



INDEPENDENCE DAY OF INDIA SPECIAL EDITION

INSIDE :-

INDIA AT 79: PRIDE, PROMISE, AND THE PRESSING CHALLENGES AHEAD PAGE 2

IS INDIA STILL A LIBERAL DEMOCRACY? PAGE 8

HOW INDIA CAN NAVIGATE TRUMP'S TARIFF STORM IN A CHOPPY WORLD PAGE 9

INTERVIEW - A WIDE-RANGING CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR BINAYA SRIKANTA PRADHAN, INDIA'S CONSUL GENERAL IN NEW YORK PAGE 15

INTERVIEW - SAURIN PARIKH, PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERATION OF INDIAN ASSOCIATIONS (FIA) PAGE 19

PM Modi's 79th I-Day address charts roadmap for Viksit Bharat

Focuses on self-reliance, innovation, and citizen empowerment



PM Narendra Modi delivered his longest and most decisive address yet from the Red Fort, lasting 103 minutes, charting a bold roadmap for a Viksit Bharat by 2047.

AUGUST 15, 2025

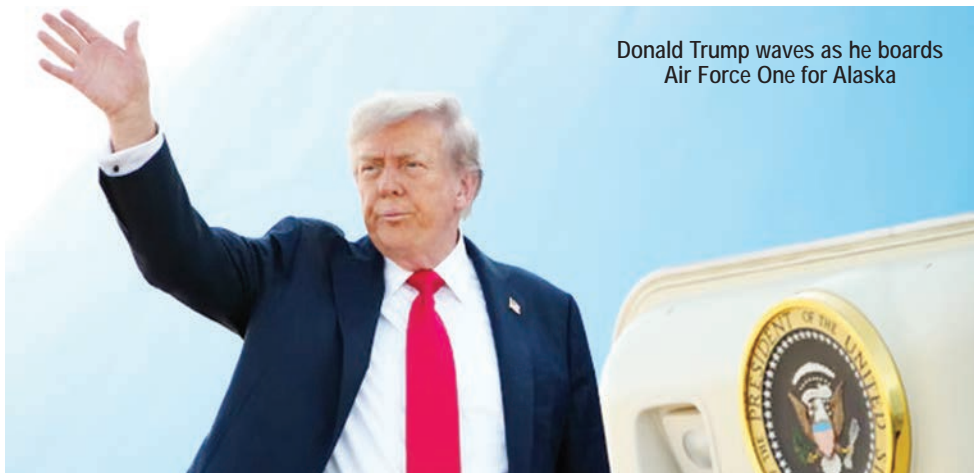
NEW DELHI (TIP): On the 79th Independence Day, India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi delivered his longest and most decisive address from the Red Fort, lasting 103 minutes, charting a bold roadmap for a Viksit Bharat by 2047.

No blackmail, no compromise

PM Modi hailed Operation Sindoor, conducted after the Pahalgam attack, as

CONTD ON PAGE 66

Trump confirms plans for 'economically severe' sanctions if Russia doesn't move on Ukraine



Donald Trump waves as he boards Air Force One for Alaska

AUGUST 15, 2025

WASHINGTON, D.C. (TIP): President Trump says Russia needs to show willingness to seriously talk about the end of the war in Ukraine, as he travels to his meeting with Putin in Anchorage, Alaska

Trump also confirms his earlier threat

of "severe" consequences for Russia if it fails to show willingness to seriously talk about the end of war in Ukraine.

He says:

"Economically severe. It will be very severe. I'm not doing this for my health, okay, I don't need it.

CONTD ON PAGE 66

DC sues Trump over police takeover as Bondi ends city's 'sanctuary policies' and homeless encampments are cleared

AUGUST 15, 2025

WASHINGTON, D. C. (TIP): Late yesterday, DC mayor Muriel Bowser hit back against Pam Bondi's move to put DEA chief Terry Cole in charge of the capital's police department. In a post on X, Bowser wrote: "there is no statute that conveys the District's personnel authority to a federal official".

CONTD ON PAGE 66



District of Columbia Mayor Muriel Bowser says, "there is no statute that conveys the District's personnel authority to a federal official".



Andy Singh

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India at 79: Pride, Promise, and the Pressing Challenges Ahead

By Indrajit Saluja



As the nation celebrates nearly eight decades of independence, it must confront security threats, internal divisions, and deep social inequities-while harnessing the power of its youth to shape a stronger, fairer future.

Seventy-nine years after Independence, India stands tall as the world's largest democracy-but faces mounting challenges from hostile neighbors, internal strife, and deep social divides. This Independence Day, the nation must harness its greatest asset-its youth-to fulfill the promise of freedom for all.

As India prepares to celebrate its 79th Independence Day on August 15, 2025, it stands as the world's largest democracy and a rising global power. Nearly eight decades of independence have brought impressive achievements-from advancements in technology, defense, and agriculture to space exploration and a robust democratic framework. Yet, this proud journey is shadowed by persistent and evolving challenges, both internal and external, that test the resilience of the Republic.

CHALLENGES FROM WITHOUT: A TURBULENT NEIGHBORHOOD

1. The Pakistan Problem: A Legacy of Partition

The 1947 partition sowed the seeds of one of the world's most enduring geopolitical rivalries. Months after independence, Pakistan-backed tribal militias invaded Kashmir, prompting the first Indo-Pak war and cementing the region as a flashpoint. Wars in 1965 and 1971, the Kargil conflict of 1999, and continued cross-border terrorism have kept relations hostile. Recent incidents, such as Operation Sindoor following the killing of Hindu tourists in Pahalgam, show that Pakistan's use of terrorism as a state policy remains a grave threat.

2. China: A Persistent Northern Challenge

India's northern frontier remains unsettled due to China's territorial ambitions. The 1962 war and more recent incidents, including the deadly 2020 Galwan Valley clash, reveal a pattern of strategic encroachment. Beijing's military build-up, infrastructure push along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), and diplomatic resistance to India's rise compound the threat.

3. Regional Friction: Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Myanmar

India's neighborhood diplomacy must navigate complex realities-balancing strategic interests in Sri Lanka with advocacy for Tamil rights, countering China's growing influence in Nepal, and managing security risks from Myanmar's ongoing conflict. China's Belt and Road Initiative continues to challenge India's strategic space.

CHALLENGES FROM WITHIN: THE INTERNAL FAULT LINES

1. Separatist Movements and Identity Politics

The Khalistan movement, though militarily subdued, persists ideologically among diaspora groups abroad. Similar challenges arise from left-wing extremism



in central India, where Maoist insurgents exploit poverty and alienation to sustain their campaign of violence. These movements reflect deep social and economic gaps that must be addressed alongside security measures.

2. Poverty, Inequality, and Social Divides

Despite economic growth, India continues to rank poorly on global hunger and malnutrition indices-111 out of 125 countries in the 2024 Global Hunger Index. The caste system and entrenched discrimination against Dalits and Adivasis remain barriers to social justice. Unemployment, particularly among the youth, threatens stability and undermines the demographic advantage.

3. Religious Polarization

India's secular fabric is strained by rising religious divisions. Communal violence, anti-conversion laws, and political rhetoric targeting minorities undermine constitutional values and national unity. This polarization not only damages social harmony but also erodes India's global image as a tolerant, pluralistic society.

4. Corruption: The Invisible Enemy

Corruption continues to corrode governance, from high-level scams to petty bribery. Despite reforms such as the Lokpal and digital governance tools, lack of accountability hampers public service delivery and development. The poor suffer the most, as corruption deepens inequality and mistrust in institutions.

THE PATH FORWARD: A NATIONAL REAWAKENING

1. Strengthen National Security

India must modernize its armed forces, fortify border infrastructure, and invest in intelligence and cybersecurity. Diplomacy with both neighbors and global powers should be guided by strategic realism.

2. Address Separatism Through Development and Dialogue

Security measures must be coupled with efforts to eliminate the root causes of insurgency-poverty, discrimination, and political alienation. Justice, development, and inclusion are as essential as enforcement.

3. Rebuild Social Cohesion

Political leaders must reject divisive identity politics and recommit to the

secular, plural ideals of the Constitution. Hate speech and communal violence should be met with swift, impartial action.

4. Fight Corruption with Transparency and Accountability

Strengthen anti-corruption institutions, protect whistleblowers, and expand e-governance measures. Public audits and open data can help build trust between citizens and the state.

5. Invest in Human Capital

Education and healthcare must receive higher budgetary priority. Implementing the National Education Policy with a focus on skills, and expanding rural health infrastructure, will help India harness its demographic dividend.

6. Translate Growth into Jobs

Economic growth must generate employment. Investments in infrastructure, MSMEs, green energy, and labor reform can create sustainable livelihoods for millions.

RISING TO THE OCCASION

At 79, India is at a crossroads-poised between great promise and significant peril. Its democracy has endured wars, insurgencies, and political upheavals. Its economy has grown from colonial impoverishment to a global contender. Yet, unresolved inequities, security threats, and internal divisions demand urgent, collective action.

India's greatest strength lies in its youth-dynamic, creative, and ambitious. If given the tools of quality education, economic opportunity, and ethical governance, they can transform the nation's destiny.

As the tricolor flutters high this Independence Day, it should serve not just as a symbol of past struggles, but as a rallying call for unity, justice, and renewal. The challenges from within and without are formidable, but they are not beyond the reach of a determined nation.

The task before us is clear: to secure India's borders, heal its divisions, and ensure that the promise of freedom reaches every citizen. Only then will we honor the sacrifices of the past and secure the future our founding fathers dreamed of.

On this 79th Independence Day, may India rise to meet its moment-stronger, fairer, and more united than ever before.



State Bank of India
New York



It's our pleasure to continue serving you since 1971.
We thank you and wish you a very

HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY



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VINAY KWATRA
Ambassador of India
2107 Massachusetts Ave. N.W,
Washington DC 20008



Message

I extend my warm greeting to the readers of The Indian Panorama on the occasion of India's 79th Independence Day. I am happy to note that The Indian Panorama continues to be a part of the lives of Indians and Indian diaspora in the USA.

India is an ancient civilization but a young nation. As India enters the eighth decade of her independence, it is an opportune moment to reflect on the objectives that we have laid out for ourselves under the vision of Viksit Bharat (Developed India) by 2047. The path to achieve this goal will require sincere and dedicated effort from all of us, it will require the ingenuity of our young and the strength of experience of our older generations.

The India-U.S. Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership today indeed cooperates across all verticals of human endeavor. Recent milestones underscore this vibrant alliance. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the United States in February 2025, alongside External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar's engagements in January and July for the QUAD Foreign Ministers' meetings, have reinforced our shared commitment to strengthening the bilateral partnership. U.S. Vice President J.D. Vance's visit to India in April 2025 has further deepened our dialogue and understanding. Cooperation in the space domain between the two countries has seen significant achievement recently with the launch of the NASA-ISRO NISAR satellite and the visit of an Indian astronaut to the International Space Station.

Our diaspora plays a significant role in strengthening this relationship. It is my firm belief that the Indian diaspora in the United States acts as a living bridge between our two vibrant societies, contributing to the development and enrichment of both the nations. I hope that you will continue to play this important and irreplaceable role.

I would also like to pay homage to the victims of heinous terrorism attack in Pahalgam in April this year. In the aftermath of the attack, the entire world has witnessed the strength of India's people and our armed forces in form of Operation Sindoor.

I would also like to mention that this August, we have significantly expanded our consular service delivery across the United States of America, by opening 09 new Consular Application Centers. This expansion is a reflection of our commitment to expand service delivery, driven by the deep regard that Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi holds for the Indian diaspora. Jai Hind!

Vinay Kwatra
(Vinay Kwatra)

BINAYA S PRADHAN
Council General of India, New York



Message

On the proud occasion of India's 79th Independence Day, the Consulate General of India, New York, extends warm greetings to the readers of *The Indian Panorama* and to all members of the Indian diaspora.

This day marks the celebration of India's hard-won freedom and the enduring spirit of democracy, unity, and progress that defines our nation. It is a moment to honour the sacrifices of our freedom fighters and to renew our collective commitment to building a stronger, inclusive, and self-reliant India.

The Indian diaspora in the United States has been an integral part of this journey, contributing meaningfully to India's global engagement while enriching the multicultural fabric of American society. We take immense pride in your achievements and continued connection with your roots.

We also commend *The Indian Panorama* for its steadfast commitment since 2006 to serving as a bridge between India and the global Indian community through responsible journalism and cultural dialogue.

Let us celebrate this Independence Day with pride in our heritage and hope for the future.

Binaya S. Pradhan
(Binaya S. Pradhan)

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**PADMA BHUSHAN
SANT CHATWAL**
New York



Message

Congratulations to The Indian Panorama and its esteemed editor, Prof. Indrajit S. Saluja, on bringing out a special edition to mark India's 79th Independence Day. This edition is both a tribute to the nation's remarkable journey since 1947 and a timely reminder of the road ahead.

Over the past 79 years, India has transformed from a newly independent, impoverished nation into one of the world's largest economies, with achievements in science, technology, agriculture, space exploration, and democratic governance. The country's vibrant culture, resilient institutions, and growing global influence are sources of pride for every Indian.

Yet, the challenges remain formidable—persistent poverty, economic inequality, corruption, gaps in education and healthcare, environmental degradation, and the need to strengthen democratic accountability. Addressing these issues is essential if India is to truly realize its potential.

India's greatest strength lies in its youth—dynamic, creative, and ambitious. This relatively young population, if empowered with education, opportunity, and ethical leadership, has the capacity to transform India into a global leader of progress and justice.

On this historic occasion, we extend heartfelt wishes to the people of India and the Indian diaspora worldwide for a Happy Independence Day—may the spirit of freedom and unity continue to inspire generations to come!

Sant Chatwal

PREM BHANDARI
President, Rajasthan Association
of North America (RANA) ,
President, Jaipur Foot USA



Message


On this proud occasion of India's Independence Day, I extend my heartfelt greetings to all Indians and the global Indian diaspora. Today, as we honor the sacrifices of our freedom fighters and celebrate the progress our nation has achieved, let us also reaffirm our commitment to contributing positively to the country we proudly call our own, no matter where we live.

The Indian diaspora has become a vibrant force worldwide, contributing to every field from business and technology to culture and philanthropy while upholding our shared heritage and values. It is heartening to see how our community continues to strengthen the bridge between India and the nations we reside in.

I would also like to extend my special congratulations to Professor Saluja for his tireless dedication in running Panorama, a newspaper that has consistently given voice to the concerns, aspirations, and achievements of the Indian diaspora. Through his steadfast commitment to truthful reporting and community advocacy, Panorama has become an important pillar for Indians abroad.

May we continue to work together for a brighter future, keeping alive the spirit of unity, service, and pride in our Indian identity.

Jai Hind!
Prem Bhandari



TOM SUOZZI
US House of Representatives
NY Congressional District 3



Message

Today, we celebrate Indian Independence Day. Throughout my career in public service, I have worked to strengthen the U.S.-India partnership, which I believe to be one of our most important relationships for the next 50 years.

Last year, I introduced House Resolution 1394, which celebrates the principles of democracy, religious pluralism, human rights, and the rule of law shared by the United States and India.

Our relationship is also fueled by our vibrant Indian American community, one of the most industrious and successful diaspora populations in the world. Today, we honor their contributions to our communities here on Long Island and in Queens.

I wish all my friends in the Indian community happy, healthy, and safe celebrations.
Jai Hind!

Tom Suozzi




SENATOR JOHN C. LIU
16th SENATE DISTRICT
MAJORITY CONFERENCE VICE CHAIR

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FINANCE
HIGHER EDUCATION
JUDICIARY
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August 15, 2025

The Indian Panorama
124 Dean Street
Hicksville, NY 11801

Dear Friends,


It is with great pleasure that I extend my best wishes of the Indian Panorama on the publication of its special issue celebrating India's 79th Independence Day!

On this important holiday, we celebrate the independence of India and join in festivities with friends, family and our community. Special thanks to the Indian Panorama as it continues to bring its readers the latest news and important information so that our community can stay abreast of current news and events. Since the newspaper's inception in 2006, the Indian Panorama has rapidly come to occupy a central place for the South Asian community and serve as an essential resource in this multicultural, multireligious contemporary American society.


On behalf of the New York State Senate, I commend all of the correspondents and staff of The Indian Panorama for their service. My sincere thanks to Chief Editor Professor Indrajit S. Saluja for his hard work and dedicated leadership. I look forward to continuing to work as your State Senator on behalf of our community in the future, and I would like to express my best wishes for a joyous Independence Day!

Wishing you and your loved ones a most joyous holiday during this 79th Independence Day!

Sincerely,

AMIT VERMA
Country Head, US Operations
State Bank of India
460 Park Avenue, New York



Message

On the auspicious occasion of India's 79th Independence Day, I extend my warmest greetings to all of you. Independence Day is a time to remember and acknowledge the courage and sacrifices of all those who fought tirelessly for India's freedom.

The tricolor, with its saffron, white, and green stripes and the Ashoka Chakra at its center, symbolizes the nation's strength, courage, peace, truth, fertility, growth, and the pursuit of dharma and righteousness.

Upholding our values is essential for building a truly inclusive and prosperous society.

Happy Independence Day!
Jai Hind!



PRASANTA K TRIPATHY
Chief Executive Officer
State Bank of India
460 Park Avenue, New York



Message

On the eve of India's 79th Independence Day, I extend my warm greetings to all of you. This day is a tribute to the extraordinary perseverance of those who fought for freedom, and a celebration of the nation's remarkable progress in the decades since.

May this Independence Day bring renewed hope, prosperity and progress to all of us.

Wishing you a happy Independence Day.

Jai Hind!

रमेश बाबू लक्ष्मणन
Ramesh Babu Lakshmanan



भारत का प्रधान कौंसुल
अटलांटा
Consul General of India
Atlanta



Message

On the proud occasion of the 79th Independence Day of India, I extend my warm greetings and best wishes to India Panorama magazine, Prof. Indrajit S. Saluja, Editor and his team, and its vibrant readers across the United States.

This day holds deep significance for all Indians, both in India and abroad. It is a time to remember the sacrifices of our freedom fighters, to honor our journey as a sovereign democratic republic, and to celebrate the spirit of unity that the Tiranga represents. The Indian flag is not just a symbol — it is a reminder of our shared history, enduring values, and collective aspirations.

I sincerely appreciate India Panorama for its consistent efforts in keeping the Indian-American community informed and connected through its thoughtful coverage of India's development stories and community milestones. Your Special Independence Day Edition 2025 is a meaningful tribute to the spirit of India and the vibrant Indian diaspora in the United States.

The contributions of the Indian-American community continue to strengthen the fabric of American society while reflecting the richness of Indian heritage. Your achievements across sectors are a matter of immense pride and have helped elevate India's global image.

The Government of India remains deeply committed to the welfare of our diaspora through a range of consular services, community engagement programs, and policy initiatives designed to foster stronger ties between India and its global citizens.

The Consulate General of India in Atlanta is committed to serving and supporting the Indian community, and to furthering its connection with India through efficient consular services, cultural outreach, and welfare measures. We stand with you in celebrating your successes and addressing your concerns.

As we celebrate this Independence Day, I extend my warmest wishes to all members of the Indian community. May this special edition inspire renewed pride in our heritage and encourage continued contributions to both India and the United States.

Let us carry forward the values our Tiranga embodies — courage, peace, and progress.

Jai Hind!

(Ramesh Babu Lakshmanan)

SOMNATH GHOSH
Council General of India, Chicago



Message

On this proud occasion of India's Independence Day 2025, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to *The India Panorama* for its commitment to serving the Indian diaspora and friends of India with thoughtful and informed journalism, community engagement, and a deep connection to India's democratic spirit.

As we celebrate India's journey of freedom, progress, and global leadership, we also salute the role of the Indian diaspora in upholding the values of liberty, diversity, and innovation around the world. Media voices like *The India Panorama* help promote our shared values of freedom and democracy with the United States of America, while amplifying the hopes and aspirations of a vibrant global Indian community in the USA.

May you continue to inform, inspire, and unite across borders.

Jai Hind!

(Somnath Ghosh)
Consul General

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D C MANJUNATH
Council General of India, Houston



Message

I extend my congratulations to The Indian Panorama for bringing out this special edition to mark the 79th Independence Day of Bharat. Over the years, the magazine has served as a strong link for the Indian community in the United States, highlighting our shared heritage and celebrating the values that unite us.

As we celebrate the 79th Independence Day, we also look toward our Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision of Viksit Bharat 2047—a developed and self-reliant India by 2047. This ambitious goal calls for the collective efforts of every Indian, at home and abroad. The Indian American community, as cultural ambassadors and partners in progress, is uniquely positioned to contribute through innovation, entrepreneurship, and knowledge exchange.

I take this opportunity to convey my warm greetings and best wishes to all members of the community on the Independence Day and urge you to add your efforts towards stronger Indo-US relations and Viksit Bharat 2047.

(D.C. Manjunath)

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DR. DIPAK NANDI
Neuropsychiatrist and Entrepreneur
New York



Message

As we mark the 79th Independence Day of India, we reflect on the remarkable transformation of a nation that has grown steadily in confidence, capacity, and global stature. India's progress across healthcare, science, technology, and education continues to inspire not only its citizens but also the larger global community.

This occasion also evokes personal reflection. Having begun my journey in India and built a professional life abroad, I have witnessed firsthand how Indian values—discipline, resilience, and a deep respect for learning—resonate well beyond its borders. My education at institutions like AIIMS laid a strong foundation that has guided me through decades of service in healthcare. The opportunities I've had since then have only deepened my appreciation for the richness of India's legacy and its enduring relevance worldwide.

This Independence Day is a celebration not only of sovereignty but also of shared responsibility—to promote innovation, equity, and inclusive development. No matter where we are, we carry the essence of India within us: a quiet strength, a drive to uplift others, and a purpose rooted in service.

May this day remind us of the values we carry and the purpose we strive to fulfill—wherever we are.

Dipak Nandi



DR V K RAJU

MD, FRCS, FACS
President and Founder,
Eye Foundation of America
President and Founder, Goutami Eye Institute
Clinical Professor, West Virginia University
Adjunct Professor, Wilmer Eye Institute, Johns
Hopkins University
Director, International Ocular Surface Society



Message

Happy 79th Independence Day, dear friends and fellow citizens!

On this momentous occasion, as our nation celebrates freedom and progress, I invite you to envision a freer world for our children—one without the darkness of preventable blindness.

India bears a heavy burden of childhood blindness: estimates suggest around 270,000 children aged 0–15 are blind—the highest number in any single country

Globally, about 1.42 million children suffer from blindness, with nearly three-quarters residing in low- and middle-income countries like ours

And the economic stakes are staggering: India loses an estimated US \$118 billion annually in gross national income due to productivity lost from childhood blindness—projected to escalate to US \$158 billion over a child's working life span

These numbers are more than statistics; they represent precious lives robbed of learning, joy, and opportunity. As an ophthalmologist, I firmly believe the eye is the gateway to education, to imagination, and to self-reliance.

This Independence Day: Let Us Gift Sight

As we unfurl the tricolor, let's dedicate ourselves to giving the best possible Independence Day gift—a world where no child grows up in darkness.

Happy Independence Day—and here's to a World Without Childhood Blindness.

VK Raju

PURNIMA DESAI

Founder President, Shikshayatan
and Sriniketan



Message

On the joyous occasion of India's 79th Independence Day, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to all my fellow Indians across the globe. Over the past seventy-nine years, India has made remarkable strides in science, technology, industry, arts, and democratic governance, steadily advancing towards its rightful place among the leading nations of the world.

The Indian Diaspora, spread across continents, has played a singular role in enriching their adopted countries while keeping alive and spreading India's rich heritage, culture, and values. I take pride in having devoted the last four decades through my institutions, Shikshayatan and Sriniketan, to the promotion of Indian classical music and dance forms, contributing in my own way to this cultural mission.

I also congratulate The Indian Panorama for bringing out a special edition to commemorate this historic milestone, showcasing the achievements and aspirations of our great nation. May India continue to soar to greater heights!

Jai Hind!

Purnima Desai

H S PANASER

Chairman, Global Indian Trade and Culture, USA
President, Global Indian Diaspora Alliance



Message

On this momentous 78th Indian Independence Day, we stand united in celebration of our nation's incredible journey. Today, we not only honor the monumental sacrifices of our freedom fighters, but also recognize the tireless efforts of all those who continue to build a modern and resilient India.

Our nation's strength is a testament to the dedication of our diverse people. We extend our deepest appreciation to:

- The bureaucrats and public servants whose unwavering commitment ensures good governance and public welfare.
- The farmers who, with their hard work and dedication, continue to feed a nation of over a billion people.
- The professionals and innovators in IT and pharmaceuticals, who have made India a global powerhouse, providing essential services and affordable medicines to the world.
- Our brave defense personnel, who stand as the guardians of our sovereignty, protecting our borders and ensuring our peace.
- And to the dynamic Indian diaspora around the world, who serve as our nation's ambassadors, bridging cultures and contributing to the global community with pride.

In a world facing unprecedented challenges, from geopolitical tensions to regional conflicts, India's voice for peace and humanity is a beacon of hope. Our commitment to democratic values, economic progress, and social justice remains our guiding light.

The Global Indian Trade and Cultural Council, USA and Global Indian Diaspora Alliance joins together to appreciate this spirit is brilliantly captured by platforms like The Indian Panorama, under the esteemed leadership of Professor Indrajit Saluja, Editor-in-Chief. His dedication to creating a media space that shares the transparent news and feelings of the Indian diaspora ensures our collective story, with all its diverse voices and perspectives, is heard loud and clear.

As we look to the future, let us continue to work together, leveraging our collective strength to overcome adversity and build a prosperous, inclusive, and peaceful world. The tricolor represents our collective dream, and together, we will ensure it soars to new heights.

Jai Hind!

H S Panaser

RAJENDAR DICHPALLY

Senior Database/ Business
Intelligence Developer



Message

On this 15th of August, we proudly celebrate the 79th Independence Day of our great nation. This day reminds us of the countless sacrifices, unwavering courage, and relentless determination of our freedom fighters who paved the way for a sovereign India.

As we honor their legacy, let us also reaffirm our commitment to the values of democracy, unity, and progress. Independence is not just a gift of the past—it is a responsibility for the present and a promise for the future.

May we continue to work together to build an India that stands strong in diversity, thrives in innovation, and leads with compassion on the global stage.

Jai Hind!

Rajendar Dichpally

Is India still a liberal democracy?

As the Diaspora celebrates the 79th Independence Day of India, a pressing question looms in the minds of people across the globe: Is today's India truly a liberal democracy? This week, we may witness widespread celebrations of India's independence that will be held in many cities across the U.S. However, one may hear very little regarding whether the hard-fought freedom by the founders of modern India is in danger of being extinguished, a concern that should be at the forefront of our discussions.

Many cultural and religious organizations that host such events seem indifferent to the steadily eroding freedoms of India's citizens and the weakening of its democratic institutions. It is essential that the Indian diaspora, with its unique vantage point and influence, take a principled stand and speak out on these issues. Yet, far too often, these forums choose instead to recycle the same celebratory narratives of India's history and heritage, continually invoking our noble ancestry and cultural traditions. Adding to this irony, many of the same leaders neglect to acknowledge the freedoms and opportunities they themselves have enjoyed in their adopted countries-and, in some cases, go so far as to deride the so-called "decadent culture" of the West, as though migration to this part of the world were something imposed upon them.

A noticeable trend in recent years has been the decline of India's rankings on several global indices, especially dealing with subjective issues such as democracy and freedom. According to Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem), which produces the most extensive global dataset on democracy, India remains an "Electoral Autocracy". Freedom House downgraded India from "Free to" Partly Free" and maintained that classification since 2024. The Economic Intelligence Unit (EIU) ranks India as a "Flawed Democracy".

Under Modi's rule, the suppression of journalists has intensified. Tactics such as raiding news organizations like the BBC and bringing up sham charges against investigative journalists have become regular tools of intimidation. The Unlawful Activities Prevention Act, counter-terrorism laws, and a new censorship bill have been used to silence any criticism. India, like any other authoritarian country, has harassed and denied foreign funding to civil society organizations and religious ones. Academic freedom has also been a casualty, leading to the dismissal of professors critical of the Government.

The democratic Institutions that were built and maintained under the Congress rule over the years are under deep duress. There has been a growing pressure on the judiciary by the Executive, resulting in inconsistent rulings in politically sensitive areas. There is also a steep decline in debates in parliaments over critical issues, while the governing party relies more and more on the use of ordinances,



India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi celebrates his Party's victory in the elections

marginalizing the opposition. India's election commission appears to have compromised its impartiality while becoming a vassal for the BJP political machine.

India leads the world in Internet shutdowns, and platforms like Twitter and YouTube have been pressured to remove content critical of the Government. There are allegations of Pegasus spyware's use against journalists, activists, and opposition politicians, painting a picture of a surveillance state that is said to be in operation, violating fundamental civil liberties. Since the Narendra Modi government came to power, access to information through the Right to Information (RTI) Act has diminished dramatically, according to the annual report of the Central Information Commission (CIC) for 2014-15. "Every Indian deserves to know the truth," and the BJP wants to hide the truth. The BJP believes the truth must be hidden from the people, and they must not question people in power. The changes proposed to the RTI (Right to the Information Act) would make it a useless Act," Rahul Gandhi, the opposition leader, once said on the X platform.

Agencies such as India's Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), the Enforcement Directorate of the Finance Ministry, the Tax authorities, and even local police forces are often accused of doing the Government's bidding. The opposition has charged that their leaders have frequently been targeted for harassment, which they consider a political vendetta for expressing their opinions critical of the Government.

Religious freedom in India continued on a downward trend, said the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom's annual report released recently. It noted that although government statistics have indicated that communal violence has decreased over the past two years, under the BJP rule, Hindu-nationalist groups have sought to "saffronize" India through violence, intimidation, and harassment

against non-Hindus and Hindu Dalits. However, the Indian Constitution guarantees freedom of religion through articles 25 and 26. Since the ascendance of Modi as the Prime Minister, tensions between minorities and the majority community have increased in many parts of the country, further pushing minorities towards marginalization.

These days, the Embassies and Consulates of India have been utilized as propaganda machinery for the ruling party in India. In the name of promoting soft power, they have been forced to underwrite programs with intrinsic religious themes or ones that would fit their nationalist agenda. Even English is often being banished at official functions to the dismay of the attendee population, which always includes non-Hindi speaking people from the south or people who are born and brought up abroad.

India's electoral integrity has been a focus of critics and a growing concern in recent years. Rahul Gandhi, the opposition leader, has recently exposed wholesale fraud in the voter rolls in the Mahadevapura constituency in Bangalore in the last parliamentary election. He had earlier alleged bogus turnout in the recently concluded Maharashtra elections. His concern reflects more profound structural anxieties about the whole electoral systems where disparate voices are calling for a shift to paper ballots away from Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs). The changing of the composition of the Election Commission to majority appointees by the ruling disposition cast a serious cloud on that body for its independence and integrity to dealing with chorus of protests and complaints arising from the opposition ranks.

The basis for democracy is Liberty,' said Aristotle. However, today, the Institutions that were built to safeguard that principle are under duress. India is one of the most diverse nations in the world. The country has a population of 80% Hindu, 14% Muslim, Sikhs, and Christians, about 2% each.



By George Abraham

It has Castes and sub-castes, many languages and dialects, and varying customs and traditions, including different dress codes and dietary habits. That is the crossroad where India is today, with Narendra Modi in power, disregarding the aspirations of the minorities and diminishing the power structures that provided political and social equilibrium in the last six decades or more.

Many liberal critics of the Modi regime sincerely believe that his administration is run by a political dogma inspired by the RSS ideology. That ideology is based on a common thread promoted by the Sangh Parivar organizations and is called the 'Hindu Nationalist agenda of the BJP.' The ultimate goal of the agenda is to transform the pluralistic and democratic India into a Hindu nation where the majority religion will have the pre-eminence and minorities are relegated to a subservient role, probably being denied equal protection or opportunities, that too, to a substantial segment of the population.

The constitution's framers created a democratic system wherein the legislature would make laws, the Executive would implement laws and be accountable to parliament, and an independent judiciary would interpret them. They also put in a system of checks and balances among these three organs of the state. However, over the years, these three organs of the state have pushed the boundaries of their relationship with one another. NDA has the majority in the Lok Sabha, where they pass ordinary bills and then pass them on to the Rajya Sabha as Money bills to circumvent their numerical impairment in that body. They have also shown utter disregard for deliberating on essential bills, bypassing various parliamentary committees.

The Bhartiya Janata Party's victory in the Lok Sabha elections of 2014 has ushered in an unprecedented attack on India's democracy and injected new elements of intolerance and authoritarianism into the lives of people living in the country. Most political scientists agree that a liberal democracy rests on the pillars of free and fair elections, the rule of law, civil liberties, minority rights protection, pluralism, political competition, and institutional autonomy. The Modi government has utterly failed on those scores, earning India the inglorious title of a 'flawed democracy'.

Martin Luther King Jr. once said: Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter. The question is: will the Diaspora continue its long-held silence on the state of India's democracy?

(The author is a former United Nations Chief Technology Officer. He is Vice Chair of IOC USA. He can be reached at gta777@gmail.com)

How India can navigate Trump's tariff storm in a choppy world



By Prabhu Dayal

Trump's tariffs and the penalty he is likely to put on India for purchasing Russian oil have undeniably introduced a new layer of complexity to the Indo-American relationship

Good diplomacy aims for win-win situations where all parties involved in a negotiation or agreement benefit, fostering cooperation and long-term stability. A win-win approach can de-escalate tensions and build trust between nations. This contrasts with a zero-sum approach where one party's gain necessitates another's loss. Win-win outcomes in diplomacy are achieved through negotiation, compromise, and a focus on mutual gains.

India and the US have deepened their partnership across multiple sectors, driven by shared interests, democratic values, and strong people-to-people ties. Key areas of collaboration include defense, technology and innovation, space, semiconductors, biotechnology, cybersecurity, advanced telecommunications, clean energy, trade and economy, energy, education and culture.

However, India's relations with the US, which were progressing from strength to strength, are now facing serious challenges. Some experts are even saying that President Donald Trump has sent Indo-American ties to the drawing board.

Indeed, a comprehensive US-India trade deal has hit several roadblocks and is currently facing uncertainty. The US has imposed a 25 per cent tariff on a broad range of Indian goods, effective August 7, 2025. This comes despite previous indications of good progress in trade talks and amidst a deadline for a possible agreement.

In addition, President Trump has signed an Executive Order imposing an additional 25 per cent tariff on Indian imports. He has said that these additional tariffs are because India is purchasing Russian oil. That will raise the total tariff on Indian imports to the United States to 50 per cent, which is among the highest tariff rates imposed by the US. India has 21 days to respond to the additional tariffs before they go into effect.

A major point of contention is the US' demand for greater access to India's agricultural and dairy sectors. India has consistently resisted, citing concerns about the livelihoods of millions of small farmers and potential disruption from subsidized US products. India is also pushing for the removal of the recently imposed tariffs and further reductions on other products, such as steel and aluminum, to gain a competitive advantage over other countries.

The situation is deteriorating further as the US has expressed concerns about India's continued purchases of Russian oil and military equipment, linking these actions to the current trade impasse. President Trump has accused India of profiting from the Ukraine war by selling Russian oil in the open market and said that the US will be "substantially" increasing the tariffs imposed on Indian imports in response. The Time magazine (August 5) has said that "President Trump seems unafraid to burn India, a long-time friend of the US, over its Russian oil purchases".

India, however, maintains that its relationship with Russia stands on its own merits and that its energy purchases are vital for its economy. India has said that such targeting by the US was "unjustified and unreasonable" in light of continued and substantial Western trade with Moscow. In a statement issued on August 4, India's Ministry of External Affairs said:

"Europe-Russia trade includes not just energy but also fertilizers, mining products, chemicals, iron and steel machinery and transport equipment. Where the US is concerned, it continues to import from Russia uranium hexafluoride for its nuclear industry, palladium for its EV industry, and fertilizers as well as chemicals."

The statement concluded by saying that like any other major economy, India will take all necessary



A comprehensive US-India trade deal has hit several roadblocks and is currently facing uncertainty

measures to safeguard its national interests and economic security.

The Indian government has also decried the executive order on additional tariffs. India has said:

"It is therefore extremely unfortunate that the US should choose to impose additional tariffs on India for actions that several other countries are also taking in their own national interest. We reiterate that these actions are unfair, unjustified and unreasonable. India will take all actions necessary to protect its national interests."

However, the important question is whether the position taken by India will diffuse tensions with the US or escalate them even further. Going by past trends, Trump is unlikely to be swayed by the undeniable logic contained in India's statement, as it runs counter to his own stand. Being a businessman, Trump brings a transactional approach to diplomacy. His style of functioning is such that he feels happy only when the other party is seen to be making concessions. The concessions must sound big even if they are not quite so, for Trump likes to feel that he has won the contest.

An article entitled 'India Defies Trump on Russian Oil Despite Tariff Threats' in The Wall Street Journal (August 5) states that "India is digging in its heels and resisting pressure from the US to curb purchases of Russian oil, despite threats by President Trump to retaliate by imposing higher tariffs on India." Based on this assessment, it appears that the statement by the Ministry of External Affairs could escalate tensions.

The US tariffs could potentially damage India's economy in several ways. They will increase the cost of Indian products for American consumers, making them less competitive compared to goods from other countries not subject to these tariffs or to lower tariffs. The tariffs could put Indian exports at a disadvantage in the US market compared to competitors like Vietnam and Bangladesh.

Sectors heavily reliant on exports to the US, such as gemstones and jewelry, textiles and apparel, pharmaceuticals, and potentially auto components, are likely to experience the most significant negative impacts. India supplies a significant portion of US pharmaceutical needs. Tariffs could lead to decreased demand, potentially impacting earnings for Indian pharmaceutical companies which derive a substantial portion of their revenue from the US market. A decline in export orders could lead to production cuts and job losses, particularly in labor-intensive sectors and smaller businesses in India.

The American tariffs on India, which were hiked to 50 per cent citing Delhi's continued buying of Russian oil, could also potentially reduce the country's GDP growth by a significant amount. Further penalties imposed by the US could weaken capital inflows and investment in India. Thus, Trump's tariffs could be considered a near-term headwind for the Indian equity market and could contribute to volatility.

In short, a comprehensive bilateral trade agreement

remains elusive. India-US tensions are escalating and are likely to continue doing so in the immediate future. US tariffs could hurt India's economy by making its exports less competitive, potentially impacting key industries and slowing down its overall economic growth, while also straining the diplomatic relationship between the two countries.

The tariffs and the likely penalties linked to India's purchase of Russian oil have already caused diplomatic friction. They will also damage the long-standing, carefully nurtured relationship between India and the US. India views the imposition of tariffs and penalties related to Russian oil purchases as an attempt at coercion and interference in its foreign policy. While India has initially ruled out immediate retaliation, it has expressed its intention to safeguard its national interests and economic security, possibly through future measures. There are reports that India could consider imposing reciprocal taxes on US imports to compensate for the anticipated \$33 billion loss in exports due to the tariffs.

There are also geopolitical factors at play which India cannot ignore. Trump has moved closer to Pakistan, with which he has historically had a complex and sometimes tense relationship. It cannot be forgotten that in January 2019, Trump had said that the US had given Pakistan 33 billion US dollars in aid, and in return, Pakistan had given only lies and deceit. He is now speaking about Pakistan in a completely different tone. Trump's approach also raises concerns about the potential elevation of Pakistan as preferred regional partner for the US, further destabilizing the dynamics in South Asia.

It's widely acknowledged that high-level diplomatic intervention can sometimes achieve remarkable results in international relations. One wonders whether the need of the hour is for Prime Minister Narendra Modi to step in and stem the rot. After all, the strategic India-America bilateral relationship built over decades is now also at risk.

PM Modi has repeatedly said that solutions to problems can only be found through dialogue and diplomacy. He has emphasized that the world needs leaders who can find solutions to global complexities and needs while prioritizing their nation's interests on the global stage. He has received numerous international awards, including the Legion of Merit on December 21, 2020, from President Trump himself. The award recognized PM Modi's leadership and vision for India's global emergence, his contributions to advancing the India-United States strategic partnership, and his role in promoting global peace and prosperity. All the accolades received by him are seen as a recognition of his global leadership and standing on the world stage. However, without some concessions, Trump is unlikely to soften his position.

WHAT SORT OF CONCESSIONS CAN PM MODI OFFER?

India has often used TRQs (tariff rate quotas), which involve a two-tiered system. A specified quantity of a particular agricultural product can be imported at a lower or even zero duty. Imports exceeding this quota face a higher tariff rate. India currently has TRQs for commodities like corn, sunflower oil, rapeseed oil and milk powder. While India has reportedly offered TRQs to the US, the extent of these concessions is limited.

CONTD ON PAGE 66

(The writer is a retired Indian diplomat and had previously served as Ambassador in Kuwait and Morocco and as Consul General in New York.)

(First published in First Post)

Happy 79th Independence Day!



Oneness of Humanity. The whole world is a family (Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam).

I urge you not to poison or prejudice your children against any individual. When they grow up and find themselves working alongside those you have taught them to view negatively, they may struggle to connect, leading to unnecessary challenges and unhappiness. Additionally, if they aspire to hold public office, those prejudices could hinder their success.

I wish everyone could experience true freedom-freedom from bias against any fellow Indian or human being. Let us promote unity among Indians and dare to speak out against divisive rhetoric. Take the time to learn about others. If we can respect and embrace the differences among us, conflicts will diminish, and solutions will surface.

I officiate interfaith marriages between individuals of different faiths, races, and ethnicities, with no conversions involved.

A LETTER TO MY FELLOW INDIANS;

We are Indians and nothing but Indians. An Indian is an Indian is an Indian, period.

As a nation, we comprise Adivasis, Atheists, Bahais, Bos, Buddhists, Christians, Dalits, Hindus, Jains, Jews, Muslims, Sikhs, Tribals, Zoroastrians, and countless other identities. We are of various skin tones-brown, black, white, yellow, and green with envy-but our hearts remain Hindustani.

Every race, nationality, ethnicity, language, culture, and religion is a part of our Motherland. We perceive the divine in one, none, and many forms; as male, female, genderless, and non-existent; as being and non-being; nameless and with innumerable names. We accept them all as we are all created by the same process.

We take pride in our heritage-a multifaith,

multicultural, multiregional, and multilingual society that embraces and respects the diverse ways people choose to live. For over 5,000 years, India has stood as a beacon of pluralism, welcoming Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Baha'i faith, and Zoroastrianism alongside indigenous religions such as Hinduism, Tribal traditions, Dalit practices, Jainism, Buddhism, and Sikhism.

Let us consciously strive to think and act as one person within a nation, one community, and one global family. There is peace in being conflict-free. I hope each of us can shed any biases we hold against one another. There is joy in being free from ill will. From this day forward, let's commit to being free from anything that obstructs our unity.

Our collective philosophies promote the idea of one world. Hinduism teaches that "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam," or that the whole world is one family. Sikhism emphasizes the oneness of humanity-everyone is created from the same source. The Quran and the Torah convey similar messages, and Jesus embraced all people, regardless of their backgrounds. Jainism introduces Anekantwad (the theory of multiple viewpoints), while Buddhism encourages us to focus on living a happier life. These principles are found in all our religions.

While some individuals stray from their heritage, engaging in thievery, violence, rioting, and other evils that threaten societal fabric, the majority of people from every group navigate their lives peacefully, striving to coexist without disturbing others. We should focus on supporting the 99% of the population committed to pluralism and work to bring the remaining individuals into the fold of humanity.

On this day and every day moving forward, I urge you to embrace the identity of "I am an Indian," instead of identifying as Malayalee, Gujarati, Bengali, Punjabi, or as a Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, or any other designation. Do not expect others to adopt this mindset immediately; allow them time. If you remain consistent for at least a year, you will inspire others to follow suit.

India has historically led the freedom movement. Since 1947, countries around the world have liberated themselves from colonialism. Indian democracy exemplifies the peaceful transfer of power by the people.

We are inherently secular and economically capitalistic, believing in a "live-and-let-live" ethos-the essence of capitalism. We respect everyone's rights to choose how to eat, dress, and feel, all in pursuit of happiness. Every one of us is unique, as evidenced by



By Mike Ghose

our thumbprints, eyeprints, tastes, beliefs, and DNA.

Over the years, we have shown remarkable maturity in handling extreme situations. As we encounter diverse opinions, our hearts expand, our embraces grow wider, and we become better equipped to cushion our differences. Let's remember that there are always multiple sides to every story, and discovering the truth is our shared responsibility. I am proud of my heritage and proud to be an Indian-American.

Believing that every Indian desires justice and fair treatment for all 1.6 billion citizens-regardless of wealth, connections, religion, or any other distinctions-we must engage in social and community life to create an exemplary India that can serve as a model nation in the world.

We need to coexist with minimal friction. Justice is in everyone's interest, including yours and mine, as it fosters sustainable peace and prosperity. We must find solutions for individuals who resort to extremes, regardless of their faith-be it Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Muslim, Sikh, Zoroastrian, or otherwise. We hope they will recognize the divine space each of us occupies and understand the benefits of co-existence.

Patriotism should be defined as taking action to uplift the hopes of our fellow citizens. Initiatives such as providing education for all, creating jobs for as many people as possible each year, ensuring housing for every individual, and promoting a better lifestyle for every Indian are crucial.

Every public office holder, from the lowest rank to the President of India, must take this pledge and adhere to it. Any violation should disqualify them from holding public office, and there should be public oversight in place.

I pledge to honor and treat every Indian with the utmost dignity.

I pledge that every individual will be treated equally. I pledge to respect all religions.

Mike Ghose
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(Dr. Ghose is the President and founder of the Center for Pluralism and director of the World Muslim Congress. He is an Interfaith Wedding Officiant for InterfaithMarriages.org and a Muslim Wedding Officiant. He is a Muslim, Pluralist, activist, speaker, author, and social scientist. More on- Google)

From Great Friend to Tariff King - The Changing Shades of the USA-India Relationship

Can Prime Minister Modi Overcome the Hesitations of History Again?



By V.K. Raju

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent visit to the United States marked another chapter in the long, complex journey of India-US relations. It was a celebration of friendship, shared values, and mutual aspirations. As I said then-with both enthusiasm and hope-India and the US need real Maitri (friendship) for the sake of world peace.

The relationship between the two nations goes back decades. Under Presidents Truman, Eisenhower, and Kennedy, ties were warm and full of promise. President Kennedy famously remarked that "the hinge of fate in Asia rests with India." When President

Eisenhower visited India in 1959 to inaugurate the first US Embassy, he expressed a vision that still resonates today: if American and Indian children grew up as best friends, the world would be a safer and better place.

But the warmth did not last uninterrupted. In 1965, relations shifted sharply, reaching one of their lowest points during President Nixon's tenure.

Fast forward to December 2024, when Richard Verma, US Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources, addressed the 25th Annual Gala of the US-India Chamber of Commerce in Dallas, Texas. He acknowledged-and echoed-Prime Minister Modi's earlier

words: that the US and India have "overcome the hesitations of history" in their partnership.

The challenge now is to sustain that momentum in a rapidly changing and often turbulent world. The wisdom of history reminds us of what is truly at stake. As historian Dr. Arnold Toynbee once wrote:

"It is already becoming clear that a chapter which has a Western beginning will have to have an Indian ending if it is not to end in the self-destruction of the human race.... At this supremely dangerous moment in human history, the only way of salvation for mankind is the Indian way-Emperor Ashoka's and

Mahatma Gandhi's principle of non-violence and Sri Ramakrishna's testimony to the harmony of religions. Here we have an attitude and spirit that can make it possible for the human race to grow together into a single family-and, in the Atomic Age, this is the only alternative to destroying ourselves." Stay Safe".

(The writer is a West Virginia-based ophthalmologist. He is the President of the Eye Foundation of America. He can be reached at vkraju@comcast.net)



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NATURAL SHIVA IMAGES

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Lord Shiva's divine presence amazes Edison residents



A mysterious event has unfolded at a home in Edison. As claimed by the owner, naturally formed (Swayambhu) images of Lord Shiva have appeared with any human involvement. The homeowner and his family were stunned to witness these sacred formations, which many believe to be a rare divine sign.

“Lord Shiva, Mahadev ji has blessed our home, and we feel his divine presence on our property,” said Abhishek Mishra, the owner of the house at 25, Lavender Drive, Edison, NJ.

Among the astonishing manifestations, a Shivaling with two snakes took shape in ice, while a 50 foot image of Lord Shiva holding a trident appeared in the backyard snow. Inside the home, an image of Shiva with Nandi was seen on bathroom tiles, and another meditative form of Shiva emerged from ice.

Many believe these formation are a sign of divine blessings, strengthening faith and devotion. As work spreads, more people are eager to witness this remarkable occurrence, calling it a true spiritual marvel. The house is open for the visitors who would want to see and feel the spiritual miracle.



Homeowner Abhishek Mishra
can be contacted at
732-690-0404 for more information.

NUMC Chaos Demands Independent Probe



By Seth I. Koslow

Nassau University Medical Center - an essential safety net health care hospital for our first responders and our region's most vulnerable patients - has been hamstrung by political patronage, gross mismanagement, and wasteful spending.

The circus-like atmosphere surrounding Matthew Bruderman's long-overdue firing as NUMC Board Chairman - complete with tales of a mysterious break-in and alleged theft of sensitive documents - would have been bad enough on its own.



NUMC on Long Island

However, the initial stages of a forensic audit into hospital finances have already unearthed disturbing findings that, commensurate with the hospital's reliance upon federal, state and local funds, demand an immediate and full investigation by the United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, New York State Attorney General Letitia James, and Nassau DA Anne Donnelly to identify and prosecute any acts of criminal wrongdoing.

On Thursday, June 19, Newsday first reported allegations that the hospital's departing CEO, Meg Ryan, gave herself and 12 other employees \$1 million in wage and leave payouts that they were not entitled to receive. Ryan was subsequently fired for cause.

To make matters worse, Newsday further revealed that, as Ryan and other top hospital executives had one foot out the door, they spent thousands of dollars on lobster dinners, hotel, and travel reimbursements, all while the safety-net hospital teetered on the brink of financial collapse.

As these shocking facts came to light only partway through a forensic audit being led by NUMC's new management, there is a very good chance that this is just the tip of a big, ugly iceberg of corruption and graft.

The blame for this latest chapter falls squarely upon the desk of Bruce Blakeman - whose disinterest in doing his job as County Executive led him, despite numerous warnings, to install an unqualified individual as hospital

CEO who now stands accused of taking advantage of taxpayers.

For generations, the Nassau County GOP has treated NUMC - a regionally significant Level 1 trauma center that provides essential drug detox services, boasts a world-class burn center, and serves as a medical lifeline for individuals who cannot afford care anywhere else - like a candy store for political patronage. There, they have packed the payroll with allies, forcing taxpayers to foot six-figure salaries for their cronies as deficits soared, the future of the hospital hung in the balance, and Republicans blamed everybody but themselves for the crisis they created.

Blakeman and the Nassau GOP's exploitation of NUMC goes well beyond these most current allegations. In December 2023, Blakeman appointed disgraced former Sheriff Michael Sposato, whose tenure at the County jail was marred by scandal and numerous inmate deaths, as the \$275,000 per year executive director of public safety and investigations at the Hospital. On April Fool's Day of 2022, the Republican Majority of the Legislature, at Blakeman's behest, rubber-stamped the appointment of Matthew Bruderman as president of the NUMC board - even though his only qualifications seemed to be his reckless, vulgar mouth and the big checks he wrote to Blakeman's political campaigns.

In the Legislature where I currently serve, Republicans have co-signed Blakeman every step of the way with disastrous results. True leadership would have been pushing for the County to invest \$30 million of the opioid lawsuit settlement funds into expanding the Hospital's in-patient drug detox and treatment facilities. In doing so, they could have delivered much-needed treatment resources for families in crisis, helped to get opioid funds off of the County books and into the hands of life-saving agencies, and sent a message to New York State demonstrating a heightened commitment to the Hospital's future.

Instead, they failed to exercise their duty and responsibility as a coequal branch of government and sat on their hands as Blakeman allowed NUMC to fall apart with Meg Ryan as its CEO.

Such a disastrous and self-serving track record creates a perfect storm in which oversight is curtailed, chaos thrives, and corruption can run rampant - and it creates an inflection point. We can either remain silent and co-sign Blakeman's exploitation of NUMC - or be independent watchdogs, follow the facts and get this essential public resource back on the right track for the benefit of every Nassau County resident.

(Seth I. Koslow represents the 5th District in the Nassau County Legislature. He lives in Merrick)



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HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY



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A Wide-Ranging Conversation with Ambassador Binaya Srikanta Pradhan, India's Consul General in New York

BY PROF. INDRAJIT S. SALUJA

The Consulate General of India in New York is one of the busiest Indian diplomatic missions in the world, serving a jurisdiction of ten states on the U.S. East Coast with a diaspora population of over 2.3 million. It is both a service hub for passports, visas, and other consular needs, and a diplomatic bridge between India, Indian Americans, and the broader American public.

Ahead of India's 79th Independence Day, I met with India's Consul General in New York, Ambassador Binaya Srikanta Pradhan, for an in-depth conversation. We spoke at length about new services being introduced from August 1, the Consulate's broad mandate, and its engagement with students, women, cultural promotion, and the Indian-American community at large.

I was joined by my colleague Mr. Gurinder Singh Hothi, who documented our discussion.

Saluja: Good afternoon, sir. It's such a wonderful opportunity to speak with you after a long time. I'm sure you have much to share with the readers of The Indian Panorama. Before we begin the formal questions, I want to thank you for inviting me to your office for this conversation.

CONSUL GENERAL: Thank you, Professor Saluja. It's always a pleasure to speak to the readers of The Indian Panorama and, through you, to reach out to the larger Indian community in our jurisdiction. I also extend a warm welcome to you and Gurinderji to the Indian Consulate.

Saluja: There's talk in the community that the Consulate is about to give a "big gift" on the eve of Independence Day. Could you share what's in store?

CONSUL GENERAL: While I'd avoid the word "gift," I can say that the Government of India-through both the Embassy and the Consulates-has worked to improve services for three main groups: Indian nationals living in the U.S., persons of Indian origin, and American friends of India who travel, invest, or engage culturally with India.

Starting August 1, several new initiatives will make our services more accessible and user-friendly. These include:

Three new satellite VFS Global centers in Boston, MA; Edison, NJ; and Columbus, OH-offering the full range of consular services, not just passports, visas, and OCI cards, but also attestation, power of attorney, birth/death certificates, will registration, and more.

All-inclusive service charge of \$19 covering form-filling assistance, four passport-size photographs, photocopies, and return courier service-at no extra cost.

Saturday service: All VFS centers in our jurisdiction (New York, Boston, Edison, Columbus) will now be open Monday to Saturday, 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., providing more flexibility for working people.

This is a decentralization of services that will save time, travel, and effort for community members, while standardizing the quality of assistance.

Saluja: The Consulate's role seems multifaceted-providing consular services, engaging in diplomacy, and fostering people-to-people contact. Could you describe your main priorities?

CONSUL GENERAL: Broadly, our work falls into three categories.

Consular services for the Indian diaspora and friends of India-passport, visa, OCI, and miscellaneous documentation.

Political engagement with elected representatives-both at the federal level (U.S. Congress) and in state legislatures within our ten-state jurisdiction. Many of these leaders are longstanding friends of India.

Economic and commercial work-about one-third of India-U.S. merchandise trade originates in this region. We host frequent delegations from Indian industry sectors including IT, jewelry, textiles, ceramics, and



"Independence Day is a time to remember our nation's achievements, the sacrifices of our freedom fighters, and the strength of the India-U.S. partnership", said Ambassador Pradhan

more.

Underpinning all of this is cultural outreach and constant contact with the diaspora-maintaining bonds and strengthening mutual understanding.

Saluja: Let's talk about students. How important are they to your work?

CONSUL GENERAL: Students are a top priority. In our jurisdiction alone, there are about 117,000 Indian students. Nationwide, there are 373,000, making India the largest source of international students in the U.S. This number grew from 353,000 last year, and represents an investment of about \$20 billion annually by Indian families.

We engage with student associations, visit campuses (I've personally visited about 30 universities), and hold meet-and-greet events-both in-person and virtual-to provide guidance on safety, cultural adaptation, and U.S. regulations.

Our focus is not only on Indian passport holders but also on the second and third generation of Indian Americans. Many of them visit India for studies-ranging from Sanskrit and philosophy to engineering and liberal arts. The goal is to integrate them into the larger India-U.S. story, economically and culturally.

Saluja: You've mentioned culture several times. How successful has the Consulate been in promoting Indian culture?

CONSUL GENERAL: I'd say Indian culture is now mainstream in the U.S. Take yoga-there are 36,000 yoga studios here, and 33 million Americans (10% of the population) practice yoga. It's part of daily life, not just a niche activity.

Similarly, Indian cuisine has gone from "ethnic" to celebrated-an Indian restaurant, Sema, is now ranked No. 1 in The New York Times' list of best New York City restaurants. Indian dance, music, Ayurveda, cricket, and cinema are all finding large non-Indian audiences.

Literature festivals and film screenings attract significant American participation.

This is a moment of pride: our culture enriches the American mosaic while retaining its distinct identity.

Saluja: Women are a vital part of the diaspora. How does the Consulate support those in adverse circumstances?

CONSUL GENERAL: While most Indian-origin women here thrive-often excelling in academia, business, and the arts-there are still cases of hardship: domestic violence, legal disputes, sudden bereavement, or financial distress.

We offer one-time legal assistance, connect individuals with community lawyers and doctors for free counseling, and link them with local support organizations for ongoing help. I've urged community associations to make women's welfare a philanthropic priority.

It's a mixed story-alongside challenges, we see remarkable achievements, such as Indian-origin women winning Grammys, leading university departments, and breaking barriers in diverse fields.

Saluja: Returning to the August 1 changes-could you outline the practical benefits for community members?

CONSUL GENERAL: Certainly. The benefits include closer access: Residents of New England, New Jersey, and the Midwest will no longer need to travel to New York for in-person services.

Uniform service quality: Every VFS center will offer the same range of services with the same \$19 flat fee, eliminating uncertainty.

Form-filling assistance: Many applicants struggle with online forms-now trained staff will help on-site.

Included extras: Photos, photocopies, and return courier-no hidden costs.

Extended hours: Monday-Saturday access helps working families.

For comparison, similar services from other countries' consulates often cost significantly more.

Saluja: We are days away from India's 79th Independence Day. What message would you like to share?

CONSUL GENERAL: Independence Day is a time to remember our nation's achievements, the sacrifices of our freedom fighters, and the strength of the India-U.S. partnership.

When I look at the progress we've made-from a global comprehensive strategic partnership to the deep contributions of our diaspora-I feel proud. This success is built collectively, with the effort of both India and its overseas community.

In the U.S., every celebration reflects three parallel rises.

The rise of India itself.

The rise of India-U.S. friendship.

The rise of the Indian diaspora's impact-both here and in strengthening bilateral ties.

I congratulate all members of the Indian community, as well as the friends of India, on this occasion. Let us continue to work together so that both our nations and our partnership grow stronger in the years ahead.

The conversation revealed a Consulate not just managing paperwork but actively shaping connections-between individuals and institutions, between culture and commerce, and between generations of Indians and Americans.

From August 1, with expanded services, decentralized centers, and extended hours, the Consulate General in New York aims to make consular access easier than ever. Yet, as the Consul General emphasized, its role goes beyond transactions-it is about trust, engagement, and community partnership.

This Independence Day, the message is clear: as India rises, so too does the India-U.S. relationship and the role of its diaspora in shaping it.

Stray dog issue due to inaction of authorities: SC reserves order

The Supreme Court on Thursday, Aug 14, reserved its orders on petitions seeking a stay on its August 11 order in a suo motu case to round up stray dogs in Delhi-NCR and send them to dog shelters with immediate effect.

"The whole problem is because of the inaction of local authorities... Rules are framed, but no implementation carried out, creating a problem today. On one hand, humans are suffering, on other hand animal lovers want dogs protected," a three-judge Bench led by Justice Vikram Nath said.

The hearing took place after CJI BR Gavai on Wednesday assigned the matter to a new three-judge Bench led by Justice Nath following widespread protests across India over the top court's order to relocate stray dogs in Delhi-NCR. Several petitioners sought recall of the SC's August 11 directions issued by a Bench of Justice JB Pardiwala and Justice R Mahadevan.

The Bench reserved its order on interim stay after hearing the parties.

BIHAR SIR

Publish list of 65 lakh deleted voter names with reasons: SC to EC

NEW DELHI (TIP)

The Supreme Court, in an interim order, has directed the Election Commission of India to make available online a searchable list of approximately 65 lakh voter names omitted from the draft electoral roll for Bihar with reasons for deletion such as death, migration, duplication etc.

"Since this action can have some civil consequences of depriving a citizen or a person of the right to franchise, a fair procedure is required," Justice Surya Kant, heading the bench also comprising Justice Joymalya Bagchi, observed.

The EC agreed to publish the list of approximately 65 lakh voters whose names appear in the voter list of 2025 but are not included in the draft list following the Special Intensive Revision exercise in Bihar.

The bench said the list of deletions be made searchable and directed the EC to give wide publicity on its website. It asked the EC to file a status report by



August 19 and said it would monitor the issue again on August 22, the next date of hearing.

Senior Advocate Rakesh Dwivedi, appearing for the EC, said the list, which has already been provided to Booth Level Agents of political parties, will now also be uploaded online with details as directed by the Supreme Court. He said the details regarding a voter can be found by searching it with the Electoral Photo Identity Card (EPIC) number.

The bench directed that the list be displayed on the website of every District Electoral Officer as well the Chief Electoral Officer of the state. The

information will be booth-wise and can be accessed by referring to the EPIC number of the voter. The list will also disclose the reason for exclusion from the draft roll.

In addition, booth-wise lists of the excluded voters with reasons shall also be displayed on notice boards by each booth-level officer in respective panchayat bhavans/ block development offices, so as to enable the public to have access to them, the bench said.

It asked the EC to give wide publicity to the exercise through public notices in vernacular and English dailies with maximum circulation in Bihar, and be broadcast on Doordarshan and All India Radio. If the District Electoral Officer has a social media handle, the list will be displayed on it as well, the bench said.

It said the public notice must expressly mention that persons who do not have their names in the draft roll may submit their claims for inclusion in the final list along with their Aadhaar cards.

Op Sindoor heroes conferred with top gallantry honors

NEW DELHI (TIP)

India on Thursday, Aug 14, acknowledged the heroism of its soldiers who took part in Operation Sindoor and played a pivotal role in hitting terror and military targets in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir three months ago, with President Droupadi Murmu approving scores of wartime honours for them.

Among the 127 gallantry medals and 40 distinguished service awards cleared by the President on the eve of the 79th Independence Day are four Kirti Chakras, 15 Vir Chakras, 16 Shaurya Chakras, two bar to Sena Medals (Gallantry), 58 Sena Medals (Gallantry), six Nao Sena Medals (Gallantry), 26 Vayu Sena Medals (Gallantry), seven Sarvottam Yudh Seva Medals, nine Uttam Yudh Seva Medals and 24 Yudh Seva Medals, the defence ministry said.

Vir Chakra is India's third-highest wartime honour, and has been awarded to soldiers who demonstrated uncommon valour during Operation Sindoor -- India's direct military response to the April 22 Pahalgam terror strike.

The Vir Chakra awardees are Colonel Koshank Lamba, Lieutenant Colonel Sushil Bisht, Naib Subedar Satish Kumar, Rifleman Sunil Kumar, Group Captain Ranjeet Singh Sidhu, Group Captain Manish Arora, Group Captain Animesh Patni, Group Captain Kunal Kalra, Wing Commander Joy Chandra, Squadron Leader Sarthak Kumar, Squadron Leader Siddhant Singh, Squadron Leader Rizwan Malik, Flight Lieutenant Aarshveer Singh, BSF Sub Inspector Mohd Imteyaz (Posthumous) and Constable Deeap

Recognising the brave

127 Total gallantry medals	4	Kirti Chakras	Vir Chakra is India's 3rd highest wartime honour, and was awarded to soldiers who demonstrated uncommon valour during Op Sindoor
	15	Vir Chakras	
	16	Shaurya Chakras	
	2	Bar to Sena Medals	
	58	Sena Medals	
	6	Nao Sena Medals	
	26	Vayu Sena Medals	
	7	Sarvottam Yudh Seva Medals	
	9	Uttam Yudh Seva Medals	
	24	Yudh Seva Medals	
40 Distinguished service awards			Two Agniveers have been awarded Sena Medal (Gallantry) for the first time

Source: HT

Chingakham (Posthumous). All the Indian Air Force (IAF) Vir Chakra awardees are pilots. The defence ministry did not release the citations of the military awardees. The Kirti Chakras and Shaurya Chakras -- India's second and third-highest peacetime gallantry awards are not linked to Operation Sindoor.

The bar to Sena Medals (Gallantry) and Sena Medals (Gallantry) have been awarded for both Operation Sindoor and counter-terrorism operations, people aware of the matter said, asking not to be named. Two Agniveers have been awarded Sena Medal (Gallantry) for the first time. The Nao Sena Medals (Gallantry), Vayu Sena Medals (Gallantry), Sarvottam Yudh Seva Medals, Uttam Yudh Seva Medals and Yudh Seva Medals have been awarded to

soldiers for their role in Operation Sindoor, the people said. The Sarvottam Yudh Seva Medal awardees include Northern Army commander Lieutenant General Pratik Sharma, director general military operations Lieutenant General Rajiv Ghai, IAF vice chief Air Marshal Narmadeshwar Tiwari, South Western Air Command chief Air Marshal Nagesh Kapoor, Western Air Command chief Air Marshal Jeetendra Mishra, director general air operations Air Marshal AK Bharti and then Western Naval Command chief Vice Admiral Sanjay J Singh (ret'd).

The Kirti Chakra has been awarded to Captain Lalrinawwa Sailo, Lieutenant Shashank Tiwari, Lance Naik Meenatchi Sundaram A and Sepoy Janjal Pravin Prabhakar. The President also approved

290 Mention-in-Despatches.

India launched Operation Sindoor in the early hours of May 7 and struck terror and military installations in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) following the Pahalgam terror strike in which 26 people were killed. Between the launch of the operation in the early hours of May 7 and the ceasefire on May 10 evening, Indian forces bombed nine terror camps in Pakistan and PoK, killing at least 100 terrorists, and the Indian Air Force struck targets at 13 Pakistani airbases and military installations.

The nine terror camps hit by the Indian forces with a mix of missiles and smart munitions included Markaz Subhanallah in Bahawalpur, Markaz Taiba near Muridke, Mehmoona Joya in Sialkot, Sawai Nala and Syed Na Bilal in Muzaffarabad, Gulpur and Abbas in Kotli, Barnala in Bhimber, and Sarjal.

The targets in Bahawalpur and Muridke were hit by the IAF; the rest by the army.

The air force also struck military targets in Rafiqui, Murid, Chaklala, Rahim Yar Khan, Sukkur, Chunian, Pasrur, Sialkot, Skardu, Sargodha, Jacobabad, Bholari and Malir Cantt in Karachi. In one of the counterstrikes on the night of May 7-8, Islamabad launched aerial attacks using drones and missiles at multiple towns and cities, including Awantipora, Srinagar, Jammu, Amritsar, Kapurthala, Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Adampur, Bathinda, Chandigarh, Pathankot, Phalodi, Suratgarh, Uttarai, Nal and Bhuj. India's air defence shield fended off the attacks. Source: HT



India-China in talks to resume border trade after 5-year gap

India is working with China to resume trade through Lipulekh, Shipki La and Nathu La passes, said the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in a statement.

"We have remained engaged with the Chinese side to facilitate the resumption of border trade through all the designated trade points—namely Lipulekh Pass in Uttarakhand, Shipki La Pass in Himachal Pradesh, and Nathu La Pass in Sikkim. If there are any updates, we will keep you informed," said MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal during a media briefing.

Meanwhile, India and China will be holding a crucial meeting next week to discuss border disputes between the two countries. Both countries will be holding the Special Representative Level talks next week.

The Chinese Foreign Minister, Wang Yi, will be visiting India on August 18 for the talks. He will meet National Security Advisor Ajit Doval. Both leaders will discuss the boundary issues between the two nations.

The meeting holds significance as it will be the first visit by a Chinese Foreign Minister to India post the Galwan clashes of June 2020.

Direct flight services between both the nations are likely to resume from next month.

The Indian government has reportedly asked carriers such as Air India and IndiGo to be ready to operate flights to China at short notice.

Here it is to be noted that the direct air connectivity between the two nations has remained suspended since the onset of Covid-19.

More than 60 killed, many missing as flash flood hits J&K's Kishtwar

JAMMU (TIP)

More than 60 people were killed, and several others remain missing after torrential rain triggered a flash flood in a remote village in Jammu & Kashmir's Kishtwar district on Thursday, Aug 14, sweeping away a community kitchen and multiple structures along the route of an annual pilgrimage, officials said.

The flash flood, which struck around 12.30pm, sent a barrage of boulders, debris, and mud barreling through Chishoti village, where a large number of devotees had gathered for the pilgrimage to the Chandi Mata temple in Machail village.

Located around 80km from the Kishtwar district headquarters, Chishoti is the last motorable village on the way to the temple and serves as the point where the devotees start the 8.5-kilometre trek to the 9,500-foot-high shrine. The pilgrimage began on July 25 and was scheduled to end on September 5. Close to 130,000 devotees have already taken part in it, officials aware of the matter said, asking not to be named. The pilgrimage has been put on hold. Officials said the gushing water hit a community kitchen, or langar, when around 100-150 pilgrims were having lunch. "The langar was swept away in the deluge along with several vehicles," a senior police officer said on condition of anonymity. The identities of the deceased were not immediately known, but officials said that most of them could be pilgrims.

The flash flood also damaged many homes, clustered together in the foothills, and swept away a CISF picket set up near the community kitchen, killing at least two personnel. "Two CISF personnel died in the calamity. It was not immediately known if any of the securitymen are missing," Sharma said.

Visuals showed torrents of muddy water, silt and rubble tearing through the steep slopes in the village, which is located next to a rivulet, washing away roads and bringing down houses, shops



People move through the debris after a massive cloudburst at Chositi village, in Jammu and Kashmir's Kishtwar district, Thursday, August 14, 2025. PTI

and other structures.

Personnel from the army, Border Security Force (BSF), National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), and local police rescued 165 people till midnight, said officials, even as the unceasing rain and treacherous terrain hindered their efforts.

"Chishoti is around 15 to 20km from Gulabgarh, and the road is blocked because of the pilgrims' stranded vehicles. Since the road has been snapped, rescuers are covering the distance on foot to help in the search and relief operations," he said.

The disaster came nine days after flash floods wreaked havoc in Dharali village of Uttarakhand's Uttarkashi district, ripping into buildings, power lines and vehicles. Just one person has been confirmed dead in the incident, but 68 continue to be missing.

Officials on the ground said that the flood might have been triggered by a cloudburst but Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) officials said they needed more data to ascertain that.

A cloudburst, according to IMD, is a sudden, intense downpour of over 100mm (4 inches) of rain in just one hour that can

trigger sudden floods, landslides, and devastation, especially in mountainous regions. The local weather office in Srinagar predicted intense showers for several regions in Kashmir on Thursday, including Kishtwar, asking residents to exercise caution. "It's very difficult to say if this was due to a cloudburst. For now we can say it was a massive flash flood possibly triggered by intense rain," said Sonam Lotus, director of the meteorological department, J&K.

In the wake of the disaster, Jammu & Kashmir chief Minister Omar Abdullah has cancelled 'At Home' tea party and cultural events planned as part of Friday's Independence Day celebrations.

"The news is grim & accurate... All possible resources are being mobilised from within & beyond J&K to manage the rescue operations," he said in a post on X.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi promised full central assistance in the rescue. "My thoughts and prayers are with all those affected by the cloudburst and flooding in Kishtwar, Jammu and Kashmir. The situation is being monitored closely. Rescue and relief operations are underway. Every possible assistance will be provided to those in need," he posted on X.

Supreme Court seeks Centre's reply on J&K statehood plea

NEW DELHI (TIP)

The Supreme Court on Thursday, Aug 14, issued notice to the Centre on a plea for restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir, but observed that the killing of 26 tourists in Pahalgam could not be ignored and that ground realities must be taken into account.

"You also have to take into consideration the ground realities. You cannot ignore what has happened in the Pahalgam terror attack," Chief Justice B.R. Gavai told senior advocates Gopal Sankaranarayanan and Maneka Guruswamy, representing the petitioners.

Solicitor-general Tushar Mehta questioned the maintainability of the petitions on the ground that the decision-making process in such matters

involved sensitive law-and-order issues and other considerations. He sought dismissal of the petitions.

The bench, which included Justice K. Vinod Chandran, sought a formal response from the Centre and posted the matter for consideration after eight weeks.

The two petitions have been filed by Zahoor Ahmad Bhat and Irfan Hafiz Lone.

Bhat cited the five-judge constitution bench judgment of December 11, 2023, by which the Supreme Court not only upheld the creation of the Union Territory of Ladakh, but also recorded a statement from solicitor-general Tushar Mehta that statehood would be restored to Jammu and Kashmir and that its status as a Union Territory was

temporary.

"...The solicitor-general submitted that statehood will be restored to Jammu and Kashmir and that its status as a Union Territory is temporary. The solicitor-general submitted that the status of the Union Territory of Ladakh will not be affected by the restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir," Bhat said.

According to the application, even 18 months after the order, no steps have been taken to restore statehood, which is gravely affecting the rights of its residents and also violating the basic structure of federalism. The applicants also said the voter turnout in the recent Assembly elections was exemplary, suggesting that there was no impediment in restoring statehood.

India in history this Week

AUGUST 15 TO AUGUST 21

15 AUGUST

1772 The East India Company decided to set up separate civil and criminal courts in the districts.

1854 East India Railway ran the first passenger train from Calcutta to Hooghly in a distance of 37 km. However, it was officially inaugurated in 1885.

1872 Writer and litterateur Sri Aurobindo was born.



1947 Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was sworn in as the first Prime Minister of independent India.

1950 An earthquake of 8.6 magnitude killed 20 to 30 thousand people in India.

1972 Postal index number ie PIN code is implemented.

1982 The national program of nationwide color broadcasting and TV was inaugurated in Delhi.

1990 The ground-to-air missile Akash was successfully launched.

1907 It was founded on 15 August as part of the Indian Bank-Swadeshi movement.

16 AUGUST

1886 Ram Krishna Paramahansa Dev breathed his last at the Twilight Vela.

1946 The Muslim League declared a direct action day, during which around 5000 people were killed and 15,000 were injured in Kolkata during the violence.



2018 Former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee died at the age of 93.

17 AUGUST

1909 Madan Lal Dhingra was hanged in the Pentonvilli prison in connection with the murder of Vayali and Lalkaka.

1947 After the independence of India, the first British troops left home.

1941 Bimal Jalan, the 20th Governor of the Reserve Bank of India, was born on 1941.

2011 Lokpal movement: Anna Hazare continued his fast in Tihar, despite his release in 2011, till he got written permission to continue his fast in JP Park.

2009 On the issue of internal security, the one-day conference of all the Chief Ministers of the country was held in New Delhi on 2009 under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

18 AUGUST

1900 Vijayalakshmi Pandit, sister of former Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, was born.



1934 The film director, lyricist and poet Gulzar was born.

1940 For the first time, the weather map was broadcast on television.

1945 The great freedom fighter Netaji Subhash Chand Bose was badly injured in a plane crash in Taihoku, Taiwan, later died in a military hospital.

1951 Indian Institute of Technology was established in Kharagpur.

1872 Birth of Pandit Vishnu Digambar, the great musician of Maharashtra. Despite being blind, he achieved memorable achievements in the field of music.

1800 Governor General Lord Vallejali established Fort William College in Calcutta.



1956 Indian cricketer Sandeep Patil was born in Mumbai. He scored 1588 runs in 29 Test matches.

2008 The Mayawati government in Uttar Pradesh announced the implementation of the Sixth Pay Commission recommendations in 2008.

2010 In 2010, TVS Electronics included a rupee symbol just above the tab in its new key board called 'TVS Gold Bharat'.

1700 Bajirao I, the great general of the Maratha Empire, was born on 1700.

19 AUGUST

1757 The first one rupee coin of the East India Company was made in the Calcutta mint.

1918 Birth of Dr. Shankardayal Sharma, 9th President of India.

1666 Shivaji escaped from Aurangzeb's captivity by hiding in a fruit basket in Agra.

1949 Bhubaneshwar became the capital of Odisha.

1999 Angered by India's draft nuclear policy, the G8 announced a ban on all kinds of aid.

1600 Mughal Emperor Akbar captured Ahmednagar.

1964 The communication satellite Cincom 3 was launched.

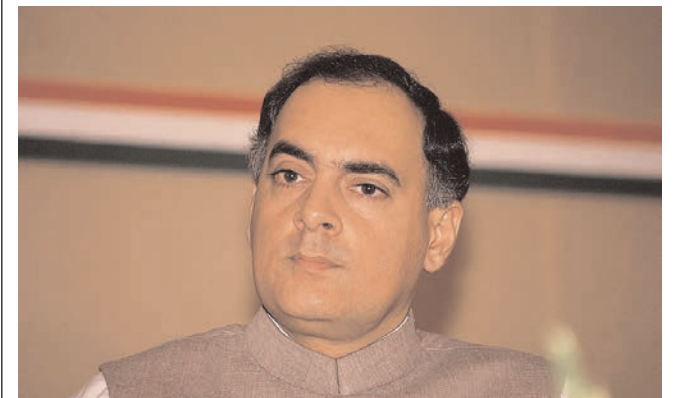
1939 Guruvar Ravindra Nath Tagore laid the

foundation stone of Subhash Chandra Bose Mahajati Sadan in Calcutta in 1939.

1907 Hazari Prasad Dwivedi, essayist, novelist, critic, thinker and researcher was born in 1907.

20 AUGUST

1597 Dutch East India Company's first ship returned from East Asia.



1944 Former Prime Minister of India, Rajiv Gandhi was born.

1921 Start of Mopala Rebellion in Malabar, Kerala.

1979 Prime Minister Chaudhary Charan Singh resigned from his post.

2011 India's famous historian Ram Sharan Sharma died.

1828 The first session of Raja Ram Mohan Roy's Brahma Samaj was held in Calcutta (now Kolkata).

1897 Ronald Ross identified malaria-causing anopheles mosquito while working at the Presidency General Hospital in Calcutta (now Kolkata).

1988 A magnitude 6.5 earthquake in India and Nepal killed a thousand people.

2018 Vinesh Phogat of India won the gold medal in the 50 kg category of the Jakarta Asian Games women's wrestling competition. She became the first woman wrestler in the country to achieve this feat.

21 AUGUST

1790 The British army, led by General Meadows, captured Dindigul in Tamil Nadu.

1988 One thousand people died due to the severe earthquake that hit the Indo-Nepal border.

2005 The ceasefire agreement between Bangladesh and India's Border Security Force concluded.



2006 Renowned Shehnai player Ustad Bismillah Khan passed away.

2008 The Caravan-e-Aman bus service plying between Muzaffarabad, the capital of Srinagar and 'Pakistan-occupied Kashmir', resumed.

1931 Pandit Vishnu Digambar died.

1972 The Wildlife Protection Act was passed in India.

2008 In 2008, India joined hands with NASA on the Moon mission.

2009 The Indian Navy's fighter aircraft 'Sea Harrier' crashed in the Arabian Sea after flying from Goa in 2009. Take the pilot. Commander Saurabh Saxena died.

The Indian Panorama Chief Editor Prof. Indrajit S. Saluja spoke with Saurin Parikh, President of the Federation of Indian Associations (FIA), on the forthcoming 43rd India Day Parade in New York, August 17, 2025

Saurin Parikh, President of FIA, originally from Gujarat, highlighted the theme "Survey Bhavantu Sukhina" emphasizing unity and happiness. The parade will feature 35 floats representing diverse faiths and cultures, including "Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Isai, and Jainism". Celebrities Rashmika Mandanna and Vijay Deverakonda will serve as grand marshals. Local politicians, including Mayor Eric Adams, have confirmed participation. Cultural programs, a street fair, and a cricket-playing area will accompany the parade. FIA has 1,800 volunteers and 10 city agencies involved in the planning.

HERE ARE EXCERPTS FROM THE CONVERSATION.

TIP : Good morning, Mr. Parikh. Before we talk about the parade, I'd like our readers to know about you personally. Could you tell us about your background-where you are from, your education, and your family?

SP: First of all, Professor Saluja, I would like to thank you and The Indian Panorama for your continuous support over the years in highlighting and promoting the India Day Parade. This is a massive annual event that FIA organizes, and it is heartening to see your newspaper cover it year after year.

As for myself, I am originally from Gujarat, India. I was born and raised there before immigrating to the United States at the age of 20. I am a licensed civil engineer by profession, and I have been actively involved with the FIA for the past 15 years. This year, I have the privilege of serving as the President of the FIA Executive Committee for 2025.

TIP: And your family?

SP: My father was a banker with Bank of Baroda in India before we immigrated. After coming to the U.S., he worked for the State Bank of India for about 15 years. My mother was a social worker back in India. Both my parents were deeply committed to community service, and they were my earliest role models in working for the community selflessly.

TIP: Are you married?

SP: Yes, I am married. I have a wonderful wife and am the proud father of twin daughters. They are the joy of my life.

TIP: Let's talk about the big event. Is this the 43rd India Day Parade?

SP: Yes, it is. This is the 43rd India Day Parade in New York City-organized by FIA since its inception.

TIP: Every new FIA president tries to bring in something fresh and exciting. What is your vision for this year's parade?

SP: That's a very good question. For any incoming president, the challenge is not just to maintain tradition but to improve upon the previous year's



Saurin Parikh, President of the Federation of Indian Associations (FIA) in conversation with The Indian Panorama Chief Editor Prof. Indrajit S Saluja on August 12

achievements.

After much thought, we have chosen this year's theme as "Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah"-a Sanskrit phrase meaning "May All Be Happy". It's a message of universal well-being, unity, and harmony. In a world currently plagued by wars, terrorism, and division, our goal is to unite all faiths and communities and encourage people to spread happiness. Happiness grows when it is shared.

To put this theme into action, my team and I, along with the Board of Trustees Chairman and my Executive Committee, reached out to leaders of various faiths-Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian, and Jain. We met them individually, participated in their community events, and invited them to be part of the parade.

For the first time in FIA history, we will have floats representing all these faiths marching side by side. Out of the 35 floats confirmed, a substantial number will reflect this diversity, alongside marching groups representing different Indian states, cultures, and ethnicities.

TIP: Our readers always want to know about star attractions. Who are your celebrity grand marshals this year?

SP: This year, we are delighted to have two prominent stars from the Indian film industry-Rashmika Mandanna, currently one of Bollywood's most sought-after actresses, and Vijay Deverakonda, a hugely popular actor from the South Indian film industry who has also made a mark in Bollywood.

Their presence will add glamour and draw a massive crowd.

TIP: And what about political dignitaries?

SP: We have invited governors, senators, mayors, and other elected officials from across the United States. Mayor Eric Adams of New York City has confirmed his participation. We will also have several U.S. Congress members, New Jersey mayors, and, we hope, a few senators, whose confirmations are pending.

TIP: Apart from the parade itself, what other attractions have you planned?

SP: Alongside the parade on Madison Avenue, there will be cultural performances at Madison Avenue and East 25th Street-featuring Indian classical, folk, and Bollywood dance presented by talented kids from schools in the tri-state area.

We will also have a Street Fair on East 26th Street between Madison and Park Avenues. Visitors will find Indian and international cuisines, vendor booths showcasing products and services, and even giveaways at various stalls.

This year, a unique addition is a cricket playing area organized by our title sponsor, CricMax. We will build a safety-enclosed cricket cage right on the streets of New York, where people can enjoy playing with a softball. It's symbolic of our effort to promote cricket in America, which has been gaining popularity, especially after the T20 World Cup matches were hosted in New York

earlier this year.

TIP: The parade is the centerpiece, but FIA also organizes other events during this period. Could you tell us about them?

SP: Yes. On August 15, we will participate in the Empire State Building Lighting Ceremony, where the iconic skyscraper will be lit in the Indian tricolor. This partnership has been ongoing for over a decade, and it is always an emotional and proud moment for the Indian community here.

On August 16, we will host the Flag Hoisting Ceremony at Times Square-a tradition we began during COVID-19 when large gatherings were not permitted. It became so popular that we continued with it. This year's flag hoisting will be at 10:30 a.m. and is open to the public.

We also host a Gala Dinner to thank our volunteers, sponsors, and supporters. This year, it will be held at Cipriani's on Wall Street-one of New York's most elegant venues-and it is already sold out.

TIP: Organizing the largest India Day Parade outside India must require enormous effort. Who would you like to acknowledge?

SP: You are absolutely right-it is a gigantic undertaking. The parade involves 1,800 volunteers, numerous committee members, and collaboration with 10 city agencies to secure permits and ensure smooth execution. Planning begins almost a year in advance.

I am deeply grateful to our Board of Trustees, comprised of past presidents whose experience is invaluable. Our sponsors deserve special thanks-without their financial and moral support, this event would not be possible.

I especially acknowledge our title sponsor CricMax, along with other major supporters such as X-RAY Group, TEK Group, Wenzel Foundation, Mehta Foundation, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India, Bank of Baroda, Bank of India, and our media partners-including The Indian Panorama.

TIP: Finally, what is your message to our readers?

SP: I invite each and every member of the community to come and be part of this grand celebration of India's 79th Independence Day. The parade will be held on Sunday, August 17, starting at noon, on Madison Avenue at 38th Street in Manhattan.

Come with your families, bring your friends, wave the tricolor, and let's celebrate our heritage with pride. I promise that you will experience the joy and emotion of seeing Mother India honored in the heart of New York City.

TIP: Thank you, Mr. Parikh, for speaking with The Indian Panorama. We wish you and the FIA a very successful 43rd India Day Parade.

SP: Thank you, Professor Saluja. I look forward to seeing all your readers at the parade.

Jai Hind!

SITARIST RISHAB SHARMA IS REDEFINING INDIAN CLASSICAL MUSIC FOR A NEW GENERATION

BY MABEL PAIS

RISHAB RIKIRAM SHARMA is the sitarist who is redefining Indian Classical music for a new generation. On his 'Sitar For Mental Health' global tour, sitarist, music producer and composer, and health advocate Rishab stops at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) on Saturday, September 13 at 8 PM to delight his audience.

The youngest and last protégé of the legendary Ravi Shankar, he is one of the most compelling and culturally relevant voices in music today. Rishab Rikihiram Sharma is a fourth-generation sitarist from the revered Rikhi Ram family of instrument makers, great-grandson of Rikhi Ram Sharma.

Born in Delhi, Sharma picked up the sitar at the tender age of ten and began performing at thirteen. At seventeen, he moved to New York to study music production and economics.

He's been cited as, "getting Gen-Z excited about the Sitar" by Vogue India, blending Indian ragas with hip-hop and cinematic scores alongside a mission beyond the stage which is setting him apart.



(Center) Rishab Sharma as a young boy.

Credit: rishabsharma.com.



Rishab Sharma with his sitar.

Credit: njpac.org.

RISHAB'S JOURNEY

Rishab founded 'Sitar for Mental Health' after his own personal struggle with grief, anxiety and depression. During the recent Covid-19 pandemic, in 2020 Rishab Rikiram Sharma experienced profound grief following the death of his grandfather. For a time, he left the sitar behind. But after turning to therapy and slowly reconnecting with the instrument, he discovered something powerful: music could heal — not just him, but others too.

Sharma began performing live on socials, in between songs talking about his loss and mental health. "It became this virtual room where everyone came together for each other, to share our grief," says Sharma. "I started calling these sessions 'Sitar For Mental Health' (SFMH) because I was using my voice — the sitar — to talk about mental health." "People think I'm doing something new," Sharma says. "But I'm actually going back to ancient Indian traditions—because they have real, time-tested healing power."

In his 'Sitar for Mental Health' performance Rishab uses the sitar to promote mental well-being around the world. In this performance, he blends Indian classical music with mindfulness and sound therapy to reawaken and reenergize your soul and promote calmness. It has since become a global movement.

That movement became the foundation for 'Sitar For Mental Health' — an ongoing global concert and conversation series at the intersection of Indian classical music, emotional wellbeing, and collective healing.

Sharma combines live sitar and surbahar, guided breathwork, and ancient raga therapy practices in an immersive two-hour experience that resonates across cultures, generations, and spiritual traditions.

His openness about his mental health journey — and how the sitar helped him find his way back — has struck a chord with fans around the world. Rishab creates a space for vulnerability, using his platform not just to perform, but to encourage others to talk about what

they're going through. Beyond music, he's a driving force for global mental health awareness, fostering a community of musicians dedicated to both artistic innovation and mental well-being.

RECENT RELEASE

Sharma's latest single, 'The Burning Ghat,' a haunting, reverent ode to the eternal cremation flame of Manikarnika Ghat in Varanasi is his most introspective work to date. Blending traditional Indian instruments with electronic textures, the track draws on Sharma's spiritual journey — from the sacred ghats of India to the fires of Burning Man, where grief and transformation are equally ritualized.

"From the dust storms of Burning Man to the sacred silence of Varanasi's ghats, my journey has been one of sound and spirit. 'The Burning Ghat' is not just a track — it's the resonance of a New India, where ancient wisdom meets modern expression. Channelling the teachings of my Guru, Ravi Shankar, and weaving them through the fabric of

contemporary music production felt like stepping outside my body and into something far greater. This piece is my offering to the eternal flame of Manikarnika Ghat—a fire that has given salvation to countless souls. I believe this is the most honest and transcendent music I've created so far."

Listen to it -
youtu.be/iChaC_Trtto?list=RDChaC_Trtto

In an age of noise and distraction, Rishab Sharma stands apart as a true visionary — a rare artist who fuses deep-rooted classical mastery with a fearless sense of emotional honesty. His music doesn't just entertain; it offers stillness, clarity, and connection. Through delicate ragas, meditative textures, and a mission rooted in healing, Sharma is bringing the ancient power of Indian classical music to new generations seeking solace in a confused and fast-paced world. As both a torchbearer of tradition and a bold voice for mental wellness, he is redefining what it means to be a modern musician — one note at a time.

PERFORMANCES

Rishab Sharma is the first Sitarist to be invited to perform solo at the White House by US President Biden, First Lady Jill Biden, and VP Kamala Harris for the Diwali event hosted by the President.

Rishab stands as the only Sitarist of his generation to have performed solo, in front of a live audience of 60,000+ people at the NGR Stadium in Houston Texas, and 500+ million at-home live viewers.

Rishab has taken the "Sitar For Mental Health" tour worldwide in the last year covering multiple shows in India, the USA, Canada, and South America.

Rishab has performed at the Woodstock 50 Reunion (50 years of Woodstock Festival), paying tribute to the performance of the great Pandit Ravi Shankar.

PHILANTHROPY

Through Sitar For Mental Health, Rishab continues his mission to merge art and advocacy — offering cost-free music therapy online, collaborating with mental health experts, and reviving forgotten spiritual lineages through sound.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Rishab goes live weekly on Instagram and Clubhouse, entertaining audiences with reels that often reach millions of views. A master at blending modern music nuances with his classical foundation, Rishab has crafted a strong US network and garnered a substantial online following through platforms like YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, and Clubhouse. Learn more about Rishab Rikiram Sharma at rishabsharma.com.

Mabel Pais writes on The Arts and Entertainment, Social Issues, Spirituality, Education, Business, Health and Wellness, and Cuisine.

APPLICANTS ARE STILL WELCOME FOR THE SASSY AWARDS COMPETITION

BY MABEL PAIS

The search is on for the next great jazz singer!

The New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) continues to accept applications for the 14th annual Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition. Solo vocalists from around the world are encouraged to submit their entries before September 2, 2025, by visiting SarahVaughanCompetition.com. In the Fall, the Top Five Finalists will be announced followed by a final competition and performance on the iconic NJPAC stage in Newark, New Jersey.

The Sarah Vaughan International Vocal Competition, also known as 'The SASSY Awards', is open to singers over the age of 18, of all genders and nationalities, from anywhere in the world, and not signed by a major label. Entrants are judged on vocal quality, musicality, technique, performance, individuality, artistic interpretation, and ability to swing.

What has become one of the top annual vocal competitions in jazz, The SASSY Awards offers outstanding jazz singers a one-of-a-kind platform for embarking on a career in the music business — and offers audience members a chance to discover the jazz stars of tomorrow. Gifted young contestants from around the world are evaluated on vocal quality, musicality, technique, performance,



Sarah Vaughan.

individuality, artistic interpretation, and ability to swing. For more information about The SASSY Awards, visit SarahVaughanCompetition.com.

ORIGIN

The competition recalls the humble beginnings of legendary jazz singer/NEA Jazz Master Sarah Vaughan (1924-1990) who, back in 1942, was a Newark teenager and winner of an amateur singing contest at the Apollo Theater. That memorable night helped launch the lifework of one of the most successful, influential jazz vocalists in the history of American music.

JUDGES

On November 23, 2025, the finalists will compete at NJPAC in front of a live audience and before a distinguished

panel of judges including Tony-nominated singer/lyricist Ann Hampton Callaway, GRAMMY®-nominated trumpeter Jon Faddis, GRAMMY®-nominated jazz vocalist Nnenna Freelon, GRAMMY® Award-winning bassist and Artistic Advisor for Jazz Programming at NJPAC Christian McBride, and founding member of The Manhattan Transfer and co-host of WBGO Radio's 'Singers Unlimited,' vocalist Janis Siegel. Hosted by WBGO Radio's Gary Walker, this special event will also include performances by the 2023 winner of the Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition Tyreek McDole.

PRIZES

The first-prize winner of The SASSY Awards will receive a \$5,000 cash award, second-place \$1,500, and third-place \$500.

PAST AWARDEES

Past winners include Cyrille Aimée, Jazzmeia Horn, Ashleigh Smith, Arianna Neikrug, Deelee Dubé, Quiana Lynell, Laurin Talese, Samara Joy (GRAMMY® Award winner for Best New Artist 2023), Gabrielle Cavassa and Tawanda Suessbrich-Joaquim, G. Thomas Allen, Lucía Gutiérrez Reboloso, Tyreek McDole, and April May Webb.

NEW JERSEY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER (NJPAC)

NJPAC, located in downtown Newark, N.J., is America's most diverse performing arts center, and the artistic, cultural, educational and civic center of New Jersey — where great performances and events enhance and transform lives every day.

NJPAC brings diverse communities together, providing access to all and showcasing the state's and the world's best artists while acting as a leading catalyst in the revitalization of its home city.

Through its extensive Arts Education programs, NJPAC is shaping the next generation of artists and arts enthusiasts. NJPAC has served more than 10 million visitors (including over 1.9 million students and families) since opening its doors in 1997, and nurtures meaningful and lasting relationships with each of its constituents. Learn more about NJPAC at njpac.org.

CATCH UP ON FINAL SCREENINGS OF INDIAN CINEMA TRADITION AT ASIA SOCIETY NEW YORK



Film: Paheli.

Credit: asiasociety.org.

BY MABEL PAIS

Asia Society celebrates two distinct traditions of Indian cinema this summer with PARALLEL DAYS/BOLLYWOOD NIGHTS; the last weekend of films featuring beloved popular Hindi-language cinema alongside landmark films in the arthouse 'Parallel Cinema' movement, which flourished from the late sixties to the early/mid nineties — highlighting both their vast differences and occasional connections.

In 1970 film scholar Arvind Mehta coined the term 'Parallel' to describe

Indian film that set itself apart from the song-and-dance spectacles known and beloved around the world as Bollywood. In 1969 filmmakers Mrinal Sen, Mani Kaul, and Basu Chatterjee each released films that would come to be seen as the beginning of a movement; all presented unique auteurist visions without musical numbers, featured stories and characters immersed in regional specificity, and were funded by loans from the government's newly formed Film Finance Corporation. Preceded figures like Ritwik Ghatak and to a lesser degree Satyajit Ray — who despite arguably being later influenced by



Kathapurushan.

Credit: asiasociety.org.

the Parallel filmmakers was derisive of their efforts, many of which diverged from his brand of lyrical realism — these artists sought an escape from formula and new methods of working and expression.

Meanwhile, Bollywood continued its path to becoming one of the largest film industries in the world. In the years since 1947, it had become a powerful force in asserting India's pluralistic national identity, and its influence stretched far into the Asian and Soviet worlds. Coupled with its familiar tropes and formulas is sometimes a profound sense of artistry and proficiency of craft.

Often framed in antagonistic terms,

these two modes of filmmaking each offer their own distinct pleasures and rewards, and the connections between them — figures, influences, source material, themes — can't be ignored. The last screenings this month are scheduled for August 22-23.

ASIA SOCIETY

Learn more about Asia Society at asiasociety.org.

Mabel Pais writes on The Arts and Entertainment, Social Issues, Spirituality, Education, Business, Health and Wellness, and Cuisine.



FREE

EVENTS
PERFORMANCES
PARTICIPATION
PROGRAMS



SUN. AUG.

17

12:00pm

E38TH STREET
MADISON AVE. NYC

GRAND MARSHAL

VIJAY DEVERAKONDA

INDIAN ACTOR AND FILM PRODUCER

SPONSORS



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43rd
THE WORLD'S LARGEST
INDIA DAY PARADE



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EVENTS
PERFORMANCES
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PROGRAMS



SUN. AUG.

17

12:00pm

E38TH STREET
MADISON AVE. NYC

GRAND MARSHAL
RASHMIKA MANDANNA
INDIAN ACTRESS

SPONSORS

		<p>COMMUNITY SPONSORS</p>	<p>LIGHTING PARTNER</p>	<p>LOGISTIC PARTNER</p>	<p>CATERING PARTNER</p>
		<p>MEDIA PARTNERS</p>			



Deepika Padukone steps away from acting in *The Intern* remake

After years of waiting, the Hindi remake of 'The Intern' is finally moving ahead, but this time, Deepika Padukone won't be acting in it. She was earlier set to star with Amitabh Bachchan, but has now decided to only produce the film under her company, KA Productions.

A source close to the development told Mid-Day, "This time, Deepika will step away from acting in the film to serve solely as a producer, overseeing the creative and logistical reboot. A new leading lady is being cast to play the part she was once slated to perform."

The source added that Padukone is using this shift to expand her creative horizons. "The Intern is the first of five projects she plans to mount in the coming year. She is looking to tell stories that are globally relevant."

Based on the 2015 Hollywood hit starring Anne Hathaway and Robert De Niro, the Hindi version has been in the works since 2020, when KA Productions acquired the rights.

Originally, the senior role was to be played by Rishi Kapoor, but after his passing, Amitabh Bachchan came on board. However, the film's production has faced repeated delays due to the pandemic, Padukone's maternity break, and scheduling conflicts.

In 2020, Padukone had said, "The Intern' is an intimate, relationship-driven film, set in and around the workplace; a story that I believe is very relevant to the present-day social and cultural environment. I have been looking for a light, breezy comedy-drama and this story fits in seamlessly. I cannot wait to begin this journey."

The Hindi remake will be co-produced by Sunil Khetarpal along with Warner Brothers India, KA Productions, and Azure Entertainment. Amit Ravindernath Sharma was attached to direct, with the film initially planned for a 2022 summer release.

The story's global appeal has also led to other adaptations, including a Japanese TV version in 2022, 'Unicorn Ni Notte', starring Hidetoshi Nishijima and Mei Nagano.

Fatima Sana Shaikh thinks female leads are 'stereotypical'

Fatima Sana Shaikh is known for portraying daring shades of women on screen. Right from her debut film, *Dangal*, the actress has been capturing the hearts of audiences with her thought-provoking roles, impressive acting skills, and powerful on-screen presence. The actress has had two remarkable releases so far this year – *Metro...* In *Dino* and *Aap Jaisa Koi*, in both of the films, Fatima Sana Shaikh portrayed unapologetically fearless women characters with a natural soft side.

During an interview with Filmfare, Fatima opened up about her roles and her decision to play Madhu Bose in *Aap Jaisa Koi*, throwing light on her drive that boosts reinvention.

Fatima shared that after *Dangal*, she was offered many empowering roles, but she did not want to portray aggressive women who hate men, because for her it is not the right portrayal of empowering women. "When people think of strong women, they think of aggressive women. I don't know why! Just because we know what we want and we voice for equality does not mean we will fight with men, or we want to fight, or we want to smoke a cigarette. The idea is very stereotypical. We don't want to do that. There is so much more; it's about how we think and how we hold a space as women. We don't see that in films," she shared.

Fatima further talked about carefully picking roles to go beyond the



audience's predictions. "I don't need to do a film that's dependent on a topic or is issue-related. It's okay if I'm doing a comedy film, but we don't see women in comedy films. That's so rare and sad, because we also have good comic timing," she stated, explaining that women-led films are few and far between in the commercial sense.

Fatima was seen stressing the need to

reinvent herself as an actress and explained how times have changed since she first started. "When I started it all, it was different, and now it is very different. Your relevance keeps changing," she shared. "I'm excited today, and tomorrow I won't be. Two films have come along; it could be my luck. People are interested in me again. But, that's the game," Fatima added.

War 2 X review: Hrithik and Jr NTR's action thrills, but story sparks debate

Actors Hrithik Roshan and Jr NTR's film 'War 2' has ignited a wave of reactions from audiences, with fans offering mixed responses following its release. While many have lauded the film's adrenaline-fuelled action sequences and star-studded cast, others believe it fails to meet the high expectations set by its predecessor.

Hrithik, Jr NTR, and Kiara Advani are already sending fans into a frenzy with their commanding screen presence. Fans have praised the film as a grand visual spectacle. Hrithik is celebrated for his charisma and physical prowess, while Jr NTR captivates with a powerful and intense performance. The film's climax has been widely described as explosive and impactful.

One fan wrote: "I'm just left speechless, what a movie #War2. Never a dull moment – full action-packed until the end. @iHrithik couldn't take my eyes off you. #HrithikRoshan #JrNTR enjoyed seeing him in his role. Must-watch movie in theatre. Blockbuster loading (sic)"

Another fan gushed over the film's emotional core and Hrithik Roshan's larger-than-life screen presence: "Not your usual Spy Universe flick – this one's got HEART & a solid emotional connect. #HrithikRoshan = dark aura + godly presence #JrNTR x Hrithik emotional scenes >> PRE-INTERVAL BLOCK & CLIMAX = pure madness (sic)"

A fan even shared a clip from the climax, calling it the best part of the film. In the scene, Hrithik is seen landing a punch



on Jr NTR during a dramatic face-off.

While many have heaped praise on the film, others expressed disappointment with what they perceived as its mediocrity and underwhelming VFX.

One critic wrote: "#War2 is a strictly mediocre action thriller, leaning heavily on style over substance! The storyline deviates slightly from other Spy Universe films and had promise, but failed to fully deliver. Despite the variation, the pacing mirrors the rest of the franchise, making it feel rather ordinary and formulaic. (sic)"

Jennifer Lopez shops at rival brands after being denied entry at Chanel store

Actor Jennifer Lopez was recently denied entry to a Chanel store in Istanbul. She was stopped at the door by a security guard, claiming the boutique was full, as reported by *Trkkey Today*. After walking away, Lopez was later seen shopping at other stores in the city, including rival luxury brands.

During her recent visit to Istanbul, after being prevented from entering the store, the actor-singer cordially replied, "Okay, no problem," and left. Later, pictures of Lopez, 56, surfaced on social media in which she is seen in a baby pink set with matching sunglasses, while shopping at Istanbul's Istinye Park.

However, later realising their mistake, the store's employees reportedly approached the actor-pop icon with an invitation to come back, which she declined. Lopez redirected her shopping spree to nearby rival luxury brands. She spent tens of thousands of dollars at fashion houses such as Celine and Beymen.

Lopez was in Turkey's largest city for her performance at Yenikapi Festival Park during the Istanbul Festival on August 5, 2025. She has been busy with her 'Up All Night: Live in 2025 tour', which will wrap up on August 12 in Sardinia, Italy.

The Istanbul stop was the 'Unstoppable' actor's second visit to Turkey on the tour. On July 23, 2025, she performed at Regnum Carya Resort Hotel. She celebrated her birthday there, a day after the show.

Lopez was last seen in the biographical sports-drama 'Unstoppable' (2024). The film was directed by William Goldenberg and also featured Jharrel Jerome, Michael Pena, Don Cheadle, Bobby Cannavale, Mykelti Williamson, Shawn Hatosy and others in key roles.

The actor will next be seen in the musical drama 'Kiss of the Spider Woman', based on the musical by John Kander and Fred Ebb. It was based on the book of the same name by Manuel Puig.

'Kiss of the Spider Woman' is scheduled for a theatrical release on October 10, 2025.



Jennifer Aniston reveals how she tried to help Matthew Perry during his addiction struggle

Jennifer Aniston revealed that she grieved for her *Friends* fellow actor Matthew Perry for a "long time" prior to his death in 2023 from a drug overdose.

The 56-year-old Aniston costarred with Perry as Chandler Bing in the popular comedy series from September 1994 to May 2004. After *Friends* ended, they stayed close for years.

In an interview with *Vanity Fair*, Aniston described her efforts to support Perry throughout his battle with addiction, saying "We did everything we could when we could."

"But it almost felt like we'd been mourning Matthew for a long time because his battle with that disease was a really hard one for him to fight," the actress continued.

Explaining the difficult time and grief in wake of his demise, she described the situation "As hard as it was for all of us and for the fans, there's a part of me that thinks this is better. I'm glad he's out of that pain."

Five persons, including two doctors and a dealer known as the "ketamine queen", were charged in connection with Perry's overdose following an inquiry into his death.

Perry talked candidly about his three-decade battle with addiction, which led to 15 visits to rehab during his lifetime and several near-death situations.

In his moving 2022 memoir, *Friends, Lovers and the Big Terrible Thing*, Perry wrote that *Friends* viewers will be able to determine whether he was using drugs or alcohol "from season to season" by "gauging" his weight and monitoring his facial hair during the show.

"When I'm carrying weight, it's alcohol; when I'm skinny, it's pills; when I have a goatee, it's a lot of pills," he stated.

After Perry's passing, *Friends* lead cast members issued a joint statement to *People*, stressing that they are "utterly devastated".

"We are a family. There is so much to say, but right now we're going to take a moment to grieve and process this unfathomable loss."

Beyonce wins her first Emmy for Beyonce Bowl



So remember when everyone was buzzing about Martin Scorsese's Emmy nomination? Well, there's another big headline-stealer this year — none other than Queen Bey herself. And no, this isn't her first rodeo. After ten previous nominations, Beyoncé has finally won her first-ever Primetime Emmy Award, thanks to her show-stopping Netflix special, *Beyonce Bowl*.

The special captured her unforgettable 2024 NFL Christmas Day halftime performance during the Baltimore Ravens vs. Houston Texans game. On August 13, the Television Academy announced the first set of winners for the Primetime Creative Arts Emmy Awards in juried categories, including Animation, Costume, Emerging Media Programming

and Motion Design. This is where Beyoncé's win came in the category of Outstanding Costumes for Variety, Nonfiction, or Reality Programming. This category was decided by peer panels rather than through the usual nomination and voting process.

Her victory, however, sparked divided opinions online. While fans flooded social media with support, detractors weren't holding back. "Always find a way to give her things," one comment on X read. Another accused, "This award is so rigged." Some went further, saying, "They just be doing anything for her," while one user asked, "Does she really deserve it?" Harsh words like "She stole that" and "Another bought award Gheez" also made the rounds.

Australia to recognise Palestinian state at United Nations in September

Australia will recognise a Palestinian state at next month's United Nations General Assembly, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said on Monday, a move that adds to international pressure on Israel after similar announcements from France, Britain and Canada.

"Australia will recognise the State of Palestine at the 80th Sessions of the United Nations General Assembly in September, to contribute to international momentum towards a two-state solution, a ceasefire in Gaza and the release of hostages," Albanese said in a statement.

Albanese told reporters in Canberra that recognition would be predicated on commitments Australia received from the Palestinian Authority, including that Islamist militant group Hamas would have no involvement in any future state.

"A two-state solution is humanity's best hope to break the cycle of violence in the Middle East and to bring an end to the conflict, suffering and starvation in Gaza," Albanese said at a press conference.

Albanese said he spoke with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and told him a political solution was needed and not a military one. Australia last week criticised Israel's plan to take military control of Gaza, and Albanese said the decision to recognise a Palestinian state was "further compelled" by Netanyahu's disregard of the international community's calls and failure to comply with legal and ethical obligations in Gaza.

"The Netanyahu Government is extinguishing the prospect of a two-state solution by rapidly expanding illegal settlements, threatening annexation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and explicitly opposing any Palestinian state," Albanese said in the joint statement with Foreign Minister Penny Wong.

Commitments by the Palestinian Authority to reform governance, demilitarise and hold general elections, as well as Arab League demands for Hamas to end its rule in Gaza, created an opportunity, he said.

"This is an opportunity to isolate Hamas," he added.

Wong said she had informed U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio of Australia's decision.

U.S. President Donald Trump last month criticised Canada's decision to back Palestinian statehood and Rubio has said the decision by France was reckless.

Israel's Ambassador to Australia, Amir Maimon, criticised Australia's decision on social media platform X as undermining Israel's security and derailing hostage negotiations.

Israel announces West Bank settlement that rights groups say could imperil Palestinian state

MAALE ADUMIM, WEST BANK
(TIP)

Israel's far-right finance minister announced approval of contentious new settlement construction in the Israeli-occupied West Bank on Thursday, Aug 14, which Palestinians and rights groups worry will scuttle plans for a future Palestinian state by effectively cutting the West Bank into two separate parts.

The announcement comes as many countries, including Australia, Britain, France, and Canada said they would recognize a Palestinian state in September.

"This reality finally buries the idea of a Palestinian state, because there is nothing to recognize and no one to recognize," said Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich during a ceremony on Thursday. "Anyone in the world who tries today to recognize a Palestinian state — will receive an answer from us on the ground," he said. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu did not publicly comment on the plan on Thursday, but he has touted it in the past.

Development in E1, an open tract of land east of Jerusalem, has been under consideration for more than two decades, but was frozen due to U.S. pressure during previous administrations. On Thursday, Smotrich praised President Donald Trump and U.S. ambassador to Israel Mike Huckabee as "true friends of Israel as we have never had before."

The E1 plan is expected to receive final approval Aug. 20, capping off 20 years of bureaucratic wrangling. The planning committee on Aug. 6 rejected all of the petitions to stop the



Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich holds a map that shows the E1 settlement project during a press conference near the settlement of Maale Adumim, in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, Thursday, Aug. 14, 2025. Associated Press

construction filed by rights groups and activists. While some bureaucratic steps remain, if the process moves quickly, infrastructure work could begin in the next few months and construction of homes could start in around a year.

The approval is a "colonial, expansionist, and racist move," Ahmed al Deek, the political adviser to the minister of Palestinian Foreign Affairs, told The Associated Press on Thursday.

"It falls within the framework of the extremist Israeli government's plans to undermine any possibility of establishing a Palestinian state on the ground, to fragment the West Bank, and to separate its southern part from the center and the north," al Deek said.

Rights groups also swiftly condemned the plan. Peace Now called it "deadly for the future of Israel and for any chance of achieving a peaceful two-state solution" which is "guaranteeing many more years of bloodshed."

At least 87 people die in Argentina after being treated with medical-use fentanyl tainted with bacteria: Reports

BUENOS AIRES (TIP)

At least 87 people have died in Argentina after being treated with medical-use fentanyl that was tainted with bacteria, reports said.

According to Buenos Aires Herald, the investigation started in May, when the first nine people were confirmed to have died of an infection caused by fentanyl produced by pharmaceutical company HLB Pharma and its laboratory Laboratorio Ramallo.

Since then, La Plata Federal Judge Ernesto Kreplak, from the Buenos Aires province judiciary, has been leading an investigation to trace the full number of victims and those responsible.

Argentine food and drug regulator ANMAT, Buenos Aires Herald added, ordered all health centers in Argentina to stop using their fentanyl batch, and ordered the companies to halt all production. Last week, a media outlet reported that HLB Pharma had been authorized to purchase certificates to manufacture medicines.

However, ANMAT refuted the article in a communiqué and stressed that the laboratory "cannot carry out any activity related to the manufacture, fractionation, import, export, distribution, or marketing of medical or pharmaceutical products."

The Guardian reported that in an interview with La Nación, the owner of

The announcement comes as the Palestinian Authority and Arab countries condemned Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's statement in an interview on Tuesday that he was "very" attached to the vision of a Greater Israel. He did not elaborate, but supporters of the idea believe that Israel should control not only the occupied West Bank but parts of Arab countries.

Israel's plans to expand settlements are part of an increasingly difficult reality for Palestinians in the occupied West Bank as the world's attention focuses on Gaza. There have been marked increases in settler attacks against Palestinians, evictions from Palestinian towns and checkpoints that choke freedom of movement. There also have been several Palestinian attacks on Israelis during the course of the war.

More than 700,000 Israelis now live in the occupied West Bank and east Jerusalem, territories captured by Israel in 1967 and sought by the Palestinians for a future state. The international community overwhelmingly considers Israeli settlement construction in these areas to be illegal and obstacles to peace.

Israel's government is dominated by religious and ultranationalist politicians with close ties to the settlement movement. Finance Minister Smotrich, previously a firebrand settler leader, has been granted cabinet-level authority over settlement policies and vowed to double the settler population in the West Bank.

Israel captured the West Bank, east Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip in the 1967 Mideast war. The Palestinians claim all three territories for a future independent state.

HLB Pharma, Ariel García Furfaro, denied that the deaths could be directly attributed to his product, said his company pulled it from the market itself, and claimed that if the ampoules were contaminated, someone had "planted" the contaminant.

The patients had been hospitalised for unrelated conditions and were given the drug for pain relief or anaesthetic, before becoming infected with the multidrug-resistant bacteria.

No charges have yet been filed, but the court has named 24 people involved in the manufacture and sale of the opioid as suspects. They have been banned from leaving the country and had their assets frozen, The Guardian report said.

India added to UK's 'deport now, appeal later' list for foreign criminals

India is among the countries being added to an expanded UK government list of countries where foreign criminals will be deported once they are sentenced before their appeals are heard as part of measures to crack down on rising migration to the country. In an announcement on Sunday, the UK Home Office confirmed that the scope of its "Deport Now Appeal Later" scheme will be nearly trebled from eight countries to 23, with foreign nationals from these countries to be deported to their home countries before they can appeal against that decision. Foreigners who have had their human rights claim refused will have a chance to take part in their UK appeal hearing remotely from overseas using video technology.

"For far too long, foreign criminals have been exploiting our immigration system, remaining in the UK for months or even years while their appeals drag on. That has to end," said Home Secretary Yvette Cooper.

"Those who commit crimes in our country cannot be allowed to manipulate the system, which is why we are restoring control and sending a clear message that our laws must be respected and will be enforced," she said.

The list of countries covered under the remote hearing scheme, revived in 2023 by then Conservative home secretary Suella Braverman, included Finland, Nigeria, Estonia, Albania, Belize, Mauritius, Tanzania and Kosovo.

Now, India will be added along with Angola, Australia, Botswana, Brunei, Bulgaria, Canada, Guyana, Indonesia, Kenya, Latvia, Lebanon, Malaysia, Uganda and Zambia.

The UK government said it remains in continuous discussions with "a range of other countries about joining the scheme".

"We are leading diplomatic efforts to increase the number of countries where foreign criminals can be swiftly returned, and if they want to appeal, they can do so safely from their home country. Under this scheme, we're investing in international partnerships that uphold our security and make our streets safer," said Foreign Secretary David Lammy. According to the Home Office, previously offenders from the countries on the expanded list could remain in the UK for months or years while their cases were worked through the appeals system as an "added burden on the British taxpayer" beyond the end of the prison sentences.

It also released the latest figures to highlight that around 5,200 foreign nationals were deported since July 2024 when the Labour government came into office, an increase of 14%.

Serbian anti-government protests escalate in third night of clashes

BELGRADE (TIP)

Thousands of protesters took to the streets across Serbia, smashing windows of the governing party's headquarters in the northern city of Novi Sad, where the country's antigovernment revolt started more than nine months ago.

The protesters came out in force for a third night on Thursday, following major clashes earlier in the week that saw dozens detained or injured, demanding that President Aleksandar Vucic call an early election.

In Novi Sad, where a train station canopy collapsed last year, killing 16 people and creating public anger over alleged corruption in infrastructure projects, protesters attacked the offices of the governing Serbian Progressive Party (SNS), carrying away furniture and documents, and splashing paint on the entrance.

"He is finished," they shouted, with reference to the president as they demolished the offices. The police and Vucic's supporters, who have guarded the office in Serbia's second-largest city for months, were nowhere to be seen.

In Belgrade, the Serbian capital, hundreds of protesters and SNS supporters threw flares and firecrackers at each other on one of the city's main boulevards. Police fired tear gas at least two locations to disperse the protesters and keep the opposing camps apart.

Similar protests were held in towns across the country.

Vucic told pro-government Informer television that "the state will win" as he announced a crackdown on



Serbian police detain a demonstrator during a standoff between ruling party supporters and anti-government protesters in Belgrade. Photograph: Reuters

antigovernment protesters, accusing them of inciting violence and of being "enemies of their own country".

"I think it is clear they did not want peace and Gandhian protests. There will be more arrests," he said during the broadcast.

He reiterated earlier claims that the protests have been organised from abroad, offering no evidence.

The previous night, there were gatherings at some 90 locations in the country, according to Interior Minister Ivica Dacic the following day.

The EU's Commissioner for Enlargement Marta Kos said on X that the reports of violence were "deeply concerning".

"Advancing on the EU path requires citizens can express their views freely and journalists can report without intimidation or attacks," Kos said on X.

The Serbian president denies allegations of allowing organised crime and corruption to flourish in the country, which is a candidate for European Union membership.

'Scared to go outside': Indian student plans to return home after violent attack in Ireland

DUBLIN (TIP)

An Indian man in Dublin was reportedly attacked by a group of teenagers over the weekend, in what he says was an unprovoked assault.

"One of the youths rode up on an electric scooter and suddenly kicked me in the stomach," the man told Irish news outlet, The Journal. "Many of my friends are even scared to go outside," he added.

The incident marks the fourth racist attack in Dublin within a month and comes after President Michael D Higgins on Tuesday condemned the violence as "despicable" while expressing a "deep sense of gratitude" for the Indian community.

The victim, speaking on condition of anonymity to The Journal, said around 5:30 pm on Sunday, he was walking home

from Fairview Park when the teenager took his metal water bottle and struck him above the eye, causing a deep cut and heavy bleeding that required eight stitches.

As he tried to walk away, two more joined in, punching and hitting him until he fell, where they continued the attack. He now plans to return to India following the assault.

Although bystanders did not intervene, two teenagers later called the police. The man was taken to hospital. Police are investigating and have appealed for witnesses.

His parents, worried after the assault, urged him to return to India. He has since requested an extension from his university to complete his thesis remotely from home.

The victim as per The Journal also

said he felt "let down" by the Indian Embassy. According to him, his brother contacted the Embassy the day after the attack. He was then asked via phone to send an email outlining the incident — but has received no follow-up since.

The assault is among a spate of violent incidents targeting Indian nationals in recent weeks, including attacks in Tallaght, Waterford, and Dublin.

Other recent attacks include a man being stripped and beaten after a false accusation in Tallaght, another man assaulted on his way home from a friend's apartment, and a six-year-old girl attacked in Waterford.

The Indian Embassy in Dublin has advised citizens to "take reasonable precautions for their personal security and avoid deserted areas, especially in odd hours."

UN probe finds evidence of 'systematic torture' in Myanmar

United Nations investigators say they have gathered evidence of systematic torture in Myanmar's detention facilities, identifying senior figures among those responsible.

The Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar (IIMM), set up in 2018 to examine potential breaches of international law, said on Tuesday that detainees had endured beatings, electric shocks, strangulation and fingernail removal with pliers. "We have uncovered significant evidence, including eyewitness testimony, showing systematic torture in Myanmar detention facilities," Nicholas Koumjian, head of the mechanism, said in a statement accompanying its 16-page report. The UN team said some prisoners died as a result of the torture. It also documented the abuse of children, often detained unlawfully as proxies for their missing parents.

According to the report, the UN team has made more than two dozen formal requests for information and access to the country, all of which have gone unanswered. Myanmar's military authorities did not respond to media requests for comment.

The military has repeatedly denied committing atrocities, saying it is maintaining peace and security while blaming "terrorists" for unrest.

The findings cover a year that ended on June 30 and draw on information from more than 1,300 sources, including hundreds of witness accounts, forensic analysis, photographs and documents.

The IIMM said it identified high-ranking commanders among the perpetrators but declined to name them to avoid alerting those under investigation.

The report also found that both government forces and armed opposition groups had committed summary executions. Officials from neither side of Myanmar's conflict were available to comment.

The latest turmoil in Myanmar began when a 2021 military coup ousted an elected civilian government, sparking a nationwide conflict. The UN estimates tens of thousands of people have been detained in efforts to crush dissent and bolster the military's ranks.

Last month, the leader of the military government, Min Aung Hlaing, ended a four-year state of emergency and appointed himself acting president before planned elections. The IIMM's mandate covers abuses in Myanmar dating back to 2011, including the military's 2017 campaign against the mostly Muslim Rohingya, which forced hundreds of thousands of members of the ethnic minority to flee to Bangladesh, and postcoup atrocities against multiple communities.

Pakistan to create Army Rocket Force after Op Sindoor setback

ISLAMABAD (TIP)

Pakistan, which was made to bite the dust by Indian armed forces in Operation Sindoor, has announced the creation of a new military force to supervise missile combat capabilities in a conventional conflict. Pakistan's move on a dedicated command for missiles and rockets, modelled on China's People's Liberation Army Rocket Force (PLARF), is being seen as an apparent move to match India's onslaught.

During the four-day mini-war in May, aerial warfare prevailed. Drones, missiles, and loitering munitions were all used by both sides. Pakistan's Chinese-made PL-15 and India's indigenous BrahMos, Akash systems, and even the Russian S-400 were deployed. Pakistan's missiles largely turned into duds, as almost all were intercepted and destroyed by Indian air defence using several missile systems.

Pakistan's Prime Minister, Shehbaz Sharif, on the eve of its Independence Day, late Wednesday (August 13, 2025), announced the creation of the Army Rocket Force at a ceremony held in Islamabad to commemorate the military confrontation with India, reported news agency Reuters.

"It will be equipped with modern technology," Sharif said, according to a statement from Islamabad. He added that the force will prove to be a milestone in strengthening the combat capability of Pakistan's army.

Sharif, however, did not provide any further details.

A senior Pakistani security official told news agency Reuters that the new



force will house a dedicated command, which will be exclusive to the handling and deployment of missiles in any event of a conventional war.

"It is obvious that it is meant for India," he said.

Pakistan's Army Rocket Force Command (ARFC) will be "modelled explicitly after China's People's Liberation Army Rocket Force (PLARF)", noted Group Captain MJ Augustine (retired) in his report in the Eurasian Times.

The PLARF, previously known as the Second Artillery Corps, serves as China's strategic and tactical missile force. As the fourth branch of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), the PLARF manages China's land-based missile arsenal, including ballistic, hypersonic, and cruise missiles, both nuclear and conventional.

Group Captain MJ Augustine (retired) explained how Pakistan's new force being modelled after the one in China, also strengthens the Islamabad-Beijing axis. During Operation Sindoor, China provided Pakistan with real-time intelligence, satellite surveillance, and advanced military hardware. This collaboration, including the use of Chinese-supplied J-10 aircraft and AI-driven systems like CENTAIC, revealed the deep strategic nexus, with China

using Pakistan as a testing ground for its military technology.

At the regional level, the ARFC reinforces the China-Pakistan alliance, often referred to as an "all-weather friendship". Modelled after China's PLARF, which oversees the country's extensive missile arsenal for both conventional and nuclear purposes, Pakistan's force gains from Chinese technology transfers, according to the veteran.

During Operation Sindoor, India demonstrated a decisive advantage over Pakistan in both missile interception and offensive air power.

Indian defence systems proved highly effective in neutralising incoming threats, intercepting Pakistani missiles with precision and minimising potential damage. A night before the ceasefire, India intercepted and shot down Pakistan's Fatah-1 missile over Haryana's Sirsa. Its debris were found near Khaja Khara village.

At the same time, the Indian Air Force launched a fierce and coordinated assault, striking multiple high-value and sensitive targets deep within Pakistani territory. These included PAF's Nur Khan airbase, key communication hubs, and strategic infrastructure, disrupting Pakistan's operational capabilities.

The combination of technological superiority, advanced missile defence systems, and aggressive aerial tactics left Pakistan struggling to mount an effective counteroffensive.

Rattled by this, Pakistan has seemingly responded by creating its new military unit – the Army Rocket Force.

Pak FM to visit Bangladesh on Aug 23 amid warming ties

ISLAMABAD (TIP)

Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar is set to visit Bangladesh on August 23 as the two countries saw a warming up of bilateral relations after former prime minister Sheikh Hasina's ouster from office last year.

Dar, who is also the Deputy Prime Minister, was earlier set to visit Bangladesh in April this year, but the visit was postponed due to tension with India in the wake of the Pahalgam terror attack and subsequent conflict between India and Pakistan.

According to official sources, Dar is now set to visit Dhaka on August 23.

The details of the visit, however, have not been shared as yet, but he is expected to meet his counterpart Touhid Hossain, as well as the Chief Adviser of the Interim government, Muhammad Yunus.

Ties between Pakistan and Bangladesh had plummeted during



The visit reflects improved bilateral relations, resumption of direct trade, and recent visa-free agreements for official

Hasina's regime, but took a sharp upward turn as she was ousted from

power on August 5 last year following a massive student-led protest.

Last month, the two countries agreed to grant visa-free entry to holders of diplomatic and official passports from the other side.

The deal was reached during a meeting between Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and Bangladesh's Home Minister Jahangir Alam Chowdhury.

Foreign Secretary Amna Baloch had visited Dhaka in April for Foreign Office Consultations after a 15-year break in diplomatic engagement with Bangladesh.

In February, both countries started direct government-to-government trade after decades of troubled relations, with imports of 50,000 tonnes of rice.

Direct private trade between the two countries restarted in November 2024 when a container ship sailed from Karachi to Chittagong.



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India's freedom struggle: From first invasion to midnight of Independence

India's journey to freedom was neither swift nor simple—it was a centuries-long saga of resilience, rebellion, and renaissance. While the climax arrived on 15 August 1947, the struggle had its roots in the earliest invasions that disrupted the subcontinent's autonomy. This story spans from medieval conquests to colonial exploitation, from fragmented resistance to unified nationalism, and from armed uprisings to non-violent mass movements.

Before the Raj: Early Invasions

The Turkish and Mughal Periods

The first significant foreign incursions into India's political structure began with Mahmud of Ghazni's raids in the 11th century, followed by Muhammad Ghori's conquests in the late 12th century. These invasions led to the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate (1206-1526), which reshaped governance and trade but also saw resistance from local rulers like the Rajputs.

The arrival of the Mughals in 1526, under Babur, ushered in a new imperial order. While the Mughal period (especially under Akbar) was known for cultural synthesis, by the 18th century, weakening central control allowed European trading companies to gain influence.

The European Footprint: Traders to Rulers

Portuguese and Dutch Presence

The Portuguese, led by Vasco da Gama's arrival in 1498, were the first Europeans to establish a foothold, controlling ports like Goa. The Dutch East India Company followed, though their influence remained largely in trade.

The British East India Company

An official of the East India Company in procession surrounded by Indians, a colonial official of the British East India Company moving on horseback in a procession. Watercolor on paper, c. 1825–30. The British first arrived not as conquerors, but as merchants, drawn by India's extraordinary wealth, which had been famous in the West since Greek times. They arrived to find India dominated by the vast Mughal empire, which had been established in the 16th century by the conqueror Babur and now ruled most of the subcontinent. In 1613, the Mughal emperor Jahangir granted the British permission to establish a trading post in Surat, Gujarat, which would become the first British foothold in India.

Over the following century, the British East India Company established additional trading posts and also



Jawaharlal Nehru delivers his "Tryst with Destiny" speech At the stroke of midnight on August 14–15, 1947, India and Pakistan became independent nations. Just before midnight, India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, delivered a speech entitled "A Tryst with Destiny."



An official of the East India Company in procession surrounded by Indians, a colonial official of the British East India Company moving on horseback in a procession. Watercolor on paper, c. 1825–30.

gradually increased its economic and political influence throughout the subcontinent. After the death of Emperor Aurangzeb in 1707, the Mughal empire entered a rapid phase of decline, providing an opening for various regional powers, including the Marathas, the Sikhs, and the northern Rajput chiefs to assert their sovereignty. By the middle of the 18th century, there was no longer a single dominant power in the subcontinent, leaving the region vulnerable to colonial ambitions.

The Battle of Plassey

The Battle of Plassey in 1757, part of the larger Seven Years' War between

Britain and France, was a turning point in the British conquest of India. The East India Company had increasingly solidified its position and was now regarded by native rulers as a serious threat. The nawab (ruler) of Bengal, Siraj al-Dawlah, favoring an alliance with the French, had previously attacked company trading posts. With the help of some of the nawab's own generals, the British were able to defeat and depose the nawab at the Battle of Plassey and appointed their own administration in Bengal. This crucial victory marked the transformation of the British East India Company from a mere mercantile presence into a military and political

power in India. The company would go on to consolidate its power over the Indian subcontinent through a series of military campaigns. It established its dominance in Bengal and Bihar with the Battle of Buxar (1764), in southern India with Tipu Sultan's defeat in the fourth Mysore War (1799), and in the Punjab following the second Sikh war (1848-49).

The Rebellion of 1857 and the British raj

By the 1850s, the company had consolidated its rule over much of India, fostering widespread discontent and a pattern of unrest that produced localized uprisings such as the Sannyasi Rebellion in the late 18th century and the Santhal Rebellion of 1855–56. On May 10, 1857, however, a rebellion erupted in Meerut that would profoundly alter the dynamic between India and Britain. Sepoys (Indian soldiers) in the company's service shot their British officers and marched to Delhi, rallying local troops to their cause. By the evening of May 11, they had declared the aged Bahadur Shah II the emperor of India, symbolically restoring the Mughals to power and rejecting British rule.

The Rebellion of 1857, often called as the Sepoy Mutiny in traditional British historiography, spread rapidly across northern and central India. It produced fierce battles at Delhi, Kanpur, and Lucknow, and it eventually involved leaders such as Nana Sahib, Tantia Tope, and Lakshmi Bai, the rani ("queen") of Jhansi. Lakshmi Bai in particular became a legendary symbol of resistance against British rule; after the British attempted to annex Jhansi using the pretext of the doctrine of lapse, Lakshmi Bai took command of the rebels in the Bundelkhand region and fought valiantly before being killed in battle on June 17, 1858.

By the end of 1858, the revolt was largely suppressed. The British captured Bahadur Shah II and exiled him to Rangoon (now Yangon, Myanmar [Burma]), where he died in 1862, marking the end of the Mughal dynasty. In response to the revolt, the British government recognized the administrative failures of the East India Company, and the British crown assumed direct rule of India, initiating the period known as the British raj.

The failure of the revolt had a profound psychological impact on the people of India. The sepoys, the native princes, the queen of Jhansi, and the heir of Mughal grandeur had made their stand against the British—and they had failed. From this time all serious hope of a revival of the past or an exclusion of the West diminished. The traditional structure of Indian society began to break down and was eventually superseded by a Westernized class system, from which emerged a strong



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Parade Committee Chairman: Koshy O. Thomas.

From Page 30

middle class with a heightened sense of Indian nationalism.

Formation of the Indian National Congress

Yet the struggle continued. On December 28, 1885, the Indian National Congress (Congress Party) was formed, marking the inception of the first major nationalist movement to emerge in the British Empire outside Britain. Led largely by Allan Octavian Hume, a retired British civil servant sympathetic to the cause of Indian freedom, the Congress Party was initially established as a platform for educated Indians to discuss political issues and advocate for a greater role in governance. The first meeting was held in Bombay (now Mumbai), drawing 72 delegates from across the Indian subcontinent. These initial delegates were largely Western-educated and from elite backgrounds and focused on moderate reforms rather than outright independence.

By the early 20th century, a strong “extremist” faction emerged within the Indian National Congress in response to British policies, especially after the 1905 partition of Bengal, which was widely viewed as an attempt to weaken nationalist sentiment in the region. The partition of Bengal sparked the Swadeshi Movement (swadeshi: “of one’s own country”), the first organized mass action against British rule; though it declined by 1908, its central aim was achieved when the partition was annulled in 1911. By 1907, a clear delineation existed within the Congress between the “extremists,” led by Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal, and Lala Lajpat Rai, and the “moderates,” led by Gopal Krishna Gokhale.

Formation of the All-India Muslim League

The All-India Muslim League, the first political party for Muslims in India, was founded in Dhaka (now the capital of Bangladesh) on December 30, 1906. This development was driven by the increasing dissatisfaction among Indian Muslims with the Indian National Congress, which many perceived as primarily representing Hindu interests. The party was heavily influenced by the visionary Indian Muslim leader Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, who had died in 1898, and was founded by leaders including Mian Muhammad Shafi, Nawab Waqar-ul-Mulk, Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk, Syed Ameer Ali, Mualana Mohammad Ali Jouhar, and Sir Sultan Mohammed Shah (the league’s first president, also known as Aga Khan III). Sir Muhammad Iqbal would emerge as a key voice within a few years of the party’s founding.

The league aimed to safeguard the rights of Indian Muslims and initially espoused loyalty to the British raj as a means to achieve greater civil rights and counterbalance the dominance of the Congress Party. The Muslim League would eventually lay the groundwork for modern Pakistan. Mohammed Ali Jinnah, who joined the league in 1913, would later transform the political party into a mass movement for Muslim autonomy.

Gandhi’s return from South Africa



The Battle of Plassey.



The Rebellion of 1857.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, later known as Mahatma (“Great Soul”) Gandhi, was born in 1869 in Porbandar, India, and initially trained as a lawyer in England before relocating to South Africa. There, he advocated for civil rights and developed his foundational philosophy of nonviolent resistance. After spending over two decades in South Africa, Gandhi returned to India in 1915 amid the backdrop of World War I and joined the Indian National Congress. Initially, he remained at the periphery of the movement, supporting the British war effort and refraining from political agitation. However, his perspective shifted dramatically following the enactment of the Rowlatt Act in 1919.

The Rowlatt Act is passed

In February 1919 the British government passed the Rowlatt Act, which empowered authorities to imprison suspected independence activists without trial and allowed for certain political cases to be tried without juries. The object of this act was to replace the repressive provisions of the wartime Defence of India Act with a permanent law. Indians felt profoundly betrayed after their support of Britain throughout World War I, and resentment spread throughout the country. Gandhi, provoked by the act, announced his initial satyagraha (“clinging to truth”) struggle, advocating nonviolent civil

disobedience, which would lead to a political earthquake throughout the spring of 1919.

The Jallianwala Bagh Massacre

On April 13, 1919, British troops under the command of Gen. Reginald Dyer fired on a crowd of unarmed civilians in Amritsar. Following Gandhi’s calls for resistance and a one-day general strike earlier that month, protests had broken out across the country, particularly in Punjab. In Amritsar, following the arrests of prominent Indian leaders, protests had turned violent on April 10. A force of several dozen troops commanded by General Dyer was tasked with restoring order, and among the measures taken was a ban on public gatherings.

On the afternoon of April 13, a crowd of at least 10,000 men, women, and children gathered in the Jallianwala Bagh, a public garden near the Golden Temple that was nearly completely enclosed by walls and had only one exit. It is not clear how many people there were protesters who were defying the ban on public meetings and how many had come to the city from the surrounding region to celebrate Baisakhi, a spring festival. Dyer and his soldiers arrived and sealed off the exit. Without warning, the troops opened fire on the crowd, reportedly shooting hundreds of rounds until they ran out of ammunition. It is not certain how many

died in the bloodbath, but, according to one official British report, an estimated 379 people were killed, and about 1,200 more were wounded. After they ceased firing, the troops immediately withdrew, leaving behind the dead and wounded.

The shooting was followed by the proclamation of martial law in Punjab that included public floggings and other humiliations. Indian outrage grew as news of the shooting and subsequent British actions spread throughout the subcontinent. The Bengali poet and Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore renounced the knighthood that he had received in 1915. Gandhi was initially hesitant to act, but he soon began organizing the noncooperation movement (1920–22), his first large-scale and sustained nonviolent protest campaign.

The noncooperation movement

Launched in 1920 Gandhi’s noncooperation movement, backed by the Congress Party, was a mass protest against British authority advocating nonparticipation in colonial institutions. Indians were encouraged to resign from their titles; boycott government educational institutions, courts, government services, foreign goods, and elections; and, eventually, refuse to pay taxes. The noncooperation movement rapidly gained momentum amid growing national anger toward the British raj, particularly in the wake of the Rowlatt Act and the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. The heavy-handedness of the British government and its failure to adequately address the actions of General Dyer only intensified the Indian resolve for self-governance.

By 1921 the British government, confronted with a united Indian front for the first time, was visibly shaken. The noncooperation movement had definitively shown the potential of united, nonviolent civil disobedience against the colonial regime; additionally, it marked the transition of Indian nationalism from a middle-class movement to a nationwide struggle. Gandhi, at this point, emerged as the de facto leader of both the Indian National Congress and the independence movement itself. The noncooperation movement also drew support from the Khilafat movement, which was mobilizing Muslim protest against the dissolution of the Ottoman empire after World War I. Gandhi’s solidarity with the Khilafat movement helped strengthen Hindu-Muslim unity during this phase of the independence struggle.

However, Gandhi called an end to the noncooperation movement in 1922 after an angry mob in Chauri Chaura killed 22 police officers. Gandhi feared that the movement was becoming violent, contrary to its principles. Gandhi was arrested for sedition that year and sentenced to six years in prison. Jawaharlal Nehru, a young leader within the Congress Party who would later become India’s first prime minister, had been arrested the previous year for anti-government activity and released a few months later.

Gandhi was released in 1924 after serving only two years of his sentence.



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From page 32

By the time of his release, the political landscape had changed significantly. The Indian National Congress had split into two factions: one led by Chittaranjan Das and Motilal Nehru (the father of Jawaharlal Nehru), favoring participation in the British-dominated legislative councils as a means to gain political influence, and the other led by Chakravarti Rajagopalachari and Vallabhbhai Patel, opposing this approach and advocating for a more assertive stance against British authority. Additionally, the unity between Hindus and Muslims had deteriorated. In 1924 Gandhi was named president of the Congress Party, a position he held for a year.

Declaration of Purna Swaraj

On January 26, 1930, the Indian National Congress publicly declared its Purna Swaraj ("Complete Self-Rule") resolution, decisively rejecting the idea of dominion status within the British Empire and establishing full sovereignty as the goal of the independence movement. Initially, some leaders within the movement had aimed for dominion status, which would have given India a position similar to that of Canada and Australia within the British Empire. However, as the movement progressed, this idea was increasingly viewed as inadequate by Congress Party leaders.

The resolution was initially passed by the Congress Party on December 19, 1929, during the presidency of Jawaharlal Nehru, who at the time was the youngest person to hold that position in the party. The resolution was publicly declared the following month, with the Congress Party urging Indians to celebrate January 26 as Independence Day. Although August 15 was later chosen as India's official Independence Day after achieving independence in 1947, the date January 26 remained significant. The constitution of India was drafted to take effect on January 26, 1950, to honor the 1930 declaration, marking India's transition to a republic. Today, January 26 is celebrated annually as Republic Day in India.

The Salt March

In March 1930 Gandhi launched the Salt March (popularly known as the Dandi March), a satyagraha campaign against the British monopoly on salt. Salt production and distribution in India had long been a lucrative monopoly of the British. Through a series of laws, the Indian populace was prohibited from producing or selling salt independently, and instead Indians were required to buy expensive, heavily taxed salt that often was imported. This affected the great majority of Indians, who were poor and could not afford to buy it. Indian protests against the salt tax began in the 19th century and remained a major contentious issue throughout the period of British rule.

Gandhi decided to mount a highly visible demonstration against the increasingly repressive salt tax by marching through what is now the western Indian state of Gujarat from his ashram (religious retreat) at Sabarmati (near Ahmadabad) to the town of Dandi



Indian National Congress, 1885 The first meeting of the Indian National Congress in Bombay (now Mumbai), on December 28, 1885.



(near Surat) on the Arabian Sea coast. He set out on foot on March 12, accompanied by several dozen followers. After each day's march the group stopped in a village along the route, where increasingly larger crowds would gather to hear Gandhi speak about the unfairness of the tax on poor people. Hundreds more would join the core group of followers as they made their way to the sea, until on April 5 the entourage reached Dandi after a journey of some 240 miles (385 km). On the morning of April 6, Gandhi and his followers picked up handfuls of salt along the shore, thus technically "producing" salt and breaking the law.

In May Gandhi was arrested after informing Lord Irwin, the viceroy of India, of his intention to march on the Dharasana saltworks. Gandhi's arrest further fueled the movement, prompting tens of thousands more people to join the satyagraha. On May 21 Sarojini Naidu, a well-known political activist and poet, led a march to the saltworks, where many of the 2,500 peaceful marchers were brutally attacked and beaten by police. By the end of 1930 approximately 60,000 people were imprisoned as part of the civil disobedience campaign. In January 1931 Gandhi was released from custody and began negotiations with Irwin, leading to the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, signed on March 5, 1931. This truce ended the satyagraha campaign and allowed Gandhi, accompanied by Naidu, to represent the Indian National

Congress at the second session of the Round Table Conference in London later that year. This session, however failed to reach agreement, either on a constitutional framework or on communal representation.

The Poona Pact, Ambedkar, and the movement against "untouchability"

The Poona Pact, signed on September 24, 1932, was a significant agreement between Hindu leaders and Dalit representatives, granting new rights to Dalits, Hindu caste groups then labeled "untouchables." This agreement arose from the British government's Communal Award, which proposed separate electorates for Dalits to ensure their political representation. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, the most prominent Dalit leader, supported the proposal, believing that it would allow Dalits to advance their interests. However, Mahatma Gandhi opposed separate electorates, fearing that it would divide the Hindu community and weaken India's fight for independence. While imprisoned, Gandhi began a fast unto death on September 18, 1932, to protest the separate electorates. Faced with Gandhi's deteriorating health, Ambedkar and Hindu leaders negotiated the Poona Pact, which increased Dalit representation within the Hindu electorate instead of creating separate electorates.

Ambedkar's advocacy of Dalit rights was rooted in his personal experiences of discrimination and his extensive education. Born on April 14, 1891, into a Dalit Mahar family, Ambedkar faced severe social exclusion from an early age. Nonetheless, he excelled academically, to the extent that he came to the attention of Sayajirao Gaekwad III, the maharaja of Baroda (now Vadodara). The maharaja provided financial support for Ambedkar's education at Bombay's Elphinstone College and later at Columbia University in the United States and the London School of Economics in Britain. Ambedkar would use this education to champion the cause of Dalit rights upon his return to India. Ambedkar would also later become the chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constitution for the future Republic of India.

Although the Poona Pact was a significant development in the

movement against "untouchability," Ambedkar felt coerced into the agreement by Gandhi's threat of suicide by starvation. Nonetheless, Ambedkar's work would continue. He would found several journals for Dalits and, through his later role in drafting the Indian constitution, secure special representation for them in legislative councils. His efforts laid the foundation for future advancements in social justice and the eventual outlawing of untouchability, although cultural caste prejudice continues to persist in India.

Provincial elections of 1937

Following the Government of India Act of 1935, which granted significant autonomy to the provinces of India in response to increasing momentum in the struggle against British rule, elections were held during the winter of 1936-37, and results were declared in February 1937. The Indian National Congress emerged victorious in seven provinces, demonstrating its popularity with the Indian populace. This allowed the Congress Party to form provincial governments, giving Indians significant control over local governance for the first time in over a century. The Muslim League, however, was unable to establish a government in any province, even the Muslim-majority provinces of Punjab and Bengal. The Congress Party ministries resigned only a few years later, in 1939, in protest against India being declared a belligerent nation in World War II without consultation.

World War II begins

With the outbreak of World War II in 1939, the Indian Independence Movement entered its last, crucial phase. The viceroy of India, Victor Alexander John Hope (commonly known as Lord Linlithgow), declared that India was at war with Germany, to the dismay of the Congress Party, which had not been consulted. Throughout the war, Indian soldiers would fight for Britain in Asia, Africa, and Europe.

The Indian National Congress, under the leadership of figures like Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, grappled with how to respond to the war. Gandhi, a staunch anti-fascist, was fundamentally opposed to all forms of violence, including war. However, he was equally critical of British colonialism. Initially, the Congress Party was willing to support the British war effort, provided that Britain assured India of eventual self-governance. However, the British did not agree to this condition, leading the Congress Party to distance itself from Britain as the war progressed. In contrast, the Muslim League fully supported the war effort.

The Lahore Resolution and the idea of Pakistan

In March 1940 the Muslim League fully resolved to chart its own path. In Punjab's ancient capital of Lahore, the league called for the creation of a separate state for Muslims, under the leadership of Mohammad Ali Jinnah. The famous Lahore Resolution, later known as the Pakistan Resolution, was passed by the largest gathering of league



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From page 34

delegates just one day after Jinnah informed his followers that “the problem of India is not of an inter-communal but manifestly of an international character.” The league resolved, therefore, that any future constitutional plan proposed by the British for India would not be “acceptable to the Muslims” unless it was so designed that the Muslim-majority “areas” of India’s “North-Western and Eastern Zones” were “grouped to constitute ‘independent States’ in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign.” Although the term “Pakistan” was not mentioned in the resolution itself, it was popularized by the Hindu press in their coverage shortly after the resolution was passed, and the term was then widely adopted by Muslims. Jinnah later clarified that the resolution envisioned the establishment of not two separately administered Muslim countries but rather a single Muslim nation-state—namely, Pakistan.

The Quit India Movement

On July 14, 1942, the Congress Party passed its “Quit India” resolution calling for an immediate end to British rule in India. The involvement of India in the war outraged many Indian political leaders, who, despite a range of opinions on the just nature of the war, thought it was morally wrong for the British to force their subjects into the fighting without consulting Indian leadership and to use Indian resources for the effort. By the war’s end 2.5 million Indians had served in the British armed forces, though the majority were volunteers.

As the war continued and Japanese armies swept through Britain’s Southeast Asian colonies—Singapore, Malaya (now Malaysia), and Burma (now Myanmar)—a faction of the Congress Party began to call for India to gain immediate independence from Britain in order to avoid a Japanese invasion. Japanese forces moved into the Bay of Bengal, attacked British ships, and bombed the east coast ports of Visakhapatnam and Kakinada, thus making the threat of full-scale war on Indian soil seem imminent. Gandhi became more adamant about the departure of the British colonists and less concerned about internal squabbles among Indian leadership. He notably demanded of the British in his magazine *Harijan* on May 24, 1942: “Leave India to God. If that is too much leave her to anarchy.”

The Congress Party’s resolution authorized Gandhi to lead a mass nonviolent protest movement if independence was not granted. The slogan “Quit India” was coined by the mayor of Bombay (now Mumbai), Yusuf Meherally. When the British government failed to meet its demands, the Congress Party met in Bombay and voted on August 8 to initiate the Quit India Movement. During that meeting, Gandhi delivered his “Do or Die” speech, in which he famously declared: “The mantra is ‘Do or Die.’ We shall either free India or die in the attempt; we shall not live to see the perpetuation of our slavery.”

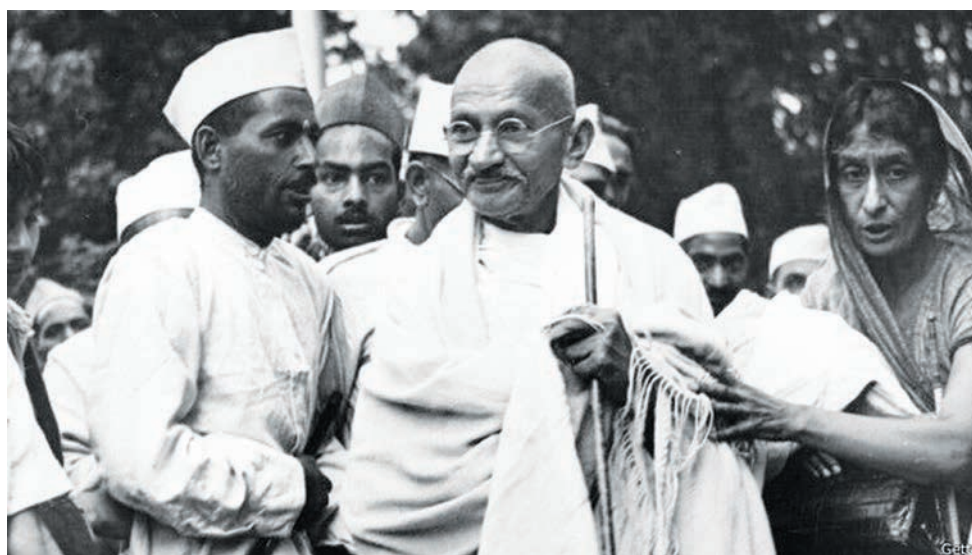
The morning after the Quit India



Britain’s Indian Army A line of Indian soldiers standing with rifles at attention, 1939–1945.



Muslim League, 1940 The leaders of the Muslim League, after a dinner party in 1940.



resolution was agreed upon in Bombay, British authorities invoked the Defense of India Act, which permitted detention without a trial, to arrest Gandhi and dozens of other leaders of the Congress Party, including Jawaharlal Nehru, Abul Kalam Azad, and Vallabhbhai Patel. Concern for Gandhi’s age and fear of worldwide condemnation persuaded the British not to jail Gandhi, and instead they confined him in the Aga Khan summer palace in Pune along with his wife, Kasturba, his secretary, and some followers. The British authorities erroneously hoped they could stifle the

movement by imprisoning its leaders.

The British authorities were, however, misguided. Younger leaders stepped forward; among the most prominent of these was Aruna Asaf Ali, who presided over the August 9 Congress session in Bombay, hoisted the Congress flag, and galvanized protesters across the country. The absence of senior Congress leaders also enabled more militant forces to turn the movement in a more incendiary direction. The British government, particularly secretary of state Leopold Amery in a radio address, further fanned the flames by justifying the arrests of the

Congress Party leaders as a means of preventing mass violence. Amery’s description of the movement’s disruptive tactics might have inadvertently given voice and legitimacy to those very actions among more militant protesters. Also partly due to the lack of Congress Party leaders emphasizing nonviolence, many demonstrations turned into attacks on the British raj’s infrastructure. Telegraph lines and railroads were destroyed, and hundreds of railway stations, post offices, and police stations were burned down or damaged.

The British response to these protests was often brutal. The military, already present in India in larger than usual numbers for the war effort, was deployed to disperse rioters, and in a few cases airplanes were instructed to fire their machine guns on the crowds from the air. Parts of the United Provinces, Bihar, the North-West Frontier, and Bengal (now West Bengal state and Bangladesh) were bombed and strafed by pilots as the British raj resolved to crush all Indian resistance as swiftly as possible. Thousands of people were killed or wounded, and roughly 60,000 arrests were made in the first few months. Most of those arrested, along with the leaders of the Congress Party, were imprisoned for the duration of World War II to prevent further protests, although Gandhi was released on May 6, 1944, because of his failing health.

Although the movement failed to achieve its stated aim of gaining India’s immediate independence from British rule, its impact was profound. The Quit India Movement demonstrated the willingness of ordinary Indians to take action to advance their independence and proved to the British government the necessity of decolonization after World War II.

Subhas Chandra Bose and his Indian National Army



Running parallel to the activities of Gandhi, Nehru, and the other nationalist leaders was the career of Subhas Chandra Bose, an individual with a biography worthy of Shakespearean tragedy. Commonly known as Netaji (“Respected Leader”), he was at times an ally and at other times an adversary of Gandhi. Dedicated to the independence movement from a young age, he advocated for broad industrialization, in contrast with Gandhi’s preference for cottage industries, and favored a militant approach to the independence struggle,

Continued on page 38

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From page 36

as opposed to Gandhi's insistence on nonviolence.

During World War II, Bose sought alliances with Germany and Japan. Desperate for military support, he believed that they could aid India in driving the British out. In 1943, with Japanese aid and assistance, he proclaimed the establishment of a provisional independent Indian government and formed a trained army of about 40,000 troops in Japanese-occupied Southeast Asia, which he called the "Indian National Army" (Azad Hind Fauj). Alongside Japanese troops, his forces advanced to Rangoon (now Yangon) and thence overland into India, reaching Indian soil on March 18, 1944, and moving into Kohima and the plains of Imphal.

In a stubborn battle, the mixed Indian and Japanese forces, lacking Japanese air support, were defeated and forced to retreat; the Indian National Army nevertheless for some time succeeded in maintaining its identity as a liberation army, based in Burma (now Myanmar) and later broader Southeast Asia. With the defeat of Japan, however, Bose's fortunes ended. A few days after Japan's announced surrender in August 1945, Bose, fleeing Southeast Asia, reportedly died in a Japanese hospital in Taiwan as a result of burn injuries from a plane crash.

World War II ends

By the end of World War II, Britain was greatly diminished, under immense international pressure to decolonize and, following the Quit India Movement, increasingly recognizing the necessity of withdrawal from India. In the 1945 United Kingdom general elections, Churchill's Conservative Party government was voted out of power, and the new Labour Party prime minister, Clement Attlee, appointed one of Gandhi's old admirers, Lord Frederick William Pethick-Lawrence, as Secretary of State for India and Burma. With the dawn of the atomic age in August and Japan's surrender, London's primary concern in India was how to find the political solution to the Hindu-Muslim conflict that would most expeditiously permit the British raj to withdraw its forces and to extricate as many of its assets as possible from what seemed to the Labour Party to have become more of an imperial burden and liability than any real advantage for Great Britain.

The 1946 Cabinet Mission

In 1946 Pethick-Lawrence personally led a three-man cabinet deputation to New Delhi with the hope of resolving the Congress Party-Muslim League deadlock and, thus, of transferring British power to a single Indian administration. Richard Stafford Cripps was responsible primarily for drafting the ingenious Cabinet Mission Plan, which proposed a three-tier federation for India, integrated by a minimal central-union government in Delhi, which would be limited to handling foreign affairs, communications, defense, and only those finances required to care for such unionwide matters. The subcontinent was to be



divided into three major groups of provinces: Group A, to include the Hindu-majority provinces of the Bombay Presidency, Madras (now Chennai), the United Provinces (now Uttar Pradesh), Bihar, Orissa, and the Central Provinces (virtually all of what became independent India a year later); Group B, to contain the Muslim-majority provinces of Punjab, Sindh, the North-West Frontier, and Balochistan (the areas out of which the western part of Pakistan was created); and Group C, to include the Muslim-majority Bengal (a portion of which became the eastern part of Pakistan and in 1971 the country of Bangladesh) and the Hindu-majority Assam. The group governments were to be virtually autonomous in everything but matters reserved to the union center, and within each group the princely states were to be integrated into their neighboring provinces. Local provincial governments were to have the choice of opting out of the group in which they found themselves should a majority of their populace vote to do so.

Punjab's large and powerful Sikh population would have been placed in a particularly difficult and anomalous position, for Punjab as a whole would have belonged to Group B, and much of the Sikh community had become anti-Muslim since the start of the Mughal emperors' persecution of their Gurus in the 17th century. Sikhs played so important a role in the British Indian Army that many of their leaders hoped that the British would reward them at the war's end with special assistance in carving out their own country from the rich heart of Punjab's fertile canal-colony lands, where, in the kingdom once ruled by Ranjit Singh (1780–1839), most Sikhs lived. Since World War I, Sikhs had been equally fierce in opposing the British raj, and, though never more than 2 percent of India's population, they had as highly disproportionate a number of nationalist "martyrs" as of army officers. A Sikh Akali Dal ("Party of Immortals"), which was started in 1920, led militant marches to liberate gurdwaras ("doorways to the Guru"; the Sikh places of worship) from corrupt Hindu managers. Tara Singh (1885–1967), the most important leader of the vigorous Sikh political movement, first raised the demand for a separate Azad ("Free") Punjab in 1942. By March 1946

many Sikhs demanded a Sikh nation-state, alternately called Sikhistan or Khalistan ("Land of the Sikhs" or "Land of the Pure"). The Cabinet Mission, however, had no time or energy to focus on Sikh separatist demands and found the Muslim League's demand for Pakistan equally impossible to accept.

Direct Action Day

As a pragmatist, Jinnah—terminally afflicted with tuberculosis and lung cancer—accepted the Cabinet Mission's proposal, as did Congress Party leaders. The early summer of 1946, therefore, saw a dawn of hope for India's future prospects, but that soon proved false when Nehru announced at his first news conference as the reelected president of the Congress Party that no constituent assembly could be "bound" by any prearranged constitutional formula. Jinnah read Nehru's remarks as a "complete repudiation" of the plan, which had to be accepted in its entirety in order to work. Jinnah then convened the league's Working Committee, which withdrew its previous agreement to the federation scheme and declared August 16, 1946, to be "Direct Action Day," a day of nationwide protest by the "Muslim Nation." Thus began India's bloodiest year of civil war since the mutiny nearly a century earlier. The Hindu-Muslim rioting and killing that started in Calcutta sent deadly sparks of fury, frenzy, and fear to every corner of the subcontinent, as all civilized restraint seemed to disappear.

Lord Mountbatten's arrival

Lord Louis Mountbatten (served March–August 1947) was sent to replace Archibald Percival Wavell as viceroy as Britain prepared to transfer its power over India to some "responsible" hands by no later than June 1948. Shortly after reaching Delhi, where he conferred with the leaders of all parties and with his own officials, Mountbatten decided that the situation was too dangerous to wait even that brief period. Fearing a forced evacuation of British troops still stationed in India, Mountbatten resolved to opt for partition, one that would divide Punjab and Bengal, rather than risk further political negotiations while civil war raged and a new mutiny of Indian troops seemed imminent. Among the major Indian leaders, Gandhi alone

refused to reconcile himself to partition and urged Mountbatten to offer Jinnah the premiership of a united India rather than a separate Muslim nation. Nehru, however, would not agree to that, nor would his most powerful Congress Party deputy, Vallabhbhai Patel, as both had become tired of arguing with Jinnah and were eager to get on with the job of running an independent government of India.

The Indian Independence Act

Britain's Parliament passed in July 1947 the Indian Independence Act. It ordered that the dominions of India and Pakistan be demarcated by midnight of August 14–15, 1947, now celebrated annually as Independence Day in both Pakistan (August 14) and India (August 15). It was both a glorious and a tragic moment. The peoples of the subcontinent, though deeply divided, were now free and the masters of their own destinies. Just before midnight, Nehru made his famous "Tryst with Destiny" speech to the Indian Constituent Assembly in the Parliament House.

The Partition of India and Pakistan

The Indian Independence Act ordered that the assets of the world's largest empire—which had been integrated in countless ways for more than a century—be divided within a single month. Racing the deadline, the Boundary Commission, appointed by Mountbatten, worked desperately to partition Punjab and Bengal in such a way as to leave the maximum practical number of Muslims to the west of the former's new boundary and to the east of the latter's. The commission consisted of four members from the Congress Party and four from the Muslim League and was chaired by Cyril Radcliffe, a lawyer who had never before been to India. With little agreement between the parties and the deadline looming, Radcliffe made the final determination of the borders, which satisfied no one and infuriated everyone.

Dividing Punjab and Bengal, the provinces with a slim Muslim majority, caused tremendous problems, as the demographic distributions of those regions were heterogeneous and diverse. The new borders ran through the middle of villages, towns, fields, and more. When Pakistan was created, East and West Pakistan were separated by about 1,000 miles (1,600 km).

The commission also effectively cut in half the large Sikh population in Punjab. The western half of the community reacted with great concern over potential Muslim rule: the Mughal emperors had persecuted the Sikh Gurus in the 17th century, and the legacy of that persecution remained deeply felt. Although the commission had placed Amritsar, the Sikhs' most sacred city, under Indian dominion, many other important Sikh shrines and landed estates were set to become part of Pakistan. Some Sikhs of western Punjab tried initially to retain control over their estates by pushing out local Muslims, but their attempts were met with violent reprisals. Nearly the entirety of the Sikh



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From page 38

community ultimately fled to areas that would become part of India.

The transfer of power was completed on August 14 in Pakistan and August 15 in India, held a day apart so that Mountbatten could attend both ceremonies. With the birth of the two independent countries, the British raj formally came to an end on August 15, 1947.

The borders of the new countries were not published until August 17, two days after the end of British rule. This set the stage for an immediate escalation of communal violence in areas around the new borders. Many people did not understand what partition meant until they were in the middle of it, sometimes literally. If a border village was roughly evenly divided between Hindus and Muslims, one community could argue that the village rightly belonged to India or Pakistan by driving out or killing members of the other community.

As soon as the new borders were announced, roughly 15 million Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs fled from their homes on one side of the newly demarcated borders to what they thought would be “shelter” on the other. Some people were able to take trains or buses from one country to another, but most were forced to flee on foot, joining refugee columns that stretched for miles. These columns were the target of frequent ambushes, as were the trains that carried refugees across the new borders. In the course of that tragic exodus of innocents, as many as 2 million people were slaughtered in communal massacres (although scarce documentation left a wide range of estimates). Sikhs, settled astride Punjab’s new division, suffered the highest proportion of casualties relative to their numbers.

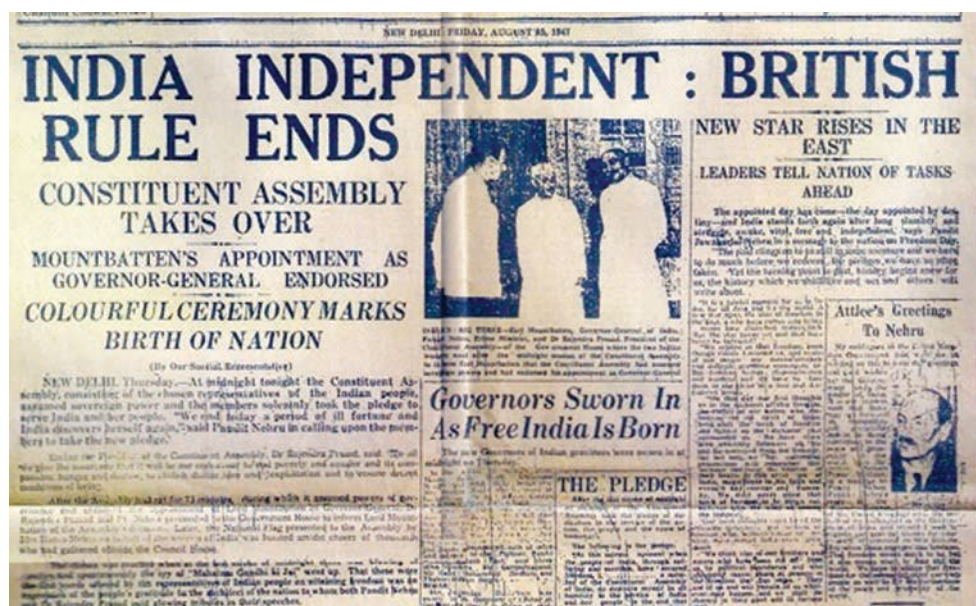
While the worst of the violence took place during the first six weeks of partition, the consequences of those weeks played out for decades. Even provinces that had initially escaped violence later saw outbreaks of conflict; for example, Sindh struggled to absorb large numbers of refugees (muhajirs) from India who, although Muslim, belonged to different ethnolinguistic groups from the local population. Disparities that arose from the hasty creation of Pakistan led ultimately to a devastating war in 1971 between its eastern and western provinces, which resulted in the independence of East Pakistan as Bangladesh. Territorial disputes between India and Pakistan, particularly the question of the Kashmir region, have also led to multiple wars. Moreover, tensions over the rights of Sikhs and the preservation of their communal integrity have also led to violent confrontations in India, most notably with the storming of the Harmandir Sahib in 1984 and the subsequent assassination of Indira Gandhi.

The assassination of Mahatma Gandhi and aftermath

Amid growing communal violence, Gandhi traveled to New Delhi, India’s capital, to take part in a fast for peace and to participate in prayer meetings.



The Partition of India and Pakistan.



His presence on the day of his death, January 30, 1948, attracted a crowd of followers estimated at between several hundred and 1,000 people. About 5:15 PM, Gandhi and his two granddaughters left Birla House, where he had been living, with the intent of leading his followers to a nearby summer pagoda where he often made his evening devotions. Nathuram Godse approached the frail politician, greeted him, then fired three shots at close range from a small-caliber revolver that he had hidden in his clasped hands, striking Gandhi in the upper thigh, abdomen, and chest. As Gandhi fell to the ground, he put his hand to his forehead in the Hindu gesture of forgiveness. He was quickly carried back into Birla House and placed on a couch, his head resting in the lap of his granddaughter Mani, who minutes later told the crowd: “Bapu is finished.” His final words were, allegedly, “He Ram, He Ram” (“Oh God, Oh God”).

News of Gandhi’s death spread quickly throughout India, generating a sometimes violent response. In Bombay (now Mumbai), riots set fundamentalist Hindus against terrified Muslims. In New Delhi, throngs of people left their homes and businesses to mourn at Birla House. Troops were sent to maintain order. A few hours after Gandhi’s death, a balcony window at Birla House was opened and Gandhi’s body was carried outside and placed in a chair facing the crowd. Prime Minister Jawaharlal

Nehru gave a radio address later in the evening in which he proclaimed a day of national mourning and appealed for calm:

The light has gone out of our lives, and there is darkness everywhere. I do not know what to tell you and how to say it. Our beloved leader, Bapu as we called him, the Father of the Nation, is no more.... We will not run to him for advice and seek solace from him, and that is a terrible blow.... The light has gone out, I said, and yet I was wrong.... The light that has illumined this country for these many years will illumine this country for many more years, and a thousand years later, that light will be seen in this country and the world will see it and it will give solace to innumerable hearts.

At the end of his speech, Nehru informed listeners that Gandhi’s body would be brought out at 11:30 AM the following day and taken to the banks of the Yamuna River, a tributary of the Ganges, and cremated there at 4 PM.

Nathuram Godse was an acolyte of a right-wing fundamentalist political ideology known as Hindutva, championed at the time by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), a Hindu nationalist organization. Godse was tried by a special court inside the historic Red Fort in May 1948. When it came time for him to speak, Godse read a 30,000-word confession in which he referred to Gandhi’s murder as “wholly and exclusively political” and held Gandhi responsible for partition and

communal violence. Godse said he acted alone, although seven others were later convicted in relation to the murder. Godse and an accomplice, Narayan Apte, were executed by hanging on November 15, 1949; the other six were sentenced to life in prison.

Yet Nehru carried on at India’s helm, and, owing in part to his secular enlightened leadership, not only did India’s flood of religious hatred and violence recede, but also some progress was made toward communal reconciliation and economic development. Nehru spoke out fearlessly against India’s “caste-ridden” and “priest-ridden” society, which, as a Hindu Brahman pandit, he could do without fear of too much upper-caste criticism. His charismatic brilliance, moreover, continued to make him a major vote-winner in each election campaign that he led (1951–52, 1957, and 1962) throughout his 17 arduous years in office as the Indian National Congress—opposed only by minor parties and independent candidates—dominated political life. Nehru’s modernist mentality and cosmopolitan popularity helped to hide the traditional continuity of India’s internal problems, few of which disappeared under his leadership.

The promulgation of the Indian constitution

The dominion of India was reborn on January 26, 1950, as a sovereign democratic republic and a union of states. That day is celebrated annually as Republic Day, a national holiday commemorating the adoption of India’s constitution on January 26, 1950. The constitution was crafted under the chairmanship of Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar and resolved to secure for its citizens liberty, equality, and fraternity.

With universal adult franchise, India’s electorate was the world’s largest, but the traditional feudal roots of most of its illiterate populace were deep, just as their religious caste beliefs were to remain far more powerful than more recent exotic ideas, such as secular statehood. Elections were to be held, however, at least every five years, and the major model of government followed by India’s constitution was that of British parliamentary rule, with a lower House of the People (Lok Sabha), in which an elected prime minister and a cabinet sat, and an upper Council of States (Rajya Sabha). Nehru led his ruling Congress Party from New Delhi’s Lok Sabha until his death in 1964. The nominal head of India’s republic, however, was a president, who was indirectly elected. India’s first two presidents were Hindu Brahmans, Rajendra Prasad and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, the latter a distinguished Sanskrit scholar who had lectured at the University of Oxford. Presidential powers were mostly ceremonial, except for brief periods of “emergency” rule, when the nation’s security was believed to be in great danger and normal constitutional procedures and civil rights were feared to be too cumbersome or threatening.



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India celebrates its 79th Independence Day



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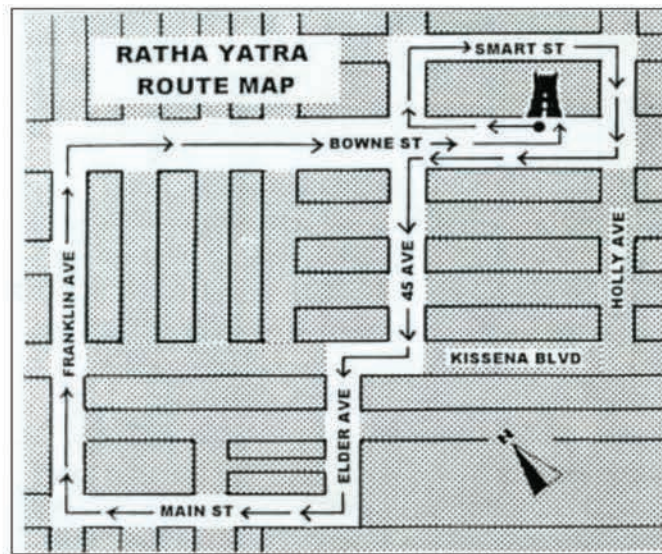
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GRAND RATHA YATRA

Sunday, August 31st, 2025 YATRA ROUTE MAP



The Ratha will start from the Temple at 12:30 PM after the pooja in the Temple, make a full Pradakshina around the temple block (covering 45th Ave, Smart St. and Holly Ave.) and will reach Main Street approximately at 1:45 PM - 2:00 PM. The Ratha will return to the Temple by approximately 2:30 PM.



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Freedom fighters who shaped India's destiny

Hundreds and thousands left everything, and many sacrificed their life for one common goal - freedom of India from foreign rule! These freedom fighters, activists and revolutionaries came from different backgrounds and philosophies to fight one common enemy - the foreign imperialists! While we are aware of several freedom fighters and revolutionaries, many have remained unsung heroes. We have made best efforts to present some of the most prominent freedom activists and revolutionaries who made immense contribution towards India's struggle for freedom.

Tantia Tope

Tantia Tope was one of the Indian rebellions of 1857. He served as a general and led a group of Indian soldiers against the British. He was an ardent follower of Nana Sahib of Bithur and continued to fight on his behalf when Nana was forced to retreat by the British army. Tantia even forced General Windham to retreat from Kanpur and helped Rani Lakshmi of Jhansi to retain Gwalior.



Rani Lakshmi Bai



One of the key members of India's first war of independence, Rani Lakshmi Bai went on to inspire thousands of women to join the fight for freedom. On 23 March, 1858 Lakshmi Bai defended her palace and the entire city of Jhansi when it was threatened to be captured by British troops led by Sir Hugh Rose.

Bal Gangadhar Tilak

Bal Gangadhar Tilak was one of the most prominent freedom fighters of India who inspired thousands with the slogan - "Swaraj is my birthright and I shall have it". As a form of protest against the British, Tilak established schools and published rebellious newspapers. He was famous as one of the trios - Bal, Pal and Lal. People loved him and accepted him as one of their leaders and so, he was called Lokmanya Tilak.



Mangal Pandey



Mangal Pandey is said to have played a key role in inspiring Indian soldiers to start the great rebellion of 1857. Working as a soldier for the British East India Company, Pandey started firing at English officials and caught them unawares. His attack is regarded as the first step of the Indian rebellion that started in 1857.

Ashfaqulla Khan

Ashfaqulla Khan was a firebrand among the young revolutionaries, who sacrificed his life for the sake of his motherland. He was an important member of the Hindustan Republican Association. Khan, along with his associates, executed the train robbery at Kakori for which he was arrested and executed by the British.



Bipin Chandra Pal

Bipin Chandra Pal was one of the key members of the Indian National Congress and a prominent freedom fighter. He advocated the

abandonment of foreign goods. He, along with Lala Lajpat Rai and Bal Gangadhar Tilak, spearheaded many revolutionary activities. For this reason, he is called as the 'Father of Revolutionary Thoughts.'



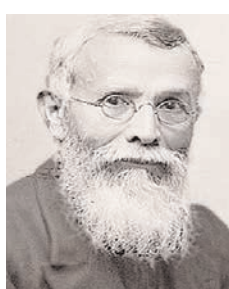
Chandra Shekhar Azad

One of the close associates of Bhagat Singh, Chandra Shekhar Azad is credited for reorganizing Hindustan Republican Association. Azad, as he was popularly called, is known as one of the bravest freedom fighters of India. At the time of being surrounded by British soldiers, he killed many of them and

shot himself to death with the last bullet of his Colt pistol. He did so, as he never wanted to be captured alive.

Birsa Munda

Principally a religious leader, Birsa Munda used the religious beliefs of his tribe in order to revolt against the government of British. He implemented guerrilla warfare techniques to upset the rhythm of the British troops. In 1900, Birsa, along with his army, was arrested by the British soldiers. He was later convicted and was lodged in a jail in Ranchi.



Dadabhai Naoroji

Credited with establishing the Indian National Congress, Dadabhai Naoroji is remembered as one of the most prominent members to have participated in the independence movement. In one of the books published by him, he wrote about the colonial rule of the British which was precisely aimed

at looting wealth from India.

Jawaharlal Nehru

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was one of the most important freedom fighters of India, who went on to become the first Prime Minister of free India. He was also the author of the famous book - 'Discovery of India'. Nehru was extremely fond of children and was fondly called as 'Chacha Nehru'. It was under his leadership that India embarked on the planned pattern of economic development.



Khudiram Bose

Khudiram Bose was one of those young revolutionaries and freedom fighters whose deeds of bravery went on to become the subject of folklore. He was one of those brave men who challenged the British rule and gave them a taste of their own medicine. At the age of 19, he was martyred, with 'Vande Mataram' being his last words.

Lakshmi Sahgal

A doctor by profession, Lakshmi Sahgal, popularly known as Captain Lakshmi, encouraged women to join the troop led by Subhas Chandra Bose. She took the initiative of forming a women's regiment and named it 'Rani of Jhansi regiment'. Lakshmi fought vigorously for the Indian independence before she was



arrested by the British government in 1945.

Lala Lajpat Rai



One of the most important members of the Indian National Congress, Lala Lajpat Rai is often revered for leading a protest against the Simon Commission. During the protest, he was assaulted by James A. Scott, the superintendent of police, which ultimately played a role in his death. He was a part of the famous triumvirate called 'Lal

Bal Pal.'

Mahatma Gandhi

Mahatma Gandhi led the Indian independence movement and was successful in freeing India from the clutches of the British. He employed non-violence and engaged in various movements as part of his inspiring protest against the British rule. He went on to become the most significant freedom fighter and hence is called as the 'Father of the Nation.'



Maulana Abul Kalam Azad

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was an active member of the Indian National Congress and a great freedom fighter. Maulana Azad took part in most of the important movements. He presided over the special session of Congress in September 1923 and at the age of 35 he became the youngest man to be

elected as the President of the Congress.

Ram Manohar Lohia

One of the founding members of the Congress Socialist Party, Ram Manohar Lohia was an active member of the Indian independence movement. Lohia was a key member in organizing the Quit India Movement, for which he was arrested and tortured in 1944. He even worked for the Congress Radio which operated secretly, propagandizing anti-British messages.



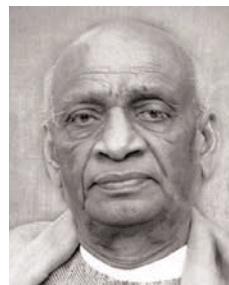
Ram Prasad Bismil

Ram Prasad Bismil was one of those young revolutionaries who sacrificed his life for the sake of his motherland. Bismil was one of the most important members of the Hindustan Republican Association and also a prominent member of the group that was involved in the Kakori train robbery. He was

sentenced to death by the British government for his involvement in the famous train robbery.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

His brave deeds earned Vallabhbhai Patel the title, 'the iron man of India.' For his role in the Bardoli Satyagraha, Patel came to be known as Sardar. Though he was a famous lawyer, Sardar Patel gave up his profession in order to fight for the freedom of the country. After the independence, he became the deputy Prime Minister of India and played an important role in the integration of India by merging numerous





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Saketh



Neeti



Om



Mansi



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Event
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From page 46

princely states with the Indian Union.

**Bhagat Singh**

The name Bhagat Singh is synonymous with sacrifice, courage, bravery and vision. By sacrificing his life at the age of 30, Bhagat Singh became an inspiration and a symbol of heroism. Along with other revolutionaries, Bhagat Singh founded the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association. To

remind the British government of its misdeeds, Bhagat Singh hurled a bomb in the Central Legislative Assembly. By embracing death at a young age, Singh became a symbol of sacrifice and courage, thereby residing forever in the hearts of every Indian.

Shivaram Rajguru

A member of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association, Shivaram Rajguru was a close associate of Bhagat Singh and Sukhdev. Shivaram is mainly remembered for his involvement in the assassination of John Saunders, a young British police officer. With an intention of killing James Scott, the police superintendent who had assaulted Lala Lajpat Rai just two weeks before his death, Shivaram mistook John for James and shot him to death.

**Subhas Chandra Bose**

Popularly known as Netaji, Subhas Chandra Bose was a fierce freedom fighter and popular leader on the political horizon of pre-independent India. Bose was elected as the President of the Indian National Congress in 1937 and 1939. He founded the Indian National Army and raised the famous slogans, 'Delhi Chalo' and 'Tum Mujhe

Khooon Do main Tumhe Ajadi Doonga.' For his anti-British remarks and activities, Bose was jailed 11 times between 1920 and 1941. He was the leader of the youth wing of Congress Party.

Sukhdev

One of the key members of Hindustan Socialist Republican Association, Sukhdev was a revolutionary and a close associate of Bhagat Singh and Shivaram Rajguru. He too, was involved in the killing of John Saunders, a British police officer. Sukhdev was captured, along with Bhagat Singh and Shivaram Rajguru, and was martyred at the age of 24.

**Aruna Asaf Ali**

An active independence activist and member of the Congress Party, Aruna Asaf Ali is remembered for her participation in various movements including Salt Satyagraha and Quit India Movement. During the Quit India Movement, she risked being arrested by hoisting the INC flag in Bombay. She was arrested on many occasions for her revolutionary

activities and was lodged in jail until 1931 when political prisoners were released under the Gandhi-Irwin Pact.

Udham Singh

Udham Singh was one of the most important and famous revolutionaries who took part in the Indian independence movement. He is remembered for avenging the Jallianwala Bagh massacre by brutally murdering Sir Michael



O'Dwyer on March 13, 1940. For his act, Udham Singh was convicted and was eventually sentenced to death.

Annie Besant

Being a British, Annie Besant advocated Indian self-rule and eventually became a prominent freedom fighter. After becoming a part of the Indian National Congress, she was made the President of INC in 1917. After acting as one of the key members in establishing 'Home Rule League', she even founded a Hindu school in Benares to achieve her goal of freeing India from the clutches of her countrymen.

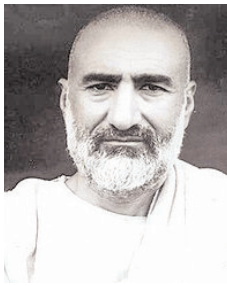
**Kartar Singh Sarabha**

Kartar Singh Sarabha was one of the most famous revolutionaries who sacrificed his life at the age of 19. Sarabha joined the Ghadar Party, an organization formed to protest against the British rule, at the age of 17. He, along with his men, was arrested when a member of the Ghadar Party betrayed them by

informing the police about their hiding place.

Batukeshwar Dutt

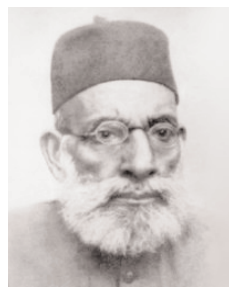
Batukeshwar Dutt was a firebrand revolutionary who is often remembered for his association with Bhagat Singh. Batukeshwar was involved in the serial blast that took place in the Central Legislative Assembly on April 8, 1929. A member of Hindustan Socialist Republican Association, Batukeshwar is also remembered for his hunger strike that secured a few rights for the Indian political prisoners.

**Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan**

Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan was one of those independence activists who opposed the partition of India at the time of its independence. Popularly known as Bacha Khan, he advocated non-violence and wanted a secular country. In 1929, he initiated the 'Khudai Khidmatgar' movement, which gave the British a run for their money. Since his principles were similar to that of Mahatma Gandhi's, he worked closely with Gandhi in all his endeavours.

Hasrat Mohani

At the Ahmedabad Session of Indian National Congress, Hasrat Mohani became the first person to raise his voice against the British rule in India. An eminent writer and poet, Hasrat was arrested on multiple occasions for propagating anti-British policies through his articles that were published in the magazine, 'Urdu-e-Mualla'. He was also a co-founder of Communist Party of India.

**Bhagwati Charan Vohra**

An associate of Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Chandrashekhar Azad, Bhagwati Charan Vohra too, was an important revolutionary. In 1929, he rented a house in Lahore and turned it into a bomb factory. He planned to assassinate Viceroy Lord Irwin by blowing up the train he was travelling in. Lord Irwin escaped the attack unhurt.

Bina Das

Bina Das was one of the bravest women revolutionaries



Movement.

who attempted to murder Stanley Jackson, the then Bengal Governor, by firing five rounds at him at the Convocation Hall in the University of Calcutta. Unfortunately, she missed her target and was imprisoned for over nine years. She was once again arrested for participating in the Quit India

Jatin Das

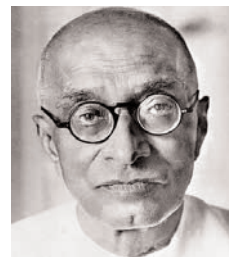
Jatindra Nath Das died at the age of 25 after a hunger strike that lasted for 63 days. Jatindra Nath Das, also remembered as Jatin Das, was a revolutionary and was lodged in jail along with other revolutionaries. He began his hunger strike when the political prisoners had a strikingly different environment when compared to that of their European counterparts.

**B. R. Ambedkar**

Fondly remembered as Baba Saheb, B. R. Ambedkar was a key figure in empowering Dalits. The British had used the Indian caste system to their advantage and were firm believers in the divide and rule policy. Ambedkar understood this motive of the British and ensured their downfall by inspiring the Dalit Buddhist Movement among many other movements.

C. Rajagopalachari

A lawyer by profession, C. Rajagopalachari joined the Indian National Congress in the year 1906 and then successfully defended a revolutionary named P. Varadarajulu Naidu. He went on to become an ardent follower of Mahatma Gandhi and actively participated in the Non-Cooperation Movement. Rajagopalachari was an important representative of Congress in Tamil Nadu.

**Baba Gurdit Singh**

Baba Gurdit Singh understood that India must take its fight for freedom overseas as well in order to truly succeed. But a law prevented the entry of Asians into countries like Canada and the United States. In order to change this law, Baba Gurdit Singh embarked on a journey to Canada and thus became actively involved

in the 'Komagata Maru incident'.

Vinayak Damodar Savarkar

The founder of Abhinav Bharat Society and Free India Society, Vinayak Damodar Savarkar was an activist and was popularly known as Swatantryaveer Savarkar. Also an eminent writer, Savarkar published a book titled 'The Indian War of Independence' that spoke about the struggles of the Indian mutiny of 1857.

**Rash Behari Bose**

Rash Behari Bose was one of the most important revolutionaries who tried to assassinate Lord Hardinge, the then Viceroy of India. Along with other revolutionaries, Bose is credited for organizing Ghadar Mutiny and the Indian National Army.



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Cultural Registration



India's journey of triumphs, trials and transformation

When the clock struck midnight on August 15, 1947, a newly free India stepped into the unknown—scarred by Partition, burdened by poverty, yet fuelled by an unyielding spirit. As Pandit Nehru spoke of the nation's "tryst with destiny," few could have imagined that within eight decades, this struggling colony would emerge as a global powerhouse—economically dynamic, technologically advanced, and democratically resilient.

But progress has not been even. India's post-independence journey has been a tale of two realities: extraordinary achievements on one hand, and stubborn challenges on the other.

Achievements: Building a Modern Nation

Democracy: India's Greatest Triumph

Universal Adult Franchise from Birth: Unlike many new nations that restricted voting to the educated or wealthy, India trusted its citizens fully. Every adult, regardless of caste, gender, or literacy, had a vote.

Stable Democratic Institutions: Over seventeen general elections and hundreds of state polls, India has witnessed peaceful transfers of power—even after deeply divisive campaigns.

Robust Judiciary and Free Press: The Supreme Court's power of judicial review and an independent media have kept governments in check. Historic judgments—from Kesavananda Bharati (1973) protecting constitutional supremacy to Navtej Johar (2018) decriminalizing homosexuality—reflect India's evolving social contract.

Innovation in Electoral Processes: Electronic Voting Machines, Voter ID programs, and massive voter awareness drives have made India's electoral process both efficient and inclusive.

Agricultural Transformation: From Famine to Surplus

Green Revolution (1960s-70s): Led by M. S. Swaminathan and supported by Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri's call to "Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan," India introduced high-yield crop varieties, irrigation expansion, and fertilizer use.

Result: India went from importing food under PL-480 aid programs to self-sufficiency in grain production by the 1970s, and today is a leading global exporter of rice and wheat.

White Revolution: Operation Flood, spearheaded by Verghese Kurien, transformed India into the largest producer of milk, empowering rural farmers.

Economic Growth and Global Integration

Planned Economy to Liberalization: Post-independence India followed Nehruvian socialism, building public-



sector heavy industries, dams, and premier institutions (IITs, AIIMS).

- **1991 Economic Reforms:** Facing a severe foreign exchange crisis, PM P. V. Narasimha Rao and Finance Minister Manmohan Singh dismantled the License Raj, liberalized trade, and attracted foreign investment.
- **Results:** GDP growth accelerated, millions entered the middle class, and India emerged as a hub for IT, outsourcing, and software exports. By 2023, India became the fifth-largest economy globally.
- **Digital India Revolution:** In the 2010s, Aadhaar biometric ID, UPI payment systems, and massive telecom penetration brought financial inclusion to millions, changing everyday life.

Science, Technology, and Strategic Power

Space Achievements:

- **Aryabhata (1975):** first satellite launch.
- **Mangalyaan (2014):** world's lowest-cost Mars mission.
- **Chandrayaan-3 (2023):** soft landing on Moon's south pole.
- **Nuclear and Defense Programs:** India developed indigenous nuclear capability (Smiling Buddha test in 1974, Pokhran-II in 1998) and built advanced missiles under the Integrated Guided Missile Development Program.
- **Healthcare and Pharma:** India became known as the "pharmacy of the world", supplying affordable medicines and vaccines globally,





॥ श्री गणेशाय नमः ॥

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10:00 AM to 9:00 PM
(SUN) SEPTEMBER 7TH 2025 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM

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4TH, 5TH, 6TH, 7TH 2025
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SUN, SEPTEMBER 7TH 2025
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From page 50

particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Social Justice and Inclusion

- Abolition of Untouchability (Article 17): Legal equality laid the foundation for social reforms.
- Affirmative Action: Reservations in education and employment uplifted Scheduled Castes, Tribes, and OBCs.
- Education Expansion: Literacy rose from 12% in 1947 to over 77% today, driven by schemes like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and Mid-Day Meals.
- Women in Leadership: From Indira Gandhi to President Droupadi Murmu, women have assumed the highest offices, while legal reforms improved inheritance, workplace equality, and political participation.

Challenges: The Unfinished Agenda

- Poverty, Inequality, and Unemployment
- Progress but Uneven: Extreme poverty dropped sharply—from 45% in 1983 to under 10% today—yet income inequality has widened, with wealth concentrated among a few.
- Jobless Growth: While GDP has surged, employment generation has lagged, creating frustration among India's vast youth population.

Population Pressure and Infrastructure Deficit

- Demographic Dividend at Risk: India's young workforce (median age ~28) could fuel economic growth—but only with adequate jobs, skills, and infrastructure.
- Urban Overcrowding: Cities like Delhi and Mumbai face congestion, housing shortages, and pollution, reflecting planning gaps.

Governance and Corruption

- Institutional Weaknesses: Despite RTI laws and digital transparency, high-profile scams (Bofors, 2G spectrum, coal allocations) have eroded public trust.
- Bureaucratic Inefficiency: Delays, red tape, and inconsistent policies continue to discourage investment and reforms.

Social Harmony Under Strain

- Caste, Religious, and Regional Tensions: Violence, discrimination, and political polarization challenge the vision of "unity in diversity."
- Need for Inclusive Nationalism: Social cohesion must rise above divisive rhetoric to ensure long-term stability.

Environmental and Climate Crisis

- Pollution and Resource Stress: India is home to some of the most polluted cities, and rivers like the Ganga remain under stress despite cleanup efforts.
- Climate Vulnerability: Erratic monsoons, droughts, and heatwaves threaten agriculture and health. Sustainable energy and urban



planning are critical for the future.

The Road Ahead: Vision for 2047

As India approaches its centenary of independence in 2047, the nation has set an ambitious goal: to become a developed country. Achieving this vision requires a multi-pronged strategy:

Inclusive Economic Growth

- Invest heavily in education, vocational training, and entrepreneurship to turn the youth bulge into a demographic dividend.
- Strengthen manufacturing through initiatives like Make in India and build global supply chain integration.

Good Governance and Institutional Strengthening

- Deepen transparency using e-governance, AI-powered services, and judicial reforms.
- Ensure federal balance, empowering states to innovate while maintaining national cohesion.

Sustainable Development

- Aggressively expand renewable energy (solar, wind) to meet climate goals.
- Implement urban reforms to create smart, liveable cities with better public transport and waste management.

Social Harmony and Equality

- Expand affirmative action into quality education and skill-building programs, not just quotas.
- Promote dialogue, cultural exchange, and inclusive nationalism to reduce caste and communal divides.

Global Leadership

- Use India's position in G20, BRICS, and the Quad to shape global



economic, security, and climate policies.

- Leverage India's soft power—Bollywood, yoga, diaspora, IT leadership—for cultural diplomacy.

A Nation Still in Motion

India's journey since 1947 is a testament to resilience. From a country battling famine to a spacefaring power and global economic leader, its

achievements are undeniable. Yet, poverty, inequality, and social divisions remind us that independence is not a destination but an ongoing project.

As the world's largest democracy marches toward its centenary, India must marry growth with justice, modernity with tradition, and power with compassion. The promise of 1947 still shines bright—waiting to be fully realized by 2047.

15 Aug 2024 to 15 Aug 2025: India's hits & misses

A YEAR OF CONTRASTS: From space milestones and semiconductor breakthroughs to economic turbulence and climate calamities, India's story from August 2024 to August 2025 has been one of ambition tempered by reality. The challenge now is clear: translate scientific and strategic achievements into broad-based prosperity while safeguarding people against economic and environmental shocks. If India can bridge this gap, the road to its centenary of independence in 2047 will be far more secure and sustainable.

As India marched past its 78th Independence Day on August 15, 2024, it carried the momentum of an economy on the rise, a space program gaining global attention, and a rapidly digitizing society. Yet, the following year also brought sobering reminders of deep-rooted vulnerabilities—from economic turbulence to climate shocks.

The period between August 2024 and mid-2025 was marked by scientific breakthroughs, infrastructure gains, and diplomatic assertiveness—but also by economic strains, natural disasters, and policy challenges.

The Hits: Bright Spots in India's Progress

Space Successes and Tech Ambitions

- ISRO achieved satellite docking in December 2024, making India the fourth country after the U.S., Russia, and China to master this complex capability.
- Preparations for Gaganyaan, India's first human spaceflight, moved into final abort-test stages, strengthening India's credentials in crewed space exploration.
- ISRO also intensified outreach programs, inspiring millions of students and predicting a Rs 40 lakh crore space economy capable of generating 3 crore jobs in coming decades.

Digital Leap and AI Leadership

- India led the world in Generative AI training enrollments in 2024-25, reflecting its drive to upskill youth for the future economy.
- The National Academic Depository pilot advanced secure digital credentialing, reducing document fraud and boosting employability.

Semiconductor Push and Manufacturing Growth

- The government approved four semiconductor manufacturing projects worth Rs 4,594 crore in Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, and Punjab—part of India's ambition to become a global chip hub.
- Defense Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs), led by HAL, continued to build indigenous aerospace capability, cutting dependence on foreign suppliers.

Climate Action and Sustainability Recognition

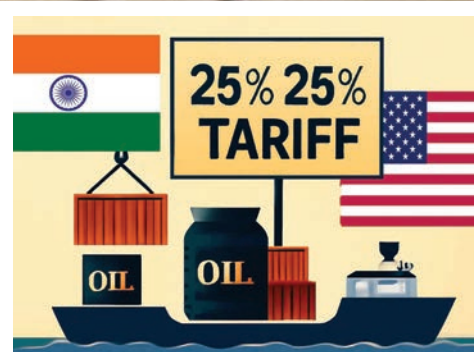
- Mission LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment) gained traction, promoting eco-friendly practices nationwide and earning international support.
- A women-led self-help group in Karnataka won the UN's Equator Initiative Award for millet-based



natural farming and biodiversity conservation, highlighting India's grassroots climate leadership.

Strategic Diplomacy and Global Standing

- India deepened engagement with G20, BRICS, and Quad partners, using forums to push for tech cooperation, clean energy investment, and balanced global governance.
- Efforts to establish a global code of conduct against pilot poaching reflected India's growing voice in international aviation policy.



The Misses: Setbacks and Challenges

Economic Strains and Market Volatility

- GDP growth slowed to 6.5% in FY 2024-25, the lowest in four years. While agriculture and construction performed well, manufacturing and job creation lagged.
- A stock market crash in mid-2025, fueled by global uncertainty and foreign fund withdrawals, shook investor confidence and triggered government intervention.

Climate Disasters and Resource Stress

- The 2024 monsoon floods affected over 7.7 million people and caused nearly 1,900 deaths across multiple states.
- A record heatwave (April-July 2025), with temperatures soaring to 48°C, led to over 450 deaths, crop failures, and severe water stress.

Diplomatic and Trade Frictions

- India-Canada tensions deepened over allegations in the Nijjar case.
- India-U.S. trade relations soured, with Washington imposing a 25% duty on Indian imports—prompting India to lean further into partnerships with BRICS, Russia, and China.

Innovation and Skills Gaps

- Despite leading the world in AI course enrollments, India still faces a critical skill gap—too few workers are industry-ready in advanced technology fields.
- India continues to lag in creating homegrown global tech giants, with systemic hurdles in R&D investment, venture capital access, and commercialization.

Social and Governance Concerns

- Organ donation rates remained far below potential, with institutions like KGMU performing only 29 cadaveric transplants despite capacity for 50 annually, revealing structural and cultural challenges.
- Persistent wealth inequality and youth unemployment dampened the benefits of headline economic growth.

Looking Ahead: Lessons from a Mixed Year

India's year since Independence Day 2024 showcases a nation in rapid transition—capable of reaching the Moon and preparing for human spaceflight, yet vulnerable to economic shocks and climate extremes.

To sustain momentum and avoid future setbacks, India must:

- Close the skills gap by aligning education with industry needs in AI, robotics, and semiconductor manufacturing.
- Diversify the economy, boosting manufacturing while ensuring rural development.
- Invest in climate resilience, including heat-resistant infrastructure, urban water management, and disaster preparedness.
- Strengthen global trade diplomacy to prevent tariff disputes and maintain investor confidence.
- Build inclusive social systems, ensuring the benefits of growth reach every section of society.

'Scent-sible' at work: Mastering perfume etiquette in the office

Perfume is often described as the invisible accessory-it can boost confidence, enhance presence, and even become part of one's personal brand. However, in a professional setting, fragrance is not just a personal choice; it becomes a shared experience in the air you breathe with colleagues. Workplace perfume etiquette is about balancing self-expression with respect for others' comfort, cultural norms, and health sensitivities.

Don't bathe in perfume before work

We've all encountered coworkers who seem to think "more is more" when it comes to perfume. It doesn't matter whether they are dousing themselves in a drugstore brand or Chanel: An overpowering scent is distracting - and it can even make you sick. Most of us enjoy subtle perfume, but in the workplace, be careful. If you aren't following proper etiquette, you might as well have a dead fish in your office.

Less is More

The cardinal rule of perfume at work is that a little goes a long way. If you choose to wear perfume - and your office allows it - use it sparingly. Save heavy, musky and sexy scents for after work; light floral and citrus scents are best for the office. A light spritz on your wrists or behind your ears is sufficient. You may also spray a mist in front of you and walk through it to disperse the scent. Ideally, others should only be able to smell your perfume if they come within a couple of feet. If coworkers



can smell you before you enter a room or after you leave, step away from the perfume bottle.

Don't Reapply

You applied perfume before work, but now you can't smell it. Or perhaps you hit that Korean joint for lunch, and now all you smell is kimchi. Resist the urge to reapply your perfume. Over time, our noses become used to smells. Even if you can't smell your fragrance anymore, others still can. Spraying on more can make your once-subtle scent overpowering.

Confronting Others

Telling someone she's wearing too much perfume can be excruciatingly awkward. If your great aunt Sally wears too much Chanel No. 5, you may let her slide. But at work, you can - and should - speak up, especially if the scent is

preventing you from getting your work done. Avoid bluntly telling your coworker she stinks. Instead, gently say you like her perfume, but you are really sensitive to scents and would appreciate it if she could wear less. Most people will comply because they don't realize they are using too much. If your coworker refuses to stop bathing in her perfume, you may need to get your boss or human resources involved.

Policies

Fragrance allergies are a serious concern in the workplace, and many employers have opted for a fragrance-free environment to keep employees healthy. Before you spritz on that delicious-smelling scent your husband bought you for your birthday, check your company's policies. If perfume is banned, you'll have to save the scent for the weekend.

Mustard oil can make you look more beautiful

- It works wonders on the skin as a natural cleanser. It can be used as a make-up remover as well, making sure that it doesn't clog pores. This helps the skin to get cleansed naturally within minutes.
- Mustard oil is considered one of the best natural ingredients for brushing and when applied with lemon drops and a bit of salt, it makes your teeth shine and become stronger.
- Think about the condition of your hair after you get them styled using chemical based hair products. The adverse effects on one's hair after those curls and buns can be managed well with a massage of hot mustard oil. It provides adequate nutrients to the hair and prevents situations like frizziness and hair fall.
- In case of acne and rashes, apply a few drops of mustard oil for 10-15 minutes daily. It keeps the skin healthy and glowing.
- Massaging mustard oil on your face regularly can help reduce tan and lighten dark spots and pigmentation. Make a face mask by mixing mustard oil with besan or gram flour, one teaspoon of curd and a few drops of lemon juice. Mix the



ingredients well and apply it on your face and neck. Wash your face after 10 to 15 minutes and try applying the face mask at least thrice a week for best results.

- Dry patchy skin is a common problem that we all face during harsh winter season. One can apply a few drops of mustard oil and rub it along the face. Let it remain for a few minutes before washing it in water. The skin becomes smooth.

Kesar peda



Ingredients

500g Soft white milk fudge (khoya), 300gms sugar powdered, ½tsp cardamom powder, 1tsp cardamom seeds semi crushed, 1tbsp slivered or crushed pistachios, A few strands of saffron, 1tbsp warm milk, 2 drops saffron color (optional)

Method

- Soak the saffron in warm milk.
- Crumble the milk fudge. If very hard, grate the fudge. Add powdered sugar and mix well.
- Put mixture in a large heavy or nonstick pan. Heat on medium high for few minutes. Reduce the flame and cook till soft and gooey.
- Make sure to stir continuously, while on heat. When mixture is thick and gooey, add cardamom and saffron. Add the color if desired.
- Mix well, and take off fire. Allow to cool, gently turning occasionally.
- Use cookie molds, or shape pedas with palms into patty rounds. Mix pistachios and cardamom seeds and press a bit on top of each.

Peach almond suji halwa

Ingredients

1/2 cup almonds, 1/2 cup suji, 2 tsp ghee, 1/2 cup sugar, 1 1/2 cups water, 8 peach halves, chopped, 1-2 peach halves, sliced for garnish

Method

- Blanch the almonds in boiling water for 5 minutes, peel, and slice. Place sugar and water in a saucepan and bring to a boil. Stir to mix sugar. Simmer until suji is ready, 2-3 minutes
- In the meantime, roast the suji in a heavy bottom kadhai/wok over low heat until light golden brown. Reserve in a bowl
- Heat ghee in the same wok and add the almonds and roast for 2-3 minutes. Next add the suji and continue to roast for 1-2 minutes over low heat
- Gently pour in the boiling sugar syrup, keeping heat to low, and stir to mix
- Increase heat to medium, and stir until the water is absorbed and the halwa begins to thicken and leave the sides of the wok, Add the peaches and stir well until the halwa leaves the sides, 1-2 minutes, Transfer peach almond suji halwa to serving dish, Serve hot garnished with peach slices and slivered almonds



An excellent source of protein: Health, hype and hard truths

Protein is having its moment: From grocery store shelves to Instagram feeds, high-protein foods are everywhere. Food labels shout their protein content in bold, oversized fonts, while social media overflows with recipes promising to pack more protein into your favourite dishes.

And according to the International Food Information Council's Food and Health Survey, "high protein" topped the list of popular eating patterns in 2024.

But does the hype match the science?

Yes and no.

Protein is essential to good health and boosting protein intake can support healthy aging and fitness goals, but the rush to pile on grams — often driven by marketing more than medical need — raises questions. How much do you really need? Can you overdo it? What's the best source of protein?

This article breaks down the facts, debunks common myths and answers the most pressing questions about protein today.

What is dietary protein and why do we need it?

Protein is one of the three essential macronutrients your body needs in large amounts, alongside carbohydrates and fats. While carbs and fats are primarily used for energy, protein plays a more structural and functional role. It helps build and repair tissues, supports immune health and produces enzymes, hormones and other vital molecules.

Proteins are made of amino acids. Your body can make some amino acids, but nine must come from food. These are called essential amino acids. That's why protein is a daily dietary requirement, not just a delicious post-workout bonus.

Unlike fat and carbohydrates, which the body can store for later use, protein doesn't have a dedicated storage system. That means you need to replenish it regularly. In extreme situations — like prolonged fasting or severe illness — your body will break down its own muscle to release amino acids for energy and repair. It's a last-resort mechanism that underscores just how essential protein is for survival.

How much protein do people need?

The amount of protein an individual needs to consume each day may vary based on age, physical activity levels and the presence of health conditions. However, the recommended dietary allowance (RDA) for daily protein intake is the same for almost everyone: 0.8 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight per day (g/kg/d).

For example, a woman weighing 65 kilograms should aim to consume approximately 52 grams of protein daily.

An important caveat is that the RDA is set to prevent protein deficiency, not to promote optimal health. Older adults who have a reduced ability to utilise the nutrients they consume, athletes whose bodies need more substrate for tissue growth and repair, and pregnant or breastfeeding individuals whose protein intake is shared with another being, often need more protein. Sometimes as much as 1.2 to 2 grams per kilogram of body weight. Therefore, an older person of the same body mass (65 kilograms) might need between 78 g and 130 g of protein daily, far exceeding the RDA.

Is there such a thing as too much protein?

While several expert groups agree that consuming more protein can be beneficial in certain situations — particularly for older adults — there is probably little to no advantage in consuming protein amounts exceeding two grams per kilogram per day.



The good news is that if you are generally healthy, increasing your protein intake will not shorten your lifespan, cause your kidneys to fail, give you cancer or lead to bone loss.

When should I consume my protein?

A prominent social media influencer recently claimed that post-menopausal women must consume protein within a very short window (Rs 45 minutes) after exercise, or any benefits from exercise will quickly dissipate and they will lose all their muscle. This is absolutely not the case.

The idea of an "anabolic window" — a brief period after exercise when recovering muscles make the best use of protein — has long been debunked. Perhaps more accurately described as a garage door rather than an anabolic window, there is a generous period of at least 24 hours to consume protein after exercise.

This means your muscles remain sensitive to the muscle-building effects of protein for a long time after exercise. So, focusing your efforts on consuming enough protein each day is much more important than stressing about guzzling your protein shake in the changing room immediately following your workout.

As long as you're eating enough protein each day, feel free to consume it on a schedule that fits your daily routine.

But if increasing the amount of protein that you eat at each meal helps you feel fuller and curb your appetite, you may be a little less likely to overeat or indulge in sweet treats.

And with the increasing off-label use of Type 2 diabetes medications such as GLP-1 agonists, which significantly reduce appetite, putting protein on your plate first might — and it's a considerable might — help slow muscle loss that accompanies this drastic weight loss. However, this is rather speculative, and resistance exercise will probably be your best option for slowing muscle loss while on these medications.

Are all proteins created equal?

Protein is found in a wide variety of foods, from animal sources such as meat, fish, eggs and dairy to plant-based options like legumes, soy products, whole grains, nuts, seeds and even some vegetables. Protein is also widely available as a nutritional supplement, with whey, casein and collagen being among some of the most popular options.

Animal-based proteins are often touted by many online as superior, especially when it comes to supporting muscle growth, but the reality of protein quality is more nuanced.

Animal proteins often contain more of the essential amino acids and are more bioavailable, meaning they are easier for the body to absorb and use. However, a well-planned plant-based diet can also supply all the essential amino acids the body needs — it just takes a bit more variety and intention.

Source: PTI



5 things that can raise blood sugar and they're not food

When we think of high blood sugar, the first thing that comes to mind is food. But your blood sugar levels can go up even when you haven't eaten a single bite. Here are five surprising factors that can cause these changes and what you should know about them.

According to Dr Pranav Ghody, consultant endocrinologist and diabetologist, Wockhardt Hospitals, Mumbai Central, stress, poor sleep, exercise, infections, and hormonal changes can all cause your blood sugar levels to rise.

For example, stress triggers the release of cortisol, which tells your liver to release stored glucose to give you energy, a useful response in emergencies, but not so helpful during daily stress. "One bad night of sleep can make the body temporarily more insulin-resistant, which keeps glucose in your blood longer," said Dr Ghody.

Exercise, especially intense or resistance training, can also cause temporary spikes as your body releases glucose for energy, though this usually leads to better blood sugar control over time. "Illnesses or infections push your immune system into overdrive, needing extra energy in the form of glucose. Lastly, hormonal changes, especially around menstrual cycles, perimenopause, and menopause, can make the body less sensitive to insulin, causing fluctuations in blood sugar," said Dr Ghody. These spikes aren't always bad. "For instance, temporary increases after exercise or during an immune response are natural and necessary. But chronic stress, regular poor sleep, or persistent hormonal imbalances can lead to long-term blood sugar issues, which need attention. Women in their 40s and 50s, in particular, may notice changes in weight, energy, or mood due to these hormonal effects on blood sugar," said Dr Ghody.

Understanding these triggers is the first step. It is essential to manage stress with relaxation techniques, prioritise good sleep, and keep a regular exercise routine. "Consulting a healthcare professional for hormonal or long-term concerns can make a big difference. If you notice unusual blood sugar spikes, especially without any change in diet, it's worth discussing with your doctor," said Dr Ghody.

The Indian Express

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Trump eases spaceflight rules in big boost to Elon Musk's SpaceX

U.S. President Donald Trump signed an executive order on Wednesday, Aug 13, to streamline federal regulations governing commercial rocket launches, a move that could benefit Elon Musk's SpaceX and other private space ventures. Trump's order, amongst other things, directs the U.S. transportation secretary to eliminate or expedite environmental reviews of launch licences administered by the Federal Aviation Administration, the White House said in a statement. The declaration also calls on the secretary to do away with "outdated, redundant or overly restrictive rules for launch and reentry vehicles."

"Inefficient permitting processes discourage investment and innovation, limiting the ability of U.S. companies to lead in global space markets," the executive order states.

While Musk and Trump had a high-profile falling out months ago, the billionaire entrepreneur's SpaceX rocket and satellite venture potentially stands to be the single biggest immediate beneficiary of Trump's order.

SpaceX, though not mentioned by name in Trump's order, easily leads all U.S. space industry entities, including NASA, in the sheer number of launches it routinely conducts for its own satellite network, the U.S. space agency, the Pentagon, and other enterprises.

Jeff Bezos' private rocket company Blue Origin and its space tourism business could also gain from a more relaxed regulatory regime. Musk has repeatedly complained that environmental impact studies, post-flight mishap investigations and licencing reviews required by the FAA have needlessly slowed testing of SpaceX's Starship rocket, under development at the company's South Texas launch facility.

The Starship is the centrepiece of Musk's long-term SpaceX business model, as well as a core component of NASA's ambitions for returning astronauts to the moon's surface, establishing a permanent human lunar presence and ultimately sending crewed missions to Mars.

Musk has viewed FAA oversight as a hindrance to his company's engineering culture, considered more risk-tolerant than many of the aerospace industry's more established players. SpaceX's flight-test strategy is known for pushing spacecraft prototypes to the point of failure, then fine-tuning improvements through frequent repetition.

Google's Find Hub app to get satellite location sharing: Here's how it could work

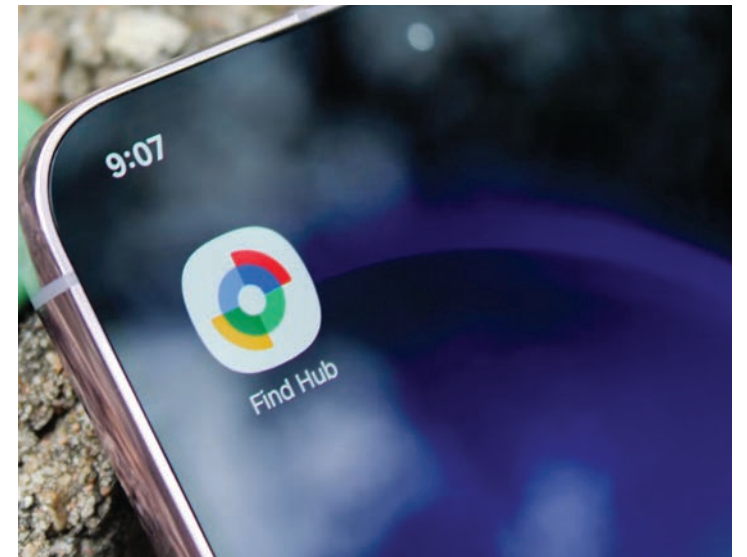
At this year's Google I/O, the tech giant announced that it is renaming Android's Find My Device network to Find Hub and that it would have satellite connectivity, at least in some capacity. Now, new strings of code found in the Find Hub app are giving us a glimpse of how the new functionality would work.

According to a recent APK teardown by Android Authority, Google Find Hub v3.1.399-3 release has a few text strings which clearly refer to the upcoming functionality. The publication said that when Android users share their location with others using the Find Hub app, the app will send a "one-off ping with your location", which means it won't continuously transmit your location in real-time, but instead drop a pin like Google Maps.

The code also suggests that Find Hub's satellite location sharing feature won't be used as a replacement for contacting emergency services in areas with no network. Another thing to note is that while Find Hub will let you send single location pings to people you are sharing your location with, the app will also update your location every 15 minutes, but you may have to manually update it by coming back to the app.

As it turns out, there may be a daily limit to how many times you can ping your location using satellites, but currently, we have no idea what it will be. But given that satellite connectivity is pretty limited and expensive to maintain, these restrictions sound fairly reasonable. Google will also reportedly show how many pings a user has left for the day and how much more time they will have to wait before being able to use the feature again.

Google had announced that Find Hub will be getting satellite connectivity sometime later, but the tech giant has yet to share a timeline on when it will be rolling out to everyone. However, some speculations suggest that the feature would be announced at the upcoming Made by Google event, where the tech giant will be launching the



much-anticipated Pixel 10 series phones.

Looking Ahead: Potential Expansions and Challenges

Looking forward, insiders speculate that Find Hub could incorporate AI-driven predictions for location requests, such as suggesting shares based on calendar events. This would build on the satellite features teased in the aforementioned Android Authority teardown, enabling offline functionality that could prove invaluable in disaster-prone areas.

Ultimately, Google's location request tool represents a subtle yet significant step toward more connected digital lives. By addressing the reciprocity gap in sharing, it could enhance safety and convenience, but only if implemented with robust privacy controls. As the service matures, its success will hinge on user trust, a factor Google has historically navigated with varying degrees of success.

AI is more persuasive than humans, can change your political views in minutes: Report

Imagine having a casual chat with an AI chatbot and walking away with a completely different opinion on a political issue you felt strongly about just ten minutes earlier. Sounds like a science fiction movie, but it's already happening. New research shows that leading AI models are becoming highly effective at persuasion and, in some cases, even more convincing than humans. They are not just sharing facts but tailoring responses to the individual, using tone, evidence, and personalisation in a way that can subtly sway opinions.

According to a report by Financial Express, studies conducted by the UK's AI Security Institute, in collaboration with universities including Oxford and MIT, found that AI models like OpenAI's GPT-4, GPT-4.5, GPT-4o, Meta's Llama 3, xAI's Grok 3, and Alibaba's Qwen could influence political views in conversations lasting less than ten minutes. What's more, the changes in opinion were not fleeting. A significant portion of participants retained their new views even a month later.

The researchers didn't rely on AI's default behaviour alone. They fine-tuned these models using thousands of conversations on divisive topics like healthcare funding and asylum policy. By rewarding outputs that matched the desired persuasive style and by adding personalised touches — such as referencing the user's age, political leanings, or prior opinions — the AI became even more convincing. In fact, personalisation increased its persuasiveness by about five per cent compared to generic responses.



While that may not sound huge, in the context of influencing public opinion, it's substantial. Political campaigns spend millions chasing even a one per cent swing in voter sentiment. The ability to get that shift in minutes, at scale, is both impressive and alarming. I think this is where the real debate begins; it's one thing for AI to sell you a new smartphone, but quite another for it to nudge your stance on government policy.

The study also highlighted that AI persuasion isn't limited to politics. Earlier research from MIT and Cornell showed these models could reduce belief in conspiracy theories, climate change denial, and vaccine scepticism by engaging in personalised, evidence-based conversations. While that sounds like a positive use case, it reinforces the fact that the same skillset could be applied in less ethical ways, such as spreading misinformation or promoting harmful ideologies.

US national debt hits record \$37 trillion amid mounting fiscal concerns

WASHINGTON (TIP)

The US government's gross national debt has surpassed \$37 trillion, a record number that highlights the accelerating debt on America's balance sheet and increased cost pressures on taxpayers, the AP reported. The \$37 trillion update is found in the latest Treasury Department report issued on Tuesday, Aug 13, which logs the nation's daily finances, according to the AP report.

Experts said that as the debt scale grows larger, future interest payment costs will continue to rise, posing risks to fiscal sustainability, while global investors may grow wary of US Treasury bonds amid credit downgrades and uncertainty.

The \$37 trillion debt milestone comes less than eight months after the nation hit the \$36 trillion threshold for the first time in late November 2024, and a little over one year after the \$35 trillion mark was reached in late July 2024, Fox Business reported.

The \$37 trillion debt amounts to about \$280,000 per household or \$108,000 per person, according to the Peter G. Peterson Foundation.

The national debt soaring past \$37 trillion sends yet another clear message about America's unsustainable fiscal path, Chair and CEO of the Peter G. Peterson Foundation Michael Peterson said in a statement on its website.

"Our growing debt slowly damages our economy and the prospects of the next generation. As the government borrows trillion after trillion, it puts upward pressure on interest rates, adding costs for everyone and reducing private sector investment. Within the federal budget, the debt crowds out important priorities and creates a damaging cycle of more borrowing, more interest costs, and even more borrowing," Peterson said.

The Government Accountability Office outlines some of the impacts of rising government debt on Americans — including higher borrowing costs for things like mortgages and cars, lower wages from businesses having less money available to invest, and more expensive goods and services, according to the AP.

The Joint Economic Committee estimates at the current average daily rate of growth, an increase of another trillion dollars in the debt would be reached in approximately 173 days, according to the AP.

Peterson warned that "As our debt continues to rise, at some point the financial markets will lose confidence in our ability to overcome the politics to solve this problem."

To repay maturing debt, the US government has been issuing new debts to repay old ones, leading to the continuous



expansion of the overall debt load. As the debt scale grows larger, it means that the future interest payment costs will continue to rise, posing risks to fiscal sustainability, Zhou Mi, a senior research fellow at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, told the Global Times on Wednesday.

If maturing debts cannot be repaid, US debt will become unsustainable, and its credit ratings may be downgraded, creating significant risks for global investors, Zhou added.

The expansion of the US government's debt scale has brought more uncertain risks to investments in US Treasury bonds, making global investors more cautious, Zhou said.

"Factors such as rating agencies' changes in sovereign credit ratings and sharp swings in US tariff policies at the real-economy level have added to this uncertainty," Zhou added.

Yang Changjiang, a professor at Fudan University, told the Global Times on Wednesday that the expanding US government debt has also brought greater uncertainty to the global financial market and the stable operation of the international monetary system.

In May, Moody's downgraded the US sovereign credit rating. It is expected that US large-scale fiscal deficits will further increase the burden of government debt and interest payments, and the fiscal situation is likely to deteriorate, Yang said.

Moody's Ratings in May cut the US' sovereign credit rating by one notch to Aa1 from Aaa.

"This one-notch downgrade on our 21-notch rating scale reflects the increase over more than a decade in government debt and interest payment ratios to levels that are significantly higher than similarly rated sovereigns," said a release by Moody's Ratings.

S&P upgrades India's rating after over 18 years to 'BBB' on robust economic growth

S&P on August 14 upgraded India's sovereign credit rating to 'BBB' with a stable outlook after over 18 years, citing robust economic growth, political commitment for fiscal consolidation and 'conductive' monetary policy to check inflation.

"India remains among the best performing economies in the world...The quality of government spending has improved in the past five to six years," S&P Global Ratings said.

The impact of US tariffs on the Indian economy will be "manageable", S&P said, adding that a 50 per cent tariff on US exports (if imposed) will not pose a "material drag" on growth.

"India is relatively less reliant on trade and about 60 per cent of its economic growth stems from domestic consumption," it said.

Welcoming the rating upgrade, the Finance Ministry said it reaffirms that under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, "India's economy is truly agile, active, and resilient."

The ministry in a post on X further said India has prioritised fiscal consolidation, while maintaining its strong infrastructure creation drive and inclusive growth approach, that has led to the upgrade.

"India will continue its buoyant growth momentum and undertake steps for further reforms to attain the goal of Viksit Bharat by 2047," it said.

The rating upgrade by a US-based agency comes days after American President Donald Trump dubbed India as a "dead economy". Trump has imposed the highest 50 per cent tariff on Indian goods with effect from August 27.

S&P in January 2007 placed India on the lowest investment grade rating of 'BBB'. The rating upgrade to 'BBB' will help lower borrowing cost of Indian companies in international markets. 'BBB' is an investment grade rating and denotes improved ability of the country to discharge its debt obligation comfortably. This is the second sovereign rating revision by a global agency. Earlier this year, Morningstar DBRS had upgraded India's issuer ratings to 'BBB' from 'BBB-' (low).

In May last year, S&P changed India's credit rating outlook to 'positive', from 'stable', and hinted that a rating upgrade could be coming in the next 24 months. "The upgrade of India reflects its buoyant economic growth, against the backdrop of an enhanced monetary policy environment that anchors inflationary expectations. Together with the government's commitment to fiscal consolidation and efforts to improve spending quality, we believe these factors have coalesced to benefit credit metrics," S&P said.

Bitcoin hits record high above \$124,000

Bitcoin hit a record high on Thursday, Aug 14, during early Asian trading, surpassing \$124,000, driven by favourable US legislation and a rise in US equities.

The cryptocurrency rose above its previous July record, briefly exceeding \$124,500 before retreating.

US stocks ended higher Wednesday, with the S&P 500 index and the tech-heavy Nasdaq reaching new heights this week, contributing to the cryptocurrency's rise.

Bitcoin's value has recently soared, fuelled by US regulatory changes under US President Donald Trump, a strong backer of the crypto sector.

Its price has also been boosted by large holders of cryptocurrency, referred to as "whales".

"The crypto market is enjoying a period of highly favorable fundamentals," said Samer Hasn, senior market analyst at XS.com.

"President Donald Trump has moved to end restrictions that previously prevented banks from doing business with companies flagged for reputational risk concerns, a category in which crypto firms were often unfairly placed," he added.



Trump may also be inclined to "accelerate the integration of cryptocurrencies into the national financial system and lift additional restrictions, given his and his family's growing involvement in the sector", Hasn said.

Trump's media group and Tesla, the electric carmaker owned by tech billionaire Elon Musk, are among an increasing number of companies buying huge amounts of bitcoin.

Sikh History This Week

AUGUST 15 TO AUGUST 21

15th August

1923 The case of the Babbars was initiated.

1924 10th Shahidhi Jatha of 500 Akalis, led by Sardar Visakha Singh Daftur (Lahore), courted arrest on reaching Jaito.



1947 Punjab was divided into East and West Punjab. A major segment of the Sikh community was uprooted from their ancestral land and forced to migrate to India. This day marks the Independence day for India. Though citizens of India, the Sikh community encountered organized and pre-meditated killings of their members, lootings of all their worldly possessions, and general human suffering and deprivation that is unparalleled in the history of humankind. Over two lakh Sikhs gave their lives in search of freedom while being forcibly migrated to East Punjab. However, until today the independence promise remains unfulfilled for the Sikh community. The community itself continues to persist in petty internal squibbled, allow others to dictate terms, and is unable to establish its own sovereign state where Sikhs may prosper without any restriction. More than the lost lives, dearer than homes and lands left behind, was the Holy Nankana Sahib, the birth place of Guru Nanak Dev. Numerous other historical gurudwaras were also left behind with their fates unknown. For more information refer to History section on page 29 of the September 1994, Volume 42:9, No. 489, issue of The Sikh Review.

1951 The Times of India reported that the Sikhs were opposed to Hindu-Congress because each and every demand of the Sikhs was opposed by the Congress.

1960 Sikhs observe Indian independence day as Ghulami (Slavery) day.



1960 Master Tara Singh begins fast unto death.

Master Tara Singh begins fast unto death to protest against the discriminatory attitude of the government in not forming a Punjabi Speaking State demanded by the Sikhs although the rest of India had been reorganised on linguistic basis. On Aug. 28th, Jawahar

Lal Nehru, Prime Minister of India, made a statement in the Indian Parliament declaring:

1969 Shaheed Darshan Singh Pheruman launched his fast until death to force resolution of Punjab demands from Indian central government.

1980 Dal Khalsa hoisted Khalistan flag throughout the Sikh Homeland.

16th August



1604 SRI GURU GRANTH SAHIB first installed in Sri Harmandir Sahib

The Holy Sri Guru GRANTH SAHIB was ceremonially installed in Sri Harmandir Sahib, Amritsar. Guru Arjan, shortly after Akbar's visit, early in 1599, began the project of compilation of Adi Granth. Bhai Gurdas was appointed amanuensis. Guru Arjan took five years to complete the project. Adi Granth was ready in 1604 when it was installed in Sri Harimandir Sahib. Baba Buddha Ji was appointed the first priest. Today is the actual date of the event, however, it is observed on a different date by Guru Khalsa Panth.

1940 Gandhi wrote a nasty letter to Master Tara Singh. It contained some of his preceived notions about Sikhs and the Akali movement. It was also influenced by the Punjab Congress's solid support of Subash Chandra Bose for the Presidentship of the Congress vis a vis Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Gandhi's nominee.

17th August

1931 The foundation stone was laid for Sri Guru Ram Das Sarai.

1947 Radcliffe Award decided the boundary between Pakistan and the Sikh Homeland.

1994 Principal Satbir Singh, a renowned scholar of GurSikhism passed away in Patiala.

18th August

1887 Sardar Thakur Singh Sandhwalia, the chief of Sri Guru Singh Sabha movement, and a chief proponent of Khalsa Raj, passed away. SINGH SABHA, a reform group of Amritdhari GurSikhs who objectively sought the eradication of the wrong practices in re-establishing the true traditions of GurSikhism. Their initial efforts for religious propagation and education resulted in the establishment of Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Amritsar, in 1872. Sardar Thakur Singh Sandawalaia was the first chief, while the temporary offices and gathering facilities were organized at Guru Ka Bagh. The objectives of Singh Sabha, Amritsar, were to inculcate the principles of Sikh religion as preached by the Sikh Gurus among the Sikhs with a view to restoring Sikhism to its pristine purity, preach the principles of Sikh religion by word of mouth, by publication of historical and religious books, and through magazines

and newspapers, encourage propagation of Punjabi, reclaim apostates and attract the sympathies of those highly placed in public administration to the educational progress of the Sikhs. The Singh Sabha was to shun politics.

1922 Karam Singh of Jhingar, Master Dalip Singh of Gossal and Kishan Singh Gargaj visit Montgomery jail to meet Master Mota Singh.

20th August

1922 Babbars call to plunder treasuries through the Babbar Akali Doaba newspaper.

1942 Protection of Sikh interests again came up in British mind. British, while preparing to leave Indian subcontinent were conscious of the fact that the Sikhs have a rightful claim to a Sikh State but did not want to create one. Mr. Amery, Secretary of State, in his letter to Viceroy linked the Sikh concern for a degree of autonomy sufficient to protect them from Muslim domination in the context of Pakistan scheme and sought to explore the various possibilities they suggest in advance of any further constitutional discussions. He came to the conclusion that a separate Sikhdom is really unworkable without extensive transfer of population, and wanted the reform department to work out contingency plans in complete secrecy.

1944 All Party Sikh Conference passed resolution for the creation of an independent Sikh state.

1947 PEPSU established through a combination of eight regions.

1980 Harchand Singh Longowal was elected President of the Shiromani Akali Dal. Gently spoken and mild-mannered, he was assisted by a well-informed and sharp-witted writer and political commentator, of exactly his own age, Rajinder Singh, Editor of Kuami Ekta. Harchand Singh Longowal had chosen him to be his team-mate as one of the general secretaries of the party.

1982 Sardar Manjit Singh alias Musibat Singh was killed at Rajasansi airport, Amritsar. He was shot at a point blank range by D.S.P. Bachan Singh when Manjeet Singh surrendered and came out of the plane. Subsequently, D.S.P. Bachan Singh with all the members of his family was killed except his daughter.

1982 Gurmit Singh's nails pulled out and hands burnt by Indian Police.

Gurmit Singh of the village Dhulkot (Ludhiana) was arrested on by the police. He was taken to Rahon (Jullundur) police station where the nails of his hands and feet were pulled out by the police and both hands burned over candles. When police failed to get any information from him, he was killed in a fake encounter.

21st August

1664 Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji visits Kiratpur.



1982 Sardar Gurmit Singh of Dhudkot was martyred in a false police encounter.

1982 Gurmit Singh Rahon killed in fake encounter after a bomb attack on Darbara Singh, the terrorist Chief Minister of Punjab.

Happy 79th Independence Day!

“Shahidon ko shraddhanjali”

PATRIOTIC MUSICAL EVENING

Be a part of this special celebration of independence, as we pay heartfelt tribute to the brave hearts who gave us freedom.

An evening filled with patriotic melodies, stirring memories, and a celebration of India's glorious journey.

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Time: 5:00 PM

Location: Long Island Marriott

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- 5 PM to 7 PM: Welcome and Dinner
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Ticket Options:

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- Elite Preferred: \$150 per person

Special Instructions:

- Unassigned Seating for Elite ticket option
- Preferred outfit choices include Indian traditional attire in saffron, green, or white

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BLUESKY
HOSPITALITY SOLUTIONS

WEEKLY HOROSCOPE - AUGUST 18 TO AUGUST 24, 2025

By Chirag Daruwalla - Son of Astrologer Bejan Daruwalla



BEJAN DARUWALLA AND CHIRAG DARUWALLA

ARIES



Ganesha says this week, you may face some challenges, especially due to negative energies. You are being led to face disagreements and problems. These challenges can come in both personal and professional life. You need to maintain patience and restraint. This week, be restrained in your behavior and try to stay away from any controversial situation. Maintain openness in communication with family members, so that disputes are reduced. It is important to maintain positive relations with colleagues at the workplace. Also, take some care in terms of health, as stress can affect your health. Take time to relax and prepare yourself mentally. Meditation and yoga can prove to be helpful for you. Face problems this week, but remember that there is an opportunity hidden in every difficulty. Move forward with patience and courage.

TAURUS



Ganesha says this week will bring amazing changes in your life. You will get the opportunity to excel in your tasks. During this time, your creativity and sanjivani shakti will increase, which will enable you to face any challenge easily. Your social life will also improve, and it is time to make new connections. Emphasis on spending quality time with friends and family. Realize how important the people around you are. Keep in mind that it is important to maintain your self-confidence. As the week progresses, you will feel that there is clarity in your thoughts, which will help you make the right decisions. Finally, take special care of your health this week. Regular exercise and a balanced diet will be beneficial for you. If you pay attention to all these aspects, this week will be extremely successful and positive for you.

GEMINI



Ganesha says this week, you may face some challenges. You may feel some obstacles in your routine. It is time to be patient and keep your emotions in control. Some people around you may try to take advantage of your situation, so be cautious. It will be important to communicate your thoughts clearly to avoid misunderstandings. In the field of work, challenges may come, but you will face them with your intelligence and creativity. Differences may also arise in personal relationships, so try to communicate. By keeping yourself

positive at this time and changing tactics as needed, you can be sure to succeed in your tasks. In terms of health, meditation will be beneficial for you. Self-love and relaxation are required. Instead of worrying about things that are out of control, channel your energy into positive activities. Remember, this is a changing time, and you need to be extremely vigilant. Organize your schedule and keep moving forward.

CANCER



Ganesha says challenges may arise for you this week. This situation may agitate you mentally and emotionally. Try to channel your energy in positive directions. Self-reflection will help you recognize the strengths within you. You need to balance your personal and professional life. Spending time with family and listening to their ideas will be important at this time. Be cautious in financial matters, as carelessness can lead to losses. Pay attention to health, regular exercise can bring mental peace. You will be appreciated for your work in society, but do not forget to have faith in yourself. Be cautious and maintain patience in difficult moments. This week will test your decision-making ability and patience. Listen to your inner voice to move in the right direction.

LEO



Ganesha says this week, you may see unexpected positive changes in your life. Your confidence will be high, and you will impress others with your qualities. There will also be enthusiasm in your social life, which can lead to new friends and opportunities. Be patient and keep your thoughts clear. During this time, time spent with family will give you mental balance. If you are working on a project, then it will be very beneficial to maintain proper coordination with colleagues. Be careful from a financial point of view, as expenses may increase. Pay attention to your health and exercise regularly. Your positivity and energy will inspire others. The most important thing this week is that you focus on the plans set for your desires and goals. Your hard work will prove fruitful in the coming time.

VIRGO



Ganesha says many positive things are coming to the fore this week. You are likely to get success and happiness in both personal and professional fields. This week, you will be able to express your ideas and plans in a clear manner, which will strengthen your relationship with your colleagues and friends. This time is favorable for starting a new project or work. In terms of health, practicing

meditation and yoga will help in increasing your mental balance. Spending time with family members will make your relationships even sweeter. Financial situation will remain stable, but make decisions wisely in matters of savings and investments. If you remain dedicated to even small tasks, success will come to you. Meanwhile, do not forget to listen to the voice of your soul. This will allow you to become introverted and even more motivated towards your goal. Remember, every challenge can be faced with a positive attitude and hard work. Instead of battling yourself this week, give yourself a chance to expose yourself. This is the time for you to touch new heights!

LIBRA



Ganesha says this week will bring mixed experiences for you. There may be ups and downs in your social life, but keep in mind that these are only temporary problems. You may experience some conflict, but face it with patience and understanding. On the professional front, your ideas are likely to be recognized, but be cautious in your interactions with your colleagues. Avoid any dispute or misunderstanding, as these can prevent you from moving forward. In personal life, sweetness will remain in relationships, but there can also be disputes over some small things. Try to talk openly with your loved ones, so that misunderstandings can be removed. In terms of health, resort to meditation and yoga to avoid stress. Try to keep your mental state positive. This week, keep in mind that instead of getting scared of difficulties, accept them as a challenge and maintain your confidence.

SCORPIO



This week, pay attention to your mental state. While on the one hand, the circumstances around you may be full of difficulty, on the other hand, you will need dedication and patience. Try to keep your thoughts positive, as mental stress can affect your energy level. During this period, you will feel that some issues are not in your control. But accepting that there is a problem is the first step towards its solution. Try to maintain a balance in work, family, and personal life. Tension may increase in relationships, so resort to communication and express your thoughts clearly. It is also important to pay attention to health. You can get mental peace through yoga and meditation. At this time, there is a need to focus on your emotions, because you should not forget your happiness while caring for others. You need to take some time for yourself and prepare yourself to deal with the challenges of this week. Move forward with positive thinking and strength; this week can prove to be a turning point for your development.

SAGITTARIUS



Ganesha says this week, you will come across many new opportunities that indicate positive changes in your life. Your confidence will increase, and you will be motivated to achieve your goals. When you take important decisions in your life, do not forget to consider the advice of others. This time will also have a positive impact on your relationships. Time spent with family and friends will increase your happiness. Meeting an old friend is possible, who may express something important to you. In terms of health, take care of your mental and physical health. Regular exercise and meditation will keep you full of energy. This week will be moderate from the financial point of view, so avoid making big purchases and try to keep the budget balanced. Overall, this week is a time of new possibilities, strengthening relationships, and self-discovery for you. Welcome new experiences and keep your inner enthusiasm alive.

CAPRICORN



Ganesha says this week is a great time to solve problems. Your hard work and patience can take you to new heights of success. You will experience novelty and positivity. Relationships with colleagues at work will be strong, which will help in executing your plans. In personal life, there will be harmony in family matters. If there was any old problem going on, then its solution is possible this week. Pay attention to health, a little fitness, and yoga will give you energy. There will be stability in material comforts and financial matters, but a little financial management will be necessary. Finally, you will get a chance to go on a short trip or spend time with friends, which will boost your morale. Have faith in yourself and move forward with positivity.

AQUARIUS



Ganesha says this week, you may face some challenges that will be necessary to overcome. You may face mental stress. This is the time to handle your emotions and keep yourself calm. Maintain patience in your relationships, as things may escalate for some reason. On the work front, your hard work is likely to be recognized, but at the same time, some problems may arise. Communicate better with team members, so that there is no hindrance to work. Health-wise, rest and self-care are a must. Meditation and yoga can help improve your mental health. Boost creativity in your life; this is the time to focus on your hobbies. Remember, after every difficulty, there is a smooth path. Face

BIRTHDAY HOROSCOPE : AUGUST 18 TO AUGUST 24 BY VEDIC ASTROLOGER NASTUR BEJAN DARUWALLA



**VEDIC ASTROLOGER NASTUR
BEJAN DARUWALLA**

AUGUST 18

Ganesha says you strike the ideal balance between religion and logic. You will spend a lot of time traveling in the coming year. You will be fascinated by both music and literature and listening to music can bring you peace. You love to support those who are oppressed. You will have many possibilities to help those less fortunate in the coming year. The subject of your choice will be available for study, and you will be able to delve deeper into it. As a result of this, you will be successful in your academic subject. You are obsessed with maintaining law and order.

AUGUST 19

Ganesha says your character and an optimistic outlook toward life will enable you to surround yourself with a large number of friends. Proximity to water bodies will benefit you financially in the coming year. Try to get a job in a city or town near a river or sea. Those of you who are single can guess to get married. You may have a strong sense of independence and self-assurance. In the coming year, you will roam among intelligent people. This will benefit you in every way. After your marriage, you will be prosperous.

AUGUST 20

Ganesha says your friends will notice your humility and humility and will

come to you for help and guidance. However, you sometimes get restless and make hasty decisions as a result. It only gets worse as a result. You do not enjoy exercising your authority because you are submissive and meek by nature. However, you also hate people interfering in your matters. You value privacy and like to be alone. Your passion for reading and thirst for information will be your assets in the coming year. You will be able to harness this powerful power of observation so that you will be able to notice small movements around you.

AUGUST 21

Ganesha says you will experience many events in the coming year, but it is best not to overreact to unimportant issues. White, blue, purple, and cream are auspicious colors for you. You are naturally a studious person, and you are happy when you are surrounded by literature. You will be willing to defy tradition and decide what you think is best in matters of love. Those who will get married this year should look forward to a happy and prosperous life in marriage. Your dedication and hard work will be noticed by your managers, and you will be rewarded for your efforts. You are naturally good at teaching. You enjoy doing it professionally and find fulfillment in it.

AUGUST 22

Ganesha says in the coming year, you can expect changes both on the professional and domestic front. Some of you may suffer financial loss by betting. It is advised that you lend money only when you are sure that you will get it back. In the coming year, you will be able to make your own decisions because of your independence. You are serious by nature, and you value some level of solitude in your life. You like to spend time alone working on your projects. The suffering of physically challenged persons is unbearable. You will spend a lot of time in the coming year working as a social worker for hospitals and non-profit organizations.

AUGUST 23

Ganesha says although you tend to have a practical approach and take your obligations seriously, you need to rein in your tendency to act stubborn and jealous at times. Your spouse gives you love and affection, and your children excel and make you proud. If there is a sudden deterioration in the health of an elderly relative, there may be a concern. Be extra careful while driving at night. You have the potential to invest extensively in the coming year not only in speculative industries but also in real estate. Benefit in kind and cash from family and friends.

AUGUST 24

Ganesha says in the coming year, your self-assurance will help you become popular and successful. Family and friends will come to you for guidance and support. The domestic front will be filled with a lot of happiness and love, especially for your children. Colors like Yellow, Purple, and Green are Lucky for You. Some of you are likely to inherit property in the coming year, especially from your father's side. Your career will involve a lot of travel in the coming year. You enjoy developing your spiritual abilities and using them to help groups of people.

Nastur Bejan Daruwalla is available for astrological consultations. He can be reached at
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CONTD FROM PAGE 60

these challenges with courage and positivity.



PISCES

Ganesha says this week will be full of various opportunities and challenges for you. Your sensitivity and emotional depth will help you build strong relationships with people around you at this time. Collaborative exchange of ideas at the workplace can open new doors for you. Although you may feel some uncertainty, you should be patient. Your creativity is in your favor at this time, and you can expand your talents. In matters of love, your communication skills will help you express your feelings clearly, which will further strengthen your relationship. It is important to be health-conscious. A little exercise and meditation will give you mental peace. At the end of the week, it is time to focus on your personal goals and aspirations. Remember that your intuition will guide you in the right direction.

Author Bio

Chirag Daruwalla is the best astrologer and one of the most famous names in the astrology world. He has more than 18 years of experience. Readers may seek his advice related to career, health, finance, business, money, love and marriage. He has complete knowledge, solutions, and guidance to all the problems related to life. Visit his website chiragdaruwalla.com. He is available for consultations on WhatsApp number +91 8141566266 or by email: info@chiragdaruwalla.com

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Nastur Bejan Daruwalla

Janmashtami: Celebrating the birth of Lord Krishna

Krishna Janmashtami, celebrated on the eighth day (Ashtami) of the dark fortnight in the month of Bhadrapada (August-September), commemorates the birth of Lord Krishna, the eighth avatar of Vishnu.

The legend revolves around Kansa, a tyrannical king and Krishna's uncle, who was destined to be killed by Krishna. To avoid this fate, Kansa imprisoned Krishna's parents, Devaki and Vasudeva, and attempted to kill all their newborn children.

Krishna was miraculously saved by Vasudeva, who carried him across the Yamuna River to Gokula, where he was raised by Nanda and Yashoda. Janmashtami celebrates Krishna's birth, his triumph over evil, and the restoration of dharma.

Birth of Lord Krishna

It is believed that Krishna was born in a dungeon of Mathura, Uttar Pradesh, on this day at the clock struck midnight. Krishna is the god of love, tenderness and compassion. Hindu mythology portrays him as a prankster, a gentle lover, a universal supreme being and child-like God.

The narrative and stories of Lord Krishna's life are referred to as Krishna Leela. According to the tale, Krishna was born in the Yadava clan of Mathura to Queen Devaki and her husband, King Vasudeva.

Devaki had a brother, Kansa, a tyrant, who along with some other demon kings was terrorising Mother Earth. Kansa had usurped the throne of Mathura from his father, the benevolent King Ugrasen. Mother Earth took the form of a cow and went to Lord Brahma, the creator God of Hinduism, with her plight. Lord Brahma then summoned Lord Vishnu, who assured Mother Earth that he would take birth as Lord Krishna to end this tyranny.

Kansa agreed to let Devaki get married to Yadava prince Vasudeva in the hopes of taking over the Yadava clan too. When Devaki was getting married, Kansa was told by fortune tellers that one of the offsprings of Devaki would bring his end. In his paranoia, Kansa brandished his sword and decided to kill Devaki right there and then. But after Vasudeva begged for his wife's life and promised to hand each child to Kansa as soon as it was born, Kansa let go of his sister, and instead imprisoned Devaki and Vasudeva, and made sure that none of Devaki's children survived. As soon as a child was born to Devaki, Kansa would smash the child's head against the walls of the prison.

However, on the night of Krishna's birth, as soon as Krishna was born, a bright light filled the prison and Vasudeva was woken up by a divine voice that guided him to take Krishna across the Yamuna and leave him with his dear friend Nandraja, the head of the Gopa tribe. Nandraja and his wife Yashoda had also given birth to a baby girl that night, so Vasudeva secretly carried baby Krishna across the Yamuna river, which was no longer in its calm state, but instead was raging as if it were the ocean. Just then Lord Vishnu's Shesh Naag, the giant multi-headed snake came and helped Vasudeva carry Krishna safely across the river. Vasudeva went to Nandraja's house and



exchanged the babies. His heart was filled with a deep sadness, as if he had left a part of his soul behind. He headed back to the prison with the exchanged baby, who gave a loud cry as soon as she lay next to Devaki. The guards informed Kansa that Devaki's eight child was finally born.

Devaki begged Kansa not to kill the baby, she pleaded that the prophecy must have been wrong as her son was meant to bring the end of Kansa but to no avail. When Kansa tried to kill the exchanged baby, it transformed into Goddess Durga and warned him that his death had arrived in his kingdom, and would come back to punish Kansa for his sins. That Kansa would find no peace and keep thinking about his end, she said that she could kill him then and there, but Kansa's end had to be timely, and then the goddess vanished.

However, Kansa was certain that the prophecy may not be entirely true given that if his slayer was born inside the prison, he would have surely killed him. With a slight relief, Kansa finally freed Vasudeva and Devaki, and let them live in a separate palace. After some days, Vasudeva shared what happened on the night of Krishna's birth, and though Devaki was sad, she was relieved to hear her son was safe.

Days later, news of Nandraja and Yashoda's son's birth reached the kingdom, people were gushing about the unique twinkle in the child's eyes, about how he was always happy and how his mere presence spread joy and cheer all around. Krishna grew up unaware of his destiny, far away from all the chaos of Mathura, in Gokul, with Nanda Baba and his wife Yashoda, as his foster parents.

Lord Krishna's childhood

Among the countless tales of Indian spirituality, few glow with as much tenderness, mischief, and cosmic wonder as the childhood of Lord Krishna. The eighth avatar of Lord Vishnu, Krishna is revered not only as the divine protector and philosopher of the Bhagavad Gita but also as the Makhan Chor (butter thief), the



playful cowherd, and the darling of Gokul. His childhood stories-Bal Leelas-come primarily from sacred texts such as the Bhagavata Purana, Vishnu Purana, and Harivamsa Purana, where divine play (lila) becomes a window to profound spiritual truths.

Birth in Adversity: A Child Against a Tyrant

Krishna's childhood is rooted in a tale of cosmic confrontation. His parents, Vasudeva and Devaki, were imprisoned by Devaki's brother, King Kansa, after a divine prophecy foretold that Devaki's

eighth son would bring Kansa's downfall. To thwart this destiny, Kansa cruelly slew each of Devaki's first six infants, while the seventh-Balarama-was mystically transferred to the womb of Rohini by divine intervention.

On the night of Krishna's birth, described vividly in Bhagavata Purana (10.3), the Yamuna River parted and prison doors unlocked miraculously as Vasudeva carried the newborn across to Gokul, placing him in the care of Nanda and Yashoda. The child was exchanged with Yashoda's newborn daughter, who, when

Kansa tried to kill her, transformed into Goddess Yogamaya and vanished into the sky, warning the tyrant of his imminent doom.

The Enchanting Child of Gokul

Raised as a humble cowherd's son, Krishna grew up in idyllic Vrindavan, surrounded by love. Yashoda's tender care and Nanda's affection made him the darling of every household. Yet, this child was no ordinary infant—his divine aura shone even through his innocent mischief.

The Butter Thief (Makhan Chor): Krishna's insatiable love for butter became the heart of Gokul's laughter. He would crawl into kitchens, break pots, and share stolen butter with monkeys and friends. In Bhagavata Purana (10.9), Yashoda ties Krishna with a rope (Damodara Lila) when she catches him in the act. Astonishingly, no rope is long enough to bind him until she prays humbly, showing that only love, not force, can hold the Divine.

The Universal Vision to Mother Yashoda: Once, when Krishna mischievously ate mud, Yashoda scolded him. But when she asked him to open his mouth, she saw the entire universe—stars, planets, and cosmic deities—within him (Bhagavata Purana 10.8). This vision revealed the paradox of Krishna's childhood: the Infinite dwelling in a child's form.

Protecting Gokul from Peril

Kansa's repeated attempts to eliminate Krishna through demonic emissaries only deepened his legend. Each episode was both thrilling and symbolic:

- Putana Vadh: The demoness Putana tried to poison Krishna by nursing him with her venomous milk. But the infant sucked out her life instead, purifying her soul. This story shows Krishna's grace: even enemies are liberated by contact with him.
- Shakatasura and Trinavarta: As a toddler, Krishna kicked over a cart demon (Shakatasura) and vanquished a whirlwind demon (Trinavarta) who tried to carry him away—symbolizing his power over inert obstacles and delusive forces.
- Yamala-Arjuna Trees: Tied by Yashoda to a wooden mortar for mischief, Krishna dragged it between two trees, uprooting them and freeing the cursed demigods trapped within (Bhagavata Purana 10.10).

Govardhan Lifting and Early Boyhood

As Krishna grew, his playful charm deepened into heroic acts:

- Vanquishing Kaliya: The venomous serpent Kaliya poisoned the Yamuna River. Krishna leapt onto its heads, subduing it with a dance that symbolized the triumph of divine harmony over destructive forces.
- Govardhan Hill: When Indra, the rain god, angrily sent torrential storms, Krishna lifted the entire Govardhan Hill on his little finger, sheltering the villagers. This Govardhan Lila redefined worship—not appeasing gods out of fear, but serving nature and community with devotion.

Symbolism of Krishna's Childhood



Krishna's Bal Leelas are more than charming folktales:

- Butter theft represents the Lord's love for the pure heart (makhan = churned essence of devotion).
- Yashoda's rope shows that divine love is bound only by selfless surrender.
- Demon-slaying episodes signify the removal of ego, greed, and delusion from human life.
- Govardhan lifting teaches ecological reverence and courage to challenge hollow ritualism.

Cultural Celebrations

Across India, Krishna's childhood is celebrated with unparalleled joy:

- Janmashtami: Marking Krishna's birth, devotees fast, sing bhajans, and enact Raslilas and Dahi Handi—a symbolic breaking of butter pots.
- Vrindavan and Mathura: These sacred towns recreate every episode of Krishna's youth through vibrant festivals.
- Puri and Dwarka: Temples emphasize his divine kingship but never forget his innocent days as Gopal, the cowherd boy.

Krishna's victory over Kansa

The sun shone bright over Mathura as the grand wrestling arena filled with cheering crowds. King Kansa sat on his jeweled throne, masking his fear with forced arrogance. For years, he had tried to kill his sister Devaki's eighth son, the child foretold to end his life. Yet here Krishna stood—no longer a child, but a radiant youth, calm and smiling beside his brother Balarama.

The trumpets blared. Two monstrous wrestlers, Chanura and Mushtika, stepped forward, their muscles rippling like coiled serpents.

"Fight them!" Kansa roared. "Show Mathura that prophecy means nothing!"

Krishna met Chanura's gaze, unafraid. The bout began, shaking the ground with every blow. Balarama grappled Mushtika with the strength of a thousand elephants, while Krishna moved like lightning, dodging, striking, and finally lifting Chanura high into the air before hurling him to the ground. Within moments, both wrestlers lay lifeless.

The arena gasped. Citizens whispered, "This is no ordinary boy... this is divine!"

Seeing his plan fail, Kansa sprang from his throne in rage. "Guards! Seize these



cowherd boys!" But before his soldiers could move, Krishna leapt onto the royal platform in a single bound. Grabbing the tyrant by his hair, he dragged him down, throwing him onto the ground. The earth trembled as Krishna placed his foot upon Kansa's chest. With one decisive strike, the king's reign of terror ended.

A strange peace spread through Kansa's face in death, as though his soul recognized the divine hand that freed it from fear. The arena erupted with joy. Krishna walked calmly to the prison, breaking open the chains of Vasudeva and Devaki, bowing to them as his true parents. Then, instead of claiming the throne, he placed Kansa's father, Ugrasena, back on it, restoring justice to Mathura. The prophecy was fulfilled, and the people knew: dharma had triumphed over adharmarighteousness over tyranny.

Celebrations

Janmashtami is celebrated all over India and abroad with great enthusiasm. The celebrations start from early morning and go past midnight, the time when Krishna is believed to have been born. The temples are decorated with flowers and lights. The idols of Krishna and other deities in the temple are bathed with a variety of auspicious liquids including yogurt, honey, ghee in a kind of ablution

ceremony called abhisheka. After that they are decorated with new clothes and jewellery. Images and idols of Krishna's infancy are placed in swings and cradles in temples and homes. Before midnight, devotees gather around in the temples and sing devotional songs and dance in the praise of Lord Krishna. At midnight devotees welcome the birth of Lord Krishna and exchange sweets and gifts. Children also enjoy dressing up as Radha, Krishna and their associates, and reenacting Krishna's pastimes and childhood events.

Dahi Handi Celebration

In Maharashtra and some other parts of India, young men form human pyramids to reach and break earthen pots filled with buttermilk, which is tied at a height. This event, known as "Dahi Handi," reenacts Krishna's playful nature as a child who loved stealing butter and curd.

Krishna Janmashtami is not only a religious celebration but also a cultural event that fosters a sense of unity and devotion among people. It is a time when families and communities come together to share joy and celebrate the divine presence of Lord Krishna. The festival also teaches important moral lessons from the life and teachings of Lord Krishna, such as righteousness, love, and the path of devotion.

Varaha Jayanti: When the Cosmic Boar rescued the earth

In the Hindu cosmic cycle, whenever the balance between righteousness (dharma) and unrighteousness (adharma) tilts dangerously, Lord Vishnu descends to the mortal realm in one of his ten primary avatars (Dashavatara).

The third avatar-Varaha, the Divine Boar-is among the most dramatic and symbolically profound, for it is not merely a tale of slaying a demon but of physically lifting the Earth back to its rightful place in the cosmic order. Varaha Jayanti marks the day of this divine descent, blending vivid mythology with deep spiritual and ecological messages.

The Legend of Varaha Avatar

Origins in the Puranas

The Varaha incarnation is narrated in several scriptures-most notably the Shreemad Bhagavata Purana, Vishnu Purana, Matsya Purana, and the Varaha Purana.

According to the Vishnu Purana, the demon king Hiranyaksha, brother of Hiranyakashipu, was born to sage Kashyapa and Diti. Endowed with near-immortality through boons from Lord Brahma, Hiranyaksha's arrogance knew no bounds. In his quest to challenge the Devas, he rolled the Earth into a ball and plunged her deep into the Garbhodaka Ocean -the primal waters at the base of the universe.

The Descent of Varaha

In response, Lord Vishnu manifested as Varaha, a colossal boar with a body as vast as a mountain, a roar that shook the three worlds, and tusks gleaming like the crescent moon. In some versions, the avatar emerged from the nostril of Brahma, growing to an immeasurable size within moments.

Varaha plunged into the cosmic waters, and there, in a battle that raged for a thousand years (by the reckoning of the gods), he clashed with Hiranyaksha. Ultimately, with a mighty blow of his tusk, the demon was slain. The Earth (Bhudevi), personified as a radiant goddess, was lifted upon Varaha's tusks and placed gently back into her orbit, restoring stability to the universe.

Historical & Cultural Traces

Archaeological Evidence: The Varaha motif is one of the oldest represented Vishnu avatars in temple art. The Udayagiri caves in Madhya Pradesh feature a monumental 5th-century CE Varaha relief, commissioned during the Gupta period, symbolizing royal authority and divine protection.

- **South Indian Tradition:** Temples like the Sri Varaha Swamy Temple in Tirumala and the Bhu Varaha Swamy Temple in Srimushnam, Tamil Nadu are major pilgrimage spots where the avatar is worshipped daily.
- **Royal Emblems:** The Varaha emblem was adopted by the Chalukya and Vijayanagara dynasties to symbolize their role as protectors of the realm, just as Vishnu protected the Earth.



Rituals and Observances

Varaha Jayanti is typically observed on Bhadrapada Shukla Tritiya (third lunar day of the waxing fortnight in the month of Bhadrapada-August-September), though in some traditions, it is celebrated in Magha Shukla Dwadashi in honor of the Nrisimha-Varaha aspect.

Main Ritual Practices

- **Fasting (Vrat):** Devotees undertake nirjala (waterless) or phalahar (fruit and milk only) fasting from sunrise to moonrise.
- **Puja Vidhi:** Bathing the idol of Varaha with panchamrit (milk, curd, honey, sugar, and ghee).
- **Offering of sesame seeds, betel leaves, coconut, jaggery, and fresh flowers.**
- **Recitation of Varaha Stotra, Vishnu Sahasranama, and chapters from the Varaha Purana.**
- **Bhudevi Worship:** Since Bhudevi is central to the legend, she is honored alongside Varaha, symbolizing gratitude towards Earth.
- **Charity (Dana):** Donating grains, cows, or clothes to Brahmins and the poor is considered auspicious.
- **Temple Celebrations:** In major Vaishnavite temples, elaborate abhishekams, archanas, and alankarams (ornamental dressings) are performed, often followed by devotional singing and feeding of pilgrims.

Spiritual and Philosophical Significance

- **Restoration of Cosmic Order:** The lifting of Bhudevi symbolizes the divine's role in restoring balance when the world is submerged in

Important information

Varaha Jayanti Muhurat - 01:40 PM to 04:15 PM

Duration - 02 Hours 35 Mins

Tritiya Tithi Begins - 12:34 PM on Aug 25, 2025

Tritiya Tithi Ends - 01:54 PM on Aug 26, 2025

- **moral decay.**
- **Triumph Over Arrogance:** Hiranyaksha's defeat illustrates that no boon or power can overcome the destiny shaped by arrogance and injustice.
- **Ecological Awareness:** The act of rescuing Earth mirrors the human responsibility of safeguarding nature and living sustainably.
- **Symbol of Stability:** In Hindu cosmology, Earth resting on Varaha's tusks represents an unshakeable cosmic foundation-steady yet upheld by divine will.
- **Allegory of the Mind:** Some philosophical interpretations equate the "ocean" with the unconscious mind, Bhudevi with wisdom, and Varaha with the awakened self that rescues wisdom from the depths of ignorance.

Regional Variations in Celebration

- **Andhra Pradesh & Tamil Nadu:** Special prayers are offered in Tirumala's Varaha Swamy temple, where legend says Lord Venkateswara promised to first grant darshan to those who worship Varaha.

- **Odisha:** At the Bhu Varaha temple in Chaurasi, grand yagnas and bhajans are organized.
- **North India:** The day is often merged with Vishnu-related rituals, including discourses on the Varaha Katha in local temples.

In Art, Literature, Performing Traditions

- The Varaha avatar is a frequent subject in classical dance dramas like Kuchipudi and Kathakali, where the ocean battle is portrayed with theatrical grandeur.
- Poetic works like the Varaha Gita within the Varaha Purana present dialogues between Varaha and Bhudevi, discussing cosmic creation, dharma, and devotion.
- In sculpture, Varaha is sometimes depicted anthropomorphic (human body, boar head) or fully zoomorphic, always holding Bhudevi protectively.
- Varaha Jayanti is not merely a festival but a philosophical reminder: whenever life is overwhelmed by chaos-be it moral, environmental, or personal-there exists a higher force ready to rescue and restore. The story's relevance today is striking, urging humankind to protect Earth, confront arrogance, and strive for balance.

In a world where ecological balance is threatened, the ancient image of Varaha lifting the Earth is both a devotional icon and a call to action: Protect the planet, for it is the very lap of the divine.



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CONTD FROM PAGE 1

PM Modi's 79th I-Day address charts...

a demonstration of India's strategic autonomy. Using Made-in-India weapons, the operation dismantled terror networks and Pakistan-based infrastructure, signaling a new era where India will no longer accept nuclear blackmail or threats on foreign terms.

On the issue of the Indus Waters Treaty, he made it unequivocally clear: "India has now decided, blood and water will not flow together. The people have realized that the Indus Waters Treaty was unjust. Water from the Indus River system irrigated enemy lands while our farmers suffered."

This statement reaffirmed that India will no longer compromise on its national interests, and the operation underscored the country's ability to act swiftly and decisively, relying entirely on indigenous technology and defense platforms.

Atmanirbhar Bharat, strengthening technology, industry

PM Modi said, "Dependence on others raises questions about a nation's independence. It is unfortunate when dependence becomes a habit, a dangerous one. That's why we must remain aware and committed to becoming self-reliant. Self-reliance is not just about exports, imports, the rupee, or the dollar. It is about our capabilities, our strength to stand on our own."

That is why he announced that India will roll out its first Made-in-India semiconductor chip by 2025 and is opening the nuclear sector to private players, creating unprecedented opportunities in energy and technology.

He urged every citizen, especially the youth, to take part in nation-building by innovating and producing jet engines, social media platforms, fertilizers, and other critical technologies indigenously, forging a future where India stands self-reliant, powerful, and globally respected.

PM Modi also highlighted India's bold steps to secure resources critical for its future. Through the National Critical Minerals Mission, the country is exploring 1,200 sites to ensure access to minerals essential for energy, industry, and defense.

He emphasized that controlling these minerals strengthens India's strategic autonomy, keeping its industrial and defense sectors truly self-reliant. Complementing this, the National Deepwater Exploration Mission will harness India's offshore energy resources, boosting energy self-reliance and reducing dependence on foreign fuel imports, marking another step toward a fully independent and powerful India.

PM Modi urged the nation to achieve self-reliance in medicines and innovation, highlighting India's strength as the "pharmacy of the world". He asked, "Shouldn't we be the ones providing the best and most affordable medicines for the welfare of humanity?"

He emphasized India's growing prowess in domestic pharmaceutical innovation and the urgent need to develop new medicines, vaccines, and life-saving treatments entirely within India. Drawing inspiration from India's COVID-19 response, where indigenous vaccines and platforms like CoWin saved millions of lives globally, he called on the nation to expand this spirit of innovation.

Researchers and entrepreneurs were urged to secure patents for new drugs and medical technologies, ensuring that India not only meets its own healthcare needs but also becomes a global hub of medical self-reliance and innovation, demonstrating the country's ability to lead in science, technology, and human welfare.

Mission Sudarshan Chakra

To strengthen India's offensive and deterrent capabilities, PM Modi launched Mission Sudarshan Chakra, drawing inspiration from India's rich cultural and mythological heritage. He said, "India is launching Mission Sudarshan Chakra to create a powerful weapon system to thwart any attempt by enemies to attack us."

The initiative is designed to enhance rapid, precise, and powerful defense responses, reinforcing India's strategic autonomy. PM Modi added, "All public places will be covered by an expanded nationwide security

shield by 2035," ensuring comprehensive protection for the nation while showcasing India's commitment to self-reliant defense.

Next-generation Reforms

PM Modi announced the formation of a Task Force for Next-Generation Economic Reforms, aimed at overhauling laws, rules, and procedures that govern economic activity.

He highlighted that the government has already abolished over 40,000 unnecessary compliances and 1,500 outdated laws, and in the latest parliamentary session, over 280 provisions were removed. Looking ahead, Next-Generation GST reforms by Diwali will reduce taxes on daily essentials, benefiting MSMEs, local vendors, and consumers, while simultaneously stimulating economic growth and creating a more efficient, citizen-friendly economy.

(Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news)

Trump confirms plans for 'economically..

I'd like to focus on our country, but I'm doing this to save a lot of lives.

Yeah, very severe."

He ends the briefing here.

Meanwhile, "Time to end the war. We are counting on America," Zelenskyy says, as he hopes for a trilateral summit with Trump, Putin.

Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskyy has just posted on social media, saying he expects to get a report from the Ukrainian intelligence services today "on the current intentions of the Russian side and its preparations for the meeting in Alaska."

Directly responding to Trump's earlier comments, he then says:

Indeed, high stakes.

He adds:

"The key thing is that this meeting should open up a real path toward a just peace and a substantive discussion between leaders in a trilateral format - Ukraine, the United States, and the Russian side.

It is time to end the war, and the necessary steps must be taken by Russia.

We are counting on America. We are ready, as always, to work as productively as possible." (Agencies)

DC sues Trump over police takeover as...

police at the request of the president, as outlined in Section 740 of the Home Rule Act.

Bowser also reposted a letter from DC attorney general Brian Schwalb, addressed to the mayor, which said that Bondi's order is "unlawful" and Bowser is "not legally obligated to follow it".

According to the federal lawsuit filed by the DC government today, the Trump administration has engaged in "a brazen usurpation of the District's authority over its own government".

The suit says that the president's move to federalize the DC police, and attorney general Pam Bondi's order to install DEA administrator Terry Cole as "emergency police commissioner", both "exceed the narrow delegation that Congress granted the President in Section 740".

A reminder, earlier this week the president invoked Section 740 of the DC Home Rule Act, which grants him a 30-day period to control the district's local law enforcement if he declares a safety emergency. To get an extension, the president would need Congress's approval.

The president has said that violent crime in DC - which the justice department says experienced a 30-year low in 2024 - is "the worst it's ever been".

The lawsuit also states that Section 740 only requires that the DC mayor "provide services" of the Metropolitan police department (MPD) to federal government, but "does not permit the President to seize control of MPD. Nor does it authorize the President to direct MPD in the policing of local crime."

CONTD FROM PAGE 9

How India can navigate Trump's tariff storm in a choppy world

According to a report prepared by the US

Department of Agriculture, top agricultural prospects for US exporters include cotton, dairy products, ethanol, fresh fruit, forest products, processed food and beverages, pulses, and tree nuts. According to this report, India has tremendous potential to be a large consumer of many of the high-quality and diverse agricultural products that the United States has to offer.

The US is seeking to significantly expand its agricultural exports to India, with a particular focus on commodities like cotton, corn and soybeans. India has concerns about allowing imports of certain products like corn and soybeans due to potential impacts on domestic farmers. However, it must be pointed out that the domestic demand for both these items is rising.

India is a significant consumer of corn, particularly for animal feed, human consumption, and increasingly for ethanol production. While it's also a notable producer, recent trends show a growing domestic demand that is reshaping the country's corn market. Corn consumption in India is rising, driven by factors like the adoption of corn-based snacks and dishes, increased use in animal feed, and the growing biofuel industry.

The Indian government's decision to promote ethanol production from corn has significantly increased demand, leading to a surge in imports. Corn is a crucial component of animal feed, especially for poultry and dairy, and the expansion of the livestock sector also contributes to the rising demand for corn. While India is a major corn producer, the increased domestic demand, coupled with the ethanol push, is leading to a shift in focus towards more imports for meeting domestic needs.

Likewise, India is a significant importer of soybeans and soybean oil. While India is no doubt a major producer, its domestic production is not sufficient to meet the growing demand for edible oils and animal feed. In fact, India is a big importer of soybean oil, with imports often exceeding domestic production. India relies on imports to meet a significant portion of its soybean oil needs, with a large percentage coming from countries like Argentina and Brazil.

While China remains the largest export destination for US soybeans, India is seen as a growing market, especially for soybean oil. The war in Ukraine has led India to seek alternative sources for vegetable oils, potentially boosting soybean oil imports from countries like the US. India had restricted imports of Genetically Modified soybeans but had also temporarily relaxed these restrictions in 2021 and 2022 to address shortages and rising prices.

To whatever extent is feasible, India could offer the US some more TRQs on specific American agricultural products like corn, soybeans and nuts while maintaining higher tariffs for quantities exceeding the quota. This could help to provide some concessions to the US in sectors where it is demanding greater market access while still protecting domestic industries.

Dairy product imports remain a sensitive sector in India, where cultural and dietary preferences influence food choices, and some restrictions exist on imports, particularly concerning animal by-products in feed. India's dairy imports are relatively small, with a focus on specific products like butter oil, skimmed milk powder, and ingredients like lactose and whey protein, primarily for industrial use. India does not currently offer TRQs for dairy imports and has halted such mechanisms since 2014. India also requires dairy imports to be certified as originating from animals not fed with feed containing ruminant or porcine byproducts, such as blood meal or meat and bone meal. Dairy products which do not meet this requirement cannot enter the Indian market.

In conclusion, Trump's tariffs and the penalty he is likely to put on India for purchasing Russian oil have undeniably introduced a new layer of complexity to the US-India relationship with significant geopolitical implications for India's foreign policy choices, economic trajectory, and regional standing. The tensions with the US are assuming dangerous proportions and the situation cannot be brushed off lightly.

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Proud Moment for Lotus
We organized a spiritual celebration in June to mark the International Day of Yoga with the Brahma Kumaris at their Americas headquarters in Great Neck, NY.



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Happy Independence Day, India

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History This Week AUG 15-21

AUGUST 15

August 15, 1969 - Woodstock began in a field near Yasgur's Farm at Bethel, New York. The three-day concert featured 24 rock bands and drew a crowd of more than 300,000 young people. The event came to symbolize the counter-culture movement of the 1960's.



Birthdays - French Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821) was born on the island of Corsica. Originally an officer in King Louis' Army, he rose to become Emperor amid the political chaos that followed the French Revolution. He built a half-million strong Grand Army which utilized newly invented modern tactics and improvisation in battle to sweep across Europe and acquire an empire for France. However, after defeats in Russia and later by the British, he went into exile on the island of St. Helena off the coast of Africa. On May 5, 1821, he died alone on the tiny island abandoned by everyone.

AUGUST 16



August 16, 1777 - During the American Revolutionary War, the Battle of Bennington, Vermont, occurred as militiamen from Vermont, aided by Massachusetts troops, wiped out a detachment of 800 German-Hessians sent by British General Burgoyne to seize horses.

August 16, 1780 - The Battle of Camden in South Carolina occurred during the American Revolutionary War. The battle was a big defeat for the Americans as forces under General Gates were defeated by troops of British General Charles Cornwallis, resulting in 900 Americans killed and 1,000 captured.

August 16, 1896 - Gold was discovered in Rabbit Creek, a tributary of the Klondike River in Alaska, resulting in the Great Klondike Gold Rush.

August 16, 1977 - Elvis Presley was pronounced dead at the Memphis Baptist Hospital at 3:30 p.m., at age 42.

Birthdays - T.E. Lawrence 'of Arabia' (1888-1935) was born in Tremadoc, North Wales. He led an Arab revolt against the Turks during World War I and served as a spy for the British. He was killed in a motorcycle accident at Dorset, England, on May 19, 1935.

Birthdays - Israeli leader Menachem Begin (1913-1992) was born in Brest-Litovsk, Poland. He fought for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine in the 1940's, serving as the leader of a militant Zionist group. In 1977, he became Prime Minister of Israel, and is best known for signing the 1979 Camp David Peace Accord between Israel and Egypt with President Jimmy Carter and President Anwar el Sadat of Egypt.

AUGUST 17

August 17, 1943 - During World War II in Europe, the Allies completed the conquest of the island of Sicily after just 38 days. This gave the Allies control of the Mediterranean and also led to the downfall of Benito Mussolini and Italy's eventual withdrawal from the war. However, the Germans managed to evacuate 39,569 troops, 47 tanks, 94 heavy guns, over 9,000 vehicles and 2,000 tons of ammunition back to the Italian mainland from Sicily.

August 17, 1978 - The first transatlantic balloon trip was completed by three Americans; Max Anderson, Ben Abruzzo, and Larry Newman, all from Albuquerque, New Mexico. Starting from Maine on August 11th, they traveled in Double Eagle II over 3,000 miles in 137 hours, landing about 60 miles west of Paris.



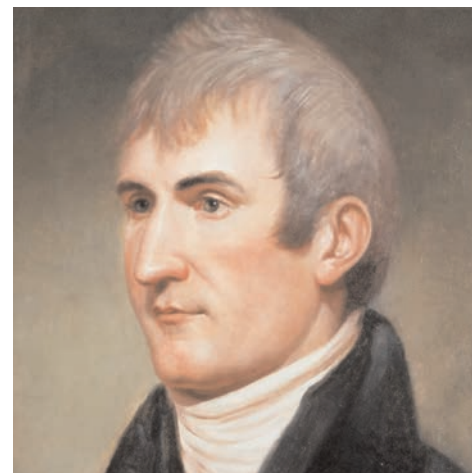
August 17, 1998 - Bill Clinton became the first sitting President to give testimony before a grand jury in which he, the President, was the focus of the investigation. This resulted from a sweeping investigation of the President by Independent Counsel Ken Starr as well as a private lawsuit concerning alleged sexual harassment by Clinton before he became President. In the evening, President Clinton appeared on national television and gave a speech admitting he had engaged in an improper relationship with former White House intern Monica Lewinsky. The admission occurred several months after a much publicized denial.

Birthdays - American frontiersman Davy Crockett (1786-1836) was born in

Hawkins County, Tennessee. He was a farmer, scout and politician who perished at age 49 during the final heroic defense of the Alamo in Texas.

AUGUST 18

August 18, 1920 - The 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified, granting women the right to vote.



Birthdays - American explorer Meriwether Lewis (1774-1809) was born near Charlottesville, Virginia. Along with William Clark, he explored the American West, and in 1805, after a journey of over 18 months, reached the Pacific Ocean.

AUGUST 19

August 19, 1934 - In Germany, a plebiscite was held in which 89.9 percent of German voters approved granting Chancellor Adolf Hitler additional powers, including the office of president.

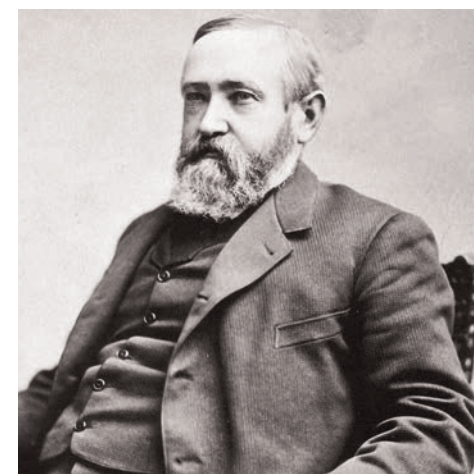
August 19, 1991 - Soviet hard-line Communists staged a coup, temporarily removing Mikhail Gorbachev from power. The coup failed within 72 hours as democratic reformer Boris Yeltsin rallied the Russian people. Yeltsin then became the leading power in the country. The Communist Party was soon banned and by December the Soviet Union itself disintegrated.



Birthdays - Aviation pioneer Orville Wright (1871-1948) was born in Dayton, Ohio. In 1903, Orville and his brother Wilbur achieved the world's first successful sustained and controlled flight of a motor-driven aircraft, following years of experimentation with kites and gliders.

Birthdays - Bill Clinton, the 42nd U.S. President was born in Hope, Arkansas, August 19, 1946. He was the first President elected who was not alive during World War II.

AUGUST 20



Birthdays - Benjamin Harrison (1833-1901) the 23rd U.S. President was born in North Bend, Ohio. He was the grandson of William Henry Harrison, the 9th President.

AUGUST 21



August 21, 1863 - During the American Civil War, William Quantrill led 450 irregular Confederate raiders on a pre-dawn terrorist raid of Lawrence, Kansas, leaving 150 civilians dead, 30 wounded and much of the town a smoking ruin. In 1862, Quantrill had been denied a Confederate commission by the Confederate Secretary of War, who labeled Quantrill's notions of war as 'barbarism.'

August 21, 1959 - President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed a proclamation admitting Hawaii to the Union as the 50th state.



August 21, 1983 - Filipino opposition leader Benigno S. Aquino, Jr., was assassinated at the Manila airport while leaving his plane. Public outcry over the killing ultimately led to the collapse of the government of Ferdinand E. Marcos and the inauguration of Corazon C. Aquino, widow of the slain man, as president.

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Tucked in the foothills of the Himalayas, along the banks of the emerald-green Ganga, Rishikesh is more than a destination—it's an experience. Known globally as the "Yoga Capital of the World" and a sacred gateway to the Char Dham pilgrimage, this Uttarakhand town seamlessly blends spirituality, adventure, and scenic beauty. From sunrise yoga sessions on the ghats to adrenaline-pumping river rafting, Rishikesh has a way of making every visitor find their own rhythm.

A Glimpse into History and Spirituality

Rishikesh's spiritual legacy is rooted deep in Hindu mythology. It is believed that Lord Rama performed penance here after defeating Ravana, and his brother Lakshmana crossed the Ganga at the spot now marked by the iconic Lakshman Jhula. Ancient sages (rishis) and saints found solace in its serene surroundings, giving the town its name—Rishikesh, "Lord of the Senses."

Rishikesh, over the years, has become extremely popular as the top spiritual destination in the world, especially after the Beatles association with Maharishi Mahesh Yogi here in the late '60s. As it lies on the holy banks of river Ganga, this place has been a hub of Sadhus (saints) and there are numerous ashrams teaching spirituality, yoga, meditation and Ayurveda. With the tourists coming in, there has been a surge in the number of cafes and restaurants in the town and there a lot of cafes serving English and American food and beverages. However, in the last few years, Rishikesh has also been developed as the hub of Adventure Sports in India as there is a multitude of options including White Water Rafting, Bungee Jumping, Flying Fox, Mountain Biking, etc. here. It also serves as the gateway to many Himalayan treks and is used as a popular camping site. Rishikesh is a must visit for everyone visiting India to truly experience something new.

Rishikesh is believed to be the holiest place for Hindu pilgrims. The numerous temples, the holy ghats, and the serene ambiance provide a natural calmness to the body and soul. The land of yogis, Rishikesh is popular for the several yoga ashrams present in the city. Visited by numerous people worldwide, the yoga camps in Rishikesh are known to rejuvenate the tourists and help them break free from the stress of daily life. From the evening arti in the Triveni Ghat to the simple culture of the ashrams, exploring Rishikesh is a treat to the mind and a trip to the inner self.

Adventure Activities

Rishikesh is also a brilliant spot for white water rafting. Other adventure activities include mountain biking, canyoning and even bungee jumping. However, the rates and availability differ from season to season.

Neelkanth Mahadeva Temple

Neelkanth Mahadev Temple is dedicated to Shiva as Neelkanth is his another name. This temple is located around 7km from Swarg Ashram and the route is a 3 hour long walk along a forest path.

Rishikesh: Where the Himalayas whisper and the Ganga sings



Geeta Bhawan

Also popularly known as the Guru Shri Ram Sukh Daasji, the Geeta Bhawan is a vast and spacious complex that is located on the banks of the river Ganga in Swargashram in Rishikesh, at the foothills of the mighty Himalayas. The Ashram is renowned as an important institution that preserves Hindu

literature since it houses the Gita, which symbolizes the Hindu Vedas and epics. The Geeta Bhawan is visited by a large number of people each year, who flock to here to take a dip in the holy waters of the Ganges, listen to the discourses and meditate.

Other than airy and large discourse halls, the ashram also has over one

thousand rooms that are available free of cost for the devotees to stay at. The pious devotees are also served with simple vegetarian food and Indian sweets at nominal prices during their stay at the Geeta Bhawan. Be it a mere two-hour visit to the ashram, or a stay there for a few days, the experience imbues the devotee with tranquillity, peace and devotion.

The visitors gladly indulge in the devotion of the River Ganges every evening, and the bathing ghats in front of the Geeta Bhawan offer them with an opportunity to take a holy dip in its waters. The ancient Banyan tree that is located within the complex is also worthy of notice since this spot has been the site of penance for numerous saints. All in all, the Geeta Bhawan comes across as a place that is overflowing with religious fervour and calmness, and is a must visit while in Rishikesh.

Triveni Ghat

Situated on the banks of the holy river Ganges, Triveni Ghat is the biggest ghat in Rishikesh. 'Maha Aarti' happens every evening at Triveni Ghat.

Triveni Ghat plays an essential role in Hindu Mythology and is also mentioned in the epics Ramayan and Mahabharat. The Triveni Ghat is also where the chattri of Lord Krishna was constructed. In fact, the ghat is considered to be the cremation ground for the great Lord Krishna. Along with the holy dips, the devotees also make offerings to the river in the form of milk, while feeding the fishes in the Ghat too.

Jadh Ganga Trek

Since past many years, the region and the trail has been able to maintain its raw beauty accompanied by virginity and tranquility of the place. The gushing streams, pristine glaciers and splendid landscape adds charm to the beauty of this already beautiful place.

Regarded as one of the most strenuous and difficult trek of north Uttarakhand, the route of Jadh Ganga Trek was taken by Heinrich Harrer and his companions during May 1944 while escaping the prison in Dehradun. They traversed the Aglar valley followed by going over Nag Tibba ridge, they ultimately arrived at Nelang in Jadh Ganga. From there on, they proceeded further towards Naga, Sonam, Dosindhu, Tirpani and finally Pulamsunda. They, then ascended upwards along the first tributary of Jadh, the Mendi, to reach Tsangchok La, which they crossed seven after leaving Dehradun.

Another kind of adventure awaits you if you decide to go further towards Mana Pass and Saraswati Tal and finally terminating the trek at Badrinath Temple. Tiring yet exhilarating, the trek is an experience you will cherish throughout your life.

Venus Williams receives wildcard to play singles at US Open

QUEENS (TIP)

28 years on from when she made the finals of the US Open in her first appearance at the tournament as a teenager, Venus Williams is back. Having missed the last two editions of her home tournament at Flushing Meadows as she battled against surgery, Williams is set to mark a return to the singles field as a 45-year-old veteran.

The older Williams sister has been granted a wildcard into the singles draw, alongside the mixed doubles invitation she already received earlier this month from the USTA. Williams becomes the oldest player to be an entrant into a US Open singles event since 1981 — 44 years ago, and 16 years before her own debut, when Renee Richards participated at the age of 47.

Williams became the oldest player to win a singles match on the WTA tour since 2004, when she marked her return to the court at the DC Open in Washington with a victory over Peyton Stearns. Martina Navratilova had won a singles match at the age of 47 in 2004.

This appearance marked Venus' return to the tour after an absence due to surgery, and although she hadn't played professional tennis since 2023, she had not officially announced her retirement. When once again prompted with the question in Washington, the seven-time grand slam champion held her cards close to her chest.



"I'm just here for now, and who knows? Maybe there's more ... But at the moment, I'm focused just on this," Venus had said following her win. "I haven't played in a year. There is no doubt I can play tennis, but obviously coming back to play matches, it takes time to get in the swing of things. I definitely feel I'll play well. I'm still the same player."

Williams is a two-time champion at

the US Open, having won in back-to-back tournaments in 2000 and 2001, to account for two of her seven singles slam titles (with four more at Wimbledon to her name.) She has also reached the finals on two occasions, with her best finish in recent years coming in her resurgent 2017 season, in which she reached the finals of the Australian Open and Wimbledon, and made the semifinals in New York.

WI crush Pak by 202 runs, win series 2-1

After 34 years of waiting, the West Indies finally broke their ODI series drought against Pakistan in emphatic fashion, crushing the visitors by 202 runs in the deciding third match at the Brian Lara Cricket Academy. It was a complete team performance, powered by captain Shai Hope's unbeaten 120 and Jayden Seales' career-best 6 for 18, as the hosts clinched the series 2-1.

Winning the toss, Pakistan skipper Mohammad Rizwan opted to field on a surface offering grip for the spinners. Early wickets from Abrar Ahmed (2-34) and tight lines from Mohammad Nawaz kept the West Indies' scoring rate in check. At 68-3, the home side's innings looked to be meandering towards mediocrity.

However, Hope, known for his composure, shifted gears in the death overs. Partnering with *Justin Greaves (43 off 24)***, he launched a brutal counterattack in the final eight overs, plundering 110 runs. His knock included 10 fours and 5 sixes, marking his 18th ODI century and placing him third behind Brian Lara and Chris Gayle in West Indies' all-time ODI hundreds list.

Hope's late blitz against Pakistan's pace trio – Naseem Shah, Hasan Ali, and Shaheen Afridi's absence felt deeply – turned what looked like a modest total into a daunting 295-run target.

McGrath predicts 5-0 win for Australia in Ashes

LONDON (TIP)

The Ashes is still over three months away but pace legend Glenn McGrath is out with his much-awaited prediction for the upcoming edition -- a 5-0 sweep for Australia. The feisty showdown is slated to begin in Perth on November 21 and McGrath believes England will find it "pretty tough" to battle past the likes of Pat Cummins and a rather poor past record.

McGrath said his prediction this time is based on how England were held to a 2-2 series draw by India in the recent Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy.

"It's very rare for me to make a prediction, isn't it? And I can't make a different one - 5-0," McGrath declared on 'BBC Radio'. "I'm very confident with our team. When you've got Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc, Josh Hazlewood and Nathan Lyon firing in their home conditions, it's going to be pretty tough.

"Plus, that track record England have had, it'd be interesting to see if they can win a Test," he added.

England, who are set to travel Down Under for the five-match series later this year, haven't won the Ashes since 2015.

Additionally, they have lost either 0-5 or



England's captain Ben Stokes (L) and Australia's captain Pat Cummins (R) hold the Series trophy after the drawn Ashes Series, after England's victory on day five of the fifth Ashes cricket Test match between England and Australia at The Oval cricket ground in London on July 31, 2023. (File photo | AFP)

0-4 in all but one series in Australia since 2002-03. Their last Test win came in 2010-11 when they claimed a 3-1 series triumph.

Australia won 4-0 when England last toured the country in 2021-22 and Pat Cummins' side have only lost two of their past 15 Tests at home, winning 11 and drawing two. McGrath admitted that Australia's unsettled top three is an issue. The likes of Usman Khawaja, Cameron

Green and Marnus Labuschagne are also out of form, while the young and sprightly Sam Konstas is yet to cement his spot as opener.

But with England's bowling attack also needing "to strengthen a little bit", McGrath feels the main battle will be to get the wickets of Joe Root and Harry Brook.

"It's the top order or top and middle order of England against the Australian

fast bowlers and Lyon. That's going to be a big match-up."

Root, who became the second-highest run-scorer in Test history recently, has scored 892 Test runs in Australia, including nine fifties, but is yet to score a century.

He averages 35.68 down under, compared to his career average of 51.29, with a highest score of 89.

"This series will be a big one for Root. He's never really done that well in Australia, he's not even got a 100 over there, so he'll be keen to get out there. He's in fine form," McGrath said.

"Brook's the one that I've enjoyed watching. He just goes out there, plays his game, and takes it on. The Australians will need to get on him pretty early," added McGrath.

"Ben Duckett is such an aggressive opener. Zak Crawley would be keen to score a few more runs than he has previously."

The pace legend was full of praise for England coach Brendon McCullum and the team's fearless approach.

"I love seeing sportspeople go out there and play without fear. That's what Baz is looking to bring into this England team - play without fear."

Lions Club New Delhi Alaknanda Marks 32nd Installation & Janmashtami Celebration with Unprecedented Grandeur

NEW DELHI (TIP)

Lions Club New Delhi Alaknanda (LCNDA) scripted yet another milestone in its illustrious journey with the spectacular success of its 32nd Installation Ceremony combined with the vibrant celebrations of Janmashtami, held at Sandal Suites, Noida Expressway.

Under the visionary leadership of President Lion CA Abhishek Jain, the evening seamlessly blended the joy of festivity with the spirit of service. In a stirring keynote, President Jain reignited the passion of members, underscoring the true essence of Lionism and reminding everyone why "We are Lions."

The installation, gracefully conducted by PDG Lion Nargis Gupta, saw the new team pledge unwavering commitment to impactful community service aligned with Lions Clubs International's global causes. Adding to the inspiration, Lions Clubs International President Lion A.P. Singh addressed the gathering with a powerful message that earned a rare standing ovation. DG Lion Onkar Singh Renu further energized the house, reaffirming the club's proud motto - We Serve.

The celebration was marked by landmark recognitions:

- Induction of 10 new members, strengthening the club's service force.
- Chiranjilal Dhanuka Service Award presented to Pragyata Foundation under the Chairmanship of Lion Rajesh Gupta.
- CA C.P. Agrawal Memorial Scholarship Awards to four



aspiring Chartered Accountants, led by Chairman Lion N.K. Bansal & Co-Chairperson Lion Komal Agrawal.

- Felicitation of members completing 25 years of service in Lionism.
- Special honor to Lion Lalit Narang as Lion of the Month.

The event was flawlessly orchestrated by Installation Chairperson Lion O.P. Baheti and elegantly compered by Lion Adeep Veer Jain. The Leo members infused the evening with youthful enthusiasm, with Leo Rahini Jain, Leo Shruti Garg, and Leo Arnav Jain formally taking charge as President, Secretary, and Treasurer of the Alaknanda Leo Club.

The Janmashtami festivities, led by Chairman Lion Sunil Agarwal and Co-Chairman Lion Rajesh Gupta, brought divine vibrance through soulful bhajans, cultural performances, and festive décor.



The presence of Past District Governors and wholehearted participation of the LCNDA family made the evening truly unforgettable.

Behind the scenes, Secretary Lion Ravi Agrawal and Treasurer Lion Chinmay Bansal played a pivotal role in ensuring the event's flawless execution.

Rahul, Kharge skip Red Fort celebrations, BJP hits out

NEW DELHI (TIP)

Congress MP Rahul Gandhi and party leader Mallikarjun Kharge skipped the Independence Day celebrations at the Red Fort on Friday, sparking speculation about the reason behind their absence.

There was no official statement from the opposition party or the two leaders but sources suggested Gandhi gave the event a miss after he was upset with the seating arrangement last year.

The two leaders extended their greetings to all citizens by paying tribute to the country's freedom fighters on social media. "This freedom, achieved through the sacrifices of great freedom fighters, is a resolve to build an India where justice rests on the foundation of truth and equality, and every heart is filled with respect and brotherhood. It is the duty of all of us to protect the pride and honor of this precious heritage. Jai Hind, Jai Bharat!"

Gandhi said.

Kharge said: "Independence Day is a solemn occasion to rededicate ourselves to values of Freedom, Justice, Equality and Fraternity, cherished by our Democracy."

Kharge attended the Independence Day celebrations at the Congress party headquarters and Mr Gandhi at Indira Bhawan, in the Capital.

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) national spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla, however, took a swipe at Gandhi, who is the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, over his absence at the event.

"Congress spokesperson in tv debate with me just now confirmed that 'LoP' Rahul Gandhi skipped 15th August Program at Red Fort. This was a national celebration but sadly Lover of Pakistan Rahul Gandhi - in Modi virodh does Desh & Sena Virodh! Shameful behaviour. Is this Sanvidhan and Sena

ka Samman?" he said in a post on X.

Last year, a controversy erupted during the Independence Day celebrations when Gandhi, who enjoys the status of a Cabinet minister, sat in the second last row - in a departure from tradition and protocol - for the programme at the Red Fort.

The Opposition called the allocation of the seat to the Congress MP an insult to the people, even as the Defence Ministry, which organised the event, argued that the arrangement was tweaked to accommodate Olympians on the premises.

As per the protocol, the Leader of Opposition is seated in the front row during ceremonial events. Last year, that row was occupied by then Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud, Union Ministers Nirmala Sitharaman, Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Amit Shah and S Jaishankar among others.

Gandhi was seen seated in the fifth

row, behind the Indian Olympic medalists. Star Indian shooters Manu Bhaker and Sarabjot Singh, and hockey players, including Indian Captain Harmanpreet Singh and goalkeeper PR Sreejesh, were seated ahead of him.

Sources in the Defence Ministry said the seating arrangement at ceremonial events follows a table of precedence and protocol. "This year, it was decided to honour the Olympic Games medal winners. It may be noted that some Union Ministers were also seated behind the Olympic Games medal winners," a source said.

The explanation was, however, shredded by the Congress. Congress leader KC Venugopal said the explanation did not "cut much ice". "While Olympians deserve every bit of respect, I wonder how Cabinet Ministers like Amit Shah or Nirmala Sitharaman ji get front row seats ahead of them," he said.



AUGUST 15th

79th Happy Indian Independence Day

Rajender Dichpally



The banner features a background of a sunset sky with clouds. On the left, the Indian national flag is flying on a pole. In the center, the text '79th Happy Indian Independence Day' is written in a stylized font. The number '79' is large and colorful, with the Indian national flag's colors. The word 'Happy' is in a cursive font, and 'Indian Independence Day' is in a bold, outlined font. Below the text, the name 'Rajender Dichpally' is written in a white serif font. On the right, there is a circular inset containing a portrait of a man in a white shirt, with his hands in a prayer position. The background of the portrait is the Indian national flag.

Happy 79th Independence Day of INDIA

TIRLOK MALIK

FOUNDER AND SPEAKER OF HAPPY LIFE YOGA

ACTOR AND EMMY NOMINATED FILMMAKER

Follow @MALIKTIRLOK



The advertisement features a large portrait of Tirlok Malik on the right side. He is a middle-aged man with dark hair, wearing a grey suit jacket over a light blue shirt. He is smiling and looking towards the camera. The background of the portrait is a blue sky with a trail of yellow stars. On the left side, the text 'Happy 79th Independence Day of INDIA' is written in white. Below it, the name 'TIRLOK MALIK' is written in large, bold letters. 'TIRLOK' is in pink and 'MALIK' is in white. Below the name, his credentials are listed in pink: 'FOUNDER AND SPEAKER OF HAPPY LIFE YOGA' and 'ACTOR AND EMMY NOMINATED FILMMAKER'. At the bottom left, the text 'Follow @MALIKTIRLOK' is written in white and pink.



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Peter J McDonnell, MD Director Wilmer Eye Institute, Johns Hopkins



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