and Housekeeping for Franchise Motel in Middletown / Monticello, NY. Accommodation available. Call Payal Patel (347) 323 3919 / (646) 752 0589.

04/10-05/01-SL

SEASIDE HEIGHTS, NJ
Independent Motel in Seaside Heights, New Jersey, near Edison need young male front desk person. Accommodation & good salary. Contact Vic 732-581-4379

04/10-05/01-SL

SAN ANGELO, TEXAS
US citizen, single, puritan, motel owner needs a live-in female help to run a small 30 room Texas motel. Call Evenings 540-287-8349.

04/24-05/08-SH

PERRYVILLE, MARYLAND
Immediate Hire: Need Single for Front Desk Help (Fluent English, Computer literate) and Couple for Housekeeping help. Experienced preferred but ready to train. Accommodation provided. Legal must. Call / Text (410) 504 3444 from 8 am to 6 pm.

04/10-05/08-SL

Durham, NC
Independent motel in Durham, NC has an urgent requirement for housekeepers, and help for laundry and miscellaneous work. Legal status must. Accommodation will be provided. Contact: 609-317-3177

04/10-05/08-SL

MERRILLVILLE, INDIANA:
(Just few miles south of Chicago International Airport) Housekeeping • Front Desk • Handyman Experienced or Fresher • Single/Couple On-site accommodation provided Email: 58541wyndham@gmail.com Text: (917) 683-6569

04/17-05/08-SL

APPLETON and GREEN BAY, WISCONSIN
Looking for a Hotel Front Desk single or couple (Fluent English), and Housekeeping couple. Accommodation will be provided. Attractive wages. Please contact 708-790-0021

04/17-05/08-MS

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

04/17-05/15-SL

LANCASTER, PENNSYLVANIA
House keeping couple needed for property in Lancaster, Pennsylvania (close to Reading & Harrisburg PA). We will also provide accommodation. Legal status must. Please Call 717-669-6217

04/17-05/29-SH

NEW JERSEY
Franchise Hotel in NJ is looking for Single/Couple for: Housekeeping, Front Desk, Maintenance. Good salary and accommodation will be provided. Also looking for Hotel Sales Associate. (Experience and good communication skills required) Call: Nick 201-637-5062 (Contact between 9 AM to 7 PM.) • Vivian (757) 620-9207 • Hina (201) 936-8762

08/02-TFIV-SD

VIRGINIA
Housekeeping couple needed to clean hotel rooms and do laundry at a franchise hotel in Roanoke, VA Experienced with legal status must. Free accommodation provided. Whatsapp message : Sunny Shah (540) 537 0618.

04/17-05/15-SL

AUGUSTA, GA
2 franchise motels 110 rooms and 65 rooms in Augusta, GA immediately need Single/couple for front desk clerk and Manager. Legal status must. Accommodation will be provided on site. Please call Meena: 706-877-1991, 706-631-2626 meena888patel@aol.com

04/17-05/15-SL

ARIZONA
Need Energetic Couple for Laundry and other miscellaneous help for 90 Rooms Franchise Motel in St George, UT. Experience preferred, ready to train. Legal must. Accommodation provided. Call (435) 229 8980

04/24-05/22-SL

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