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AMERICANS
NOVEMBER, 2026
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Cross Roads
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A Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the inaugural edition of Telugu Americans. This magazine begins with a simple belief: the Telugu American story deserves to be told in all its richness. It is a story of journeys across continents, of dreams pursued with courage, and of families building new lives while preserving the language, traditions, and values that connect them to their roots.

Across the United States, Telugu Americans are making meaningful contributions to medicine, technology, business, education, public service, the arts, and community life. Yet our collective experience extends far beyond professional success. It can be found in volunteers organizing cultural events, parents teaching Telugu to their children, artists carrying forward traditions, entrepreneurs supporting local communities, and young people shaping identities that are both American and Telugu.

Telugu Americans magazine aims to bring these varied experiences together, without commenting on politics. We also hope to connect generations, associations, professionals, and communities. We invite you to contribute your stories, ideas, photographs, and perspectives as we build this platform together. Thank you for joining us in this journey. May these pages inform, inspire, and strengthen our sense of community.

Warmly,
R. Ashwath
Editor

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Email: contact@teluguamericans.com

COVER STORY

WILL TELUGU MOVIES GET THIRD DIMENSION IN U.S.?

Thirty years ago, Telugu America was primarily an immigrant audience. Then it became a crucial overseas theatrical market. Now it is slowly producing filmmakers whose stories could not have originated anywhere else.

by GEETIKA

Telugu cinema has long treated the United States as an overseas market. But as the community matures, a different possibility is emerging: movies conceived, written and made from within Telugu-American life itself. The challenge is whether passion-driven experiments can grow into a sustainable creative ecosystem — especially when Hollywood remains the bigger destination for ambitious talent.

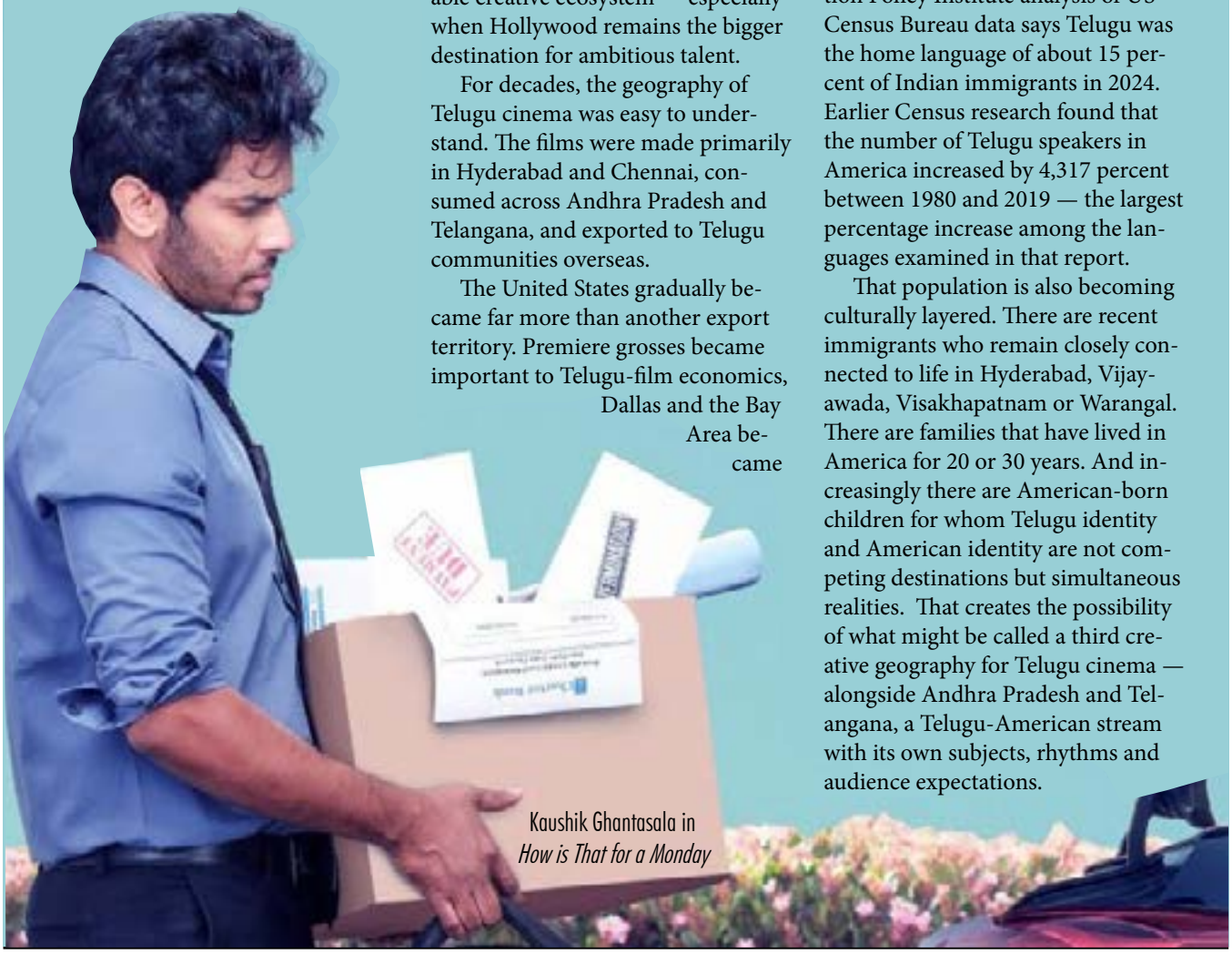
For decades, the geography of Telugu cinema was easy to understand. The films were made primarily in Hyderabad and Chennai, consumed across Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, and exported to Telugu communities overseas.

The United States gradually became far more than another export territory. Premiere grosses became important to Telugu-film economics, Dallas and the Bay Area became theatrical centers, and a large professional community acquired the habit of watching Telugu movies simultaneously with audiences back home.

Now another transition is taking place. America is not merely where Telugu people watch Telugu cinema. It is increasingly a place where some of them want to make it. That distinction could eventually matter.

The US is home to a substantial Telugu-speaking population. Migration Policy Institute analysis of US Census Bureau data says Telugu was the home language of about 15 percent of Indian immigrants in 2024. Earlier Census research found that the number of Telugu speakers in America increased by 4,317 percent between 1980 and 2019 — the largest percentage increase among the languages examined in that report.

That population is also becoming culturally layered. There are recent immigrants who remain closely connected to life in Hyderabad, Vijayawada, Visakhapatnam or Warangal. There are families that have lived in America for 20 or 30 years. And increasingly there are American-born children for whom Telugu identity and American identity are not competing destinations but simultaneous realities. That creates the possibility of what might be called a third creative geography for Telugu cinema — alongside Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, a Telugu-American stream with its own subjects, rhythms and audience expectations.



Kaushik Ghantasala in *How is That for a Monday*

It does not exist as an industry yet. But its early building blocks are visible.

IDEA IS OLDER THAN IT APPEARS

Telugu cinema began looking seriously at immigrant life long before the present US population boom. The first Telugu movie to be shot in the United States was C.V. Sridhar's *Hare Krishna Hello Radha,* starring Krishna, Sripriya and Rati Agnihotri in 1980. At a time when taking an Indian film unit to America involved enormous expense and logistical difficulty, producer B. Bharani Reddy and Sridhar traveled with a deliberately small crew.



Thomas Jane and Vijayashanti in *Padamati Sandhya Ragam*

K. Vasu's *America Alludu* (1985) and Jandhyala's *Padamati Sandhya Ragam* (1987) remain important early landmarks, which were partly made in the United States. They centered on Indian families in the United States. Their American setting was not merely scenery; cultural displacement was the story.

Later filmmakers approached migration from different directions. Sekhar Kammula's *Dollar Dreams* emerged from his observations after returning from the US and focused on the enormous attraction America held for young Indian professionals around the turn of the century. But perhaps the most instructive precedent is Deva Katta.

Before Prasthanam made him widely known as a Telugu filmmaker, Katta was an engineer working in the United States. He attended filmmaking courses in Detroit and made *Valasa,* a project about Indian students in America, using friends and acquaintances rather than professional actors.

After showing that work to Telugu NRIs in Detroit, he found investors for his first commercial feature, *Vennela.*

Katta has recalled that around 25 to 32 US-based investors participated, some with relatively small contributions. The experiences of Indian students in America that he had observed became the foundation for the film.

TECHIE WITH CAMERA IS NO JOKE

One recurring characteristic of US-made Telugu independent cinema is that its filmmakers often have another profession. That can look like a weakness. It may actually be the movement's starting capital.

The makers of the 2020 Telugu thriller *Gatham* were largely US-based professionals. Actor-producer Bhargava Poludasu told the International Film Festival of India that the team was working in software and had to find time around their jobs to complete the film. Production involved difficult winter conditions in California and a small crew whose members performed multiple jobs. The result nevertheless reached Amazon Prime Video and was selected for the Indian Panorama at the 51st International Film Festival of India. That is significant not because *Gatham* created a new industry overnight but because it demonstrated what digital filmmaking and OTT distribution had made possible: people with no conventional Tollywood infrastructure could produce a Telugu feature in America and place it before a global audience. The model continues.

San Francisco-based actor Rakesh Galebhe has described maintaining his technology career while acting in US-produced Telugu projects, sometimes scheduling major shoots during Christmas holidays and smaller work over long weekends.

This is filmmaking built around PTO (Paid Time Off), weekends and personal savings rather than call sheets issued by a Hyderabad studio. It is obviously difficult to sustain. But many independent film movements begin with people who have more conviction than infrastructure.

AMERICA BECOMES THE SUBJECT

Simply shooting a Telugu movie in California does not create Telugu-American cinema. For years, mainstream Telugu films have filmed songs, romances and action sequences in the United States. Those remain Hyderabad productions using America as a location.

A more distinctive cinema begins when the American experience itself generates the screenplay. Sripal Sama's *How Is That for a Monday?* offers one example.

The Telugu-English independent film was shot entirely in the US and follows, among others, an immigrant technology worker dealing with a sudden career setback while the narrative also engages with race, policing and class. It subsequently received theatrical exposure and was acquired by ETV Win.

More recent short films indicate an even more localized storytelling impulse.

The 2025 Indie Meme Film Festival in Austin programmed two US-made Telugu shorts, *Lost in Concrete Woods and Smoke Cheyyaku Bro*. One deals with an ambitious man's isolation after his controlled routine collapses; the other begins with the emotional consequences of losing a job.

Dallas later hosted an *Indie Sitralu* event at the Angelika Film Center specifically showcasing Telugu independent cinema, including *Lost in Concrete Woods*. And in Minnesota, *Rudram* offers perhaps an even clearer example of an American social issue being processed through a Telugu-language film. These are not films about an NRI hero arriving at an airport. America has become their lived environment. That is an important distinction.

A second-generation Telugu-American filmmaker starts from an entirely different place. America is not the destination. It is home.



Shalini Bathina and Sri Chilukuri in *'Dos Bros Force'*

2ND GEN CHANGES EVERYTHING

The first major Telugu migration narratives generally revolved around movement: leaving India, arriving in America, acquiring a visa, adjusting to Western culture, marrying across cultures, succeeding abroad or deciding whether to return.

A second-generation Telugu-American filmmaker starts from an entirely different place. America is not the destination. It is home.

That opens up stories mainstream Telugu cinema has barely explored: parents and children who switch languages during the same argument; teenagers who understand Telugu perfectly but answer in English; grandparents who spend six months each year in suburban America; inter-Indian and interracial marriages; women rebuilding careers after migration; immigration status affecting family decisions; American-born children negotiating expectations imported from India; loneliness inside prosperous technology households; or elderly parents realizing their grandchildren belong to a culture they only partly understand.

California-based filmmaker Kalyan Sura is developing precisely this territory. His short *Dos Bros Force* received support from the Netflix x Tasveer Film Fund.

Sura says he is now expanding it into a Telugu-English family dramedy set in 1990s California, centered on immigrant parents, children and the gap between what each generation understands as sacrifice, success and belonging.

The important creative decision is the bilingualism.

A genuinely Telugu-American film may not be entirely in Telugu — and forcing it to be could actually make it less authentic.

A mother might speak Telugu. Her son might answer in English. The parents could switch to Telugu when they do not want the children's friends to understand. That linguistic movement is itself part of Telugu-American culture.

But where will the actors come from? This is where the proposed "third stream" faces a structural problem.

Any highly talented American-based actor is operating within reach of the world's largest English-language screen industry. If that performer can obtain substantial opportunities in Hollywood, American television or major streaming productions, the economic and professional incentives are obvious. A small Telugu-American independent film cannot compete with Hollywood on salaries, visibility, agents, production infrastructure or career scale.

That means some early Telugu-American productions will inevitably depend on people who have another profession, actors still seeking larger opportunities, theatre performers, newcomers and filmmakers willing to work for passion rather than immediate financial reward.

That reality should not be romanticized. But it should not be interpreted to mean that Telugu-American cinema can only be populated by people who "failed" to enter Hollywood. The relationship could be much more fluid.

American-born Telugu actress Avantika Vandanapu, for instance, has already demonstrated how a performer can move between Telugu cinema and mainstream American entertainment. Discussing reactions to her American accent in 2024, she pointed out that she was born and raised in the US and described the code-switching familiar to immigrant children.

For the next generation, "Tollywood or Hollywood" may be the wrong choice altogether. A Telugu-American actor could work in an American series, audition for studio films and still appear in an independent Telugu-English feature if the role offers something Hollywood does not. A good actor may accept a smaller Telugu-American production not because Hollywood rejected them, but because Hollywood is unlikely to tell that particular story.

A genuinely Telugu-American film may not be entirely in Telugu. A mother might speak Telugu. Her son might answer in English.

WRITERS, DIRECTORS MAY ARRIVE BEFORE

For this reason, the most important people in an emerging Telugu-American cinema may initially be writers and directors rather than actors. Actors benefit enormously from joining the biggest available market. For writers, cultural specificity can be an advantage.

A filmmaker who has lived for 20 years in New Jersey understands things a writer sitting in Hyderabad may not fully know. An American screenwriter with no Telugu background would miss another layer entirely. The filmmaker who understands both worlds owns a valuable perspective. That is why the most promising Telugu-American stories may not imitate mainstream Telugu films at all. They may resemble American independent cinema: smaller casts, real locations, modest budgets, bilingual conversations, fewer songs, less hero-centric storytelling and greater emphasis on relationships, social observation and character. They could also eventually expand beyond immigrant drama.

A Telugu-American film culture should be able to produce a suburban thriller, workplace comedy, horror film, science-fiction story or murder mystery without every movie needing to explain what it means to be an immigrant. A Telugu family in Texas should be allowed simply to exist on screen.

NOT TOLLYWOOD USA, AT LEAST NOT YET

It would be premature to call this "Tollywood USA." There is no continuous production slate, reliable financing system, dedicated distribution network or professional talent pool large enough to constitute a parallel film industry.

Most projects remain isolated experiments. Many are dependent on personal money and volunteer labor. Some will inevitably have amateur performances or technical shortcomings. Others may never find distribution.

And the gravitational pull of both Hollywood and Hyderabad will remain powerful. But that does not make the experiments unimportant.

Thirty years ago, Telugu America was primarily an immigrant audience. Then it became a crucial overseas theatrical market. Now it is slowly producing filmmakers whose stories could not have originated anywhere else.

The first generation of Telugu-American cinema largely asked: What happens when a Telugu person goes to America?

The next generation can ask something much more complicated: What happens when Telugu people have been in America long enough for America to become part of Telugu culture itself?

If filmmakers begin answering that question, Telugu cinema in the US may become something new, not a competitor to Hyderabad and not a substitute for Hollywood, but a third creative stream positioned between them.

Mahesh Babu wraps up the shoot



Ace director SS Rajamouli's *Varanasi*, starring Mahesh Babu, is reportedly moving into the final stretch of production, with most of the principal photography now completed. Recent reports from the Telugu film industry say more than 90 percent of the shoot has been finished and that Mahesh Babu has completed his on-camera work and dubbing. The production has officially moved into an intensive post-production and VFX phase and is scheduled for theatrical release on April 7, 2027.

Deepfake scandal shocks Tollywood

by SHARADA

The Telugu film industry is facing a significant issue with the misuse of artificial intelligence to produce obscene and deceptive videos, leading prominent actors and industry groups to call for stronger protections against digital impersonation and online abuse.

The issue escalated in early October when an AI-altered version of the well-known *Chuttamalle* song from *Devara*, starring Jr NTR and Janhvi Kapoor, circulated on the internet. This manipulated clip reportedly included sexually explicit content, causing widespread outrage. Jr NTR condemned the act and pursued legal measures against those involved.

Megastar Chiranjeevi also voiced his concerns and suggested initiating talks with film bodies and government officials to create a system for detecting and removing doctored content.

On October 6, Vishnu Manchu, president of the Movie Artists Association (MAA), urged a collective industry response involving the Telugu Film Chamber, Producers Council, and other key players.

He emphasized that deepfakes, impersonations, and coordinated online harassment should not be seen as isolated events. MAA was gathering data on accounts allegedly engaged in repeated misuse and abuse of celebrities' identities.

This controversy also brought back worries about organized efforts targeting films before their release. Producers and actors have claimed that anonymous social media profiles sometimes spread defamatory or intentionally negative content to harm box office results.

Nonetheless, it remains crucial to differentiate between harmful campaigns and legitimate criticism. Film reviews, audience feedback, and anonymous opinions are protected speech, and claims of coordinated attacks require solid proof.

The problem goes beyond just protecting celebrity reputations. AI-created intimate images can infringe on personal dignity, harm careers, and expose victims to harassment, while realistic impersonations can deceive viewers and advertisers.



AP GOVT REVIVES NANDI AWARDS

The revival of the Nandi Awards in Andhra Pradesh has brought renewed attention to government recognition of excellence in Telugu cinema. The AP government has approved the presentation of pending awards for 2012–2016 and fresh selections for 2017–2024. For the latter period, four honours will be given annually, including two awards for best films. The full awards structure will resume for 2025. The ceremony is slated for December 2026



RAJINIKANTH'S JAILER IS DASARA WINNER

The Dasara holiday season produced unexpected results at the Telugu box office, with Rajinikanth's Tamil film Jailer 2 emerging as the strongest performer among the major releases, ahead of several Telugu productions. Vijay Deverakonda's Ranabaali experienced a more uneven theatrical run, although the film benefited from weekend and Dasara holiday collections.



A graphical rendition of Vedic Village project.

A techie's journey to Vedic Village

by RAGHAV

For Prakash Buchireddy, entrepreneurship began not with a new technology or an untapped digital market, but with a question: Could he recreate some of the best elements of the Indian village in modern America?

That question has grown into Vedic Village, a 215-acre residential development near Winston-Salem, North Carolina, envisioned as a community where homes coexist with organic farms, orchards, walking trails, wellness facilities and large tracts of open space. Behind the ambitious project is an entrepreneur whose professional roots are far removed from farming or property development.

Buchireddy was born and raised in a village near Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh. He later studied in Hyderabad and pursued further education and work



Prakash Buchireddy

opportunities in Bengaluru before moving to the United States. He initially lived in Stamford, Connecticut, and later Princeton, New Jersey, before eventually making North Carolina home.

His professional career was built largely in IT. Over more than two decades, Buchireddy worked across roles ranging from software programming and architecture to product management and account leadership. He was involved in developing software solutions that helped replace paper-based pharmaceutical regulatory reports with encrypted electronic submissions.

Yet, as his children grew older, Buchireddy found himself contemplating a question familiar to many first-generation Indian immigrants: where was home for the next stage of life? Returning to India meant moving farther away from his children.

Conventional American retirement communities did not quite correspond with the lifestyle he remembered from India.

His childhood memories were of villages where agriculture, cattle, fruit trees, neighbors and temples were part of everyday life. Instead of choosing between the two worlds, he tried to combine them.

ENTREPRENEUR'S PIVOT

In 2021, Buchireddy established Sustaino LLC, a company focused on self-sustaining communities. But initially, he encountered rejection and regulatory challenges before securing approval in Guilford County.

This experience became a proving ground for the much larger Vedic Village. In September 2023, the Forsyth County planning process cleared the Vedic Village, which envisages about 180 single-family homes, while more than 150 acres are intended to remain as organic farms, orchards, pastures and other natural and recreational areas. Plans also include an 18-room resort.

The proposed amenities include fruit and vegetable gardens, honeybees, Desi cows, more than three miles of nature trails, rainwater harvesting, renewable energy, a community kitchen, yoga facilities, a temple, medicinal plants and a biogas plant, which together forms an ensemble that harmonizes people's lifestyle with nature.

Leadership isn't authority, it's responsibility, says GTA chief

by MAHESH

When Bapureddy Kethireddy, the new president of the Global Telangana Association (GTA), describes leadership, he does not begin with titles, organizational charts. For him, "Leadership is not authority; it is responsibility. And participation is power." That philosophy now accompanies a considerably larger responsibility as he seeks to expand GTA, a relatively young diaspora organization across the United States and internationally. Currently, GTA has chapters in 54 countries and had set a goal of eventually reaching 100 countries.



Bapu Reddy and his wife Srujana

For Kethireddy, however, diaspora leadership is about more than preserving Telangana culture. His vision, as outlined in the interview, extends into civic participation, entrepreneurship and a larger question facing immigrant organizations in America: how to maintain connections with India while becoming more deeply engaged in the countries their members now call home.

A JOURNEY THROUGH INDIA, ASIA, AMERICA

Kethireddy traces his roots to Karimnagar in Telangana. His professional journey included an early software venture in Hyderabad, work in Singapore and Malaysia, and eventually a move to the US about 25 years ago for graduate studies — a period that was marked not by a smooth migration but a succession of experiments, setbacks and adjustments.

Kethireddy says his approach to leadership was shaped much earlier, inside his family. He recalls his father as a local political figure who dealt with disputes in rural Telangana through patient conversation and listening, while his mother took a more assertive role in managing the family's agricultural and business responsibilities. Kethireddy learnt from his lessons from his parents, which continue to guide him: listen before acting, but do not be afraid to act decisively.

His community involvement in the United States predates his GTA presidency. He was one of the vice-presidents of the Telangana Development Forum-USA for 2022-23.

CULTURAL CELEBRATION TO COMMUNITY INSTITUTION

Kethireddy's base in Atlanta placed him inside one of the more visible centers of Telangana cultural activity in the United States. In October 2025, he was GTA's president-elect, Atlanta Bathukamma celebration drew more than 6,000 attendees. The scale reflects GTA's rapid growth.

The organization emerged in 2023 with a stated goal of bringing Telangana-origin people around the world onto a common platform.

As president elect, Kethireddy wanted GTA to work for preserving Telangana folk arts and literature while providing guidance to young people considering opportunities abroad.

By the end of 2025, Global Telangana Association said it had established chapters in 45 countries. Its first major Hyderabad convention in December 2025 drew more than 2,000 visitors. That growth has brought a broader question into focus for Kethireddy: what should a diaspora association actually do once cultural preservation is no longer its only challenge?

BROADER VISION FOR DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT

Kethireddy argues that overseas Indians should participate more actively in civic institutions rather than remaining primarily inside professional and cultural networks.

In the interview, he urged Indian Americans to become involved with city governments, school boards and other local institutions and to participate in the civic traditions of the communities in which they live.

His emphasis on participation is particularly relevant to a generation of Telugu Americans whose relationship with the United States has shifted from temporary professional migration toward long-term community building.

Kethireddy also said he supports more accessible voting arrangements for eligible non-resident Indian voters and favors a broader discussion of dual citizenship for Indians who acquire citizenship abroad.

Those positions should be understood as Kethireddy's advocacy views rather than descriptions of existing Indian law. India currently provides Overseas Citizenship of India status to eligible foreign citizens of Indian origin, but OCI is not dual citizenship and does not carry voting rights in Indian elections.

For Kethireddy, the underlying issue is representation. Diaspora communities, he argues, should seek meaningful participation in public institutions rather than measuring influence primarily through access to political leaders or large community events.

AI CHALLENGE FOR INDIAN TECH PROFESSIONALS

Kethireddy's message is similarly pointed when the conversation turns to technology.

Drawing on his experience in the technology sector, he argues that generative artificial intelligence and automation are changing the employment model that supported generations of Indian technology professionals.

His prescription for younger professionals is entrepreneurship.



Bapu Reddy and his wife Srujana with their children.

Rather than depending exclusively on conventional technology-services careers, Kethireddy said young engineers should develop intellectual property, pursue patents, experiment with applied research and become more willing to build companies.

Failure early in a career, in his view, can be an education rather than a permanent setback.

It is a message with particular resonance for Telugu Americans. Technology employment has played a major role in the growth of Telugu-speaking communities across metropolitan areas such as Atlanta, Dallas, New Jersey, Washington and the Research Triangle. Changes brought by AI therefore have implications extending beyond individual careers to the economic model on which many immigrant families have built their lives.

LEADERSHIP BEYOND CONVENTION HALL

Kethireddy also describes community leadership as something that has to coexist with family and professional responsibilities.

He credits his wife, Srujana, with balancing her own professional career while the family manages the demands that come with his community work. He also emphasizes physical exercise as part of his routine, arguing that professionals working under sustained pressure need to treat health as a daily responsibility rather than an afterthought.

The personal philosophy connects back to his larger view of volunteer organizations.

For Kethireddy, GTA's next stage is not simply about producing bigger festivals or adding more names to a chapter map. It is about whether a diaspora network can convert cultural solidarity into sustained service, civic participation, professional collaboration and opportunities for the next generation.

GTA itself is already moving beyond individual cultural events. Its published programming includes youth and education initiatives, business and innovation forums, humanitarian activities and Telangana cultural celebrations.

And its geographic ambitions continue to grow.

At a September 2026 board meeting in Frisco, Texas, GTA leaders said they wanted eventually to establish chapters in 100 countries, positioning the organization as a bridge between Telangana and its increasingly dispersed global population.

Kethireddy's presidency comes as that experiment enters its next phase: whether an organization built around a shared Telangana identity can preserve those roots while encouraging its members to become more deeply invested in the civic, technological and economic future of the societies in which they now live.

Festivals in November



Nov 6: Dhana Trayodashi, Dhanteras

Nov 8: Deepavali

Nov 15: Skanda Sashti

Nov 21: Tulasi Vivaha

Nov 23: Kartika Pournami



THE STORY BEHIND TULASI VIVAHA

Tulasi Vivaha celebrates the ceremonial marriage of Tulasi, the sacred basil plant, to Lord Vishnu, usually represented by a Shaligrama stone or an image of Krishna. It is celebrated between Prabodhini Ekadashi and Kartika Purnima, with many families celebrating it on Kartika Shukla Dwadashi. In Telugu households, it is often called Ksheerabdi Dwadashi. The Tulasi plant is dressed and decorated like a bride, sometimes with a sari, jewellery and a small wedding pavilion. Vishnu or Krishna is placed beside her, and families perform wedding rituals. The festival marks Vishnu's awakening after the four-month Chaturmasya period.

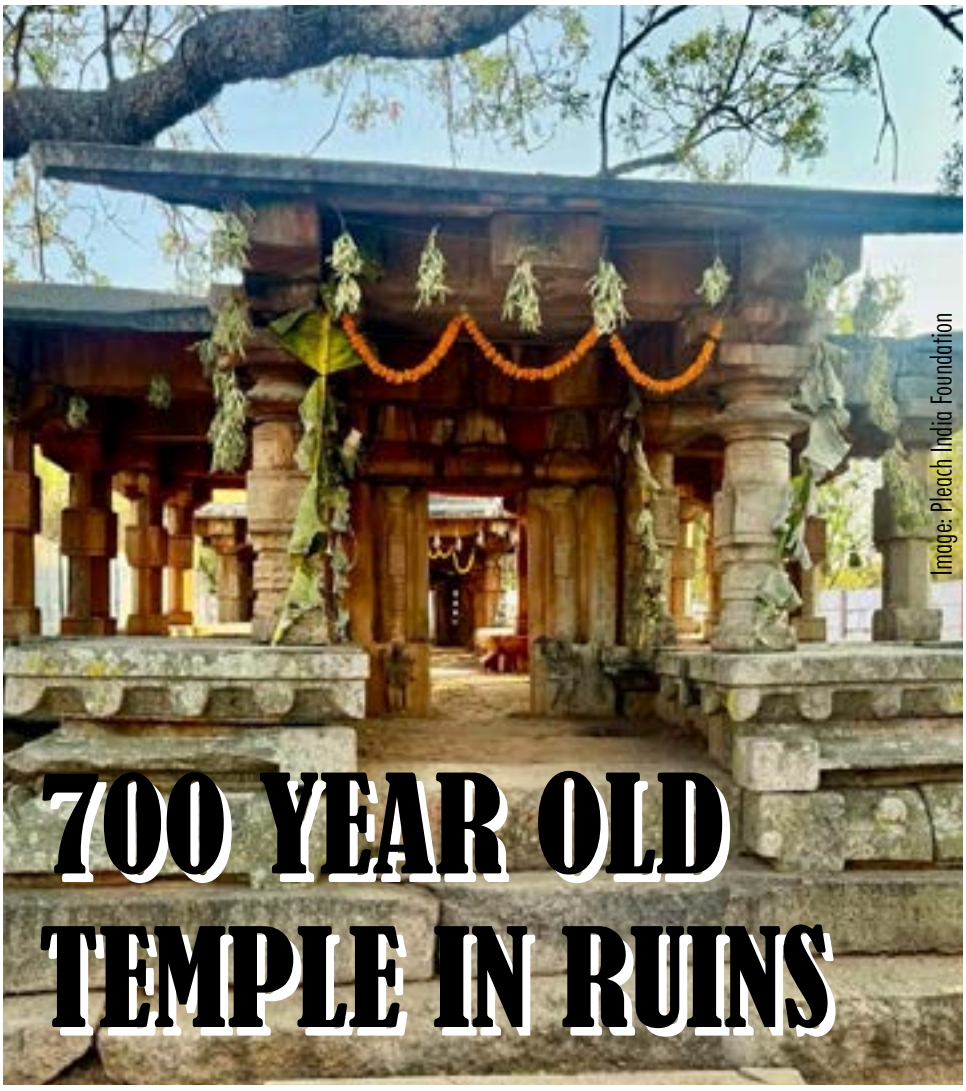


Image: Pleach India Foundation

700 YEAR OLD TEMPLE IN RUINS

by SAINATH

Over seven centuries-old temple believed by heritage researchers to date to the Kakatiya period remains in a dilapidated condition at Lalgadi Malakpet in Telangana's Medchal-Malkajgiri district, with researchers calling for conservation of the structure before more of its architectural heritage is lost.

The ruined temple is in Lalgadi Malakpet, a village in Shamirpet mandal near the Genome Valley area north of Hyderabad. The Medchal-Malkajgiri district administration lists Lalgadi Malakpet among the gram panchayats in Shamirpet mandal. Medchal Malkajgiri District. The structure is another example of lesser-known Kakatiya-era heritage surviving outside the better-known monumental sites.

Although no Shiva linga survives in the sanctum, the researchers identified the structure as a Shiva temple based on its architectural and iconographic features. Among the evidence they cited are Shaiva dvarapalakas, or guardian figures, at the entrance and a damaged pranali, a stone outlet associated with draining liquids from ritual abhishekam of a Shiva linga.

The temple consists of a Mukhamantapam, a Rangamantapam, an Antaralam or vestibule, and a Garbhagudi, the sanctum sanctorum. It has no vimana above.

The scale of the surviving stonework is notable. Mukhamantapam has 24 pillars and the Rangamantapam 16. The sanctum has suffered particularly serious damage. The Shiva linga and its panavattam, or pedestal, are missing, while the shrine's upper structure has also been lost. The surviving architectural elements, however, led the researchers to argue that restoration remains possible. Researchers said the surviving structure could be conserved and reconstructed with relatively limited interventions. Their proposals included securing the sanctum and restoring missing ritual elements such as a Shiva Linga, panavattam and Nandi.



The Caravan Timeshare: A new travel convenience in India

For Indian diaspora settled in abroad, caravan timeshare is a practical way to gift their families in India, a comfortable travel means. Campervan Camps & Trails, part of the IIT Madras incubated Campervan Group company which in collaboration with Mahindra & Mahindra, introduces the Mahindra CARAVAHN. Caravahn Travel card (timeshare) is an ownership model built for families who live overseas.

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Stunning aerial view of pristine white sand beaches and turquoise waters at Andaman's Cinque Island

Andaman's Emerald Waters

by GOVIND

For travelers seeking a blend of pristine tropical serenity and profound historical depth, the Andaman and Nicobar archipelago remains unmatched. Floating in the Bay of Bengal, this cluster of islands offers clear turquoise waters, raw evergreen canopies, and somber monuments to India's freedom movement.

ALLURE OF SWARAJ DWEEP

No visit is complete without stepping onto Radhanagar Beach on Havelock Island. Ranked among the world's most beautiful coastlines, its soft white sands and calm surf provide an ideal retreat. Nearby reefs near Elephant Beach and Neil Island feature vibrant coral systems populated by sea turtles, manta rays, and tropical schools.

ECHOES OF FREEDOM

Beyond natural beauty, the Andaman Islands carry profound historical significance. In Port Blair, the imposing brick wings of the Cellular Jail (Kala Pani) stand as a national memorial to the freedom fighters exiled and imprisoned here during the British Raj. A visit through its solitary confinement cells and the evening light-and-sound narration offers a moving tribute to sacrifice and resilience.

NATURE MEETS NOSTALGIA

A short ferry ride across the harbor leads to Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Island (Ross Island). Once the administrative headquarters of the British settlement, it now resembles a forgotten temple reclaimed by nature, where sprawling banyan roots weave through the cracked masonry of colonial ballrooms, churches, and barracks.

KEY TRAVEL HIGHLIGHTS

Best Time to Visit: October to May, when sea conditions are calm and skies remain clear.

Connectivity: Direct flights connect Port Blair (IXZ) from Chennai, Kolkata, Bengaluru, and Hyderabad. High-speed private catamarans connect Port Blair to Havelock and Neil Islands.

Experiences: Scuba diving, mangrove kayaking at Baratang, and coastal seafood featuring coastal Andhra and Bengali culinary influences.



An enchanting sunset in Andaman Islands.

For families traveling from the US — who are often managing long flight fatigue, jet lag, and traveling with both young and seniors — a 5-day itinerary must balance iconic highlights with a comfortable, unhurried pace. This curated itinerary focuses on smooth transit, comfortable private catamaran journeys, top-tier beach experiences, and accessible historical immersion.

DAY 1

Arrival in Port Blair & History

Cellular Jail serves as the most significant historical monument in the Andaman Islands, offering visitors an intimate look into India's struggle for independence.
Morning Arrival: Land at Veer Savarkar International Airport (IXZ) in Port Blair, check into your hotel, and take time to rest.
Afternoon: Explore the historic corridors, tower, and galleries of the jail complex.
Evening Sound & Light Show: Watch the evening light and sound presentation narrated under the open sky (pre-booking executive seating is recommended).

DAY 2

High-Speed Ferry to Havelock

Radhanagar Beach is world-renowned for its pristine white sand, calm turquoise waters, and backdrop of native Mahua trees.
Morning Ferry: Board a comfortable premium catamaran from Port Blair to Havelock Island. Check into a beachfront resort.
Afternoon Relaxation: Unwind by the resort pool or take a gentle stroll along the private shoreline.
Sunset at Radhanagar: Spend late afternoon swimming in safe, designated zones with lifeguards on duty, followed by catching one of the most celebrated sunsets in Asia.

DAY 3

Marine Adventures at Elephant Beach

Elephant Beach is the island's primary hub for water sports and vibrant shallow-water coral reef exploration.
Speedboat: Take a 20-minute fiber-boat ride from Havelock jetty to the beach.
Family Activities: Enjoy glass-bottom boat rides (ideal for kids and elders), guided introductory sea walks, and supervised snorkeling among clownfish and live corals.
Afternoon & Evening: Head back to the resort for lunch, followed by a relaxed evening dining on fresh coastal fare or booking a private stargazing experience by the beach.

DAY 4

Island Charm at Neil Island

Morning Hop to Neil Island: Take a short 45-minute ferry from Havelock to Neil Island.
Reef & Lagoon Exploration: Walk into the gently sloping tide pools at Bharatpur Beach or take a boat over the fringing reef. Its crystal-clear waters make it one of the safest swimming locations.
Natural Rock Formations: Visit the nearby low-tide Natural Bridge formation before heading to Laxmanpur Beach, which offers a tranquil, shell-strewn shoreline famed for photography and dramatic sunset vistas.
Return to Port Blair: Board the afternoon catamaran back to your hotel at Port Blair.

DAY 5

Heritage at Ross Island & Coastal Relaxation

Morning Boat Excursion: Take a 15-minute boat ride from Aberdeen Jetty to explore the Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Island, which provides a glimpse of British colonial ruins draped in banyan roots.
Afternoon Souvenirs & Stroll: Visit Sagarika Emporium for local pearl and mother-of-pearl handicrafts, followed by coconut water by the beach.
Departure Prep: Rest before your onward flight connection to Hyderabad, Chennai, or Bengaluru the next morning.

Ferry Class: Always book upper-deck tickets on private catamarans; they provide panoramic windows, and smoother stabilisation for travelers.
Cash & Connectivity: International credit cards are accepted only at major resorts. Keep Indian Rupee cash on hand. Airtel and BSNL work best.
Luggage Logistics: When taking inter-island ferries, keep a small daypack with essentials such as sunscreen, swim gear, medications.

Rithik to play at Youth Olympics

by **SHARANYA**

Young badminton standout Rithik Krishna Rasamsetti will represent the United States at the 2026 Youth Olympic Games in Dakar, Senegal, which are scheduled from November 1 to November 5, adding another major milestone to a remarkable junior career that has taken the North Carolina teenager from US tournaments to international podiums. For the Telugu community in the US, Rithik's rise is also a story that resonates with the experience of many immigrant families raising the next generation in America — parents supporting a child's ambitions while the young athlete competes under the US flag on the global stage.



Rithik, 15, is the son of Anil and Geetha Rasamsetti. In a recent interview, he spoke extensively about the role his parents have played in making his badminton journey possible, particularly as international competition has required extensive travel and significant family commitment. “My parents, they were like doing everything for me,” Rithik said, explaining that both of his parents work in IT and have supported the costs associated with his international tournament schedule. He said their sacrifices have become a source of motivation.

Rithik’s badminton story began at home. His father was an enthusiast who played regularly, helping introduce the sport to both him and his brother. Rithik initially played only intermittently and did not begin with dreams of becoming a professional player. That changed as his training became more serious.

His breakthrough came when a major junior competition was held close to home in Charlotte. After defeating a highly seeded opponent, Rithik realized he could compete at the national level. He went on to win, giving both him and his parents greater confidence to pursue the sport more seriously.

Rithik's badminton development has also included training visits to India, one of the world’s strongest badminton nations. Rithik said he traveled to India twice and used the trips partly for badminton training and sparring while visiting the country with his family. The experience gave him a firsthand look at the intensity of Indian badminton. Behind Rithik’s results is an unusually demanding schedule for a 15-year-old. He said he tries to complete at least 30 hours of training each week, combining badminton sessions, physical conditioning, gym work and additional practice. He described maintaining a routine that can involve several hours of training a day, which produced increasingly significant results.

At the 2026 Pan Am Junior Championships in João Pessoa, Brazil, Rithik won the U19 men's singles championship and teamed with Noah Chien to win U19 men’s doubles gold. He was also part of the US squad that captured the team championship. His Pan American success began years earlier. Rithik has also been selected to represent the US at the 2026 BWF World Junior Championships. For Rithik, wearing Team USA colors at the Youth Olympics represents another step in a progression that only a few years ago began with uncertainty about whether a young badminton player from North Carolina could compete with America's strongest juniors.

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Pilot prevents 9/11 in Israel, emerges hero

by **GOVIND**

An Indian pilot prevented a major aviation disaster after his Omani co-pilot allegedly stabbed him and attempted to take control of a Flydubai aircraft travelling from Dubai to Tel Aviv on October 3. The aircraft, carrying 174 passengers, including 27 children, made an emergency landing at Tabuk airport in Saudi Arabia. Almost all the passengers were Israeli nationals.

The Indian captain, identified as Smit Machchhar, struggled with the co-pilot and opened the door of the cockpit to allow passengers to stop the co-pilot from taking the aircraft on a suicide mission.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu praised Machchhar's courage and credited him with saving the lives of those



aboard the aircraft.

According to Israeli news website Ynet, which cited Israeli officials, the co-pilot was an Omani national suspected of attempting to deliberately crash the aircraft.

Flight-tracking data reportedly examined by BBC Verify showed that the aircraft was cruising at approximately 34,000 feet before losing more than 17,000 feet of altitude in less than two minutes.

The aircraft subsequently transmitted emergency signals, including a transponder code associated with possible unlawful interference, indicating a potentially serious security incident aboard the flight.

Machchhar, who hails from Mumbai, is an experienced Boeing 737 pilot who previously worked with Indian budget carrier SpiceJet for approximately 11 years before joining Flydubai in June 2022.

Indian media reports said he had served as a senior commander at SpiceJet's Mumbai base and became a line training captain in November 2020.

His professional profile reportedly listed approximately 9,750 flying hours on Boeing 737-800 and 737 MAX 8 and 9 aircraft.

Machchhar reportedly underwent surgery for injuries sustained during the incident.

The alleged attack has raised serious questions about cockpit security, crew screening and the safeguards intended to prevent unlawful interference with commercial flights.

TIGER SHROFF ESCAPES SHOOTING BID: Bollywood actor Tiger Shroff escaped unhurt after at least two unidentified gunmen allegedly opened fire at his car near Pushpa Park in Juhu, Mumbai, on Sunday. The assailants fired seven rounds at the car before fleeing on a motorcycle driven by their aide. Two men claiming to be members of the Lawrence Bishnoi gang posted a message on Facebook taking responsibility for the attack.

RBI HIKES REPO RATE: The Reserve Bank of India raised the policy repo rate by 25 basis points to 5.5 per cent, its first rate increase since February 2023. The six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) unanimously voted for the increase and shifted its stance from "neutral" to "calibrated tightening", which signals that there won't be any rate cut in the near term.

INDIA SELLS 60% STAKE IN IDBI BANK TO FAIRFAX: The Union Cabinet approved the sale of a 60.72 per cent stake in IDBI Bank to Canada-based Fairfax Financial Holdings for Rs 52,878 crore, paving the way for one of India's largest strategic disinvestments.

MODI COMPLETES 25 YEARS IN POWER: The Union Cabinet on Tuesday congratulated Prime Minister Narendra Modi on completing 25 years of uninterrupted leadership as head of government, first as Gujarat Chief Minister and later as Prime Minister, and highlighted his record in governance, welfare, reforms, technology, national security and diplomacy.

INDIA BLAMES CHINA FOR LAC RUNOFFS: India blamed Chinese forces for multiple face-offs between the troops of the two countries in the last few months in the Arunachal sector. In a reminder to Beijing, New Delhi also "emphasised that the maintenance of peace and tranquility in the border areas is essential for the overall development of bilateral relations".

INTERNET A FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT: The Supreme Court has declared access to and use of the internet a fundamental right of children and directed the Indian government to establish a national database to detect and facilitate the removal of child sexual exploitation and abuse material circulating on digital platforms.

Severe drought affects AP, Telangana

A severe rainfall deficit has pushed Telangana and Andhra Pradesh into a water crisis, threatening farming, rural livelihoods and drinking water supplies. With groundwater levels declining and reservoirs coming under pressure, the two state governments are preparing emergency measures to address the consequences of a deficient monsoon.

In Andhra Pradesh, the government declared 388 mandals across 21 districts drought-affected on October 1, including 283 classified as severely affected. The declaration followed a reported rainfall deficit of 53.4 per cent during June–August 2026. Rayalaseema, historically vulnerable to recurring droughts, accounted for 186 affected mandals.

Telangana is confronting similar challenges. Reports indicated that groundwater scarcity had emerged in hundreds of mandals, while declining reservoir storage raised concerns about irrigation and drinking water availability.

The state government has begun prioritising drinking water requirements and preparing contingency arrangements to sustain supplies until the next monsoon. In Hyderabad, residents have been urged to conserve water as authorities assess the availability of supplies for consumption.

LAND POOLING FOR MUSI PROJECT: New land-pooling terms were announced for the Musi Riverfront Development Area between Nagole and Gowrelly. Landowners will get either a 50:50 share of developable land or 1,400 sq. yards per acre, whichever is less. Owners of the patta land in the buffer area will be eligible for 800 square yards per acre or Transferable Development Rights. Land falling in the riverbed or Full Tank Level area will get 400 sq yards per acre or eligible TDR. People occupying government land will be allotted 300 sq. yards per acre.

HIGH COURT SAYS ABNORMAL BEHAVIOR NO GROUNDS FOR DIVORCE: The Telangana High Court has held that unsubstantiated allegations that a wife had suicidal tendencies, displayed abnormal behaviour could not constitute cruelty warranting divorce. Dismissing the husband's appeal for divorce after nearly nine years of its pendency, the court ruled that allegations of cruelty must be supported by credible evidence and that petty quarrels and trivial disputes between spouses did not amount to mental cruelty.

AP HC STRIKES DOWN HIGHER BC QUOTA: The Andhra Pradesh High Court set aside government orders providing enhanced reservations for Backward Classes in local bodies, holding that they breached the overall 50 per cent reservation ceiling. The decision created a major political controversy over BC representation and the legal limits on affirmative action.

HORTICULTURE FOR RAYALASEEMA: AP Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu and Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman laid the foundation for a Global Horticulture Hub in Madanapalle. The initiative, which could help Rayalaseema region, was presented as part of a large investment vision for horticulture, agricultural processing, logistics and related infrastructure.

AMARAVATI ORR TENDER FLOATED: The National Highways Authority of India floated tenders worth Rs 11,538 crore for the Amaravati Outer Ring Road on October 7. The project, which is a part of new infrastructural push for the state capital, could significantly influence the capital region's connectivity, land development and investment prospects.

Local polls in AP halted after court intervention

The conduct of municipal elections in Andhra Pradesh became the centre of a major political and legal controversy in October 2026, with allegations of obstruction of opposition candidates and irregularities in the nomination process reaching the Supreme Court.

The dispute involved elections to 100 urban local bodies, including 13 municipal corporations and 87 municipalities and nagar panchayats. The controversy brought renewed attention to the conditions necessary for free and fair elections at the grassroots level.

The YSR Congress Party alleged that candidates affiliated with it were prevented from filing nominations in several areas through intimidation, threats and violence. The ruling alliance rejected the allegations.

The matter reached the Supreme Court, where concerns surrounding the nomination process and the conduct of the elections came under judicial scrutiny. Following the court's directions, the State Election Commission ordered a halt to further election proceedings in the affected urban local bodies on October 21.

The intervention disrupted the electoral timetable and created uncertainty over when the elections would resume.

Community Events (US, Canada)



DEEPAVALI CELEBRATIONS

Deepavali Sambaralu featuring Tollywood Singer Sameera Bharadwaj
Date & Time: November 1 | From 3 pm
Venue: Windemere Ranch Middle School, 11611 E Branch Pkwy, San Ramon, CA 94582

* * *

Vignesh Ishwar (Carnatic Vocal)
Organizer: MITHAS
Date & Time: November 7 | From 6 pm
Venue: Thomas Tull Concert Hall
Amherst Street, Cambridge, MA 02139

* * *

Bollywood Diwali Family Cruise — New Jersey
Date & Time: November 7 | 6 PM - 10 pm
Venue: Liberty Landing Marina, Jersey City
Highlights: A four-hour family cruise departing Liberty Landing Marina, with Bollywood music, dhol performances and views of the New York skyline.

Telugu Youth of America's Diwali Dhamaka
Organizer: Telugu Youth of America
Date & Time: November 13 | 6:30 PM – 11 PM
Venue: Royal Albert's Palace, Fords, NJ
Ticket: $27

TAMA Grand Diwali — 45th Anniversary
Date & Time: November 15 | 2 pm to 10 pm
Venue: DeSana Middle School, 625 James Road, Alpharetta, Georgia

TANA LadiesNight 2026
Organizer: TANA
Date & Time: November 21 | From 5.30 pm
Venue: Griffith Hall, Glenmoore, PA
Highlight: TANA Mid-Atlantic's 50th event of live band music, dance and 90s hits, for women in the community.

* * *

CANADA

Brampton Diwali Mela 2026
Organizer: Telangana Canada Association
Date & Time: November 8 | 4 PM to 10.30 PM
Venue: Sesquicentennial Park, Brampton

* * *

Toronto Telugu Community — Deepavali Dhamaka
Date: November 14
Venue: J. Clarke Richardson Collegiate, Ajax, Ontario

Bharat Utsav & Diwali — Vancouver
Organizer: BKSP Canada
Date & Time: November 14
Venue: Fraserview Banquet Hall, Vancouver, British Columbia

* * *

Ontario Bar Association – SABA Diwali Celebration
Date: November 5 | 6–9 pm
Venue: OBA Conference Centre, Toronto
Ticket: $50

MUSIC CONCERTS & OTHER EVENTS

Jubin Nautiyal — North American concerts

November 13: San Jose Civic, California
November 14: Curtis Culwell Center, Dallas
November 20: MGM Music Hall at Fenway, Boston
November 28: Atlantic City, New Jersey

* * *

Udit Narayan & Aditya Narayan — Legacy Tour

November 20: Chicago area
November 21: New York area
November 26: Detroit
November 27: Pennsylvania



KING — Canada concerts

November 21: Queen Elizabeth Theatre, Toronto
November 22: Harbour Event & Convention Centre, Vancouver

* * *

Band Capricio: Rise Tour
Date: November 7, 5 | 6–9 pm
Venue: Taj Park Convention Centre, Surrey, Vancouver

Pandit Jitendra Abhisheki Tribute Concerts

November 7: Houston
November 8: Chicago
November 14: San Francisco Bay Area
November 15: Seattle
November 20: Atlanta
November 21: Bridgewater, New Jersey

Diwali Festival 2026
Organizer: UP North American Association
Date: November 5 | 6 pm to 11 pm
Venue: DeSana Middle School, Atlanta, GA

Diwali in Dunwoody
Date: November 7 | 5.15 pm onwards
Venue: Dunwoody Nature Centre

Disclaimer: This listing is for informational purposes only. Telugu Americans assumes no responsibility for event details or changes. Please verify with the organizers before finalizing your plans.