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## **ICAM'S NEWSLETTER**

### **FALL 2024**

#### **Editor's Note**

Samarpan's editorial team is pleased to share the fall newsletter of 2024 with our readers. We are looking forward to publishing new contributions from our readers. Thank you!!

#### **Newsletter Team**

Subhankar Bhattacharya | Abhinga Dutta | Unni Gopinathan | Jyothi Gubili | Ram Kadirvel | Nisha Kurup | Alka Mehra | Anu Nair | Priya Sampathkumar | Varshini Srinivasan | Ajay Singh | Namrata Tomer



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# President's Message

Namaste,

I wish you a very happy festival season, the best time of the year as we celebrate Ganesh Chaturthi, Onam, Navratri, Durga Pooja, Vijay Dashami, and Diwali. To celebrate Navratri, we are organizing Garba and dandiya dance on Oct 4th at Mayo Civic Center, where we will bring a famous troop from Gujarat, India, led by upcoming singer Bimal Chouan. We will also organize a Diwali cultural program on Saturday, September 26th in Mayo Civic Center. This year's event is not just about our best talent show but a special one as we have invited a guest star from India, singer Arnab Chakraborty who will be performing LIVE on the stage. Please purchase your tickets today for both events. Details are included in this newsletter.

We recently concluded another very successful Utsav 2024 - Festival of Color and 5K run on July 20th, 2024, with many in attendance from all faiths at the Peace Plaza, downtown. Mayor Kim Norton and Tina Liebling, MN House of Representatives visited us to bless us, this event was covered by the local newspaper as well. Hindi school started this fall, registration continues to grow, and ICAM again organized a picnic to appreciate volunteers and membership support. The blood drive on July 23rd was successful as well.

Participating in elections is one of the key freedoms of American life. No matter what you believe or whom you support, it is important to exercise your rights. Kick-off for the voter's engagement drive started on National Voter Registration Day of September 17th, 2024 at Cascade Lake. We will continue the effort by putting up booths at Garba, and Diwali events for people to register and provide information on where and how to vote. This information will be available on our website soon.

Thank you everyone for your continued support. Please visit our website, [icamn.org](http://icamn.org), and subscribe to our mailing list for more information and to become an ICAM member for 2024. The membership fee is a small amount to support our organization, in return, you are getting many benefits.

Best wishes,  
Ajay Singh  
President, ICAM Board

## Since Last Newsletter

### Utsav- Festival of Colors in Rochester

ICAM hosted its third annual signature event "Utsav- Festival of Colors" at Peace Plaza. The festival kicked off with a 5K run with over 150 runners, followed by flash mob dance performances, color splash, DJ music, and an open dance session throughout the evening. Numerous vendors also participated, offering a variety of delicious food and showcasing a diverse array of artifacts, clothing, and jewelry. The festival successfully fulfilled its aim of uniting people in a spirit of joy and festivity while creating a sense of belonging for the Rochester Indian community.





## India at Olympics 2024

### Abhishek Chandra

The XXXIII Olympiad at Paris, 2024, judged the mettle of more than ten thousand athletes from approximately 200 nations in more than 329 events across 32 sports. As expected, the best athletes, through different qualifying events, finally made it to this mega event, to show their skills. Years of training, hard work, and overcoming perilous conditions and financial adversities, came down to a single best performance lasting for minutes at times. India, a country of 1.45 billion people, could master a contingent of only 117 athletes. Contrary to the expectations to better their recent performance at the Tokyo, 2020 games, the performance at the Paris games, was under par. Manu Bhaker became the first athlete in independent India, to win two medals at a single Olympics, one in individual 10-meter air pistol shooting event and the second pairing with Sarabjot Singh, in the 10-meter mixed air pistol shooting event. Manu barely missed a third medal in the 25-meter event, where she came 4th. Swapnil Kusal, brought the third bronze medal in shooting, making it India's best performance in shooting event at the Olympics.

India's fourth medal came in the form of a bronze in men's field hockey, where team India, after several tough round-robin matches, defeated Great Britain in the quarterfinals to reach the semifinals, where they lost to Germany in a nail-biting match. In the match for the bronze medal, team India played Spain, and after several nerve-racking moments, and owing to some great saves by the legendary goalkeeper, P.R. Sreejesh, India won the bronze medal with a final scoreline of 2-1. This triumph added to India's 13th medal in field hockey at the Olympics.



This was followed by another successful run by Neeraj Chopra, India's legendary javelin thrower, who while failing to defend his gold medal at the Tokyo Olympics, won a well-deserving silver medal, a commendable feat and something for historians to write for many years to come. India's most anticipated event, wrestling, while we saw some brilliant performances, was marred with controversies, which potentially affected the morale of several other athletes. Aman Sehrawat, was the lone medal winner, getting a bronze medal in the men's 57 kg freestyle wrestling. Vinesh Phogat reached the final of her weight category but was disqualified based on a few hundred grams of body weight above the allowed limits. This was disappointing, as on her route to the final, she defeated Yui Sasaki, the world's number one, and was the favorite to win the gold medal. With all the focus on the medal winners, some notable performances that came very close to podium finishes were from Lakshya Sen in badminton, Mirabai Chanu in weightlifting, Dhiraj Bommadevara and Ankita Bhakat in archery and Arjun Babuta, Anantjeet Singh Naruka and Maheshwari Chauhan in shooting.

In a country, where sports are not perceived as a lucrative career option. Barring cricket, which takes up 90% of the attention, and funds, these performances at the Olympics, are a marked improvement from two decades ago, when India used to barely get a medal. With the current investments in youth, college and national games, with better monetary rewards, and lesser political and bureaucratic interventions, newer talents are being identified, and that lays the platform for better performances by our athletes at future Olympics.

## India FEST 2024

Indian Association of Minnesota Celebrated India Fest on Saturday, August 17, 2024, at the State Capitol in Saint Paul. It was a great day for experiencing India in A Day at the bazaar, watching cultural performances, the flag hoisting ceremonies, visiting corporate partners, regional partners, and Indian organizations, and dining on Indian specialties. The event was bigger and better than ever.



## Blood Drive Seema Kumar

A community blood drive was organized by ICAM on July 23rd, 2024, at the Intercultural Mutual Assistance Association. The drive was very successful and increased awareness about blood donation in the Indian as well as the IMAA community. A total of 15 volunteers ranging in age from 23 to 55 years participated in blood donation. ICAM would like to thank the IMAA for allowing the use of their space.





## India Day 2024

### Shatavisa Mukherjee

"Viksit Bharat" or "Developed India" was the 78th Independence Day theme this year which aims to reflect on India's progress and envision its future growth by 2047. Just like every year, India Day was celebrated on 17th Aug, the following Saturday of Indian Independence Day by the Cultural Association of Bengalees in Rochester (CABERI) at Peace Church, Rochester, Minnesota. Keeping this theme in mind the photo booth and all cultural programs were arranged. Around 120 people gathered from Rochester and Nearby towns for this event.



This fun-filled day started with a 'Sit and Draw' competition for kids. Kids were divided into three different age groups, and each of the groups did an amazing job!! Then the cultural program started with the US National anthem followed by the Indian National anthem. Moving on there were a bunch of Songs, Dances, and instrumental performances portraying the vast and diverse culture of India.

The overwhelming success of the fashion show last year led us to divide this year's participants into two groups. Kids' theme was "Representing India", and they really did an amazing job representing different national symbols or freedom fighters of Indian Independence. Adults theme was "Brides of India" which was a visual treat for everyone to see Bridal attire and culture from different states of India and how they can be so different yet so similar. That's our "Unity in Diversity". It was really a showstopper for the day!!!

As Usual, Indian events are incomplete without our world-famous cuisine. There was an array of Indian foods ranging from "Mango Lassi", "Samosa" to Different "Chat" and "Golgappa/Fuchka", to a full veg/ nonveg lunch combo.

The day ended with a charm and aura from all these experiences. to conclude the piece, I would say while we are thousands of miles away from India, our heart still belongs to our motherland, and events like this really awakens that sense of belonging. Also, witnessing the vastness and diversity of India, in a nutshell, is only possible in events where we all participate together. That's what we can nurture in the next generation so that they also feel towards these roots. Hope to see more enthusiasm to join the event from everyone in the community next year!!!!





## Vaccines to Stay Healthy through Fall and Winter

Priya Sampathkumar

When I first moved to Minnesota, I was told that the state had two seasons - road construction and winter. As a long-time MN resident, I realize this is not completely accurate - I have come to appreciate our four seasons. But as an infectious disease doctor, I've realized there is really one more season that I'm not fond of at all - respiratory virus season.

While we don't have a vaccine to beat the winter blues, we do have vaccines that can keep you healthy in the coming months

1. **COVID vaccine:** the 2024-25 updated COVID vaccine is now available. It is recommended for everyone 6 months and older. If you recently had COVID, you can wait 3 months from the infection, as the infection itself gives you short-lived protection from re-infection.

2. **The flu vaccine:** The flu season in the Midwest typically begins in December and can continue through March or April. The best time to get the flu vaccine is in September or October. The flu virus changes over time, so a new vaccine is needed each year. This year's flu vaccine protects you against two strains of Influenza A and one strain of Influenza B. The flu vaccine is recommended for everyone 6 months and older but is especially important for older people and pregnant women. By getting the flu vaccine in the second half of pregnancy, mothers can pass on protection to their babies while also protecting themselves. Several versions of the vaccine are available

- An injectable (killed or inactivated) standard dose vaccine - for those aged 6 months to 64 years
- A nasal spray (live virus) vaccine - can be given to healthy, non-pregnant individuals 2 years to 49 years



- A high dose flu injectable vaccine: Recommended for those 65 and older.

3. **RSV vaccine:** Respiratory Syncytial Virus called RSV for short is another respiratory virus. It generally only causes mild cold-like symptoms in healthy adults but can cause severe illness including pneumonia in babies and the elderly. An RSV vaccine became available in 2023 and is recommended for

- Everyone 75 years and older
- Those who are 60-74 years old and have chronic heart, lung, kidney or liver disease or who are on medications that weaken the immune system (such as prednisone or cancer treatments)
- Pregnant women from week 32 through week 36 of pregnancy. Vaccination at least 2 weeks before delivery allows the mother to pass on RSV protection to the infant. Infants are at highest risk for severe RSV infection

Unlike the flu vaccine, this vaccine is only needed once and does not need to be repeated yearly.

As you pull out your cold weather gear, roll up your sleeves (or turn up your nose) to keep yourself safe and healthy in the coming months.

## Upcoming Events

### Celebrate Navratri with Garba, Dandiya, with very special guests from Gujarat, India Muskan Garg

Join us for an unforgettable night of music, dance, and celebration at the Garba and Dandiya event organized by ICAM in Rochester, MN! on Friday October 4th, 2024, 7pm at Mayo Civic Center.

This Navratri, immerse yourself in the rich traditions of Gujarati folk dance and experience the vibrant energy of Indian culture. Whether you are new to Garba or a seasoned dancer, young or old, this event offers something for everyone.

#### Special Performance by singer Binal Chauhan and group

We are excited to welcome Binal Chauhan, a rising star in Indian music, known for her powerful voice and dynamic performances. Her unique blend of traditional Garba rhythms and contemporary sounds has captivated audiences worldwide. Don't miss this chance to experience her electrifying performance, along with special hosting by Anchor Girish, known for his engaging style and charm.

#### What Are Garba and Dandiya?

Garba and Dandiya are traditional Gujarati dances performed during Navratri, a festival dedicated to Goddess Durga. Garba involves circular movements and rhythmic clapping, while Dandiya features lively stick dancing. Together, they create a joyful, colorful, and energetic atmosphere.

#### Why Attend?

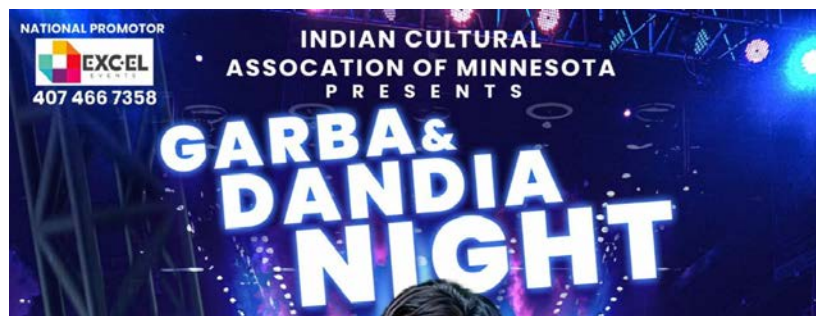
Cultural Immersion: Experience the beauty of Indian music, dance, and cuisine.

Community Spirit: Connect with others and celebrate together.

Fun and Fitness: Dance the night away and stay active!

Step into a night of enchantment where tradition meets rhythm, and every step is a celebration!!!!

To buy tickets, visit [icamn.org](http://icamn.org).





## Diwali Veena Gandhi

This October 26th, 2024, at 4:30 PM, ICAM with the support from Hindu Samaj Temple invites you to experience the vibrant festival of lights - Diwali - like never before at the Mayo Civic Center, Rochester, MN! This year's event is not just about our incredible community talent—although you won't want to miss our local stars shining on stage in the Rochester Talent Show—we are also thrilled to announce that renowned singer Arnab Chakraborty will be performing LIVE!

Arnab is a celebrated singer, known for his popular song "Wada Raha" from the movie Khakee. He won the title of "Champion of K for KISHORE" in a reality show judged by the legendary Asha Bhosle. Arnab also sang the official anthem for the 2014 ICC T20 Cricket World Cup. Beyond film music, he's composed jingles for top brands like Airtel, Coca-Cola, and Samsung. With a career that spans live concerts across the world, including the USA, UK, and Canada, Arnab is a well-known name in the world of live entertainment.

The cultural program promises to be extra special with very special guests who will dazzle you with performances, stories, and traditions that capture the essence of Diwali. From breathtaking local performances to a star-studded musical experience, this evening will be filled with joy, culture, and lights. We will celebrate the triumph of light over darkness in a way that unites our diverse community. Bring your family and friends and let us create unforgettable memories together! Don't miss out—save the date and be a part of this illuminating evening!

Ref: <https://www.arnabchakraborty.com/>

Buy tickets today at [icamn.org](https://www.icamn.org).







## General Elections

**2024 GENERAL ELECTIONS**  
**IMPORTANT DATES**

**WHAT'S ON MY BALLOT FOR OLMSTED COUNTY?**

Absentee Voting starts Friday, 20th Sep 2024  
In-person voting venues [here](#)  
Application for mail in ballots [here](#)

Are you registered? Check [here](#)  
No? Register [here](#)

General Elections Nov 6<sup>th</sup> 2024  
Early voting starts a week in advance on Oct 30<sup>th</sup> 2024

ICAM Voter engagement booth  
Tue, Sep 17<sup>th</sup> @Cascade Lake Park  
Fri, Oct 4<sup>th</sup> @Garba celebrations  
Sat, Oct 26<sup>th</sup> @Diwali celebrations



## Youth Scape

### IMAA's Impact on Indian Community

Natasha Sohni

My first full-time job after my undergraduate education was as a Diversity & Inclusion Specialist with the



Intercultural Mutual Assistance Association (IMAA). I could not have chosen a better organization for this purpose, and I am so proud of all of the work that I was able to do within it. As a young Indian woman who grew up in Rochester, working at IMAA was a full-circle moment for me. The organization was founded in 1984 and has done so much for the community that later raised me. From providing resources for newcomers to not only Minnesota, but the United States, supporting victims of abuse, and educating community members on a variety of different diversity and inclusion topics, IMAA has fostered a welcoming environment for immigrants and refugees. Many of our own community members would not have the roles, families, or experiences that they have now without the work of IMAA.



Personally, I had the opportunity to work with other non-profit organizations, universities, healthcare centers, and more in my role. I was able to share my own experiences as a brown girl in a predominantly white area while also providing research and counsel to those who served or worked with communities of color. All of IMAA's other services are free to clients, so my supervisor, Rawhi Said, and I were tasked with building relationships and bringing in revenue through our partners and our work with them. I know that we left a large impact as we were able to transform the viewpoints and practices of multiple groups of people, and this feeling was incredible for me to have in my first full-time role. I credit a lot of my accomplishments since this point to my work at IMAA.

Outside of my own personal involvement, the Indian community has been a proud partner of IMAA since its inception. We have had many volunteers participate in IMAA events and initiatives such as supporting the Victim Services Department and tutoring new immigrants and refugees. I started volunteering as a middle schooler without knowing that I would later work for the organization. Many of my peers in our community have had similar experiences, and a lot of Indian families are connected to IMAA's work in some way. The ability of an organization to unite so many groups of people is beautiful to witness.

IMAA has always celebrated the diversity within our community, and we have had members perform dances, sing, and display other works of art at both Pearl Gala and Walk Around the World. These events are essential to the organization's growth in addition to being lots of fun. This year, the Pearl Gala will be held on Friday, October 4th, 2024, at 5:30 pm at J. Powers at the Hilton. 2024 marks 40 years of IMAA's impact and so much will be celebrated on this night. Please find more information and register to volunteer at the event [here](#).

## Youth Awards

**Tanisha Lahiri** received the All-State Leadership award, All-State Academic award, and Varsity Letter Athletics award for 2024. She is one of Rochester's recent graduates currently enrolled in Mechanical Engineering at Purdue University, Indiana.



**Anushka Kollengode** completed the requirements and earned the Girls Scout Gold Award, the highest

distinction and award that a Girl Scout can achieve. She created websites and held environment awareness campaigns through Rochester Public Schools, Earth Day celebrations, Toastmasters, Girls Scouts and the Museum of Minnesota.

On August 20th, 2024, Senator Carla Nelson presented Anushka with a senate resolution for her achievement. She received congratulatory letters from President and First Lady of the United States Joe and Jill Biden and from United States Congressman Brad Finstad from Minnesota.



[Have you considered becoming an ICAM member?](#)

Check out <http://icamn.org/membership> to learn about the amazing benefits you can enjoy!



Indian Cultural Association of Minnesota | 911 11th Avenue NW | Rochester, MN 55901 US

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