



Website: www.kojain.com

A non-profit Organization

Tax Exempt No: 06-1442444

Volume 63: June 2024

Board of Directors

Officers:

President: Bhavini Gada

408-505-3227 | bhavini_s@hotmail.com

Vice President: Deepak Gada

201-888-0269 | dlgada@gmail.com

Secretary: Dimple Dedhia

669-241-4433 | pinkybitushah@yahoo.com

Treasurer: Narendra Shah

404-604-7251 | narendrars@gmail.com

Regional Directors

Region 1: AZ, CO, HI, NM, So.CA, UT

Shekhar Shah, 480-717-9657

shahshekhar@gmail.com

Region 2: AK, ID, MT, NV, No.CA, OR, WA, WY

Rahul Shah, 623-297-0004

rahulshah1988@gmail.com

Region 3: AR, KS, LA, MO, OK, TX

Namisha Jain, 832-310-7159

nilutx@yahoo.com

Region 4: IL, IN, IA, MN, NE, ND, SD, WI

Amit Shah, 847-769-3346

mail_amit_shah@yahoo.com

Region 5: AL, FL, GA, MS, TN

Open

Region 6: KY, MI, OH, W.PA, WV

Priti Haria, 347-702-0785

priti_haria@yahoo.com

Region 7: WA, DC., MD, NC, SC, VA

Vaishali Chheda, 410-564-4758

vaishali.chheda@gmail.com

Region 8: DE, E.PA, NJ

Shailesh Gala, 732-567-3276

skgala@yahoo.com

Region 9: NY

Priyank Chheda, 313-398-4860

chhedapriyank@gmail.com

Region 10: CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT

Nilam Maru, 203-981-3878

nilammaru@gmail.com

Region 11: Canada

Bhavesh Shah, 416-727-0928

bhavesh.kshah@yahoo.ca

Past President: Manish Mota, 602-363-6145

Youth Coordinator: Janak Shah, 339-234-1023

Sr. No	Topics
1	President's Message
2	KOJAIN 2024 Merit Scholarship Winners
3	Host Family Program
4	Region 1: Newborn, Picnic
5	Region 2: Bandhus, Picnic, Camping, Graduation
6	Region 3: Houston Meetup
7	Region 5: Atlanta Get Together
8	Region 7: Governor's Citation Award
9	Region 8: Girnar (99 Yatra), Graduation, Obituary, Picnic
10	KOJAIN Youth Updates
11	KOJAIN Matrimonial advertisements

President's Message

Pedam,

Aa manike Kachchhi nave vareji lakh lakh vadhai. Happy Ashadhi Beej.

Summer is a special time of the year - for some it means graduation and milestones, for others it could be travel and exploring new places. Enjoying the juicy delicious fruits and ice creams during the hot days of summer is a treat for sure. Hopefully all of you are enjoying the bright and long summer days.

Glad to see the many regional get-togethers and a wide variety of events that have been planned in the first half of the year. Thank You to all the community members for their efforts, participation and support in making local events successful.

Am inspired and amazed to see the planning and execution of the youth retreat that took place during memorial day weekend in PA. Thanks to each and everyone who joined and made this retreat successful. We are aiming to spread this youth energy across other states and help form a strong leadership for the future.

A BIG Thank You to the scholarship team for reviewing the high school scholarship applications. Like the past few years, we continue to see increasing applications for scholarships. Congratulations to the winners.

The cruise trip with fellow KOJAIN members is coming up in a few weeks and I'm glad to see the turn out. It's a new activity after the big pause for in-person KOJAIN meetups due to COVID but good to see representation from six different states for the trip. Your enthusiasm in going together will be a catalyst for future KOJAIN meetups and we are grateful for this enthusiasm.

With the arrival of summer, host family activities for international students have started. Do check out our host family program to help and support the incoming students this year.

This last quarter many new matrimonial candidates registered and the surge in candidates has kept the matrimonial team extremely busy. The matrimonial candidates virtual mixer in June had a good turnout. And we look forward to seeing more participation from such mixers in the near future. We are looking to add a dedicated community member in the Matrimonial volunteers team, if you would be interested in supporting this worthy cause please get in touch with me or any of the BOD members.

KOJAIN's latest initiative - the Mentor Mentee Program is seeing great momentum. Very thankful to the MMP team for bringing in a new initiative and to all those who have registered. It is really encouraging to see that members are not only vested in each other's growth but also helping with bringing the community closer.

Last but not the least, calling all regions to consider hosting a Sammelan next year. This will be our 10th Sammelan and even though JAINA is hosting a Sammelan next year, COVID has slowed us down significantly and we need the enthusiasm, drive and support of local regional groups to make this happen. Let's learn from the youths and make Sammelan a priority for all of us.

We are also looking to fill regional director 5(AL,FL, GA, MS, TN) position and also need volunteers to help out with the Matrimonial program, loan program, website updates etc. We invite everyone interested in supporting our community to join us and participate through various initiatives. If you can spare a few hours each month, we'd love to have you involved.

Regards,

Bhavini Gada

President | KOJAIN 2024-25



**** 2024 Merit Scholarship Winners ****

KOJAIN Scholarship committee is excited to announce the recipients of the 2024 Merit Scholarship.

Congratulations and best wishes for a bright future from KOJAIN.



Mitesh Shah (son of Tina and Manish Shah, GA) is a rising freshman at the Georgia Institute of Technology in his hometown of Atlanta, Georgia. He will be studying computer science and hopes to find exciting new ways to challenge himself and incorporate his knowledge into his faith and values. Aside from school, he enjoys playing sports, making music, and forming new friendships. In the future, he aspires to be a software engineer with a focus in machine learning and artificial intelligence to better our society and ease our lives through supportive technology.



Parsvi Shah (daughter of Svati & Vishal Shah, NJ) is grateful to be receiving one of the 2024 Kojain scholarships. She plans on attending the University of California Los Angeles this fall and majoring in business economics. She hopes to minor in the Film & Television department and continue pursuing acting while attending college.



Syna Lodaya (daughter of Tejal and Sheel Lodaya, VA) will be attending the University of Virginia this fall as a Biology major. She intends to go upon the pre-medical route and pursue a career in pediatrics as a doctor! She has been an avid part of the Jain and Kutchi communities for over a decade. Not only did she graduate from Pathshala after 10+ years of attendance, she spent the past two years acting as a student-aide volunteer for the upper classes. She has also served on both the YJA LR committee and my local JSMW youth community board. Furthermore, she has been in touch with Kutchi heritage by attending several KOJAIN events, such as the youth retreat. Apart from this, she enjoys dancing, and recently graduated from Kathak academy after 13 years. She also has a Black Belt in Karate, and has participated in other sports such as volleyball. At school, she has been an active board member for many clubs such as the Indian Student Association, Pre-med Club, Red Cross Club, and Model UN. She culminated her academic career by participating in the prestigious Governor's School program offered by the state of Virginia.

**** Host Family Program ****

We are approaching that time of the year again; we will have a new batch of Kutchi students arriving in North America starting August. As you know KOJAIN Host Family Program volunteers are ready to help settle these kids by connecting with local host families. How to get connected with KOJAIN host family program:

- **Students:** If you are a parent or the student who is coming to the US we request you to get connected with KOJAIN host family program via sending an email at hostfamily@kojain.com with details of which city/state you are coming to and also the name of the University.
- **Become a host family:** If you live in North America and are willing to help the incoming students then we request you to also send email hostfamily@kojain.com with your contact details. With the changing times the needs of the students have changed and host family support has evolved to be more of a guidance and support during any emergency situations.

It is great to give support to new incoming students and learn new ways of doing things.

**** Regional News: Region 1 ****

❖ Newborn

Neev Ketki Dedhia

DOB: 11/22/23

Son of Gunjan and Ketki Dedhia
from Gardena, CA

Gaam: Kapaya



❖ SoCal Picnic

Sun, fun, family and friends - our SoCal Kutchi picnic at Yorba Regional Park on June 1st had it all! Delicious food, exciting games like cricket, badminton, dodgeball, and a thrilling quadracycle ride, and adorable moments with the little ones, including a special milestone - Dali's first birthday!

The new babies, Siaan, Kiara, Payal, and Dali, stole the show. Beautiful weather and wonderful company made for an unforgettable day. Enjoy the highlights in these pics!



Thank you SO much to Jinal and Nilesh for helping secure this beautiful location!! 😊

Now, here's where it was exciting – it was a POTLUCK! 🍲🥗🍱 The culinary magic with Food items like Schezwan paneer sliders, khandvi, pan shots, curd rice, sandwiches, chana salad, fried idli, dhokla, peaches, fresh fruits, salsa dip, sev Khamni, thai salad made this event unforgettable

Man of the match was Punita Pandya Shah!! 🏏





**** Regional News: Region 2 ****

❖ KV Bandhus Get Together

KutchValley Bandhus had their annual get-together at Brundavan restaurant in Santa Clara on Friday Apr 26, 2024. Around **104** Bay Area Kutchi males attended the event. The dress theme was Hawaiian/printed shirts. People caught up with each other and did a lot of medavo. Later there was a fun Antakshari contest between teams. This was followed by some Karaoke too. After a sumptuous dinner, Bandhus made a fun reel on their favorite Bollywood swag step. The night ended with everyone dancing to DJ style music. The organizers for this event were Krunal Shah, Nikunj Shah, Nilay Chheda, and Prashant Shah.



On **May 11th, 2024** our KutchValley community came together at Lake Cunningham, San Jose for a vibrant Spring Potluck Picnic. With a record turnout of over **400** attendees, including **130+** families from **20** different cities, the event was a resounding success.

A Culinary Journey

One of the standout features of this year's picnic was the introduction of seven different food hubs, each offering a unique culinary experience. Attendees were free to contribute to one of these hubs, which included Mexican, Chaat, Gujarati, Pav, South Indian, Italian, and Dessert stations. Gola (shaved ice) and fresh watermelon were the highlights, providing a refreshing respite from the summer heat.

More Than Just Food: Games, Activities, and Lasting Memories

The spacious Cypress Pavilion (Lake Cunningham) offered ample shade and seating. Adults enjoyed games and friendly volleyball matches, while kids had fun with Tug of War and a well-equipped play structure. The picnic was about bringing people together. There was plenty of "Medavo. The colorful reels and the game of Housie added to the festive atmosphere, creating moments that will be cherished for years.



A big thank you to the dedicated Picnic team: Beleena Veera, Bhanik Shah, Isha Shah, Jaikit Savla, Naman Gala, and Prashant Shah. The Spring Picnic celebrated community, food, and fun, leaving everyone excited for next year. Additional pictures for the event are captured [here](#).

❖ BYO Memorial Weekend Camping

KutchValley introduced a second camping to their annual camping outings. This one was labeled as "BYO Camping" - Bring Your Own everything. About **95+** campers took advantage of this BYO Camping during the May Memorial day weekend. The location was Clear Lake State Park in California. **16** campsites were booked and provided to the campers. No other co-ordination was required. Campers formed smaller groups within themselves and arranged for their own breakfast, lunch, and dinner. On Saturday morning we headed to the lake to enjoy water activities. Some of the activities during the day involved card games, volleyball, bocce ball, frisbee, kids water gun fight, hiking, biking, etc. On Sat and Sun nights we had fun campfire games and stories. Since everything was BYO, people could move leisurely at their own pace. Overall a fun long weekend outing was achieved. Some support was required from the regular camping team which was provided by Ami Lalan, Neelam Dharod, Prashant Shah and Vinay Rambhia. Our regular camping is in Aug 2024 for which we expect double the crowd.



❖ Congratulations to Rea Savla

Rea (daughter of Piyusha & Vijay Savla from Milpitas, CA, Gaam - Bidada) graduated with an MBA from Harvard Business School (HBS) in May 2024. During her time there, she co-founded a project to bring more affordable, clean irrigation to farmers in India that received numerous awards, including 1st place at both Harvard and HBS' premier startup competitions. She also served as co-president of the South Asian Business Association, co-led multiple school theatrical and dance productions, and benefitted from many opportunities for global immersion. Rea is immensely grateful for this transformational experience and is happy to support students in the KOJAIN community who are interested in this professional path.



** Regional News: Region 3 **

❖ Houston Group meetup



Houston group in Region 3 had a meet and greet get-together after almost 6 yrs. It was an awesome party with so many new and old families meeting after a long time. We had Mexican Pani Puri and snow cones made by our amazing members Priti And Rajiv Rambhia. The food was delicious and mouth watering. Everyone had a great time. The members parted with the promise of meeting more often and doing many social and religious activities together.





**** Regional News: Region 5 ****

We had a fabulous, fantastic, friendly “JALSA - JALSA Get-Together” on **April 13, 2024**, from 3 - 10 pm with 54 participants, at the Gujarati Samaj of Atlanta. Lots of entertaining activities including gifts for kids, music, dance & games for adults.



Scrumptious food was catered by our own Sandeep & Kumud Savla including High Tea with Tea, Coffee, Khichu, Lilva Kachori and dinner with Puri, Rotli, veg, Paneer Tikka & Cauliflower vegetables, Jeera fried rice, Dal fry, Jain Samosa, Gulab Jamun, etc. Sandeep Savla provided a complimentary sound system, as always.

Everybody was excited to participate in this event while dancing with cool steps, meeting everyone and we were also glad to see some new faces. The kids also had a wonderful time, thanks to the games and goodie bags.

Beena Shah, Bhaven Malde, Forum Gor, Jay Gala,

Karishma Momaya, Ketan Merchant, Priyesh Sangoi, Sandeep & Kumud Savla, Trupti and Narendra Shah (Visaria), Urvi Shah helped organize this amazing and memorable event.

All these wonderful activities brought everyone close with a feeling of belonging. It was lovely witnessing all the kind-hearted people going extra miles & helping hands everywhere.



** Regional News: Region 7 **

❖ Governor's Citation Award

Kantilal N Gangar (Gaam Chassra) & **Pravin Dand** (Gaam Daltungi) in Region 7 received the governor's citation for service to Jain Society of Metropolitan Washington.

The award was given by the Governor's team at the JSMW Mahavir Janma Kalyanak Celebration on **April 27th, 2024** in Maryland.



❖ Girnar Navanu(99) Yatra



Chery Gada (daughter of Deepak & Dipal Gada) from Paramus, NJ (Gaam: Mota Asambia) recently returned from Navanu (99) Jatra of Girnar. Chery is an incoming senior at Fordham University in New York pursuing a major in Finance.

Chery only had 25 days between the end of her college and the start of her internship. Her dedication and perseverance were truly remarkable as she completed 77 Jatras in 20 days. Despite the challenging weather, she embraced the experience with unwavering faith and determination. We are deeply grateful to the Divine, our Guru's and the elders in our family for blessing her throughout this spiritual journey.

We were amazed by her commitment of undertaking this tap during this time of the year, without any hesitation. She plans to go back and complete the remaining Jatras as soon as possible. We hope her Jatra will be an inspiration for other kids living in the US.

Cavin Gada (Chery's brother) & Dipal Gada also got an opportunity to do their Jatras.

Within 7 days, Cavin has completed 25 Jatras and within 25 days, Dipal completed 33 Jatras.

We wish for continued success in spiritual growth for all the Yatriks 🙏



❖ Congratulations to Cavin Gada



Cavin Gada son of Deepak & Dipal Gada from Paramus, NJ (Gaam Mota Asambia & Chashra) recently graduated from Stevens Institute of Technology with a major in Computer Science. Cavin graduated with a GPA of 3.99. He will be joining JP Morgan Chase full time as an Software Engineer. Cavin is a music lover and loves playing guitar, piano and producing music. He has been producing music for various singers and production houses. He was also an active debater in school and now is debate coach at Bergen County Debate Club.

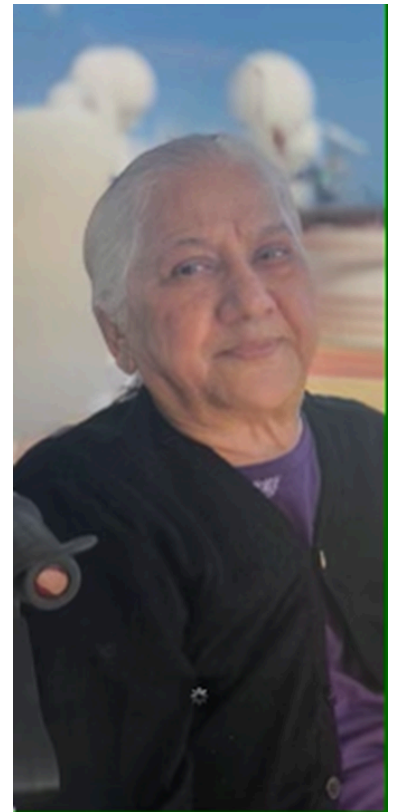
We wish Cavin continued success in his future endeavors.

❖ Obituary : Taruben Talaxi Shah

Smt. Taruniben Talaxi Shah, **80**, passed away on June 24, 2024 in Tinton Falls, NJ (Gaam: Naredi). She was mother of Pramit of Tracy, CA and Vishal of Tinton Falls, NJ as well as mother-in-law of Komal and Svati resp. She is mourned by her loving grandchildren Aloukika, Kshitij, Visv and Parsvi. She was a family-loving person and a good singer with a love for music.

Taruniben was born in Bhuj, Kutch in 1944 and married to Talakshi Shah in Pune in 1965. She lived in Vadodara, Gujarat, after her marriage and raised her children there. She spent a good amount of time in Vadodara as a business woman. She moved to the USA in 2019. She was under great care of Vishal and Svati for her ill health for the last 10 years.

Om Shanti.



❖ NJ Picnic

The NJ Kutchi group raised the bar with this year's picnic. Over 200+ adults and kids attended a whole day picnic on June 23 at Colonial Park in Somerset, New Jersey.

Over 20+ volunteers made sure all aspects of the picnic was well organized. Food was catered from various places and also brought from many stores.

We had breakfast including tea, coffee, jalebi, fafda and bagels. Lunch had Live Dosa station and a South Indian spread. Dinner included Mexican food at the end of the day along with water melons.

Loads of fun !! Even though it was a very hot day, the turnout and enthusiasm was great.

Many thanks to all the volunteers for organizing the picnic with every minute detail taken care of. And also cheers to all families for being present ignoring the 97 degree hot weather.

See photos from the picnic at

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/TM5pH4N49CVwHDDBA>



❖ **Memorial Weekend Youth Retreat**

This past **Memorial Day Weekend**, the third Kojain Youth retreat was hosted in Danville, Pennsylvania. We had an amazing turnout of **37** attendees with a waitlist of **20** people. We are so pleased to see Kutchi youth coming together and watching the community grow.

We began our retreat on Friday night by teaming everyone into four groups with whom we'd work with all weekend during evening activities. The first night featured a lip sync battle. Each team coordinated a routine to a song of their choice and put on quite a show. Getting creative and expressive the first evening was the perfect way to kick our retreat off!

We started off day two with our jubilee session, which focused on discussing modern topics of Jainism and how we can implement Jainism in our lives. Next our keynote speaker, Rashmi Auntie, the founder of Rann Escapes, a tourism group based in Kutch, presented to us from our homeland through a 112-degree heatwave. She taught us about the origins of Kutch, the creation of the land, the creation of our culture, modern-day changes, and much more. She explained the geological history and significance of Kutch, and its unique cultural evolution. She also shared fascinating insights into how the region has adapted to modern times while preserving its rich heritage. We learned so much about our homeland from her insightful presentation, gaining a deeper appreciation for our roots and the vibrant history that shapes our identity. In addition to this we had two of our attendees lead a session on the makings of bandhani art for an interactive afternoon activity.

In addition to our educational activities, we had many physical ones as well. We played Supergirl vs. Batman, a camp-inspired game where teams completed various challenges like human pyramid, rap battle, human knot, dance battle, plank relay, and more. This game was a fantastic way to build teamwork and camaraderie as participants cheered each other on and strategized to complete the challenges. The friendly competition fostered a spirit of unity and excitement among everyone. On our last day, we played kickball and had a field day full of fun nostalgic games from our childhood. These included classic activities like sack races, three-legged races, and an eventful water balloon toss. It was wonderful to see everyone reliving their childhood memories and bonding over these timeless games. The energy and enthusiasm were palpable, making the day incredibly memorable.

Another highlight of the retreat was our baking competition, where teams created culinary delights with an Indian twist. The creations included chai mug cake, a gulab jamun cake, rose tres leches cake, and dates stuffed with dried mango. The inventive recipes and delicious results showcased the participants' creativity and baking skills, adding a sweet and flavorful dimension to the retreat. This competition was not only about the tasty treats but also about celebrating our cultural heritage through food.

Our attendees teamed up to participate in the Kutchi Shark Tank. Each team pitched an idea on how to improve KOJAIN/KOJAIN youth. The ideas varied from regional meetups, trips to Kutch, to a Kutchi connection app. The creativity and innovation displayed were truly inspirational. Each team demonstrated a deep understanding of the community's needs and presented solutions that could have a lasting impact. We see real promise in many of the ideas presented and hope they can be implemented in the near future. This session was a testament to the ingenuity and passion within our youth community.

Our Kutchi retreat was full of sessions deepening our understanding and challenging our perspectives about our culture. With a weekend filled with games, activities, pool time, education, challenges, food, and more, 37 young Kutchi Jain Americans were able to bond with those who share the same roots. It was truly a unique experience to connect in a way that is not possible for many of us on a day-to-day basis. We are so excited for the future of KOJAIN and the youth sector as well.

If you would like to contribute in any way and donate to the future of Kojain, feel free to Venmo @Janakashah. These funds will be used to coordinate future events and endeavors, including a larger Kutchi youth convention! Please follow [@kojainyouth](https://www.instagram.com/kojainyouth) on Instagram for more updates!



Our winning team of the weekend: Janak Shah (NY), Amay Gada (NH), Parth Haria (KY), Aarya Jain (MD), Khushi Haria (CT), Illene Dedhia (NJ), Anand Maru (NY), Jessica Vora (CT), Simone Shah (NJ)



Rec Hour fun with: Jessica Vora (CT), Khushi Haria (CT), Reeya Vora (PA), Riya Gada (CT), Mehal Gala (PA)



37 of our amazing attendees!



Dessert Comp/Mango team: Nuvika Shah (NJ), Pia Visaria (NJ), Urmi Chheda (VA)



Bandhani Art: Anand and Umed Maru (NY) led this beautiful session to showcase the making of this Kutchi art form



Keval Gala/ Boots (TX) On Kitchen Duty!



Keynote Speaker: Rashmi Auntie From Kutch/ Founder of Rann Escapes spoke to our Kojain youth at this year's retreat about the history, culture, and landscapes of our homeland.



Kojain Youth Board: Neev Maru (MA), Keval Gala (TX), Rohan Gala (PA), Tanay Gada (NY), Janak Shah (NY), Mehal Gala (PA), Jess Vora (CT), Reeya Vora (CT), Riya Gada (CT), Khushi Haria (CT)

**** KOJAIN Matrimonial Candidates ****

If any eligible matrimonial candidate would like to become a member of KOJAIN Matrimonial WhatsApp group, please visit <https://kojain.com/matrimonial/> for signup details.

Disha Umesh Vora

Age: 28

Height: 5'

Location: Kitchener,
Ontario, Canada

Parents: Kusum
Umesh Premji Vora

Brief Intro:

An open-minded, loyal, easy-going person with a friendly demeanor and a great sense of humor. I love to travel, explore and meet new places and people. I am a great foodie and love exploring different local cuisines. Looking for someone cheerful, caring, ambitious, empathetic, and family-oriented!

LinkedIn- <https://www.linkedin.com/in/dishauvora/>

Insta- <https://www.instagram.com/dishavora/>

Email address: dishavora6@gmail.com



Mausam Shah

Age: 25

City: New York City /
Jersey City

Education:

MS in Marketing
Intelligence, Fordham
University NYC, Dec
2023

BS in Business
Analytics and
Information

Technology and **BS** in Marketing, Rutgers
Business School NJ, 2020

International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma
Program, Greenwood High International School,
Bangalore

Parents: Vijay and Kavita Shah, Milpitas, CA
Gaam: Merau

Brief Intro: Mausam is ambitious, thoughtful, and adventurous. She enjoys exploring new restaurants and cafes, biking, fashion designing, and table tennis, among other things. Ideally, she prefers someone between the ages 25-28 (1996-1998) who is patient, kind, ambitious, and open to trying new things. She is a vegetarian and would prefer someone who follows a similar diet.

Parents' contact: Kavita Shah - Call
+1-669-338-9517, **Whatsapp** - +91 9886765981

Email: contactmausamshah@gmail.com,
kavitaaurvi@gmail.com

