

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2

APRIL, 2026

Pravasi

SAMWAD

THE BIG INTERVIEW

'GOA AS A BRAND IS GETTING BIGGER AND BETTER'

CHIEF MINISTER OF GOA
DR. PRAMOD SAWANT
RESPONDS TO EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
KAUSHLENDRA S. SINGH'S
QUERIES IN AN EXCLUSIVE
INTERVIEW



COVER STORY

BRIDGING BORDERS:
THE CRUCIAL ROLE
OF NRIS IN SHAPING
INDIA'S GLOBAL
FUTURE

INSIDE: 6 PROFILES OF PRAVASI HEROES



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Editor's Note



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In times of crisis, diaspora communities often become both witnesses and bridges: Witnesses to global change and bridges between nations, cultures and economies.

A Global Community in a Fragile World

Dear Readers,

In our previous issue, we introduced *Pravasi Samwad* as a platform dedicated to connecting the global Indian diaspora - a space where stories of identity, resilience and achievement could travel across continents. As we bring you this edition, the world around us reminds us why such connections matter more than ever.

We are living through a moment of profound global uncertainty. Conflicts across regions are reshaping geopolitics, economies and the everyday lives of millions. The recent escalation of war involving Iran, Israel and the United States has sent shockwaves across West Asia, disrupting energy markets and threatening vital maritime routes such as the Strait of Hormuz - through which a significant portion of the world's oil supply passes. Oil prices have surged and shipping routes have been disrupted, illustrating how regional conflicts quickly become global economic challenges.

At the same time, other conflicts—from the ongoing war in Ukraine to tensions in Gaza and new confrontations in parts of South Asia—continue to strain the international system and deepen humanitarian crises. These developments are reminders that in an interconnected world, the consequences of war do not remain confined to borders. They ripple across societies, economies and communities everywhere.

For the Indian diaspora, this global landscape is not a distant reality—it is part of everyday life. Millions of Indians live and work in regions affected by geopolitical shifts, including the Gulf and West Asia. In times of crisis, diaspora communities often become both witnesses and bridges: Witnesses to global change and bridges between nations, cultures and economies.

This is precisely where the role of the diaspora becomes even more significant. As highlighted in our cover story, Non-Resident Indians are not just contributors to India's economic strength through remittances or investments. They are also ambassadors of dialogue, cooperation and shared progress.

With latest available figure of 2024, remittances from the diaspora reached \$129.4 billion in 2024. The diaspora continues

to provide one of the strongest economic lifelines to India. Yet the contribution of overseas Indians extends far beyond financial flows. From technology and academia to diplomacy, entrepreneurship and public service, Indians abroad are helping shape conversations that influence global policy, innovation and cultural exchange.

In a world often divided by political tensions, diaspora communities frequently embody the opposite spirit. They represent the possibility of coexistence, collaboration and mutual understanding. The Indian diaspora in particular has shown how cultural roots can coexist with global citizenship - how one can be proudly Indian while contributing meaningfully to the societies in which they live.

It is in this context that the relevance of *Pravasi Samwad* becomes even more important. A magazine like ours is not merely a publication; it is a forum for dialogue among Indians scattered across the globe. It is a platform where experiences from Dubai, London, New York, Singapore or Sydney can meet on common ground.

In times of global uncertainty, communication and shared understanding are powerful tools. Stories of innovation, community building and cultural continuity remind us that beyond political divisions, human connections endure.

Our aim is to document those connections. We seek to highlight how Indians abroad are navigating complex global realities while continuing to strengthen their ties with Bharat. Their journeys—whether in boardrooms, universities, laboratories, or community organisations—tell a larger story of resilience and hope.

As the world faces uncertain times, the Indian diaspora stands as a reminder of the enduring power of bridges over borders.

And through *Pravasi Samwad*, we hope those bridges grow stronger with every issue. ■

Warm regards

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Publisher: Amit Goyal, on behalf of
Legacy Media

Place of Publication: 104B, New Lahore
Colony, Shastri Nagar, New Delhi 110031

Printer: Archana Singh

Basement B-44, Okhla Industrial Area,
Phase-1, New Delhi 110020



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Bridging Borders: The Crucial Role of NRIs in Shaping India's Global Future

WHY NRIs MATTER TO INDIA



India's remarkable rise in the 21st century is fuelled not only by domestic ambition but by the extraordinary strength of its global diaspora. With \$129.4 billion in remittances in 2024 and influence spanning innovation, culture and diplomacy, Non-Resident Indians remain a powerful force shaping India's global destiny

SHASHANK SHEKHAR

India's rise on the global stage in the 21st century is not driven by domestic growth alone. It is also powered by the strength, skills and commitment of its vast overseas community. Spread

across continents, the Indian diaspora has become a vital link between India and the world—contributing not just money, but influence, ideas and goodwill.

The Indian diaspora broadly comprises two groups: Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) and Overseas Citizens of

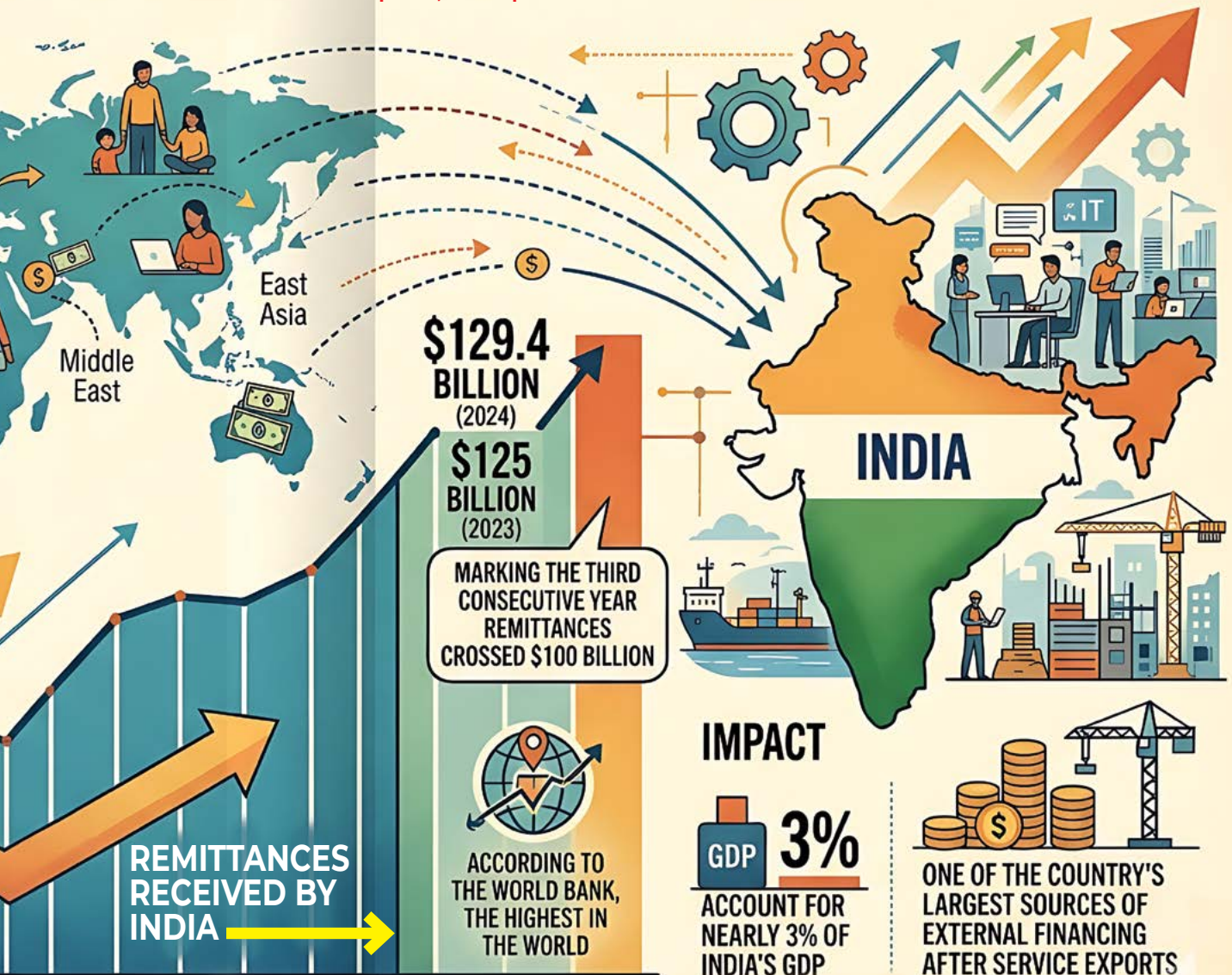
India (OCIs). NRIs are Indian passport holders living abroad for work, study or business, while OCIs are Indian origin foreign nationals and are eligible for OCI cards which gives them liberty to visit India and invest in the country with certain restrictions.

Total NRIs
15.9 million

Key Investment Areas
Real estate,
equities, start-ups

Indian-Origin Population in US
5.2 million

Median Annual Household Income (US Indians)
\$151,200



Together, this global community plays an increasingly important role in India's economic strength, diplomatic outreach and cultural presence.

Economic Backbone

NRIs are central to India's financial stability. According to the World Bank, India received \$125 billion in remittances in 2023, the highest in the world. In 2024, this figure rose further to \$129.4 billion—marking the third consecutive year remittances crossed \$100 billion. These inflows account for nearly 3 per cent of India's GDP and form one of the country's largest sources of external financing after service exports.

The largest contributions come from

the United States (\$27 billion), the United Arab Emirates (\$18 billion), Saudi Arabia (\$12 billion), the United Kingdom (\$9 billion) and Singapore (\$6 billion).

Importantly, the pattern of remittances has changed. While earlier flows were largely from blue-collar workers in the Gulf, over half now originate from advanced economies such as the US, UK, Canada and Australia.

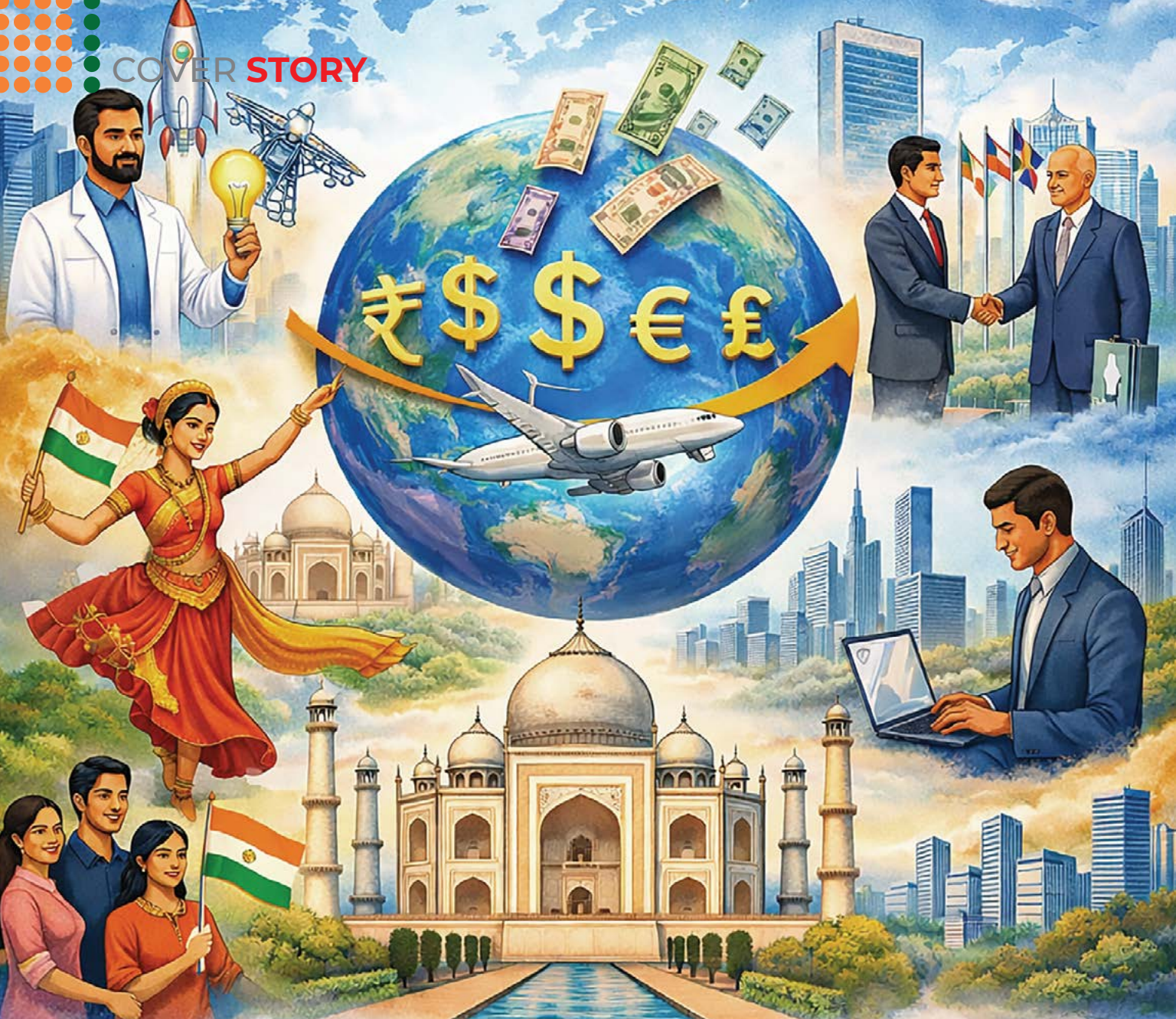
This reflects a shift in the diaspora's profile, with more professionals, entrepreneurs and business leaders sending money home.

Beyond remittances, NRIs are investing actively in Indian real estate, equity markets and start-ups, encouraged by India's steady economic growth.

Global Leadership and Influence

Indian-origin leaders are now at the helm of major global institutions. Figures such as Sundar Pichai of Google and Satya Nadella of Microsoft have become symbols of professional excellence. In politics, leaders such as Rishi Sunak in the United Kingdom and Kamala Harris in the United States reflect the growing political footprint of people of Indian origin.

Their achievements strengthen India's global image, build trust and open doors for cooperation in trade, technology and education. The Indian government recognises diaspora contributions through initiatives such as Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, OCI schemes and the conferment of Padma Awards on



distinguished overseas Indians.

Cultural Connect

The diaspora also acts as a cultural bridge. Indian associations across the world organise language classes, celebrate festivals, promote yoga and showcase cinema and arts. The widespread observance of International Day of Yoga each year is supported strongly by overseas Indian communities. Through such efforts, the diaspora carries forward the spirit of “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam” — the idea that the world is one family.

Strategic and Political Value

In countries such as the US, UK and Canada, diaspora communities have growing electoral influence. They help shape policy discussions on trade, immigration and strategic partnerships with India. They also counter

misinformation and facilitate business and technology partnerships.

Demographic Strength

The global Indian diaspora is estimated at 35.42 million, of which 15.91 million are NRIs. Large populations reside in the UAE, US, Saudi Arabia, UK and Canada.

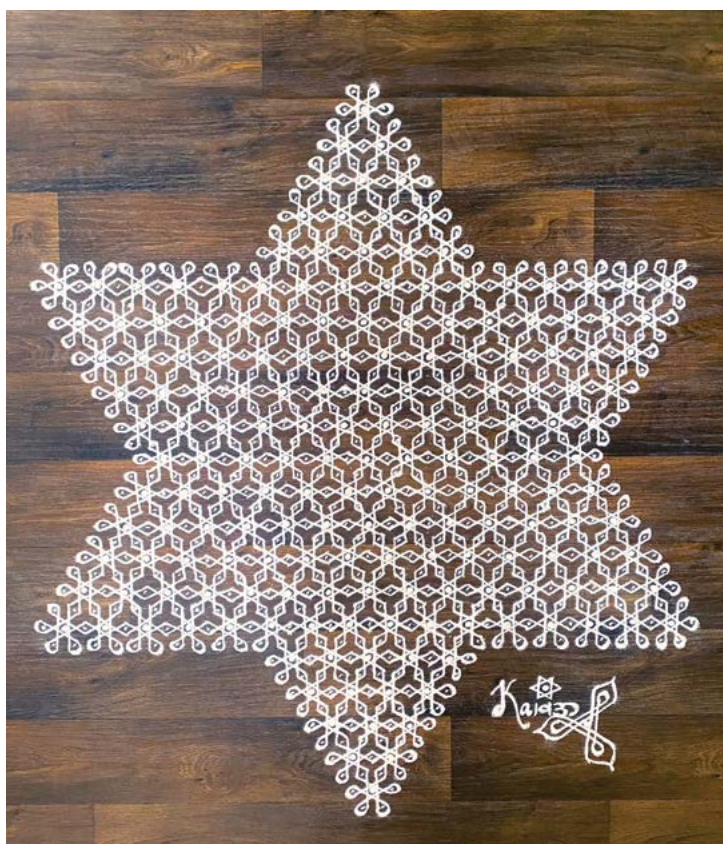
In the US alone, the Indian-origin population reached 5.2 million in 2025, according to Pew Research Center. This marks a sharp rise from 1.8 million in 2000. Indian Americans now form 21 per cent of the Asian American population. About 51 per cent are naturalised citizens, and 60 per cent have lived in the US for more than a decade. Economically, they are among the most successful communities. Median household annual income stands at \$151,200, significantly above the national average. Poverty levels remain low at around 6 per cent. Major population hubs

include California, Texas, New Jersey, New York and Illinois, with large concentrations in metropolitan areas such as New York City, Dallas and San Francisco.

The Way Forward

As India positions itself as a leading global economy, deeper engagement with its diaspora is essential. Programmes such as Invest India and Startup India can further attract overseas capital and expertise. Stronger diplomatic outreach and structured engagement policies will help transform diaspora goodwill into long-term partnerships.

India’s overseas community is no longer just an emotional extension of the homeland. It is a strategic asset. By harnessing its scale, talent and commitment, India can strengthen its global standing and shape a more confident and connected future. ■



US-based artist **Kavita Rao's** journey with art spans continents, traditions, and quiet rediscoveries. Born in Mumbai and now rooted in the United States, she finds meaning in traditional Indian art forms—especially Kolams—where geometry, impermanence, and cultural memory come together through patience, practice, and passion

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AWAY FROM HOME, ARTIST KAVITA RAO FINDS HOME IN INDIAN TRADITIONAL ART

From school craft periods in Mumbai to intricate Kolams created thousands of miles away in the United States, **Kavita Rao's** artistic journey has come full circle. A software professional turned devoted practitioner of Indian traditional art, she explores creativity as passion, meditation, and cultural continuity



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For Kavita Rao, art is neither a destination nor a profession bound by rigid definitions. It is a quiet, persistent companion—one that has travelled continents with her, waited patiently through years of engineering studies and software work, and eventually resurfaced with renewed intensity thousands of miles away from her birthplace in Mumbai.

“I would like to think of myself as a perpetual student of art,” says Kavita, a phrase that quietly captures both her temperament and her journey. Born and raised in Mumbai, Kavita now lives in the United States, far from the city where her creative instincts first took shape, yet deeply rooted in the artistic traditions of India that continue to guide her work.

Early Sparks

She completed her engineering degree in Mumbai before stepping into the world of software—a professional path that eventually brought her to the US nearly two decades ago. Art, however, never truly left her. Even today, when she is not immersed in creating, she finds comfort in reading mysteries, solving crosswords and puzzles, listening to music, or simply enjoying a quiet cup of tea. “When I am not making art, reading or watching mystery, or solving crosswords and puzzles while listening to good music are some of the things I love doing,” she shares.

Her relationship with creativity began early. As a child, Kavita was drawn to crafts and eagerly awaited the bi-weekly “zero period” at school. “Even as a child, I always took interest in crafts,” she recalls, explaining how she loved working on small projects like papier maché bowls and letter hangers. Alongside visual art, Indian classical dance played an important role in shaping her sense of rhythm, discipline, and expression. Though academics and career demands eventually pushed these interests into the background, she says “the embers never quite died down,” thanks in large part to constant encouragement from friends and family.

That encouragement, she believes, began at home. Kavita traces her earliest exposure to art to her mother. “As a little girl, I would sit by her side and watch her patiently do her needlework, knitting and crochet for hours,” she says, still awed by the quiet patience that defined those moments. Her father, too, had a strong inclination towards music and never hesitated to motivate her to create. Together, they instilled in her not just an appreciation for art, but a seriousness towards it.

Inspiration, for Kavita, comes from many places. “It all stems from a deep love for words, geometry and symmetry,” she reflects, adding that nature and





Kolams are like little visual math puzzles that I absolutely enjoy.”

its patterns intrigue her the most. Her creative impulse is also shaped by a strong urge to recycle and reuse—ribbon ends, dried flowers, or any object with potential finds its way into her artistic universe. Equally influential are fellow artists whose work nudged her to experiment with forms she once avoided, particularly painting, which she admits she was “very wary of” for a long time.

Kolams, Impermanence, and the Joy of Process

A self-described dabbler and experimenter, Kavita explored hand embroidery and jewellery making for several years before the pandemic became a turning point. In 2021, Kolams—traditional South Indian floor designs—entered her life and soon became central to her practice. “Kolams are like little visual math puzzles that I absolutely enjoy,” she says, describing the mental stimulation she derives from designing them. Created with sand and flour, these geometric patterns are both meditative and demanding.

While Kavita follows traditional Kolam rules, the designs themselves are deeply personal. “The patterns are most often a manifestation of my mental makeup on that day, combined with elements from nature,” she explains, occasionally attributing the outcome to what she calls “even some divine intervention.” What makes Kolams especially meaningful to her is their impermanence. “No matter how many hours I may have spent on a design, I know it will be erased in a day or two,” she says. “This impermanence has its own charm.”

Embracing Tradition, One Brushstroke at a Time

The pandemic also pushed her to confront her fear of painting. What began as online workshops soon grew into long-term courses in Shilpashastra sketching, Kerala mural painting, and Mysuru-style painting under accomplished Indian teachers. Immersing herself in these traditions left her humbled. “The more I learn, the more awed I am about how much these various art forms share with each other,” she says, adding with a laugh, “Sometimes I wish there were 48 hours in a day instead of 24—there is so much to learn and do.”

For Kavita, art remains primarily a passion rather than a profession. “I can only hope it stays that way,” she says, explaining that even commissioned work must allow creative freedom to remain





honest and unbiased.

Living in the US, she feels, has allowed her to explore this freedom more fully. “The US has given me the freedom and means to explore my own potential, experiment with ideas and expand my horizon,” she reflects. At the same time, she observes striking cultural differences. “Here, people are not afraid to say they are proud of what they do,” she notes, contrasting it with India’s long-standing tendency to underplay artistic talent—though she is encouraged by the shift she now sees, driven largely by digital exposure.

One difference that stands out sharply is how art is valued. “There is no bargaining when it comes to art here,” Kavita says plainly. “The artist and their pricing is respected.” In India, she feels, this remains a challenge, even for well-established artists, and greater awareness is needed to honour the labour behind handcrafted work.

Art Across Borders

Indian art, however, continues to find a warm audience in the US. “Indian art is very well received even by non-Indian audiences, especially the younger crowd,” she says. The storytelling, use of colour, and symbolic depth draw people in, and she finds it fulfilling to hear how non-Indian viewers interpret the work. “Their awe becomes apparent when the stories behind the artworks are explained,” she adds.

Looking Ahead

Kavita does not speak of rigid plans for the future. Instead, she prefers a quieter metaphor. She wants to keep making art, she says, “much like a river that keeps flowing without really knowing anything about what’s ahead.” Between ongoing coursework, commissioned projects, and studio reminders lovingly placed by her spouse, she remains grounded in gratitude.

Her advice to young artists is simple and urgent: “If you have something to express, do it. Now.” Art, she believes, is “the least harmful and most impactful way” to communicate what lies within.

And as for Indian art, Kavita is certain of its resilience. “Indian art—in all its grandeur, subtlety, glory, as well as its understated charm—is here to stay,” she says. For those who feel that quiet inner nudge towards creativity, she offers reassurance: this is the best time to listen, to begin, and to push one’s limits—because, she believes, “time will learn to stretch itself.” ■



Indian art—in all its grandeur, subtlety, glory, as well as its understated charm—is here to stay.”



‘GOA AS A BRAND IS GETTING BIGGER AND BETTER’

INTERVIEW OF HON’BLE CM OF GOA
DR. PRAMOD SAWANT

KAUSHLENDRA S. SINGH

The Indian diaspora, including Goans living abroad, is the largest in the world with over 32 million Indians living in other countries all around the globe. With tourism being

by far the major industry of the state, what plans do you have to bring those NRIs to visit Goa in big numbers?

The Goan diaspora has always been

an integral part of our society. We consider them important stakeholders in Goa’s growth and development. Over the last few years, our government has consciously worked on improving experiences that matter to them, i.e. better connectivity, safety, quality infrastructure, and diverse tourism experiences that are suitable for families.

The commissioning of the Manohar International Airport at Mopa and the continued operations at Goa International Airport, Dabolim, giving our small state

two international airports, reflect our strong commitment in this direction. This capacity allows Goa to handle higher international traffic and improves our connectivity with Europe, the Middle East, and other long-haul markets through better aviation hubs. Alongside this, we are actively engaging with airlines and charter operators to rebuild and expand international routes that slowed down after Covid, so that travel to Goa becomes easier and more convenient.

Beyond access, we are upgrading



As a government, we are continuously reviewing our systems and addressing every possible gap in the overall tourist experience and safety ecosystem. Our focus is on rebuilding long-term confidence rather than looking for short-term or cosmetic solutions.”



tourism facilities to global standards so that when members of the diaspora visit their roots, they feel a deep sense of pride in calling themselves Goan. We are strengthening heritage circuits, restoring temples, churches, and traditional precincts, promoting festivals, cuisine, music, and village tourism, and encouraging curated experiences that allow the younger generation of the diaspora to understand Goa's history, traditions, and values.

We have also strengthened the NRI Commission of Goa to serve as a dedicated institutional bridge between the government and Goans living overseas. The Commission works to address their concerns, provide guidance and grievance redressal, and support their engagement with the state. It also helps connect diaspora members with investment, heritage, and community initiatives in Goa. Through this platform, we aim to ensure that every Goan abroad feels safe on foreign soil. For any Goan in stress abroad, the Commission has and will always come to their rescue.

Although Goa attracted 1.01 crore domestic tourists (a little over 10 million, as on May 30, 2025), the number of foreign tourists dropped to 5 lakh, according to Directorate of Planning, Statistics and Evaluation data. What are the key reasons for this drop?

It is important to look at this situation realistically and with balance. Goa recorded over 1 crore domestic tourists in 2025, which clearly shows the strong confidence that Indian travellers continue to have in Goa as a safe and preferred destination. Foreign tourist arrivals, while steadily improving, have not yet fully reached pre-pandemic levels, and this trend is not unique to Goa alone.

Several of Goa's traditional international markets depend heavily on charter operations. After Covid, many charter routes across parts of Europe and Asia took longer to restart due to geopolitical uncertainties, higher travel costs, aircraft availability issues, and changing global travel patterns. At the same time, international tourists today are more cautious in their spending and are taking longer to finalise destinations.

As a government, we are continuously reviewing our systems and addressing every possible gap in the overall tourist experience and safety ecosystem. Our focus is on rebuilding long-term confidence rather than looking for short-term or cosmetic solutions.

A major pillar of this effort is strengthening the tourism assistance and safety network across the state. We have enhanced the presence of the Tourist Police Force at major destinations,

Goa recorded

1,08,02,410

total tourist arrivals in 2025

(Domestic **1,02,84,608** +

Foreign **5,17,802**



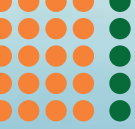
The Atal Setu bridge is a 5.1-kilometer-long cable-stayed architectural marvel spanning the Mandovi river in Goa

↓ Dr. Pramod Sawant with a group of female police officers at the 2023 Swayampurnaa Sanman awards ceremony

→ The Drishti Marine lifesavers patrolling a beach in Goa, equipped with surf rescue boards and rescue tubes







The Mopa Link Road has improved access from North Goa and the coastal belt to Manohar International Airport



increased night patrolling in sensitive zones, and deployed the all-women Pink Force to ensure that women travellers feel safe and supported at all times. I must place on record how proud we are of the work done by our lifeguards. In the last five years alone, they have saved more than 2,700 lives on Goa's beaches. With these sustained efforts, we are confident that foreign tourist numbers will continue to recover in a steady and sustainable manner.

How did changes in flight connectivity, travel costs, or visa regulations impact tourist arrivals to Goa during 2025?

Flight connectivity plays a decisive role in international tourism. Goa International Airport at Dabolim has served the state for decades, and with growing demand and increasing footfall, our government took the forward-looking decision to operationalise the Manohar International Airport at Mopa. Over the last two years, the presence of both Goa International Airport and Manohar

International Airport has significantly strengthened our aviation infrastructure, allowing us to attract more international flights and charter operations, especially during the peak tourist season. Airlines today have the flexibility to operate larger aircraft and plan more convenient schedules for travellers.

Inflation is an integral part of the global economy and travelling has become dearer across the board. This has some impact on the global travelling trend. Visa regulations are largely under the purview of the Central Government, but factors such as ease of travel, frequency of flights, and total journey time continue to influence destination choice. In these areas, we are working closely with airlines, tour operators, and other stakeholders to steadily improve connectivity and convenience for international visitors.

What we can directly control is the experience once a tourist lands in Goa. We are focusing on better infrastructure and ease of travel.

Connectivity from the airports to major

tourism hubs is also being strengthened. The Mopa Link Road has improved access from North Goa and the coastal belt to Manohar International Airport, reducing travel time and congestion. Similarly, the upcoming flyover near Dabolim is expected to ease traffic movement and provide smoother connectivity between the airport, South Goa, and key highways, making onward travel more convenient for visitors.

In terms of capacity, the new airport at Mopa has been a major enabler. In 2025, the airport handled more than 4.5 million passengers, which reflects our ability to scale up tourism movement in a planned manner.

For a small state like ours, having two fully functional international airports stands as a strong testimony to the growing confidence in Brand Goa. It reflects our commitment to improving accessibility, enhancing visitor experience, and positioning Goa as a well-connected, world-class tourism destination.



“Connectivity from the airports in Goa to major tourism hubs is being strengthened. The Mopa Link Road has improved access from North Goa and the coastal belt to Manohar International Airport, reducing travel time and congestion.”

Manohar International Airport, Mopa



Goa International Airport, Dabolim



Dr. Sawant: Man on a mission

The Chief Minister of Goa exemplifies the true virtues of a leader – humility, sense of service, a deep vision, wisdom and an inexorable desire to better the lot of the common man in his state

Dr. Pramod Sawant, honourable Chief Minister of Goa, is a widely respected politician, administrator and social personality. He was born on 24th April, 1973 in Mapusa, Goa in a humble family. His father was a machine operator in a mining company and his mother was a homemaker. He got a Bachelor of Ayurveda, Medicine and Surgery degree from Ganga Education Society's Ayurvedic Medical College in Kolhapur and a PG degree in Master of Social Work from Tilak Maharashtra University in Pune.

An unassuming man, Dr. Sawant won the Sanquelim constituency in North Goa twice with no former political experience under his belt. A staunch supporter of the late Chief Minister of Goa, Manohar Parrikar, Sawant was elected as the Assembly speaker by Parrikar. A doctor by profession and an RSS member, he was chairman of the Goa State Infrastructure Development Corporation, an initiative set up by Parrikar. He was sworn in as the Chief Minister of Goa on 18th March, 2019, following the demise of Parrikar.

Among Dr. Sawant's key initiative as Chief Minister is Swayampurna Goa which aims to make Goa self-sufficient and self-reliant. Under this initiative, various programs were launched to encourage local entrepreneurship and promote self-employment.

Dr. Sawant's efforts toward promoting self-sufficiency and sustainable development in Goa have received widespread praise and recognition. His vision for a self-reliant Goa has inspired many and continues to guide the state toward progress and prosperity. That his journey as a leader serves as an inspiration to many is a testament to his hard work and dedication toward serving the people. His efforts are shaping the state's future and paving the way for a better tomorrow.

“
I strongly believe that great accomplishments are often initiated by small actions.”

“
As the Chief Minister of Goa, my primary goal is to raise awareness about the importance of self-reliance and begin the journey toward making Goa Swayampurna in its true essence.”





Dr. Pramod Sawant (right) with Prime Minister Narendra Modi who visited the Shree Samsthan Gokarn Partagali Jeevottam Math in Canacona, South Goa in Nov, 2025. (Below) The PM unveiled a giant statue of Lord Rama on the occasion



Since I have been chosen by the people and given an opportunity by Bharatiya Janata Party to be their voice, I have made it my mission to serve the people, by ensuring easy access to all the government schemes and introducing new services to accommodate the increasing necessities of individuals from all walks of life.”



We deeply value our diaspora and see them as partners in Goa’s growth story. We are committed to creating a tourism model that is sustainable, family-friendly, and globally competitive.”



To what extent did competition from international and domestic tourist destinations like Uttarakhand, Gujarat, Himachal, Ladakh, Kashmir, Kerala and Andamans impact Goa's tourism numbers?

I am elated that you compared us with bigger states of our nation. Considering that we are relatively a smaller state and being put in comparison with these bigger states shows our brand value. Also when Goa is compared to major global tourism countries and put on the same pedestal as they are, it gives me immense satisfaction that Goa as a brand is getting bigger and better.

Goa's strength lies in its unique balance. We offer beaches, certainly, but also a rich blend of heritage, cuisine, music, festivals, spirituality, nature, and a relaxed social culture that very few destinations can replicate in such a compact geography. A visitor can experience coastline, heritage precincts, wildlife, river tourism, and vibrant entertainment zones within short travel distances, which is a natural advantage for Goa.

In recent years, we have also positioned Goa as a preferred venue for major national and international events that bring global visibility. These include platforms in cinema and culture like the International Film Festival of India (IFFI), endurance sports such as Ironman 70.3, global mind sports events like the FIDE Chess World Cup, and upcoming international engagements such as Formula 4 racing and the World Legends Pro T20 League 2026. In addition, knowledge and industry platforms like India Energy Week 2026 further reinforce Goa's image as a destination capable of hosting world-class events beyond leisure tourism.

Instead of trying to replicate what other destinations offer, our approach is to strengthen what Goa already does best, i.e. improving quality of infrastructure, maintaining safety and cleanliness, promoting heritage and culture, and creating diverse, family-friendly experiences. We firmly believe that a well-managed Goa, offering varied experiences within a small and accessible state, will always remain competitive and continue to attract both domestic and international visitors.



In recent years, we have also positioned Goa as a preferred venue for major national and international events that bring global visibility."



↑ The 56th International Film Festival of India (IFFI) was held in Panaji, Goa, from 20 to 28 November 2025. One of the highlights of the festival was superstar Rajinikanth celebrating a monumental 50 years in Indian cinema at the closing ceremony of the festival. Accompanied by Union Minister L. Murugan (left) and actor Ranveer Singh, Goa Chief Minister Dr. Pramod Sawant presented the legendary actor with the Lifetime Achievement Award



↑ Goa Chief Minister Dr. Pramod Sawant makes the ceremonial first move in the Gukesh D vs. Kazybek Nogerbek match at the 2025 FIDE World Cup in Goa, in the presence of legendary grandmaster Viswanathan Anand (standing left)



Private hotels and restaurants charge high room and dining rates. Unofficial data backs this inflationary trend. How does the Goa Government plan to bring down this price spike and induce more budget tourists?

We live in a globalised economy where businesses largely operate on the principles of demand and supply. The Government does not directly control pricing in commercial establishments, but we do play an important role in shaping the overall tourism ecosystem so that it remains fair, competitive, and accessible.

Price spikes usually happen when tourism gets concentrated in a few locations and within a limited peak season. To address this, we are actively promoting tourism beyond the traditional coastal belt and encouraging visitors to explore hinterland destinations, heritage villages, eco-tourism sites, and new tourism circuits. We are also supporting homestays and smaller hospitality units, which naturally increase accommodation options and provide more budget-friendly choices for travellers.

Another important step is our focus on year-round, event-based and experience-based tourism. By hosting cultural, sporting, and business events across different months, we aim to distribute tourist inflow more evenly through the year. When demand is spread out instead of being limited to a short peak window, pricing tends to stabilize in a natural and

sustainable manner.

Regarding unofficial estimates, I would prefer to rely on verified data. What we do see clearly is that during peak seasons, Goa's hospitality sector often operates at very high occupancy levels. This reflects strong market confidence in the destination and also creates the basis for further expansion of capacity.

Our objective is to ensure that Goa remains welcoming and affordable for families and young travellers, through greater supply, better regulation of services, transparent pricing practices, and a wider range of tourism experiences across the state.

What is it that Goa offers to visitors that is unique and which no other tourist destination can provide? What is your message to Indians living abroad regarding tourism in Goa and what the state has to offer to them to make their visit a great experience?

Goa's uniqueness lies first and foremost in its hospitality and warmth. People who visit Goa often say they feel welcomed, not processed, and that comes from our lived Konkan culture where community life, openness, and respect for guests are a natural way of living. The way heritage, faith, cuisine, music, and everyday life blend together here creates an atmosphere that is very difficult to replicate anywhere else.

Another distinctive aspect of Goa

is its social harmony and progressive civic traditions, including a uniform civil framework that reflects our long-standing culture of coexistence. Places of worship, and heritage precincts exist side by side, and festivals of different communities are celebrated with equal enthusiasm. This shared cultural space gives visitors a sense of peace, inclusiveness, and authenticity.

Goa also has the advantage of scale. Within a short distance, a visitor can experience beaches, rivers, forests, waterfalls, the Western Ghats, heritage towns, spiritual centres, and vibrant local markets. This variety within a compact state is quite rare. Over the years, Goa has also built a strong global cultural identity through major events in cinema, arts, music, sports, and international conferences, which adds depth to our tourism profile beyond just leisure travel.

My message to Indians living abroad is simple and heartfelt: please come to Goa. Come not only as our guests, but also as our extended family. Goa holds a special emotional connection for Indians overseas, and especially for Goans living around the world. Whether you visit for leisure, to reconnect with your roots, attend family and cultural occasions, or introduce Goa to your children and friends, our government is continuously working to make your journey smoother, safer, and more meaningful.

Giant effigies of the multi-headed demon Narkasur and Lord Ganesha illuminate the night in Goa during the traditional Diwali eve celebrations, symbolizing the victory of good over evil



Goa has strong emotional and cultural links with Goans living abroad, especially in the Gulf, Europe, the UK and North America. What specific investment opportunities does the state offer to NRIs who want to invest in sectors such as tourism, hospitality, real estate, renewable energy, start-ups and the blue economy?

Goa offers several investment avenues that are aligned with our larger vision of sustainability, quality, and responsible growth. In tourism and hospitality, there is growing scope for boutique hotels, wellness and Ayurveda retreats, heritage property restoration, homestays, and experience-based tourism such as river cruises, hinterland tourism, and cultural circuits. These segments are seeing increasing demand from travellers who are looking for authentic and high-quality experiences.

The blue economy is another area with strong long-term potential for Goa. Opportunities exist in fisheries value addition, seafood processing, marine services, coastal logistics, marina development, and water-based tourism activities. Our approach is to promote these sectors in a way that protects coastal ecology while creating livelihoods and modern infrastructure.

Renewable energy is also a priority area. We are encouraging rooftop solar, green buildings, energy-efficient tourism infrastructure, and sustainable industrial practices. This not only reduces environmental impact but also improves long-term cost efficiency for businesses.

In terms of ease of doing business, our effort is to reduce delays and physical visits through transparent, technology-driven systems. Goa has an online single-window mechanism through the Goa Investment Promotion and Facilitation Board (Goa-IPB), which is designed to simplify approvals, provide time-bound



For me, trust is the biggest currency. For diaspora investors, confidence comes from policy stability, clear processes, and the assurance that Goa values their contribution not only as financial investment, but also for the experience, technology, and global networks they bring.





A vibrant crowd gathers to witness the spectacular fire-breathing umbrellas during the traditional Sontrio (Umbrella Festival) in Cuncolim, Goa



My message to Indians living abroad is simple and heartfelt: please come to Goa. Come not only as our guests, but also as our extended family.”

clearances, and improve transparency. We also recognise the need for stronger handholding, especially for overseas Goans who may not be physically present. The direction is clear – fewer office visits, more online tracking, and clear guidance through one integrated system.

Goa's differentiation is very clear: we are not competing on size, we are competing on quality. We seek investments that match Goa's character i.e. clean, sustainable, and job-creating. Platforms such as the Amazing Goa Global Business Summit are intended to connect diaspora investors and global businesses with real opportunities on the ground along with practical institutional support.

For me, trust is the biggest currency. For diaspora investors, confidence comes from policy stability, clear processes, and the assurance that Goa values their contribution not only as financial investment, but also for the experience, technology, and global networks they bring. Our focus is therefore on predictable policies, transparent land-use norms, streamlined approvals, and well-structured PPP frameworks.

Closing Statement: Goa today stands at a very important point where tradition and modern development are moving together. Our effort is to strengthen tourism, improve connectivity, and ensure that every visitor experiences a safe, clean, and welcoming Goa. We deeply value our diaspora and see them as partners in Goa's growth story. We are committed to creating a tourism model that is sustainable, family-friendly, and globally competitive. At the same time, we are opening responsible investment opportunities that generate employment and respect our environment. For us, Brand Goa represents trust, quality, and warmth. Our vision is simple – to ensure that everyone who comes to Goa, whether as a tourist or diaspora, leaves with pride, confidence, and a lasting connection to the state. ■



When global experience connects with local opportunity, the potential for Goa can truly become extraordinary.”

BUILDING BRIDGES BETWEEN GOA AND ITS GLOBAL DIASPORA



Entrepreneur and community leader **Manoj Patil** has been actively involved in connecting Goa with its global diaspora through a range of business initiatives, mentorship efforts, and professional networks. His work focuses on encouraging overseas Goans to remain engaged with the state's evolving economy—supporting investment, entrepreneurship, and tourism while helping strengthen Goa's connections with its global community.

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For many members of the Indian diaspora, the desire to reconnect with their roots often begins with a simple question: how can they contribute to the place they still consider home?

In Goa, a local entrepreneur, Manoj Patil, well known for his networking and community support initiatives, has been among those working to help create opportunities for such engagement. Over the years, his work has increasingly focused on connecting Goans living abroad with the economic and cultural developments taking place in the state.

On any given day, Patil may be mentoring a young entrepreneur, guiding an expatriate Goan interested in starting a business, helping connect them with opportunities, or discussing ways to promote Goa as a destination for investment and tourism. For him, these interactions are part of a broader effort to encourage stronger engagement between Goa and its diaspora.

A Journey Rooted in Goa

Patil was born in the Goan town of Bicholim and later grew up in Panaji. His early life reflected the blend of cultural values and educational emphasis that many Goan families share.

He completed his schooling at People's High School, Panaji, and then studied at Dhempe College before pursuing Industrial Electronics at Government Polytechnic in Panaji. The technical knowledge he gained during this period later influenced his professional journey.

After completing his studies, Patil began his career with Chowgule Industries, where he gained experience in the corporate sector. However, the early 1990s were a time of significant economic change in India, and he saw emerging opportunities in technology-related services. In 1991, he decided to start his own venture, marking the beginning of his entrepreneurial journey.

Building a Technology Enterprise

That venture evolved into Armour

Office Automation, a company that initially focused on providing communication and office technology solutions to businesses in Goa.

Over time, the company expanded its services to include telecom systems, CCTV surveillance, access control technologies, and automation solutions. As organizations across the region modernized their infrastructure, the company gradually built a diverse client base.

Today, Armour Office Automation serves thousands of clients across various sectors. For Patil, the enterprise has always been about more than business growth. It has also been about providing systems and solutions that help organizations operate more efficiently.

Developing Skills for a Global Economy

As his business activities expanded, Patil observed that many young Goans had the ambition to pursue professional



↑ Manoj Patil is featured in Business Goa magazine for his incredible contribution to Goa's entrepreneurial ecosystem



Manoj Patil (right), felicitating a visiting delegation of Education Ministry, Zimbabwe, on behalf of Vibrant Goa Foundation in Goa



Goa has tremendous talent, and when that talent interacts with the experience of Goans working abroad, new opportunities can emerge.”

careers but often needed greater exposure to industry-oriented skills.

In response, he launched Sigma Plus in 2008, an initiative focused on leadership development, communication training, and professional skill building. The organization later evolved into Cogniflux Training & Consulting Private Limited, which now works as a capacity-building hub, collaborating with educational institutions, corporates, and organizations across India to support professional development and nurture industry-oriented Executive MBA programmes.

Patil believes that building skills among young people can help Goa benefit more effectively from its connections with the global diaspora. “Goa has tremendous talent,” he often notes, “and when that talent interacts with the experience of Goans working abroad, new opportunities can emerge.”

Strengthening the Business Ecosystem

Alongside his business ventures, Patil has also contributed to the growth of business networks in Goa. As a founding member of BNI Goa, he was involved in establishing a platform where entrepreneurs could collaborate, exchange referrals, and support each other’s growth.

His involvement extends to organizations such as Rotary International, Junior Chamber International, and the Goa Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Through these associations, he has been part of efforts that encourage entrepreneurship, networking, and professional collaboration in the state.

These platforms also allow experienced professionals to mentor younger entrepreneurs who are beginning their business journeys.

Sports as a Community Catalyst

Sports have also been an important part of Patil’s life. As a young cricketer, he represented Goa at the youth level, an experience that helped shape his understanding of teamwork and discipline.

Today, he continues to support sports development in his capacity as President of the Goa Badminton Association. Under the association’s initiatives, efforts have been made to expand participation and strengthen infrastructure for badminton



↑ Manoj Patil being welcomed as President of Badminton Association by the players at a badminton tournament in Goa

↓ Manoj Patil with badminton legend Prakash Padukone (left) at the collaboration ceremony between GBA and Padukone School of Badminton





across the state.

He has also supported the introduction of Pickleball in Goa, a sport that has been gaining popularity in recent years. With several courts now operational in the state, the sport has attracted both local players and members of the expatriate community, adding another recreational dimension to Goa's sporting landscape.

Engaging the Global Goan Diaspora

In recent years, Patil has been particularly involved in initiatives that encourage greater engagement between Goa and its diaspora.

Through the Vibrant Goa Foundation, he has participated in efforts aimed at creating platforms that allow Goans living abroad to reconnect with the state in practical ways. As one of the Trustees of the Vibrant Goa Foundation, Patil was also closely involved in the Amazing Goa - Global Business Summit and Expo, an initiative that brought together international delegates, Goan entrepreneurs, and members of academia on a common platform. The interactions during the event created valuable opportunities for collaboration, knowledge exchange, and potential partnerships between global investors and the local business community.

Another such initiative is the Confederation of Global Goan Entrepreneurs (COGGE), a network designed to connect Goan entrepreneurs, professionals, and investors from around the world. The network seeks to create opportunities for mentorship, collaboration, and investment by linking global professionals with businesses and

startups in Goa.

For many members of the diaspora, such platforms provide an opportunity to remain connected with their home state while continuing their professional careers abroad.

Boosting Business and Tourism

Patil believes that stronger engagement with the diaspora can contribute to the growth of both business and tourism in Goa.

Tourism continues to play a major role in the state's economy, but he also sees potential for growth in sectors such as pharmaceuticals, precision engineering, clean technology, and research-based industries. Infrastructure developments, including the opening of the Manohar International Airport at Mopa and improvements in connectivity, have further strengthened Goa's accessibility for visitors and investors.

According to Patil, Goans living abroad often serve as informal ambassadors for the state by introducing friends, colleagues, and business partners to Goa. He also supports forward-looking local travel and hospitality entrepreneurs by offering guidance and supporting initiatives that help promote Goa as a strong and evolving tourism brand in national and international markets.

"When members of the diaspora bring visitors or business partners to Goa, they help create opportunities that benefit the local economy," he says.

A Vision for the Future

Looking ahead, Patil hopes that Goa will continue to evolve as a place

where innovation, entrepreneurship, and tourism coexist alongside the state's cultural heritage and natural environment.

He believes that the state's development should remain environmentally responsible, with a focus on industries that support sustainable economic growth while preserving Goa's ecological balance.

In this context, collaboration between local entrepreneurs and members of the diaspora can help introduce new ideas, partnerships, and international perspectives.

Building a Global Goan Network

For Patil, the long-term vision of strengthening connections between Goa and its global community is an idea he strongly supports, particularly through initiatives that encourage collaboration, investment, and engagement with the state.

Through mentorship, business networks, and collaborative initiatives, he hopes to encourage greater participation from Goans living abroad in Goa's economic and social development.

Such engagement, he believes, can help create opportunities for local entrepreneurs while allowing members of the diaspora to maintain meaningful ties with their roots. As these networks continue to grow, initiatives that bring together global expertise and local opportunity may play an important role in shaping Goa's future development. In his own words, Manoj Patil reflects, "When global experience connects with local opportunity, the potential for Goa can truly become extraordinary." ■

↓ As Founder President of Pickleball Association of Goa, Manoj Patil with Dr. Pramod Sawant (left), Chief Minister of Goa





ऑस्ट्रेलियाई डॉ अजय राणे यौन हिंसा के पीड़ितों के इलाज और महिलाओं के स्वास्थ्य सेवा के लिए जाने जाते हैं। उन्हें संयुक्त राष्ट्र मानवाधिकार पुरस्कार से भी सम्मानित किया गया है। उन्होंने क्वींसलैंड में चिकित्सा शिक्षा के क्षेत्र में महत्वपूर्ण योगदान दिया। चेन्नई में गरीबों के लिए कस्तूरबा गांधी अस्पताल की स्थापना की है।



Dr. Ajay Rane

Dr MIRACLE WHO DOES MAGIC WITH HIS HOLISTIC MEDICAL SOLUTIONS FOR WOMEN

Dr. Rane's name resonates globally as a beacon of compassion and medical innovation. Renowned for his pioneering work in treating survivors of sexual violence, he was honoured with many prestigious awards for his lifelong commitment to justice and care. These include two Queens Honour Awards and the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award.

Dr. (Prof.) Ajay Rane, a global do-gooder, a member of the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize winning team and known as Dr. Miracle for the magical medical services for women, including in war zones, is also renowned for his immense contribution to medical education which mark him out as a very distinguished global citizen of Indian origin.

It is not for nothing that Ajay Rane's name makes it to any list of committed health services advocates, anywhere in the world, and inclusion of his name in the list of the prestigious Pravasi Bharatiya

Samman Award (PBSA) for 2025 by an eminent jury was only natural.

A Champion of Healing and Humanity

The highest accolade conferred upon overseas Indians only reinforces the recognition of Dr Rane's transformative impact in medical services and health advocacy in Australia and around the world, including India. It is also a testimony of his commitment to fostering equality and well-being. Dr. Rane is an Australian citizen of Indian origins and was chosen for the award for his

community services, he delivered globally, including in India.

Professor Rane is also a member of the Nobel Peace Prize winning team in 2018 and works with Dr. Denis Mukwege in the Congo. He has also played a leading role in establishing medical education in the James Cook University in Queensland, Australia.

Closer home, Dr. Rane built a charity hospital in Chennai -- Kasturba Gandhi Hospital -- for the poor and the needy. He also invented Duneze which is a universal device for all ages and genders to facilitate squatting whilst using the existing toilet pedestal.



↑ Dr. Ajay Rane is a member of the Nobel Peace Prize winning team in 2018 and works with Dr Denis Mukwege in the Congo

His book, part of the Aussie STEM Stars series, tells the inspiring true story of Dr. Rane →

Dr. Rane and other equally eminent worthies were presented with the Pravasi Bhartiya Award at a glittering ceremony held in Bhubaneshwar in January 2025. Dr. Rane was amongst the chosen few of Indian origin, who was honoured with the prestigious award. In the fitness of things, the President, Droupadi Murmu presented the award that symbolises an enduring bond between India and its diaspora that is scattered across the globe.

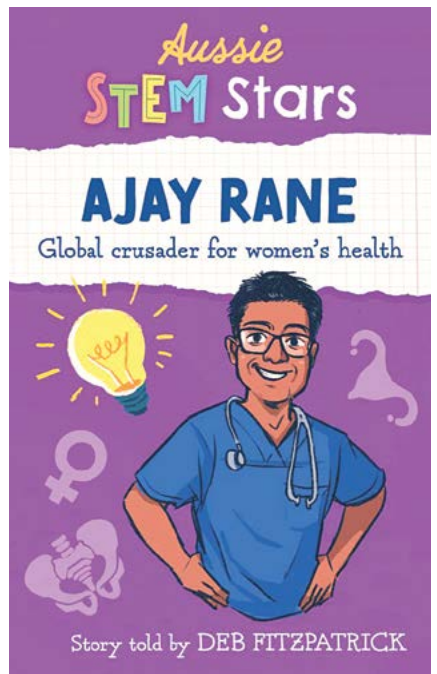
An Extraordinary Journey

Over the past three decades, Dr. Rane has volunteered his time in India, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Bangladesh and Africa, offering surgery to women who suffered injuries from childbirth.

A globally renowned Urogynaecologist, Dr. Rane is the Professor and Head

of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at James Cook University School of Medicine in Townsville, Australia. Other than his involvement in the academic world, his advocacy for women’s health earned him accolades from grassroots communities and professional organisations alike. What makes his contribution unique is his ability to carry out minimum invasive surgeries that have enhanced clinical practices and also empowered medical professionals globally. His medical procedures have set a benchmark for efficiency and patient recovery.

As a boy who grew up in rural India Dr. Ajay Rane ascribes his success to his grandparents and parents who taught him the value of education and the art of giving without expecting anything back. ■





↑ Dr. Ajay Rane receives Pravasi Bharatiya Samman award from the Hon'ble President of India Smt Droupadi Murmu at the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2025

Dr. Rane, known world over for treating survivors of sexual violence, has also been conferred with the UN Human Rights Award

Former US President Barack Obama (R) with Dr. Ajay Rane, a world-renowned surgeon and advocate of women's health





डॉ. ए.एस. सरिता बुधू मॉरीशस भोजपुरी संस्थान की संस्थापक-निदेशक हैं और सम्मानित लेखिका, पत्रकार व सांस्कृतिक कार्यकर्ता हैं। वे मॉरीशस में हिन्दी व भोजपुरी भाषा और संस्कृति के संरक्षण एवं प्रचार में सक्रिय रही हैं। मॉरीशस सरकार ने 'ऑर्डर ऑफिसर ऑफ द स्टार एंड की ऑफ द इंडियन ओशन' से उन्हें सम्मानित किया है।



Dr. Sarita Boodhoo

A CULTURAL TORCHBEARER CONNECTING INDIA AND MAURITIUS

Dr. Sarita Boodhoo's contributions embody a profound commitment to cultural preservation and community service, making her a deserving recipient of the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award

Dr. Sarita Boodhoo's name resonates deeply with cultural legacy. She is a heritage activist, writer, journalist, and social reformer from Mauritius. A fourth-generation descendant of Bihar, Dr. Boodhoo has spent decades championing the Bhojpuri language and Indian cultural heritage, particularly within the diaspora communities of Mauritius.

The Bhojpuri Beacon of Mauritius

A revered Indologist, Dr. Boodhoo's life work is intricately woven with the revival and preservation of Bhojpuri traditions. Her passion took institutional form in 1982 with the founding of the Mauritius Bhojpuri Institute, a pioneering NGO that

has played a pivotal role in revitalising Bhojpuri language and customs through literature, music, and education.

Her initiatives, such as the popular Bhojpuri song "Pani Nai Ba", cultural festivals, and Bhojpuri Cultural Week, have ignited pride and awareness among younger generations.

As Chairperson of the Bhojpuri Speaking Union since 2012, under Mauritius' Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage, she has championed state-supported efforts to secure Bhojpuri's place in contemporary society.

Academic and Literary Excellence

Dr. Boodhoo's academic journey spans

continents. After earning a B.A. Honours in Geography from Lady Brabourne College, Calcutta University, she pursued a Master's and Ph.D. in Hindi from Varanasi, supported by a Government of India Cultural Scholarship. She further enriched her scholarly base with a Diploma in Advanced Journalism from Germany and France.

Her literary contributions stand as milestones in the documentation and interpretation of Bhojpuri culture. Her works include, 'Kanya Dan': A 5,000-year chronicle of Hindu wedding rituals; 'Geet Gawai' is collection of Bhojpuri folk songs in Mauritius. The book is a seminal documentation of Bhojpuri Sanskar Geet across scripts.



She has also authored ‘What’s Wrong with the Hindus?’, A socio-cultural critique. ‘Speak Bhojpuri – Bhojpuri Bola’ is an easy approach to Bhojpuri Grammar (2010): Vital tools for learners and preservationists

Her tireless advocacy culminated in a landmark global recognition when her nomination of Bhojpuri Folk Songs of Mauritius – Geet Gawai was accepted into UNESCO’s Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Global Recognition and Enduring Legacy

Dr. Boodhoo is no stranger to accolades. Her stellar work has earned her multiple awards, including Vishwa Hindi Samman (2012) – 9th World Hindi Conference, Johannesburg; Vishwa Bhojpuri Samman (2013) – Government of Bihar; Distinguished Alumni Award (2016) – Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR); Grand Officer Star and Key of the Indian Ocean (GOSK) – Mauritius’ second-highest civilian award (2023).

She also served as Special Advisor to

the Government of Mauritius from 1997 to 2001, playing a key role in establishing the World Hindi Secretariat, which further solidified her stature as a global advocate for Indian languages.

A Life Devoted to Cultural Roots

More than a scholar or an activist, Dr. Sarita Boodhoo represents the soul of a people determined not to let their ancestral identity fade. Her relentless dedication to language, music, rituals, and research has built lasting cultural bridges between India and Mauritius.

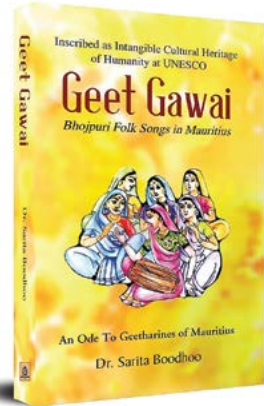
As the PBSA citation aptly notes, she was chosen for her “outstanding community service”, but in truth, Dr. Boodhoo’s service goes beyond metrics—it lies in the resonance of a language, the revival of traditions, and the reaffirmation of a shared identity for millions of Bhojpuri speakers across the globe.

“Language is the soul of a people. Through Bhojpuri, we sing the stories of our ancestors,” says Dr. Boodhoo. Thanks to her, those songs will continue to be heard for generations to come. ■

↑ Sarita Boodhoo has been championing the cause of Indian languages, especially Bhojpuri



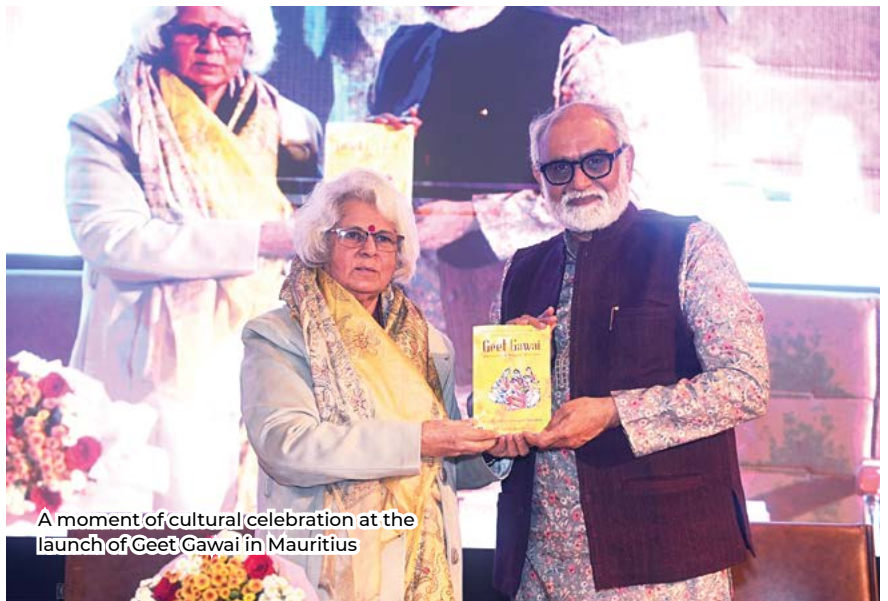
Sarita Boodhoo is felicitated at the Nalanda Literature Festival



Boodhoo's clection of Bhojpuri Folk Songs of Mauritius -- Geet Gawai -- has got global recgnition



Boodhoo has worked tirelessly to keep alive the colourful tradition of Bhojpuri folk songs



A moment of cultural celebration at the launch of Geet Gawai in Mauritius



SOLUTION TO POLLUTION: EQUIP CITIES WITH ARTIFICIAL LUNGS

“Don’t retreat, reinvent,” says **Dr. Prithvi P. Singh** at a time when cities are expanding faster than their ecosystems. He offers a decisive proposition: Scalable, efficient and affordable air purification solutions to foster a healthier and sustainable world

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Pollution has become the background noise of modern life—visible in hazy skylines, felt in laboured breaths, and measured in rising health statistics. It is the price cities have paid for rapid growth. Yet what if the same cities that generate pollution could also actively clean the air, every single day? What if infrastructure itself became the solution?

For Prithvi Dr. P. Singh, Founder and Innovator of Zero Carbon Tech24 Pvt Ltd, the answer lies in turning urban

spaces into living, breathing systems. His mission is as direct as it is urgent: Create a practical, scalable solution to pollution—one that works quietly, continuously and efficiently.

With over 15 years of successful inventions across diverse fields, Singh has now dedicated himself entirely to climate technology. The escalating crisis of industrial and urban air pollution compelled him to focus his engineering expertise on one defining goal: “My vision is to install Artificial Lungs in polluted cities—to save human lungs and lives.”

Reimagining Urban Infrastructure

Modern cities are built for movement, communication and illumination. Singh believes they must now also be built for respiration. Through Zero Carbon, he has pioneered advanced, patent-granted air purification systems designed for continuous deployment in public spaces.

At the heart of this innovation is a filter-less dust and smoke capturing device engineered for round-the-clock operation. Unlike conventional systems that rely on replaceable filters and intensive servicing, this technology functions without consumables—



Dr. Prithvi P. Singh,
founder of Zero
Carbon Tech24 Pvt Ltd



dramatically reducing maintenance demands and recurring costs.

Operating 24 hours a day on just 12V power, the system integrates seamlessly with existing streetlight poles and civic infrastructure. Its low-energy design makes large-scale deployment both economically and environmentally sustainable.

Each unit purifies up to three lakh litres of air per hour. Within its operational range, it captures carbon, dust and smoke, while reducing harmful gases with up to 99 per cent efficiency. Built for resilience, it performs reliably in extreme weather conditions across seasons.

A self-cleaning mechanism ensures uninterrupted functioning and measures captured dust levels. Real-time monitoring supported by advanced server systems enables performance tracking and environmental data analysis, empowering institutions and city administrators with actionable insights.

From Carbon to Construction

What distinguishes Singh's approach is not merely pollutant capture—but pollutant transformation. The collected carbon is repurposed into useful materials such as paver blocks and industrial dyes, embedding a circular economy model into the very foundation of the technology.

This zero-waste philosophy reflects a deeper belief: environmental innovation must create value while eliminating harm. Pollution, in this framework, becomes a resource waiting to be redirected.

Engineering Excellence

Behind the vision stands rigorous execution. Singh established a fully integrated, five-star manufacturing facility in Mumbai spanning 10,000 square feet. Equipped with modern machinery and advanced testing systems, the facility consolidates research, development, production and quality control under one roof.

This integrated approach ensures global standards of performance and reliability. For Singh, scalability begins with precision engineering and uncompromising quality.

Deployment at Scale

Zero Carbon's deployment strategy focuses on installing models such as WARO-C6, STR-101 and DVR-101 across polluted urban zones. Mounted strategically on streetlights, these systems can significantly reduce particulate matter—especially PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀—along with ambient carbon levels.

Streetlights form one of the most extensive and evenly distributed urban networks. Transforming them into air



“My vision is to install Artificial Lungs in polluted cities—to save human lungs and lives.”



Dr. Prithvi P. Singh, innovator and entrepreneur

purification nodes creates a decentralised grid of artificial lungs capable of delivering measurable environmental impact citywide.

The advantages are compelling:

- Tangible improvement in local air quality
- Software-driven control with minimal mechanical complexity
- Self-cleaning systems with dust quantification
- Durable construction for diverse climates
- Easy installation and minimal maintenance

- No consumables and no recurring replacement costs
- Real-time monitoring with advanced server integration

Such features position the technology as both environmentally responsible and financially viable for municipalities, industries and institutions.

A Mission for Breathable Futures

Singh’s mission is clear: To develop scalable, efficient and affordable air purification solutions that foster a healthier, more sustainable world. Under his leadership, Zero Carbon continues to

merge innovation with environmental accountability. He firmly believes clean air is not a luxury—it is a fundamental human necessity. By combining research, sustainability and real-world implementation, he aims to establish Zero Carbon as a global benchmark in clean air technology.

In an age where cities expand faster than their ecosystems can recover, Singh offers a decisive proposition: The solution to pollution is not retreat—it is reinvention. And perhaps the future of urban progress will not be measured solely by skyscrapers, but by the simple, priceless act of breathing freely. ■



जापान से डॉ. लेखराज जुनेजा विज्ञान और प्रौद्योगिकी के क्षेत्र में महत्वपूर्ण योगदान के लिए जाने जाते हैं। वे जापानी कंपनी, कामेडा सेका कंपनी लिमिटेड के पहले भारतीय मूल के अध्यक्ष और सीईओ हैं और खाद्य, सौंदर्य प्रसाधन तथा दवा उद्योगों में नवाचारों में अग्रणी रहे हैं।



Dr. Lekh Raj Juneja

THE MASTER OF MACHINES AND THE PROBLEM SOLVER PAR EXCELLENCE

Dr. Juneja is not just innovating products—he's reshaping the future of Japanese food on a global scale. And his wide-ranging philanthropic efforts in education and healthcare underscore a deep commitment to social responsibility. Additionally, through various initiatives, he actively strengthens India–Japan bilateral ties and promotes cross-cultural understanding

If there is anyone from the Indian diaspora who can be described as the master of the machines, so to speak, it is Dr. Lekh Raj Juneja, known for his innovations and engineering feats that added to his transformative impact on global collaborations he had engaged in, in the field of science and technology, and manufacturing.

Born in India, and having his foundational studies in the country,

Juneja shifted to Japan for higher education, a decision that turned out to be the most important one in his life as he transformed from a shy but studious, smart and dedicated student from India with an inquisitive and inquiring mind into a problem solver par excellence.

So, when Dr. Juneja, a celebrated figure in the Indian diaspora in Japan, was honoured with the prestigious Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award

(PBSA) for 2025 it was a just recognition of his groundbreaking contributions in the field of science and technology, Dr. Juneja's achievements epitomise the transformative impact of global collaborations.

The official citation for the award noted that Dr. Juneja, the first Indian-origin Chairman and CEO of a major listed Japanese company, Kameda Seika Co. Ltd, was also an internationally recognized



↑ Dr Lekh Raj Juneja receives Pravasi Bharatiya Samman award from the Hon'ble President of India Smt Droupadi Murmu at the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2025

↓ Indian Embassy in Tokyo honours Dr. Lekh Raj Juneja, recipient of the prestigious PBSA

Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award 2025

Embassy of India, Tokyo | 11 March, 2025

#ConnectingHimalayaswithMountFuji

@embassyofindia @indianEmbTokyo @japan_embassyofindia





↑ Dr. Lekh Raj Juneja, CEO, Kameda Seika and recipient of Pravasi Bhartiya Samman Award 2025 with the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Assam, Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma (left)

Born in India, Dr. Juneja reached Japan to study fermentation science, a decision that laid the foundation for a remarkable career. Over the nearly four decades of his stay in the Land of the Rising Sun, he rose to prominence as a global innovator and leader.

on fostering an international mindset. He encouraged employees to embrace independent thinking and collaborative communication.

Problem solver

His very approachable personality coupled with the brain of a problem solver made him the 'Mr Helpful' and 'Mr Dependable' in the workplace, and beyond, adding to his professional charm. His vision of change was visible in his friendly approach to colleagues and outsiders alike.

What he did was to integrate the strengths of Indian and Japanese work ethics: Indians excel at creating strategies and moving forward aggressively, while Japanese professionals excel in meticulous execution. Well aware that combining these strengths will drive global success, this is what D. Juneja did with his company.

Under Dr. Juneja's leadership, Kameda Seika has embraced international trends and market opportunities. The company has expanded its product portfolio to include vegan-friendly items, catering to the growing demand for plant-based foods and accommodating dietary restrictions. In 2023, a dedicated department was established to develop globally appealing products, staffed by individuals with international experience. This initiative aims to achieve a significant presence in foreign markets within three years.

Dr. Juneja's ambition extends beyond product innovation. He envisions international sales contributing 50% of Kameda Seika's revenue by 2030. His strategy includes leveraging the unique properties of rice, not just as a staple but as a versatile ingredient for creating textures and forms unique to Japanese cuisine. This vision has already begun yielding results, with overseas sales increasing by an impressive 150% in just one year. ■

scientist who pioneered innovations in food, cosmetics and pharmaceutical industries.

A recipient of awards like Nutra Excellence Award, the International Most Innovative Food Ingredients Award of FIE, IAFOST Fellow Award and the like, Dr Juneja was absolutely the right candidate worthy of honour in the field of science and technology. .

Philanthropic initiatives

Moreover, his diverse philanthropic initiatives, such as supporting education and healthcare, highlight his dedication to social responsibility. Bridging cultural divides, he also fosters closer India- Japan bilateral relations through multifaceted initiatives.

Global vision, but Indian at heart

Dr. Juneja reached Japan to study fermentation science, a decision that laid the foundation for a remarkable career. Over the nearly four decades of his stay in the Land of the Rising Sun, he rose to prominence as a global innovator and leader.

In 2022, he took charge of Kameda Seika, a leading Japanese rice cracker manufacturer based in Niigata Prefecture.

Dr. Juneja's appointment as CEO marked a pivotal shift in the company's outlook, blending Japanese precision with Indian entrepreneurial vigour to rejuvenate the traditional snack industry.

Dr. Juneja's leadership at Kameda Seika is characterised by his emphasis



TAX

India Budget 2026 and non-resident taxation

By **Shailendra Kumar**, Founder Editor,
www.taxindiaonline.com

With India spreading both hands to embrace foreign capital and roll out red carpet for foreign investors, the Union Budget 2026 has taken a long stride to keep pace with national goals. This is also to ensure that India does not fall behind in the global AI race. For the first time in the history of Union Budgets, non-resident taxation has occupied the centrestage of policy-making. Among all the non-resident provisions proposed, the provision that has got maximum attention is a tax holiday of 20 years till 2047 for foreign companies procuring services from Indian data centres. The incentive is for boosting infrastructure and more particularly for boosting investments in data centres. If a foreign company provides cloud services to its global clients (including Indian clients) through these data centres, then the income, if any, that may arise to the foreign company in India will be exempt from tax for 20 years.

Although servicing global clients from the data centre has been mentioned, what is alluring for the foreign company is the Indian market. Foreign markets can be serviced from other data centres also. The recent data localisation drive of the government could be an incentive for foreign operators to access the lucrative Indian market through this route. But why this tax concession now? One can only speculate that potential foreign investors promising big bucks in Indian data centres in their talks with Indian interlocutors, expressed apprehension about possible permanent establishment exposure in India. The Supreme Court in the Hyatt International case having held that continuous presence of employees of a foreign parent company at the premises constituted a permanent establishment of the parent company in India, the guess is that potential foreign investors wanted some kind of assurance before committing any investment.

Contract manufacturing

Another important concession in non-resident taxation is the concession in respect of toll manufacturers of electronic manufacturing up to tax year 2030-31. Although the FM has framed the proposal as promoting contract manufacturing in 'electronic manufacturing', it seems that the exemption is tailored for Apple that has started manufacturing iPhone in India. It was reported that Apple was concerned about its global profits being drawn into Indian tax ambit in terms of the expansive business connection provision in the domestic law that treats foreign ownership of manufacturing equipment used in India as a business connection.

The government seems to have resolved the issue through this specific

exemption without tweaking the business connection rule generally subject to the condition that the factory must be set up in customs-bonded areas that are technically considered to be outside India's customs border.

Incidentally, the Budget also reduces the customs duty on smartphone components that will also benefit global players such as Apple and Samsung.

Non-resident taxation

One of the refrains from the non-resident lobby has been that expatriates (non-resident individuals) do not prefer to come to India on long-term assignments because of India's residency rules that will make the expatriates subject to Indian taxation of their global income. The government has given in to their demands albeit with some conditions. These are that the individual must have been non-resident for 5 consecutive years before coming to India for the first time and the services must be in respect of a notified scheme and only the income that accrues outside India and which is not deemed to

The recent data localisation drive of the government could be an incentive for foreign operators to access the lucrative Indian market through this route



accrue in India, is entitled to exemption for a period of five consecutive years. The scheme is yet to be notified.

The logic of this exemption is doubtful as the expatriates should get credit for the taxes paid in India in their country of residence. One only hopes that the provision does not degenerate into another tax planning structure.

Foreign Assets of Small Taxpayers - Disclosure Scheme, 2026 (FAST-DS 2026)

At the time of introduction of the Black Money Act in 2015, a small window of voluntary disclosure from 1 July 2015 to 30 September 2015 was provided. Subject to payment of tax and penalty, the delinquent taxpayer could get immunity under the Black Money Act. There was not much response to the scheme.

The return of income now contains a schedule of foreign assets (FA). The tax department has observed that there is non-compliance in this regard which is particularly prevalent in cases involving legacy or inadvertent non-disclosures for small taxpayers, including holdings arising from foreign employment benefits such as ESOPs or Restricted Stock Units, dormant or low-value foreign bank accounts of former students, savings or insurance policies of returning non-residents, and assets held by individuals on overseas deputation.

The department now receives substantial information under the automatic exchange of information programme and has noticed that such information received indicates non-disclosure of foreign financial assets by a significant number of PAN holders.

In order to facilitate voluntary compliance and enable resolution of such legacy cases of small taxpayers, the government now proposes to introduce a time-bound scheme for declaration of foreign assets and foreign-sourced income, with payment of tax or fee based on the nature and source of acquisition and grant of limited immunity from penalty and prosecution under the Black Money Act in respect of matters covered by the declaration.

Cases involving prosecution or proceeds of crime will be excluded. The relevant provisions are contained in Chapter- IV of the Finance Bill 2026 in sections 114 to 128 known as- The Foreign Assets of small Taxpayers Disclosure Scheme, 2026.

Considering the depreciating value of the Indian rupee, the amount of one crore seems to be very low. Voluntary disclosures in India have not been very successful in the country so far. Now that the government is in possession of a large amount of information, it is to be seen how this one fares. ■

India's Union Budget 2026 opens new doors for NRI investors

- Property and equity markets to get a boost
- The Union Budget 2026 signals a friendlier investment climate. With clearer rules and higher limits, NRIs now have greater scope to participate in India's growth story, particularly in real estate and stock markets

KAUSHLENDRA S. SINGH

India's Union Budget 2026 has introduced several reforms that make investing in the country easier and more attractive for Non-Resident Indians (NRIs). These changes aim to bring more global capital into Indian companies and the real estate sector, while reducing paperwork and uncertainty.

One of the key announcements is the increase in equity investment limits for NRIs. Earlier, an individual NRI could hold up to 5% in a listed Indian company, with total NRI ownership capped at 10%. The new rules double the individual limit to 10% and raise the aggregate cap to 24%. This allows NRIs to take larger stakes in Indian firms, diversify their portfolios, and potentially gain more influence in corporate decisions.

- **The Budget also simplifies property-related compliance for overseas buyers**
- **Filing requirements have been streamlined, property transfer rules clarified, and reporting obligations for overseas income and repatriation made easier**

These steps reduce red tape that previously discouraged many NRIs from purchasing homes or commercial property in India.

In addition, the government has provided clearer tax rules for overseas income. A more predictable tax environment is expected to encourage NRIs to bring capital back to India for investments such as housing, commercial real estate, or equities.

These reforms work alongside India's broader push for infrastructure development and urban expansion. Better connectivity, new growth corridors, and rising demand in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities are creating fresh opportunities for homebuyers and investors. For developers, increased foreign and domestic investment could improve funding and support long-term project planning. ■



Budget 2026 eases NRI property deals by simplifying TDS rules for buyers

- The move reflects a shift towards practical and outcome-driven tax administration
- By reducing paperwork without weakening tax collection, Budget 2026 makes genuine property transactions smoother for both resident buyers and NRI sellers

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Buying property in India from a Non-Resident Indian (NRI) seller has traditionally been a slow and paperwork-heavy process for resident buyers. Budget 2026 has now brought much-needed relief by simplifying the way tax deducted at source (TDS) is handled in such transactions.

In an announcement made on February 1, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman proposed removing the requirement for resident buyers to obtain a separate Tax Deduction and Collection Account Number (TAN) when purchasing immovable property from a non-resident. Instead, buyers will now be able to deduct and deposit TDS using a PAN-based challan, aligning NRI property sales with the simpler system already used for resident-to-resident transactions.

- Earlier, buyers were required to obtain a TAN, deduct tax under Section 195 of the Income Tax Act, deposit the amount using the TAN, and file TDS returns
- For most homebuyers, especially those involved in a one-time transaction, this process was confusing and often led to delays
- In many cases, buyers avoided dealing with NRI sellers altogether, which negatively affected sale timelines and bargaining power for NRIs

By removing the TAN requirement, Budget 2026 cuts down unnecessary procedural steps. Buyers can now comply with tax rules using only their PAN, making the process faster and easier. This change is particularly helpful for NRIs managing property sales from abroad or through a power of attorney.

Importantly, the Budget does not change the applicable TDS rates or the tax liability of the seller. Buyers must still deduct tax at non-resident rates, including surcharge and cess, and apply for lower or nil deduction certificates where eligible. For instance, TDS of 20% or 30% may still apply under Section 195, depending on the nature of the capital gains and PAN availability. ■

This change is particularly helpful for NRIs managing property sales from abroad or through a power of attorney



Relief for NRIs as India scraps value limits on gold jewellery in new baggage rules

The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) said the changes aim to modernise baggage regulations, reflect current travel habits and reduce congestion at ports of entry. For Indian expatriates, especially those living in the Gulf where gold purchases are common, the move is being seen as a practical and long-awaited reform



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India has brought welcome relief to Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) by easing customs rules on carrying gold jewellery into the country. Under the newly notified Customs Baggage Rules, 2026, the government has removed long-standing value caps on gold jewellery and retained only weight-based limits, making the process simpler and clearer for travellers.

The revised rules were announced as part of the Union Budget presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on February 1 and came into effect from midnight on February 2. They replace baggage regulations that had been in force for almost a decade.

As per the new framework, female passengers of Indian origin returning to India can carry up to 40 grams of gold jewellery duty-free, while male passengers are allowed up to 20 grams. Unlike earlier rules, there is now no monetary ceiling attached to this allowance.

Previously, although the same weight limits applied, they were linked to value caps of ₹100,000 for women and ₹50,000 for men. Jewellery exceeding these values attracted customs duty, and passengers often had to declare items at the Red Channel and produce purchase bills, leading to delays and confusion. The removal of the value cap is expected to reduce paperwork and uncertainty at airports.

The updated baggage rules also increase the general duty-free allowance for other imported goods. Indian residents, tourists of Indian origin and foreign nationals holding valid non-tourist visas can now bring goods worth up to ₹75,000 duty-free when arriving by air or sea, up from the earlier limit of ₹50,000.

Foreign tourists, however, have a separate allowance and can bring articles valued up to ₹25,000 duty-free, provided these are carried on their person or in accompanied baggage. ■



बारबाडोस की डॉ. फिलोमेना एन मोहिनी हैरिस को चिकित्सा विज्ञान में योगदान के लिए जाना जाता है। उन्होंने 2008 से 2020 तक भारत की मानद कौंसल के रूप में काम करते हुए भारत और बारबाडोस के बीच द्विपक्षीय संबंधों को सक्रिय रूप से बढ़ावा दिया। उन्हें ऑर्डर ऑफ द रिपब्लिक ऑफ बारबाडोस से सम्मानित किया गया था।



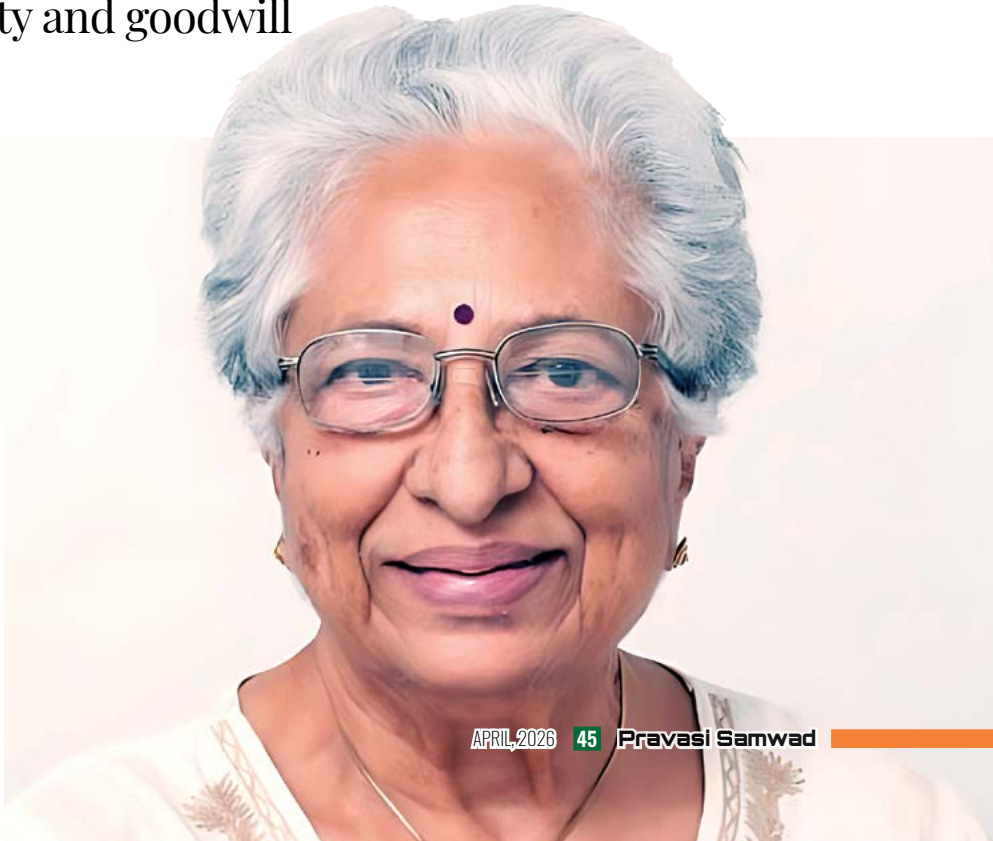
Dr. Philomena Ann Mohini Harris

A TRAILBLAZER IN SERVICE TO MANKIND

Dr. Philomena Ann Mohini Harris is a distinguished physician, humanitarian, and former Honorary Consul of India in Barbados. Renowned for her lifelong dedication to service, she has strengthened India-Barbados relations and uplifted communities through compassion, leadership, and diplomacy. Her global contributions have earned her prestigious honours, reflecting her enduring commitment to humanity and goodwill

A life guided by the principle of selfless service, Dr. Philomena Ann Mohini Harris has carved a niche as a compassionate healer, a bridge-builder between nations, and a beacon of goodwill. Her journey—from the corridors of medicine to the dignified halls of diplomacy—stands as a shining testament to the enduring values of humanity and global solidarity.

Dr. Harris, a distinguished medical doctor and proud daughter of India, has long embraced a mission larger than herself: Serving humanity with humility and heart. Her simplicity, coupled with “service with a smile” approach, has earned her respect, admiration, and accolades in every community she has touched. Whether in a clinic or on a diplomatic platform,



her presence evokes both comfort and confidence—an embodiment of grace in service.

A Global Indian with a Heart for Humanity

One of the most decorated members of the Indian diaspora, Dr. Harris’ unwavering commitment to the people of Barbados and to the Indian community abroad has made her a natural ambassador of goodwill. In recognition of her outstanding contributions, she was conferred with the prestigious Order of the Republic of Barbados in 2022—the country’s highest civilian honour. The award highlighted not only her significant medical contributions but also her dedicated role as Honorary Consul of India in Barbados since 2008.

Her work in this honorary capacity spanned 12 transformative years, during which she served as a vital link between India and Barbados. From enhancing cultural exchange to ensuring the welfare of the Indian community, Dr. Harris has been instrumental in fortifying the

bilateral relationship between the two nations.

PBSA 2025: A Moment of National Pride

In January 2025, Dr. Harris was once again in the national spotlight when she was named a recipient of the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award (PBSA)—the highest honour conferred upon overseas Indians. The award recognised her lifelong dedication to promoting India’s image abroad and her meaningful contributions to international relations.

She has been lauded her as a “catalyst who fosters understanding and cooperation between India and Barbados.” She is known for her exceptional dedication to safeguard India’s interests as a diaspora representative.

Celebrated Leadership and Community Impact

The accolades she has earned are not merely tokens of recognition — they are reflections of the deep impact she has made across spheres. In 2001, she received

the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Award for Best Service, a testament to her exemplary performance in the medical field.

Her leadership was further honoured during the 2022 Christmas Get-Together of the Consular Corps of Barbados, where she was celebrated alongside fellow leaders like Mrs. Katheryn Angella Connie Smith for her transformative contributions.

A Living Legacy

Dr. Philomena Harris’ life is an inspiring blueprint for what it means to be a global citizen. Her legacy is defined not just by the medals she wears, but by the lives she has touched, the bridges she has built, and the enduring goodwill she spreads wherever she goes.

She continues to embody the spirit of India—that is Bharat—while fostering bonds of friendship that transcend borders. For those who seek to make a difference, her journey serves as a stirring reminder that greatness is born not only out of ambition but from the quiet courage to serve. ■



↑ The High Commissioner of India to Barbados, Subhash Gupta handed over the Pravasi Bhartiya Samman to Dr. Philomena Ann Mohini Harris. The award was conferred on Dr. Mohini by the President of India in acknowledgment of her outstanding achievement in the field of Medical Science and in recognition of her valuable contribution in promoting the honour and prestige of India and in fostering the interests of osverseas Indians



The government of Barbados, through the India-UN Fund and UN Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), has received 107 pieces of medical equipment to strengthen the national health system in the transition period of the COVID 19 recovery. (From left) Martín Arévalo, Director of the UNOPS Multi-Country Office for the English & Dutch Caribbean; Philomena Ann Mohini Harris, former Honorary Consul of India at Barbados; Dr. Shankar Balachandran, High Commissioner of India to Barbados; Dr. Kenneth George Chief Medical Officer Ministry of Health and Wellness; Janet Phillips, General Director Reform of Social & Environmental Ministries; and Dr. Manohar Singh, Indian community member

In recognition of her outstanding contributions, she was conferred with the prestigious Order of the Republic of Barbados in 2022—the country's highest civilian honour





किर्गिज गणराज्य से डॉ. प्रेम कुमार को चिकित्सा विज्ञान में उनके योगदान के लिए जाना जाता है। पिछले 25 सालों से बिश्केक में उन्होंने किर्गिज समुदाय के साथ भारतीय नागरिकों की सेवा की है। कोविड के दौरान मानवीय सेवा के लिए उन्हें किर्गिज में उत्कृष्टता पदक दिया गया था।



Dr. Prem Kumar

AN EPITOME OF MEDICAL EXCELLENCE

Dr. Prem Kumar's achievements in medical science have not only elevated healthcare standards in the Kyrgyz Republic but have also underscored the transformative potential of dedication and expertise in fostering cross-cultural collaboration

Dr. Prem Kumar's achievements in medical science which have elevated healthcare standards in the Kyrgyz Republic exemplify the essence of the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman, which celebrates excellence and the spirit of service among the Indian diaspora.

Now, one is not exaggerating when one describes Dr. Prem Kumar as the person who has helped raise healthcare standards in Kyrgyz Republic, a small breakaway country from the erstwhile Soviet Union.

A Trailblazer in Kyrgyz Healthcare

Dr Kumar, a trailblazer in the medical community in the Kyrgyz Republic, has shown exemplary dedication and focus in medical service - and is ever ready to offer healthcare to anyone who approaches him. Other than his normal doctoral duties, Dr Kumar is never found wanting if someone

has an emergency medical need.

Extremely popular with the small Indian diaspora in Kyrgyzstan, Dr Kumar is equally popular with the locals who have developed an affinity towards him, because of his ever so friendly attitude and his reputation as a good doctor.

Which is why, when Pravasi Bharatiya Samma Award Jury was looking at the diaspora here to see if there was anyone who they could find, many from the Indian diaspora mentioned the good doctor, Dr Prem Kumar.

A Doctor for the People

This accolade the highest recognition bestowed upon overseas Indians, sits naturally on Dr Prem Kumar and the official citation for the award acknowledges his remarkable contributions to the field of medical science and his commitment to advancing

equality and well-being in the region.

Dr. Prem Kumar's efforts exemplify the essence of the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman, which celebrates excellence and the spirit of service among the Indian diaspora.

This recognition highlights the strong ties between India and its global diaspora, showcasing the immense contributions of Indian professionals worldwide.

Dr. Prem Kumar's achievements in medical science have not only elevated healthcare standards in the Kyrgyz Republic but have also underscored the transformative potential of dedication and expertise in fostering cross-cultural collaboration. His efforts exemplify the essence of the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman, which celebrates excellence and the spirit of service among the Indian diaspora. ■



↑ Dr. Prem Kumar receiving the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award from the President Smt. Droupadi Murmu.



↑ Dr. Prem Kumar (first from right) and Recipients of the Pravasi Bhartiya Samman Award 2025 with Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi.

‘THE TRUE COST OF WAR SHOULD NOT BE MEASURED IN TERRITORY OR POLITICS, BUT IN HUMAN LIVES’



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In a world increasingly defined by conflict and uncertainty, voices of experience often carry the deepest resonance. Among them is

Dr. Syed Anwar Khursheed, a distinguished physician and recipient of the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award 2025, who reflects not only on a lifetime of service but also on the urgent need for peace amid escalating tensions between Israel, America, and Iran.

Sitting in quiet contemplation, Dr. Khursheed speaks with a sense of urgency shaped by decades in medicine. “War is not just fought on battlefields,” he says, “it is carried into hospitals, into homes, into the fragile lives of ordinary people.”

Drawing from his long experience in critical care and emergency medicine, he views conflict through a humanitarian lens. For him, war is not a matter of



geopolitics—it is a cascade of human suffering. “Every missile launched translates into lives shattered—children orphaned, families displaced, and futures erased. As doctors, we are trained to save

lives, but war creates wounds faster than humanity can heal them.”

He reflects on how modern conflicts ripple far beyond borders, affecting global stability, healthcare systems, and the mental well-being of millions. Refugee crises, shortages of medical supplies, and the breakdown of essential services are, in his view, some of the most devastating consequences. “In war zones, even the simplest act of healing becomes a challenge. Hospitals lose power, medicines run out, and fear becomes a constant companion.”

Dr. Khursheed also emphasizes the psychological toll of war—an often overlooked dimension. “Trauma does not end when the guns fall silent. It lingers in the minds of those who survive—in children who grow up with fear, in families who carry invisible scars for generations.”

Having served diverse communities in



AI Image

“War is not just fought on battlefields, it is carried into hospitals, into homes, into the fragile lives of ordinary people.”

Saudi Arabia and assisted people during crises like the pandemic, he understands the importance of stability and cooperation. He believes that the same global solidarity witnessed during health emergencies must extend to preventing conflicts. “If nations can unite to fight a virus, they can certainly unite to prevent war,” he observes.

His message is clear and deeply human: “I hope good sense prevails among the warring factions. Peace is not a sign of weakness; it is the highest form of strength. Humanity must choose dialogue over destruction.”

For Dr. Khursheed, peace is not an abstract ideal but a necessity for progress. He sees it as the foundation upon which education, healthcare, and community development can thrive—values he has dedicated his life to promoting.

As the world watches unfolding

tensions with apprehension, his words serve as both a warning and a hope. In the quiet strength of his voice lies a powerful reminder: “The true cost of war is not measured in territory or politics, but in human lives.”

And in that understanding, perhaps, lies the path to peace.

Armed with determination and a vision for service, Dr Khursheed stepped into medicine with a resolve that would define his life. Over 45 years in Saudi Arabia, he became a pillar of the healthcare community, serving at King Faisal Hospital in Taif. His work earned him not just professional acclaim but also the trust of countless patients across cultural and national boundaries.

His contributions during Hajj—one of the world’s largest human gatherings—are equally remarkable. For over three decades, he has helped design emergency

medical protocols, establish critical care units, and train teams, safeguarding millions of pilgrims.

Beyond healthcare, Dr. Khursheed’s vision extends into education and community building. As the founder of the International Indian School in Taif, he created a platform that nurtures academic excellence while preserving cultural identity. His leadership as Vice President of the Saudi-Indian Healthcare Forum further strengthens bilateral cooperation between India and Saudi Arabia.

Through organisations like the Gulbarga Welfare Society and MESCO, he has supported vulnerable sections of the diaspora, embodying his belief in collective upliftment. His promotion of AYUSH medicine in Saudi Arabia further highlights his commitment to integrating traditional knowledge with modern healthcare. ■



ऑस्ट्रिया से डॉ. मारियालेना जोन फर्नांडीस ने शिक्षा के क्षेत्र में महत्वपूर्ण योगदान दिया है। एक प्रसिद्ध कॉन्सर्ट पियानोवादक और प्रोफेसर, डॉ. फर्नांडीस ने पश्चिमी शास्त्रीय संगीत में अपनी पहचान बनाई है। भारतीय विरासत से गहराई से जुड़ी, उन्होंने अपनी परियोजना “क्वेस्ट फॉर पैशन” के माध्यम से भारत-ऑस्ट्रेलिया संबंधों को बढ़ावा दिया है, जो यूरोपीय और भारतीय छात्रों के बीच सहयोग को बढ़ावा देती है।



Dr. Marialena Fernandes

MAKING MUSIC TO UNITE, INSPIRE AND TRANSFORM PEOPLES' LIVES

From Mumbai to Vienna: Armed with a degree in psychology from Mumbai University, an LRSM diploma, and an unwavering passion for music, Dr. Fernandes set out from her hometown of Mumbai with little more than her talent and a dream. Like many young dreamers, she aspired to make her mark in the world—and chose music as her compass

This blend of musical prowess and educational excellence is what makes Dr. Marialena Joan Fernandes distinct among the Indian diaspora of Austria — the land of classical music traditions, art and theatre.

Her deep-rooted connection to culture and tradition, nurtured through her practice of various classical music

genres and years of dedication to music academia, makes her a distinctive figure in Vienna's vibrant musical landscape. It is a significant achievement to stand out in the music capital of the world—home to legendary composers like Mozart, Beethoven, Haydn, Schubert, and Strauss.

It is easy to understand why the jury of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Awards picked her up for the prestigious honours -

bestowing her with the award, the highest recognition given to overseas Indians to celebrate her outstanding contribution to music, and music academics. Last December, she was also among the very few chosen ones from across the world as India celebrated its most valuable children from across the globe. President Droupadi Murmu presented her the award at a glittering ceremony held in Bhubaneswar



↑ Dr. Marialena Fernandes receiving the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award from the President Smt. Droupadi Murmu

during the 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) Convention.

Journey of Music, Dreams, and Determination

Hailing from Mumbai, Dr. Fernandes left the shores of the country armed with just a degree in psychology from Mumbai University, her love for music and a burning ambition to explore the world, and make it big, like every youngster with dreams. To show for her musical interests, she also acquired a Licentiate Diploma of the Royal Schools of Music (LRSM). Her passion for music took her to the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna. Here she received her diploma in Piano and Chamber Music Performance with unanimous distinctions.

Since 1991, Dr. Fernandes has been a professor at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna, shaping the next generation of musicians through workshops, masterclasses, and mentorship. She has also served as a jury member at international music competitions. From 1988 to 2006, she was a professor of piano and chamber music at the Joseph Haydn Conservatory in Eisenstadt, Austria.

As the Artistic Director and International Programme Curator, she has spearheaded numerous projects emphasising intercultural dialogue and artistic collaboration. Her Series Cycle “Uno, Due, Tre” at Musikverein Vienna, ongoing since



↑ Dr. Marialena Fernandes shows her prowess on the piano at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna

2007, reflects her commitment to blending diverse musical traditions.

The official citation for the PBDA recorded the fact that the “renowned Concert Pianist and Professor at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna, marked 50 years of her illustrious musical career during the course of which she contributed to different musical genres.”

Strong Connect with Indian Heritage

Originating from India and moving to Austria as a teenager, she has risen to be a prominent figure in the field of western classical music. Her PhD thesis on “The Konkoni Song- Roots, Development, Documentation” reflects her strong connect with her Indian heritage.” Completed in 2013, it stands as a testament to her dedication for preserving cultural heritage.

It is elements like these that reveal her strong ideation mettle and out of the box thinking, making her a visionary in global artistic projects. One such effort of Dr Fernandes was the “Quest for Passion” project in 2015, that brought together musicians from Europe and India. This initiative fostered dialogue between talented youth and seasoned artists, exploring diverse themes in cities like Goa, Bangalore, Mangalore, Mumbai, and Pune. Collaborators include acclaimed ensembles with the Austrian folk quartet “Hotel Palindrome” and the Polish trio “The ThreeX.”

Dr. Fernandes’ illustrious career spans continents, with solo, chamber music, and orchestral performances in major European capitals, the United States, Australia, Africa, and Asia. Her artistic versatility shines through her annual television and radio broadcasts. A pioneer in crossover music, she integrates classical, jazz, and world music, creating innovative fusions with a focus on improvisation and intercultural exchange.

All through her professional life revolving around music, Fernandes championed projects that highlighted women composers and focused on gender themes that fostered a deeper understanding of artistic and cultural narratives. She was honoured with MIA award in 2008 for her contribution as a woman with international presence in art and culture.

Her collaborations extend to groundbreaking events like the Beethoven Improvisation Symposium at MIT in 2014, and her work with the woodwind ensemble “Trio Viennair” continues to captivate audiences globally. ■



↑ Quest for Passion! Dr. Marialena with students from the University of Music and Performing Arts, Vienna



Celebrating 75 years of Indian Independence, Dr. Marialena Fernandes performed a “Musical Bridge” concert at the Embassy of India in Vienna



Sandesh Dhuri felicitates budding cricketers at Bausher Sports Centre in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman

FROM RANJI WHITES TO THE LONE STAR STATE

THE GLOBAL CRICKET JOURNEY OF SANDESH Y. DHURI

Sandesh Dhuri with young cricketers at Dallas Sports Centre in Dallas, USA



From the competitive ‘maidans’ of Indian domestic cricket to the emerging cricket fields of Texas, **Sandesh Y. Dhuri’s** journey is one defined by reinvention, resilience and an unwavering passion for the game

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A former First-Class cricketer, Sandesh Y. Dhuri represented Goa in the prestigious Ranji Trophy between 1993 and 1998. Those were the formative years which shaped his cricketing identity.

In 1997, his performances earned him selection to the South Zone squad for both the Duleep Trophy and the Deodhar Trophy — elite tournaments that brought together the finest domestic talent in the country.

Playing under respected leaders such as WV Raman and Robin Singh, Sandesh absorbed invaluable lessons in discipline and professionalism.

In 1998, he relocated to Oman, where his cricketing chapter took a new turn. He represented leading domestic sides before earning selection to the Oman national cricket team during their 2006 tour of Malaysia. The squad was coached

by former India Test cricketer Sandeep Patil, whose mentorship further refined Sandesh’s understanding of high-performance cricket.

Yet, it was in coaching that Sandesh would truly leave his mark.

An Asian Cricket Council (ACC) Level 3 Accredited Coach and ICC Level 1 Coach, he also achieved Level 4 Elite High Performance certification under the guidance of Gary Kirsten. He also trained under renowned educators such as Venkatapathy Raju and Iqbal Sikandar, later serving as an ACC Course Educator in Oman himself — a recognition of his technical depth and leadership.

Sandesh was appointed Elite Coach of Oman’s national team and conducted a ‘High-Performance Under-19’ camp in 2023 under Kirsten’s mentorship. By then he had already begun building something far more enduring — infrastructure.

As co-founder of the Boshier Olympic

Centre in Muscat and founder of Boshier Sports Centre (BSC), Sandesh pioneered structured, year-round cricket development in Oman. With over a dozen cricket pitches across the country, BSC integrated modern tools such as PitchVision for video analytics, bowling machines and live match broadcasting. The academy also hosted international coaching camps, including sessions with Rajkumar Sharma, known for mentoring Virat Kohli.

Under Sandesh’s leadership, BSC organised international exposure tours to the UAE, India, Sri Lanka, England, Australia and the United States. In 2018, he took academy players to Bengaluru for camps associated with Rahul Dravid, and later conducted a specialised camp in Chennai with Australian coach Dav Whatmore. In 2023, he led the first Gulf-based academy tour to the USA, with matches in Dallas and Houston — a



Sandesh Dhuriengages with school students at Bausher Sports Centre in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman



From the Ranji circuit to the Gulf, and from Muscat's academies to Texas tournaments, Sandesh Y. Dhuri has continually redefined his role in the game.

move that would foreshadow his next chapter. Since March 2024, Sandesh has been based in Dallas, Texas, focusing on youth cricket development in the United States. He volunteered during the ICC Men's T20 World Cup matches hosted in Dallas, gaining valuable exposure to global event operations.

As Head Coach of Texas Cricket Club (TCC), he quickly built a winning culture. In July 2024, TCC clinched the inaugural U17 International Tour Tournament in McKinney, competing against teams from Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica.

Later that year, as coach of Dallas Thunders, Sandesh guided the side to victory in the first edition of the US Junior League Championship in Houston, approved by USA Cricket. TCC also finished runners-up in the Houston Youth Premier League's Fall Season Classic and remained active across NTCA and FCCA youth competitions.

His influence, however, extends

beyond trophies.

Sandesh has spearheaded grassroots outreach across Dallas, conducting awareness programmes at cultural festivals and local schools in McKinney. He organised cricket camps at Valley Creek Elementary School and serves as mentor for the Outreach Program at McKinney High School, promoting sport as a pathway to holistic development.

In 2025, his footprint expanded further. He led TCC to Denver, Colorado, for a high-standard bilateral U17 tournament featuring teams from Trinidad & Tobago, Jamaica, Colorado and Dallas — emerging champions once again. He served as Head Coach of South Stallions in the USA Masters 50+ League in Atlanta, securing another title.

He also conducted a seven-day High Performance Camp in Winchester, UK, and travelled to Jamaica as Assistant Coach for a U15 tour, working alongside former West Indies Test cricketer Carlton Baugh.

Throughout his journey, Sandesh has championed sport as a vehicle for physical fitness, mental resilience, leadership and academic excellence. For him, cricket is not merely competition — it is character-building. That philosophy is reflected at home, where his children balance strong academics with competitive cricket.

Alongside his sporting commitments, Sandesh has built a successful career in the IT sector, serving multinational corporations in Oman — a testament to his discipline and adaptability.

From the Ranji circuit to the Gulf, from Muscat's academies to Texas tournaments, Sandesh Y. Dhuri has continually redefined his role in the game. Player, coach, mentor, builder — his journey reflects not only personal ambition, but a larger mission: to take cricket beyond boundaries and plant it firmly in new soil.

For Sandesh, the scoreboard tells only part of the story. The real victory lies in the next generation he inspires. ■



MISSION TO PROPEL INDIA'S 2047 ECONOMIC DREAM

PIOCCI SECRETARY
GENERAL **KRITI SHARMA**
URGES FOCUSED POLICIES



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Kriti Sharma speaks about India's economic future with conviction. He understands the challenges and the opportunities. The Secretary General of the Person of Indian Origin Chamber of Commerce of India (PIOCCI) believes India has bright hopes of becoming a developed country by 2047. This entails focused business, trade, foreign policies and government astuteness besides swagger and ambition. He says, this goal calls for the collective strength of the global diaspora. People of this group remain emotionally connected to India. Now is the time for them to become an organised economic force and help propel India.

A bridge between global potential and local transformation

For Sharma, the Indian diaspora is not just a sentimental link – this august group is a strategic asset. “Goodwill and cultural ties will not help build factories that push economic growth,” he says. What PIOCCI aims to do is convert that goodwill – with capital, technology, and global market access – into productive investments and enterprises in India. The Chamber positions itself as a bridge between global opportunity and domestic execution, especially where India's growth is spiralling rapidly in manufacturing, MSMEs, technology, and services.



Unlike many diaspora organisations that lean towards cultural celebration and philanthropic outreach, PIOCII is unapologetically business-first. It is outcome-orientated, execution-driven, and deeply focused on trade, investment easing, and supply-chain integration. Crucially, it focuses on India's Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities - where, Sharma says, "real economic transformation happens."

Untapped power of Indian business diaspora

While India's steady flow of foreign remittances is being laudedm Sharma believes this story undersells India's true potential. He sees a shift from emotional contributions and salary cash flows to robust economic engagement. This calls for co-investing in MSMEs, and propelling Indian firms into global supply chains, enabling technology transfer, and helping businesses secure top certifications.

This is not a community of passive well-wishers. It is a network of decision-makers - entrepreneurs, investors, and professionals - who can pump capital, open markets, and build enterprises. "They are the most effective agents of economic engagement," Sharma says, "because they perform at the intersection of influence, expertise, and opportunity."

Why Tier 2 and Tier 3 India holds the key?

Sharma's emphasis on smaller cities is not romanticism. It is strategy. These regions are home to the enterprises that form the backbone of India's economy. They are employment-intensive, regionally rooted, and inherently scalable. Strengthening them, he argues, is essential for building resilient supply chains and achieving inclusive growth.

He points to examples of China, South Korea, and Taiwan. All nations that built manufacturing strength through dense networks of Tier 2 and Tier 3 suppliers. India must replicate this and do much preparatory work if it aspires to become a larger market and a reliable global hub.

Beyond remittances: The case for investment-led engagement

India cannot rely indefinitely on foreign remittances, Sharma insists. The future lies in investment-led engagement - new factories, new exports, skilled jobs, and long-term asset creation. Even modest investments, when added across the diaspora, creates powerful economic multipliers.

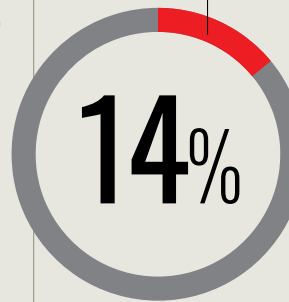
India's domestic market strengthens this case. For investors, it reduces risk. For Tier 2 and Tier 3 businesses, it offers a ready customer base that makes scaling more viable.

Derisking India for global investors

INDIA HAS THE WORLD'S LARGEST GLOBAL DIASPORA OF 35.4 MILLION PEOPLE AS ON 2025

Non Resident Indian, Person of Indian Origin, Overseas Citizens of India	35.4 million
Indians Living Abroad [United Nations Report 2024]	18.1 million
Indian diaspora in the United States [2025]	5.4 million
50% Indians in the US reside in California, Texas, New Jersey, New York, and Illinois	2.7 million
Indian diaspora living in the United Kingdom as of 2025	1.3 million
Indian diaspora transferred record-breaking remittances in 2024-25 <small>*According to Reserve Bank of India data</small>	US\$ 134.46 billion

The diaspora includes NRIs (Indian citizens living abroad) and PIOs/OCIs (people of Indian descent, including Overseas Citizens of India). The highest concentration of Indian diaspora lives in the US, the Gulf Co-operation Countries (UAE, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain and The Sultanate of Oman), UK, Canada, Australia, Malaysia, and Southeast Asia.



The remittances transferred to India by Non Resident Indians and others working abroad have registered a **14% rise in the financial year 2024-25** to a record 135.46 billion dollars.





↑ Members of the Indian diaspora welcome Prime Minister Narendra Modi (not in picture) in London in 2015

Entering India can be daunting for foreign businesses, but the Chamber positions itself as a trusted guide. “We help investors navigate rules, identify partners, understand cost plans, and avoid common pitfalls,” he says.

Predictability, Sharma highlights, is more valuable than incentives. “Investors seek clarity – on compliance, timelines, and costs. The Chamber’s working model delivers exactly this.”

Its support includes market-entry advisory, joint-venture matchmaking, compliance mapping, pilot project help, and state-level handholding. The goal is simple: reduce uncertainty and speed up decision-making.

Building a network for a new economic era

PIOCCI’s membership includes people of Indian origin from various fields -- Indian MSME promoters, trade consultants, and investors – people motivated not by symbolism, but by access to India’s growth story. The Chamber works closely with policymakers, trade bodies, and opinion leaders across countries to shape business stories and strengthen two-way ties. Academic partnerships add another layer. They provide data-driven insights into diaspora and help the Chamber design strategies rooted in evidence rather than anecdote.

Digital platforms allow the Chamber to preserve continuous engagement across

One of PIOCCI’s most compelling ideas is Micro Foreign Direct Investments in the range of US \$1 to 5 million. These are perfect for India’s MSMEs; quick to scale, and low on risk.



time zones – helping knowledge sharing, deal discovery, and policy dialogue. Global chapters bring local relevance to this network, adapting to host-country realities while staying aligned with PIOCCI’s national vision.

Rise of Micro FDIs

One of PIOCCI’s most compelling ideas is Micro Foreign Direct Investments in the range of US \$1 to 5 million. These are perfect for India’s MSMEs; quick to scale, and low on risk. Hundreds of such investments, Sharma argues, could collectively reshape India’s industrial scene far more sustainably than a handful

of major projects. Micro FDI spreads risk, promotes entrepreneurship, and generates deeper employment impact. It is inclusive, resilient, and adaptable – qualities essential for India’s long-term economic transformation.

PIOCCI as the ‘Fourth Pillar’

Sharma describes the Chamber as the “fourth pillar” that complements government, bureaucracy, and think tanks. “Our strength lies in our ability to work informally where formal systems pose constraints – especially in cross-border collaboration. We translate policy intent into enterprise action, bridging institutional gaps with speed and trust.”

Looking upbeat towards 2047

In the next two to three years, PIOCCI plans to expand its global chapters, increase micro FDI inflows, strengthen Tier 2 and Tier 3 enterprise networks, and build digital platforms for knowledge and deal flows. Its longer-term vision stretches to 2047: to become a permanent economic bridge between India and its global business diaspora, deepening India’s integration into global markets. Sharma’s message to people of Indian origin is simple, “You do not need to start big. Start structured. Start local. Start with partnership.” PIOCCI, he promises, exists to guide, derisk, and expand their participation in India’s growth plans. ■



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