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OCTOBER 2026

EDITION #10

PCC NEWSLETTER 2026

The Global Festive Economy

Where Culture, Commerce & Community Meet



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FOUNDER'S DESK

The Global Festive Economy: Where Culture, Commerce & Community Meet



As we enter the festive season, cities and communities across India and around the world begin to come alive with celebration. From Navratri and Durga Puja to Dussehra and the many cultural traditions observed by Indian communities globally, this time of year represents much more than celebration. It is also a period of increased economic activity, entrepreneurship, community engagement and opportunity.

For businesses, the festive season brings a significant shift in consumer behavior. People shop, travel, dine, gift, attend events and invest in experiences.

Small businesses prepare for increased demand, established brands launch new campaigns, entrepreneurs introduce seasonal products and services, and digital platforms create new ways for businesses to connect with customers.

For businesses, the festive season brings a significant shift in consumer behavior. People shop, travel, dine, gift, attend events and invest in experiences. Small businesses prepare for increased demand, established brands launch new campaigns, entrepreneurs introduce seasonal products and services, and digital platforms create new ways for businesses to connect with customers.

What makes this particularly interesting is that the festive economy is no longer limited by geography.

Indian festivals have a growing presence across North America, the United Kingdom, the Middle East, Europe, Australia and other parts of the world. The Indian diaspora continues to create markets for Indian products, food, fashion, entertainment and experiences, while also introducing Indian traditions to wider communities. This creates opportunities not only for established companies but also for entrepreneurs and small businesses looking to take their products and ideas beyond their home markets

For entrepreneurs, this season is a reminder that culture can be a powerful driver of business. Traditional skills, regional products, food, fashion, handicrafts and celebrations can become successful businesses when combined with innovation, quality branding and access to global markets.

At the same time, today's consumers are changing. Digital commerce, social media, influencer marketing and quick delivery have transformed how people discover and purchase products. Businesses that understand these changing expectations can use the festive season not simply to increase short-term sales, but to build stronger customer relationships and long-term brand loyalty.

There is also an important community dimension to the festive season. Festivals bring people together, create opportunities for networking and strengthen connections between businesses and the communities they serve. For organizations such as the Punjabi Chamber of Commerce, this connection between business and community is particularly meaningful.

Our mission has always been to create a platform where entrepreneurs, professionals and business leaders can connect, learn from one another and create opportunities. In today's

increasingly interconnected world, these relationships can extend well beyond local communities and national borders.

This is also why initiatives such as **PunjabiTech** are important to our broader vision. By bringing together technology professionals, entrepreneurs, innovators, investors and digital leaders from across the world, we are creating another avenue for members to exchange ideas, identify opportunities and build meaningful connections in a rapidly changing business environment.

As we celebrate this festive season, I encourage our members to look beyond the immediate commercial opportunities and think about the larger possibilities. How can your business serve a changing customer? How can a local idea reach a global market? How can technology help preserve and expand traditional businesses? And how can our business communities work together to create opportunities for the next generation?

Festivals remind us of the importance of connection, generosity and community. These are values that are equally important in business.

At the Punjabi Chamber of Commerce, we remain committed to building a global business community where relationships lead to collaboration, ideas lead to opportunities, and businesses can grow together.

I wish all our members, their families and communities a joyful, prosperous and successful festive season.

WARM REGARDS,
GURPREET (GARY) PASRICHA
FOUNDER
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EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

A Seat for Everyone at the Festival Table

As a Sikh woman and educator, I have learned that the best celebrations include more people — and cost the earth less.

The festive season is almost upon us. In the coming weeks, homes will glow with diyas for Diwali and Bandi Chhor Divas, menorahs will be lit for Hanukkah, and Christmas trees will appear in living rooms around the world. Every culture seems to reach for light in the darkest months of the year.

I love this season. But as an educator and a Sikh woman, I have started asking harder questions about how we celebrate—who gets included, and what our celebrations cost the world around us.

Celebrating with, not just about

In many classrooms, there is an unspoken holiday hierarchy: some festivals get the crafts and the songs, while others get a passing mention — if that. Children notice. A child whose family observes Bandi Chhor Divas or Hanukkah quickly learns whether their celebration counts as "real."

True inclusion is not about listing every festival on a calendar. It is about celebrating with people, not just about their traditions. Ask your neighbours how they observe the season. Taste the food. Let children share their own traditions in their own words.

My faith gave me a living model: the langar. In every gurdwara, a free meal is served to all — regardless of religion or background. Everyone sits together and eats the same food. There is no head table. Imagine if our festive seasons worked that way — every table a langar table, with a seat for everyone

The freedom behind the lights

For Sikhs, this season brings Bandi Chhor Divas, the Day of Liberation, on November 8th alongside Diwali. It marks the release of Guru Hargobind Ji from imprisonment — along with fifty-two princes he refused to leave behind. We light diyas to remember that freedom means little unless we share it.

That story shapes how I see celebration. Our Gurus taught sarbat da bhala, the welfare of all, and seva, selfless service. A festival that leaves people out, or harms the world we share, has missed something essential.

Lighting diyas the earth can live with

The morning after the fireworks, the air is thick, and the streets are strewn with debris. None of our joy requires this — only rethinking. Clay diyas give more warmth than fireworks, without choking the air our children breathe. Cook to feed people, not to impress them. Choose one thoughtful gift over five hurried ones. Decorations of cloth and flowers, reused each year, carry more memory than anything disposable.

Sustainability, I have come to believe, is seva extended to the earth.

Children learn celebration by watching us. When they see us welcome the unfamiliar, waste less, and give with intention, they absorb what no lesson can teach: joy and responsibility are not opposites.

So this season, I offer a small invitation. Light your diyas, your menorah, your tree — and set one more plate at the table for someone whose festival is not yours. Ask, before the season begins: who is missing from my table, and what will my joy leave behind?

The lights are loveliest when everyone can see them.



DR. NAGINA PARMAR
MEMBER (TORONTO CHAPTER)

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Simran Arora
PCC Member

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The right network gave our business a clearer direction.

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Arjun Malhotra
PCC Member



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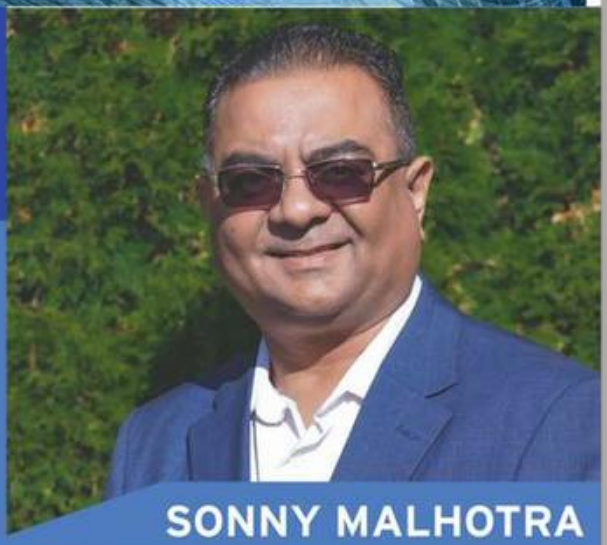
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The Diaspora Behind the Global Festive Economy

BY DAVID H. NACHMAN, ESQ., NPZ LAW GROUP – IMMIGRATION & NATIONALITY LAW

The festive season has always carried an economic weight in the diaspora community that goes beyond the holiday itself. Diwali, Navratri, and the string of celebrations that follow in the fall bring a predictable rise in cross-border activity: families traveling to see each other, gifts and goods moving between countries, and money flowing home to relatives. For businesses that serve or employ members of the diaspora, that seasonal rhythm is worth paying attention to, and immigration timing is part of what makes it work.

Every year, a meaningful share of international travel out of India is tied to visiting family living abroad rather than tourism in the traditional sense, and the reverse is just as true here in the United States. Families with roots in India, Pakistan, or elsewhere in South Asia plan trips around the festival calendar months in advance, often coordinating visits so that grandparents can be present for Diwali, a wedding, or a new baby's first celebrations. That travel depends on visitor visas being processed and approved with enough lead time, and consular wait times have not gotten shorter in recent years. A family planning to bring a parent over for the holidays in November needs to be thinking about that application well before the season actually arrives.

This matters for employers too. Diaspora-owned businesses and companies with a significant South Asian workforce often see requests for time off cluster around the same weeks each fall, and some of that time off is tied not just to celebrating the holiday but to hosting visiting family or traveling to see them. Businesses that plan ahead, rather than treating these requests as they come in, tend to handle the season more smoothly.

There is also a commercial dimension that connects back to trade and market planning. The same diaspora that travels and sends money home during the festive season is also a consumer base, a source of remittances that supports family businesses abroad, and in many cases a bridge for companies looking to expand into South Asian markets. Businesses that understand the travel patterns and family obligations shaping that community are better positioned to plan around them, whether that means scheduling product launches, adjusting staffing, or simply being realistic about when key people will be available.

None of this is complicated once it is accounted for, but it tends to get overlooked when festive season planning happens separately from immigration and travel planning. A visitor visa application for a parent or in-law is not a last-minute errand. A company relying on a diaspora workforce or diaspora customers benefits from building the festive calendar into its planning the same way it would build in any other predictable seasonal pattern.

The global festive economy is not just about spending. It is about families finding a way to be together across long distances, and the visa and travel processes that make those reunions possible are as much a part of the season as the celebrations themselves. Businesses that keep that in view, rather than treating immigration as a separate track from culture and commerce, tend to serve their communities better when the season arrives.



DAVID H. NACHMAN,
MEMBER (NEW JERSEY CHAPTER)

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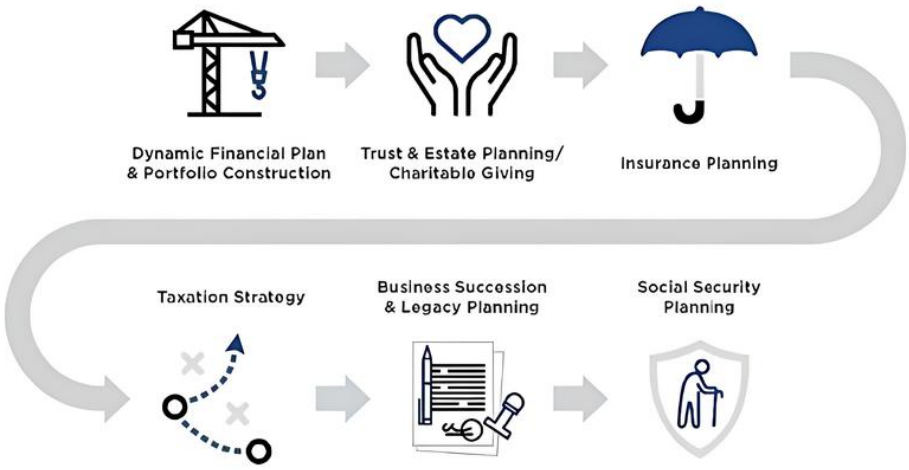
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Dussehra: A Celebration of Courage and Renewal

Honouring the victory of good over evil—and the values that bring us together.



Celebrated across India and by communities worldwide, Dussehra marks Lord Rama's victory over Ravana. The festival carries a lasting message: courage, truth and integrity can overcome even the greatest challenges.

From Ramlila performances to gatherings around Ravana effigies, traditions vary across regions. What unites them is a shared spirit of reflection, renewal and hope—passed from one generation to the next.

For a global community, occasions like Dussehra are also a chance to reconnect with our roots, share traditions with neighbours and strengthen the bonds that bring people together.

As the festive season unfolds, may we carry its values into everyday life: act with purpose, support one another and welcome new beginnings.

"Let integrity guide us.
Let community strengthen us."

HERITAGE & COMMUNITY

Bandi Chhor Divas

Freedom with compassion. A legacy of service.





A celebration that reminds us to seek freedom together—and care for one another.

A legacy of liberation

Bandi Chhor Divas honours Guru Hargobind Sahib, the sixth Sikh Guru, and his release from Gwalior Fort alongside 52 imprisoned rulers. Remembered for his concern for those who remained captive, the occasion places compassion and collective freedom at its heart.

> *"May we celebrate freedom by helping others move forward."*

Faith expressed through service

Observed around Diwali, the day brings Sikh communities together for prayer, kirtan and seva. Illuminated gurdwaras reflect a spirit of hope, while langar welcomes people of every background to share a meal as equals.

A message for every community

Its meaning reaches beyond a celebration of the past. Supporting a neighbour, sharing our time and opening doors for others are everyday ways to honour this legacy. For our global community, it is a reminder that progress carries greater meaning when it is shared.

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KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THIS ISSUE

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Trends shaping markets.

PEOPLE & COMMUNITY
Stories that inspire.

BUSINESS INSIGHTS
Ideas for new opportunities.

WHAT'S NEXT
Perspectives for what's ahead.

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