

KHAASBAAT

A PUBLICATION FOR INDIAN AMERICANS IN FLORIDA

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SEPTEMBER 2025

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FLORIDA COMMUNITIES CELEBRATING NAVRATRI

TAMPA BAY
Gujarati Samaj of Tampa Bay will
celebrate Garba Dandiya Nights Sept.
19-20 and Sept. 26-27 in Tampa.

ORLANDO
The Gujarati Society of Central
Florida will hold Navratri Garba on
Sept. 20 and Sept. 26-27 in Orlando.

SOUTH FLORIDA (CORAL SPRINGS)
The Indian Regional & Cultural Center
(IRCC) will celebrate Navratri on Sept. 20
and Sept. 27 in Coral Springs.

For more information on these events and others to be held in Bartow/Lakeland, Ocala,
Jacksonville and Melbourne, please see page 17



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WHO'S WHO

Khaas Baat is a monthly publication that has been in circulation since August 2004. Issues are direct mailed to subscribers and also are available at South Asian grocery stores and restaurants. It presents exclusive, informative and relevant news about the Indian American community in Florida to its readers.

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EVENTS / SIGNIFICANT DATES

EVENTS

TAMPA/CLEARWATER/ST. PETERSBURG

SEPT. 3: GSTB SENIOR DAY; organized by Gujarati Samaj of Tampa Bay; India Cultural Center, 5511 Lynn Road, Tampa; 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.; \$10 for GSTB members, \$15 for non-members; lunch and entertainment; for information, call Jitubhai Vora at (941) 962-9774.

SEPT. 5: RAMEGUJARATI GARBA; performer is Gujarati folk singer Sagar Patel; presented by DQ Entertainment; India Cultural Center, 5511 Lynn Road, Tampa; 7 p.m.; \$25 per person or \$20 each for group of over four in advance; \$40 at door; for information, call Shrey Patel at (941) 539-8098.

SEPT. 9: HANUMAN CHALISA; second Tuesday of month; Vishnu Mandir Tampa, 5803 Lynn Road; 7 to 9 p.m.; for information, call Deo Gajadhar at (813) 817-9714.

SEPT. 13: BRIDGING THE CULTURAL GAP; conversation between generations; presented by PEHCHAAN; free workshop for adults and middle/high school students; New Tampa Regional Library, 10001 Cross Creek Blvd., Tampa; 2:30 to 4:30 p.m.; RSVP at (813) 720-7115.

SEPT. 14: RHYTHMS OF INDIA; presented by Shruti Foundation; solo tabla by Pandit Anindo Chatterjee; also, Suhail Yusuf Khan on sarangi and Shankh Lahiri on tabla; Hindu Temple of Florida auditorium, 5509 Lynn Road, Tampa; 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.; \$30 per person, \$50 couple, \$15 students with ID; free for Shruti Foundation members; visit www.shrutifoundationtampa.org

SEPT. 17: ICC SENIORS GET-TOGETHER; India Cultural Center, 5511 Lynn Road, Tampa; 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.; free seminar, lunch and entertainment; only for 65 years and older; for information, text email address along with your name to Bhikhu Nayi at (631) 560-2718 to receive details about seniors gathering every month; or call Mahesh Modha at (813) 476-1540.

SIGNIFICANT DATES

SEPT. 5: ONAM

SEPT. 22: NAVRATRI STARTS

OCT. 8: TIECON FLORIDA: IMPACT, INFLUENCE & BEYOND; annual conference of Tie Tampa Bay brings entrepreneurs, investors, industry leaders and changemakers together; Centro Asturiano De Tampa, 1913 N. Nebraska Ave., Tampa; 11 a.m.; \$125 per person; for tickets/info, visit tieconflorida.com

**TIECON
FLORIDA
2025**

OCT. 11: FLORIDA DIWALI MELA; organized by Urban Craft Ship; Sickles High School, 7950 Gunn Highway, Tampa; 10:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.; food, clothes, jewelry, henna, craft, game room, performances; free with online registration at www.floridadiwalimela.com or call (813) 466-2733.

ORLANDO/CASSELBERRY/MAITLAND

SEPT. 6: GANDHI DAY OF SERVICE; presented by Indian American Chamber of Commerce; 8:30 a.m. registration; Olympia High School, 4301 S. Apopka Vineland Road, Orlando; goal is to package 300,000 meals; open to all ages, register at www.iaccorlando.com

SEPT. 14: GRANDPARENTS DAY; organized by Hindu Society of Central Florida New Age Group; 12:30 to 3 p.m.; community hall, 1994 Lake Drive, Casselberry; essay and drawing competitions will be held; free with RSVP; food, ice cream and cultural programs; free entry to everyone by RSVP only, hscfnewagegroup@gmail.com

SEPT. 27: ANNUAL ASHOKA AWARDS GALA; organized by Indian American Chamber of Commerce; 6 p.m.; Renaissance Orlando at Seaworld, 6677 Sea Harbor Drive, Orlando; for information, email info@iaccorlando.com and for tickets, visit www.iaccorlando.com/

Cont'd on page 4



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Monthly Events

Wednesday, September 03, 2025
Parivartini Ekadashi

Friday, September 05, 2025 (3:30pm-7:30pm)
Shahatra Modak Homam Shree Ganesh Yagna

Saturday, September 06, 2025 (4:00pm)
Anant Chaturdashi Parthiv Ganesh Visarjan
(Prasad will be served after Shree Ganesh Visarjan)

Sunday, September 07, 2025
Shraddham Begins (Pitru Paksha)
Bhadra Purnima (Chandra Graham)
Group Pitru Tarpan every weekend

Wednesday, September 10, 2025 (6:30pm-8:00pm)
Sankashthi Chaturthi Chaturthi Havan

Saturday, September 13, 2025 (5:30pm-7:30pm)
Shree Jagannath Bhajan (Prasad will be served after Aarti)

Sunday, September 14, 2025 (5:00pm-6:00pm)
Shree Jhulalay Bhajan (Prasad will be served after Aarti)

Wednesday, September 17, 2025 (8:00pm Aarti)
Indira Ekadashi

Thursday, September 18, 2025 (6:30pm-8:00pm)
Bhaskar Pradosh Vrat Puja

Saturday, September 20, 2025
Sarva Pitru Amavasya Vishnu Yagna / Samuh Pitru Tarpan

Sunday, September 21, 2025 (4:00pm-6:00pm)
Sanatan Gujarati Bhajan Sandhya

Monday, September 22 - Thursday, October 02, 2025
9 Days Navratri Festival
• Daily Aarti at 12:00pm & 8:00pm
• Matangi Akhand Jyot & Kalash (Ghat) Sthapana & Jawara Puja (September 22, 10:30am-12:00pm)
• Daily Navratri Garba (8:30pm-10:30pm)

Monday, September 29, 2025 (5:30pm-8:30pm)
Durga Ashtami
Group Chandi Havan (Prasad will be served after Aarti)

Weekly Events

EVERY MONDAY - 6:30 PM
• SHIV ABHISHEK AND PUJA

EVERY TUESDAY - 7:00 PM
• SUNDERKAND PATH
• HANUMAN CHALISA

EVERY THURSDAY - 7:00 PM
• ALL SADGURU & SHIRDI SAI BABA
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LIFESTYLE MEDICINE

By DR. VENKIT IYER, MD, FACS



Modern medicine is focused on treatment of diseases by doing tests, procedures or administering medications. But what really matters is the way we live our lives. This is the promise of Lifestyle Medicine — a rapidly growing field that empowers individuals to take control of their health through informed choices in everyday living. Lifestyle Medicine seeks to address the root causes of chronic diseases by modifying our behaviours and environments that contribute to illness.

Lifestyle Medicine is a medical discipline that uses lifestyle interventions as a primary therapeutic tool for the prevention, treatment and reversal of chronic diseases. It has become an approved medical sub speciality with

residency programs and board certifications.

Chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity and certain cancers are now the leading causes of death and disability worldwide. These conditions are driven in large part by lifestyle factors — unhealthy diets, lack of physical activity, chronic stress, poor sleep, and substance abuse. Traditional medical care often addresses the downstream effects, managing symptoms rather than eliminating the causes. Lifestyle Medicine, however, offers the possibility of true healing and prevention.

Studies have shown that up to 80% of heart disease, stroke, and type 2 diabetes, and over one-third of cancers, could be prevented by eliminating risk factors such as tobacco use, unhealthy diet, physical inactivity and excessive alcohol consumption. This staggering statistic highlights the immense potential of Lifestyle Medicine to transform individual and public health.

The core pillars of Lifestyle Medicine typically include:

- A whole-food, plant-predominant diet;
- Regular physical activity;
- Restorative sleep;
- Stress management;
- Avoidance of risky substances;
- Positive social connections.

Nutrition

A cornerstone of Lifestyle Medicine is diet based on whole, minimally processed foods, predominantly plant based. This includes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, nuts and seeds. Such diets are rich in fibre, antioxidants, vitamins and minerals, while being low in saturated fats and added sugars. Research consistently shows that plant-predominant diets reduce the risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, certain cancers, and even improve mental health.

Physical Activity

Regular exercise is essential for maintaining a healthy body and mind. The World Health Organization recommends at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic exercise or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity exercise per week for adults. Physical activity improves cardiovascular health, regulates blood sugar, boosts mood, enhances cognitive function, and is an effective tool for weight management. Lifestyle Medicine encourages integrating physical activity into everyday life, whether it's through structured exercise, active commuting, or simply standing and moving more throughout the day.

Sleep

Sleep is often overlooked in the pursuit of health, yet restorative sleep is crucial for cellular repair, cognitive function, emotional regulation and metabolic balance. Chronic sleep deprivation has been linked to obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, depression and impaired immunity. Lifestyle Medicine promotes healthy sleep habits such as maintaining a consistent sleep schedule, creating a restful environment, and limiting exposure to digital screens and stimulants before bedtime.

Stress management

Chronic stress is a silent epidemic, contributing to inflammation, hormonal imbalance, and the progression of many chronic diseases. Techniques such as mindfulness, meditation, yoga, deep breathing and cognitive behavioural therapy can be powerful

tools for building resilience and managing stress.

Avoidance of risky substances

Avoiding or minimizing the use of tobacco, alcohol, recreational drugs and other harmful substances is an essential aspect of Lifestyle Medicine. These substances are directly linked to a myriad of health problems and are leading contributors to premature death.

Healthcare providers encourage individuals to quit or reduce these habits, often through counselling, support groups, and evidence-based interventions.

Social connections

Humans are inherently social beings, and supportive relationships are essential for well-being. Research shows that strong social ties can enhance longevity, reduce the risk of disease, and promote emotional health. Conversely, social isolation and loneliness have been associated with increased risk of premature death and mental health issues.

Lifestyle Medicine recognizes the healing power of community and encourages individuals to foster positive relationships with family, friends and broader social networks.

Lifestyle Medicine can be delivered in various settings such as primary care clinics, specialty practices, hospitals, workplaces and communities. It often involves interdisciplinary teams, including physicians, nurses, dietitians, psychologists, physical therapists and health coaches. The process is deeply individualized, recognizing that each person's journey and barriers are unique.

Unfortunately, there is little incentive for the health care industry to recommend Lifestyle Medicine. It is the tests, treatments, procedures and medications that bring in big money. It is up to each person to make efforts to avoid and prevent illnesses instead of seeking treatment after the fact.

Dr. Venkit S. Iyer, MD, FACS, is a retired general and vascular surgeon.

He has authored six books: "Decision making in clinical surgery" first and second editions; "Aging well and reaching beyond," "The Clinic," "Geriatrics Handbook" and "Iyer's story book for children." They are available through Amazon or from the author. His website venkitiyer.com has necessary links and contact information.

EVENTS

Cont'd from page 2

OCT. 4-6: "BEYOND BOLLYWOOD: THE 31ST ANNUAL SOUTH ASIAN FILM FESTIVAL"; presented by Enzian Theater along with Asian Cultural Association; Enzian Theater, 1300 S. Orlando Ave., Maitland; for details, visit www.enzian.org close to event date.

JACKSONVILLE

SEPT. 21: PICNIC; organized by Gujarati Society of North East Florida; Hanna Park (shelters 2 and 3, Oceanside), 500 Wonderwood Drive, Jacksonville; 11 a.m.; \$10 per family tickets can be purchased at tinyurl.com/jaxpicnic

SOUTH FLORIDA (MIAMI/DAVIE/BOCA RATON)

SEPT. 4-30: MANTRA & MELODY; fusion of sacred image and sound; featuring devotional art of Syamarani Dasi; Miami Dade College, Padron Campus Art Gallery, 627 S.W. 27th Ave., Miami; 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.; opening reception will be 6 to 9 p.m. Sept. 4; for information, call Vasanti Das at (347) 727-8692 or visit sacredvedicarts.org/mantra-melody

SEPT. 7 : SURON KI MEHFIL; presented by Association of Performing Arts of India; vocalist Shuchita Rao will be accompanied by Sudhir Limaye on tabla and Girish Dubal on harmonium; Palace Indian restaurant, 11422 W. State Road 84, Davie; 4 to 8 p.m.; advance tickets \$49 via Zelle at apaiart@comcast.net, \$55 at door; for information, visit www.apaiart.org

SEPT. 13: SINGLES UNPLUGGED; meet and connect with singles; presented by Palm Beach India Association; Stage Kitchen & Bar, 5377 Town Center Road, Suite 200, Boca Raton; 5 to 7 p.m.; RSVP required; email info@gopbia.org or visit www.gopbia.org

Disclaimer: Event details are subject to change. Please check with local organizers. Event submissions are free, e-mail information to editor@khaasbaat.com by the 20th.

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IMMIGRATION

NEW USCIS POLICY MEMO DISRUPTS 60-DAY GRACE PERIOD FOR H-1B VISA HOLDERS

By DILIP PATEL and KHUSHBU PATEL



In a significant development for foreign nationals residing in the United States under the H-1B visa program, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) issued a policy memo on Feb. 28, 2025, that alters the long-standing interpretation of the 60-day grace period afforded to certain nonimmigrant visa holders. This memo has raised concerns among H-1B visa holders and their employers, as it impacts the way Notices to Appear (NTAs) are issued in cases involving noncitizens deemed inadmissible and removable.

Under previous interpretations, noncitizens holding employment-based nonimmigrant visas, including H-1B, enjoyed a grace period of up to 60 consecutive days following the end of their employment. This period was intended to allow individuals the opportunity to transition to a new job, change their visa

classification, or adjust their status without the immediate threat of removal. However, the new USCIS memo states that the agency will no longer exempt classes or categories of removable noncitizens from potential enforcement actions, including the issuance of NTAs.

Understanding the 60-Day Grace Period

The 60-day grace period is designed to provide a buffer for noncitizens in specific visa categories — such as E-1, E-2, E-3, H-1B, H-1B1, L-1, O-1, or TN — allowing them to remain in valid status while they explore their immigration options. During this time, individuals may file for a change of nonimmigrant visa classification, apply for an adjustment of status, or submit a petition to change employers.

However, recent reports indicate that USCIS is interpreting this grace period differently, particularly for H-1B visa holders. Anecdotal evidence suggests that some noncitizens have received NTAs even during their 60-day grace period, raising alarms about the potential for enforcement actions during a time when individuals were previously considered to be maintaining valid status.

The Implications of the New Policy

The memo's shift in interpretation appears to be particularly focused on H-1B visa holders, as employers are legally obligated to notify USCIS when an H-1B employee is no longer working for them. This notification effectively withdraws the H-1B approval, leading the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to initiate NTA issuance against the visa holder, rendering them "out of status" despite the grace period's intent.

This new trend has left many H-1B visa holders and their employers in a state of confusion and anxiety. The concern is intensified by reports that DHS is utilizing artificial intelligence tools to automate the generation of NTAs, potentially leading to an increase in enforcement actions that may not take individual circumstances into account.

Navigating the Uncertainty

For H-1B visa holders, the implications of receiving a Notice to Appear during the grace period are severe. A Notice to Appear, known formally as Form I-862, is a document that initiates removal, or deportation, proceedings against foreign nationals. It includes critical information such as the reasons for the removal, the location and time of the required court appearance, and the name of the issuing officer.

Individuals who receive an NTA are urged to seek experienced immigration counsel immediately to explore their options, as failing to do so could lead to dire consequences, including deportation.

To minimize the risk of receiving an NTA, H-1B visa holders are encouraged to take proactive measures as soon as their employment ends, or to secure other employment prior to leaving an employer. Filing for a change of status or applying for a new nonimmigrant visa classification before the employer notifies USCIS of the termination may help protect their status during this precarious period. However, achieving this can be challenging, given the employer's legal responsibility to report employment termination immediately.

Consulting Legal Experts

Given the complexities of immigration law and the rapidly changing landscape, it is crucial for those affected by this new policy to consult with an experienced immigration attorney. Legal counsel can provide tailored advice based on individual circumstances and help navigate the potential ramifications of receiving a Notice to Appear.

In conclusion, the USCIS memo on Notice to Appear represents a significant shift in how immigration enforcement is approached, particularly for H-1B visa holders during their grace period. As the situation evolves, it is essential for foreign nationals and their employers to stay informed and seek guidance to ensure compliance with immigration regulations and protect their rights.

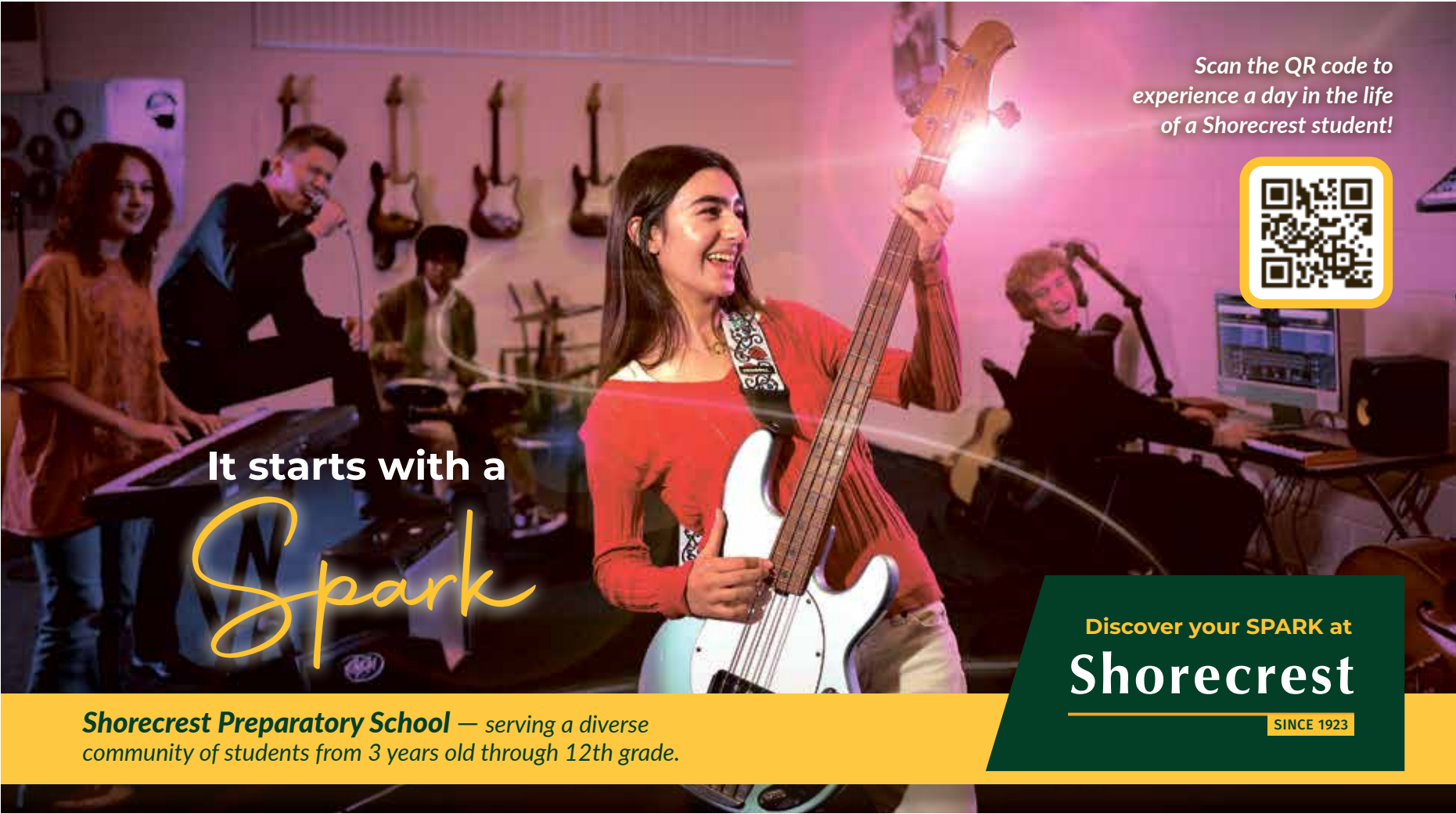
As the landscape of immigration continues to change, understanding the implications of policies like this one will be critical for maintaining lawful status and avoiding unnecessary legal challenges.

Dilip Patel of Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney PC, a board-certified expert on immigration law, can be reached at (813) 222-1120 or email dilip.patel@bipc.com




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KHAAS BAAT LAUNCHES ANNUAL SPONSOR DRIVE

BY NITISH S. RELE AND SHEPHALI J. RELE

After completing our 21-year anniversary last month, we launched an annual sponsor drive to secure funds to cover production costs. Since its inception, Khaas Baat has been mailed free to subscribers around the state with only a handful of paid subscribers in the past few years. We are proud that during the pandemic we continued publishing regularly. In fact, we haven't skipped an issue since we began printing in August 2004. Also, the entire print version of the newspaper can be found online. Since ad revenues alone do not cover our monthly production costs (printing, design, mailing), we are in need of corporate or private sponsors. Your backing will allow us to continue to publish Khaas Baat as a high-quality newspaper proudly serving our community.



Please send your contribution via Zelle to (813) 758-1786 or you can PayPal ID to: nitishrele@gmail.com You may also send a check addressed to KHAAS BAAT and mailed to KHAAS BAAT, 8312 WINDSOR BLUFF DRIVE, TAMPA, FL 33647.

With our festival season under way, we request community leaders and organizers to email event details to editor@khaasbaat.com by the 20th of the month to be included in the following month's issue. We always welcome your story ideas and suggestions to best serve our community.

Khaas Baat is proud to be the ONE AND ONLY Sunshine State publication to offer comprehensive coverage of news and happenings in the Florida Indian community. Do follow us on twitter @khaasbaat and join us on facebook.

Congratulations to Khaas Baat
for a well-deserved 21-year anniversary!

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MY ADMISSIONS SEASON – PART 1

BY ELIZABETH LIU AND ROBERT A.G. LEVINE



It is always instructive to hear from students who have endured the burdens, felt the pains, and embraced the joys of The Admissions Season. Please read Liz's story, replete with its ups and downs and weird moments. Maybe it will make your admissions efforts easier to shoulder.

Here is Part 1. Next month will bring Part 2.

"I'm not going to lie. My senior year was probably the most miserable year of my life. Although I expected it to be difficult, it was worse than anything I could have ever imagined.

"After spending the summer busy with a lab internship (aka, locking myself in an engineering building, sitting in front of a computer, and coding all day), I finished my list of extracurriculars pretty early on. Still, worried that my SAT score was good but not perfect, I debated taking it again, but Bob and Serena talked me down from that. I'm really glad because in hindsight, it would've been a huge waste of time and a significant distraction from what I had to do.

"My Personal Statement essay? That was a bit trickier. After about 50 conversations with friends to ideate storylines, I scrapped them all after talking to Bob just one time. I was originally fixated on the idea of a 'snapshot' essay, focusing on a singular moment and then zooming out to discuss why it might represent who I am as a person. In actuality, a chronological approach spanning the last several years of my life was way more fitting. I had to accept that this essay is not about jamming your story into a specific formula, but rather explaining what makes you, you? As Bob told me, 'With a good essay, you should be able to remove the author's name and still understand who wrote it.'

"Writing was definitely a struggle. In fact, having seen how I had written my school essays, Bob told me not to type it, but to dictate it for a more natural, conversational tone. The stress of writing something perfect, exacerbated by following an unfamiliar method, was overwhelming. I vaguely remember crying in bed while recording my first draft because I didn't think it was going well, pausing the recording to finish crying, then going back and continuing.

"But in the end, finishing my Great Big Essay before school started was a huge relief, and I was glad to have that off my back. Plus, the essay was good, authentic to my 'truth' and much different from what the echo chambers and the Internet told me I had to create.

"Next came my supplemental essays, those pesky paragraphs that nobody discusses but which are as important as any Personal Statement. Because my first school would be MIT, the task didn't feel so bad. MIT's essay prompts are relatively straightforward, so I just wrote, Bob edited, and we found our way to the finish line.

"At the same time, Bob and friends were preparing me for my college interview ... but MIT never asked me to interview. That was weird, scary and dispiriting. My friends were being interviewed; was I not good enough? Then I got official word: a deferral, meaning MIT had moved me into its Regular pool for consideration. Although Bob emphasized "You are not dead yet!", I definitely felt defeated. Then MIT confessed what had happened: as it turns out, the interviewer assigned to me hadn't done any of her assignments. So, MIT had to move me back because my file was not complete.

"I took that deferral pretty hard. Yes, there were tears involved.

"Truth? The two months before the January deadlines were a huge blur. I had a lot of reach schools on my list (I had not followed Bob's 'less is more' advice), so November and December were a never-ending chain of essays, essays, interviews, essays and more essays. Some prompts I struggled with more (Harvard, Columbia), and some schools I struggled with less (Georgetown, Stanford, Princeton), but what came easily and what came harder was probably more a result of my mood than my effort.

"Thankfully – I guess – I did receive an acceptance letter from my sole safety school, Ohio State. It was kinda weird. I felt nothing. No happiness. No excitement.

Just nothing. I live in Ohio, and my grades and SAT scores were way above OSU's norms, so it didn't feel like a win. It wasn't what I was looking for, just a decent school that was only a two-hour drive from home. That acceptance did nothing to rehabilitate my mental health.

"Then came over two months of waiting...."

To be continued next month

Robert LeVine is the founder and CEO of University Consultants of America, an independent educational consultancy assisting students around the world with applications to colleges, universities and graduate schools. For more information, call University Consultants of America, Inc. at 1-800-465-5890 or visit www.universitycoa.com



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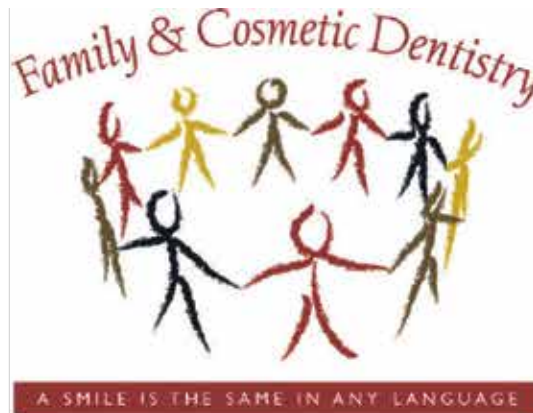
By NITISH S. RELE - editor@khaasbaat.com

The Indian Consular Application Center (ICAC) in Orlando is now open to offer all consular services through VFS Global. It was one of eight new ICACs that was launched Aug. 1 in the United States, including Raleigh, N.C., San Jose, Dallas, Detroit, Columbus, Ohio, Edison, N.J., and Boston. Additionally, the ICAC in Los Angeles will be launched soon. That's a total of 17 ICACs, which will be open six days a week, including Saturdays.

Toward that end, the Consulate General of India-Atlanta Ramesh Babu, under whose jurisdiction the Orlando center falls, held "Connecting Communities, Serving the Diaspora: Consular Conference 2025" Aug. 16 in the Theme Park Capital of the World. Present were CG Ramesh Babu and several leaders of community associations across Florida. VFS Global staff were also present to address any questions relating to the new center. Babu shared that of all the applications the Atlanta office handled last year, 35 percent of the requests came from Florida.

The Orlando ICAC will offer the following services: passport, visa, Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI), surrender/NRI/life/birth/death/marriage and police clearance certificates, GEP, attestation of documents, NORI (No Obligation to Return to India) certificate, registration of birth and marriage. Included in the service fees are photographs for the application, photocopy of supporting documents, assistance in filling forms, and return courier service for completed documents.

Open from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday to Saturday, the ICAC/VFS Global is at 934 N. Magnolia Ave., Suite 100, Orlando. CGI-Atlanta can be reached at <https://indiainatlanta.gov.in/>



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A S T R O L O G Y

SEPTEMBER FORECAST

By PANKAJ KOHLI



ARIES / Mesha (Fire sign, ruling planet is Mars) - (March 21-April 20) Mars Sign – Stars covered Ashwini, Bharani, Krittika (1st Part) This is an energetic month as your sign lord transits powerfully. The focus shifts on career and boosting initiatives. Leadership opportunities may emerge; however, be cautious of taking impulsive decisions. The Sun's transit from Leo into Virgo increases focus on health and shouldering responsibilities. Pay attention to routine work with a balance between ambition and health. Financial clarity surfaces mid-month. However, it is advised to avoid risky investments.

Relationships improve with mutual effort, though ego clashes may arise.

TAURUS / Vrushabha (Earthen sign, ruling planet is Venus) - (April 21-May 21) Venus Sign - Stars covered Krittika (last 3 parts), Rohini, Mrigashira (first 2 parts) September focuses on personal growth and well-being as your planetary lord transits powerfully. Professional matters bring recognition. Family-related responsibilities are the focus – plan well. Jupiter's blessings support financial planning and finding new income streams. However, Rahu presence in Aquarius may cause restlessness in career direction — avoid abrupt decisions. Focus on bringing long-term financial security and forming close partnerships.

GEMINI / Mithuna (Air sign, ruling planet is Mercury) - (May 22-June 21) Mercury Sign - Stars covered Mrigashira (last 2 parts), Ardra & Punarvasu (first 3 parts) With Jupiter influence in Gemini, expansion and learning should be the main themes. Mercury, the planetary lord, goes retrograde mid-September, slowing down one's efforts. Double-check all legal agreements and avoid taking hasty decisions. Career and partnerships may require revisions and replanning for greater clarity. Social networks remain active, bringing valuable contacts. This is a powerful time for inner reflection, writing and spiritual practice.

CANCER / Kataka (Watery sign, ruling planet is Moon) - (June 22-July 22) Moon Sign – Stars covered Punarvasu (4th part), Pushya, Aslesha Powerful planetary transition brings focus on finances and career growth. Venus helps strengthen emotional and family ties. Some may explore investment opportunities or plan future savings. Middle of the month, planetary alignment tests emotional resilience — be calm and avoid unnecessary worry. Work brings opportunities for growth but balance it with personal health. Creative pursuits spur joy and healing. Balance in everything is the mantra.

LEO / Simha (Fire sign, ruling planet is Sun) - (July 23-Aug. 22) Sun Sign – Stars covered Magha, Purva Phalguni, Uttara Phalguni (1st part) Your planetary lord Sun remains in your sign until mid-month, which makes you shine. Confidence, charisma and recognition flow in personal and professional life. During this time, focus shifts to finances and values — practical decisions bring long-term benefits. Ketu in Leo reminds natives to shed outdated ego patterns and embrace humility. Relationships solidify, especially when one shares their authentic self. Avoid over-exertion and maintain balance in rest vs. action.

VIRGO / Kanya (Earthen sign, ruling planet is Mercury) (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) Mercury Sign – Stars covered Uttara Phalguni (last 3 parts), Hasta, Chitra (first 2 parts) September is a transformative month with powerful planets influencing your sign, energy surges that require discipline. Mercury retrograde may delay projects, so remain patient, which is key. Focus on health, grounding routines and long-term plans. Professionally, opportunities for leadership arise, teamwork and humility may yield better results than a stubborn attitude. Inner healing and self-analysis bring clarity, calm and patience.

LIBRA / Tula (Air sign, ruling planet is Venus) - (Sept. 23-Oct. 23) Venus Sign – Stars covered Chitra (last 2 parts), Swati, Vishakha (first 3 parts) Prepare for greater visibility and recognition as powerful planetary transition takes place. Mars movement energizes you but may bring irritability if not directed properly. Career recognition is possible, though it comes with greater responsibilities. Focus on aligning with long-term rather than short-term goals. Personal relationships require more patience, especially in the middle of the month.

SCORPIO / Vruschika (Water sign, ruling planet is Mars) - (Oct. 24-Nov. 22) Mars Sign – Stars covered Vishakha (4th part), Anuradha, Jyestha September encourages one to expand horizons. Mars empowers social networks and professional alliances. Some might travel for work or consider academic pursuits. Saturn in Pisces strengthens creativity and responsibilities with children and family matters. Financially, it's a mixed month — delays may test your patience; however, persistence pays. This is a good time for spiritual reflection and connecting with deeper truths.





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SEPTEMBER FORECAST

Cont'd from page 12

SAGITTARIUS / Dhanush (Fire sign, ruling planet is Jupiter) - (Nov. 23-Dec. 21)

Jupiter Sign – Stars covered Moola, Purva Shada, Uttara Shada (first part)

Jupiter's position blesses communication and teaching. September highlights career advancement and leadership; however, it requires persistent efforts. Recognition could be delayed. Personal values and spiritual principles may undergo re-evaluation. Family responsibilities need patience. Some natives might pursue long-term investments or matters related to property. Stay grounded and avoid over-committing.

CAPRICORN / Makara (Earthen sign, ruling planet is Saturn) - (Dec. 22-Jan. 20)

Saturn Sign – Stars covered Uttara Shada (last 3 parts) Shrivana, Dhanistha (first 2 parts)

Relationships and partnerships dominate the month. Saturn asks for a balance between personal needs and expectations of others. Work may bring collaboration or partnership opportunities; however, it requires patience. Emotional depth strengthens bonds but also demands honest communication. Career paths can open through alliances and teamwork. Avoid financial over-commitments. Balance rest vs. responsibilities.

AQUARIUS / Kumbha (Air sign, ruling planet is Saturn) – (Jan. 21-Feb. 19) Saturn Sign - Stars covered: Dhanishta (last 2 parts) Satabhisha, Purva Bhadra Pada (1st 3 parts)

Focus shifts to health, daily routines and family. Saturn guides you to restructure habits for better productivity. Work demands consistency but also brings recognition if one commits. Relationships may test patience, especially in balancing freedom with responsibilities. Rahu in your sign pushes you toward ambitious goals — channel this energy wisely. Creative pursuits bring joy but avoid spreading yourself too thin.

PISCES / Meena (Water sign, ruling planet is Jupiter) - (Feb. 20-March 20) Jupiter Sign - Stars covered: Purva Bhadra Pada (last part) Uttara Bhadra Pada, Revathi

Creativity, romance and self-expression will be enhanced. Saturn in your sign grounds you with maturity while pushing a balance between dreams with practical action.

Mid-month, focus on partnerships and collaborations that can strengthen personal or professional path. Financial clarity emerges — avoid overspending on luxuries. This is a good time to realign spirituality with life goals.

For detailed horoscope analysis and chart reading, courtesy Pankaj-Astro Jyotish, call Pankaj Kohli at (905) 910-1441 or e-mail Pathofastrology@gmail.com

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2025 GENESIS G80 IS THE PERFECT BLEND OF OPULENCE, POWER, TECH!

Test-drive stories by NITISH S. RELE motoringflorida@gmail.com



Think of midsize luxury sedans and a Benz, Audi or BMW may come to mind. But you are committing a huge error if you pass on the Genesis G80, which for 2025 has undergone a refresh inside out. However, it still retains the power train shared with its SUV sibling, GV80.

The all-wheel-drive G80 is equipped with a 3.5-liter twin-turbo V-6 engine blasting off 375 horsepower @ 5800 rpm and churns out 391 pounds-feet of torque @ 5800 rpm. A smooth 8-speed auto gearbox delivers smooth upshifts and speedy downshifts. Drive modes included comfort, sport, sport+ and custom. The electronically controlled multilink suspension handles the rough surfaces of real-time roads with little sacrifice. Perfectly weighted and providing ample feedback is the motor-driven power steering. And the brakes, which feature 14.2-inch front and 13.6-inch rear vented discs, are powerful and have a secure pedal feel.

Similar to big brother GV80, the extended hood of the G80 meets a massive crest grille with a winged Genesis insignia atop, surrounded by quad LED auto headlights. Step into the cabin and you'll discover that the 14.5-inch infotainment screen and 12.3-inch digital cluster are long gone. They have been replaced by a colossal 27-inch OLED display screen stretched across the dashboard that exhibits all your phone, nav, audio controls as well as digital cluster for the driver. Need to shift into park? The rotary dial selector is a nice touch. So are the suede headliner and carbon-fiber trim splashes. The interior is lush with reassuring seats and logical controls. The driver and



G80 SPORT PRESTIGE

Tires: P245/40R20 front;
P275/35R20 rear

Wheelbase: 118.5 inches

Length: 197 inches

Width: 75.8 inches

Height: 57.7 inches

Fuel capacity: 19.3 gallons

City/hwy/combined:

16/24/19 mpg

Weight: 4,508 pounds

Base price: \$77,000

Price as tested: \$79,780

Web site: www.genesis.com

occupants are further pampered with tri-zone auto a/c, 16-way driver and 12-way front passenger heated/cooled leather seats, power tilt/telescopic steering column and tilt-and-slide sunroof, head-up display, 18-speaker, 1400-watt Bang & Olufsen package; power rear and manual side window sunshades; and much more.

Since its introduction 15 years ago, the nimble G80 sedan has been received with accolades by the automotive press, including us. Indeed, it is an impeccably balanced package of extravagance, tech and performance. And at a more suitable price than rivals in the midsize luxury sedan segment.

VENZA REPLACEMENT 2025 TOYOTA CROWN SIGNIA OOOZES EXTRAVAGANCE!

Remember the Venza, a midsize SUV that boasted "a sleek appearance, opulent cabin features, and commendable gas-sipping figures?" Well, the Toyota crossover is history, replaced for 2025 by an even more capable and luxurious Crown Signia, joining the large Crown sedan in its stable.

Sharing the hybrid power train with RAV4, the 2.5-liter DOHC inline-4-cylinder gas engine develops 188 horsepower @ 6000 rpm and 178 pounds-feet of torque @ 4500 rpm. Three electric motors (two up front and one in the rear) boast hp up to 240 hp. A 230-volt nickel-metal hydride battery, which is placed under the rear seat for space purposes, is recharged by energy captured as the driver applies the brakes or coasts. Also, the electronically controlled continuous variable transmission-equipped SUV with paddle shifters boasts a regenerative braking system.

Mind you, this is no speed demon, but 0 to 60 in 7.1 seconds is quite an achievement in a 4,210-pound vehicle.

An independent MacPherson strut front and multilink rear suspension with stabilizer bar does a particularly good job of soaking bumps and potholes with skill and sure-footedness in the all-wheel-drive ride. Also, the rack-and-pinion electric power steering makes it a breeze to pulling into a parking lot or step up to higher speed.

The Crown Signia operates in four modes: EV, which is electric at lower speeds of up to 25 mph; ECO, an efficient mode where the driver can control the throttle opening; normal; and sport for some feisty driving. The rounded instrument display showing charge, power and eco readings will come in handy for drivers who like to eke out every gallon of fuel.

Slim projector-beam LED headlights surround a body-colored monochromatic



CROWN SIGNIA (LIMITED)

Tires: 225/45R21

Wheelbase: 112.2 inches

Length: 194.1 inches

Width: 74 inches

Height: 64 inches

Fuel capacity: 14.5 gallons

City/hwy/combined:

39/37/38

Base price: \$47,990

Price as tested: \$52,074

Web site: www.toyota.com

grille with a centered and familiar Toyota emblem. The lush cabin portrays a Lexus-comparable feel with opulent

and tech backdrops. Two 12.3-inch displays, one for infotainment and the other presenting information to the driver, grab one's attention. The 60/40-split rear-seat passengers get to appreciate not just two hidden cup holders in the center console but also air vents in front. Fold the seat down and you get a copious 6.5 feet length space. Standard amenities include dual auto a/c, leather tilt/telescopic steering column and shifter, fixed panoramic proof with power sunshade, eight-way power driver and front-passenger heated/cooled seats, height-adjustable power lift gate, an 11-speaker JBL audio system and a vertically-placed wireless phone charger.

RAV4 too small for the family and the seven-passenger Highlander bigger for your needs? Then the midsize Crown Signia with its plentiful passenger/cargo room and fuel-saver capabilities should fill in the gap. Besides, who wouldn't want a Toyota that is almost Lexus-like?

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TAX PLANNING

CLEAN VEHICLE CREDITS EXPIRE SEPT. 30



By TEJAL DHRUVE

If you've been pondering the purchase of a new or used electric vehicle for yourself or your business, you may want to buy sooner rather than later to take advantage of available tax credits. Under the One, Big, Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA), these credits won't be available for purchases made after September.

Individual Credits

The Clean Vehicle Credit (Sec. 30D) was scheduled to expire after 2032. Under the OBBBA, the credit is available only through Sept. 30, 2025. In 2022, the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) significantly expanded the credit for qualifying clean vehicles placed in service after April 17, 2023. For eligible taxpayers, it extended the credit to any "clean vehicle," including electric vehicles, hydrogen fuel cell cars and plug-in hybrids.

The maximum credit for new vehicles is \$7,500, based on meeting certain sourcing requirements for 1) critical minerals and 2) battery components. Clean vehicles that satisfy only one of the two requirements can qualify for a \$3,750 credit.

Vans, pickup trucks and SUVs with a manufacturer's suggested retail price (MSRP) of more than \$80,000 don't qualify for the credit, nor do automobiles with an MSRP higher than \$55,000. Qualified vehicles also must undergo final assembly in North America.

The IRA also created a new credit, Sec. 25E, for eligible taxpayers who buy used clean vehicles from dealers. The credit equals the lesser of \$4,000 or 30% of the sale price. But the credit can't be claimed at all if the sale price is over \$25,000. The OBBBA also ends this credit after Sept. 30, 2025.

These credits are unavailable to taxpayers with incomes exceeding certain amounts, and additional rules and limits apply.

Business Credit


The OBBBA also eliminates the tax incentive for a business' use of clean vehicles. The Qualified Commercial Clean Vehicle Credit (Sec. 45W) had been scheduled to expire after 2032. It's now available only for vehicles acquired on or before Sept. 30, 2025. Depending on vehicle weight, the maximum credit is up to \$7,500 or \$40,000.

Additional rules and limits also apply to this credit.

Do Your Due Diligence

While these credits can be valuable, don't rush to purchase a clean vehicle without doing your due diligence. Check whether the vehicle you want to buy is qualified and that you would indeed be eligible to claim the credit. If you have questions regarding any of these clean vehicle credits (or other tax breaks related to purchasing a vehicle) contact the office.

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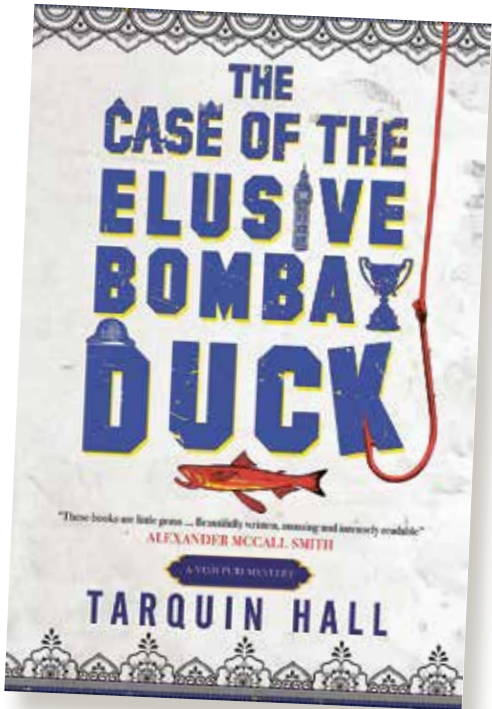
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**"The Case of the Elusive Bombay Duck" (224 pages; \$24)
by Tarquin Hall; published by Severn House; (www.severnhouse.com)**

He is back! And so is Mummy-ji! After a five-year hiatus, India's most private detective Vish Puri returns to solve yet another intriguing case – the Bombay duck! Readers will recall our previous laudatory reviews of Tarquin Hall's "The Case of the Missing Servant," "The Case of the Deadly Butter Chicken," "The Case of the Love Commandos," all Vish Puri Mysteries. This time around, the good inspector heads out to London to collect the long-coveted International Detective of the Year award. Accompanying him on the trip are wife Rumpi and his ever-hilarious Mummy-ji, an uninvited guest, of course. Simultaneously, a government official assigns Puri to track down India's most wanted fugitive – a billionaire pharmaceutical fraudster codenamed Bombay Duck hiding in the British capital. In London, Puri catches up with an old

friend Inspector Bromley of the Scotland Yard and a reluctant nephew, Jags, otherwise known as Jagat, an assistant of sorts. "In response, Puri gave a vague nod, struggling to decipher the young man's (Jags) accent and idioms, and wondering how the sweet little boy he's met on visits to Delhi over the years had mutated into this strange specimen with a spiky hairdo, pierced ears and jeans that looked like they'd been attacked by wild cats?" Like all other detectives, Puri has his lineup of intriguing agents with names such as Handbrake, Tubelight and Flush, as well as secretary Madam Rani. The book is a riot brimming with amusement and rib-tickling twists and plots. For example, Puri's thoughts on disembarking from the plane in London at baggage claim. "They live in what can be called a DIY culture – Do It Yourself. We people are strictly DIFM – Do it for me." Why the name Bombay Duck? The inspector asks Bromley of Scotland Yard, who replies, "Dr. Bhatt's from Bombay and Bombay Duck is actually a fish. Not a lot of people know that. Fish are slippery and this particular type of fish is known to reek." An alternative subplot – a must in a Vish Puri mystery – involves another Indian family, Dhillions, who have been mistreating their maid. Here come Mummy-ji and Rumpi to the rescue in what will be known as a predatory maid scandal! Once again, Hall has a page-turner on his hands in the Vish Puri series. Let's hope the talented author won't take another five years to regale us with Mummy-ji's sidesplitting escapades!



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AUGUST WAS NATIONAL EYE EXAM MONTH

By DR. ARUN GULANI



August brings the close of summer, the excitement of a new school year, and a gentle but important reminder — it's or rather was National Eye Exam Month. As someone who has spent a lifetime caring for vision, I find this a perfect moment to talk about how often we overlook the very sense that connects us so deeply to our world.

Our eyes are extraordinary. They work constantly, often without complaint — from the second we wake up to the moment we drift off at night, helping us navigate our routines, connect with people, and experience the beauty around us. Yet, we rarely think about them until something goes wrong.

An eye exam is not just about updating your glasses. It's a way to catch silent threats that can quietly take vision away. Conditions like glaucoma, macular degeneration, diabetic eye disease and cataracts can develop without pain or symptoms. And by the time we notice, it's often too late to fully reverse the damage. That's why regular, comprehensive eye exams are so important, because early detection is the best form of protection.

Depending on your age, lifestyle and risk factors, here's what I usually recommend:

- Children: At least one exam before starting school, then regularly ensure visual development.
- Adults (ages 18-40): Every 2 to 3 years, unless issues arise.
- Adults over 40: Every 1 to 2 years, as age increases the risk of eye disease.
- High-risk individuals (like diabetics or those with a family history of eye disease): Every year without exception.

Beyond checkups, we can support eye health with simple, everyday choices. A few small habits make a big difference:

- Wear sunglasses that block 100% of UVA and UVB rays to protect against sun damage.
- Eat a balanced diet rich in leafy greens, carrots, citrus fruits, nuts and omega-3s — your eyes thrive on nutrients.
- Follow the 20-20-20 rule when using screens: every 20 minutes, look 20 feet away for 20 seconds.
- Stay hydrated — dry eyes are often a sign of low water intake.
- Avoid smoking, which significantly increases the risk of macular degeneration and cataracts.

August is also a time when children are heading back to school, and it's worth noting how essential clear vision is to learn. Some problems, like a lazy eye or trouble with focusing, may go unnoticed by parents or teachers but can quietly interfere with a child's ability to read, write, and concentrate. A quick, painless exam can help prevent frustration in the classroom and support your child's confidence and performance.

We should also be mindful of eye safety at home, work and during sports. Eye injuries often happen in seconds — and many are preventable. Whether you're using power tools, working in the yard, or playing high-speed sports like baseball or racquetball, protective eyewear is essential. It's a simple precaution that could prevent permanent damage.

And if something feels off — if there's sudden vision loss, flashes of light, a wave of new floaters, pain or a foreign object in the eye — don't wait. Seek medical attention immediately. Time matters in emergencies, and quick action can often mean saving your sight.

Vision is not just about seeing clearly. It's about independence, connection, and quality of life. As we move into September, I encourage everyone to schedule an eye exam — for yourself, your children, or your aging parents. Make it part of your wellness routine. Because protecting your sight today means preserving the richness of your life for years to come.

Arun C. Gulani, M.D., M.S., is director and chief surgeon of Gulani Vision Institute in Jacksonville. He can be reached at gulanivision@gulani.com or visit www.gulanivision.com

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