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India Celebrates 77th Republic Day with Grand Display of Military Strength, Culture and Global Engagement



European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and delegates from the European Union (EU) with President of India Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the 77th Republic Day celebrations in New Delhi on January 26, 2026

**JANUARY 27, 2026
NEW DELHI (TIP)**

India marked its 77th Republic Day on January 26 with a spectacular parade along Kartavya Path, blending military strength, rich cultural heritage and diplomatic symbolism. The ceremonial event unfolded before an audience of nearly 77,000 people, including the chief guests-European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and European Council President Antonio Costa-underscoring India's expanding global partnerships.

As in previous years, the parade was a powerful expression of national pride, with special emphasis this time on Operation Sindoor, India's targeted military action against terror infrastructure in Pakistan following last year's deadly attack in Pahalgam.

CONTD ON PAGE 4

Thousands rally in Minneapolis as immigration anger boils

THE CROWD GATHERED IN FREEZING TEMPERATURES AFTER BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN PERFORMED AT AN ANTI-ICE CONCERT IN THE CITY



Protestors march to Dolores Park as part of a nationwide shutdown effort in response to the ongoing federal immigration raids and unrest in Minneapolis, in San Francisco on January 30, 2026.

Photo: San Francisco Chronicle via AP

**JANUARY 30, 2026
MINNEAPOLIS (TIP)**

Thousands of protesters took to the streets of Minneapolis on Friday, January 30, 2026, in the latest show of anger over President Donald Trump's immigration crackdown, as a prominent U.S. journalist was charged over his

coverage of protests in the northern city.

People marched with signs blasting Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the agency leading Mr. Trump's mass deportation drive, in response to a call for a "national shutdown" across the United States.

CONTD ON PAGE 42

Indian Consulate in New York Celebrated Republic Day despite of inclement weather



Consul General Binaya Srikanta Pradhan unfurling the Indian National flag

**JANUARY 27, 2026
NEW YORK (TIP)**

The Indian Consulate celebrated the 77th Republic Day with Flag Hoisting by Consul General Binaya Srikanta Pradhan. He read the Hon'ble President of India's Address to the Nation, highlighting the timeless values of the Constitution and the vital role of citizens at home and the Indian diaspora abroad in building a Developed India by 2047 when India celebrates hundred years of independence.

Ambassador Pradhan thanked members of the diaspora for joining the celebrations despite extreme weather conditions.

CONTD ON PAGE 3

Former CNN Anchor Don Lemon Arrested

**JANUARY 30, 2026
MINNESOTA(TIP)**



Don Lemon, a former CNN anchor was arrested after he and other reporters covered a protest at a church in Minnesota where an ICE official is a pastor

The Trump administration charged former CNN anchor Don Lemon and eight others with civil rights violations, after he and other reporters covered a protest at a church where an ICE official is a pastor.

The journalist's lawyer said he was taken into custody in Los Angeles overnight, adding that his work covering the protest "was no different to what he has always done."

He faces two charges of conspiracy to deprive rights and interfering with First Amendment rights, a Department of Homeland Security spokesperson told

CONTD ON PAGE 42



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PRESIDENT/PUBLISHER:

Prof. Indrajit S. Saluja

VICE PRESIDENT:

Chitagam Saluja

CHIEF EDITOR:

Prof Indrajit S. Saluja

ASSISTANT EDITOR:

Bidisha Roy

SPL. REPORTER UNO:

H.S. Panaser

GRAPHICS DIRECTOR:

Om Parkash Malik

DIRECTOR**ADMINISTRATION:**

Gauri Beri

CONTRIBUTING**PHOTOGRAPHERS:**

Baldev Singh / BJ Videos

Gunjesh Desai / Masala Junction

Jay Mandal,

Mohammad Jaffer,

SnapsIndia

Mohammad Shahzad,

Zia Khan,

Nisha Rani

Vaaho Photographers,

Vijay Shah - Photo Journalist.

CORRESPONDENTS :**SACRAMENTO:**

Parminder S. Aujla

NEW YORK :

Chitagam

FRESNO:

Tarlochan Singh

DALLAS:

Harjit Dhesi, Amarjit Dhillon

OVERSEAS CORRESPONDENTS**LONDON**

Nirpal Singh Shergill

SPL CORRESPONDENT**DELHI BUREAU CHIEF:**

Chandan Singh

CHANDIGARH:

Manjit Sidhu

LUDHIANA:

A.S. Arora,

R.P.Sharma

JAIPUR :

Dr. Yashpaul Goyal

DALLAS BUREAU CHIEF & VP

Lovliien Kaurr

972-330-3139

editor@theindianpanorama.news

The Indian Panorama

P.O. Box No. 190067, South

Richmond Hill, NY 11419,

Tel: 646-247-9458

Email:

editor@theindianpanorama.news

COMMENT

When the Fourth Pillar Is Shackled: Don Lemon's Arrest and the Alarming Erosion of American Democracy



Trump DOJ Arrests Don Lemon over Coverage of Minneapolis ICE Protests

The arrest of Don Lemon, a former CNN anchor and one of the most recognizable faces of American broadcast journalism, is far more than an isolated legal episode involving an individual reporter. It is a moment of deep national reckoning. It forces Americans to confront an uncomfortable but unavoidable question: Is the United States drifting away from its foundational commitment to free speech and press freedom?

In a democracy, free speech is not merely a right, it is the very strength of the nation. The Founding Fathers understood this with remarkable clarity. That is why the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, adopted in 1791, begins not with conditional language but with an unequivocal command: "Congress shall make no law... abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press." These words were written not to protect agreeable speech, but to safeguard dissent, criticism, and voices that question those in power.

The arrest of a journalist in this context—particularly one engaged in reporting on public protest—cuts to the heart of that constitutional promise.

JOURNALISTS AS THE CONSCIENCE KEEPERS OF THE NATION

In every functioning democracy, journalists serve as the conscience keepers of society. They are entrusted with the responsibility of informing the public, scrutinizing authority, exposing injustice, and amplifying voices that would otherwise remain unheard. This role is neither optional nor ornamental. It is essential.

A FREE PRESS DOES NOT EXIST TO PLEASE GOVERNMENTS. IT EXISTS TO QUESTION THEM.

When journalists analyze policies, investigate abuses, or report from sites of protest and dissent, they do so in service of the people. That is precisely why the media has often been described as the Fourth Pillar of democracy—standing alongside the Legislature, the Executive, and the Judiciary as a guardian of accountability. When that fourth pillar is weakened or intimidated, the entire democratic structure begins to wobble.

The criminalization of journalistic

work, whether overt or veiled in legal technicalities, sends a dangerous signal. It tells reporters that certain subjects are best avoided, that certain truths come with a cost, and that dissent may invite punishment. The chilling effect of such actions spreads far beyond one individual. It seeps into newsrooms, editorial meetings, and ultimately into public discourse itself.

FREE SPEECH MUZZLED: THE FIRST SIGN OF FASCIST DRIFT

History offers sobering lessons. Democracies rarely collapse overnight. They erode gradually—through the normalization of extraordinary measures, through the selective application of law, and through the steady silencing of critical voices. One of the earliest and most reliable indicators of authoritarianism is the suppression of free speech, especially the silencing of independent media.

When an administration begins to view journalists not as watchdogs but as adversaries to be subdued, alarm bells must ring. When the machinery of the state is turned against the press, the danger is no longer hypothetical, it is real and immediate.

The arrest of a journalist for doing his professional duty fits a troubling global pattern. Around the world, authoritarian regimes routinely cloak repression in the language of law and order, public safety, or national interest. Democracies must be held to a higher standard. When America, the nation that once lectured the world on press freedom—begins to resemble those it once criticized, the consequences are profound.

TRUMP'S SECOND TERM AND THE SHADOW OF AUTHORITARIANISM

The second term of President Donald Trump has been marked by an unmistakable hardening of attitudes toward dissent, criticism, and institutional independence. While the rhetoric of "law and order" is invoked frequently, its application has too often appeared selective and politically charged.

Domestically, America has witnessed increasing pressure on the media, legal harassment of critics, and an atmosphere in which journalists are portrayed as enemies rather than participants in a democratic system. Internationally, the United States has displayed a troubling tendency toward bullying-coercing allies, undermining international institutions, and favoring forceful unilateralism over diplomacy and consensus.

Such behavior is not merely unbecoming of a democratic leader; it is dangerous to the democratic fabric itself. America has long been regarded as the epitome of the free world beacon whose moral authority rested not on military might alone, but on its constitutional values. When those values are compromised, America's global standing weakens, and its credibility erodes.

WHY THIS MOMENT DEMANDS VIGILANCE FROM CITIZENSINDRAJIT
SALUJA

The Founding Fathers did not design democracy as a self-sustaining machine. They assumed vigilance. They expected citizens to guard their rights zealously, to challenge overreach, and to resist the concentration of unchecked power.

What is at stake today is not only the freedom of one journalist, but the future of free expression in the United States. If journalists can be arrested for covering protests, if commentary can be reframed as criminality, then the boundaries of permissible speech will continue to shrink.

Americans must remember that rights lost are rarely regained easily. Silence today becomes precedent tomorrow.

This vigilance must extend beyond partisan loyalties. The defense of free speech cannot depend on whether one agrees with the speaker. The First Amendment protects conservatives and liberals, critics and supporters alike. Once its protections are weakened for one group, they are weakened for all.

THE DANGER OF NORMALIZING REPRESSION

Perhaps the greatest danger lies not in any single arrest, but in the temptation to normalize it. Democracies die not only through coups and revolutions, but through apathy—when citizens accept the unacceptable as routine.

When journalists are arrested and the public shrugs, democracy suffers quietly but deeply. When fear replaces debate, when caution replaces courage, the marketplace of ideas begins to close. And when that happens, the nation envisioned by America's Founding Fathers—bold, free, argumentative, self-correcting—begins to fade.

The United States was imagined as a republic where power fears the people, not the other way around. Any administration that seeks to invert that relationship undermines the republic itself.

IT MUST STOP-BEFORE THE DAMAGE IS IRREVERSIBLE

The arrest of Don Lemon should serve as a wake-up call. It must compel Americans to ask whether the country is still faithful to its constitutional soul. Free speech is not an inconvenience to be managed; it is the lifeblood of democracy.

The intimidation of the press, the silencing of dissent, and the misuse of state power against journalists are hallmarks of authoritarian regimes—not of free societies. If America is to remain true to its founding ideals, such tendencies must be confronted and reversed.

This is a moment for citizens, lawmakers, judges, and institutions to reaffirm that no administration, no matter how powerful, stands above the Constitution. The freedoms guaranteed by the First Amendment are not gifts from the government; they are inalienable rights entrusted to the people.

For the sake of this generation—and those yet to come—this slide toward repression must stop. Now. God Bless America!

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CONTD FROM PAGE 1

Indian Consulate in New York Celebrated Republic Day despite of inclement weather



Ambassador Pradhan reading out the President of India's Address to the Nation.

The Consulate recognized the outstanding achievements and contributions of the 2nd generation Indian diaspora members across diverse fields, felicitating Mr. Ronit Karki and Ms. Jiya Jadhav for their commendable accomplishments.

The celebrations concluded with a graceful Odissi dance by Ms. Shalini Basu and mesmerizing performances of "Vande Mataram" by Khushi Dance Academy, New Jersey marking 150 years of the iconic national song.



Ms Shalini Basu mesmerized the gathering with her graceful Odissi dance performance



Mr. Rohit Karki is being felicitated for his commendable accomplishments



Ms Jiya is being given a commendation certificate for her commendable accomplishments



Khushi Dance Academy, New Jersey dancers gave a performance of "Vande Matram"



A View of the full room gathering

FIA Celebrates 77th Republic Day of India in Burlington, MA, Honoring Freedom, Democracy, and Unity

JANUARY 28, 2026
BURLINGTON, MA (TIP)

The Foundation of Indian Americans (FIA) - New England celebrated the 77th Republic Day of India with pride and patriotism at the Academy of Creative Arts in Burlington, Massachusetts, honoring India's freedom fighters and the architects of the Constitution of the Republic of India who laid the foundation of the nation.

The celebration commemorated the historic day when India adopted its governing document, granting fundamental rights to every citizen and formally becoming a Constitutional Republic.

Addressing the gathering, FIA-New England President Abhishek Singh highlighted the significance of the occasion and the responsibility it carries for future generations.

"Republic Day marks the moment when India adopted its Constitution, empowering every citizen with freedom, equality, and justice. We must follow the path shown by our forefathers and protect the unity and integrity of our community," Singh said.

As part of the ceremony, attendees observed a moment of silence in honor of the martyrs who sacrificed their lives during the freedom struggles of both India and the United States. The audience also sang the national anthems, reflecting on values of courage, service, and national unity that continue to inspire generations.

FIA Executive Vice President Sanjay Gokhale appealed to the community to take a pledge to work toward a world free from hunger, poverty, and inequality, strengthening bonds between communities while promoting peace and inclusion.

Through celebrations like these, FIA continues to preserve cultural heritage while inspiring civic



responsibility and unity among Indian Americans throughout New England.

During the event, dignitaries and community leaders

shared their thoughts on the significance of Republic Day. Rakesh and Aditi Soni (Community Leaders) emphasized the strong parallels between the history of India and the United States. Both nations fought against colonialism and embraced democracy, secularism, and a constitutional republic framework.

Entrepreneur Devendra Patil noted that as the United States approaches its milestone of 250 years of independence in 2026, India continues advancing in its own journey of development, stability, and progress.

Mohan Nannapaneni (Founder, Team Aid), Java and Hetal Joshi (Promoters of education and creative arts), and Jayesh Patel (Entrepreneur) highlighted constitutional values such as freedom of religion, cultural and educational rights, protection against exploitation, and the right to constitutional remedies, reaffirming commitment to these principles in both India and the United States.

FIA Executive Board Members Shova Sharma and Anand Sharma thanked all dignitaries and supporters, including Ravindra Zende, Vijay Agarwal (Businessman), Anil and Ranjani Saigal (Founders of Lokvani), Manisha Jain (Ekal Vidyalaya), and Manisha Kumar (Ekal Vidyalaya) for their guidance and continued support.

The entire program was captured by prominent photographer Rasik Mehta, preserving memorable moments from the celebration.

The event reflected the enduring values of courage, service, and national unity, reinforcing FIA's mission to strengthen community bonds while honoring cultural heritage.

Indian-origin drug dealer, Naginder Gill, using 'Indianocean' handle jailed for 20 years in UK

JAN 30, 2026
LONDON (TIP)

An Indian-origin drug dealer has been jailed for 20 years by a court in north-west England for plotting a range of firearms and drugs offences.

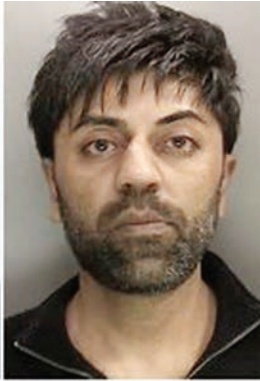
Naginder Gill, 47, used the handle 'indianocean' on the encrypted communications platform EncroChat in the plot involving 59-year-old Carl Ian Jones, and 29-year-old Harly Wise.

While Jones was handed a 30-year sentence, Wise was jailed for 25 years at a sentencing hearing at Bolton Crown Court on Thursday.

The UK's National Crime Agency (NCA) discovered Jones, Wise and Gill had been in discussions to trade military-grade weapons using EncroChat.

"These men are extremely dangerous offenders, and the streets are safer now that they're in prison," said Jon Hughes, branch commander at NCA. "We've seen in recent years that entirely innocent victims can be tragically caught in the crossfire of feuding organized crime groups. Drugs and firearms crimes are often interconnected. The NCA will continue to work with partners at home and abroad to protect the public from these threats," he said.

The NCA-led Operation Venetic had led to EncroChat being taken down in 2020, after which evidence revealed details around dangerous offenders using the encrypted route. The court heard how Jones tried to broker a deal



Naginder Gill has been jailed for 20 years by a court in north-west England for plotting a range of firearms and drugs offences.

with other offenders over an AR15 assault rifle, complete with 50 7.62mm bullets. He also asked a contact to store some guns he had hidden in a property he owned in Mallorca because his girlfriend was "going mad". He and Wise also discussed trading firearms, including AK47s and an Uzi submachine gun.

In May 2020, Wise brokered the sale of two 9mm handguns and 50 bullets to an EncroChat contact and agreed on an exchange near Eltham, south London. Two other men were later

sentenced to 12 years and six years in relation to this.

NCA said its investigators waded through thousands of lines of data for both Jones and Wise relating to the daily movement of Class A and B banned drugs. Both men operated as facilitators, moving drugs to contacts for more money than they paid for them.

Jones from Greater Manchester, who used the EncroChat handle 'stalehead', was convicted at trial of a range of drugs and firearms charges.

While Wise from London went on to admit conspiracy to supply cocaine, cannabis, methylamphetamine and conspiracy to transfer prohibited weapons, Gill from West Midlands admitted conspiring to supply a range of drugs.

Wise, who used the EncroChat handles 'bluffcheatah' and 'hungrykiller', also admitted conspiring to kidnap.

Indo-Canadian Punjabi couple found dead under mysterious circumstances in Calgary



Ekamveer Singh and his wife Jasmine were found dead in a pool of blood under mysterious circumstances at their home in Redstone, a neighborhood in northeast Calgary, Canada.

JANUARY 30, 2026
CALGARY (TIP)

A couple from Punjab was found dead in a pool of blood under mysterious circumstances at their home in Redstone, a neighborhood in northeast Calgary, Canada.

The couple, identified as Ekamveer Singh and his wife Jasmine, belonged to Chaukiman village near Jagraon in Ludhiana. The incident came as a repetition of history in the clan, as both parents of Ekamveer had also died an unnatural death a few years ago.

A pall of gloom has descended over the village, but one family member—an octogenarian grandmother—remains unable to comprehend the tragedy. Meanwhile, the deceased's younger brother, Ekamveer, lives with his maternal grandparents in another locality, largely unknown to residents.

The village sarpanch, Kewal Singh, said the villagers came to know about the tragedy that had struck the Babbey Nikkey Ke family, only after government officials started making inquiries about the incident.

"We are really shocked to learn about the repetition of history in the family

with the tragic end of Ekamveer and his wife Jasmine, but none of us knows what exactly happened to the youth who left the village in search of greener pastures a couple of years ago," said Kewal Singh.

Referring to information received from relatives of the deceased, villagers said it was suspected that Jasmine had received a bullet injury accidentally, and Ekamveer shot himself in shock.

However, the Calgary police have not yet made any formal announcement about the sequence of events leading to the mysterious and tragic end of the couple under the roof of their own home.

Not ruling out the criminal angle to the deaths, the Calgary police have launched a detailed investigation to determine the exact cause of the tragedy.

The Calgary police have urged anyone with information regarding the case to come forward and contact them at 403-266-1234. Those requiring anonymity have been asked to call 1-800-222-8477.

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Two Indian American Women Physicians to lead Institute of Medicine of Chicago

**JANUARY 29, 2026
CHICAGO (TIP)**

Two noted Indian American physicians - Archana Chatterjee and Beena Peters - are set to lead The Institute of Medicine of Chicago (IOMC), a leading non-profit dedicated to advancing health equity.

Archana Chatterjee was named as President-Elect and Fellow of IOMC, and Beena Peters as Secretary and Fellow of IOMC, according to a media release. The Board of Governors unanimously approved both appointments on December 8, 2025.

"Welcoming Dr. Archana Chatterjee and Dr. Beena Peters in these roles marks a pivotal moment for IOMC," said IOMC President Dr. Lorenzo Pence. "Their passion and expertise will energize our mission to close gaps in care, foster innovation, and champion a healthier future for all."

"It is a true privilege to serve as President-Elect of IOMC at such a transformative time," said Chatterjee. "I am inspired by the collective purpose of our Board and leadership team, and I am eager to help shape bold new initiatives that will enrich lives and build healthier communities."

"Being named Secretary of IOMC is a distinct honor," said Peters. "I am excited to champion our shared mission-especially in maternal health-while collaborating across disciplines to create brighter, healthier futures for all."

Dr. Chatterjee has served as Vice President of the IOMC and previously as a Board Director. She currently serves as Dean of Chicago Medical School and



Archana Chatterjee and Beena Peters - are set to lead The Institute of Medicine of Chicago (IOMC), a leading non-profit dedicated to advancing health equity.

Senior Vice President for Medical Affairs at Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science.

Trained as a pediatric infectious disease specialist, Dr. Chatterjee has practiced in her field for over 20 years and has conducted over 120 clinical trials, published over 100 peer reviewed articles, 26 invited review articles, 31 book chapters, and one book.

She serves as an ad hoc reviewer for 35 scientific journals, has delivered more than 1000 lectures, and given 210 presentations at international, national, regional, and local events. Additionally, she has served as the course director for over 30 CME programs, participated in over 100 media interviews, and written 30 newspaper articles.

Dr. Peters most recently served as a Board Director at IOMC, and now chairs the IOMC Maternal & Child Health Workgroup, where her leadership sparks actionable change.

She previously served as the System Chief Nursing Executive at Cook County Health System, making a lasting impact

on patients and professionals alike.

As a transformational leader with more than 25 years of progressive healthcare leadership experience, Dr. Peters most recently served as System Chief Nursing Executive at Cook County Health. In this role, she oversaw nursing practice across hospitals, correctional health ambulatory care, public health, and the Medicaid managed care plan.

Before joining Cook County Health, Dr. Peters held a variety of nursing and hospital leadership roles, including Administrator of Children's Hospital, Founding Director of the NIDCAP Training Center, Director of Payroll and Nursing Information Systems, and Associate Chief Nursing Officer at the University of Illinois Hospital.

Dr. Peters is a Fellow of the Johnson & Johnson Nurse Innovation Fellowship, the American College of Healthcare Executives, The Advisory Board, and the American Academy of Nursing.

She serves on numerous community and educational boards, including the UIC College of Nursing External Advisory Board, the UIC Master of Healthcare Administration Advisory Board, and served the Advocate South Asian Cardiac Center Advisory Board. Dr. Peters is also the founding president of the Indian Nursing Association of Illinois.

Her exceptional leadership has been recognized with the 2023 Joan L. Shaver Outstanding Illinois Nurse Leader Award, the

Jonas Salk Health Leadership Award from March of Dimes, the Woman Icon Award, and the Outstanding Professional Award from KCCNA.

FOUR INDIAN AMERICAN FAMILY MEMBERS KILLED IN LAWRENCEVILLE

**JANUARY 23, 2026
LAWRENCEVILLE, GA (TIP)**



Police say that Vijay Kumar shot and killed four relatives, including his wife.

Photo for representation only

A 51-year-old man has been charged with multiple counts of murder and assault after police say he shot and killed four relatives, including his wife, during an early-morning shooting at a Lawrenceville home on Friday, an incident that has shaken both the local community and metro Atlanta's Indian American population.

Lawrenceville police were dispatched to the 1000 block of Brook Ivy Court at around 2:30 a.m. after receiving a report of shots fired. When officers arrived, they discovered four adults dead inside the residence, each with apparent gunshot wounds. Inside the home, police also found three children - ages 7, 10, and 12 - hiding in a closet, unharmed. Authorities said the 12-year-old child, who is the suspect's son, placed the 911 call that alerted police.

Investigators identified the suspect as Vijay Kumar, 51, who was located a short distance away from the home following the shooting and taken into custody without incident.

The four victims were identified as the suspect's wife Meenu Dogra, 43, her sister, Nidhi Chander, 37; their brother, Gourav Kumar, 33; and Nidhi Chander's husband, Harish Chander, 38.

Kumar and Meenu Dogra also have an adult daughter who was not present at the house.

According to investigators, the shooting followed an argument between Kumar and his wife at their own residence earlier. Police said the couple then traveled to the Brook Ivy Court home, where the deadly shooting later took place. Authorities have not disclosed what led to the argument, what occurred once the couple arrived at the relative's home, or what ultimately triggered the violence.

Kumar now faces a total of 15 felony charges, including four counts of malice murder, four counts of felony murder, four counts of aggravated assault, one count of cruelty to children in the first degree, and two counts of cruelty to children in the third degree. Police said the cruelty-to-children charges stem from the presence of the minors during the shooting.

(Read full story on
www.theindianpanorama.news)

Two Indian-origin men drown in NSW river on Australia Day weekend

**JANUARY 30, 2026
ADELAIDE (TIP)**

Two Indian drowned in a river on the NSW Mid North Coast during the Australia Day long weekend.

Sachin Khillan and Sahil Batra, both in their 30s, were visiting the Never Never River at John Locke Place in Gleniffer, near Bellingen, with their partners when the incident occurred about 6.45pm on Sunday.



Sachin Khillan and Sahil Batra drowned in a river on the NSW Mid North Coast during the Australia Day long weekend.

According to family, they had only stepped into shallow water when a sudden and powerful current swept the men away. Emergency services were called to the scene, but both men could not be revived after being pulled from the river. Sachin's fiancée was injured while attempting to help and was taken to Coffs Harbour Health Campus, where she remains in serious condition.

A GoFundMe campaign has been launched to raise \$200,000 to cover funeral and repatriation expenses and provide financial support to the grieving families. The fundraiser had raised more than \$125,000 by Thursday morning, drawing support from both Australian and Indian communities.

Indian-origin 57-year-old man charged with woman's murder in London.

**JANUARY 28, 2026
LONDON (TIP)**

A 57-year-old Indian-origin man appeared in a UK court on Wednesday charged with the murder of a woman at a home in Ilford, east London.

Dalip Chadha was arrested at the scene at Applegarth Drive in Ilford in the early hours of Tuesday, the Metropolitan Police said. The victim, believed to be his wife, is yet to be formally identified.

"At around 04:00hrs on Tuesday, 27 January, officers were called to an address in Applegarth Drive. Upon arrival, they found a woman dead at the property," the Met Police said in a statement.

"Formal identification has yet to take place, but the victim is believed to be 58-year-old Vanessa Puntney-Chadha. Her next-of-kin have been informed and are being supported by specially trained officers."

"Dalip Chadha, 57, of Applegarth Drive, was arrested at the scene. He will appear before Barkingside Magistrates' Court on Wednesday, 28 January, charged with murder, the police said.

The force said its investigation remained ongoing and had appealed for any information that would assist their enquiries in the case.



Dalip Chadha has been charged with the murder of a woman at a home in Ilford, east London.

GOPIO-CT Launches 20th Anniversary Celebrations and Marks India's Republic Day



GOPIO-CT Trustees, Executive Committee, and Board Members with Senator Dr. Sujata Gadkar-Wilcox and singer Srinivas Gunupuru, who were presented with commemorative First Day Covers issued by the U.S. Postal Service for the first GOPIO Convention in 1989. From l. to r.: Deepender Gupta, Nandu Kuppaswamy, Past President Shailesh Naik, Jayashri Chintalapudi, Singer Gunupuru, Senator Dr. Gadkar-Wilcox, President Mahesh Jhangiani, Vice President Sonali Gannu, Dr. Thomas Abraham, Meera Banta, Manish Maheshwari, Secretary Mirat Joshi, Prasad Chintalapudi and Anita Mathur

**JANUARY 26, 2026
STAMFORD, CT (TIP)**

The Connecticut Chapter of the Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO-CT) officially launched its 20th Anniversary celebrations with a planning meeting held on January 24, 2026, followed by a special program commemorating India's Republic Day.

During the meeting, members outlined plans for a 20th Anniversary Awards Banquet to be held in Spring 2026. GOPIO-CT, one of the most active chapters among GOPIO's 100-plus chapters worldwide, was inaugurated on March 24, 2006, in the presence of then U.S. Congressman

Christopher Shays and A. R. Ghanashyam, then Deputy Consul General of India in New York.

Over the years, GOPIO-CT has supported more than a dozen charitable organizations in Connecticut, sponsored fundraising efforts for the Bennett Cancer Center to assist cancer patients and their families, and regularly hosted soup kitchens at the New Covenant Center in Stamford. A 20th Anniversary Celebration Committee was formed, with Secretary Mirat Joshi appointed as its chairman.

Following the planning session, attendees observed India's Republic Day with the playing of the Indian national



Connecticut State Senator Prof. Sujata Gadkar-Wilcox addressing attendees at the GOPIO-CT Republic Day Celebration.

anthem and a Republic Day address by Dr. Thomas Abraham, Chairman of GOPIO International. Dr. Abraham reflected on India's democratic journey, noting that at the time of independence in 1947 and the adoption of the Constitution in 1950, many doubted whether India-grappling with poverty, illiteracy, and social divisions-could sustain itself as a democratic republic.

"India not only withstood those challenges," Dr. Abraham said, "but emerged as the world's largest functioning democracy. India's journey over the past 76 years has been like iron tested in fire-emerging stronger-and the nation will continue to progress as a major player in the global economy."

Dr. Abraham then introduced Connecticut State Senator Dr. Sujata Gadkar-Wilcox, Professor of Constitutional Law at Quinnipiac University, who delivered a talk titled "India's Constitution and Its Significance."

"India's Constitution is among the most remarkable in the world," Senator Gadkar-Wilcox said. "It uniquely integrates civil and political rights with social and economic rights through Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles. Drafted under global scrutiny, its

architects-most notably Dr. B. R. Ambedkar-drew upon lived experiences while thoughtfully incorporating elements from other constitutional traditions, including those of the United States and Ireland."

She added that the Constituent Assembly Debates reflect the pluralism and diversity of thought that shaped the Constitution. Her presentation was followed by a lively and engaging question-and-answer session.

The program concluded with patriotic songs performed by vocalist Srinivas Gunupuru. The event was chaired by GOPIO-CT President Mahesh Jhangiani, while Secretary Mirat Joshi delivered the closing remarks and vote of thanks.

CAPAC Chair Meng Calls on Trump Administration to Reverse Visa Suspensions for 75 Countries



Rep Grace Meng

NEW YORK (TIP)

Chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC) Rep. Grace Meng (NY-06) joined 74 of her colleagues in calling on Secretary Marco Rubio and Secretary Kristi Noem to reverse course on their decision to indefinitely halt immigrant visa processing for 75 countries.

On January 21, the Trump administration suspended immigrant visa processing for applicants from 75 countries, including more than a dozen countries in Asia. The U.S. visa suspension affects immediate relatives of U.S. citizens as well as all family-sponsored, employer-sponsored, religious worker, diversity, and returning resident visas. 44 percent of Asian immigrant visa holders-over 135,000 individuals-will be affected by this policy change.

"The Trump administration's decision to halt visas for nearly 40 percent of the

world is ignorant and xenophobic. They have the audacity to tell immigrants to come here the 'right way,' while deliberately closing legal pathways that make that possible," said Rep. Grace Meng, Chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus. "This cruel policy leaves immigrants-who have been thoroughly vetted and have waited years to lawfully enter the United States-stuck in limbo. I join my colleagues in demanding that the administration reverse this decision immediately."

The indefinite pause will block nearly half of all legal immigrants from entering the U.S. over the next year. Individuals from the affected countries represent 40 to 45 percent of all immigrant visas. With no clear timeline for resuming processing, the suspension will undoubtedly separate families, prohibit individuals who have completed the necessary steps to legally come to the U.S., and harm small businesses by stifling their growth.

The State Department justified the move by claiming foreign nationals from the impacted countries may be more likely to seek federally funded public benefits in the United States and become a "public charge," despite longstanding restrictions that already prohibit immigrant visa recipients from accessing said benefits.

(Read full story at
www.theindianpanorama.news)

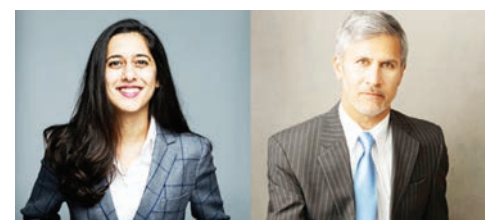
2026 "Trailblazers In Healthcare": City & State New York Recognizes two leaders from NYC Health + Hospitals and Metroplushealth

**JANUARY 29, 2026
NEW YORK (TIP)**

NYC Health + Hospitals announced, January 29, 2026, that NYC Health + Hospitals/Elmhurst Director of Oral and maxillofacial surgery Dr. Maryam Akbari and MetroPlusHealth Chief Medical Officer Dr. Sanjiv S. Shah have been named to City & State New York's annual "Trailblazers in Health Care" list for 2026. City & State New York annual Trailblazers list puts a spotlight on key figures in New York, including high-ranking elected officials, high-powered health care executives and effective advocates. City & State New York is a media organization dedicated to covering New York's local and state politics and policy through in-depth, non-partisan coverage.

said to stand alongside colleagues who are driving meaningful change and ensuring that patient-centered, equitable care remains at the heart of everything we do," said NYC Health + Hospitals/Elmhurst Director of Oral and maxillofacial surgery Dr. Maryam Akbari. "City & State Health Care Trailblazer recognition underscores the importance of innovation, collaboration, and compassion in health care."

"Being named to City & State's



NYC Health + Hospitals/Elmhurst Director of Oral and maxillofacial surgery Dr. Maryam Akbari and MetroPlusHealth Chief Medical Officer Dr. Sanjiv S. Shah are recognized on the list of distinguished individuals

Trailblazers in Healthcare list is an honor and a reflection of the collective work of dedicated clinicians, public health professionals, and the managed care teams who show up for our communities every day," said Dr. Sanjiv S. Shah, Chief Medical Officer for MetroPlusHealth. "This recognition reinforces our shared commitment to advancing equitable, high-quality care and building a health system that truly meets people where they are."

Leading Oral and Maxillofacial services at NYC Health + Hospitals/Elmhurst, Dr. Maryam Akbari, a dual-trained dentist and physician, is expanding reconstruction services for the Queens community.

(Read full story at
www.theindianpanorama.news)

Meet Ravi Bhalla: A Historic Sikh Voice Enters New Jersey Assembly



MEET RAVI BHALLA, SECOND TURBAN-WEARING SIKH SWORN INTO NEW JERSEY ASSEMBLY ON GURU GRANTH SAHIB JI

Former Hoboken Mayor Ravi Bhalla is the Second Sikh member of the New Jersey General Assembly, representing the 32nd Legislative District.

**JANUARY 17, 2026
TRENTON, NJ (TIP)**

On January 13, 2026, former Hoboken Mayor Ravi Bhalla was sworn in as a member of the New Jersey General Assembly, representing the 32nd Legislative

District. The moment marked a significant chapter in New Jersey's political history and Sikh representation in the United States.

Ravi Bhalla made history by taking his oath on the Sanchi Sahib (Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji), the sacred Sikh scripture. The oath ceremony took place in the presence of his family, symbolizing his deep commitment to Sikh values such as equality, service, and compassion as he begins his work in Trenton.

With this step, Bhalla became the second turban-wearing Sikh to serve in a U.S. state legislature. He now represents Hoboken and parts of Jersey City, further strengthening diversity and representation in New Jersey's State Assembly.

The same day also marked the conclusion of Bhalla's eight-year tenure as the 39th Mayor of Hoboken. During his mayoralty, he created history by becoming the first Sikh mayor in New Jersey, earning recognition for inclusive leadership and community-focused governance.

A Democrat, Bhalla was elected in the November 4, 2025, general election alongside his running mate Katie Brennan. The duo secured around 76% of the vote, reflecting strong public trust and support from their constituents.

Attorney General James Leads Multistate Coalition Condemning DOJ Threats Against Minnesota

**JANUARY 29, 2026
NEW YORK (TIP)**

New York Attorney General Letitia James today led a coalition of 21 other attorneys general in denouncing the Department of Justice's (DOJ) latest attempt to coerce the state of Minnesota. In a letter to U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi and Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem, Attorney General James and the coalition condemn the Trump administration's effort to exploit recent chaos in Minnesota to pressure state leaders into turning over sensitive resident data and dismantling longstanding public safety policies. The attorneys general warn that these thinly veiled federal threats are likely to conflict with ongoing litigation and court-ordered protections.

"The federal government is asking us to accept a belated justification for its unlawful actions in Minnesota," said Attorney General James. "We refuse to be intimidated by these threats, and we reject their unlawful demands that infringe on Minnesota's fundamental sovereignty. My fellow attorneys general and I will continue to stand firm in defense of the rule of law and Americans' rights."

Attorney General James and the coalition sent today's letter in response to Attorney General Bondi's January 24 letter to Minnesota



In Letter to Attorney General Bondi and Secretary Noem, 22 AGs Call DOJ's Demand Letter an "After-The-Fact Attempt to Justify a Highly Concerning Federal Operation."

Governor Tim Walz, which accused the state - without any concrete evidence - of enabling widespread fraud. The Bondi letter, sent the same day federal immigration agents fatally shot a Minneapolis resident for the second time in as many weeks, demanded a series of drastic actions in exchange for the withdrawal of federal agents from Minnesota.

Read full story at
www.theindianpanorama.news



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There's more to growth than GDP

INDIA CANNOT AFFORD TO CONTINUE WITH THE URBAN-INDUSTRIALIZATION MODEL THAT HAS CREATED GLOBAL CRISES

ARUN MAIRA



"The key reform the Indian economy requires is a reform of the design and governance of a business enterprise. Workers, whether on farms or in factories, must be the owners of the enterprises in which they work so that they earn the profits made from their work and increase their own wealth, rather than passing on the profits to increase the wealth of financial investors. The capital assets required in the production process - machines in the manufacturing enterprise and the land for farms - must belong to the workers in the enterprise. Workers should be their own employers and not be compelled to become employees in factories and farms owned by stock market investors and feudal landlords."

India's policymakers are in a dilemma. Too many people, they say, are working in the agriculture sector. Therefore, according to them, the productivity of India's farm sector, measured by the number of people employed in it, is also too low. They would rather have more people being moved out of rural areas and farms - and small, 'informal', manufacturing and service enterprises - into cities, and into large, 'formal' factories and service enterprises.

The problem is that large formal enterprises are not creating enough secure jobs with decent wages. They are unwilling to absorb more people, pay them higher wages and provide them with social security. Instead, they want more 'flexible' labor laws to keep wage costs down. The core problem of the Indian economy is that employers in all sectors (manufacturing, services and agriculture) are using more machinery, and more technology - instead of human beings - to increase their output and productivity.

The key reform the Indian economy requires is a reform of the design and governance of a business enterprise. Workers, whether on farms or in factories, must be the owners of the enterprises in which they work so that they earn the profits made from their work and increase their own wealth, rather than passing on the profits to increase the wealth of financial investors. The capital assets required in the production process - machines in the manufacturing enterprise and the land for farms - must belong to the workers in the enterprise. Workers should be their own employers and not be compelled to become employees in factories and farms owned by stock market investors and feudal landlords. They should have the choice of how they will use profits from their work: whether to invest further in their enterprise or invest in their family welfare and their children's education.

Reforms of land ownership that transferred land from landlords to the erstwhile workers on farms caused small farmers' incomes to grow much faster in Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and China than in India in the last 50 years, explains Mike Bird in *The Land Trap: A New History of the World's Oldest Asset*. Bird explains why reforms progressed faster in other countries than in India. Vested interests came in the way of reforms in all countries. However, the leaders in those nations supported the rights of farmer-workers not the capitalist-owners. With reforms, small farmers' incomes and wealth increased, and they invested more in the education of their children. It is noteworthy that farm output and agricultural productivity also increased



The capital assets required in the production process must belong to the workers.

-Image / iStock

FASTER GDP GROWTH WILL NOT IMPROVE THE WELL-BEING OF INDIA'S BILLION-PLUS CITIZENS. FOR THE PAST 25 YEARS, THE INDIAN ECONOMY HAS CREATED LESS EMPLOYMENT WITH EACH UNIT OF GDP GROWTH THAN OTHER LARGE COUNTRIES. WE HAVE THE LARGEST POPULATION OF YOUTH IN THE WORLD, SEEKING EMPLOYMENT WITH GOOD WAGES.

without forcing people off farms.

Economists and business people must rethink the value of 'scale' in enterprises. Large-scale production of a standardized commodity - whether widgets in a factory or a monocrop on a large farm - increases economic efficiency by enabling the use of large machines and employment of low-skill workers to perform repetitive tasks. Large-scale enterprises can afford to deploy capital in machines and artificial intelligence. Thereby, they need less human labor and intelligence. While their efficiency and output may go up, and productivity too (measured as output per human being employed), such enterprises employ fewer humans. They contribute to the 'jobless' GDP growth of the economy.

Small farms that grow a variety of food organically have a greater 'scope' of production on the farm. Waste becomes a useful input on the farm itself, especially on farms that also have animals. Farms with more scope are naturally more sustainable. Materials and energy circulate within and around such small farms which have less scale but more scope.

Environmental scientist Vaclav Smil has computed the total system requirements of hydrocarbon energy and other non-renewable inputs in modern industries, food production and distribution systems, and in global transportation systems. In his book, *How the World Really Works*, he explains that the modern and

technologically intensive large-scale food production and distribution system is the largest polluter of the soil, water and the atmosphere. He also explains that small-scale farms with more scope are the best scientific solutions for environmental sustainability.

The problem, he points out, is that this solution requires more people to live and work in rural areas, and engage in smaller agriculture, manufacturing and service enterprises. This will require a reversal of migration from urban/formal enterprises to rural/informal ones. Citizens in advanced countries will not accept this. India should not have as much of a problem as other nations, because it already has the largest number of people living and working in rural areas - the very problem our economists are struggling to solve!

Faster GDP growth will not improve the well-being of India's billion-plus citizens. For the past 25 years, the Indian economy has created less employment with each unit of GDP growth than other large countries. We have the largest population of youth in the world, seeking employment with good wages.

With the present pattern of growth, India's GDP must grow at 12 per cent per annum for the next few years to generate enough employment. Each unit of GDP growth is also causing more pollution and environmental degradation than in other countries. Therefore, India cannot afford to continue following the urban-industrialization model of growth that has created global environment and inequality crises.

The pattern of growth must change for our nation to become a livable and sustainable 'Viksit Bharat'. Rather than the goal of climbing higher than other countries on the GDP ladder, India's economic reformers should reform the process of economic growth itself.

We must find our own way; a more inclusive and environmentally sustainable way; a more 'family' and 'community' way - a more 'Gandhian way' - to build our nation and strengthen our economy for it to deliver poorna swaraj (complete political, social and economic freedom) for all citizens. This was the 'tryst with destiny' towards which we had set out on August 15, 1947, when India became a sovereign nation responsible for its own future.

(Arun Maira is a management consultant and former member of Planning Commission of India. He is also a former chairman of Boston Consulting Group, India)

Litmus test for India-EU bonhomie

Sustaining deeper ties will entail compromises on both sides in the long run

SUSHMA
RAMACHANDRAN



"IT IS NOT JUST BRUSSELS THAT IS INVESTING HEAVILY IN NEW RELATIONSHIPS. NEW DELHI IS ALSO LOOKING TO DIVERSIFY MARKETS IN THE WAKE OF THE PUNITIVE TARIFFS IMPOSED BY THE US. THERE IS A MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF THE VALUE OF A CLOSE PARTNERSHIP. THIS IS BEING EXPRESSED IN THE CONCLUSION OF NOT JUST A TRADE AGREEMENT BUT ALSO A SECURITY AND DEFENSE PARTNERSHIP. IT WOULD BE ONLY THE THIRD SUCH PACT SIGNED BY THE EU, THE OTHER TWO BEING WITH JAPAN AND SOUTH KOREA. AS SUCH, IT SENDS A POWERFUL MESSAGE IN AN ERA OF FAST-CHANGING GLOBAL ALLIANCES."

India and Europe seem poised to bridge a gap that has yawned for decades. There has been greater confluence with the UK, given the colonial history and ease of communication in the English language. A shared language has equally helped in promoting a close relationship with the US, along with a highly educated diaspora.

As for Europe, there have been sizeable investments from multinationals, but the inflows have been far lower than to China. Economic ties have also faced the hurdles of the European Commission's complex bureaucracy and rigid regulations. Even so, trade between India and the European Union (EU) has grown rapidly over the years.

Latest official data shows that the annual India-EU merchandise trade was \$136 billion in 2024-25. This is even higher than the \$132-billion trade recorded with the US. The EU is India's biggest trading partner; yet there has been far more media hype over the much-awaited pact with the US than over the one with the EU. This is primarily due to the tariff drama of US President Donald Trump, who has been using a trade instrument as a blunt weapon of foreign policy.

At the World Economic Forum summit in Davos last week, the buzz was over Trump's summary dismissal of Europe over a wide range of issues, from Greenland to the role of NATO. Equally, there was buzz over Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney's call to middle powers to create a new world order. It is at this juncture when the post-WWII rules-based international system seems to be overturning that EU leaders descended on New Delhi for a high-profile summit along with being honored guests on Republic Day. The unveiling of a free trade agreement (FTA) at this stage could not have been more timely as Europe is clearly looking to reduce its economic dependence on the US. New ties are being forged rapidly as the India trade pact comes on the heels of the EU tying up a deal with Latin America's biggest trade bloc, Mercosur.

It is not just Brussels that is investing heavily in new



The unveiling of the India-EU free trade agreement could not have been more timely as Europe is looking to reduce its economic dependence on the US. -Photo / Reuters

IT IS THUS WORTHWHILE TO
RECOGNIZE THAT THE PRESENT
BONHOMIE IN INDIA-EUROPE
RELATIONS WILL BE TESTED ON THE
GROUND IN THE COMING DAYS.

relationships. New Delhi is also looking to diversify markets in the wake of the punitive tariffs imposed by the US. There is a mutual recognition of the value of a close partnership. This is being expressed in the conclusion of not just a trade agreement but also a security and defense partnership. It would be only the third such pact signed by the EU, the other two being with Japan and South Korea. As such, it sends a powerful message in an era of fast-changing global alliances.

At the same time, sustaining deeper India-EU ties will entail compromises on both sides in the long run. The newfound warmth has emerged after many years of frostiness. It must be recalled that the current FTA has been under discussion for as long as 18 years. Talks were even suspended in 2014 and then resumed in 2022. The reason has been rigidity on both sides, with red lines being drawn firmly without any effort at flexibility.

Going forward, the first area of conflict could be the European Commission's bureaucracy, legendary for its tangled web of rules. In fact, some Brexit supporters had cited the EU's regulatory complexity as a reason to exit the economic bloc. There is no doubt that in contrast, the FTA with the UK moved much more quickly despite several changes at the top during the negotiations. Boris Johnson was the Prime Minister when the talks commenced, while it was Keir Starmer who ultimately signed the pact.

Thus, there are potential irritants, especially over a wide range of non-tariff barriers. The most contentious is the carbon border adjustment mechanism (CBAM) that could affect the ultimate cost of myriad Indian

exports, particularly steel, aluminum, and cement. This runs counter to studies showing that the environmental impact of such emissions is minimal. According to an UNCTAD report, the value of the CBAM in mitigating climate change is limited as it would cut only 0.1 per cent of global CO2 emissions.

Another issue that is critical for India is greater ease of movement for skilled professionals. While the US has benefited greatly from relaxed entry policies for highly educated personnel, Europe has fallen behind in this respect. This is despite the fact that countries like Germany are now keen to lure high-tech professionals, especially in the wake of the curbs on H-1B visas. The new mobility agreement that is being put in place may ultimately correct this lacuna, though the focus is largely on students and research.

The need to appreciate India's red lines in terms of market access will also be an important factor in expanding economic ties. Dairy and agriculture have always been contentious issues between the two sides. The EU has often taken a sharply divergent position at the World Trade Organisation on agriculture, including the need to protect livelihoods of farmers surviving at subsistence levels, even though huge subsidies are given to rich farmers in developed economies. A greater understanding of these issues is needed on multilateral platforms.

It is thus worthwhile to recognize that the present bonhomie in India-Europe relations will be tested on the ground in the coming days. Among the positives, the free trade pact has been finalized due to a determined effort to be more flexible, considering the external headwinds on the trade front. Even India has had to recognize that providing greater market access can yield rich dividends in terms of enabling matching access to a huge market of developed economies.

Yet both sides must reduce the red tape for which Brussels and New Delhi have a well-deserved reputation. In the backdrop of a changing world order, one hopes efforts will be made to do everything needed to upgrade the economic and strategic relationship. It is only this firm resolve that will ensure a brighter outlook for India-Europe ties.

(Sushma Ramachandran is a columnist at The Tribune)

India-RI 'gotong royong': Persevering geopolitical storms together

**SANDEEP
CHAKRAVORTY**



"AS INDIA AND INDONESIA MARCH TOWARD OUR COMMON VISION OF DEVELOPED INDIA 2047 AND GOLDEN INDONESIA 2045, WE DO SO AS COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIC PARTNERS. BY STRENGTHENING OUR BILATERAL TIES AND LEADING THE GLOBAL SOUTH THROUGH ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE AND SOCIAL INCLUSION, WE WILL BRAVE THE CURRENT GEOPOLITICAL STORM WITH GREATER RESOLVE AND FORTITUDE."

Exactly one year ago, President Prabowo Subianto was the chief guest at India's Republic Day Parade at the invitation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. A 352 Strong Indonesian marching and hand contingent marched down the majestic Kartavya Path - Delhi's most magnificent promenade.

This marked the first time an Indonesian contingent participated in a national day parade abroad. The occasion was deeply symbolic and poignant, commemorating the culmination of 75 years of diplomatic relations and echoing the moment 75 years ago when President Sukarno served as the chief guest at India's very first Republic Day.

In January 2025, Indonesia further deepened these ties by joining BRICS. As India holds the BRICS chair in 2026, it looks forward to warmly receiving President Prabowo for the BRICS Summit later this year, focused on theme: "Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability."

As a year has passed since that momentous visit, it is time to take stock

of our ties and outline the roadmap our leaders have charted. The decisions and actions taken by India and Indonesia, the world's largest and fourth-largest countries, carry significant weight for the international community, particularly the Global South. In an era of acute geopolitical contestation and a shifting international order, our partnership is vital.

As non-bloc, nonaligned nations with a firm belief in multipolarity, the India-

making perennial rice imports a thing of the past. Indonesia has also finalized several free trade agreements (FTAs), signaling a commitment to dismantling artificial trade barriers. India is delighted to partner with Indonesia across several of the government's Asta Cita (eight goals) initiatives, particularly in food security and digitalization.

Parallel to Indonesia's transformation, the Indian growth story is gaining significant steam. While it took India 60

trade.

By finalizing FTAs with the United Kingdom and New Zealand and dismantling protectionist barriers like certain Quality Control Orders (QCOs), India has created a landscape from which Indonesian exports directly benefit.

As of now, India is nearing an FTA with the European Union, shortly after Indonesia concluded the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement with eurozone. A key remaining task for both nations is finalizing the revision of the ASEAN- India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA) and initiating bilateral trade agreement discussions. Amid global tariff narratives, it is often overlooked that India is Indonesia's third or fourth largest export destination, while Indonesia remains India's eighth largest trading partner.

Following the Presidential visit, forward-looking exchanges have taken place across eight primary pillars; digital, health, financial integration, energy, food sufficiency; defense, education and culture. In the digital and AI space, we expect strong Indonesian participation in the AI Impact Summit, with Indonesia cochairing the Working Group on Economic Growth and Social Good.

Together, we can shape a global AI discourse centered on People, Planet and Progress". In 2026, we anticipate greater integration through the UPIQRIS tie-up, collaborations between capital markets and local currency settlements between our central banks.

In the healthcare sector, India's Apollo Hospitals has teamed up with Mayapada Hospitals to provide, international standard care within Indonesia, helping the nation conserve valuable foreign exchange. Several Indian pharmaceutical companies will commence local production in 2026, and India remains committed to establishing a world-class liver transplant facility in Indonesia.

Our cooperation extends to the grassroots as well; Indian entrepreneurs are supporting the rollout of the nutritious meal program and the Merah Putih cooperatives, sharing branding insights from the successful Amul movement.

From the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Bangalore's proposed tie-up with the Singhasari Special Economic Zone to the Archaeological Survey of India's upcoming restoration of the Prambanan Temple, our partnership spans the modern and ancient.

As India and Indonesia march toward our common vision of Developed India 2047 and Golden Indonesia 2045, we do so as comprehensive strategic partners. By strengthening our bilateral ties and leading the Global South through economic performance and social inclusion, we will brave the current geopolitical storm with greater resolve and fortitude.

(Sandeep Chakravorty is India's Ambassador to Indonesia)



Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto witnesses India's grand Republic-Day parade with President of India Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in New Delhi, January 26, 2025

MUCH LIKE INDONESIA, INDIA HAS EXHIBITED UNWAVERING ADHERENCE TO ITS REFORM AGENDA. OVER THE PAST YEAR, THE MODI GOVERNMENT HAS RATIONALIZED TAXATION, CONSOLIDATED 29 DISPARATE LAWS IN FOUR STREAMLINED LABOR CODES AND ADOPTED AN ENLIGHTENED APPROACH TO TRADE.

Indonesia partnership is more than a bilateral benefit; it is a balancing force for global good. By doing more together, we reduce dependencies on outside powers, thereby preserving out respective sovereignty and strategic autonomies.

Despite challenges from adverse global economic conditions, including the weaponization of tariffs and investment wariness, both nations have prioritized domestic reform and perseverance.

Both countries have launched initiatives to increase the share of manufacturing in their respective gross domestic products (GDPs).

In Indonesia, the establishment of Danantara, the new sovereign wealth investment agency, stands as remarkable and courageous reform with far reaching potential. Another bold initiative, the free Nutritious Meal program, is already proving to be transformational and generational in its impact. Furthermore, the Merah-Putih Co-operatives, once fully operational will serve as hubs for rural economic growth.

Since President Prabowo assumed office just over a year ago, Indonesia has made immense strides in food security,

years post-independence to reach a GDP of US\$1 trillion, the pace has accelerated dramatically. The \$2 trillion mark was achieved in 2014, \$3 trillion was achieved in 2021, \$4 trillion was reached in 2025 and \$5 trillion is projected within the next two years.

Recently, India surpassed Japan to become the fourth-largest economy in the world; by 2028. It is projected to surpass Germany to become the third largest.

This internal transformation is fueled by structural reforms, infrastructural spending, digital expansion, and surge in startups and R & D. The recent promulgation of the Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Act has also opened new pathways for nuclear energy through small modular reactors (SMRs) and private sector participation.

Much like Indonesia, India has exhibited unwavering adherence to its reform agenda. Over the past year, the Modi government has rationalized taxation, consolidated 29 disparate laws in four streamlined labor codes and adopted an enlightened approach to

Glimpses Of 77th Republic Day Celebrations



An unusual yet striking element of this year's 77th Republic Day celebrations unfolded at Kartavya Path as the Indian Army introduced the nation to a rare symbol of frontier resilience—Bactrian camels from Ladakh—capturing public attention with their commanding presence.



An artist performs during the annual NCC PM rally, at Cariappa Parade Ground in New Delhi in January 26.



Maharashtra state tableau rolls down the Kartavya Path during the 77th Republic Day Parade, in New Delhi. Maharashtra won the top prize in the category of states and Union Territories for its tableau.



President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen and President of the European Council Antonio Costa leave in the presidential carriage after attending the 77th Republic Day Parade.



Beating Retreat ceremony 2026 is underway at Vijay Chowk, in New Delhi on Thursday, January 29.



Indians abroad celebrate 77th Republic Day

An enthusiastic Indian diaspora dressed in vibrant traditional dresses on Monday celebrated India's 77th Republic Day at the country's missions abroad, where the national tri-colour was unfurled.

In Beijing, Ambassador Shri Pradeep Kumar Rawat unfurled the tri-colour flag and read out extracts of President Droupadi Murmu's address to the nation.

The stirring chants of Vande Mataram and Bharat Mata Ki Jai resonated in the celebrations as everyone joined in rendering the national song with pride and a spirit of unity, the Indian Embassy in Beijing posted on X.

A thematic exhibition traced the history of Vande Mataram, highlighting its powerful role in uniting the nation during India's freedom struggles. The programme included several cultural programmes.

In Shanghai, Consul General of India, Pratik Mathur, hoisted the tricolour.

The event marked by pomp and splendor, the celebrations were attended by over 400 Friends of India from the local Indian diaspora, Chinese community and the diplomatic and consular corps, including 20 Consul Generals representing our European Union friends and partners, a post by the Consulate on X said.

In Washington, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio extended a special message to India on the occasion of the country's Republic Day, commemorated on January 26.

"On behalf of the people of the United States, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the people of India on your Republic Day," Rubio said in the message issued Sunday.

"The United States and India share a historic bond. From our close cooperation on defence, energy, critical minerals, and emerging technologies to our multi-layered engagement through the Quad, the US-India relationship delivers real results for our two countries and for the Indo-Pacific region," Rubio said, referring to the grouping of Australia, India, Japan and the US.

Rubio said he looks forward to working together with India to "advance our shared objectives in the year ahead."

In Singapore, Indian High Commissioner Dr Shilpak Ambule led the Indian diaspora community in celebrating 77 Republic Day at the chancery in Singapore.

Dr Ambule read the President's address and congratulated over 1,200 Okmembers of the community who came with family members at the event on Monday morning, despite the start of the working week.

Students from the Indian schools performed cultural dance played to traditional music, while patriotic songs were played to full applause by the



Embassy of India, Beijing, joined by members of Indian community and Friends of India celebrated the 77th Republic Day & 150th Anniversary of Vande Mataram with great fervor. Ambassador Shri Pradeep Kumar Rawat unfurled the tri-colour flag and read out extracts of Hon'ble President's address to the nation.



The High Commission of India in Singapore hosted a reception for diplomats, dignitaries and other prominent guests as part of the 77th Republic Day celebration with an elaborate display of the richness and diversity of Indian art forms.



Republic Day celebrations in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

guests.

Team members of the Sarang helicopter squad, who have arrived here for the Singapore Airshow next week, joined the Indian community in celebrations at the chancery.

In Japan, the flag was unfurled by Ambassador-designate Nagma M Mallick.

"The Embassy of India, Tokyo, celebrated the 77th Republic Day of India. The celebration began with the unfurling of the National Flag by Ambassador-designate Ms Nagma M Mallick @IndianEmbTokyo, followed by the singing of the National Anthem and reading of the Hon'ble President of India's address to the nation," the



The Embassy of India, Tokyo, celebrated the 77th Republic Day.



The 77th Republic Day of India was celebrated with patriotic fervour at the premises of the Embassy of India in Dublin.

embassy said in a post on X.

In Sri Lanka, High Commissioner Santosh Jha unfurled the flag at India House, Colombo. He was joined by members of the Indian diaspora.

"May the Tiranga always fly high!" the Indian High Commission posted on X.

Jha also paid tributes at the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) memorial, honouring the brave Indian soldiers.

"On the occasion of the 77th #RepublicDay, High Commissioner @santjha and officers of @IndiainSL paid solemn tributes at Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) memorial, honouring the brave Indian soldiers who made the supreme sacrifice for the cause of peace and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka," the post said.

Celebrations resonated with national fervour, as the Sri Lankan Navy performed beloved patriotic tunes.

"Marking 150 years of India's National Song, #VandeMataram, students of

@iccr_colombo paid vibrant tributes through captivating Kathak and Bharatanatyam performances, celebrating its timeless legacy through dance," the post said.

Also, Sri Lanka's Leader of the Opposition and Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) leader Sajith Premadasa extended greetings to India on the occasion of the 77th Republic Day celebrations.

Premadasa appreciated the country's "enduring" commitment to democracy.

"On Indian Republic Day, I extend my warm wishes to the people of India. In a turbulent world, India's enduring commitment to democracy stands as a reminder that institutions, resilience, and the will of the people still matter. May your republic continue to grow stronger," he said in a post on X.

Three Indian-American luminaries among Padma Award honorees

Three distinguished Indian-Americans have been named among the recipients of India's prestigious Padma Awards 2026, the Government of India announced on the eve of Republic Day. The honours recognize outstanding contributions in medicine and sports, and will be conferred by the President of India at a ceremonial function later this year.

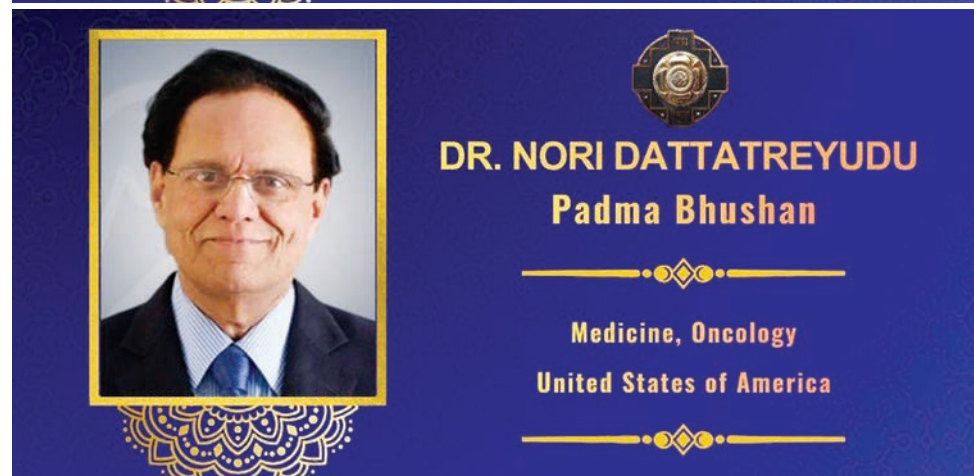
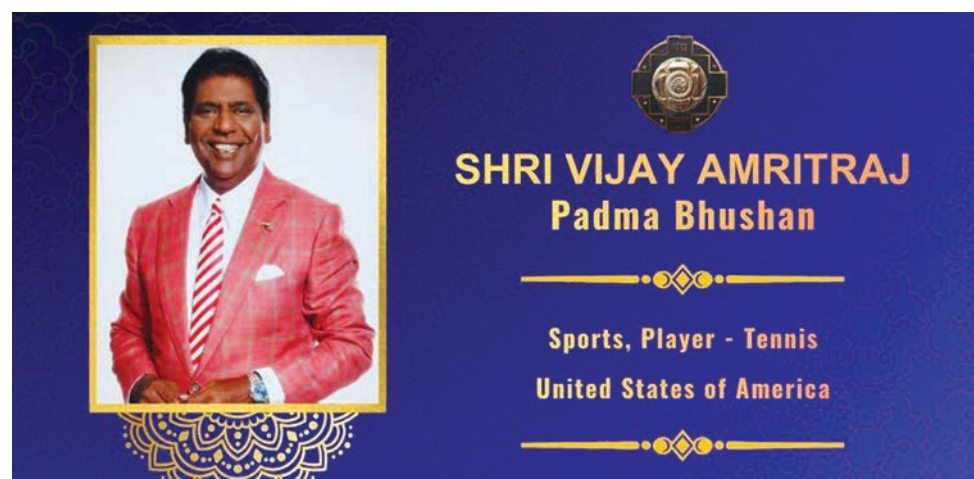
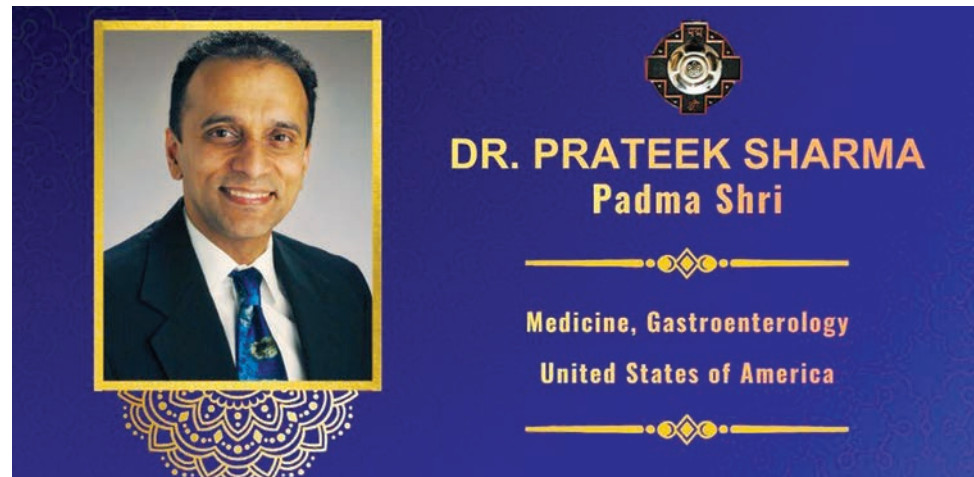
Padma Bhushan for Dr. Nori Dattatreyyudu

Dr. Dattatreyyudu Nori, a renowned radiation oncologist based in the United States, has been awarded the Padma Bhushan, India's third-highest civilian honour, for his lifelong service to medicine.

Born in Mantada village in Andhra Pradesh, Dr. Nori trained at Kurnool Medical College and Osmania Medical College before moving to the United States, where he built a distinguished career in cancer care. He is widely recognized as a leader in brachytherapy — a targeted form of radiation therapy — and has pioneered techniques that have improved treatment outcomes for many cancer patients. Beyond clinical innovation, Dr. Nori has advised government and health organizations on cancer prevention and care strategies. He was previously awarded the Padma Shri in 2015 for his contributions to medicine.

Dr Nori's contributions have been widely acknowledged at both national and international levels. In 2014, he received the Ellis Island Medal of Honour, one of the highest civilian awards in the United States. He was also conferred the Padma Shri in 2015 for his services to medicine.

In addition, he has been named among the top doctors in America by his peers, based on evaluations by tens of thousands of oncologists, particularly for his work in treating cancers in women.



Padma Bhushan for Vijay Amritraj

Vijay Amritraj, one of India's most celebrated tennis players, has also been honoured with the Padma Bhushan.

Born in Madras (now Chennai) in 1953, Amritraj became a global ambassador for Indian sport during his professional tennis career. He reached the quarterfinals at both Wimbledon and the US Open, won numerous titles, and captained India's Davis Cup team. After retiring from competition, he became a respected sports commentator and broadcaster. Amritraj has also worked in film and served as a United Nations Messenger of Peace, advocating for health and social causes. He was earlier honoured with the Padma Shri in 1983 and was inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame in 2024.

Padma Shri for Dr. Prateek Sharma

Dr. Prateek Sharma has been named a Padma Shri recipient for his contributions to medicine.

Dr. Sharma, a leading Indian-American gastroenterologist, is internationally recognized for his work in diagnosing and treating gastrointestinal diseases and cancers. His efforts include advancing imaging and endoscopic techniques that help detect conditions such as Barrett's esophagus and early-stage gastrointestinal cancer, improving patient outcomes. Dr. Sharma's leadership in medical research and his role in professional healthcare organisations have brought him wide recognition in the field.

The Padma Awards — comprising the Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan, and Padma Shri — are among the highest civilian honours in India. They are announced annually on Republic Day and celebrate distinguished service across medicine, arts, sports, science, public affairs, and other fields. In 2026, a total of 131 awardees were selected.

Padma Awards, India's prestigious civilian honors

The Padma Awards were established in 1954 alongside the Bharat Ratna. Initially, Padma Awards had three classes: Pahela Varg, Dusra Varg, and Tisra Varg. These were renamed in 1955 via Presidential Notification as: Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri.

Padma Awards Categories

- Padma Vibhushan: Awarded for exceptional and distinguished service.
- Padma Bhushan: Conferred for distinguished service of a high order.
- Padma Shri: Recognises distinguished service in any field.

Eligibility Criteria

- All persons, regardless of race, occupation, position or gender, are eligible for the award.
- Government servants, including employees of

Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs), are not eligible, except doctors and scientists.

- Awards are normally not conferred posthumously, but in highly deserving cases, exceptions are allowed.
- A minimum 5-year gap is required for conferring a higher category Padma award upon a previously awarded individual.
- However, this can be relaxed by the Awards Committee in exceptional cases.
- Nominations are open to the public, and self-nomination is also allowed.

Selection Process

- All nominations are evaluated by the Padma Awards Committee, which is constituted annually by the Prime Minister.
- The Committee is headed by the Cabinet Secretary. Its recommendations are submitted to

the Prime Minister and President for final approval.

- The awards are presented by the President, usually in March or April.
- Awardees receive a Sanad (certificate) signed by the President and a medallion.

Other Key Features

- The total number of Padma awards per year is capped at 120, excluding Posthumous awards and Awards to NRIs, foreign nationals, and Overseas Citizens of India (OCIs).
- The award does not constitute a title and cannot be used as a prefix or suffix to the awardee's name.
- Disciplines covered: Awards span across art, social work, public affairs, science and engineering, trade and industry, medicine, literature and education, sports, civil service, among others.

Padma awards 2026: Dharmendra, Rohit Sharma, Mammooty among 131 named

The Centre on Sunday (January 25) announced the Padma Awards for 2026, approving a total of 131 civilian honors across the Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri categories. The list comprises five Padma Vibhushan, 13 Padma Bhushan and 113 Padma Shri awards, and includes names from fields such as public life, arts, cinema, literature, sports and public affairs. Those selected for the Padma Vibhushan include veteran actor Dharmendra Singh Deol (posthumous), former Kerala chief minister V S Achuthanandan (posthumous), classical violinist N Rajam, former Supreme Court judge K T Thomas, and writer P Narayanan.

The category recognizes exceptional and distinguished service. Cricketer Rohit Sharma has been awarded the Padma Shri. The Padma Bhushan list features personalities such as singer Alka Yagnik, actor Mammooty, industrialist Uday Kotak, former Uttarakhand chief minister Bhagat Singh Koshyari, advertising professional Piyush Pandey (posthumous), social leader Vellappally Natesan, and former tennis player Vijay Amritraj, honouring distinguished service of a high order.

President Droupadi Murmu will be giving out these awards during the ceremony which generally happens around March/April every year.

Padma Vibhushan (5)

- Dharmendra Singh Deol (Posthumous): Art (Maharashtra)
- K T Thomas: Public Affairs (Kerala)
- N Rajam: Art (Uttar Pradesh)
- P Narayanan: Literature and Education (Kerala)
- V S Achuthanandhan (Posthumous): Public Affairs (Kerala)

Padma Bhushan (13)

- Alka Yagnik: Art (Maharashtra)
- Bhagat Singh Koshyari: Public Affairs (Uttarakhand)
- Kallipatti Ramasamy Palaniswamy: Medicine (Tamil Nadu)
- Mammooty: Art (Kerala)
- Dr. Nori Dattatreya: Medicine (United States of America)
- Piyush Pandey (Posthumous): Art (Maharashtra)
- S K M Maeilanandhan: Social Work (Tamil Nadu)
- Shatavadhani R Ganesh: Art (Karnataka)
- Shibu Soren (Posthumous): Public Affairs (Jharkhand)
- Uday Kotak: Trade and Industry (Maharashtra)
- V K Malhotra (Posthumous): Public Affairs (Delhi)
- Vellappally Natesan: Public Affairs (Kerala)
- Vijay Amritraj: Sports (United States of America)

Padma Shri (113)

- A E Muthunayagam: Science and Engineering (Kerala)
- Anil Kumar Rastogi: Art (Uttar Pradesh)
- Anke Gowda M.: Social Work (Karnataka)
- Armida Fernandez: Medicine (Maharashtra)
- Arvind Vaidya: Art (Gujarat)
- Ashok Khade: Trade and Industry (Maharashtra)
- Ashok Kumar Singh: Science and Engineering (Uttar Pradesh)
- Asok Kumar Halder: Literature and Education (West Bengal)
- Baldev Singh: Sports (Punjab)
- Bhagwandas Raikwar: Sports (Madhya Pradesh)
- Bharat Singh Bharti: Art (Bihar)
- Bhikya Ladakya Dhinda: Art (Maharashtra)
- Bishwa Bandhu (Posthumous): Art (Bihar)



- Brij Lal Bhat: Social Work (Jammu and Kashmir)
- Buddha Rashmi Mani: Others - Archaeology (Uttar Pradesh)
- Budhri Tati: Social Work (Chhattisgarh)
- Chandramouli Gaddamanugu: Science and Engineering (Telangana)
- Charan Hembram: Literature and Education (Odisha)
- Chiranjeevi Lal Yadav: Art (Uttar Pradesh)
- Deepika Reddy: Art (Telangana)
- Dharmiklal Chunilal Pandya: Art (Gujarat)
- Gadde Babu Rajendra Prasad: Art (Andhra Pradesh)
- Gafruddin Mewati Jogi: Art (Rajasthan)
- Gambir Singh Yonzon: Literature and Education (West Bengal)
- Garimella Balakrishna Prasad (Posthumous): Art (Andhra Pradesh)
- Gayatri Balasubramanian and Ranjani Balasubramanian (Duo): Art (Tamil Nadu)
- Gopal Ji Trivedi: Science and Engineering (Bihar)
- Guduru Venkat Rao: Medicine (Telangana)
- H V Hande: Medicine (Tamil Nadu)
- Hally War: Social Work (Meghalaya)
- Hari Madhab Mukhopadhyay (Posthumous): Art

- (West Bengal)
- Haricharan Saikia: Art (Assam)
- Harmanpreet Kaur Bhullar: Sports (Punjab)
- Inderjit Singh Sidhu: Social Work (Chandigarh)
- Janardan Bapurao Bothe: Social Work (Maharashtra)
- Jogesh Deuri: Others - Agriculture (Assam)
- Juzer Vasi: Science and Engineering (Maharashtra)
- Jyotish Debnath: Art (West Bengal)
- K Pajani: Sports (Puducherry)
- K Ramasamy: Science and Engineering (Tamil Nadu)
- K Vijay Kumar: Civil Service (Tamil Nadu)
- Kabindra Purkayastha (Posthumous): Public Affairs (Assam)
- Kailash Chandra Pant: Literature and Education (Madhya Pradesh)
- Kalamandalam Vimala Menon: Art (Kerala)
- Kewal Krishan Thakral: Medicine (Uttar Pradesh)
- Khem Raj Sundriyal: Art (Haryana)
- Kollakal Devaki Amma G: Social Work (Kerala)
- Krishnamurthy Balasubramanian: Science and Engineering (Telangana)
- Kumar Bose: Art (West Bengal)

From Page 14



This combo image shows Padma Awardees for 2026, First row, from left, Yumnam Jatra Singh (Arts), Vishwa Bandhu (Arts), Thiruvavur Bhakthavatsalam (Arts), Techu Gubin from Arunachal Pradesh (Social Work), Taga Ram Bheel (Arts), Suresh Hanagavadi (Indigenous Medicine for Haemophilia), Simanchal Patro (Arts), Shrirang Devaba Lad (Agriculture), Shafi Shauq (Literature and Education), Second row, from left, Sangyusang S Pongener (Arts), SG Susheelamma (Social Work), Rama Reddy Mamidi (Animal Husbandry and Dairy), Rajasthathi Kaliappa Goundar (Arts), Raghupat Singh (Agriculture), Sunita Godbole (Medicine), R Krishnan (Arts), Pokila Lekthepi (Arts), Othuvur Thiruthani (Arts), Third row, from left, Nuruddin Ahmed (Arts), Nilesh Mandlewala (Social Work), Mohan Nagar (Environment), Mir Hajibhai Kasambhai (Arts), Mahendra Kumar Mishra (Literature and Education), Kollakayil Devaki Amma G (Environment and afforestation), Khemraj Sundriyal (Arts), Kailash Chandra Pant (Literature and Education), K Pajanivel (Arts), Fourth row, from left, Inderjit Singh Sindhu (Social Work), Hally War (Social Work), Gafruddin Mewarti (Arts), Dr Shyam Sundar (Medicine), Dr Punniyamurthy Natesan (Veterinary scientist), Dr Padma Gurment (Medicine), Dr Kumarasamy Thangaraj (Indian Geneticist), Dharmiklal Chunilal Pandya (Arts), Chiranjil Lal Yadav (Arts), Fifth row, from left, Charan Hembram (Literature and Education), Budri Thathi (Social Work), Brij Lal Bhat (Social Work), Bhikya Ladakya (Arts), Bhagwadas Raikwar (Sports), Armida Fernandes (Medicine), Ram Chandra Godbole (Medicine), Anke Gowda (Literature and Education), Raghuveer Kehdkar (Arts).

- Kumarasamy Thangaraj: Science and Engineering (Telangana)
- Prof. (Dr.) Lars-Christian Koch: Art (Germany)
- Liudmila Viktorovna Khokhlova: Literature and Education (Russia)
- Madhavan Ranganathan: Art (Maharashtra)
- Maganti Murali Mohan: Art (Andhra Pradesh)
- Mahendra Kumar Mishra: Literature and Education (Odisha)
- Mahendra Nath Roy: Literature and Education (West Bengal)
- Mamidala Jagadesh Kumar: Literature and Education (Delhi)
- Mangala Kapoor: Literature and Education (Uttar Pradesh)
- Mir Hajibhai Kasambhai: Art (Gujarat)
- Mohan Nagar: Social Work (Madhya Pradesh)
- Narayan Vyas: Others - Archaeology (Madhya Pradesh)
- Naresh Chandra Dev Varma: Literature and Education (Tripura)
- Nilesh Vinodchandra Mandlewala: Social Work (Gujarat)
- Nuruddin Ahmed: Art (Assam)
- Othuvur Thiruthani Swaminathan: Art (Tamil Nadu)
- Dr. Padma Gurmet: Medicine (Ladakh)
- Palkonda Vijay Anand Reddy: Medicine (Telangana)
- Pokhila Lekthepi: Art (Assam)
- Dr. Prabhakar Basavprabhu Kore: Literature and Education (Karnataka)
- Prateek Sharma: Medicine (United States of America)
- Praveen Kumar: Sports (Uttar Pradesh)
- Prem Lal Gautam: Science and Engineering (Himachal Pradesh)
- Prosenjit Chatterjee: Art (West Bengal)
- Dr. Punniyamurthy Natesan: Medicine (Tamil Nadu)
- R Krishnan (Posthumous): Art (Tamil Nadu)
- R V S Mani: Civil Service (Delhi)
- Rabilal Tudu: Literature and Education (West Bengal)
- Raghupat Singh (Posthumous): Others - Agriculture (Uttar Pradesh)
- Raghuveer Tukaram Khedkar: Art (Maharashtra)
- Rajasthathi Kaliappa Goundar: Art (Tamil Nadu)
- Rajendra Prasad: Medicine (Uttar Pradesh)
- Rama Reddy Mamidi (Posthumous): Others - Animal Husbandry (Telangana)
- Ramamurthy Sreedher: Others - Radio Broadcasting (Delhi)
- Ramchandra Godbole and Suneeta Godbole (Duo): Medicine (Chhattisgarh)
- Ratilal Borisagar: Literature and Education (Gujarat)
- Rohit Sharma: Sports (Maharashtra)
- S G Susheelamma: Social Work (Karnataka)
- Sangyusang S Pongener: Art (Nagaland)
- Sant Niranjana Dass: Others - Spiritualism (Punjab)
- Sarat Kumar Patra: Art (Odisha)
- Saroj Mandal: Medicine (West Bengal)
- Satish Shah (Posthumous): Art (Maharashtra)
- Satyanarayan Nuwal: Trade and Industry (Maharashtra)
- Savita Punia: Sports (Haryana)
- Prof. Shafi Shauq: Literature and Education (Jammu and Kashmir)
- Shashi Shekhar Vempati: Literature and Education (Karnataka)
- Shrirang Devaba Lad: Others - Agriculture (Maharashtra)
- Shubha Venkatesha Iyengar: Science and Engineering (Karnataka)
- Shyam Sundar: Medicine (Uttar Pradesh)
- Simanchal Patro: Art (Odisha)
- Sivasankari: Literature and Education (Tamil Nadu)
- Dr. Suresh Hanagavadi: Medicine (Karnataka)
- Swami Brahmdev Ji Maharaj: Social Work (Rajasthan)
- T T Jagannathan (Posthumous): Trade and Industry (Karnataka)
- Taga Ram Bheel: Art (Rajasthan)
- Tarun Bhattacharya: Art (West Bengal)
- Techu Gubin: Social Work (Arunachal Pradesh)
- Thiruvavur Bhakthavatsalam: Art (Tamil Nadu)
- Tripti Mukherjee: Art (West Bengal)
- Veezhinathan Kamakoti: Science and Engineering (Tamil Nadu)
- Vempaty Kutumba Sastry: Literature and Education (Andhra Pradesh)
- Vladimir Mestvirishvili (Posthumous): Sports (Georgia)
- Yumnam Jatra Singh (Posthumous): Art (Manipur)

This year's Padma Awards 2 duo cases (in a duo case, the Award is counted as one). Padma Awards 2026 has 5 Padma Vibhushan, 13 Padma Bhushan and 113 Padma Awards. Congratulations to all the awardees who have won in the three different categories.

Extortions and transnational crime worry the Indian community in general, and Sikhs in particular

JANUARY 29, 2026
TORONTO (TIP)

The fear of extortion continues to escalate as the local, provincial and federal agencies continue to grope in the dark without finding any substantial solutions to the problems that have been spreading their tentacles to communities across Canada, especially those with a significant Indian immigrant population.

The worst hit are the affluent members of the Indian community in general and the Sikhs in particular.

Extortions, which have been a rising concern for years, continue to rock meetings of city councils, provincial assemblies, and the national Parliament, the House of Commons.

The problem has been in the public domain that after a series of town hall meetings, debates and deliberations, those allegedly behind the rattling crime have started spreading the terror by making the shocking videos of their actions viral. The other day, a video of a man shooting up a Brampton home while brandishing two pistols allegedly went viral. It sent shock waves among members of the Indian community.

A recent report in a major tabloid of Toronto said that extortion was a "story of people being threatened with violence, like the shooting, or arson to the business or home, if they do not pay up. While the shootings and other acts of violence are carried out by hired local thugs, the money is often wired to organized crime groups in India. While the notoriously vicious and violent Bishnoi gang in India has claimed responsibility for some of these extortion rackets, there are other groups and copycat outfits involved.

"In the Brampton incident earlier this month, the shooting was recorded by an accomplice of the gunman and then sent to the homeowner the next day with a demand for \$500,000. While Brampton and the surrounding area are a hotspot for this activity, it's also been a problem in Winnipeg, Edmonton, and British Columbia's Lower Mainland," the report said.

After the Brampton City Council and Mayor urged the Federal Government to declare it a national crisis. Now, the city council of Surrey in BC, headed by Mayor Brenda Loc, passed a unanimous motion calling for a national state of emergency and for strong action by the federal government after 35 extortion incidents since the beginning of the year.

"Surrey is facing a serious and growing crisis of organized extortion, intimidation, and targeted shootings," Locke said. "Residents and business owners are living in constant fear. Public safety is at risk, and the social and economic impact is real."

She wants additional police resources, suggesting a joint federal-provincial-municipal task force and expedited deportation of "non-citizens charged or convicted of extortion, firearms offences, or participation in extortion-related criminal activity."



Sitting ducks: Sikh leaders take aim at Canada's failures on extortion crisis
Photo / courtesy The Williams Lake Tribune

On return from his India visit, British Columbia Premier David Eby went after the head of a police anti-extortion task force. After his interaction with Indian media in Mumbai, where he found himself in a piquant situation when asked repeatedly about the Hardeep Singh Nijjar case, Eby said that the head of the anti-extortion needed to step aside if he could not demonstrate a sense of urgency in the fight. His remarks about RCMP Assistant Commissioner John Brewer come a day after Brewer repeatedly declined to characterize a wave of extortion-related shootings in the Lower Mainland as a crisis.

Soon after, the premier said that Brewer's comments "cut at public confidence" and he needed to clarify himself. "If Mr. Brewer does not feel that urgency, does not feel this is a crisis, perhaps he's not the right person to head up this task force," Eby said, maintaining that "the reason we established this task force ... was to respond to a crisis. We need them to bring that urgency to this job and to do it quickly and effectively for the people of Surrey and the people south of the Fraser," the premier continued. "That is what they expect, that is what they demand, and that is what I expect."

A few days earlier, Brewer, in an update on the work of the B.C. extortion task force, held that it was "actively hunting" suspects in 32 files across the Lower Mainland. But he would not describe the situation as a crisis after being pressed to do so in a news conference. Police were "actively hunting" those who were extorting businesses and individuals in B.C. John Brewer urged residents not to take matters into their own hands. This statement came as a sequel to yet another shooting in Surrey, which was believed to be linked to extortion.

There have been instances when victims reportedly retorted and fired back at the extortionists. Interestingly, Brewer apologized for not using the term "crisis" in his news conference and said the opportunity to provide an update had instead called the RCMP's

commitment into question and impacted public confidence.

The issue has been rocking the House of Commons, which resumed its sitting after the holiday break on Monday.

Conservative Deputy Leader Tim Uppal said that Canadians were living in fear in their own neighborhoods as extortion runs rampant right across the country. In British Columbia alone, extortion has increased by nearly 500%, yet the Liberals continue to ignore this crisis, so much so that the Surrey city council desperately passed a unanimous motion to ask the government to take some action. Canadians do not need more empty announcements or more meetings and town halls. Canadians need action. Why was the government ignoring the safety of Canadians? When will the Liberals finally work with us to bring in mandatory minimum sentences for extortion to help protect Canadians? he asked.

Responding to Tim Uppal, Minister of Justice and Attorney-General Sean Fraser admitted that extortion was a real and pressing problem in this country and that members had an opportunity to do something about it. Laws are being debated in Parliament right now that would make it harder for people charged with extortion-related offences to be released on bail, that would result in deeper and longer sentences for people who are convicted of extortion, and that would give new tools to law enforcement, who are asking the House to pass the strong borders act on lawful access so they can investigate, charge, and prosecute criminals. The thing that these different measures have in common is that the Conservative Party of Canada has been obstructing them for months. I ask them to get with the program, support these important bills, and bring extortion to an end in Canada.

Conservative MP Harb Gill from Windsor West, while joining the debate, said that as a former police officer, "I know a crisis when I see one. Extortion is out of control. Businesses and families are being threatened, shot at,

PRABHJOT
SINGH



and shaken down daily, yet the Liberals deny there is a crisis. They are dragging their feet. Some municipalities are even asking for a state of emergency to be declared. When will the government stop its hug-a-thug policy, work with Conservatives, restore mandatory minimums, and repeal the catch-and-release laws? For crying out loud, do something about this crisis.

Ruby Sahota, Secretary of State, Combatting Crime, intervened to say that in this country, we have life in prison for extortion and mandatory minimum sentences when extortion is committed by organized criminals or with a firearm." We are taking this issue very seriously. That is why I have crisscrossed the country, finding out what is needed and where the gaps are. Everywhere I have gone, police and law enforcement agencies have asked for lawful access. That was the second measure that we brought to Parliament, but the Conservatives have been obstructing it every step of the way. What do they have against catching extortionists?

Another Conservative MP, Amarjeet Gill from Brampton West, held that extortion was "exploding and terrorizing communities across Canada, such as Brampton and Surrey. Homes and businesses are being threatened and shot at. Families are living in fear. Some residents have recently fled the country. Their families are in fear for their lives. This crime surge cannot become the new normal. Canadians are paying the price, but Canadians deserve safety, not excuses. When will the Liberal government take real action to stop extortion, crack down on organized crime, and keep Canadians safe?

Veteran Affairs Minister Jill McKnight said that the rise in "extortion-related threats, shootings, and intimidation across Ontario and the Lower Mainland is a grave concern. I know how much fear it is causing for families, businesses, and our communities. Our government is advancing expanded legislative powers so that law enforcement has the tools it needs to effectively combat extortion and organized criminal networks. Political opponents in Surrey put aside their differences to act with quick urgency. I am asking their Conservative counterparts to stop obstructing necessary legislation and work with us to provide practical solutions. Our communities need to feel safe at home," he said.

(Toronto based Prabhjot Singh is an award-winning journalist recognized for investigative journalism, environment and business reporting, sports and feature writing. A Media Consultant, he has remained associated with various news agencies, including Reuters, and media houses like PTC News (India/Canada), Parvasi Media (Canada) the Liberal World (India), and The Indian Panorama, New York. He is interested in Indian Diaspora and the Sikh Diaspora in particular. His work has appeared in various international and national newspapers, magazines and journals.)

India, Canada revive Ministerial Energy Dialogue

PRABHJOT
SINGH



JANUARY 29, 2026

NEW DELHI / TORONTO (TIP):

Energy ministers of India and Canada have reaffirmed the immense importance that energy security and diversity of supply have in the safety, well-being, and economic vitality of both countries. They held a bilateral meeting last week and launched the renewed Canada-India Ministerial Energy Dialogue.

Indian Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas of India, Hardeep Singh Puri, and Canadian Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Timothy Hodgson, participated in India Energy Week 2026 (IEW'26) in Goa, marking the first high-level participation of a Canadian Cabinet Minister at IEW.

The Goa meeting was a follow-up to the direction provided by the prime ministers of the two countries during their interaction on the sidelines of the G7 Summit, held in June 2025 in Kananaskis, where they underscored the importance of restarting senior ministerial as well as working-level engagements.

Natural Resources Canada and India's Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas recognized the complementary nature of their energy sectors and the mutual value to be gained from sustained engagement on energy matters.

Canada has stated its goal of becoming an energy superpower in clean and conventional energy, with export diversification as a priority, while India, as the epicenter of the global energy landscape, offers a natural and symbiotic partnership grounded in scale, stability, and long-term opportunity.

Canada has current and emerging liquefied natural gas (LNG) projects, is increasing production and exports of crude oil to markets in Asia via the Trans Mountain Expansion (TMX) Pipeline, and is advancing liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) exports to Asia via the west coast of Canada. At the same time, India, being the world's third largest oil consumer, fourth largest LNG importer, third largest LPG consumer, and having the fourth largest refining capacity, is projected to remain at the center of the global energy landscape, accounting for over one-third of the growth in global energy demand over the next two decades, the largest



Indian Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas of India, Hardeep Singh Puri, and Canadian Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Timothy Hodgson, participated in India Energy Week 2026 (IEW'26) in Goa, marking the first high-level participation of a Canadian Cabinet Minister at IEW.

contribution by any country.

Even efforts are underway in India to substantially scale up domestic oil production, significantly expand refining capacity, and increase the use of natural gas in the energy mix. Thus, India and Canada have significant potential to emerge as strong collaborators in the area of energy fuels. In this context, the ministers affirm to deepen bilateral energy trade, including the supply of Canadian LNG, LPG, and crude oil to India and the supply of refined petroleum products from India to Canada.

The ministers recognize the importance of joint commercial and investment partnerships in each other's energy sector. Canada is acting quickly to build energy projects and supply products to international markets, with Asia as a priority region. In 2025, the Government of Canada launched the Major Projects Office and announced the acceleration of several energy and resource projects and strategies, representing more than \$116 billion in investments.

India is also investing heavily in its own energy supply and prosperity. India highlighted the various policy reforms undertaken, including the huge investment opportunity of US\$ 500 billion in the overall value chain of the energy sector. Recognizing this, the

ministers agreed to deepen long-term partnerships aimed at facilitating increased reciprocal investment in the Canadian and Indian energy sectors.

The ministers also recognized the importance of climate-related objectives. This includes efforts to reduce emissions in conventional energy value chains, including through carbon capture utilization and storage, and support for the development and deployment of cleaner technologies as energy demand grows. Recognizing that there exists a huge potential for cooperation in clean energy value chains, the ministers noted the opportunities for collaboration in renewable energy, including hydrogen, biofuels, and sustainable aviation fuel; battery storage; critical minerals; clean technologies; electricity systems; energy supply chain resilience; and the application of artificial intelligence in the energy sector.

The ministers noted the ongoing collaborative efforts to advance the global energy transition via the global development and deployment of biofuels through the Global Biofuels Alliance (GBA), where Canada is an observer.

BUILDING ON THE DELIBERATIONS, BOTH SIDES AFFIRM:

The importance of energy security and diverse energy supply chains. Canada, as a safe, secure, and reliable supplier, and India, as a major consumer, can act in partnership to deepen trade and ensure stable and secure energy supplies. Canada and India will collaborate to promote and strengthen cooperation across trade in the energy sector, including services.

Their commitment to continued government-to-government dialogue and cooperation, such as through the Canada-India Ministerial Energy Dialogue, and regular and ongoing expert collaboration.

The intention is to work in partnership to support meaningful business-to-business, or business-to-government, collaboration across the value chain.

Their mutual intent is to continue supporting work through bilateral and multilateral mechanisms, as well as with industry partners, to support climate objectives for the benefit of the global community.

Canadian Energy Minister says he is pleased to work with India

JANUARY 29, 2026
TORONTO (TIP):

"As Prime Minister Carney says, we are in the midst of a rupture, not a transition. That means we must move quickly to deepen and enhance partnerships in every corner of the globe and use the natural advantages and resources we have to build Canada Strong.

"As one of the largest and fastest-growing economies in the world, India is looking to us as a potential supplier of energy and minerals. I am pleased to work with India to build partnerships that advance bilateral trade and investment, global energy security, and the clean energy transition and generate revenue in Canada that we can use to pay for the public services we rely on. This is what being an energy superpower looks like," says Tim Hodgson, Canadian Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, at the conclusion of his trip to India, where he attended India Energy Week and met with leaders of major Indian energy companies and his Indian counterparts to discuss opportunities to deepen bilateral trade and investment.

He is the third Canadian minister, after Anita Indira Anand and Maninder

Singh Sidhu, to visit India during the past few months. Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney is also expected to visit India in the coming months.

As Canada diversifies trade and attracts new investment to build the strongest economy in the G7, he says, "We are prioritizing broad engagement to maximize opportunities for our industries. That includes building new and enhanced relationships with Asian markets seeking long-term, reliable collaboration in energy and critical minerals.

"As one of the world's largest economies, India is expected to have the largest growth in global energy demand from now through to 2030-offering a significant opportunity for Canada to supply Indian partners and customers with world-class, low-cost, low-carbon Canadian resources," he said.

During India Energy Week, Minister Hodgson relaunched the Canada-India Ministerial Energy Dialogue (CIMED) alongside Hardeep Singh Puri, India's Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas, and endorsed the CIMED Action Plan. These initiatives mark a crucial first step for Canada toward a long-term, collaborative bilateral relationship with

India that will serve as an important channel for sustained discussions on advancing Canada-India energy projects, potential long-term supply agreements, joint ventures, business-to-business deals, and targeted investments.

Minister Hodgson also met Piyush Goyal, India's Minister of Mines, in New Delhi following his participation in India Energy Week. The two ministers agreed to formalize Canada and India's cooperation on critical minerals in the coming weeks, including a high-level Indian government and industry delegation coming to the Prospectors & Developers Association of Canada Convention in Toronto in March 2026.

There is strong alignment between India's ambitions and Canada's push to begin building major energy and natural resource projects again, including LNG and recent investments under the G7 Critical Minerals Production Alliance. Rebuilding Canada's relationship with India is key to achieving the Prime Minister's goal of doubling exports to non-U.S. markets by 2035.

Canada has what the world wants, from conventional and clean energy to critical minerals, and we are leveraging these strengths to build partnerships



Tim Hodgson, Canada's Minister of Energy and Natural Resources says he is pleased to work with India to build partnerships

with major global players-creating economic opportunities at home to foster our position as an energy superpower worldwide. Recognizing the opportunities for enhanced economic cooperation, Canada's participation in India Energy Week continues positive momentum and bilateral engagement with India toward more reliable supply chains and strategic stability, for the benefit of both countries.

(Prabhjot Singh is a Toronto-based Senior Journalist. He can be reached at prabhjot416@gmail.com)

Embassy of India in Romania Celebrates the 77th Republic Day of India with Great Enthusiasm



Celebration of 77th Republic Day of India in Cluj-Napoca

**JANUARY 27, 2026
BUCHAREST (TIP)**

The Embassy of India in Bucharest marked the 77th Republic Day of India with great pride, patriotic fervor, and enthusiastic community participation across Romania, celebrating the enduring spirit of India's democracy, unity, and progress.



Flag hoisting ceremony at Embassy of India in Bucharest. Ambassador Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra unfurls the Indian National Flag. Looking on is Mrs. Mohapatra

As part of the celebrations, Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra, Ambassador of India to Romania, joined the vibrant Indian community in Cluj-Napoca on 25 January, where the Tricolor was proudly displayed in striking Indian colors brought by members of the diaspora. The occasion was honored by the



presence of H.E. Mr. Emil Boc, Mayor of Cluj-Napoca, and H.E. Ms. Maria Forna, Prefect of Cluj County, reflecting the strong friendship, goodwill, and growing people-to-people ties between India and Romania. The event, which was held for the first time in Cluj, showcased the enthusiasm and unity of the Indian community and highlighted the warmth



with which India is regarded in Romania.

At the Embassy of India in Bucharest on 26 January, Ambassador Dr. Mohapatra unfurled the National Flag and read out the Message of the Hon'ble President of India, which highlighted India's remarkable socio-economic



Members of the Indian community and friends of India attended the ceremony

transformation, democratic resilience, and the nation's inspiring journey towards becoming a "Viksit Bharat" (Developed India). Members of the Indian community, friends of India, and Embassy officials attended the ceremony with deep patriotic spirit. The celebrations were further enriched by cultural performances presented by members of the Indian diaspora, reflecting India's rich cultural diversity and national pride.

To commemorate the occasion, the Embassy hosted a National Day Reception on the evening of 26 January, attended by members of the diplomatic corps, Indian diaspora, Romanian friends of India, and distinguished guests. H.E. Ms. Ana Cristina Tinca, State Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Mr. Petre-Florin Manole, Minister of Labor, Family, Youth and Social Solidarity, graced the event, adding special significance to the celebration. In his address, Ambassador Dr. Mohapatra highlighted the growing and dynamic India-Romania partnership, underlining expanding cooperation in trade, technology, education, innovation, culture, and people-to-people exchanges. He reaffirmed India's strong commitment to further strengthening bilateral relations and deepening engagement with Romania in the years ahead.

The evening featured captivating

cultural performances set to Indian patriotic songs, which deeply resonated



H.E. Ms. Ana Cristina Tinca, State Secretary graced the event as the Chief Guest



Glimpses of Cultural performances during the Republic Day reception

with the audience and beautifully reflected India's rich cultural heritage, unity in diversity, and national pride.

The celebrations held from Cluj-Napoca to Bucharest, underscored the strong bonds of friendship between India and Romania, and highlighted the vibrant and positive role played by the Indian community in fostering cultural understanding, goodwill, and enduring bilateral ties. Events are also being organized in Timișoara, Romania, and Chișinău, Moldova, to commemorate India's 77th Republic Day. These celebrations are expected to highlight the deepening bonds of friendship and cooperation between India and our valued partners in Eastern Europe.

(Based on a press release issued by the Embassy of India in Bucharest)



Republic Day Reception on 26 January in Bucharest

Ambassador Mohapatra Strengthens India-Romania Partnerships Through Engagements in Cluj-Napoca Across Industry, Academia, and Community

JANUARY 30, 2026
BUCHAREST (TIP)

Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra, Ambassador of the Republic of India to Romania, embarked on a dynamic series of engagements in Cluj-Napoca, Romania's vibrant innovation hub, to further solidify bilateral cooperation. These interactions spanned industry, higher education, cultural exchange, and community building, reflecting India's strategic vision for multifaceted partnerships with Romania amid shared goals of economic resilience, technological advancement, and people-to-people connectivity.



Ambassador joins Indo-Romanian Forum at Babes-Bolyai University

A highlight was Ambassador Mohapatra's participation in the Indo-Romanian Forum "Bridging Minds, Markets, and Innovation," organized by Babe-Bolyai University (UBB) via UBB Tech Transfer and the Indian Cultural Centre. The forum convened Indian business leaders thriving in Cluj-Napoca-spanning IT, pharma, and startups-with academics from diverse faculties. Participants brainstormed synergies in AI, innovation commercialization, and industry and university collaboration, paving the way for Romanian universities to partner with the industries for internships, job recruitment, and joint research etc,



Ambassador joins Indo-Romanian Forum at Babes-Bolyai University

while catalyzing business-academia ecosystems.

Reinforcing academic bridges, the Ambassador visited the prestigious Technical University of Cluj-Napoca (UTCN), engaging with Rector Prof. Dr. Vasile Popa and senior officials overseeing international affairs. Dialogues delved into expanding collaborative research, faculty exchanges, and dual-degree programs, with a focus on student mobility. Emphasis was placed on drawing Indian talent to UTCN's acclaimed engineering and IT curricula, potentially through scholarships and joint workshops. This builds on existing ties, positioning Romania as a gateway for Indian students to Europe's technical ecosystem.

Ambassador Mohapatra toured Emerson's state-of-the-art facilities in Romania, a key player in automation



Ambassador visits Emerson Romania for supply chain discussions

and engineering solutions. In productive discussions with company executives, he explored avenues for global supply chain integration, joint industrial ventures, and leveraging Romania's skilled workforce alongside India's manufacturing prowess. The facility tour illuminated cutting-edge production lines, underscoring operational excellence and the pivotal role of advanced



Ambassador meets UTCN leadership on academic cooperation

engineering in fostering resilient, cross-border supply chains. Such collaborations hold immense potential for sectors like renewable energy and digital infrastructure, aligning with India's "Make in India" initiative and Romania's industrial ambitions. On the



Ambassador celebrates India's 77th Republic Day in Cluj with Indian community

cultural front, the Ambassador met with Brahma Kumaris representatives, joined by Ms. Teodora Suhan and Ms. Ioana Goga. Conversations emphasized spiritual dialogue, ethical leadership, and grassroots initiatives to nurture values-based understanding,



Ambassador meets Brahma Kumaris representatives in Cluj-Napoca

fortifying the human foundation of India-Romania relations. Culminating the visit, Ambassador



Ambassador celebrates India's 77th Republic Day in Cluj with Mayor Emil Boc and Prefect Maria Forna

Mohapatra celebrated India's 77th Republic Day with the local Indian community, graced by Mayor Mr. Emil Boc and Prefect Ms. Maria Forna. Joyful performances of classical dance, music, and patriotic tributes celebrated India's democratic ethos, strengthening diaspora integration and societal bonds.

These initiatives exemplify the accelerating trajectory of India-Romania relations, anchored in democratic solidarity, burgeoning trade (nearing 1 billion annually), academic excellence, and cultural

vibrancy. They signal India's resolve to forge sustainable frameworks that propel mutual prosperity, innovation, and a shared role in global affairs.

(Based on a press release issued by the Embassy of India in Bucharest)

FIA Sets New Benchmark for Cultural Excellence with Grand Republic Day Gala in Chicagoland

**JANUARY 27, 2026
CHICAGO, IL (TIP):**

The Federation of Indian Associations (FIA) delivered a masterclass in community organization and cultural celebration this past Sunday, hosting a landmark India's 77th Republic Day Gala at the Matrix Club. The event, held on January 25, 2026, was a powerful demonstration of unity, patriotism, and high-level collaboration, drawing distinguished guests from across the political and corporate spectrum.

The evening's success was driven by the strategic vision of the organization's top executive leadership. Founder President & Chairman Sunil Shah, working in tandem with President Altaf Bukhari and President Richa Chand, orchestrated an event that not only celebrated heritage but also reinforced the FIA's standing as a pillar of the Illinois community.



L to R-President 2026 Richa Chand, FIA Chairman Sunil Shah, President 2026 Altaf Bukhari

A CONVERGENCE OF DIGNITARIES AND STARS

The gala was graced by the legendary Bollywood actress and singer, Ms. Padmini Kolhapure, whose presence added sophisticated elegance to the evening.

The event further solidified FIA's diplomatic and civic relationships, with key dignitaries in attendance including:

- Shri Somnath Ghosh, Consulate General of India, Chicago
- US Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi
- State Representative Stephanie Kifowit
- Kevin Morrison, Cook County Commissioner
- Mayor Tom Dailly (Schaumburg), and Mayor Rodney Craig (Hanover Park)
- FIA Vice Chairman Neil Khot who is running for Congress in 8th District.
- FIA Director Raj Pillai running for Will County Treasurer



FIA Scholarship 2026 Winners Receiving Award from the Legendary Bollywood Actress & Singer Padmini Kolhapure ji.



Auspicious beginnings for FIA 2026 Team with Lamp Lighting with FIA Leadership, Consul General Hon. Somnath Ghosh and prominent community leaders

- Ajay Gupta, FIA Director running for State Representative in Illinois House District 41

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP AND KEY ADDRESSES

A highlight of the evening was the address by Founder & Chairman Sunil Shah. Acknowledging the energy of the room, Chairman Sunil Shah remarked: "Despite the bitter cold outside, the warmth of patriotism, unity, and joy has truly filled this venue." He further outlined the organization's evolving strategic structure, noting, "This year, due to the sheer size and capability of our team, FIA has appointed two Presidents. This dual-leadership structure is a deliberate move to ensure we keep the bar raised high and deliver excellence in every initiative we undertake."

Following this vision, both Presidents delivered impactful remarks. President Altaf Bukhari took the



L to R-Mayor Tom Dailly, State Representative Stephanie Kifowit, FIA Chairman Sunil Shah, US Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi, Consul General Hon. Somnath Ghosh, FIA Vice Chairman Neil Khot, Mayor Rodney Craig



The Legendary Bollywood Actress & Singer Receiving Award from Chairman Sunil Shah, President Altaf Bukhari, President Richa Chand, Past Presidents Rita Singh, Vinita Gulabani, Pratibha Jairath

podium to thank the dignitaries and guests for their presence. In a moment of reflection, he expressed his profound pride in the FIA team's hard work and stated that serving as President of such a dynamic organization is a distinct personal honor.



The Glorious TEAM FIA 2026 Ready to win all challenges together

President Richa Chand followed with an eloquent and inspiring speech that captivated the audience. She paid tribute to the freedom fighters who fought for Independence, drawing a powerful parallel to the present day. She remarked that anyone today who dedicates themselves to the service of their country or community is performing work no less significant than that of a freedom fighter. Calling for active participation, she stated: "If you belong to that category of individuals driven to serve, FIA is the one-stop shop to channel that passion into action." She concluded by offering a touching tribute to her family, publicly thanking them for the unwavering support that empowers her to serve the community with such dedication.

OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE & TEAM SYNERGY

The leadership of President Altaf Bukhari and President Richa Chand was instrumental in mobilizing a robust support system. Their efforts were bolstered by Immediate Past President Ms. Anu Malhotra, Vice Chairman Mr. Neil Khot, and distinguished past presidents Vinita Gulabani, Pratibha Jairath, Hitesh Gandhi, Mukesh Shah, and Rita Singh. The entire Advisory Board and volunteer corps worked in unison to turn the vision into reality.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS: A CULTURAL SHOWCASE

The evening featured seamless stage management and meaningful moments of pride. Highlights included soul stirring renditions of the Indian National Anthem, "Jana Gana Man", by Ms. Pratibha Jairath and the American National Anthem by Riddhika Gupta.

Vocal Performances: Outstanding performances were delivered by Mr. Jitendra, Mr. Dharmender Gill, Mr. Shivam Viswanathan, Ms. Manmeet Kaur, Ms. Sargam Kapoor, and a soulful Vande Matram song by Dr. Radhika Chimata.

Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news

Invest India Business Forum in Seattle showcases Indian Pomegranates, Araku Coffee

Investment opportunities in AI, Ag-Tech, Quantum, Photonics, Higher Education and Healthcare Discussed
Largest Trade Mission from State of Washington to visit India

**JANUARY 25, 2026
SEATTLE, WA (TIP)**

In partnership with Montana World Affairs Council and ZOHO, Consulate General of India in Seattle hosted the second edition of Invest India Business Forum at the Bell Harbor International Conference Center today.

CEOs and senior executives of several multinational companies from the Greater Seattle area, along with local dignitaries attended, which included representatives from Microsoft, Salesforce, Amazon, T-Mobile among

India from 28 January to 07 February 2026. The delegation includes nearly 30 plus members from Port of Seattle, City of Bellevue Economic Development, Mayor of Redmond, and senior leadership of Microsoft, Amazon and Boeing. Ms. Rebecca Lovell, Interim President & CEO of GSP addressed the gathering and looked forward to developing stronger commercial and investment ties between Seattle and India.

The event also showcased various experiential Indian products on display

items on display included ODOP (One District One Product) cultural heritage items from all 28 States of India, Araku coffee from the foothills of eastern ghats of Southern India and some of India's finest wines and hand-crafted spirits.

Addressing the gathering, Mr. Eric Wexler, CEO of Providence, commended India's healthcare potential and highlighted Providence's recently inaugurated Global Capability Center in Hyderabad, which is projected to create more than 2000 new jobs. The facility will focus on building AI-enabled advanced

senior business leaders from the Montana World Affairs Council. It may be noted that a youth delegation led by Montana World Affairs Council had recently visited India and Montana State Governor Greg Gianforte had hosted a welcome reception at the State Capitol in Helena.

The Invest India Business Forum (IIBF) aimed to deepen economic ties between US Pacific Northwest and India by presenting India's investment potential in key priority sectors. Additionally, the Forum also served as a



A collage of photographs of the occasion

others. Leading Industry experts from the fields of Artificial Intelligence, Photonics, Quantum Computing, Ag-Tech, Healthcare and Higher Education made detailed presentation on the investment opportunities and the progress in those sectors in India and their investment potential.

As a follow up from today's Invest India Business Forum (IIBF), Greater Seattle Partners (GSP), along with Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce will be leading Washington State's largest trade mission ever to visit

for tasting and exports to the US Pacific Northwest, which included the premium Indian "Bhagwa Variety" pomegranates for tasting and these would be very soon available at local retail stores in USA. These Bhagwa variety of Indian pomegranates produced in Maharashtra, Gujarat and Karnataka, are renowned worldwide for their rich flavor, deep red color and high nutritional value. Since India is one of the leading producers of pomegranates in the world, there has been an increased demand in recent years after US granted market access to Indian pomegranates in 2023. Other

healthcare technology solutions by leveraging India's talent pool.

Representative of ZOHO showcased how AI driven locally developed data models were being utilized in India, as it pushes for digital self-reliance (Atmanirbhar Bharat) and data sovereignty. It may be noted that Government of India has recently adopted Zoho's technology solutions such as its Office Suite, sending a positive signal of encouragement to Indian startups.

The Invest India Business Forum was also attended by a large delegation of

platform to showcase Indian export-ready products with strong potential in the Greater Seattle market. As such, IIBF aimed to complement Consulate's ongoing efforts to advance 3Ts - Trade, Tourism & Technology by promoting investments, industry linkages and exports.

For any further clarifications/ details, please contact Press Officer Consul Soumith Raju, Phone: 206-412-0448, Email: pic.seattle@mea.gov.in.

(Based on a Press Release issued by Press Officer Consul Soumith Raju)

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Threat email received for Dera Ballan ahead of PM Modi's Punjab visit

Ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's scheduled visit to Dera Sachkhand Ballan in Jalandhar for Guru Ravidas Jayanti on Sunday, Feb 1, threatening emails were received by three to four schools in the city.

Although the emails were sent to schools, they specifically mentioned a threat to Dera Ballan.

One email reportedly stated: "Full respect for Guru Ravidas ji, but Modi is the enemy. We have no issues with Sant Niranjan Dass, but with Modi."

The sender also hinted at avenging the killing of Hardeep Nijjar, who was shot dead in Canada in June 2023.

All schools in Jalandhar are closed on Saturday due to the shobha yatra of Guru Ravidas, and authorities have confirmed that students' safety is not at risk.

Punjab DGP Gaurav Yadav visited Dera Ballan on Jan 30 to oversee security arrangements. Around 1,500 police personnel have been deployed in the city, with SPG teams present since last Tuesday.

Security agencies are treating the threat seriously due to the high-profile nature of the Prime Minister's visit. Investigations are underway to trace the origin of the email, assess its credibility, and ensure the safety of the religious site and surrounding areas.

Menstrual health is fundamental right: SC orders free sanitary pads, separate toilets in schools

NEW DELHI (TIP)

Declaring the right to dignified menstrual health as part of the right to life and education under the Constitution, the Supreme Court on Friday directed all states and Union Territories to provide free oxo-biodegradable sanitary napkins to girl students and functional, gender-segregated toilets for all the students.

In a landmark judgment to ensure gender justice and educational equity, a bench comprising Justices J B Pardiwala and R Mahadevan issued a slew of directions to all states and UTs to ensure that these facilities are provided in schools irrespective of whether they are government-run, aided or private.

"A period should end a sentence, not a girl's education," Justice Pardiwala opened the 126 judgment with a poignant quote from American educator, social activist and producer Melissa Berton, and said, "The issues that have unfolded before us echo the very same judicial disquiet. Even with the passage of time, the challenges that beset a girl child's education persist in much the same form." The verdict warns of stringent consequences for non-compliance,



including the derecognition of private schools and holding state governments directly accountable for failures in public institutions.

"The right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution includes the right to menstrual health. Access to safe, effective and affordable menstrual hygiene management measures helps a girl child attain the highest standard of sexual and reproductive health. The right to healthy reproductive life embraces the right to access education and information about sexual health," the bench held.

It then referred to Article 21A (right to education) and said it has been termed as a "multiplier right" as it enables the

exercise of other human rights.

"The right to education forms part of the broader framework of the right to life and human dignity, which cannot be realised without access to education," it said.

On the substantive approach to equality under Article 14, the verdict said it demands that treatment be accorded with due regard to the individual, institutional, systemic and contextual barriers that impede the translation of rights in reality.

"At the same time, the State, as a benefactor, is under an obligation to remedy such structural disadvantages," it said.

"Inaccessibility of menstrual hygiene management measures undermines the dignity of a girl child, as dignity finds expression in conditions that enable individuals to live without humiliation, exclusion or avoidable suffering. Privacy is inextricably linked with dignity.

"As a corollary, the right to privacy entails a duty on the State to not only refrain from violating privacy but an accompanying obligation on the State to take necessary measures to protect the privacy of an individual," it said.

Is it RTI's turn to get murdered? asks Kharge

NEW DELHI (TIP)

A day after the Economic Survey called for re-examining the RTI law, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Friday asked whether it was RTI's turn to get murdered after MGNREGA's "killing". In a post on X, Kharge accused the Union government of systematically weakening the RTI Act and unleashing a climate of terror that punishes truth-seekers as he pointed out that over 100 RTI activists had been murdered since 2014. "The Economic Survey has called for 're-examination' of the Right to Information Act. It also suggests a possible 'Ministerial veto' to withhold information and wants to explore the possibility of shielding public service records, transfers and staff reports of bureaucrats from public scrutiny. "The Modi Government has systematically weakened the RTI Act -- Over 26,000 pending cases as of 2025. In 2019, the Modi Government hacked away at the RTI Act, seizing control over Information Commissioners' tenure and pay, converting independent watchdogs into submissive functionaries," Kharge said in his post. He said the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 gutted the RTI's



public interest clause, "weaponising privacy to shield corruption and stonewall scrutiny." Until last month (December 2025), the Central Information Commission had been functioning without a chief information commissioner. It was the seventh time in 11 years that this key post was deliberately kept vacant, the

Congress chief claimed.

"Since 2014, over 100 RTI activists have been murdered, unleashing a climate of terror that punishes truth-seekers and extinguishes dissent. The Whistle Blowers Protection Act, 2014 passed by the Congress-UPA has not been implemented by the BJP, till date.

"After killing MGNREGA, is it RTI's turn to get murdered?" Kharge asked.

The Economic Survey on Thursday made its case for re-examining the nearly two-decade-old RTI law to exempt confidential reports and draft comments from disclosures, saying such provisions constrain governance.

It also said that the RTI (Right to Information) Act 2005 was never intended as a tool for idle curiosity, nor as a mechanism to micro-manage the government from the outside. The law seeks to promote transparency and accountability in the working of every public authority, to contain corruption, and to enhance people's participation in the democratic process.

"Nearly two decades on, the RTI Act may need re-examination, not to dilute its spirit, but to align it with global best practices, incorporate evolving lessons, and keep it firmly anchored to its original intent," the Survey said.

CID Begins Probe Into Baramati Plane Crash That Killed Ajit Pawar

The Maharashtra Crime Investigation Department (CID) has started its probe into the plane crash in Baramati that killed Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar and four others, an official said on Friday, Jan 30. The state police have issued orders about the CID probe into the accidental death case registered at Baramati in Pune district, following the January 28 crash, a senior official told PTI. "The Pune Rural police have registered a case of accidental death under section 194 Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), and the same has been transferred to the CID," he said. Pawar (66), who had taken off from Mumbai, and four other persons on board a Learjet 45 plane died after it crashed barely 200 metres from the edge of the tabletop airstrip at Baramati, his hometown in Pune district, on Wednesday morning. The others killed in the tragedy were Captain Sumit Kapoor, who had a flying experience of 15,000 hours, co-pilot Captain Shambhavi Pathak, with 1,500 hours of flying experience, Pawar's Personal Security Officer Vidip Jadhav and flight attendant Pinky Mali.

Delhi High Court Issues Notice on PIL Challenging DGCA's FDTL Relaxations

The Delhi High Court on Friday, Jan 30, issued notices to the Union government, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), and InterGlobe Aviation Ltd, which operates IndiGo Airlines, in response to a public interest litigation challenging the aviation regulator's decision to allow relaxations under the revised Flight Duty Time Limitation (FDTL) framework. During the hearing, the DGCA firmly told the Court that the mandatory weekly rest requirement for pilots has not been relaxed for any airline. Appearing on behalf of the regulator, advocate Anjana Gosain submitted that weekly rest provisions continue to remain fully enforceable and untouched. "Weekly rest is non-negotiable. It cannot be interfered with. No relaxation has been granted to any airline on this count," Gosain informed the Bench, requesting that the statement be formally recorded. She clarified that the only concession provided by the DGCA relates to night operations, and that too is temporary, valid only until February 10, 2026. The relaxation, she said, has been granted solely to facilitate operational adjustments during the transition to the revised regime. The PIL contends that the DGCA has, in effect, placed the revised FDTL regulations in abeyance until February 10, 2026, and argues that the regulator lacks statutory authority to suspend or defer notified safety norms governing pilot fatigue and passenger safety.

6mn infiltrators entered Assam in Cong rule: Amit Shah

DHEMAJI (TIP)

Claiming that the demography of Assam changed during Congress rule, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday said the BJP-led government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi is working to reverse the trend.

Addressing the closing ceremony of the 10th Mising Youth Festival organised by Takam Mising Porin Kebang (All Mising Students' Union) at Kareng Chapori here as the chief guest, Shah appealed to people to vote for the BJP in the upcoming Assembly elections to free the state from infiltration.

"Assam's demography totally changed during the Congress rule. The population of infiltrators rose to 64 lakh from nil, and infiltrators became a majority in seven districts," he alleged.

Shah asserted that the Modi government was working through various means to reverse the demographic trend in the state.

"If you want to stop infiltration in Assam, then elect the BJP government for a third term and strengthen the hands of Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma in the fight against illegal immigrants. Two BJP state governments in Assam have freed 1.26 lakh acres of land from encroachment by infiltrators," he added.

The Union home minister also stressed the role played by the Mising community in stopping infiltrators from settling in Upper Assam through their lifestyle of hard work.

"It's the responsibility of the Mising community to stop infiltration. You do not need to take up guns. Through your culture of hard work, infiltrators have not been able to come to this side," he said.

Talking about the Bogibeel bridge over Brahmaputra river connecting Dibrugarh and Dhemaji, Shah said it stands as a symbol of India's progress before the entire world.

"However, very few people in India know that the Bogibeel Bridge was built through the hard work and sweat of my brothers and sisters from the Mising community. Today, this bridge has become a powerful representation of the vision of a New India, both across the nation and globally," he added.

The Union home minister further said that Rajya Sabha MP



from Assam, Manmohan Singh had served as Prime Minister for 10 years but this bridge remained incomplete.

"The people of Assam placed their trust in Modi Ji, and it was under his leadership that this bridge was completed in just four years," he added.

Shah also alleged that several tribal communities struggled to protect their identity during the Congress regime, while asserting that the BJP was committed to addressing the issues of the Mising society through an interlocutor appointed by the Centre. He lauded the unique 'chang ghar' or stilt house of the community, saying its architectural design in a way gives way to river during the flood, thereby silently fighting the global warming.

The Union home minister announced that a special requirement drive will be conducted for Mising youths for the central paramilitary forces.

"If I had not attended the Mising Youth Festival, my life would have felt incomplete without witnessing this truly magnificent spectacle. Today, I bow with deep respect to the sacred 'Donyi-Polo' tradition, which embodies nature worship and the faith of our Mising community," he added.

EAM Jaishankar, Palestinian counterpart discuss Gaza peace plan, ties

NEW DELHI (TIP)

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Friday, January 30, met Varsen Aghabekian Shahin, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the State of Palestine, and discussed the Gaza peace plan, evolving regional developments and bilateral development cooperation.

One of the key takeaways from the meeting was that Shahin flagged the importance of the Palestinian side attaches to a possible visit by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the State of Palestine during his forthcoming regional engagements, requesting that the message be conveyed. Jaishankar, according to the Palestinian Foreign Ministry, said he would do so.

The interaction took place on the margins of the second session of the India-Arab ministerial meeting, being held in New Delhi from January 30 to 31, amid heightened tensions in West Asia.

As per the Palestinian Foreign Ministry readout, Shahin briefed



EAM S Jaishankar meets Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of State of Palestine Varsen Aghabekian Shahin in New Delhi on Friday, Jan 30. ANI

Jaishankar on the "catastrophic" humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip, stressing the need for urgent international action to halt the continuing suffering of the Palestinian people. She emphasised that any pathway related to Gaza must be linked to the New York Declaration to ensure the unity of Palestinian territory and advance a political settlement based on

the two-state solution.

Shahin expressed appreciation for India's humanitarian and development assistance, highlighting ongoing joint projects, including the Diplomatic Institute, and other initiatives under consideration, particularly a prosthetics project described as an urgent humanitarian requirement.

Jaishankar conveyed India's concern over the grave humanitarian situation in Gaza and affirmed New Delhi's readiness to contribute to relief and recovery efforts. He also referred to India's strengths in technology and capacity-building, while noting challenges related to implementation mechanisms in certain projects.

Earlier, on the first day of her visit, Shahin met Indian and foreign ambassadors, political leaders, parliamentarians, business representatives and social activists, reiterating that military solutions would not bring peace and calling for a just and comprehensive political settlement rooted in international law.

Pro-nation, not pro-BJP, says Tharoor on his political stance

Senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor on Friday, Jan 30, sought to put to rest speculation about his political position, asserting that his comments on sensitive national issues should not be viewed through a partisan lens. Responding to questions about past remarks that drew criticism within the party, Tharoor said that his interventions had always been guided by national interest rather than political alignment. Speaking to reporters, the Thiruvananthapuram MP said he had never concealed his approach to foreign policy and international affairs, where he prefers to speak as an Indian rather than as a party politician. He said that this position had remained consistent over the years and should not come as a surprise. The clarification comes months after a controversy erupted over Tharoor's remarks on India-Pakistan relations and India's diplomatic engagement following the Pahalgam attack. His comments had differed from the Congress' stated position, triggering sharp reactions from several party leaders.

India in history this Week

JANUARY 30 TO FEBRUARY 5

30 JANUARY



1948 Mahatma Gandhi, the father of nation, was assassinated.

1530 Rana Sangram Singh of Mewar passed away.

31 JANUARY

1561 Bairam Khan, who played an important role in making the Mughal emperor deserving of a throne, was killed.



1963 The peacock was declared the national bird of India in 1963.



2007 Indian steel company Tata became the fifth largest company in the world in 2007 after the acquisition of Anglo Dutch steel company Corus.

1923 Birth of Major Somnath Sharma, the first braveheart to get 'Paramveer Chakra'.



01 FEBRUARY



1881 St. Stephen's College, the oldest college in Delhi, was established.



2003 Kalpana Chawla, the first Indian-American astronaut, died.

1930 The Times published the cross word puzzle for the first time.

02 FEBRUARY

1814 Calcutta (now Kolkata) Museum established.



1915 Khushwant Singh, a well-known writer, poet and columnist of the country, was born.

1952 India wins the first Test cricket in Madras.



03 FEBRUARY

1934 The process of sending Parcel by airplanes for the first time began. It was started by the company which is today known as Lufthansa.

1963 Former Reserve Bank Governor Raghuram Rajan was born.



1916 Banaras Hindu University started.

1988 The first nuclear submarine (INS Chakra) joined the Indian Army.



2008 There are indications that the stolen Nobel Prize of poet Guru Ravindra Nath Tagore was in Bangladesh.

04 FEBRUARY

1628 Shah Jahan was declared Emperor of Agra.

1881 The first issue of the daily newspaper 'Kesari' appeared in the editing of Lokmanya Tilak.



1938 Birju Maharaj, the famous Kathak artist of the country, was born.

1974 Physicist Satendra Nath Bose, who discovered God Particle, died.

05 FEBRUARY

1630 The seventh Sikh Guru Har Rai was born in Kiratpur, Punjab.

1916 Popular Hindi poet Janki Vallabh Shastri was born.

2007 Sunita Williams of Indian origin set a new record of the most spacewalking time by a female.

1915 Wireless message sent for the first time by a moving train was received to the railway station.

HONORING STELLA LEVI ON HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY



(front row - seated, wearing eyeglasses) Stella Levi, holocaust survivor.
Credit: www.primolevicenter.org.

BY MABEL PAIS

In Honor of STELLA LEVI, the American Sephardi Federation pays tribute to the native Ladino speaker, member of Centro Primo Levi NY's (<https://primolevicenter.org>) Board of Directors, recipient of the ASF's Pomegranate Award for Lifetime Achievement, and namesake of the Stella Levi Diwan at ASF (<https://americansephardifederation.org>).

Stella was born on the Island of Rhodes under Italian rule. On 23 July 1944, Stella, her immediate family, and the entire Jewish community of Rhodes (1,870 people) were deported to Auschwitz (a network of over 40 concentration and extermination camps built by Nazi Germany in occupied Poland). She has long been involved with the reconstruction and

preservation of Sephardic and Italian Jewish life and traditions, offering her knowledge, guidance, and dedication to the Jewish Museum of Athens, the Jewish Museum of Rhodes, the Museum of Kehilah Kedoshah Janina, and the American Sephardi Federation. Stella appears in several films, including 'The Longest Journey' by Ruggero Gabbai, 'The Island of Roses' by Rebecca Samona, and 'Redemption Blues' by Peter Stastny.

A flow of programs, publications (including the Jewish Book Council's Natan Notable Book Award-winning 'One Hundred Saturdays: Stella Levi and the Search for a Lost World'), and projects have their source in her imagination and questions. Stella's love and understanding of culture is very special. Stella, now in her eleventh decade, is an inspiration for all of us!

EXPLORE THE HISTORY AND CULTURE OF THE JEWS OF PAKISTAN AND THEIR FORGOTTEN STORY

BY MABEL PAIS

The Jews of Pakistan were primarily members of the Bene Israel community. Until 1947, the entire region that is now Pakistan was part of the British Raj in undivided India. Jewish families began settling in what is today Pakistan — mainly in Karachi, but also in cities such as Peshawar, Multan, and others. Some sources trace their presence to around 1818.

In 1893, the community built a large synagogue in Karachi, bigger than anything you can find in modern-day Pakistan. Jews lived peacefully alongside neighbors of all faiths and played an important role in society. However, after the partition of India and the creation of Pakistan in 1947, the community largely fled. Out of nearly 3,000 Jews, only a small number remained, and those who stayed mostly lived underground. The grand synagogue was eventually demolished, community records and books were dispersed, and descendants migrated primarily to India and later mostly to Israel. Today, only forgotten graves hint at the once-thriving Jewish presence.

This presentation explores the history and culture of the Jews of Pakistan and examines what remains of their legacy both within Pakistan and beyond."

EVENT PRESENTATION

WHAT: BENE-ISRAEL COMMUNITY OF PAKISTAN

WHO: Eliaz Reuben-Dandeker, speaker

WHEN: Thursday, 5 February at 3:00PM EST

WHERE: Live On Zoom

COST: \$18 - registration required

REGISTRATION

Register @ www.qesher.com/jews-of-pakistan/

The Jews of Pakistan and Their Forgotten Story



February 5, 2026,
12 pm Pacific / 3 pm Eastern

register at:

www.qesher.com/jews-of-pakistan/

Jews of Pakistan.

Speaker:
Eliaz Reuben-Dandeker

Credit: www.americansephardifederation.org.

pakistan

SPEAKER, ELIAZ REUBEN-DANDEKER

Eliaz Reuben-Dandeker is a 4th-generation Israeli, descendant of the leaders of the Bene-Israel community from the 18th century, the Kammodan Mocadem Divekars. He also has ancestors among the Bene Israel community of Pakistan. He is an author, archivist, documentary maker, lecturer, artist, and publisher. Eliaz is the founder and owner of Kammodan Mocadem Publishing House, and has published seven books, taking part in several more. He was also a co-founder of the Next Generation Group of Jewish-Indian activists in Israel and Masale, an inter-generational voyage of Indian Jewry in Israel and around the world. Eliaz has lectured and given interviews around the world on subjects such as the Jewish communities of India and Pakistan and PTSD (post traumatic stress disorder) related to combat experience.

WOMEN@NJPAC SPARK DISCUSSION ON DEMYSTIFYING AI

BY MABEL PAIS

Women@NJPAC "Power Hours," powered by the Sisterhood for Good, are virtual learning sessions designed to inspire connection, spark meaningful discussion, and provide practical guidance on the topics that shape our world. Each session offers a conversation with a trusted expert, whose insights can inform, empower, and elevate our community.

Artificial intelligence is already reshaping the way we work — but how do these complex systems operate, and how should we be thinking about them?

Join the group for the very first Women@NJPAC Power Hours session: "AI Demystified." Trustee Sherin Ijaz and her colleagues from McKinsey & Company will offer a practical and accessible overview of today's AI landscape. This session will break down what AI is (and isn't), explore its real-world applications, and predict how AI technology will impact how we work, now and in the future.

WHAT: AI DEMYSTIFIED, 1st Power Hours session

WHO: Sherin Ijaz, speaker, McKinsey & Company

WHEN: February 6, 2026 @ 9 a.m.

This event is for members ONLY. Become a member @ https://support.njpac.org/campaign/597863/donate?c_src=powerhour

NJPAC'S COMMUNITY ENGAGES YOU IN AN INTERFAITH DANCE & CULTURAL EXCHANGE



Participants in Dance of different faiths. -Credit: njpac.org

BY MABEL PAIS

Let the power of movement and music (including live drumming) lead you on a cultural journey. Through two dance workshops we'll together explore the vibrant heritages of West African and Israeli folk dance, including special choreography that will tie these traditions together.

All ages and abilities are welcome — no dance experience is required. Wear comfortable clothing.

WHAT: INTERFAITH DANCE & CULTURAL EXCHANGE

WHEN: February 8, 2026 @ 1:30 PM

WHERE: Location will be emailed after registration

Contact Daniela Fonseca for more information at dfonseca@njpac.

TEACHERS

Karen Miles

West African Dance

Elyse Litt

Israeli Folk Dance

REGISTRATION - required

RSVP @ <https://njpac.org/event/interfaith-dance-cultural-exchange/#register>

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

EXPERIENCE THE INGENUITY OF BEETHOVEN'S FIFTH & SIXTH SYMPHONY MASTERWORKS

BY MABEL PAIS

"What the New Jersey Symphony has established, bringing music to the Garden State in schools and in six different cities, is a sincere accomplishment. And it's never been better." – nj.com

Ludwig van BEETHOVEN's iconic Fifth Symphony will be performed on February 26, 27 and March 1, 2026 and his equally popular Symphony No. 6, "Pastoral" will have performances on March 27, 28, and 29, 2026 at locations in New Jersey (see details below).

Beethoven composed these symphonies in tandem, and both premiered at the same concert in 1808. An enduring example of the composer's ingenuity and range of musical styles: the Fifth is legendary for its drama, while the Sixth presents a softer side of his music, an ode to life in the countryside.

Markus Stenz returns to take the podium for Beethoven's Fifth Symphony paired with Richard Wagner's Prelude to Act I of 'Lohengrin.' Audiences will also



Time For Three, ensemble

hear Kevin Puts' GRAMMY Award-winning concerto, 'Contact,' composed for the genre-defying string trio, Time For Three.

PROGRAM - BEETHOVEN'S FIFTH SYMPHONY

Time For Three Plays 'Contact'
Markus Stenz conductor

Time For Three guest artists
Ranaan Meyer double bass
Nick Kendall violin
Charles Yang violin
New Jersey Symphony
Richard Wagner Prelude to Act I of 'Lohengrin'
Kevin Puts 'Contact'
Ludwig van Beethoven Symphony No. 5

MPAC, Morristown - Thursday, Feb 26 @ 7 pm

NJPAC, Newark - Friday, Feb 27 @ 7:30pm | Sunday - Mar 1 @ 2 pm

NEXT GEN HAPPY HOUR

Prior to the Friday, February 27 performance, the New Jersey Symphony Next Gen program will host a happy hour event at Newark Local Beer at 5:30 pm. The Next Gen program is a membership program for young music enthusiasts between the ages of 21 and 40 to network with other passionate music lovers from across the state. For more information, visit njsymphony.org/nextgen.

CLASSICAL CONVERSATION

Friday, February 27, at 6:30 pm and Sunday, March 1, at 1 pm at NJPAC in Newark

Enjoy a lively Classical Conversation before the performance. Learn more about the music from New Jersey Symphony musicians, guest artists and other engaging insiders. Free for all ticketholders!

Access the Event page @ <https://njsymphony.org/events/detail/beethovens-fifth-symphony-2026>

BEETHOVEN'S "PASTORAL" SYMPHONY

Discover the storytelling power of classical music!

Beethoven's "Pastoral" Symphony was one of his only works that depicts very specific scenes and storylines, which NJ Symphony will dive into measure by measure in this concert.

PROGRAM - BEETHOVEN'S "PASTORAL" SYMPHONY

Xian Zhang conductor
Juan Esteban Martinez clarinet
New Jersey Symphony
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Divertimento in D Major, K. 136
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart Clarinet Concerto
Ludwig van Beethoven Symphony No. 6, "Pastoral"
Newark - Friday, Mar 27, 7:30 pm* | Saturday, Mar 28, 7:30 pm
Morristown - Sunday, Mar 29, 2 pm
***Special Concert - Opening Performance**

The March 27 concert at NJPAC opens with a special performance by the New Jersey Symphony Youth Orchestra's Academy Orchestra.

Classical Conversation
Saturday, March 28, at 6:30 pm at NJPAC in Newark and Sunday, March 29, at 1 pm at Mayo Performing Arts Center in Morristown

Enjoy a lively Classical Conversation before the performance. Learn more about the music from New Jersey Symphony musicians, guest artists and other engaging insiders. Free for all ticketholders!

Access the Event Page @ <https://njsymphony.org/events/detail/beethovens-pastoral-symphony>

TICKETS :
Tickets available at njsymphony.org • 1.800.ALLEGRO (255.3476).

Artist Bios : Markus Stenz
(markusstenz.com)

Markus Stenz has held several high-profile positions including Principal Conductor of the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra, Principal Guest of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra and

most recently Conductor-In-Residence of the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra. He was General Music Director of the City of Cologne and Gürzenich-Kapellmeister for 11 years, conducting Mozart's 'Don Giovanni,' Wagner's 'Ring' cycle, 'Lohengrin,' 'Tannhäuser,' and 'Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg,' as well as Janáček's Jenufa and Katya Kabanová and Eötvös' 'Love and other Demons.' Learn more at <https://markusstenz.com>.

Time For Three (TF3): GRAMMY and Emmy-winning ensemble, Time For Three (TF3), defies convention and boundaries by showcasing excellence across different genres, including classical music, Americana, and singer-songwriter. Their unique sound captivates audiences, immersing them in a musical experience that merges various eras, styles, and traditions of Western music. TF3, consisting of Charles Yang (violin, vocals), Nicolas "Nick" Kendall (violin, vocals), and Ranaan Meyer (double bass, vocals), combines their instruments and voices in a remarkable sound, establishing a distinct voice of expression that resonates with listeners worldwide.

TF3's longstanding history of collaboration with contemporary classical composers continues to thrive. They have worked closely with esteemed artists such as Chris Brubeck and Pulitzer Prize winners William Bolcom and Jennifer Higdon. Their most recent commission, 'Contact,' composed by Pulitzer Prize winner Kevin Puts, premiered with the San Francisco Symphony and The Philadelphia Orchestra in the summer of 2022. This extraordinary piece, alongside Jennifer Higdon's Concerto 4-3, was released on Deutsche Grammophon under the album title, 'Letters for the Future.' Conducted by Xian Zhang, the album's exceptional quality propelled it onto the Billboard top 10 Classical Recordings charts. Additionally, it garnered a nomination for an Opus Klassik award and received a GRAMMY win in the Best Classical Instrumental Solo category. Learn more @ <https://tf3.com>.

XIAN ZHANG : 2025-26 marks the

GRAMMY and Emmy Award-winning conductor Xian Zhang's 10th season as Music Director of New Jersey Symphony, and her inaugural season as the Music Director of Seattle Symphony with whom she has been a long-term collaborator since her debut in 2008. Zhang has also been appointed Principal Guest Conductor of the NCPA Orchestra in Beijing, beginning this season. Following her tenure as Music Director of Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano between 2009-16, she continues as their Conductor Emeritus.

2025-26 highlights include returns to Philadelphia Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, St. Louis Symphony, and National Arts Centre Ottawa. In Europe, she returns to Netherlands Radio Philharmonic with a performance at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw and makes her debut at Finnish National Opera conducting Tosca. This follows her huge success at The Metropolitan Opera in New York, where she recently conducted Madama Butterfly and Tosca to great acclaim. Read full bio @ <https://njsymphony.org/musicians-orchestra/musical-leadership/xian-zhang>.

JUAN ESTEBAN MARTINEZ : A native of Colombia, Juan Esteban Martinez moved to the Dominican Republic at a young age, where he began to play the clarinet. He is a graduate of the Yale School of Music and the Peabody Conservatory of Music. In 2022, he was the first prize winner of Sphinx Orchestral Partners Auditions (SOPA) Excerpt Competition. Juan has appeared as a soloist numerous times with the National Symphony Orchestra of the Dominican Republic, making his official debut at the age of 15 performing Rossini's Introduction, Theme and Variations in a traditional concert that was live streamed on national television. He has been a featured soloist with the Caldas Symphony Orchestra in Colombia and the Coeur d'Alene Symphony. In 2019, he was selected by concert pianist Gabriela Montero to form the Gabriela Montero Ensemble, a group that went on to perform a program of Montero's original compositions at the



Juan Esteban Martinez, clarinetist.

Credit: www.njsymphony.org.

prestigious Victoria Hall in Geneva, Switzerland. Read his full bio @ <https://njsymphony.org/musicians/detail/juan-esteban-martinez>.

NEW JERSEY SYMPHONY : New Jersey Symphony is a GRAMMY and Emmy Award-winning orchestra. Under the direction of Music Director Xian Zhang, the Symphony performs more than 55 mainstage concerts across the state at venues in Newark, Princeton, New Brunswick, Red Bank, and Morristown, as well as at schools and public spaces statewide. Programming at the Symphony reflects an unwavering commitment to diverse communities throughout the state, while providing students unparalleled opportunities to achieve musical excellence through its Youth Orchestra and other education programs. In 2024, the Symphony announced it would continue to deliver its statewide activities from a new, permanent office, rehearsal, and concert space in Jersey City, set to open in 2027. For more information about New Jersey Symphony, visit the website at njsymphony.org.

CONNECT WITH NJ SYMPHONY : Follow NJ Symphony on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, X, and YouTube

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

OSCAR WILDE'S 'AN IDEAL HUSBAND' PLAYS IN NY THEATRE

BY MABEL PAIS

'AN IDEAL HUSBAND,' OSCAR WILDE's classic play, will be played at The Jeffrey and Paula Gural Theatre at A.R.T./New York Theatres of The Storm Theatre Company (stormtheatre.com) (Peter Dobbins, Artistic Director). The performance will take place at 502 West 53rd Street, New York, NY 10019 (@ 10th Avenue). Performances begin on Thursday, February 5, 2026 at 7:30pm and continue through Saturday evening, February 21.

Peter Dobbins, artistic director, was hailed by The New York Times for the 2012 production of 'The London Merchant,' calling it one of "The Most Galvanizing Moments of 2012."

A glittering comedic classic, 'An Ideal Husband' is as timely as it is timeless, blending blackmail, political scandal and looming personal disgrace in a story that's both deeply moving and irresistibly funny. It promises to be a joyous theatrical experience you won't want to miss.

CREDITS: CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM

Directed by Peter Dobbins, the cast includes Chase Bishop as Lord Goring, David Bodenschatz as Mason, Connie Castanzo as Mrs. Chevely, Evangelia Kingsley as Lady Markby, Madelyn Monaghan as Lady Gertrude Chiltern, Heather Olson as Mabel Chiltern, Carl Pasbjerg as Lord Caversham, Jed Peterson as Sir Robert Chiltern, and Ed Prostack as Phipps.

The creative team is Daniel Prosky (set design), Michael Abrams (lighting design), Sandrina Sparagna (costume design), and Andy Evan Cohen (sound design). The assistant director is Joe Danbusky. The production stage manager is Michelle Pomponio. The Associate Artistic Director is Fleur Phillips Dobbins.

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

February 5 - 21. Wednesday-Saturday at 7:30pm; Saturdays and Sundays at 2pm.

TICKETS

Tickets may be purchased online at <https://stormtheatre.ludus.com>

BIOS

PETER DOBBINS (Director) is a cofounder of The Storm Theatre, and has directed such Storm productions as T.S. Eliot's 'Murder in the Cathedral,' Dion Boucicault's 'The Shaughraun,' John Regis's 'Stavrogin's Confession,' Stewart Parker's 'Spokesong,' William Shakespeare's 'As You Like It,' 'The Tempest,' 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' and 'Twelfth Night,' Karol Wojtyla's 'The Jeweler's Shop,' 'Job, Jeremiah, and Our God's Brother,' the North American Premiere of 'House of Desires' by Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz, and the world premieres of 'The Last Starfighter' by Skip Kennon and Fred Landau and 'Linnea' by John Regis. As an actor, he has been seen as T.E. Lawrence (Ross) in 'Ross' by Terrence Rattigan, and Mesa in Paul Claudel's 'Noon Divide' and has played leading roles in various regional theatres. Learn



Peter Dobbins in "The Surprise." -Credit: stormtheatre.com.

more at www.facebook.com/peter.dobbins.56.

FLEUR PHILLIPS DOBBINS (Associate Director) has been working for 30+ years in the entertainment industry as actress, director and playwright. She has appeared on and off Broadway as well as regionally in the US. Storm productions include 'The Surprise' (2015), 'The Fight & Deconstruction' (2017) and 'The Rainmaker' (2018). Most recently she performed her one woman musical, 'Who's My Girl?,' at the Fort Worth Int'l Fringe Festival and her play, 'Home,' was accepted to 'Missed The Boat' New Works Festival in Fall '25. Fleur studied Shakespeare at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art and has a BFA in acting from Southern Methodist University. Learn more @fleuralsdobbins and www.fleuralsdobbins.com

THE STORM THEATRE COMPANY

The Storm Theatre Company's 1997 inaugural production of 'Murder in the Cathedral' by T.S. Eliot was staged on the altar of the Church of the Holy Cross on 42nd Street in New York City for virtually no money. Since that rather modest beginning, 'The Storm' has produced over 60 plays of astonishing scope and audacious breadth.

The name "Storm" was chosen to represent a journey through catharsis and regeneration. Inspired by Elizabethan Theatres such as Shakespeare's 'The Globe' and 'The Rose,' The Storm Theatre Company proved an apt name for its mission – to reawaken audiences to the awe-inspiring truths of our shared humanity: its beauty and potential.

Such aspirations have led The Storm Theatre Company to produce quite a varied selection of plays over the last quarter century. Our second show, Dion Boucicault's 'The Shaughraun,' was the first production in New York City in

over 100 years, and subsequently led to a resurgence of this neglected nineteenth century theater genius's work. The Storm rediscovered other forgotten gems such as Edward Bulwar Lytton's 'Money' (1840); Thomas Dekker's 'The Shoemaker's Holiday' (1599); Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz' 'The House of Desires' (1683); and George Lillo's 'The London Merchant' (1731), all produced to great critical success.

In addition, The Storm Theatre Company produced three plays by the French playwright, Paul Claudel. While Claudel is one of France's most revered, his work is rarely staged in the United States. Storm Theatre produced the epic work 'The Satin Slipper' as well as the mysterious and intriguing 'Noon Divide'; the haunting play, 'The Tidings Brought to Mary,' and had three successful Storm Theatre productions.

In 2007, The Storm Theatre Company produced a festival of the work of Polish playwright and actor Karol Wojtyla, including 'Our God's Brother,' 'The Jeweler's Shop,' 'Jeremiah,' and 'Job'. Wojtyla seemed destined to become a major theatrical force but instead went on to become canonized Pope John Paul II.

In its 24th season, The Storm Theatre Company mission has inspired productions of an unusual assortment of plays including 'Marius' by Marcel Pagnol (part of his Marseilles trilogy); Terrence Rattigan's 'Ross' (about Lawrence of Arabia); a rare NYC revival of Saroyan's 'The Time of Your Life,' a staged version of Graham Greene's novel 'The Power and The Glory,' 'Le Cid' by Pierre Corneille in a new verse translation by Richard Wilbur; 'Gillette' by William Hauptman; Stewart Parker's, 'Spokesong,' Jim Nolan's 'The Salvage Shop,' Stavrogin's 'Confession' by John Regis (adapted from Dostoevsky's 'The Demons'); and much more. With 'Antigone,' The Storm Theatre Company returned to Jean Anouilh having

produced his 'Eurydice' in May/June of 2000. Interspersed throughout the years, The Storm Theatre Company has delighted audiences with productions of 'As You Like It,' 'The Tempest,' 'Twelfth Night' and 'A Midsummer Night's Dream,' featuring of all things, a former Miss America and an NFL Hall of Famer.

Most recently The Storm Theatre Company has produced original productions of new plays: 'The Believers' by Robert Carroll, 'Deconstruction' and 'The Fight' by Jonathan Leaf; The New York premiere 'Sister Calling My Name' by Buzz McLaughlin and the North American premiere of 'Collaborators' by John Hodge. Learn more at <https://stormtheatre.ludus.com>.

A.R.T./NEW YORK THEATRES (THE ALLIANCE OF RESIDENT THEATRES/NEW YORK)

Established in 1972 by an innovative collective, A.R.T./New York has matured into an indispensable cornerstone for over 475 theatres and more than 150 individual producers and artists throughout all five boroughs of New York City and across the state. As the singular membership organization dedicated to encompassing New York's entire not-for-profit theatre sector, A.R.T./New York's reach extends from playwrighting collectives and developmental labs to producing organizations and pioneering independent artists. A.R.T./NY continues to serve the field through four essential service areas — Funding, Space, Professional Development and Advocacy — in order to help theatremakers put their creative ideas on stage. Learn more at <https://art-newyork.org>.

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

Amber Heard confronts intense public scrutiny and media trial in powerful doc *Silenced*

Actor Amber Heard makes a poignant appearance in the new documentary *Silenced*, which premiered at the World Cinema Documentary Competition section at Sundance. But the actor wants to amplify that this is not her story to tell, because she did not really have a choice. "This is not about me. I have lost my ability to speak. I am not here to tell my story. I don't want to tell my story. In fact, I don't want to use my voice anymore. That's the problem," she says, speaking directly to the camera.

Silenced charts her story, but from the perspective of international human rights lawyer Jennifer Robinson, who worked along with her during the 2018 lawsuit filed by Heard's ex-husband Johnny Depp, against British newspaper *The Sun*. It is Robinson's point of view that comes first, and she is among the multiple women whose stories are traced to contextualise how defamation laws are blatantly used to silence the stories/testimonies of survivors and victims.

Jennifer Robinson, whose 2022 book *How Many More Women? How the Law Silences Women*, inspired the film, wastes no time in opening up and threading the multiple stories together. Directed by Selina Miles, who uses the *vérité* approach to quite a moving effect, *Silenced* also considers the parallel cases of Mexico-based journalist Catalina Ruiz-Navarro and former federal government staffer Brittany Higgins. The details are traced closely enough as Miles moves from one case to another, overlapping the information, testimonies, and personal comments.

The urgency is instrumental to the film's rage-inducing, shocking power. It demands your fury and channels it into questioning how much more women stand to lose when they decide to speak up. The misogyny, online harassment and public vitriol are all explored here, but because there is so much ground to cover, it never really digs into one case in particular.

Silenced is infused with the right kind of anger, but at times, it forgets to draw the line. From the break of the MeToo movement to the case of Gisèle Pelicot, to the details of Andrew Tate and Sean 'Diddy' Combs, *Silenced* is bustling with compelling stories but glosses over many to fit in its 97-minute runtime.

Silenced also does not spend enough time with Robinson



herself to truly understand her role in understanding and working towards the impacts of the legal system and the widespread expansion of defamation laws in the last few years. Even Justin Baldoni and Blake Lively's case is brought up, but it is ongoing, and the film merely adds a passing reference to how terms like defamation suits and online smear campaigns have become more common than ever.

This is a film that wants to chart a history along these lines of trials swinging the other way. But the truth is that there is no finish line in immediate sight. It is scary but what is the point if there is no hope? This is a film that needed more time and a tighter structure, but it nevertheless serves as a cautionary tale of the fights yet to be fought. These voices will not be silenced.

Die My Love: Jennifer Lawrence delivers a stunning performance

Only Lynne Ramsay could inject so much angst, fury and passion into the untranslatable pain of not being seen. Her cinema is so alive and so sensory, from *Ratcatcher* to *You Were Never Really Here*, and in her latest offering, she adapts Ariana Harwicz's novel to blistering effect. It is irksome that the film has been pocketed as a study of postpartum depression, when it is about so much more. Co-written with Enda Walsh and Alice Birch, it is often a discomfiting watch, but Ramsay wants you to stay till the very end. She wants you to extend your empathy with a woman who won't listen, agree or look you in the eye. It exists from her point of view.

It starts with a long shot of Grace (Jennifer Lawrence) and Jackson (Robert Pattinson) inspecting a property far off the town, which will soon become their home. The cinematography by Seamus McGarvey, exquisite throughout, establishes this scene from a distance. It is as if there is a ghost somewhere, lurking behind the room. Grace and Jackson arrive, and in the blink of an eye, there's a baby too. It is a family of three now, and the baby cries, babbles and coos like most babies do. Jackson goes off to work, and Grace is left alone with the baby.

An aspiring author, her days are spent in hallucinatory woes as she slowly loses her mind. She cannot contain anything anymore; there is no signal or directness in the way the days turn into night. It is a frenzy of unbridled emotions, which Ramsay explores with tight control. She is not looking for a reason here. The film operates on an operatic level of momentum, where we are passive witnesses to Grace's growing sense of despair and anxiety. We cannot save her from herself, and we are not given any answers. Jackson's mother is the first one to see her truly, even as she sleepwalks at night with a loaded gun.

Actresses are 'treated like puppets' in Hollywood, claims Kristen Stewart

Actor-turned-director Kristen Stewart has criticised Hollywood for its treatment of female actors, saying the film industry does not give them any agency. In a recent interview, Kristen called how actresses are treated like "puppets" in Hollywood.

Speaking with *Variety*, Kristen, who is turning director with *The Chronology of Water*, spoke about the treatment meted out to female actors in the industry. "Actresses get treated like shit, I've got to tell you. People think anyone could be an actress, but the first time I sat down to talk about my movie as a director, I thought, wow, this is a different experience. They are talking to me like I'm somebody with a brain," the actor said.

Drawing on her own experience, Kristen said that directors are put on a pedestal by the industry, while actors are relegated to

the background. "There's this idea that directors have otherworldly abilities, which is not true. It's an idea perpetuated by men. Not to sound like I'm complaining all the time, but it's worse for female actors than male ones -- they get treated like puppets, but they are not. Imogen Poots put her whole body and soul into this movie," she added.

Kristen Stewart, who is famously known for headlining the *Twilight* series, switched to directing with her latest project, *The Chronology of Water*. The film premiered at the Cannes Film Festival 2025, where it received a standing ovation for over 6 minutes.

The film, adapted from Lidia Yuknavitch's memoir, tells the story of a woman's journey to turn trauma into art. Kristen worked on this project for eight years. The film stars Imogen Poots, Jim Belushi, and Thora Birch.





Who is Talwinder Singh, Disha Patani's rumored masked boyfriend?

Talwinder Singh Sidhu, a Punjabi indie music artist, has captured widespread attention for his distinctive style and enigmatic presence. Gaining traction in the music industry through viral hits and public appearances alongside Bollywood actor Disha Patani, Talwinder's rising profile has led to increased interest from fans. Known for wearing a painted skeleton mask during performances and public outings, Talwinder's choice to conceal his face has only fuelled public curiosity about his identity and personal life.

Born Talwinder Singh Sidhu on November 23, 1997, in Tarn Taran, Talwinder's early years were shaped by his Punjabi Jat Sikh family and a deep connection to music. Reports indicate that he started singing at just four years old, showing a natural inclination toward music from childhood. This early passion continued to develop, setting the foundation for his future career in music.

Talwinder's childhood took a significant turn when his family moved to the San Francisco Bay Area at the age of 14. This relocation exposed him to Western music, which he later blended with his Punjabi roots to form a unique sound that resonates with a broad audience. The melding of these influences is apparent in his work, which has gained considerable popularity on digital streaming platforms.

Maintaining privacy is central to Talwinder's public persona. The singer hides his face behind a painted mask to give him privacy as well as make fans connected to his music rather than his face. This mask, often featuring a skeleton motif, has become a hallmark of his identity, simultaneously preserving his anonymity and serving as a conversation starter among fans and observers.

In addition to his music career, Talwinder's public appearances have sparked rumours about a possible relationship with Disha Patani. Amid their relationship buzz, the two were also seen together hand-in-hand attending Lollapaloza festival in Mumbai. This is not the first time the pair have drawn attention for being seen together.

FIR filed against Ranveer Singh in Bengaluru for mimicking Daiva scene from Rishab Shetty's Kantara

Actor Ranveer Singh, a few months ago, faced criticism for mimicking the Daiva scene from Rishab Shetty's film Kantara: A Legend - Chapter 1 during a public event. Now, as per NDTV, an FIR was on Wednesday registered against Ranveer at the High Grounds Police Station in Bengaluru.

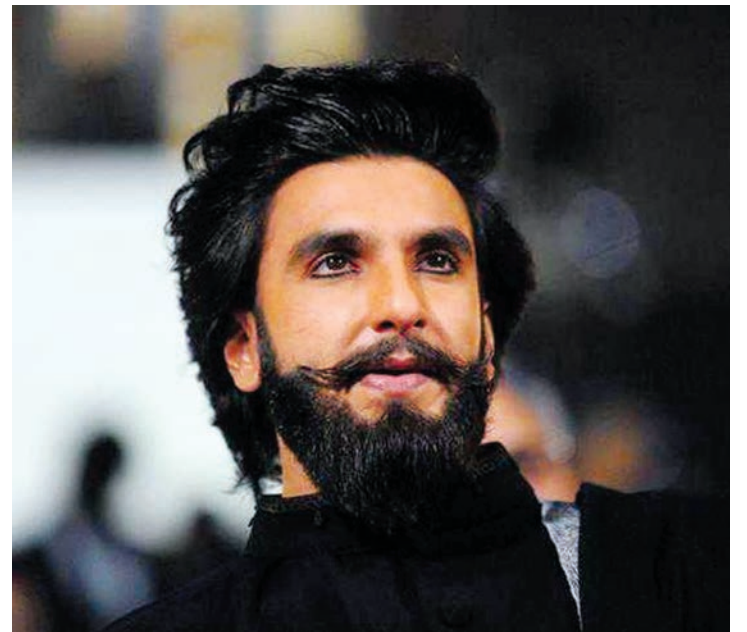
Ranveer has been accused of insulting Hindu religious sentiments and the Chavundi Daiva tradition of coastal Karnataka. The case was booked under Sections 196, 299 and 302 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). The complaint was filed by Bengaluru-based advocate Prashanth Methal.

According to the FIR, the alleged incident took place at the International Film Festival of India (IFFI), Goa, on November 28, 2025. The complainant claimed that Ranveer made derogatory remarks and also performed a mocking stage act that allegedly demeaned revered elements of the Daiva tradition.

The advocate, in his complaint, claimed that Ranveer imitated the expressions associated with Panjurli and Guliga Daiva adding that he described it in a crude, comical, and derogatory manner. Prashanth added that Ranveer referred to the Chavundi Daiva as a "female ghost".

The complaint said that Chavundi Daiva is a revered guardian deity symbolising divine feminine energy in the coastal regions of Karnataka. Calling the deity a ghost was a serious misrepresentation that hurt religious sentiments, said the complainant.

The matter has been referred to the 1st Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM) Court in Bengaluru. It is scheduled for a hearing on April 8. A private complaint was filed by the Bengaluru advocate on December 27 last year, in the Additional Judicial Magistrate, Bengaluru.



On January 23 this year, the court gave an order to the High Grounds police station to register an FIR under Section 175 clause 3 of BNS.

After facing backlash, Ranveer apologised with a note on social media. He had said, "My intention was to highlight Rishab's incredible performance in the film. Actor to actor, I know how much it takes to perform that particular scene the way he did, for which he has my utmost admiration. I have always deeply respected every culture, tradition, and belief in our country. If I've hurt anyone's sentiments, I sincerely apologise."

Rani Mukerji faces backlash over 'wives should raise voices at husbands' remark

In a recent interview, actor Rani Mukerji weighed in on household dynamics and gender roles, remarking that wives should raise their voices while speaking to their husbands. The comment has since triggered a wave of backlash online, with several social media users criticising the actor for normalising shouting within a relationship.

During a conversation with Bollywood Hungama, Rani spoke about the importance of gender dynamics at home.

Talking about how a boy's behaviour is shaped by the way his father treats his mother, Rani said, "I think respect starts at home. Very easily, when you see your mother being ill-treated, it empowers boys to think that if my mother can be treated like this, every other girl can be treated the same way. I think fathers need to be responsible for how they treat their wives at home, because that's what a boy grows up seeing. If your mother is treated well, if she's given respect, boys will understand that women are supposed to be given that respect and that darja in society."

She continued, "So it all starts at home. Even a small thing like a father raising his voice at the mother shouldn't happen. You know, the mother should raise her voice at the father, that's how it should be."

Rani went on to recall an incident from her school days, sharing that she once slapped a boy, before jokingly referencing her husband, filmmaker-producer Aditya Chopra.

"Only one boy I slapped, and the rest of the boys were my friends. And just don't go and ask my husband what happens to him every day at home," Rani said.

However, Rani's remarks did not sit well with a section of



social media users. Many took to platforms such as Reddit and Instagram to voice their disagreement, questioning her perspective.

One wrote, "I think she tries to be funny, but she doesn't realise that she is NOT", with another mentioning, "She laughs and insists she made a great point."

"What kind of behaviour is this? I honestly don't understand why no one ever calls her out. Just because she's from an older generation doesn't mean she can say anything she wants," one mentioned. One wrote, "We talked about this Rani. Not again!"

Myanmar military air strikes killed at least 170 civilians during voting period: UN

At least 170 civilians were killed in more than 400 military air strikes in Myanmar during its recent two-month election period, the United Nations said on Friday, highlighting deepening violence amid a widely criticised vote under junta rule.

The UN rights office said “credible sources” had verified that 170 civilians lost their lives in some 408 military aerial attacks reported by open sources during the voting period between December 2025 and January 2026,” and cautioned that the actual figure was likely higher due to communication blackouts and fear among witnesses.

James Rodehaver, head of the UN rights office’s Myanmar team, speaking from Bangkok to reporters in Geneva, said verification covered the period from the start of the election campaign through the three phases of voting. “Because of the way communications are cut off and because of, frankly, the fear of individuals in some of these locations to speak to us, it sometimes takes a lot longer to get that information,” he said.

The brutal tally of civilian deaths comes as Myanmar holds elections that were widely dismissed by democracy watchdogs as a rebranding of military rule, five years after the 2021 coup ousted Aung San Suu Kyi’s government. Critics argue the vote lacked legitimacy, pointing to the exclusion of opposition candidates, repression, and widespread insecurity across the country.

UN rights chief Volker Türk said the “profound and widespread despair inflicted on the people of Myanmar” since the coup “has only deepened with the recent election staged by the military.” He noted that many citizens voted, or chose not to vote, out of fear, a situation he said was starkly at odds with their internationally guaranteed civil and political rights.

The rights office also highlighted that the election was held in just 263 of 330 townships and mostly in urban centres under military control, leaving conflict areas and large segments of the population especially displaced groups and minorities such as the Rohingya effectively excluded from the process.

Five years of military rule, the UN said, have been marked by repression of dissent, mass arbitrary arrests, forced conscription, extensive surveillance, and shrinking civic space, with the latest election appearing to entrench military dominance rather than restore civilian governance.

Trump says ‘very dangerous’ for UK to do business with China

WASHINGTON (TIP)

US President Donald Trump said it was “very dangerous” for the UK to do business with China, as Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer arrived in Shanghai on the third day of his visit to the country.

The US president was reacting to agreements aimed at increasing business and investment between the UK and China, announced after Sir Keir met Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Speaking at the premiere of a documentary about his wife Melania on Thursday, Trump went on to refer to Xi as a “friend” of his and said he knew the Chinese president “very well”.

UK business minister Sir Chris Bryant said Trump was “wrong” and it would be “bonkers frankly for the UK to ignore the presence of China on the world stage”.

“Of course, we enter into our relationship with China with our eyes wide open,” he added.

The business minister also pointed out that Trump is due to visit China himself in April.

In response to Trump’s remarks, Downing Street indicated that Washington had been aware of this trip and its objectives in advance.

Arriving at the premiere of the Melania film on Thursday, the US president was asked by a reporter: “What do you think about the UK going into business with China?”

Beyond his brief comments, Trump did not say anything further about the UK’s engagement with China, pivoting instead to Canada and delivering a similar warning.

He said it was “even more dangerous, I think, for Canada”.

“Canada is not doing well. They’re doing very poorly, and you can’t look at China as the answer,” he added.

Earlier this week, the US president threatened to impose tariffs on Canada if it went through with economic deals struck with China on a recent visit to Beijing by its Prime Minister Mark Carney.

The comments come after Sir Keir said the UK’s relationship with China was in a “good, strong place” following his talks with Xi at the Great Hall of the People on Thursday.

Sir Keir said on Friday that the “very good meetings” with Xi had provided “just the level of engagement that we hoped for”.



Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer shakes hands with Chinese President Xi Jinping in Beijing on Thursday, Jan 29.

“We warmly engaged and made some real progress, actually, because the UK has got a huge amount to offer,” he told a meeting of the UK-China Business Forum at the Bank of China in Beijing.

So far several things have come out of Sir Keir’s trip including an agreement on visa-free travel and lower whisky tariffs, as well as a £10.9bn investment by AstraZeneca to build manufacturing facilities in China.

An agreement aimed at tackling organised crime and illegal immigration will see the UK and China share intelligence to identify the supply routes of people smugglers.

The UK government says the inflatable dinghies used in small boat crossings often contain parts sourced in China.

Other deals include an agreement to co-operate on reducing red tape for UK exporters and collaborate on health challenges such as antimicrobial resistance.

The US was the UK’s largest single country trading partner in 2025, while China was the fourth largest, according to the Department for Business and Trade.

The chair of the British Chamber of Commerce in China, Chris Torrens, praised Sir Keir’s visit to Beijing as “successful”. Torrens told the BBC it made “sense for the UK to be looking to China, it’s one of its larger trading partners”.

Ukraine will reciprocate if Russia halts attacks on energy sectors, says Zelensky

KYIV (TIP)

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Friday said that his country is ready to cease strikes on Russian energy infrastructure if Moscow also adheres to such a halt proposed by US President Donald Trump.

During a conversation with journalists reported by Ukrainian media outlets, Zelenskyy said that the topic of an energy truce between Kyiv and Moscow was raised during trilateral peace talks in the Emirati capital Abu Dhabi on Jan. 23-24 by the American side and is a personal initiative of US President Donald Trump.

“If Russia heard the signal from the American side the same way we heard it, then we will definitely have some result and will be able to evaluate it,”



Zelenskyy told reporters, according to state news agency Ukrinform.

Noting there was no direct dialogue or agreements between Russia and Ukraine on the topic, Zelenskyy said that his country would “maintain a mirror attitude towards such steps.”

“If Russia does not attack our energy (infrastructure) ... we will not attack their energy (infrastructure). I think this is the answer that the mediator of the negotiations, namely the United States of America, was counting on,” Zelenskyy added, expressing Ukraine’s readiness for de-escalation steps.

The Ukrainian president’s remarks come as Trump said during a Cabinet meeting on Thursday that he “personally asked” Russian President Vladimir Putin not to fire on Kyiv and various Ukrainian cities amid “extreme cold” weather conditions.

Zelenskyy thanked his US counterpart in a later statement on the US social media company X, saying the topic was discussed in the UAE and that they “expect the agreements to be implemented.”

FROM PAGE 30

Spanish PM tells SpaceX's Musk 'Mars can wait, humanity can't' in defence of migrant move

Spain's Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez has defended his government's plan to grant legal status to undocumented residents in an exchange with billionaire Elon Musk on social media platform X, telling him, "Mars can wait".

The plan approved on Jan 27 by Mr Sanchez's leftist government could regularise around 500,000 undocumented workers, in a break with harsher policies seen elsewhere in Europe.

Mr Musk posted a link on X – which he owns – to a post by a man named Mr Ian Miles Cheong, who called the plan "electoral engineering", along with the comment, "Wow".

"The logic is simple: legalise half a million people, fast-track them to citizenship (which takes as little as two years for many), and you've effectively imported a massive, loyal voting bloc that's indebted to the left," Mr Cheong wrote in the post which has had nearly 12 million views.

Mr Sanchez hit back at Mr Musk, responding to the billionaire's post on X late on Jan 29 with the message: "Mars can wait. Humanity can't".

Mr Musk's aerospace company SpaceX is developing the mammoth Starship – the world's largest and most powerful rocket – as part of his vision to take humans to Mars.

Son of Norway crown princess to stand trial for rape

In the biggest scandal to rock Norway's monarchy, the son of Crown Princess Mette-Marit goes on trial next week accused of raping four women, as well as drug and assault offences.

Marius Borg Hoiby, Mette-Marit's 29-year-old son from a relationship before she married Crown Prince Haakon, has been charged with a total of 38 counts, some of which date back to 2018.

He faces up to 16 years in prison if the Oslo district court finds him guilty. The trial, scheduled to last until 19 March, is expected to attract intense media coverage.

"When it comes to the Norwegian royal family, it is without a doubt the biggest scandal" in its 120-year history, Trond Noren Isaksen, a historian and expert on Norway's monarchy, told AFP. "There have been controversies surrounding the choice of spouses, about renovations of the palace and these kinds of things, but never any real scandals involving criminal offences, let alone so many," he said.

Won't budge over defence capabilities: Iran on N-talks

ISTANBUL (TIP)

Iran is prepared for the resumption of talks with the United States, but they should be fair and not include Iran's defence capabilities, Iran's chief diplomat said on Friday, Jan 30, as regional powers work to prevent military conflict between the two foes.

US President Donald Trump said on Thursday he planned to speak with Iran, even as the US sent another warship to West Asia and the Pentagon chief said the military would be ready to carry out whatever the president decided. A US Navy destroyer has docked at the Israeli port of Eilat, an Israeli news outlet reported.

One of the main demands by the US to resume talks with Iran is curbing its missile programme, a senior Iranian official said last week. Iran rejects that demand.

"If negotiations are fair and equitable, Iran is ready to participate in such talks," Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi said in a press conference with his Turkish counterpart in Istanbul.

Araqchi said no talks between Tehran and Washington were currently arranged. In response to US threats of military action, Araqchi said Tehran was ready for either negotiations or warfare.

In an earlier development, European Union foreign ministers agreed to



Iranian Foreign Minister meets his Turkish counterpart in Istanbul. Reuters

designate Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) as a terrorist organisation, placing the powerful military force in the same category as Islamic State and al Qaeda, in what marks a symbolic shift in Europe's stance on Iran's leadership.

Iran says Europe to 'suffer consequences of foolish act' after Guards terror listing

Iran's judiciary chief Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei warned on Friday that

European countries would face consequences after the EU listed the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as a terrorist organisation.

"There is no doubt that the hostile action of the Europeans, who labelled the Revolutionary Guards as a terrorist organisation, will not go unanswered," Ejei was quoted by state television as saying, adding that "they will suffer the consequences of their foolish act," without elaborating.

Israel reopening Gaza's border crossing with Egypt on Sunday after long closure

JERUSALEM (TIP)

Israel said on Friday, Jan 30, that it will reopen the pedestrian border crossing between the Gaza Strip and Egypt over the weekend, marking an important step forward for U.S. President Donald Trump's Gaza ceasefire plan.

COGAT, the Israeli military body in charge of coordinating aid to Gaza, said in a statement that starting on Sunday a "limited movement of people only" would be allowed through the Rafah crossing, Gaza's main gateway to the outside world.

The announcement followed statements from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Ali Shaath, newly appointed to head the Palestinian administrative committee governing Gaza's daily affairs, that it would likely open soon.

While COGAT said the passage will open in both directions on Sunday, Shaath said the first day will be a trial for operations and that travel both ways will start Monday.

Israel as of Friday agreed to allow up to 150 people to leave each day — 50 medical patients with two family



members, an official familiar with the situation told The Associated Press, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were discussing diplomatic talks. Up to 50 people who fled during the war can return daily, the source said.

Roughly 20,000 sick and wounded Palestinians need treatment outside Gaza, according to the territory's health ministry. Gaza's health system was decimated in the war, rendering advanced surgical procedures out of reach. COGAT said both Israel and Egypt will vet individuals for exit and entry through the crossing, which will be supervised by European Union border patrol agents. In addition to screenings at the crossing, Palestinians leaving and returning will be screened

by Israel in the adjacent corridor, which remains under Israeli military control. The crossing has been under a near complete closure since Israel seized it in May 2024, saying the step was part of a strategy to halt cross-border arms smuggling by Hamas. It was briefly opened for the evacuation of medical patients during a short-lived ceasefire in early 2025.

Israel had resisted reopening the crossing, but the recovery of the remains of the last hostage in Gaza on Monday cleared the way to move forward. A day later, Netanyahu said the crossing would soon open in a limited and controlled fashion.

Thousands of Palestinians inside Gaza are trying to leave the war-battered territory, while tens of thousands who fled the territory during the heaviest fighting say they want to return home. The reopening is one of the first steps in the second phase of last year's U.S.-brokered ceasefire agreement, which includes challenging issues ranging from demilitarizing Gaza to putting in place an alternative government to oversee rebuilding the mostly destroyed enclave.

Pakistan-Bangladesh direct flights resume after 14 years

Direct air connectivity between Pakistan and Bangladesh resumed after 14 years, with Biman Bangladesh Airlines operating its inaugural Dhaka-Karachi flight, Dawn reported.

The Pakistan Airports Authority (PAA) said in a statement that the Bangladeshi carrier landed at Karachi's Jinnah International Airport on Thursday, Jan 29, night, after more than a decade and received a traditional water cannon salute on arrival.

Flight tracking data cited by Dawn showed that Biman Bangladesh Airlines flight BG341 arrived in Karachi at 11.03 pm after departing Dhaka's Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport at 8.15 pm.

Speaking to reporters at the airport, Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori said cooperation with Bangladesh would extend beyond aviation to other sectors.

Earlier, Pakistan's High Commission in Dhaka said the "fully packed" inaugural flight departed Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport and was seen off by Bangladesh Civil Aviation and Tourism Adviser Sheikh Bashiruddin, Pakistan High Commissioner to Bangladesh Imran Haider and other officials, Dawn reported.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony, Bangladesh's adviser for civil aviation and tourism said the Dhaka-Karachi route was aimed at "enhancing connectivity, promoting tourism and strengthening people-to-people links". The statement quoted him as saying, "Bangladesh Airlines will gradually increase flight frequency and reduce airfares to make travel affordable for the people."

Pakistan security forces kill 5 TTP terrorists in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Pakistan's security forces killed five terrorists belonging to the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in a joint operation in northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, police said.

Three civilians, including two women, were also killed and several others were injured during the operation, which lasted around ten hours, local police confirmed late night.

The operation was carried out jointly by security forces and police in Domel tehsil of restive Bannu district, during which five terrorists, including a TTP commander, were killed, it added.

The slain commander was identified as Zewaran alias Al-Badri, who was wanted in several cases. The security forces targeted the terrorists' hideouts with more than 25 quadcopter strikes, while a heavy exchange of fire continued throughout the clashes.

Pakistan's military undergoing major transformation: Asim Munir

ISLAMABAD (TIP)

Pakistan's military is undergoing a major transformation in multiple domains, Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Asim Munir said on Jan 29, reaffirming that they remain fully prepared to defend the country's territorial integrity against all threats.

Munir made the remarks during a visit to Bahawalpur Garrison, where he was briefed on various operational, training and administrative aspects of the Corps, with a special focus on preparations for multi-domain warfare, according to a statement issued by the army.

While addressing the troops, Munir lauded their high morale, professional competence and operational preparedness. Munir, who is also the army chief, reaffirmed that the armed forces remain fully prepared to defend Pakistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity against all threats, emphasising the need to maintain optimum readiness to meet the requirements of future battlefield and security challenges.

"COAS & CDF highlighted that Pakistan Armed Forces are undergoing major transformation in multiple domains," the army said. "In future, technological manoeuvres will replace physical manoeuvres and will fundamentally alter the way offensive and defensive operations are undertaken. Therefore, the Pakistan Armed Forces are embracing and absorbing technology at a rapid pace.

In this process innovation, indigenisation and adaptation shall remain fundamental," he said. Munir also witnessed a high-intensity Field Exercise "Steadfast Resolve," at Khairpur Tamewali, encompassing



integration of niche technologies like unmanned aerial systems, advanced surveillance assets, Electronic Warfare assets and modern command-and-control mechanisms. Earlier, he inaugurated the ROHI eSkills Learning Hub (STP) aimed at promoting digital skills and learning opportunities for students, particularly from southern Punjab and across the country.

He also visited the EME Regional Workshop, where he was briefed on the maintenance regime to sustain modern platforms through advanced technologies, indigenisation and other combat support measures. Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Asim Munir.

'Hybrid' Confession: PM Sharif Admits Military Is Pak's True Economic Engine

In a stunning departure from traditional diplomatic rhetoric, Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has openly admitted that a

"hybrid regime" is the engine driving the country's current survival. Addressing a gathering of eminent exporters and business leaders in Islamabad on Friday, the Prime Minister credited the military leadership—specifically Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir—for bailing out the civilian government and steering the nation away from the precipice of economic default.

The Prime Minister's remarks come in the wake of a significant constitutional overhaul in late 2025, which saw General Asim Munir elevated to the rank of Field Marshal and appointed as the country's first Chief of Defence Forces (CDF). This new role grants him overarching control over all three branches of the military and the nuclear command, effectively institutionalising the military's role in civil governance.

"I can say without hesitation that without the help of Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, many of our most pressing problems could not have been solved," Sharif stated. He specifically lauded the military's "one-hundred-per-cent role" in eliminating petrol smuggling and stabilising the sugar industry. By describing the current setup as a "partnership", Sharif essentially acknowledged that the civilian administration now operates in a subservient, though collaborative, role to the military high command.

The most provocative segment of the Prime Minister's speech was directed at New Delhi. Vowing to transform Pakistan into a global economic power, Sharif claimed that the unprecedented level of civil-military unity would soon leave India "astonished" and "puzzled".

Exiled leader Hasina denounces upcoming Bangladesh election after party ban

NEW DELHI (TIP)

Bangladesh's toppled leader Sheikh Hasina has denounced her country's election next month after her party was barred from participating in the polls, raising fears of wider political division and possible unrest.

In a message published by The Associated Press news agency on Thursday, Jan 29, Hasina said "a government born of exclusion cannot unite a divided nation."

Hasina, who was sentenced to death in absentia for her crackdown on a student uprising in 2024 that killed hundreds of people and led to the fall of her 15-year government, has been sharpening her critique of the interim government of Nobel Peace winner Muhammad Yunus in recent days, as the election that will shape the nation's next chapter looms.



"Each time political participation is denied to a significant portion of the population, it deepens resentment, delegitimises institutions and creates the conditions for future instability," the former leader, who is living in exile in India, warned in her email to the AP.

She also claimed that the current Bangladesh government deliberately disenfranchised millions of her supporters by excluding her party – the former governing Awami League – from the election. More than 127 million people in Bangladesh are eligible to vote in the February 12 election, widely seen as the country's most consequential in decades and the first since Hasina's removal from power after the mass uprising.

Yunus's government is overseeing the process, with voters also weighing a proposed constitutional referendum on sweeping political reforms.

Campaigning started last week, with rallies in the capital, Dhaka, and elsewhere. Yunus returned to Bangladesh and took over three days after Hasina fled to India on August 5, 2024, following weeks of violent unrest.

Sikh History This Week

JANUARY 30 TO FEBRUARY 5

30th January

1850: Bhai Maharaj Singh was deported to Calcutta from Jalandhar.



1855: Baba Dayal Singh Nirankari passed away.

1892 Lal Singh, a Bar Student charged with an offence, insisted to give his evidence on oath by saying: I am a Sikh. I have a religion. When he was examined on solemn affirmation and not oath, the matter went up in appeal. It was held by Justice Hawkins that it was wrong to let Lal Singh make a solemn affirmation instead of taking an oath. Wills, Charles, Lawrence, and Wright JJ all concurred.

31st January



1630 Seventh Patshash, Guru Har Rai Ji came to this planet. He was born at Kirtapur in the house of Baba Gurditta, eldest son of Guru Hargobind, and Mata Nihal Kaur. He was the second grandson of Guru Hargobind, the first being Baba Dhir Mal. Today is the actual date of birth, although it is observed on a different date by Guru Khalsa Panth (Please NOTE the contention on the actual date. Some have suggested Jan. 16, 1630.)

1922 The management of Gurudwara Guru Ka Bagh was handed over to the Sikhs after a long agitation.

1927 Saint Attar Singh passed away.

1st February



1998 The British Army announced a revolutionary dress code, which is aimed to allow its Sikh members wear their traditional dresses. The Sikhs will be able to carry a miniature version of the kirpan in their

wallets. They would also be permitted to wear army-issue special design knee-length underpants.

2nd February



1534 Bibi Bhani Ji, was born at Basarkae.



1807 Maharaja Ranjit Singh attacked Kasur, as Qutbuddin had sided against him in the battle of Bhasin. Qutbuddin was caught while fleeing. However, he was pardoned with a jagir at Mamdot. Kasur was annexed to Lahore Darbar. Pasrur town was also annexed.

1958 Sikhs held a Protest March in Delhi against numerous acts of the sacrilege of their Gurdwaras by the Hindus.

3rd February



1816 Baba Ram Singh Namdhari was born. BABA RAM SINGH was born in village Rayia,

Ludhiana, to father Jassa Singh and mother Sedha Kaur. Since early childhood, Ram Singh was inclined to reciting God's name (Vaaheguru's Naam simran). For a while, he served in the forces of Lahore darbar. However in 1841 he left active service and joined the company of Baba Balak Singh, whose preachings had enlightened thousands. Upon receiving Naam Updaesh, Ram Singh settled in Bhaenni village and engaged in extensive preaching of Sikh faith. On the Baisakhi day of 1857, Baba Ram Singh administered Pahul to the Sikhs in his village and created 22 centres in different parts of the country. He started the Kuka branch. Kuka Sikhs wear white attire and a malla made from white wool. Their practices include, giving Vaaheguru Gurmantar in individual's ear; amrit is not partaken together, rather given to individuals in isolation; practice of Hawaan ceremony; rather than the traditional Parikarma around Guru Granth Sahib during marriage ceremony, they recite lawan in presence of fire (Agni Haum). During religious ceremonies, they yell, shout, and dance out of love. The Punjabi term for their yelling and shouting is Kukeh. Hence they are popularly known as Kukas.

4th February

1764 Khalsa fought against Ruhaliya forces in which Ruhala lost and left the battle grounds.

1853 John Lawrence was appointed the Chief Commissioner of Punjab.

1975 As a result of representation made by The Sikh Dharma Brotherhood (USA), the Labor department of US Government exempted the Sikh workers employed in workshops from wearing safety helmet which are required to be worn by all the labourers in carpentry trade and construction (an OSHA program Directive of 1972). The exemption to Sikh employees was granted under the provisions of the United States Constitution relating to free exercise of religion.

5th February

1762 Ahmad Shah invaded for the 6th time. This invasion was primarily against the Sikhs. The Sikhs had besieged Jandiala. Ahmad Shah reached Jandiala by forced marches. In the meantime Sikhs had moved to Malerkotla. Ahmad Shah surprised the Sikhs at Kup Raheera near Malaerkotla (now in Sangrur district) and the two armies met in a straight fight. Sikhs were encumbered with families and camp followers and lost more than 30,000 Sikh – mostly old men, women, and children, out of a total of 50,000. However, the main body of the Sikhs fighting force remained intact. However, the handwritten copy of the Holy Sri Guru Granth Sahib had to be lodged near here in the house of a muslim, who kept the holy scripture respectfully for about two centuries. It is said to have been taken to Pakistan by that family at the time of India's Partition in 1947. This battle is known as the "Wada Ghallughar." Ahmad Shah reached Amritsar and destroyed Hari Mandir and the holy tank. Ahmad Shah stayed the entire year 1762 in Panjab to subdue and crush the Sikhs, but he totally failed in the objective. Despite the heavy loss of life and the Holy Sri Guru Granth Sahib, the Sikhs fought several subsequent wars with Ahmed Shah Abdali and eventually convince him to leave Punjab. Soon they recuperated and established their own kingdom, the Khalsa rule in Punjab. With the establishment of the Sikh rule, the Western borders of India were sealed forever to the Mughal invaders.

1921 The famous Sikh shrine, Punja Sahib was brought under management control of Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC).

Healing after a toxic relationship: How to let go, reclaim yourself

Walking away from a toxic relationship is not weakness—it is courage in its quietest, bravest form. Whether the bond was emotionally draining, controlling, dismissive, or manipulative, leaving it often marks the beginning of a deeper struggle: how to heal, how to trust again, and how to find yourself after losing pieces along the way.

For many women, toxic relationships do not end cleanly. They linger in self-doubt, guilt, anxiety, and the haunting question—Was it really that bad? Healing is not linear, but it is possible. And it begins with choosing yourself, again and again.

Recognise That It Was Toxic—Without Minimising It

One of the hardest steps is acknowledging the truth. Toxic relationships often disguise themselves as intense love, concern, or dependency. Emotional manipulation, gaslighting, constant criticism, silent treatment, or control over choices can quietly erode self-worth. You do not need dramatic abuse for your pain to be valid. If the relationship made you feel small, anxious, unheard, or afraid to be yourself, it was harmful. Naming it honestly is not about blaming—it's about freeing yourself from denial.

Allow Yourself to Grieve—Even If You Left

Ending a toxic relationship does not mean you won't miss the person. You may grieve the version of them you hoped they would become, the future you imagined, or the effort you invested. Give yourself permission to mourn without shame. Grief does not mean you made the wrong decision. It means you are human, and attachment does not vanish the moment clarity arrives.

Break the Cycle of Self-Blame

Many women carry the burden of responsibility long after a toxic relationship ends. Why didn't I leave sooner? Why did I tolerate it? Why didn't I see the red flags? The truth is: toxic dynamics are designed to confuse. They thrive on emotional imbalance and gradual erosion of boundaries. What matters is not how long you stayed, but that you chose to leave when you could. Compassion toward yourself is a crucial part of healing.

Create Emotional and Digital Distance

Healing cannot begin in constant contact. This includes resisting the urge to check social media,



reread old messages, or replay conversations in your mind. Distance is not cruelty—it is self-preservation. Silence creates space for clarity. Each day without re-engagement weakens the emotional hold and strengthens your sense of independence.

Rebuild Boundaries—With Others and Yourself

Toxic relationships blur boundaries. You may have become used to over-explaining, apologising excessively, or putting others' comfort above your own.

Start small:

- Say no without justification
- Pause before responding to emotional demands
- Honor your instincts when something feels off

Healthy boundaries are not walls—they are filters that protect your peace.

Reconnect With Who You Were—and Who You're Becoming

Toxic relationships often distance women from their passions, friendships, and inner voice. Healing means rediscovering what brings you joy without validation from anyone else. Return to activities you abandoned. Nurture friendships that feel safe. Spend time alone without guilt. Slowly, confidence rebuilds—not as loud assurance, but as quiet self-trust.

Redefine Love and Self-Worth

One of the most lasting impacts of a toxic relationship is distorted belief systems—confusing intensity with love, control with care, or suffering with commitment.

FOOD CORNER

Sambhar Idli: A South Indian comfort classic

Soft, fluffy idlis soaked in hot, aromatic sambhar—Sambhar Idli is a wholesome dish that brings together protein, lentils, vegetables, and gentle spices in one satisfying bowl. Light on the stomach yet full of flavor, it's loved by all ages.

Ingredients

Idli batter - as required (store-bought or homemade)

For Sambhar

Toor dal (arhar dal) - ½ cup, Mixed vegetables (carrot, drumstick, potato, pumpkin, beans) - 1½ cups, Tamarind pulp - 1½ tablespoons, Sambhar powder - 2 tablespoons, Turmeric powder - ½ teaspoon, Salt - to taste, Water - as needed

For Tempering

Oil or ghee - 1 tablespoon, Mustard seeds - 1 teaspoon
Dry red chillies - 2, Asafoetida (hing) - a pinch, curry leaves - a few

Method

Grease idli moulds lightly and pour batter into each cavity. Steam for 10-12 minutes until soft and cooked. Set aside.

Wash and pressure cook toor dal with turmeric and water until soft and mushy. Mash well and keep aside.

In a pot, add vegetables with water and cook until tender. Add tamarind pulp, sambhar powder, and salt. Simmer for 5-7 minutes.

Add the mashed dal to the vegetable mixture. Adjust consistency with water and let it boil gently for another 8-10 minutes until flavours blend.

Heat oil or ghee in a small pan. Add mustard seeds and let them splutter. Add dry red chillies, curry leaves, and hing. Pour this tempering into the sambhar and mix well.



From Dull to Dewy: Simple ways to wake up tired skin

If your skin has been looking dull, flat, or exhausted lately, it's trying to tell you something. Long hours, stress, changing weather, poor sleep, and inconsistent skincare can quietly drain the skin of its natural glow. The good news? You don't need complicated routines or expensive treatments to bring it back. A few mindful habits can help transform tired skin into fresh, dewy radiance.

Cleanse Gently, Not Aggressively

Over-cleansing and harsh face washes strip the skin of its natural oils, leaving it dry and lifeless. Switch to a mild, hydrating cleanser that cleans without tightening your skin. Washing twice a day is enough

anything more can do more harm than good.

Exfoliate to Let Fresh Skin Shine

Dead skin cells are one of the biggest reasons skin looks dull. Gentle exfoliation once or twice a week helps remove this layer and reveals smoother, brighter skin underneath. Choose mild exfoliants and avoid scrubbing too hard, which can irritate the skin and dull it further.

Hydration Is the Real Glow Secret

Dewy skin starts with hydration. Drinking enough water matters, but topical hydration is just as important. Use a lightweight serum with hydrating ingredients like hyaluronic

acid, followed by a moisturizer that seals it in. Well-hydrated skin reflects light better, instantly looking healthier.

Never Skip Sunscreen

Sun exposure is a major cause of dullness, uneven tone, and premature ageing. Daily sunscreen protects your skin barrier and prevents long-term damage. Even indoors or on cloudy days, SPF is essential if you want your glow to last.

Feed Your Skin From the Inside

What you eat shows on your skin. Fresh fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, and healthy fats support skin repair and radiance. Cutting down on excess sugar and processed foods can also help

reduce inflammation and dullness.

Sleep Is Non-Negotiable

No skincare product can replace good sleep. Your skin repairs and renews itself while you rest. Aim for 7-8 hours of quality sleep to wake up with naturally refreshed skin. Consistent sleep patterns can visibly improve texture and tone.

Add a Simple Face Massage

Facial massage boosts blood circulation and gives skin an instant glow. Spend a few minutes daily massaging your face upward using a facial oil or moisturizer. It relaxes facial muscles and helps skincare products absorb better.

8 hrs of sleep and still drained? What your body is trying to tell you

You go to bed on time. You clock a full eight hours. Yet morning arrives-and instead of feeling refreshed, you wake up groggy, heavy-eyed, and already exhausted. By mid-afternoon, fatigue creeps back in, coffee becomes a necessity, and by evening you're drained all over again.

If this sounds familiar, you're not alone. Feeling tired despite adequate sleep is one of the most common modern health complaints-and the reasons often go far beyond "not sleeping enough."

Sleep Duration vs Sleep Quality

Eight hours of sleep doesn't automatically mean restful sleep. True restoration depends on sleep quality, not just quantity.

Your body cycles through different sleep stages-light sleep, deep sleep, and REM sleep. Deep sleep repairs muscles, strengthens immunity, and restores energy, while REM sleep rejuvenates the brain and regulates emotions. If these stages are frequently interrupted, your body never fully recharges, even if you spend enough time in bed. Poor sleep quality can be caused by stress, screen exposure, irregular sleep schedules, or underlying health issues-many of which quietly sabotage rest.

Chronic Stress

Living in a constant state of mental alertness keeps stress hormones like cortisol elevated. High cortisol interferes with deep sleep, leaving the body stuck in a shallow, half-resting state. You may fall asleep easily but wake up feeling unrefreshed, tense, or mentally foggy. Over time, this stress-sleep imbalance leads to persistent fatigue, irritability, and burnout-no matter how many hours you sleep.

Nutrient Deficiencies

Low energy is often linked to hidden nutritional gaps, especially in:



- Iron - essential for oxygen transport in the blood
- Vitamin B12 - vital for nerve function and energy metabolism
- Vitamin D - influences muscle strength, immunity, and mood
- Magnesium - supports muscle relaxation and quality sleep

Deficiencies are common, particularly among women, vegetarians, people with digestive issues, or those with limited sun exposure. Fatigue caused by nutrient imbalance doesn't disappear with sleep alone-it lingers throughout the day.

Blood Sugar Imbalance and Energy Crashes

What you eat plays a major role in how energetic-or exhausted-you feel. Diets high in refined carbohydrates and sugar cause rapid spikes and crashes in blood sugar, leading to sudden fatigue, sleepiness, and brain fog. Skipping meals, irregular eating patterns, or relying heavily on caffeine can further disrupt energy stability, making you feel tired even after rest.



Where your body stores fat may affect your brain more than your weight

Obesity affects the human body in various ways, and one among them is its impact on brain function. A recent study has revealed that the impact on brain function depends not only on how much fat the body carries, but also on where it is stored. This links pancreatic fat and 'skinny fat' body types to accelerated brain aging, cognitive decline, and higher neurological disease risk.

"Our work leveraged MRI's ability to quantify fat in various body compartments, especially internal organs, to create a classification system that's data-driven instead of subjective. The data-driven classification unexpectedly discovered two previously undefined fat distribution types that deserve greater attention," said study co-author Kai Liu, an associate professor at The Affiliated Hospital of Xuzhou Medical University in China.

Although earlier studies have linked obesity with a decline in brain health, the latest study highlights the specific risks tied to different fat storage patterns.

As per the researchers, data of nearly 26,000 individuals from the UK Biobank were analysed and the brain health outcomes were compared with patterns in how body fat was distributed.

The analysis "revealed distinct patterns of body fat distribution, where pancreatic-predominant and skinny-fat patterns, in particular, were associated with adverse neurologic outcomes."

Experts revealed that the body fat profiles were mostly associated with extensive gray matter shrinking, an accelerated brain aging, cognitive decline and an increased risk of neurological disease, with risks present in both men and women.

It was also found that people with 'skinny fat' profiles showed the highest fat burden in nearly all areas except the liver and pancreas, unlike a balanced 'high obesity' profile, skinny fat tends to be more concentrated in the abdomen.

Health impacts due to plastics worldwide may double by 2040: Lancet study

Adverse effects on health due to emissions from the world's plastics system, including greenhouse gases, air-polluting particles and toxic chemicals released from production, could more than double by 2040, compared to levels in 2016, if current trends continue, according to a study.

The study, published in The Lancet Planetary Health journal, also highlighted that the global production of plastics may not peak until beyond 2100, worsening environmental and health burdens in an already overwhelmed system.

Plastic pollution and emissions released across its lifecycle are increasingly recognised for their potential impacts on human health, yet the overall scale of the impact is only beginning to be fully quantified, researchers from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and institutes in France, said.

Quantifying health impacts throughout plastics' lifecycles can inform global action against pollution, promoting sustainability across the environment, economy and health, they said.

The team added that a non-disclosure of the chemical composition of plastics is "severely limiting" lifecycle assessments in informing effective policy.

The plastics lifecycle assessment study is the first global-scale one to estimate health impacts in terms of 'disability-adjusted life-years' related to greenhouse



gases, air pollutants and chemicals released, the researchers said. Lifecycles of plastic products analysed include raw material extraction to polymer production to post-consumption waste collection, recycling technologies, dumpsites and open burning and environmental pollution.

The model put forth in the study contributes a flexible framework that can be expanded to include new data and methods and improve precision in health impact estimates associated with plastics, their alternatives and substitutes - the information can contribute towards a rapidly changing policy landscape, the authors said.

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DR. SATISH AND GITANJLI ANAND



DR. SATISH ANAND
Former Chairman, Board of Trustees, AAPI National
E-Mail: sanandmd@gmail.com

GITANJLI ANAND
Former President, India Association of Long Island (IALI)
E-mail: gitanjlianand@gmail.com

OpenAI is secretly building a social network, master plan to catch bots leaked

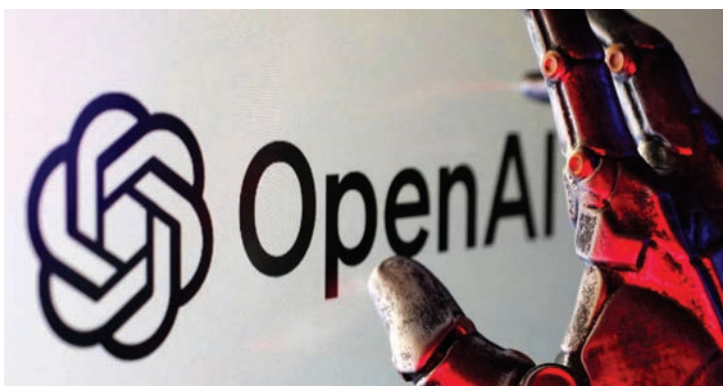
OpenAI may be quietly preparing its boldest consumer-facing experiment yet, and it has little to do with chatbots answering questions. People familiar with the matter told Forbes that the company is working on an early version of a social network designed around a single promise, which is basically conversations led by real people and not automated accounts pretending to be human.

The idea comes at a time when many popular platforms feel increasingly crowded with fake profiles, spam replies and AI-generated chatter. Insiders say OpenAI wants to tackle that problem at the root by building a space where every account belongs to a verified person. The project is still in its infancy and is reportedly being built by a very small team of fewer than ten people, with no public launch plan in sight yet.

What makes OpenAI's approach different is how seriously it is considering identity checks. Unlike existing social apps that rely on phone numbers, email IDs or behavioural patterns, this network could ask users to prove they are human through biometric verification. Options discussed internally include Apple's Face ID and the World Orb, a device that scans a person's iris to create a unique digital identity. The World project is run by Tools for Humanity, a company founded and chaired by OpenAI CEO Sam Altman.

Such a system would make it extremely difficult for bot networks to exist on the platform. At the same time, it has already raised alarms among privacy advocates, who warn that biometric data cannot be changed if misused and could create serious risks if leaked or mishandled. Sources say these concerns are part of ongoing internal discussions.

While details about the app's features remain limited, people aware of the project say users would likely be able to use AI tools to create content such as images or videos. That would



place OpenAI in direct competition with platforms like Instagram and TikTok, both of which are already leaning heavily into AI-powered creation tools. Instagram alone has over three billion monthly active users, underlining just how crowded the space already is.

The motivation behind the project appears closely tied to the current state of social media, particularly X. Bot activity has long been an issue across platforms, but it became far more visible after Elon Musk took over Twitter, renamed it X, and drastically reduced its trust and safety workforce. Although the company removed around 1.7 million bot accounts in 2025, spam and automated replies continue to frustrate users.

Altman has spoken openly about this problem. In posts on X, he has said that discussions around AI on social platforms now feel strangely artificial, filled with accounts that do not seem human. He has even pointed to the so-called dead internet theory, noting that large language model-run accounts appear to be far more common than they were just a couple of years ago.

Map of dark matter's distribution in universe unveiled

Using observations from the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) in a patch of the sky covering almost three times the area of the full moon, scientists have created the most detailed cosmic map to date of the mysterious substance called dark matter that accounts for most of the stuff that populates the universe.

Ordinary matter makes up stars, planets, people and everything else we can see. But it represents only about 15% of all the matter in the cosmos. The rest is dark matter, which does not emit or reflect light, making it invisible to the human eye and to telescopes.

Scientists infer its existence based on the gravitational effects it exerts on a large scale such as how quickly galaxies rotate, how galaxy clusters are held together and how light from distant objects bends as it passes through massive cosmic structures.

The new map of the distribution of dark matter was based on this phenomenon of light bending — causing subtle distortions in the shape of roughly 2,50,000 distant galaxies as observed by Webb — thanks to the gravitational effects of matter along the line of sight.

A previous map of dark matter was based on observations by the Hubble Space Telescope. The new map, powered by Webb's greater capabilities, offers double the resolution of the previous map, spans more parts of the cosmos and peers further back in time — effectively looking to roughly 8 to 10 billion years ago, a key period for galaxy formation.

"This allows us to resolve finer dark matter structures, detect mass concentrations that were previously unseen, and extend dark-matter mapping into earlier epochs of the universe," said observational cosmologist Diana Scognamiglio of NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in California, lead author of the research published on Monday in the journal *Nature Astronomy*.

The map reveals with unprecedented clarity new details of the macrostructure of the universe called the cosmic web - galaxy clusters, immense filaments built of dark matter along which galaxies and gas are distributed, as well as regions with less density of mass. Webb, an infrared telescope possessing about six times the light-gathering power of Hubble, was launched in 2021 and became operational in 2022.

"The James Webb Space Telescope is like putting on a new pair of glasses for the universe," Scognamiglio said. "It sees fainter and more distant galaxies with much sharper detail than ever before. That effectively gives us a much denser grid of background galaxies to work with, which is exactly what you want for this kind of study."

Earth 2.0 discovered outside Solar System. But, there is a bad news

Astronomers have unearthed a tantalising exoplanet candidate that could mirror Earth in size and orbit, orbiting a Sun-like star just 146 light-years away.

Dubbed HD 137010 b, this rocky world, slightly larger than our planet, sits at the chilly outer edge of its star's habitable zone, where liquid water might exist under the right atmosphere.

Detected in archival data from NASA's retired Kepler Space Telescope, it represents a rare find: the first potential Earth twin transiting a nearby, bright, Sun-like star ideal for follow-up studies.

The discovery, detailed in a paper in *The Astrophysical Journal Letters*, comes from lead author Alexander Venner, a postdoctoral researcher at Germany's Max Planck Institute for Astronomy.

Previously a Ph.D. student at Australia's University of Southern Queensland, Venner and his international team mined Kepler's K2 mission data, spotting a single 10-hour transit, the planet's shadow eclipsing its star's face.

With an orbital period around one year, much like Earth's 13-hour transit duration, HD 137010 b tantalises as "Earth 2.0."

WHAT IS THE BAD NEWS?

Its star, HD 137010, a cooler, dimmer K-dwarf, delivers less than a third of the heat and light Earth gets from the Sun.

Surface temperatures could plunge to minus -68°C, colder than Mars' average -65°C, evoking a perpetually frozen world.



Confirmation remains pending. A lone transit demands repeats for validation, a challenge given the year-long orbit that spaces events far apart. NASA's TESS or ESA's CHEOPS satellites might catch more, but next-gen telescopes may be needed.

Modelling offers hope: a CO₂-rich atmosphere could warm it into the conservative habitable zone (40% chance) or optimistic one (51%), potentially yielding a temperate or watery oasis. Odds are 50-50 it lies entirely beyond habitability. This frigid contender points to exoplanet hunting's highs and hurdles.

As Venner notes, such Earth-like orbits evade easy detection, but HD 137010 b's precision single transit breakthroughs that barrier. Follow-up could redefine habitable worlds, or reveal another icy also-ran.

India to retain fastest growing economy tag with 6.8-7.2% expansion next fiscal: Eco Survey

NEW DELHI (TIP)

India's economy is projected to grow by 6.8-7.2 per cent in the fiscal year starting April, the government's pre-Budget Economic Survey said on Thursday, January 29, reaffirming the country's status as the world's fastest-growing major economy despite trade risks and global volatility clouding the outlook.

The forecast for 2026-27 is slower than the 7.4 per cent projection for the current financial year, driven by consumption and investment.

"The cumulative impact of policy reforms over recent years appears to have lifted the economy's medium-term growth potential closer to 7 per cent", from the 6.5 per cent estimated three years back due to efficiency gains from reforms, the annual report card on the economy said.

"The outlook, therefore, is one of steady growth amid global uncertainty, requiring caution, but not pessimism." While the current year GDP growth estimate of 7.4 per cent is higher than the 6.3-6.8 per cent range that the survey had forecast last year, the projection for the next year retains India's world-beating economic expansion despite trade tensions with the US.

India, which has been slapped with the highest 50 per cent tariffs on goods it sends to the US, remains one of the few large economies that is yet to sign a trade deal with Washington.

In response to the labour-intensive sector-hurting tariffs, the Modi government has unleashed policy and tax reforms, including cutting GST rates, raising the bar for levy of income tax, an overhaul of labour laws to ease compliance burden on businesses, and concluded four free trade agreements since May 2025, including a mega deal with the European Union.

While inflation is low, balance sheets of



Chief Economic Adviser, Dr. V. Anantha Nageswaran, holds Economic Survey 2025-26 with his team posing for photograph after the press conference after tabling of Economic Survey 2025-26 in Parliament at the National Media Centre, in New Delhi, on Thursday, January 29. Photo: ANI

firms and households are healthier, and consumption demand remains resilient, US tariffs have led to the rupee falling 5 per cent, and it is now "punching below its weight".

"The rupee's valuation does not accurately reflect India's stellar economic fundamentals," the survey said, even though the "undervalued" currency "offsets, to some extent, the impact of higher American tariffs on Indian goods".

The macroeconomic conditions, however, "provide resilience against external shocks and support the continuation of growth momentum", it said.

The International Monetary Fund forecasts 6.2 per cent growth in the coming financial year, if steep tariffs remain in place.

The Economic Survey, authored by Chief Economic Adviser V Anantha Nageswaran, said the "ongoing trade negotiations with the United States are expected to conclude during the year,

which could help reduce uncertainty on the external front".

Commenting on the Survey, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said it highlights strong macroeconomic fundamentals, sustained growth momentum and the expanding role of innovation, entrepreneurship and infrastructure in nation-building.

"The economic survey tabled today presents a comprehensive picture of India's Reform Express, reflecting steady progress in a challenging global environment. It highlights strong macroeconomic fundamentals, sustained growth momentum and the expanding role of innovation, entrepreneurship and infrastructure in nation-building," he said in a post on X.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, who tabled the Survey in Parliament on Thursday, in a post on X said India's "macroeconomic fundamentals are stronger than ever". "We have successfully navigated global headwinds to place India on a high-

growth trajectory, improving our potential GDP growth to 7 per cent," she said.

Stating that domestic inflation averaged 1.7 per cent during April-December 2025, the survey said core inflation stickiness was largely due to precious metals prices and excluding this, inflation remains muted. Outlook is favourable due to strong agricultural output and gradual GST pass-through.

One of the tools the survey suggested to counter global trade and other headwinds was the implementation of 'Swadeshi' as a disciplined strategy - moving from self-reliance to strategic indispensability.

Stating that while not all import substitution is either feasible or desirable, it said Swadeshi is inevitable and necessary in the wake of export control and technology denials by developed nations.

It called for a 'National Input Cost Reduction' strategy.

From a revenue buoyancy standpoint, both direct and indirect tax collections been robust for the current FY26, in particular growth of non-corporate tax collections (within that, individual tax collections) is notably growing faster than other components of overall mix, and that clearly underlines the changing dynamics of tax collection buckets, administrative reforms and even the measure of success for future tax reforms.

The survey also emphasises the significance of the new Income tax legislation, due to take effect from April 1st, with the aim to provide for simplicity and structural clarity for taxpayers, and encourage voluntary compliance.

The document unveiled before Sitharaman presents the annual Budget for 2026-27 on February 1, flagged shortcomings in India's export policies, particularly for agriculture.

Gold, silver plunge as wild swings, record losses rattle metals markets

Gold suffered its biggest slide in four decades and silver posted a record intraday decline in a stark reversal of the rally that lifted prices to all-time highs.

Gold fell more than 12 percent to slump below \$5,000 an ounce in its biggest intraday decline since the early 1980s. Silver plunged as much as 36 per cent, a record intraday decline, as the selloff swept through the broader metals markets. Copper fell 3.4 per cent in London, retreating from Thursday's record high. The dollar jumped, boosted by a selloff commodity currencies including Australian dollar and Swedish krona.

A wave of investor demand for precious metals over the past year has clocked record after record, shocking seasoned traders and driving exceptional price volatility. That accelerated in January, as investors piled into the time-honored havens amid concerns about currency debasement and the Federal Reserve's independence, trade wars and geopolitical tensions.



Friday's selloff is the biggest shock to the rally, outdoing the slump in October. It was triggered by the dollar rebounding after a report the Trump administration was preparing to nominate Kevin Warsh for Fed chair, a move later confirmed. The

greenback's rally undercut sentiment among investors who had been piling into metals after the US president signaled a willingness to let the currency weaken.

Traders regard Warsh as the toughest inflation fighter among the finalists, raising expectations of monetary policy that would underpin the dollar and weaken greenback-priced bullion.

"Trump announcing Warsh as his pick for next Fed Chair has been a US dollar positive and precious metals negative," said Aakash Doshi, global head of gold and metals strategy at State Street Investment Management. "This has probably been exacerbated by month-end rebalancing as both short dollar and long precious metals has been the consensus macro trade over the past two to three weeks."

Gold's move "validates the cautionary tale of fast-up, fast-down," said Christopher Wong, a strategist at Oversea-Chinese Banking Corp. While reports of Warsh's nomination were a trigger, a correction was overdue, he said.



BEJAN DARUWALLA AND CHIRAG DARUWALLA

**ARIES**

Ganesha says this week's horoscope is indicating a very wonderful day for Aries. You will get a lot of resources to make your day enjoyable. You will have to spend more time on your work and use your power to make your plans successful. You will have to take support from the people around you to start your day. You may get a chance to spend more time with your friends and family. You will have to pay more attention to your work and increase your limits to achieve your goals. You will have to start your day with your goals and end your day with your work. You may get a chance to spend your day with your friends and family. You may get a chance to make your day great with your friends and family. You may get a chance to spend your day with your friends and family.

**TAURUS**

Ganesha says this week's horoscope will not be favorable for Taurus. Normal days will not be favorable for you. You will need to fulfill your responsibilities well this week. You will also have to be cautious about your health. This week you will not have to have a good time with your loved ones. There may be a rift with family members, and you may also get confused with them. Therefore, pay attention to your behavior and talk to them wisely. This week you may have to face some new challenges in financial matters. You have to understand your financial situation and invest accordingly clearly. This week you have to understand the new investment well and only then invest. You will also have to review your plans to improve your financial situation. There will not be any compatibility in your work area this week.

GEMINI

Ganesha says this week is going to start with inauspicious results for Gemini people. You have to be careful about your work. You have to work carefully with your opponents. You should not trust anyone. You do not need to give your opinion on everything. You can avoid quarrels among your family by keeping a calm mind. Your anger can harm your work. You need to pay attention to your expenses as you may feel a shortage of money. You need to stay mentally strong. Spending some time on your favorite hobby can relax you. Students may need to take a break from their studies for a while. This week you need to focus more on your work.

**CANCER**

Ganesha says this week will be very good for Cancer. You will get a chance to take new successful steps in your life. This week will be very auspicious for you. You will be successful in all areas of your life. You will get a chance to have a good time with your family and friends. There is a possibility of some auspicious work happening in your house. You will get a chance to build a good relationship with your relatives. You will improve your financial condition and there will be an increase in wealth. This week you will get a lot of success in your business or work. You can start new projects in your enterprises. This week will be a great time for students to study. You will try to acquire knowledge from new places. You will also share your knowledge with others and guide them. You will also improve your health and personal life.

**LEO**

Ganesha says the horoscope for the week for Leo is indicating a great day for you. Despite being a normal day, you will get good results in your work. You will get money from a job or business. However, you may have to face arguments with your relatives. Therefore, you will need to maintain restraint on your language. Employed people are advised to stay away from office politics today, otherwise you may get into trouble. You will get a chance to spend time with your loved ones. You may need to spend money on your entertainment. Marriageable people may get a good proposal for marriage. Today you can buy a new vehicle or some household items. This week you may gain more money than usual.

**VIRGO**

Ganesha says this week will bring inauspicious results for Virgo from the beginning. None of the work you are thinking of doing will be fruitful for you. You need to focus on your work and take the right advice from the people around you. You have to be alert against your competitors and do not try to hide your work from them. This week you may also have to compromise with your friends and relatives. You will not get satisfaction in your personal and professional life. You also need to pay attention to your health. In business, you will have to implement new plans to increase your work. This week you will also need to pay attention to your financial situation. You will need to manage your expenses and try to save. This week you may face a shortage of money.

**LIBRA**

Ganesha says this week will be unfavorable for you. You will have to remain busy in your daily activities. Taking

care of your health will be very important for you. You should not ignore your health as it can cause you trouble. This week you can receive some special gifts from your relatives. Love will pour in married life and working people will be very busy at work. Your work will be appreciated and people preparing for government jobs may get to hear good news. But this week you will need to control your expenses. Do not do any work out of overexcitement and complete the necessary tasks on time. You should make a budget for your income and expenditure. This will help you avoid problems later. This week you have to focus on your work and do not forget to spend time with your friends and family.

**SCORPIO**

Ganesha says this week is expected to be great for you. You will get signs of improvement in your financial condition and a chance to be active in achieving your goals. Your business may also progress well and you may get new opportunities. This week will also be good for love birds. Sweetness will remain in your relationship, and you will get a chance to spend more time with your partner. Due to improvement in your financial condition, you may need to keep an eye on your expenses to keep your financial condition stable. This week you may also have to pay attention to your health. Regular exercise and consumption of a healthy diet will keep your health good. This week you may also need to pay attention to yourself and practice yoga and meditation to keep your mind calm.

**SAGITTARIUS**

Ganesha says this week's horoscope is likely to be excellent for Sagittarius. You may get a golden opportunity to start a new relationship in your life. If you are talking about marriage, then this week your relationship can be confirmed. Manglik functions may be organized in your house which will bring happiness to your family. Your credibility with relatives will increase and you will be able to talk to them more intelligently. This week you can also buy some new things for your home which will make your home even more beautiful. Students may need to spend more time on research work. You will try to acquire knowledge from new places and increase your knowledge even more. This week you will be successful in sharing your knowledge with others as well. Your financial side will remain strong due to profit in financial matters as well. This week you will be successful in your work.

**CAPRICORN**

Ganesha says this week will bring nausea for you. You will have to face failure in your work. You will need to make more effort to

make your work successful. This week can also be full of challenges for you in terms of money and health. You may need to keep your expenses controlled. You will also have to take care of your health. If you do not take care of your food, you can put your health in danger. So take care of your food and pay attention to your health. This week you will also have to take care of your health. This week you will pay more attention to your work. You may need to make more effort to make your work successful. You will need to pay more attention to your work. This week you will need to make more efforts in your work.

AQUARIUS**Aquarius**

Ganesha says this week's horoscope will be very good for Aquarius. You will be successful in your daily tasks, and your day will be very pleasant. Do not ignore health, it will be very important to take care of it this week. You may get some special gifts from your relatives, and your love will pour into your partner. Employed people will be very busy in their work and your work will be appreciated. People preparing for a government job may get to hear some good news today. You have to control your expenses, otherwise there may be a problem later. Do not do any work with too much enthusiasm, otherwise they may misunderstand you. Complete the necessary tasks on time and make a budget for your income and expenditure. This week you will succeed in achieving your goals and your life will be full of happiness.

**PISCES**

Ganesha says this week's horoscope will not be fair for Pisces. You will not get favorability in your day-to-day work. You will need to be careful with your opponents. You will not have to trust anyone. You do not need to react to everything. You can fulfill your responsibilities to your family by staying calm. Anger can cause loss to your work. This week you will need to pay attention to your expenses. You may feel a shortage of money. Therefore, you need to stay mentally strong. Try to spend some time on your favorite hobby this week. Students can get a break from their studies today. Keep your education in mind and adapt each day to achieve your goals. This week you also have to take care of your health. You should take care of your body and do not forget to exercise regularly.

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

**BIRTHDAY HOROSCOPE : FEB 2 TO FEB 8
BY VEDIC ASTROLOGER NASTUR BEJAN DARUWALLA****FEBRUARY 2**

Ganesha says that you have to take out time for yoga, meditation, and especially music or any of your hobbies. Try to vent your anger in the best possible way by acting or communicating better. Today can be beneficial for you. The interest of students of these zodiac signs increases in this zodiac sign. Some new responsibilities come upon you, which you will be able to complete successfully.

FEBRUARY 3

Ganesha says that today is a perfect day for you because, despite being busy with work, you can feel very calm and happy today. Everything in your life today will help you achieve everything you want. If you try to move forward slowly, take care of your health.

FEBRUARY 4

Ganesha says the day is looking wonderful. You February feel energetic throughout the day, and the flow of

positivity allows you to do some serious work. Your creative ideas can inspire people around you. Have a nice day today. Today, you get to learn something new in the office. Today, you can plan to visit some beautiful places with your partner.

FEBRUARY 5

Ganesha says the day brings wonderful travel opportunities for you. Today, you meet an old friend who can make you happy; you get emotional while talking to your friends. You can soon plan to visit some beautiful places with your partner. Spend some money on holidays, trips, or hobbies, as this can help improve your mental health. Your work life can be great. It is advised to take precautions, eat healthy food, and change your lifestyle.

FEBRUARY 6

Ganesha says that today, you can feel good by getting the support of your family and spouse at every step of life.

You plan to buy a new house. You plan a reunion of all your friends, which will take you down memory lane. This could be a good day to be successful in your endeavors. You can make every possible effort to move ahead in life. Your strong commitment to getting things done perfectly can work to your advantage.

FEBRUARY 7

Ganesha says it is a good day. Positive energy can keep you active throughout the day and make you feel good in the first part of the day. This is a good day if you want to resolve your love or marital issues. Positive developments in your lifestyle can prove beneficial for you. You find yourself more confident on the professional front after achieving career or educational goals. You get some good marriage proposals.

FEBRUARY 8

Ganesha says you will have a great day. Some wonderful career opportunities

**VEDIC ASTROLOGER NASTUR
BEJAN DARUWALLA**

knock at your door, and it takes you some time to make the best decision of your life on the professional front. It's a wonderful day, so you should try to make the most of it. You can expect a good day as all your business or job issues get resolved today with the help of a mediator or third party. Your parents appreciate your presence and shower you with love.

Nastur Bejan Daruwalla is available for astrological consultations. He can be reached at www.bejandaruwalla.com
info@bejandaruwalla.com | +91 81412 34275

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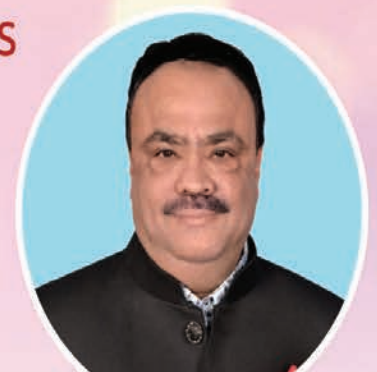
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Magha Purnima: The sacred full moon of purification, charity and inner awakening

Magha Purnima, the radiant full-moon day of the Hindu month of Magha (January-February), is not merely a date on the religious calendar-it is a deeply transformative spiritual threshold. Marking the culmination of the sacred Magha Snan period, this auspicious Purnima is believed to dissolve accumulated karmas, sanctify human life, and gently guide the soul toward liberation.

Across India, especially along the banks of the Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Narmada, and Kaveri, Magha Purnima awakens rivers into living altars. Millions of devotees gather in quiet devotion, turning faith into action and ritual into realisation.

The Sacred Aura of the Month of Magha

The spiritual greatness of Magha finds repeated affirmation in the Padma Purana, Skanda Purana, and Narada Purana. Scriptures declare Magha to be the most meritorious month for spiritual practices, dear above all to Lord Vishnu. It is believed that during this month, divine energies descend into sacred waters, rendering every bath, prayer, and act of charity extraordinarily potent.

Magha Purnima represents the completion of this holy cycle, a moment of fulfillment when discipline ripens into grace. For those observing Kalpavasa-a month-long vow of austerity, restraint, prayer, and simplicity-this full moon is the spiritual harvest of sustained effort.

Brahma Muhurta Snan

The observance of Magha Purnima begins in the stillness of Brahma Muhurta, before sunrise. Devotees rise early to perform the sacred bath (snan), ideally in holy rivers. This ritual bath is considered the heart of Magha Purnima, believed to cleanse not only the body but also the subtle layers of the mind and soul. Before entering the water, devotees offer prayers to the river deity, acknowledging water as the primal purifier. Those unable to travel sanctify the ritual at home by adding Ganga jal, sesame seeds, or tulsi leaves to their bath water, transforming the household space into a sacred tirtha.

Spiritually, the act symbolises surrender-immersing ego, regrets, and attachments into the eternal flow of divine consciousness.

Sankalpa: Aligning Will with the Divine

After bathing, devotees take a sankalpa, a sacred verbal resolve. By stating their intention to observe Magha Purnima with purity, devotion, and charity, the ritual becomes a conscious spiritual commitment. In Hindu thought, intention (bhava) is as powerful as action, and the sankalpa



Important information

Magha Purnima 2026

Sunday, 01 February 2026

Purnima Tithi Begins: 01 February 2026 at 05:53 AM

Purnima Tithi Ends : 02 February 2026 at 03:39 AM

aligns human will with cosmic order.

Worship of Lord Vishnu

Magha Purnima is especially sacred to Lord Vishnu, the sustainer of the universe. Homes and temples resonate with the chanting of Vishnu Sahasranama, Narayan Sukta, and verses from the Bhagavad Gita. Many households perform Satyanarayan Puja and Katha, offering tulsi leaves, bananas, sweets, and yellow flowers.

The narratives of the Satyanarayan Katha reinforce timeless virtues-truthfulness, faith, humility, and gratitude-values believed to dissolve suffering and restore harmony in life.

Upavasa: Fasting as Inner Discipline

Fasting on Magha Purnima is observed as an act of inner restraint rather than physical denial. Devotees may observe a complete fast, consume fruits and milk, or partake of a single sattvic meal after moonrise. The

discipline of upavasa redirects energy inward, quietens sensory distractions, and prepares the mind for reflection and prayer.

Dana: Charity as a Path to Liberation

Charity (dana) performed on Magha Purnima holds exceptional spiritual merit. Scriptures declare that donations made on this day never diminish but multiply across lifetimes. Devotees offer food grains, warm clothes, blankets, sesame seeds, jaggery, ghee, utensils, and symbolic gold. Go-dana and feeding the poor, pilgrims, saints, and animals are considered especially sacred.

Dana on Magha Purnima is not transactional-it is transformational. By loosening attachment to possessions, the heart expands, making space for compassion and divine grace.

Magha Purnima at the Sangam

Magha Purnima is one of the most

significant bathing days during the Magh Mela and Kumbh Mela at Prayagraj. At the Triveni Sangam-the confluence of Ganga, Yamuna, and the unseen Saraswati-millions bathe together, momentarily dissolving social identities in shared spiritual purpose.

Ascetics, householders, and seekers stand side by side in silence and prayer, embodying the ancient truth that liberation is open to all.

Deepa Dana and the Offering of Light

As dusk approaches, devotees light oil lamps (deepa dana) in temples, homes, and along riverbanks. Floating lamps upon flowing waters symbolise the offering of ego and ignorance into divine will. The flickering flame becomes a prayer-fragile yet luminous-trusting the river of life to carry it forward.

Chandra Puja

At moonrise, devotees perform Chandra Puja, offering water, milk, rice, and white flowers to the full moon. The moon, ruler of the mind in Vedic cosmology, is worshipped for emotional balance, clarity, and inner peace.

Meditation under the Magha Purnima moon is considered especially powerful, as lunar energies are believed to heighten awareness and calm mental turbulence.

Completion of Kalpavasa

For Kalpavasis, Magha Purnima marks the formal conclusion of their month-long spiritual retreat. Final prayers, charity, and ceremonial offerings signify a return to household life-carrying forward the wisdom of restraint, simplicity, and devotion into everyday existence.

The Full Moon of Inner Completion

The Purnima moon symbolises fullness, balance, and illumination. On Magha Purnima, it reflects not just light upon the world, but clarity within the seeker. It gently asks: What has been purified? What is ready to be released?

A Day of Spiritual Realignment

At its core, Magha Purnima is a day of realignment-of body through purity, speech through truth, and mind through devotion. Every ritual, from bathing to charity, serves as a bridge between the external act and internal awakening.

As the full moon rises over sacred waters, Magha Purnima reminds humanity of an eternal promise: that through sincerity, compassion, and faith, the path to liberation flows quietly within reach-like a river under moonlight.

CONTD FROM PAGE 1

India Celebrates 77th Republic Day...

The operation featured prominently through a tri-services tableau and a distinctive arrowhead formation during the flypast, highlighting jointness among the armed forces.



Display of military power

The theme of the cultural segment revolved around the 150th anniversary of "Vande Mataram," India's national song. About 2,500 artists from across the country performed a meticulously choreographed dance presentation, fusing folk and classical traditions to celebrate the enduring legacy of the song penned by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay in 1875. The musical composition for the performance was created by Oscar-winning composer M.M. Keeravani and extended beyond the customary two stanzas.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in a message on social media platform X, said the Republic Day parade showcased India's robust security apparatus, technological capabilities and commitment to national defense, while also celebrating the country's cultural diversity and unity. The celebrations began with Prime Minister Modi paying homage to the fallen soldiers at the National War Memorial. Soon after, President Droupadi Murmu arrived at Kartavya Path with the chief guests in a ceremonial carriage drawn by six horses. The national flag was unfurled, followed by a 21-gun salute fired by the Army's 172 Field Regiment using 105 mm light field guns.

Before the parade commenced, President Murmu conferred the Ashoka Chakra, India's highest peacetime gallantry award, on astronaut and Indian Air Force officer Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla for his role as pilot in last year's historic Axiom Mission to the International Space Station.

The military segment of the parade highlighted India's growing emphasis on modern warfare and indigenous capabilities. Unmanned systems took Centre stage for the first time, reflecting their increasing role in surveillance, reconnaissance and precision strikes, particularly in the backdrop of Operation Sindoor. The parade adopted a phased battle array format, demonstrating how various platforms are deployed in real combat scenarios.



A Fly past by Indian Air Force aircraft

Among the systems on display were new additions such as the Suryastra universal rocket launcher and a long-range anti-ship hypersonic missile capable of travelling at speeds exceeding Mach 5. Other showcased equipment included BrahMos and Akash missile systems, T-90 and Arjun tanks, Dhanush and ATAGS artillery guns, BMP-II infantry combat vehicles, and a range of all-terrain and light strike vehicles.

In a first, the ceremonial procession also included double-humped Bactrian camels, Zanskar ponies, black kites used for surveillance and anti-drone roles, and five indigenous dog breeds—symbolizing both tradition and



The Vande Mataram tableau featured the Father of the Indian Nation, Mahatma Gandhi



The tableaux displayed India's culture

innovation within the armed forces.

The flypast featured 29 aircraft and was conducted in two phases—during the parade and at its conclusion—aligning with the Indian Air Force's role in the battle order. A special formation named "Sindoor", comprising Rafale, MiG-29, Sukhoi-30 and Jaguar fighter jets, paid tribute to the Air Force's contribution during Operation Sindoor.

The tri-services tableau titled "Operation Sindoor: Victory Through Jointness" depicted coordinated air strikes, naval maneuvers, and ground offensives, reflecting India's evolving doctrine of integrated military command.

Adding a strong diplomatic dimension to the celebrations was the presence of a large delegation from the European Union. A small EU military contingent also participated in the parade, carrying flags associated with the bloc's naval missions. Prime Minister Modi described the visit as a reflection of the growing India-EU partnership and shared democratic values, with the engagement expected to give momentum to cooperation across multiple sectors, including trade.

Visually enriching Kartavya Path were reproductions of rare paintings created in 1923 by artist Tejendra Kumar Mitra, illustrating verses of Vande Mataram. Several state and ministry tableaux also echoed the national song, aligning with the parade's overarching theme, "Swatantrata Ka Mantra - Vande Mataram." The celebrations came amid renewed public discourse on the historical and political significance of Vande Mataram, a debate that had resonated in Parliament in the past year. Against that backdrop, the Republic Day parade stood as a reaffirmation of India's democratic ideals, cultural continuity, and strategic resolve on the world stage.

Thousands rally in Minneapolis as...

Minneapolis has become the epicenter of the immigration policy backlash after two protesters, both U.S. citizens, were shot dead by federal agents this month. "I don't think our Federal Government should be terrorizing our people like this," Sushma Santhana, 24, told AFP as protesters chanted "our streets!" around her.

The crowd gathered in freezing temperatures after Bruce Springsteen performed at an anti-ICE concert in the city. The U.S. rock legend recently released "Streets of Minneapolis," a tribute to the two killed protesters.

Another protester, 24-year-old Max Maffor, said he was demonstrating "to conserve what we would consider our democracy and all the liberties that we get from living in America." Rallies were also underway

across Los Angeles, where immigration raids last year sparked protests, with thousands carrying signs outside City Hall.

Trump meanwhile walked back his conciliatory tone to describe Alex Pretti, the 37-year-old nurse gunned down on Saturday, January 23, as an "agitator and, perhaps, insurrectionist" after new footage allegedly of Pretti emerged. AFP could not immediately verify the video, in which a man said to be Pretti is seen kicking and breaking the taillight of the agents' car before they emerge and tackle him to the ground.

Some Minneapolis residents were unstirred by the footage. "So the guy kicked a car's light, does that mean he deserved to die?" Pedro Wolcott, a Latino sandwich shop owner, told AFP.

The Justice Department has opened a civil rights investigation into Pretti's death, Deputy Attorney

General Todd Blanche told reporters on Friday, January 30. There is no similar probe for Renee Good, also fatally shot by agents in January.

(Source: AFP)

Former CNN Anchor Don Lemon Arrested

AFP, referencing the constitutional protection for freedom of expression, including religion.

Political figures and media advocates condemned Lemon's arrest, with Democratic House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries calling for his immediate release.

"This is an egregious attack on the First Amendment and on journalists' ability to do their work," said Committee to Protect Journalists CEO Jodie Ginsberg.

Lemon was released from custody after a short court hearing in Los Angeles, media reported. His next hearing is in Minneapolis on February 9.

Kausani: Where the Himalayas pause to breathe

Perched at an altitude of about 1,890 meters in Uttarakhand's Bageshwar district, Kausani is a hill town defined by stillness. Wrapped in pine forests, terraced fields, and endless Himalayan skies, it offers travelers not excitement but elevation-of thought, of breath, of perspective.

Often called the "Switzerland of India," Kausani's beauty lies in its restraint. It does not compete for attention; it invites contemplation.

A Himalayan Panorama

Kausani is famed for its sweeping 300-kilometre-wide view of the Greater Himalayas. On clear days, majestic peaks-Nanda Devi, Trishul, Panchachuli, Chaukhamba, and Nanda Kot-rise in flawless alignment, their snowbound silhouettes glowing at sunrise and fading gently at dusk.

The experience is less about photography and more about presence. Many visitors find themselves returning to the same viewpoint repeatedly, watching the light shift, the clouds drift, and the mountains quietly assert their timelessness.

Echoes of History and Thought

Kausani's tranquil landscape once offered refuge to Mahatma Gandhi, who stayed here in 1929. Enchanted by its serenity, he described it as the "Switzerland of India." The Anasakti Ashram, where he spent time reflecting on the Bhagavad Gita, continues to embody the ideals of simplicity, self-restraint, and inner freedom.

Today, the ashram stands not as a monument but as a pause-an invitation to step away from noise and return to essentials.

Places to Visit In and Around Kausani

While Kausani itself is a destination for stillness, its surroundings offer quiet explorations that deepen the travel experience.

Anasakti Ashram

A place of reflection rather than sightseeing, this ashram overlooks the Himalayan range and houses a small museum, prayer hall, and library. The silence here feels intentional, echoing Gandhi's belief in mindful living and spiritual discipline.

Kausani Tea Estate

Set against rolling hills and misty skies, this is the only tea estate in Uttarakhand. A walk through its neatly lined bushes reveals the region's lesser-known colonial heritage. Visitors can learn about tea processing and sample aromatic organic brews that capture the flavour of the mountains.

Bajnath Temple

Located about 17 kilometres from Kausani, the Bajnath Temple complex is a significant 12th-century shrine dedicated to Lord Shiva. Built by the Katyuri kings on the banks of the Gomti River, the temple blends spiritual



reverence with architectural grace, making it both a pilgrimage and heritage site.

Someshwar

Approximately 20 kilometres away, Someshwar is known for its ancient Shiva temple and serene valley setting. Surrounded by orchards and farmland, it offers a glimpse into rural Kumaon life and serves as a peaceful excursion from Kausani.

Rudradhari Falls and Caves

A short drive from Kausani leads to this natural retreat, where a forest trail opens to cascading waterfalls and ancient rock-cut caves. Associated with legends of Lord Shiva, the area is ideal for short treks, meditation, and quiet communion with nature.

Pinnath

Situated atop a hill and surrounded by dense forests, Pinnath is a revered Shiva shrine and a panoramic viewpoint. On clear days, the vistas extend across valleys and distant Himalayan peaks, making the journey as rewarding as the destination.

Life at a Gentler Pace

Kausani's charm reveals itself in small moments-mist lifting from valleys at dawn, the distant clang of temple bells, the scent of pine and wood smoke. Village life unfolds quietly, rooted in agriculture, tradition, and seasonal rhythms. Local Kumaoni cuisine reflects this simplicity. Dishes prepared with mandua (finger millet), bhatt (black soybean), and fresh mountain greens are wholesome, warming, and deeply tied to the land.

Why Kausani Lingers in Memory

Kausani is not about rushing from one



attraction to another. It is about slowing down, listening to the mountains, and rediscovering the luxury of unhurried time. In a world driven by speed, Kausani

stands still-and in doing so, teaches the art of balance. To leave Kausani is to carry a quietness within, long after the road winds away from the hills.

History This Week

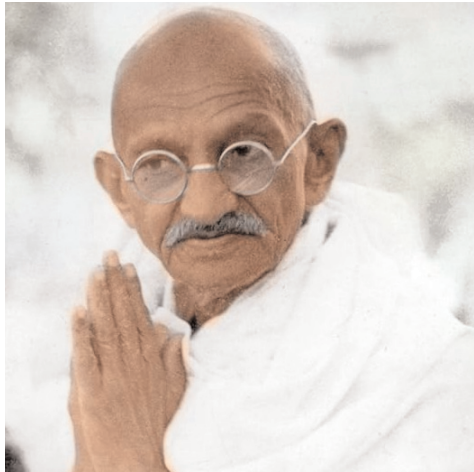
JAN 30 - FEB 05

JANUARY 30

January 30, 1649 - King Charles I of England was beheaded for treason by order of Parliament under the direction of Oliver Cromwell, leader of the Puritan Revolution.

January 30, 1835 - President Andrew Jackson survived the first assassination attempt on a U.S. President. While leaving the House of Representatives Chamber, an insane would-be assassin fired two pistol shots at him, however both pistols misfired and the president was unharmed.

January 30, 1933 - Adolf Hitler was appointed Chancellor of Germany by President Paul von Hindenburg. Hitler went on to become the sole leader of Nazi Germany. He then waged a war of expansion in Europe, precipitating the deaths of an estimated 50 million persons through military conflict and through the Holocaust in which the Nazis attempted to exterminate the entire Jewish population of Europe.



January 30, 1948 - Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated in New Delhi, India, by a religious fanatic. Gandhi had ended British rule in India through nonviolent resistance. "Non-violence is not a garment to be put on and off at will. Its seat is in the heart, and it must be an inseparable part of our very being," he had stated in 1926.

January 30, 1968 - Beginning of the Tet Offensive in Vietnam as North Vietnamese troops attacked 36 provincial capitals and 5 major cities in South Vietnam, including an attack on the U.S. Embassy in Saigon and the presidential palace. Although U.S. forces eventually fended off the massive surprise attack and achieved a military victory, Tet became a propaganda victory for the Vietnamese due in part to graphic news reports on television which helped turn U.S. public opinion against continuation of the war.

January 30, 1972 - In Londonderry, Northern Ireland, 13 Roman Catholics were killed by British troops during a banned civil rights march. The event became known as Bloody Sunday.

January 30, 1973 - During the Watergate scandal, Gordon Liddy and James McCord were convicted of burglary, wire-tapping and attempted bugging of the Democratic headquarters inside the Watergate building in Washington, D.C.

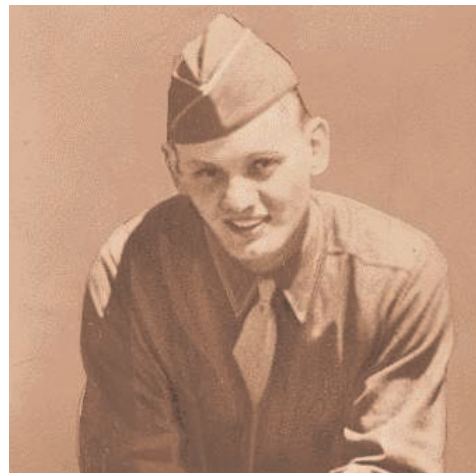
January 30, 1992 - Argentina allowed access to numerous files of Nazis who had fled to South America from Germany after World War II, thus aiding the hunt for Nazi war criminals.

Birthday - Franklin Delano Roosevelt

(1882-1945) the 32nd U.S. President was born in Hyde Park, New York. Despite crippling polio, he led America out of the Great Depression and through World War II and is widely considered to be one of America's three greatest presidents (along with Washington and Lincoln). "When peace has been broken anywhere, the peace of all countries is in danger," he stated in 1939.

JANUARY 31

January 31, 1943 - German troops surrendered at Stalingrad, marking the first big defeat of Hitler's armies in World War II. During the Battle of Stalingrad, 160,000 Germans were killed and 90,000 taken prisoner, including the commander, Friedrich von Paulus, the first German field marshal ever to surrender. The captured Germans were forced to march to Siberia, with few ever returning to Germany.



January 31, 1945 - Eddie Slovik, a 24-year-old U.S. Army private, was executed by a firing squad after being sentenced to death for desertion, the first such occurrence in the U.S. Army since the Civil War.

Birthday - Jackie Robinson (1919-1972) was born in Cairo, Georgia. He was the first African American to play professional baseball. He played for the Brooklyn Dodgers from 1947 to 1956, was chosen as the National League's most valuable player in 1949 and elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1962.

FEBRUARY 1

February 1, 1960 - In Greensboro, North Carolina, four African American students sat down and ordered coffee at a lunch counter inside a Woolworth's store. They were refused service, but did not leave. Instead, they waited all day. The scene was repeated over the next few days, with protests spreading to other southern states, resulting in the eventual arrest of over 1,600 persons for participating in sit-ins.

February 1, 2003 - Sixteen minutes before it was scheduled to land, the Space Shuttle Columbia broke apart in flight over west Texas, killing all seven crew members. The accident may have resulted from damage caused during liftoff when a piece of insulating foam from the external fuel tank broke off, piercing a hole in the shuttle's left wing that allowed hot gases to penetrate the wing upon re-entry into the Earth's atmosphere. This was the second space shuttle lost in flight. In January 1986, Challenger exploded during liftoff.

Birthday - Hattie Caraway (1878-1950) the first woman elected to the U.S.

Senate, was born in Bakersville, Tennessee. Her husband became the U.S. Senator from Arkansas. Following his death in 1931, she filled the remainder of his term, then was elected herself, serving a total of 14 years.



Birthday - Hollywood director John Ford (1895-1973) was born in Cape Elizabeth, Maine. Known for The Grapes of Wrath and The Searchers, he also served in World War II as chief of the Photographic Unit of OSS, and earned two Academy Awards for documentaries made during the war.

FEBRUARY 2

February 2, 1848 - The war between the U.S. and Mexico ended with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. In exchange for \$15 million, the U.S. acquired the areas encompassing parts or all of present day California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming, and Texas. The treaty was ratified on March 10, 1848.

February 2, 1990 - In South Africa, the 30-year-old ban on the African National Congress was lifted by President F.W. de Klerk, who also promised to free Nelson Mandela and remove restrictions on political opposition groups.



Birthday - Irish novelist and poet James Joyce (1882-1941) was born in Dublin, Ireland. His works include; Dubliners, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, Ulysses, and Finnegans Wake.

FEBRUARY 3

February 3, 1865 - A four-hour peace conference occurred between President Abraham Lincoln and Confederate Vice President Alexander Stephens at Hampton Roads, Virginia. The meeting was unsuccessful as President Lincoln insisted there could be no armistice until the Confederates acknowledged Federal authority. The Confederates wanted an armistice first. Thus the Civil War continued.

February 3, 1870 - The 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was

ratified, guaranteeing the right of citizens to vote, regardless of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

February 3, 1913 - The 16th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified, granting Congress the authority to collect income taxes.

February 3, 1943 - An extraordinary act of heroism occurred in the icy waters off Greenland after the U.S. Army transport ship Dorchester was hit by a German torpedo and began to sink rapidly. When it became apparent there were not enough life jackets, four U.S. Army chaplains on board removed theirs, handed them to frightened young soldiers, and chose to go down with the ship while praying.



Birthday - The first female physician in the U.S., Elizabeth Blackwell (1821-1910) was born near Bristol, England. As a girl, her family moved to New York State. She was awarded her MD by the Medical Institute of Geneva, New York, in 1849. She then established a hospital in New York City run by an all-female staff. She was also active in training women to be nurses for service in the American Civil War.

Birthday - American artist and illustrator Norman Rockwell (1894-1978) was born in New York City. Best known for depicting ordinary scenes from small town American life for the covers of Saturday Evening Post magazine.

FEBRUARY 4

February 4, 1861 - Apache Chief Cochise was arrested in Arizona by the U.S. Army for raiding a ranch. Cochise then escaped and declared war, beginning the period known as the Apache Wars, which lasted 25 years.

February 4, 1985 - Twenty countries in the United Nations signed a document entitled "Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment."

Birthday - Thaddeus Kosciuszko (1746-1817) was born in Poland. He served in the American Revolution, building the first fortifications at West Point. He then returned to Poland and fought against a Russian invasion.



Birthday - Aviation pioneer Charles Lindbergh (1902-1974) was born in Detroit, Michigan. He made the first non-stop solo flight from New York to Paris, May 20-21, 1927.

FEBRUARY 5

February 5, 1917 - The new constitution of Mexico, allowing for sweeping social changes, was adopted.

Djokovic & Alcaraz win 5-set epics to reach Australian Open final

MELBOURNE (TIP)

The 38-year-old Djokovic will have his latest shot at a record 25th major triumph - the sole unfulfilled ambition of his illustrious career - after the Serb came from behind to beat two-time defending champion Jannik Sinner 3-6 6-3 4-6 6-4 6-4 at 01:30 local time.

Spain's Alcaraz earlier came through 6-4 7-6 (7-5) 6-7 (3-7) 6-7 (4-7) 7-5 after an enthralling five hours and 27 minutes against Alexander Zverev.

But the scorelines barely hint at the drama that occurred in both semi-finals. The men's singles final takes place on Sunday, after world number one Aryna Sabalenka and former Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina meet in Saturday's women's showpiece.

After what was undoubtedly one of the greatest performances of his 20-year career, Djokovic thanked all who had stayed until late into the night to provide support - including Australian great Margaret Court, with whom he shares the overall Grand Slam record at 24.

A staggering success was founded in near-perfect ball striking in key moments, but defined by the remarkable resilience he showed to twice level the match against world number two Sinner, saving eight break points in the fifth set as he battled to victory after four hours and nine minutes.

Having looked physically fatigued as he conceded the third set, Djokovic grew in strength and refused to fold under sustained pressure as another thrilling conclusion unfolded on Rod Laver Arena.

A 10-time winner in Melbourne, Djokovic produced a remarkable recovery from 0-40 down to move a game from victory after striking the first blow for a 4-3 lead, eventually ending Sinner's resistance with a third match point to become the oldest man in the professional era to reach the Australian Open final.

This will be his first Grand Slam final appearance since Wimbledon in 2024, while success would bring Djokovic his first major title since the 2023 US Open.

Standing in his way of a historic triumph is world number one Alcaraz, who fell to the floor in complete disbelief after sealing a victory which kept alive his bid to become the

Novak Djokovic will meet Carlos Alcaraz in the Australian Open final on Sunday after both players came through five-set epics to maintain their respective bids for history on an extraordinary day in Melbourne.



youngest man to complete the career Grand Slam.

The 22-year-old had clinched the first two sets against Zverev and was cruising when, serving at 4-4 in the third, he suddenly pulled up and struggled to move.

The world number one took a medical timeout - leaving third seed Zverev irate - and looked a shadow of his former self as his German opponent forced a decider.

Zverev went an early break up in the fifth set and served for the match at 5-4, before Alcaraz produced a scarcely believable comeback to reach a first Australian Open final.

De Kock's hundred in his 100th T20 leads South Africa to series win over West Indies - A

Quinton de Kock celebrated his 100th Twenty20 international with a century as he powered South Africa to a seven-wicket victory over the West Indies on January 29.

De Kock hit a career-best 115 off 49 balls with a borrowed bat from Dewald Brevis. Ryan Rickelton finished the rout with a career-best 77 not out off 36. The left-handers battered the West Indies for 162 runs in 11.5 overs. Together, they had South Africa flying at 12 runs per over.

"Special to watch," South Africa captain Aiden Markram said. "Quinny put on a great show for the crowd. Ricks flies under the radar but to get us home back to back is a good effort from him." The West Indies made a hefty 221-4 but South Africa cruised to 225-3 with 15 balls to spare.

The target didn't faze the Proteas. They chased down 258 against the West Indies on the same ground in 2023, led by de Kock's 100, his only previous T20 century.

After losing five straight bilateral T20 series, South Africa gave coach Shukri Conrad his first T20 series win as they clinched it 2-0 with a match to spare. That third match is on Saturday, then both teams head to the T20 World Cup starting next week in India and Sri Lanka. De Kock was rested from the first T20, where Markram hit 86 not out in a nine-wicket win chasing 174. The captain made only 15 this time but de Kock, who was on 6, took up the mantle and launched sixes against five of the six West Indies bowlers.

5th T20: Samson's form, Axar's fitness concerns for India

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM (TIP)

Sanju Samson would expect passionate home support to lift his game even as India fret over Axar Patel's fitness when they wind up their T20 World Cup preparations in the fifth and final T20 International against New Zealand here on Saturday, Jan 31.

India were in experimental mode in the fourth T20I at Visakhapatnam, sticking to five front-line bowlers without resorting to all-rounders Hardik Pandya and Shivam Dube. The plan didn't yield the desired result as the hosts lost even though the result does not alter the series outcome, which India has already sealed.

As has been the case through this series, the bowling department might see some shake-up again and the management could give a chance to mystery spinner Varun Chakravarthy after resting him from the previous two matches.

The batting department might not see too many changes, but the management will keep an eye on Samson. A free-flowing batsman, Samson now appears to be holding the weight of the world on his

India's captain Suryakumar Yadav, Sanju Samson, and others arrive ahead of the India-New Zealand final T20I cricket match, in Thiruvananthapuram.



shoulders. More than the drying up of runs, the think-tank will be worried about technical discrepancies that have crept into his batting of late, and the subsequent draining of confidence.

A laden back-foot, and improper bat

swing might require some deep correction ahead of the ICC showpiece starting February 7.

Since Samson is a contender for the pivotal opening slot at the marquee event, the lean patch cannot be allowed to enter a

terminal phase.

But in his home town, backed by adoring fans, Samson might just find the lost rhythm. That he is a superstar in this part of the country was evident from a video that the BCCI shared after the team's arrival.

Skipper Suryakumar Yadav was seen playfully clearing the way for 'Chetta' (elder brother) at the airport exit where hundreds of fans had lined up to catch the glimpse of the local favourite and his teammates.

Ishan Kishan is a crucial backup option for Samson and has been in fine fettle in this rubber, but the wicketkeeper batter had to sit out of the previous match with an unspecified injury.

All-rounder Axar too has not played since suffering a finger injury in the first T20I at Nagpur. The left-arm spinner, though, had bowled a few deliveries at nets ahead of the fourth match in Visakhapatnam.

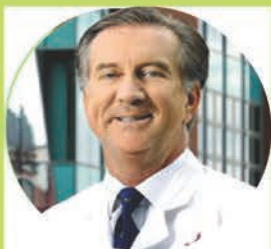
Beyond the individual scenarios, there are team goals to be achieved. In modern cricket, turnaround time between matches or series is quite tight, and India will play their first game of the T20 World Cup on February 7 in Mumbai.



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Best Wishes, Peter



Peter J McDonnell, MD Director Wilmer Eye Institute, Johns Hopkins



New Goutami Institute to be constructed 2024



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