



Prakash Gupta with Bruce Harrell, Mayor of Seattle.

New Indian Consulate of Seattle

A Gateway to Strengthened Ties and Cultural Exchange

WRITTEN BY ALLISON FREY

With a goal of enhancing diplomatic and economic ties between India and the Pacific Northwest, the new Indian Consulate in Seattle officially opened its doors in November 2023. With offices based in downtown Seattle, this consulate will serve nine states: Washington, Montana, Wyoming, Nebraska, Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, South Dakota, and North Dakota.

A LONG-AWAITED DREAM REALIZED

The establishment of the Indian Consulate marks the culmination of efforts that began nearly three decades ago. In 1994, residents first petitioned the Embassy of India in Washington, D.C., to establish a local consulate. The consulate aims to provide more accessible services to the over 300,000 Indian Americans residing in the Indian Pacific Northwest diaspora,

who previously had to travel to San Francisco for consular services. This will streamline business and tourism visas and other business between the two areas, while deepening the exposure and understanding of diverse cultural landscape that makes up the entire country of India.

SEASONED LEADERSHIP

The consulate is currently staffed by 15 employees, with plans to expand to around 20 people. Leading the team is Consul General Prakash Gupta, a seasoned diplomat with 22 years in the Indian Foreign Service. Gupta's distinguished career includes roles such as Director General for the United Nations, planning preparations of the G-20 summit in New Delhi, and Consul General of Shanghai. He resides in the India House on the Eastside, near

Meydenbauer Bay, with his wife, Neha, and daughter, Pranjali.

CONSULATE FOCUS AREAS

The Seattle consulate will initially concentrate on three primary areas:

- **Technology:** A major focus will be fostering alliances in emerging and critical technologies, such as AI and quantum computing, between companies in India and the Silicon Forest of Seattle and the Eastside. The consulate aims to strengthen ties with aerospace leaders in the region, building on the recent \$36 billion aerospace order placed by Indian Air with Boeing. Discussions are also underway to establish direct flights between Seattle and India, similar to routes between India and New York, San Francisco, Houston, Atlanta, and Chicago.



Prakash Gupta's daughter, Pranjali, with Lynne Robinson (Mayor of Bellevue) and his wife, Neha.

- **Trade:** Enhancing trade between India and the Pacific Northwest is a top priority. The consulate will work to introduce consumable goods like mangoes, Indian coffee, and other Southeast Asian specialties to the Seattle market, enriching the local culinary scene.
- **Higher Education:** The Consulate seeks to build robust partnerships with local educational institutions such as the University of Washington and Seattle University. Initiatives like the "India Culture Week" will facilitate academic exchanges and collaborative teaching, providing enriching experiences for students from both regions.

he is passing on to his daughter. Gupta has already discovered some favorite Indian restaurants in the area, including Chutney's for North Indian cuisine, Clove in Renton, and The Mint Progressive in Seattle for Indian dishes.

One of the benefits he finds most enjoyable about world travel and diplomatic work is the cross-cultural communication and understanding his job creates. He was introduced to this

when, on his first placement, he was based in Beijing. He employed a local housekeeper who only spoke Mandarin, which helped with his command of the language. When his mother came to stay with him for an extended visit, he was worried she would be lonely in the city since she spoke only Hindi. But the two women, neither speaking the other's language, broke the boundaries of communication and forged a strong bond despite not sharing a common tongue. For many years after her visit, his mother and his former housekeeper had video calls where each were speaking their respective language, but the messages between them was very clear.

He and his family enjoy exploring new cultures and languages. Gupta feels his daughter is benefiting significantly by embracing and welcoming disparate communities, enabling her to approach life and connect with people from all walks of the global community.

For more information about the consulate and its services visit: indiainseattle.gov

CULTURAL ENRICHMENT

The Consulate is committed to promoting the unique, multifaceted communities that make up the generic term "Indian culture" in the Pacific Northwest. Plans are in place to host Indian Cultural Week celebrations, Indian film & food festivals, Yoga classes, and other events to introduce Seattleites and Eastside residents to the diversity and richness of Indian heritage.

MEET THE CONSUL GENERAL

Prakash Gupta, born and raised in Lucknow, a city in Northern India, brings a wealth of experience and a passion for cultural exchange to his new role. He enjoys exploring new cultures and languages, a trait



Prakash with Lynne Robinson, along with Deputy Mayor and City Councilmember, Mo Malakoutian.