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Will You Come Home?

By ADIL ZAINULBHAI, COURTESY PRIME MINISTER RESEARCH CHAIR (PMRC) SCHEME

-JUNE 15, 2026

India has spent decades watching its best scientific minds build careers abroad. It now has a serious answer to the question of why they should come back.

Think about the last time you explained your research to someone at a dinner party. The polite nods. The moment when they asked what it was for, really, in the end. And the pause before you gave the answer you have given a hundred times, about the long game, about how science works, about patience.

Now think about what it would mean to work on a problem where the answer to that question was obvious. Where the scale was so large, and the need so visible, that you never had to explain the relevance. Where your work on clean energy fed directly into the world's largest renewable deployment. Where your research on AI ran on a digital public infrastructure used by hundreds of millions of people. Where your drug or your diagnostic reached a healthcare system that had no alternative.

That is what India offers right now. Not as aspiration. As fact.

The question Indian-origin researchers have always asked is not whether they want to contribute. It is whether the conditions exist to do it properly.

For a long time, the honest answer was: not quite. The funding was uneven. The bureaucracy was real. The gap between what was possible in a well-resourced Western university and what was available in India was wide enough that even researchers who deeply wanted to return did the math and stayed put. The pull of India was emotional. The friction was practical. Practical usually wins.

The Prime Minister Research Chair (PMRC) Scheme, launched this month by the Ministry of Education, is a serious attempt to change that arithmetic.

It is not another fellowship with a stipend that makes you feel appreciated but not compensated. The financial package is structured as a top-up to whatever researchers are currently receiving, with a competitive annual fee, a one-time research grant for project initiation that runs to several crores depending on seniority, residential and medical allowance, and full relocation support. Fellows can return to their parent institution twice a year. The

three-year engagement is designed to be a genuine commitment, not a sabbatical experiment.

There are 120 positions. Three tracks cover the full range of career stages. Young Research Fellows are early-career researchers within five years of their PhD, people at the moment when the habits and networks that define a scientific career are still being formed. Senior Fellows are mid-career scientists with five to ten years of post-PhD experience, researchers who have proven themselves and want their work to operate at a different scale. Research Chairs are the senior figures, ten-plus years out, with the standing to shape what an institution does rather than simply contribute to it.

The 13 priority sectors are the ones worth paying attention to. Semiconductors, quantum computing, AI, clean energy, biotechnology, healthcare and medical technology, space and defense, critical minerals. These are not invented priorities padded out to look comprehensive. They are the areas where India has national missions already running, with funding committed and institutions already in place. A researcher working in any of these fields will find not just a lab but a direct line into policy.

Host institutions are the IITs, IISc, and national laboratories under DST, DBT, CSIR, and ICMR. Not every institution in the country, curated ones that have the infrastructure to absorb and support incoming researchers without the fellow having to spend the first year sorting out basics.

For early-career researchers, particularly those on postdoctoral contracts in the US or UK, the timing matters more than it might appear. The research funding environment in the US has contracted. Visa uncertainty for Indian nationals is real and has not gone away. Academic hiring in many fields is tight. The window between PhD completion and a permanent position is longer than it used to be, and the outcome is less certain. Against that backdrop, a funded research position in India, with a serious grant, world-class students, and the scale of problems that only India can offer, deserves a genuine look rather than a reflexive no.

For senior researchers, the calculation is different but equally worth making. At a certain point in a career, the question is not what the next paper will be but what the body of work adds up to. A Research Chair in PMRC is not being asked to deliver papers. They are being asked to shape an institution, to build something, to use what

they know to create capacity that will outlast them. That is a different kind of opportunity from anything a tenured position in the West typically provides.

The scheme is also honest about what it asks. This is a three-year commitment, residential by design, with enough structure to ensure that fellows are actually embedded rather than just nominally affiliated. India has tried softer versions of diaspora engagement before, visiting positions, advisory roles, one-semester teaching stints. They have produced goodwill and occasionally good research. They have not produced the kind of sustained institutional change that a real presence over real time can create. PMRC is trying to do the harder thing.

For researchers with families, the practical questions are real and the scheme addresses them directly. IIT campuses and the cities around India's premier research institutions have good schools. Spouse employment support and OCI card facilitation are part of the package. Relocation support is not a vague promise. These are answers, not deflections.

India ranks third in global scientific publications and is the second fastest-growing research producer in the world. Patents granted have grown tenfold in a decade. The Anusandhan National Research Foundation is operational. The infrastructure is there.

What PMRC is asking is whether the people who trained in India, built careers abroad, and carried that question about contribution somewhere in the back of their minds are ready to do something about it. Not someday. Now, while the window is open and the positions are real.

Applications are open for 45 days from June 1, 2026. The portal, the eligibility criteria, and the application process are all at pmrc.education.gov.in. The contact for

queries is contact.pmrc@gov.in.

The country that shaped you is asking a direct question. It would be worth taking seriously.

Adil Zainulbhai is the ex-Chairman of Capacity Building Commission of India, which was set up by Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi in 2021, to help improve the Capacity of Indian Civil Service. Prior to that, he was Chairman of Quality Council of India.



PHOTO: LINKEDIN

INDIA

On 41st Anniversary Of Kanishka Bombing India Reaffirms Commitment To Combat Terrorism In All Its Forms

India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Tuesday, June 23, 2026, paid solemn tributes to the victims of the tragic Air India Flight 182 'Kanishka' bombing on its 41st anniversary and reaffirmed India's commitment to combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

India's EAM S. Jaishankar, speaking at the inauguration of the exhibition on terrorism put up by the government of India at United Nations July 30, 2025. PHOTO: pminewyork.gov.in

Taking to social media platform X, the minister emphasised that New Delhi remains resolute in its fight against terrorism.

"Today, on the 41st anniversary of Air India 182 'Kanishka' bombing, we honour the memory of those who lost



PHOTO: PMINENYORK.GOV.IN

India's EAM S. Jaishankar, speaking at the inauguration of the exhibition on terrorism put up by the government of India at United Nations July 30, 2025.

their precious lives in this horrific terror incident. Reaffirm our commitment to combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations," Jaishankar stated.

The mid-air bombing, which occurred on June 23, 1985, remains one of the deadliest acts of aviation terrorism in global history, comparable in scale to the September 11 attacks in 2001. The Boeing 747 aircraft, operating on the Montreal-London-Delhi route, was blown up at an altitude of 9,400 meters by the Canada-based Khalistani terrorist group Babbar Khalsa, claiming the lives of all 329 passengers and crew members on board.

The catastrophic blast occurred while the aircraft was above the Atlantic Ocean, navigating Irish airspace. Marking the largest mass killing in Canadian

history, that claimed the lives of 329 individuals, including 268 Canadian citizens and 24 Indian nationals.

To honour their memory, the High Commission of India in Ottawa, alongside the Consulates General of India in Toronto and Vancouver, joins the families of the deceased and representatives of the Indian diaspora annually on June 23 to pay solemn tribute to the victims of this heinous act of terrorism across synchronised ceremonies in Ottawa, Toronto, and Vancouver.

More than four decades later, India, Canada, and Ireland continue to share the profound grief of an air tragedy that left the international community deeply shocked and altered global aviation security standards.

-ANI

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“If They Are Attacked And He Is The Leader We Are Going To Help”: Trump Pledges Support To India And PM Modi

US President Donald Trump, as a sign of unwavering support to India, stated that Washington will help India if the nation is attacked, provided Prime Minister Narendra Modi is the leader.

During a bilateral meeting at the sidelines of the 52nd G7 Summit, Trump lauded the defense relations between India and US and affirmed support precisely for the PM Modi-led nation during conflict situations.

“I think it is a great relationship. If they were attacked, we would be there to help them. We don't have a contract, but if they are attacked and he (PM Modi) is the leader, we are going to be there to help. If anybody attacks that man, we are going to be there. If there is another leader, I don't know about that, but if they are attacked and he is the leader, we are going to help”, Trump said.

The two leaders were seen shaking hands after US President's act of friendship and support for PM Modi.

Furthermore, the US President also recognised himself as a “great friend” of India, adding that the Indian Prime Minister is well respected in Washington.

“As long as I am President, they (India) have a great friend in the White House.

Everyone here loves India and they have tremendous respect for this (PM Narendra Modi) man,” he said.

The two leaders met at the G7 Summit in France, their first in-person talks in 16+ months, a move past trade and geopolitical tensions and steadying the relationship between the two democracies. It started with a warm handshake at Tuesday's G7 outreach.

By Wednesday, PM Modi and Donald Trump were in serious talks. And Trump even called the Prime Minister “calm and cool.”

The White House had earlier confirmed that the meeting would focus heavily on advancing the proposed India-US trade agreement. Earlier sources also said that



U.S. President Donald Trump attends a bilateral meeting with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the G7 Summit in Evian-les-Bains, France, June 17, 2026.

PM Modi and Trump were likely to discuss the situation in West Asia, the strategic Strait of Hormuz, energy imports from the United States and the proposed bilateral trade agreement during their meeting on the sidelines of the G7 Summit in France.

The sources also said both countries are keen on building a long-term energy partnership, with discussions expected to focus on strengthening cooperation in the energy sector amid concerns over disruptions to global supply chains caused by tensions in West Asia.

The proposed India-US trade deal is in its final stages, with negotiations progressing steadily and work on the agreement expected to be completed in the coming weeks.

The two nations reached an interim trade agreement

earlier in February after a year of talks. The meeting assumes significance as instability in the Strait of Hormuz continues to impact global energy markets and maritime trade.

The narrow waterway remains one of the world's most critical shipping routes, handling a substantial portion of global oil and gas supplies.

ADDON FROM NEWS INDIA TIMES:

Experts from the Asia Society Policy Institute gave the Trump-Modi meeting a plus.

Wendy Cutler — Senior Vice President, ASPI, said, “The Trump-Modi meeting on the margins of the G7 was a necessary step in getting our bilateral relations back on track. Importantly, USTR Greer will visit India next week, which provides the perfect opportunity to wrap up the first phase of bilateral trade negotiations. Each of these steps will help repair the bilateral relationship, which should be a strategic and economic priority for the Trump administration.

Farwa Amer — Director of South Asia Initiatives at ASPI, said, “There were a lot of eyes on the meeting given the Trump and Modi were

coming face to face after a year of strained ties giving way to an evident trust deficit in the bilateral dynamic. PM Modi took the opportunity to assert the need for trust building ahead of the bilateral meeting.”

Amer continued, “While there were no major outcomes and that was expected, there was reassurance that the trade deal is close. On U.S.-India defense, Trump shared that the U.S. would help India if it was attacked,”

“But the fact that the two leaders met helps stabilize some of the relationship optics. Does it fully restore the trust? Maybe not, but the leadership level engagement sets a positive pace for the two countries to work toward shared interests.”

-ANI

Trump, Modi Discuss Trade, Safety Of Indian Sailors In Gulf Region

BY STEVE HOLLAND, BO ERICKSON AND SAKSHI DAYAL

U.S. President Donald Trump said on Wednesday he had held a “very good” conversation with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the G7 summit in France and that their two countries were working on trade deals.

Trump called Modi a “tough negotiator,” and told reporters that he would be going to India “sometime in the future”.

India has been pressing the United States for months for a Trump trip, potentially as part of a meeting including Japan and Australia.

The two leaders' meeting is their first since February 2025, when Modi visited Washington within weeks of Trump returning to the White House, and the two sides agreed to resolve their differences over trade and tariffs.

Ties, however, have since deteriorated, with Washington imposing high tariffs on Indian goods, punishing New Delhi for purchasing Russian oil, and engaging closely with India's arch-rival Pakistan.

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio visited India last month seeking to repair ties, but the killing of three Indian sailors in attacks on commercial ships by the U.S.



U.S. President Donald Trump attends a bilateral meeting with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the G7 Summit in Evian-les-Bains, France, June 17, 2026.

Navy in the Gulf has roiled relations again.

Modi told Trump, in the presence of reporters, that the safety of Indian seafarers working in the Strait of Hormuz region was of “utmost importance” to New Delhi.

MODI WANTS IRAN DEAL TO INCLUDE SAFETY OF SAILORS

“You are aware that hundreds of thousands of Indian seafarers are working across the world, performing their duties along international maritime trade routes — including the Strait of Hormuz — and their safety is of utmost importance to us,” Modi said.

“You have made tremendous efforts to reach this understanding, and I am confident that the issue of seafarers will receive the highest priority during the implementation of this agreement,” Modi said, referring to the U.S. peace agreement with Iran.

Asked by reporters if he shared his condolences on the deaths of the Indian sailors, Trump said: “It's a rough profession, there's no question about it, and we work together on it ... We love all of those people, they're great people.”

Trump also said the United States would defend India.

“If they were attacked, we would be there to help them,” Trump said, when asked about the U.S.-India defense relationship.

“If anybody attacks that man, we're going to be there,” Trump said, referencing Modi. “Now, if there's a new leader, I'm not sure about it.”

-REUTERS

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GAPIO And Other High-Profile Philanthropic Organizations Join New ALIGN Health Initiative

BY A STAFF WRITER

A unique philanthropic grassroots effort to reach out to younger school children and educate them on healthy eating and lifestyle, garnered strong support recently from high profile organizations.

The ALIGN Health Initiative acquired the partnership of the Global Association of Physicians of Indian Origin, GAPIO, led by its President, Padma Shri recipient Dr. Sudhir Parikh; the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin, AAPI, led by Dr. Amit Chakrabarty, and WHEELS Global Foundation, WGF, led by Ratan Agarwal along with Raj Shah.

The June 17, 2026 pledge-signing event was led by Dr. Vikas Khurana, and hosted by The Wright Center for Graduate Medical Education, represented by Michael Mahon, Vice President of Academic Affairs and Associate Designated Institution. The Wright Center trains future healthcare leaders while maintaining a strong commitment to community service, preventive medi-



PHOTO: COURTESY THE WRIGHT CENTER

The Pledge of the ALIGN Health Initiative.

“totally amazed” by the (ALIGN) initiative. “We are going to highlight this at the AAPI annual conference,” he added. “You will have an amazing presence” there, adding, “We’ve got ALIGN T-shirts also made.”

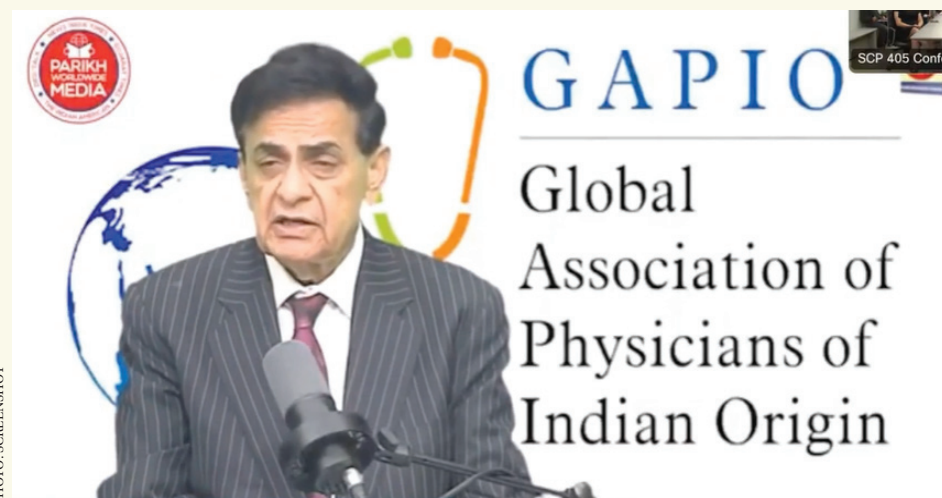
Ratan Agarwal noted how for WHEELS Global Foundation, health and education go together. “Nearly 100 doctors from US and India are helping us,” with projects ranging from telehealth to sanitary pads and low-cost medical diagnostic, post-partum depression, and a plethora of other medical needs. “We are almost in all 50 states” in the US, he noted. “WHEELS is fully committed to tackle the challenges,” and bring its capabilities to bear on ALIGN’s objectives, he added.

Vikas Khurana pointed out that WHEELS is planning to reach 20 percent of the Indian population by 2030.

Raj Shah, a cardiologist, passionate about what technology can do for healthcare, agreed with ALIGN’s vision that children are at the center of medicine. Posing the question, “What’s in it for us?” Dr. Shah said, “We all got our success and resources from the community,” and now, as non-profits like WHEELS Global, it was time to give back to the community. The Wrights



ALIGN Health Initiative Pledge Signing ceremony June 17, 2026. On the screen at the back are the representatives of various philanthropic organizations participating in the pledge.



Padma Shri recipient Dr. Sudhir Parikh, president of the Global Association of Physicians of Indian Origin, delivering his video-message pledging support and partnership with the ALIGN Health Initiative, June 17, 2026.

cine, and population health.

Dr. Vriti Khurana, founder of the ALIGN Health Initiative, explained what the program was about – a physician-led, school-based program that delivers interactive health education to children and adolescents. The program teaches core concepts in nutrition, movement, sleep, mindset, and lifestyle medicine in ways appealing to children. ALIGN partners with local schools to make preventive health education accessible and practical for communities. (Website: <https://www.facebook.com/alignhi>).

Each of the major philanthropic organizations present at the pledge-signing event, committed to partner with ALIGN, promising to take the initiative nationwide and expand on a global scale.

In his video-message, Dr. Parikh said he was “very proud and privileged to become part of ALIGN” calling it a “great philanthropic partnership,” one which GAPIO would be happy to work with. He described GAPIO’s mission as a global organization representing some 1.4 million physicians of Indian origin, and having chapters in 60 countries. He also offered the support of his other philanthropic initiative as President of Life Global which builds schools in India for the disadvantaged, as well as his media organization Parikh Worldwide Media/ITV Gold, to send out the message of the ALIGN Health Initiative.

Dr. Chakravarty, President of AAPI, said he was



ALIGN Health Initiative event held at Riverside High School in Scranton, PA, on March 27, 2026.

Center, he noted, will help reach the doorsteps of those we want to help. I am sure this (ALIGN) will take on like wildfire.”

Dr. Rajiv Jain spoke about the work of Akshaya Patra which has been serving 2.35 million nutritious midday meals to school children in India every year covering 25,000 schools. “We focus on education and nutrition. I say nutrition an dnot food. And we have brought that concept back to US, to community colleges here. ALIGN brings that perspective to children.” Jain said he was there to focus on the ALIGN initiative and expand it across the US.

Michael Mahon of the Wright Center praised the work of Dr. Vikas Khurana, emphasizing that, the “Power of Partnership” is what is going to drive these programs for “our children.” He said it was “deeply humbling” to be part of the effort.

Dr. Manju Thomas, a pediatrician by specialty, at the Wright Center, described the March 27, 2026, event at Riverside School in Scranton, PA, where 150 students were exposed to the ALIGN initiative – to know what constituted the foods they consumed, and how their sleep, their moods, depression, etc. were linked to food habits. She said even if only 3 out of the 150 children went home and changed their food habits, she would consider it a success. “We as pediatricians need to shift from the focus on infectious diseases to food habits and healthy living through healthy habits.”

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Hundreds Gather To Celebrate 12th International Yoga Day Hosted By Indian Consulate Chicago



India's Consul General in Chicago Somnath Ghosh addresses the crowd at the National India Hub, for IDY 2026 celebration June 21, 2026.

By BHAILAL M. PATEL

The Consulate General of India in Chicago, in partnership with Friends of Yoga and National India Hub, celebrated the 12th International Day of Yoga (IDY 2026) on June 21, 2026, bringing together hundreds of yoga enthusiasts, community leaders, families, seniors, and children for a memorable morning dedicated to health, mindfulness, and holistic well-being.

Held at the National India Hub in Schaumburg under the global theme "Yoga for Healthy Ageing," the celebration highlighted yoga's timeless message of physical wellness, mental balance, emotional resilience, and spiritual harmony.

Nearly 500 participants enthusiastically joined the event, beginning the session with the sacred chanting of "Om" before practicing a series of yoga postures and breathing exercises designed to promote overall wellness.

The Consul General of India in Chicago, Somnath Ghosh addressed the gathering and emphasized yoga's growing role as a universal force for unity and well-being.

"Yoga belongs to all humanity," he noted. "It is a pathway to connect with ourselves, our communities, and nature. The tremendous enthusiasm witnessed today reflects yoga's universal appeal and its power to bring people together across cultures and generations."

The Consul General praised National India Hub and its leadership for making the venue available at short notice after



Two youth show yoga postures at the June 21, 2026 IDY celebrations in Schaumburg, Ill.

weather conditions made an outdoor celebration impractical. He also thanked sponsors, volunteers, and community organizations for their invaluable support in making the event a success.

The celebration featured complimentary yoga mats, commemorative T-shirts, refreshments, guided yoga instruction, and participation certificates. The atmosphere was warm, inclusive, and inspiring, with people of all ages participating side by side in the spirit of health and harmony.

The Chicago-area observance formed part of a much larger regional celebration of International Yoga Day that has continued to grow in scope and impact since Prime Minister Narendra Modi proposed the observance at the United Nations in 2014. Today, International Yoga Day is celebrated worldwide, demonstrating the

enduring relevance of India's ancient gift to humanity.

Earlier in the week, Chicagoland witnessed what many described as its largest-ever International Yoga Day celebration, June 14, 2026, at the Naperville Yard Sports Complex where thousands gathered to celebrate yoga. The event was organized by Mindful Meditation Yoga under the leadership of Anu Malhotra.

Participants from diverse backgrounds joined in guided yoga sessions, cultural presentations, meditation practices, and wellness activities, showing the growing popularity of yoga in the Midwest.

From children learning their first yoga postures to seniors embracing yoga as a path toward healthy ageing, the events highlighted the universal benefits of the practice and its ability to enrich lives at every stage.



Hundreds joined in Yoga celebrations June 21, 2026 in Schaumburg, Illinois, for International Day of Yoga.



FIFA WORLD CUP

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COMPLETE MATCH SCHEDULE- ALL 104 MATCHES

No.	Date	Teams	Venue
1	Thu, June 11	Mexico vs South Africa	Mexico City, Mexico
2	Fri, June 12	Korea Republic vs Czechia	Guadalajara, Mexico
3	Fri, June 12	Canada vs Bosnia & Herzegovina	Toronto, Canada
4	Sat, June 13	USA vs Paraguay	Los Angeles, USA
5	Sun, June 14	Haiti vs Scotland	Boston, USA
6	Sun, June 14	Australia vs Turkiye	Vancouver, Canada
7	Sat, June 13	Brazil vs Morocco	New York/New Jersey, USA
8	Sat, June 13	Qatar vs Switzerland	San Francisco Bay Area, USA
9	Mon, June 15	Cote d Ivoire vs Ecuador	Philadelphia, USA
10	Sun, June 14	Germany vs Curacao	Houston, USA
11	Sun, June 14	Netherlands vs Japan	Dallas, USA
12	Mon, June 15	Sweden vs Tunisia	Guadalajara, Mexico
13	Mon, June 15	Saudi Arabia vs Uruguay	Miami, USA
14	Mon, June 15	Spain vs Cabo Verde	Atlanta, USA
15	Tue, June 16	IR Iran vs New Zealand	Los Angeles, USA
16	Mon, June 15	Belgium vs Egypt	Seattle, USA
17	Tue, June 16	France vs Senegal	New York/New Jersey, USA
18	Tue, June 16	Iraq vs Norway	Boston, USA
19	Wed, June 17	Argentina vs Algeria	Kansas City, USA
20	Thu, June 18	Austria vs Jordan	San Francisco Bay Area, USA
21	Wed, June 17	Ghana vs Panama	Toronto, Canada
22	Wed, June 17	England vs Croatia	Dallas, USA
23	Wed, June 17	Portugal vs Congo DR	Houston, USA
24	Thu, June 18	Uzbekistan vs Colombia	Mexico City, Mexico
25	Thu, June 18	Czechia vs South Africa	Atlanta, USA
26	Thu, June 18	Switzerland vs Bosnia & Herzegovina	Los Angeles, USA

No.	Date	Teams	Venue
53	Thu, June 25	Czechia vs Mexico	Mexico City, Mexico
54	Thu, June 25	South Africa vs Korea Republic	Guadalajara, Mexico
55	Thu, June 25	Curacao vs Cote d Ivoire	Philadelphia, USA
56	Thu, June 25	Ecuador vs Germany	New York/New Jersey, USA
57	Fri, June 26	Japan vs Sweden	Dallas, USA
58	Fri, June 26	Tunisia vs Netherlands	Kansas City, USA
59	Fri, June 26	Turkiye vs USA	Los Angeles, USA
60	Fri, June 26	Paraguay vs Australia	San Francisco Bay Area, USA
61	Fri, June 26	Norway vs France	Boston, USA
62	Fri, June 26	Senegal vs Iraq	Toronto, Canada
63	Sat, June 27	IR Iran vs Egypt	Seattle, USA
64	Sat, June 27	New Zealand vs Belgium	Vancouver, Canada
65	Sat, June 27	Cabo Verde vs Saudi Arabia	Houston, USA
66	Sat, June 27	Uruguay vs Spain	Guadalajara, Mexico
67	Sat, June 27	Panama vs England	New York/New Jersey, USA
68	Sat, June 27	Croatia vs Ghana	Philadelphia, USA
69	Sun, June 28	Algeria vs Austria	Kansas City, USA
70	Sun, June 28	Jordan vs Argentina	Dallas, USA
71	Sun, June 28	Colombia vs Portugal	Miami, USA
72	Sun, June 28	Congo DR vs Uzbekistan	Atlanta, USA
73	Sun, June 28	Group A runner-up vs Group B runner-up	Los Angeles, USA
74	Mon, June 29	Group E winner vs 3rd Place A/B/C/D/F	Boston, USA
75	Tue, June 30	Group F winner vs Group C runner-up	Guadalajara, Mexico
76	Mon, June 29	Group C winner vs Group F runner-up	Houston, USA
77	Tue, June 30	Group I winner vs 3rd Place C/D/F/G/H	New York/New Jersey, USA
78	Tue, June 30	Group E runner-up vs Group I runner-up	Dallas, USA

No.	Date	Teams	Venue
27	Thu, June 18	Canada vs Qatar	Vancouver, Canada
28	Fri, June 19	Mexico vs Korea Republic	Guadalajara, Mexico
29	Sat, June 20	Brazil vs Haiti	Philadelphia, USA
30	Fri, June 19	Scotland vs Morocco	Boston, USA
31	Sat, June 20	Turkiye vs Paraguay	San Francisco Bay Area, USA
32	Fri, June 19	USA vs Australia	Seattle, USA
33	Sat, June 20	Germany vs Cote d Ivoire	Toronto, Canada
34	Sun, June 21	Ecuador vs Curacao	Kansas City, USA
35	Sat, June 20	Netherlands vs Sweden	Houston, USA
36	Sun, June 21	Tunisia vs Japan	Guadalajara, Mexico
37	Sun, June 21	Uruguay vs Cabo Verde	Miami, USA
38	Sun, June 21	Spain vs Saudi Arabia	Atlanta, USA
39	Sun, June 21	Belgium vs IR Iran	Los Angeles, USA
40	Mon, June 22	New Zealand vs Egypt	Vancouver, Canada
41	Tue, June 23	Norway vs Senegal	Toronto, Canada
42	Mon, June 22	France vs Iraq	Philadelphia, USA
43	Mon, June 22	Argentina vs Austria	Dallas, USA
44	Tue, June 23	Jordan vs Algeria	San Francisco Bay Area, USA
45	Tue, June 23	England vs Ghana	Boston, USA
46	Wed, June 24	Panama vs Croatia	Boston, USA
47	Tue, June 23	Portugal vs Uzbekistan	Houston, USA
48	Wed, June 24	Colombia vs Congo DR	Guadalajara, Mexico
49	Wed, June 24	Scotland vs Brazil	Miami, USA
50	Wed, June 24	Morocco vs Haiti	Atlanta, USA
51	Wed, June 24	Switzerland vs Canada	Vancouver, Canada
52	Wed, June 24	Bosnia & Herzegovina vs Qatar	Seattle, USA

No.	Date	Teams	Venue
79	Wed, July 1	Group A winner vs 3rd Place C/E/F/H/I	Mexico City, Mexico
80	Wed, July 1	Group L winner vs 3rd Place E/H/I/J/K	Atlanta, USA
81	Thu, July 2	Group D winner vs 3rd Place B/E/F/G/J	San Francisco Bay Area, USA
82	Wed, July 1	Group G winner vs 3rd Place A/E/H/I/J	Seattle, USA
83	Fri, July 3	Group K runner-up vs Group L runner-up	Toronto, Canada
84	Thu, July 2	Group H winner vs Group J runner-up	Los Angeles, USA
85	Fri, July 3	Group B winner vs 3rd Place E/F/G/H/J	Vancouver, Canada
86	Fri, July 3	Group J winner vs Group H runner-up	Miami, USA
87	Sat, July 4	Group K winner vs 3rd Place D/E/I/J/L	Kansas City, USA
88	Fri, July 3	Group D runner-up vs Group G runner-up	Dallas, USA
89	Sat, July 4	Winner 74 vs Winner 77	Philadelphia, USA
90	Sat, July 4	Winner 73 vs Winner 75	Houston, USA
91	Sun, July 5	Winner 76 vs Winner 78	New York/New Jersey, USA
92	Mon, July 6	Winner 79 vs Winner 80	Mexico City, Mexico
93	Mon, July 6	Winner 83 vs Winner 84	Dallas, USA
94	Tue, July 7	Winner 81 vs Winner 82	Seattle, USA
95	Tue, July 7	Winner 86 vs Winner 88	Atlanta, USA
96	Tue, July 7	Winner 85 vs Winner 87	Vancouver, Canada
97	Thu, July 9	Winner 89 vs Winner 90	Boston, USA
98	Fri, July 10	Winner 93 vs Winner 94	Los Angeles, USA
99	Sat, July 11	Winner 91 vs Winner 92	Miami, USA
100	Sun, July 12	Winner 95 vs Winner 96	Kansas City, USA
101	Tue, July 14	Winner 97 vs Winner 98	Dallas, USA
102	Wed, July 15	Winner 99 vs Winner 100	Atlanta, USA
103	Sat, July 18	Loser 101 vs Loser 102 - Bronze Final	Miami, USA
104	Sun, July 19	Winner 101 vs Winner 102 - Final	New York/New Jersey, USA

WHERE WILL THE MATCHES HAPPEN

USA Atlanta: Mercedes-Benz Stadium Boston: Gillette Stadium Dallas: AT&T Stadium	Houston: NRG Stadium Kansas City: Arrowhead Stadium Los Angeles: SoFi Stadium Miami: Hard Rock Stadium	New York/New Jersey: MetLife Stadium Philadelphia: Lincoln Financial Field Seattle: Lumen Field San Francisco: Levi's Stadium	CANADA Toronto: BMO Field Vancouver: BC Place	MEXICO Guadalajara: Estadio Akron Mexico City: Estadio Azteca Monterrey: Estadio BBVA
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104 MATCHES, 16 HOST CITIES, 48 NATIONS, 1 CHAMPION.

BE A PART OF HISTORY!

Indian American Lawmakers Condemn Anti-India Demonstration Outside Frisco City Hall, TX., Express Solidarity With Community

PRESS RELEASE

On June 15, 2026, Representatives Raja Krishnamoorthi (IL-08), Ami Bera (CA-06), Pramila Jayapal (WA-07), Ro Khanna (CA-17), Shri Thandaram (MI-13), and Suhas Subramanyam (VA-10), the Indian American members of Congress, released the following joint statement after a demonstrator outside Frisco City Hall in Frisco, Texas, tore an Indian flag amid anti-India chants and rhetoric during an immigration-related protest:

"We strongly support the constitutional right to freedom of expression for all Americans. At the same time,

PHOTO: SCREENSHOT FROM VIDEO ON FACEBOOK @ RAJA KRISHNAMOORTH



Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi, D-Illinois, speaking on the issue of naturalized citizens being barred from federal public office and appointments.

we condemn the tearing of an Indian flag outside Frisco City Hall alongside hateful anti-India rhetoric, which continues to fuel anti-Indian violence and xenophobia. Acts of hate and intimidation targeting any community are unacceptable and have no place in our country.

"The Indian American community is an important part of our nation and deserves to feel safe and respected. As Indian Americans and South Asian Americans face harassment, xenophobia, and hateful rhetoric, leaders must speak clearly: hate targeting any community cannot be tolerated or ignored.

"We stand in solidarity with the Indian American community in Frisco and across the country. Everyone deserves to live with dignity and safety, free from fear, harassment, and discrimination."

MOKSH DHAM Cremations Inc. Launches Historic Initiative To Establish Dedicated Sanatani Cremation Center In Chicagoland

By BHAILAL M. PATEL

A Sacred Vision to Serve Future Generations with Dignity, Compassion, and Tradition

MOKSH DHAM Cremations Inc., a non-profit 501(c)(13) charitable organization, has announced an ambitious and historic community project to establish a dedicated Sanatani cremation center in the Chicago metropolitan area. The proposed facility aims to provide affordable, dignified, and spiritually appropriate cremation services for Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, Buddhists, and other followers of Sanatan Dharma while preserving sacred traditions for future generations.

The organization was founded in response to a growing need within the community. Although the Chicago metropolitan area is home to an estimated 250,000 Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, Buddhists, and other Sanatanis, there is currently no dedicated cremation center specifically designed to meet the religious and cultural requirements of these communities. With nearly 35 percent of the population consisting of senior citizens, community leaders believe the need for such a facility has become increasingly urgent.

For followers of Sanatan Dharma, cremation is more than a funeral service; it is the final sacred rite known as Antim Agni Sanskar. This deeply spiritual ceremony represents the soul's journey toward liberation and is an important part of Hindu, Jain, Sikh, and Buddhist traditions. MOKSH DHAM Cremations Inc. seeks to ensure that families can honor their loved ones with dignity, respect, and adherence to their religious beliefs.

According to Dr. Rashmi Patel, President of MOKSH DHAM Cremations Inc., the vision extends beyond providing cremation services. "This project is a sacred responsibility and a lasting gift to future generations. Our mission is to provide affordable and dignified services while preserving the spiritual traditions that are central to our faith and culture," she said.

The organization plans to offer a comprehensive range of services, including qualified priests to perform religious ceremonies at minimal cost, professional staff to guide families through every step of the process, rental caskets with disposable containers to help reduce expenses, return of cremated remains with all required



MOKSH DHAM Cremations Inc., A Sanatani Community Project

documentation, and assistance with final disposition services, including Asthi Visarjan. Future plans also include grief counseling, family support services, and a comprehensive website providing information and scheduling assistance twenty-four hours a day.

The proposed Moksh Dham Cremation Center will be constructed on a 4.6-acre site and will feature a modern two-story building consisting of approximately 13,100 square feet. The facility will include two spacious prayer and gathering halls for religious ceremonies, bhajans, memorial services, and community events. Designed to accommodate up to 400 visitors, the center will also provide parking for more than 200 vehicles.

A unique feature of the facility will be a dedicated temple honoring Lord Shiva, revered in Sanatan Dharma as the Lord of Transformation. The center will also house two state-of-the-art cremation chambers and advanced audio-visual technology. Families unable to attend ceremonies in person will have access to closed-circuit camera systems and internet broadcasting capabilities, allowing them to participate remotely from anywhere in the world.

The project has already achieved several important milestones. The organization has successfully acquired the 4.6-acre property, completed all architectural drawings, and submitted applications for demolition, building, sanitary, wetland mitigation, and water retention permits. These applications have been under review for the past four months. In addition, a complete set of construction drawings has been distributed to seven qualified contractors for cost estimates and competitive

bidding. The organization is currently awaiting permit approvals and contractor proposals before proceeding to the next phase of construction.

MOKSH DHAM Cremations Inc. is governed by a dedicated volunteer leadership team. All founders, officers, and board members serve without monetary compensation, reflecting the organization's commitment to selfless community service and responsible stewardship.

Funding for the project will come through charitable donations, corporate philanthropy, fundraising events, and non-interest-bearing loans from individuals and corporate sponsors. To encourage broad community participation, the organization has created a variety of sponsorship opportunities. Major contributions include Building Naming Rights at \$2.5 million, Shiva Temple Sponsorship at \$500,000, Gate Sponsorships at \$250,000 each, Prayer Hall Sponsorships at \$150,000 each, and Cremation Chamber Sponsorships at \$125,000 each. Additional opportunities include Mortuary Van Sponsorships at \$51,000 each, Super Trustee memberships at \$25,000, Trustee memberships at \$15,000, Sponsors at \$11,000, Voting Lifetime Memberships at \$2,500, Non-Voting Lifetime Memberships at \$1,100, Memorial Benches at \$1,100, and Commemorative Bricks at \$101.

Dr. Patel emphasized that every contribution, regardless of size, will help create a lasting legacy for the community. "This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to establish a sacred institution that will serve our families with dignity, compassion, and respect for centuries to come. We humbly request the support of community members, organizations, and philanthropists to help make this vision a reality."

MOKSH DHAM Cremations Inc. is calling upon individuals, families, businesses, religious organizations, and community leaders to join this noble undertaking. Through collective effort and generosity, the organization hopes to create a facility that honors Sanatani traditions while providing a compassionate and essential service for generations to come.

For additional information, sponsorship opportunities, or pledge cards, interested individuals may contact Dr. Rashmi Patel, President of MOKSH DHAM Cremations Inc., at (773) 592-9501 or via email at Mokshdhaminc@gmail.com. Additional information is available at MokshDham.org.

Federal Court Strikes Down \$100,000 H-1B Fee: What Employers Need to Know

By David H. Nachman, Esq

IN MEMORIAM



Michael Phulwani



David Nachman



Ludka Zimovcak



Snehal Batra

On June 8, 2026, a federal judge in Boston delivered a significant win for U.S. employers who depend on the H-1B visa program. U.S. District Judge Leo T. Sorokin of the District of Massachusetts struck down the Trump administration's \$100,000 supplemental fee on new H-1B petitions, ruling that the executive branch imposed an unauthorized tax without congressional approval.

At NPZ Law Group, we have been closely monitoring this litigation since the fee was introduced through Presidential Proclamation 10973 on September 19, 2025. The ruling removes a massive financial barrier that had been disrupting hiring decisions across technology, healthcare, higher education, and other industries.

Background: How the \$100,000 Fee Came About

The fee took effect on September 21, 2025, just two days after the Proclamation was signed. It applied to new H-1B petitions filed on behalf of workers outside the United States, adding \$100,000 on top of existing regulatory and statutory fees that previously ranged from approximately \$960 to \$7,595.

For many employers — particularly state universities, public hospitals, and smaller businesses — the cost made new H-1B sponsorships economically impossible. A coalition of 20 state attorneys general filed suit in December 2025, arguing that the fee exceeded presidential authority and violated the Administrative Procedure Act.

What the Court Decided

Judge Sorokin granted summary judgment in favor of the plaintiff states on all claims and vacated the policy in its entirety. The court's key findings:

The \$100,000 payment functions as a tax, not a regulatory fee — and only Congress has the constitutional authority to impose taxes.

The Proclamation exceeded the president's delegated authority under the Immigration and Nationality Act.

The policy violated the APA by bypassing required notice-and-comment rulemaking procedures.

The implementation was arbitrary, capricious, and procedurally deficient.

The ruling means USCIS is currently prohibited from collecting the \$100,000 fee from H-1B employers.

What This Means for Employers Right Now

The practical impact of the ruling is immediate and significant: New H-1B petitions — including cap-subject, cap-exempt, transfers, and amendments — can proceed without the \$100,000 surcharge.

Petitions that were delayed internally due to the fee burden can now move forward under standard statutory filing fees.

Workers outside the United States requiring consular processing are no longer subject to the fee.

Important: The Legal Battle Is Not Over

Employers should understand that this is a district court ruling — not a final resolution. A few important considerations:

The federal government is widely expected to appeal the decision, and the appeals process could result in the fee being reinstated during the pendency of that appeal.

A conflicting ruling already exists from the District of Columbia district court, which upheld the \$100,000 fee in December 2025. This circuit split adds uncertainty.

The court's ruling does not address whether employers who already paid the fee are entitled to refunds.

NPZ Law Group will continue to monitor this case closely and provide updates as the government's next steps become clear.

"The court's decision provides welcome clarity for employers that depend on the H-1B program to recruit and retain talent. A fee of this magnitude would have created significant barriers for employers and foreign professionals alike. While the legal process may continue, this ruling helps preserve access to an important employment-based immigration pathway."

— David Nachman, Esq., Managing Partner, NPZ Law Group

What Employers Should Do

If you had H-1B petitions on hold due to the fee, now is the time to reassess your hiring plans and move forward. However, given the likelihood of an appeal, working closely with qualified immigration counsel on timing and strategy is important.

Beyond this ruling, employers should also keep an eye on the Department of Labor's pending prevailing wage rule, which could significantly increase minimum salary requirements for H-1B workers if finalized. H-1B compliance, sponsorship planning, and workforce strategy remain as important as ever.

Contact NPZ Law Group

NPZ Law Group assists employers, investors, and foreign professionals with U.S. and Canadian immigration matters.

If you have questions about how this ruling may affect your H-1B program or workforce plans, contact us at info@visaserve.com, call 201-670-0006 ext. 104, or visit www.visaserve.com.

LAW OFFICES

Parveen Goyal LTD

27+ Years Experience

Attorney Goyal with a Doctor in Juris & MBA from the U.S. is the Member of Chicago Bar, American Immigration Lawyers Association

Attorney
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ISKCON Chicago Celebrates Legacy Of Sri Sri Kishore Kishori

By BHAILAL M. PATEL

ISKCON Chicago's history is not just about buildings but about the community it has fostered over the decades as the first Krishna Temple

The historic Hare Krishna Temple of Chicago, officially known as ISKCON Chicago, joyfully celebrated the 53rd Anniversary of the installation of its beloved deities, Sri Sri Kishore Kishori (Radha and Krishna), on Wednesday evening, June 17, 2026.

The special commemorative gathering, held at the temple located at 1716 W. Lunt Avenue in Chicago, brought together devotees, community leaders, temple veterans, and well-wishers to honor more than five decades of devotion, spiritual service, and Krishna consciousness in the Chicagoland area.

The evening was filled with heartfelt memories, inspiring reflections, devotional kirtan, and expressions of gratitude as devotees recounted the temple's journey and its presence for the community.

Devotees reflected on how the beautiful deities were originally worshipped in India before being brought to Chicago in 1973, even before the arrival of ISKCON Founder-Acharya His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, who later visited Chicago during 1974-75.

Senior devotees shared vivid recollections of the early years of Krishna consciousness in Chicago. Memories were recounted of the temple's humble beginnings in a small apartment on Halsted Street, followed by its move



Celebration of 53 years of the ISKCON temple in Chicago, June 17, 2026.

to a former YMCA building in Evanston. Despite numerous challenges, including harsh winters, financial hardships, and municipal obstacles, the devotees persevered.

The current temple building on Lunt Avenue, acquired in 1980, was remembered as a miraculous achievement. At the time, many considered the purchase of the property for \$140,000 nearly impossible, but the temple managed with supporters to secure a permanent home.

Among those sharing memories was Jitendriya Das, a disciple of Srila Prabhupada who has served the temple for more than five decades. He recalled the days of large festivals, downtown Chicago parades, book distribution

programs, and the gradual transformation of the temple from modest beginnings into one of North America's respected centers of Krishna devotion.

Several speakers offered moving personal testimonies about the transformative power of Sri Sri Kishore Kishori's mercy. Many described life-changing experiences, answered prayers, and spiritual awakenings. Poems, scriptural readings, and devotional reflections added to the celebration.

ISKCON Chicago's diverse and international congregation was on display. Devotees from various cultural backgrounds shared how the temple became their spiritual home and a source of lifelong inspiration. Younger devotees spoke of the joy of serving the deities and witnessing the ever-growing beauty of devotional life.

Throughout the evening, special recognition was given to generations of volunteers, temple presidents, book distributors, kitchen teams, teachers, donors, and community members whose dedication has sustained the temple's mission for more than half a century. Gratitude was also expressed to members of the Indian-American community whose support played a crucial role in establishing and strengthening the temple.

ISKCON (International Society for Krishna Consciousness) has spread the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita and Bhakti Yoga across the globe, and for more than 53 years in Chicago.

The evening concluded with a group photograph of assembled devotees, enthusiastic congregational chanting of the Hare Krishna Maha Mantra, and the distribution of sanctified prasadam.

NATIONAL AFFAIRS

Another Indian American Democratic Socialist, Aparna Raj, Wins D.C. Democratic Primary for Ward 1

By A STAFF WRITER

A massive crowd of supporters gathered around Aparna Raj to cheer her victory in the race for the Democratic Party candidate to represent Ward 1 in Washington, D.C.

The 32-year-old Raj, who is described on her campaign website and social media accounts as a Democratic Socialist, is the 3rd known Indian American on a road to potential victory, after Zohran Mamdani, Mayor of NYC, and candidate for Los Angeles Mayor in the November runoff Nithya Raman.

If Raj wins in November, she will be the first Indian American elected to the District Council of the US Capitol. It would be an even greater win for the Democratic Socialist Party which has its endorsed candidate Janeese Lewis George for Mayor of D.C.

Aparna Raj holds up ticket showing she has voted in the Ward 1 Democratic primary for District of Columbia.

In the 'Meet Aparna' section of her campaign site, it says, "Aparna is a renter, a queer woman of color, and a democratic socialist fighting to lower the cost of living."

An activist for stable housing, good public schools, union jobs and strong public transit, Raj's Ward 1 includes Columbia Heights, Park View, Adams Morgan, Mount Pleasant, Shaw, U Street, Kalorama, Howard, and LeDroit Park.

"I never thought I would run for office, but I was tired of seeing a status quo that was grinding people down, having to beg our own government to maintain tenant and worker protections as the cost of living soared, and seeing our own elected leaders' absence as we were fight-



Candidate for Ward 1 in D.C., Aparna Raj (holding a bouquet), surrounded by supporters after her win in the Democratic primary June 21

ing to protect immigrants from ICE," Raj says upon her victory in the primary, results for which were declared June 21. She posted it on her Instagram account, aparnafordc.

A poster from Democratic Socialists of America showing the two candidates endorsed by the party – Aparna Raj for Ward 1 District Council seat in D.C., and Mayoral candidate Janeese Lewis George.

"This campaign has been about more than one person.



Aparna Raj holds up ticket showing she has voted in the Ward 1 Democratic primary for District of Columbia.

It's about the seniors who can only afford to live here because of their rent stabilized unit. The family who doesn't know if they can afford childcare. The immigrant who has built a life & a community here and is worried it will be ripped away. The high school students who need to know that their city still cares about them. And that is exactly what the office will be about too," Raj says, adding, "It's an honor to officially be your Democratic nominee for the Ward 1 DC Council seat."

Fifty Thousand Walkers In 100+ Cities Launch 'America250' With BAPS Charities Spirit Of Service Walk-Run

By A Staff Writer

As the United States approaches its 250th anniversary, more than 50,000 participants took part in the 2026 BAPS Charities Spirit of Service Walk-Run, held in over 100 cities across North America this spring. Each city organized its own walk-run to promote volunteerism and support local charitable causes. Together, these events turned parks, town squares, and community centers into hubs of civic engagement and pride, BAPS said in a June 20, 2026 press release. US-India relations reports

Families participated alongside fire chiefs, members of Congress, mayors, and community advocates. The America250 initiative directly benefited more than 90 organizations, including first responders, food banks, and cancer research groups throughout the U.S. and Canada, organizers claimed.

The Spirit of Service Walk-Run brought together federal, state, and local leaders to promote community, it added.

It cited the example of Greater Houston where 2,200 participants assembled at Sugar Land Town Square to support local mental health, education, and law enforcement initiatives. Congressman Christian Menefee



PHOTOS: PROVIDED BY BAPS

BAPS Charities Spirit of Service Walk-Run to celebrate USA's 250th anniversary, with a sign in the grass made by the participants.

Gilchrest and Tom Delnicki, and Rocky Hill Mayor Allen Smith.

The call to service resonated in the American heartland and South, BAPS said. In Michigan, State Senator Michael Webber and State Representative Tom Kuhn supported local initiatives in Sterling Heights. In

Jackson, Mississippi, Mayor John Horhn, State Senator Sollie Norwood, and Fire Chief Rasean Thomas participated alongside community members.

LOCALIZED PHILANTHROPY: VOICES FROM THE FRONTLINES

BAPS Charities employs a decentralized funding model, enabling local committees to select beneficiaries that serve their communities. Beneficiaries highlighted the tangible impact of the 2026 event:

- **Progressing Medical Frontiers:** "BAPS Charities' continued support holds an important role in promoting cancer research," noted Monty Permenter of the American Cancer Society in Jackson, Mississippi. "Their contributions help create a lasting influence on individuals and families affected by cancer."
- **Direct Patient Aid:** Lydia Nadeu of the Carol G. Simon Cancer Center in New Jersey added, "Today, your support helps our patients; individuals you may never know, yet your generosity allows us to continue this important work."
- **Combating Homelessness:** "Thank you for making sure that the homeless families and children that we serve have the resources they need to move from crisis to stability," stated Katrina Bostick, CEO of Family Promise of the Coastal Empire in Savannah, Georgia.
- **Sustaining First Responders:** Doug Clarke of the



Glimpses from the BAPS Charities Spirit of Service Walk-Run.

and Sugar Land Mayor Carol McCutcheon joined the volunteers.

"We go on social media and think about ourselves. We watch the news and think about how it impacts us personally," said Congressman Menefee. "But sometimes we need to focus on our neighbors, our brothers, our sisters, and our community — and that's what this is all about."

In Dallas, State Representative Matt Shaheen reinforced this message:

"We have gotten united here for a purpose. There is just joy that we experience together in serving others, and that is what BAPS Charities is all about."

In Edison, New Jersey, U.S. Congressman Frank Pallone led a bipartisan group of public officials, including State Senator Patrick Diegnan, Assemblymen Robert Karabinchak and Joe Danielson, and the mayors of Edison, Piscataway, and East Brunswick. US-India relations reports

In Pennsylvania, U.S. Congressman Brian Fitzpatrick joined State Senators Frank Farry and Steve Santarsiero, State Representatives Jim Prokopiak and Tina Davis, and Bucks County District Attorney Joe Khan. At the same time, Connecticut's efforts were supported by State Senator Matt Lesser, State Representatives Jillian



Rocky Hill Fire Department in Connecticut said the funds would help recruit and retain volunteer firefighters as the department nears its centennial.

The Walk-Run is part of BAPS Charities' broader mission. Guided by the ethos, "In the joy of others lies our own," the organization coordinates global volunteer efforts, disaster relief, and local community support.

As America approaches its 250th anniversary, thousands walking together demonstrate a commitment to advancing national ideals. These collective actions show that true citizenship involves actively supporting and uplifting our communities to create a more inclusive future, organizers said.

"The 2026 Spirit of Service Walk-Run demonstrates that collective local volunteerism can drive significant social change. By supporting local initiatives and assisting neighbors, citizens strengthen communities and set a standard of civic responsibility for the future," BAPS said.

ABOUT BAPS CHARITIES

BAPS Charities is a global charity active in nine countries across five continents, with more than 50 years of experience in humanitarian work.

The Washington Post

As tourism booms in Rio, the city tries to adapt without losing its identity

By Carla Viann

Ordering food from one of Rio de Janeiro's beach vendors used to require a mix of faith and Google Translate. Now, at Barraca do Antônio on Ipanema Beach, one of hundreds of long-standing kiosks on the sand, a newly laminated menu offers a small but telling update: Beneath the words *aipim frito* sits the English translation, "fried cassava."

Manoel Gomes Alves, the kiosk's manager, proudly holds up the menu as I spot a slightly botched translation farther down the page: The typical Brazilian cut of beef known as "contrafilé" is translated here, quite literally, as "against (contra) fillet (filé) with fries."

Behind him, young men are mixing caipirinhas and showing off their *portunhol*, a Portuguese-leaning Spanish mix heard in touristy spots. "They learned on the beach," Alves says. Alves, who has worked at the same spot for 14 years, says this summer has been his best yet. The scene points to Rio's often improvised adaptation to a growing international audience. For decades, Brazil existed somewhat outside mainstream travel, its famous beaches often overshadowed by concerns about safety and political instability. But that perception is quickly changing.

"Latin Funk," the neon paper reads, followed by the phrase *Bem Brasil*: "very Brazilian." Yet nothing about this interaction felt very Brazilian, mainly because Reggaeton isn't a popular genre here. Beyond the beach, the city's dining landscape is going through its own transformation. Rio's culinary scene has long been defined by caipirinhas in plastic cups and unfussy post-beach meals, all typically enjoyed at the same gritty dive bar. Food was never meant to be the

tourist-friendly Leblon, Ipanema and Copacabana neighborhoods. From the start, owner Fernando Kaplan says, the cafe offered flexible hours and a light menu to fit Rio's beach-centric routine.

"SO_Lo was created to really serve the carioca public," Kaplan says, referring to people born and raised in Rio. "So much so that we have customers who go two or three times a day - for a coffee, then a sandwich and maybe later a yogurt."

And the cariocas like it. In less than three years, the cafe expanded to four locations. The local-first model still holds, but the crowd is noticeably shifting. At the Copacabana location, especially, foreigners

beans. Some of these new food and bar concepts are opening in more local neighborhoods, the ones that have rarely appeared on tourist itineraries. In Laranjeiras, for example, Mercado São José, a historic building that sat shuttered for seven years, was recently transformed into a food hall inspired by such venues as New York's Chelsea Market and Lisbon's Time Out Market.

"I've noticed a higher flux of tourists in Laranjeiras, and that used to be really rare," says Lara Stahlberg, who lives in the neighborhood. Every now and then, she'll even hear a foreign accent at her local gym.

The new attractions are also pulling visitors beyond the typical tourist spots of Ipanema and Copacabana, including to Rio's favelas. Recently, on my way to a yoga class in Vidigal, a hillside community perched above Rio's wealthiest neighborhoods, I watched two women step off the backs

Last year, the city welcomed a record 2.1 million international tourists - 45 percent more than the year before - led by visitors from Argentina, Chile and the United States. And more than 1 million have already arrived this year, according to official tourism numbers.

English menus and multilingual staff may seem like small details, but they reveal something bigger: a city learning how to welcome the world without sacrificing the people and customs that make it what it is.

We're already seeing that tension play out on the sands.

Rio's beach economy, for one, has long been informal, with prices fluid and open to negotiation. The city recently started cracking down on vendors who charge tourists more than locals for food, drinks and souvenirs, a practice known as the "gringo price." Officials have even launched a study to explore ways to standardize pricing across the board, an unusual move in a city whose beach culture is often guided by personal relationships.

Recently on Copacabana, a Spanish-speaking promoter handed me a flier for a Reggaeton party. She doesn't even attempt Portuguese.

main event here, but increasingly, it is.

When I moved to Rio from New York City six years ago, brunch wasn't even a concept. Instead, sustenance was buttered toast and a quick espresso at the neighborhood bakery. Today, the long, lingering ritual is powering entire restaurants. One of those eateries is SO_Lo Cafe, a health-forward all-day brunch spot with locations in Rio's

Photos By: Carla Vianna — For The Washington Post



make up a growing share of Kaplan's clientele. He is now hiring staff who speak English or Spanish and is developing an in-house English program, where employees will learn hospitality-specific language. "We consider this super important," Kaplan says, "because it makes foreigners feel much more welcomed." Other restaurants that would have felt out of place just a few years ago are also flourishing and spilling onto the sidewalks, including Teva, a vegan spot modeled after a New York deli; Fatchia, a living-room-style disco bar serving pizza; and Virtuoso, a natural wine bar where veg-forward small plates cost more than a traditional Brazilian lunch of rice and

of motorcycle taxis at a bend in the road that gives way to a sweeping view of the beaches below. Wearing matching Brazil-themed T-shirts, they paused for a photo before continuing uphill.

The scene would have been far less common a decade ago. Rio's favelas, traditionally low-income neighborhoods, have long been associated with crime and drug trafficking and were considered largely unsafe for outsiders. It wasn't until the lead-up to the 2014 World Cup and 2016 Olympics, when the city launched a security and tourism initiative to "pacify" the most visible favelas, that more tourists began visiting.

Today, places like Vidigal and Rocinha have become tourist attractions in their own right with their panoramic views and rooftop bars, but the latest crowds have been enticed by viral social media videos.

Continued on Page 18

Embassy Of India In Washington Celebrates The 12th International Day Of Yoga

BY A STAFF WRITER

Hundreds of yoga enthusiasts gathered to participate in the Embassy of India's celebration of the 12th International Day of Yoga on June 19, 2026. Held at the iconic Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C., this year's theme was 'Yoga for Healthy Ageing.'

Ambassador Vinay Kwatra addressed the participants, speaking to yoga's universal appeal and its place as a shared heritage for all of humanity. He emphasized India's longstanding belief that knowledge should be open and accessible to everyone. It was in this spirit that India introduced the resolution at the United Nations to establish the International Day of Yoga, a resolution that went on to receive the backing of a record 175 member states.

An Ayurveda Corner was additionally set up at the venue for the purpose of disseminating information pertaining to various traditional Ayurvedic practices and associated products.

In the lead-up to IDY 2026, the Embassy of India hosted a series of curtain-raiser



PHOTOS: INDIAN EMBASSY

Hundreds of yoga enthusiasts gathered at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., June 19, 2026, to mark the 12th International Day of Yoga which falls on June 21, and is a declared day by the United Nations. The event was organized by the Indian Embassy.

events at multiple locations, including the historic Dupont Circle, Washington D.C., the headquarters of the World Bank, and

in collaboration with community-based organizations.



Above and below: Yoga instructors guiding the participants on IDY 2026, in Washington, D.C. June 19, 2026.



International Yoga Day 2026 @UN: A Global Gathering In Motion

BY ARCHANA ADALJA

The United Nations' North Lawn turned into an open-air yoga studio June 18, 2026, as more than 800 yoga enthusiasts from different walks of life gathered by the East River to mark the 12th International Day of Yoga, organized by the Permanent Mission of India to the UN, and celebrated under the theme "Yoga for Healthy Ageing."

As evening light fell across the North Lawn, participants unfurled mats in neat rows facing the river. The program began with the traditional chanting of "Om," the sound rippling gently through the crowd before instructors led the group through a sequence of asanas and breathing exercises.

The mass yoga session unfolded symbolically in the shadow of Mahatma Gandhi's statue, a permanent feature of the UN grounds. For many participants, the sight of hundreds engaged in yoga near Gandhi's likeness evoked his ideals of peace, non-violence and harmony, as well as India's enduring philosophical contributions to the world.

Yogmata Keiko Aikawa, the first female and non-Indian Siddha Master, was the chief guest. The event featured Common Yoga Protocol sessions and an advanced yoga demonstration by the Art of Living Foundation. The Chair of the International Day of Yoga Committee at the UN, Dennis Scotto, served as the Master of Ceremony.

Diplomats in formal attire, UN officials, visiting delegations and local yoga enthusiasts moved in unison—stretching, balancing and breathing together. The event became a reminder that, at the UN, global cooperation sometimes comes not in conference rooms, but on yoga mats.

Speaking at the event, P. Harish, Permanent Represen-



PHOTO: COURTESY PERMANENT MISSION OF INDIA TO THE UN

Yoga asanas seem to be a nice way to relax after a workday! Guests at the International Yoga Day 2026 at the UN, practice asanas.

tative of India, underlined Yoga's expanding global reach and its role in promoting physical, mental, and spiritual well-being across cultures and faiths. He emphasized Yoga's universal character and its roots in India's ancient wisdom, guided by the philosophy of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, the world as one family.

This year's theme, "Yoga for Healthy Ageing," placed older persons at the center of the observance. In a special message, UN Secretary-General António Guterres underscored how yoga can support societies facing unprecedented demographic change.

"From its deep roots in ancient India, yoga has become truly universal, helping millions of all faiths and cultures find calm, build strength and live with purpose," he said, noting that the practice can promote physical and mental well-being, mobility and dignity for older people worldwide.

The current year's theme directly aligns with the WHO Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021–2030), which calls for concrete efforts to keep older adults active, independent and engaged. Gentle movement, stretching, and breathing—core elements of yoga—can improve balance, flexibility and strength, reducing the risk of falls and supporting day-to-day functioning, while mindfulness and breathing exercises help manage stress, anxiety and sleep.

"On this International Day," Guterres urged, "let us extend that care to the older members of our human family and build a world where every generation can lead a healthy life."

The International Day of Yoga, observed each year on 21 June, was established after India proposed a resolution at the UN General Assembly in 2014, which was endorsed by a record 175 Member States. Introducing the idea, India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi called yoga "a way to discover the sense of oneness with yourself, the world and the nature." The 2023 UN event set a Guinness World Record.

The UN's observance of the Day speaks to urgent public health and social priorities. The organization and the World Health Organization recognize yoga as a low-cost, accessible tool to encourage healthier lifestyle choices and tackle physical inactivity, a key risk factor for non-communicable diseases such as heart disease, cancer and diabetes.

Each year, the Day highlights different facets of well-being—ranging from mental health and resilience to inclusivity and, in 2026, healthy ageing. The underlying message is consistent: yoga can help individuals cope with the pressures of modern life while fostering a sense of interconnectedness with others and with the planet.

Yoga's insight on the International Day of Yoga resonated far beyond the postures themselves, as a call for balance not only within individuals, but within communities and across generations in an ageing world.

ASTROLOGY

This week for you



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

ARIES: Opportunities may open doors for career growth and business expansion. Guidance can help you make decisions with confidence. Your partner is likely to stand by your side and bring emotional comfort. Irregular routines could leave you feeling exhausted, so maintaining rest and healthy eating habits will be important. Students are likely to achieve encouraging academic results.



TAURUS: This month encourages self-improvement. Professional advice regarding fitness may prove highly beneficial. Domestic harmony can improve. Couples should focus on honest communication to prevent misunderstandings. Students are advised to trust their skills despite outside opinions. Socially, trying something new may bring fresh connections.



GEMINI: Creative thinking and a refreshed attitude could help you stand out. Financial rewards come through consistent efforts. Physically, you are likely to feel energetic if you maintain a balanced diet. Family responsibilities may demand attention, but finding personal time will be necessary. Romantic relationships could require more care. Students may benefit greatly from the support of mentors.



CANCER: Patience may help you overcome ongoing challenges. Financial pressure could arise because of delayed returns. While caring for others, remember to focus equally on your personal goals and family life. Romantic bonds may deepen, and some relationships could move toward greater commitment. Joining wellness activities can improve physical and emotional balance. Students who stay disciplined perform well academically.



LEO: Practicing mindfulness may bring positivity. Loved ones could motivate you to pursue your ambitions. Recognition at work is possible. Students exploring entrepreneurial opportunities may gain valuable learning experiences. Romance appears joyful. Those confused about career choices may receive useful advice. Visiting a peaceful or spiritual place may also help clear your mind.



VIRGO: Innovative ideas may earn you important responsibilities at work. Financially, avoiding risk and unnecessary spending would be wise. Couples may enjoy meaningful time together. Singles could feel confident about expressing their feelings to someone they admire. Helping relatives bring satisfaction. Students aiming for overseas education may receive positive developments. Staying active can help you maintain your desired fitness level.



LIBRA: Financial stability may allow you to enjoy greater comfort. A surprise could brighten your mood. Family matters should be handled calmly. Increasing physical activity may help you stay motivated. Those planning to purchase property should carefully verify all documents before making commitments. Students who remain dedicated may achieve satisfying progress.



SCORPIO: Responsibilities require you to make difficult choices involving family matters. Patience will avoid unnecessary tension. Romantic relationships bring exciting moments. A short getaway could prove refreshing. Financial gains are possible. Regular exercise and meditation may help maintain wellness. Students are likely to receive favorable results.



SAGITTARIUS: Relationships improve when you make sincere efforts to understand your partner. Thoughtful gestures can strengthen romantic bonds further. Your optimistic nature may create harmony within the family environment. Exploring different fitness routines could bring impressive results. Students may feel highly motivated and could complete pending tasks through hard work.



CAPRICORN: Your practical thinking may help you succeed in demanding professional situations. Financial inflow looks promising, and investments could improve stability. Offering balanced advice during family discussions may help maintain peace at home. Minor health concerns that slowed you down earlier may gradually disappear. Students are encouraged to stay fully committed to their studies, as this period supports academic growth.



AQUARIUS: Wise financial planning may strengthen savings and help you secure long-term benefits. Positive changes create a pleasant atmosphere. Good news could lift your spirits this month. Romance may feel emotionally fulfilling. Making lifestyle improvements can enhance your overall wellness. Students searching for practical experience may come across rewarding opportunities.



PISCES: This month may bring progress in matters of relationships. Family disagreements could arise over sensitive issues, so patience will be essential. Protecting your peace of mind by avoiding unnecessary arguments may prove beneficial. Regular exercise and mindful eating habits can help improve recovery and health. Students should maintain respectful communication to preserve a positive reputation and academic harmony.



As tourism booms in Rio, the city tries to adapt without losing its identity

By CARLA VIANNA

Continued From Page 16

At Rocinha's Porta do Céu, or "Gateway to Heaven," tourists line up to partake in the latest trend: to have a drone capture them stepping through a weathered door on a rooftop terrace and walking toward the edge as the drone pulls away. In front of them, a sea of brick homes stretches across the hillside down to the ocean, and the massive Pedra da Gávea mountain rises in the distance.

On the day I visited, I met a couple from northern Brazil and one from Canada. It was the Brazilian couple's second time touring the favela. As the man opened the door for his partner, the drone zipped overhead, capturing the pair as they walked toward the ledge, sat together in a chair and kissed for the camera.

The videos began going viral this year, driven largely by my guide, Carlos Alberto Soares da Silva, who started posting drone videos of the favela in 2018. "I used to carry the drone in my bag and offer: 'Want a video?' I would charge 50 reais at the time. The videos were terrible back then," he says.

This is now one of the most sought-after spots in the favelas; there can be waits of up to three hours to access the Porta do Céu rooftop during high season. On the roof, there are at least a half-dozen drone pilots, each with their own equipment and tourist groups.

"A lot of the kids around here were lost, caught up in crime," Soares da Silva says. "Today I see a ton of them working in tourism. It's really cool. They start an Instagram, start making their own videos - kids who were going down the wrong path found a new purpose."

Later, I met a family who opened their own rooftop for a similar, yet more intimate experience. They painted a mural on the ledge and run a tiny bar from their kitchen, selling lemonade, sodas and caipirinhas. Owner Marcelo Campos says his wife loves teaching Brazilian dance steps to visitors, making the visit feel more interactive. Most of the family now works in the business.

"I'm very happy to see Rocinha being viewed differently," says Laryssa Silva, a yoga teacher who lives in the neighborhood. For a long time, she says, the community was seen as a "forbidden place."

But while that perception is changing, and bringing money in for new projects for children and basic sanitation works,

not everyone is convinced that the benefits are being distributed evenly. And the makeup of the neighborhood is shifting, with many longtime residents leaving, renting or selling their homes for surreal prices, all because outsiders are willing to pay.

"Nowadays, you barely recognize anyone anymore," Silva says. "Rocinha has always been crowded and chaotic, but now, within an hour, you'll see more than five groups of 15 tourists each being guided through the community."

Adam Newman, an American who moved to the Vidigal favela in 2014, worries that much of today's tourism is designed to move visitors through the favelas as quickly as possible, with little lasting benefit for the businesses there.

That's what drove him to found Favela Inc. The nonprofit organization includes Brota, an incubator for community-led projects, and Favela Experience, a tour company that changes the focus from "seeing" the favela to "meeting" the people who live there.

Newman's tours take visitors to see local social projects, such as AmeViva, which offers free yoga and jiu-jitsu classes to children and adults in underserved communities. Visitors can participate in different activities in each project - such as a self-defense class at AmeViva - and are given the opportunity to donate.

At Brota, locals can access free WiFi, laptops, a recording studio and podcast equipment. The goal, Newman says, is to fuel opportunities within the community and give residents the resources to build businesses of their own.

"If you walk through the community from one year to the next, the majority of businesses will have changed names or disappeared," he says. "My major concern is that 10 years from now, the majority of people living here will not have been from Vidigal."

Weeks later, back on Ipanema Beach, the translations on the Barraca do Uruguai menu remain imperfect. Contrafilé com fritas is still rendered as "against fillet with fries," which somehow feels fitting for a city learning to speak to the world on its own terms.

But a fresh coconut is going for 15 reais, whether you're a local or not. When I arrived six years ago, it cost 6 reais. The question facing Rio now isn't whether tourists will come. It's how the city will adapt without losing the people and places that made visitors fall in love with it in the first place.

"If profit isn't the only thing that's prioritized, and the well-being of the community is," Newman says, "everything happens differently."

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Om Chants Echo Across Times Square In New York On International Yoga Day



Yoga enthusiasts gathered at Times Square, NYC, to observe the 12th International Day of Yoga, IDY, held June 21, 2026.



Yoga practitioners and learners do the asanas at Times Square June 21, 2026.

The iconic Times Square popularly called “the crossroads of the world” resonated with chants of “Om” as hundreds of yoga enthusiasts, members of the Indian diaspora and wellness advocates gathered to celebrate the International Day of Yoga June 21, highlighting the growing global appeal of the ancient Indian practice. The theme of this year’s celebration was “Yoga for Healthy Ageing”.

The Consulate General of India, New York, in partnership with @TimesSquareNYC, celebrated the 12th International Day of Yoga at the iconic Times Square, bringing together yoga enthusiasts from diverse nationalities. The Indian Consulate posted a video with ‘Glimpses’ of the IDY event, as well as pictures, on X.com @IndiaInNewYork.

Speaking to ANI, Yoga Guru Dr HR Nagendra, regarded as Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s yoga guru, credited him for taking yoga to the global stage.

“Today is a great day because our Prime Minister (Narendra Modi) brought International Yoga Day to the world. Yoga is essential for healthy ageing... It is an ancient science that guides modern science to go beyond the physical... Everyone should practice yoga... so that we can move forward and make the world one family,” he said.

Members of the Indian diaspora also emphasized yoga’s role in promoting health, inner peace and global harmony.

Prem Bhandari told ANI, “I am thankful to Yoga Guru Dr HR Nagendra Gururji for the message of Yoga from here today... It is the dream of Gururji that VYASA University is established here... We want to take this work forward. Thanks to the PM of India for having 21st June declared



The Indian Consulate co-hosted the event at Times Square. Seen in photo is also the Consul General of India in New York Binaya Srikanta Pradhan.



as International Yoga Day... Yoga is very necessary for inner peace... and I am promoting it as much as possible.”

Entrepreneur and philanthropist Satish Gupta highlighted the efforts of S-Vyasa University in advancing yoga-based research and therapy.

Gupta told ANI, “Our entire team of S-Vyasa University has come here from Dallas... Yoga is a therapy and it is a privilege to be celebrating it here at the iconic place of the world... S-Vyasa is offering research-based therapy and hoping to take it to a level where people practice Yoga in their households.”

Speaking to ANI on the occasion, S-Vyasa University Vice Chancellor Dr Manju Nath Sharma said the theme of this year’s celebration was “Yoga for Healthy Ageing”.

Sharma said, “This is a special occa-



Renowned yoga guru HR Nagendra was among the high-profile attendees and community activist Prem Bhandari speaking at the June 21, 2026 IDY celebration at Times Square.

sion for all of us... This year our theme is Healthy Ageing because everyone wants to age in a healthy way and Yoga is the

only way to achieve it... Everyone will continue to do Yoga daily, which will give everyone a chance to live their life towards Healthy Ageing.”

This year’s theme, ‘Yoga for Healthy Ageing’, reflects the growing global emphasis on healthy and active living across the lifespan.

As populations age and non-communicable diseases and lifestyle-related health concerns rise globally, the emphasis is shifting from simply adding years to life to enhancing health span, quality of life and overall well-being.

The International Day of Yoga is observed annually on June 21 and is celebrated across the world to raise awareness about the physical, mental and spiritual benefits of yoga.

-ANI WITH ADDON FROM DESI TALK

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