

PAGE 17

**Sikh Student Challenging
Civics Competition Results**

PAGE 15

NASA Awardees

PAGE 19

**Epic Ramayana Trailer
Summons Global Awakening**

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IN CHICAGO

PAGES 10,12

**India Wins 39 Medals @Commonwealth Games
in Scotland. 13 Golds!**



**Indian American Physicians
Launch Preparations For
AAPICON 2027**

PAGE 8

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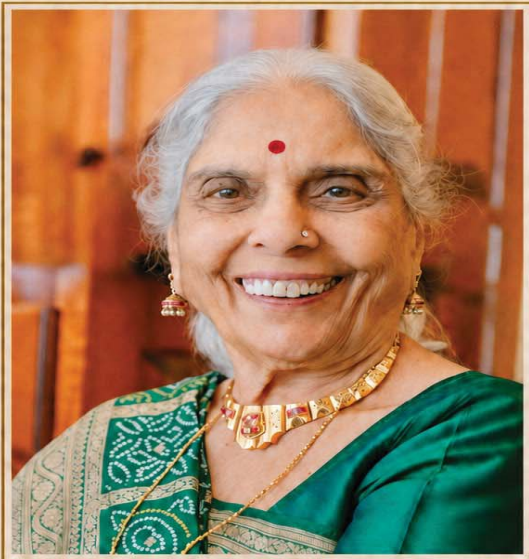


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IN LOVING MEMORY OF
Shraddhanjali (Tribute)



Late Suhagben Rajnikant Parikh

(Passed away on July 25, 2026)

It is with deep sorrow that the Parikh family of Nadiad and Ahmedabad announces the passing of **Smt. Suhagben Rajnikant Parikh**, who left for her heavenly abode on July 25, 2026.

Suhagben was a warm, kind-hearted, and deeply compassionate person. Throughout her life, she devoted herself to serving her family and community. She played an active role in numerous social and religious organizations and was always ready to help those in need.

She was known for her loving nature, humility, generosity, and cheerful personality. For nearly **40 years**, she actively participated in women's organizations and community service, earning the love and respect of everyone who knew her.

She always encouraged others, inspired positive values, and treated everyone with affection and dignity. Her memory will remain forever in the hearts of her family, friends, and all whose lives she touched.

May the Almighty grant her eternal peace and bless the bereaved family with strength to bear this irreparable loss.

— The Family of Late Suhagben Rajnikant Parikh

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Education Needs A Radical Overhaul For The AI Age

By VIVEK WADHWA

AI can provide every child with a personalised tutor that speaks their mother tongue, adapts to their pace, and presents ideas through tailored pathways

India has reached a rare national consensus: Education must change. The outrage over examination leaks and widespread corruption creates an opportunity to go far beyond securing question papers, punishing brokers, or tightening supervision. India has the chance to shed the colonial baggage that has constrained its classrooms for generations — and build an education system for the age of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

The education system clearly demands a radical overhaul and AI can help India build something far better. (Shutterstock)

The education system clearly demands a radical overhaul and AI can help India build something far better. (Shutterstock)

Examinations have long defined learning in India, with children spending their formative years memorising answers and chasing test scores, rarely given the ability to reason, question, create, or solve real-world problems. This fixation on high-stakes testing has created an economy of desperation and corruption. When a single score can dictate a child's entire future, marks become a commodity, coaching becomes a multibillion-dollar industry, and stolen papers become extraordinarily valuable. Corrupt officials, brokers, and criminal syndicates profit from families driven by the fear that one exam will make or break their children's lives.

Also Read: NEP at six: Is India's education system ready for the AI age?

AI will make this old form of cheating look primitive. Students already use AI to write essays, generate research papers, produce code, and answer examination questions — all while understanding virtually none of it. The next wave of academic fraud will no longer rely on officials secretly selling leaked papers. Instead, machines will quietly perform the very work that schools continue to mistake for learning.

The education system clearly demands a radical overhaul and AI can help India build something far better. But to understand what should replace the old model, we must first understand how we arrived here.

The British imposed an educational model engineered

entirely to serve an empire. They required compliant clerks and obedient administrators to enable them to govern a vast nation. Examinations were used to sort Indians by recall, conformity, and usefulness to their white masters.

Thomas Macaulay explicitly sought to create a class that was Indian by birth, but English in intellect, tastes, and opinions — sidelining India's rich traditions of philosophy, mathematics, medicine, and debate. A civilisation that gave the world Nalanda and Takshashila was subjugated and trained to seek legitimacy from foreign rulers.

India won independence, but sadly the structural baggage of colonial education remained. The country now has the chance to complete the unfinished work of independence: By designing a system that once again develops original thinkers, pioneering scientists, bold entrepreneurs, visionaries, and courageous leaders.

That transformation begins by redefining learning itself, and fortunately, India already knows how — because it taught the world how to learn. Long before standardised testing and rigid classrooms, education across India was anchored in the guru-shishya tradition and the gurukula. Learning was rooted in a personal relationship with a teacher who understood each student's unique temperament, abilities, and pace. Teaching was tailored to the individual, weaving knowledge together with character, discipline, curiosity, and the courage to ask difficult questions.

That ancient principle remains completely relevant today: Every child learns differently, and education becomes transformative when it nurtures the whole person. Technology, for the first time, allows us to apply this concept at scale. AI can provide every child with a personalised tutor that speaks their mother tongue, adapts to their pace, and presents ideas through tailored pathways. It can identify gaps in comprehension and democratise quality instruction across all languages. Relieved of repetitive drills and mechanical grading, teachers are freed for their highest purpose: mentoring students, cultivating judgment, and igniting curiosity.

India must also restore its tradition of disciplined intellectual debate, and the world's greatest historic centre of learning is once again showing the way forward. Nalanda University, in its revived form, has resurrected *strrtha* — the rigorous examination of ideas through structured dialogue and argument. In this tradition, scholars were required to master opposing positions,

present concrete evidence, defend their logic, and listen carefully before responding.

Also Read: Focusing on processes, not outcomes, as base for education reforms

Nalanda has integrated *strrtha* into its academic calendar and convocation process, requiring students to defend their research orally before panels of scholars. This practice relies on two pillars: *Prvapaka*, demonstrating a thorough understanding of the opposing argument, and *Uttarapaka*, delivering a reasoned, evidence-based response. Students are judged on logic, evidence, and intellectual honesty, rather than merely the polish of a written submission.

This model offers the ultimate antidote to AI-generated slop. A student can easily prompt a machine to produce an impressive paper, but genuine understanding is tested when asked: Why do you hold this view? What evidence contradicts your thesis? What assumptions are you making? Borrowed words always collapse under serious questioning.

Primary and secondary schools should embrace this same principle. Students should spend more time discussing ideas, solving real-world challenges, conducting experiments, and defending their work. Major projects should feature oral defences. An AI-generated answer offers little protection when a student must explain the reasoning and apply it to a new problem.

India should continue to absorb the best of western science and technology, but the oppressive machinery left behind by the British must no longer define the limits of its ambition. That system served an empire and rewarded passivity, rote learning, fuelled systemic corruption, and constrained generations of Indian genius. India has finally outgrown it.

This is the moment to free teachers to inspire, give every child a personalised path to mastery, and restore dialogue, questioning, and intellectual courage to the heart of the classroom.

India once taught the world how to learn. In the age of AI, it has the opportunity — and the duty — to do so again.

Vivek Wadhwa is CEO, Vionix Biosciences. The views expressed are personal



PHOTO: COURTESY VIVEK WADHWA

Mamdani's Grocery Plan Is Mainly Just More Subsidies

By RYAN BOURNE AND NATHAN MILLER, CATO.ORG

New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani has just published details of how he plans to fulfill his campaign pledge to open five city-owned grocery stores across the city. On Monday, he released his "Recipe for Affordability" proposal and a call for grocery store operators to manage the coming stores. That confirms that rather than government-managed locations, these city-owned stores will really just be delivering a trumped-up subsidy.

The stores will carry a core basket of produce, meats, and other groceries placed on average 30 percent below market prices. But American supermarkets net just 1 to 4 percent profit margins on sales, so you can't wring out a 30 percent discount just by forswearing profits. The proposal is therefore quite candid that the difference will be made up by taxpayers. It promises to "offer subsidies that will lower grocery prices" and admits that "sustaining these lower prices will require targeted public investment."

That undisclosed subsidy total comes on top of \$70 million to build out the stores, plus waived rent and property taxes on city-provided sites. This is a more disguised subsidy, of course. A public site used for a store is one that isn't sold, leased, or used for other municipal functions, such as housing or schools. Costs will materialize when NYC must rent space for functions it could've put at the locations it owns or when it taxes New Yorkers for money it could've got by selling land.

Much media attention has focused on the distortive effects on competition. But five subsidized stores are unlikely to have a huge effect citywide. And because Mamdani says the stores won't stock hot food, beer, or cigarettes, plenty of grocery and bodega revenue is insulated. Yet there will probably be localized undercutting of independent stores on thin margins in the city blocks immediately surrounding each government entity. Whether local consumers end up with more or fewer choices is ambiguous, depending on how neighboring grocers respond to the new government competitor.

The deeper problem is the distortions steep subsidies will bring over time. Lower out-of-pocket costs on

popular staples will generate excess demand and arbitrage opportunities for resellers. That invites the familiar failure of subsidized retail—some combination of empty shelves, purchase limits, customers wasting time looking for goods, long lines, and black market resale. Over time, there will be pressure for more subsidies and enforcement costs to overcome these challenges. And there's no guarantee, of course, that the people who get access to the subsidized goods will be the poorest families struggling to make ends meet.

Government ownership layers on further risks that subsidies will grow. The plan promises "best-in-class wages and benefits" and preferences for favored local vendors. That'll inevitably add running costs at the same time Mamdani wants to lower final prices. Then there will be political reasons to favor certain suppliers. With voters on all sides—shoppers, employees, and wholesalers—the size of the grocery subsidies will tend to drift higher as the mayor tries to appease everyone. As Whole Foods co-founder John Mackey put it when I interviewed

—CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



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Midwesterners, Plan Your Weekend Activities In Advance!

COMPILED BY ARCHANA ADALJA

In August 2026, Indian and South Asian communities across the Midwest are gearing up for a packed calendar of Independence Day-themed festivals, concerts, and community fundraisers. A few other cultural events all fall within this calendar period. From large-scale cultural melas to late-night music marathons, here is a guide to the major upcoming events, with dates, cities, and full details.

SKOKIE, ILLINOIS – SOUTH ASIAN COMMUNITY FESTIVAL

Date: Friday, August 7, 2026 (starting at 2:00 PM)

Event: South Asian Community Festival

City & Venue: Skokie, Illinois – Holiday Inn & Suites Chicago North Shore

Organizers: Mestarlet Entertainment

Skokie's South Asian Community Festival offers an afternoon and evening of entertainment and engagement at the Holiday Inn & Suites Chicago North Shore. The program includes:

- Live music performances
- An appearance and Q&A session with actor

Aashir Wajahat

- A South Asian marketplace featuring vendors, goods, and cultural products

SCHAUMBURG, ILLINOIS – FIA CHICAGO INDEPENDENCE DAY GALA & EXPO

Date: Sunday, August 9, 2026

Event: FIA Chicago Independence Day Gala & Expo

City & Venue: Schaumburg, Illinois – Renaissance Schaumburg Convention Center Hotel, 1551 Thoreau Drive North, Schaumburg.

The FIA Chicago Independence Day Gala & Expo will be a major 80th Indian Independence anniversary celebration, to be held at the Renaissance Schaumburg Convention Center Hotel. The program will span the full spectrum of community, business, and entertainment activities, including:

- A business conclave
- A parade
- A formal dinner
- A live celebrity concert headlined by singer Shibani Kashyap

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS – UNSCRIPTED: FROM RAGA TO RHYTHM

Date: Sunday, August 9, 2026, at 3:00 PM

Event: Unscripted: From Raga to Rhythm

City & Venue: Chicago, Illinois – The iO Theater, 1501 N Kingsbury St, Chicago.

Organizers: Chicago Tyagaraja Utsavam (CTU) and The iO Theater

Part of a mid-August cultural slate, “Unscripted: From Raga to Rhythm” is a special musical exploration hosted at The iO Theater. The show features:

- The Alaya Project

- The Patri Satish Kumar Ensemble
- Together, they present a cross-genre journey from classical Indian raga traditions to contemporary rhythmic styles.

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS – RAGAS IN THE PARK

Date: Friday, August 14, 2026, at 6:00 PM

Event: Ragas in the Park

City & Venue: Chicago, Illinois – Warren (Laurence) Park, 6601 N Western Ave, Chicago.

Organizers: South Asian Classical Music Society of Chicago.

Ragas in the Park offers a family-friendly outdoor evening in Warren (Laurence) Park, celebrating classical Indian music. The event presents:

- Performances from both Hindustani and Carnatic classical music traditions
- A relaxed, picnic-style setting suitable for families and community groups

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS – AZADI AFTER DARK

Dates & Times:

From Friday, August 14, 10:00 PM to

Saturday, August 15, 2026, 4:00 AM

Event: Azadi After Dark

City & Venue: Chicago, Illinois – ROCBAR, 25 W Hubbard St, Chicago.

Organizers: Desivibes Productions

For late-night revelers, Azadi After Dark is a back-to-back Independence Day party, running through the night at ROCBAR. The event fuses multiple musical influences, featuring:

- Bollywood anthems
- EDM and Afro-house drops

The format is designed as a high-energy, cross-cultural club experience leading into Independence Day.

ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA – INDIAFEST 2026

Date: August 15, 2026

Event: Indiafest 2026

City & Venue: St. Paul, Minnesota – Minnesota State Capitol Grounds

Organizers: India Association of Minnesota (IAM), Website: <https://iamn.org/>, Phone: (651) 321-3421. Email: info@iamn.org, Mailing Address: P.O. Box 130158, St. Paul, MN 55113.

Minnesota's flagship Indian cultural celebration returns to the Minnesota State Capitol Grounds as Indiafest 2026, recognized as the state's largest cultural festival. The event draws over 25,000 attendees and features:

- More than 100 booths showcasing businesses, community groups, and cultural organizations
- A wide array of regional Indian food
- Cultural performances on stage
- An open dance floor inviting community participation

NOVI, MICHIGAN – AQL INDIA DAY / INDIA DAY MICHIGAN

Date: August 15, 2026

Event: AQL India Day / India Day Michigan

City & Venue: Novi, Michigan – Vibe Credit Union Showplace/Suburban Collection Showplace

Organizer: India League of America (ILA) Michigan, Website: ilamichigan.org, Email: info@ilamichigan.org, 35560 Grand River Ave, # 251, Farmington Hills, MI 48335.

Novi will host one of the Midwest's most prominent Independence Day observances, known variously as AQL India Day and India Day Michigan. Held at the Vibe Credit Union Showplace (Suburban Collection Showplace), the program is described as “the Midwest's largest indoor Indian event.”

The celebration features:

- Prominent state guests
- A wide range of cultural performances
- A massive marketplace highlighting Indian products and services
- Cultural workshops
- Traditional Indian cuisine from multiple vendors
- Art exhibitions
- Special celebrity guests, including high-profile figures such as former Indian cricketer Harbhajan Singh

SCHAUMBURG, ILLINOIS – INDIA FEST MELA 2026: AAZADI KA JASHAN

Date & Time: Saturday, August 15, 2026, from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM

Event: India Fest Mela 2026: Aazadi Ka Jashan

City & Venue: Schaumburg, Illinois – National India Hub (930 National Pkwy, Schaumburg)

India Fest Mela 2026: Aazadi Ka Jashan is a free, full-day community festival at the National India Hub in Schaumburg. The program includes:

- A flag hoisting ceremony marking India's Independence Day
- A grand parade featuring over 100 organizations
- Cultural dances spanning various Indian regions and styles
- A fashion show highlighting traditional and contemporary South Asian attire
- A JALSA concert finale, rounding off the day with live music and performances

Across these cities, from St. Paul and Novi to Chicago, Schaumburg, and Skokie. August 2026 is set to offer a dense calendar of Indian and South Asian cultural programming. Together, these events span civic parades, classical music, club nights, celebrity appearances, charity runs, and large-scale melas, providing multiple entry points for communities across the Midwest and beyond to celebrate “Azadi” in their own style.

OPINION

Mamdani's Grocery Plan Is Mainly Just More Subsidies

-CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

him earlier this year, these stores will be constrained only when they collide with Thatcher's problem of running out of other people's money.

Tellingly, the plan's own diagnosis undercuts its solution. It blames high prices, in large part, on operating costs and the scale disadvantages that independent stores face. It also pledges to reduce regulatory burdens

and streamline permitting so private grocers can operate more easily and cheaply. That'd be a real affordability improvement, and one Cato endorses in our own Handbook on Affordability, but it gilds the lily to pile on a new government-run grocery bureaucracy.

A lot of conservative commentators seem to expect these stores to quickly showcase the perils of socialism in eradicating abundance, à la Venezuela's Mercal, but Mamdani's small-scale experiment is far removed from

nationalized supply chains. His five government-owned, privately managed stores, paired with vast subsidies to make managers whole, will more likely amount to an underwhelming and increasingly costly boondoggle. To the extent these stores make groceries cheaper for some, they'll do so overwhelmingly by shifting costs onto taxpayers. It's nothing new, just more subsidies.”

-THIS ARTICLE APPEARED ON CATO.ORG JULY 29, 2026.



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New Gandhi Ashram Shaikshanik Sankul: A New Vision for Education to Open in 2027



Life Global joins hands to create a residential educational ecosystem inspired by Gandhian values and modern innovation. With the active support and vision of Life Global, the New Gandhi Ashram Shaikshanik Sankul is emerging as a transformative educational campus, welcoming its first students in 2027. Inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of Nai Talim, the residential campus will seamlessly integrate academic excellence with values, vocational skills, community living, and character building. More than an educational institution, the Sankul is envisioned as a vibrant learning community featuring classrooms, hostels, library, dining facilities, workshops, playgrounds, gardens, and open learning spaces. Students will experience a balanced education that combines academics with practical skills, service, leadership, and environmental responsibility. Reflecting Life Global's commitment to sustainable development, the campus will incorporate solar energy, green infrastructure, and eco-friendly practices, alongside a Primary Health Centre serving both students and the surrounding community. Through this landmark initiative, Life Global is helping create a future-ready model of education where learning, sustainability, and humanitarian values come together to nurture responsible, compassionate, and socially conscious leaders for generations to come.

Life Global Idar Chatralay Project : Honoring Acharya Vinoba Bhave's Legacy Through Sustainable Development



Inspired by these timeless values, Life Global is supporting the development of the Idar Chatralay Project to honor Acharya Vinoba Bhave's legacy and create a space dedicated to education, reflection, community engagement, and sustainable development. The project is envisioned as a living tribute - not only preserving the memory of a great humanitarian leader but also transforming his principles into meaningful action for future generations. A significant feature of the project is the installation of a solar power system, demonstrating Life Global's commitment to clean energy, environmental protection, and climate-resilient development. The Life Global Idar Chatralay Project represents the belief that true development must balance human well-being with the protection of our planet. Made possible through the generous support of Mr. Haren Joshi and Mrs. Pratima Tolat, the project reflects a shared commitment to preserving inspiring legacies, empowering communities, and building a cleaner, greener, and more compassionate future for generations to come. Through this initiative, Life Global continues its mission of creating lasting positive change by combining humanitarian values with innovative solutions. The Idar Chatralay Project will stand as a symbol of hope - a place where humanitarian service, education, renewable energy, and environmental stewardship come together to inspire generations to live with greater responsibility, simplicity, and harmony with nature.

Lighting the Future: How a Grassroots Solar Movement in India is Inspiring Global Change



As the world searches for climate solutions, two villages in Gujarat are proving that meaningful change begins at the grassroots. Sankapura and Bhanpur in Mehsana district have transformed into solar-powered communities through the support of Amar Shah, Life Global Foundation, USA, local partners, and government subsidies. Life Global Foundation contributed approximately \$700 per household, making clean energy affordable for families. Today, 160 homes run on solar power, collectively reducing up to 320 metric tons of CO₂ emissions annually. Families now enjoy reliable electricity, lower energy costs, greater energy independence, and improved quality of life, with some earning additional income by supplying surplus power to the grid. The journey of Sankapura and Bhanpur demonstrates how community participation, visionary philanthropy, and local partnerships can create a cleaner, more sustainable future - one ray of sunlight at a time.

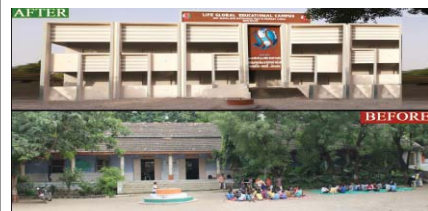
Reviving the Legacy of Mashru and Patan Patola Through Technology and Innovation



Life Global and Gramshree Empower Traditional Artisans for a Sustainable Future. For centuries, Patan Patola and Mashru textiles have symbolized India's extraordinary handloom heritage. To preserve these timeless crafts while creating sustainable livelihoods, Life Global, in partnership with Gramshree, is driving a transformative initiative that blends traditional craftsmanship with technology, innovation, and skill development. The initiative has digitally documented over 150 Patola layouts and 200 Mashru designs, creating a permanent archive that safeguards invaluable artisan knowledge while enabling contemporary product development. Through research, design innovation, and structured training, the project empowers artisans to preserve authenticity while meeting global market demands. Today, the initiative directly supports over 80 artisans in Patan and connects with a wider network of 35,000+ artisans across India, opening opportunities for women and first-generation weavers. Looking ahead, Life Global envisions establishing a Centre of Excellence for Patan Patola and Mashru Weaving with modern infrastructure, research, and training facilities. By preserving heritage, empowering artisans, and fostering innovation, Life Global is ensuring these iconic crafts continue to flourish as symbols of India's cultural legacy while creating sustainable livelihoods for generations to come.



Life Education Centre: Building Futures, Transforming Generations



At Life Global, we believe that every child deserves access to quality education, regardless of where they are born. Guided by this belief, 10 years ago we have partnered with Project 'Life', one of India's most respected humanitarian organizations with nearly five decades of service, to transform rural education into a powerful catalyst for lasting social change. Together, we are reimagining government primary schools by creating safe, modern, and inspiring learning environments equipped with smart classrooms, digital education, libraries, separate sanitation for boys and girls, playgrounds, and teacher capacity - building programmes. Our mission extends beyond constructing school buildings - we are nurturing dreams, unlocking potential, and empowering children to become confident leaders of tomorrow. With the successful transformation of more than 30 rural schools, this initiative is creating meaningful opportunities for over 10,000 students every year, strengthening entire communities through the power of education. Every school we help build reflects the generosity of our donors and partners. Together, we are not simply investing in infrastructure - we are investing in futures, transforming lives, and creating a legacy of hope that will inspire generations to come.

Life Women Empowerment Centre: Empowering Women. Transforming Generations.



At Life Global, we believe that empowering a woman transforms not only her life but also the future of her family and community. Through our partnership with Project 'Life' since last 10 years, we are creating sustainable opportunities for more than 3000 women that enable economically disadvantaged women to achieve financial independence, dignity, and self-confidence. Our Women Empowerment initiative equips women with practical vocational skills through structured training programmes in tailoring, embroidery, handicrafts, beauty care, digital literacy, and other livelihood-oriented trades. Beyond skill development, we nurture entrepreneurship by providing guidance, mentoring, and opportunities that help women build sustainable sources of income and become active contributors to their households and society. Every woman empowered represents a family uplifted, a child inspired, and a community strengthened. By supporting this initiative, our donors and partners are helping create pathways to self-reliance, resilience, and lasting social transformation. At Life Global, we believe that true progress is measured not only by economic growth but by the opportunities we create for women to realize their potential. Together, we are transforming lives, fostering equality, and building stronger, more inclusive communities for generations to come.

Be the Reason : A Life Changes Forever

At Life Global, we pledge to honour every contribution with integrity, transparency, and measurable impact. Together with our partners and donors, we remain committed to transforming lives, empowering communities, and creating a more compassionate and equitable world. Your support today is an investment in brighter futures, empowered communities, and lasting social transformation. Together, through Life Global, we can turn compassion into meaningful action and dreams into reality.

Life Global (USA)
Mr. Amar Shah

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Physicians Kick Off AAPICON 2027 With Chicago Launch

By BHAILAL M. PATEL

The American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPi) officially launched preparations for AAPICON 2027, its National Convention, during a kick-off event held in Oak Brook, Illinois.

Mayor Larry Herman of Oak Brook, IL thanked physicians for their contributions to medicine, education and humanitarian service. He read a proclamation recognizing AAPi as the nation's largest ethnic medical organization, representing more than 100,000 physicians, residents, fellows and medical students. PHOTOS: Asian Media USA

The gathering brought together hundreds of physicians, healthcare leaders, elected officials, community representatives, dignitaries, and families to mark the beginning of what the organization says is one of the most significant conventions in AAPi's history, a press release from Asian Media USA said.

Dr. Utpal Parikh, Convention Co-Chair welcomed attendees and emphasized the importance of unity, collaboration, and shared purpose in making AAPICON 2027 an extraordinary success. The current President of AAPi is Dr. Meher Medavaram, the 42nd leader since the organization was formed.

Dr. Radhika Chimata sang both the American and Indian National Anthems, symbolizing the dual heritage of Indian-American physicians.

Among the distinguished leaders recognized during the evening was Dr. Suresh Reddy, Past President of both AAPi and the Indian Medical Association (IMA), an Interventional Radiologist and Oak Brook Village Trustee. Reflecting on AAPi's rich legacy, Dr. Reddy highlighted Oak Brook's unique distinction as the only community in the United States to have produced three national AAPi Presidents. He invited Oak Brook Mayor Larry Herman and Village Manager and CEO Greg Summers to join him in recognizing the community's longstanding partnership with AAPi.

Mayor Herman praised Indian-American physicians for their extraordinary contributions to medicine, education, research, and humanitarian service throughout the United States and across the world. He presented an official proclamation recognizing AAPi as the nation's largest ethnic medical organization, representing more than 100,000 physicians, residents, fellows, and medical students.

The proclamation also celebrated Oak Brook as the home of AAPi's international headquarters for more than three decades while honoring the three national AAPi Presidents who have hailed from the village—Dr. Gopal Lalimalani, the organization's 11th President; Dr. Suresh Reddy, the 36th President; and Dr. Medavaram.

AAPi honored the Mayor with its Distinguished Leadership Award for his steadfast support of the medical community.

Dr. Medavaram, the only physician to have simultaneously served as President of both AAPi and the Indian Medical Association, outlined her vision for AAPICON 2027, describing the convention as far more than an annual gathering.

"AAPICON 2027 will be a collaboration of excellence, a platform for scientific innovation, a commitment to physician wellness, a center for mentoring the next generation of physicians, an expansion of global health initiatives, and a renewed dedication to serving humanity," she declared.

She encouraged every physician to become an ambassador, innovator, mentor, and team builder, recalling how previous Chicago conventions inspired many young physicians



Mayor Larry Herman of Oak Brook, IL thanked physicians for their contributions to medicine, education and humanitarian service. He read a proclamation recognizing AAPi as the nation's largest ethnic medical organization, representing more than 100,000 physicians, residents, fellows and medical students.

who later rose to national leadership within AAPi.

Supporting that vision, Dr. Umang Patel, Convention Chair, pledged to deliver one of the finest conventions in AAPi's history.

AAPi Treasurer Dr. Sujeeth Punnam, an interventional cardiologist from Stockton, California, presented the goals for fundraising, participation, and national engagement on the road to the Convention. Providing strategic guidance was Senior Advisor Dr. Bharat Barai.

Dr. Dwarakanatha Reddy, President of IMA Telangana

State and Overseas Coordinator for the Global Health Summit 2027 in Hyderabad, India, extended a formal invitation to physicians worldwide to participate in the upcoming summit. He reaffirmed his commitment to strengthening collaboration between Indian and American medical professionals.

Dr. Lalimalani, former Oak Brook Mayor and AAPi's 11th National President, reflected on the organization's evolution, recalling major milestones, including renaming the organization to the American Association of

Physicians of Indian Origin to better reflect its inclusive mission, relocating AAPi's headquarters to Oak Brook, and achieving the historic accomplishment of bringing a sitting U.S. President to an AAPi national convention.

Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi, D-Ill. applauded Indian Americans as one of the nation's fastest-growing, best-educated, and most successful communities. While celebrating their professional achievements, he urged physicians to increase their participation in civic life through voting, public service, advocacy, and leadership.

Past AAPi President Dr. Ranga Reddy of Springfield, Illinois, who has meticulously documented the organization's history and helped organize previous Chicago conventions, shared valuable insights from earlier conventions and pledged his full support to the organizing committee.

As the evening concluded, past presidents of AAPi and IMA, officers of the IMA Charitable Foundation, and leaders representing numerous community organizations—including the Federation of Indian Associations (FIA) and the American Telugu Association (ATA)—joined together for commemorative photographs celebrating the launch of AAPICON 2027.



Mayor Larry Herman of Oak Brook, IL thanked physicians for their contributions to medicine, education and humanitarian service. He read a proclamation recognizing AAPi as the nation's largest ethnic medical organization, representing more than 100,000 physicians, residents, fellows and medical students.



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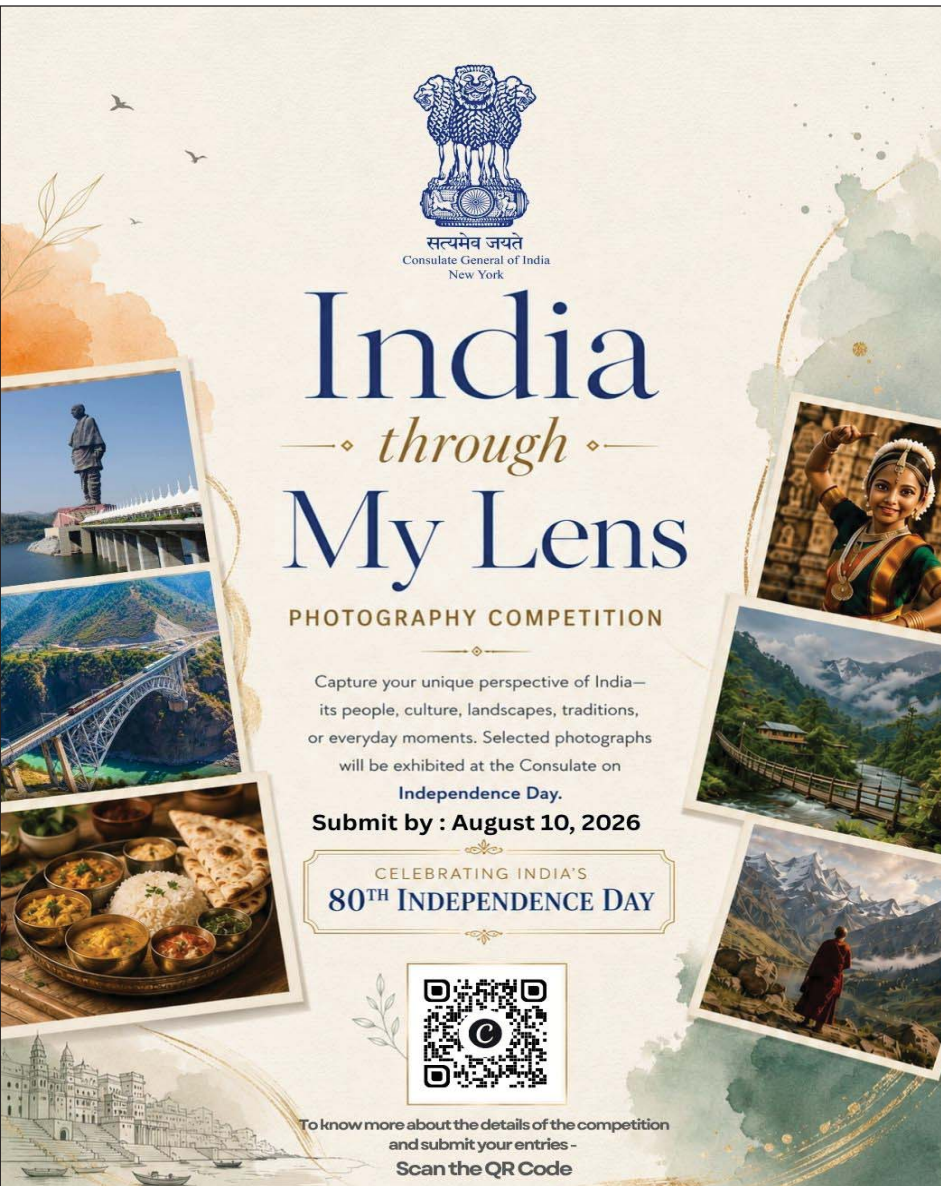
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IC: 26-026834 (OMKAR S HATTI)



INCIDENT DETAILS

DATE: 01/19/2026
TIME: U/K
LOCATION: Harrison, NJ 07029

LAST CONTACT: Mr. Hatti was last heard from in January of 2026 and had possibly rented an Airbnb in Hoboken, NJ 07030. Anyone with information on the whereabouts of Mr. Hatti, please contact the investigating Detective listed below.

INVESTIGATING DETECTIVE: Detective Brian Fisher
PHONE: (973)-483-4101 EXT. 5124
EMAIL: bfisher@townofharrison.com

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Indian Contingent Wins 39 Medals At Commonwealth Games 2026 In Glasgow

ANI (WITH ADDONS FROM DESI TALK)

-GLASGOW, SCOTLAND

India wrapped up a memorable Commonwealth Games 2026 campaign by finishing fourth in the overall medal standings with 39 medals, as newly-crowned boxing champion Jaismine Lamboria was named the country's flag-bearer for the closing ceremony, where the Commonwealth Games baton and flag will officially be handed over to Ahmedabad, host of the 2030 edition.

India concluded the Glasgow Games with 13 gold, 17 silver and nine bronze medals from a 122-member contingent, matching the fourth-place finish achieved in Birmingham four years ago despite competing in a significantly trimmed programme that excluded several sports in which the country traditionally wins medals, according to ESPN.

The closing ceremony will also mark the formal transition to India, with Gujarat Deputy Chief Minister Harsh Sanghavi and Sports Ministry Secretary Hari Ranjan Rao representing the country during the handover as Ahmedabad prepares to welcome the Commonwealth sporting family in 2030.

Jaismine, who clinched the women's 57 kg boxing gold after defeating defending champion Michaela Walsh in the final, will carry the Indian flag during the ceremony, capping a Games that saw boxing once again emerge as the nation's biggest medal contributor.

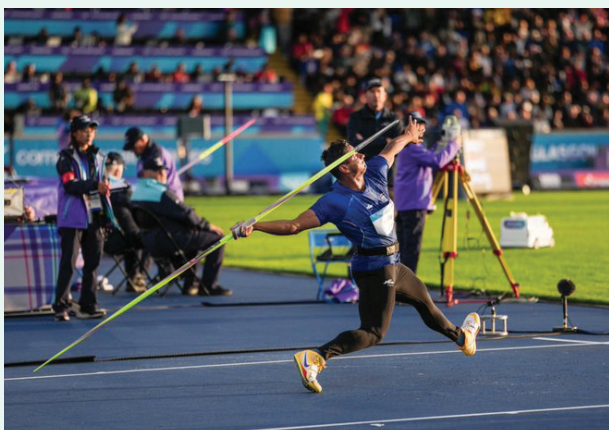
Although India's tally was lower than the 61 medals won in Birmingham in 2022, the context tells a different story. Thirty of those medals had come in sports that were dropped from the Glasgow program. With only 122 athletes compared to 210 four years ago, India still managed to maintain its fourth-place finish while producing an even better medal conversion rate, with 38 athletes returning home with medals. Long-distance runner Gulveer Singh was the only Indian to win two medals.



Sakshi Chaudhary clinched Gold in the Women's 51kg boxing category at CWG.



Jaismine Lamboria



Neeraj Chopra wins Silver Medal for Men's Javelin event at CWG 2026.

Australia dominated the Games with a staggering 171 medals, including 70 gold, while England finished second with 110 medals and Canada claimed third place with 62 medals. India ended level with hosts Scotland on 39 medals but finished fourth courtesy of a stronger gold-medal count.

The campaign was headlined by boxing, where India reinforced its growing supremacy at the Commonwealth Games by collecting 10 medals, including seven golds.

World champion Jaismine Lamboria led the charge, while Sakshi Chaudhary (51kg), Preeti Pawar (54kg), Priya Ghanghas (60kg), Arundhati Choudhary (70kg), Sachin Siwach (60kg) and Ankush Panghal (80kg) also stood atop the podium. Lovlina Borgohain, Jadumani Singh and Narender Berwal added silver medals to complete an outstanding campaign for the Indian boxers.

Weightlifting once again delivered consistently for India, with Olympic champion Mirabai Chanu continuing her remarkable Commonwealth Games dominance by winning a third consecutive gold medal in the women's 48kg category.

Silver medals followed through Rishikanta Singh, Raja Muthupandi, Gyaneshwari Yadav, V. Ajaya Babu, Harjinder Kaur and Lovepreet Singh, while Bindyarani Devi added a bronze to extend her impressive record at the Games.

Judo provided one of India's biggest breakthroughs as Asmita Dey scripted history by becoming the country's first-ever Commonwealth Games judo gold medalist after winning the women's 48kg title.

Harsh Singh quickly followed by capturing gold in the men's 60kg division, giving India an unprecedented double celebration in the sport. Yamini Mourya claimed silver, while Unnati Sharma secured bronze.

Athletics produced several landmark performances and emotional stories throughout the Games.

-CONTINUED ON PAGE 12



Indian contingent in the opening ceremonies at Commonwealth Games 2026 in Glasgow.



Asmita Dey wins Gold in Judo Women's 48kg Final.



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Indian Contingent Wins 39 Medals At Commonwealth Games 2026 In Glasgow

-CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

Olympian Neeraj Chopra returned to the Commonwealth podium with silver in the men's javelin after a season-best throw of 85.83m, an encouraging result in his comeback from injury. Yash Vir Singh joined him on the podium with a personal-best effort to take bronze.

Murali Sreeshankar continued his consistency by winning silver in the men's long jump with an 8.09m leap, while Sarvesh Kushare secured India's first athletics medal of the Games with silver in the men's high jump.

Tejaswin Shankar created history by becoming India's first Commonwealth Games medalist in the men's decathlon, claiming bronze after an outstanding performance across two demanding days of competition.

Distance runner Gulveer Singh emerged as one of India's standout performers, winning silver in the men's 10,000m before adding bronze in the 5,000m to become the country's only double medallist in Glasgow.

India also enjoyed consecutive podium finishes in

PHOTO: X.COM @NARENDRA MODI



Gulveer Singh at CWG wins Silver in Men's 10,000 meter event.

the men's triple jump, where Praveen Chithravel earned redemption with silver after narrowly missing a medal in Birmingham, while Selva Prabhu took bronze.

Seema Kaliramna rounded off the athletics medal haul with bronze in the women's discus throw.

Para athletics underlined the remarkable progress India has made in disability sport, producing multiple historic moments and three double podium finishes.

Sharmila Dhankar won gold in the women's shot put F57 with a season-best effort, while Shilpa K. Shyla secured bronze in the same event.

India achieved a memorable one-two finish in the men's 100m T47 as Dilip Mahadu Gavit stormed to gold in a Games record time of 10.71 seconds, with Mohammed Basil M taking silver.

Another Indian clean sweep followed in the men's shot put F57, where Soman Rana won gold ahead of compatriot Shubham Juyal, who claimed silver.

India's opening medal of the Games had come through para powerlifter Jhandu Kumar, whose bronze medal set the tone for an impressive campaign.

Not every event ended with a podium finish. On the final day, judokas Ishroop Narang, Avtar Singh and Yash Ghanghas bowed out without medals, while the track

cycling contingent fell short of qualification.

Sixteen-year-old para cyclist Lisha Das finished sixth in the women's C4-C5 1000m time trial, bringing India's competitive campaign to a close.

If Glasgow showcased India's established strengths, it also revealed the country's growing depth.

Beyond the familiar excellence in boxing and weightlifting came historic judo golds, milestone performances in athletics, and dominant displays in para sport, reflecting an expanding medal base despite a reduced sporting program.

The focus now shifts quickly to the Asian Games, just weeks away, while the closing ceremony signals the beginning of India's journey towards hosting the Commonwealth Games once again.

As the baton and Commonwealth Games flag pass from Glasgow to Ahmedabad, India leaves Scotland with 39 medals, countless breakthrough performances and renewed confidence that the country's next chapter on the Commonwealth stage may be even bigger on home soil in 2030.



Harjinder Kaur wins Silver in Women's 69kg event at CWG.



Shilpa Kanchugarakoppalu Shyla wins Bronze Medal at Women's Shot Putt Final at CWG.



Lovepreet Singh wins Silver in Men's 110kg event at CWG.



Gulveer Singh winning Bronze Medal at Men's 5,000 meter event at CWG 2026.

The \$100,000 H-1B Fee Is Blocked Again: What the First Circuit's Ruling Actually Changes

By David H. Nachman, Esq

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Ludka Zimovcak



Snehal Batra

The \$100,000 H-1B fee is off the table again, at least for now. On July 24, 2026, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit denied the government's request to keep the fee in effect while its appeal continues, finding that the administration had not shown it was likely to succeed on the merits. That denial lets the underlying district court ruling take hold, meaning USCIS is now barred from assessing or collecting the fee on covered H-1B petitions.

This is the third turn in a case that has moved quickly since it started. Back on June 8, 2026, a federal judge in Massachusetts ruled that the fee exceeded the administration's authority and struck it down entirely. Days later, on June 12, the same court paused its own ruling through an administrative stay so the government could seek emergency relief from the First Circuit, and the fee remained in effect on an interim basis while that request was pending. With the First Circuit's July 24 denial, that interim period is over and the fee is blocked while the case moves forward.

It is worth being precise about what this ruling does and does not do. The government's appeal on the merits of the case is still ongoing, and an appellate court declining to pause a lower court's order is a different question from that same court eventually ruling on whether the fee was lawful in the first place. The Department of Justice has continued to defend the fee and can keep pressing its case. Employers should treat this as a meaningful, favorable development rather than a permanent resolution.

There is also a separate deadline worth watching. The Presidential Proclamation that created the \$100,000 fee in September 2025 is set to expire on September 19, 2026 unless the administration renews it. Given how this litigation has gone so far, renewal is not guaranteed, and that date adds another point at which the fee's status could change independent of anything the courts decide.

For employers, the practical result right now is that H-1B petitions subject to the fee, particularly those involving beneficiaries outside the United States who require consular processing, are moving forward without the \$100,000 charge attached. A number of firms are filing petitions while this window is open. Given how quickly the fee's status has shifted over the past two months, anyone relying on its current blocked status should keep in close contact with immigration counsel as the appeal and the September proclamation deadline both continue to develop.

Continued on Page 18



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Walter Reed's Skull Base Team (Including Indian American Physician) Performs Innovative Brain Surgery

BY ANN BRANDSTADTER,
WALTER REED NATIONAL MILITARY
MEDICAL CENTER

-JULY 30, 2026

For 15 years, Marine Corps Staff Sgt. Andy Archer lived with a relentless, everyday companion — a pounding headache.

"I'd wake up with a headache and go to bed with a headache," Archer recalled.

He chalked it up to severe allergies or sinus issues, relying on over-the-counter decongestants to get through his demanding days.

For Archer, a former drill instructor at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, South Carolina, and a current flight line mechanic at Marine Corps Air Station New River, North Carolina, pushing through the pain became part of his daily routine. But recently, Archer's vision began to blur.

"I became nearsighted; it was bad," Archer said. "I thought I was getting old."

He finally mentioned the chronic pain to his doctor, a provider with Marine Centered Medical Home New River.

The doctor ordered an MRI that revealed a mass the size of a golf ball, measuring roughly 4.4 centimeters, sitting directly in front of his pituitary gland and pressing against his optic nerve.

Archer needed neurological care, and he needed it fast. It was suggested that he go to the premier medical hub for complex cases: Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland.

At Walter Reed, Archer consulted with Army Lt. Col. Charles Miller, neurosurgeon, and Army Maj. Jagatkumar "J." Patel, anterior surgeon, both assigned to the hospital's skull base team. The specialized surgical team mapped out an innovative, minimally invasive procedure.

The surgeons planned to extract the massive brain tumor entirely through Archer's nose.

"Historically, most of these surgeries were done open, which is a much more challenging procedure for the patient," Patel said. "Today, if a tumor is the appropriate size and location, open surgery just isn't necessary. Through the nose, we get the best access and the best chance of complete removal."

The procedure required a highly synchronized collaboration between two experts. Patel developed a plan to navigate the complex nasal anatomy and create a clear surgical pathway. Archer had a severely deviated septum,



PHOTO: ANN BRANDSTADTER, DOW

The Walter Reed National Military Medical Center's skull base team removes a complex brain tumor from a service member at the hospital in Bethesda, Md., July 7, 2026. The team is a collaborative, multidisciplinary group of specialists (including Army Lt. Col. Charles Miller and Army Major Jagatkumar "J." Patel) who treat some of the most complex head, neck and skull base tumors.



PHOTO: ANN BRANDSTADTER, DOW

Marine Corps Staff Sgt. Andy Archer poses for a picture with occupational therapist Colleen Reilly two days after the removal of a complex brain tumor at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Md., July 9, 2026.

and Patel likened the fix to "removing the sheetrock but leaving the studs" so that the nose wouldn't collapse.

Once the pathway was clear, Patel used an endoscopic camera to provide high-definition, close-up visualization on a surgical monitor. This allowed Miller the crucial two-handed freedom to dissect and extract the tumor safely.

"If he needs to get to critical structures, I can drive the camera closer,

so he has perfect visualization," Patel noted. "Dr. Miller takes on these complex cases when many surgeons wouldn't want to risk the complications or step out of their comfort zone. My skills in navigating the nasal approach are only useful because he is skilled enough to completely remove the tumor once we get there. Dr. Miller is very well equipped to do these surgeries. It is a true team effort."

In July, the team successfully removed more than 99% of the benign mass. Still, a microscopic fraction of the tumor remained wrapped tightly behind Archer's optic nerve, that if removed, carried major risks.

"You must ask, 'Is it worth giving the patient a stroke or permanently changing their perfect vision just to get that last millimeter?'" Patel said.

Prioritizing the patient's health, the team decided to leave that final fraction, confident the tumor is highly unlikely to return.

"The biggest thing was to get the tumor out safely," Patel said. "A minimally invasive approach through the nasal passages is more challenging and we are mindful that [the tumor] has to be in a certain spot to go through the nose."

To complete the surgery, the team performed a reconstruction of the skull base, using a small graft taken from Archer's leg to seal the area.

Just two days after surgery, sitting in the surgical intensive care unit at Walter Reed, there were no visible signs that Archer had just undergone major brain surgery.

Archer's vision had already started to clear, and while he was dealing with expected post-operative headaches and leg soreness from the graft, his spirits were high. He and his wife, Rebecca, have been blown away by the hospitality and professionalism of the hospital staff.

"The care has been awesome," Archer said, giving special praise to the nurses, as well as the physical and occupational therapy teams.

Rebecca echoed his sentiments, noting that the on-campus Navy Lodge provided a comfortable, supportive environment for their recovery process.

For surgeons Miller and Patel, and the Walter Reed skull base team, Archer's remarkable outcome highlights a broader mission: ensuring military beneficiaries know that they do not need to look to the civilian sector for cutting-edge medical care.

"I don't think anyone else in the Defense Health Agency has this kind of team performing these complex skull base surgeries," Patel said. "Our goal is to make sure providers know this capability exists, so patients have the best options. Most patients are happy to stay in military healthcare."

Thanks to an observant Navy doctor, a collaborative surgical team and the innovative capabilities of Walter Reed, Archer's toughest battle appears to be behind him.

-(THIS ARTICLE APPEARED ON WAR.GOV
JULY 30, 2026)

3 Indian Americans Among 18 NASA Awardees Of 2026 Innovative Technology Concepts

BY A STAFF WRITER

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration announced July 29, 2026, that it's Innovative Advanced Concepts (NIAC) program has created 18 new awards "to support visionary ideas to improve aerospace technologies" in areas ranging from the exploration of the solar system to understanding the universe. Three of the 18 awards are going to Indian Americans.

The 18 NIAC Phase I awards total \$3.2 million. Each award provides up to \$175,000 for a nine-month initial investigation. The NIAC projects are about early-stage concept development and are not considered official NASA missions, the organization clarified.

"NASA has outlined an ambitious vision for the future of space exploration, we're returning (to) the Moon to stay, advancing to Mars, and pushing to deepen our understanding of space," said Greg Stover, director of the Advanced Research and Technology division within the Research and Technology Mission Directorate at NASA Headquarters in Washington. "Achieving that will require more than incremental technological advancement. It means we need great leaps. These awards are the kinds of innovation the world needs NASA to help foster."

As an innovation incubator, NIAC funds early development of potential breakthrough technologies, covering a wide range of subjects.

Researchers, known as NIAC Fellows, will investigate their concepts and identify potential challenges and opportunities for further development.

The 3 Indian-origin Researchers/NIAC Fellows for 2026 Phase 1 grants are:

Saptarshi Bandyopadhyay, NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Pasadena, California: Dimming the Sun Using Controllable Dust Cloud to Reduce Solar Insolation (DimSun)

C. Charania, Zeno Power Systems, Inc., Washington: Extended Astronaut Radioisotope-EVA in Nighttime and Deep-space Icy Landscapes (EARENDIL)

Anish Damodaran Roshi, University of Central Florida, Orlando: PS21: Transforming Submillimeter Space Interferometry with Photonic Technologies

NASA's biography shows Bandyopadhyay, an IIT Bombay graduate and a recipient of several awards, is a Robotics Technologist at the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory, California Institute of Technology, where he develops novel algorithms for future multi-agent and swarm missions. In 2020, he was named



PHOTO: ROBOTICS, JPL.NASA.GOV

Saptarshi Bandyopadhyay

a NASA NIAC fellow for his work on the Lunar Crater Radio Telescope on the far-side of the Moon. He received his Ph.D. in Aerospace Engineering in 2016 from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA, where he specialized in probabilistic swarm guidance and distributed estimation.

He earned his Bachelors and Masters degree in Aerospace Engineering in 2010 from the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay, India, where as an undergraduate, Bandyopadhyay co-founded and led the institute's student satellite project Pratham, which was launched into low Earth orbit in September 2016. He won the gold medal for India at the 9th International Astronomy Olympiad held in Ukraine in 2004.

Charania is currently the Senior Vice President of Space Business Development at Zeno Power and also an Advisor at Balerion Space Ventures. He worked at NASA till April 2025 as Chief Technologist, Office of Technology, Policy and Strategy.

As NASA's chief technologist, Charania served as principal advisor to NASA's administrator on technology policy and programs. He led technology innovation at the agency and aligned NASA's agencywide technology investments with mission needs across its six mission directorates. Charania also oversaw technology collaboration with other federal agencies and the private sector while coordinating with external stakeholders.

Charania worked within NASA's Office of Technology, Policy, and Strategy (OTPS) where he succeeded former



PHOTO: NASA.GOV

A.C. Charania

OTPS Associate Administrator Bhavya Lal, who had been serving as acting agency chief technologist

Considered an experienced leader in entrepreneurial space and aviation ventures, Charania's private sector work included projects under contract for NASA, the Air Force, and the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA). His experience spans multiple areas including launch vehicles, hypersonics, human/robotic exploration, lunar landers, planetary defense, small satellites, and aviation autonomy.

Before joining NASA, he served as vice president of product strategy at Reliable Robotics, a firm working to bring certified autonomous vehicles to commercial aviation. Prior to Reliable Robotics, Charania worked on advanced development programs at Blue Origin.

Prior to Blue Origin, Charania worked at Virgin Galactic, and Virgin Orbit. He was also a NASA Innovative Advanced Concepts (NIAC) fellow and was on the Lunar Exploration Analysis Group Commercial Advisory Board. He received a bachelor's and a master's degree in aerospace engineering from the Georgia Institute of Technology and a bachelor's in economics from Emory University.

Damodaran Roshi, a graduate from the University of Kerala, is an experimental radio astrophysicist. Over the course of his 20+ years career he has served in a few of the world's most advanced observatories and has acquired extensive observational research experience utilizing radio interferometers and single-dish telescopes, his biography on the Florida Space Institute website says.



PHOTO: ISLUCEEDU

Michelin Cha Anish Damodaran

His astronomy research projects focus on studying the interstellar medium, molecular cloud formation and aspects of star formation. Dr. Roshi has also successfully designed, built, and commissioned several sophisticated instruments for astronomy research.

He has an engineering degree in electronics and communications from the University of Kerala. In 1989, he joined the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR), National Center for Radio Astrophysics, India as a Research Associate/Scientific officer and upon completion of his PhD thesis, was appointed as a member of the faculty. He was a Jansky postdoctoral fellow at the National Radio Astronomy Observatory (NRAO), USA (2000-2002), worked as Associate Professor at the Raman Research Institute (RRI), India (2003-2010), Scientist at NRAO (2010-2018), Senior Scientist and Head of Radio Astronomy Group at Arecibo Observatory (2019-2023). Since 2020, he is a Scientist at the Florida Space Institute, University of Central Florida (UCF).

His most significant contribution is a technique to estimate magnetic fields in molecular clouds using carbon radio recombination lines (Roshi 2007). Other notable achievements include his contributions to the development of the world's most sensitive phased array feed through accurate electromagnetic modeling (Roshi, Shillue, Fisher 2019).

His current passion is mentoring and training next generation experimental astrophysicists. With this goal in mind, he is establishing an 'Experimental Astronomy Lab' at UCF.

The Washington Post

What a \$150 hotel will get you in Barcelona

By Andrea Sachs

BARCELONA - With 73 neighborhoods and roughly 680 hotels and guesthouses, Barcelona presents a lodging problem: There are just too many choices.

In my search for a three-night stay in early July, I spent such an exhaustive amount of time researching neighborhoods, I was ready to fall into any bed. Well, almost: I would not be snuggling up with strangers in a shared dorm room.

Goedele Mangelaars, a travel expert and founder of the trip-planning platform Pink Notebook, wrote in her newsletter that Barcelona is one of the easiest European cities to flub.

“A hotel in the wrong area will make the city feel exhausting,” she wrote, “and a hotel in the right one will make you start browsing apartments by day three.”

Mangelaars recommends staying in the Gothic Quarter, Eixample, Les Tres Torres or the central area around Plaça de Catalunya, but she warned that finding a quality hotel for \$100 or less anywhere in the city could be challenging. By comparison, she said I would have an abundance of options higher up the scale. “Barcelona on average punches above its weight price-wise, especially if you compare it to Paris, Milan and Rome,” Mangelaars said. “It’s such a design-driven city that there are a huge number of fun boutique hotels that really come in at the \$200 and \$300 price point.”

Inside by Meliá Barcelona Apolo: \$132

Inside Barcelona Apolo, described online as “in the center of Barcelona,” sits on Avinguda del Paral·lel, a theater district reminiscent of pre-sanitized Times Square. The commercial strip had a slightly scruffy edge. Day and night, I saw an alert security guard patrolling the lobby. The hotel clearly caters to bulk tourism - the terminal-size lobby was teeming with groups of international travelers and flight crew members between trips - but the experience didn’t feel manufactured. The front desk staff was attentive and engaging, offering budget tips such as paying for the breakfast buffet in advance to save a few euros. The lobby was upbeat, with boldly colored decor, artful lighting fixtures, plants (real, I checked) and shelves of curios and books (also real). I could order food and drinks from the Bite Box, a pocket-size bar, or construct a tapas tasting menu from the grab-and-go market that stocked Spanish delicacies such as Iberian dry-cured pork, three-cheese boards, ham-stuffed olives and cava.

Upstairs, I passed more lounging opportunities, including an area that resembled a pop art gallery and private huddle rooms, en route to La Terraza. The Mediterranean restaurant serves three square meals indoors and on a terrace with hanging wicker lanterns and a cactus garden that reminds guests, “I’m not an ashtray.”

I eventually made my way to my room, which featured every shade of neutral, a palette more soothing than bland. In addition to a fridge stocked with free “locally sourced” beverages, I had a full-size electric kettle with coffee and tea. I drank my fizzy water (“con gas”) in a coffee mug adorned with long-lashed eyes. A coaster winked back at me. The scaffolding outside my window was not very picturesque, and the morning construction awoke me like songbirds with chest colds. But for tranquility, I simply retreated to the restaurant’s back patio. I ordered a coffee from the host, who threw in a pastry of my choosing.

Highlights: The decor was cheerful and uplifting, and the amenities were generous. In addition to the in-room extras, the hotel offered a 24-hour gym (though the bike was broken), e-bike rental and a luggage storage room for a fee. The front desk sold an array of unique gifts, including dog treats and striped onesies, the Smile eucalyptus-and-peppermint toiletries stocked in the bathrooms and eye-embellished towels and mugs. The breakfast buffet was a lavish spread and not too outrageously priced at \$22, if purchased in advance.

Lowlights: I was hard-pressed to find flaws, but if pushed, the bed squeaked like a cot, and the surrounding road work was occasionally loud. Though I didn’t want to spend too much time on Avinguda del Paral·lel, I could easily lose myself in the nearby Parc de Montjuïc and its myriad attractions, including the Olympic and Sports Museum and the Joan Miró Foundation.

Worth the price: ¡Absolutamente!

Photos by: Michele Curel — The Washington Post



Though many exceptional hotels fall within this range, rates are creeping up. According to CoStar, which compiles hotel data, the average daily rate in June was \$227, up from \$157 in 2022. In addition to the general higher cost of living, overtourism, and efforts to rein it in, are affecting prices, too.

In 2024, the mayor announced that Barcelona’s roughly 10,000 licensed short-term apartment rentals would lose their permits by November 2028, shrinking the lodging supply despite strong demand. Meanwhile, the Parliament of Catalonia doubled the tourist tax earlier this year, and Barcelona officials approved an annual one-euro increase of the local surcharge until 2029. The amount depends on the type of establishment.

As of April, guests are required to pay an additional roughly \$10 per person per night (up from about \$6.60) at a four-star property and about \$14 (up from about \$8.70) at a five-star hotel.

To save money, I used third-party booking sites as a research tool but reserved on the hotel’s site, taking advantage of up to 20 percent off plus a lowest-price guarantee. I also signed up for each hotel’s loyalty membership plan, which promised discounted prices, perks and an incentive to come back to Barcelona.



Hotel Granados 83: \$213

Derby Hotels founder Jordi Clos collects properties and art, and he decorates the former with the latter. Each of his 12 hotels spotlights a distinct artistic period, place or style. Hotel Granados 83 showcases Hindu and Buddhist works from India and Cambodia, dating from the 8th century.

The hotel, which resides in a mid-19th-century building in Eixample, was serene inside and out. The lobby, with its leather couches, tastefully worn Oriental rugs and artworks on pedestals, could double as a private art gallery or psychoanalyst’s waiting room. I felt like a philistine asking the front desk for recommendations on bars hosting World Cup watch parties.

My room was a yin and yang of design: classic and industrial, ancient and contemporary, a Nespresso machine beneath a centuries-old stone frieze.

Natural light poured through the balcony windows, as did glimpses of a guest sunbathing by her pool. I instinctively avoided that side of the room to give her semiprivacy.

Guests in suites can paddle around their own pool. The rest of us have to squeeze into the rooftop pool, which is better suited for soakers than swimmers. In the early evening, the three couches on the terrace were occupied. I perched on the edge of the pool and drank a sangria from Terrace Bar 8. I passed on the tapas menu because if the small plate tipped over, I didn’t want to have to rescue a ham croquette or prawn in sweet chili sauce from the pool.

The hotel does not have an on-site restaurant, though I could have ordered from an extensive takeout menu. The breakfast buffet (about \$30) had a little of everything: fruit, meats, cheeses, yogurt, etc. I sat on the back terrace, which had much better views than my room. No bikini-clad guests, just tropical plants and a server breaking down the buffet.

Highlights: The Zen-like spaces, industrial architecture and Asian art were striking, not staid. The box of truffles and turndown service of chocolate and a rose were a thoughtful touch. The staff was incredibly personable and helpful, assisting with even the most specific requests, such as where to buy espadrilles. Derby Hotels guests receive free admission to Clos’s Egyptian Museum (normally about \$16).

Lowlights: The gym was sad, with only two bikes for cardio equipment, one of which was broken. For a real meal, my only options were to eat takeout in my room or go out. The hotel claims to follow sustainable tourism practices, yet in the bathroom, two tiny plastic bottles of lotion sat beside a sign touting its eco-friendly policies.

Worth the price: The hotel is easy on the eyes but thin on amenities. I might pay \$50 more to upgrade to a suite with the semiprivate pool but would keep a cover-up within reach.

To be continued on Page 18

Judges Accused Of Denying Sikh Student Points In National Civics Contest

By LAUREN LUMPKIN

The Education Department hosted a televised civics game show for students last month to celebrate America's 250th birthday. Weeks later, the results are being disputed and members of Congress called the contest "rigged" after judges rejected a Sikh student's answers.

And constitutional law experts who reviewed the questions and answers are torn.

Aangad Singh, 15, had studied for months for the Presidential 1776 Award, hosted in partnership with a constitution education group. His family had forgone vacations so he could stay home and practice. When an illness spread through their Connecticut home, everyone donned masks so that Aangad could stay healthy enough to keep studying.

Under bright lights at the Kennedy Center on June 9, he stood before the cameras alongside seven other contestants in a suit and turban for the taping of the show, hosted by TV personality Mario Lopez. He answered questions about federal courts, declaring war, and slavery incorrectly, according to the judges – mistakes that led to his elimination from the competition.

Okay, that happens, he reasoned. But something felt off to him and his parents. He would later learn that if at least one of his answers had been scored differently, he could have advanced in the competition – and contest organizers were unwilling to address the alleged discrepancies.

After his experience was reported this week by NOTUS, the congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus called foul in a post on X.

"Why did the judges improperly grade a Sikh student's correct responses as wrong?" the group asked. "Why did the Department of Education refuse to conduct a review? This Trump-led civics competition has the words RIGGED written all over it."

To Aangad, it's straightforward: If he answered a question correctly, he should have been awarded points. He'd been told by his parents, who emigrated from India in the early 2000s, that in the U.S., hard work gets rewarded and success is based on merit. But the civics competition challenged the family's concept of what's fair.

"We try to do everything right. We follow the laws, we follow the rules, we pay our taxes. We do everything right that's expected of good citizens, and the only thing we want in return is justice," said Aangad's father, Bhalindar Singh, who immigrated in the pursuit of a good education. "I know it's a different world that we live in, not everybody feels that way."

After watching the broadcast on June 30, Aangad's family debated what to do, and eventually decided to send an email July 14 to the Education Department asking for a review of the responses and information on the scoring. Their emails went unanswered for days.

On Tuesday, an agency official told them in an email that they enjoyed working with Aangad and directed them to rules stating the judges' decision is "final and binding."

The civics competition was unveiled early this year as one of many celebrations of America's semiquincentennial. The event tested high school students on the country's founding, the Constitution and other historical documents. Aangad, who is used to public speaking, decided to give it a shot.

"I just thought it was an extraordinary opportunity to really delve into the founding documents," he said in an interview with The Washington Post. "I did it mainly for the learning aspect of it, going deep into our history."

The competition consisted of three rounds: an online multiple-choice exam, an in-person oral competition and the final show at the Kennedy Center. The top three finalists would split a \$250,000 scholarship prize and get to

PHOTO: SCREENGRAB FROM YOUTUBE VIDEO IN ACBS NEWS SEGMENT



Aangad Singh at the Presidential 1776 competition, answering a question. Photo: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jbiXZPIRhuE>

visit with President Donald Trump in the Oval Office.

For weeks, Aangad would return home from school, have a snack and a glass of milk, then study. His father peppered him with questions about the Constitution and the American Revolution.

He passed the online test and made it through the oral competition.

At the televised finals, he advanced through the third challenge before getting eliminated with most of the other students.

It came as a surprise, Aangad said. There was no scoreboard, so it was unclear how many points each participant had racked up.

After Aangad left the stage to join his parents in the audience, he replayed every answer in his head. He pulled up the Constitution on his phone, hoping to see where he'd messed up.

"We didn't know where he lost the points," his father said.

Then his competitors suggested something was amiss. "They were like, 'I don't know what happened. We don't know how he did not make it to top three,'" Bhalindar recalled another parent saying. "They were, kind of, more shocked than us." But without knowing the official score, they couldn't know for sure.

Later, the winner would tell her hometown paper she was surprised at who made it to the top three.

Weeks passed, and Aangad went back to his normal routine. He played pickleball and prepared for a public speaking competition in California. On June 30, he watched the game show's broadcast on CBS with his family.

After the third challenge, a scoreboard flashed on screen.

Aangad was in sixth place with 16 points. He had just missed a question about federal courts.

"According to Article III of the U.S. Constitution, in which cases do the federal courts have jurisdiction? List at least four for full credit," the proctor said.

"Our federal courts have jurisdiction over maritime or admiralty jurisdictions; cases in which the state may be a party and citizens of another state; controversies between citizens of different states; controversies between multiple states; and controversies in which a state and a subject of a foreign nation is involved," Aangad said.

The judges said just three of them were correct. Some constitutional experts are split.

"They're basically accurate," David Super, a Georgetown Law professor whose expertise includes constitutional law, said about Aangad's answers. He said he would have given the teen credit.

Elizabeth Earle Beske, a constitutional law professor at American University, said the judges' grading was "stingy," but ultimately agreed with them.

Maeva Marcus, a leading constitutional studies scholar at George Washington University, said the categories

Aangad named were originally in Article III, but two of them were removed by the 11th Amendment. "He was wrong," she said. "The judges were right."

If that is the case, the question should have been worded differently, the Singhs said.

In the fourth challenge, a lightning round where students scored points by answering as many questions as possible in 30 seconds, Aangad was asked which amendment ended slavery. "Thirteenth," he said. A red X flashed on screen.

It was the correct answer – when other students provided that response, they earned two points. Aangad still doesn't know why he wasn't awarded points as well. However, the broadcast's captions show that Aangad said "13th."

The questions were developed and scored by the James Madison Memorial Fellowship Foundation, which works to improve the way the U.S. Constitution is taught in schools. The organization's board, appointed by the president, includes Education Secretary Linda McMahon and circuit court Judge Raymond Kethledge, who was on Trump's Supreme Court shortlist in 2018.

The foundation's leaders did not respond to multiple requests for comment about the competition or how it was scored.

In response to questions from The Post, the Education Department referred to the competition's rules.

"The contest was designed so that judges exercised independent good faith judgment in selecting finalists and winner," a spokesperson said in an email. "This fact was outlined in the competition rules to which every participant agreed."

The judges did not respond to requests for comment.

Katy Forsythe, a high school social studies teacher who proctored the game show, said her role was to read questions and relay the judges' rulings.

"The main relevant context is that everyone involved in the competition is under contract to help maintain its integrity," Forsythe said in an email. "As with any dispute, I will put my faith in the due process of law enshrined in our Constitution rather than the court of public opinion."

If Aangad had scored points for either of the missed questions he would have made it to the final round and secured at least \$25,000 in scholarship money, according to calculations by his family and The Post.

That fact has nagged at him since he left D.C.

In an emailed response to the family's request for a review of Aangad's incorrect answers, an Education Department staffer called Aangad an "incredibly personable and driven student," but did not answer questions about how the competition was scored.

"They did not engage with the substance of our questions," Bhalindar said. He's grown distrustful; he isn't sure if bias is at play. "The more you withhold the facts, the more suspicious it becomes."

Aangad's mom, Ramandeep, can't help but wonder if her son, a first-generation American, a Sikh boy in a turban, was denied what he deserved.

"Talk to me, clarify my doubt," she said about the contest organizers. "Tell us the reason this question is marked incorrect. At least that will give us some closure."

Aangad is a bit more diplomatic about it all.

"I don't think we can jump to conclusions until we actually have the information. There's nothing more dangerous than just throwing around baseless conclusions," he said, adding that all the students he competed against deserved to be there. "Right now, we're just trying to solidify the facts, what actually happened."

If he was wrong, he'll accept it, he said. His dad said the family won't stop until they know for sure.

"We just want some justice, you know?" Bhalindar said. "I mean, in the United States, that shouldn't be an exception."

-THE WASHINGTON POST

ASTROLOGY



This week for you

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

ARIES: Progress in your professional life. Enhancing skills opens the door to growth. Financial planning strengthens security. Fitness routine makes you energetic. Family life remains warm. If your love life feels distant, open communication can rekindle the spark. A trip may leave you refreshed. Holding on to property could prove beneficial. Helping brings fulfillment. Students receive encouraging feedback.

TAURUS: The week is optimistic. Good health brings enthusiasm. Career opportunities increase job satisfaction. Financial planning, prove rewarding. Family matters require patience. Romance flourishes. A drive lifts your spirits. Property matters may require more patience. Acts of kindness enhance your well-being. Students gain valuable learning experiences.

GEMINI: Your physical well-being is one of your strongest assets. Investments deliver results. Career growth require persistence. Family could benefit from honest conversation. Romance may bring beautiful moments. A short trip or visit to a nearby destination can be refreshing. Sharing your success may bring lasting happiness. Students who improve their study routine achieve better academic results.

CANCER: Positive developments may brighten both your life. Career prospects appear promising. Staying committed to healthy habits. Financial planning may strengthen your future. Romance may remain calm and moments may deepen bond. A peaceful outing may help you relax. Those planning to buy a home may come across an attractive opportunity. Charity can bring inner peace. Students with a structured study plan perform well.

LEO: Reviewing your financial plans may improve your stability. A balanced lifestyle can keep you motivated. Workplace challenges may become valuable learning experiences. Family provides emotional comfort. Love relationships may grow stronger. Travelling can create joyful memories. Investments deserve observation. Volunteering can be deeply rewarding. Students may need to work harder.

VIRGO: Financial matter improve with planning and wise investments. Your health is likely to remain stable. Professional responsibilities may increase. Harmony within the family can make home life satisfying. Romance looks pleasant. A group outing may provide welcome relaxation. Property-related decisions may prove rewarding. Community service brings a sense of fulfillment. Academic tasks could require extra dedication.

LIBRA: Professional progress looks encouraging. Family matters improve. Varying fitness routine keeps you motivated. Romantic relationships become warmer. Previous financial decisions provide support. Purchasing could bring satisfaction. Travel introduce fresh perspectives. Acts of generosity can strengthen your social connections. Students who manage time efficiently achieve better results.

SCORPIO: Healthy habits improve well-being. Financial planning can strengthen your position. Leadership skills increase career progress. Family harmony can be maintained. Romance may bring pleasant surprises. Travel introduce you to experiences. Investments offer benefits. Networking create opportunities. Students find online learning productive.

SAGITTARIUS: Love takes a positive turn. Financial planning strengthen future. Building professional relationships help you overcome challenges. Paying attention to your diet and daily routine can improve your health. Travel brings memorable experiences. Renovation adds value to property. Community service is fulfilling. Students benefit from online and classroom education.

CAPRICORN: The week promises progress. Financial gains may improve. Your fitness levels stay high. Romantic relationships may become more. Family bonds, can bring joy. Workplace challenges may encourage you to sharpen your skills. Property matters continue to look favourable. Rather than travelling, spending time relaxing at home may prove more rewarding. This is also a good period for self-reflection and personal growth.

AQUARIUS: Looking after your physical should remain priority. Careful budgeting strengthen financial security. Spend quality time with family. Professional life brings satisfaction. Love may take a quieter pace. Singles benefit from focusing on personal growth. Home improvement plans move ahead. Reputation remains positive, and helping brings satisfaction. Group learning enhance academic understanding.

PISCES: The week bring happiness through family support and financial stability. Loved ones encourage you in ways. Planning for financial security produce lasting rewards. Romance appears fulfilling. Prioritising your health will keep you feeling your best. Creative thinking and help you make progress at work. Travel need slight adjustments. Investing in land or property could prove beneficial. Students will make the most of opportunities.

IMMIGRATION

The \$100,000 H-1B Fee Is Blocked Again: What the First Circuit’s Ruling Actually Changes

By DAVID H. NACHMAN, ESQ

Continued From Page 13

Frequently Asked Questions
Is the \$100,000 H-1B fee currently in effect?
No. As of July 24, 2026, the First Circuit denied the government’s request to keep the fee in effect during its appeal, so USCIS is currently barred from assessing or collecting it on covered petitions.
Is this a final decision on whether the fee is legal?
No. The First Circuit only ruled on whether to pause the lower court’s order while the appeal continues. The government’s appeal on the underlying legality of the fee is still pending.
Why did the fee go back into effect briefly in June?
After the district court struck down the fee on June 8, it issued its own temporary administrative stay on June 12 so the government could seek emergency relief from the First Circuit, which kept the fee in place on an interim basis until the ap-

pellate court ruled.
What is the September 19, 2026 deadline about?
The original Presidential Proclamation that created the fee in September 2025 needs to be renewed by that date to continue past it. Given the litigation so far, renewal is not guaranteed.
Should employers file H-1B petitions now while the fee is blocked?
Many employers are choosing to move forward with filings while this window is open, though anyone doing so should stay in close contact with immigration counsel given how quickly the fee’s status has changed over the past two months.
If you have questions about how the current status of the \$100,000 H-1B fee affects your pending or upcoming petitions, our attorneys are available to help.
If you or your family members have questions about how this ruling or other immigration and nationality matters may affect you, please do not hesitate to contact the immigration and nationality lawyers at NPZ Law Group. You can reach us by emailing info@visaserve.com or by visiting our website at www.visaserve.com for more information.

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TRAVEL

What a \$150 hotel will get you in Barcelona

By ANDREA SACHS

Continued From Page 16

Seventy Barcelona: \$302
The hotel characterizes its style as “Mediterranean guest-house,” but I picked up an ocean liner vibe, as well. Maybe it was the giant image of a ship’s bow hanging above the fireplace, the nautical color scheme (lots of blues, whites and stripes) or the spiral staircase similar to the ones I have climbed in cruise ship atriums. Among the most arresting features were the bookcases stretching toward the sky. Don’t try to pull a title off the shelf, however, or you’ll be sorely disillusioned. (The books were - gasp! - hacked in half.)
At check-in, I stopped by a table with free champagne and cucumber-infused water, repeatedly refilling my cup without side-eye from the staff. In a classy move, the front-desk employee walked around the desk and stood beside me while I reviewed the paperwork, and he explained the amenities. He didn’t mention the special activities, such as a sangria class, Gràcia neighborhood walking tour or weekend music in the hotel’s La Cors bar, but I had received an email about those events before my arrival. He did, however, go over the hotel’s restaurant options: the Kitchen (Mediterranean fare), Molino de Pez (slow-cooked traditional Spanish cuisine) and the breakfast buffet (\$27), a feast of many plates and return trips.
My room was more muted than the public areas, as if a cloud had blown in,

blocking the bright Mediterranean sun and casting the space in crisp whites and soft grays. Freebies included a Nespresso machine, an electric kettle with fixings and a brown bag full of eco-friendly toiletries, such as a bamboo toothbrush.
Every booking includes 45 minutes at the fitness center plus a half-hour at the “vegan” spa, where I spent my allotted time on a repeat cycle of steaming and sweating in the saunas and cooling off in the jet pool. (Treatments and plant-based products are extra.) Because the hotel caps the number of guests in both venues, reservations are required.
The rooftop pool and terrace had no time or capacity limits. I could have whiled away the day on the seventh floor, gazing beyond the blue water, striped chaises and sun umbrellas at Gaudí’s Sagrada Família.
Highlights: The whole aesthetic, from the lobby to the rooftop pool, brought joy. When I finally buy that villa in Costa del Sol, I have the decor all picked out. I really enjoyed the neighborhood on the border of Eixample and Gràcia, but the restaurants were worth staying for, too. After hoofing it around in the heat all day, my knotted muscles appreciated the spa tuneup.
Lowlights: I have so few complaints. I respect the hotel’s wish to not pack the gym, but the rules seemed very pandemic-era. And how about a noon checkout instead of 11 a.m., so I can spend more time at the hotel?
Worth the price: It was and, when I added in the perks, then some.

Beyond The Screen: Epic Ramayana Trailer Is Summoning A Global Cultural Awakening

By ARCHANA ADALJA

In a world fractured by wars and geopolitical tensions, where systemic injustices and brute might grows heavier with spite and riches, when the world gasps for an anchor of enduring truth, art remains our final bastion of hope and confidence in ultimate justice.

This is precisely the era when great epics must resurface to remind us of enduring human values. Just as global audiences thrill to modern cinematic interpretations of The Odyssey, a towering counterweight arrives in its wake: the cinematic adaptation of the Ramayana, poised to gently yet powerfully draw humanity back into an honorable world order.

Against this backdrop, the global conversation shifted on July 30, 2026, when the makers of Namit Malhotra's Ramayana: Part 1, unveiled its highly anticipated official trailer. Released in the early hours across five major Indian languages—Hindi, Kannada, Telugu, Tamil, and Malayalam—the footage immediately captivated fans and cinephiles worldwide.

The official four-minute-and-nine-second trailer showcases a grand cinematic scale and highlights several key narrative elements, character debuts, and technical features. It incorporates larger-than-life treatments of iconic elements such as the divine mount Airavat, Indra's winged white elephant, the Pushpak Vimaan, and Jatayu. Handled by the Oscar-winning visual effects studio, Double Negative (DNEG), the Computer Generated Imagery (CGI) delivers sweeping panoramic shots of golden Ayodhya, dazzling vistas of Lanka, massive armies, and mythological monsters with Hollywood-level polish.

Ramayana is not merely the return of a classic tale, but a profound cultural summoning—inviting us back from the brink of cynicism and into an honorable world order anchored in righteousness, duty, and the indomitable hope of the human spirit.

"Very few stories continue to shape everyday life thousands of years after they were first told. The Ramayana does," said Namit Malhotra, Producer and Creative Architect of Ramayana, releasing the trailer.

"The Ramayana is one of our greatest epics. It is woven into how we live, celebrate and pass our values from one generation to the next. Every year, the Indian festivals Dussehra and Diwali remind us that its message



PHOTOS: STUDIO DNEG

Sita Swayamvar. Ram, returning from the Gurukul after his education, breaks the dhanush at Sita Swayamvar.



Ram (Ranbir Kapoor), Sita (Sai Pallavi) and Lakshman (Ravi Dubey) set out for their fourteen years of Vanvaas.

continues to guide millions through the triumph of light over darkness and righteousness over evil," Malhotra said, adding, "...Its scale is immense, but its values remain deeply personal and timeless."

Malhotra said he has always believed that India's stories belong on the world stage. India now possesses the artists, technology, craftsmanship, and collective ambition required to showcase its cultural legacy with authenticity, scale, and cinematic excellence. Ramayana represents the beginning of a journey to share India's cultural richness and enduring stories with global audiences, he said.

The film's director, Nitesh Tiwari said, "The story is already universal. My responsibility has been to approach it with complete honesty, authenticity and reverence."

Every creative choice made, from writing, performances, production design, music, visual effects, and framing, was driven by a commitment to honor the legacy of the Ramayana with utmost dignity and respect, utilizing top-tier cinematic craftsmanship, Tiwari said.

Describing the project as the professional privilege of a lifetime working alongside world-class artists, technicians, and storytellers, Tiwari expressed hope that global audiences will deeply experience the visual spectacle alongside the emotion, humanity, and timeless spirit that have

sustained the epic for thousands of years.

Produced by Namit Malhotra, who is a filmmaker himself, Ramayana is planned as a two part epic film. Malhotra is a global film and television producer, media executive, and visual effects (VFX) powerhouse. He is also the driving force behind Prime Focus and the global visual effects giant DNEG.

Director of Ramayana, Nitesh Tiwari, an alumnus of IIT Bombay in Metallurgy and Material Science, has built a reputation as one of Indian cinema's most acclaimed and reliable storytellers, celebrated for his ability to blend deep human emotions with mass commercial appeal. While his crowning glory remains the film Dangal, he has also directed Bhoothnath Returns and Chhichhore.

A big attraction for the audiences would be actor Ranbir Kapoor who will play Lord Rama. Kapoor has proved his acting talent in various different impressive roles including his endearing performance in Barfi.

Sai Pallavi, an actor who primarily works in Tamil and Telugu cinema, is cast to portray Sita. Pallavi is recognized for bringing grace, strength, and compassion to her roles.

Yash, an actor in Kannada cinema, will play the part of Ravana. Frequently called Rocking Star by his fans, Yash has a phenomenal screen presence and raw intensity. Yash is also the co-producer of Ramayana through his production company Monster Mind Creations.

Hindi film actor Arun Govil will play King Dasharath, father of Rama. Govil is a much loved Rama from the older TV series Ramayana. Acclaimed actor Shobana will play Queen Kaikeyi. She is widely regarded as one of the finest and most versatile leading actors in Indian cinema. Ajinkya Deo will portray Sage Vishwamitra. Kunal Kapoor will play Lord Indra. Rakul Preet Singh will be Surpanakha

and Ravi Dubey will play Lakshmana.

Adapted by award-winning screenwriter Shridhar Raghavan, the epic brings together an extraordinary constellation of Indian and international talent.

Scoring cinema's most ambitious East-West creative collaboration, Oscar-winning legend A.R. Rahman will join forces with Hans Zimmer to deliver the original score for Ramayana.

The film features production design that reimagines ancient India at an unprecedented scale by Ravi Bansal and Ramsey Avery. Action is helmed by leading Hollywood stunt directors Terry Notary and Guy Norris.

Ramayana is set to release Diwali 2026.



Ram on the battleground at Lanka.



Ranbir Kapoor plays the role of Rama in the upcoming epic film Ramayana 1.

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